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HOHENBERG, PAUL: *A Primer on the Economic History of Europe*. New York 1968. Random House. 241 pp. \$ 2.95

This book is, as its preface announces, 'a modest effort at bringing the longer perspective of European economic history to bear on the justly popular problem of economic growth'. The focus is not quite as sharp as it could have been had the author written an essay on growth rather than a brief narrative of European economic history since the fall of Rome. It is striking, however, how little the traditional story needs to be bent to serve the fashionable concern for growth. The reason, of course, is that this has been the primary concern of economic historians since the inception of the discipline. To the extent that an intellectual trade between the economics of development and economic history is viable, then, it is not surprising that the balance of trade runs heavily in favor of history. The new trade arising between history and general economic theory, in which the flow is decisively reversed, has not influenced this book. The book stays within familiar patterns, yet treats them with pleasing freshness. The style is warm, modest, and readable. The book emphasizes recent economic history: the first third covers in rapid strokes the history up to 1750, the second up to 1914, and the third after 1914. It would be well-suited for an introductory undergraduate course in general economics or as introductory material for undergraduate courses in economic development or economic history. The usefulness of the book could be increased by adding more statistics of the story (population estimates for the middle ages, national income statistics when they become available, real wages), some maps to supplement the weak geographical background of American students, a little more chronology to supplement their equally weak historical background, and more bibliographical footnotes. Its attractions for the general reader 'desiring only a genteel sufficiency of European economic history', as the preface puts it, could be increased by giving more concrete examples of the history. On the whole, though, it is an excellent primer.

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