

# Climate Change and the Course of Global History: A Rough Journey (Studies in Environment and History)


*By John L. Brooke*

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Climate Change and the Course of Global History presents the first global study by a historian to fully integrate the earth-system approach of the new climate science with the material history of humanity. Part I argues that geological, environmental, and climatic history explain the pattern and pace of biological and human evolution. Part II explores the environmental circumstances of the rise of agriculture and the state in the Early and Mid-Holocene, and presents an analysis of human health from the Paleolithic through the rise of the state. Part III introduces the problem of economic growth and examines the human condition in the Late Holocene from the Bronze Age through the Black Death. Part IV explores the move to modernity, stressing the emerging role of human economic and energy systems as earth-system agents in the Anthropocene. Supported by climatic, demographic, and economic data, this provides a pathbreaking model for historians of the environment, the world, and science.

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### **Editorial Review**

#### **Review**

"Think of this as travel writing of the highest order. A rough journey for mankind becomes a stimulating armchair adventure for the reader. This is big history, framed by big ideas but anchored in the very recent explosion of knowledge about climate through the ages and about our history and prehistory. Brooke skillfully navigates the interpretive hazards of proxy paleoclimate data. In Brooke's persuasive account, our evolution to modernity is not absolutely determined by climate and disease, but it has been substantially influenced by them. Our new knowledge shows that quite often these influences abruptly change course, and Brooke shows that much of our history is a consequence of societies scrambling to adjust."

Mark A. Cane, G. Unger Vetlesen Professor of Earth and Climate Sciences, Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory, Columbia University

"John Brooke skillfully joins a vast scientific literature to the historiography of virtually every major region to argue that climatic shifts always have been the primary agency determining the pace and direction of human development. He thus offers an unprecedentedly coordinated global chronology as well as a nuanced, distinctly original understanding of the relation between endogenous and exogenous forces. A jaw-dropping tour de force."

Victor Lieberman, Raoul Wallenberg Distinguished University Professor of History, University of Michigan

"Readers with advanced degrees in meteorology, archaeology, economics and world environmental history will easily comprehend Brooke's magisterial survey-synthesis. For others, it poses an interesting challenge. The author's mastery and referencing of the vast technical literature in different disciplines is remarkable. ... The author also explains seven phases of climate history since 3000 BCE and three industrial revolutions. The consequence is a fundamental change from a lightly populated world controlled by nature to a heavily populated world controlled by both nature and human agency. Summing up: highly recommended."

F. N. Egerton, Choice

#### **About the Author**

John L. Brooke is Humanities Distinguished Professor of History at Ohio State University, where he also directs the Center for Historical Research. His books include *Columbia Rising: Civil Life on the Upper Hudson from the Revolution to the Age of Jackson* (2010), which won the Best Book Prize from the Society of the Historians of the Early American Republic; *The Heart of the Commonwealth: Society and Political Culture in Worcester County Massachusetts, 1713-1861* (Cambridge, 1994), which won the Merle Curti Award for Intellectual History from the Organization of American Historians; and *The Refiner's Fire: The Making of Mormon Cosmology, 1644-1844* (Cambridge, 1989), which won the Bancroft Prize for American History. He has held fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the American Council of Learned Societies, the American Antiquarian Society and the Harvard Charles Warren Center.

### **Users Review**

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**Maureen Harris:**

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