The Holy Roman Empire lasted a thousand years, far longer than ancient Rome. Its continuity rested on the ideal of a unified Christian civilization. As Peter Wilson shows, the Empire tells the story of Europe better than histories of individual nation-states, and its legacy can be seen today in debates over the nature of the European Union.

Learn why the Roman Republic collapsed—and how it could have continued to thrive—with this insightful history from an award-winning author. In Mortal Republic, prize-winning historian Edward J. Watts offers a new history of the fall of the Roman Republic that explains why Rome exchanged freedom for autocracy. For centuries, even as Rome grew into the Mediterranean’s premier military and political power, its governing institutions, parliamentary rules, and political customs successfully fostered negotiation and compromise. By the 130s BC, however, Rome’s leaders increasingly used these same tools to cynically pursue individual gain and obstruct their opponents. As the center decayed and dysfunction grew, arguments between politicians gave way to political violence in the streets. The stage was set for destructive civil wars—and ultimately the imperial reign of Augustus. The death of Rome’s Republic was not inevitable. In Mortal Republic, Watts shows it died because it was allowed to, from thousands of small wounds inflicted by Romans who assumed...
The Roman Empire, a very short introduction. Very Short Introductions

that it would last forever. The contribution of the Ancient Greeks to modern western culture is incalculable. In the worlds of art, architecture, myth, literature, and philosophy, the world we live in would be unrecognizably different without the formative influence of Ancient Greek models. Ancient Greek civilization was defined by the city - in Greek, the polis, from which we derive 'politics'. It is above all this feature of Greek civilization that has formed its most enduring legacy, spawning such key terms as aristocracy, oligarchy, tyranny and - last but by no means least - democracy. This highly stimulating introduction to Ancient Greece takes the polis as its starting point. Paul Cartledge uses the history of eleven major Greek cities to illuminate the most important and informative themes in Ancient Greek history, from the first documented use of the Greek language around 1400 BCE, through the glories of the Classical and Hellenistic periods, to the foundation of the Byzantine empire in around CE 330. Covering everything from politics, trade, and travel to slavery, gender, religion, and philosophy, it provides the ideal concise introduction to the history and culture of this remarkable civilization that helped give birth to the world as we know it.

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How devastating viruses, pandemics, and other natural catastrophes swept through the far-flung Roman Empire and helped to bring down one of the mightiest civilizations of the ancient world. Here is the monumental retelling of one of the most consequential chapters of human history: the fall of the Roman Empire. The Fate of Rome is the first book to examine the catastrophic role that climate change and infectious diseases played in the collapse of Rome's power—a story of nature's triumph over human ambition. Interweaving a grand historical narrative with cutting-edge climate science and genetic discoveries, Kyle Harper traces how the fate of Rome was decided not just by emperors, soldiers, and barbarians but also by volcanic eruptions, solar cycles, climate instability, and devastating viruses and bacteria. 

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He takes readers from Rome's pinnacle in the second century, when the empire seemed an invincible superpower, to its unraveling by the seventh century, when Rome was politically fragmented and materially depleted. Harper describes how the Romans were resilient in the face of enormous environmental stress, until the besieged empire could no longer withstand the combined challenges of a "little ice age" and recurrent outbreaks of bubonic plague. A poignant reflection on humanity's intimate relationship with the environment, The Fate of Rome provides a sweeping account of how one of history's greatest civilizations encountered and endured, yet ultimately succumbed to the cumulative burden of nature's violence. The example of Rome is a timely reminder that climate change and germ evolution have shaped the world we inhabit—in ways that are surprising and profound.

The Roman Empire was a remarkable achievement. With a population of sixty million people, it encircled the Mediterranean and stretched from northern England to North Africa and Syria. This Very Short Introduction covers the history of the empire at its height, looking at its people, religions and social structures. It explains how it deployed violence, 'romanisation', and tactical power to develop an astonishingly uniform culture from Rome to its furthest outreaches. Michael Kulikowski traces two hundred years of Roman history during which the Empire became ungovernable and succumbed to turbulence and change. A sweeping political narrative, The Tragedy of Empire tells the story of the Western Roman Empire's downfall, even as the Eastern Empire remained politically strong and culturally vibrant.

Traces the rise of Rome as an unlikely evolution from a market village to the world's most powerful empire, offering insight into its political clashes, military strategies, leading figures, and internal corruptions. This provocative and controversial volume examines the notions of ethnicity, citizenship and nationhood to determine what constituted cultural identity in the Roman empire. The contributors draw together the most recent research and use diverse theoretical and methodological perspectives from archaeology, classical studies and ancient history to challenge our basic assumptions of Romanization and how parts of Europe became incorporated into a Roman culture.

History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire — Volume 1' by historian Edward Gibbon was first published in the year 1776. Through this book, Gibbon offers an explanation for the fall of the Roman Empire, a task made difficult by a lack of comprehensive written sources, though he was not the only historian to attempt the task.
citizenship by the Roman Empire, a soldier named Alaric changed history by unleashing a surprise attack on the capital city of an unjust empire. Stigmatized and relegated to the margins of Roman society, the Goths were violent "barbarians" who destroyed "civilization," at least in the conventional story of Rome's collapse. But a slight shift of perspective brings their history, and ours, shockingly alive. Alaric grew up near the river border that separated Gothic territory from Roman. He survived a border policy that separated migrant children from their parents, and he was denied benefits he likely expected from military service. Romans were deeply conflicted over who should enjoy the privileges of citizenship. They wanted to buttress their global power, but were insecure about Roman identity; they depended on foreign goods, but scoffed at and denied foreigners their own voices and humanity. In stark contrast to the rising bigotry, intolerance, and zealotry among Romans during Alaric's lifetime, the Goths, as practicing Christians, valued religious pluralism and tolerance. The marginalized Goths, marked by history as frightening harbingers of destruction and of the Dark Ages, preserved virtues of the ancient world that we take for granted. The three nights of riots Alaric and the Goths brought to the capital struck fear into the hearts of the powerful, but the riots were not without cause. Combining vivid storytelling and historical analysis, Douglas Boin reveals the Goths' complex and fascinating legacy in shaping our world.

The Roman Empire was a remarkable achievement. It had a population of sixty million people spread across lands encircling the Mediterranean and stretching from drizzle-soaked northern England to the sun-baked banks of the Euphrates in Syria, and from the Rhine to the North African coast. It was, above all else, an empire of force - employing a mixture of violence, suppression, order, and tactical use of power to develop an astonishingly uniform culture. This Very Short Introduction covers the history of the Empire from Augustus (the first Emperor) to Marcus Aurelius, describing how the empire was formed, how it was run, its religions and its social structure. It examines how local cultures were "romanised" and how people in far away lands came to believe in the emperor as a god. The book also examines how the Roman Empire has been considered and depicted in more recent times, from the writings of Edward Gibbon, to the differing attitudes of the Victorians and recent Hollywood blockbuster films.

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In this lively and very readable history of the Roman Empire from its establishment in 27 BC to the barbarian incursions and the fall of Rome in AD 476, Kershaw draws on a range of evidence, from Juvenal's Satires to...
recent archaeological finds. He examines extraordinary personalities such as Caligula and Nero and seismic events such as the conquest of Britain and the establishment of a ‘New Rome’ at Constantinople and the split into eastern and western empires. Along the way we encounter gladiators and charioteers, senators and slaves, fascinating women, bizarre sexual practices and grotesque acts of brutality, often seen through eyes of some of the world’s greatest writers. He concludes with a brief look at how Rome lives on in the contemporary world, in politics, architecture, art and literature.

Offers a secular perspective on the growth of the Christian Church in ancient Rome, identifies nonreligious factors in conversion, and examines the influence of Constantine.

What went wrong in imperial Rome, and how we can avoid it: “If you want to understand where America stands in the world today, read this.” —Thomas E. Ricks

The rise and fall of ancient Rome has been on American minds since the beginning of our republic. Depending on who’s doing the talking, the history of Rome serves as either a triumphal call to action—or a dire warning of imminent collapse. In this “provocative and lively” book, Cullen Murphy points out that today we focus less on the Roman Republic than on the empire that took its place, and reveals a wide array of similarities between the two societies (The New York Times).

Looking at the blinkered, insular culture of our capitals; the debilitating effect of bribery in public life; the paradoxical issue of borders; and the weakening of the body politic through various forms of privatization, Murphy persuasively argues that we most resemble Rome in the burgeoning corruption of our government and in our arrogant ignorance of the world outside—two things that must be changed if we are to avoid Rome’s fate. “Are We Rome? is just about a perfect book. . . . I wish every politician would spend an evening with this book.” —James Fallows

Ammianus Marcellinus was the last great Roman historian, and his writings rank alongside those of Livy and Tacitus. The Later Roman Empire chronicles a period of twenty-five years during Marcellinus’ own lifetime, covering the reigns of Constantius, Julian, Jovian, Valentinian I, and Valens, and providing eyewitness accounts of significant military events including the Battle of Strasbourg and the Goth’s Revolt. Portraying a time of rapid and dramatic change, Marcellinus describes an Empire exhausted by excessive taxation, corruption, the financial ruin of the middle classes and the progressive decline in the morale of the army. In this magisterial depiction of the closing decades of the Roman Empire, we can see the seeds of events that were to lead to the fall of the city, just twenty years after Marcellinus’ death.

Why did Rome fall? Vicious barbarian invasions during the fifth century resulted in the cataclysmic end of the world’s most powerful civilization, and a ‘dark age’ for its conquered peoples. Or did it? The dominant view of this period today is that the ‘fall of Rome’ was a largely peaceful transition to Germanic rule, and the start of a positive cultural
transformation. Bryan Ward-Perkins encourages every reader to think again by reclaiming the drama and violence of the last days of the Roman world, and reminding us of the very real horrors of barbarian occupation. Attacking new sources with relish and making use of a range of contemporary archaeological evidence, he looks at both the wider explanations for the disintegration of the Roman world and also the consequences for the lives of everyday Romans, in a world of economic collapse, marauding barbarians, and the rise of a new religious orthodoxy. He also looks at how and why successive generations have understood this period differently, and why the story is still so significant today.

The rise and fall of the Roman Republic occupies a special place in the history of Western civilization. From humble beginnings on the seven hills beside the Tiber, the city of Rome grew to dominate the ancient Mediterranean. Led by her senatorial aristocracy, Republican armies defeated Carthage and the successor kingdoms of Alexander the Great, and brought the surrounding peoples to east and west into the Roman sphere. Yet the triumph of the Republic was also its tragedy. In this Very Short Introduction, David M. Gwynn provides a fascinating introduction to the history of the Roman Republic and its literary and material sources, bringing to life the culture and society of Republican Rome and its ongoing significance within our modern world.

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A vivid historical account of the social world of Rome as it moved from republic to empire. In 49 B.C., the seven hundred fifth year since the founding of Rome, Julius Caesar crossed a small border river called the Rubicon and plunged Rome into cataclysmic civil war. Tom Holland's enthralling account tells the story of Caesar's generation, witness to the twilight of the Republic and its bloody transformation into an empire. From Cicero, Spartacus, and Brutus, to Cleopatra, Virgil, and Augustus, here are some of the most legendary figures in history brought thrillingly to life. Combining verve and freshness with scrupulous scholarship, Rubicon is not only an engrossing history of this pivotal era but a uniquely resonant portrait of a great civilization in all its extremes of self-sacrifice and rivalry, decadence and catastrophe, intrigue, war, and world-shaking ambition.

Traces the five-hundred year history and wide-ranging influence of the Roman historian's unflattering book about the ancient Germans that was eventually extolled by the Nazis as a bible. An in-depth look at the first chapter of Ancient Roman history, this book takes a personal and compelling approach that makes the already rich story of Ancient Rome that much more engaging. "The Rise and Fall of the Roman Kingdom" takes the reader from the mythical earliest
Explore the unique mix of legend and truth that defines the early kings of Rome and learn about the first steps Rome took toward Republic and eventual Empire. This book makes history relevant and entertaining, and is a must-read for any fan of the ancient world. Follow the rest of the story of Rome with the second and third books in this trilogy, "The Rise and Fall of the Roman Republic" and "The Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire." Arguably the greatest Empire to ever exist, Rome has indelibly left a significant mark on the modern world. The posthumous influence of the Roman Republic and Empire have no equal in all of history. Their varied culture, stunning art, brilliant philosophy, and towering architecture is embedded in our modern world. Roman innovation has left behind a legacy that has remained admired and emulated for over a thousand years. They built massive networks of roads before the birth of Christ. They constructed elaborate public sewer systems over 1,500 years before the United States became a Nation, and had networks of aqueducts bringing running water. Their tactics in battle are still studied by historians and military leaders of today. Their history is filled with great conflicts, compelling love stories, and the most treacherous of leaders. Hollywood has explored their culture time and again on the silver screen. Larger than life commanders like Julius Caesar would help shape their ultimate destiny. In his book entitled The Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire: Life, Liberty, and the Death of the Republic author Barry Linton highlights and explains the significant struggles and contributions that have made Rome so well known. Join us as we explore the meteoric rise, monumental life, inevitable death, and eventual rebirth of Rome.

An investigation of the America-Rome analogy that goes deeper than the facile comparisons made on talk shows and in glossy magazine articles. America's post–Cold War strategic dominance and its pre-recession affluence inspired pundits to make celebratory comparisons to ancient Rome at its most powerful. Now, with America no longer perceived as invulnerable, engaged in protracted fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan, and suffering the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression, comparisons are to the bloated, decadent, ineffectual later Empire. In Why America Is Not a New Rome, Vaclav Smil looks at these comparisons in detail, going deeper than the facile analogy-making of talk shows and glossy magazine articles. He finds profound differences. Smil, a scientist and a lifelong student of Roman history, focuses on several fundamental concerns: the very meaning of empire; the actual extent and nature of Roman and American power; the role of knowledge and innovation; and demographic and economic basics—population dynamics, illness, death, wealth, and misery. America is not a latter-day Rome, Smil finds, and we need to understand this in order to look ahead without the burden of counterproductive analogies. Superficial similarities do not imply long-term
The gripping story of how the end of the Roman Empire was the beginning of the modern world. The fall of the Roman Empire has long been considered one of the greatest disasters in history. But in this groundbreaking book, Walter Scheidel argues that Rome's dramatic collapse was actually the best thing that ever happened, clearing the path for Europe's economic rise and the creation of the modern age. Ranging across the entire premodern world, Escape from Rome offers new answers to some of the biggest questions in history: Why did the Roman Empire appear? Why did nothing like it ever return to Europe? And, above all, why did Europeans come to dominate the world? In an absorbing narrative that begins with ancient Rome but stretches far beyond it, from Byzantium to China and from Genghis Khan to Napoleon, Scheidel shows how the demise of Rome and the enduring failure of empire-building on European soil launched an economic transformation that changed the continent and ultimately the world.

Gibbon offers an explanation for why the Roman Empire fell, a task made difficult by a lack of comprehensive written sources, though he was not the only historian to tackle the subject. Most of his ideas are directly taken from what few relevant records were available: those of the Roman moralists of the 4th and 5th centuries. As this book intriguingly explores, for those who would make Rome great again and their victims, ideas of Roman decline and renewal have had a long and violent history.

The decline of Rome has been a constant source of discussion for more than 2200 years. Everyone from American journalists in the twenty-first century AD to Roman politicians at the turn of the third century BC have used it as a tool to illustrate the negative consequences of changes in their world. Because Roman history is so long, it provides a buffet of ready-made stories of decline that can help develop the context around any snapshot. And Rome did, in fact, decline and, eventually, fall. An empire that once controlled all or part of more than 40 modern European, Asian, and African countries no longer exists. Roman prophets of decline were, ultimately, proven correct—a fact that makes their modern invocations all the more powerful. If it happened then, it could happen now. The Eternal Decline and Fall of Rome tells the stories of the people who built their political and literary careers around promises of Roman renewal as well as those of the victims they blamed for causing Rome's decline. Each chapter offers the historical context necessary to understand a moment or a series of moments in which Romans, aspiring Romans, and non-Romans used ideas of Roman decline and restoration to seize power and remake the world around them. The story begins during the Roman Republic just after 200 BC. It proceeds through the empire of Augustus and his successors, traces the Roman loss of much of western Europe in the fifth century AD, and then follows Roman history as it runs through the Eastern Roman Empire (Byzantium) until its fall in 1453.
The final two chapters look at ideas of Roman decline and renewal from the fifteenth century until today. If Rome illustrates the profound danger of the rhetoric of decline, it also demonstrates the rehabilitative potential of a rhetoric that focuses on collaborative restoration, a lesson of great relevance to our world today. Written by one of the foremost historians of the Roman Empire, this collection of both new and previously published essays forms a colorful picture of daily life in the Mediterranean world between A.D. 50 and 450. Here, for example, the author applies statistical analysis to broad groups of people on matters ranging from justice through medicine to language. In so doing he is able to substantiate general statements about routines in ordinary people's behavior and to detect within these routines the very changes that constitute history. Such analysis also shows how this era benefits from the same historiographical approaches that have so successfully elucidated sociocultural phenomena in other periods. Drawing from statistical analysis and many other historical approaches, these essays on popular mores in the Roman Empire cover such topics as language and art, acculturation, thought and religion, sex and gender, cruelty and slavery, and aspects of class and power relations. The author introduces the collection with several essays on historical method, as it pertains to the richness of documentation and variety to be found in the region and period chosen. Ramsay MacMullen is Dunham Professor of History and Classics at Yale University. The most recent of his many books include Corruption and the Decline of Rome and Christianizing the Roman Empire: A.D. 100-400, both published by Yale. Originally published in 1990. The Princeton Legacy Library uses the latest print-on-demand technology to again make available previously out-of-print books from the distinguished backlist of Princeton University Press. These editions preserve the original texts of these important books while presenting them in durable paperback and hardcover editions. The goal of the Princeton Legacy Library is to vastly increase access to the rich scholarly heritage found in the thousands of books published by Princeton University Press since its founding in 1905. The very idea of empire was created in ancient Rome and even today traces of its monuments, literature, and institutions can be found across Europe, the Near East, and North Africa—and sometimes even further afield. In Rome, historian Greg Woolf expertly recounts how this mammoth empire was created, how it was sustained in crisis, and how it shaped the world of its rulers and subjects—a story spanning a millennium and a half of history. The personalities and events of Roman history have become part of the West's cultural lexicon, and Woolf provides brilliant retellings of each of these, from the war with Carthage to Octavian's victory over Cleopatra, from the height of territorial expansion under the emperors Trajan and Hadrian to the founding of Constantinople and the barbarian invasions which resulted in Rome's ultimate collapse. Throughout
Woolf carefully considers the conditions that made Rome's success possible and so durable, covering topics as diverse as ecology, slavery, and religion. Woolf also compares Rome to other ancient empires and to its many later imitators, bringing into vivid relief the Empire's most distinctive and enduring features. As Woolf demonstrates, nobody ever planned to create a state that would last more than a millennium and a half, yet Rome was able, in the end, to survive barbarian migrations, economic collapse and even the conflicts between a series of world religions that had grown up within its borders, in the process generating an image and a myth of empire that is apparently indestructible. Based on new research and compellingly told, this sweeping account promises to eclipse all previously published histories of the empire.

There are, to be sure, hundreds if not thousands of books on the Roman Empire. A book on every emperor, a book on every century, a book on every battle or assassination, a book on every meal enjoyed by every despotic Caesar. The Roman Empire has been the subject of countless tomes and innumerable movies. Why, then, should you take another look? Because—to be blunt—the books tend to be bloated and the movies interminable. A quick scan of the particulars reveals that books on the Roman Empire are undeniably plentiful—and undeniably long. Before a reader has gotten much past Romulus and Remus, the very length of the book becomes a distraction. The reader is only a few pages into the history and already dreading the monumental amount of time that will be required to finish it. The book is set aside in frustration.

The Roman Empire: The Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire lets you avoid all of that. Instead of snooze-inducing, micro-detailed accounts of what Hannibal's rear guard soldiers had for lunch two days before leaving Carthage for Italy, you'll get only the pertinent details of the Roman Empire's existence. No extraneous details, no bloat. This is history as it's meant to be written: factual, concise, informative, and entertaining.

Unlike the ancient world of Rome, the modern world moves very fast. Your time is valuable, as is your interest in the world around you. The Roman Empire: The Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire allows you to satisfy both needs. Accessibly written and easily digestible in small bites, you'll get your fill of the Roman Empire's smorgasbord of characters and events. You already know, if vaguely, some of the characters: Julius Caesar, Nero, Constantine. Prepare to meet many more. Prepare to be surprised. History is seldom predictable, and no history is less predictable than that of the Roman Empire.

Voltaire's description of the Holy Roman Empire as 'neither holy, nor Roman, nor an empire' is often cited to underline its worthlessness. German historians traditionally despised it because it had allegedly impeded German unification. Since 1945 scholars have been more positive but the empire's history and significance is still largely misunderstood. In this Very Short Introduction Joachim Whaley outlines the fascinating thousand-year history of
the Holy Roman Empire. Founded in 800 on the basis of Charlemagne's Frankish kingdom, its imperial title went to the German monarchy which became established in the ninth and ten centuries. They claimed Charlemagne's legacy, including his role as protector of the papacy and guardian of the Church. Around 1500 the title Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation was adopted. An elective monarchy, the empire gradually developed from a feudal monarchy into a legal system that pacified the territories and cities of German-speaking Europe. By 1519 it had a supreme court and a regional enforcement system ended feuding. Throughout its lifetime, the empire's growth and history was shaped by the major developments in Europe, from the Reformation, to the Thirty Years War, to the French revolutionary wars, which led to Napoleon destroying the empire in 1806. The sense of a common history over a thousand years and the legal traditions established by the empire have shaped the history of German-speaking Europe ever since. Joachim Whaley analyses the empire's crucial impact and role in the history of European power and politics, and shows that there has never been a more durable political system in German history. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.
Roman Empire

A Very Short Introduction

Very Short Introductions

Roman Empire from one of our foremost classicists shows why Rome remains “relevant to people many centuries later” (Atlantic). In SPQR, an instant classic, Mary Beard narrates the history of Rome “with passion and without technical jargon” and demonstrates how “a slightly shabby Iron Age village” rose to become the “undisputed hegemon of the Mediterranean” (Wall Street Journal). Hailed by critics as animating “the grand sweep and the intimate details that bring the distant past vividly to life” (Economist) in a way that makes “your hair stand on end” (Christian Science Monitor) and spanning nearly a thousand years of history, this “highly informative, highly readable” (Dallas Morning News) work examines not just how we think of ancient Rome but challenges the comfortable historical perspectives that have existed for centuries. With its nuanced attention to class, democratic struggles, and the lives of entire groups of people omitted from the historical narrative for centuries, SPQR will shape our view of Roman history for decades to come.

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barbarians, strengthened by centuries of contact with Rome on many levels, turned into an enemy capable of overturning and dismantling the mighty Empire. A definitive history of the great commanders of ancient Rome, from bestselling author Adrian Goldsworthy. “In his elegantly accessible style, Goldsworthy offers gripping and swiftly erudite accounts of Roman wars and the great captains who fought them. His heroes are never flavorless and generic, but magnificently Roman. And it is especially Goldsworthy’s vision of commanders deftly surfing the giant, irresistible waves of Roman military tradition, while navigating the floating logs, reefs, and treacherous sandbanks of Roman civilian politics, that makes the book indispensable not only to those interested in Rome and her battles, but to anyone who finds it astounding that military men, at once driven and imperiled by the odd and idiosyncratic ways of their societies, can accomplish great deeds.” —J. E. Lendon, author of Soldiers and Ghosts: A History of Battle in Classical Antiquity
Analyses the origins and nature of the Roman empire, and its continuing influence in discussions and debates about modern imperialism.

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