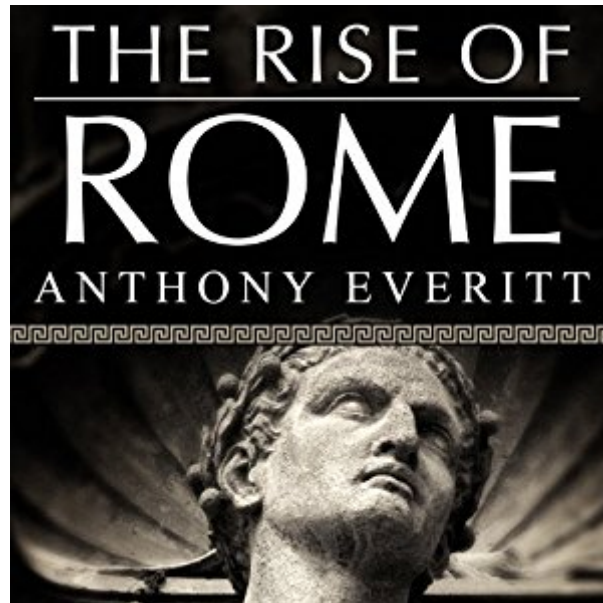


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The Rise Of Rome: The Making Of The World's Greatest Empire



Synopsis

Emerging as a market town from a cluster of hill villages in the eighth and seventh centuries B.C., Rome grew to become the ancient world's preeminent power. Everitt fashions the story of Rome's rise to glory into an erudite book filled with lasting lessons for our time. He chronicles the clash between patricians and plebeians that defined the politics of the Republic. He shows how Rome's shrewd strategy of offering citizenship to her defeated subjects was instrumental in expanding the reach of her burgeoning empire. And he outlines the corrosion of constitutional norms that accompanied Rome's imperial expansion, as old habits of political compromise gave way, leading to violence and civil war. In the end, unimaginable wealth and power corrupted the traditional virtues of the Republic, and Rome was left triumphant everywhere except within its own borders. Everitt paints indelible portraits of the great Romans - and non-Romans - who left their mark on the world out of which the mighty empire grew: Cincinnatus, Rome's George Washington, the very model of the patrician warrior/aristocrat; the brilliant general Scipio Africanus, who turned back a challenge from the Carthaginian legend Hannibal; and Alexander the Great, the invincible Macedonian conqueror who became a role model for generations of would-be Roman rulers. Here also are the intellectual and philosophical leaders whose observations on the art of government and "the good life" have inspired every Western power from antiquity to the present: Cato the Elder, the famously incorruptible statesman who spoke out against the decadence of his times, and Cicero, the consummate orator whose championing of republican institutions put him on a collision course with Julius Caesar and whose writings on justice and liberty continue to inform our political discourse today. Rome's decline and fall have long fascinated historians, but the story of how the empire was won is every bit as compelling. With *The Rise of Rome*, one of our most revered chroniclers of the ancient world tells that tale in a way that will galvanize, inform, and enlighten modern listeners.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is a good book, and a worthwhile acquisition especially if you are -- like me -- a semi-retired amateur/dilettante historian. Having said that, I suppose professionals will enjoy the book too, because it gives a good overview. Readers will certainly fly through it quickly, as it is written without the turgid prose that characterizes academic works. It's also nice to get a good breezy work that treats the rise of Rome, given the myriad of books on the fall of Rome. What makes the book good? Everitt writes for a wide audience, and provides a fine overview of the factors, viewed through the lens of episodes involving key figures, which contributed to the rise of what was essentially a large tribe in the centre of the Italian "peninsula" becoming the hegemon of the immediate region and then later the Mediterranean basin and beyond. Via entertaining and informative narrative portraits, Everitt treats many, but of course not all, aspects of the figures who made Rome. He's strong on the military and institutional aspects and solid on the political, social and ideological (and rhetorical) battles. So what issues do I have with the book? Not too many, other than the superficiality of it: the book, perhaps inevitably, feels rushed. There's a tremendous amount of history covered in it (700+ years), so there are going to be gaps. It's a reliable highlight package. I've given the book 4 stars. Maybe I've been too harsh, though I just don't feel the book merits 5 stars, for the reason stated above. However, Everitt has collected a lot of interesting material (probably in the course of writing his other books) about Rome and Roman ways, he's and he's a good storyteller.

If I were to mention the Roman Empire in any sort of word association context, many people might respond with some variation of "decline and fall of". It seems that every historian or history buff who is at all familiar with the history of the Roman Empire thinks largely in terms of its decline and fall and they all seem to have their favorite theories why the Empire fell; moral decay, economic collapse, climate change, etc. The impression seems to be that Rome was somehow doomed to fail and that the only lessons to learn from Roman history is what great powers ought not to do in order to avoid their own decline and fall. Yet, Rome was an enormously successful state. For almost six hundred years, 146 BC to AD 410, Rome was uncontested ruler of the lands surrounding the Mediterranean, a feat unmatched by any of the many great powers since, and even after the "fall" of

the Empire in 476, the eastern half of the Roman Empire, the so-called Byzantine Empire managed to last for another thousand years. No other, more recent, great power has managed such longevity. Perhaps the question we need to ask about the Roman Empire is not how it fell, but how a small, Italian city-state rose to rule the known world, and how they managed to rule for so long. This is the question which Anthony Everett seeks to answer in "The Rise of Rome". In his book, Everett traces the history of Rome from its legendary, even mythical, beginnings to the generation before the rise of Caesar. Everett recounts the legends of Rome's founder, Romulus, and its kings, the overthrow of Tarquin and the establishment of the Republic, and the wars in which the city fought for its life against its neighbors.

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