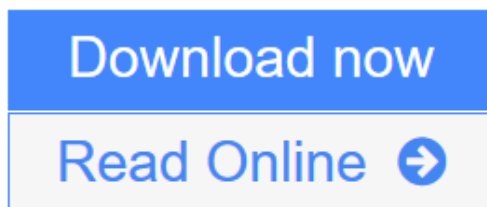




Na kra?ce ?wiata. Podró? historyka przez histori?

Norman Davies



From Reader Review Na kra?ce ?wiata. Podró? historyka przez histori? for online ebook

Graham says

A beautiful and scholarly work. Highly recommended. This book takes you so far away. It takes you to places you have never heard of . Truly wonderful.

Toby says

Where do I start with this?

On the positive side Professor Davies is an engaging writer who rarely bores. I learnt a lot reading this book, especially as my knowledge of history outside of Europe is shamefully poor. There are some wonderfully titbits of knowledge, my favourite being that of the Tahitian Queen Aimate whose name the Europeans believed to mean "beloved" but that actually translated as "Eyeball-eater".

I found his chapter on air disasters, particularly MH370 illuminating and at times he writes with real verve and energy.

But, and there are a lot of Buts.

There is very little here that could not be gleaned from Wikipedia, and despite the book being touted as a blend of history and travel journal, there is in fact comparatively little of the latter. The chapter on Manhattan provides us with no evidence that Davies has ever travelled to New York at all. Elsewhere there are small vignettes of encounters with locals, sometimes expressed in rather odd ways - Malaysians and dark and stocky, his Azerbaijani guide is dark haired and dark eyed. Like most Asians, in fact.

And then there are the mis-steps, factual errors and dodgy history. Norman Davies is an acknowledged expert in European, especially East European history, but once outside of his natural subject, he is less certain.

So there are the errors of cultural understanding: the Church of North India is emphatically not an Anglican church. It's a uniquely Indian expression of Protestant Christianity - albeit one which has Cathedrals and Bishops.

Then there are the errors of fact: The United States is made up of 50, not 51 states. The English Philosopher Roger Bacon preceded Leonardo da Vinci by 200, not 300, years.

There are quirky typos, or faulty maths: The indigenous Tasmanians may have been around for 10,000 years before the first Europeans arrived, but that does not equate to 4000 generations. Unless, that is, the Tasmanians had the life span of a hamster.

And then there is the sloppy history. Take this paragraph, for instance:

"In July 1776, when American Independence was declared, crowds gathered on the bowling green in Lower Manhattan to witness a patriotic ceremony. The centrepiece of the action was to be the toppling of an equestrian statue of King George III... A surviving print of the era whows how the demolition was done. A

number of ropes were fastened around the monarch's head and that of his horse, and a gang of black slaves, stripped to the waist, were brought in to heave on the ropes in rhythmic unison and to pull the monument crashing down. Yet half a century later, when the scene was painted for posterity by the German-American clergy and artist Johannes Oertel (1823-1909), the details were incomplete... The Afro-American slave gang that actually did the work is nowhere to be seen. Such was the self-image that the newly liberated citizens wished to portray."

But hold on. Oertel was born in 1823, 47 years after the events depicted. He could not have re-painted the scene half a century later. A quick Wikipedia search finds the painting dated to c.1859, a full 83 years later. The work is not that of newly liberated citizens but of antebellum New Yorkers who would certainly have had their own reasons to erase the history of their forebears' slave-keeping.

So overall the book is well-written, albeit far too long (the chapter on the United Arab Emirates could most certainly have been excised), but has been poorly researched and proof-read and so sadly does not stand comparison with his other works.

Kasiek says

<http://kasiek-mysli.blogspot.com/2018...>

Philip Tadros says

A thrilling ride; delightful. It's history, geography, culture, and travel literature all in one!

Fraser says

An interesting weave between geography, history and travelogue. The structure and breadth both loose and bewildering at times, the main premise of global history and European imperialism is neatly condensed in the final chapters.

Reader says

This is, essentially, Davies' account of his gap year - taken in his late 70s as a historian with a genuinely global perspective. In each location, he gives a brief tourist's guide, but then the angle widens and he sets the present in the contest of an always contested past, writing with judicious observation and thoughtful commentary. His perspective is deeply humane. Not all of his judgements are right, but his perspective is global and the world looks slightly different after you've read Davies.
