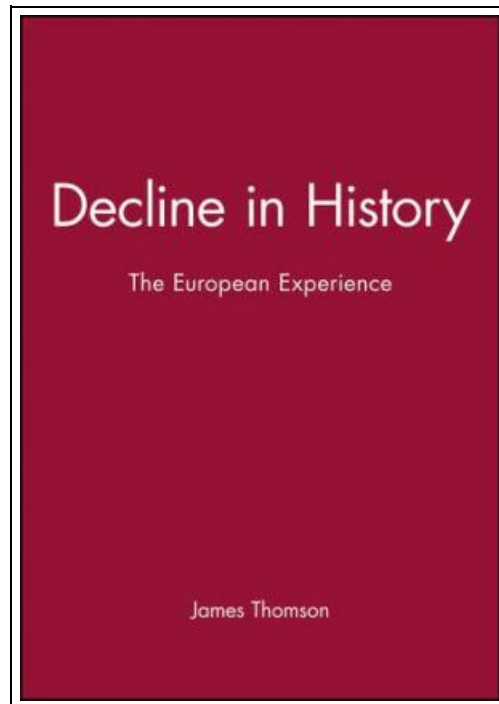


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Polity Press, United Kingdom, 1999. Paperback. Condition: New. Language: English . Brand New Book. The study of decline in history deserves as much attention as progress, and yet there are very few comparative studies available. This book fills that gap. Drawing on the works of Immanuel Wallerstein, Fernand Braudel, Michael Mann and Jonathan Israel to inform his approach, Thomson examines the experience of decline in history with particular reference to Europe. He argues that the history of Afro-Asian and European civilizations has been characterized by a slow diffusion of cultural and technical skills which has occasioned repeated cycles of progress and decline. The European variant of this dynamic was shaped by its unique qualities of political pluralism and economic dynamism, resulting in declines that were micro rather than macro in character. Thomson develops his argument through a structured narrative of economic and technical change in European history from the fall of Rome and the decline of Byzantium to Italy's declines and to those of Portugal and Spain. Within Spain, the decline of Castile is distinguished from those of Andalusia and Aragon; Thomson shows that the final decline of Andalusia and Aragon in the seventeenth century, rather than being a specifically Spanish crisis, was part of a general upheaval affecting the whole of the western Mediterranean and much of central Europe. Wide-ranging and clearly written, *Decline in History* will be an invaluable text for students of European and comparative history.



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