

barrington atlas of the greek and roman world

Barrington Atlas of the Greek and Roman World is a monumental work that serves as a definitive cartographic reference for the classical civilizations of ancient Greece and Rome. Published in 2000 by the Princeton University Press, this atlas has been a valuable resource for historians, archaeologists, and scholars interested in the geographical context of ancient societies. The Barrington Atlas stands out not only for its detailed maps but also for the accompanying scholarly resources that enhance its utility. This article will delve into the background, structure, significance, and impact of the Barrington Atlas, illustrating why it is considered foundational for the study of classical antiquity.

Historical Context

The genesis of the Barrington Atlas can be traced back to the need for a comprehensive geographical resource that accurately represents the ancient world. Prior to its publication, various maps and atlases existed, but they often lacked the precision and scholarship necessary for serious academic work.

Predecessors and Influences

Several important works paved the way for the Barrington Atlas:

1. Ptolemy's Geography: This ancient text laid the groundwork for geographical understanding in the classical world.
2. The Tabula Rogeriana: Created by the Arab geographer Muhammad al-Idrisi in the 12th century, this map was influential in medieval cartography.
3. The Oxford Classical Dictionary: This comprehensive reference work provided background information on various aspects of classical studies, setting the stage for a geographical atlas.

The Barrington Atlas synthesizes previous cartographic efforts while integrating modern archaeological discoveries and contemporary scholarship.

Structure of the Atlas

The Barrington Atlas consists of several key components that enhance its functionality and accessibility:

Maps

The atlas contains 102 detailed maps that depict various regions of the ancient world, including:

- Greece: Detailed representations of city-states, geographical features, and

trade routes.

- Italy: Maps covering the Roman Republic and Empire, including provincial boundaries.
- The Mediterranean: Major trade routes and maritime connections between different civilizations.

Each map is meticulously crafted, ensuring accuracy in the representation of ancient locations.

Gazetteer

One of the standout features of the Barrington Atlas is its extensive gazetteer, which lists over 4,000 locations relevant to the ancient world. Each entry includes:

- Location Names: Both ancient and modern names.
- Coordinates: Latitude and longitude for precise identification.
- Historical Context: Brief descriptions that provide insight into the significance of each location.

This gazetteer serves as an invaluable tool for researchers seeking specific sites or regions within the maps.

Indexes

To facilitate research, the atlas includes various indexes, such as:

- Topographical Index: Organized by geographical features (mountains, rivers, etc.).
- Historical Index: Organized by significant historical events or figures.
- Cultural Index: Related to languages, religions, and cultural practices of the time.

These indexes allow users to navigate the vast amount of information contained within the atlas easily.

Significance of the Barrington Atlas

The Barrington Atlas has played a crucial role in the study of ancient history and archaeology for several reasons:

Scholarly Resource

The atlas is widely regarded as an authoritative reference for scholars. Its combination of detailed maps and scholarly rigor has made it indispensable in academic research. It has been used in various fields, including:

- History: Providing context for historical events and figures.
- Archaeology: Assisting in the identification and location of archaeological sites.
- Classical Studies: Enhancing the understanding of ancient cultures and

societies.

Educational Tool

Beyond academia, the Barrington Atlas is also an effective educational resource. It is frequently utilized in university courses covering:

- Ancient History: Offering a geographical perspective on historical narratives.
- Classical Literature: Providing context for literary works set in the ancient world.

The visual nature of the atlas aids in engaging students and enhancing their understanding of complex historical concepts.

Interdisciplinary Connections

The atlas fosters interdisciplinary collaboration by bridging the gap between geography, history, and archaeology. It encourages researchers from diverse fields to engage with one another, leading to richer interpretations of the ancient world. This collaborative approach has resulted in new insights and discoveries.

Impact and Legacy

Since its publication, the Barrington Atlas has made a lasting impact on the field of classical studies. Its influence can be seen in various ways:

Continued Relevance

Even more than two decades after its release, the Barrington Atlas continues to be a key reference point for scholars. Its maps have been cited in numerous academic publications, and it is frequently recommended for reading lists in classical studies courses.

Digital Adaptations

In response to the growing trend of digital scholarship, efforts have been made to adapt the Barrington Atlas for online use. This includes the development of interactive maps and databases that allow users to explore ancient locations digitally. Such adaptations ensure that the atlas remains relevant in an increasingly digital academic landscape.

Conclusion

The Barrington Atlas of the Greek and Roman World is a landmark achievement

in the field of classical studies. Its detailed maps, comprehensive gazetteer, and scholarly rigor make it an essential resource for historians, archaeologists, and students alike. As a bridge between geography and history, the atlas has facilitated a deeper understanding of the ancient world and its complexities. The continued relevance of the Barrington Atlas attests to its significance and the enduring interest in the civilizations that shaped Western history. With its impact felt across disciplines, the atlas not only preserves the legacy of ancient Greece and Rome but also enriches contemporary scholarship and education.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Barrington Atlas of the Greek and Roman World?

The Barrington Atlas of the Greek and Roman World is a comprehensive map and reference work that details the geography of the ancient Mediterranean world, including the locations of cities, roads, and other significant geographical features.

Who were the editors of the Barrington Atlas?

The Barrington Atlas was edited by Richard J.A. Talbert and published in 2000, featuring contributions from various scholars in the field of classical studies.

How many maps are included in the Barrington Atlas?

The Barrington Atlas consists of 102 full-color maps that represent the geographical extent of the Greek and Roman world.

What is the significance of the Barrington Atlas for scholars?

The Barrington Atlas serves as a critical resource for historians, archaeologists, and classicists, providing a visual representation of ancient geography that aids in the understanding of historical texts and archaeological sites.

How does the Barrington Atlas differ from earlier atlases of the ancient world?

The Barrington Atlas incorporates modern cartographic techniques and extensive scholarly research, offering a more accurate and detailed representation of ancient geography compared to earlier works.

Is there a companion volume to the Barrington Atlas?

Yes, the Barrington Atlas is accompanied by a comprehensive directory that provides additional information about the places depicted on the maps, including historical context and significance.

What types of locations are highlighted in the Barrington Atlas?

The atlas highlights a wide range of locations, including cities, forts, sanctuaries, and trade routes, reflecting the diverse aspects of ancient Greek and Roman life.

Can the Barrington Atlas be used for educational purposes?

Absolutely, the Barrington Atlas is widely used in educational settings, particularly in courses on classical studies, archaeology, and ancient history, as it provides a visual framework for understanding ancient civilizations.

How has the Barrington Atlas influenced modern archaeological research?

The Barrington Atlas has influenced modern archaeological research by providing a reliable geographical context for excavations, aiding researchers in locating ancient sites and understanding their spatial relationships.

Is the Barrington Atlas available in digital format?

Yes, the Barrington Atlas is available in digital format, making it accessible for online use and integration into digital humanities projects, enhancing its usability for researchers and educators.

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