



The Invention of Enterprise: Entrepreneurship from Ancient Mesopotamia to Modern Times (The Kauffman Foundation Series on Innovation and Entrepreneurship)

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Whether hailed as heroes or cast as threats to social order, entrepreneurs--and their innovations--have had an enormous influence on the growth and prosperity of nations. *The Invention of Enterprise* gathers together, for the first time, leading economic historians to explore the entrepreneur's role in society from antiquity to the present. Addressing social and institutional influences from a historical context, each chapter examines entrepreneurship during a particular period and in an important geographic location.

The book chronicles the sweeping history of enterprise in Mesopotamia and Neo-Babylon; carries the reader through the Islamic Middle East; offers insights into the entrepreneurial history of China, Japan, and Colonial India; and describes the crucial role of the entrepreneur in innovative activity in Europe and the United States, from the medieval period to today. In considering the critical contributions of entrepreneurship, the authors discuss why entrepreneurial activities are not always productive and may even sabotage prosperity. They examine the institutions and restrictions that have enabled or impeded innovation, and the incentives for the adoption and dissemination of inventions. They also describe the wide variations in global entrepreneurial activity during different historical periods and the similarities in development, as well as entrepreneurship's role in economic growth. The book is filled with past examples and events that provide lessons for promoting and successfully pursuing contemporary entrepreneurship as a means of contributing to the welfare of society.

The Invention of Enterprise lays out a definitive picture for all who seek an

understanding of innovation's central place in our world.

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Editorial Review

Review

Winner of the 2011 Silver Medal Book Award in Entrepreneurship, Axiom Business

"*The Invention of Enterprise* offers a timely contribution to our emerging understanding of entrepreneurship in an historical context and is particularly worthwhile for readers who are interested in certain rich historical episodes that are nevertheless little known."--**Michaël Bikard and Scott Stern, *Journal of Economic Literature***

"I think these essays deserve close consideration, as much for the questions they raise as for the answers they give about innovation and entrepreneurship."--**Mansel G. Blackford, EH.Net**

"Entrepreneurship has a long and varied history, and academics explore its evolution in *The Invention of Enterprise*. Edited by [Landes, Baumol, and Mokyr], the book collects essays from the editors and 18 other economists and historians. They look for commonalities in the societies that prospered--or failed to prosper--from entrepreneurial innovation, and they note that entrepreneurship is directly affected by the prevailing culture and religion."--**Biz Ed**

"*The Invention of Enterprise* is a bold, exploratory attempt to answer our most important questions about how entrepreneurship has evolved and what makes it flourish. The volume brings together a stellar cast of economic historians. The important questions and the available evidence for the periods and places analyzed vary tremendously, so authors' approaches must too. Their scope is almost beautifully and absurdly vast, their insights are numerous, and their conclusions are restrained."--**Robert Whaples, Books & Culture**

"A classic, impressive, study for serious students of the subject."--**Long Range Planning**

"*The Invention of Enterprise* is an important contribution. It will certainly affect key debates in economics and economic history along with the national and regional histories of the areas discussed in the volume."--**Jeff Horn, European Legacy**

From the Back Cover

"While entrepreneurship is as old as civilization itself, its history is little known and widely scattered. This book sheds a fascinating light on the prevalence and importance of entrepreneurship across the continents and the millennia. *The Invention of Enterprise* is sure to lead to a deeper appreciation of this phenomenon."-
-Josh Lerner, Harvard Business School

"The modern world became wealthy by shifting toward productive entrepreneurship. How did this happen? How might it continue to happen? Read this book--the first comprehensive history of entrepreneurship--and find out. It's a remarkable work of scholarship."--**Richard Sylla, New York University**

"There are other books on the history of entrepreneurship, but *The Invention of Enterprise* offers a substantial and fresh approach. These top-notch economic historians cover a vast geographic span and broad period of time."--**William J. Hausman, College of William and Mary**

"*The Invention of Enterprise* addresses a topic that has been sorely neglected--the role of the entrepreneur in historical context. The breadth of historical contexts contained in this volume provides compelling evidence that entrepreneurship is important for economic growth and that institutions shape entrepreneurship. This well-researched and well-written book is a pleasure to read."--**David Audretsch, Indiana University**

About the Author

David S. Landes is the Coolidge Professor of History and professor emeritus of economics at Harvard University. Joel Mokyr is the Robert Strotz Professor of Arts and Sciences and professor of economics and history at Northwestern University. William J. Baumol is the Harold Price Professor of Entrepreneurship at New York University's Stern School of Business.

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