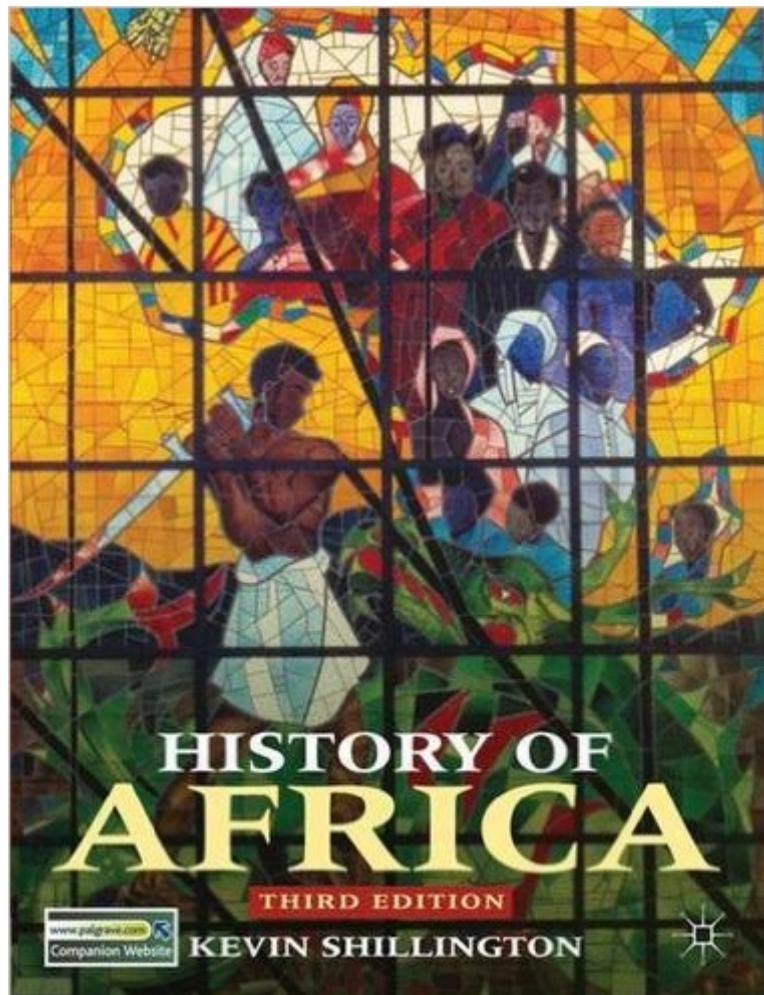


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History Of Africa



Synopsis

In a single volume, History of Africa offers readers a richly illustrated narrative introduction to the history of the entire continent, from earliest times through to the present day. Building on the book's established reputation and success, this third edition has been revised and updated throughout in the light of new research and recent events. A companion website now also supports the text. Kevin Shillington traces the history of the continent through the ancient world to medieval, modern and contemporary Africa. He explores the early emergence of farming; the kingdoms of Ancient Egypt, Aksum and Meroe; medieval empires; the spread and impact of Islam; the role of trade and religion; and the development of Africa's wide range of pastoral, agricultural and hunting societies.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Shillington provides a good survey style textbook on African history from antiquity to the modern period. He covers in great detail and quality of the relationship between Africa and Islam as well as the nature of slavery and apartheid. He covers the slave trade in quite a bit of detail, explaining the value of the African as a marketable commodity. He also explains the origins of apartheid as a colonial parting gift that became entrenched racist national policy for more than fifty years.

Shillington's survey is quite appropriate for a high school African history class, an undergraduate African history survey or introduction or even as a first book for a graduate African history course. The topics covered here are obviously from an Africanist point of view although there is a minimum, if any, level of bias on Shillington's part.

Kevin Shillington's organization and structure serve well the one semester survey course in African history. There are 29 chapters from pre-history to post-independence Africa. The maps are excellent - the best I have seen. The book does not get bogged down into too much detail but has the most important concepts, people and events. We use it at the Air Force Academy every year with no plans to change in the near future.

The book is written from an African point of view, which is badly needed in the current world of academia. Shillington does a great job of portraying things from the "other side". The only defect is that he can sometimes be too sympathetic to the other side and penalize westerners, giving the book a slight bias. Despite this, it is an excellent book for getting a look into African history from another angle.

I have to be honest and admit that until reading this book I was very uninformed about the history of Africa outside of Egypt and Ethiopia and in any other periods than the ancient and Medieval. This book was a great general introduction to the history of Africa from the dawn of man through to modern times. The illustrations and pictures, both modern and historic, that were featured were very helpful in bringing the subjects to life. The flow of the text itself helped very much in connecting the dots and helping me to understand the flow of African history from one event, period, person, etc. to the next. Overall, I would recommend this is a good general introduction to the history of Africa that would come in use to someone who, like me, knew little to nothing about the history of this great continent.

Here is the best one-volume history of this misunderstood continent, one which highlights Africans' agency and creativity. Now in a third edition, it has more useful features than any competitors. Numerous superb illustrations present images ranging from rare to famous. The maps are even better, allowing readers to locate places, peoples and developments precisely. And the text displays Shillington's mastery of all the latest scholarly work on the continent. His sober, balanced approach is sometimes dry, but the style is always readable. Publisher and author claim that "History of Africa" is both a high school and college text, but plentiful (not excessive) detail makes it a challenge for all but the most advanced secondary students. More direct quotations from oral and written sources would improve the book, but this is a minor problem remedied by using supplementary materials. Lastly, the cost is reasonable, less than half the average for comparable surveys of Western Civ or US history. This volume will satisfy the curiosity of the general public too.

Independent scholar Kevin Shillington has improved this standard work even further. It incorporates the most recent scholarship, along with a valuable website containing some new material, especially helpful for familiarizing students with ongoing debates on interpreting Africa's past. It is the best one-volume history of this misunderstood continent, one which highlights Africans' agency and creativity. Now in a fourth edition (there were 2nd & "2nd revised" editions; not sure why), it has more useful features than most competitors. Numerous superb illustrations present images ranging from rare to famous. The maps are even better, allowing readers to locate places, peoples and developments precisely. And the text displays Shillington's mastery of all the latest scholarly work on the continent. His sober, balanced approach is sometimes dry, but the style is always readable. Publisher and author claim that "History of Africa" is both a high school and college text, but plentiful (not excessive) detail makes it a challenge for all but the most advanced secondary students. More direct quotations from oral and written sources would improve the book, but this is a minor problem remedied by using supplementary materials. Lastly, the cost is quite reasonable, less than half the average for comparable surveys of Western Civ, US or world history. This volume will satisfy the curiosity of the general public too.(Adapted from my review of the 2005 edition.)

Extremely well written and hard to put down. Shillington has an obvious affection for Africa, but I expected it and allowed for it. I'd recommend this book to anyone looking for a first survey of African history. I would like to have seen more maps, with less information on each map. I'm not sure the book would make a good text for college, but it makes a great book for general reading.

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