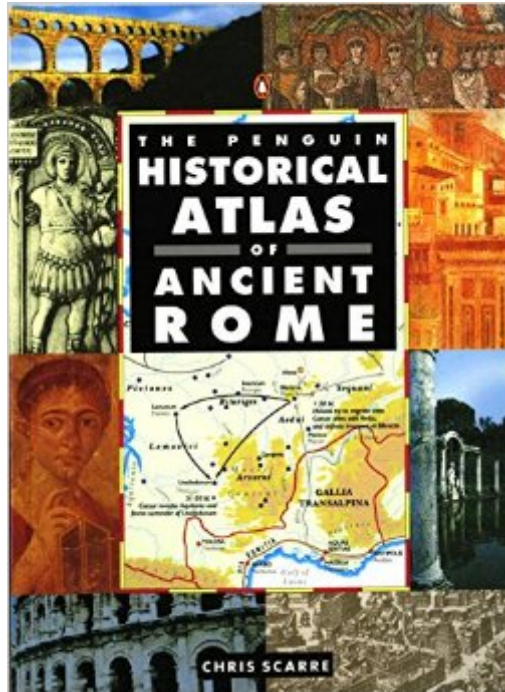


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# The Penguin Historical Atlas Of Ancient Rome (Hist Atlas)



## Synopsis

More than fifteen centuries after its fall, the Roman Empire remains one of the most formative influences on the history of Europe. Its physical remains dot the landscape from Scotland to Syria. Its cities are still the great metropolises of the continent. Its law and institutions have shaped modern practice, and its ideal of a united Europe has haunted politicians ever since. Fully illustrated and featuring more than sixty full-colour maps, this atlas traces the rise and fall of the first great multinational state. It looks at its provinces and cities, its trade and economy, its armies and frontier defences; follows its foreign wars and internecine struggles; and charts its transformation into a Christian theocracy and its fall in 476.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

If you are already familiar with the broad outlines of Roman history and are looking for a visual reference to further your explorations, keep looking. This volume appears to be the outcome of an effort guided primarily by concern for today's short attention spans and budget limitations. The text is adequate enough as the briefest of introductions to its subject, but in fact this is an ATLAS, not a history per se, and its usefulness as such depends on the quality of its maps, which I found sadly disappointing. For one thing, there are surprisingly few maps in this volume. If you are interested in the growth of the city itself, if you hope to trace the movements of particular military campaigns, or if you seek a better understanding of trade routes, you will not find this volume helpful. Only the tired highlights (which can be found in any number of books) are covered. Furthermore, the maps are

small--to the point of silliness--and the editors have in a number of instances alluded to events separated by a wide gulf of years on the same map. This renders even the few maps in the atlas muddled and is sure to confuse rather than inform neophytes, though these would seem to be the primary target audience. On the plus side, the book contains a number of interesting photographs, and the captions to these are surprisingly informative--the best thing about the book. All in all, a great disappointment and a surprising one as I remember Penguin's excellent pocketbook atlases of world history. Unfortunately, the narrowed focus of this Roman atlas was not matched by a corresponding increase in the quality of information offered.

A nice looking book, but as I get into it the need for better editorial work is showing. The battle of Pharsalus is mistakenly placed in Thrace instead of in Thessaly, and two pages later the battle of Philippi is called the battle of Pharsalus! Another reviewer noted that Tacitus is misspelled in the Foreword. This book was published in 1995, so things like this should have been fixed by now. Maybe the rest will be accurate, but so far it does not inspire confidence.

I don't know where these folks got their information, but it is certainly not based in reality. I found a tremendous amount of the information in this book to be downright erroneous. At one point, the book claims that the Emperor Tiberius restored the Temples of Castor and Pollux between the years 6 B.C and 7 A.D. Sad to say, Penguin, but Augustus was Emperor during those years and was responsible for the restoration of the Temple. Bad information, bad typesetting (yes, they've actually used cut and paste - the old fashioned form - in areas to correct mistakes before press time), and sadly inaccurate maps are the highlights of this book. On the plus side ... pretty colors.

I would like to second the comments of Jacques P. Talbot. I bought this book expecting an atlas, that is a book of maps. There are some maps in this book, but they are small and cluttered and I don't really find them useful. The book is mostly pictures and text. It reminds me of that Time-Life series, that is aimed at young people, although this book is not as good as any in that series. The publishers must have changed their mind about what they wanted to do with this book. They should not have put the word "Atlas" on this confused mess. It might be OK as an introduction for people about 14-16 years old, but if you want an atlas with useful maps in it, don't buy this.

This book permits to follow the history of Rome through colorful maps. Visual learner will find great advantage out of this approach. However, this is only an overview and does not add more than that

compared to any other book of ancient Roman history. As a previous reviewer has noticed, the battle of Pharsalus was in Thessaly and not in Thrace as mistakenly placed by the author at page 32. Thrace is mainly in today Bulgaria, but overlaps also Turkey and Greece. Thessaly is in central Greece. However, to give Caesar what is Caesar's, another reviewer allegedly claimed to have discovered a mistake at page 16 related to the Temples of Castor and Pollux. In fact, the Penguin's text is correct: the temples were rebuilt by Tiberius (before he became emperor), under Augustus. Augustus adopted Tiberius, who later became Emperor. The practice of adopting would-be emperors was a pragmatic way to ensure a suitable persona for Rome, instead of a inept natural son. However, the book does not cover the Eastern Roman Empire (lasting for further more centuries) after the fall of the western part. Moreover, the author does not provide useful maps concerning the pressure from barbarians on the borders. Goths were Germanic tribes that moved from the Baltic sea to the Black sea, but this Atlas does not mention it. Why and where the pressure along the borders was mounting is not satisfactorily mentioned either. It is a shame for an historical atlas.

With several dozen books on my shelf regarding Ancient Rome, I often need something akin to an index for all of their combined knowledge: a few paragraphs, a map, or a photo will have me scurrying to the appropriate text (or, of late, an internet link). Of note are the numerous Roman city maps, showing walls, aqueducts, forts, temples, etc. relative to the natural geography.

An excellent little booklet on ancient Rome starting from the initial stages as a city state right up to the decline and fall after 378 AD or so. A superb reference book simply because of its small size and quick clear illustrations with maps and diagrams which display important information extremely well, even the little known fact that Chinese ambassadors visited Rome in the age of Marcus Aurelius is fascinating. The book is full of gems like this. It outlines the trade that took place including the silk route to China and India, the major figures including not only the emperors but also the major proponents of art, history and rhetoric such as Cicero and Tacitus. This is a book intended for a quick summary not an in depth detailed look at a topic as such it does this very well indeed. Highly recommended for a concise history of Rome

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