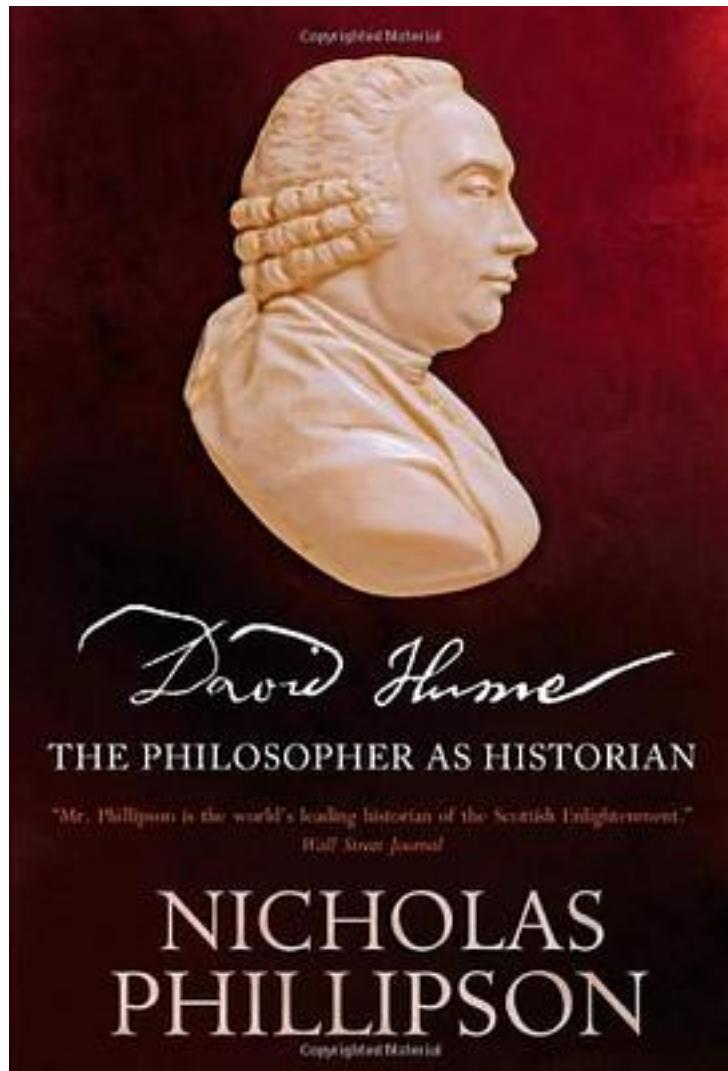


David Hume



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In his seminal *Philosophy of David Hume* (1941), Norman Kemp Smith called for a study of Hume "in all his manifold activities: as philosopher, as political theorist, as economist, as historian, and as man of letters," indicating that "Hume's philosophy, as the attitude of mind which found for itself these various forms of expression, will then have been presented, adequately and in due perspective, for the first time." Claudia Schmidt seeks to address this long-standing need in Hume scholarship. Against the charges that Hume holds no consistent philosophical position, offers no constructive account of rationality, and sees no positive relation between philosophy and other areas of inquiry, Schmidt argues for the overall coherence of Hume's thought as a study of "reason in history." She develops this interpretation by tracing Hume's constructive account of human cognition and its historical dimension as a unifying theme across the full range of his writings. Hume, she shows, provides a positive account of the ways in which our concepts, beliefs, emotions, and standards of judgment in different areas of inquiry are shaped by experience, both in the personal history of the individual and in the life of a community. This book is valuable at many levels: for students, as an introduction to Hume's writings and issues in their interpretation; for Hume specialists, as a unified and intriguing interpretation of his thought; for philosophers generally, as a synthesis of recent developments in Hume scholarship; and for scholars in other disciplines, as a guide to Hume's contributions to their own fields.

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