



The History of Government from the Earliest Times, Vol. 3: Empires, Monarchies, and the Modern State

Samuel E. Finer, S. E. (Late Emeritus Professor of Finer)

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No one has hitherto had the breadth of imagination and intellectual boldness to describe and analyse government throughout recorded history and throughout the world. This unique study of government is the culmination of the work of the late S. E. Finer, one of the leading political scientists of the twentieth century. Ranging over 5,000 years, from the Sumerian city state to the modern European nation state, five themes emerge: state-building, military formats, belief systems, social stratification, and timespan. The three volumes examine both representative and exceptional polities, and focus on political elites of different types. The first volume, Ancient Monarchies and Empires opens with Finer's masterly Conceptual Prologue, setting out the entire scope and structure of The History. He goes on to consider early examples of the predominantly palace type of polity, notably in respect of the Kingdoms of Egypt and the Empires of Assyria, Persia, Han China, and Rome; interspersed with consideration of the exceptional Jewish Kingdoms and the Greek and Roman Republics. Volume II, The Intermediate Ages encompasses the church polities of the Byzantine Empire and the Caliphate; the evolution of the Tang and Ming Empires in China; the characteristics of feudal Europe, the republican alternatives of Florence and Venice, and finally the growth of representative assemblies across Europe. Volume III, Empires, Monarchies, and the Modern State opens with Tokugawa Japan and thence reviews the evidence on the Ching, Ottoman, and Mughal Empires, before turning to facets of the re-creation, modernization, and transplantation of the European state model. It concludes with the synoptic review of Pathways to the Modern State. Professor Finer's cogent descriptive analysis offers both an invaluable reference resource and an exhilarating journey across time and space.

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