

Why America Is Not a New Rome

Vaclav Smil

The MIT Press
Cambridge, Massachusetts
London, England

Contents

Preface ix

Part 1 America as a New Rome? 1

I *Nihil Novi Sub Sole* 3

Exempla Trahunt 3

Imperium Americanum 11

Intentio Libri 26

Part 2 Why America Is Not a New Rome 31

II Empires, Powers, Limits 35

What Is an Empire? 42

Roman Reach: Hyperboles and Realities 54

America's Peculiar Hegemony 64

III Knowledge, Machines, Energy 79

Inventing New Worlds 81

Power of Machines 98

Energy Sources 105

IV Life, Death, Wealth 115

Population Dynamics 117

Illness and Death 126

Wealth and Misery 135

Contents

Part 3	Why Comparisons Fail	147
V	Historical Analogies and Their (Lack of) Meaning	149
	Common Shortcomings	149
	Fundamental Differences	158
	One World	163
	Notes	173
	References	197
	Name Index	217
	Subject Index	221