



An Introduction to the History of Project Management: From the Earliest Times to A.D.1900

Y.C. Chiu

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Project management applies knowledge, skills, tools and techniques to project activities in order to achieve defined requirements. It is the very deliberate orchestration of the areas of expertise to complete a specific project. Investigating the history of project management is to reach a comprehensive view of the historical development of the areas of expertise and their application to project activities.

This research identifies six research topics, based on the areas of project management expertise, to guide data collection and the research process. In the contribution to architecture, the research regards "building construction and engineering structures" as the application area of project management. The research considers twelve periods of architectural history that represent a 5,000-year timeline from the earliest recorded time to AD 1900, just before the two forefathers of twentieth century project management, Henry Gantt and Henri Fayol, formulated their project management tools and the core elements of knowledge for contemporary project management. In addition, the research employs twenty architectural projects to demonstrate the application of the areas of expertise to project activities.

The hypothesis of this research is that there are circumstances at different historical periods that affect the development of the areas of expertise and their application to project activities. The significance of this study is that it adds knowledge and insight to the existing body of knowledge concerning project management prior to AD 1900. It attempts to define a template for investigation into the history of project management. The study also contributes to the development of project management as a discipline. Furthermore, it increases understanding and appreciation of the profession of project management and situates it historically.

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