

A Global History of History

A global history of historical writing, thought and the development of the historical discipline from the ancient world to the present. This is a definitive guide to human efforts to recover, understand and represent the past, bringing together different historical traditions and their social, economic, political and cultural contexts. Daniel Woolf offers clear definitions of different genres and forms of history and addresses key themes such as the interactions between West and East, the conflict of oral, pictographic and written accounts of the past and the place of history in society and in politics. Numerous textual extracts and illustrations in every chapter capture the historical cultures of past civilizations and demonstrate the different forms that historical consciousness has taken around the world. This book offers unique insights into the interconnections between different historical cultures over 3,000 years and relates the rise of history to key themes in world history. Special attention is paid to connections between the modern dominance of Western forms of historical consciousness and the impact of European empires on other parts of the world.

Daniel Woolf is Professor of History at Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario where he is currently also Principal and Vice-Chancellor. His previous publications include *Reading History in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2000) and the two-volume *Global Encyclopedia of Historical Writing* (1998). He is also general editor of the *Oxford History of Historical Writing* (2010–).

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For JAGW

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PREFACE AND CONVENTIONS

The purpose of this book, in brief, is to provide a history of history, suitable for undergraduates, faculty members seeking a relatively concise introduction to the subject and the interested general reader. Many years of teaching courses on historiography, and the prescription of several different textbooks for the students in those courses, convinced me that a further work was needed, but most of all I have been struck for many years by the relative dearth of studies of ‘historiography’ (a term for discussion of which see below, in the introduction) which covered the entire span of human efforts to recover, understand and represent the past, from earliest known times to the present, and that did so in a geographically inclusive manner. There are several books covering very long time spans, and one or two with a global reach, but none in English, of which I am aware, that do both. A conviction that students ought to be exposed to the ‘historical cultures’ of other civilizations than their own has thus informed my choice of subject; a strong sense that there is a story to be told about the development of historical thought, historical writing and the modern historical discipline, and that it relates directly to some of the larger movements of world history (in particular the global engagement of different peoples and cultures over several millennia), provides the ‘plot’, if a work on historiography can be said to have a plot.

The years of teaching various aspects of the subject have also convinced me that students, especially those in compulsory courses on historiography, dislike most textbooks because they consist of a parade of names of great historians, most of whom the student has never heard of, and will in all likelihood never read, unless they go on to advanced study in the field. I have therefore tried to avoid creating such a parade, though the necessity of inclusiveness and breadth means that I may not always have succeeded. I have found that students unnecessarily fear historiography as ‘difficult’ or ‘dull’ (though it is not always clear what they mean by either word). Since the first time I heard the term ‘historiography’ as an undergraduate and began to write papers of various sorts (and ultimately a doctoral thesis) on historiographic topics, I have had a fascination with how we have, as a species, come to terms with the past. I find the great works of historiography as intellectually exciting and riveting as many great works of literature, though it is true that very few historians have written works that command a wide readership today. Many other past historical works, of lesser literary merit, can nonetheless

provide us with windows into past cultures' ideas about their own pasts, and with traces of now-vanished notions about scholarship and truth. A broadening of my own horizons in the past fifteen years has not changed my attitude to the 'classic' histories, but it has led me to many non-Western works of historiography and thus to a different perspective on the more familiar 'canon' of great historians from Thucydides to the present. Many of these non-Western works are, happily, gradually becoming more readily available in English and other European languages.

While the chapters of this book are free-standing and can be assigned separately, the reader will derive more from the book if he or she reads them in order: there is, again, an argument and a story, and there is a continuity of themes between chapters.

In order to make the book more accessible, and allow it to serve multiple purposes, I have introduced a few features that are not normally found in texts on historiography. These are connected to, but can again, stand apart from, the main narrative. Four features in particular require explanation.

- The first is a series of 'Subject Boxes'. These provide additional detail on particular episodes or important points in the history of history, and sometimes on individual historians, approaches or 'schools'. They can be read on their own and are separated from the main narrative both in order to highlight them and not to distract from the account in the chapter itself.
- The second is a parallel series of offset 'Extracts', in addition to the quotations that appear in the main text. These are designed to provide illustrative examples, principally of lesser-known histories or historians, and often of non-European historical works (or works indicating historical consciousness even if they do not fit the normal expectations of what a history should look like). Quotations in the text proper routinely illustrate a point being made in the book; the offset extracts, while generally illustrative, can be detached and analysed separately. Instructors may, of course, find these too brief, and wish to prescribe separate, lengthier extracts from other works, or even the complete text by a particular historian, a Herodotus or Voltaire. In my experience, there is relatively little time in a twelve-week or even twenty-four-week course for students to read very many complete works, though it is certainly hoped that some will be sufficiently excited by the topic that they wish to pursue it on their own, or in further courses.
- The third is an annotated 'Further Reading' section for each chapter (rather than a single amalgamated bibliography), which can be found at the end of the book. On occasion, where two or more sections share several titles in common, their further reading sections have been combined; and in Chapter 8, an additional bibliographical appendix has been supplied, arranged by nation or region, reflecting

one important theme (the connection between history and modern nationalism) of that chapter. In the case of books for which there are multiple editions I have listed the edition which I have consulted, while sometimes noting for clarity the original year in which the work was published. This is especially necessary with some secondary works widely available in modern paperback editions but in fact authored many years or even decades ago and thus likely to have been superseded or at least modified by subsequent scholarship.

- The fourth feature is the inclusion of a number of pictures. With a few exceptions, these avoid the 'portrait gallery' (to go along with the textual 'parade') of famous historians. On rare occasions where images of individual historians are included it is typically in order to reveal something about contemporary (or later) perceptions of them. In several instances, the pictures are intended to help illustrate a particular point or to give the reader a clearer idea of the actual appearance of an object referred to, especially where dealing with physical forms of history other than the book (for instance, Inca quipus and Mesoamerican pictorial histories).

Diacriticals and transliteration

In a work such as this where many languages and scripts come into play, a balance needs to be struck between fidelity to the original and readability for the non-expert. I have thus in several instances adopted a 'minimal-diacritical' approach.

For Arabic the full standard system which I have followed in other works is unnecessarily elaborate in a book such as this which is intended for the relative novice. I have followed the usage and spellings in C. F. Robinson, *Islamic Historiography* (Cambridge, 2003), including dots above and below letters and bars above, but dispensing with underlined characters. With familiar proper or family names that are frequently used in English (such as 'Abbasid', 'Mamluk' or 'Muhammad'), diacriticals have been dispensed with.

In Arabic, the mark ' denotes a letter ('ayn) often transliterated as an inward facing single quotation mark; ' denotes a quite distinct character, hamza. Hamzas and 'ayns have generally been retained, using this form of transliteration.

Indian names and words are also heavily accented, especially those from earlier periods, but these marks have normally been discarded in sections on modern India and modern Indian historians, in keeping with current scholarly practice on the subcontinent.

Roman alphabet titles of books are not adjusted but appear as they would in normal bibliographical records.

Chinese names and words are rendered according to the pinyin system, which has supplanted the older Wade-Giles system as the standard protocol for

transliteration: thus Mao Zedong not Mao Tse-tung. Certain exceptions to this rule apply for historians with established Western names, such as Confucius, whose Chinese name was either Kong Qiu or Kong Zi (Master Kong). The names of Chinese historians publishing in Western languages, and the titles of books originally issued in those languages, follow the actual spelling of the author or title, whether Wade-Giles or pinyin.

Korean words and names are more problematic, as no system has yet achieved dominance, including the long-standing McCune-Reischauer system, and romanization practices thus vary. I have therefore often provided alternative spellings of a word or name.

Chinese, Korean and Japanese names appear with the family name first followed *without a comma* by the given name. This is well-known and common practice for Chinese and Korean, but in the case of Japanese, Western journalistic practice has tended to invert the name order according to North American usage, a practice that we have not followed: thus a reference to Ienaga Saburō denotes a historian whose surname is Ienaga. Occasional exceptions, mainly historians whose names appear Western-style on their English-language publications, are indexed *with* commas to avoid confusion; a few Japanese historians (Motoori Norinaga and Hayashi Razan for instance) are by convention referred to by their given names, e.g. Norinaga. As with Arabic, where a word has become commonplace in English usage (for instance 'shogun'), the diacriticals are omitted.

Adjectives or adverbs constructed out of foreign terms, usually for the purpose of grouping a category of person or text, dispense with diacriticals. Thus we write on India about *purāṇa* (the noun), but about puranic texts.

Where the system of transliteration in a quoted or extracted text differs from my own usage (as for instance in the case of Chinese, where most translations until recently followed the Wade-Giles method, while I have used the now-standard pinyin system), I have maintained the spelling as it is in the source of the extract or quotation, and of course in actual titles of modern books and articles. Thus the historian referred to by me as 'Sima Qian' is the same individual referred to by earlier authors as 'Ssu-ma Ch'ien', which is simply the same name in Wade-Giles transliteration; Ban Gu is Pan Ku, and so on; the Qing dynasty is the same as the Ch'ing; and Mao Zedong is Mao Tse-tung. Occasionally where I have felt more explicit signposting is justified I have inserted the pinyin spelling in square brackets.

Citations and quotations

In an effort to maximize readability, footnotes have been kept to a minimum and are used to document very specific points and quotations or, on occasion, to add a detail of interest but not essential to the main narrative. Where a fact or point

is uncontroversial, well known or contained in many other books, no footnote is provided. Bibliographic references for primary quotations and the longer extracts that accompany the main text are given in full. Not every item cited in a footnote is included in the 'Further reading' section.

Titles of historical works cited within the main text are routinely given in their original language (transliterated if in a non-Roman script) with an English translation of that title following in quotation marks, within parentheses; such translated titles are generally not italicized except where used subsequently in the main text or, naturally, if a particular edition of the work is cited, as in the footnotes and bibliography. The purpose of this somewhat cumbersome practice is to provide an understandable translation (typically one used in the secondary works on which I have relied) to English-speaking readers while also easing reference back to the work in its original language for those willing and able to read it. Where the meaning of a title seems reasonably obvious, or is cited fully in a note, no parenthetical translation is provided, and in some instances I have, for the sake of brevity, simply referred to a work by its most familiar English title. The foreign names of journals and periodicals are not normally translated, e.g. *Historische Zeitschrift*.

Dates

A multitude of calendars have been used by various peoples in the course of the past five thousand years. Full compliance with the non-Eurocentric principles of this book would suggest that dates be recorded as the authors being described recorded them, for instance using the Hijri year of the Muslim calendar. However, this would be far more confusing than helpful. While a compromise might have been to use dates in the format of Common Era (CE)/Before the Common Era (BCE), I have opted for familiarity and simplicity and used the more conventional 'BC' and 'AD'.

Vital dates (where known) for most historians (and many who were not historians but nonetheless figure in the narrative) are provided in the main text. Certain abbreviations for dates have been used:

- b. = born, in the case of historians still living as of mid-2010.
- c. = *circa*, approximate year where no firm year is known or agreed upon.
- comp. = composed during or complete by.
- d. = died. Used where a firm death year is known (or approximate, in which case noted as 'd. c.').
- est. = established, for instance, a journal or historical society.
- fl.* = 'floruit', that is 'flourished': generally used in relation to authors for whom birth and death dates are entirely unknown or highly obscure; indicates active period.

r. = 'reigned'. When a monarch is noted, his or her regnal years, not years of birth and death, are noted in parentheses. The same applies to non-monarchical but significant officials, for instance popes.

In some cases alternative dates are used either because of lack of agreement in scholarship as to a single date, or in some instances because the date itself is tied to a particular chronological scheme which itself is ambiguous.

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DRW

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