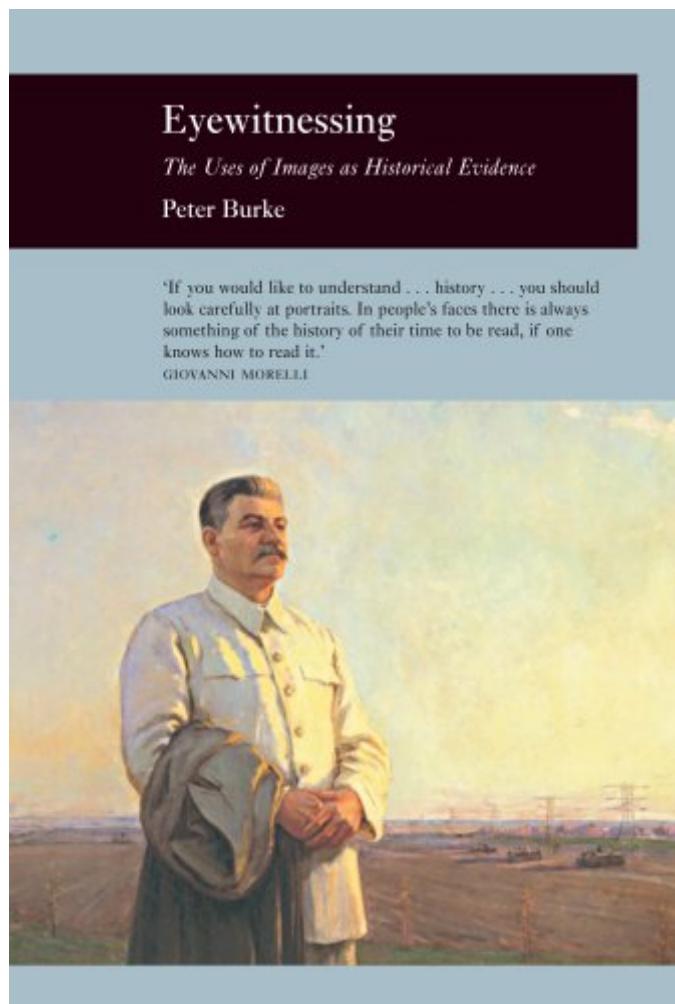


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# Eyewitnessing: The Uses Of Images As Historical Evidence (Picturing History)



## **Synopsis**

Eyewitnessing evaluates the place of images among other kinds of historical evidence. By reviewing the many varieties of images by region, period and medium, and looking at the pragmatic uses of images (e.g. the Bayeux Tapestry, an engraving of a printing press, a reconstruction of a building), Peter Burke sheds light on our assumption that these practical uses are 'reflections' of specific historical meanings and influences. He also shows how this assumption can be problematic. Traditional art historians have depended on two types of analysis when dealing with visual imagery, iconography and iconology. Burke describes and evaluates these approaches, concluding that they are insufficient. Focusing instead on the medium as message and on the social contexts and uses of images, he discusses both religious images and political ones, also looking at images in advertising and as commodities. Ultimately, Burke's purpose is to show how iconographic and post-iconographic methods - psychoanalysis, semiotics, viewer response, deconstruction - are both useful and problematic to contemporary historians.

## **Book Information**

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## Customer Reviews

Burke discusses using images as historical resources and evidence, focusing on both the positive insights that might be garnered from imagery as well as the potential problems. One such historiographical danger is that the historian might view images from within their present context and not with the same significance or contextual milieu that the original historical actors might have attributed to them. This point, and others throughout the text, are elementary to many historians; others could use a friendly reminder of presentist tendencies. While there is nothing revolutionary to modern historians in Burke's text, it is a pleasant reminder of some of the pitfalls in constructing historical narrative based on visual evidence.

Peter Burke is one of the best historians of his age. Highly recommended

Very helpful when it comes to teaching my son history through images.

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