



# Everyday Life in Ancient Egypt; Everyday Life in Ancient Rome

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Editorial Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

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The novelty in these books is the use of four plastic overlay pages in each. Some of the overlays are more successful than others and are, perhaps, most enlightening when lifting aside roofs or walls to look at what goes on inside, for example, Roman baths and Egyptian tombs. Otherwise, these books are unremarkable productions. Each title covers a variety of aspects of its subject with an emphasis on social history and gives a good impression of what life was like across the social spectrum. Granted, there is some information that does not routinely appear: consideration of Roman urban apartment blocks and Egyptian village homes; and sections on Italy before the Romans and Predynastic Egypt. But most of what is here can be found in numerous other books.

Nothing is explored in any depth and some topics are treated in such a perfunctory way that you wonder why they are included at all: Roman hypocausts sit in a small diagram scarcely explained, tucked away at the top of a page. There is vagueness about some of the larger illustrations that reconstruct scenes of Roman and Egyptian life. These tableaux are the work of a team of illustrators and generally lack the incidental detail and sense of a lived-in world that you get from the best historical illustration. Why these books bear the imprimatur of the British Museum is a mystery. While they have British authors, they seem to be produced in Italy and have all the marks of off-the-peg international production. There is very little in the way of research paraphernalia: no glossary, bibliography or web resources, only an index.

Running Order:

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