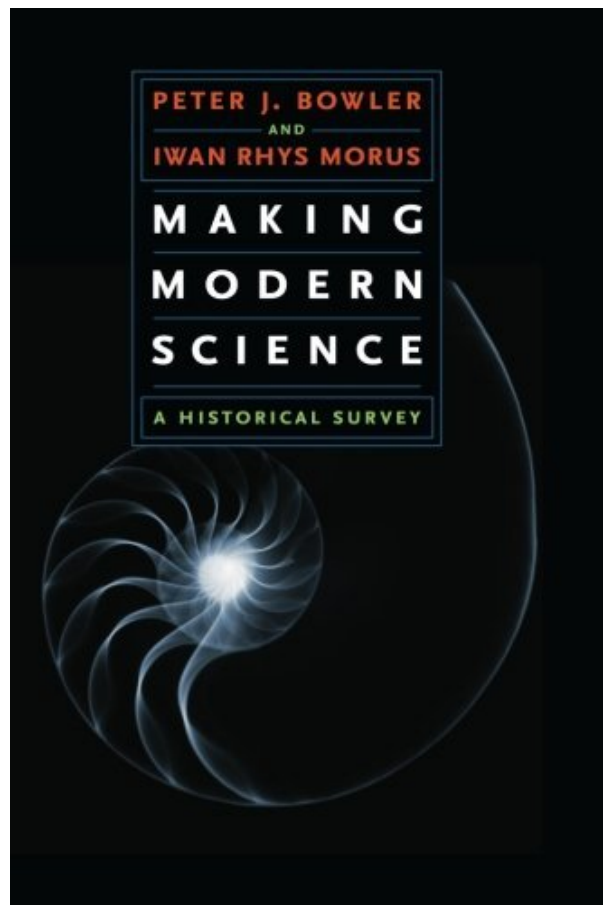
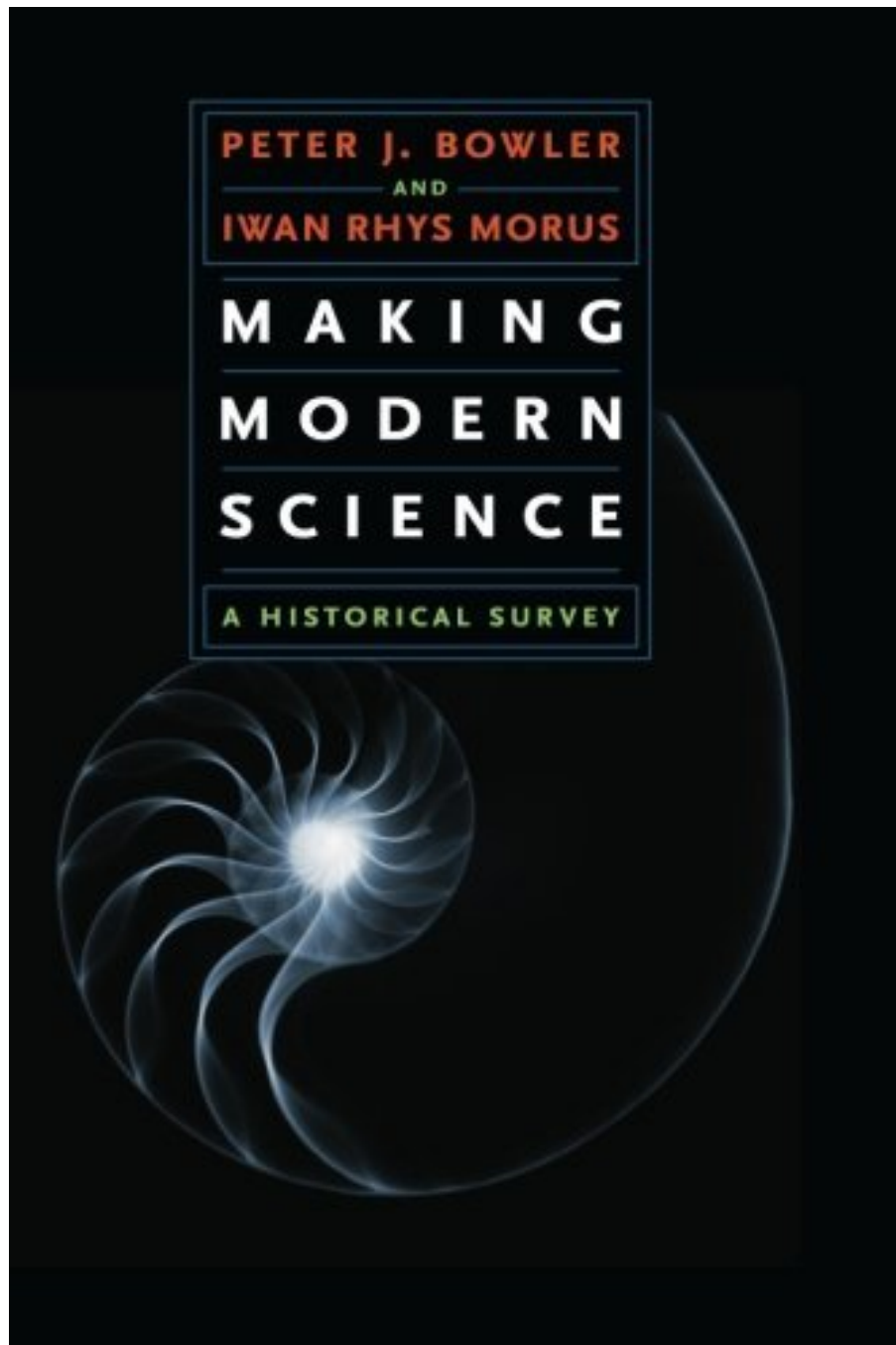


**MAKING MODERN SCIENCE: A
HISTORICAL SURVEY BY PETER J.
BOWLER, IWAN RHYS MORUS**



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Review

"This book strikes a wonderful balance between basic exposition and constructive, critical literature review. The selection of topics - 'modern science' from the seventeenth century through the twentieth, along with analysis of the themes that have animated historians' study of these many endeavors - forms a coherent and readable whole. It should fit curricular needs very well." - David Kaiser, Massachusetts Institute of Technology; "The breadth of knowledge represented here is remarkable. There is nothing on (or off) the market that equals what Bowler and Morus have accomplished." - Richard Burkhardt, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign"

About the Author

Peter J. Bowler is professor of the history of science in the School of Anthropological Studies at Queen's University, Belfast, and the author of *Reconciling Science and Religion: The Debate in Early-Twentieth-Century Britain*, published by the University of Chicago Press. Iwan Rhys Morus is lecturer in the Department of History and Welsh History at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth, and the author of *When Physics Became King*, also published by the University of Chicago Press.

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The development of science, according to respected scholars Peter J. Bowler and Iwan Rhys Morus, expands our knowledge and control of the world in ways that affect-but are also affected by-society and culture. In *Making Modern Science*, a text designed for introductory college courses in the history of science and as a single-volume introduction for the general reader, Bowler and Morus explore both the history of science itself and its influence on modern thought.

Opening with an introduction that explains developments in the history of science over the last three decades and the controversies these initiatives have engendered, the book then proceeds in two parts. The first section considers key episodes in the development of modern science, including the Scientific Revolution and individual accomplishments in geology, physics, and biology. The second section is an analysis of the most important themes stemming from the social relations of science-the discoveries that force society to rethink its religious, moral, or philosophical values. *Making Modern Science* thus chronicles all major developments in scientific thinking, from the revolutionary ideas of the seventeenth century to the contemporary issues of evolutionism, genetics, nuclear physics, and modern cosmology.

Written by seasoned historians, this book will encourage students to see the history of science not as a series of names and dates but as an interconnected and complex web of relationships between science and modern society. The first survey of its kind, *Making Modern Science* is a much-needed and accessible introduction to the history of science, engagingly written for undergraduates and curious readers alike.

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Most helpful customer reviews

30 of 30 people found the following review helpful.

Excellent Academic Introduction to the History of Science

By Amy E. Harth

These authors have attempted to fill the void in the history of science field by creating not exactly a textbook, but not simply a survey of scientific events. This combines both the survey and methodology by offering two sections: one which includes self-contained units on major events or periods in the history of science, and another which includes the methodological themes in the field.

The introduction is of great help since it offers a very short (13 pages), but thorough history of the history of science including the major works which are considered classics and addressing many of the historical issues as well as scientific issues which are considered when studying this field. The history of science as a discipline is clearly not limited to recording a list of discoveries, inventions or scientific events, but has much greater depth as this work makes clear. Furthermore, the authors do an excellent job of making it readable and especially thought provoking and expect the reader not only to question other science, history and history of science books, but also their own ideas and conclusions. How refreshing!

Additionally, each chapter ends with a list of references for further reading, rather than a long disorganized bibliography at the end. Furthermore, there are several illustrations, but the authors have not succumbed to riddling the text with graphics or breaking it into so many sections and sidebars that it is cluttered and unreadable, as unfortunately is the case with many test books.

I highly recommend this to the student (or professor) of the history of science and the dedicated general reader.

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Error Correction: the Amazon product details lists 464 pages, I have the 2005 paperback copy which has 529 pages including index (513 pages of text).

14 of 14 people found the following review helpful.
A Subject-Balanced Survey of the History of Science
By David Milliern

Bowler and Morus put together a fantastic survey of the history of science. I think it is adequately philosophical, and it does a great job of gauging the periods in history with a lens that is representative of the era. The problem I see with many works on history is that they approach the content of times past by applying a modern lens. While sometimes useful, I don't think this is a fair way to proceed. At any rate, this is not an issue in Morus and Bowler's work.

What's great about this book is that it does not focus on the history of physics, as so many books of this sort do. Coming from physics, the last thing I wanted was a book about the history of science that was 99% history of physics. The authors were able to get a nice blend of subjects, and they even hit topics like popular science in the 18th and 19th century.

All in all, this book is well written, very, very easy to read, and it has about as much useful information as can be put in so many pages. Above all, it is friendly to a readership not coming from the sciences. Though I come from the sciences, the other students in my class, all of whom were history graduate students with little or no training in the sciences, pointed that not much knowledge of science was necessary to clarify points made by the authors. For anyone that needs convincing on this issue, a quick look at the chapter on 20th century physics will convince you of the readability; no concept is introduced in such a way that it feel completely alien. They do a nice job of wording things.

I do have one negative criticism, though. The book is intended to talk about the making of modern science, but the problem is that much of the Baconian, as well as other philosophical inputs, were, largely, left out. In my view, this is a detriment, in any attempt to understanding the rise of modern science. My feeling was that one more chapter on the development of methods, even if a romp through history, would make for a good additional chapter.

This book is enjoyable, and I recommend it to the scientist, beginning historian of science, beginning philosopher of science, historian, and layman. For the layman, there may be no real need to read anything more, if one's desire is to simply grasp the big picture and gain some competency of the history of science.

13 of 13 people found the following review helpful.
Dense but thorough and well laid out
By D. Wick

Bowler and Morus (B&M henceforth) set themselves two projects in this book. First, to create a general introductory overview of the history of science. Second, to introduce their reader (presumably an undergraduate history major) to arguments currently playing out amongst academics who study the history of

science.

They are pretty successful at both, although a reader who buys this book without already being aware of the academic controversies may occasionally be puzzled by some of the positions that B&M take.

The tone is a bit dry and the number of facts per page can be overwhelming to someone who is learning this material for the first time. It's more of a textbook than a pleasure read. However, to my knowledge they have done an excellent job of covering relevant and significant people, events, connections to past knowledge, and social influences.

On several occasions, their "conclusions" at the end of each chapter are unsupported (at least in this book) assertions rather than actual consequences of the evidence and arguments they cover. No doubt this is largely due to the difficulty of compressing 550 years of scientific discovery into a single volume. I consider this the chief weakness of the book. Otherwise, it accomplishes its intended purpose well.

A professional historian will not need this book. A scientist or well educated layperson interested in history might find it overwhelming or simply too dense. But if you are looking for a middle ground between a completely academic volume and a pleasure read, or if you need a great bibliography or condensed summary volume, this is almost your only choice. Lucky for you it's well done.

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