



by Raimund Schulz
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Worlds in Upheaval. A Global History of Antiquity

*Welten im Aufbruch. Eine
Globalgeschichte der Antike*

review

'Worlds in Upheaval' is a brilliant work of 'entangled history' that illuminates the connections between historical developments in different areas of Eurasia between 1200 BCE and 300 CE.

Accomplished author Raimund Schulz takes us on an expert tour of the world of antiquity, examining sociopolitical and economic history across different geographical regions, and the role of religion and philosophy during this time. The book follows a chronological structure as it examines evolving modes of societal organisation, from nomadic societies to city states to empires. Schulz points out the fluidity of the boundaries between these categories, however: nomads had sedentary periods, and nomadic life continued into later eras. Schulz includes sections dedicated to specific peoples, including the Scythians and the Hebrews, as well as to specific geographical areas from the Urals to India.

In the second part of the book, the emergence of city states is linked to favourable ecological conditions, the development of inter-regional trade, and the economic activities of aristocratic elites. This section considers Greece, where politics were invented, the maritime cities of the Phoenicians and the Etruscans, and the emergence of cities in India and China. The third section of 'Worlds in Upheaval' focuses on

the formation of empires. In many instances, for example Egypt and Babylon, it was the need for defence that drove the expansion of empires. The goal was to achieve stability, a feat successfully managed by Augustus in Rome and Darius in Persia.

Empires and other political entities play a central role in the fourth part of the book, which is devoted to economics. In ancient societies, there was, Schulz maintains, no trace of today's neo-liberalism. Rulers' desire for wealth, along with the influence of religious institutions, were significant factors in shaping the economy. Key recurring themes in this section include taxation, currency, and the roles of slaves and women. The final topic explored in depth is religion and philosophy. Schulz considers individual religions such as Christianity, Judaism, and Buddhism, as well as broader religious concepts like the transmigration of souls.

Raimund Schulz is a highly knowledgeable historian who writes in a clear and accessible style. 'Worlds in Upheaval' is a timely read in today's challenging geopolitical climate.

Sold in: China, Beijing Science; Spain, Taurus; further offers pending.

Find out more:

<https://www.klett-cotta.de/produkt/raimund-schulz-welten-im-aufbruch-9783608988031-t-8979>

press quotes

A tour de force which displays a great breadth of knowledge and gives original insights into ancient worlds which were interlinked to a remarkable extent.

Stuart Parkes

about the author



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Born in 1962 in Hildesheim, Raimund Schulz teaches Ancient History at the University of Bielefeld. He is a specialist in seafaring, navigation, warfare, dominance and international law in the ancient world. His previous book, *Abenteurer der Ferne* ('Adventurers in Far-Off Lands'), won the 2017 Research Prize for Geography and History, was named Historical Book of the Year 2016 by DAMALS, and was shortlisted for Austria's 2017 Science Book of the Year.

Previous works: *Feldherren, Krieger und Strategen*, Klett-Cotta (2012), *Abenteurer der Ferne*, Klett-Cotta (2016).

Previous translations: *To the Ends of the Earth*, Oxford University Press (2024).

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