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### Samuel Eliot Morison's Historical World

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of military studies. Until the present republication, only the People's Commissariat for Defense in the former Soviet Union and the the United States Military Academy at West Point had translated his opus.

Delbrück's methodology was straightforward. A product of nineteenth-century German society, Delbrück brought to his studies both conceptual affinities for the philosophy of G.W.F. Hegel and the empirical explicitness of Leopold von Ranke. He adopted, especially from the latter, historical realism and rigorous use of contemporary primary accounts. The very notion of *Kritik* that dominates Carl von Clausewitz's writings also found resonance in Delbrück's works.

His fundamental approach to military history was to analyze eyewitness accounts critically and then scrutinize them, in part by subjecting them to modern parallels. One example from volume one must suffice: Herodotus's claim that the Persian army of Xerxes numbered 4.2 million men. Delbrück argued that inasmuch as a Prussian army corps of his day took up about fourteen miles of road without its supply train, and counting the same fourteen miles of road for each thirty thousand Persians. Xerxes's force would have taken up two thousand miles of road in its line of march. In other words, the vanguard of this Persian force would have arrived at Thermopylae at about the same time the rear guard was about to set out from Susa, on the far side of the Tigris River!

Admittedly, today Delbrück's work appears uneven. There is a definite Germano-centric bias (especially in the second volume) as well as a general Teutonic arrogance in dismissing the writings of others. Additionally, more recent examinations of Greek warfare by W.K. Pritchett, and of Roman warfare by Arthur Ferrill, have forced corrections of some of Delbrück's views. But even his most severe critics concede that he almost single-handedly forced ancient and medieval scholars to take seriously the study of warfare. Also, if his work is viewed in its proper context (i.e., in *the Framework of Political History*), it remains without rival among military studies both in scope and as critical analysis.

One final quibble. Given that the volumes were completed in 1924 and that Delbrück died in 1929, an introductory essay on the historian and his craft would have been of immense value.

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Pfitzer, Gregory M. *Samuel Eliot Morison's Historical World*.

Boston: Northeastern Univ. Press, 1991. 367pp. \$29.95

Samuel Morison offered Gregory Pfitzer access to his personal papers on the condition that they not be used to write his biography. Pfitzer agreed. Instead, he has recounted the intellectual development of a preeminent American historian who made notable and numerous contributions to the

writing of American political, cultural, maritime, and naval history.

Pfitzer, a professor of American studies at Skidmore College, places Morison's historical work—produced over a period of more than sixty years—in the context of the stream of ideas and the major events of the twentieth century. He describes Morison's early outlook, when the impact of philosophical relativism led him to attempt to use history to promote social reform. During the disillusionment that followed World War I, Pfitzer asserts, Morison rejected the idea of applying his craft to social engineering. He turned instead to the tradition of New England's great literary historians of the nineteenth century, most notably Francis Parkman. Morison shared Parkman's conviction that it was essential for the historian to experience the geographical environment of his or her subject. Furthermore, both men were determined to write for a general audience rather than for the academic community specifically.

It was in this tradition that Morison left his post at Harvard University in 1942 to write a history of U.S. naval operations in World War II. Over the next four years, while serving as a Naval Reserve officer, Morison and his staff traveled widely to observe their subject matter firsthand. At the end of the war, after his release from active duty, Morison entered into a contract with the Navy's historical office to complete his project. Amazingly enough, between 1947 and 1962 he produced an average of one

volume per year of his *History of United States Naval Operations in World War II*. Morison's fifteen-volume narrative remains in print today and is considered to be the standard account. It must be viewed as one of the great accomplishments of American historiography.

Pfitzer argues, in his interpretation of Morison's World War II history, that Morison initially adhered to the values of the Navy's establishment but later became increasingly critical. This reviewer remains unconvinced, however, that Morison ever abandoned his scholarly independence. After all, in the first volume of his series Morison castigates the Navy for a lack of preparedness to counter the German U-boat blitz off the East Coast in 1942. The tone of Morison's remarks in that connection is not substantially different from that of his later criticism (in the eleventh volume) of Admiral Halsey's performance at the Battle of Leyte Gulf, which Pfitzer cites as an indicator of the historian's growing readiness to view the Navy's leadership in an unfavorable light.

Unfortunately, the author's lack of familiarity with the U.S. Navy has led him to make several mistakes in dealing with naval subjects. For example, on more than one occasion Pfitzer confuses the well-known naval historian, Dudley W. Knox, with Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox. Another error appears in his discussion of Rear Admiral John B. Hefferan, whom the author depicts as a special friend and protector of Morison. Pfitzer claims that

Heffernan was dismissed “shortly” after becoming Director of Naval History largely because of the admiral’s discharge of an unnamed “civilian historian who was making little progress on a project for the Navy.” This appears to be a reference to Heffernan’s controversial decision in 1950 to terminate Robert G. Albion’s contract to write a history of naval administration in World War II. It is true that the admiral’s action won him few friends, especially in academic circles, but it did not result in his dismissal. In fact, Admiral Heffernan served as Director of Naval History from 1947 until 1956. Despite such problems, however, Pfitzer’s volume does deepen our understanding of a dominant figure in the intellectual history of the United States. This book will be read with interest and considerable profit by students of naval and maritime affairs.

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Ullman, Harlan K. *In Harm's Way: American Seapower and the 21st Century*. Silver Spring, Md.: Bartleby Press, 1991. 271pp. \$16.50

In 1982 the newly appointed Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral James Watkins, received a letter from the Vice Chief, Vice Admiral William Small, which stated that although the Navy was experiencing a gratifying expansion, the strategy underwriting

that growth was not sufficiently defined either for the public or for Congress. The implication was that if easily understandable strategic justification was not provided and made a top Navy priority, every gain would be at risk.

Harlan Ullman believes that Admiral Small’s statement has even more validity today than it did in the halcyon years of expanding budgets. In the post-Cold War era every strategic assumption that justified the modern, dominant U.S. Navy is under fire. The demise of the Soviet Union dominates congressional and public thinking, and unless both are provided with strong strategic arguments, the immediate future of the Navy looks bleak. *In Harm's Way* is a carefully crafted effort to provide those arguments, discussing the politics of justifying, building, and maintaining a navy.

The fundamental problem is clearly presented in the beginning of his treatise: the days of citing the Soviet capability as justification for ships, aircraft, and weapon systems are over. The key factors in the U.S. Navy’s future are economics and politics—not just threats. Ullman predicts that its future will probably be dominated by events over which it has no control and by people over whom it has relatively little influence. This may have far-reaching effects on what he calls the four “battle ensigns” that will shape the navy of the future: strategy, domestic environment, infrastructure, and operations.