

Understanding the Past to Shape the Future: Reflections on History, Historians, and Adventist History¹

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I Stories, Historical Records, Historians, and Adventist Historians

Introduction. We Adventist historians need to renew our commitment and increase our productivity in writing the history of Adventism. The work to date is a good start, but too many historians of Adventism are still dancing around Ellen G. White (EGW) issues, and work is mostly limited to 19th and early 20th Century biographies. Most critically, historians are insufficiently placing Adventist history in context.

Why is Adventist history needed and what must Adventist historians do to meet this need? My answer is that what Adventists believe about their past will significantly shape the future of the Adventist Church, that Adventist historians have a responsibility to provide Adventists with an accurate, fair, and comprehensive understanding of this history, and that to do this effectively they must go beyond narrative history and use the tools of modern historiography. This paper is my attempt to make this case.

Stories. I begin with the foundational question, why history? Do humans really need to know their history? The answer is an emphatic yes, but that is not the reason there are historians. Historians exist because humans insist on having history. Of all the things humans want to know, other than how to procure food and shelter, belong to a group, and find love, perhaps nothing trumps our desire to know our story. I acknowledge that this assertion often does not apply to the young. They do not yet have a history of their own. But even the very young like stories.

¹ My thanks to Jon Butler for critiquing an earlier draft of this paper. I accepted most of his suggestions, for which all readers should be most thankful.

Humans have always told stories. We still tell some of the great stories from the past: the Gilgamesh Epic, the great stories of the Old Testament, the Iliad and Odyssey, and the Greek Myths. These great stories of the past, however, are not just stories. They claim to be rooted in history precisely because claiming the mantle of history is what gives them authority.

Historical Records. Not only do humans create great literature out of the past and continually recall the past to each other—such stories are a staple at every family reunion—they cannot resist recording their lives and times with diaries, journals, and memoirs. Historians know of thousands of memoirs from the Roman period, from the courts of China, Korea, Japan, Medieval Islam, and the Ottoman Empire. The number produced in the West since early modern times is beyond counting.

We don't consider memoirs reliable history, but sometimes memoir writers gather and weigh source material and write memoirs that are more than memoirs. Caesar's *Commentaries on the Gallic War and Civil War*, is an example. Moving a step closer to a professional work of history is U. S. Grant's *Personal Memoirs* (1885). And Winston Churchill's multivolume histories of WWI and WWII, though not comprehensive are, in my opinion, great works of history.

Clearly, even without historians, there will be history. Humans will insist on recording history in their letters, diaries, journals, and memoirs and create historical evidence even when they are not aware they are doing so. But this raw history is not enough. To understand the past and make sense of our present we need historians.

Historians. We all know that Herodotus was the Father of History. And let's give him his due: he was a damn good historian and also a geographer, ethnographer, and collector of folk tales. Yes, he passes on unbelievable stories. Most of them, however, he does not pass on as truth, just as what others told him. He seems to enjoy even the most ridiculous ones, and they do make for a page turner

Thucydides took history to the next level. "Either I was present myself at the events which I have described or else I heard of them from eyewitnesses whose reports I have checked with as much thoroughness as possible." "My work is not a piece of writing designed to meet the taste of an immediate public, but was done to last forever." Thucydides wrote great history: the narrative is accurate and balanced, says Donald Kagan, perhaps the greatest modern interpreter of Thucydides.

And as it turns out, ever since Herodotus there have been historians, and they have been more numerous than as a young historian I imagined. Consider the *Wikipedia* list of significant historians up to the 18th Century, when modern historical writing as we know it began to emerge. (See the Appendix) These are just the historians who have biographies in *Wikipedia*. Their works have survived because succeeding generations considered them indispensable. Without them we would not have a structured narrative of the past. In addition to the historians, there are thousands of annals, chronicles, sagas, poems, etc., many of them unpublished. They show up in profusion in the notes of the books we read. Try to imagine history without them.

There will be stories; there will be diaries, journals, memoirs, annals, chronicles, and all manner of historical records; and there will be historians, major ones and ones quite obscure. This is my first point. And what they write will make a difference. This is my second. In a wonderful new survey of the history of England—*The English and Their History* (1915)—Robert Tombs sees the history of England as “not simply what happened, or what historians believe they can demonstrate, but what a vast range of people, for a great variety of purposes, have recorded, asserted and believed about the past.” (pp.5-6) He describes his book as a narrative that tries to do something unusual: “make memory and its creation an inherent part of the story.” So as the narrative unfolds we see in passing generations how the English view of their past helped shape their present.

Certainly one of the lessons we learn from history is that what people believe about their past shapes their present. Did Alexander’s memorization of the *Iliad* contribute to his quest for greatness? Did the stories and ruins of the Roman Empire influence the development of Medieval Europe? Did reading *Plutarch’s Lives* shape the leadership of Britain’s ruling class in the 18th and 19th Centuries? Did the German belief in the “stab in the back” explanation for their loss of WWI have anything to do with the rise of Nazism? Do beliefs in Northern Ireland about the past, especially the 17th Century, have anything to do with The Troubles of recent decades. Do American beliefs about slavery, the Civil War, and Reconstruction have anything to do with race issues in today’s America? There is a reason rewriting history is one of the first acts of a totalitarian regime. Whether true or not, history is powerful. We are today making history based in no small measure on what we believe about our past.

The recognition of the power of history is what produced the first historians and motivated the thousands of historians who followed them. It is why we are

historians. If what is believed about the past shapes the future, and it does, then beliefs should be based on history that is accurate, balanced, and fair. The facts should be true, significant relevant facts should be included, weight should be apportioned according to significance, and omitting alternative viewpoints is not fair.

SDA Historians. This is why professional historians must write the history of Adventism. There will be stories about our past: some of us grew up hearing the story of EGW holding on her outstretched hand a huge family Bible. There will be sources. And there will be writers who gather and evaluate these stories and sources and write history: examples include John Loughborough, A. W. Spalding, F. D. Nichol, Mervyn Maxwell, and Arthur White. These historians shaped the beliefs and influenced the behavior of generations of Adventists. I know, for this was the Adventist world of my youth. I knew Ellen White was inspired because I could not hold on my outstretched hand the massive Bible Arthur White carried around in a large briefcase.

History is an ongoing dialog between past and present. The issues of our day provoke us to ask new questions about the past, and we see our present through the lens of what we believe about our past. Will we see our present through the eyes of the early Adventist pioneers, through the eyes the Adventist historians of my youth, through the eyes of the current leadership of the General Conference, or through the eyes of hundreds of thousands of new Adventists from all corners of the world who know nothing about 19th and 20th America? One thing we know for certain, if we don't see our past through the eyes of professional historians, we will in time see our present through the mist of myth. I don't think one can dispute the value for Adventists of history that meets the highest standard of the profession. Without this, our view of our past will be false and our beliefs and lives will be shaped by falsehood.

What about Adventist history for everyone else? Has Adventism left a mark on Christianity, on America, on the world? Perhaps not much, but enough to begin attracting non-Adventist historians. Sooner or later, whether Adventists or not, professional historians will write the history of Adventism. Why not us? Why not now? And what fun it will be to write it, for the field is mostly unplowed and the sources rich.

II Modern Historiography²

Narrative History and Biography. How should professional historians seek to understand the Adventist past? What questions should they ask? What research methods should they employ? The easiest place to start is narrative history and biography. That is where Herodotus, Thucydides, and Plutarch started and where most of the pre 20th Century historians followed. And that is where historians of Adventism have begun.

Narrative history is foundational. Chronology is everything, for events are shaped by those that precede them and influence those that follow. And narrative history is fun. It is a story. Few pleasures exceed the reading of great narrative history: Edward Gibbon, Thomas Babington McCauley, Francis Parkman, and William H. Prescott come to mind. Biography is a subset of narrative history, narrative history narrowly focused.

Narrative history and biography do come with problems, however. Since the narrative historian must weave together multiple stories that overlap in time and place, there must be flashbacks and flashforwards. Narrative historians know the difficult part is not the writing, it is deciding what goes in and where it goes. A premier example of someone who had done this well is Shelby Foote in his three-volume masterpiece, *The Civil War*, which he subtitled *A Narrative* (1958).

For biographers there are questions such as: was the subject the commanding figure he or she appears in retrospect to be, or is the contribution of others being underplayed? Does the subject, let's consider EGW, for example, reflect the values and beliefs of her generation or do her values and beliefs diverge in significant ways? How much is she a product of her times and how much is she a shaper of her times? The only way to know is to see her in the full context of her life and times and become intimate with her inner life. Becoming intimate without becoming overly sympathetic is not easy.

Every biographer has to be at some level a critic. A masterpiece of this genre is our own Ben McArthur's book *The Man Who Was Rip Van Winkle: Joseph Jefferson and Nineteenth-Century American Theatre* (2007). Ben not only puts Jefferson center stage in the American theatre, he also travels with him in booming and

² I wish to acknowledge the insights I have gained on modern historiography from John Burrow, *A History of Histories: Epics, Chronicles, Romances and Inquiries from Herodotus and Thucydides to the Twentieth Century* (Alfred A. Knopf: New York, 2008) and J. H. Elliott, *History in the Making* (Yale University Press: New Haven and London, 2012).

changing 19th Century America. And he takes us deeply into Jefferson's art and his inner life.

Both narrative history and biography must be somewhat analytic, and to do that they must provide relevant context. A good example of a biography that fails to do this is Arthur White's six-volume biography of his grandmother—*Ellen G. White*. White comprehensively narrates the life of the prophet, but we learn almost nothing about what was going on around her. It is a valuable resource for historians, but given its insularity, for every answer it provides it prompts a myriad of historical questions. Biography without context is empty.

Context. Human agency is a great driver of history. It is the key to Arthur White's understanding of EGW, especially since he sees human agency as an instrument of the divine, but it is only one of three drivers of history. The other two are context and contingency. Historians did not focus on context until the 20th Century (Burckhardt, to my knowledge being the exception), though the great ones of the past provided more than we sometimes recognize. Gibbon and McCauley come to mind. But the creative work of some of the best historians of the last century have opened our eyes to context. Historians of Adventism can learn from them.

A good place to start might be the work of historians of culture. Numerous examples come to mind. Perhaps two of the greatest and earliest examples are Jacob Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* (1860) and Johan Huizinga, *The Autumn (or Waning) of the Middle Ages* (first published in 1919). In Burckhardt narrative disappears as he describes the state as a work of art and the man of the Renaissance as an amoral military or artistic entrepreneur relying on his talents and will to ruthlessly assert his freedom and seek greatness.

There is also no narrative in Huizinga. He paints a portrait of life, thought, and art in 14th and 15th Century France and the Low Countries, especially Burgundy. Perhaps the best way to capture its essence is just to list some of the chapters: The Passionate Intensity of Life, The Heroic Dream, The Forms of Love, The Vision of Death, The Depiction of the Sacred, Religious Excitation and Religious Fantasy. The reader, at least this one, is overwhelmed with the realization that late Medieval people did not see or comprehend the world as we do. Their world seems strange and far away. Without some knowledge of this culture, the narrative history of the era is difficult to grasp.

Marxist historians are consistent and persistent in their focus on context. Their ideology demands it. They see economic power and social class as the most

powerful drivers of historical change. My examples, naturally, come from British history: E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down*, and Eric Hobsbawm's trilogy on the 19th Century. To me, Marxist historians overstate their case, as their histories of the French Revolution demonstrate. But historians will never again ignore economic power or social class, nor should they.

Perhaps the best example of a focus on context is the work of the Annales School, the three most famous historians being Marc Bloch, Lucien Febvre, and Fernand Braudel. Braudel's *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* (first published in 1946) describes mountain life, transhumance and nomadism, people of the hills, city life and towns, water problems, food supply, disease, coastal navigation, shipping trade routes and roads, banking, climate, the impact of the seasons, and on and on. Braudel had little use for biography. For him events were mere "surface disturbances."

Prosopography is another tool of modern historians. Human agency matters, say Eric Syme, in his book *The Roman Revolution* (1939), a classic revision of Augustus's transition to power, and Lewis Namier, in his ground breaking *The Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III* (1929). But collective biography, prosopography, is more important than individual biography. A prosopographical approach requires the reconstruction of a cluster of lives. It analyses the structure and power of networks with a common interest.

In late Republican Rome the networks were anchored in families. Here is how Syme in his introduction describes his approach to understanding the Roman Revolution. Think of EGW and the pioneer generation of Adventists as you read this quote.

At its worst, biography is flat and schematic: at the best, it is often baffled by the hidden discords of human nature. Moreover, undue insistence upon the character and exploits of a single person invests history with dramatic unity at the expense of truth. However talented and powerful in himself, the Roman statesman cannot stand alone, without allies without a following. ...the rule of Augustus was the rule of a party, and in certain aspects his Principate was a syndicate. In truth, the one term presupposes the other. The career of the revolutionary leader is fantastic and unreal if told without some indication of the composition of the faction he led, of the personality, actions and influence of the principal among his partisans. In all ages, whatever the

form and name of government, be it monarchy, republic, or democracy, an oligarchy lurks behind the façade.... (Folio Society edition, p.7)

Namier's focus was the British House of Commons. Here the networks were local interests: influence and power based on land and wealth. Namier describes the drive for status as "an ant-heap, with the human ants hurrying in long files along their various paths; their joint achievement does not concern us, nor the changes which supervene in their community, only the pathetically intent, seemingly self-conscious running of individuals along beaten tracks." (Preface to 1st ed., p. xi)

We know that beliefs move individuals. We know that there can be serious disagreements within ruling groups. But—after Syme and Namier—can we believe that self-interest does not powerfully influence the beliefs we embrace and the paths we choose. There are few forces more powerful than shared beliefs conveniently aligned with self-interest. This is as true for ministers, educators, or hospital administrators in the Adventist Church as it was Britain's landed class in the 18th Century. If one wants to understand how Adventism is changing while at the same time resisting change, then the changing world around us and the self-interest of the ruling oligarchy must be considered.

Contingency. Human agency, broadly defined, and context, which has almost no limits, are two of the three main drivers of history. The third is contingency, chance, or as the Renaissance writers called it, fortune. Not just sometimes, but all the time, things just happen. A birth or unexpected death, lost battle plans, storms, and no end of happenstances change the course of history. We have all seen it in our own lives.

Some might insist that there is a fourth driver of history, Divine intervention. Indeed as believers we can make this claim, and do so when we proclaim our belief in the resurrection of Jesus. But as historians we can only affirm what the early Christians believed. The tools of the historian do not enable us to know what God thinks or how He acts in history.

This is why it is foolish to talk of the arc of history. History has no arc. History does not care. Because human needs and human nature does not change, there are patterns in history. There are also trends in the arts, science, and technology. Because time flows in one direction, history is linear, but that does not mean it's on a path to somewhere. And history is always more complex than we know. Every history is an abridgement. Even the most detailed history of a most singular event

is a selective abridgment, for example Jim Bishop's *The Day Lincoln Was Shot*. For many reasons, things just happen.

Yet we must make sense of the past. Historians need an organizing principle to shape and control what they seek, what they gather, and what they write. What organizing principle could be more powerful than progress when writing the history of a nation, a constitutional principle, an economic system, a church, an institution, even a person? I think we all have a bit of Whig in us when we write history. Herein lies a challenge for the Adventist historian of Adventism. As believers we believe that Adventist history is going someplace, the Last Days and the Second Advent. As historians we cannot allow this belief to influence our writing, for if we do we will be using history rather than writing history.

If the primary purpose of history is to understand how the world and all that is in it came to be and to learn from the experience of humanity, then a focus on change is inevitable. How much value would we see in the history of science if our focus was on all the dead ends of science rather than on the unfolding human understanding of how nature works?

And yet a focus on dead ends is historically appropriate. History is more than understanding how the world came to be as it is. It is also understanding what it means to be human. Much of the past sheds little light on the present, even if it illuminates what it means to be human. It might make little sense to include much of this history in high school and college history courses. Time limits push to the front the ideas, events, and people of the past who help us understand the present. But micro history has its place. We see it today in such classics as Natalie Zemon Davis's *The Return of Martin Guerre* (1983). Antiquarianism is history. How thankful we must be for the antiquarians who over the centuries have collected and organized all manner of information on local histories and obscure events.

III Adventist History: What Has Been Done

It is time, at last, to focus directly in Adventist history. Having reflected generally on the nature of historical writing, I hope I have made a case for researching and writing the history of Adventism and how we should do it. Now let's look at what has been done and what needs to be done.

The place to start is Jonathan Butler's marvelous review essay, "Seventh-Day Adventist Historiography: A Work in Progress," in the March 2018 issue of *Church History*. It is a must read for any historian who decides to take the plunge

into writing Adventist history. Butler makes many great points as he critiques what has been done since 1976, when the writing of Adventist history entered a new era with the publication of Ron Numbers, *Prophetess of Health*.

Numbers represented a new generation of Adventist historians who focused on the Adventist past according to the accepted canons of historical scholarship. What made Numbers especially provocative was that he explored the inner sanctum of Adventist history in a biography of Ellen White. He wrote about her as if she were any other nineteenth-century historical figure. As Butler writes, Numbers “handled ‘the prophetess of health’ with secular hands, as if she were a Julia Ward Howe or a Harriet Beecher Stowe.”

Before Numbers there was history that Butler calls “magical thinking,” history like John Loughborough’s *Rise and Progress of the Seventh-day Adventists* designed to celebrate God’s leading and the gift of prophecy; and then in the early 20th Century apologetics, like LeRoy Froom and Francis D. Nichol. These apologists, notes Butler, “argued with considerable historical and theological sophistication.”

But it is the work since Numbers that interests Butler. Using a framework Martin Marty applied to his review of Mormon historiography in the mid-1980s, Butler describes “two integrities.” The first is “primitive naivete,” the “guileless belief of the faithful before historical consciousness has emerged.” That would be John Loughborough. The “second naivete,” is “continuing to believe in the face of criticism, not by ignoring its existence but by reinterpreting it.” That, says Butler, describes George Knight, who, recognizing that after Numbers the “primitive naivete” could not be sustained, committed himself to the highest standards of scholarship but with the confidence that the prophet could withstand whatever was thrown her way.

Here is how Butler sums up the difference between Numbers and Knight:

Parochial critics have faulted Numbers for his naturalism, but Knight does not enlist the supernatural in his historical explanations either. With respect to the supernatural, both historians have more in common with each other than they do with Adventist “historians” prior to the revisionist 1970s. The critical difference between them lies in the fact that Numbers is given more to a “hermeneutics of suspicion” than Knight. But each is a man of integrity who, though tracking his own trajectory as a historian, has made a significant contribution to SDA historiography. (pp.153-4)

The quantity and quality of Adventist historiography since Numbers, says Butler, is impressive, and all of his critiques are positive, but his highest praise is reserved for Brian Bull and Keith Lockhart, *Seeking a Sanctuary*; Terrie Aamodt, Gary Land, and Ronald Numbers, *Ellen Harmon White: American Prophet*; *The Rise of Adventism: Religion and Society in Mid-Nineteenth Century America*, edited by Edwin Gaustad; *The Disappointed: Millerism and Millenarianism in the Nineteenth Century*, edited by Numbers and Butler; and the work of Douglas Morgan, Gilbert Valentine, Gary Land, and Ben McArthur. He also notes that in the review of *Ellen G. Harmon*, David Holland identifies the authors who do the most contextualizing of White as Butler, Ann Taves, Ron Numbers, Rennie Schoepflin, Douglas Morgan, Ben McArthur, Eric Anderson, and Laura Vance.

In sum concludes Butler:

the new historians did the heavy lifting historiographically by unraveling the “primitive naïveté” in the 1970s and 1980s. The [new] apologists integrated much of their criticism— and softened its edges— in seeking to affirm a historiographical “second naïveté” in the 1990s and after. In the long run, both types of historians have learned from each other, and historians beyond Seventh-day Adventism can learn from them too. (p. 166)

IV Adventist History: What Needs to be Done

Given what has been done, and saluting the historians who have begun the work of creating the field of Adventist history, where do we stand and what needs to be done? For one thing we need more historians committing themselves to writing Adventist history. In recent years we have lost two great ones, Gary Land and Ben McArthur. And other prolific writers are a few years beyond maturity. Where are the young historians of Adventism? It is time for Adventist historians who have not yet stepped into the field of Adventist history to do so.

What should the next generation write about and how should they approach their work? There is still much to be learned about the pioneer years: more biographies and good narratives about important events. But what is needed is institutional history and in-depth understanding of the church itself. Consider the following list of possible topics for the pioneer years:

The Growth of the Church. Wouldn't it be interesting to know the demographics by year and by geographic area? Who was joining the church, men, women, old, young, rich, poor, farmers, tradesmen, already practicing Christians, and if so from

which churches, etc.? Which areas were growing the fastest or slowest? Which declining? Why?

How were these people coming into the church, by book sales, by evangelistic meetings, by local church outreach? Why were people joining? Was it the Advent message? Was it the Sabbath? My guess is yes since the early church chose to highlight these two points in the church name. We can no doubt determine what potential members were reading in Adventist literature and what they were hearing at evangelistic meetings.

Life in the Adventist church. How large were the churches? How often did most church members see a pastor? What happened at services? What were the sermons about? What did the congregations sing? How about instruments, Sabbath School, programs for children? How rigorously were church standards enforced? Were there any specialized “ministries”? What about Sabbath afternoon potluck dinners? Do we know when, how, and why various Adventist traditions and practices emerged? Were they mirrors of practices in other Protestant churches?

Institutions. Over time the influence of publishing houses, colleges, and hospitals became a powerful force in Adventism. How much do we know about these institutions: annual budgets, number of employees, management structure, governance, profitability, influence in the church, the growing Adventist communities around them? What is the history of K-12 education?

Ellen White. Much has been written about EGW, but there are still interesting questions to ask. One that I have been urging for years is a study of the White household finances. Following the death of James, how did EGW support herself and her not insignificant household staff? Can we identify all staff and know what they did? Can we gather or infer annual income and expenditures? Did the General Conference assume some of her household costs? Might there be financial records at the publishing houses of royalties paid to EGW? Did her dependence on royalties to support her household provide an additional motive for her writing, especially expanding the Conflict series?

With a growing church membership willing to purchase almost anything she published and an army of colporteurs motivated to sell her books as words from heaven every book was bound to be a best seller. Would not all of us write more books if we knew in advance they would be best sellers? EGW was generous with her money, and there is no evidence of greed in her life, but for sure her last years were not lived in poverty.

Then there is the EGW problem. How does an Adventist historian, especially one employed by the church, handle the “inspiration” question and what we might refer to as EGW’s human imperfections? The answer, I think, is simply to be a professional historian. As a simple believer or trained theologian one can seek a definition of inspiration to meet one’s own spiritual needs or the perceived needs of others. But however one defines inspiration, the definition should conform to the facts. As professional historians our job is not to judge whether or not EGW was inspired. All we can do is present the evidence in the broadest possible context and let the reader judge for him or herself.

What is the evidence? The evidence is that EGW claimed divine inspiration, visions in her early years and dreams in her later years, and appeared to sincerely believe her claims. So did quite a few people who knew her well, some well-educated and others hard-nosed men of business.

The evidence is also that we do not need to believe her claims of Divine inspiration to explain her writings. Everything she wrote that historians can evaluate can be traced back to something she experienced, something someone told her, or something she read. If her source was accurate, so was she. If her source erred, so did she. And finally, the evidence shows that she was extraordinarily dependent on “literary assistants” to help her prepare her writings for publication and that over the years, as Ron Graybill has shown in his new book, *Visions and Revisions*, she authorized no end of revisions to accommodate her changing views and the changing needs and expectations of her readers. In short, her sources and methods were not that unusual for those who write.

EGW was an exceptional woman, and her influence was and remains unmatched by any other Adventist. As for her life? She was wholesome, upright, and blameless overall, but she could be meanspirited and less than fully honest on occasion. She was a Victorian woman of distinction, and because of her claims and her influence she deserves the attention of historians.

Of course, men and women (and they were mostly women) of humble birth who had visions and proclaimed themselves prophets with messages from the Lord, are not uncommon in our Christian heritage. One can dismiss some of them as charlatans or fools. But there are numerous serious claimants to be considered. Two prime examples are Denis the Carthusian (1402-1417) and Maria de Agreda (1602-1665).

Denis the Carthusian was born in what is today Belgium, he studied philosophy and theology at the University of Cologne, received a Master of Arts degree, and became a monk, spending most of his life in a monastery near Limberg. He combined asceticism with continuous visions and revelations. His ecstasies normally lasted two or three hours, the revelations being later revealed to others when he believed they would profit from them. He was a spiritual advisor to the powerful and a noted theologian. Soon after the fall of Constantinople in 1453, he reported in a letter written to all the princes of Europe that God had revealed to him that they should reform their lives, cease their conflicts, and unite in a holy war against their common enemy, the Turks. His writings fill 45 quarto volumes. His most significant spiritual writings: Contemplation, Prayer, Meditation, Fountain of Light and the Paths of Life, and the Monastic Profession are available in English under the title *The Spiritual Writings of Denis the Carthusian* on Kindle or can be purchased, used, on Amazon.com for \$440.

Maria was the founder and abbess of the Monastery of the Immaculate Conception in Agreda. Philip IV wrote her letters at least twice a month between 1643 and 1665 asking for her advice and her prayers, making her the most powerful woman in the Spanish Monarchy. Over 600 letters from this correspondence survive. Maria's ecstasies included levitation and most remarkably bilocation. She reported that she had been transported by angels to Jumano Indian settlements in New Spain (today Texas and New Mexico). When friars arrived, they reported that the Jumanos were ready to be baptized because they had been visited by a Lady in Blue, the habit of the nuns of the Immaculate Conception.

Maria de Agreda was a prolific writer. Her best known work is the *Mystical City of God*, eight books in six volumes (available online unabridged in English and Spanish). This work relates her visions about life on heaven and earth, the relationship between Mary and the Trinity and extensive details about events described in the New Testament. Written in elegant Spanish, the book is studied today in university Spanish language and culture classes as a brilliant example of Spanish Baroque literature

Given what we know about these and many other Christian visionaries, there is no reason to doubt that many of them sincerely believed in their spiritual gifts and that thousands of their contemporaries shared these beliefs. Were they actually inspired? Historians cannot answer this question. They can present the evidence, and allow their readers to make their own judgements.

Readers expect historians to use their judgement to select, analyze, and explain events; to suggest causes, point out patterns, and grapple with the “why” question. They expect historians to praise or condemn, but, in fairness, to do so using the values of the period, not the values of the present. What people—and this applies to EGW just as it does to everyone else—believe, say, and do is history and can be judged by historians. Explaining what God does and will do is the work of prophets, and affirming belief in God or one of his messengers is an act of faith. As men and women of faith, historians of Adventism may believe in EGW’s inspiration, defining inspiration as the evidence requires. But writing as historians they should apply the same standards of evidence to EGW as they would to other serious claimants of prophetic gifts.

Archives for the 20th Century. For historians who wish to avoid EGW issues altogether or look beyond the pioneer years of Adventism, there is almost the entire 20th Century to examine. Fortunately for historians of Adventism, the sources for research are plentiful. For that we can thank the EGW Estate for the pioneer years and for the 20th Century the establishment of the General Conference Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research (ASTR). As you may know, Adventist historians played a significant role in the establishment of ASTR.

From 1904 there was a GC statistical secretary. But before 1973 there was almost nothing else. Departments kept their own files. Secretaries threw out old and what they considered unimportant files when they needed room for new ones. The GC had few if any records management policies. I discovered this while doing research in the Publishing Department, where my father was the secretary. The same pattern likely prevailed in most of our institutions.

It was the custom in those days and still today for many Adventist historians to attend the annual meetings of the American Historical Association, which met every year right after Christmas. During the early 70s some of us began to talk of creating an association of Adventist historians. So we agreed to promote a large turnout of our peers for a dinner meeting to organize ASDAH at the 1972 AHA meeting in New Orleans.

We also agreed that at the meeting we would launch an effort to establish a professional records management system and archive at the GC. We invited Arthur White to attend, because we wanted him to be our advocate with the brethren. We met on December 28 at Kolb’s on Charles Street. I kept a journal in those days, and have a record of who attended. I think except for Ron Numbers and me, all the rest have passed.

At the dinner we duly organized ASDAH, with G. T. Anderson, Jerome Clark, and me to provide leadership for the first year. Then we proceeded to discuss the need for a GC archive. Following is an account of the discussion, recorded in my journal the following day:

Then we discussed my archive proposal. This has been one of my big projects for the last several months. It is a 6 page document calling on the GC to set up a comprehensive records management program and archival system. Gerry Herdman, [Gary] Land & Dennis Bodem, Gerry's friend and ex-archivist, State of Michigan, helped me draw it up. It was accepted with slight modifications, mostly suggested by A. L. W [hite]. He of course was toning it down. His fears of uncontrolled use of materials was clear, as was his lack of understanding as to what history is all about. If our program eventually succeeds, this evening will be seen as a most important point in the history of the church.

The next morning Anderson, Clark and I met for breakfast to divide up the work for the next year. I was to follow up with the archive project, Anderson to write a constitution, and Clark? All my journal entry says is "do everything else." So history was made and ASDAH continues to this day.

Now back to ASTR. Following up on the New Orleans dinner, Arthur White carried the ball for the establishment of a GC Archives. He should be remembered and recognized for this work. In 1973, by action of the Annual Council, the archive was established with Don Yost as archivist. In 1975 the Archives and Record Center was combined with the Department of the Statistical Secretary to form the Office of Archives and Statistics, and in 2011 the department was renamed the Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research.

Today the Office is a mature records management and archival system with branches all over the world. And following suit, numerous other Adventist institutions have established records management programs. Thanks to the technological, today virtually everything is available on-line, in both the Adventist Archives and the EGW Estate. It is now almost unnecessary to visit these research centers. Almost. But there is still value in on-site exploration at these centers. While there, consider the numerous topics and issues that deserve attention. But do not allow yourself to be swallowed up by the primary sources, losing contact with the wider context. Think about the social, economic, and political context in which these topics and issues need to be understood, and then start digging. The field is

ripe for harvest and there are not that many workers in the field. To thoroughly mix up my metaphors, it is a virgin forest.

Having ranged widely and with a focus none too sharp, it is time to sum up my case. There will be a history of Adventism. We must have our stories. The history may be more myth than fact, but it will exist and it will influence what Adventists believe about themselves and will, in fact, contribute to the future of Adventism. Historians, as it turns out, not only make sense of the past, they help create the future. For this reason, professional historians, both Adventist and non-Adventist, need to accelerate what has already begun, the creation of a recognized field of historical research and writing. And how should they proceed?

To begin with they must research interesting topics that help explain how the church as it exists today came to be. This will continue to include biographies and narrative history of the Pioneer Years, but it must include more. Historians must write about the Mature American Church of the early 20th Century and the Fissiparous World Church since 1970, and the work must be much more contextual. Listen to this quote from Tombs writing about the history of England and apply it to the history of Adventism: “A basic fault of traditional national history . . . is insularity: writing consciously or unconsciously as if the history of a particular nation [or church] were self-contained, unique and incomparable whereas it is inevitably part of much wider ebbs and flows.” (p.4)

One great lesson from modern historiography is that the best history is history understood in context. We must see Adventist history in context. To date, which works on Adventist history would we rate as the best? Probably Bull and Lockhart, *Seeking a Sanctuary*; Aamodt, Land, and Numbers, *Ellen Harmon White*; and Numbers, *Prophetess of Health* and *The Creationists*. Why these books? Because all of them are rich in context. Note that all were written for non-Adventist as well as Adventist readers and all were published by secular publishers. And note *The Creationists* is not even a book primarily about Adventists. George McCready Price, however, is one of the major creationists in this history, and the Adventist Geoscience Research Institute receives significant attention. Numbers has put Adventism in the main stream. And that is where it belongs. We cannot fully understand the Adventist past if we do not see it in context, the broader the context the better.

Writing with the non-Adventist reader in mind and seeking a non-Adventist publisher will force historians to place Adventism in context. My guess is that in Number's forthcoming biography of John Harvey Kellogg, to be published by

Harvard University Press, we will see Kellogg as a charismatic, entrepreneurial, and innovative doctor who was influenced by his church rather than as an Adventist who was also a leading physician and health reformer. Will this book be Adventist history or American medical and health reform history? The history of Adventism is important; the history in which Adventism plays a part might be even more important.

There are so many topics of interest where context is everything: race relations in the Adventist Church, women and power in the Adventist Church, evangelism, coping with war, social change, mass and social media, money and power, management, institutions, missions, and on and on.

We Adventist historians in America need to engage with our non-American colleagues. Maybe we can convince some of them to research and write about Adventism in their cultures and countries. Maybe we should consider trying to recreate *Adventist Heritage*, a beautiful magazine modeled on *American Heritage* that was first published in 1974 and survived for a few years. Vern Carner, who along with Ron Numbers created *Adventist Heritage*, deserves to be added to the list those we recognize as pioneers of Adventist historiography. Or maybe it would be more useful for Adventist historians to start an on-line journal as an outlet for articles, book reviews, news, and queries.

Creating a field is the work of many. But it is not something that just emerges because many are doing their own thing. It requires focus, leadership, and community. Who better to provide this than the members of ASDAH? The work is already well begun, but only just begun. The field lies ripe before us, and the rich historiography of the past and present provide great examples of how to better understand the past. Let us put our training as professional historians to work. Let us shape the future of Adventism.

Appendix

List of historians

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

This is a **list of historians**.

The names are grouped by order of the [historical period](#) in which they were living and producing works, which is not necessarily the same as the period in which they specialize.^[1]

Chroniclers and annalists, though they are not historians in the true sense, are also listed here for convenience. Only historians with biographical articles in Wikipedia are listed here.

Contents

- 1Antiquity
 - 1.1Greco-Roman world
 - 1.2China
- 2Middle Ages
 - 2.1Byzantine sphere
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- 3Renaissance to early modern
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- 4Modern historians
 - 4.1Historians who flourished after 1815 and who were born after 1770
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Antiquity[[edit](#)]

Greco-Roman world[[edit](#)]

Further information: [List of Greek historiographers](#), [Greek historiography](#), and [Roman historiography](#)

Classical period[[edit](#)]

- [Herodotus](#) (484 BC–c. 420 BC), Halicarnassus, wrote the *Histories* that established Western [historiography](#)
- [Thucydides](#) (460 BC–c. 400 BC), Peloponnesian War
- [Xenophon](#) (431 BC–c. 360 BC), Athenian knight and student of Socrates
- [Ctesias](#) (early 4th century BC), Greek historian of Assyrian, Persian, and Indian history

Hellenistic period[[edit](#)]

- [Theopompus](#) (c. 380 BC–c. 315 BC), Greek history
- [Eudemus of Rhodes](#) (c. 370–c. 300 BC), Greek historian of science
- [Ptolemy I Soter](#) (367 BC–c. 283 BC), general of Alexander the Great, founder of Ptolemaic Dynasty
- [Duris of Samos](#) (c. 350 BC – after 281 BC), Greek history
- [Berossus](#) (early 3rd century BC), Babylonian historian
- [Timaeus of Tauromenium](#) (c. 345 BC–c. 250 BC), Greek history
- [Manetho](#) (3rd century BC), Egyptian historian and priest from Sebennytos (ancient Egyptian: Tjebnutjer) who lived during the Ptolemaic era
- [Quintus Fabius Pictor](#) (c. 254 BC–?), Roman history
- [Artapanus of Alexandria](#) (late 3rd to early 2nd centuries BC), Jewish historian of [Ptolemaic Egypt](#)
- [Cato the Elder](#) (234–149 BC), Roman statesman and historian, author of the *Origines*
- [Cincius Alimentus](#) (late 2nd century BC), Roman History
- [Gaius Acilius](#) (fl. 155 BC), Roman history
- [Agatharchides](#) (fl. mid 2nd century BC), Greek history
- [Polybius](#) (203 BC–c. 120 BC), early Roman history (written in Greek)
- [Sempronius Asellio](#) (c. 158 – after 91 BC), early Roman history
- [Valerius Antias](#) (1st century BC), Roman history
- [Quintus Claudius Quadrigarius](#) (1st century BC), Roman history
- [Diodorus of Sicily](#) (1st century BC), Greek history
- [Posidonius](#) (c. 135 BC – 51 BC), Greek and Roman history

- [Theophanes of Mytilene](#) (fl. mid 1st century BC), Roman history

Roman Empire^[edit]

- [Julius Caesar](#) (100 BC–c. 44 BC), Gallic and civil wars
- [Sallust](#) (86 BC–34 BC), Roman history
- [Dionysius of Halicarnassus](#) (c. 60 BC–after 7 BC), Roman history
- [Livy](#) (c. 59 BC–c. 17 AD), Roman history
- [Memnon of Heraclea](#) (fl. 1st century AD), Greek and Roman history
- [Strabo](#) (63 BC–24 AD), [geography](#), Greek history
- [Marcus Velleius Paterculus](#) (c. 19 BC–c. 31 AD), Roman history
- [Claudius](#) (10 BC–54 AD), Roman, Etruscan and Carthaginian history
- [Pamphile of Epidaurus](#) (female historian active during the reign of [Nero](#), r. 54–68), Greek history
- [Marcus Cluvius Rufus](#), (fl. 41–69), Roman history
- [Quintus Curtius Rufus](#) (c. 60–70), Greek history
- [Flavius Josephus](#) (37–100), Jewish history
- [Dio Chrysostom](#) (c. 40 – c. 115 AD), history of the Getae
- [Thallus](#) (early 2nd century AD), Roman history
- [Gaius Cornelius Tacitus](#) (c. 56 –c. 120), early Roman Empire
- [Plutarch](#) (c. 46–120), would not have counted himself as an historian, but is a useful source because of his *Parallel Lives* of important Greeks and Romans
- [Criton of Heraclea](#) (fl. 100), history of the Getae and the Dacian Wars
- [Suetonius](#) (c.69 – after 122), Roman emperors up to the Flavian dynasty
- [Appian](#) (c. 95–c. 165), Roman history
- [Arrian](#) (c. 92–175), Greek history
- [Granius Licinianus](#) (2nd century), Roman history
- [Criton of Pieria](#) (2nd century), Greek history
- [Lucius Ampelius](#) (2nd century AD?), Roman history
- [Dio Cassius](#) (c. 160–after 229), Roman history
- [Marius Maximus](#) (c. 160 – c. 230), biographer of Roman emperors
- [Diogenes Laërtius](#) (fl. c. 230), history of Greek philosophers
- [Sextus Julius Africanus](#) (c. 160 – c. 240), early Christian
- [Herodian](#) (c. 170–c. 240), Roman history
- [Publius Anteius Antiochus](#) (early 3rd century)
- [Gaius Asinius Quadratus](#) (fl. 248), Roman history
- [Dexippus](#) (c. 210 – 273), Roman history
- [Ephorus the Younger](#) (late 3rd century), Roman history
- [Acholius](#) (late 3rd century), Roman history
- [Callinicus](#) (d. 273), history of Alexandria
- [Eusebius of Caesarea](#) (c. 275–c. 339), early Christian
- [Praxagoras of Athens](#) (fl. early 4th century), Greek and Roman history
- [Festus](#) (fl. 370), Roman history
- [Aurelius Victor](#) (c. 320 – c. 390), Roman history
- [Eutropius](#) (d. 390), Roman history
- [Ammianus Marcellinus](#) (c. 325–c. 391), Roman history
- [Virius Nicomachus Flavianus](#) (334–394), Roman history
- [Sulpicius Alexander](#) (fl. late 4th century), Roman history
- [Rufinus of Aquileia](#) (c. 340–410), early Christian
- [Eunapius](#) (346–414), biographies of philosophers and universal history

- [Orosius](#) (c. 375 – after 418), early Christian
- [Philostorgius](#) (368–c. 439), early Christian
- [Socrates of Constantinople](#) (c. 380–?), early Christian
- [Agathangelos](#) (5th century), Armenian history
- [Priscus](#) (5th century), Byzantine history
- [Sozomen](#) (c. 400–c. 450), early Christian
- [Theodoret](#) (c. 393–c. 457), early Christian
- [Moses Khorenatsi](#) (13 January 410–488), Armenian history
- [Hydatius](#) (c. 400–c. 469), chronicler of Hispania
- [Salvian](#) (c. 400/405–c. 493), early Christian
- [Faustus of Byzantium](#) (5th century), Armenian history
- [Ghazar Parpetsi](#) (441/443–510/515), Armenian history
- [Zosimus](#) (fl. 491–518), late Roman history
- [Jordanes](#) (6th century), history of the Goths
- [John Malalas](#) (c. 491–578), Early Christian

China[\[edit\]](#)

Further information: [Historiography of China](#)

- [Sima Tan](#) (165 – 110 BC), Chinese historian and father of Sima Qian, who completed his [Records of the Grand Historian](#)
- [Sima Qian](#) (c. 145 BC–c. 86 BC), founder of [Chinese historiography](#) who compiled the [Records of the Grand Historian](#) (although this was preceded by the [Book of Documents](#) and [Zuo Zhuan](#))
- [Liu Xiang](#) (79 BC–8 BC) (Chinese [Han Dynasty](#)), Chinese history
- [Ban Biao](#) (3–54) (Chinese [Han Dynasty](#)), started the [Book of Han](#) that was completed by his son and daughter
- [Ban Gu](#) (32–92) (Chinese [Han Dynasty](#)), Chinese history
- [Ban Zhao](#) (45–116) (Chinese [Han Dynasty](#), China's first female historian)
- [Chen Shou](#) (233–297) (Chinese [Jin Dynasty](#)), compiled the [Records of the Three Kingdoms](#)
- [Fa-Hien](#) (c. 337–c. 422), Chinese Buddhist monk and historian
- [Fan Ye](#) (398–445), Chinese history, compiled the [Book of Later Han](#)
- [Shen Yue](#) (441–513), Chinese history of the [Liu Song Dynasty](#) (420–479)

Middle Ages[\[edit\]](#)

Byzantine sphere[\[edit\]](#)

Further information: [Category:Byzantine historians](#)

- [Procopius](#) (c. 500–c. 565), Byzantine, useful for writings on the reign of [Justinian](#) and [Theodora](#)
- [Constantine of Preslav](#) (late 9th century–early 10th century), [Bulgarian](#) historian
- [Nestor the Chronicler](#) (c. 1056–c. 1114, in Kiev), author of the [Primary Chronicle](#)
- [Joannes Zonaras](#) (12th century), Byzantine chronicler
- [Nicetas Choniates](#) (died c. 1220)
- [Domentijan](#) (1210–1264), Serbian monk and chronicler

Latin sphere[\[edit\]](#)

Further information: [Historians of England in the Middle Ages](#)

Early Middle Ages[\[edit\]](#)

- [Gregory of Tours](#) (538–594), *A History of the Franks*

- [Baudovinia](#) (fl. c. 600), Frankish nun who wrote a biography of [Radegund](#)
- [Cogitosus](#) (fl. c. 650), Irish historian
- [Tírechán](#) (fl. c. 655), Irish biographer of [Saint Patrick](#)
- [Muirchu moccu Machtheni](#) (7th century), Irish historian
- [Adamnan](#) (625–704), Irish historian
- [Bede](#) (c. 672–735), Anglo-Saxon England
- [Paul the Deacon](#) (8th century), Langobards
- [Einhard](#) (9th century), biographer of [Charlemagne](#)
- [Nennius](#) (9th century?), Wales
- [Notker of St Gall](#) (9th century), anecdotal biography of [Charlemagne](#)
- [Martianus Hiberniensis](#) (819–875), Irish teacher and historian
- [Asser](#), Bishop of [Sherborne](#) (died 908/909), Welsh historian
- [Regino of Prüm](#) (died 915)

High Middle Ages[\[edit\]](#)

Further information: [Recueil des historiens des croisades](#)

fl. 10th century[\[edit\]](#)

- [Widukind of Corvey](#) (925–973), Ottonian chronicler
- [Liutprand of Cremona](#) (922–972), Byzantine affairs
- [Heriger of Lobbes](#) (925–1007)

fl. 11th century[\[edit\]](#)

- [Thietmar of Merseburg](#) (25 July 975–1 December 1018), German, Polish, and Russian affairs
- [Michael Psellus](#) (1018–c. 1078)
- [Marianus Scotus](#) (1028–1082/1083), Irish chronicler
- [Michael Attaleiates](#) (c. 1015–c. 1080)
- [Guibert of Nogent](#) (1053–1124)
- [Eadmer](#) (c. 1066–c. 1124), post-Conquest English history
- [Adam of Bremen](#) (second half of the 11th century), historian of Scandinavia, work [Gesta Hammaburgensis Ecclesiae Pontificum](#)

fl. 12th century[\[edit\]](#)

- [Albert of Aix](#) (fl. circa AD 1100), historian of the [First Crusade](#)
- [Florence of Worcester](#) (died 1118), English chronicler
- [Symeon of Durham](#) (died after 1129), English chronicler
- [Alured of Beverley](#) (fl. 1143), English chronicler
- [William of Malmesbury](#) (1095–1143), English
- [Anna Comnena](#) (1083–after 1148)
- [John of Worcester](#) (fl. 1150s), English chronicler
- [Saxo Grammaticus](#) (12th century), Danish
- [Ambroise](#) (fl. 1190s), Anglo-Norman poet, wrote verse narrative of the [Third Crusade](#)
- [Galbert of Bruges](#) (12th century), Flemish chronicler
- [Gallus Anonymus](#) (fl. 11th–12th centuries), Polish historian
- [Svend Aagesen](#) (c. 1140/1150–?), Danish historian
- [Geoffrey of Monmouth](#) (c. 1100–c. 1155), churchman/historian
- [Helmold of Bosau](#) (ca. 1120–after 1177), German chronicler
- [William of Tyre](#) (c. 1128–1186)

- [William of Newburgh](#) (1135–1198), English historian called "the father of historical criticism"
- [Geoffroi de Villehardouin](#) (c. 1160–1212)

fl. 13th century[[edit](#)]

- [Giraldus Cambrensis](#) (c. 1146–c. 1223)
- [Wincenty Kadlubek](#) (1161–1223), Polish historian
- [Adam of Eynsham](#) (died c. 1233), English hagiographer and writer, abbot of [Eynsham Abbey](#)
- [Snorri Sturluson](#) (c. 1178–1241), Icelandic historian
- [Matthew Paris](#) (died 1259)
- [Salimbene di Adam](#) (1221–c. 1290), Italian
- [Templar of Tyre](#) (c. 1230–1314), end of the [Crusades](#)

Late Middle Ages[[edit](#)]

Historians of the Italian Renaissance are listed under "Renaissance".[[edit](#)]

- [Piers Langtoft](#) (died c. 1307)
- [Jean de Joinville](#) (1224–1319)
- [John Clyn](#) (fl. 1333–1349), Irish historian
- [Jean Froissart](#) (c. 1337–c. 1405), chronicler
- [Dietrich of Nieheim](#) (c. 1345–1418), ecclesiastic history
- [Adhamh Ó Cianáin](#) (died 1373)
- [Alfonso de Cartagena](#) (1396–1456)
- [Christine de Pizan](#) (c. 1365–c. 1430), historian, poet, philosopher
- [Álvar García de Santa María](#) (1370–1460)
- [Giolla Íosa Mór Mac Fhirbhisigh](#) (fl. 1390–1418)
- [John Capgrave](#) (1393–1464)
- [Jan Długosz](#) (1415–1480), Polish historian and chronicler
- [Cathal Óg Mac Maghnusa](#) (1439–1498), compiler and annalist
- [Giovanni Villani](#) (1276–1348), Italian chronicler from Florence who wrote the [Nuova Cronica](#)
- [Seán Mór Ó Dubhagáin](#) (died 1372)
- [John of Fordun](#) (died 1384), Scottish chronicler
- [Ruaidhri Ó Cianáin](#) (died 1387)

Islamic world[[edit](#)]

Further information: [Historiography of early Islam](#)

- [Ibn Rustah](#) (10th century), Persian historian and traveler
- [Muhammad al-Tabari](#) (838–923), Great [Persian](#) historian
- [Al-Biruni](#) (973–1048), Persian historian
- [Mohammed al-Baydhaq](#) (fl. 1150), Moroccan historian
- [Usamah ibn Munqidh](#) (1095–1188)
- [Abdelwahid al-Marrakushi](#) (born 1185), Moroccan historian
- [Ibn al-Khabbaza](#) (died 1239), Moroccan historian
- [Ata al-Mulk Juvayni](#) (1226–1283), Persian historian
- [Abdelaziz al-Malzuzi](#) (died 1298), Moroccan historian
- [Ibn Abi Zar](#) (fl. 1315), Moroccan historian
- [Ibn Idhari](#) (late 13th and the early 14th century), Moroccan historian
- [Rashid-al-Din Hamadani](#) (1247–1317), [Persian](#) historian
- [Abdullah Wassaf](#) (1299–1323), Persian historian

- [Ibn Khaldun](#) (1332–1406), North African historian "of the world"
- [Ismail ibn al-Ahmar](#) (1387–1406), Moroccan historian
- [Sharaf ad-Din Ali Yazdi](#) (died 1454), Persian historian

Far East[[edit](#)]

- [Fang Xuanling](#) (579–648) (Chinese [Tang Dynasty](#)), compiled the *Book of Jin*
- [Yao Silian](#) (died 637) (Chinese [Tang Dynasty](#)), compiled the *Book of Liang* and *Book of Chen*
- [Wei Zheng](#) (580–643), Chinese historian and lead editor of the *Book of Sui*
- [Liu Zhiji](#) (661–721), Chinese history, author of the *Shitong*, first Chinese work about [Chinese historiography](#) and the methods of writing histories
- [Ō no Yasumaro](#) (died 723), Japanese chronicler and editor of the *Kojiki* and *Nihon Shoki*
- [Liu Xu](#) (888–947), Chinese historian and lead editor of the *Old Book of Tang*
- [Li Fang](#) (925–996), Chinese editor of the *Four Great Books of Song*
- [Song Qi](#) (998–1061), Chinese historian and co-author of the *New Book of Tang*
- [Ouyang Xiu](#) (1007–1072), Chinese historian and co-author of the *New Book of Tang*
- [Sima Guang](#) (1019–1086), Chinese historiographer and politician
- [Kim Bu-sik](#) (1075–1151), Korean historian, author of the *Samguk Sagi*
- [Il-yeon](#) (1206–1289), Korean historian, author of the *Samguk Yusa*
- [Lê Văn Hưu](#) (1230–1322), Vietnamese history
- [Toqto'a](#) (1314–1356) (Chinese [Yuan Dynasty](#)), Mongol historian who compiled the *History of Song*
- [Song Lian](#) (1310–1381) (Chinese [Ming Dynasty](#)), wrote the *History of Yuan*
- [Zhu Quan](#) (1378–1448), Chinese history

South Asia[[edit](#)]

- [Kalhana](#) (c. 12th century), historian of Kashmir and the broader Indian Subcontinent
- [Hemachandra](#) (12th century)
- [Abdul Malik Isami](#) (14th century)
- [Jonaraja](#) (15th century)
- [Padmanābha](#) (15th century)
- [Yahya bin Ahmad Sirhindi](#) (15th century), Delhi Sultanate

Renaissance to early modern[[edit](#)]

Renaissance Europe[[edit](#)]

Western historians flourishing during the [Italian Renaissance](#) or [Northern Renaissance](#)
Individuals born after 1600 are listed under "early modern".

- [Baldassarre Bonaiuti](#) (1336–1385), chronicler (historian) of the 14th century
- [Philippe de Commines](#) (1447–18 October 1511), French historian
- [Robert Fabyan](#) (died 1513)
- [Niccolò Machiavelli](#) (1469–1527), author of *Florentine Histories*
- [Hector Boece](#) (1465–1536), Scottish philosopher and historian; wrote *Historia Gentis Scotorum*
- [Albert Krantz](#) (1450–1517)
- [Polydore Vergil](#) (c. 1470–1555), Tudor history
- [Francesco Guicciardini](#) (1483–1540), historian of the [Italian Wars](#), "Storia d'Italia"
- [Olaus Magnus](#) (ca. 1490–1570)

- [João de Barros](#) (1496–1570)
- [Aegidius Tschudi](#) (1505–1572), Swiss historian
- [Josias Simmler](#) (1530–1576)
- [Arild Huitfeldt](#) (1546–1609), Denmark
- [Raphael Holinshed](#) (died c. 1580)
- [Caesar Baronius](#) (1538–1607)
- [Sigismund von Herberstein](#) (1486–1566), Muscovite affairs
- [Paolo Paruta](#) (1540–1598), Venetian historian
- [Garcilaso de la Vega](#) (1539–1616), Spanish historian, Inca history, culture, and society
- [Pilip Ballach Ó Duibhgeannáin](#) (fl. 1579–1590)

Early modern period[[edit](#)]

Western historians who flourished during the Early modern and Enlightenment period, between c. 1600 and 1815

- [John Hayward](#) (1564–1627)
- [James Ussher](#) (1581–1656), chronology of the history of the world
- [Pieter Corneliszoon Hooft](#) (1581–1647), Dutch Republic
- [William Bradford](#) (1590–1657), Mayflower/Plymouth Colony of America
- [Mícheál Ó Cléirigh](#) (c. 1590–1643), Irish historian
- [Tadhg Óg Ó Cianáin](#) (died c. 1614)
- [Cú Choigcríche Ó Cléirigh](#) (Peregrine O'Clery) (died c. 1662/1664), Irish
- [Sir James Ware](#) (1594–1666), [Anglo-Irish](#) historian and antiquarian
- [Placido Puccinelli](#) (1609–1685), Italian historian
- [John Strype](#) (1643–1737), English historian
- [Thomas Rymer](#) (c. 1643–1713), English historian and antiquary
- [Dubhaltach MacFhirbhisigh](#) (fl.1643–1671), Irish historian, annalist, genealogist
- [Charles du Fresne, sieur du Cange](#) (1610–1688), Medieval and Byzantine historian and philologist
- [Mary Bonaventure Browne](#) (c. 1610–c. 1670), [Poor Clare](#) and [Irish](#) historian
- [Peregrine Ó Duibhgeannain](#) (fl. 1627–1636), Irish historian
- [Ruaidhrí Ó Flaithbheartaigh](#) (1629–1716/1718), Irish historian
- [Louis-Sébastien Le Nain de Tillemont](#) (1637–1698), ecclesiastical historian
- [Geoffrey Keating](#)/Seathrún Céitinn (died 1643), Irish historian
- [Đorđe Branković](#) (1645–1711), Serb history
- [Josiah Burchett](#) (1666–1746), British naval historian and Admiralty official
- [Laurence Echard](#) (c. 1670–1730), England
- [Ludovico Antonio Muratori](#) (1672–1750), Italy
- [Manuel Teles da Silva, 3rd Marquis of Alegrete](#) (1682-1736), Portuguese historian
- [Archibald Bower](#) (1686–1766), Rome
- [Vasily Tatishchev](#) (1686–1750), first historian of modern Russia
- [Giambattista Vico](#) (1688–1744), Italian historian, first modern philosopher of history
- [Voltaire](#) (1694–1778), Europe, France
- [Johann Lorenz Von Mosheim](#) (1694–1755), Lutheran historian
- [Charlotta Frölich](#) (1698–1770), Swedish historian
- [David Hume](#) (1711–1776), *History of England*
- [Thomas Hutchinson](#) (1711–1780), colonial Massachusetts
- [Francisco Jose Freire](#) (1719–1773), Portuguese historian and philologist
- [Zaharije Orfelin](#) (1726–1785), Austrian Serb historian

- [Edward Hasted](#) (1732–1812), Kent, England
- [Mikhail Shcherbatov](#) (1733–1790), Russian historian
- [John Barrow](#) (fl. 1735–1774), English naval historian and geographer
- [Edward Gibbon](#) (1737–1794), Roman Empire and Byzantium
- [Alexander Hewat](#) (or Hewatt) (1739–1824), colonial Carolina and Georgia
- [Benjamin Inledon](#) (1730–1796), English antiquary and school historian
- [Fray Íñigo Abbad y Lasierra](#) (1745–1813), Spanish historian
- [David Ramsay](#) (1749–1815), American Revolution; South Carolina
- [Johannes von Müller](#) (1752–1809), Switzerland
- [Anton Tomaz Linhart](#) (1756–1795), well known for Slovenian history
- [Nikolai Mikhailovich Karamzin](#) (1766–1826), Russian historian, Russian Empire
- [Francesco Maria Appendini](#) (1768–1837), Italian historian-Republic of Ragusa
- [Ernst Moritz Arndt](#) (1769–1860), German historian

Middle East and Islamic Empires[\[edit\]](#)

Further information: [Safavid Empire](#), [Mughal Empire](#), and [Ottoman Empire](#)

- [Abd al-Qadir Bada'uni](#) (1540–1615), Indo-Persian historian
- [Ahmad Ibn al-Qadi](#) (1553–1616), Moroccan historian
- [Abd al-Aziz al-Fishtali](#) (1549–1621), Moroccan historian
- [Bahrey](#) (1593), Ethiopian monk and historian; wrote *Zenahu le Galla* (History of the Galla, now the [Oromo](#))
- [Abd al-Rahman al-Fasi](#) (1631–1685), Moroccan historian
- [Mohammed al-Ifrani](#) (1670–1745), Moroccan historian
- [Abu al-Qasim al-Zayyani](#) (1734–1833)
- [Sulayman al-Hawwat](#) (1747–1816), Moroccan historian
- [Mohammed al-Duayf](#) (born 1752), Moroccan historian
- [Abbasgulu Bakikhanov](#) (1794–1847), history of [Azerbaijan](#) and the [Middle East](#)
- [George Grote](#) (1794–1871), classical Greece
- [Teimuraz Bagrationi](#) (1782–1846), history of Georgia and the Caucasus
- [Mohammed Akensus](#) (1797–1877), Moroccan historian

Far East[\[edit\]](#)

- [Qian Qianyi](#) (1582–1664) (late Chinese [Ming Dynasty](#))
- [Zhang Tingyu](#) (1672–1755) (Chinese [Qing Dynasty](#)), compiled the [History of Ming](#)
- [Mohammed al-Qadiri](#) (1712–1773), Moroccan historian
- [Qian Daxin](#) (1728–1804) (Chinese [Qing Dynasty](#))
- [Chang Hsüeh-ch'eng](#) (1738–1801), Chinese historian, local histories and essays on historiography
- [Yu Deuk-gong](#) (1749–1807), Korean historian