



The Evolution of Technical Analysis: Financial Prediction from Babylonian Tablets to Bloomberg Terminals

By Andrew W. Lo, Jasmina Hasanhodzic

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A comprehensive history of the evolution of technical analysis from ancient times to the Internet age

Whether driven by mass psychology, fear or greed of investors, the forces of supply and demand, or a combination, technical analysis has flourished for thousands of years on the outskirts of the financial establishment. In *The Evolution of Technical Analysis: Financial Prediction from Babylonian Tablets to Bloomberg Terminals*, MIT's Andrew W. Lo details how the charting of past stock prices for the purpose of identifying trends, patterns, strength, and cycles within market data has allowed traders to make informed investment decisions based in logic, rather than on luck. The book

- Reveals the origins of technical analysis
- Compares and contrasts the Eastern practices of China and Japan to Western methods
- Details the contributions of pioneers such as Charles Dow, Munehisa Homma, Humphrey B. Neill, and William D. Gann

The Evolution of Technical Analysis explores the fascinating history of technical analysis, tracing where technical analysts failed, how they succeeded, and what it all means for today's traders and investors.

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Editorial Review

From the Inside Flap

“A movement is over when the news is out,” so goes the Wall Street maxim. For thousands of years, technical analysis—marred with common misconceptions likening it to gambling or magic and dismissed by many as “voodoo finance”—has sought methods for spotting trends in what the market’s done and what it’s going to do. After all, if you don’t learn from history, how can you profit from it?

In *The Evolution of Technical Analysis*, the director of MIT’s Laboratory for Financial Engineering, Andrew Lo, and coauthor Jasmina Hasanhodzic present an engaging account of the origins and development of this mysterious “black art,” tracing its evolution from ancient Babylon to the rise of Wall Street as the world’s financial center. Along the way, the practices of Eastern technical analysts like Munehisa Homma (“the god of the markets”) are compared and contrasted with those of their Western counterparts, such as Humphrey Neill, William Gann, and Charles Dow (“the father of technical analysis”).

With deep roots in antiquity, technical analysis is part art and part science, seeking to divine trends, reversals, cycles, and other predictable patterns in historical market prices. While the techniques for capturing such regularities have evolved considerably over the centuries, the all-too-human predilection to extrapolate into the future using the past has been a constant driving force throughout history.

The authors chronicle the fascinating and unexpected path of charting that likely began with simple superstitions and coincidences, and has developed into widespread practices in many markets and instruments, involving sophisticated computational algorithms and visualization techniques. *The Evolution of Technical Analysis* is the story of how some early technicians failed miserably, how others succeeded beyond their wildest dreams, and what it means for traders today.

From the Back Cover

Praise for *The Evolution of Technical Analysis*

“Where there is a price, there is a market, then analysis, and ultimately a study of the analyses. You don’t want to enter this circle without a copy of this book to guide you through the bazaar and flash.”—**Dean LeBaron**, founder and former chairman of Batterymarch Financial Management, Inc.

“The urge to find order in the chaos of market prices is as old as civilization itself. This excellent volume traces the development of the tools and insights of technical analysis over the entire span of human history; beginning with the commodity price and astronomical charts of Mesopotamia, through the Dow Theory of the early twentieth century—which forecast the Crash of 1929—to the analysis of the high-speed electronic marketplace of today. The account is particularly refreshing for academics steeped in statistical models, as technical analysis relies upon a substantially different analytical language: graphs, trends, and complex structures. An excellent overview of an important topic.”—**William N. Goetzmann**, Edwin J. Beinecke Professor of Finance and Management Studies, Yale School of Management

“This book will fascinate anyone interested in technical analysis. Lo and Hasanhodzic are the first to compile this history and they present it with clear, good-humored prose that moves swiftly. And the book has a larger message. By charting the history of organized trading through the millennia—even Babylon!—it points out the timelessness of the human endeavor we presently know as Wall Street.”—**Carol Osler**, Director,

Lemberg Masters Program in International Economics and Finance, Brandeis International Business School, Brandeis University

“This book is an exhaustive study of technical analysis history and development from Babylon to the present, another classic by Lo and Hasanahodzic. Using multiple sources, the authors provide a persuasive argument for the origin, rationale, growth, and future of technical analysis. I found the information and logic compelling, and I highly recommend this book to anyone interested in the analysis of trading markets.”—**Charles D. Kirkpatrick II**, CMT, President, Kirkpatrick & Company, Inc., coauthor of *Technical Analysis: The Complete Resource for Financial Market Technicians*, and Adjunct Professor, Brandeis University

The fascinating history of technical analysis and its role in shaping the behavioral theory of modern financial markets.

The Evolution of Technical Analysis explores the history of technical analysis from ancient Babylon through the Internet Age, and highlights the successes and failures of the pioneers—the famous and the forgotten—who played a pivotal role in the evolution of this fascinating craft. Today, thanks to their contributions, technical analysis has evolved from “voodoo finance” into a more scientific endeavor, emerging as a respectable discipline that commands the attention of all serious students of financial markets. This sweeping history will surprise skeptics and open the door for more constructive dialogue between technicians and proponents of modern finance.

About the Author

ANDREW W. LO is the Harris & Harris Group Professor of Finance at MIT Sloan School of Management and the director of MIT’s Laboratory for Financial Engineering. He has published numerous papers in leading academic and practitioner journals, and his books include *The Econometrics of Financial Markets*, *A Non-Random Walk Down Wall Street*, and *Hedge Funds: An Analytic Perspective*. His awards include the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation Fellowship, the Paul A. Samuelson Award, the Graham and Dodd Award, the James R. Vertin Award, and the American Association of Individual Investors Award. He is also Chairman and Chief Investment Strategist of AlphaSimplex Group, LLC.

Jasmina Hasanahodzic is a research scientist at Alpha-Simplex Group, LLC, where she develops quantitative investment strategies and benchmarks. She received her PhD from MIT’s Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science. Her works on alternative market betas and technical analysis have appeared in leading publications, such as the *Journal of Investment Management*, and she is the coauthor with Andrew Lo of the book *The Heretics of Finance*. She also serves on the Board of Directors of the Market Technicians Association Educational Foundation.

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