



The Austrians: A Thousand-Year Odyssey

Gordon Brook-Shepherd

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This is a masterful survey of Austria's controversial place at the heart of European history. From the Reformation through the Napoleonic and Cold Wars to European Union, a superb history of Austria's central role in uniting Western civilization is covered. 24 pages of photographs and maps are included.

"Connoisseurs of Austria and its delightful and infuriating inhabitants will agree that Mr. Brook-Shepherd has got it just about right."—The Wall Street Journal "Engrossing, elegantly written history."—Publishers Weekly

The Austrians: A Thousand-Year Odyssey Details

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From Reader Review The Austrians: A Thousand-Year Odyssey for online ebook

Billy Connard says

One of my hobbies is doing family research. I was looking for a book that would give me some background info on the area. This book was more then helpful. Very informative.

Jaroslav Tu?ek says

As an overview of Austrian history - which both the book's subtitle and description seem to promise - The Austrians resoundingly disappoints. The first thousand years, until the reign of Franz Joseph I are rushed over in a couple of pages with almost all details left out. For example, here is the entire coverage of the War of Austrian Succession:

"There is no need to recount here how the young and inexperienced empress survived the onslaught on her inheritance which was now lavished by those same powers who had promised to respect it; but survive, at the end, she did, though at the heavy cost of yielding up Silesia to Frederick II of Prussia."

Fortunately, beginning with the revolutionary year 1848, and even more so around the two world wars, the account becomes very detailed and interesting. The author has had first-hand experience with many of the events as an officer in Vienna's Allied Commission, and it shows throughout the text. It is nevertheless frustrating how he skimmed over the period of Austria as a major European power and focused so much on the time when the Germans in Vienna decidedly started to play second fiddle to the Germans in Berlin.

The book enjoys almost no competition in the English language and so the reader cannot be too picky. This particular reader however wishes that the author had been more honest, dropped the opening part and called his book Austria in the 20th Century.

Amy says

My attempt to read this is turning into a thousand-year odyssey.

Eben DuRoss says

Agree with last reviews. Very comprehensive. Light on early Austria.

Zach says

Over all not great, it covered 1000 years and almost every step of the way I get they shifted topic just as it

was going interesting. Part of the problem is that it may be called a thousand year Odyssey but half the book is about the 20th century and the quarter before was the 19th leaving the first quarter to cover the balance. So if you want to know about Austria in the 19th and 20th century it's a good read, if you want their full history keep looking.

Lauren Albert says

The book is marred by two things--one is the obvious bias against Austria and the Austrians which is odd in light of the second--his ego as it shows in his mentions at the beginning and in footnotes of his personal relationship with some of the prominent players. He can't say that he learned something at a concert of a composer but must say that he learned it at a "private" concert at his own home. The bias is all over the place--here are some representative examples:

"classic case of Austrian muddle in general."

"in true muddle-headed Viennese style."

"Austrians were not made for barricades."

"as always in the story of Austrian protestors, their lungs proved stronger than their will."

"The Austrian revolutionary spirit had shown itself, as ever, to be made of very damp dynamite."

The condescension is affectionate as if he is patting the Austrians on their heads.

Peter Sørensen says

A very interesting story about the History of, not just Austria, but the whole of Europe. Also a valuable insight in to how the apocalypse of the two world wars came about.

Brendan Steinhauser says

This excellent book covers Austrian history, self identity, and political culture over the centuries. It focuses mainly on the 19th and early 20th centuries, when the Austrian empire was beginning its decline. The author does a good job explaining the tensions between the various nationalities within the empire (Germans, Czechs, Magyars, Slovenes, etc.) but he also helps the reader understand the tension between Austria and the German empire / Germany. He explores the Austrians' "Germanness" and their relationships with Prussia, Bavaria, and other German states and principalities throughout Austrian history. After reading this book, the reader will better understand the Austrian psyche, the country's glorious past, and its modern psychological insecurities. (As someone who has visited Vienna, I have seen these first hand). I would recommend this book to anyone with an interest in Austrian history, German history, or Central European history more broadly, as they are all intertwined, and almost inseparable.

Yeongbae K says

I enjoyed reading the book. I knew a little bit about the Habsburg Empire. Now, I know how it contributes to

Austria's history. It is interesting how such an empire managed to exist for so long.
