A Concise History of France

This book provides a clear and well-informed guide to French history from the early Middle Ages to the present – from Charlemagne to Chirac. It offers the most up-to-date and comprehensive study of French history available. Among the book’s central themes are the relationship between state and society, the impact of war and such crucial questions as who possessed political power and how this power was used. It takes account of the great figures in French history, among them Philip Augustus, Henri IV, Louis XIV, Robespierre, Napoleon, de Gaulle, and also the findings of social historians concerned with ordinary people, social structures, beliefs, and economic activity. This second edition, substantially re-written to take account of recent research, includes a new chapter on contemporary France – a society and political system in crisis as a result of globalisation, international terrorism, racial tension, and a loss of confidence in political leaders.

ROGER PRICE is Professor of History at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth. He has written extensively on French history; his latest publications include The French Second Empire: an anatomy of political power (2001) and People and politics in France, 1848–1870 (2004).
This is a series of illustrated ‘concise histories’ of selected individual countries, intended both as university and college textbooks and as general historical introductions for general readers, travellers, and members of the business community.

For a list of titles in the series, see end of book.
A Concise History of France

SECOND EDITION

ROGER PRICE
CONTENTS

List of plates vi
List of figures xi
Acknowledgements xiii

Introduction 1

PART I MEDIEVAL AND EARLY MODERN FRANCE 13
1 Population and Resources in Pre-Industrial France 15
2 Society and Politics in Medieval France 30
3 Society and Politics in Early Modern France 54

PART II THE DUAL REVOLUTION: MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY FRANCE 97
4 Revolution and Empire 99
5 The Nineteenth Century: Continuity and Change 165
6 A Time of Crisis, 1914–1945 241
7 Reconstruction and Renewal: The Trente Glorieuses 315
8 A Society Under Stress 382

A short guide to further reading 465
Index 473
PLATES

1.1 Peasant ploughing (end twelfth century). Bibliothèque nationale.  


2.1 Coronation of a king of France. Bibliothèque nationale.  

2.2 Return of Philip Augustus to Paris after his victory at Bouvines. Bibliothèque royale Albert I, Brussels.  

2.3 The siege of Orléans. Bibliothèque nationale.  

3.1 The sacking of a farm. Musée Bargoin, Clermont-Ferrand. Photo: Giraudon.  

3.2 Louis XIV in 1660, aged twenty-two. Engraving by Von Schuppen, after a painting by W.Vaillant. Photo: Roger-Viollet.  

3.3 Construction of a road. Painting by J.Vernet, 1774. Musée du Louvre. Photo: Giraudon.  


List of plates

4.3 Châteaux burning as their owners flee, 1789. Anonymous engraving. Musée Carnavalet. Photo: Giraudon.

4.4 The night of 4 August 1789. Engraving by Helman, after a painting by Charles Monnet. Bibliothèque nationale. Photo: Giraudon.


4.7 Emergence of the conservative republic, Thermidor Year II (28 July 1794). Engraving by Helman, after a painting by Charles Monnet. Bibliothèque nationale, Cabinet des Estampes. Photo: Giraudon.


5.1 The royal family in May 1814. Musée Carnavalet. Photo: Giraudon.

5.2 ‘The solemn blessing of a cross’: the restoration of moral order, or Catholic reconquest, 1826. Engraving by Massard. Bibliothèque nationale.

5.3 Fighting in the boulevard des Italiens, 28 July 1830. Lithograph by Victor Adam. Musée Carnavalet. Photo: Musées de la Ville de Paris. © SPadem.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plate</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>June 1848: barricade in the rue Saint-Antoine. Lithograph by Beaumont and Ciceri. Bibliothèque nationale.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>Napoleon III, the Empress, and the Prince Imperial, surrounded by their people. Engraving by Léopold Flaming. Bibliothèque nationale, Cabinet des Estampes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>The Schneider works at Le Creusot. Watercolour by Bonhomme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>Paris, 4 September 1870: the republicans proclaim the overthrow of the Bonaparte dynasty. Painting by Jacques Guiaud. Musée Carnavalet. Photo: Musées de la Ville de Paris. © SPADEM.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>The burning of Paris, May 1871. Musée Carnavalet. Photo: Musées de la Ville de Paris. © SPADEM.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.10</td>
<td>Peasants travelling by rail. Photo: Popperfoto.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.13</td>
<td>Strike in the Nord coalfield. Engraving from L’Illustration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>The offensive tactics of 1914–15.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>Trench warfare. Photo: Roger-Viollet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>Mobilisation for ‘total war’: female munitions workers. Photo: P. Lorette.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>The cost of reconstruction: the ruins of Montdidier (Somme), June 1919. Photo: Collection Albert Kahn.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of plates

6.8 Members of the Croix de Feu on parade. Photo: Roger-Viollet.

6.9 Right-wing demonstrators clash with police on the Place de la Concorde, 6 February 1934.

6.10 Léon Blum and his Popular Front government in 1936. Photo: The Hulton Picture Company.

6.11 Paul Reynaud leaving a cabinet meeting, 21 May 1940. Photo: The Hulton Picture Company.


6.14 French miners working under German supervision. Photo: Roger-Viollet.

6.15 Execution of young members of the Resistance by German soldiers. Photo: Roger-Viollet.

6.16 Execution of members of the milice in Grenoble, August 1944.


7.1 Reconstruction: the Communist Party calls for a further effort. Photo: Taillandier-D.R.


7.3 Troops guarding pitheads and deployed by Socialist ministers as strike-breakers, 1947.

7.4 The government of Pierre Mendès-France, 19 June 1954. François Mitterand is on his right. Photo: Viollet/Photob.

7.5 Military operations in Algeria: on guard in the Casbah. Photo: Getty Images.

List of plates

7.7 General de Gaulle speaks to the nation on television, 23 April 1961. Photo: The Hulton Picture Company. 367

7.8 General de Gaulle with Chancellor Adenauer during his visit to West Germany, September 1962. Photo: Camera Press (UK) Ltd. 368

7.9 Common Market poster by Savignac, 1957. Photo: Larousse. 369

7.10 Police chasing demonstrators, 6 May 1968. Photo: Caron. 372

7.11 A Gaullist demonstration in the Champs-Élysées, 30 May 1968. Photo: Le Campion/ANA. 373

7.12 Pompidou as prime minister. On his left a youthful Jacques Chirac. Photo: Getty Images. 376

7.13 Property development. Photo: Sappa/CEDRI. 380

8.1 Protest against reform of the pension system, Marseilles 13 May 2003. Photo: Getty Images. 404

8.2 Immigrant labour and low-cost housing. Gennevilliers in the 1980s. Photo: Chollet-Rapho. 405

8.3 Presidential elections. Valéry Giscard d’Estaing and François Mitterrand engage in a televised debate, 5 May 1981. Photo: Gamma. 420

8.4 Mitterand’s appeal as la force tranquille: poster by Séguela. 421

8.5 The investiture of Jacques Chirac as President of the Republic, 17 May 1995. Photo: Getty Images. 439

8.6 Posters supporting Le Pen, presidential elections 2002. Photo: Getty Images. 447

8.7 Demonstration against the candidature of Le Pen, 22 April 2002. Photo: Getty Images. 448

8.8 The defeated Socialist candidate Lionel Jospin voting in the second ballot, 5 May 2002. Photo: Getty Images. 449

8.9 The rivals? Raffarin, Sarkozy, and Villepin gathered around the president, 14 July 2004. Photo: Getty Images. 454

8.10 Chirac, Schroeder, and Blair: the body language says it all! Photo: Getty Images. 457
FIGURES


2.1 The creation of France. I. The Treaty of Verdun 843. (Source: Revel, *L'espace français*.)

2.2 The creation of France. II. The reign of Philip Augustus, 1180–1223. (Source: Revel, *L'espace français*.)

2.3 The creation of France. III. The Treaty of Brétigny 1360. (Source: Revel, *L'espace français*.)

3.1 The creation of France. IV. The reign of Louis XI, 1461–83. (Source: Revel, *L'espace français*.)

3.2 The creation of France. V. Expansion of the royal domain during the reign of Henri IV. (Source: Revel, *L'espace français*.)

3.3 The creation of France. VI. The reign of Louis XIV (Source: Revel, *L'espace français*.)

4.1 The Civil Constitution of the Clergy (percentage of oath takers). (Source: M. Vovelle (ed.), *L’état de la France pendant la Révolution*. Editions La Découverte, 1988.)
List of figures


5.2 France: developed and underdeveloped. II. The steam engine as an indicator of industrialisation. Number per department in 1841 and in 1878. (Source: G. Dupeux et al., *Atlas historique de la France contemporaine*. Armand Colin, 1966.)

5.3 The loss of Alsace-Lorraine. (Source: Dupeux, *Atlas historique*.)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author of a general work of this kind owes a great deal to many people, including the students taking my courses at the University of East Anglia between 1968 and 1993 and subsequently at Aberystwyth, colleagues past and present, and the library staff at both institutions, as well as those at the National Library of Wales. I am especially grateful to William Davies of Cambridge University Press for setting me the challenge in the first place and subsequently for encouraging other projects. Isabelle Dambricourt provided valuable assistance in the preparation of this second edition. The following friends read and commented on the original manuscript – Malcolm Crook, Colin Heywood, Oliver Logan, and the greatly missed Peter Morris. Heather Price has made an enormous contribution to both editions. Richard Johnson at the University of East Anglia drew some of the maps and Mary Richards and Jean Field, copy-editors for the Press, made extremely helpful suggestions.

For their constructive criticism, their patience, their love, and for laughter, I remain profoundly grateful to Richard, Luisa and Luca, Siân, Andy and Molly, Emily and Dafydd, to Hannah, and to my dearest Heather.