

# WHAT WAS HISTORY?

The art of history in early modern Europe

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## CONTENTS

- List of illustrations [vi]
- Preface [vii]
- 1 Historical criticism in early modern Europe [1]
- 2 The origins of the *ars historica*: a question  
mal posée? [62]
- 3 Method and madness in the *ars historica*: three  
case studies [123]
- 4 Death of a genre [189]
- Bibliography [255]
- Index [305]

## ILLUSTRATIONS

1. A Caesar in full medieval dress: Princeton University Library, MS Garrett 129, fol. 1 recto. [85]
2. A Milanese courtly Suetonius: Princeton University Library, MS Kane 44. [86]
3. A Ferrarese Caesar: Princeton University Library, MS Kane 41. [87]
4. Caesar's bridge. [88]
5. The siege of Vxellodunum, as recreated by Giocondo, with full details of the city's defenses and Caesar's siege engines. [89]
6. Caesar crosses the Rhine, from the 1575 edition by Andrea Palladio and his sons. [90]
7. Diodorus Siculus, as translated by Poggio Bracciolini: Princeton University Library, MS Garrett 105, fol. 112 verso. [154]
8. Annus of Viterbo recreates ancient history. [155]
9. Reiner Reineck recreates history as genealogy. [156]
10. Reineck reproduces what he takes as a coin of Ptolemy Lagi. [157]
11. Genealogy in the teaching of history. [158–9]
12. Geography and travel in the *ars historica*. [160–1]

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## P R E F A C E

This book is a revised and enlarged version of the four George Macaulay Trevelyan Lectures that I had the honor of delivering at Cambridge University in January and February 2005. My heartfelt thanks go to the Faculty of History at Cambridge for the invitation to address them, and in particular to David Abulafia, John Morrill, and Quentin Skinner, who presided over my visit with great kindness and warm hospitality. My thanks, too, to the many Cambridge friends, old and new, whose comments and questions led me to rethink my arguments: above all Simon Goldhill, Lauren Kassell, Scott Mandelbrote, Joan-Pau Rubiés, Ulinka Rublack, and Richard Serjeantson.

My teachers at the University of Chicago, Hanna Gray and Eric Cochrane, introduced me to the *artes historicae* in the late 1960s, and since then I have had the pleasure of discussing these complex and provocative texts with many friends and colleagues. I owe debts of long standing to Carlotta Dionisotti, Donald Kelley, Jill Kraye, Joseph Levine, and Zachary Schiffman; to Lisa Jardine, with whom I had the good fortune to collaborate in studying that preeminent artist of history, Gabriel Harvey; to Ingrid Rowland, Wilhelm Schmidt-Biggemann, and Walter Stephens, who have done so much to illuminate the achievements of the Renaissance's most exuberant outlaw historian, Giovanni Nanni; to Paola Molino, for letting me read her forthcoming work on Hugo Blotius and Theodor Zwinger; to Nancy Siraisi and Gianna Pomata, who invited me to devote

## PREFACE

the summer of 2003 to a collaborative study of early modern *Historia* in all its forms, based at the Max Planck Institute for History of Science at Berlin, and who offered invaluable criticism and advice, as well as to the other participants in the research group that they formed, especially Ann Blair, Ian Maclean, Peter Miller, Martin Mulso, and Brian Ogilvie; and to Lorraine Daston, who supported our work and posed us many valuable, difficult questions. The invitation to deliver the Camp Lectures at Stanford University in January 2006 enabled me to test revised versions of my arguments on a new public. My thanks to the irrepressible John Bender, Matthew Tiews, and Julie Cheng, who made my stay at the Stanford Humanities Center so memorable, and to Keith Baker, Giovanna Ceserani, Dan Edelstein, and Paula Findlen, whose objections and suggestions have proved immensely helpful as I put the book through its last revisions.

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My research was chiefly carried out in the Firestone Library of Princeton University, where Stephen Ferguson has shown endless generosity and resourcefulness in acquiring works of early modern erudition and Don Skemer has provided endless help in the exploration of manuscripts, and at the Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel; the Biblioteca

## PREFACE

Apostolica Vaticana; the Bibliothèque Nationale de France; the Bodleian Library; the British Library; and the Cambridge University Library. An earlier version of chapter 1 appeared as “The Identities of History in Early Modern Europe: Prelude to a Study of the *Artes historicae*,” in *Historia: Empiricism and Erudition in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Gianna Pomata and Nancy Siraisi (Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT Press, 2005), 41–74. A semester’s leave from Princeton University in 2004 and a Residency at the American Academy of Rome provided time for both research and contemplation.

Arnaldo Momigliano took only a modest interest in most of the traditions of historical thought discussed here. Nonetheless, this little book reflects, imperfectly, the model of his scholarship and the impact of his teaching, and I hope that it contributes something to the international discussion of the historical tradition that he helped bring into being more than half a century ago.

Princeton, New Jersey  
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