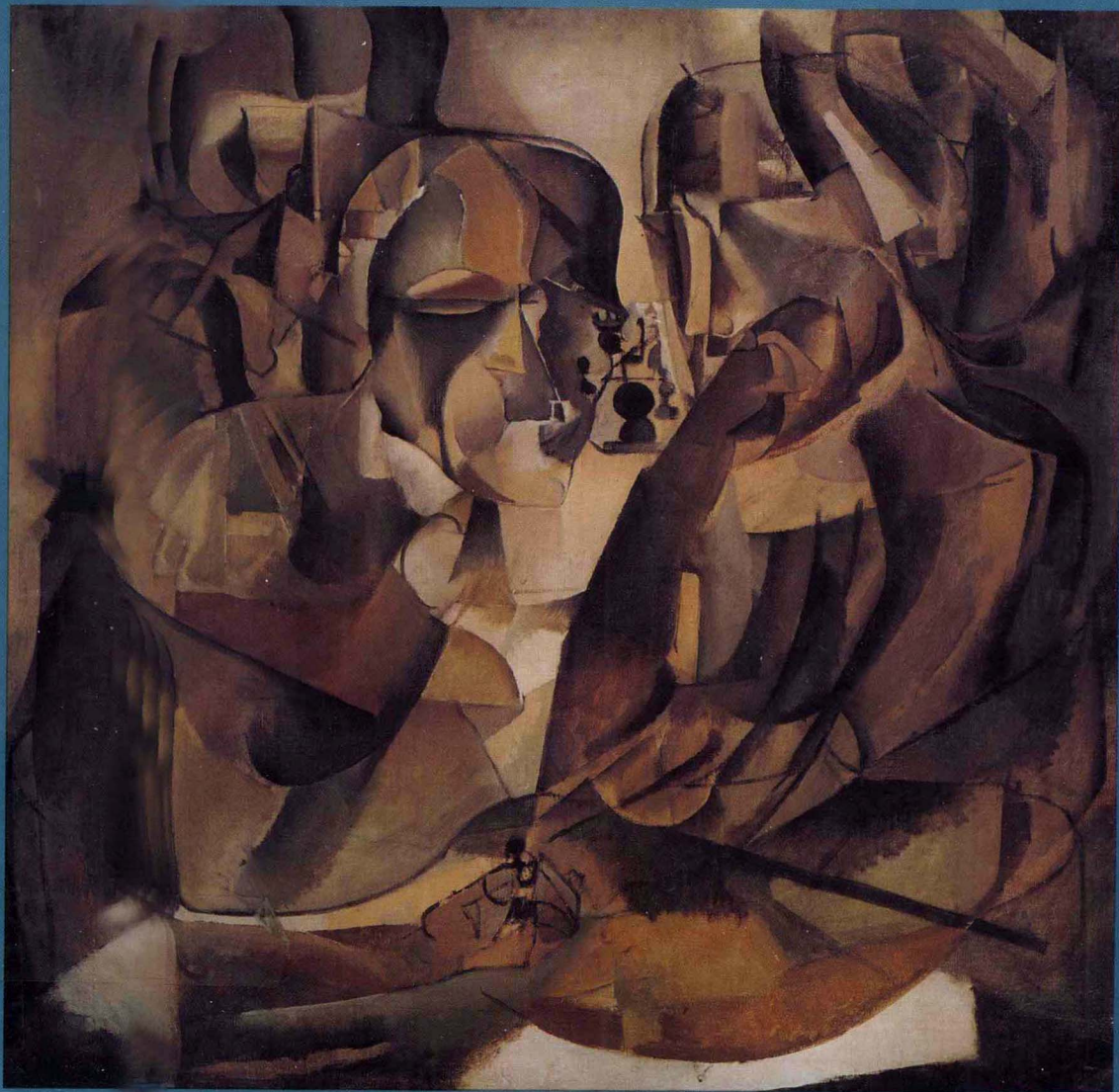


TWELFTH EDITION

Volume 2

Western Civilizations



Lerner · Meacham · Burns

ROBERT E. LERNER
STANDISH MEACHAM
EDWARD MCNALL BURNS

WESTERN CIVILIZATIONS

Their History and Their Culture

VOLUME 2

TWELFTH EDITION

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PREFACE

George Orwell once remarked that “keeping the past up to date is a full-time job.” This insight seems particularly telling as a result of the startling rush of events during the last few years. “Trends” that seemed so clear only yesterday have turned out to be no trends at all. In addition, dramatic advances in historical scholarship have cast new light on old problems and have placed into prominence subject matters that historians previously had all but ignored. Accordingly we have worked hard to keep the past up to date for this twelfth edition of *Western Civilizations*. Yet we have always worked within the framework of authorial principles bequeathed to us by E. M. Burns—principles that may have served to make this book a “text-book classic.” We offer a history of civilizations—an evolving account of the ways in which human beings have organized their lives in response to changing environments and persistent needs. Thus we complement narrative passages with discussions of ideas and societal institutions, and we draw heavily on pictorial material to give our readers the best impression possible of how our civilizations really looked. We try as well to avoid a tone of disembodied truth, both because we do not believe there is such a thing and because we want to engage and maintain our readers’ attention. Our urgent desire is to demonstrate without resorting to cheapness that “first-year history” need not be viewed as a chore but might be welcomed as a source of intellectual excitement, even delight.

Although we have gone over *Western Civilizations* line by line in our effort to keep the past up to date, teachers will wish to know where the most significant changes occur. Chapter 5, on Greek civilization, is almost entirely new. Among its new features are a completely reconceived section on women and men in the daily life of ancient Athens, a consideration of the role of the Greek alphabet and the transformation of military techniques in the rise of the *polis*, and an emphasis on the differences as well as similarities between Athenian and modern democracies. About half of the Roman chapter (Chapter 7) is also new. Major innovations here include an

altered treatment of the nature of family life (we have greatly changed our estimation of the role of women), a greater emphasis on the significance of slavery within the Roman economic and social system, and a reorganized discussion of Roman golden-age and silver-age literature. Other noteworthy changes in Parts One and Two are: a revised discussion of the stages of Hebrew religious development; an account of the volcanic eruption on the island of Thera; a reorganized presentation of Minoan social and cultural history; streamlined treatment of Epicureanism and Hellenistic religion; a new discussion of the conversion of Constantine. Finally, we have replaced the abbreviation "A.D." with "C.E.": students no longer know the meaning of *anno domini*, and C.E. (standing for "Common Era") assumes no particular religious commitment.

In the medieval chapters certain terms that would not be readily understandable to beginners, such as *see* and *benefice*, have been eliminated. The treatment of the formation of the Russian Empire in Chapter 12 now distinguishes carefully between Russia proper and the other Slavic-speaking territories. In Chapter 13 the treatment of the Greek studies of the humanists has been rewritten; corrections have also been made in discussions of the work of Raphael and Michelangelo. Chapter 15 contains a rewritten paragraph on Pascal (students are reminded that a computer language was named after him!). Chapter 16 has been reorganized to place greater emphasis on the conflicts produced by changes occurring throughout the society and economy of early-modern Europe and particularly by the effects of proto-industrialization. Treatment of Rousseau has been moved from Chapter 19 (the French Revolution) to Chapter 18 (the Enlightenment) and has been completely rewritten with the aim of presenting Rousseau's ideas on education as well as government.

Chapter 19, which deals with the French Revolution, has been reshaped; a rewritten section on the origins of the Revolution attends to recent scholarship on the relationship between social structure and politics. Material in Chapter 25, on the challenge of science, has been expanded, as have sections on Russia before the First World War (Chapter 26) and during the war (Chapter 27). In Chapter 28, the treatment of the Soviet Union, Italy, and Germany has been modified in the light of scholarly analysis that distinguishes between authoritarian dictatorships in those three countries. Finally, material in the last two chapters has been thoroughly updated and includes a discussion of the collapse of the Soviet Union, the reordering of politics in Eastern Europe, the reunification of Germany, the economic integration of Western Europe, as well as events in other parts of the fast-changing world of the 1990s.

Robert Lerner has been responsible for Chapters 1 through 15, as well as Chapter 18; Standish Meacham for the rest. To borrow a phrase from the tenth century savant, Gerbert of Rheims: "we write what we know, and what we do not know we learn." In seeking guidance, we always learn much from colleagues and reviewers. For this edition we are enormously indebted to reviews provided by Clifford Backman (Boston University), David Graf (University of Miami), Carolyn Lougee (Stanford University),

Daniel Orlovsky (Southern Methodist University), Peter Sahlins (University of California, Berkeley), Richard Saller (University of Chicago), Arlene Wolinsky (San Diego Mesa College), and Stephen Wessley (York College of Pennsylvania), and the anonymous reviewers commissioned by our publisher. Robert Lerner is also grateful to Stephen Harris, Alauddin Samarrai (St. Cloud State University), Nancy Spatz (University of Northern Colorado), Heide Stier, Steven Williams (University of Northern Iowa), and Rachel Wolford for alerting him to numerous errors, dubieties, and infelicities. Standish Meacham acknowledges the thoughtful advice and suggestions received from Nancy Barker and David Crew (University of Texas). To Simon Cordery and Ann Rodrick he owes special and heartfelt thanks. Without their timely, patient, and professional assistance, he could not have completed this assignment. At W. W. Norton and Company the supervisors of this edition have been Robert Kehoe and Steven Forman. A. Deborah Malmud has gathered illustrations with resourcefulness and awesome perseverance. Our editor, Sandy Lifland, has been unfailingly patient and helpful, teaching us gracefully about a range of matters from Kepler's Laws to Lifland's Laws of "that and which."

Robert Lerner
Standish Meacham

CONTENTS

LIST OF MAPS xiii

PREFACE xv

Chapter 15 A CENTURY OF CRISIS FOR EARLY-MODERN EUROPE
(c. 1560–c. 1660) 485

ECONOMIC, RELIGIOUS, AND POLITICAL TESTS 486

A HALF CENTURY OF RELIGIOUS WARS 489

YEARS OF TREMBLING 496

QUESTS FOR LIGHT OUT OF DARKNESS 508

LITERATURE AND THE ARTS 513

Chapter 16 THE ECONOMY AND SOCIETY OF EARLY-MODERN
EUROPE 525

LIFE AND DEATH: PATTERNS OF POPULATION 526

THE DYNAMICS OF AGRICULTURE AND INDUSTRY 531

THE COMMERCIAL REVOLUTION 540

COLONIZATION AND OVERSEAS TRADE 547

LIFE WITHIN A SOCIETY OF ORDERS 554

Chapter 17 THE AGE OF ABSOLUTISM (1660–1789) 569

THE APPEAL AND JUSTIFICATION OF ABSOLUTISM 570

THE ABSOLUTISM OF LOUIS XIV 573

ABSOLUTISM IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE, 1660–1720 577

THE ENGLISH EXCEPTION 584

WARFARE AND DIPLOMACY: THE EMERGENCE OF A STATE SYSTEM 588

ENLIGHTENED ABSOLUTISM AND LIMITED MONARCHY IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY	593
WAR AND DIPLOMACY IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY	604

Chapter 18 THE SCIENTIFIC REVOLUTION AND ENLIGHTENMENT 611

THE SCIENTIFIC REVOLUTION	613
THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE ENLIGHTENMENT	616
THE WORLD OF THE PHILOSOPHES	619
THE ONWARD MARCH OF SCIENCE	628
CLASSICISM AND INNOVATION IN ART AND LITERATURE	631
BAROQUE AND CLASSICAL MUSIC	640

Part Five THE FRENCH AND INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTIONS AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES

Chapter 19 THE FRENCH REVOLUTION 653

THE COMING OF THE REVOLUTION	654
THE DESTRUCTION OF THE ANCIEN RÉGIME	660
A NEW STAGE: POPULAR REVOLUTION	666
NAPOLEON AND EUROPE	679
THE VIENNA SETTLEMENT	689

Chapter 20 THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION 695

THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION IN ENGLAND	696
THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION ON THE CONTINENT	704
THE COMING OF THE RAILWAYS	709
INDUSTRIALIZATION AFTER 1850	713

Chapter 21 CONSEQUENCES OF INDUSTRIALIZATION: URBANIZATION AND CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS (1800–1850) 717

PEOPLE ON THE LAND	718
URBANIZATION AND THE STANDARD OF LIVING	723
THE LIFE OF THE URBAN MIDDLE CLASS	726
THE LIFE OF THE URBAN WORKING CLASS	733
THE MIDDLE-CLASS WORLDVIEW	739
EARLY CRITICS OF THE MIDDLE-CLASS WORLDVIEW	745

<i>Chapter 22</i>	THE RISE OF LIBERALISM (1815–1870)	751
	CONSERVATIVE REACTION, 1815–1830	752
	LIBERAL GAINS IN WESTERN EUROPE, 1815–1832	753
	LIBERALISM IN FRANCE AND BRITAIN, 1830–1848	759
	THE REVOLUTION OF 1848 IN FRANCE	767
	LIBERALISM IN FRANCE AND BRITAIN AFTER 1850	771
<i>Chapter 23</i>	NATIONALISM AND NATION-BUILDING (1815–1870)	777
	ROMANTICISM AND NATIONALISM	778
	NATIONALISM AND NATION-BUILDING, 1800–1848	784
	NATIONALISM, LIBERALISM, AND REVOLUTION, 1848	788
	NATION-BUILDING, 1850–1870	793
<i>Part Six</i>	THE WEST AT THE WORLD'S CENTER	
<i>Chapter 24</i>	THE PROGRESS OF INTERNATIONAL INDUSTRIALIZATION AND COMPETITION (1870–1914)	811
	NEW TECHNOLOGIES	812
	CHANGES IN SCOPE AND SCALE	816
	THE NEW CAPITALISM	822
	INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION: BRITAIN VS. GERMANY	825
	INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION: IMPERIALISM	827
<i>Chapter 25</i>	THE MIDDLE CLASS CHALLENGED	841
	THE CHALLENGE OF SOCIALISM	841
	THE CHALLENGE OF SCIENCE AND PHILOSOPHY	850
	THE CHALLENGE OF LITERATURE AND THE ARTS	857
<i>Chapter 26</i>	A DELICATE EQUILIBRIUM (1870–1914)	869
	GERMANY: THE SEARCH FOR IMPERIAL UNITY	870
	FRANCE: THE EMBATTLED THIRD REPUBLIC	874
	BRITAIN: FROM MODERATION TO MILITANCE	879
	RUSSIA: THE ROAD TO REVOLUTION	884
	THE SEARCH FOR EQUILIBRIUM ELSEWHERE IN THE WEST	892
	INTERNATIONAL RIVALRIES: THE ROAD TO THE FIRST WORLD WAR	897

Chapter 27 THE FIRST WORLD WAR 905

- PRELUDE TO WAR 905
- THE ORDEAL OF BATTLE 910
- REVOLUTION IN THE MIDST OF WAR 916
- ARMISTICE AND PEACE 921

Chapter 28 TURMOIL BETWEEN THE WARS 935

- THE SOVIET EXPERIENCE AND THE RISE OF STALIN 936
- THE EMERGENCE OF FASCISM IN ITALY 944
- THE RISE OF NAZI GERMANY 948
- THE DEMOCRACIES BETWEEN THE WARS 957
- INTELLECTUAL AND CULTURAL TRENDS IN THE INTERWAR YEARS 961

Chapter 29 THE SECOND WORLD WAR 975

- THE CAUSES OF THE WAR 976
- THE OUTBREAK OF HOSTILITIES 981
- THE PEACE SETTLEMENT 988

Part Seven THE EMERGENCE OF WORLD
CIVILIZATION

Chapter 30 NEW POWER RELATIONSHIP AND THE NEW EUROPE 999

- A DIVIDED CONTINENT 1001
- ECONOMIC RENAISSANCE 1010
- THE POLITICS OF EUROPEAN RECOVERY 1016
- PATTERNS OF SOCIAL CHANGE 1019
- PROTEST AND STAGNATION: THE PRICE OF STABILITY 1021
- EUROPE RECAST: THE COLLAPSE OF COMMUNISM AND THE END OF THE SOVIET UNION
1027
- INTELLECTUAL AND CULTURAL PATTERNS 1033

Chapter 31 PROBLEMS OF WORLD CIVILIZATION 1043

- THE EMERGENCE OF THE THIRD WORLD AND ITS CONSEQUENCES 1044
- WARMAKING AND PEACEKEEPING IN THE NUCLEAR AGE 1055

THE PROBLEMS OF ECOLOGY AND POPULATION	1065
THE ACHIEVEMENTS AND LIMITATIONS OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY	1068

RULERS OF THE PRINCIPAL STATES	1075
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS	1081
INDEX	

MAPS

MAPS IN COLOR

(Maps appear facing or following the pages indicated)

Europe at the End of the Thirty Years' War, 1648	493
The Empire of Napoleon at Its Greatest Extent, 1812	684
The Industrial Revolution	685
Europe on the Eve of World War I, 1914	940
The Soviet Union, 1918–1945	940
Europe on the Eve of World War II, Sept. 1, 1939	941
Europe during the Cold War	1037

MAPS IN BLACK AND WHITE

Europe c. 1560	490
The Atlantic World in 1713	548
Age of Absolutism	593
France under the Ancien Régime	659
France: The Revolutionary Departments after 1789	681
Europe after the Congress of Vienna, 1815	691
Toward the Unification of Germany, 1740–1871	795
The Unification of Italy	798
Imperialism in Africa to the Eve of World War II	833
The Great Powers and Imperialism in Asia to Sept. 1, 1940	837
Europe after the Congress of Berlin, 1878	893
The Dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire, 1683–1923	895
Territorial Changes in Europe and the Near East Resulting from World War I	928–929
The Post Cold War West, 1992	1034
The Decline of Colonialism after World War II	1047

WESTERN CIVILIZATIONS



A CENTURY OF CRISIS FOR EARLY-MODERN EUROPE (c. 1560–c. 1660)

I do not wish to say much about the customs of the age in which we live.
I can only state that this age is not one of the best, being a century of iron.

—R. Mentet de Salmonet, *History of the Troubles in Great Britain* (1649)

What in me is dark
Illumine, what is low raise and support.

—John Milton, *Paradise Lost*

On the night before St. Bartholomew's Day in August of 1572 the Catholic queen mother of France, Catherine de Medici, authorized the ambush of French Protestant leaders who had come to Paris to attend a wedding. Thereupon, during the hours after midnight, unsuspecting people were awakened and stabbed to death or thrown out of windows. Soon all the targeted Protestants were eliminated, but the killing did not stop because roving bands of Parisian Catholics seized the opportunity of licensed carnage to slaughter at will any enemies they happened upon, Protestant or otherwise. By morning the River Seine was clogged with corpses and scores of bodies hung from gibbets in witness to an event known ever since as the Massacre of St. Bartholomew's Day.

A massacre in Paris

Had this lamentable incident been an isolated event it hardly would be worth mentioning, but in fact throughout the hundred years from roughly 1560 to roughly 1660 outbreaks of religious mayhem—with Protestants the ruthless killers in certain cases as Catholics were in others—recurred in many parts of Europe. Moreover, to make matters far worse, economic hardships and prolonged wars accompanied religious riots to result in a century of pronounced crisis for European civilization. Granted that Europe's early-modern period of crisis was much less uniform in its nature

A century of crisis



The St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre. A contemporary painting depicts the merciless slaughter of Huguenots in Paris. At the top left (in front of the large gate next to the Seine) the Queen Mother Catherine looks over a pile of naked dead bodies; to the right a Huguenot leader is being pushed out of a window.

and extent than the terrible times of the Later Middle Ages, seen from the broadest perspective the period from 1560 to 1660 was Western Europe's "iron century"—an age of great turbulence and severe trials.

1. ECONOMIC, RELIGIOUS, AND POLITICAL TESTS

Impending crisis

Europe's time of troubles crept up on contemporaries unawares. For almost a century before 1560 most of the West had enjoyed steady economic growth, and the discovery of the New World seemed the basis of greater prosperity to come. Political trends too seemed auspicious, since most Western European governments were becoming ever more efficient and providing more internal peace for their subjects. Yet around 1560 thunderclouds were gathering in the skies that would soon burst into terrible storms.

Soaring prices

Although the causes of these storms were interrelated, each may be examined separately, starting with the great price inflation. Nothing like the upward price trend that affected Western Europe in the second half of the sixteenth century had ever happened before. The cost of a measure of

wheat in Flanders, for example, tripled from 1550 to 1600, grain prices in Paris quadrupled, and the overall cost of living in England advanced well over 100 percent during the same period. Certainly the twentieth century has seen much more dizzying inflations than this, but since the skyrocketing of prices in the later sixteenth century was a novelty, most historians agree on calling it the “price revolution.”

If experts agree on the terminology, however, very few of them agree on the exact combination of circumstances that caused the price revolution, for early-modern statistics are patchy and many areas of economic theory remain under dispute. Nonetheless, for present purposes two explanations for the great inflation may be offered with confidence. The first is demographic. Starting in the later fifteenth century, Europe’s population began to mount again after the plague-induced fall-off: roughly estimated, there were about 50 million people in Europe around 1450 and 90 million around 1600. Since Europe’s food supply remained more or less constant owing to the lack of any noteworthy breakthrough in agricultural technology, food prices inevitably were driven sharply higher by greater demand. Although the prices of manufactured goods did not rise as steeply because there was a greater match between supply and demand, the prices of manufactured items did rise, especially in cases where the supply of agricultural raw materials crucial to the manufacturing process remained relatively inelastic.

Population trends explain much, but since Europe’s population did not grow nearly as rapidly in the second half of the sixteenth century as prices, other explanations for the great inflation are still necessary. Foremost among these is the enormous influx of bullion from Spanish America. Around 1560 a new technique of extracting silver from silver ore made the working of newly discovered mines in Mexico and Bolivia highly practical, soon transforming the previous trickle of silver entering the European economy into a flood. Whereas in the five years between 1556 and 1560 roughly 10 million ducats worth of silver passed through the Spanish entry point of Seville, between 1576 and 1580 that figure had doubled, and between 1591 and 1595 it had more than quadrupled. Inasmuch as most of this silver was used by the Spanish crown to pay its foreign creditors and its armies abroad, or by private individuals to pay for imports from other countries, Spanish bullion quickly circulated throughout Europe, where much of it was minted into coins. This dramatic increase in the volume of money in circulation further fueled the spiral of rising prices. “I learned a proverb here,” said a French traveler in Spain in 1603, “everything costs much here except silver.”

Aggressive entrepreneurs and landlords profited most from the changed economic circumstances, while the masses of laboring people were hurt the worst. Obviously, merchants in possession of sought-after goods were able to raise prices at will, and landlords either could profit directly from the rising prices of agricultural produce or, if they did not farm their own lands, could always raise rents. But laborers in country and town were caught in a squeeze because wages rose far more slowly than prices, owing to the pres-

Causes of inflation:

(1) *population increase*

(2) *influx of silver*

*Effects of inflation on the
laboring poor*