

The Classical World - An Epic History from Homer to Hadrian
by Robin Lane Fox. Penguin Allen Lane 2005.

Robin Lane Fox has produced some of the best popular works of ancient history in recent years, and has also been closely involved in the bringing of some stories to life as films. He writes with an easy style that is fact-rich but still easily digestible.

At nearly 700 pages long, *The Classical World* is epic in every sense of the word, as Lane Fox takes the reader on a journey that is heavily influenced by the travels that the Roman emperor Hadrian enjoyed round his dominions from 120 AD/CE onwards. Starting with Homer and the Homeric epic, the journey takes in the art and culture of the Greeks, their many wars, the hegemony of Athens, Alexander the Great and then the rise and fall of the Roman republic, the aftermath of the murder of Julius Caesar and the rise of the Empire.

As many will know, this is a period - some nine hundred years in total - that is rich in individual and incident and Lane Fox admirably breathes life into both. This is an excellent study of a period that continues to exert influence on the modern world and which will be a delight to devotees of the subject as well as an excellent introduction for those approaching it for the first time.

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