



A History of Civilizations

By Fernand Braudel

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Written from a consciously anti-ethnocentric approach, this fascinating work is a survey of the civilizations of the modern world in terms of the broad sweep and continuities of history, rather than the "event-based" technique of most other texts.

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A History of Civilizations By Fernand Braudel Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #161290 in Books
- Brand: Penguin Books
- Published on: 1995-04-01
- Released on: 1995-04-01
- Original language: French
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 7.80" h x 1.10" w x 5.00" l, .93 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 640 pages

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Editorial Review

From Library Journal

Braudel was the most prominent member of the *Annales* school of history in post-World War II France. This history, originally published in 1963 as part of curriculum reform for French secondary students, was eventually judged by French school teachers as too hard for their students and was withdrawn. More than half the book is devoted to the development of Western civilization, and despite the judgment of French school teachers, it is suitable for serious high school students along with undergraduate and public libraries. Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From Booklist

A leader of the *Annales* school, which reacted against the prominence of politics and personalities in historiography, Braudel wrote based on *la longue durée*, emphasizing the material basis of daily life--the routine workings of commerce as it changes over the long term. This outlook has gradually permeated the profession, and, as so often happens when a good idea proves unstoppable, its proponent takes a turn at textbook writing. This is the late Braudel's 1962 lesson for French university students on the origin of European, Islamic, Indian, Asian, and New World civilizations. As a text it wasn't widely adopted, perhaps because France was then in a political uproar, pitting its colonialists--heirs to the civilizing mission of the nineteenth century--against decolonizers. And the book bears that sign of its time: The colonial motif pops up everywhere, presented as a timeless feature of ways of life in collision. So it was at the Battle of Tours in 732, which stopped the Muslim juggernaut; and so it is now in the anti-Western sentiments in the Arab world. Whether the conflict split religion and religion, town and country, or liberty and right, the colonial view benefits from Braudel's phenomenal depth of knowledge and synthesizing agility, and his palpable curiosity enlivens the sometimes deadly textbook form. For serious history collections. *Gilbert Taylor*

Language Notes

Text: English

Original Language: French

Users Review

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Willie Davis:

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