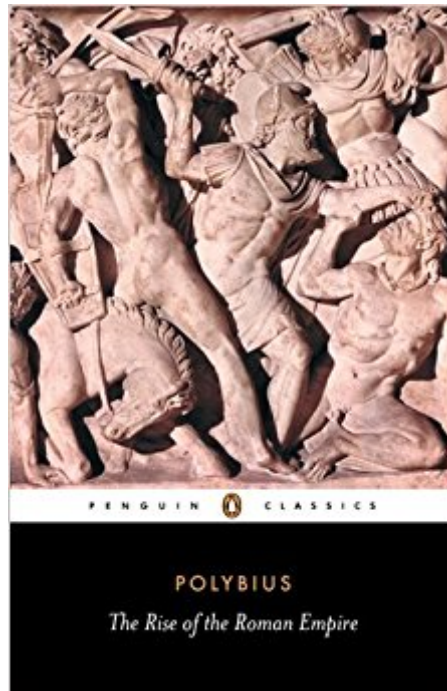




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The Rise Of The Roman Empire (Penguin Classics)



Synopsis

The Greek statesman Polybius (c.200 – c.118 BC) wrote his account of the relentless growth of the Roman Empire in order to help his fellow countrymen understand how their world came to be dominated by Rome. Opening with the Punic War in 264 BC, he vividly records the critical stages of Roman expansion: its campaigns throughout the Mediterranean, the temporary setbacks inflicted by Hannibal and the final destruction of Carthage. An active participant of the politics of his time as well as a friend of many prominent Roman citizens, Polybius drew on many eyewitness accounts in writing this cornerstone work of history. For more than seventy years, Penguin has been the leading publisher of classic literature in the English-speaking world. With more than 1,700 titles, Penguin Classics represents a global bookshelf of the best works throughout history and across genres and disciplines. Readers trust the series to provide authoritative texts enhanced by introductions and notes by distinguished scholars and contemporary authors, as well as up-to-date translations by award-winning translators.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Text: English, Greek (translation)

Polybius (200-118 BC) was a Greek statesman and historian. F.W. Walbank has published numerous works on ancient Greece. Ian Scott-Kilvert has also translated Plutarch's works for

Penguin Classics.

It is simply unacceptable for this important historical work to be so poorly adapted for Kindle:1. Significant spelling mistakes - "die" in place of "the" in multiple locations, just as an example.2. No map - how can the readers read about the Punic Wars without maps of Sicily, Italy, North Africa, etc. At a price almost the same as the paperback, this is an unacceptable poor quality product!!

Rise of the Roman Empire is not really an easy read. Polybus takes himself and his subject matter very seriously and he refuses to let a ray of humor or irony into the work. But, when you think about it, the subject matter is pretty serious, especially considering that the author was born around 200 BC in Megalopolis, Arcadia, which at that time was an active member of the Achaean League (or what most of us call ancient Greece). During Polybus' lifetime, the Romans rose to power over the Greeks and the Carthagians and the author tries to explain how this happened. In fact the name of the book ought to be, "How the Romans Ate Our Lunch and, Damn, They Did a Good Job Doing it!" Polybus gives two reasons why the Romans rose above their rivals to dominate the world: (1) good governance and (2) organization on and off the battlefield. The author lauds the Romans' mixed constitution which he cites as a balance between the three forms of acceptable government: monarchy, aristocracy and democracy. I've read that this had an effect on the US founding fathers. Polybus writes that the Romans had a good balance between checks and balances and efficiency of decision making. Another reason for Roman ascension and dominance given by Polybus is the Romans' ability to focus on a task and to work together to achieve it. This can be said of most great empires and cultures and the inverse can be said of most basket cases. Polybus makes an interesting comment that the Romans were better at land warfare than they were at sea warfare because the Romans could plan and control things better on land. The Romans managed to do OK against Carthage at sea. But, the Romans still did best when they stuck to mother earth. Also of note, was Polybus' smack down on the rival historian Timaeus. Polybus spends a lot of ink telling us readers that Timaeus is a schmuck and that Polybus' rhyme rules. Sure, 'Rise of the Roman Empire' is lacking in humor and irony. However, it provides insight into an important turn in the history of Western civilization that was far from pre-ordained. And we have some good mud slinging to reassure us that the author is human after all.

The book was interesting, easy to read and full of useful information. There is one feature that I found annoying, however. Almost every page had at least one referral to footnotes. Try as I might, I

never managed to access these footnotes. Finally I called a customer service tech. We tried various things without success. Finally the tech said, "I guess we have to admit that this edition DOES NOT HAVE ANY FOOTNOTES. What was then my shock when, on finishing the book today, I saw----low and behold---page after page of FOOTNOTES. Interesting as they are to read now, they are hardly as useful and helpful as they would have been, if they had been accessible WHILE I was reading the text instead of divorced entirely from it. Upshot??? Never again will I buy an academic work on kindle. Half of the information will be unavailable until it is useless.

Ordered a new book, but book had a crease in the binding and was slightly damaged when I received it.

The discription of "Hannibal's War" was vivid and detailed. My unanswered question will always be "was my ancient African ancestor with him as he crossed the Alps"? Later in the book he gave the types of government of states and why they failed, excellent. It is as true today as it was 2000 years ago.

My son is quite the history buff, I bought this book for him and he enjoyed it!

Very informative, focuses on military history and basic governing systems.

For a basic history student, this is a great edition of Polybius's work. The translation is quite readable, and the material seems reasonably well selected. The work is also generally important for the study of ancient Rome. Of course folks should be aware that this is an abridged version, and that Polybius's works have survived only in part. However, unless you need an unabridged edition, this is worth getting and reading.

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