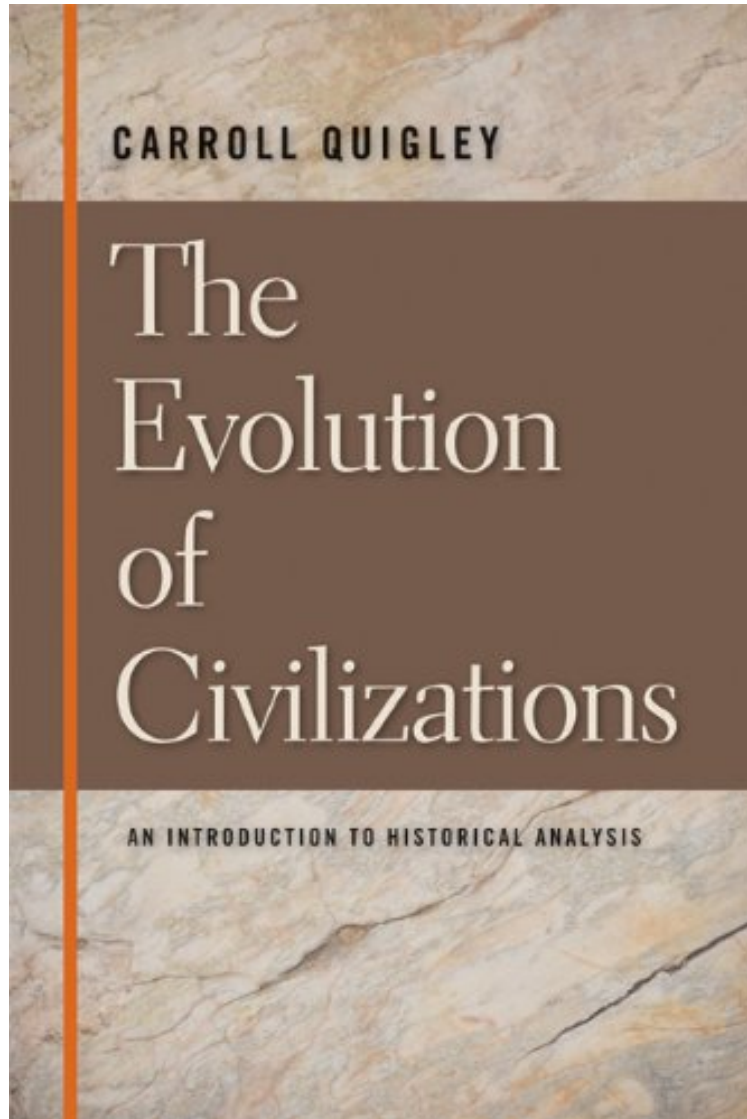


The Evolution of Civilizations

Carroll Quigley

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Carroll Quigley : The Evolution of Civilizations before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Evolution of Civilizations:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. A honest and strong intellectual effort to create a framework for history analysis on a grand scale By Emre Sevinç Let me repeat a short part from the Conclusion of the book: "To know is not too demanding: it merely requires memory and time. But to understand is quite a different matter: it requires intellectual ability and training, a self-conscious awareness of what one is doing, experience in techniques of analysis

and synthesis, and above all, perspective." I'm not a professional historian but I can see that Quigley had put a very honest intellectual effort in order help bring a perspective to the readers who want to understand the history of civilizations. He puts his framework into test by trying to explain the major phases of many civilizations and he seems to have achieved a consistent set of explanations. Moreover, he does this without being dry, the whole book is an exciting read and feels like listening to a good professor who seems to have a deep understanding and knowledge of his subject matter. Nevertheless, there are still many open questions regarding the evolution of civilizations, such as: is it really possible to explain and predict many events by focusing on weapons technology? Why the difference between civilizations between different times, etc?The book has other drawbacks, especially the explanations about linguistics, but I think they can be tolerated, after all it was written about 50 years ago. We have learned a lot since then but it's a pity that we do not see more people like Quigley; people who can write really good books on big topics without being drown in details, and people who can defend a strong framework for analyzing grand structures throughout long periods of time.18 of 18 people found the following review helpful. History through a Scientist's EyesBy Kenneth J. DillonI am a professional historian and one-time student of Carroll Quigley. Rereading "The Evolution of Civilizations" after 40 years, I heard his voice speaking across time and felt once again the uncanny penetration of his analytical mind. I suppose that he was the most remarkable person I have ever met.This book makes a major contribution to the study of civilizations, previously the preserve of writers of a literary or philosophical bent. Quigley was through and through a scientist who strove to analyze the rise and fall of civilizations and develop explanations of their dynamics that went well beyond the descriptive treatments of Toynbee and others.Quigley's seven stages of the rise and fall of civilizations, his six dimensions of analysis (military, political, economic, social, religious, and intellectual), and his application of the concept of institutionalization of once-productive "instruments" of society to explaining the stages of Expansion and Conflict are superior to any competing framework of analysis I have encountered. They deserve careful scrutiny for what they can tell us about the interaction of civilizations in our globalizing world.I found especially interesting Quigley's analysis of how climate change shaped prehistorical population movements, his discussion of the philosophical struggles of classical antiquity, and his explanation of the economic factors driving European expansion and conflict.That this book has never received much attention from professional historians should not surprise us. Quigley was operating in a mode that led him to diverge from the mainstream and to upset more than a few specialists.While this book certainly contains high value for students of world history, its teachings can be applied in other fields as well. I have found the analytical techniques and the explanation of science and epistemology in this book repeatedly fruitful in my own historical, scientific, and criminal detective work.For more on Quigley, try a Google or Yahoo search under "Carroll Quigley: Theorist of Civilizations".3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. The best book of Carroll QuigleyBy Radoslaw KmiecickiI have read few more books of Carroll Quigley and this is definitely the best one. The first time I read it, it made me want to translate it into my first language, because I believed and still do that everyone should read it. If you want to hear Carroll Quigley's ideas on history, on raise and decline of civilizations and on any social organizations - this is the book which you should start with. There are just brilliant observations on the nature of civilizations served without too many details.Once you have this background you can venture to read something more of Quigley's to fully appreciate his insights into the real reasons behind the events from the history. Most history books collects just facts and don't give you any reasons at all or give you only the official excuses. Quigley shows you true motivations behind the events and social movements.

Carroll Quigley was a legendary teacher at the Georgetown School of Foreign Service. His course on the history of civilization was extraordinary in its scope and in its impact on his students.Like the course, The Evolution of Civilizations is a comprehensive and perceptive look at the factors behind the rise and fall of civilizations.Quigley defines a civilization as "a producing society with an instrument of expansion." A civilization's decline is not inevitable but occurs when its instrument of expansion is transformed into an institutionthat is, when social arrangements that meet real social needs are transformed into social institutions serving their own purposes regardless of real social needs.

"The only book that improves on and develops Toynbees work. ... The very best work of its kind I have read in a very long time."