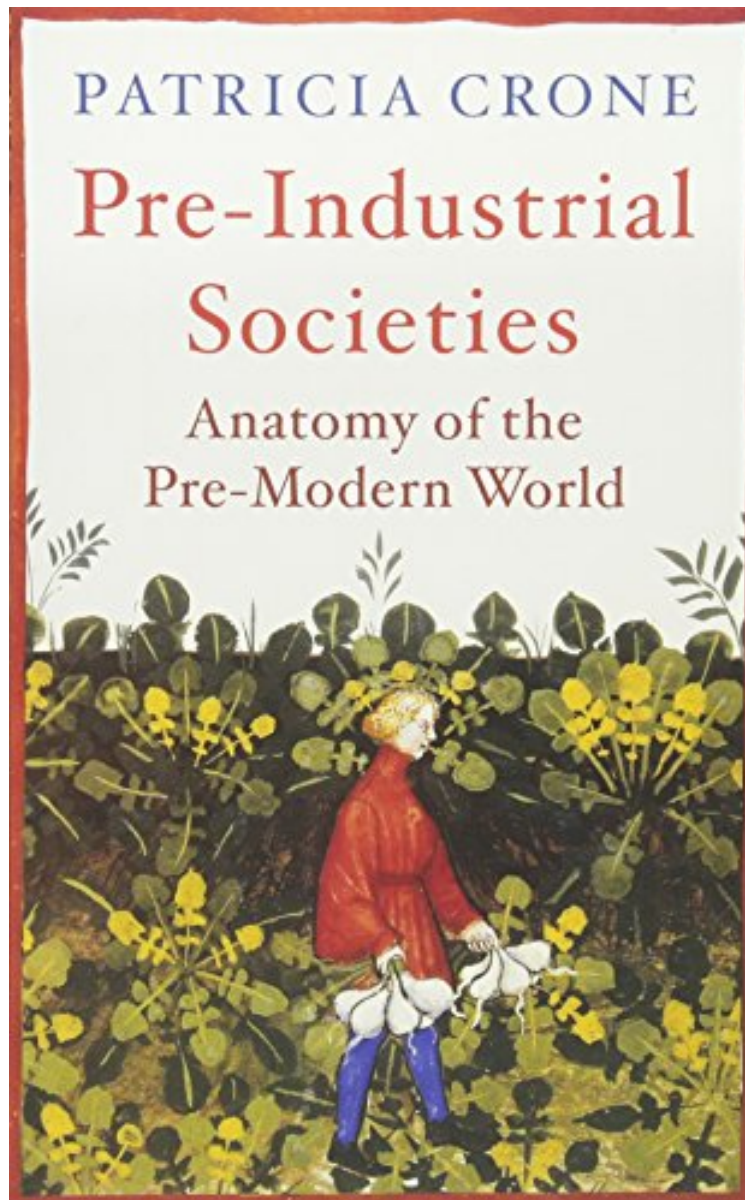


(Get free) Pre-Industrial Societies: Anatomy of the Pre-Modern World

## Pre-Industrial Societies: Anatomy of the Pre-Modern World

*Patricia Crone*

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**Patricia Crone : Pre-Industrial Societies: Anatomy of the Pre-Modern World** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Pre-Industrial Societies: Anatomy of the Pre-Modern World:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A good quick survey of pre-modern societies, and the origins of

modernityBy omarali50A good review of pre-industrial societies (especially emphasizing how they ALL differed from modern societies, even as they had their own great variety). Somewhat elementary and sometimes TOO elementary (the thought experiments about the evolution of politics and religion for example could be improved). About politics and states for example the Fukuyama book (The origins of political order) is far more detailed and deeply thought out. But this is a good quick read and she clearly has deeper knowledge that is simplified and "dumbed down" for this particular presentation.The last two chapters (discussing why Europe was different and whether all societies were headed for this specific modernity, only at different rates..she thinks not) are very interesting and were the ones I found most enlightening and thought provoking.Well worth a read.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Four StarsBy Jan Christian NielsenEasy but thorough reading on a very fascinating subject.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Most People for Most of HistoryBy JohnCarrI bought this book to read one chapter but found all of it to be worth the read.Like Gaul, it is divided into three parts.The first two-thirds deal with the subject matter of the title. It doesnt, nor does it claim to, deal with all pre-industrial societies it deals with societies that were pre-industrial of the civilized kind, in other words the kinds of societies that the majority of people have lived in since before recorded history and up to about two centuries ago. (SJWs whom I would urge to read this in order to gain some understanding of the planet they live on be warned, this book includes words like civilized and primitive). Basically if your society (the Inca excepted) didnt have writing youre not included in this survey.As an introduction the author asks the readers to imagine themselves as part of a group of castaways on a desert island and how we would construct a working society. The more of us there are, the more complex the society will be. She then points out that this thought experiment can only bring us so far in imagining the origins of societies as it leaves out the vital component of religion.The main text is taken up with chapters on Socio-Economic Organization, The State, Politics, Culture (in 15th century Korea King Seijong tried to democratise learning by introducing an alphabet in place of the thousands of Chinese characters but his best efforts were defeated by scholars opposed to vulgar letters), Society and the Individual (in 15th century Siam everybody below the king was awarded dignity marks ranging from 5 for a slave to 100,00 for the heir apparent, the kings dignity being infinite), and Religion.The last third of the book is taken up with two chapters, one on The Oddity of Europe and the other on Modernity.The first of these, is, based on recommendations of authors I admire, why I bought this book to read. Here she addresses the question of the rise of the West and whether the West was merely the first or a freak. She thinks it was a freak and ascribes its rise to, inter alia, the weakness of its state system (unlike Chinese emperors Western rulers had to bargain with subjects and popes), the composite nature of its culture (here she makes interesting comparisons with Japan) and the opportunities Europes wealth and European population control provided.There are areas where I felt more could have been written.For instance she touches on the difference between shame and guilt but could and to my mind should have written more on this topic particularly as it gives an insight into one of the causes of friction arising out of mass migration from shame-based third world countries to guilt-based Western ones. There are reasons for honour killings.In the chapter on Europe a little over a page is given over to scientific thought. This is far too little as the Scientific Revolution preceded the Industrial one and, as Ed Wilson pointed out, Science isn't easy; that's why it took so long to get started, and then mostly in one place, western Europe. In her coverage of scientific thought she starts well and makes the very interesting point that South-East Asia had a mixture of the Buddhist religion and a Hindu high culture mixed with assorted native legacies without producing science or the rise of a bourgeoisie (The West being a composite of barbarian invaders, Christianity, and Graeco-Roman high culture, which did produce both). But the rest of the section fizzles out with one long paragraph about Classical deductive thought and Protestant inductive reasoning.I also get the impression that, in dealing with The Oddity of Europe, the author goes out of her way to downplay the conscious contribution of Europeans e.g. that medieval Latin Christendom gave birth to the university. Similarly I think the role of individual Catholic churchmen is downplayed e.g. the influence of Thomas Aquinas is overlooked.Nor does she properly address the importance of the fact that Latin West made far more use of the legacy of the legacy of Golden Age Greece than either the Greek speaking East or in the long run the Islamic world.The closing chapter on modernity is also worth reading and helps explain why some societies find it easier than others to adapt to the modern world.Unlike a lot of social science writing this one is written in plain if bland English that a layperson like me can follow easily. It contains a useful Further Reading list.This review is based on the third edition, produced shortly before the authors death.

Eminent historian Patricia Crone defines the common features of a wide range of pre-industrial societies, from locations as seemingly disparate as the Mongol Empire and pre-Columbian America to cultures as diverse as the Ming Dynasty and 17th-century France. This lucid exploration of the characteristics shared by these societies is an essential introductory text for all students of history.

About the AuthorPatricia Crone is the Mellon Professor of Islamic History at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton. She is the editor of Oneworld's Makers of the Muslim World series. She lives in Princeton, NJ.