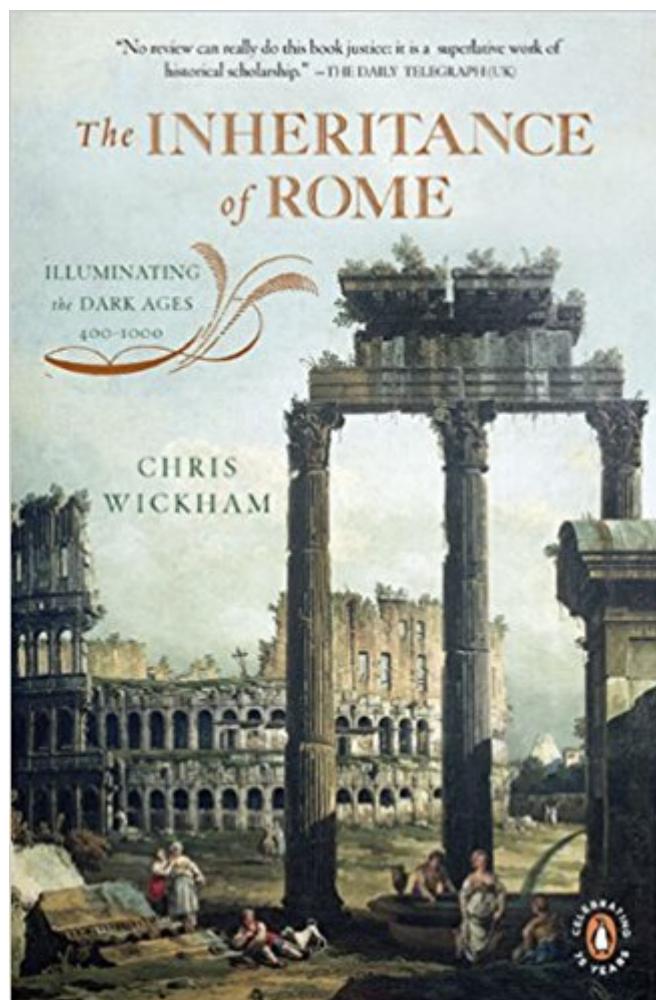


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The Inheritance Of Rome: Illuminating The Dark Ages 400-1000 (The Penguin History Of Europe)



Synopsis

"The breath Â of reading is astounding, the knowledge displayed is awe-inspiring and the attention quietly given to critical theory and the postmodern questioning of evidence is both careful and sincere."--The Daily Telegraph (UK)"A superlative work of historical scholarship."--Literary Review (UK)A unique and enlightening look at Europe's so-called Dark Ages; the second volume in the Penguin History of Europe Defying the conventional Dark Ages view of European history between A.D. 400 and 1000, award-winning historian Chris Wickham presents The Inheritance of Rome, a work of remarkable scope and rigorous yet accessible scholarship. Drawing on a wealth of new material and featuring a thoughtful synthesis of historical and archaeological approaches, Wickham argues that these centuries were critical in the formulation of European identity. From Ireland to Constantinople, the Baltic to the Mediterranean, the narrative constructs a vivid portrait of the vast and varied world of Goths, Franks, Vandals, Arabs, Saxons, and Vikings. Groundbreaking and full of fascinating revelations, The Inheritance of Rome offers a fresh understanding of the crucible in which Europe would ultimately be created.

Book Information

Series: The Penguin History of Europe

Paperback: 688 pages

Publisher: Penguin Books; Reprint edition (August 3, 2010)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0143117424

ISBN-13: 978-0143117421

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 1.4 x 8.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.6 out of 5 stars 66 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #58,207 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #33 inÂ Books > History > Europe > Italy #79 inÂ Books > History > Ancient Civilizations > Rome #113 inÂ Books > Textbooks > Humanities > History > Ancient

Customer Reviews

Starred Review. Building on the foundation he laid in *Framing the Early Middle Ages*, award-winning Oxford historian Wickham constructs a magisterial narrative of the political, economic, cultural and religious fabrics that constituted the crazy quilt of Europe's Dark Ages. Negating what he calls a common teleological view of this period as the source of European nations and a modern sense of

European identity, he draws on archeological evidence and rich historiographical methods Wickham challenges standard views of the early Middle Ages as barbarous and bereft of political and cultural structure, and recreates a stunning portrait of the breakup of the Roman Empire and its consequences for Europe. Wickham looks at the immediate post-Roman polities in Gaul, Spain and Italy; the history of Byzantium, the Arab caliphate and its 10th-century successor states, including Muslim Spain; the Carolingian Empire and its successors and imitators, notably Russia and Scotland. Under this narrative layer lies a focus on the accumulation of wealth, the institutionalization of politics and the culture of the public. Wickham's achievement contributes richly to our picture of this often narrowly understood period. Maps, illus. (Aug. 3) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Just as astronomers no longer call Pluto a planet and paleontologists no longer recognize the Brontosaurus, historians have stopped referring to the European era from A.D. 400 to 1000 as the Dark Ages. The latest scholarship, Wickham explains, has made it possible to look at the period "without hindsight," without moral judgments, grand theories, or modern nationalist myths. The result sounds like a historiographical stunt: a single volume that, using only a slender and unreliable documentary record and no narrative crutches, covers six centuries and at least seven major rival powers. Wickham largely pulls it off. His wide net catches some striking comparisons: apparently, all early medieval societies used coins except Ireland, "where valuations were in slave women and cows." If anything, Wickham is too careful, reluctant to draw conclusions about an epoch that, no matter what new discoveries are made, will likely remain in partial eclipse. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Informative ... too much so. It was too academic for my taste.

Chris Wickham's *The Inheritance of Rome* takes a look at Europe from just before the Fall of the Roman Empire to just before the Norman conquest of England. In doing so, Wikham has shed light on an era of history largely treated as empty, or devoid of any progress, or as simply the inevitable darkness before the light of the Renaissance. The book is strong as it does not repeat the traditional historian error of treating historical events as inevitable but instead as consequences arising from actions and reactions by the actors of the time. Wickham's strengths is in his organization, research, and ability to keep a cogent and flowing narrative. This is not light reading but it also not terse or

hyper-technical. If there is one criticism of this book is that at times Wickham indulges on issues a bit too long (as his treatment of the Iconoclasts in Byzantium and the structure of villages in Northern Europe) but the sheer amount of information and explanation of what this all to misunderstood era was all about more than makes up for these digressions.

An excellent book! Very comprehensive in its approach to cross-societal developments in the post-Roman world, including the rise of the doctrinally muddled Islamic world and its secondary influence as a hostile force to the West. The book enlightens the reader to the nature of society and government after the decline of the western Roman empire and the continuing influence of the Eastern Roman, or Byzantine, empire and the enormous importance of the Christian Church as a source of continuity and cohesion for an otherwise potentially chaotic Europe. The author treats the subject in a scholarly and objective manner and provides the reader with a keen insight into the not-so-Dark Ages. One leaves the book with a much deeper understanding of Western civilization, its development, depth, strength, and place in today's world.

Very well researched, but a slow read.

Having studied Latin and Renaissance English literature for ten years, I needed to bridge the gap between the two cultures. This is an informative and focused look at the early Middle Ages that oscillates nicely among the attested literature, archaeology, and psycho-social extrapolations therefrom. One note of critique--the author has a stylistically annoying habit of self-reference that is not very helpful: "As we shall see in Chapter 7," "As of course you saw in Chapter 2" etc etc.

So what happened to the western half of the Roman Empire after it fell? Who were the people who moved into what is now France, Spain, Portugal, Italy, and Britain? What were they like? What are their stories? If you want the answers to these questions, buy this book and you will have all the answers. It is a great book for those who love reading about the Dark Ages and the different people who inhabited them.

Terrific overview that illustrates how deeply local conditions and events affected social developments in the various places that had once been part of the Roman Empire. A very good read for people like me who don't have the kind of familiarity with the period that we may have with the centuries preceding the splintering of the Empire in the West and the era of the Crusades.

I am in the 2nd or 3rd reading, and I appreciate this book more and more. Between the 1st and the 3rd, I have read several other books on this subject. I believe the author gives the reader a thoughtful, unbiased and honest analysis of "the dark ages"

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