



I had become increasingly disillusioned with Western Civ textbooks in general, largely on the grounds that they present a unified, uncontroversial narrative, which is not at all how historians actually understand the past. The Shaping of Western Civilization is entirely different, in that, by highlighting puzzles and debates, it actually shows students what historians do. I am also pleased with the low-cost production, as I teach at a campus with many students of modest means. If and when I teach Western Civ again, I will almost certainly assign this text. (William H. Campbell, University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg) At last, an introductory text that takes the power of ideas seriously. Judicious and insightful, this book will treat students to the breadth and riches of Western civilization. (Gerry Bowler, University of Manitoba) Instructors of a Western Civilization curriculum can nowadays choose from any number of textbooks, most of which are, in all honesty, perfectly good. But I know of no other textbook in English that I would recommend to undergraduates, graduate students, and colleagues as a thought-provoking read on its own merits. Burger's survey covers all of the expected factual bases, but it also challenges readers to reflect on the process of history-making itself, models enquiry for them, and calls attention to the structuring limitations on our pursuit of historical knowledge: evidence never speaks of its own accord, different questions require different levels of resolution, similarities among cultures serve to heighten the contrasts, past and present ways of looking at the world may be incommensurable, historians must beware of moralizing and all this just in the first chapter! This is a book for those instructors who believe that the goal of teaching history is not to impart knowledge but to provoke their students to a certain way of thinking. (Oren Falk, Cornell University) About the Author Michael Burger is an historian of medieval Europe and the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Auburn University at Montgomery. He is the author of Bishops, Clerks, and Diocesan Governance in Thirteenth-Century England: Reward and Punishment (2014) and The Shaping of Western Civilization (2013).