



Worlds at War: The 2,500-Year Struggle Between East and West

Anthony Pagden

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Spanning two and a half millennia, Anthony Pagden's mesmerizing *Worlds at War* delves deep into the roots of the "clash of civilizations" between East and West that has always been a battle over ideas. It begins with ancient Greece and its epic fight against the Persian Empire, then sweeps to Rome, which created the modern concepts of citizenship and the rule of law. Pagden dramatizes the birth of Christianity in the East and its use in the West as an instrument of government, setting the stage for what would become, and has remained, a global battle of the secular against the sacred. Islam, at first ridiculed in Christian Europe, drives Pope Urban II to launch the Crusades, which transform the relationship between East and West into one of competing religious beliefs.

Modern times bring a first world war, which among other things seeks to redesign the Muslim world by force. In our own era, Muslims now find themselves in unwelcoming Western societies, while the West seeks to enforce democracy and its own secular values through occupation in the East. Pagden ends on a cautionary note, warning that terrorism and war will continue as long as sacred and secular remain confused in the minds of so many.

Eye-opening and compulsively readable, *Worlds at War* is a stunning work of history and a triumph of modern scholarship.

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