

## GREEK HISTORIOGRAPHY IN LATE ROME AND EARLY BYZANTIUM\*

For the sake of reasoned and reasonable limits, this survey is restricted to the period 238-565. There is emphasis throughout on writers whose works are lost, fragmentary, or not usually read except in the course of specialised research. Hence familiar figures of the order of Herodian at one end of the scale and Procopius at the other are largely excluded<sup>1</sup>. The chosen termini are treated with occasional elasticity, to permit mention of authors who straddle them, or whose work helps to illumine the themes of the present paper.

Historiography went in a number of directions. Large compilations of history from the remote past up to the present continued (at least for a while) to be produced. Some basic starting points can be discerned. Porphyry the Neoplatonist essayed a universal history of Greece and Rome, covering the period from Troy to the reign of Claudius Gothicus. Much the same pattern was followed by Publius Herennius Dexippus who, as we shall see, helped to make history as well as write it<sup>2</sup>. Dexippus composed, amongst other things, a History in twelve books extending from mythical Greece to the same emperor Claudius<sup>3</sup>.

Porphyry was a native of Tyre who studied in Athens before teaching at Rome; Dexippus came from an Athenian family prominent for public and cultural services. They are coupled as great figures of late paganism by the partisan Eunapius (*VS* 457), who allotted one of his

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\* Two papers that should be read in the context of the present one are E. L. Bowie, Greeks and their past in the Second Sophistic, *Past and Present* 46(1970) 3-41, and Momigliano's superb paper in *Conflict between Paganism and Christianity* (Oxford 1973).

1. Herodian, of course, terminates his narrative in 238; see the excellent Loeb edition of C. R. Whittaker for full details and bibliography. For Procopius, the neophyte is well served by J. A. S. Evans, *Procopius* (New York 1972).

2. On whom, see F. Millar, *JRS* LIX (1959) 12-29.

3. Text in Jacoby, *FHG* 100.

biographical notices to Porphyry and continued the work of Dexippus in his own History<sup>1</sup>. Their use of Greece as a starting point reflects a self-conscious reaffirmation of Hellenism at a time when Graeco-Roman civilisation was undergoing great stress.

It is likely that religion played a considerable part in their interpretations of history. The paganism of Dexippus is certified by his tenure of an Eleusinian priesthood and by the admiration of Eunapius for his learning and logic. Porphyry was the author of a polemical treatise *Against the Christians*, sufficiently influential in the fifth century to be banned by Theodosius II.

The Roman side was emphasised by others. Cassius Dio had written the story of Rome on a large scale from its origins to A.D. 229. Somewhat later, Asinius Quadratus brought out a History from the foundation of the city to the reign of Alexander Severus, in fifteen books<sup>2</sup>.

Its title *Chilieteris* is suggestive. The longevity of Rome will have been stressed, perhaps at the expense of the Greeks. And it could be inferred that the work was published at the time of the emperor Philip, in whose reign was celebrated the Roman millenium. The penchant of Asinius for geographical detail and his employment of the Ionic dialect might suggest that he set himself up as some sort of Roman Herodotus<sup>3</sup>. Not, however, so crudely as the sophist and historian Cephalion who had (in the reign of Hadrian) devised nine volumes of history in Ionic, each one named for a Muse<sup>4</sup>.

It is notable that Rome was taken as a starting point by men who had been prominent in her service. Dio's career is too familiar to detail<sup>5</sup>; Asinius Quadratus was a proconsular. Both were well placed to appreciate the length and quality of Roman history.

Polybius of Megalopolis, in his day, had been impressed by the ce-

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1. The debt is acknowledged in detail in fr. I. of Eunapius' History (text in Müller, *FGH* 4, 11-56; Dindorf, *HGM* 1, 207-74); there is a passionate attack on what Eunapius considered to be a pernicky concern for chronology on the part of Dexippus.

2. *Testimonia* and fragments in Jacoby, *FGH* 97.

3. Almost all the extant fragments have to do with geography or topography; cf. E. A. Thompson, *CQ* XXXVIII (1944) 45. Other writers discussed in this paper who used Ionic were Eusebius (not the ecclesiastical historian) and Praxagoras of Athens. Arrian had employed it, as did one of the historians ridiculed by Lucian (*De hist. conscr.* 16); cf. F. G. Allinson, *AJP* 7 (1886) 203-17, for the affectation.

4. Jacoby, *FGH*, 93, assembles *testimonia* and fragments for Cephalion.

5. Consult F. Millar, *A Study of Cassius Dio* (Oxford 1964).

lerity of Rome's advance to imperial power. By the third century after Christ, it had become appropriate for men to reflect upon the long exercise of that power. Especially now that it had become patently vulnerable to enemy attack. The contrast will have been much elaborated upon. A hint of the method may be gleaned from the *New History* of Zosimus. This wretched compilation begins with a lengthy and careless evocation of Polybius.

A third basis is exhibited by the earliest examples of Christian historical writing. These extend from the Creation to the author's own particular time. A fairly primitive example was the *Chronicle* of Hippolytus, consisting of tables in which Roman emperors and patriarchs were registered together<sup>1</sup>. Of greater moment is the *Chronography* of Sextus Julius Africanus, author of the *Cestoi*<sup>2</sup>. It brought Old Testament and classical history together from the beginning of the world to the reign of Macrinus. No less impressive than this feat of syncretism is the actual size of the work. Only five volumes: either they were big ones, or the detail was non-existent.

The work of Africanus foreshadows the Byzantine chronicles of John Malalas, Theophanes, and others of that ilk. These are usually meagre catalogues of facts, often wildly in error. It is sufficient to adduce Malalas, who locates Herodotus after Polybius and speaks of the two famous Roman poets Sallust and Cicero<sup>3</sup>! Such compilations tend to be devoid of details, judgement, and style. In scope, they will generally run from Adam to the present.

Massive compilations became something of a Christian monopoly after the third century. One fundamental reason is that the Christians found it more satisfying to trace the progress of history to their own earthly triumph. Looking back must have been increasingly painful for pagans. There was also the consideration of having to educate some Christian emperors, as well as the laity, in the simple facts of ancient history, a task not lightened by the erosion of Latin in the East and by the loss of materials in such calamities as the destruction of the Library at Ale-

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1. Edited by R. Helm. *GCS XLVI* (1965); cf. Millar, *art. cit.*, 15. This sort of compilation foreshadows such later and fascinating productions as the collection of texts covering Greek, Roman, and Oriental history described by Photius (*Bibl.*, cod. 170) who could not establish its authorship.

2. Photius, *Bibl.*, cod. 34.

3. For the Roman sections of Malalas, see A. S. Stauffenberg, *Die römische Kaisergeschichte bei Malalas* (Stuttgart 1931).

xandria. Photius discloses from time to time in his *Bibliotheca* that such and-such a work was lost or inaccessible<sup>1</sup>. On the Latin side, there is a foreshadowing of things to come in the production of epitomated versions of authors and events. It was not simply the case that men could not or would not read through the whole of Livy. The *Breviarium* of Festus makes it clear that the emperor Valens stood in need of a quick course in the history of Rome in the East<sup>2</sup>.

A related genre was ecclesiastical history. Some of its practitioners and achievements will be discussed later. Here it need only be observed that detailed accounts of church history filled a real need and were not easy to produce, given the welter of conflicting and fierce sources and polemics. Yet they were satisfying both to read and to write. It was logical that such narratives tend to begin with Constantine, a figure equally suitable as a starting or finishing point for historians. In general, a distinction should be maintained between the monkish chronicle with its formless ignorances, and the informed, albeit partisan, narratives of such historians as Socrates and Sozomen.

Pagan historiography went other ways. The significant phenomenon is the increase of detailed accounts of relatively small periods of contemporary history. These will be explored in due course. An intermediate stage can be spoken of. Some historians attempted to reconcile breadth and depth. They covered large chunks of time in considerable detail, with larger spans adumbrated in prefaces or introductory volumes. The most obvious example is Ammianus Marcellinus, an historian not disqualified from consideration here because he elected to write in Latin instead of his native Greek<sup>3</sup>. The lost first thirteen books of his work encompassed two hundred and fifty-seven years of history, whereas the last eighteen incorporate the events of only a quarter of a century. The case of Eunapius is similar. Fourteen books were consecrated to the period 270-404; of these, the years between Claudius Gothicus and Constantius were disposed of in the first<sup>4</sup>.

The (to us) obscure Eusebius may be inserted at this juncture. According to Evagrius (*HE* 5. 24), he composed a history of Roman affairs

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1. E.g., he could not find the first edition of Zosimus (cod. 98) or some of the speeches of Lycurgus (cod. 268).

2. See the edition of J. W. Eadie (London 1967).

3. It will be recalled that Wilamowitz in all seriousness included Ammianus in history of *Greek* literature.

4. Fr. 8 (the prooemium to Book Two) makes this clear.

from Augustus to the death of Carus. It might be congenial to believe that he intended an analytic treatment of the principate. However, the one surviving fragment<sup>1</sup> is a typical piece of siege literature concerning one of the Gothic blockades of Thessalonica in the third century. It is composed in Ionic, replete with pastiches of Herodotus (and the occasional reminiscence of Thucydides), and seems closer to the hacks stigmatised by Lucian than to great historical writing<sup>2</sup>. The scale of the treatment, allied to the fact that it derives from his ninth book<sup>3</sup>, suggests that contemporary events made up a disproportionate amount of the whole work.

One thing redounds to the credit of Eusebius. His narrative took some account of Western affairs. The siege of Thessalonica is illustrated by reference to a blockade of Tours, and mention is made of the Gallic Empire. This welcome breadth of vision will be seen again in some of the Eastern historians of the fifth century. It offers some corrective to views of Byzantine narrowness<sup>4</sup>.

Zosimus provides evidence of how bad things could be. He took his scissors and paste to various spots, chiefly Eunapius<sup>5</sup>, and thereby produced his *New History*. To us, it is a lamentable performance, although Evagrius deemed it influential enough to require detailed refutation. Zosimus cut his way from the remote past towards recent and contemporary events by such breathtaking short cuts as the announcement (1. 2. 1) that «Between the Trojan War and Marathon, nothing was achieved by the Greeks, either with regard to themselves or other races, that is worthy of record». Comment is superfluous.

The cataclysmic history of the period covered by this paper naturally led individuals to consider the most immediate events to possess supreme impact and significance. Hence the «growth industry» of histo-

1. Jacoby, *FGH* 101; I am writing elsewhere at length on this piece.

2. For a later, more blatant example of this sort of thing, see fragment 1b of Priscus of Panium, long ago exposed by E. A. Thompson (*CQ* XXXIX, 1945, 92-4) as a tissue of Thucydidean tags leading to complete distortion of such things as the extent of Hunnic technology.

3. Assuming the correctness of the *Excerpts* made by and for Constantine Porphyrogenitus (the provenance of this fragment).

4. Cf. (for a different view) Millar, *art. cit.*, 24-5.

5. Photius deemed Zosimus' work little more than a paraphrase of Eunapius. For events after 404, of course, Zosimus switched his dependence to Olympiodorus of Thebes. On his sources in general (a vexed issue for his pre-Eunapian sections), see the Introduction to Mendelssohn's Teubner and Paschoud's Budé editions.

riography of the most recent past. A certain Nicostratus of Trapezus composed an account of the period 244-60<sup>1</sup>. The most notable reason for regretting its disappearance is that it covered almost exactly the period left blank by the lacuna (real or fabricated) in the *Historia Augusta*. Events under Gallienus were dealt with by one Ephorus of Cumae<sup>2</sup>. However, it is in the fifth century and later that this type of historical writing comes into full bloom. Olympiodorus of Thebes<sup>3</sup> established the vogue with his twenty-two books on the period 407-25. The evidence for Malchus of Philadelphia is confused, largely because of the *Suda*; Photius attributes to him seven books on the years 473-80<sup>4</sup>. Priscus of Panium ranged rather wider, with an account of the period 433-74<sup>5</sup>. In the next century or so (overlooking the various narratives of Procopius), detailed studies of relatively short periods were produced by Christian writers such as Agathias of Myrina<sup>6</sup>, Menander Protector, and the Egyptian Theophylactus Simocatta.

There is a related matter to be noticed here. A large number of specialised Greek accounts of various reigns and periods of the third century are adduced by the *Historia Augusta*<sup>7</sup>. Nowadays, it is fashionable to dismiss most or all of these as fabrications<sup>8</sup>. Yet the point needs to be made that, even if this be granted, the biographer is reflecting a genuine fashion of the age in which he purports to be writing.

To some degree, these specialist narratives challenge and replace biography. Which marks a reflection of reality, just as the endless ac-

1. It is listed in the bibliography of Evagrius (*HE* 5. 24) immediately after Herodian.

2. See Jacoby, *FGH* 212, for Ephorus.

3. See the studies of E. A. Thompson in *CQ* XXXVIII (1944) 43-52; W. Haedicke, *P-W* XVIII, I, 201-7; J. F. Matthews, *JRS* LX (1970) 79-97. For general remarks on many of the fifth century writers dealt with in this paper, cf. W. E. Kaegi, *Byzantium and the Decline of Rome* (Princeton 1968).

4. Photius, *Bibl.*, cod. 78, albeit suggesting the existence of some sort of prefatory treatment of earlier events and surmising that death prevented a continuation of the work. The *Suda* states that Malchus covered the period from Constantine to Anastasius. Cf. my article Malchus of Philadelphia, *DOP* 31 (1977) 89-107.

5. See C. D. Gordon, *The Age of Attila* (Ann Arbor 1960), for translations of and some commentary on, the fragments of Priscus (and most of Olympiodorus, Malchus and Candidus the Isaurian, on which latter see Photius, *Bibl.*, cod. 79).

6. See Averil Cameron, *Agathias* (Oxford 1970).

7. Assembled by Jacoby, *FGH* 213-18.

8. The literature on this is familiar and immense, and need not be discussed here.

counts of sieges and gallant resistance to barbarian hordes were (for all their literary furbishings) a genuine response to contemporary conditions. Great men did not disappear from the world, and there were some great emperors too. But there was no emperor in Rome when Alaric took the city in 410. Rulers were usually in the safety of Ravenna and Constantinople. Increasingly, history was made by provincials and the ordinary man, in the sense that they and their communities were ever more under attack. It was proper that historians turned more and more to the composition of detailed narratives of events and collective actions rather than reigns and individuals.

Bibliographical writing did not, of course disappear. Lives of emperors are occasionally on display. Philostratus (*VS* 607) mentions an account of the deeds of Septimius Severus by Aelius Antipater; Bemarchius produced a Life of Constantine; Constans earned a biography from the pen of Eustochius<sup>1</sup>. The fact that these writers were all sophists may impel the suspicion that their confections were venal panegyric. That may or may not be the case. But we have almost certainly lost something of interest in the case of Bemarchius, for his account of Constantine was that of a pagan.

Nevertheless, Greek biographical writing in the period under review is largely reserved for philosophers, sophists, saints and patrons. The obvious example is the collection of notices by Eunapius, who proves that the Christians had no monopoly on the art of hagiography. When it came to history, Eunapius displayed the reverse talent: his work became notorious for its abuse of Constantine and the later officials Rufinus and Stilicho<sup>2</sup>.

There is nothing comparable in Greek to the *Historia Augusta* or the collection of *Panegyrici Latini*, just as there was little by way of epitomes to set alongside the productions of Festus or Eutropius. Where one does find the notorious Greek talent for flattery still active is in the field of poetry. Encomiastic verse was produced in quantity<sup>3</sup>. The most

1. For Bemarchius and Eustochius, see Jacoby, *FGH* 220; cf. the notices in the first volume of *PLRE* for writers of the period 260-395.

2. According to Photius, *Bibl.*, cod. 77: the extant fragments and the allusion in Eunapius' *VS* seem to bear out the Patriarch's comments.

3. See T. Viljaama, *Studies in Greek Encomiastic Poetry of the Early Byzantine period* (Helsinki 1968); also the superb article by Alan Cameron in *Historia* 14 (1965) 470-509.

celebrated exponent is, notwithstanding the fact that he wrote at Rome in Latin, Claudian<sup>1</sup>.

In these cynical times, it needs to be remembered that panegyric can be sincerely written and well deserved. Claudian and Stilicho are to the point here. Diocletian fully merited the encomium offered him by the versifier Soterichus<sup>2</sup>. Still, there are many cases of poets who would go to any lengths. It is sufficient to cite Dioscorus of Aphrodito, who ended poems with appeals for cash rewards; John Lydus, whose panegyric on the prefect Zoticus earned him one *solidus* per line; and Claudian, whose efforts on the theme of Honorius show much can be made out of nothing<sup>3</sup>. It would be naive to think that Greek historians and biographers never sank to this level. Especially as some of them were poets by profession.

Several trends converge in Praxagoras of Athens<sup>4</sup>. His first effort, at the age of eighteen, was a monograph of the kings of Athens. Similarly, Athenaeus the Deipnosophist had written on the monarchs who had ruled Syria. Three years later, Praxagoras turned his attention to the present, and produced an account of Constantine up to the defeat of Licinius. Subsequently, when he was thirty, Praxagoras came out with six books on Alexander the Great.

No subject was more time-honoured. It was not just a matter of scholarship, nor of attempting to outdo Arrian, who provokes comparison for his similar range of topics and use of the Ionic dialect. The desires of certain Roman emperors, notably Trajan and Caracalla, to emulate the Macedonian nourished an Alexander industry<sup>5</sup>. It is manifest in several areas. The poet Soterichus wrote an epic on Alexander's capture of Thebes. Julian makes significant use of the theme in his *Caesares*; the mockeries are much more than imitation of Lucian.

There were many themes for the versatile historian. Pure scholarship was rightly prized for its own sake, and there was no nonsense a-

1. Consult Alan Cameron's *Claudian: Poetry and Propaganda at the Court of Honorius* (Oxford 1969).

2. *Suda* (ed. Adler) S 877.

3. For Dioscorus, John, and Claudian, see the aforementioned writings of Viljama and Cameron.

4. Photius, *Bibl. cod.* 62; Jacoby, *FGH* 219; cf. Millar, *art. cit.* 15.

5. For Trajan and Alexander, see Syme's *Tacitus* (Oxford 1958), 470-1 (with references to the literature); on Caracalla in this context, consult Millar, *A Study of Cassius Dio*, 214-6.

about its practical utility or «relevance». Both pagans and Christians pursued learning for learning's sake. Athenaeus had produced a monograph on the *Fishes* of Archippus (*Deip.* 7. 329c); Porphyry set himself to the re-dating of the Book of Daniel; Africanus produced an article on the subject of an alleged discrepancy between Matthew and Luke on the birth of Christ; the very first notice in the *Bibliotheca* of Photius concerns the elaborate demonstration by Theodore of the authenticity of a book ascribed to Dionysius the Areopagite.

By the same token, not all scholarly writing was disinterested. A variant employed by venal poets on praise of a patron was the panegyric effusion upon a particular city or town<sup>1</sup>. Thus, when Ephorus of Cumae wrote upon the subject of Corinth, or Pausanias in the fourth century developed a reputation for knowing the local history of Antioch<sup>2</sup>, it may be that they had at least one eye on material recompense for their erudition.

Contemporary happenings naturally sparked off some historical work on specific topics. Ethnology is a case in point. The irruption of the Huns provoked set-pieces on their customs in Ammianus, Eunapius, and Olympiodorus. The revival of the Gothic menace in the fourth century may help to account for the Gothic History of a certain Ablabius which proved useful for Cassiodorus and Jordanes in a later age<sup>3</sup>.

One event spawned something of an industry. Julian's ill-fated Persian campaign inspired a number of accounts. Ammianus was not the only soldier-historian to commemorate that event. Two others of this breed were Eutychianus and Magnus of Carrhae; the latter was once thought to have been a source of Zosimus<sup>4</sup>. We should also remark the presence on the expedition of the Roman epitomator Eutropius. Another influential version was that of Julian's doctor and confidant, Ori-

1. See Cameron's article in *Historia* (cited above) for the genre and its practitioners.

2. Malalas is the obvious case of how local history can occupy a disproportionate amount of space in a chronicle of world events.

3. The reader is referred to C. C. Mierow, *The Gothic History of Jordanes* (Princeton 1915), 19-23, for an account of Ablabius and his relationship to Cassiodorus and Jordanes.

4. See Jacoby, *FGH* 221-26, for the writers on Julian. For Magnus as a source of Zosimus, see Mendelssohn, Introduction to his Teubner edition, xlii. For a contrary view (and survey of the literature), see W. R. Chalmers, *CQ* N.S. X (1960) 153.

basius of Pergamum<sup>1</sup>. The pagan priest Seleucus planned to celebrate the campaign in some written form. Of all the lost narratives, perhaps most to be regretted is that of the captured secretary of King Sapor, Khor'Obut. This character, who became known as Eleazar, learned Greek after his capture and produced a history of Sapor and Julian. He also translated the ancient history of his fellow-prisoner Barsymas. For good measure, Khor'Obut was converted to Christianity. He will have been uniquely equipped to write about the clash of cultures and empires.

Ecclesiastical history thoroughly deserves a mention in this survey. It could be more than endless recitals of dogmatics, heretics, and martyrs. And in methodology and intellectual content, it can rise infinitely higher than the meagre chronicles of later times. The familiar and giant figure of Eusebius is passed over in the present sketch. The narrowness of a Theodoret<sup>2</sup> is more than offset by Socrates, who rightly stressed that ecclesiastic and secular history were inextricably bound together<sup>3</sup>. Sozomen was willing to spread himself on secular matters, especially in his ninth and final book, where he was exploiting the History of the pagan Olympiodorus. Another writer who may<sup>4</sup> have used this latter source was Philostorgius, the extant parts of whose work offer an Arian view of recent history.

The historians of the Church can be striking. Their practical approach to conversion and propaganda is nicely exemplified by Hadrian who, in the early fifth century, produced a simplified Introduction to the Scriptures for the benefit of neophytes<sup>5</sup>. Had the emperor Julian done this sort of thing in his crusade, he might have been more successful. Particularly praiseworthy is Evagrius. It should not be assumed that his work is little more than a dreary and predictable Christian counterattack on Zosimus. The historiographical method of Evagrius puts many an historian of classical Greece and Rome to shame. Not only does he offer a for-

1. Eunapius, fr. 8; for Oribasius, see the notice in *PLRE*, also my article in *Acta Classica* 18 (1975) 85-97.

2. Cf. Photius, *Bibl.*, cod. 31.

3. A point well made by G. Downey in *GRBS* 6 (1965) 60; contrast Kaegi, *op. cit.*, 177.

4. The dependence is accepted in the aforementioned articles of Thompson and Matthews; it was rejected by Mendelssohn and in Haedicke's *P-W* notice of Olympiodorus (cited above). I myself incline towards acceptance, for reasons to appear in print elsewhere.

5. Photius, *Bibl.*, cod. 2.

mal bibliography of the sources he consulted (*HE* 5. 24), but also compiled a separate volume of his documentary materials (*HE* 6. 24).

In turning from the writings to the writers, we can conveniently remark the absence of women from the parade. Late Rome and early Byzantium do not exhibit a Pamphila or an Anna Comnena. It is not that women were not active in cultural fields. They were, both pagan and Christian<sup>1</sup>. In influence and militancy, Theodora, the empress of Justinian, was more than once anticipated. Galla Placidia, for instance, prompted the destruction of a marvellous statue that had allegedly thwarted Alaric; she also procured the death of a Neoplatonist charlatan called Libanius<sup>2</sup>. On the other side, and more pertinent to the present survey than the famous blue-stocking Hypatia, was Eudocia, the empress of Theodosius II. A former pagan, she may have moderated the persecuting zeal of her husband. At all events, we know that his repressive decree of 435 was not implemented with full rigour. Eudocia was a literary practitioner who may not have written history but who may well have helped to shape it<sup>3</sup>.

We are dealing in large measure with works that are lost or fragmentary. In this relatively brief and general survey, little is possible by way of detailed, technical analysis. Built-in distortion is patent where one has to rely on Photian paraphrases, snippets from the *Suda* (frequently anonymous and only attached to specific authors by modern conjecture), extracts preserved in the *Excerpts* of Constantine Porphyrogenitus, and (often) mere titles. This simple fact mitigates the force of all speculation, but need not preclude it.

A matter of cardinal importance is that many of the historians in cause were actively involved in affairs and events at some level; Ammianus and Procopius were in no way unusual. The exploits of Dexippus attract attention and sympathy. In the course of the Herulian at-

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1. We may notice briefly: Amphicleia, the disciple of Plotinus, and her homonym, the wife of the sophist Prohaeresius; Blesilla, whose talents in Greek and Hebrew are commended by Jerome; Eunomia, whom Jerome dubs *fecunda libris* (a form of fertility allowable in this *Christiana virgo*); Marcella, wife of Porphyry and a devotee of philosophy; the Christian poetess Faltonia Betita Proba; Rusticiana, wife and literary partner of Symmachus; Therasia, spouse and co-worker of Paulinus of Nola.

2. Olympiodorus, frs. 15, 38.

3. See Photius, *Bibl.*, codd. 183-4, on her hexametric efforts; Eudocia's remains are edited in the Teubner series by A. Ludwig. For inconsistencies in the policy of Theodosius, see Alison Franz, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 19 (1965) 187-205.

tack on Athens in 267/8, Dexippus assembled a band of some two thousand citizen guerillas and beat off the barbarian<sup>1</sup>. One cannot help thinking, in a way, of Lord Byron. Part of the gallant historian's rallying speech is preserved (*Scythica*, fr. 28). It is a poignant document, commingling as it does practical advice to his followers with Thucydidean reminiscences. As Millar emphasises in his superb article, it is a fine case of life overtaking art: Dexippus and his followers were having to enact in real life a commonplace theme of the Second Sophistic.

The soldier-historians of Julian's Persian expedition were mentioned earlier. It would be pleasant to accept the identification of that Magnus who led the tunnelling into Maiozamalcha in a famous siege with Magnus of Carrhae; unfortunately, this is far from certain<sup>2</sup>. Worthy of another mention here is the captured royal secretary, Khor'Obut, perhaps a good exchange for the emperor Valerian!

Other historians undertook important diplomatic service. Pride of place must go to Olympiodorus of Thebes, sent on a mission around the year 412 to the Hunnic king Donatus (fr. 18). The barbarian ruler died with suspicious suddenness, and Olympiodorus was able to purchase his successor's loyalty with gold from the East. The cynical modern view is that Olympiodorus had been entrusted with the arranging of this chain of events<sup>3</sup>. The image of our historian as a sort of Byzantine James Bond is not unsuitable to this buccaneering character who for twenty years travelled in the company of a talking, singing, and dancing pet parrot (fr. 37).

Few nowadays would be naive enough to think intellectuals incapable of such ruthlessness. Some ancient historians were distinctly unsavoury. On the Latin side, assuming the correctness of the equation, Festus of Tridentum, author of the *Breviarium*, was a bloodthirsty scoundrel, if Ammianus and Eunapius can be believed<sup>4</sup>.

Another historian who saw much was Priscus of Panium, who went on an embassy to the camp of Attila; this mission has been made famous by his oft-translated Fragment Eight. Less familiar is Nonnosus, who

1. Apart from Millar's article, see that of Homer Thompson in *JRS* XLIX (1959) 59-72.

2. See Chalmers, *loc. cit.*, for the negative view and a survey of the literature.

3. The view is that of Cameron and Matthews (see their aforementioned articles); it was not proposed in E. A. Thompson's pioneering study.

4. Ammianus 29. 2. 22; Eunapius, *VS* 481; fr. 39; cf. W. Den Boer, *Some Minor Roman Historians* (Leiden 1972), 178-83.

wrote an account of missions he undertook under Justinian to the Ethiopians and Saracens<sup>1</sup>. Nonnosus evidently came from a family of diplomats: his father and grandfather had had similar employment.

There were other possibilities. Zosimus had been a *comes* and *advocatus fisci*; Theophylact was prefect and imperial secretary; Oribasius played the roles of medical man and kingmaker to Julian; Julius Africanus saw service as architect in the reign of Alexander Severus; Socrates, Sozomen, Evagrius, and Agathias were all *scholastici* or lawyers.

Not all historians fall into these categories, of course. Some lingered on the periphery of affairs. Eunapius, for instance, after his student days in Athens, was recalled to his native Sardis where he apparently spent the rest of his days. It is signal that it should be this historian who complains (fr. 74) about the difficulties in obtaining news from the West.

It does not follow that involvement in great events makes a man wiser or a better historian. But the experiences of the above-named writers helped to keep their narratives realistic and to the point. There is little sign that they wasted much time on theories of historiography<sup>2</sup>. An exception to the rule is Theophylact Simocatta, who prefaced his work with a pretentious dialogue between Philosophy and History.

Thus, the tendency and temptation to produce empty rhetorical works was mitigated. For all that, it should be remembered that some of the historians were men of letters before anything else. Nicostratus, Eunapius, Priscus, and Malchus were sophists: Olympiodorus and Agathias prided themselves on being poets rather than historians or men of affairs. Sophistic inanities do creep in: the aforementioned Fragment 1b of Priscus and the Herodotean pastiche of Eusebius come to mind. The follies castigated by Lucian in his *How to Write History* were not killed off by the satirist.

From Constantine on, a man's religion becomes a vital matter. All shades of opinion are displayed by our authors. Christians did not restrict themselves to ecclesiastical histories or chronicles. Secular narratives were produced by such impeccably orthodox figures as Candidus

1. Nonnosus is known only from Photius, *Bibl.*, cod. 3.

2. It is a moot point whether or not Agathias, for instance, demonstrates a familiarity with Lucian's *How to Write History*: cf. Averil Cameron, *Agathias*, 145-6 (who is cautiously negative). The use of a rare phrase *σύνεσις πολιτική* from Lucian's pamphlet by Malchus (frs. 10, 20) could indicate knowledge of the satirist's work on historiographical theory.

the Isaurian, Agathias, and Theophylact. And their works were not intended as vehicles for open Christian propaganda: quite the contrary, as will be seen.

Understandably enough, since they knew they were fighting a rearguard action, it was the pagan historians who were more strident. The ferocious language of Eunapius and Zosimus shocked the far from intolerant Photius. A more reasoned approach was that of Olympiodorus, an avowed pagan who dedicated his *History* to Theodosius II and perhaps sought to persuade that emperor of the truth of claims that barbarian enemies could be diverted by old pagan statues<sup>1</sup>.

Some historians appear neutral. The cases of Ammianus and Procopius are well known. Another who steered a moderate course was Malchus of Philadelphia, cryptically described by Photius as «in religion not outside the Christian orbit». Two points need to be emphasised. First, pagan and Christian did not invariably stand remote and hostile from and to each other, ignorant of the other's beliefs and aching to suppress the opposition. Socrates, for example, had been the pupil of two notoriously militant pagans, according to Photius (*Bibl.*, cod. 28), but was not diverted from his faith. Eunapius was in the interesting position of being under the influence of the tolerant Christian Prohaeresius and the tolerant pagan Chrysanthius. Yet he became one of the most vicious and intolerant opponents of Christianity. It is also to the credit of the Byzantines that they by and large allowed pagan propaganda to survive. Such episodes as the banning of Porphyry's treatise must not be seen as typical<sup>2</sup>. The writings of Eunapius and Zosimus were permitted, read, and refuted. Nor are they usually<sup>3</sup> submitted to the marginal abuse of scholiasts, as in the case of the «diabolic» Lucian. The position may be summed up by the example of Theodosius II, a ruler zealous in his faith, given to words more extreme than his deeds, married to a former pagan, an amateur of history, and the dedicatee of a Christian work of history from the pen of Sozomen<sup>4</sup> and of a pagan one from the hand of Olympiodorus of Thebes.

1. On this aspect of Olympiodorus, see Kaegi, *op. cit.*, 86-91.

2. Kaegi, *op. cit.*, 101, n. 4, suggests that the loss of Zosimus' account of Diocletian is due to its suppression by «a zealous Christian copyist». Such things were always possible. For a valuable survey of the whole question, see N. G. Wilson, *Antike und Abendland* 16 (1970) 68-77.

3. An exception is the item of scholiastic abuse attached to Eunapius, fr. 23.

4. R. Henry's Budé version of Photius, *Bibl.*, cod. 30, unaccountably calls Sozomen «paien».

The second point is this. Investigation in recent years has put it beyond doubt that the playing-down of Christianity in a man's work reflects a stylistic convention rather than his beliefs. In the cause of Atticism, the technicalities of Christianity were described in ponderous circumlocution or replaced by Attic «equivalents». This was the procedure of an Agathias as much as an Ammianus. It resulted in the palpable absurdity of Christian historians trying to avoid talking about the major fact of their lifetime and their own personal lives<sup>1</sup>.

In conclusion. The period embraced by this survey can (remembering the Latin writers) fairly be called rich in documentation and diversity. Many types of traditional historiography flourished, and new ones were added by Christianity. Contemporary history predominated, rightly so, given the dramatic changes in both East and West. Historians responded with detailed accounts of the most recent past, of events in which they themselves were often involved; there were few ivory tower rites.

The view from the East was not so narrow as some have maintained. Olympiodorus from Egyptian Thebes consecrated his History to Western events. Both Malchus and Candidus included Western affairs in their Eastern narratives, a point given due emphasis by Photius. The Eastern emperors may have been unable and ultimately unwilling to save the West. But this did not mean that Greek historians thereby adopted a blinkered view.

Our survey has taken us from Dexippus the Athenian patriot and pagan priest to an age in which the word «Greek» was synonymous with paganism and subversion. The world had changed, for good or bad according to taste, but beyond any possibility of turning back the clock. The Greek historians reacted in various ways. Christian satisfaction at the triumph of their creed was tempered by the fact that they were as vulnerable to outside enemies as pagans. The rancour of pagans often subsided when they realised that there was a place for them in the new order. It is easy and legitimate to grow impatient at those who tried to write the history of late Rome and early Byzantium through pastiche of Herodotus and Thucydides. Yet, as the present paper has tried to show, there was a good deal more to late Greek historiography than reactionary Atticism.

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1. See the valuable article by the Camerons in *CQ* N.S. XIV (1964) 316-27.