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978-1-107-02054-2 - The Great Divergence Reconsidered: Europe,
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Roman Studer

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The Great Divergence Reconsidered

In stark contrast to popular narratives, *The Great Divergence Reconsidered* shows that Europe's rise to an undisputed world economic leader was not the effect of the Industrial Revolution, and cannot be explained by coal or colonial exploitation. Using a wealth of new historical evidence stretching from the seventeenth to the twentieth century, Roman Studer shows that this "Great Divergence" must be shifted back to the seventeenth century, if not earlier. Europe was characterized by a more powerful transportation system, bigger trade flows, larger and better integrated markets, higher productivity levels, and superior living standards even before the Industrial Revolution brought about far-reaching structural changes and made Europe's supremacy even more pronounced. While the comparison with Europe draws significantly on India, the central conclusions seem to hold for Asia – and indeed the rest of the world – more generally. An interplay of various factors best explains Europe's early and gradual rise, including better institutions, favorable geographical features, increasing political stability, and increasingly rapid advances in science and technology.

Roman Studer has worked both in academia and in the private sector, and he is currently the chief operating officer of the UBS International Center of Economics in Society at the University of Zurich. He was a postdoctoral prize research fellow at Oxford University and then a lecturer at the London School of Economics. He was awarded the Alexander Gerschenkron Prize by the Economic History Association for the best dissertation in international economic history.

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ROMAN STUDER



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