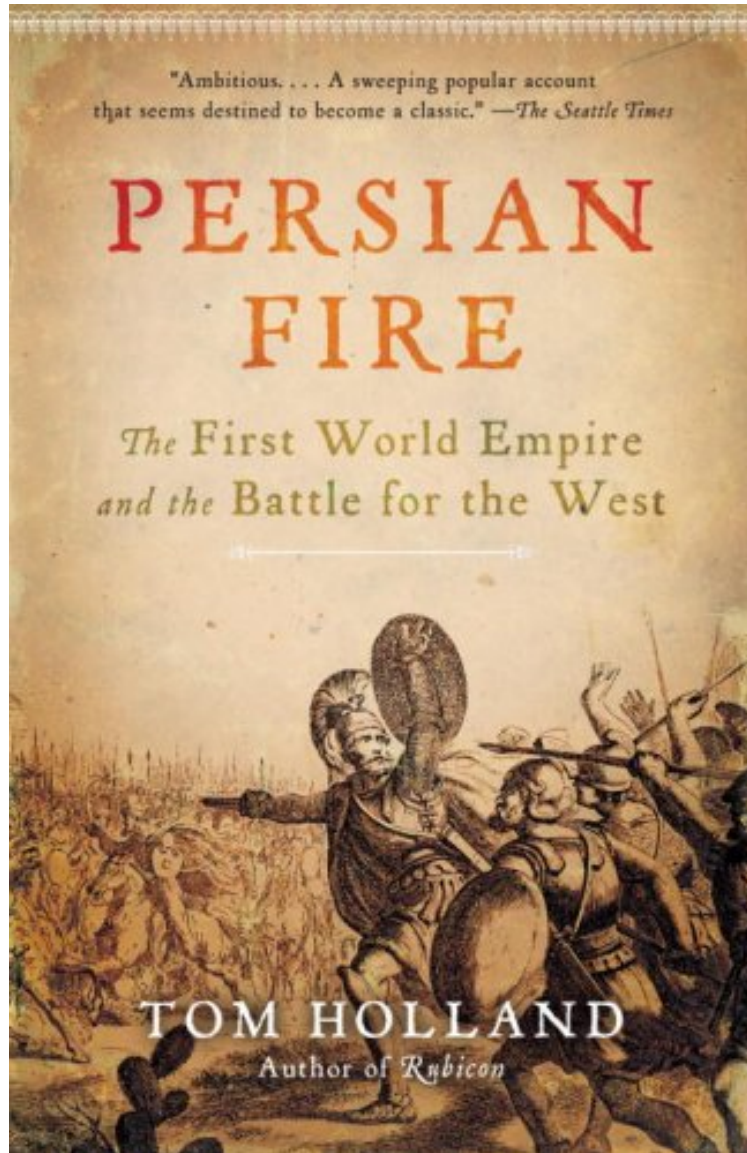


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Persian Fire: The First World Empire and the Battle for the West

Tom Holland

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#41293 in Books Tom Holland 2007-06-12 2007-06-12 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.00 x .90 x 5.201, .97 #File Name: 0307279480464 pages Persian Fire The First World Empire and the Battle for the West | File size: 27.Mb

Tom Holland : Persian Fire: The First World Empire and the Battle for the West before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Persian Fire: The First World Empire and the Battle for the West:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Accessible History of Persian-Greek Conflict By Ambrose Rankin Good accessible history of the rise of the Persian Empire and its wars with Greece. Holland tells the story from

both the Greek and the Persian perspective - which makes for an interesting read. The prose was a little stiff at times - I found myself having to reread a few paragraphs after getting lost. Overall though, a worthwhile read for anyone interested in a popular history of very interesting events. We meet all the main characters and major battles in a concise narrative. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Couldn't stop reading
By John Zmirak
More of Holland's engaging, gripping writing that puts you in the mind of the participants in history, insofar as that's possible. A triumph of empathy, research, prose. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. He does a great job in telling the story of the world's first ...
By Ben Monaghan
I didn't know what to expect when I bought this, but having studied the Greeks and wanting to know more about the Persians, I took a flier. Skip the introduction. It feels dated. But as for the book... he handles the material well and really keeps the story moving in an entertaining way. Even though I read much of the source material (at least the ancient Greek texts), Holland gives you a view from the forest - a birds eye view of antiquity and events. He does a great job in telling the story of the world's first democracy.

In the fifth century B.C., a global superpower was determined to bring truth and order to what it regarded as two terrorist states. The superpower was Persia, incomparably rich in ambition, gold, and men. The terrorist states were Athens and Sparta, eccentric cities in a poor and mountainous backwater: Greece. The story of how their citizens took on the Great King of Persia, and thereby saved not only themselves but Western civilization as well, is as heart-stopping and fateful as any episode in history. Tom Holland's brilliant study of these critical Persian Wars skillfully examines a conflict of critical importance to both ancient and modern history.

From Publishers Weekly
After chronicling the fall of the Roman Republic in *Rubicon*, historian Holland turns his attention further back in time to 480 B.C., when the Greeks defended their city-states against the invading Persian empire, led by Xerxes. Classicists will recall such battles as Marathon, Thermopylae and Salamis, which raises the question: why do we need another account of this war, when we already have Herodotus? But just as Victor David Hanson and Donald Kagan have reframed our understanding of the Peloponnesian War by finding contemporary parallels, Holland recasts the Greek-Persian conflict as the first clash in a long-standing tension between East and West, echoing now in Osama bin Laden's pretensions to a Muslim caliphate. Holland doesn't impose a modern sensibility on the ancient civilizations he describes, and he delves into the background histories of both sides with equally fascinating detail. Though matters of Greek history like the brutal social structure of the Spartans are well known, the story of the Persian empire like the usurper Darius's claim that every royal personage he assassinated was actually an imposter should be fresh and surprising to many readers, while Holland's graceful, modern voice will captivate those intimidated by Herodotus. (May 2) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.
From Booklist
Dramatizing ancient history--that is, amplifying the historical record's often fragmentary evidence with unknowable detail and inferred emotion--is always a gamble. Done well (think Herodotus), the long dead come alive, and readers are inclined to overlook their suspicions about what liberties the author may be taking with the story's veracity. Done poorly, one risks profaning history and literature alike. In dramatizing the Persian Wars--Athens' most glorious hour and the beginning of its decline into imperialism and hubris--Holland acknowledges the risks and strides boldly forward. The result is an ambitious contemporary retelling of an epic tale that, framed as a conflict between East and West, quietly subverts certain other recent histories' parallels between empires past and present. It has its awkward moments, mostly due to a predilection for melodramatic phrasing; for better or worse, its parallels to modern events are subtle and often implicit. But ultimately, one suspects that Holland's engaging narrative would do Herodotus proud--and it may even prompt readers to find out for themselves. Brendan Driscoll
Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved.
Ambitious....a sweeping popular account that seems destined to become a classic. The Seattle Times
Excellent. . . . There is an even-handedness in Holland's treatment of both Greek and Persian cultural riches that is rare in popular accounts of these wars. Sunday Times
Holland has a rare eye for detail, drama, and the telling anecdote. . . . A book as spirited and engaging as *Persian Fire* deserves to last. The Telegraph