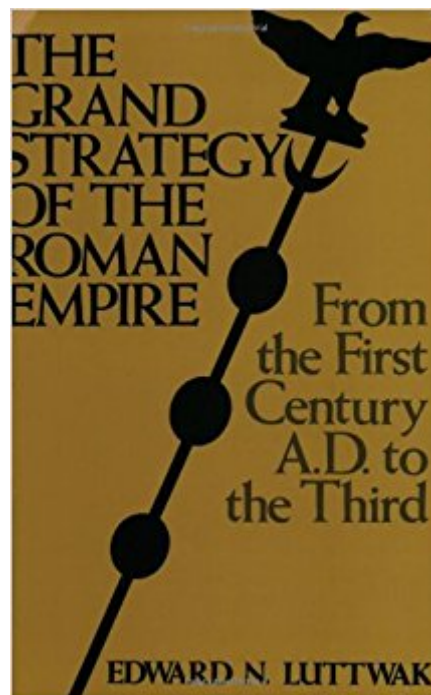




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The Grand Strategy Of The Roman Empire: From The First Century A.D. To The Third



Synopsis

'A fascinating book, well written and forcefully argued...Luttwak's formulations are as refreshing as they are convincing...He has done for Roman historians what they have not done for themselves.'

-Z. Yavetz, New Republic

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Customer Reviews

Luttwak has done scholarship an immense service... Every page brings detailed insights into the working of Roman military organization, in strategy and tactics. (E. Badian New York Review of Books) Lucidly and vigorously written. (Times Literary Supplement)

This book is approachable to the strategist, the scholar and the simply curious. Well-written and well-reasoned, Luttwak has produced yet another excellent book. The approach of using modern strategical analysis on Roman politico-military affairs is something that has long been missing from studies of the Roman Army. Certainly the armchair legates who cry that the death of the Roman Empire was in its failure to continue expanding should read this book before continuing to rant their expansion-without-profit creed!

The topic is too important to be ignored. I recommend this book. I liked the quick service and fast delivery by this store. Thanks.

Great support

I enjoyed this book a great deal and found it to be a definite must have for any Roman history (particularly Roman warfare) aficionado. Contains a wealth of insight from how defenses were established, built, and used as well as the effectiveness of them, to the different armies (legions) grand strategic intent.

Forced myself through 50 pages - couldn't go on. Dry, boring.

The book is very wonkish, which means that if you are a real nerd, this is perfect. If you are more interested in personalities and who-knifed-who, this is not your book. The book has excellent maps. It also has excellent "staff college" diagrams. That is, if one has a certain front to defend against attacks of all types (from cattle raids to major invasions), how does one use the features of the landscape to build a defensive system, with limited troops? Luttwak goes through the staff-college analysis and provide illustrative diagrams, mostly theoretical ones but also some which are actual maps of actual Roman deployments. In several places, he provides lists of how many legions were in each province, so there are 4-5 periods of time when you can see the high-level deployment scheme. He is also very interesting on the system of having "client states," "friends of Rome," and buffer states. It is not necessary, and sometimes not advisable, to conquer an area outright if you can designate a local ruler to act as puppet. The puppet ruler is a local who knows the people, knows who is important, and can control the area's internal affairs much better than a parachuted-in Roman official could. Once Rome became a hegemon, its neighbors would often do as they were told because they knew that Rome could march in whenever it became displeased. The reservations? Well, the very name of the book is a simplification because there is no evidence that the Romans sat down and developed a grant strategy. They never had a "general staff" or a "staff college." At times the defenses were designed (when an area was first taken over, or when an emperor reviewed the situation as Hadrian did.) Most of the time, the system remained as it had already been set up, and sometimes evolved as the provincial commander made adjustments. Also, he talks about the placement of legions and when they did (or did not) constitute a mobile reaction force. I find most of that discussion to be moot. They generally placed legions well forward because that is where they might do some good. Movement was agonizingly slow, so the focus should be on limiting the distances to be marched. If an enemy came in thru a gap, then the nearest legions would move sideways to either seal the gap or attack the invading force. The permanent deployment was very far forward, with the best lateral roads they could build. If the threat was too

large for nearby forces, they would take whatever legions were nearest, even if that meant a march from Hispania to the Rhine; therefore they built long roads from the interior to the frontier.

On the one hand, Luttwak's book is an insightful look into the security policy of the Roman Empire. By focusing on the role of puppet states and client kingdom's, Luttwak underlines how important these were to the Romans. Whatever political headaches these dependent governments might have caused, they were generally cheaper than outright occupation, and thus were integral to providing a buffer and reducing the overall expense of policing and defending the Empire. On the other hand, Luttwak's thesis tends to make that security policy more clean cut than it ever was in actual practice. The theory and the way things were in the provinces were two different things, and Luttwak focuses almost entirely on the neat and tidy strategy and not enough on the patchwork reality.

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