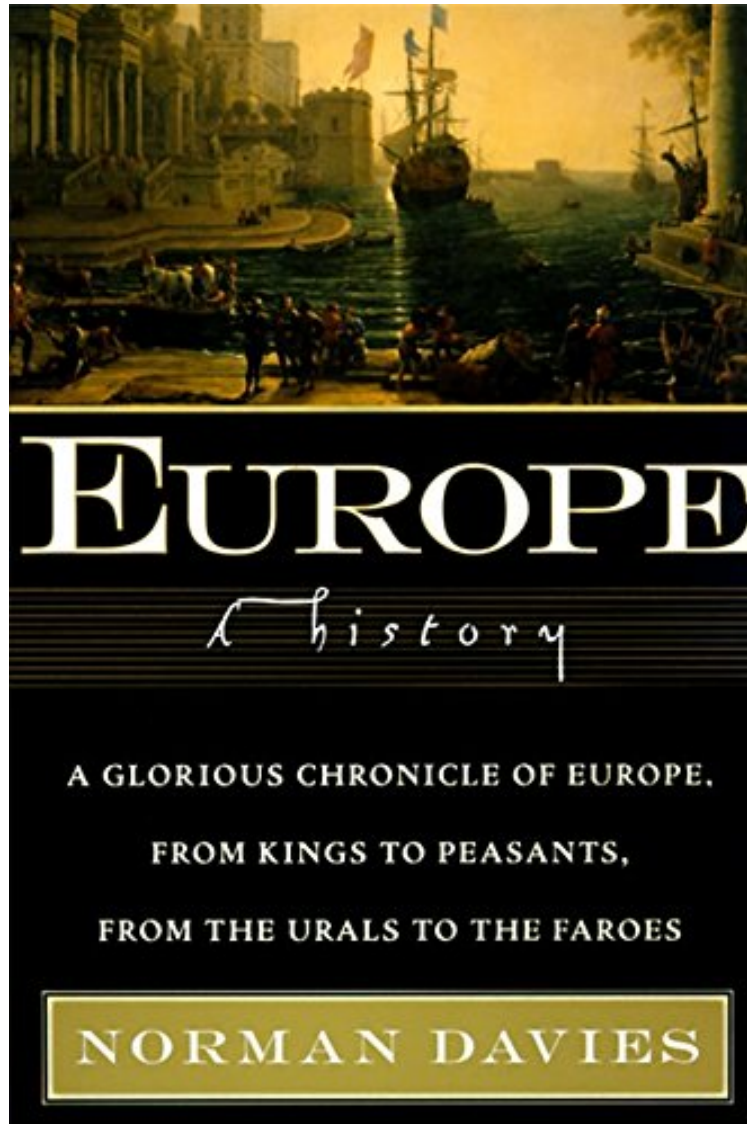


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Europe: A History

Norman Davies

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Here is a masterpiece of historical narrative that stretches from the Ice Age to the Atomic Age, as it tells the story of Europe, East and West. Norman Davies captures it all--the rise and fall of Rome, the sweeping invasions of Alaric and Atilla, the Norman Conquests, the Papal struggles for power, the Renaissance and the Reformation, the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars, Europe's rise to become the powerhouse of the world, and its eclipse in our own century, following two devastating World Wars. This is the first major history of Europe to give equal weight to both East and West, and it shines light on fascinating minority communities, from heretics and lepers to Gypsies, Jews, and Muslims. It also takes an innovative approach, combining traditional narrative with unique features that help bring history alive: 299 time capsules scattered through the narrative capture telling aspects of an era. 12 -snapshots offer a panoramic look at all of Europe at a particular moment in history. Full coverage of Eastern Europe 100 maps and diagrams, 72 black-and-white plates. All told, Davies's Europe represents one of the most important and illuminating histories to be published in recent years.

.com With Europe: A History, University of London professor Norman Davies has undertaken the near impossible: a synthetic one-volume overview of Europe from prehistory through the present. Remarkably, he has succeeded. Europe: A History is a conventional narrative, proceeding forward in time at a gradually decelerating pace. (The beginning covers millions of years of prehistory, while the final chapter discusses the 46 years between World War II and the book's publication.) But Davies's writing--vigorous, incisive, and confidently knowledgeable--carries the reader along, while the steady sweep of the main narrative is broken up by "capsules," boxed passages examining particular places, customs, or issues that cut across chronological lines. Davies, who has written two books on Polish history, also gives the eastern part of Europe its due coverage, unlike many of his predecessors, and manages to include commoners and the persecuted or ignored in his story along with the mighty and the royal. Europe: A History won't please everybody, but it's a highly intelligent, superbly readable overview that is certain to become a standard text. From Publishers Weekly The pre-eminent scholar of Polish history, Davies (God's Playground and Heart of Europe) expands his focus to all of Europe. While the book is bulky, its size is hardly adequate to a complete history of the continent from pre-history to the dismantling of the Soviet Union. In addition, as one might expect, Davies has taken great pains to treat countries other than England, France and Germany as legitimate parts of Europe?not just as the thresholds over which barbarians crossed. ("For some reason it has been the fashion among some historians to minimize the impact of the Magyars," Davies writes when discussing what would become central Europe. "All this means is that the Magyars did not reach Cambridge.") The book works because his subject is not the constituent countries but the continent as a whole. Thus, while Elizabeth I gets one brief mention in passing, Aristide Briand, the French foreign minister who tried to effect a Franco-German reconciliation until the Nazis won power, gets several paragraphs. Aside from defining what Europe is and giving all countries their due, Davies also tries to show the joys of an inclusive reading of historical subjects (he disparages excessive specialization and writes admiringly of the Annales school). A master of broad-brushstroke synthesis, Davies navigates through the larger historical currents with the detail necessary to a well-written engaging narrative. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal Historian Davies (Heart of Europe, 1984) is perfect for this ambitious project, a panoramic history of Europe from prehistoric times to the present. He reminds readers that East and West have much in common, beginning with a long, conjoined history of events, personalities, movements, and concepts. Narrative chapters alternate with tableaux of specific events; there are numerous digressive inserts. The prose is elegant throughout; Davies's comments are always insightful and frequently witty. (Of the Western historians' dismissal of the Magyars as "not a creative factor in Western history," he comments: "All this means is that the Magyars did not reach Cambridge.") The author muses on "the extreme contrast between the material advancement of European civilization and the terrible regression in political and intellectual values." At last, a truly pan-European history that rests firmly on solid scholarship and exhibits wisdom and literary elegance; highly recommended. ?David Keymer, California State Univ., Stanislaus Copyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc.