opinions on contemporary issues. Even so, he was elected president of the American Historical Association in 1902. Mahan then used this platform to espouse his support of subordinationist methodology for writing history. The war that erupted on the European continent only months before his death was in no small fashion a direct result of Mahan's theory.

William E. Fischer Jr.

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Maior, Petru (ca. 1761–1821)

Romanian historian. Maior was born in Târgu-Mureş in Transylvania, but the precise place and date of his birth remain matters of controversy. He completed a theological education at Rome (1774–1779) and Vienna (1779–1780) before returning to his native land where he became a teacher and a prominent member of the Greek-Catholic Church. In 1809 he settled at Buda where he lived until his death. Maior was the major representative in Transylvania of the late-eighteenth-century Romanian Enlightenment. His interests and knowledge were encyclopedic—he wrote or translated books in such diverse fields as religion, science, and the languages. He was also a staunch defender of Romanian interests. These views can be seen in his political memoirs from 1791, when he was an active contributor to politics.

In 1813 Maior published a history of the Romanian church which was clearly influenced by the Catholic Enlightenment and by Gallicanism. But his reputation as a historian rests on the *Istoria pentru începutul românilor în Dachia* [The History of the Origins of the Romanians in Dacia], which was first published at Buda in 1812. This book was a study of Romanian history from the Roman era up to the Magyar invasion of the tenth century; in it, Maior upholds the thesis of the "pure romanity" of Romanians and their uninterrupted continuity as the occupants of Transylvania. The *Istoria* proved an important contribution to the foundation of modern Romanian historiography, and also became a source of later nationalist ideology.

S. Lemny

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Maitland, Frederic William (1850–1906)

English legal historian. Maitland, arguably the finest English medieval historian ever to have lived, was born in Gloucestershire and was educated at Eton and Trinity College Cambridge, where he studied philosophy under Henry Sidgwick until 1872. At Lincoln's Inn (one of London's "inns" in which common lawyers were trained), he was called to the bar in 1876, where he spent eight unsatisfying years as a conveyancer. In 1885 he returned to Cambridge to take up a readership in English law, and three years later was elected Downing professor of the laws of England, a title he held for the rest of his life. In 1886, he was instrumental in founding the Selden Society (named for the great seventeenth-century historian and jurist, John Selden, 1584–1654), which was dedicated to publishing the records of English law; he became its first literary director. Maitland's health was increasingly poor, and he found it necessary to winter in the Canary Islands. In 1906, while sailing there, he contracted pneumonia and died at the age of 56.

Maitland's influence on both medieval and other venues of history has been tremendous. He was extremely prolific, writing eight major studies in twenty-two years, translating another,

editing by himself or in collaboration at least seventeen works, and writing over sixty-nine articles. His work and method provided a standard and model for his successors to follow. Maitland was first and foremost accurate and open; not only did he take care to define with skill the dry technicalities of the medieval common law, but he never mistook speculation for fact. His method was often comparative and exhibited his wide range of knowledge. His focus in much of his work was on the words of his sources: their deeper meaning, their semantic development over time and in courts. But his view of language was not two-dimensional; the words he studied had been used by people to convey meaning to their contemporaries, and it was that three-dimensional vision that set him apart from other historians. His study of Law French (the language of medieval common law), which constituted the introduction to his first yearbooks (*Year Books 1 & 2 Edward II* [1903]), has been reprinted in the *Cambridge History of English Literature* and is still the place to begin work on that arcane dialect. His technical expertise and clarity of vision opened up for him the general concepts of the common law in different phases of its development. To Maitland, the common law was an ever-changing guide to its society. Escaping from the anachronism that beset lawyers' history, Maitland also avoided many of the dogmatisms that afflicted contemporary historical work. He displayed none of the nationalistic chauvinism toward foreigners ranging in his chosen English field; his correspondence is filled with encouragement to American and German legal historians at work on the English common law. Maitland's style, while idiosyncratic, allows the claim that he was the best English historical writer of the last two centuries. Working more from the level of the word, rather than the sentence or paragraph, Maitland filled his prose with metaphors and vivid illustrations not only to give life to the results of his analysis but also to imply its certainty. Finally, Maitland endures because of his tremendous foresight: historians who work on medieval England very often find that Maitland has preceded them not only in asking the right questions but in supplying the answers.

In his specific field of medieval English law, Maitland is responsible for much of the current understanding of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. For example, it is to his *History of English Law* (1895), his most important work, that the acceptance of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries as the formative period of the common law can be traced. It was also Maitland's idea, spelled out in the *History* and elsewhere, to analyze medieval society in terms of its tenures. Perhaps his single most important thesis, argued in *Records of the Parliament Holden at Westminster* or *Memoranda de Parliamento* as it is generally known (1893), was that the medieval parliament was not a political assembly, but at its heart a court of law. Finally, Maitland invented the art of backtracking from Domesday Book in order to describe late Anglo-Saxon society (*Domesday Book and Beyond* [1887]). Because of his achievements, Maitland is considered by some to be the progenitor of modern historical method in the English-speaking world.

Bruce R. O'Brien

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Malay Historical Writing

Texts of a historical nature in traditional Malay prose and poetry, presumably written under courtly patronage from the seventeenth century onward and generally prior to the twentieth century. Given the existence of epigraphic material as well as textual and philological considerations, an older historiographical tradition can be assumed, but there is no immediate manuscript evidence available that predates the wider presence of Islam