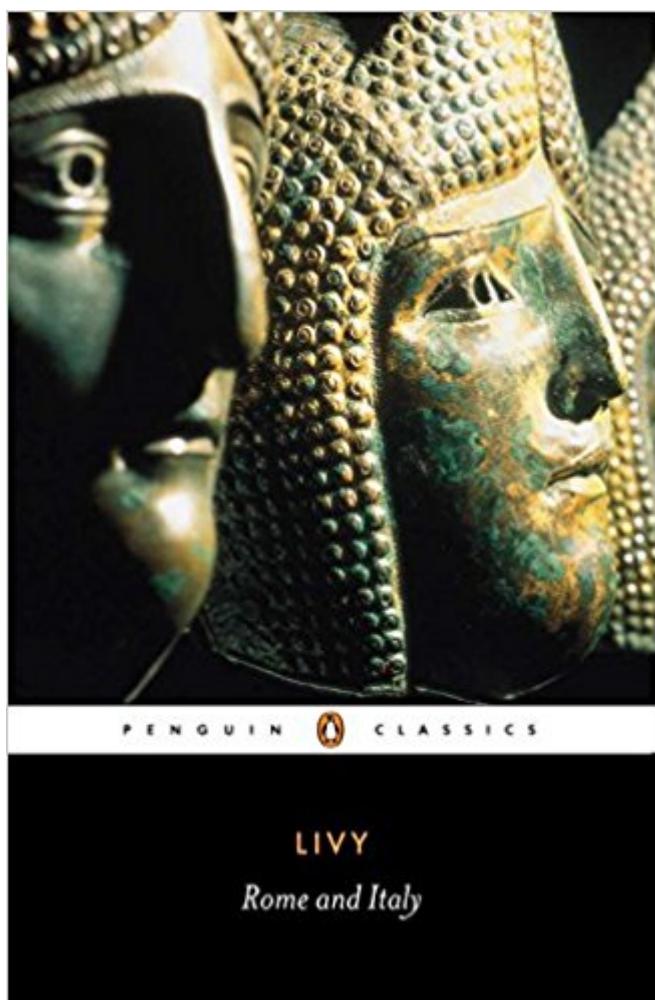


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Rome And Italy: Books VI-X Of The History Of Rome From Its Foundation (Penguin Classics) (Bks.6-10)



Synopsis

Books VI-X of Livy's monumental work trace Rome's fortunes from its near collapse after defeat by the Gauls in 386 BC to its emergence, in a matter of decades, as the premier power in Italy, having conquered the city-state of Samnium in 293 BC. In this fascinating history, events are described not simply in terms of partisan politics, but through colourful portraits that bring the strengths, weaknesses and motives of leading figures such as the noble statesman Camillus and the corrupt Manlius vividly to life. While Rome's greatest chronicler intended his history to be a memorial to former glory, he also had more didactic aimsâ "hoping that readers of his account could learn from the past ills and virtues of the city. For more than seventy years, Penguin has been the leading publisher of classic literature in the English-speaking world. With more than 1,700Â titles, Penguin Classics represents a global bookshelf of the best works throughout history and across genres and disciplines. Readers trust theÂ series to provide authoritative texts enhanced by introductions and notes by distinguished scholars and contemporary authors, as well as up-to-dateÂ translations by award-winning translators.

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Customer Reviews

Text: English, Latin

Titus LiviusÂ (59 BC-AD 17)Â began working on his History of Rome at the age of 30 and continued for over 40 years until his death. The history ran to 142 books, of which 35 survive.Betty

Radice (1912-1985) read classics at Oxford, then married and, in the intervals of bringing up a family, tutored in classics, philosophy and English. She became joint editor of the Penguin Classics in 1964. As well as editing the translation of Livy's The War with Hannibal she translated Livy's Rome and Italy, Pliny's Letters, The Letters of Abelard and Heloise and Erasmus's Praise of Folly, and also wrote the introduction to Horace's Complete Odes and Epodes, all for the Penguin Classics. She also edited Edward Gibbon's Memoirs of My Life for the Penguin English Library, and edited and annotated her translation of the younger Pliny's works for the Loeb Library of Classics and translated from Renaissance Latin, Greek and Italian for the Officina Bodoni of Verona. She collaborated as a translator in the Collected Works of Erasmus, and was the author of the Penguin Reference Book Who's Who in the Ancient World. Radice was an honorary fellow of St Hilda's College, Oxford, and a vice-president of the Classical Association.

As the other reviewer's have noted this is one of the classics of the Western literary and historical tradition. It also should have a special place in the hearts of Americans in that the Founders relied heavily for their historical knowledge of the ancient Roman and Greek republics on Livy, Polybius and Plutarch. Anyone who has read Farrand's The Records of the Federal Convention of 1787 or The Federalist knows how much the debates on the writing and ratification of our constitution were based on a reading of those three authors among others. Furthermore, as Michael Neulander points out, Machiavelli's Discourses is based on his reading of Livy. Leo Strauss' reading of Machiavelli is based on his close reading of both Machiavelli and Livy. My point is simple- Livy speaks to us to this day on issues of moral education, individual striving for excellence and virtue and on "the war of the orders" (what we today would call class struggle). Livy is thus one of our oldest resources for political theory. Livy has several purposes. He wants to hold up to the Romans of his own day the glorious virtues of their ancestors. He wants to show how the Romans by sticking to their piety and to their ancestral way of life overcame an unimaginable horde of enemies. When they strayed from their piety and their virtues they met with terrible reverses (see for example, his explanation for the sacking of Rome by the Gauls in The Early History of Rome, the first volume of the Penguin edition of Livy's history). In this volume, read the final section for Book X for Livy's contrast of the bizarre rituals of the Samnites to the auspices of the Romans before the climatic battles of The Third Samnite War (starting around p. 345 of the Penguin, chapter 40 of Book X if you have another edition). So, yes, he writes as a moralist, at times as a hagiographer, at times as a cultural imperialist (or as a patriot, your choice). But one of the really fascinating things about Livy is the way he

struggles toward something like a modern historical methodology. The events of this volume go from 389 to 292 B.C. In other words, 250+ years or more separate Livy from the events of his history. Thus he relied entirely on source material; earlier histories by Fabius Pictor and Polybius, family records, lists of consuls, praetors, the writings of antiquarians, and inscriptions on buildings and monuments. Much of the material was unreliable and Livy knew it as such. Toward the latter books of this volume, it is obvious that he struggled to evaluate different versions of the same events for accuracy. He frequently reports multiple accounts of the same events and states which one he believes. Two final thoughts- one dealing with the differences between Livy and Polybius and one dealing with my reaction to this era in Roman history. Livy had absorbed Polybius. They are telling the same story but with very different purposes. Polybius was a cultured observant Greek looking at the rise of Rome from what he felt was a culturally and, perhaps, morally superior tradition. As a soldier and a politician, he is impressed with what the Romans have done. However Polybius is a little staggered at the human cost. This is not a problem for Livy. He writes as one who is afraid that his contemporary Romans were falling from their place in history. A place that had been purchased in blood. To read both Polybius and Livy is thus to read many of the same events presented with very subtle differences in tone. It is a fascinating education. One of my other main reactions to Livy is a sort of shock. Roman history is bloody, to an extent I had never imagined. To read the first decade of Livy (the first two volumes of the Penguin edition) is to read a story of almost continual warfare. The Greeks might go forty or fifty years in between wars. I don't think the Romans (on the basis of Livy and Polybius) went four or five years without being involved in a war. They are presented as continually preparing for war, as defending their territories or marching through and laying waste to their enemies. Their patrician class is also presented as among the first to have mastered the art of distracting the lower classes with foreign wars. Finally, I would be remiss if I did not praise Penguin Classics for this edition. They present the history in full, with maps and annotations and useful introductions. One of the reviewers finds the translation stuffy. He should try the Loeb. He might change his mind. As for me, I find this version a very enjoyable read. I can hardly recommend Livy highly enough whether from a literary or a historical or a political theory point of view. Of how many books, can that be said?

Sorry Livy, these ten books were a bit boring and pretty repetitive. Basically constant wars with Rome's neighbors. The first five books are definitely a more fun read. Of course these books are priceless and the fact that we have them is amazing. This translation is very readable.

The second five books of Livy's history of Rome from its foundations are epic and inspiring. The magic of Livy is only greater in the 1st five books, where the mythology and Livy's admiration for the characters are greater. The 6th book begins at a time when Rome was still just a single city, though a powerful and feared one, with a few allies and many treacherous enemies constantly watching for their opportunity to attack. Livy paints a picture of Rome's victories that shows that intelligence and fairness are the keys to military success, while Rome's enemies' treachery and ham-fisted strategies can only lead to failure. The epic story of Rome is still very fresh and riveting in books VI-X. Anyone who read and enjoyed the first five books should gain a similar joy from reading the next five. I am currently reading Gibbon's unabridged History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, and though I'm only a chapter or two into it it seems clear that it won't hold a candle to Livy for sheer epic excitement. Though I could be wrong.

The earliest written histories belong to Egypt, but it's Italy's expanding Roman empire that usually sparks the most interest because of its sheer size. They were said to have brought civilization with their roads, aqueducts, baths, and soldiers. The Hellenization of the world with the spread of Greek philosophy influenced the Romans whose system was then adopted by both European and US government's (are based on Roman law). I wanted to try different authors who were describing their own time period (first-hand accounts) but had poor sources for early time periods. Fighting Latins to conquer Italy

Like the Early History of Rome (Books 1-5), I thought this was a good edition. The translation is reasonably accessible and the work important. In it one learns of a number of episodic tales (perhaps garnered from folklore by Livy?) recounting wars with Gauls, Sabines, etc. and the advancement of Roman military tactics along with the usual politics, intrigue, and moral stories one is used to finding from Livy. This is a fine edition. It is not quite as important as the Early History but it is important nonetheless and this translation is as good as any.

Maps were not very good, but in general it was a good competent translation.

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