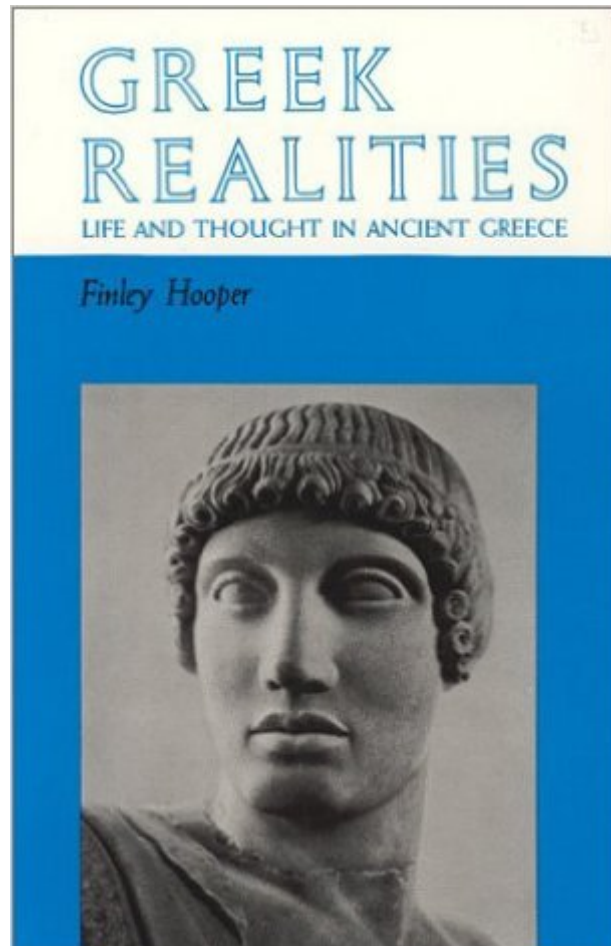


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Greek Realities: Life And Thought In Ancient Greece



Synopsis

"The study of the Greeks can never be a closed account. The wide variety of critical and descriptive works written about them . . . bears witness to man's continuing preoccupation with himself. Other ages might talk of God or machines; the Greeks, from Homer to Diogenes, were fascinated with man. Plato's emphasis on the spiritual world and Diogenes' unheroic retreat may seem to be departures from the Greek way. But that would be true if there were a single Greek way. Obviously, there was not. It is the variety of ideas about man, who he is and who he hopes to be, which is the real Greek legacy . . . This book [begins] with the rich tombs of Mycenaean kings who tried desperately to preserve what they had won. It ends with Diogenes and his fellow Cynics who say that it is better to let it all go. In between are the heroes, the art, the history which belong to the ancient Greeks. The questions they raised and the answers they offered are still the concern of us all."-Finley Hooper

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Hooper's book panoramas the history of Hellenic civilization from Mycenae to the Alexandrine Age. His grasp of art, archaeology, architecture, and complete command of his sources inform the magistral prose that pours off of every page. That said, the size of the book is manageable. Hooper's view of history is similar to Thucydides: non-idealistic, and mistrustful of extreme forms of democracy. His views come as through strongly in interpreting the course of Greek history and civilization in this book as they did in his lectures when I was his student at Wayne State. This is most evident in his chapters on the three Athenian generations stretching from Marathon to defeat in

the Peloponnesian War. The feeling of inevitability, as the city-state moves from triumphant action to hubris, exemplified by the debate over the expedition to Syracuse, to defeat at the hands of Sparta, reads like a Greek tragedy. So it was. -Lloyd A. Conway

I just purchased a used copy of this book. It has been nearly thirty years since I last read it and I can scarcely believe how time has so quickly past. I had the privilege of taking a course in ancient Greek history taught by Dr. Finley Hooper and for some reason found myself thinking about the course and how enjoyable it was. Few historical texts bring history to life the way this book does. If you are at all interested in ancient Greek History you need to read this brilliant book. Dr. Hooper was an amazing instructor with a very pointed sense of humor. He was not so unlike Professor Kingsfield from the Paper Chase for those who have seen the movie or series. I will share a real story. During class he began discussing the Greek ideal of beauty... the amazing statues, etc. Dr. Finley commented on how ancient Greek statues were able to augment and exaggerate beauty to convey the very Platonic form of beauty to the mortal mind. He then joked and said "no one is as perfect or beautiful as a Greek statue.. let alone Mr. Vitale" It appeared he was making a joke at my expense.... I was a fat non-so-attractive sort who none-the-less commanded a certain amount of attention from peers who respected my intellect. At first I was chagrined. Before I responded, a woman in the class stood to defend my honor, chastising Dr. Finley for his callousness. Dr. Finley pointed at her and instructed her to sit down. He then said "Ms. Jones, Mr. Vitale knows that it is not important what I am saying about him. What is important is that he is a person worthy of comment which is something very rare indeed!" I am sure he enjoyed toying with me and Ms. Jones. But, the reality of the situation was that he was teaching us all a valuable lesson about what "beauty" (the good and the true) really means in the spirit of the ancient Greek philosophers. No one left that class unchanged for the better. If you have a chance to pick up a copy of this book... snatch it without hesitation.

I read this book in college over thirty years ago as a textbook in my Greek History class. It is one of the best history books I have ever read. If you are wanting to explore the great classic primary writings on history such as Thucydides' history of the Peloponnesian War, or if you want to read the best philosophical works ever, such as Plato's dialogues, or if you want to read the great dramas by Aeschylus, Sophocles, or Euripides, or even if you want to read the compelling historical novels of Mary Renault, reading this remarkable survey of ancient Greek history and culture will give you exactly what you need to understand those works better. A couple of years after my class in Greek

history, I gave a copy of this book to my father, an avid reader. He loved the book and told me that it was the best general history he had ever read. I concur and I hope that colleges are still teaching Greek history with this book.

I've got a bookshelf of both new and old Greek history, historical novels, even historical fiction. Nothing even comes close to the information, originality of approach and pure delight in reading than this book. If all my school text books would have been this interesting, I'd be up to my umteenth degree by now and still going strong.

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