

Marc Anthony Meyer, ed. *The Search for Order: Landmarks of World Civilizations*. Gullford, CT: Dushkin Publishing Group, Inc., 1994. Vol. I: *From 3500 B.C.E. to 1550 C.E.* Pp. x, 432. Vol. II: *From 1500 to the Present*. Pp. x, 448. Paper, \$17.35 each.

The Search for Order is a two-volume collection of primary sources. This work is designed to be used in the world history classroom. The selections cover the gamut, from political to social to cultural topics. Each volume is divided into three parts, each part containing twenty-three sources in the following geographical subheadings: Southwest Eurasia and Africa; South and Southeast Eurasia; East Eurasia; West Eurasia; and, when appropriate, the Americas. The students may be unfamiliar with these designations, but once they are accustomed to them there should be no problem. To aid in this endeavor, Meyer provides a shaded map before each section to reinforce student knowledge of geography.

The layout of *The Search for Order* is highly organized—a boon to students. The introduction (contained in both volumes) is geared toward helping students understand the concept of order in history. The language is accessible, but never cloying. Meyer obviously has a good grasp of survey students, as he writes to challenge their notion of what history means: “Societies maintain purposeful standards that reflect what ought to be and what actually is. In the processes of building and maintaining society, the cultural need for stability struggles against discordant elements of flux.” Following the introduction is “An Approach to the Analysis of Primary Historical Sources,” which contains particularly pertinent material. Students are led through an analysis of sources (their benefits and pitfalls), then given eight exercises to complete. These exercises allow students to use everyday situations and items to hone their detective skills. An example is Exercise One: “What’s in a Name,” in which students analyze the contents of someone else’s purse or wallet. They then must write a brief biography of that person based solely on the items they find. I believe that if students take advantage of these exercises, they will find new ways of looking at historical questions.

Prior to each part, Meyer gives a brief overview of that era. One interesting feature of these intros is that Meyer tells students which of the readings relates to a particular theme he is presenting. Directly before the readings for each geographical designation, Meyer provides a map and a brief chronology of that area. Finally, at the end of each volume, there is a glossary of terms and one last invaluable tool. Meyer has taken the twelve leading World History texts (Stearns, Esler, Upshur, Greaves, etc.) and cross-referenced their chapters to each of the articles. Provided that you use one of these texts, this chart allows you to refer each of Meyer’s sixty-nine articles to the chapter and page of your particular text. I found this a highly unique and useful aspect of *The Search for Order*.

The sources themselves provide a variety of social viewpoints, from Kublai Khan’s Mongol Law Code of China to Simone de Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex*. As often is the case, in all but one of the parts (the Ancient World) the section on West Eurasia (Europe) outweighs the others. However, there is a nice mix in each section of very familiar excerpts, such as Plato’s *Republic*, and more obscure ones, such as Selected Writings of Sarojini Naidu. Meyer also takes care to include sources from women writers whenever possible. Each source is accompanied by a brief introduction. Several of the introductions are a little overwhelming in terms of the background information they give, but overall they are appropriate. Following each selection is a series of study questions. In addition to simple summarization of the material, the questions ask students to analyze what they have read. Meyer also includes the helpful element of relating texts to each other through the questions.

As supplementary material, *The Search for Order* should prove highly valuable. The variety of voices will appeal to students. Another effective tool is the inclusion of an illustration in most sections. Some examples are: Shang Sacred Yu Vessel; Ptolemaic World Map; Janus Headpiece of Ekoi Tribe for Ekkpe Society, Ekparabrong Clan of West Africa; and Pablo Picasso’s “Guernica.” The illustrations are also accompanied by explanatory material. This periodic break in the texts should help keep the students’ interest. There are no lists of supplemental material, so be aware that you will have to provide additional information for students who want to follow up on what they have read.

These volumes have been crafted with great care. They are extremely thorough and the extras help provide an excellent framework for students to start their exploration of primary sources. Be aware that as with all sourcebooks, students may have trouble with the language of some of the earlier examples.

A little guidance from you (and perhaps an extra reading or two) will get them through it. It is a special challenge for world history teachers to make documents such as *The Jainist Book of Sermons* and *The Meiji Constitution and the Imperial Rescript on Education* relevant and interesting to students, but by balancing them with such tidbits as Christine de Pisan's "L'Avison Christine" and the Traditional Oral Texts from Africa, it should be easier.

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Evan Mawdsley and Thomas Munck. *Computing for Historians: An Introductory Guide*. Manchester & New York: Manchester University Press, 1993. Pp. xvi, 231. Cloth, \$59.95. ISBN 0-7190-3547-3. Paper, \$19.95. ISBN 0-7190-3548-1.

Daniel I. Greenstein. *A Historian's Guide to Computing*. Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 1994. Pp. xiii, 268. Cloth, \$48.00. ISBN 0-19-824235-2. Paper, \$16.65. ISBN 0-19-823521-6.

Computers have changed everyone's lives and historians confront a variety of choices of how to utilize this technology to increase their productivity. The real challenge, however, lies in their discovering how to incorporate the computer into teaching and research tasks. The first step is to inquire about what is available at his or her workplace and then talk to colleagues who are already familiar with computers. This reality alone makes it difficult to write any one book that accurately and in a timely fashion deals with how to employ computers and their accompanying technology in any one setting, since every institution has a different framework and wide discrepancies exist even among departments on the same campus. Furthermore, every individual using computers has their own preferences—especially when disagreeing about IBM versus Macintosh platforms—and it takes time to figure out what is best for any one person. Finally, the explosion of the Internet is so recent that it is only dealt with briefly by Greenstein and barely at all by Mawdsley and Munck.

The authors of both *Computing for Historians* and *A Historian's Guide to Computing* have obviously utilized this technology in their own work and do a reasonable job of explaining the results of their work. Both books, however, tend to be overly technical for anyone without some previous computer knowledge. Oftentimes, it is simply a case of too much highly-detailed information being too overwhelming for the beginner to comprehend. Furthermore, both works concentrate only on the use of computers in research and do not deal with employing them in the classroom. (For the best book on this topic consult J. B. M. Schick's *Teaching History With A Computer*. The *History Microcomputer Review* is the best journal currently published specifically about computers and history. For sources on both, contact Schick, History Department, Pittsburg State University, Pittsburg, KS 66762; 316-235-4312 or e-mail at jschick@pittstate.edu). All the authors readily admit that any book can hardly claim to describe the "leading edge" because of the publication lag time.

Both books, however, do a good job in their explanation of how to utilize databases in research projects. Economic historians Mawdsley and Munck, in fact, point out that databases and their utilization are the primary forces of their book. On the other hand, Greenstein provides the best description of the advantages and the limitations of their use. Both give concrete examples and tables showing their work with these types of projects. Mawdsley and Munck, for example, discuss the "Gorbals Census Datafile," voting and census sources, and the use of multiple tables in analyzing data. These authors, as well as Greenstein, also argue the validity of this type of research and demonstrate that it can help make previously unmanageable data intelligible for further historical analysis. Both works correctly point out that "garbage in is garbage out" and that data tables in and of themselves do not necessarily yield worthy results. Anyone wanting to enter the world of quantitative history would find both of these books useful. Professors could also assign them to graduate students and some upper-division students who plan to utilize this historical research method.

In comparing the two books, Greenstein's contains the broadest coverage of the use of the computer. He discusses spreadsheets, word processing, and text analysis. In addition, he discusses the growth of the Internet and Janet, as its sister network in the United Kingdom is known. Any book on this