

Penguin Atlas of African History

Colin McEvedy

Penguin 1980

A book review by [Danny Yee](http://dannyreviews.com/) © 1992 <http://dannyreviews.com/>

The Penguin Atlases of Ancient, Medieval and Modern History covered only the history of Europe; this offering gives a bit more balance to the series, and has a better claim to be the "Penguin Atlas of Human History", since it begins with maps of the oldest known hominid fossil finds. As with the other books in the series, the maps are well laid out and will be irresistible to cartophiliacs. The emphasis is definitely on political history, but there are also maps of population densities and trade routes.

The text that accompanies the maps is not bad, but is definitely not up to the same standard. Some of the information is even a little dubious, especially in the discussion of human evolution. There is also a tendency to see things from a European point of view, and I would have preferred a little less on the "exploration" of the continent and a little more on [archaeology](#) and cultural history. The *Penguin Atlas of African History* is a reference work that should be on everyone's shelves, but it should be backed up with a more detailed history of the continent.

Note: there is a new (1996) edition of the *Penguin Atlas of African History*.

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