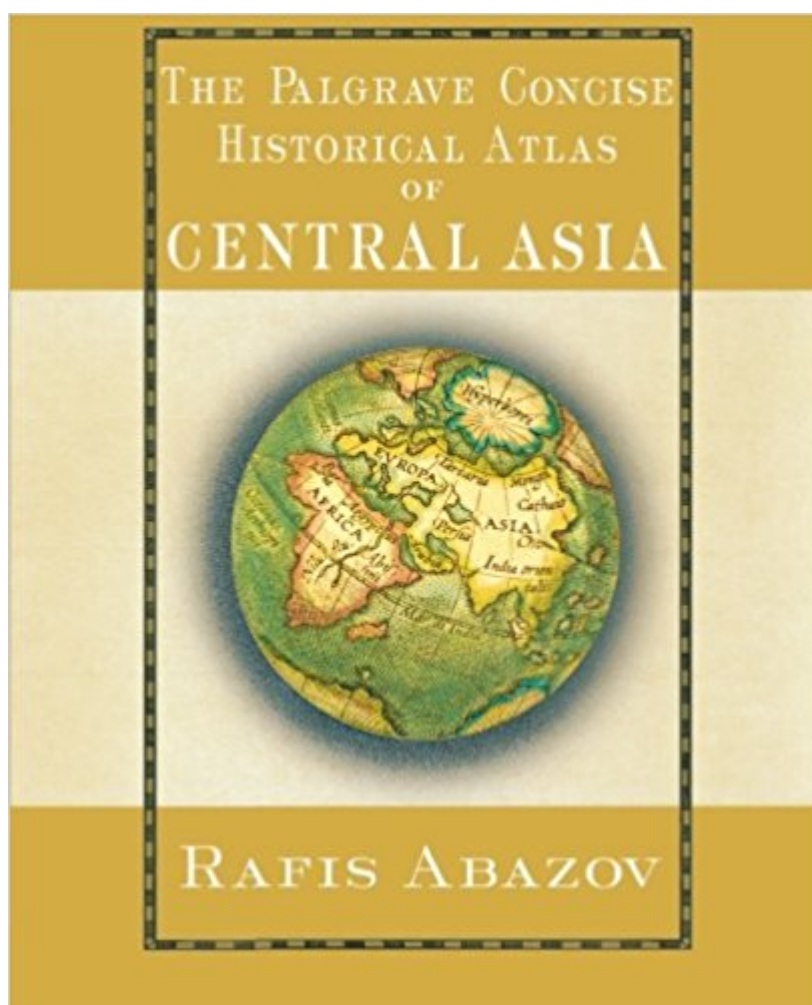


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Palgrave Concise Historical Atlas Of Central Asia (Palgrave Concise Historical Atlases)



Synopsis

This atlas graphically illuminates the region's history tracing back to the 8th-7th century B.C. From the spread of Islam to the invasion of the Mongols, the area has been at the crossroads of some of the world's most important developments, all succinctly explained in this book.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

'The atlas serves as a useful reference, valuable for its clarity and wealth of information.' -

www.museo-on.com '...as a cheap, up to date, nearly pocket-sized guide to a little-known area of enormous geopolitical importance, this book is unrivalled. It seems to me that most public reference libraries, and academic libraries catering for courses in geography, history, politics or international relations, ought to consider it for acquisition.' - Martin Guha, Reference Reviews '...contains a wealth of clear and easily accessible information; it is a bold attempt to describe and graphically illustrate the history of a complex region and the author is to be warmly congratulated for it. The paperback atlas is an affordable and worthy addition to any library.' Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society

Rafis Abazov is an adjunct professor at the Harriman Institute, Columbia University. He worked as a Central Asian regional analyst for Moscow-based news agencies and newspapers and contributed annual analytical reports on Central Asia to various international analytical research centers, including the Freedom House and Transition-on-Line. He has published three books, including

Historical Dictionary of Kyrgyzstan and Historical Dictionary of Turkmenistan and contributed a number of articles to edited volumes, including about 50 articles to various encyclopedias.

I used this book for a course and it was a real disappointment. The capsule summaries of historical events are actually pretty useful, but the maps are inexcusably bad. In most cases, they use the same rather small map, with a few little patches of various shades of green showing various regions occupied by this or that political region - a ten year-old with a paint program could have done better. In many cases, the relevant information occupies a tenth or less of the map, and features and names on the map are too small to be read without magnification. In the electronic version, which I also have, magnification just reveals a blur of pixels. I found the capsule summaries useful, but I mostly just used the maps to look up better quality ones on the internet.

I recently misplaced my previous historical atlas. I bought this as a reference for when I'm reading histories or historical fiction (not for professional work). I was disappointed by this atlas - for my purposes. The maps are only two-color, so they're a bit less enjoyable to view, although that doesn't impact the content. Most of the maps cover the same area - from Tsaritsyn to Ust-Kamnogorsk and Herat to Tobolok. This is fine if you're interested only in the history happening within that region. But I like a historical atlas that shows areas in the context of the times. For example, the map for 13th century Mongol rule does a nice job of showing the Uluses within the map area, and describing the disputes between the Uluses. I found the text the most detailed and helpful of the atlases I've tried. However, it doesn't have a larger map showing the uluses that surround the map area - the Ulus of Tolui (Mongolia) or the Ulus of Odygei (China under Kublai Khan); and it only shows truncated pieces of the Batu Empire, which stretched all the way to what is now the Ukraine, and the Ulus of Hulegu that included what is now Iraq, Azerbaijan, and Georgia. Without the larger map, it is hard to grasp just how large these Mongol empires were, and how central Asia is where they all came together. The text actually discusses these other Uluses, but the lack of a map showing them in context is unfortunate. I also purchased the Rand McNally historical atlas (pretty maps, no text at all!, huge gaps between maps). The Palgrave is far better for understanding the context. The maps in RM do a better job of showing the context, but without an additional text like the Palgrave, you wouldn't know what was happening within their pretty map. I also bit the bullet and bought the Times Complete History of the World. This has lots of maps, plus text. The text is not as thorough as the Palgrave for the Mongol Empire. A small map shows the extent of the empires much better; the big map (9"x14") shows the tribal groups throughout Asia; and a smaller map shows the Mongol

incursions into Europe. I should probably give this 5 stars because it really is good quality, but for my purposes, it just misses the mark a bit.

I've always been a big proponent of the idea that if you want to get to know a region of the world in good order and with a solid understanding, you need to know the history and geography in full context with each other. In that light, and in my current zeal to better understand the nations of Central Asia (the "Stans"), I picked up the "Palgrave Concise Historical Atlas of Central Asia (Historical Atlas)", by Rafis Abasov. Wow, this book delivered. It laid out the full history of the region along with a map of each successive era. With this book I developed a good knowledge of the constant affects of the power moving through and influencing the region - the Greeks, the Mongols, the British, and the Russian - and so on. It also gave good context of each of the nations as they exist today, along with population and economic descriptions. This is a good resource to have in your library if you are at all interested in the region. It also gave me the impetus to purchase other Palgrave Historical Atlases

Like many other reviewers have noted, this is an excellent and groundbreaking atlas, especially considering the modest price. I expected the Atlas to be really "concise", but instead it provides a wealth of information that might even look excessive when compared to some more expensive atlases. The Atlas fills an important gap, and the fact that its author is actually from the region, in my opinion adds credence to the publication. Therefore, I gave it a full five stars. However, there are some suggestions, which are to basically add more colors to the maps and make them bigger, along with increasing the font of the text, as it is rather hard to read. Of course, I understand that it would probably double or even triple the cost, so perhaps some text could be cut and other steps could be taken to reign in costs. I think most people want the atlases to look and study the maps, not the text, so text length reduction would not significantly detract from the Atlas. Otherwise, this is a great effort and a big step in the right direction.

My title says it all. I bought the atlas to help me through my reading of some histories of Central Asia, and it helped SOMEWHAT. Different authors use different spelling and even different names for tribes and geographical features, even. The atlas, by itself, is very skimpy on anything but maps. So, I hope this helps a potential buyer!

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