

Ancient and Medieval History

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ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL HISTORY



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PREFACE

This volume has been written as a textbook for high-school courses in ancient and medieval, or in ancient, medieval, and early modern history. It conforms to the specifications set forth for such courses in the more progressive and up-to-date syllabi of state and local educational authorities in the United States; and it incorporates the suggestions which the authors have welcomed from a number of high-school teachers.

While the text itself has been brought within a compass that can be covered comfortably in a one-year course, the volume is very generously provided with illustrations, colored plates, maps, time-charts, questions for review, topical references for further study, and select bibliographies. The utmost effort has been made to render the narrative especially clear and simple, readable by young people, and, above all, teachable.

The authors have sought, moreover, to present the picture of bygone ages as accurately and as critically as possible, in the light of the researches of scholarly specialists. In the hope that teachers will appreciate a serious attempt to bring a textbook survey up-to-date from the standpoint of scholarship, the authors have ventured in numerous instances to follow these specialists in revising interpretations or opinions which still enjoy some popular currency although now definitely demolished and discarded by the leading authorities. Upon the scholarly works of Breasted, Osborn, Kroeber, Olmstead, Evans, Glotz, Botsford, Boak, Carter, Bury, Thorndike, Spinden, Gowen, Ferguson, Frank, Westermann, Rostovtzeff, Haskins, and many others, as well as upon the numerous competent monographic chapters in the voluminous Cambridge Histories, the authors have leaned heavily. Their own contribution has been chiefly one of evaluation, simplification, and synthesis.

The synthesis is the main thing. And the authors flatter them-

selves that their more intensive studies in modern history have equipped them to emphasize those factors in the distant past which have been most operative in the recent past and are most significant at the present time — precisely those factors which should constitute the most telling synthesis of human history for the boys and girls of to-day, for the men and women of to-morrow. Cultural factors have been emphasized — what is most significant in the society and the economy, in the art and the religion, as well as in the politics and the wars of Stone Age hunters and farmers, of nomadic tribesmen, of the enduring civilizations of Egypt, Babylonia, and Crete, of the Phœnicians and the Hebrews, of Greece and of Rome, and of medieval Europe.

Nor has the vision been restricted to the one stream of “Western” civilization. The endeavor has been made to bring into the synthesis — into the broader and richer stream of world civilization — the noteworthy contributions of China and Japan, of India and Persia, of Mayas, Aztecs, and Incas. A genuine world history of the past is offered as a preparation for an understanding of the world problems of the present.

Realizing that there is no general agreement as to the scope of the first year’s course in world history, the authors have so planned this volume that it will cover the maximum period, from the Old Stone Age to the eve of the French Revolution; but it is also designed, Chapter XXIV being omitted, for courses ending with the sixteenth century. Partly for this purpose of convenience, but primarily for a more fundamental reason, the conventional lines of demarcation between “ancient,” “medieval,” and “modern” history have been subjected to certain modifications and refinements. It has long been customary to regard as “ancient history” everything prior to the German invasions, and to designate the following millennium, from the fifth to the fifteenth century, as “the middle ages,” leaving some four centuries to the “modern period.” For such a periodizing of history there is some justification; but against it there are also grave objections. The Roman Empire, which is supposed to be “ancient,” actually continued in eastern Europe until the end of the so-called “middle ages,” while Christianity, the core of “medieval” civilization,

had its beginning and transformed the classical Græco-Roman civilization *before* the commencement of the "middle ages."

If it is impossible to draw a sharp line between "ancient" and "medieval" history, it is equally difficult to delimit the boundary between "medieval" and "modern." We who live in America or Europe of the twentieth century A.D. are still "medieval" in a large number of habits of thought and action. We know quotations from the Bible. We are familiar with Christian churches. We observe one day in the week in some special manner. We all recognize that we are different from Moslems and Buddhists. Our speech, our architecture, our institutions of higher learning, many of our social customs, even our parliaments and juries, date from the "middle ages," as our national languages do. Any periodizing of history is open to objection, but it is especially unfortunate, we believe, to attempt a division of human history into three compartments, described as "ancient," "medieval," and "modern."

Yet for practical purposes in writing and studying history, it is convenient to emphasize certain major changes in civilization by the device of "period" labels. More significant, and less misleading than the familiar threefold division would be some such series as the following: (1) an Old Stone Age, the longest and least-known of eras; (2) an Age of Farmers, marked by the transition to civilized agricultural states and by the gradual substitution of copper and then bronze for stone implements; (3) an Age of Oriental Empires, in which the first great civilizations flourished, while copper and bronze gave way to iron; (4) a Classical Age, in which the Greek city-states, then the Hellenistic monarchies, and finally the Roman Republic and Empire blended the heritage of Near Eastern culture and produced masterpieces still styled "classics" by the western world, while in India and China there developed different but comparable "classical" civilizations; (5) a Roman-Christian Period, during which Christianity as the state religion of the Roman Empire modified and extended the classical Mediterranean culture; (6) a Dark Age, which witnessed the partition of the Roman Empire, the decline of culture in the West, and the spread of Christian civilization throughout northern and

eastern Europe; (7) a Middle Age, in which western and central Europe, emerging from barbarism, constructed a rich and many-sided "medieval" civilization; (8) an Era of Transition, in which western Europe, coming into contact with Asia and America, and reviving the classical heritage, entered upon an adventurous career of expansion, national monarchy, religious upheaval, and scholarly humanism; and finally (9) a Modern Period distinguished particularly by the rise of machine-industry, capitalism, natural science, democracy, and nationalism, not only in Europe, but spreading from Europe and America to touch every land. In a general way, the first eight of these landmarks will be remarked in the pages that follow; but such chronological divisions have not been misapplied to Asia and America, nor have they been allowed to obstruct a topical interpretation of the material.

In the last analysis, the usefulness of this book will depend upon its appeal to teachers and pupils in our secondary schools. If it does appeal to them, the credit must go less to the authors who conceived it or to the publishers who gave it an attractive form than to the numberless scholars and commentators who have supplied many of its ideas or have criticized its content. To all of these scholars and critics the authors are deeply grateful. In particular they acknowledge with sincere gratitude the candid and helpful criticism of practised teachers, including Miss Ethel Woolf, Head of the Department of History in the Girls' High School, Atlanta; Dr. W. H. J. Kennedy, Dean of Boston Teachers College and formerly of the Public Latin School, Boston; Professor Irving Raymond of Columbia College; Mr. Thomas Peardon of Barnard College; Professor Wallace Caldwell of the University of North Carolina; and that master-teacher and scholar, Dr. Charles Austin Beard.

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C. J. H. H.

P. T. M.

April 15, 1929.

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