

# A Concise History of History

Global Historiography from Antiquity  
to the Present

DANIEL WOOLF

*Queen's University, Ontario*



**CAMBRIDGE**  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

# Contents

<i>Preface and Conventions</i>	page xi
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xvi
Introduction	1
Further Reading	9
The Earliest Forms of Historical Writing	15
The Ancient Near East	15
Jewish Historical Thought from the <i>Tanakh</i> to Josephus	18
Early Greek Historiography	20
Herodotus and Thucydides	21
Greek Historiography from the Fourth to the Second Centuries	25
Roman Historical Writing from Republic to Empire	28
Chinese Historiography from Earliest Times to the Han Dynasty	35
Conclusion	43
Questions for Discussion	44
Further Reading	44
History in Eurasia to the Mid-Fifteenth Century	49
Historical Writing in Christian and Barbarian Europe	49
Islamic Historiography from Muhammad to Ibn Khaldun	56
Forms of History in Southern Asia	61
Historiography in East Asia from the Tang to the Yuan	63
The Age of the Chronicle: Historical Writing in Later Medieval Christendom	71
Conclusion	83
Questions for Discussion	84
Further Reading	85
The Sense of the Past, 1450–1700	89
Renaissance and Seventeenth-Century Europe	89
Chinese Historical Writing under the Ming and Early Qing Dynasties	98
Early Modern Historiography in Islamic Asia and Africa	101
New World Encounters 1: Europeans in Asia and the Americas	106

	New World Encounters 2: Indigenous Histories from the Americas	113
	New World Encounters 3: History in Early Colonial North America	121
	Conclusion	124
	Questions for Discussion	124
	Further Reading	125
4	Enlightenment, Revolution and Reaction, c. 1700–1830	129
	Eighteenth-Century European Historical Culture	129
	Philosophic History, Conjecture and Stadialism	135
	Historical Thought in the French Enlightenment: Voltaire, Condorcet and Rousseau	142
	The German <i>Aufklärung</i>	145
	East Asian Enlightenments	150
	Revolution, Romanticism and Historicism	157
	History in the Service of Nations	160
	Conclusion	166
	Questions for Discussion	167
	Further Reading	167
5	Disciplining the Past: Professionalization, Imperialism and Science, 1830–1945	173
	An Introductory Overview	173
	The Great Transformer: Ranke and His Influence	176
	The Institutions of History and the Beginnings of the ‘Profession’ in Europe and North America	178
	History, Science and Determinism	182
	The Cultural and Social Alternatives to Ranke	190
	Historiographical Imperialism? The Impact of Western Methods and Models Beyond the Eurosphere	196
	Women and the Historical Enterprise, 1800–1945	212
	A Crisis of Historicism? The Early Twentieth Century	215
	Conclusion	220
	Questions for Discussion	221
	Further Reading	222
6	Transitions: Historical Writing from the Inter-War Period to the Present	229
	The Annales Historians; Microhistory	229
	History and the Social Sciences	233
	History under Dictatorships and Authoritarian Regimes	239
	History from Below	247
	Varieties of Intellectual History	251

From Women's History to Histories of Gender and Sexuality	255
Postwar African Historiography	260
The Linguistic Turn: Postmodernism	262
De-centring the West: Postcolonialism	268
History Wars, Revisionism and the Problematic Relations of 'Memory' and 'History'	271
Conclusion	279
Questions for Discussion	280
Further Reading	281
Where Do We Go from Here? Reflections, New Directions and Prognostications	290
Questions for Discussion	305
Further Reading	306
<i>lossary of Terms</i>	309
<i>index</i>	316