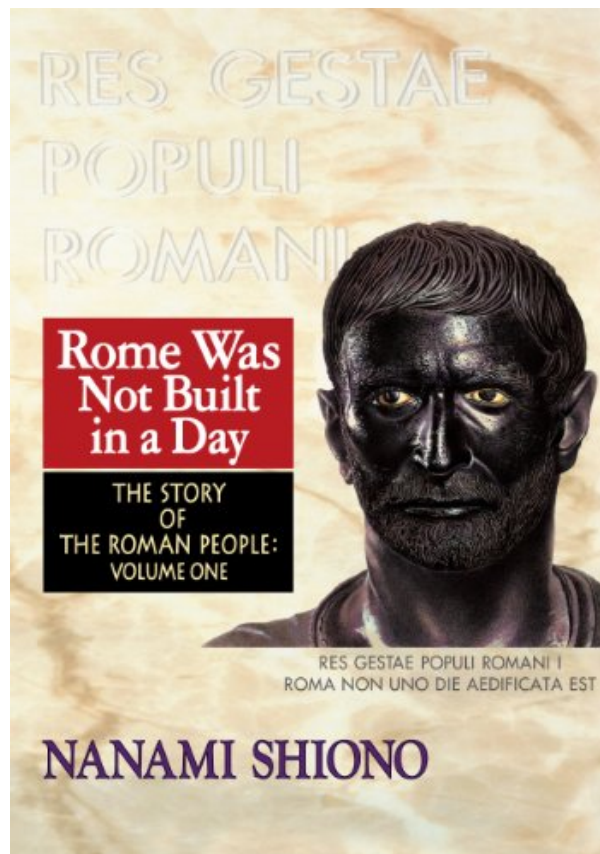
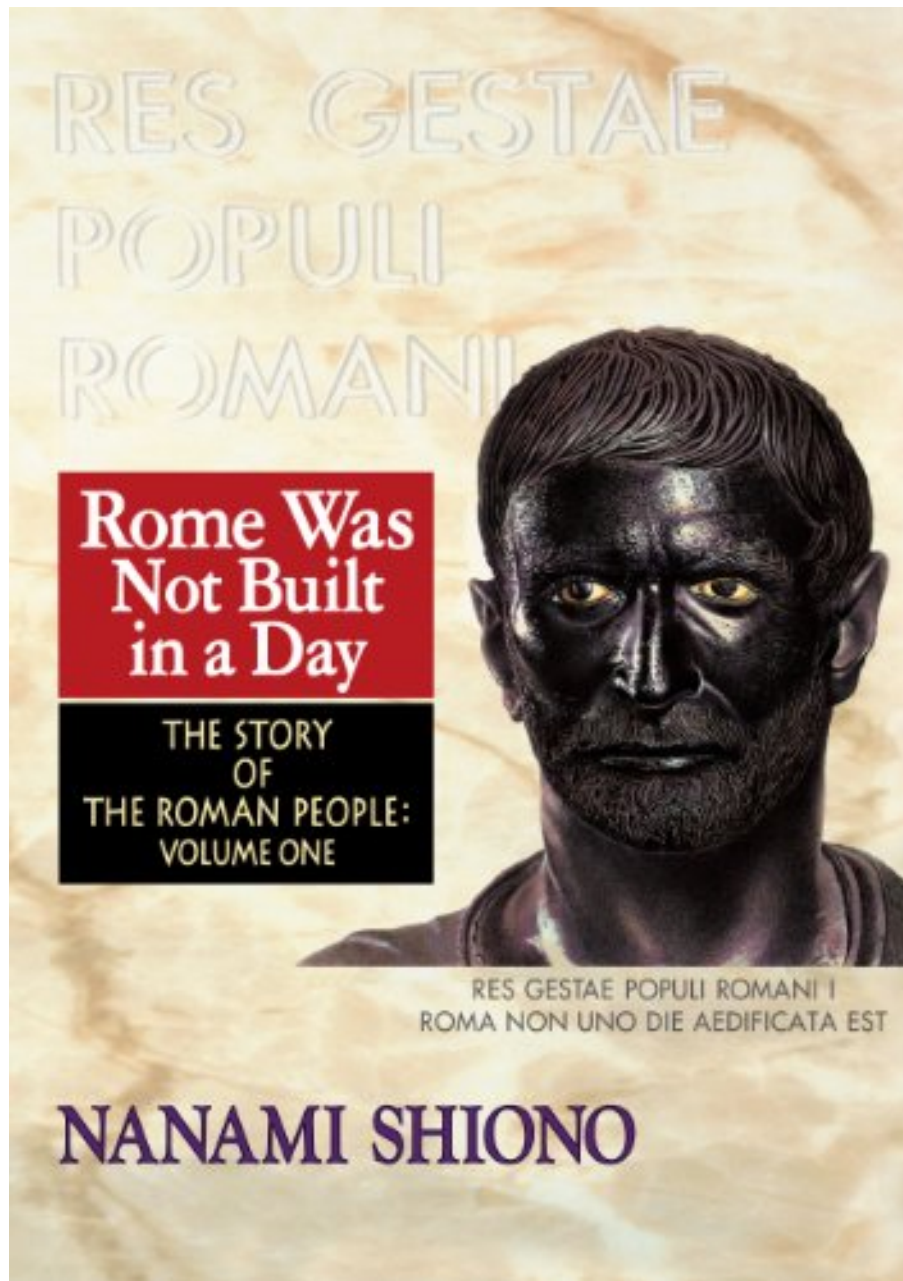


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## Most helpful customer reviews

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful.

Unique and Perceptive History of Rome

By John A. DeTore

This superb book is the first of 15 volumes written by Japanese Historian Nanami Shiono. It recounts the first 500 Hundred years of Rome, starting from the founding of the City in 753 B.C. by Romulus. At its basic level, this is an excellent narrative of the early days of Rome, a period that has not received as much attention as other periods of Roman History. It is very well written (kudos to the translator), easy to follow, and entertaining reading. The book also puts the development of Rome in perspective with historical events in Greece and compares and contrasts the two cultures. What makes this book so special, in my opinion, is the viewpoint of the author, a female Japanese Historian. She approaches historical events from a very different perspective, a non-westerner. Her objective is to seek to determine why Rome reached the heights that she did. Her thesis is very interesting and persuasive. I highly recommend this book to anyone who has a strong interest in Roman History. The second volume is currently on Kindle and I hope that the others follow soon.

3 of 4 people found the following review helpful.

Easy to read

By Avery

I can't rate this five stars because the best histories of Rome are of course the works of Livy and Tacitus, with Fustel de Coulanges' *The Ancient City: A Study on the Religion, Laws, and Institutions of Greece and Rome* ranking a close third. However, this is a quite easy to read history of Rome and makes for a good refresher for the layman. It is written for an audience with no background in the Western classical world at all. The book is a perennial bestseller in Japan -- it has sold hundreds of thousands, maybe even a million copies.

A distinctive Japanese historical approach is not very common, but is always interesting when it does appear. The Japanese perspective on Roman religion is quite interesting, for example: "At [Viriplaca's] shrine, there is nothing but a statue of the goddess, no shrine officials or anyone else." (This is specified because many Japanese shrines are staffed.) "Even though over 2,700 years have gone by since Numa's reign, we are still not free from the constraints of monotheism."

There are several times when Ms. Shiono raises a question Westerners have often pondered but rarely stated out loud. For example: "One imagines that the Greeks' characteristically vigorous sense of independence and their argumentative nature would have combined to render it remarkably difficult to manage the business of [direct democracy]. Furthermore, it is questionable whether all ten thousand had the powers of judgment necessary for dealing with affairs of state. But given that this remains an unresolved problem of democracy today, 2,500 years later, it would probably be an exercise in futility to go into this question any further."

In short, don't expect eye-opening revelations from this book like you will get from the five-star books I mentioned above, but it should be a serviceable overview.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

Concise, clear and thoughtful account of the very early foundations of the Roman Republic

By Colin Heston

This is about the most concise and insightful account of early Roman history I have so far read. The insights and succinct analyses of the Romans, their character, their capacity to suck victory from the jaws of defeat and the foundations of their uncanny ability to govern by their inclusiveness of those they defeated are magnificently drawn by Shiono in this first volume of her classic series.

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