Introduction

History of Western Philosophy is a 1945 book by British philosopher Bertrand Russell (1872–1970). A survey of Western philosophy from the pre-Socratic philosophers to the early 20th century, each major division of the book is prefaced by an account of the historical background necessary to understand the currents of thought it describes.[1] When Russell was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1950, *A History of Western Philosophy* was cited as one of the books that won him the award.

The book was written during the Second World War, having its origins in a series of lectures on the history of philosophy that Russell gave at the Barnes Foundation in Philadelphia during 1941 and 1942. Much of the historical research was done by Russell's third wife Patricia. In 1943, Russell received an advance of $3000 from the publishers, and between 1940 and 1943 he wrote the book while living mainly in Pennsylvania. The book was published in 1945 in the US and a year later in the United Kingdom. It was reset as a 'new edition' in 1961, but no new material was added. Corrections and minor revisions were made to printings of the British first edition and for 1961's new edition; no corrections seem to have been transferred to the American edition (even Spinoza's birth year remains wrong).

The work is divided into three books, each of which is subdivided into chapters; each chapter generally deals with a single philosopher, school of philosophy, or period of time.

Ancient Philosophy

- The Pre-Socratics (including Thales, Pythagoras, Heraclitus, Parmenides, Empedocles, Anaximander, Anaximenes, Anaxagoras, Leucippus, Democritus and Protagoras)
- Socrates, Plato and Aristotle
- Ancient Philosophy after Aristotle (including the Cynics, Sceptics, Epicureans, Stoics and Plotinus)

Catholic Philosophy

- The Fathers (including developments in Jewish philosophy, Islamic philosophy (which he calls Mohammedan throughout, after the fashion of his time), St Ambrose, St Jerome, St

Augustine, St Benedict and Pope Gregory the Great)

- The Schoolmen (including John the Scot and St Thomas Aquinas)

Modern Philosophy

- From the Renaissance to Hume (including Machiavelli, Erasmus, More, Bacon, Hobbes, Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Locke, Berkeley and Hume)
- From Rousseau to the Present Day (including Rousseau, Kant, Hegel, Byron, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, the Utilitarians, Marx, Bergson, William James and John Dewey)
- The last chapter in this section, *The Philosophy of Logical Analysis*, is concerned with Russell's own philosophical views at the time.

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