

## Writing History in Macaulay's Shadow: J.R. Seeley, E.A. Freeman, and the Audience for Scientific History in Late Victorian Britain

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Volume 22, Number 2, 2011

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1008977ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/1008977ar>

[See table of contents](#)

### Publisher(s)

The Canadian Historical Association / La Société historique du Canada

### ISSN

0847-4478 (print)

1712-6274 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

### Cite this article

Hesketh, I. (2011). Writing History in Macaulay's Shadow: J.R. Seeley, E.A. Freeman, and the Audience for Scientific History in Late Victorian Britain. *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association / Revue de la Société historique du Canada*, 22(2), 30–56. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1008977ar>

### Article abstract

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# Writing History in Macaulay's Shadow: J.R. Seeley, E.A. Freeman, and the Audience for Scientific History in Late Victorian Britain

IAN HESKETH\*

## *Abstract*

*So similar were the historical mindsets of J. R. Seeley and E. A. Freeman that there is still some confusion about which one coined the famous dictum that "history is past politics, politics present history". Not only did they agree about history's proper subject matter, they were also leading members of a community of historians in late Victorian Britain who sought to promote history's scientific status against men of letters who were more interested in history's literary potential. Seeley and Freeman seemed particularly to relish in exposing such historical imposters while promoting their own vision of history as a scientific and autonomous discipline. These similarities aside, the two diverged considerably when reflecting on the posthumous legacy of one such man of letters who likely did more than any other to popularize English history in the nineteenth century. Whereas Seeley believed that Lord Macaulay harmed history's development by corrupting the general reading public's historical sensibilities, Freeman argued that historians owed Macaulay a great debt of gratitude for not only basing his narratives on factual accuracy but also for doing so while reaching an extremely large audience. In debating about Macaulay, it is clear that Seeley and Freeman had different conceptions about the normative audience for a professional history.*

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\* I gratefully acknowledge the assistance of Daniel Woolf and *The Oxford History of Historical Writing* project for providing the necessary funds that allowed me to present this paper at the Canadian Historical Association. I would also like to thank Leslie Howsam, Juan Maiguashca, and John Beatty for their helpful comments on the presented version of this paper. I also received wonderful assistance from the anonymous referees and the editors in revising this paper.

### *Résumé*

*La pensée historique de J. R. Seeley et de E. A. Freeman était tellement similaire qu'il est difficile de savoir qui a formulé le premier le célèbre adage voulant que « l'histoire est la politique du passé; la politique, l'histoire du présent ». Non seulement s'entendaient-ils sur le véritable objet de l'histoire, mais ils dirigeaient également à la fin de l'ère victorienne une communauté d'historiens en Grande-Bretagne qui promouvait le statut scientifique de l'histoire contre les hommes de lettres plus intéressés par le potentiel littéraire de la discipline. Seeley et Freeman appréciaient tout particulièrement dénoncer les imposteurs et défendre leur conception de l'histoire comme une discipline scientifique et autonome. Ces similarités mises à part, les deux hommes divergeaient d'opinion quant à l'héritage posthume d'un des hommes de lettres qui a popularisé, plus que tout autre, l'histoire anglaise au dix-neuvième siècle. Alors que Seeley soutenait que lord Macaulay avait nui au développement de l'histoire en corrompant la sensibilité historique du grand public, Freeman considérait que les historiens lui devaient beaucoup non seulement pour avoir fait reposer ses histoires sur des faits véridiques, mais aussi pour avoir rejoint un très vaste lectorat. Le débat entourant les mérites de Macaulay met en lumière les différentes conceptions entretenues par Seeley et Freeman concernant le public-cible des historiens.*

When Lord Acton was appointed Regius Professor of Modern History at Cambridge in 1895, he was outspoken in his inaugural lecture about the scientific standards then being embraced by a generation of English historians, of which he was a leading figure. Acton, who was 61 at the time, argued that what separated the historical studies of his generation from that of the previous was the centrality of archival sources, empirical research, inductive reasoning, and, most importantly, an attitude of rigid disinterest. The previous generation — and here he explicitly referred to Thomas Babington Macaulay, as well as a few others — were simply unable or unwilling to live up to such standards. Instead, their work was overburdened by the presence of the historian himself rather than that of the facts of the past. In Acton's exact words, he claimed that the previous generation "project[ed] their own broad shadow upon their pages."<sup>1</sup>

By that, Acton meant the previous generation was often as great as the men they studied, great literary masters whose narratives often rivalled — in terms of readership and literary quality — the best-selling novels of the day. He could not have found a better example than Macaulay, whose five volume *History of England* (1848–1861) outsold all other histories published throughout the nineteenth century in Britain. Macaulay's *History* was also popular by design. Not only was it written in the hopes that it would, in Macaulay's words, "supersede the last fashionable novel on the tables of young ladies" — which it often did — Macaulay also had a view of grandeur about his work as if he was writing an eternal history that could have been produced in ancient Greece.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, much like his hero Thucydides, Macaulay wanted "to do something that may be remembered" — and not just beyond his own century. "I have had the year 2000, and even the year 3000, often in my mind; I have sacrificed nothing to temporary fashions of thought and style; and, if I fail, my failure will be more honourable than nine tenths of the successes I have witnessed."<sup>3</sup>

The fact that we are still talking about Macaulay's *History of England* speaks to Macaulay's success in meeting, at least halfway, his goal of being remembered into the fourth millennium.<sup>4</sup> Acton's generation, however, had a seemingly opposing view of the kind of history the English historian should produce and the kind of identity the historian should embrace. As Acton explained, "the historian is seen at his best when he does not appear," when he lets the facts speak for themselves,<sup>5</sup> quite in contrast to the overbearing presence found in the work of Macaulay where it is not the facts that speak but the man of letters.

Macaulay's popularity, however, helped secure for history a place in the Victorian literary landscape that it might not otherwise have acquired. And he motivated many of his young readers — Acton's contemporaries — to take up the pen and make history their life-work. Macaulay's "broad shadow," therefore, was one that was not only cast upon his own pages, but one that extended well beyond the finite boundaries of his books and even his own lifetime. Indeed, as much as Acton and his generation sought to differentiate their supposedly scientific work from the more literary and romantic

Macaulay, they found themselves often debating his legacy and considering how their work truly differed from the most popular historian of the period.

Two of Acton's contemporaries perhaps best symbolize the divergent opinions concerning Macaulay's legacy: John Robert Seeley and Edward Augustus Freeman, two of the most outspoken proponents of a scientific method of historical writing. By scientific history they would have understood the term pretty much the way Acton did — that it referred to a method of history that promoted an empirical, inductive, and disinterested analysis of the past, not to be confused with the positivist science of history earlier popularized by Henry Thomas Buckle.<sup>6</sup> The science of history promoted by Seeley and Freeman was one that in particular eschewed theorizing and deductive thinking in favour of a strict presentation of the facts *à la* Leopold von Ranke.<sup>7</sup> But despite their outspoken promotion of a seemingly identical science of history, the two historians disagreed considerably when contemplating the posthumous legacy of Macaulay in light of the new and supposedly consensual inductive science of history. Whereas Seeley viewed Macaulay's histories as being diametrically opposed to the scientific method of history, Freeman believed the two were highly — and even necessarily — compatible. In debating Macaulay, Seeley and Freeman made it clear that they had very different conceptions about the kind of audience a professional history should seek, despite their perceived methodological similarities.

It is in this way that these competing interpretations of Macaulay speak to a central issue in the professionalization of history that has never truly been resolved. For whom should historians write? And, how should history be written in order to appeal to this imagined audience? Seeley and Freeman had different answers for these questions, but their answers shared a certain ambiguity and even uncertainty. Macaulay, on the other hand, had no doubts about who he was writing for and how he was to achieve his goal of reaching his massive and eternal audience.

Even before the first two volumes of Macaulay's *History of England* hit the bookshops in 1848, he was already a well-established public figure. He was a prominent Whig MP and cabinet minister. He also served on the Supreme Council of India between 1834 and

1838. His literary essays in the *Edinburgh Review* were widely known and praised, as were the ballads about heroic episodes in Roman history included in his *Lays of Ancient Rome* (1842). His *History of England*, however, made Macaulay a household name and helped cement his reputation as one of the great literary masters of the Victorian period.

Had Macaulay lived even a generation earlier, his impact surely would have been mitigated if only because his popularity relied so heavily on an ever-expanding readership that simply did not exist 30 years before his time. Indeed, the decades immediately preceding the publication of Macaulay's *History* witnessed, according to James Secord in reference to another popular work of the period, "the greatest transformation in human communication since the Renaissance. Mechanized presses, machine-made paper, railway distribution, improved education, and the penny post played a major part in opening the floodgates to a vastly increased reading public."<sup>8</sup> From about 1840, it is possible to discern a dramatic increase in literacy rates among the general population, particularly among the working and middle classes.<sup>9</sup>

It was precisely these new "general readers" that Macaulay targeted with his *History*. Not only did Macaulay write his *History* in such a way that would appeal to general readers by relying on a host of novelistic literary techniques (discussed more thoroughly below), but the general story that Macaulay told of English history tended to reflect and reinforce the passions and prejudices of his many readers. The first two volumes focused on the Glorious Revolution of 1688 climaxing with James II's flight from power. The second two volumes, published in 1855, were much bloodier, with the narrative centring on William III's drawn-out struggle with Louis XIV for global hegemony. In these two volumes in particular, English history is portrayed as a grand "liberal epic" culminating in the establishment of a world empire governed by a civilized, liberal, and homogenous race.<sup>10</sup> It went without saying, argued Leslie Stephen, that Macaulay knew "how to stir the blood of the average Englishman."<sup>11</sup>

Even though he died in 1859, Macaulay was never truly silenced as he remained very much in the public sphere decades afterwards, continuing to stir the blood of the average Englishman as it

were. As Leslie Howsam has made so clear, even some of Macaulay's well-worn figures of speech, such as his fictional "New Zealander" (the oft-invoked future witness of Britain's inevitable decline) and English "schoolboy" (whose knowledge of history is decidedly parochial) had, to a great extent, simply infiltrated literary discourse.<sup>12</sup> And Macaulay's presence was even more explicitly acknowledged thanks to the posthumous publication in 1861 of a fifth and final volume of his *History of England*, a story that concluded with the death of Macaulay's hero, William III, in 1702. Perhaps more relevant yet was the publication in 1876 of the best-selling *Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay*, a work that was widely reviewed in the periodical press, engendering a wealth of new considerations about Macaulay's interesting life.

In following the typical "life and letters" biographical format of the period, Macaulay's nephew, George Otto Trevelyan, integrated a selection of letters, diary entries, as well as his own commentary in order to present the life of this fascinating Victorian intellectual. Highlights of the book — and by extension Macaulay's life — included Macaulay's role in some of the central political disputes of his day, most notably the passage of the Reform Bill of 1832, in which Macaulay played no small part. His long-standing debate with John Wilson Croker, which began on the parliamentary floor over the latter's interpretation of the French Revolution and later migrated to the periodical press thanks to Croker's scathing review of the *History of England*, gave wonderful insight into the personal motivations that underpinned the often overlapping worlds of English political and literary life.<sup>13</sup>

For historians, however, the most interesting aspect of the book was the wealth of information it contained about Macaulay's *History*, in particular his views about the multi-volume work that he was in the process of researching and writing. Readers found a man absolutely delighted with the story of English history that he was uncovering in his travels and research, a fascinating story that he believed had yet to be told. "I have at last begun my historical labours," he wrote to Macvey Napier in November of 1841, seven years before the first two volumes would appear; "I can hardly say with how much interest and delight. I really do not think that there

is in our literature so great a void as that which I am trying to supply. The materials for an amusing narrative are immense.”<sup>14</sup> Macaulay believed that previous English historians had simply failed to convey adequately many of the dramatic episodes of English history to the growing body of readers interested in England’s past, believing that he could be the historian able and willing to do justice to that past. As stated above, according to Macaulay it was possible to write a history of England that competed directly, not only with other histories, but also with the most fashionable novels of the day. This is precisely what he set out to do.

Macaulay was concerned in particular with the *writing* of his story, so much so that he spent the vast majority of his time rewriting and rewriting again. He wanted to ensure, for instance, that even though his story of English history would begin *in media res*, that is, in the middle of things with the reign of James II, that readers would not feel the omission of an immense back story that needed to be told before getting into the main thrust of the narrative:

The great difficulty of a work of this kind is the beginning. How is it to be joined on to the preceding events? Where am I to commence it? I cannot plunge, slap dash, into the middle of events and characters. I cannot, on the other hand, write a history of the whole reign of James the Second as a preface to the history of William the Third; and, if I did, a history of Charles the Second would still be equally necessary, as a preface to that of the reign of James the Second.

To deal with this central conundrum of historical narrative, Macaulay decided on “an introductory chapter” in order to help readers “glide imperceptibly into the full current of my narrative,” but adequate transitions remained a concern for Macaulay throughout the writing of his *History*.<sup>15</sup> He had particular difficulty with what he called “the art of transition” when writing about the Jacobites in 1690.

To make the narrative flow along as it ought, every part naturally springing from that which precedes; to carry the reader backward and forward across St. George’s Channel without



distracting his attention, is not easy. Yet it may be done. I believe that this art of transition is as important, or nearly so, to history, as the art of narration.<sup>16</sup>

Trevelyan also made it clear that Macaulay was not just concerned with getting the broad strokes right but that he focused much attention on all elements that made up the narrative, for instance, never letting “a sentence to pass muster until it was as good as he could make it.” Trevelyan explained that Macaulay “thought little of recasting a chapter in order to obtain a more lucid arrangement, and nothing whatever of reconstructing a paragraph for the sake of one happy stroke or apt illustration.”<sup>17</sup> He was even diligent when it came to choosing just the right word, something that he believed was absolutely key when trying to speak to an audience of general readers. “The first rule of all writing, — that rule to which every other is subordinate, — is that the words used by the writer shall be such as most fully and precisely convey his meaning to the great body of his readers. All considerations about the purity and dignity of style ought to bend to this consideration.”<sup>18</sup>

While it has become a truism that modern historians have *unconsciously* adopted the narrative form typical of nineteenth-century novels,<sup>19</sup> the *Life and Letters* makes it clear that this practice was not the case for Macaulay: that is, his was a *conscious* appropriation. Indeed, Macaulay was not only conscious of his use of nineteenth-century novelistic literary techniques, he believed that their appropriation was necessary in order to tell a story of English history that was not only accurate but was also one that would be read and remembered. Macaulay perceived the great possibility of writing an English history under such a methodology well before he sat down to write it. In an 1828 anonymous article for the *Edinburgh Review*, Macaulay argued that all English historians “miserably neglect the art of narration, the art of interesting the affections, and presenting pictures to the imagination.”<sup>20</sup> For Macaulay, it was absolutely necessary to get right not just facts, which he famously called “the mere dross of history,” but the “abstract truth which interpenetrates them, and lies latent among them, like gold in the ore, that the mass derives its whole value.”<sup>21</sup> It was precisely by relying on such novelistic techniques as

combing both the real and the unreal, factual accuracy with imaginative reconstruction, that Macaulay was able, in the words of George Levine, to “turn the reigning attitudes of middle-class culture — its pride in country, in the products of its ingenuity, in its modest domestic virtues, in its constitution — into art.”<sup>22</sup>

Macaulay’s method of research was equally as artistic and romantic as was his method of writing.<sup>23</sup> While he spent much time sifting through government documents and reading contemporary pamphlets and diaries, as well as secondary “authorities,” Macaulay felt that it was of utmost necessity to visit the actual sites where the key historical events took place. *Life and Letters* is filled with references to trips throughout England and Europe, to sites where major battles took place, to relevant towns and villages, to churches and castles. “I must go down into Somersetshire and Devonshire to see the scene of Monmouth’s campaign,” Macaulay wrote to Napier in the summer of 1842, “and to follow the line of William’s march from Torquay.”<sup>24</sup> When he visited such places, he took copious notes about seemingly mundane geographical details, but many of which appeared almost word-for-word in his *History*, to add a sense of detail and scenery to his story that would normally be reserved for romantic novels.<sup>25</sup>

Macaulay travelled to the key sites which appear in his *History* not only to add further narrative details, but also because he found it necessary to put himself in the place of past historical events and, in anticipation of R.G. Collingwood’s more thorough consideration of the subject, re-enact in his own mind historical thoughts and actions.<sup>26</sup> Macaulay sought to get a feel for what had happened and to use his imagination not unlike the way romantic poets sought to use their imagination to gain access to the sublime nature of reality. As Macaulay explained to his sister Margaret: “My accuracy as to facts ... I owe to a cause which many men would not confess. It is due to my love of castle-building. The past is in my mind soon constructed into a romance.” By this he meant that he was able, after visiting a particular place, to later envision himself there, in the midst of some historical event, able to recall every detail. “I seem to know every inch of Whitehall. I go in at Hans Holbein’s gate, and come out through the matted gallery.” He imagined “long” and “sufficiently

animated” conversations “compose[d] between great people ... in the style, if not with the merits, of Sir Walter Scott’s.”<sup>27</sup>

Taken together, Macaulay’s various statements about his methods gave wonderful insight into the kind of history Macaulay sought to write and also helped explain that the popularity of his *History* was no fluke — that Macaulay had consciously made particular literary choices in order to widen the book’s appeal. Not only did Macaulay believe that there was a dramatic story of England’s past that was worth telling, he believed that it could only be properly told by appropriating the writing style of the novelist while maintaining a romantic, even poetic, attachment to the past. The extent of Macaulay’s success in “selling” this view of history was further illustrated by Trevelyan who provided the exact sales figures for the *History* up till 1876. “Within a generation of its first appearance,” explained Trevelyan, “upwards of a hundred and forty thousand copies of the History will have been printed and sold in the United Kingdom alone.”<sup>28</sup> These figures were staggering for any book, much less a “history.” Given these figures as well as Macaulay’s rather candid methodological statements, it should not be surprising that the publishing of the *Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay* provided the occasion for fellow historians — such as John Robert Seeley and Edward Augustus Freeman — to reflect further on Macaulay’s legacy as a historian at a moment when history itself was being established as a serious discipline of scholarly study.

When Seeley read the *Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay* he believed that he was now able to understand something central, not just about Macaulay’s methodology but more so about the public perception of history itself. As he argued in a review of sorts that appeared in *Macmillan’s Magazine* in 1879, Macaulay had established an unrealistic methodology in particular and a false view of history in general that had left a dreadful legacy which contemporary historians had yet to overcome. The review, which will be discussed more closely below, amounted to a scathing attack on Macaulay the historian. Seeley was responding to what Macaulay himself said about his historical methodology in the *Life and Letters*, but something else was clearly at work in his critique: he was also responding to the many critics of his own recently published history.

The previous year, the Cambridge University Press published in three volumes Seeley's long-promised specialized study, *The Life and Times of Stein, or, Germany and Prussia in the Napoleonic Age* (1878). As far as Seeley was concerned, it was an important turning point in his career as a historian. Until then Seeley had been known only as the probable author of the anonymous *Ecce Homo*, an enormously popular life of Jesus Christ that elicited something of a scandal when it was published in 1865 for its supposedly heretical portrayal of Jesus the moral philosopher. Lord Shaftesbury famously claimed that the book had been "vomited forth from the jaws of hell." While it angered High Church and evangelical Anglicans, liberal Anglicans embraced Seeley's argument that Christ's teachings should provide the foundation for a new science of moral politics.<sup>29</sup> It was well known that Prime Minister Gladstone, in particular, was an admirer of *Ecce Homo*,<sup>30</sup> so much so that when Seeley was appointed by Gladstone to the Chair of Modern History at Cambridge in 1869, it was widely criticized as yet another example of a friendly but unjustified appointment. As the *Saturday Review* commented:

Mr. Gladstone was fascinated with *Ecce Homo*, and therefore Mr. Seeley teaches modern history at Cambridge. He may do it well; but his nomination was quite independent of any sufficiently grounded presumption that he would do so .... He has still to prove his fitness for the place.<sup>31</sup>

It seemed more than curious that a man who had published a single book that could only tangentially be called history, a book that the author had yet to acknowledge as his own, should be appointed to one of the two most important historical positions of the nation. Yet, given that he had replaced the much maligned novelist Charles Kingsley, Seeley's appointment was deemed rather par for the course when it came to Cambridge history appointments.<sup>32</sup>

This is all to say that Seeley had much to prove after his controversial appointment, and he believed his *Life and Times of Stein* would silence the critics. It was just the kind of primary source based, rigorous analysis of a specialized subject that was being called for by leading historians of the day. Unfortunately for Seeley, his "*début* as a

historian," in the words of the *Examiner*, was not reviewed as well as he had expected.<sup>33</sup> While it was deemed an "exhaustive study" completed with "discriminating impartiality,"<sup>34</sup> it was also widely panned as being practically unreadable. The *Westminster Review* questioned the necessity of three volumes on a man's life whose most important years spanned a mere decade. The book was simply too long and filled with "redundant pages."<sup>35</sup> Similarly, the *International Review* complained:

... the volumes are hard reading. There is so much analysis and discussion that the reader is never caught by the story and swept along ... by the great events of time. This is a grave defect, both for author and public.<sup>36</sup>

The *London Society* was even worse: "Compared with such a writer as Macaulay," argued the reviewer, "Professor Seeley is dull."<sup>37</sup>

Seeley, who had endured an avalanche of criticism for *Ecce Homo*, was disappointed that his new book was not better and more widely appreciated. He was especially irritated at the criticisms directed at his writing style, particularly given the fact that he followed in many ways the Rankean prescripts for scientific historical writing, something that the periodical press clearly failed to appreciate. As he wrote to one of the book's few admirers, "everyone admits its thoroughness, accuracy, judgment, and in parts originality, only they think all this unimportant compared to a tawdry, semi-political style which I took the greatest pains to avoid." He was unapologetic for the supposed dryness of the work arguing, "I remain firmly convinced that I have hit on the right way of writing history, and that the Macaulay style is wrong."<sup>38</sup> Indeed, Seeley was "seriously discouraged" by the reviews of his book, and he became convinced that the new and expanding reading public would simply never be able to appreciate proper historical writing. And he knew exactly who to blame: Macaulay.

Macaulay was to blame, Seeley argued in his *Macmillan's Magazine* article, which appeared just a few months after the notices of his work on Stein were published, because he taught the general reader that history, when written properly, should be dramatic and

entertaining, in other words as interesting as a novel. According to Seeley, the recently published *Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay* made clear Macaulay's obsession with historical romance novels, particularly the Waverly Novels of Walter Scott, and the role that obsession played in his method of history:

Macaulay tells us himself that in his rambles about the streets of London his brain was commonly busy in composing imaginary conversations among historical persons; these conversations, he says, were like those in the Waverly Novels. Thus trained, he became naturally possessed by the idea ... that it was quite possible to make history as interesting as a romance.

According to Seeley, Macaulay's success in writing a history of England that could have been written by Walter Scott not only meant that Macaulay had a whole host of followers writing history in much the same way, but that his work had also convinced the general reading public to expect history to read very much like a romance novel. "And to this day it is an established popular opinion that this is the true way of writing history, only that few writers have genius enough for it." Indeed argued Seeley, "it is inconceivable to the popular mind that a man should write a book which it is difficult to read, when he might have written a delightful and fascinating one. A historical work therefore written in these days, if it is only as interesting as histories used to be before the days of Scott and Macaulay, or if it is at all difficult to read, is popularly regarded as missing its mark."<sup>39</sup>

What was particularly problematic about Macaulay's *History* was not just that he had presented a false view of the past, but that his romantic history "has spoiled the public taste" for a historical narrative that is actually based on facts and accuracy — a story that would necessarily be "much more ordinary and monotonous than is commonly supposed."<sup>40</sup> In other words, "in making history interesting," Macaulay "has done a mischief which it is now very difficult to repair." He had, according to Seeley, corrupted the reading public's historical sensibilities to such a great extent that "no distinction remains between history and fiction" in the public's imagination. The new reading public needed to be taught what truly made for good history but Macaulay

had essentially done the opposite by skewing fact and fiction, documentation and the imagination. Because of Macaulay's "success" in this regard, Seeley believed that scientific historians like himself should essentially ignore the new general reader and write for peers alone because the general public will always want and insist upon falsehood. As Seeley argued, "All direct attempts to popularize historical knowledge seem to me likely to fail, for history only becomes interesting to the general public by being corrupted, by being adulterated with sweet, unwholesome stuff to please the popular palate."<sup>41</sup>

Edward Freeman readily agreed with many of Seeley's premises in his attack on Macaulay's legacy, but with a few major caveats, which will be explained below. First, it is important to note that Freeman's and Seeley's historical outlooks shared a great deal and their careers paralleled one another in interesting ways. For instance, for about the space of ten years they each occupied the top two historical positions in the nation — Seeley as Regius Professor of Modern History at Cambridge from 1860 to 1895, and Freeman as Regius Professor of Modern History at Oxford from 1884 to 1894 — at a time when history as a subject matter was being taken more seriously at the ancient universities. They also shared almost identical views about the true subject matter of history, so much so that the current Regius Professor of Modern History at Cambridge claims that it was Seeley who coined the phrase "history is past politics, politics present history," when, in fact, it was Freeman.<sup>42</sup> However, whether or not Seeley coined the famous phrase is beside the point: his historical writings show quite clearly that he certainly agreed with the sentiment as much, if not more, than Freeman did.<sup>43</sup> Seeley coined his own phrase: "History without political science has no fruit; Political science without history has no root," though it proved not as memorable as Freeman's more famous dictum, even as it represented the same fundamental idea about the necessary centrality of politics in historical analysis.<sup>44</sup> It should be noted that Macaulay would have agreed with this view as well. In this way the three were all "Whig" historians believing that English history was centrally a story of slow and steady political progress.<sup>45</sup>

Where Freeman and Seeley departed from Macaulay but agreed with each other was in the need for history to adopt a scientific

methodology and shed its image as a literary genre. Freeman was just as outspoken in the need for historians to give an impartial presentation of the past, devoid of a style that necessarily attracted a wider audience at the expense of the facts. Like Seeley, Freeman was convinced that the general reader would always prefer a dramatic retelling of a past event than a much less interesting narrative of what actually happened. Sounding almost exactly like Seeley (and relying on the same metaphor), Freeman argued that historians must always be on guard to avoid the temptation to succumb to the pressure to give the general reader “not the food which may be best for them, but the food which will most please their palates.”<sup>46</sup>

Freeman, like Seeley, sought to practice what he preached. He attempted to write in clear and accurate prose, devoid of jargon and hyperbolic language, in order to provide a true representation of what actually happened. His most important study, at least in his mind, was his five volume *History of the Norman Conquest* (1867–1876), a work that relied extensively on primary (albeit published) sources to argue in favour of a continuity between pre- and post-Norman conquest England. Much like Seeley’s detailed study of Stein, Freeman’s was widely praised for its rigorous attention to detail and marshalling of evidence, but the writing itself was off-putting. The *London Quarterly* argued, “If Mr. Freeman fails at all, it is in style.”<sup>47</sup> Similarly, the *Westminster Review* found it unfortunate that “Mr. Freeman’s style is almost uniformly sedate and punctual”; while the *Christian Remembrancer* argued that Freeman is “addicted to the use of archaic phrases, where a more modern way of speaking would be quite as significant and more intelligible generally.”<sup>48</sup> The *Norman Conquest’s* rather “sedate” and “archaic” style meant that it failed to approach the popular appeal of a Macaulay or even a James Anthony Froude.

It was the latter historian, Froude, who would bore the brunt of Freeman’s anger about the public’s failure to appreciate scientific history and its preference for what he called romanticized fictions which masqueraded as history. He ruthlessly denounced virtually everything the popular Froude wrote, arguing — much like Seeley on Macaulay — that Froude’s histories were essentially fictional accounts of the past. “[W]hat passes for history in the hands of Mr. Froude,” argued



Freeman, "is a writing in which the things which really happened find no place, and in which their place is taken by the airy children of Mr. Froude's imagination."<sup>49</sup> Such criticisms were raised despite the fact that Froude relied extensively on archival sources for his histories, even more so than did Freeman; but Freeman never got over the fact that Froude's histories were written in a way to "please the popular palate," as it were. Freeman was particularly disturbed by the fact that the general public so eagerly digested Froude's falsehoods and could not wait for each new Froude publication to hit the bookshops in order to satiate their ever-growing desires for a form of history that was, in Freeman's mind, fiction. This appetite for Froude's histories was why Freeman felt it continually necessary to review Froude's publications and point out his inaccuracies. "Mr Froude has a name and a following. What he writes will be read by many and will be believed by some."<sup>50</sup> In attacking Froude, Freeman was doing a public service on behalf of the discipline of history.<sup>51</sup>

What did Freeman think of Macaulay? He believed that Macaulay had his faults, but when he read the *Life and Letters*, he ignored the obvious parallels between Macaulay and Froude and instead found a man he related to on several levels. He felt a "deep debt of gratitude" towards Macaulay, arguing that he was "entitled to be looked up to by all of us [English historians] as a master and a model." Quite in contrast to Seeley, Freeman believed that Macaulay was a "model of style" and that every historian would do well to follow Macaulay in seeking to write "clear and pure English."<sup>52</sup> For Freeman, what made Macaulay's style so wonderful was not his clever turns of phrases or romantic metaphors, but rather his accurate use of the English language to describe what had happened:

Read a page of Macaulay: scan well his minute accuracy in every name and phrase and title; contrast his English undefiled with the slipshod jargon which from our newspapers has run over into our books; dwell on the style which finds a fitting phrase in our tongue to set forth every thought, the style which never uses a single word out of its true and honest meaning; turn the pages of the book in which no man ever read a sentence a second time because he failed to catch its meaning the first time, but in

which all of us must have read many sentences a second or a twentieth time for sheer pleasure of dwelling on the clearness, the combined fullness and terseness, on the just relation of every word to every other, on the happily chosen epithet, on the sharply pointed sarcasm.<sup>53</sup>

For Freeman, style in itself was not the problem with romantic historical writing. He believed Macaulay proved that there “is no real opposition between excellence of style and excellence of matter.”<sup>54</sup>

It is perhaps not surprising that those elements in Macaulay’s writing that Freeman praised were exactly the virtues of his own writing he liked to promote — though, as has been shown, critics found Freeman’s supposed stylistic virtues more peculiar than pleasing. Indeed, it was often argued that Freeman repeated the same hackneyed phrases and that his obsessive use of historically accurate English terms was distracting rather than helpful.<sup>55</sup> Freeman not only praised Macaulay’s clarity, but also his willingness “never to be afraid of using the same word or name over and over again,”<sup>56</sup> as well as his avoidance of “vulgarisms” and “new-fangled or affected expressions” — a particular pet peeve of Freeman. According to Freeman, “Macaulay never allows himself for a moment to be careless, vulgar, or slipshod .... Every person and every thing is called by the right name and no other.”<sup>57</sup> Macaulay was simply “a master” of historical style.<sup>58</sup>

What is to be made of these two diametrically opposed interpretations of Macaulay as a historian written at roughly the same time by two historians who seemed to agree substantially on many methodological and philosophical issues central to their profession? To summarize: Seeley believed that Macaulay’s romantic portrayals of the English past had so corrupted the reading public’s historical sensibilities that they would never be able to appreciate a history that sought, in Ranke’s words, to show what actually happened. Freeman, on the other hand, believed that Macaulay “was a great scholar, a great writer, a great historian, a great man.”<sup>59</sup> Whereas Seeley portrayed Macaulay much as Freeman portrayed Froude, as the anti-historian, the literary interloper who would forever undermine the kind of scientific history promoted by serious historical scholars,

Freeman portrayed Macaulay as a mirror image of himself, a writer obsessed with clarity, accuracy, and the proper way of writing in the English language. In this way the two critiques share a fundamental similarity: they were each portraying Macaulay in a particular light — one negative and the other positive — to promote a form of historical writing each appreciated. The irony, of course, is that Freeman and Seeley were advocating a very similar form of historical writing, one that was true to the sources, one that did not rely on over dramatization or overly stylized prose, and one that was clear and accurate, never giving in to that temptation to falsify in order to please a wide readership.

It would seem, then, that 20 years after his death, Macaulay had become the postmodernist's best friend — a floating signifier whose meaning cannot be fixed beyond the specific desires of a given interpreter. Macaulay was at once a historian who could be praised for his clarity and accuracy by one set, while at the same time denounced for his delusional romantic fictions by another, a floating signifier if there ever was one. Yet there was clearly something substantial at work in Seeley's and Freeman's different interpretations of Macaulay's historical methodology that speaks to a subtle but significant distinction between the two "scientific" historians, and perhaps also to a larger though somewhat hidden division within the supposedly consensual ranks of scientific historians at a moment when history was becoming a professional discipline of study.

Seeley was no friend of the so-called general reader — the reader Macaulay so clearly targeted with the content and style of his *History*. It is fairly clear that Seeley began to be suspicious about general readers about the same time his *Ecce Homo* scandalized the Christian sensibilities of particular sectors of the Church of England. Publishing anonymously was supposed to protect Seeley and by extension his deeply respected evangelical family from the inevitable criticism, but his authorship became widely known just a year after the book was published. While *Ecce Homo* might have helped secure Seeley the coveted Regius Professorship at Cambridge, the personal nature of much of the widespread criticism convinced Seeley that general readers were incapable of properly understanding complex arguments, particularly of a religious nature.<sup>60</sup> The failure of the periodical press to

appreciate the writing style he employed in the *Life and Times of Stein* further convinced him of the incapacity of the majority of readers to comprehend good historical writing. When he searched for a rationale as to why this was the case, he looked to the most widely read English historian of the Victorian period and he found a man pandering to the new general readers by making “history more interesting than it is.”<sup>61</sup> Because of this, for Seeley, good scientific history would always be for peers and peers alone.

Freeman, on the other hand, despite his angry criticisms of so-called literary interlopers, such as Froude, who did exactly what Seeley claimed of Macaulay, was slightly more optimistic about the intellectual capabilities of general readers (despite evidence to the contrary) and in this sense his view of the ideal audience for historical writing was more in line with Macaulay than Seeley. Freeman believed that it was possible to teach general readers to appreciate the principles of scientific history.<sup>62</sup> As he told his friend James Bryce, “The way to keep the [general reader] from being a fool is to treat him as if he were not one.”<sup>63</sup> This involved, for Freeman, not ignoring general readers, as seemed to be Seeley’s prescription, but rather writing histories explicitly addressed to them. It was from such a perspective that Freeman wrote histories for children and young adults with the explicit purpose of indoctrinating them into the scientific fold. As he explained to his publisher, Alexander Macmillan, he wanted “to teach [children] to call things by their right names, to distinguish history from legend, to know what sources are, and to distinguish the different values of different writers” in contrast to what they might learn at school or from their parents.<sup>64</sup> Freeman seemed to grasp that there was not a single audience for history but two quite distinct audiences that required quite different kinds of histories to meet their particular intellectual needs. Freeman essentially anticipated the two kinds of history we generally see today, those written for general readers that can be found on bestseller lists and on display in bookshops with subtitles that inevitably invoke how their subject matter “changed the world,”<sup>65</sup> and those written for peers typically only available through publishers or online sellers at a much higher price. But Freeman believed that professional historians could and should write both kinds of books and that each could be under-

pinned by a devotion to accuracy and clarity. In his mind it was Macaulay who showed the way in this regard. Freeman was therefore more willing to overlook Macaulay's literary excesses, whereas Seeley was not.

The fact remains, however, that in the few decades that separated the work of Macaulay from that of Freeman and Seeley, the discipline of history had undergone a profound epistemological shift. That is to say, along with history becoming a professional discipline of study, the idea of just what it meant to be a historian, was changing. This shift is perhaps most clear when Lord Acton's critique of Macaulay, which includes elements of Seeley's and Freeman's positions, is considered more closely. Acton, along with Freeman, readily agreed that Macaulay was a great writer, perhaps even the greatest English historian of all time.<sup>66</sup> At the same time, he agreed with Seeley that Macaulay was too much a part of his histories, that they so clearly showed the stereotypes of his day. From this perspective, Macaulay may have been, in Acton's mind, "one of the greatest writers and masters," but he was also "utterly base, contemptible and odious."<sup>67</sup> Acton seemed to understand that in necessarily becoming more disinterested, the historian would have to give up the dream of past literary figures; that is the dream of being "great." It was no longer necessary or even desirable for the historian to be greater than the history and thereby achieve what Macaulay so clearly desired: literary immortality. "Method," argued Acton, "not genius, or eloquence, or erudition makes the historian."<sup>68</sup> This view represented a profound shift.

Seeley clearly embraced this notion, so much so that he preferred his work to be read by the few historians whom he could be sure would appreciate it, with little care about its readability among the general reading public. Freeman, on the other hand, may have agreed in principle that the historian should let the past speak for itself, but he never quite embraced the idea of the historian being a mere "worker," as his friend and Regius predecessor William Stubbs put it,<sup>69</sup> never quite let go of the historian as popular genius — an identity established by his "master" Macaulay. He hoped that he could train general readers to appreciate the intrinsic value of scientific history in part because he wanted his historical views to be

disseminated to the wider public and not just to fellow historians. It may be that Freeman is best understood as a transitional figure between the historian as literary genius writing for the population at large and the historian as professional researcher writing for a more narrow audience of other historians. The issue of the kind of audience professional historians should aspire to write for has never really gone away. Even while there are — a full century and then some since Freeman and Seeley wrote — professional historians who write for peers on the one hand and for popular audiences on the other, there are still many “interlopers” who continue to pretend, like Macaulay, that these borders do not exist, writing for a single audience undisturbed by the epistemological boundaries constructed by the historical profession. Current debates about the dry-as-dust state of professional histories inevitably coalesce around issues of audience and reception, writing and style, science and art — issues debated in the wake of Macaulay’s great success.<sup>70</sup> In this regard, much like Lord Acton’s generation of so-called scientific historians, today’s historians have yet to get out from under Macaulay’s broad shadow.

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## Endnotes:

- 1 Lord Acton, "The Study of History" (1895), in *Selected Writings of Lord Acton*, vol. 2: *Essays in the Study and Writing of History*, ed. J.R. Fears (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Classics, 1986), 504–52 on 520.
- 2 Thomas Babington Macaulay to Macvey Napier, 5 November 1841, in *The Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay*, ed. George Otto Trevelyan, 2 vols. (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1876), vol. 2, 103.
- 3 Diary entry, 4 December 1848, in *ibid.*, vol. 2, 246. Macaulay believed that Thucydides was "the great historian. The others [modern historians] one may hope to match: him, never," in *ibid.*, vol. 2, 244. Macaulay also praised Thucydides in his anonymously published "History," *Edinburgh Review* 47 (May 1828): 331–67 on 338–9.
- 4 Catherine Hall's much anticipated forthcoming book, *Macaulay and Son: Writing Home, Nation and Empire* (2012), will no doubt renew much scholarly interest in Macaulay.
- 5 Acton, "The Study of History," 520.
- 6 For English historians' criticisms of Buckle, see Christopher Parker, "English Historians and the Opposition to Positivism," *History and Theory* 22 (1983): 120–45; and T.W. Heyck, *The Transformation of Intellectual Life in Victorian England* (London: St. Martins, 1982), chap. 5.
- 7 On the "science of history" in this period, see Ian Hesketh, *The Science of History in Victorian Britain: Making the Past Speak* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2011).
- 8 James Secord, *Victorian Sensation: The Extraordinary Publication, Reception, and Secret Authorship of Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 2.
- 9 On the revolution in printing and literacy in the nineteenth century, see Richard D. Altick, *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public, 1800–1900*, 2nd ed. (Columbus: Ohio State University, 1998); David F. Mitch, *The Rise of Popular Literacy in Victorian England: The Influence of Private Choice and Public Policy* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992); David Vincent, *Literacy and Popular Culture: England 1750–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); and as it relates to science publishing, see Jonathan Topham, "Scientific Publishing and the Reading of Science in Nineteenth-Century Britain: A Historiographical Survey and Guide to Sources," *Studies in the History and Philosophy of Science* 31, 4 (2000): 559–612.
- 10 On Macaulay's *History* as a "liberal epic," see Edward Adams, *Liberal Epic: The Victorian Practice of History from Gibbon to Churchill* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011), 156–63; and *id.*, "Macaulay's History of England and the Dilemmas of Liberal Epic," *Nineteenth-Century Prose*

- 33 (2006): 149–74. On the way in which Macaulay's *History* informed working- and middle-class perceptions of the nation and empire, see Catherine Hall, "Macaulay's Nation," *Victorian Studies* 51, 3 (2009): 505–23; and id., "At Home with History: Macaulay and the *History of England*," in *At Home with the Empire: Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World*, eds. Catherine Hall and Sonya O. Rose (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 33–52.
- 11 Leslie Stephen, "Macaulay," *Hours in a Library*, vol. 2 (London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 1892), 369.
- 12 Leslie Howsam, "Victorian Representations of Macaulay: The Schoolboy and the New Zealander," Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Historical Association, Fredericton, N.B., May 2011.
- 13 For a more recent and much more balanced appraisal of the debates between Macaulay and Croker, see William Thomas, *The Quarrel of Macaulay and Croker: Politics and History in the Age of Reform* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).
- 14 Macaulay to Napier, 5 November 1841, in Trevelyan, ed., vol. 2, 103.
- 15 Diary entry, 18 December 1838, in *ibid.*, 36.
- 16 27 April 1850, in *ibid.*, 276.
- 17 *Ibid.*, 226.
- 18 *Ibid.*, 108.
- 19 The classic statement on modern historians' ignorance to their own narrative choices, see Hayden White, "The Burden of History," *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 27–50. See also Dominick LaCapra, "History and the Novel," *History and Criticism* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1985), 115–35.
- 20 [Macaulay], "History," 361 (cit. n. 4).
- 21 *Ibid.*, 340.
- 22 George Levine, *The Boundaries of Fiction: Carlyle, Macaulay, Newman* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1968), 16 (quote), 111. See also James Vernon, "Narrating the Constitution: The Discourse of 'the Real' and the Fantasies of Nineteenth-Century Constitutional History," in *Re-reading the Constitution: New Narratives in the Political History of England's Long Nineteenth Century*, ed. James Vernon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 204–38.
- 23 On the role of romanticism in early nineteenth-century historical writing, see Ann Rigney, *Imperfect Histories: The Elusive Past and the Legacy of Romantic Historicism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001).
- 24 Macaulay to Napier, in Trevelyan, ed., vol. 2, 112.
- 25 See Trevelyan's many examples of this in *ibid.*, 219–21.



- 26 R.G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1946); and see William H. Dray, *History as Re-enactment: R.G. Collingwood and the Idea of History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).
- 27 Margaret Macaulay in Trevelyan, ed., vol. 1, 183–4.
- 28 *Ibid.*, vol. 2, 389.
- 29 On the publishing and reception of Seeley's *Ecce Homo*, see Ian Hesketh, "Behold the (Anonymous) Man: J.R. Seeley and the Publishing of *Ecce Homo*," *Victorian Studies* (Spring 2012, forthcoming); Daniel D. Pals, "The Reception of 'Ecce Homo,'" *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church* 46 (1977): 63–84; and Deborah Wormell, *Sir John Seeley and the Uses of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 23–8. For Shaftesbury's quote, see "Lord Shaftesbury's Inferno," *The Saturday Review* (19 May 1866), 586–7.
- 30 W.E. Gladstone, *On Ecce Homo* (London: Strahan & Co. Publishers, 1868).
- 31 "Modern History at Cambridge," *Saturday Review* (19 February 1870), 241–2 on 241.
- 32 For the criticism of Kingsley as Regius Professor of History at Cambridge, see Owen Chadwick, "Charles Kingsley at Cambridge," *The Historical Journal* 18 (1975): 303–25.
- 33 "Life and Times of Stein," *The Examiner* (18 January 1879), 84–5 on 84.
- 34 "Seeley's Life and Times of Stein," *Saturday Review* (7 January 1879), 146–7.
- 35 "The Reorganizer of Modern Germany: Stein," *Westminster Review* 55, 2 (April 1879): 329–59 on 335–6.
- 36 "The Life and Times of Stein," *International Review* 6 (1879): 578–82 on 82.
- 37 "Biographies of the Season," *London Society*, 35, 208 (April 1879): 376.
- 38 Seeley to Watson, 6 June 1879, quoted in Percy Corder, *The Life of Robert Spence Watson*, 2nd ed. (London: Headley Bothers, 1914), 40–1.
- 39 J.R. Seeley, "History and Politics I," *Macmillan's Magazine* 40 (1879): 289–99, on 290.
- 40 *Ibid.*, 291 ("ordinary and monotonous"); and *id.*, "History and Politics IV," *Macmillan's Magazine* 41 (1879): 23–31 on 31 ("spoiled the public taste").
- 41 *Ibid.*, 31.
- 42 Richard J. Evans misattributes the phrase in his *In Defense of History* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1999), 139, 241 fn1 (where he criticizes Joan Scott for suggesting that Freeman coined the phrase), and, more recently, in his *Cosmopolitan Islanders: British Historians and the European Continent* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 81. Evans is convinced that Seeley coined the phrase because the *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations* 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1953) says so. However, after an exhaustive search, I have found no evidence that Seeley even uttered the phrase and it does not appear in any of his published work.

- There are, on the other hand, several published examples where Freeman used the phrase. He first does so in a lecture in Birmingham, 18 November 1880, printed in "On the Study of History," *Fortnightly Review* 35 (1881): 319–39 on 320. He later repeats the phrase in 1881 at a lecture at Johns Hopkins University printed in *Lectures to American Audiences* (Philadelphia: Porter & Coates, 1882), 207–8. The phrase (attributed to Freeman) would subsequently adorn the frontispiece of the Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science series and, of course, was later adopted by the Johns Hopkins department of history as its official motto. See Herbert B. Adams, "Mr. Freeman's Visit to Baltimore," *An Introduction to American Institutional History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1882), 12.
- 43 As Alon Kadish argues, "Seeley tended to identify history almost exclusively with politics to the extent that some thought the maxim 'history is past politics, politics present history' more applicable to Seeley than to Freeman." See Alon Kadish, *Historians, Economists and Economic History* (London: Routledge, 1989), 98.
  - 44 J.R. Seeley, *Introduction to Political Science*, ed. Henry Sidgwick (London: Macmillan, 1896), 4; and see Wormell, 121.
  - 45 On the tradition of Whig history in Victorian Britain, see, in particular, J.W. Burrow, *A Liberal Descent: Victorian Historians and the English Past* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); and Michael Bentley, *Modernizing England's Past: English Historiography in the Age of Modernism 1870–1970* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 1–116 ("Part One: The Whig Legacy").
  - 46 E.A. Freeman, "Lecture II: The Difficulties of Historical Study," *The Methods of Historical Study* (London: The Macmillan Company, 1886), 99–100.
  - 47 "The Norman Conquest of England," *The London Quarterly Review* 48 (April 1877): 1–28 on 27.
  - 48 "History and Biography," *Westminster Review* 34 (1868): 557–74 on 557; and "Freeman's Norman Conquest of England," *Christian Remembrancer*, 55 (1868): 296–322.
  - 49 Edward A. Freeman, "Mr. Froude's 'Life and Times of Thomas Becket'," *The Contemporary Review* 33 (1878): 213–41 on 241.
  - 50 *Ibid.*, 821–42 on 821.
  - 51 See Ian Hesketh, "Diagnosing Froude's Disease: The Discipline of History in Late-Victorian Britain," *History and Theory* 47 (2008): 373–97; and *id.*, *The Science of History in Victorian Britain*, chap. 4.
  - 52 Edward A. Freeman, "Lord Macaulay," *The International Review* 3 (1876): 689–96, on 690.

- 53 Ibid., "Lecture II: The Difficulties of Historical Study," 105–6.
- 54 Ibid., 106.
- 55 Even Freeman's friends lamented his "peculiar" obsessions with accurate language and repetition. See, for instance, James Bryce, "Edward Augustus Freeman," *The English Historical Review* 7 (1892): 497–509, esp. 507.
- 56 Freeman, "Lord Macaulay," 690.
- 57 Ibid., 691.
- 58 Ibid., 692.
- 59 Ibid., 696.
- 60 The publishing strategies of *Ecce Homo* and the subsequent fall-out, is further explored in Hesketh, "Behold the (Anonymous) Man."
- 61 J.R. Seeley, *The Expansion of England* (London: Macmillan and Company, 1883; repr. ed. 1906), 358–9.
- 62 See in particular Edward A. Freeman, "On the Study of History," *Fortnightly Review* 35 (1881): 319–39.
- 63 Bodleian Library, Oxford, Papers of James Bryce, MSS 5, 258, Edward Freeman to James Bryce, 7 August 1870.
- 64 British Library, London, Alexander Macmillan Papers, Add MS 55049, 39, Freeman to Alexander Macmillan, 1 December 1865. On Freeman's histories for "general readers," see especially Leslie Howsam, "Academic Discipline or Literary Genre? The Establishment of Boundaries in Historical Writing," *Victorian Literature and Culture* (2004), 525–45; and also Hesketh, *The Science of History in Victorian Britain*, chap. 6.
- 65 For a provocative discussion of this "genre" of popular history with respect to the history of science, see David Philip Miller, "The 'Sobel Effect': The Amazing Tale of How Multitudes of Popular Writers Pinched All the Best Stories in the History of Science and Became Rich and Famous while Historians Languished in Accustomed Poverty and Obscurity, and How this Transformed the World," *Metascience* (2002): 185–200.
- 66 See Herbert Butterfield, "Reflections on Macaulay," *The Listener* (13 December 1973), 826–7 on 126; and Michael Bentley, "Shape and Pattern in British Historical Writing, 1815–1945," in *The Oxford History of Historical Writing*, vol. 4: 1800–1945, eds., Stuart Macintyre, Juan Maignuashca, and Attila Pók (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 204–224 on 209.
- 67 Lord Acton to Mary Gladstone, April 1885, in *Letters of Lord Acton to Mary Daughter of the Right Honourable W. E. Gladstone*, ed. Herbert Paul (London: George Allen, 1904), 210.
- 68 Lord Acton, "Mr. Goldwin Smith's *Irish History*," (1862) in *Selected Writings of Lord Acton*, 67–97 on 69.
- 69 See William Stubbs, "Inaugural (February 7, 1867)," *Seventeen Lectures on*

*the Study of Medieval and Modern History and Kindred Subjects* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1967), 11–12.

- 70 For a recent discussion with regard to the current state of Canadian history, see, in particular, the comments of William M. Fowler, Jr., John Ralston Saul, and Craig Heron in “Telling Canada’s Story,” a television episode of *The Agenda with Steve Paikin*, broadcast 11 November 2011. The podcast is found at <[http://podcasts.tvo.org/theagenda/audio/1971691\\_48k.mp3](http://podcasts.tvo.org/theagenda/audio/1971691_48k.mp3)> (viewed 28 January 2012).