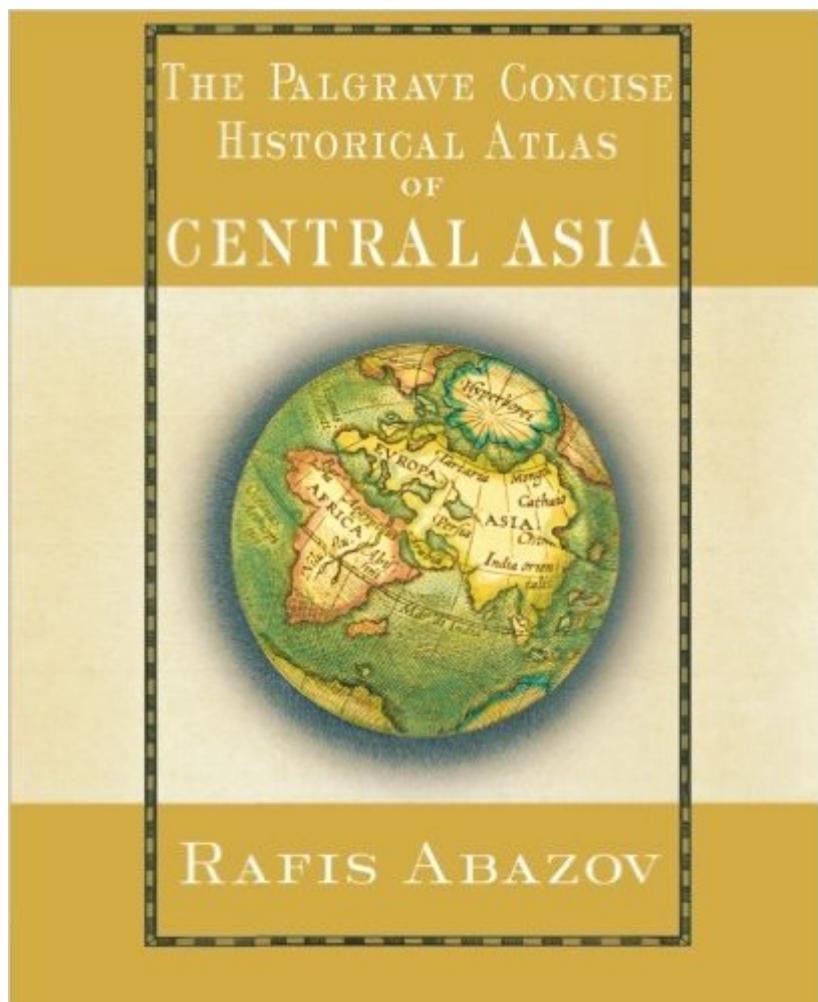


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Palgrave Concise Historical Atlas Of Central Asia



Synopsis

This atlas graphically illuminates the region's history tracing back to the 8th-7thÂ 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

This atlas, still the only one of its kind for a reasonable price, shares much of its format with the late lamented Colin McEvedy's fixed base map with facing text. That's where the problems start.

Inexplicably, the maps themselves cover only about 2/3 the page - just a little more than the area of the light band on the cover - with the rest being white space. Moreover, the map legend is inside this area. But that's not all. The map extends practically all the way to Moscow and inner Siberia to the north. The western shore of the Caspian is included. Yet to the south the map stops just into Khorasan, including about half Afghanistan. Half Taklamakan is in. Because literally nothing happens in the northern third and western tenth of the map until the 19th century - and the focus is not on it even then except as 'the place Russians come from' - the action is squeezed into an area of about 13 x 8 cm. Not surprisingly, this really tells in the lack of detail and a feeling you are looking at a wedding picture with the photographer's elbow jogged. Either the central area should have been greatly enlarged, or the map should have been extended out to, say, Dunhuang, Seistan and northern India, since that's where the settled empires were, where Central Asians sought wealth and power, and wherefrom new cultural trends entered the area. The text itself is serviceable but,

early on, too concerned with events well outside the map area, like Roman-Persian frontier wars.

I would recommend to buy this atlas because (1) here you can find a lot of information about the history and current development of each Central Asian country starting from ancient period, (2) information was obtained from different alternative sources and consolidated together, (3) graphic materials such as historical and geographical maps help to get a quick idea about the region, (4) it is very difficult to find the book on Central Asian history as balanced as this one. The fact is that it is very difficult to find objective information regarding the history of Central Asia. Since Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan got their independence from the USSR, each country started rewriting its history trying to magnify its own position as well as distorting or concealing some facts that might show the country in a negative manner. Central Asian scientists primarily focus on the history of their own countries, and still cannot get to consensus and create united historical textbook. I think the atlas would be better if it has more colored pictures.

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.

This is a nice atlas with useful information, even though it is not full color. Simply put, there are no competing atlases about Central Asia costing less than \$150, so this is your only option if you're interested in the area.

As a broad ready reference for Central Asian history, this atlas meets the basic requirements - the text is well written and objective and the maps are clear if simple and limited in scope. Together with the other atlases in the "Palgrave Concise Historical" Series, the quality and sophistication of the maps are considerably inferior to those in the comparably-priced "Penguin Historical Atlas" series - the value of the Palgraves is the coverage of relatively unusual topics not covered by a Penguin equivalent. Unfortunately, in this case the maps are inferior even to the The Palgrave Concise Historical Atlas of Eastern Europe: Revised and Updated or The Palgrave Concise Historical Atlas of the Balkans - unlike these volumes, this atlas relies on one base projection which essentially covers the area of the six Central Asian "stans" that emerged from the former Soviet Union for 44 of 50 maps, and cuts off a lot of relevant area of interest to the south. I looked in vain for a single map that showed all of Afghanistan, gave me a real feel for what Bactria looked like, or showed discrete areas of interest such as the Farghona Valley in more detail. As it stands, there is probably no real alternative to this (admittedly well-written) atlas to cover Central Asia - if Penguin ever tackle this subject matter with their usual production values, it would become a whole lot harder to recommend this one.

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