

Western Civilization *A Brief History*

Jackson J. Spielvogel

volume

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to
1715





WESTERN CIVILIZATION

A Brief History
Volume I: To 1715

JACKSON J. SPIELVOGEL

The Pennsylvania State University



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About the Author

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*To Diane,
whose love and support made it all possible*



Preface

We are often reminded how important it is to understand today's world if we are to deal with our growing number of challenges. And yet that understanding will be incomplete if we in the Western world do not comprehend the meaning of Western civilization and the role Western civilization has played in the world. For all of our modern progress, we still greatly reflect our religious traditions, our political systems and theories, our economic and social structures, and our cultural heritage. I have written this brief history of Western civilization to assist a new generation of students in learning more about the past that has helped create them and the world in which they live.

I began this project with two primary goals. First, I wanted to write a well-balanced work in which the political, economic, social, religious, intellectual, cultural, and military aspects of Western civilization would be integrated into a chronologically ordered synthesis. Second, I wanted to avoid the approach that is quite common in other brief histories of Western civilization—an approach that makes them collections of facts with little continuity from section to section. Instead, I sought to keep the story in history. Narrative history effectively transmits the knowledge of the past and is the form that best enables students to remember and understand the past. At the same time, I have not overlooked the need for the kind of historical analysis that makes students aware that historians often disagree in their interpretations of the past.

To enliven the past and let readers see for themselves the materials that historians use to create their pictures of the past, I have included in each chapter primary sources (boxed documents) that are keyed to the discussion in the text. The documents include examples of the religious, artistic, intellectual, social, economic, and political aspects of Western life. Such varied sources as a Roman banquet menu, advice from a Carolingian mother to her son, marriage negotiations in Renaissance Italy, the diary of a German soldier at Stalingrad, and a debate in the Reformation era all reveal in a vivid fashion what

Western civilization meant to the individual men and women who shaped it by their activities.

Each chapter has a lengthy introduction and conclusion to help maintain the continuity of the narrative and to provide a synthesis of important themes. Anecdotes in the chapter introductions convey more dramatically the major theme or themes of each chapter. Detailed chronologies reinforce the events discussed in the text while timelines at the beginning of each chapter enable students to see at a glance the major developments of an era. An annotated bibliography at the end of each chapter reviews the most recent literature on each period and also gives references to some of the older, “classic” works in each field. Extensive maps and illustrations serve to deepen the reader's understanding of the text. To facilitate understanding of cultural movements, illustrations of artistic works discussed in the text are placed next to the discussions.

Because courses in Western civilization at American and Canadian colleges and universities follow different chronological divisions, a one-volume edition and a two-volume edition of this text are being made available to fit the needs of instructors. Teaching and learning ancillaries include the following:

For Instructors: Instructor's Manual/Test Bank—contains chapter outlines, suggested lecture topics, discussion questions for the primary documents, map and art discussion questions. Suggested films, music, and readings are included to spice up lectures. Examination questions include essay, identification, multiple choice, and true/false questions. By Kevin Robbins, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis available in one volume only.

Thomson World Class Testing Tools—is a fully-integrated suite of test creation, delivery and classroom management tools. The package includes: World Class Test, Test Online, and World Class Manager software.

Western Civilization Map Acetates—this extensive four color acetate package includes maps from the text

and from other sources and includes map commentary prepared by James Harrison, Siena College. The acetates and commentary are packaged in a three ring binder.

Western Civilization Powerpoint—contains all the four color maps from the map acetate package, described above.

Color Map Slides—approximately 100 full color slides feature all the texts maps as well as images from other sources. Commentary is also provided.

Sights and Sounds of History Videodisk—contains short, focused video clips, photos, artwork, animations, music and dramatic readings that bring history to life. Video segments averaging four minutes in length are available on VHS. These segments make excellent lecture launchers.

Western Civilization Video Library—ask your local sales representative for details and qualifications.

For Students: Study Guide—prepared by James Baker, Western Kentucky University, contains chapter outlines, chapter summaries, and seven different types of exercises for each chapter. The exercises include: words to identify, words to match with their definitions, multiple choice questions, sentences to complete, chronological arrangements, questions for critical thought, and analysis of primary source documents. Map exercises appear at the end of many chapters. Available in volumes I and II that correspond with volumes I and II of the text.

Study Tips—prepared by James Baker, Western Kentucky University, contains brief chapter outlines, key terms, questions for critical thought and questions on primary documents for each chapter. Available in volumes I and II that correspond with volumes I and II of the text.

Document Exercises Workbook—prepared by Donna Van Raaphorst, Cuyahoga Community College, is a two-volume collection of exercises based around primary sources, teaching students how to use documents and historiographic methods.

Map Exercise Workbook—prepared by Cynthia Kosso, Northern Arizona University, is a two-volume workbook, each featuring over 20 map exercises. The exercises are designed to help students understand the relationship between places and people through time. All map exercises incorporate three parts: an introduction, a locations section where students are asked to correctly place a city, site, or boundary, and a question section.

Western Civilization Canadian Supplement—prepared by Maryann Farkus, Dawson College, Montreal, is a 30 page supplement for students that discusses Canadian history and culture in the context of Western civilization. Material is linked to chapters of Spielvogel.

Journey of Civilization CD-Rom: This exciting Windows CD-Rom takes the student on 18 interactive journeys through history. Enhanced with Quicktime movies, animations, sound clips, maps, and more, the journeys allow students to engage in history as active participants rather than as readers of past events.

Archer, Documents of Western Civilization, Volume I: To 1715

Archer, Documents of Western Civilization, Volume II: Since 1300

For Both: Internet Guide for History—prepared by Daniel Kurland and John Soares. Section One introduces students to the internet including tips for searching on the Web. Section Two introduces students to how history research can be done and lists URL sites by topic.

Web Page


Acknowledgments

I would like to thank the many teachers and students who have used the first three editions of my *Western Civilization*. I am gratified by their enthusiastic response to a textbook that was intended to put the story back in history and capture the imagination of the reader. I especially thank the many teachers and students who made the effort to contact me personally to share their enthusiasm. I continue to be grateful to the many historians who reviewed the three editions of *Western Civilization*, but I also want to thank the following who made suggestions for this new brief history of Western Civilization:

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Introduction to Students of Western Civilization

Civilization, as historians define it, first emerged between 5,000 and 6,000 years ago when people began to live in organized communities with distinct political, military, economic, and social structures. Religious, intellectual, and artistic activities also assumed important roles in these early societies. The focus of this book is on Western civilization, a civilization that for most of its history has been identified with the continent of Europe. Its origins, however, go back to the Mediterranean basin, including lands in North Africa, and the Near East as well as Europe itself. Moreover, the spread of Europeans abroad led to the development of offshoots of Western civilization in other parts of the world.

Because civilized life includes all the deeds and experiences of people organized in communities, the history of a civilization must encompass a series of studies. An examination of Western civilization requires us to study the political, economic, social, military, cultural, intellectual, and religious aspects that make up the life of that civilization and show how they are interrelated. In so doing, we need also at times to focus on some of the unique features of Western civilization. Certainly, science played a crucial role in the development of modern Western civilization. Although such societies as those of the Greeks, the Romans, and medieval Europeans were based largely on a belief in the existence of a spiritual order, Western civilization experienced a dramatic departure to a natural or material view of the universe in the seventeenth-century Scientific Revolution. Science and technology have been important in the growth of a modern and largely secular Western civilization, although antecedents to scientific development also existed in Greek, Islamic, and medieval thought and practice.

Many historians have also viewed the concept of political liberty, the fundamental value of every individual, and the creation of a rational outlook, based on a system of log-

ical, analytical thought, as unique aspects of Western civilization. Of course, Western civilization has also witnessed the frightening negation of liberty, individualism, and reason. Racism, violence, world wars, totalitarianism—these, too, must form part of the story. Finally, regardless of our concentration on Western civilization and its characteristics, we need to take into account that other civilizations have influenced Western civilization and it, in turn, has affected the development of other civilizations.

In our examination of Western civilization, we need also to be aware of the dating of time. In recording the past, historians try to determine the exact time when events occurred. World War II in Europe, for example, began on September 1, 1939, when Hitler sent German troops into Poland, and ended on May 7, 1945, when Germany surrendered. By using dates, historians can place events in order and try to determine the development of patterns over periods of time.

If someone asked you when you were born, you would reply with a number, such as 1980. In the United States, we would all accept that number without question because it is part of the dating system followed in the Western world (Europe and the Western Hemisphere). In this system, events are dated by counting backward or forward from the birth of Christ (assumed to be the year 1). An event that took place 400 years before the birth of Christ would be dated 400 B.C. (before Christ). Dates after the birth of Christ are labeled A.D. These letters stand for the Latin words *anno Domini*, which mean “in the year of the lord.” Thus, an event that took place 250 years after the birth of Christ is written A.D. 250, or in the year of the lord 250. It can also be written as 250, just as you would not give your birth year as A.D. 1980, but simply 1980.

Historians also make use of other terms to refer to time. A decade is 10 years; a century is 100 years; and a

millennium is 1,000 years. The phrase fourth century B.C. refers to the fourth period of 100 years counting backward from 1, the assumed date of the birth of Christ. Since the first century B.C. would be the years 100 B.C. to 1 B.C., the fourth century B.C. would be the years 400 B.C. to 301 B.C. We could say, then, that an event in 350 B.C. took place in the fourth century B.C.

The phrase fourth century A.D. refers to the fourth period of 100 years after the birth of Christ. Since the first period of 100 years would be the years 1 to 100, the fourth period or fourth century would be the years 301 to 400. We could say, then, for example, that an event in 350 took place in the fourth century. Likewise, the first millennium B.C. refers to the years 1000 B.C. to 1 B.C.; the second millennium A.D. refers to the years 1001 to 2000.

Some historians now prefer to use the abbreviations B.C.E. ("before the common era") and C.E. ("common era") instead of B.C. and A.D. This is especially true of

world historians who prefer to use symbols that are not so Western or Christian oriented. The dates, of course, remain the same. Thus, 1950 B.C.E. and 1950 B.C. would be the same year. In keeping with current usage by many historians of Western civilization, this book will use the terms B.C. and A.D.

The dating of events can also vary from people to people. Most people in the Western world use the Western calendar, also known as the Gregorian calendar after Pope Gregory XIII who refined it in 1582. The Hebrew calendar, on the other hand, uses a different system in which the year 1 is the equivalent of the Western year 3760 B.C., considered by Jews to be the date of the creation of the world. Thus, the Western year 2000 will be the year 5760 on the Jewish calendar. The Islamic calendar begins year 1 on the day Muhammad fled Mecca, which is the year 622 on the Western calendar.

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