

Review: *Ancient Civilizations*, 2007

Pages: 1,248

Minutes: ~2,330

Ancient History Made Accessible

This is a fantastic series to give both a generalist knowledge of ancient history and specialist knowledge of the selected topics. It does not over complicate the simple realities common to all cultures of providing food and clean water, improving health and hygiene, waging war, creating a workable political system, and religion.

While some subjects are unique and highly informative (e.g. the *Iceman* and *Miracle Machines*), others repeat or re-emphasize material (e.g. on the Egyptian Pharaohs or the Roman Empire). This only becomes tiresome with titles solely dedicated to paganism and the origins of man, seeing they are speculative and hold little value.

The books are all the same size (24 pages) and follow a common format of introduction, contextual timeline, summary facts, and have very useful multiple-choice knowledge checks at the end.

The best chapters are those where documentary and book harmonise (e.g. *Ancient Medicine* and *Letters From the Roman Front*).

A downside is the secular humanistic and evolutionary lens of the authors, and assumed "Stone Age" and "pre-history evolutionary" timelines of 100,000+ years. While showing material obviously collaborating the Bible (e.g. the Fertile Crescent origins of man [post-Babel dispersion], the Hanging Gardens of Babylon [King Nebuchadnezzar]), they are careful not to mention it.

Low points are reached when dealing with the stagnant and evil Islamic religion (falsely portrayed as driving an 'Age of

Enlightenment') which simply stole ideas from the Greek and Romans nations it destroyed.

Overall, for a secular work a cheap yet excellent self-study tool.
