

VOLUME I

WORLD HISTORY



BY THE WORLD'S HISTORIANS

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World History by the World's Historians

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*World History by the
World's Historians*

*Dedicated to the
memory of
Frank Wong
1935–1995*

Of Canons and Questions: Some Prefatory Remarks

World History by the World's Historians presents some of the finest historical writing ever produced by writers from all parts of the globe. There are historians here who wrote or passed down their tales as much as three thousand years ago, and others who wrote at the dawn of the modern era. They come from all around the world: from East and South Asia, the Americas, Africa, Europe, the Middle East, and the Pacific. These selections provide the reader the opportunity to contemplate the nature and purposes of history as it has been practiced by people from many different traditions and in many time periods.

Great historical writing is, in the first instance, a pleasure to read. We offer this collection of fine historical writing to any student or casual reader who likes a good story, who is curious about the past, who is stimulated by ideas, and who likes to think about what we know and how we know it. There is good writing here to suit many tastes: the vivid storytelling of Anna Comnena, the broad social analysis of Ibn Khaldûn, the peripatetic inquisitiveness of Herodotus, the faith of Luke and al-Tabari, the scientific detachment of Arai Hakuseki. For the general reader, it may be enough to read and reflect, to enjoy these historians simply for the pleasure of their company.

This book is also intended for use as a college text, as a supplement in courses on World History or Western Civilization from the beginning to about 1500. The book introduces the reader to the study of history as a discipline by exposing her to a variety of excellent historical writers. We contend that the writers whose work appears here are great historians. The book proceeds from the premises that there are certain historians every student of world history would benefit from reading and that reading them will illuminate the historical periods in which they wrote. Such an approach embodies the idea that there is a canon, a consensus list of the best historical writing. We offer the historians in this anthology as our nominees for inclusion in such a canon—but it is a different canon than those we have seen before.

Our choices of historians speak to two issues: excellence and representativeness. Not all historical writing is equally good. Among the Romans, Suetonius is wonderful and was widely read for many centuries, but few informed modern readers would argue that he is the equal of Tacitus. Among early Chinese, Dong Junshu is a fine historian, but Sima Qian is the giant of his age. Inevitably, our choice of just over two dozen outstanding historians involves judgments of quality, even as we recognize that our notions of quality are to some extent conditioned by the intellectual values of our own era.

Although we would argue it is possible—in fact, important—to make judgments of quality within the contexts of particular times and traditions, we are less comfortable comparing historians from different eras and places on the axis of quality. We may compare Tacitus and Suetonius, both Romans, and make a judgment. But on what basis can we compare the excellence of Tacitus and that of Sima Guang? They are both extraordinary historians, but their eras and places and purposes are so different that it seems ludicrous to attempt to judge one better than the other. It would be like trying to decide who is the greater athlete, Michael Jordan or Tiger Woods. It is a question that cannot be answered.

But just as we may decide that Jordan is an outstanding example of basketball excellence and Woods is a model golfer, so too we may choose Tacitus to stand for the highest development of Roman historical writing and Sima Guang to exemplify the medieval Chinese. It is on these two bases, then, that the historians included in this anthology are chosen: each is excellent in his or her way, and together they represent the best of many traditions.

We have purposely included a larger variety of traditions than some European-oriented traditionalists might expect. It is just not true that only men and only Europeans and North Americans have written history and written it distinctively and well. All the peoples of the world have recounted history and reflected on it. No one can read al-Tabari, Arai Hakuseki, and Sima Guang and fail to be struck by the breadth of their vision, the depth of their insight, the richness of their interpretation—and the importance of their work to the development of historical writing, even if they did not write history of a modern, Western type.

Type of history is an issue. The ways people wrote history—indeed, their conceptions of what history was and what its uses were—differed in different times and cultures. Most modern Europeans and North Americans have thought of history as the stories of the past retold with lessons for the present and guides for the future. A premium has been put on getting the story straight, on basing one's account on an accurate record and care for context. History has not been viewed that way in all times and places. Ibn Khaldûn was not much concerned with the stories, the details of the past, but was very concerned with broad generalizations that could be drawn from the past. Early Indian historians, by contrast, cared a great deal for the story and not much for accuracy, though Kalhana, whom we include here, did his best to get the facts right. Machiavelli and Guicciardini saw history not as a subject in

itself but as a branch of political philosophy that used examples drawn from the past. Many of the historians in this volume regarded written documents as superior to oral accounts, and so relied mainly on the former. Others, such as Herodotus, relied mainly on oral traditions. So there are many kinds of history represented here. Not all will fit equally well with the preconceptions or interests of a particular reader, but all of them will edify the reader if he or she is open to learn. Every reader wears spectacles fashioned by his or her time and culture, but to read the varieties of history only through the lenses of the present and of one's own culture is to blind oneself to the breadth of that which one might learn.

Just as an unbiased reading compels one to include historians from many traditions—Arai Hakuseki along with Gregory of Tours—so, too, it is worthwhile reading women historians as well as men. One can hardly read Sima Qian and Ban Zhao and judge the former a superior example of early Chinese historical writing, even though Sima Qian, the man, is more widely known than Ban Zhao, the woman. So, too, there are subjects that women historians have illuminated more fruitfully than have men. Anna Comnena and Ban Zhao are two examples of court historians whose accounts are much more vivid than their male colleagues' because of the personal connections and the woman-oriented sensitivities they brought to their work. Gulbadan Begam shows aspects of Mughal life that Abu'l Fazl, her better-known male contemporary, misses. Thus, there are women historians included here along with the men, and Asians, Africans, Latin Americans, Polynesians, and Middle Easterners along with Europeans and North Americans.

Even so, the reader will quickly observe a bias toward writers whose work has appeared in English. The work of many great writers in other languages has been translated into English and therefore will be available to our readers. That is more true, however, of Europeans than of Asians or Africans. We offer no new translations, so our collection inclines toward writers who are accessible to an English-speaking audience and slight those writers and traditions whose work has not yet been translated.

World History by the World's Historians, then, proposes a more inclusive canon, and one designed to support a worldwide understanding of the historical discipline. Nonetheless, it leaves out many fine historians; our editors insist we limit our collection to a certain number of printed pages. That is within the design of our project. We have gathered the work of 27 great historians into three roughly chronological categories: "In the Beginnings," "Early Historians," and "Evolving Traditions." "In the Beginnings" contains four selections typical of the histories found in primarily oral societies. It also presents three early works of written historical literature. All show how history writing probably began. The former show the pressures shaping oral histories; the latter show history mixed with literature, religion, and philosophy. It is out of such materials that the later traditions of history writing grew. "Early Historians" shows the founding of formal historiographical traditions in many parts of the world. "Evolving Traditions" carries the development of historiographical traditions further, up to about AD 1500.

Each part of the book begins with a discussion of the common features in that era of the development of historical thinking and writing around the world. Then we present selections from the work of several historians. Each selection is preceded by an introduction that addresses certain common questions and is followed by questions for students to consider and suggestions for further reading. Each introduction describes the life and work of the writer, lays a context for that person's writing, and highlights distinctive features. It seeks to help the reader understand not only what the author wrote, but why she wrote what she did, what were her favorite topics and themes of interpretation, and where she stood in the development of the art of history. We keep these analyses brief because, frankly, we believe it is better to read great historians than to read about them. It is like the study of literature: it is a good thing to read criticism of Jane Austen's themes and style, but it is a better thing to read *Persuasion* and *Pride and Prejudice* and discover their wonders for oneself.

We encourage students to ask questions like these as they read: Who was this historian? Where did he fit in the structure of his society? Why did this person choose to write history? Why did he write as he did? What kinds of problems or topics did this historian choose to investigate? What kinds of sources did she use? What are the strengths and weaknesses of those sources? What other sources might she have used? What are the methods the historian used to frame questions and to collect and analyze information? On what assumptions and toward what ends did he fashion an interpretation of his subject? What were the responses of others to her writing? What can one learn from this historian about the worldview of people in his or her time and place? How does the student's own cultural context shape the kind of history that he or she finds most compelling?

This anthology, then, will introduce the student to how history has been conceived and written by the world's historians from ancient times to the late middle ages.

FOR FURTHER READING

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Editors' Comments and Acknowledgments

The creation of an anthology as broad as this one required both an initial editorial division of labor and the assistance of several people. The very fact that ours is the first attempt to collect selections from the world's historians in one book meant that we had no models and no clear canon from which to draw. We therefore had to specialize and to consult other scholars with expertise different from our own. Were it not for their kind assistance, plus the help of our universities' librarians, students, and staff, this volume would not have been possible.

The editors' labors were arranged as follows: Kevin Cragg is the most classically trained of us, so he took primary responsibility for the Greeks, Romans, and early Christians, plus medieval and early modern Europe. Jim Spickard is the most familiar with anthropology and with social science, so he took responsibility for Native and Latin America, the Middle East, Africa, and India, plus the social scientifically oriented historians we have included. Paul Spickard, with expertise in Asian as well as American history, took responsibility for China, Japan, and many of the modern historians. We each chose passages and wrote drafts of introductions, which we modified based on the others' suggestions. After we had a full manuscript, we each read and revised the entire work. Paul Spickard collated and adjudicated among these revisions, making changes as clarity and style demanded. We have therefore listed him as first editor, though our efforts have been as equally divided as we can imagine on a project of this type. We are fully joint editors who take collective responsibility for our work.

Several other scholars contributed to our efforts. Noriko Usuda, a former student of Paul Spickard at Brigham Young University–Hawaii and now an independent scholar working in Tokyo, provided an analysis of Japanese historiography that undergirds both the authors and the books chosen to represent that tradition. In addition, she undertook translations of some works of Yanagita Kunio that are not otherwise available in English; although those translations are not part of this anthology, they helped us understand Yanagita

and we are grateful. Four other students provided valuable analyses of other authors and advice on the passages selected: Kerri Ritchie, Karina Kahananui Green, Gerald D'Sena, and Richard Schuchart. In addition, we have tried out most of these passages in our courses at Brigham Young University–Hawaii, the University of Redlands, and Bethel College. Our thanks go to all the students who helped make this a better text.

Several of our professional colleagues made timely suggestions that helped determine the book's shape and contents: Jeff Belnap, Robert Eng, David Grandy, Greg Gubler, Carl Hanson, Bill Huntley, John Martin, Alida Metcalf, Richard Reed, Ronald Toby, and William Kauaiwiulaokalani Wallace. In addition, several readers offered suggestions that helped us fine-tune our manuscript for publication: Wayne Hamilton Wiley, Central Virginia Community College; Juanita Smart, Washington State University; Steven W. Guerrier, James Madison University; Gerald Herman, Northeastern University; and Marian Nelson, University of Nebraska–Omaha. While we are grateful for their advice, we are also mindful that they should not be held responsible for our editorial decisions.

Charlene Keliiliki was a paragon of energy, dedication, efficiency, and grace as she typed much of the manuscript. We also thank Bernadette White, Chuck Freidel, Amy Deeds, Sarah Weingartner, and Tricia Rafanan for help with typing. We are grateful to the librarians at Brigham Young University–Hawaii, the University of Redlands, the University of Hawaii, UCLA, Trinity University, and Bethel College for sharing with us the books they prize and for many kindnesses as we tried to track down odd pieces in strange places.

The University of Redlands granted Jim Spickard a timely sabbatical, and the Institute for Latin American Studies at the University of Texas provided him a visiting scholarship. Paul Spickard received a sabbatical from Brigham Young University–Hawaii and a visiting fellowship from the East-West Center. Bethel College granted a sabbatical leave to Kevin Cragg. For all of these, we are grateful.

Finally, our families know what they have had to endure while this book was being made; thanks go to them as well.

Note regarding the spelling of non-English words

All the selections in this anthology are presented with words spelled as they were in their published forms, whether those be books written in English or English translations of works written originally in other languages. We have not reworked the translators' transliterations of names or terms from other languages. This leads, inevitably, to certain inconsistencies, but not, we hope, to confusion.

The inconsistencies exist for each of the non-English traditions, but they are most apparent in the Chinese selections (Chapters 7, 10, 11, and 22). The Chinese writings we present were translated between 1959 and 1975, all using one form or another of the Wade-Giles romanization system. The same system was used by the publishers of most of the books in the Chinese chapters' bibliographies. We have left those writings as they were first published in English. In our own introductions to the Chinese selections, however, we have employed the Pinyin romanization system that is currently used in the People's Republic of China. So, for instance, the authors of our selections write of the Hsia Dynasty and the Chou dynasty; we write of the Xia Dynasty and the Zhou Dynasty. They identify the authors of Chapter 11 as Pan Ku and Pan Chao; we write their names Ban Gu and Ban Zhao.

The selections from Arab, Persian, and Indian traditions are presented here with a minimum of diacritical marks, usually just apostrophes.

We believe that the careful reader will not be confused by all this. We must write in our era, as others have written in theirs.

Historians in Complete Volume

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Hopi/Migration Stories
The Kaguru/An East African Migration Tale
The Kumulipo/Hawaiian Mythic Genealogy
The Sundiata Epic/The Founding of a Mande Empire
The Hebrew Bible/Genesis
Homer/Epic Poet
Scholars of Zhou/History as Ethics
Herodotus/The Founder of Western History
Thucydides/Democracy, War, and Politics
Sima Tan and Sima Qian/Founding the Chinese Historical Tradition
Ban Gu and Ban Zhao/Dynastic Historians
Josephus/Jewish Historian, Roman Historian
Tacitus/History in the Roman Mode
Luke/Historian of Early Christianity
Eusebius/Ecclesiastical Chronicler
Al-Tabari/Founder of Muslim Historiography
Kalhana/Poet of the Kashmiri Past
Annals of Cuauhtitlan/Aztec History
Gregory of Tours/Medieval European
Bede/Venerable Briton
Anna Comnena/Loyal Daughter
Sima Guang/History in the Confucian Mode
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 Charles and Mary Beard/Activist as Historians
 Marc Bloch/Annaliste
 Yanagita Kunio/Historian of the People
 Fernand Braudel/Annales
 Robert William Fogel/Numbers
 John W. Blassingame/Race
 E. P. Thompson/Class
 Caroline Walker Bynum/Gender
 Natalie Zemon Davis/Culture
 Walter Rodney/World Systems
 Gertrude Himmelfarb/Neoconservative Reaction
 Edward W. Said/The Third World Talks Back

Authors' Note: About the Photographs in This Text

McGraw-Hill has kindly provided a photograph to accompany each chapter. Specialists searched diligently for an image of each historian. When such an image could not be found, the publisher's researchers substituted an image that highlighted the writer's milieu or some aspect of his or her work. We appreciate their diligence.

This means, regrettably, that we have proportionately more pictures of male historians than female, and many more photos of European writers than historians of color. Is that not a sad commentary on the way archives have been kept in a European-male-dominated world?

Our publisher tells us that what appears here is absolutely the best we can do at this time for images of Third World and women authors. We continue to hope for improvement and invite our readers to suggest sources of more appropriate photos for any subsequent editions that might appear.

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