

Robert E. Lerner • Standish Meacham
Edward McNall Burns



WESTERN CIVILIZATIONS

ELEVENTH EDITION

VOLUME **1**

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WESTERN CIVILIZATIONS

Their History and Their Culture

VOLUME I

ELEVENTH EDITION

*For Dietlind and Olivia;
Edith, Louisa, and Samuel*

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PREFACE

First published in 1941 and soon approaching its fiftieth birthday, *Western Civilizations* is often deemed a “textbook classic.” Most likely Edward McNall Burns, who brought out the first eight editions without collaborators between 1941 and 1973, was aiming toward this goal. Certainly Professor Burns was determined to create a history text of high literary distinction, one that provided coherence of narrative and interpretation expressed in vigorous and distinguished prose. Professor Burns recognized, moreover, that any introductory history text of quality needed to be more than a political history—or an economic or social history for that matter. Instead he firmly conceived of his book as a history of *civilizations*—an account of the changing ways in which humans have organized their lives in response to changing environments and consistent imperatives. Accordingly he chose to complement narrative passages with thoughtful discussions of ideas and societal institutions. Perhaps above all, Professor Burns wished to engage his readers’ attention. As a true teacher/writer he intended to demonstrate, without resorting to the slightest meretriciousness, that “freshman history” need not be viewed as a chore but might be welcomed as a source of intellectual stimulation and perhaps even delight.

Approving of Professor Burns’s strategies and sharing his goals, we have sought to retain the basic physiognomy of *Western Civilizations* in our revisions. Nevertheless the explosion of knowledge about previously neglected historical subject matters and the progress of research in more traditional areas has made it necessary to rewrite much of the work we inherited. Having redone most of the medieval and nineteenth-century material for the ninth edition, and most of the early-modern material for the tenth, we have now concentrated on overhauling the opening and the closing chapters of the book while also reexamining the entire text word by word.

Those familiar with earlier versions of *Western Civilizations* will notice right away that Part One in this eleventh edition bears mini-

mal resemblance to its predecessors insofar as it now contains four chapters instead of five, covers several aspects of paleoanthropology hitherto ignored, treats Mesopotamia before Egypt, integrates the Hittites into the Mesopotamia chapter but removes the Persians from the same chapter, and unites the Minoans and Mycenaeans with the Hebrews in one chapter. More specifically, almost the entire contents of Chapters 1 and 2 and most of what appears in Chapter 4 is completely new. Chapter 1 now aims to present simply and coherently the latest findings in paleoanthropology (a field perhaps right behind superconductivity as one of the fastest moving areas of scientific research) and to concentrate on the most important moments of change in early human existence in western Asia—the origins of sedentary villages and the “birth of Western civilizations.” Chapter 2 takes up where Chapter 1 left off (hence the new placement of Mesopotamia before Egypt) and seeks to address the flow of Mesopotamian history over the course of two and a half millennia from a more developmental perspective than before. Also new to this chapter is its emphasis on ecology and technology. The bulk of Chapter 4 consists of a fully rewritten consideration of the history and fortunes of the ancient Hebrews, stressing the magnitude of their influence on subsequent patterns of thought and behavior in the Western world.

The most extensive revision in Part Two of *Western Civilizations* lies in its treatment of the Hellenistic era. The Hellenistic chapter now opens with a consideration of the Persians (hitherto treated as a postscript to Mesopotamia) and then narrates the conquests of Alexander the Great (hitherto located in the Greek chapter); in both cases these transpositions were made in order to provide a more coherent background to the nature of Hellenistic civilization itself. In addition, the assessments of an earlier scholarly generation regarding Hellenistic economic and social “modernity” have been revised. Although less dramatic changes have been made in the respective chapters on the Greeks and the Romans, streamlining for clarity appears in both of those chapters on almost every page.

Significant revisions in Parts Three and Four include a new discussion of Jesus’s career and teachings as well as a revised consideration of Augustine’s *City of God*; an overhaul of the treatment of Waldenianism and of the founding of the Dominican and Franciscan Orders; and new accounts concerning Heloise and Abelard, the “Jacquerie,” the reigns of Ferdinand and Isabella, and Anabaptism. Chapter 16 reformulates and expands previous treatments of the joint-stock company, the enclosure movement, rural manufacturing, and demographic trends in the early-modern era. Coverage of “The Age of Absolutism” in Chapter 17 now emphasizes the close relationship between economic innovation and the rise of the power of the state, and includes new material on the absolutism of central and eastern Europe. The treatment of Kant has been moved from the

section on nineteenth-century Romanticism to the Enlightenment chapter.

In Parts Five and Six changes have similarly reflected recent scholarly perceptions and conclusions, as well as a desire to organize and present material as logically and cogently as possible. The treatment of the French Revolution in Chapter 19 contains a revised analysis of the factors that brought about the crisis of 1789, and additional material on the spread of revolutionary and Napoleonic reforms throughout the Continent. Chapter 20, "The Industrial Revolution," ties early nineteenth-century change to antecedents in what can no longer be perceived as an entirely "pre-industrial" past. Subsequent chapters on the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries contain new material on eastern Europe, on the role of women, on the meaning and importance of imperialism, and on the rise of militarism before the First World War. Revised and expanded discussion of the interwar era in Chapter 28 conveys a clearer sense of the varieties of twentieth-century totalitarianism, and, in particular, of the nature of Nazism.

In keeping with the dramatic changes in the post-Second World War era, Part Seven has been extensively reconstituted, revised, and expanded. Chapter 30 now carries forward the saga of Europe and the West well into the 1980s, treating such issues as international power relationships and class consciousness in terms of themes developed in earlier discussions. Europe's economic recovery and integration, postwar politics, and patterns of social and intellectual change are explored with a new thoroughness. The final chapter offers revised, reorganized, and updated coverage of the emergence of the Third World, the problems of international peacekeeping, ecology, population, and scientific and technological advance.

Robert Lerner has enjoyed writing and revising the material in Chapters 1 through 15 as well as Chapter 18, and Standish Meacham has enjoyed writing and revising the rest. To be sure, our enjoyment would have been greatly diminished had we not been able to draw on the criticisms and tips of a number of extremely thoughtful and helpful readers. Loretta Smith (Northwestern University) helped a Neanderthal master the material of Chapter 1 so much that she ought really to count as its coauthor. Carl Petry (Northwestern University) offered invaluable guidance on Egypt; Seymour Scheinberg (California State University at Fullerton) supplied welcome advice on all of Part One, and William V. Harris (Columbia University) and Richard Saller (University of Chicago) provided tough-minded critiques of all of Part Two. Helpful suggestions made by James Stanely and Stephen Knoble (both of Moody Bible College) were incorporated into Chapter 2, and suggestions made by Richard T. Nolan (Mattatuck Community College) were incorporated into Chapter 8. A needed fresh perspective on medieval Europe came from Stephen Ferruolo (Stanford University). A. N. Galpern (University of Pittsburgh) helped

greatly to improve many passages in the early-modern chapters, and Martin Katz (University of Alberta) provided valued help on Russia in all periods. Gert Wendelborn (University of Rostock, Germany) read the entire first half of the book with extraordinary attentiveness and is responsible for numerous improvements. Later chapters received the benefit of detailed and thoughtful criticism from James J. Sheehan (Stanford University), Allen Cronenberg (Auburn University), and James Boyden (University of Texas). Peter Hayes (Northwestern University) made some valuable observations about the treatment of twentieth-century Germany. George Robb (Northwestern University) read the entire work and smoked out several errors and infelicities. Deeana Copeland won a proofreading derby by catching twice as many “typos” as did one of the authors. At W. W. Norton & Company, Ruth Mandel has gathered illustrations with her wonted tenacity, Ben Gamit has executed the page layout with imagination and flair, and Sandy Lifland has demonstrated that firm and skillful editorial commandeering can be accomplished with tact. Our greatest debt, as it has been from the start, is to Robert E. Kehoe—omnicompetent, omnipresent (New York, Indiana, Illinois, Texas, apparently all at the same time), and, if not omniscient, pretty close to it.

Robert E. Lerner
Standish Meacham

WESTERN CIVILIZATIONS



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