



The Father of Us All: War and History, Ancient and Modern

By Victor Davis Hanson

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The Father of Us All: War and History, Ancient and Modern By Victor Davis Hanson

Victor Davis Hanson has long been acclaimed as one of our leading scholars of ancient history. In recent years he has also become a trenchant voice on current affairs, bringing a historian's deep knowledge of past conflicts to bear on the crises of the present, from 9/11 to Iran. "War," he writes, "is an entirely human enterprise." Ideologies change, technologies develop, new strategies are invented-but human nature is constant across time and space. The dynamics of warfare in the present age still remain comprehensible to us through careful study of the past. Though many have called the War on Terror unprecedented, its contours would have been quite familiar to Themistocles of Athens or William Tecumseh Sherman. And as we face the menace of a bin Laden or a Kim Jong-II, we can prepare ourselves with knowledge of how such challenges have been met before.

The Father of Us All brings together much of Hanson's finest writing on war and society, both ancient and modern. The author has gathered a range of essays, and combined and revised them into a richly textured new work that explores such topics as how technology shapes warfare, what constitutes the "American way of war," and why even those who abhor war need to study military history. "War is the father and king of us all," Heraclitus wrote in ancient Greece. And as Victor Davis Hanson shows, it is no less so today.

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The Father of Us All: War and History, Ancient and Modern By Victor Davis Hanson Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #413747 in Books
- Brand: Brand: Bloomsbury Press
- Published on: 2011-05-03
- Released on: 2011-04-26
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.31" h x .75" w x 5.47" l, .54 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 272 pages

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Since 9/11, Davis, director of the Hoover Institution's group on military history and contemporary conflict, has emerged as a major commentator on war making and politics. This anthology brings together 13 of Hanson's essays and reviews, revised and re-edited. They have appeared over the past decade in periodicals from the *American Spectator* to the *New York Times*. Hanson's introductory generalization that war is a human enterprise that seems inseparable from the human condition structures such subjects as an eloquent answer to the question *Why Study War?* a defense of the historicity of the film *300*, about the Persian Wars, in a masterpiece of envelope pushing, and a comprehensive and dazzling analysis of why America fights as she does. He explains why, though a lesser historian than Thucydides, Xenophon retains a timeless attraction and analyzes war and democracy in light of America's decreasing willingness to intervene in places like Rwanda or Darfur. The pieces are well written, sometimes elegantly so, and closely reasoned. They address familiar material from original and stimulating perspectives. Hanson's arguments may not convince everyone, but cannot be dismissed. His critics and admirers will be pleased to have these pieces available under one cover. (May)

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From [Booklist](#)

Folksinger Pete Seeger ain't gonna study war no more, but classicist Hanson warns against skipping class in this set of essays reworked from his recent articles, book reviews, and book introductions. In Hanson's estimation, amnesia about military history permeates America's media, political, and intellectual leadership: out of fashion in the academy, military history was the specialty of just 1.9 percent of American history professors as of 2007. As he suggests reasons for this state of neglect, Hanson expatiates within specific essays, such as his preface to Donald Kagan's *The Peloponnesian War* (2003), on the effects of historical forgetfulness. Hanson sees examples abounding in American leaders' negative reactions to the Iraq War, responses that the author witheringly critiques for poor historical aptitude and poor understanding about the military and military operations. At bottom, Hanson argues that recoiling from learning about warfare ignores what he insists is its tragic nature: that war, inherent in human nature, can only be struggled against and not be wished away. Not a happy message to peace-studies idealists but one a balanced current-events collection should include. --Gilbert Taylor

Review

"[A] lively collection ... the writing is always elegant and erudite." *?Foreign Affairs*

"Hanson has provided a thoughtful, wide-ranging look at the fundamental questions of war and peace." *?MHQ, The Quarterly Journal of Military History*.

"A masterpiece of envelope pushing, and a comprehensive and dazzling analysis of why America fights as she does. Hanson's arguments may not convince everyone, but cannot be dismissed." *?Publishers Weekly*

"Not a happy message to peace-studies idealists but one a balanced current-events collection should include." *?Booklist*

"I have never read another book which explains so well the truth that 'war lies in the dark hearts of us all' but that history offers hope." *?William Shawcross, author of Allies and Deliver Us from Evil*

“Few writers cover both current events and history--and none with the brilliance and erudition of Victor Davis Hanson. In *The Father of Us All*, he uses his deep knowledge of military history to shed light on present-day controversies. Required reading for anyone interested in war, past or present.” ?*Max Boot, Jeane J. Kirkpatrick Senior Fellow for National Security Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations and author of The Savage Wars of Peace and War Made New*

“Victor Hanson brings to his writing a mixture of learning and reflection that is rare in any age, especially the ignorant one in which we live” ?*Dr. Larry Arnn, President of Hillsdale College*

Users Review

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Ella Butler:

As people who live in the particular modest era should be upgrade about what going on or facts even knowledge to make these people keep up with the era which is always change and advance. Some of you maybe can update themselves by studying books. It is a good choice for yourself but the problems coming to you is you don't know what one you should start with. This *The Father of Us All: War and History, Ancient and Modern* is our recommendation to cause you to keep up with the world. Why, because this book serves what you want and wish in this era.

Hyacinth Mills:

The experience that you get from *The Father of Us All: War and History, Ancient and Modern* is a more deep you digging the information that hide inside words the more you get serious about reading it. It does not mean that this book is hard to know but *The Father of Us All: War and History, Ancient and Modern* giving you joy feeling of reading. The writer conveys their point in specific way that can be understood by means of anyone who read that because the author of this book is well-known enough. This specific book also makes your own vocabulary increase well. That makes it easy to understand then can go to you, both in printed or e-book style are available. We highly recommend you for having this specific *The Father of Us All: War and History, Ancient and Modern* instantly.

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