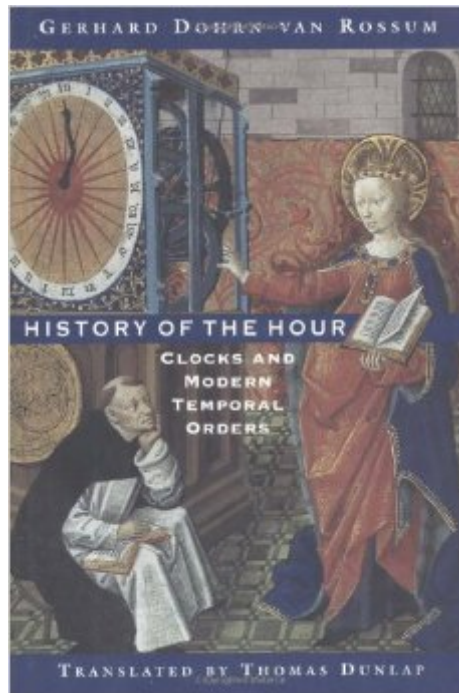


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History Of The Hour: Clocks And Modern Temporal Orders



Synopsis

In this sweeping study of the organization of time, Dohrn-van Rossum offers fresh insight into the history of the mechanical clock and its influence on European society from the late Middle Ages to the industrial revolution. Detailing the clock's effects on social activity, he presents a vivid picture of a society regulated by the precise measurement of identical hours. "In tracing the evolution of time consciousness with scholarship and skill . . . Dohrn-van Rossum evokes the many ways that the small moments of life have come to be reckoned with the passage of time."--Dava Sobel, *Civilization*"Dohrn-van Rossum paints a highly nuanced picture of time's conquest of modern life."--Steven Lagerfeld, *Wilson Quarterly*"This book is definitive in showing the clock's pervasive influence over European society."--*Virginia Quarterly Review*"[A] delightful, excellently translated history."--*Choice*"Dohrn-van Rossum has produced a persuasive and brilliantly documented new understanding of how modern time-consciousness arose."--Owen Gingerich, *Nature*

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Customer Reviews

Picked this book up on a whim, because the subject itself sounded fascinating. And I was right, to a certain extent: the details about how our concept of "time" has changed throughout the years, of when clocks were introduced and how different factors played into it, all of that is extremely interesting. However, the author is NOT writing for a general public. There seems to be an underlying assumption that not only is the reader already intimately familiar with clocks, but that the reader is also well-versed in a variety of European languages. Random phrases in Latin, German,

and Italian are thrown around, with no note as to what the translation means. The book could have benefited from footnotes to clarify meanings. At times, the book also felt disjointed, jumping around from one time period to the next and then back again. That made it hard to keep track of the chronology, somewhat ironic in a book about the "history of the hour." (Unless the entire book is supposed to be a parable of the clock's/the hour's development, in which case it goes over my head.) All in all, I would recommend the book only for people who have the patience for dense books, and are willing to look up all the foreign words the author has not bothered to explain.

It is a detailed and informing book about the history of time. It relates the past with the present, illustrating the political, social, economic and cultural meanings associated with the development of clocks and the notion of time.

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