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Count Zosimus the Historian

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COUNT ZOSIMUS
THE HISTORIAN

A Thesis
Presented To
The Faculty of the Department of History
San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master Of Arts

by

Jason Almeida

December 2007

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ABSTRACT

COUNT ZOSIMUS THE HISTORIAN

by Jason Almeida

This thesis reevaluates the sixth century work of Zosimus, known as the *Historia Nova*. It describes the history of the decline of the Roman Empire, up until the sack of Rome by Alaric in the year 410, from a Pagan perspective. Zosimus openly criticized a number of Christian emperors. As a result, his history has been unjustly criticized by Christian historians who have claimed that he was biased and unreliable. A careful examination of the work, however, reveals that Zosimus honestly attempted to be objective. For example, he had positive things to say about several Christian emperors. Similarly, Zosimus criticized the Pagan emperor Julian. Nevertheless, a derisive view of the *Historia Nova* continues unto the present day and many historians continue to completely dismiss the work. This thesis concludes that the *Historia Nova* is in fact more reliable than those accounts of Christian historians that have hitherto been accepted blindly.

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ABBREVIATIONS

A.M.	Anno Mundi
Amm. Marc.	Ammianus Marcellinus
Ann.	Annales
Bibl.	Bibliotheca
Brev.	Breviarium
Chron.	Chronicon/Chronica
Cod.	Codex/Codices
Epit.	Epitome
Epist.	Epistula/Epistulae
Eunap.	Eunapius
Euseb.	Eusebius
Exc.	Excerptum/Excerpta
Frag.	Fragmentum/Fragmenta
Hist.	Historia/Historiae
Hist. Eccl.	Historia Ecclesiastica
Lib.	Liber/Libri
Olymp.	Olympiodorus
Or.	Oratio/Orationes
Phot.	Photius
Philostorg.	Philostorgius
q.v.	quod vide
s.a.	sub anno
s.n.	sub notae
s.v.	sub verbo
SHA	Scriptores Historiae Augustae
Socr.	Socrates
Sozom.	Sozomen
VC	Vita Constantini
VS	Vitae Sophistarum
Zos.	Zosimus

INTRODUCTION

The history of the demise of the Pagan Roman Empire and the triumph of Christianity has largely been written from the perspective of the Christian orthodoxy. We are forced to reconstruct the history of the late Empire, almost exclusively, from ecclesiastical writers who, for the most part, were adamant in their attempt to show the Christian Roman Empire in every way superior to the Pagan one that had existed before Constantine. Most of writings of Pagan historians who focused on the decline of the Roman Empire are no longer extant, as they did not survive the Middle Ages. Occasionally, however, we have fragments or summaries of these writings, which were preserved only because they were quoted or used by Christian authors.¹ Zosimus is the sole Pagan historian, who dealt with the downfall of the Roman Empire, whose writings have survived virtually intact. By the time that Zosimus wrote, the Western Empire had fallen. Even though an Eastern Empire, which called itself Roman, continued to exist, contemporaries of Zosimus believed that this shadow had little in common with what had once existed.² The belief that the Roman Empire was on the decline had already been circulating in the century previous to Zosimus.³

Considering the importance of Zosimus in balancing the overly Christian view of events during the late Roman Empire, his history sadly has been neglected. Historians have tended to rely on the Christian interpretation of events, dismissing the work of Zosimus as mere Pagan propaganda. Ever since the text of Zosimus was first published, his work has continually been met with opposition and resistance. Indeed, the first editors of Zosimus felt the need to write

¹ The anti-Christian polemics of Celsus, Porphyry and Hierocles are only preserved through quotations by Christian authors who cited them in an attempt to counter their arguments. The historical work of Eunapius, who was very critical of Christians, only survives in fragments. The large number of extant anti-Pagan polemics seems to suggest that many more anti-Christian works were written by Pagans, but not even the title and authors of many of these works have managed to survive over a millennium of Christian censorship.

² John the Lydian, who wrote *On the Magistracies of the Roman Constitution* during the reign of Justinian, agreed with Zosimus that the Roman Empire had lost its fortune (2.5, 3.39, 3.42, 3.43, 3.46, 3.54, 3.56, 3.70, 3.76) when its citizens had turned away from its ancient customs. Even the emperor Justinian believed that the Roman Empire had fallen, attributing the fall to the indolence of previous emperors (*Novella* 7.2, 30.11, 69.4.1, 80.10, 84.1) and vainly attempting to restore it.

³ Priscus *Frag.* 11.2, Malchus *Frag.* 18.3.

apologies for having the audacity to publish what many Christians believed was a worthless book filled with lies.⁴ The first two translations of Zosimus into English were done anonymously, possibly because the authors feared being criticized for translating what many Christians continued to view as an untrustworthy work. The reliance on the Christian version of events for the history of the late Empire is still evident today. Historians continue to give Christian epithets to Roman Emperors such as Constantine and Theodosius I (who are both called “the Great”) and the emperor Julian (who is called “the Apostate”).

In contrast to ecclesiastical historians, Zosimus honestly set out to relate the causes of the demise of the Roman Empire. He did not attribute the downfall of the Empire to Christians or Christianity, although he has often been accused of this by those who have dismissed his work.⁵ What Zosimus criticized was the neglect of the Pagan rituals and the intolerance of the Christians towards those who continued to believe in the ancient traditions. He was critical of the religious innovations attendant upon the spread of Christianity. The credibility of Zosimus has been fiercely attacked by various Christian writers because of the open way in which he deals with people who were otherwise sacrosanct to the Christians. His objective and critical treatment of Christian emperors (e.g. Constantine I and Theodosius I) was especially infuriating to such ecclesiastical authors as Evagrius, Nicephorus and Cedrenus. Christian writers have had a tendency to overlook the faults of Constantine and Theodosius I because of their success in promoting Christianity to the detriment of Paganism. These authors have therefore characterized Zosimus as a liar and bigot and have discredited his work in the most spiteful way, simply because he presented both the good and the bad in these emperors.⁶ The fact that Zosimus went out of his way to present positive aspects of both of these anti-Pagan emperors is evidence of his objectivity. Zosimus not only has words of praise for various Christians, but also condemns many Pagans. This is in stark contrast to the ecclesiastical historians who tended to view all Pagans as

⁴ See Leunclavius' *Apology for Zosimus* for an interesting discussion on the ways Christians have attacked Zosimus. An English translation of this apology appears in the anonymous English translation of Zosimus from 1684: Anonymous, *The new history of Count Zosimus, sometime advocate of the treasury of the Roman Empire: with the notes of the Oxford edition, in Six Books: to which is prefixed Leunclavius's Apology for the author* (London: Printed for Joseph Hindmarsh, 1684).

⁵ Evagrius *Hist. Eccl.* 5.24 ff.

⁶ See the ecclesiastical histories of Evagrius (*Hist. Eccl.* 5.24 ff.) and Nicephorus (*Hist. Eccl.* 16.41) and the *Compendium Historiarum* of George Cedrenus (1.622.2) for hostile attacks on the historical work of Zosimus.

inherently evil and even held the same hatred for their fellow Christians if they happened to belong to a different sect. Many of these ecclesiastical writers write with such religious fervor that this often superceded any attempt at accuracy or objectivity.⁷

The purpose of this study is to reveal the independent value and importance of Zosimus' work and to argue that it is more trustworthy, objective and reliable than the biased accounts of the ecclesiastical authors (such as Eusebius, Lactantius, Socrates, Sozomen, Theodoret and Evagrius), who have been blindly accepted in the past. In the first part of this work I will focus on Zosimus and his history. I will first attempt to reconstruct his background and career and the date of his work. This will be followed by a detailed description of the historical work itself together with a short history of how the text has been preserved, edited and translated. I will then discuss Zosimus' probable mode of composition and the most likely sources of his information. A critical examination of the history will follow to determine the sources that were used by Zosimus in composing his work.

The second part will examine the significance and trustworthiness of Zosimus' history. This section will include a discussion of his importance for historians, focusing on historical events for which he preserves information not found in other sources. Zosimus' work will then be compared to other Pagan and Christian sources, to show the essential objectivity of his history by comparison. I will then look at Zosimus' accuracy in his use of chronology. This will follow with a discussion of his errors and omissions, as well as any biases and inconsistencies which occur in the work. In addition, the study will evaluate the overall viability and credibility of the historical work. The conclusion will determine the authenticity of the information Zosimus provides and his overall value as a historian.

⁷ For example, Evagrius violently criticizes and attacks Zosimus (*Hist. Eccl.* 5.24 ff.) and even resorts to name-calling because he disagrees with what he said in his work. Not surprisingly (considering his outrageous polemic) he offers no logical evidence for supporting his claim that Zosimus was "a liar."

PART ONE

BACKGROUND, HISTORIOGRAPHY, AND SOURCES OF ZOSIMUS

THE LIFE AND DATE OF ZOSIMUS

Details surrounding the birthplace and homeland of Zosimus are obscure. He seems to have lived somewhere in the eastern half of the Empire. There are two reasons for postulating this assertion: Zosimus wrote in Greek at a time when it was uncommon for even educated men to be conversant in both Greek and Latin and the geographical descriptions in his history are much more accurate and detailed for the eastern half of the Roman Empire.⁸ Attempts have been made to study Zosimus' geography in order to find something that might betray a more than casual familiarity with a certain area in an effort to find his place of residence. The area that Zosimus describes in the most detail in his history is the city of Constantinople.⁹ Mendelssohn argued that this familiarity provided evidence that Zosimus must have been living in Constantinople.¹⁰ Zosimus, however, makes some mistakes when he is describing Constantinople, which a native of the city would have been unlikely to make.¹¹

Zosimus is not explicitly mentioned in any contemporary source. The only references to men called Zosimus, who were living in the late fifth and early sixth centuries, occur in the tenth century Byzantine lexicon known as the *Suda*.¹² The *Suda* gives us information concerning a rhetor named Zosimus who lived in Gaza and of a sophist named Zosimus who lived in

⁸ For example, see Zosimus' (2.30-2.32) detailed description of Constantinople. Zosimus' geography (including his errors when dealing with the geography of the West) will be discussed in more detail below.

⁹ Zos. 2. 30-2.32.

¹⁰ Ludovicus Mendelssohn, *Zosimi Comitis et Exadvocati Fisci Historia Nova* (Leipzig: B. G. Teubneri, 1887), xii, xxxviii *vide* n.1; Zos. 2.30-32.

¹¹ For example, Zosimus reports that the Bosphorus was three hundred stades long the length (2.26.1, 2.30.3) when it is, in fact, only about one hundred and fifty. Zosimus also states that there was a city guard at Constantinople (4.5.4) when there was in fact none, q.v. A.H.M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire* (Oxford: B. Blackwell, 1964), 1:692-695.

¹² The author of this work has been variously called Suidas, Souidas or Soudas. The lexicon contains numerous quotations from ancient writers as well as numerous biographical, historical and etymological notices, q.v. Alexander Kazhdan, *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* (New York: Oxford University Press 1991), 3:1930-1931; Smith, *Greek and Roman Biography*, 3:932-933.

Ascalon.¹³ In the seventeenth century, Valesius attempted to identify Count Zosimus with one of these two Zosimi.¹⁴ According to George Cedrenus, Zosimus of Gaza was put to death in 489.¹⁵ Consequently, since Count Zosimus is believed to have completed his work during the reign of Anastasius, he cannot be identified with Zosimus of Gaza. Although Zosimus of Ascalon lived in the correct period, his extant work does not in anyway resemble that of Count Zosimus.¹⁶ It is therefore reasonable to assume that the historian Zosimus cannot be associated with either of these men.¹⁷

We know very little about the personal life of the historian Zosimus other than the fact that he was a high-ranking official. The heading to his history states that he held the titles of *comes* and *advocatus fisci*.¹⁸ In the early sixth century, the title *comes* or count had an ambiguous meaning.¹⁹ The title was used for officials of several different ranks or *ordines*. There were three ranks of counts: *comes primi ordinis*, *comes secundi ordinis* and *comes tertii ordinis*.²⁰ Chaffin suggests that Zosimus was a count of the third rank, although the title of *comes* could also be simply an honorary title with no office attached to it.²¹ An *advocatus fisci*, the other designation held by Zosimus, was the title held by the senior member of each of the official bars of the Roman state.²² This advocate looked after the interests of the imperial treasury or *fiscus*.²³ This profession became so overcrowded during the late Empire that a law was passed in 468 that limited the tenure of the *advocatus fisci* and required him to retire from practice after his term had

¹³ *Suda* s.v. Zosimus.

¹⁴ Henricus Valesius, *Theodoretti et Evagrii Scholastici Historia Ecclesiastica* (Mainz: Christian Gerlach & Simon Beckenstein, 1695), 25.

¹⁵ George Cedrenus *Compendium Historiarum* 1.622.2.

¹⁶ Zosimus of Ascalon wrote commentaries on Demosthenes and Lysias as well as a rhetorical lexicon, q.v. Kazhdan, *Dictionary of Byzantium*, 3:2231; Smith, *Greek and Roman Biography*, 3:1335.

¹⁷ Paschoud favors (without accepting as proved) the identification of Zosimus as the addressee of a letter written by Procopius of Gaza, q.v. François Paschoud, *Histoire nouvelle* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1971), 1:lxiii.

¹⁸ This is found in the oldest manuscript of Zosimus, namely, the *Codex Vaticanus Graecus* 156.

¹⁹ Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, 1:526.

²⁰ Kazhdan, *Dictionary of Byzantium*, 1:484-486; William Smith, *A Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities* (London: John Murray, 1890), 1:502.

²¹ Christopher Chaffin, *Olympiodorus of Thebes* (Lewiston, New York: E. Mellen Press, 1993), xxxii; Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, 1:526.

²² Smith, *Greek and Roman Antiquities*, 1:30-31; Kazhdan, *Dictionary of Byzantium*, 2:787-788.

²³ *Ibid.*

expired.²⁴ Since a law of 413 granted the title of *comes primi ordinis* to judicial advisors and assessors of court magistrates, Zosimus may have also gained the additional title of *comes* merely through these means.²⁵ In the year 468, Leo I and Anthemius promulgated a law by which Pagans were prevented from holding the office of advocate of the imperial treasury.²⁶ We also know that Anastasius I, in whose reign Zosimus lived, maintained an anti-Pagan policy.²⁷ Because of this, Zosimus probably kept both his Paganism and his historical work a secret, perhaps only confiding his true beliefs among those who were sympathetic to Paganism. Reitemeier believed that Zosimus concealed his Paganism in the interests of professional advancement.²⁸ Another possibility is that Zosimus may have written his work under a pseudonym in order to escape detection.²⁹ This would help explain why we know so little about Zosimus and why he is absent from contemporary sources.³⁰ In either case, it is possible that he may have been detected and, because of this, imprisoned or executed. If true, this would account for his work being left unfinished, but this is only speculation.

Important information regarding Zosimus is found in *The Bibliotheca or Myriobiblion* of the ninth century scholar Photius. This interesting work reviews and summarizes the contents of two hundred and seventy nine works, many of which are no longer extant. In Codex 98 the following is stated:

Read the *History* of Count Zosimus, Ex-Advocate of the Fisc, in six books. Being an impious heathen, he frequently yelps at those of the true faith. His style is concise, clear, and pure, and not devoid of charm. He begins his history almost from the time of Augustus, and glances rapidly at the emperors down to Diocletian, merely mentioning their proclamation and the order of succession. From Diocletian he treats at greater length of his successors in five books. The first book contains the emperors from Augustus to Diocletian and the sixth book ends at the time when Alaric, who was besieging Rome for the second time, when the citizens were reduced to desperate

²⁴ *Justinian Code* 2.7.13.

²⁵ *Theodosian Code* 6.15.1.

²⁶ *Justinian Code* 2.6.8; This law appears to have been ignored by Justinian as we find Trebonius, a Pagan who was notoriously anti-Christian, holding the office of advocate by 528.

²⁷ Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, 2:938.

²⁸ Fridericus Reitemeier, *Zosimi Historiae* (Leipzig: Weidmanni Heredes et Reichium Leipzig, 1784), xxv.

²⁹ We know of at least one other example where a historian concealed his works for fear of punishment. In the latter part of the sixth century, Procopius seems to have successfully hidden his *Secret History* from the emperor Justinian.

³⁰ The first source to mention Zosimus is Evagrius (*Hist. Eccl.* 5.24 ff.) who finished his history sometime after the year 594.

straits, raised the siege and proclaimed Attalus emperor. Soon afterwards he deposed him because of his incapacity, and sent an embassy to Honorius, who was then at Ravenna, with proposals for peace. But Sarus, himself a Goth and an enemy of Alaric, with about 300 men attached himself to Honorius, and, promising to do his utmost to assist him against Alaric, succeeded in making the negotiations unsuccessful. Here the sixth book ends. It may be said that Zosimus did not himself write the history, but that he copied that of Eunapius, from which it only differs in brevity and in being less abusive of Stilicho. In other respects his account is much the same, especially in the attacks upon the Christian emperors. I think that both these authors brought out new editions, although I have not seen the first edition, but it may be conjectured from the title of the "new edition," which I have read, that, like Eunapius, he published a second edition. He is clearer and more concise, as we have said, than Eunapius, and rarely employs figures of speech.³¹

Photius does not tell us when Zosimus lived or when he published his work, probably because he had no more information on that question than we do. As early as the late sixth century, the date of the *Historia Nova* had been forgotten. Evagrius assumed that Zosimus lived during the reigns of Honorius and Arcadius simply because he ended his work in the year 410. Evagrius failed to notice the numerous passages in the work that indicate that it should be dated long after these events.³² Zosimus informs us that he was writing at a time when Rome and the western provinces had been lost to the barbarians and that the Roman Empire had been reduced to a "horribly mutilated, moribund corpse" surrounding the city of Constantinople with only a "faint trace of what was once admired."³³ These passages make it clear that Zosimus was writing long after Rome and the provinces of the West had been lost to the barbarians, clearly placing him after the year 476. Valesius and Tillemont were apparently the first scholars to point this out.³⁴ Tillemont argued that Zosimus implied (2.38.4) that, at the time of his writing, the *folles* had been abolished and that the burdens of the *praetura* had become restricted. These alleviatory measures were passed by the emperor Marcian in 450. Gibbon carelessly ignored this evidence and followed Evagrius by assigning Zosimus to the reign of Theodosius II (408-450).³⁵ In 1866, Martin

³¹ John Freese, *The Library of Photius* (London: Society for promoting Christian knowledge, 1920), 98.

³² Zos. 1.37, 1.58, 2.34, 2.38, 3.32, 4.21, 4.59 5.34 and 5.5.

³³ Zos. 4.22; John the Lydian *On The Magistracies of the Roman Constitution* 3.39.

³⁴ Valesius, *Theodoretti et Evagrii*, 372; Sébastien Le Nain de Tillemont, *Histoire des Empereurs* (Paris: chez Robustel, 1720), 6:594-596.

³⁵ Edward Gibbon and John B. Bury, *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (London: Methuen, 1902), 3:207 n. 71; Evagrius 3.41. Ludwig Jeep also ignored the evidence and asserted that Zosimus lived during the reign of Theodosius II, q.v. Ludwig Jeep, "Die Lebenszeit des Zosimos" *Rheinisches Museum* 37 (1882): 425-433.

proposed that Zosimus might have written as late as the reigns of Justin I or Justinian.³⁶ In 1882, Ludwig Jeep again proposed an early date for Zosimus, suggesting that he had flourished around the year 425.³⁷ In 1887, Mendelssohn conclusively demonstrated that Zosimus could not have written before the year 450. In fact, Mendelssohn provided indisputable evidence that Zosimus lived long after this date. He analyzed the text of Zosimus using three criteria to determine the date of the history, namely, datable facts mentioned in the work, writers whom Zosimus mentions and writers who in turn used Zosimus.³⁸

Zosimus mentions that Constantine instituted three unjust taxes, specifically, the *follis senatorius* (also known as the *gleba*), the *praetura* and the *auri lustralis collatio*. The *follis* was an oppressive tax on property that was burdensome to the upper classes, especially to Senators. The *praetura* was a harsh system whereby any Senator might be forced to accept the onerous honor of holding the praetorship.³⁹ The *collatio* (also known as the *Chrysargyron*) was to be paid every four years by all who engaged in some sort of business or trade. Zosimus (2.38) mentions these taxes as if they were no longer in existence:

He [Constantine] also laid a tax of gold and silver on all merchants and tradesmen, even to the lowest classes, nor did he even spare the poorest prostitute. Thus, on the return of every fourth year, when the tax was to be paid, nothing could be heard through the whole city but lamentations and complaints, for nothing but whips and tortures were in store for those who, on account of their extreme poverty could not pay the money. Mothers were even forced to part with their children, and fathers to prostitute their daughters, for money to satisfy the collectors of this exaction. Wishing likewise to invent some trouble for the rich, he summoned them all and made them Praetors, for which dignity he demanded a sum of money. Upon this account when they who had the management of this affair arrived in any city the people fled into other countries, in the fear of gaining this honor with the loss of all they possessed. He had the schedules of all the best estates, and imposed a tribute on each of them, which he called a purse. With these exactions he exhausted all the towns; for they continued in force so long even after the time of Constantine, that the cities were completely drained of money, and

³⁶ Rudolph Carl Martin, "De Fontibus Zosimi" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Cincinnati, 1866), 31.

³⁷ Jeep, "Die Lebenszeit des Zosimos," 425-433.

³⁸ Mendelssohn, *Zosimi*, vi. ff.

³⁹ As a Praetor, a Senator was obliged to live at Constantinople during his time of office, and spend large sums on providing games and shows. This was especially hard on Senators who lived in the provinces, who had therefore to come to the capital and live for months there at ruinous expense, q.v. Kazhdan, *Dictionary of Byzantium*, 3:1710; Smith, *Greek and Roman Antiquities*, 2:481-483.

many of them forsaken by their inhabitants.⁴⁰

The *follis senatorius* and the *praetura* were abolished around 450, during the reign of the emperor Marcian.⁴¹ Mendelssohn believed that the *auri lustralis collatio* was abolished in 501. (It is now known, from Syriac sources that were apparently not consulted by Mendelssohn, to have been abolished in 498 by Anastasius).⁴² Mendelssohn, however, believed that Zosimus was only alluding to the abolition of the first two taxes. He assumed this because after Zosimus mentions the *follis* he states that it continued to be enforced long after Constantine's time by using the words τῆς ὑπαίτησεως. Mendelssohn believed that Zosimus seemed to be using the singular here and therefore was referring only to the *follis*. Mendelssohn was also reluctant to believe that Zosimus was also referring to the *collatio* because he believed that the *collatio* was only abolished in 501 and he had reason to believe that Zosimus could not have published his work at this late date. Mendelssohn pointed out that the history of Zosimus is quoted in the history of Eustathius of Epiphania, a work that was published early in the year 502.⁴³ Mendelssohn argued that there must have been more time between the publication of Zosimus' work and that of Eustathius. Accordingly, he concluded that Zosimus did not see the abolishment of the *collatio*, surmising that he must have written this part of his history sometime after the year 450, when the *follis* was abolished, but sometime before the year 501, when Mendelssohn believed the *collatio* was removed by the emperor Anastasius.

Mendelssohn attempted to back up these dates by analyzing a statement which Zosimus makes at 1.57. In this passage, Zosimus states that he will attempt to describe the demise of the Roman Empire. He asserts that this took place in as short a period as it had taken for Rome, according to the calculation of Polybius, to ascend to her glory. The rise of Rome to supremacy,

⁴⁰ All quotations from Zosimus are from the anonymous English translation of 1814: Anonymous. *The History of Count Zosimus, sometime Advocate and Chancellor of the Roman Empire: Translated from the original Greek; with the notes of the Oxford edition* (London: W. Green & T. Chaplin, 1814).

⁴¹ Marcian Novella 2.1.4.

⁴² Joshua the Stylite *Chron.* 22.

⁴³ Eustathius wrote a universal history from the creation to the twelfth year of the reign Anastasius in nine books. With the exception of a few fragments, the entire work is lost. Although Mendelssohn believed that Eustathius' work was published in 502, the exact date of publication remains a matter of controversy, q.v. P. Allen, "An Early Epitome of Josephus: Eustathius of Epiphaneia," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 81 (1988): 1-11; Smith, *Greek and Roman Biography*, 2:20; Kazhdan, *Dictionary of Byzantium*, 2:753-754.

according to Polybius, had been accomplished in only fifty-three years.⁴⁴ Mendelssohn asserted, citing 4.59, that Zosimus probably calculated the beginning of the demise at around the year 395 when the emperor Theodosius began to proscribe the public practice of Paganism. Mendelssohn argues that if this is the case, Zosimus' period of decline must have been longer than the fifty-three years assigned by Polybius for the rise of Rome. Since the earlier *terminus post quem* has been established as 450, this data only backs up Mendelssohn's earlier date for Zosimus. Mendelssohn had to analyze other sources (both those used by Zosimus and those who used Zosimus) in order to back up his *terminus ante quem* for Zosimus.

Mendelssohn looked at the sources that Zosimus used to determine the latest datable source. The latest of these sources is Olympiodorus, whom Zosimus happens to mention by name.⁴⁵ According to Photius, the history of Olympiodorus went down to the year 425.⁴⁶ It is not known, however, in what year Olympiodorus published his history. This does not add anything to Mendelssohn's argument as he had already established that Zosimus was writing after the year 450. Since this proved fruitless, Mendelssohn had to analyze those writers who had used Zosimus. Evagrius says, in his *Ecclesiastical History*, that Zosimus was one of the sources used by the historian Eustathius in his *Breviarium*.⁴⁷ Evagrius indicates that Eustathius ended his work with the capture of Amida by the Persians, an event that occurred in the twelfth year of the reign of Anastasius.⁴⁸ Mendelssohn argued that if Eustathius was already quoting Zosimus in his *Breviarium* (which he believed was published in 502), then Zosimus must have published his *Historia Nova* at least a few years before that date. This, Mendelssohn argued, would have ensured that Eustathius had had some time to examine and read the *Historia Nova*. This confirmed Mendelssohn in his opinion that Zosimus had written his history before the abolishment of the *collatio* in the year 501. Mendelssohn therefore concluded that Zosimus wrote sometime between 450 (with the abolition of the *follis* and *praetura*) and the year 502 (with the publication of the historical work of Eustathius).

Franz Ruhl disagreed with Mendelssohn.⁴⁹ At first, Ruhl had believed that there was no

⁴⁴ Polybius 6.1.3.

⁴⁵ Zos. 5.27.

⁴⁶ Phot. *Bibl.* cod. 80.

⁴⁷ Evagrius *Hist. Eccl.* 3.37.

⁴⁸ Evagrius *Hist. Eccl.* 3.37, 5.24.

⁴⁹ Franz Ruhl, "Wann schrieb Zosimos?" *Rheinisches Museum* 46 (1891): 146-147.

reasonable evidence to show that Zosimus had written before the end of the reign of Anastasius' in the year 518. But after taking a closer look at Zosimus 2.38, Ruhl offered a different interpretation. Ruhl believed that this passage referred to the abolishment of all three taxes. Since Ruhl believed that the *collatio lustralis* was abolished in 501 (rather than the year 498, which Syriac sources have now shown to be the true date), he concluded that Zosimus had most likely written his work sometime between the years 501-518.⁵⁰

Mommsen also disagreed with Mendelssohn's dates for Zosimus. Mommsen agreed with Ruhl that Zosimus, at 2.38, was referring to the abolishment of all three taxes, including the *collatio*.⁵¹ Consequently, Mommsen claimed that the year 501 was the correct *terminus post quem* for Zosimus' work.⁵² Mommsen pointed out that Evagrius had not stated that Eustathius had died in the year 502 (as Mendelssohn had assumed); Evagrius had only indicated that Eustathius had died when his history had reached the year 502.⁵³ Mommsen maintained that there is no indication that Eustathius died in that year and he may well have lived until as late as the 520's.⁵⁴ Mommsen contended that the publication of the work of Eustathius probably occurred in the reign of Justin I, sometime after 518. Mommsen therefore came to the conclusion that Zosimus had written his history sometime between the year 501 (really 498) and the year 527 (the year in which Justin I died). The *terminus post quem* of 498 (the actual date of the abolition of the *collatio lustralis*, which was only established a year after Mommsen wrote) has been accepted by many modern scholars including E. Stein, A. Chastagnol and Alan Cameron.⁵⁵

In an attempt to determine a more precise date for Zosimus, scholars have focused on two passages in Zosimus. The first passage in question (3.26) deals with the Persian situation in 363 when the emperor Jovian ceded Mesopotamia together with the greater part of Armenia to the

⁵⁰ The correct year for the abolishment of the *collatio* is 498. This was established in 1904 on the basis of Syriac sources (Joshua the Stylite *Chron.* 22); Ernst Stein, *Histoire du Bas Empire* (Paris: D. de Brouwer, 1949), 2:708.

⁵¹ Theodor Mommsen, "Zosimus," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 12 (1903): 533.

⁵² As stated above (q. v. note 47) the correct date for the abolishment of the *collatio* is 498.

⁵³ The capture of Amida in 502, with which Eustathius ended his account, occurred in the twelfth year of Anastasius.

⁵⁴ Procopius, who began writing his history in the 530's, seems to have drawn heavily on Eustathius' account of the siege of Amida.

⁵⁵ Stein, *Histoire du Bas Empire*, 2:708; André Chastagnol, "Zosime II, 38 et l'Histoire Auguste," *Bonner Historia Augusta Colloquium 1964/5* (1966): 43-78; Alan Cameron, "The Date of Zosimus' History," *Philologus* 113 (1969): 106-110.

Persians. Zosimus says:

The death of the emperor Julian alone was a sufficient cause to deprive us of them all [the provinces ceded by Jovian], and that in so irrevocable a manner, that the Roman emperors have never since been able to recover any part of them, but have gradually lost still more; some having made themselves perfectly independent, others having surrendered themselves to the Barbarians, and others becoming deserted: all which I shall in the course of this history relate as it occurred.⁵⁶

According to Cameron, this depressing summary must precede the modestly successful Persian campaign of Anastasius which occurred between 502 and 506.⁵⁷ Cameron believed that Zosimus would have alluded to the war if it had taken place or was taking place when he wrote. Thus according to Cameron, Zosimus must have written his history prior to the start of the war in 502. Goffart, however, came to a different conclusion after analyzing the same passage.⁵⁸ According to Goffart the Persian war began with a series of disasters including the loss of the city of Amida. In spite of the determination of Anastasius, his generals accomplished little more, in the years following, than prevent further deterioration of the situation. Hence, Goffart argued that Zosimus must have been writing during the early, disastrous phase of this disheartening war.⁵⁹

The second passage of Zosimus (1.5) that has been decisive in dating his historical work is that dealing with the pantomime dancers:

Hence cities are filled with sedition and tumult; for when all offices, both civil and military, are conferred upon ill disposed magistrates, it both renders the citizens restless in peace, and discourages the soldiers in war. That this is the case has been plainly shown by experience, and the train of events that took place soon afterwards, in the reign of Octavianus. For the dance called Pantomimus, which signifies a dance in imitation of every one, was introduced into Rome at that period; it never having before been in use in Italy, being invented by Pylades and Bathyllus; besides many other innovations, that still are productive of great evil.⁶⁰

We know of only two occasions, after the year 498, when pantomime dancers were the cause of

⁵⁶ Anonymous, *History of Count Zosimus*, 90-91.

⁵⁷ Alan Cameron, "Date of Zosimus," 108.

⁵⁸ Walter Goffart, "Zosimus, The First Historian of Rome's Fall," *American Historical Review* 76 (1971): 421-422.

⁵⁹ That is, sometime up to the year 504, as "Byzantine affairs took a turn for the better in 504 and the peace treaty was satisfactory," q.v. Goffart, "Zosimus, Historian of Rome's Fall," 422.

⁶⁰ Anonymous, *History of Count Zosimus*, 8.

massive riots that led to extensive slaughter among the factions. These riots took place sometime during the festival of the Brytae in Constantinople in 499 and again in 501. Little is known about this festival except for the fact that it involved dancing and some sort of aquatic event. In the riot of 501 a large number of people were murdered and drowned, including a son of the emperor Anastasius. In the following year, Anastasius forbade the festival and abolished the pantomime throughout the Empire.

Cameron asserted that Zosimus wrote his first book, at least, and most probably the rest not long after, between 498 and 502, most likely after the second and more violent Brytae revolt of 501.⁶¹ (This argument fits nicely with Cameron's argument for Zosimus writing before Anastasius' Persian war, which was begun by a sudden Persian attack in 502). This would explain Zosimus' violent hostility to mime dancers throughout his history.⁶² Cameron cited the following two examples: Zosimus' horror at the interest shown in the mime by Theodosius (4.33) and Stilicho (5.7). Considering his vehement hostility to the mime, Cameron asserted that Zosimus would surely have mentioned Anastasius' abolition of it.

By looking at the same evidence, Goffart again came to a different conclusion.⁶³ Goffart argued that Zosimus was writing after the abolition of the pantomime but that the "suppression came too late; the mischief had been done." Goffart asserted that Zosimus had already witnessed the abolition of the mime but that "it was not part of Zosimus' plan to celebrate the wise laws of his age."⁶⁴ Therefore Goffart placed the *terminus post quem* date for Zosimus in the year 502. Whatever view one chooses, it is important to note that Zosimus' *floruit* has been established by both Cameron and Goffart to sometime during the first decade of the sixth century. The dates themselves vary by only a few years. While Cameron argued that Zosimus wrote sometime between 498 and 502, Goffart asserted that Zosimus wrote sometime between 502 and 506.⁶⁵

⁶¹ Alan Cameron, "Date of Zosimus," 109-110.

⁶² Zos. 4.33.4, 5.7.2.

⁶³ Goffart, "Zosimus, Historian of Rome's Fall," 422-423.

⁶⁴ Goffart, "Zosimus, Historian of Rome's Fall," 423.

⁶⁵ Paschoud places Zosimus between 498 and 518 (or at the latest before the 530's), q.v. Paschoud, *Histoire Nouvelle*, 1:xvii, 3:80-81. Torben Damsholt believes that Zosimus' reference to the *collatio lustralis* is unclear (Zos. 2.38) and may have been taken from Eunapius. He also rejects Eustathius' citation of Zosimus as reported by Evagrius (q.v. Evagrius *Hist. Eccl.* 5.24); arguing that Evagrius is only giving us a review of past historians. Damsholt concludes, however, with absurd termini for Zosimus. He asserts that Zosimus must have written sometime before Olympiodorus, who published sometimes in the 440's, and before Evagrius, who published his work in the 590's. Damsholt is wrong to attribute the *collatio lustralis*

Fowden has also, more recently, argued for a late date for the history of Zosimus.⁶⁶ His view lends support to Goffart's theory that the Zosimus was writing after the abolition of the pantomime. Fowden believed that Zosimus' account (2.29) of the conversion of Constantine preserved some elements from a work that only became known at Constantinople during the reign of either Anastasius or Justin. This work is known as the *Actus Silvestri*. Fowden believed that Zosimus could only have incorporated several elements found in his narrative from the text of the *Actus Silvestri*.⁶⁷ In several places where the text of the *Historia Nova* diverges significantly from that of Eunapius, elements are to be found which are very similar to what is recorded in the *Actus Silvestri*.⁶⁸ This narrative, which begins to show up in Roman sources soon after the year 500, first became known in Constantinople (according to Fowden) during the latter part of the reign of Anastasius. Consequently, Fowden argued that Zosimus could have only written his work, at the earliest, during the early sixth century in the reign of Anastasius (491-518). This would confirm Goffart's date for Zosimus. Thus all the evidence seems to indicate that Zosimus probably wrote his history in the latter part of the reign of Anastasius, sometime in the early sixth century.

NATURE OF THE HISTORY

Zosimus wrote his history in order to describe the events that were instrumental in the decline and fall of the Roman Empire. He states that "as Polybius informs us by what means the Romans in a short space of time attained a vast empire, it is my purpose to show on the other

reference to Eunapius, as there is no evidence to indicate this. He is also wrong about Evagrius, whom he has apparently misread. Evagrius plainly states that Eustathius drew on both Priscus and Zosimus for his work. Evagrius states (Evagrius *Hist. Eccl.* 5.24) that a history has been written "by Zosimus, as far as Honorius and Arcadius: and events subsequent to their reign by Priscus the Rhetorician, and others. The whole of this range of history has been excellently epitomized by Eustathius of Epiphania, in two volumes, one extending from the capture of Troy, the other to the twelfth year of the reign of Anastasius." Evagrius obviously relied heavily on the work of Eustathius and attempted to cover up this fact by providing a catalog of the historians that Eustathius had previously used. (cf. Evagrius 2.15-2.16, where Evagrius cites both Eustathius and Priscus for the same topic leading one to believe he lifted the citation of Priscus directly from Eustathius.), q.v. Torben Damsholt, "Das Zeitalter des Zosimos: Evagrius, Eustathios und die Aufhebung des chrysargyron," *Analecta Romana* 8 (1977): 89-102.

⁶⁶ Garth Fowden, "The Last Days of Constantine," *Journal of Roman Studies* 84 (1994): 146-170.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 164.

⁶⁸ Fowden's arguments are based upon the faulty assumption that Sozomen (*Hist. Eccl.* 1.5.1) preserves Eunapius' exact version of events. It is more than probable that Sozomen has purposely distorted events, as his avowed purpose was to discredit the version of events preserved by Pagan writers concerning Christianity (e.g. the conversion of Constantine).

hand, that by their ill management in as short a time they lost it.”⁶⁹ According to Polybius, the Romans had gained their empire in a mere fifty-three years.⁷⁰ It is not clear whether Zosimus believed the demise of the Roman Empire had also occurred in exactly fifty-three years or if he was merely using Polybius to indicate the relatively short period of time it took for the Romans to lose their empire. It is also uncertain at what point Zosimus had believed that this period of decline set in which eventually led to the demise of the Empire. As the history of Zosimus was left unfinished, we can only hypothesize about this. Mendelssohn suggested that this period might have begun when Theodosius abolished paganism in Rome in 395.⁷¹ Another possibility may have been Alaric’s sack of Rome in the year 410.⁷²

We find the title *Historia Nova* or *New History* in the oldest extant manuscript of Zosimus. This is known as the *Codex Vaticanus Graecus* 156 and it dates to the second half of the tenth century.⁷³ All extant manuscripts of Zosimus are derived from this and carry this same title.⁷⁴ There is some debate as to what this title actually means. Photius believed that Zosimus, like Eunapius, had published a second edition of his history.⁷⁵ But it is obvious that Zosimus did not live to complete and correct his first edition, much less begin a second one. The title, *Historia Nova*, most likely either refers to the fact that Zosimus’ history is a new interpretation of events that led to the fall of Rome, or it may indicate that he is covering the history of recent events in his work.

The *Historia Nova* contains six books, with the sixth book left in an obviously unfinished state. According to Mendelssohn, some of the surviving manuscripts show a five-part division.⁷⁶ Mendelssohn believed that this may have been an attempt to balance the work more evenly as the sixth book is much shorter than the previous five. In his first book, Zosimus gives a brief survey of universal history to the time of Diocletian. Unfortunately, the last part of the first book together

⁶⁹ Zos. 1.57.

⁷⁰ Polybius 6.1.3.

⁷¹ Mendelssohn, *Zosimi*, vi; Zos. 4.59.

⁷² This would put the period of the decline and demise of the Roman Empire (if we take the traditional date of 476) at sixty-six years. Another possibility date for the beginning of this period could be the death of Honorius in 423, which would leave exactly fifty-three years until the demise of the Roman Empire in 476.

⁷³ Paschoud, *Histoire Nouvelle*, 1:lxvii ff.

⁷⁴ Because all other manuscripts of the *Historia Nova* are derived from the *Codex Vaticanus Graecus* 156, they have no independent value.

⁷⁵ Phot. *Bibl. cod.* 98.

⁷⁶ Mendelssohn, *Zosimi*, xiv-xv.

with the beginning of the second book is lost. This lost section dealt with the years 282-305. Zosimus' history becomes more detailed with his second book, which covers the reigns of Constantine and Constantius along with those of Constans and Constantine II (305-354). The third book deals with the reigns of Julian and Jovian (355-364). Book Four continues with an account of the reigns of Valentinian, Valens, Gratian and Theodosius (364-395). Book Five covers the reigns of Arcadius and Honorius (395-409). The fifth book contains the second lacuna, which occurs at chapter 22.⁷⁷ This lacuna is much shorter than the previous one as only a single folio leaf is missing from the codex at this point.⁷⁸ Book Six deals with only two years: 409-410. The book breaks off suddenly with the deposition of Attalus in July of 410 before the sack of Rome by Alaric later that year. What we possess of the sixth book is obviously a draft as the book is extremely short and ends abruptly at the thirteenth chapter.⁷⁹ The sixth book also contains repetitions and inaccuracies indicate that it was never completed or revised.⁸⁰

The fact that Zosimus planned to continue his account to his own day is proved by his numerous promises to do so.⁸¹ Since the history breaks off abruptly at 410, it could be argued that the conclusion has simply been lost. However, because Evagrius and Photius had no more of the work than we do, this seems unlikely.⁸² The sixth book of the *Historia Nova* was also carelessly written, as a comparison with the first five books clearly indicates. This leads one to conclude that the work was probably left unfinished. The fact that Zosimus intended to continue the history but was prevented from carrying out his purpose by some circumstance, perhaps his death, may indicate that the work we possess is merely a draft. This would explain the careless errors in the work. Bury calculated that if the sixth book had reached the average length of the first five, it

⁷⁷ Paschoud suggests that a folio was removed from the manuscript while it was at the Vatican library because Zosimus had expressed anti-Christian sentiments when dealing the rest of Fravitta's career and possibly his death. Paschoud believed that this had incensed some fifteenth-century reader, q.v. Paschoud, *Histoire Nouvelle*, 3:174. Mendelssohn believed that another lacuna occurred at 5.25, at the end of the Eunapius section of Zosimus, because Zosimus fails to mention the elevation of Arsacius and the death of Eudoxia which are cited by Photius to delimit the end of Eunapius' Histories, q.v. Mendelssohn, *Zosimi*, 248 n. 1; Phot. *Bibl. cod.* 77. Paschoud, however, points out that there is no evidence of a lacuna in *Vaticanus Graecus* 156. Paschoud believes that Photius may have found these events in the *Chronicon Paschale*, not in Eunapius' incomplete *Universal History* (Paschoud maintains that Eunapius died before he completed his work), q.v. Paschoud, *Histoire Nouvelle*, 3:174.

⁷⁸ A quaternion of eight leaves is missing in the first lacuna.

⁷⁹ Gibbon, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 2:565.

⁸⁰ For example: Zos. 6.7.6 & 6.12.1; Mendelssohn, *Zosimi*, 289, 293.

⁸¹ Zos. 3.32, 4.21, 4.28, 4.59.

⁸² Phot. *Bibl. cod.* 98; Evagrius *Hist. Eccl.* 5.24.

would have probably ended with the death of Honorius.⁸³ Although the narrative becomes more detailed in the last five books, it should be remembered that Zosimus intended these books as a brief epitome of events dealing with the period before that with which he was contemporaneous. If Zosimus had lived to complete his work, we would now also possess an important account of the very poorly documented fifth century by a contemporary. For whatever reason then, be it poor health, loss of interest or death, Zosimus was never able to finish his history and write about the events of his own day.⁸⁴

Since Zosimus wrote during the early sixth century, he could not possibly have been an eyewitness to events prior to the year 450. Zosimus' plan for his work was apparently to write a summary of the events for which he was not a contemporary by epitomizing the works of others. This was a typical method employed by ancient historians and can be compared to that used by Ammianus and Eunapius, who also began their works with brief summaries on the period for which they were not eyewitnesses. Like his predecessors, Zosimus would have been able to provide a detailed historical account for the events of the period in which he lived. He drew from various sources for the first part of his work, most of which are no longer extant. He abbreviated and epitomized the information he found in the detailed historical works of such historians as Olympiodorus, Eunapius and Dexippus.⁸⁵ Because of this, Zosimus is one of our chief authorities for the late fourth century and the early part of the fifth century.⁸⁶ Zosimus encountered detailed descriptions, character sketches, judgments and speeches in the works he used. The process of summarizing and organizing this information sometimes led to the omission and confusion of events, but we must remember that what we have is a draft and not a finished work.

The history of Zosimus apparently began to suffer at a very early date because of its Pagan viewpoint. By the late fifth century, Evagrius was already violently attacking Zosimus,

⁸³ Gibbon, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 2:565.

⁸⁴ At 4.20.3, Zosimus refers to some barbarian tribes and informs us that he intends to discuss them more precisely as a different location but these tribes are never again referred to in the extant text. Zosimus probably intended to discuss them in a future part of his work but (for whatever reason) never reached that part.

⁸⁵ The works of these three authors (Olympiodorus, Eunapius and Dexippus) survive only in fragments, q.v. Smith, *Greek and Roman Biography*, 3:1334-1335; Kazhdan, *Dictionary of Byzantium*, 2:745-746, 3:1524.

⁸⁶ Zosimus' account is our most important source for Roman history between the years 378 (the year in which the history of Ammianus ends) and 410.

even going to the extent of calling him an “evil and malignant demon.”⁸⁷ Reitemeier believed that the lacuna at the end of Book One and the beginning of Book Two had already appeared as early as the time of Evagrius.⁸⁸ Mendelssohn pointed out that John of Antioch, who wrote a *Universal History* (from the time of Adam to the year 610) in the early seventh century, stopped using Zosimus as a source precisely at the point where the first lacuna begins.⁸⁹ It is possible that this lacuna included some particularly anti-Christian material, which was removed by a Christian who felt it was his duty to expunge information that might sully his religion.⁹⁰ According to Reitemeier, the *Historia Nova* seems to have ceased being copied by the time Photius wrote his *Bibliotheca* in the ninth century.⁹¹ In the Christian centuries that followed, Zosimus was constantly attacked for what was perceived as an anti-Christian attitude.⁹² Because Zosimus dared to criticize emperors such as Constantine and Theodosius I, whom Christians venerated as virtual saints, the *Historia Nova* was dismissed as containing nothing of value.⁹³ It is a wonder that a manuscript of Zosimus managed to survive through these centuries of religious intolerance. Somehow one manuscript endured long enough to be rediscovered in the Renaissance and thereby became preserved for posterity. This manuscript is now kept at the Vatican and is known as the *Codex Vaticanus Graecus* 156.⁹⁴

The *Codex Vaticanus Graecus* 156 has been dated to the second half of the tenth century by Adolf Kiessling, who also determined that it was the oldest manuscript of Zosimus extant.⁹⁵ This manuscript appears to have been written by four hands, and it also has corrections that were

⁸⁷ Evagrius *Hist. Eccl.* 3.40-3.41. The bombastic reaction of Evagrius is quite surprising. His fanaticism was, unfortunately, a common trait among Christian authors who were unrelenting when it came to those who held different beliefs from their own. Christians believed that they were always right and never tended to place themselves in the shoes of other people. In stark contrast to this, the majority of Pagan writers made numerous attempts to be objective and impartial in their search for the truth.

⁸⁸ Reitemeier, *Zosimi*, xxvii-xxviii.

⁸⁹ Mendelssohn, *Zosimi*, xxvi.

⁹⁰ The lack of sources dealing with the reign of Diocletian may indicate that there was something about his reign that Christians were trying to suppress. For example, the extant portion of historical work of Ammianus Marcellinus is also missing the portion dealing with Diocletian. It is possible that there was something about Ammianus' coverage of Diocletian that angered Christians.

⁹¹ Reitemeier, *Zosimi*, xxvii.

⁹² For example, see: Nicephorus *Hist. Eccl.* 16.41.

⁹³ Today Constantine remains a saint in the Eastern Orthodox Church (as he was in the Byzantine Catholic Church), but he has not been officially recognized as such by the Roman Catholic Church.

⁹⁴ Paschoud, *Histoire Nouvelle*, 1:1xxvii. ff.

⁹⁵ Mendelssohn, *Zosimi*, xx.

probably made against the exemplar. The first two parts were written by two scribes in the same scriptorium in handwriting that is characteristic of the second part of the tenth century. The third part was written in handwriting typical of the eleventh century, while the remainder was apparently written in a hand of the twelfth. All these portions seem to be copied from the same manuscript. There are a few marginal scholia, but these are meager and trifling. There are two main lacunae in the *Codex Vaticanus Graecus* 156. The fourth quaternion is missing in its entirety, and a page has also been deliberately cut out after folio 128.⁹⁶ The care with which this page was cut out indicates that it may have been removed to eliminate an insulting passage. The loss is not accidental, as the manuscript is generally in very good condition. It is possible that the first lacuna was removed for the same reason as the second. All other extant manuscripts of Zosimus were derived from the *Codex Vaticanus Graecus* 156 as they all contain these lacunae.

The origin of the manuscript is unknown, but the presence of two crosses on the recto of the first folio of the first quaternion is a distinguishing mark of the monastery of the Studios, the most eminent scriptorium in Constantinople. However, the first two hands are not characteristic of that scriptorium, and date later than those normally used as benchmarks. The manuscript was listed as present in the Vatican library in 1475. It was borrowed from the 30th of April 1488 to the 13th of January 1492 by Luigi Lotti. Zosimus is first mentioned during the Renaissance by Politian in a series of discursive essays on philology and criticism that were published in 1489 under the title of *Miscellanea*.⁹⁷ Small extracts of Zosimus were first published in the sixteenth century. However when Marc-Antoine Muret (also known as Muretus) wanted to read Zosimus in 1572, Cardinal Sirleto, then Prefect of the Vatican Library, removed the manuscript from circulation and placed it on closed access. Despite this, Emmanuel Provataris managed to make a partial copy of the manuscript for Muret.⁹⁸ At least three other copies of the manuscript were made, either before the Vatican closed access to the *Codex Vaticanus Graecus* 156 or shortly thereafter.

Because the *Codex Vaticanus Graecus* 156 was inaccessible, the first three printed editions relied on four very faulty copies of the manuscript, only one of which was a direct copy.

⁹⁶ This missing material occurs at Zosimus 5.22.

⁹⁷ Politian was an Italian Humanist who was born at Monte Pulciano in 1454 and died at Florence in 1494. His full name was Angiolo De' Ambrosini Da Monte Pulciano.

⁹⁸ The partial copies made by Emmanuel Provataris are now known as *Codex Vaticanus Graecus* 1206 and 2351.

The next four editions were essentially reprints of these editions. The manuscript was finally taken off the closed access list of the Vatican library during the mid-nineteenth century. Thus only those editions printed since that time are based directly on the manuscript. The first complete edition of the history of Zosimus was printed in a Latin translation by Leunclavius (Johannes Löwenklau) in the year 1576.⁹⁹ The first complete edition of the Greek text was that edited by Friedrich Sylburg, which was printed in the year 1590.¹⁰⁰ A new Greek edition was prepared at Oxford by Thomas Spark and was published in 1679.¹⁰¹ This was followed by the first English translation, which appeared anonymously in 1684.¹⁰² Reitemeier's famous edition, with a copious and critical commentary, came out in 1784.¹⁰³ Another anonymous English translation appeared in the year 1814.¹⁰⁴ During this period there continued to be so much hostility to the work of Zosimus that the editors or translators of the above editions usually felt the need to write apologies for publishing what many still perceived as an anti-Christian work. This hostile attitude may explain why the first English translators of Zosimus decided to publish their work anonymously.

In 1837, Immanuel Bekker produced a new edition of Zosimus for the *Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae*, which included the commentary of Reitemeier.¹⁰⁵ This was followed by the

⁹⁹ Johannes Leunclavius, *Zosimi comitis et exadvocati fisci, Historiae novae Libri VI, numquam hactenus editi: quibus additae sunt historiae Procopii Caesariensis, Agathiae Myrrinaei, Iornandis Alani*, (Basel: Peter Perna, 1576). This volume also contained the historical works of Procopius, Agathius and Jordanes.

¹⁰⁰ Friedrich Sylburg, *Historiae Romanae Scriptores*, 3 vols. (Francofurti: Andreae Wecheli, 1588-1590). The first two books of Zosimus that had previously been published in Greek in 1581 by Stephanus (in his edition of Herodian) were reprinted for this series; q.v. Henricus Stephanus, *Herodiani Histor. Lib. VII* (Geneva: Excudebat Henricus Stephanus, 1581). The Latin translation of Leunclavius was also reprinted in Sylburg's edition.

¹⁰¹ Thomas Spark, *Zosimi Comititis & Exadvocati Fisci, Historiae Novae Libri Sex: Notis Illustrati* (Oxonii: E Theatro Sheldoniano, 1679). In the year 1679 there also appeared a Greek and Latin version edited by Cellarius; q.v. Christophorus Cellarius, *Zosimi, Comititis ex Advocato Fisci, Historia Nova* (Ienae: Sumtu Io. Felic, Bielckii, 1679). This was basically a revision of the editions of Leunclavius and Sylburg.

¹⁰² Anonymous, *The new history of Count Zosimus, sometime advocate of the treasury of the Roman Empire: with the notes of the Oxford edition, in Six Books: to which is prefixed Leunclavius's Apology for the author* (London: Printed for Joseph Hindmarsh, 1684).

¹⁰³ Johann Friedrich Reitemeier, *Zosimi Historiae. Graece et latine recensuit, notis criticis et commentario historico illustravit Io. Frid. Reitemeier* (Leipzig: Weidmanni heredes et Reichium Leipzig, 1784).

¹⁰⁴ Anonymous. *The History of Count Zosimus, sometime Advocate and Chancellor of the Roman Empire: Translated from the original Greek; with the notes of the Oxford edition* (London: W. Green & T. Chaplin, 1814).

¹⁰⁵ Immanuel Bekkeri, *Zosimus / ex recognitione Immanuelis Bekkeri* (Bonn: E. Weber, 1836).

Greek edition of Mendelssohn, which appeared in 1887.¹⁰⁶ Mendelssohn's edition was the first to be based directly on the *Codex Vaticanus Graecus* 156, as the manuscript had finally been made available once again by the Vatican Library in the mid-nineteenth century. In 1971, a new edition of the *Historia Nova* was produced by François Paschoud.¹⁰⁷ Paschoud recognized that Mendelssohn's text of Zosimus was excellent and that a new critical edition was therefore not required. Paschoud's departures from Mendelssohn's text are few; they are mostly minor corrections in matters of orthography. Paschoud has incorporated into the text a few suggestions made by Mendelssohn in his apparatus and introduced a few reasonable emendations of his own. Paschoud's edition is mainly important for its copious commentary in which Paschoud summarizes all of the recent work on Zosimus and draws attention to matters of general importance for historians of the late Roman Empire. Paschoud has also included a complete translation into French. In 1967, a third English translation was made by James Buchanan and Harold Davis.¹⁰⁸ This translation had little in the way of commentary. In 1982, Ronald Ridley produced yet another English translation of the history of Zosimus.¹⁰⁹ This translation has a superior commentary to that of Buchanan, but it still leaves much to be desired. Ridley virtually ignores many important questions surrounding Zosimus' text. The best modern commentary of the *Historia Nova* remains that of Paschoud.

SOURCES

Since Zosimus could not have been a witness to events prior to 450 he had to rely on other sources for the first part of his history. Various theories have been put forward concerning the sources for the *Historia Nova*. Photius, who was the first to inquire into the sources for the *Historia Nova*, believed that Zosimus' main source of information had been the historical work of Eunapius.¹¹⁰ Photius went so far as to assert that Zosimus merely plagiarized Eunapius. The *Historia Nova*, however, covers a much larger time period (from the Trojan War to Alaric's sack

¹⁰⁶ Ludwig Mendelssohn, *Zosimi, comitis et exadvocati fisci historia nova, edidit Ludovicus Mendelssohn* (Leipzig: B. G. Teubneri, 1887).

¹⁰⁷ François Paschoud, *Histoire nouvelle : Zosime; texte établi et traduit par François Paschoud*. 3 vols. (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1971-1979).

¹⁰⁸ James Buchanan, *Zosimus: Historia Nova; the Decline of Rome* (San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 1967).

¹⁰⁹ Ronald T. Ridley, *Zosimus: New History* (Canberra: Australia Association for Byzantine Studies, 1982).

¹¹⁰ Phot. *Bibl. cod.* 98.

of Rome in 410) than the work of Eunapius (which only covered the years 270 to 404) so it is obvious that Zosimus could not have relied solely on Eunapius and must have made use of other sources. Photius, however, was so carried away by his religious zeal that he failed to make an honest assessment of Zosimus' work. For example, Photius hastily concluded that there were two editions of Zosimus when in reality it was really Eunapius who had published two.¹¹¹ The main thrust of Photius' attack is that Zosimus is very much like Eunapius in his slanders against Christian emperors. Because of his religious prejudice, Photius was unable to accurately describe Zosimus' work, as is shown by his careless errors.¹¹² In the centuries that followed, Zosimus' work was largely ignored. It was not until the seventeenth century that Valesius reopened the discussion when he discovered that Zosimus had used the historical work of Olympiodorus for the last part of his history. Valesius came to this conclusion after he noticed similarities with the account of events given in the *Ecclesiastical History* of Sozomen, who is believed to have used the history of Olympiodorus.¹¹³ Since Sozomen's account on the history of the West is very similar to that in Zosimus, Valesius concluded that both authors must have used Olympiodorus. In the eighteenth century, Tillemont also noted that Zosimus must have made use of Olympiodorus for the latter part of his history.¹¹⁴ Reitemeier argued that Zosimus made judicious use of three historical works that, when combined together, would form an almost continuous history up to the year 410, those of Dexippus, Eunapius and Olympiodorus. The historical works of Dexippus extended from the earliest times to 270.¹¹⁵ Eunapius wrote a *Universal History* that

¹¹¹ Eunapius makes it clear in his *Lives of the Sophists* (6.3.8, 6.11.1-6.11.7, 7.1.6, 7.3.4, 7.3.8, 7.6.5, 7.4.10, 8.1.10-8.2.3, 9.1.3, 10.1.1, 10.7.13, 16.1.9, 21.1.4) that he wrote two editions of his historical work, which is commonly known as the *Chronicle after Dexippus*.

¹¹² For example, Photius stated that Zosimus did not abuse Stilicho when in fact he did, q.v. Zosimus 6.13.2. Photius is generally hostile to works that were written by those who were not Orthodox Christians and express (in his mind) the slightest criticism of his religion. For example, see his hostile review of the *Ecclesiastical History* of Philostorg. (Phot. Bibl. cod. 40), an Arian Christian, or his review of the *Chronicle* of Eunapius (Phot. Bibl. cod. 77). Some of the errors made by Photius may be attributed to his carelessness, but the fact that he makes these errors only when discussing the works of those who were not Orthodox Christians suggests that he purposely distorted facts.

¹¹³ Valesius noted this in his commentary on Sozomen (*Hist. Eccl.* 9.11), q.v. Valesius, *Theodoretti et Evagrii*, s. n. 9.11. Valesius' commentary has been reprinted, q.v. Jacques Paul Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus Completus: omnium SS. patrum, doctorum scriptorumque ecclesiasticorum. Series Graeca* (Paris: Migne, 1857-1899), 67:1617 ff.

¹¹⁴ Tillemont, *Histoire des Empereurs*, 5:656

¹¹⁵ Reitemeier, *Zosimi*, xxix-xxx. Reitemeier's preface and commentary have been reprinted, q.v. Barthold Georg Niebuhr, *Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae*, vol. 20 (Bonn, E. Weber, 1897). Dexippus wrote

covered the years between 270 and 404. Olympiodorus wrote an historical work called the *Materials for History* that extended from 407 to the year 425.¹¹⁶

Publius Herennius Dexippus was a Greek rhetorician and historian who lived in Athens, in the third century, during the reigns of Claudius II Gothicus, Tacitus, Aurelian and Probus. He lived until about the year 280. Dexippus was highly regarded by his contemporaries and known for his extensive learning. He held many high offices in Athens and even risked his life to defend the city, in 262, when it was attacked by the Herulian Goths. Dexippus is known to have written three historical works.¹¹⁷ The first of these was a history of Macedonia in four books, which does not seem to have been used by Zosimus. The second work (the *Historical Epitome*) was a chronological history in the form of a chronicle, which narrated events from the mythical ages down to the accession of Claudius II Gothicus in 268 in twelve books. Dexippus constructed a chronological framework using Olympiads and further divided each Olympiad into archon-years.¹¹⁸ This is the work that Zosimus may have used in order to compose the first book of the *Historia Nova*. The third work (the *Scythica*) was a detailed account of the war against the Goths, in which Dexippus had fought.¹¹⁹ This account probably extended from the reign of Decius to that of Aurelian, most likely covering the years 238 to 274.¹²⁰ Zosimus may have also used this account in composing certain portions of the first book of his history. Photius gives a summary of the last two of these works in Codex 82 of his *Bibliotheca*:

Read the *History* of the events that happened after the death of Alexander the Great, by Dexippus, in four books; also his *Historical Epitome*, a chronicle going down to the time of Claudius. Also read his *Scythica*, describing the wars between the Scythians and Romans and other things of note. His style is free from redundancies, massive, and

two historical works: a Universal History to the year 270 and a work called *Sythica*, which was an account of the Gothic invasions from 238 to 270.

¹¹⁶ The works of these three authors (Dexippus, Eunapius and Olympiodorus) are no longer extant; only fragments remain.

¹¹⁷ Photius has preserved a description of these works, q.v. Phot. *Bibl. cod.* 82.

¹¹⁸ Eunap. *Frag.* 1

¹¹⁹ Greek authors were in the habit of calling the Goths by the name of Scythians, q.v. Kazhdan, *Dictionary of Byzantium*, 3:1857-1858; William Smith, *A Dictionary of Greek and Roman Geography* (London: John Murray, 1872), 2:936-945.

¹²⁰ Dexippus also noted the names of the Roman consuls in his chronicle and attempted to synchronize the histories of the Greeks and Romans. This chronological framework was used for the about the last one thousand years of the work, from the period of the first Olympiad to A.D. 270. For the earlier period of his history, Dexippus attempted to reconcile several ancient chronological traditions, q.v. F. Millar, "P. Herennius Dexippus" *Journal of Roman Studies* 59 (1969): 26.

dignified; he might be called a second Thucydides, although he writes more clearly. His characteristics are chiefly shown in his last-mentioned work.¹²¹

The works of Dexippus are no longer extant. A few fragments remain as paraphrases or quotations in the *Historia Augusta*, George Syncellus, and Zonaras, as well as in various Byzantine authors. Whether Zosimus actually used Dexippus (directly or indirectly) or relied on another work or works remains an open question. Zosimus is assumed to have relied on the work of Dexippus because Eunapius (whom Zosimus is known to have used) had written his historical work as a continuation to that of Dexippus. Another reason that Dexippus has been viewed as the Zosimus' source is because his work is the only extensive historical source, in Greek, known to have covered the period up to the time of Aurelian. In any case, this question is of small importance because Zosimus would have made use of Dexippus only for his first book, which is basically a summary of history to the time of Diocletian.¹²²

Eunapius, who was a Greek sophist and historian, was born in Sardis around the year 347. Eunapius wrote a continuation of the history of Dexippus in fourteen books. It began with the death of Claudius II Gothicus, in 270, and carried the history down to the year 404, which was the tenth year of the reign of Arcadius. The historical work of Eunapius, which is known as the *Chronicle after Dexippus*, is no longer extant.¹²³ All we now possess are excerpts preserved in the encyclopedic anthology produced by Constantine Porphyrogenitus, which is conventionally known as the *Excerpta Historica*.¹²⁴ More fragments are preserved in the Byzantine lexicon known as the *Suda*, but these are of less importance since the excerpts in this compilation were made directly from the *Excerpta Historica* and not from the original authors. These remains have been collected and published with an English translation by Roger Blockley.¹²⁵ Zosimus also preserved much of content of Eunapius since he used the text for the major part (from the beginning of the second book to 5.27) of his *Historia Nova*. Eunapius also wrote the *Lives of the*

¹²¹ Freese, *Library of Photius*, 82.

¹²² The fragments of Dexippus have been collected by Niebuhr and Müller, q.v. Barthold Georg Niebuhr, *Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae*, vol. 1 (Bonn, E. Weber, 1828); Carolus Müller, *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*, vol. 3 (Paris, A. Firmin Didot, 1885).

¹²³ The title is preserved by Photius, q.v. Phot. *Bibl. cod.* 77.

¹²⁴ Ursul Phillip Boissevain, *Excerpta Historica jussu Imp. Constantini Porphyrogeniti confecta*, 4 vols. (Berlin: Weidmann, 1903-1910).

¹²⁵ Roger Blockley, *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire* 2 vols. (Liverpool, Great Britain: F. Cairns, 1983).

Sophists, which is still extant. This work contains the biographies of twenty-three philosophers and sophists and is valuable as a source for the history of the fourth century. Eunapius' *Lives of the Sophists* also contains numerous references to his historical work.

Zosimus mentions his third major source, Olympiodorus of Thebes, by name.¹²⁶ Olympiodorus lived sometime in the fifth century, but the exact dates of his life are unknown. He wrote a very detailed history in twenty-two books of the Western Empire from the year 407 to the year 425. Olympiodorus begins his history from about three years from the point at which Eunapius ends, but unlike Eunapius (who tended to center his narrative on events in the East), he focused almost exclusively on events in the western half of the Empire. The original work of Olympiodorus has been lost, but an abridgment has been preserved by Photius.¹²⁷ In addition to this, various fragments survive, mainly in the form of paraphrases or quotations from a variety of Byzantine authors including Philostorgius, Socrates and Sozomen. All the surviving material has been collected and translated into English by Roger Blockley.¹²⁸

In addition to these three authorities, Zosimus consulted a variety of sources, many of whom he quotes by name. As we have noted, he drew the inspiration for his theme from Polybius. He quotes from the Sibylline oracles twice, at one location for the secular games and at another place for Byzantium's destiny.¹²⁹ He also quotes from Homer, Herodotus, Annius Quadratus, Syrianus, Pisander, Longinus, Libanius and Julian.¹³⁰ Since the majority of these works were quite popular in his day, it is quite likely that Zosimus read and studied them, though it is possible that he quoted them at second-hand. There are many sections that do not seem to be derived from Dexippus, Eunapius and Olympiodorus, so it is unlikely that Zosimus simply lifted his allusions to other authors from these works. Zosimus was also greatly influenced by ecclesiastical historians and seems to also have been inspired in part by their propagandist views on the felicity of the Christianized Roman Empire. He seems to have adopted many of the techniques used by these writers. For example, according to Scavone the invented speech is almost nonexistent in Zosimus as a direct result of Eusebius' rejection of them.¹³¹ Various Christian sources, which

¹²⁶ Zos. 5.27.1.

¹²⁷ Phot. *Bibl. cod.* 80.

¹²⁸ Blockley, *Fragmentary Classicising Historians*, 2:2ff.

¹²⁹ Zos. 2.5-2.6, 2.36-2.37.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 4.18.4, 4.20.3, 3.2.4, 3.3.2, 5.27.1, 3.27, 5.29.3, 1.52.8, 4.41.2.

¹³¹ Daniel Scavone, "Zosimus and his Historical Models," *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 11 (1970):

may have influenced Zosimus, will be examined critically in the pages that follow. As a literate person, public official and historian, Zosimus, in all probability, had read other historical works in addition to Dexippus, Eunapius and Olympiodorus. In light of this it seems strange that a number of scholars have been reluctant to believe that Zosimus made use of a wide range of sources.

Modern debates about the sources that Zosimus used began in 1866 with the publication of Rudolph Martin's dissertation. Martin made a detailed comparison of the surviving fragments of various historians with the account of Zosimus.¹³² He concluded that Zosimus made use of only three sources, one after the other, for composing his history. The first of these was the work of Dexippus which, according to Martin, was used from the beginning of the work to 1.46.¹³³ From that point to 5.25, he believed the work of Eunapius had been used. The third source was Olympiodorus, used from 5.26 to the end of the work. Martin believed that Zosimus' references to Polybius, Julian, Syrianus, Herodotus, Olympiodorus and Quadratus were simply lifted from his three main sources. He pointed out that Zosimus tells us (at 3.2 and 3.8) that those readers who wish to know more about the emperor Julian should read Julian's own writings, pointing out that Eunapius says nearly the same thing in one of the surviving fragments (*Fragment 9*). Consequently, Martin concluded that Zosimus did not use any of Julian's works. Martin also argued that when Zosimus tells us a story (at 5.29) about the Argonauts, which he attributes to the poet Pisander, he is really following Olympiodorus. Martin reached this conclusion because Sozomen, who is also believed to have also followed Olympiodorus, also says something similar in his *Ecclesiastical History*.¹³⁴ Martin also scrutinized the areas of the *Historia Nova* in which Zosimus is supposed to have changed his source. Since the first change of source happened in a section of the history that is now lost, he focused on the second transition. In the section where Zosimus is supposed to have switched from using Eunapius to Olympiodorus, Martin pointed out that Zosimus passed over the years 405 to 406 in silence. This is the period between the end of Eunapius' history, which is supposed to have finished in 404 and the start of Olympiodorus' history, which began in the year 407. Martin believed if Zosimus has used other sources he would

64-65.

¹³² Martin, "Fontibus Zosimi," 22.

¹³³ Although Dexippus ended his work with Claudius II Gothicus, he may have included a brief account on Claudius' brother Quintillius (who had a very brief reign) and this would place the end of Zosimus' use of Dexippus at 1.47.

¹³⁴ Sozom. *Hist. Eccl.* 1.6.

have filled in this gap. This, Martin believed, betrayed Zosimus' carelessness. Martin argued that, because Zosimus had not bothered to fill in this gap, he was simply following his three sources slavishly without bothering to do any other research. If Martin had made a more careful examination of the text of the *Historia Nova*, however, he would have come upon passages which seem to suggest that Zosimus actively sought out and incorporated materials from elsewhere.

Mendelssohn agreed with Martin that Zosimus had depended heavily on Eunapius and Olympiodorus, but he argued that Zosimus had supplemented these sources with outside research.¹³⁵ Mendelssohn alleged that Zosimus used a variety of sources for his digressions, for example in his lengthy discussion of the *Ludi Saeculares*.¹³⁶ He also asserted that Zosimus drew the whole of his narrative on Julian's Persian expedition from Magnus of Carrhae.¹³⁷ Mendelssohn pointed out that Martin was wrong to believe that Zosimus and Olympiodorus had both ignored the events of 406 and 407: for example, *Fragment* 12 of Olympiodorus refers to the elevation of Marcus to the imperial throne by the British troops in the year 406, before the seventh consulship of Honorius.¹³⁸ As Chaffin has pointed out, Olympiodorus most likely wrote of events prior to 407 in an introductory chapter that dealt with the career of Stilicho from 395 to 408 before his detailed narrative began with the plot of Olympius in 407-408.¹³⁹ Zosimus clearly refers to events occurring in both 405 and 406. At 4.26, for example, Zosimus describes the invasion of Radagaisus, which happened in the year 405, and at 6.3, Zosimus mentions the incursions of the Vandals, Alani and Suevi, an event that occurred in 406 during the sixth consulship of Arcadius. There are at least two good reasons as to why Zosimus would say little about the years 405 and 406. Perhaps Zosimus believed that nothing else of importance happened in those years or, at least, nothing important enough to be included in his summary of events. Since Zosimus was simply writing an epitome of history that occurred prior to his lifetime, there was no need for him to include every incident in his narrative for this period. Furthermore, we know of little else that happened in those two years (which were not of an ecclesiastical nature)

¹³⁵ Mendelssohn, *Zosimi*, xxxviii ff.

¹³⁶ Zos. 2.1-2.7.

¹³⁷ Mendelssohn, *Zosimi*, xxxviii ff.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 248-249.

¹³⁹ Chaffin, *Olympiodorus of Thebes*, xxxiv.

except for the continuation of disturbances in Isauria in the year 406.¹⁴⁰ Since these devastations were a common occurrence, their omission is of no surprise. Another reasonable explanation is the fact that Zosimus left his work unfinished. Blockley says that:

The marked changes that are noticed when Olympiodorus replaces Eunapius as the main source can be explained by the unfinished and unrevised state of the last part of the history of Zosimus. There are no such jarring discrepancies between the part dependent upon Eunapius and the early part of the first book which is drawn from another source, because here revision was complete.¹⁴¹

Zosimus most probably composed his work by first summarizing what he required from his primary sources. He would then use his supplementary sources to revise and digest the text. The reason that Zosimus did not mention more events for the years 405-406 may simply be that he intended to go back and add details at a later time but was unable to revise his draft or notes for whatever reason.¹⁴²

It is quite apparent, however, that Zosimus did rely heavily on both Eunapius and Olympiodorus. Zosimus focuses on eastern events in sections of his history where he depended on Eunapius. This may explain why he failed to mention Alaric's first invasion of Italy in the years 401-402.¹⁴³ It is also apparent that Zosimus focuses on western events in the section where he depends on Olympiodorus.¹⁴⁴ Zosimus' dependence on these writers, however, has been exaggerated by Martin. As noted, subsequent scholars have suggested various supplementary sources that Zosimus may have used, although recently Paschoud has rejected all these arguments

¹⁴⁰ Henry Fynes Clinton, *Fasti Romani* (Oxford: University Press, 1850), 1:560-566; Roger Blockley, "The Dynasty of Theodosius," in *Cambridge Ancient History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 13:118-125; John Blair *Chronological Tables* (London: H.G. Bohn, 1856), 212.

¹⁴¹ Roger Blockley, "Was the First Book of Zosimus Based on more than Two Sources?" *Byzantion* 50 (1980): 395-396.

¹⁴² Lack of revision will also explain why the revolt in Britain and the elevation of Marcus are first dated to 407 (6.2) and then to 406 (6.3).

¹⁴³ This war was short; Alaric was only able to reach Ravenna before he was swiftly attacked, pursued and defeated at Pollentia. He was forced to agree to a peace treaty and retreated to Illyricum.

¹⁴⁴ The different assessments of Stilicho have also been used as evidence that Zosimus relied heavily on Eunapius and Olympiodorus. Eunapius is known to have presented Stilicho in a very negative way while Olympiodorus seems to have presented him positively. Since Zosimus was in the habit of presenting both the negative and positive qualities of most emperors (he even says positive things about Constantine and Theodosius, something that Eunapius was unable to do) the fact that Zosimus examines both the good and bad in Stilicho only argues for his evenhandedness, q.v. Zos. 5.1, 5.4, 5.34; Eunap. *Frag.* 62; Olymp. *Frag.* 5.34.

and has once again revived the view that Zosimus used three sources exclusively. Paschoud will only concede that Zosimus made a few additions.¹⁴⁵ He believes that these additions consist simply of a few personal comments and opinions that Zosimus expresses in his narrative.¹⁴⁶ But a close examination of the evidence will prove that some of the information contained in Zosimus could not possibly have been in either Eunapius or Olympiodorus. This evidence will be discussed below and will offer proof that Zosimus did not follow these three sources slavishly.

THE FIRST BOOK

We begin with Polybius who seems to have been the inspiration behind the work of Zosimus.¹⁴⁷ There should be no doubt that Zosimus had read Polybius' history, as he was influenced, in many ways, by that historian's ideas.¹⁴⁸ Indeed, Zosimus states that he derived his theme directly from Polybius.¹⁴⁹ Polybius wrote his history to describe how the Romans had quickly gained their empire in only fifty-three years.¹⁵⁰ Zosimus, on the other hand, set out to describe how the Romans had lost their Empire in a comparable period of time. In the same way that Polybius had dealt with Greek history as a prologue to his narrative, Zosimus summarized the important events of Greek and Roman history before beginning his proper narrative, which seems to have begun with Constantine I in his second book.¹⁵¹ Zosimus' inclusion of such events as the Trojan War and the Greco-Persian Wars can be seen as an attempt to write a universal history in the manner of Polybius. Zosimus believed that there was a superhuman force that guided the course of human events, which parallels the guiding force that Polybius believed to have been responsible for Rome's success.¹⁵² At 1.5, Zosimus states his own preference for republican government, reflecting the political philosophy he found in the sixth book of Polybius. Zosimus

¹⁴⁵ Paschoud cites the following passages, which refer to the ruin and barbarization of the Roman Empire, as the work of Zosimus alone: 1.57.1, 1.58.4, 3.32.6, 4.21.3, 4.59.3; Paschoud, *Histoire Nouvelle*, 1:xii.

¹⁴⁶ Paschoud, *Histoire Nouvelle*, 1:xxxiv-lxiii.

¹⁴⁷ Mendelssohn, *Zosimi*, xxxviii.

¹⁴⁸ Paschoud, however, believes that Zosimus may have read little more than Polybius' preface, q.v. François Paschoud, "Influences et échos des conceptions historiographiques de Polybe dans l'Antiquité tardive," *Entretiens sur l'Antiquité Classique* 20 (1973): 303-337.

¹⁴⁹ Zos. 1.1, 1.57, 5.20.

¹⁵⁰ Polybius 6.1.3.

¹⁵¹ Bury believed that Zosimus' narrative proper began with Aurelian, q.v. Gibbon, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 2:538; Reitemeier thought the first four books of Zosimus were an epitome and that the full narrative only began in the fifth book, q.v. Reitemeier, *Zosimi*, xxii.

¹⁵² Polybius 1.4; Zos. 5.41.

also constructed his sentences according to regular laws of hiatus, imitating the style that Polybius used in his *Histories*.¹⁵³

Futhermore, Zosimus makes use of expressions, language and structures that are reminiscent of Herodotus.¹⁵⁴ For example, Zosimus has the emperor Julian leaving Antioch, for his Persian expedition, even after receiving unfavorable omens.¹⁵⁵ Zosimus goes on to tell us that he knows the reason for Julian's departure but says he will not reveal his secret. Herodotus used similar remarks in his work, apparently to add a touch of mystery to his narrative.¹⁵⁶ Some stories that Zosimus relates are very similar to those found in Herodotus. Zosimus' tale of Athena defending Athens from Alaric is comparable to Herodotus' legend of Apollo defending Thebes from the Persians.¹⁵⁷ Zosimus' report of the liberation of Hormisda is similar to a story found in Herodotus about a thief who rescues the body of his brother.¹⁵⁸ Zosimus ends this account by saying: "These things I have narrated exactly as they happened." This statement is analogous to what Herodotus states after relating some Egyptian tales.¹⁵⁹ Zosimus' story about grain falling down from the skies to feed Probus' army can also be seen as an attempt by Zosimus to imitate Herodotus, who went out of his way to make his history entertaining by relating all the miracles and legends he had heard.¹⁶⁰

As stated previously, some scholars have believed that Zosimus exclusively used the works of Dexippus to write his summary of universal history in his first book. The fragments of Dexippus, however, do not offer any convincing evidence of this assertion. Reitemeier suggested that Zosimus used Dexippus because his *Chronicle* and *Scythica* are the only historical works (in Greek) known to have extensively covered the period up to the time of Aurelian.¹⁶¹ Martin attempted to prove this thesis by looking at two works that had connections with histories of Dexippus.¹⁶² Dexippus is supposed to have closely followed Herodian's *History of the Empire*

¹⁵³ Mendelssohn gives a full account of the laws of hiatus which Zosimus adopted, with modifications, from Polybius, q.v. Mendelssohn, *Zosimi*, xxi.

¹⁵⁴ Zosimus cites Herodotus directly (at 4.20.3) in his account of the Huns.

¹⁵⁵ Zos. 3.12.1.

¹⁵⁶ Herodotus 2.123, 2.171.

¹⁵⁷ Zos. 5.6 and Herodotus 8.36-8.39.

¹⁵⁸ Zos. 2.27 and Herodotus 2.121.

¹⁵⁹ Herodotus 2.123.

¹⁶⁰ Zos. 1.67.

¹⁶¹ Reitemeier, *Zosimi*, xxix-xxx.

¹⁶² Martin, "Fontibus Zosimi," 1-20.

from the *Time of Marcus Aurelius* and the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* cites the works of Dexippus several times. It is usually not possible to determine whether the citations to Dexippus refer to his *Chronica* or *Scythica* as most citations simply mention his name.¹⁶³ Martin compared Zosimus to the corresponding sections of Herodian and the citations in the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*, and discovered a number of parallels. The most important was that both the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* and Zosimus make a serious error by asserting that Gordian III was the son of Gordian II, rather than his nephew.¹⁶⁴ Since the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* quote Dexippus as the source of this information, Martin believed this correlation proved that Dexippus was the sole source that Zosimus used for his first book. Boehme concurred with Martin but proposed that another unnamed source was used by Zosimus in addition to the chronicle of Dexippus.¹⁶⁵

Mendelssohn questioned the methods used by Martin as the correlation between the texts may have occurred for a number of reasons.¹⁶⁶ Mendelssohn discovered discrepancies between Zosimus and those authors who used Dexippus (where their use of Dexippus was certain or probable). For example, Zosimus says that Valerian was part of an embassy from Africa whereas the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* relates that Valerian was the *princeps senatus* and therefore greeted the assembly from Africa when they arrived in Rome.¹⁶⁷ Zosimus reports that Maximus and Balbinus were chosen emperors while Gordian I and Gordian II still lived whereas the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* states that they were chosen only after the two Gordians had died.¹⁶⁸ Zosimus reports that the two Gordians were killed in a storm at sea while the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* relates that a storm on land contributed to the defeat and deaths of the two Gordians in Africa.¹⁶⁹ Zosimus is the only source to state that the capture of Antioch by the Persians occurred during the reign of Gallus.¹⁷⁰ For these reasons, Mendelssohn argued that

¹⁶³ Several citations of Dexippus appear in the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* (Gallienus 13, Claudius Gothicus 2, Alexander Severus 49, Maximinus 6-7, Gordians 2, 9.19, Maximus and Babinus 1.15 and Thirty Tyrants 32).

¹⁶⁴ *SHA* Gordian 19.9, 22.4, 23.1 and Zos. 1.16.1. (Herodian gives the correct information at 7.10.7) Other parallels include: *SHA* Gordian 23.6-7 and Zos. 1.17.2; *SHA* Gordian 31.2 and Zos. 1.19.1; *SHA* Gordian 31.2 and Zos. 1.26.1.

¹⁶⁵ Walter Böhme, "Dexippi fragmenta," *Commentationes Philologiae Jenenses* 2 (1883): 13-15.

¹⁶⁶ Mendelssohn, *Zosimi*, xxxiii-xxxiv.

¹⁶⁷ Zos. 1.14.1-1.14.2; *SHA* Maximus 32.2, Gordians 9.7.

¹⁶⁸ Zos. 1.14.1-1.14.3; *SHA* Gordians 10.1.

¹⁶⁹ Zos. 1.16.1; *SHA* Gordians 16.2.

¹⁷⁰ Zos. 1.27.2; George Syncellus and Zonaras, who both used Dexippus, say that the fall of Antioch occurred immediately after the capture of Valerian, q.v. Syncellus 715-716; Zonaras 12.23.

Zosimus could not have used Dexippus directly.¹⁷¹ Mendelssohn asserted that Zosimus must have used some unknown source that had made use of Dexippus' *Scythia*, and that the many discrepancies between the text of Zosimus and the *Chronica* of Dexippus discounted the latter as a source. In 1905, Graebner argued that Zosimus had not used Dexippus at all because there was really no hard evidence to prove such a theory.¹⁷² In 1909, Bury asserted that Zosimus probably used Dexippus indirectly for his account of the Gothic invasions as well as the reign of Claudius.¹⁷³ Many other scholars assert that if Zosimus did make any use of the works of Dexippus, he could only have done so indirectly.¹⁷⁴ Since so little remains of Dexippus, scholars may never be entirely certain about whether Zosimus did in fact make use of him.¹⁷⁵ Nevertheless Dexippus remains the most likely source about which we are informed.

Blockley has made a careful study of the first book of Zosimus and believes that Zosimus used six different sources in composing this book.¹⁷⁶ Each of these six distinguishable elements differed in its focus, scale or approach or a combination of these. Blockley summarized the sources of the first book as follows:

- A. 1-5: Introduction,
- A. 6.1-11.1: Brief survey of the Roman emperors to Elagabalus
- B. 11.2-19.2: Survey of emperors to beginning of Philip's reign.
- C. 20.1-26.2: Wars with Germans in Balkans and the East.
- C. 27: Prospective Summary Chapter, perhaps from a Preface.

¹⁷¹ In 1902, Rappaport dismissed these discrepancies and argued that they were basically errors committed by Zosimus, q.v. B. Rappaport, "Hat Zosimus I, c. 1-46 die Chronik des Dexippus benutzt?" *Kilo* (1902): 427-442.

¹⁷² F. Graebner, "Eine Zosimusquelle" *Byantinische Zeitschrift* 14 (1905): 87 ff.

¹⁷³ Gibbon, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 1:478.

¹⁷⁴ Otto Seeck, "Die Entstehungszeit der Historia Augusta," *Jahrbücher für classische Philologie*. 141 (1890): 638; E. Schwartz, "Zosimos," in *Real Encyclopädie der Classischen Altertumswissenschaft* (Stuttgart: A. Druckenmüller, 1903), 5:291-292; Norman Baynes, "Literary Authorities," in *Cambridge Ancient History* (Cambridge: University Press, 1939), 12:711; Andreas Alföldi, "Sources for the Gothic Invasions of the Years 260-270," in *Cambridge Ancient History* (Cambridge: University Press, 1939), 12:721-723; Timothy D. Barnes, "Some Persons in the Historia Augusta," *Phoenix* 26 (1972): 169. Baker attempted to make a case for Zosimus' use of Dexippus by arguing that errors supposedly made by Zosimus or other authors that used Dexippus accounted for the discrepancies in the texts. His arguments are unconvincing and are simply conjectural, q.v. Aaron Baker, "Eunapius and Zosimus: Problems of Chronology" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Brown University, 1987), 52 ff.

¹⁷⁵ The surviving materials were collected and published by Müller, q.v. Carolus Müller, *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*, vol. 3 (Paris: Didot, 1885).

¹⁷⁶ Blockley, "First Book of Zosimus," 393-403.

- C. 28.1-35.3: Wars with the Germans from revolt of Aemilianus to reign of Valerian.
- B. 36.1-41.1: Survey of the emperors from Valerian to the death of Aureolus.
- C. 42-43: Wars with the Germans during the reign of Claudius II.
- D. 44: Palmyrene Invasion of Egypt.
- C. 45-46: Wars with the Germans during the reign of Claudius II.
- B. 47: Notice on Quintillus.
- C. 48: Wars with the Germans in the reign of Aurelian.
- B. 49: Notice of Aurelian's activities as emperor.
- D. 50.1-58.3 (Except 57.1): Aurelian's first Palmyrene campaign.¹⁷⁷
- A. 57.1 and 58.4-59.1: Causes of Roman Decline.
- D. 59.1-61.1: Destruction of Palmyra.
- B. 61.2-67.2: Survey of Emperors from Aurelian to Probus.
- E. 67.3-68.3: Wars with the Germans in the West during the reign of Probus.
- F. 69-70: Siege and Death of Isaurian brigand Lydius.
- B. 71: Notice on Probus' activities as emperor and his death.

According to Blockley, the first elements, which are marked "A," were written by Zosimus himself, without any reference to a specific source. Blockley contends that all the information contained in these passages could come from an elementary knowledge of Roman history.¹⁷⁸ The second elements, marked "B," are based on a chronological survey of Roman history, which focused on the emperors. Blockley argues that this survey was of eastern origin as it ignores the German wars of the West and is not hostile to the emperor Gallienus, in contrast to the western senatorial tradition. This survey is also marked by a hostile attitude to Valerian and a friendly one towards Zenobia. Blockley noted that there were many correspondences between this survey and both the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* and the *Compendium Historiarum* of George Cedrenus. The fact that both of these sources use Dexippus suggests that one of the sources behind the survey used by Zosimus was the *Chronicle* of Dexippus. That the *Chronicle* of Dexippus was not Zosimus' immediate source is revealed by the fact that these parallels continue beyond the reign of Claudius II, where Dexippus' account ended. The continuance of parallels with the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* and Zonaras continues into the reigns of Aurelian and Probus. These accounts seem to all be based on some lost work which used the history of Dexippus. These third elements, marked "C," come from a detailed full-scale monograph on the wars between the Romans and

¹⁷⁷ At 1.56.2, Zosimus refers to the works of Longinus in a manner that indicates he may have read his works.

¹⁷⁸ Blockley admits the possibility that 1.7.2-1.11.1 might have been taken from a brief survey of emperors, q.v. Blockley, "First Book of Zosimus," 398.

Germans. The account is of eastern origin because it focuses almost entirely on events in the Balkans and the East. Blockley believes that this material may have come from Dexippus' *Scythica* directly or through an intermediate source that had used the *Scythica*. The fourth elements, marked "D," are from a full-scale account of Aurelian's wars in the East with Palmyra. This source is unique in preserving many details not found in any other surviving source. The fifth element, which is marked "E," is from an account of Probus' wars against the Germans in the West. The sixth element, which is marked "F," is based on a detailed account of Probus' campaign in Isauria, against a brigand called Lydius. Blockley argues that if Zosimus had used only one or two sources for his first book, the proportions and treatment of the material would not have varied so widely. Blockley asserts that these variations arose from Zosimus' attempt to summarize and condense his sources. Blockley argues that, in composing his first book, Zosimus first used a framework survey of Roman history, into which he inserted an account of the German wars in the East. When this account ended, during Aurelian's reign, Zosimus continued expanding his basic historical survey by using material from various sources.

As mentioned previously, a quaternion of eight leaves is missing at the end of the first book and the start of the second book. Zosimus' account abruptly ends at 1.71.4 in the middle of a sentence. To cover this lacuna, *Fragments* 162 and 163 of the *Chronicle* of John of Antioch are often printed as chapters 72 and 73 of Zosimus' first book. Blockley is confident that *Fragment* 163 is from Zosimus since it comes from the *Excerpta De Insidiis*, which contains a number of other direct excerpts from Zosimus.¹⁷⁹ Blockley does not believe that *Fragment* 162 is from Zosimus, though this fragment has a certain overlapping of remarks with *Fragment* 163. It is from the *Excerpta De Virtutibus Et Vitilis*, which does not have any direct excerpts from Zosimus' first book, making it unlikely that this fragment came from the *Historia Nova* directly.

BOOKS TWO TO FIVE

As previously stated, Eunapius is usually considered to be the historian on which Zosimus relied on most heavily for his history. Eunapius was born sometime in years 345-349 in

¹⁷⁹ Blockley, "First Book of Zosimus," 397.

the city of Sardis, which was the provincial capital of Lydia in Asia Minor.¹⁸⁰ Eunapius apparently spent most of his life at Sardis. He studied there under the sophist Chrysanthius, who was a relative by marriage.¹⁸¹ Around the age of fifteen or sixteen, Eunapius sailed to Athens to study epideictic rhetoric for five years under the Christian sophist Prohaeresius, and there he was initiated into the Eleusinian mysteries.¹⁸² After his stay at Athens, Eunapius considered a trip to Egypt, but his parents compelled him to come home.¹⁸³ At the age of nineteen or twenty, around the years 366-369, he returned back to his home in Sardis where he spent his time teaching rhetoric and studying philosophy with Chrysanthius.¹⁸⁴ Eunapius apparently spent the remainder of his life teaching and writing in Sardis.¹⁸⁵ He is also known to have studied medicine and became quite skilled in the medical art.¹⁸⁶ The physician Oribasius, a confidant of the emperor Julian, wrote a work in four books on medicine, which he dedicated to Eunapius.¹⁸⁷

Eunapius was the author of two works, both of which were apparently written at the request of eastern intellectuals.¹⁸⁸ The *Lives of the Sophists* was composed at the request of his teacher Chrysanthius.¹⁸⁹ This work is important as it provides some cross-references to the Eunapius' other work, the *Universal History* (also known as the *Chronicle after Dexippus*), which is no longer extant.¹⁹⁰ The latter work was written at the request of Oribasius, who made his memoirs of Julian's military expeditions available to Eunapius.¹⁹¹ It is not known whether Eunapius ever pursued a public career. He died sometime after the year 414 since his history

¹⁸⁰ The exact chronology of Eunapius' life is unknown and has been debated over by various scholars for the last century. I have given the highest and lowest dates that have been proposed. For a summary of the different opinions regarding the chronology of Eunapius' life see: Baker, "Eunapius and Zosimus," 3 ff.

¹⁸¹ Eunap. *VS* 477; Chrysanthius married a cousin of Eunapius.

¹⁸² Eunap. *VS* 475, 485.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 493.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 461.

¹⁸⁵ Eunapius witnessed the death of Festus (author of the *Breviarium*) in Smyrna in 380 but there is otherwise no evidence of his leaving Sardis as an adult, q.v. Eunap. *VS* 481.

¹⁸⁶ Eunap. *VS* 504-505.

¹⁸⁷ This work is still extant and is entitled *Libri Ad Eunapium*.

¹⁸⁸ Eunap. *Frag.* 1.

¹⁸⁹ Eunap. *VS* 500.

¹⁹⁰ The exact title of the work is unknown. Photius calls it the *History After Dexippus*, q.v. Phot., *Bibl. cod.* 77.

¹⁹¹ Eunap. *Frag.* 15.

alludes to the empress Pulcheria, who gained that title on 4 July 414.¹⁹²

Photius claimed that the *Universal History* of Eunapius was extensively used by Zosimus in his history. This *Universal History* covered events from the year 270, precisely where Dexippus' *Chronicle* ended, and continued that history up to the year 404.¹⁹³ Although the work is lost, we have three sources of information with which to reconstruct the text: fragments from the history (which have been preserved in two anthological works), paraphrases from historians who used his work and a description of the whole work given by Photius in his *Bibliotheca*. The most important of the fragments are the passages preserved in two volumes of the *Excerpta Historica*, also known as the *Historica Constantini Porphyrogeniti*. This work was a vast collection of excerpts from many important historians grouped into fifty-three volumes, each of these dealing with a certain subject or topic.¹⁹⁴ These collections of excerpts, from various historians, were compiled during the reign of the Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, who reigned from 913 to 959. The purpose of this vast work was to use the experience of the past for moral and political education. Only one of these volumes, the *Excerpta De Legationibus Romanorum Ad Gentes* (*Embassies of the Romans to Foreign Peoples*), survives complete. Four more volumes are partially extant. These are the *Excerpta De Insidiis* (*Conspiracies*), *Excerpta De Virtutibus Et Vitibus* (*Virtue and Vice*), *Excerpta De Legationibus Gentium Ad Romanos* (*Embassies of Foreign Peoples to the Romans*), and the *Excerpta De Sententiis* (*Sentiments*). Only two of these four volumes contain fragments of Eunapius: the *Excerpta De Sententiis* and the *Excerpta De Legationibus Gentium Ad Romanos*. The *Excerpta De Sententiis* preserves eighty-two fragments of Eunapius' history. As the title suggests, these are a collection of passages of an anecdotal and moralizing nature. The bulk of the surviving Eunapiian material is of this kind. The *Excerpta De Legationibus* preserves seven more fragments. These passages have a military and political orientation, dealing mostly with embassies. The passages from both of these collections are clearly identified by the editors as coming from the second edition of Eunapius'

¹⁹² Eunap. *Frag.* 87; Pulcheria became empress in 414, was exiled in 441 and was again proclaimed Augusta in 450, holding that title until her death in 453. Paschoud believes that this fragment is referring to the year 421, q.v. François Paschoud, *Cinq études sur Zosime* (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1975), 172-175.

¹⁹³ The main narration of events ended with the year 404 but there were allusions to events that occurred after that year, e.g. Fragment 72.1. Baldini believed that Eunapius intended to carry his historical narrative to the year 410 but was prevented from so doing by death, q.v. Antonio Baldini, *Ricerche Sulla Storia Di Eunapio Di Sardi* (Bologna: C.L.U.E.B., 1984), 13 ff.

¹⁹⁴ Kazhdan, *Dictionary of Byzantium*, 2:767.

history. Fragments have also been preserved in the *Suda*. This work preserves over fifty fragments of Eunapius that are expressly ascribed to Eunapius by name. Many more anonymous passages in the *Suda* have been attributed to Eunapius on the basis of verbal parallels with known fragments of Eunapius and parallels with authors who are known to have used Eunapius. The majority of excerpts from the *Suda* are very short, making it exceedingly difficult to ascertain where the fragments originally stood in Eunapius' work. Since many of these excerpts do not even mention people or events, it is hard to determine to what many of them even refer. The next important source for determining the original text of Eunapius is the *Historia Nova* of Zosimus. There are also a number of other writers who drew on the history of Eunapius. These include the historical works of Peter the Patrician, John of Antioch, Philostorgius, Sozomen, Socrates and Zonaras as well as the anonymous work known as the *Epitome De Caesaribus*.¹⁹⁵ These works contain summaries and cross references to what Eunapius essentially stated in his *Universal History*.

It has been common for many scholars to take the fragments of Eunapius as accurate excerpts of what Eunapius actually wrote.¹⁹⁶ It must be made clear, however, that the fragments that we possess of Eunapius are not verbatim quotations. The fragments we possess from the *Excerpta Historica*, in many cases, less accurately transmit the work of Eunapius than do the texts of historians and writers who directly made use of *Universal History*. The degree to which the compilers of the *Excerpta Historica* changed the text of Eunapius can be inferred by directly comparing the excerpts of those authors who are still extant with the surviving texts of these same authors. Studies by Zosel and Brunt have shown that the excerpts cannot be trusted to give direct quotations from their sources.¹⁹⁷ The excerptors not only made many careless mistakes but also made deliberate changes in the text. For example, they often changed the beginning of a passage by writing a summary paraphrase. They also closed excerpts arbitrarily and abruptly once reaching the point where the passage no longer warranted inclusion under the heading of the volume. Sometimes the excerptors simply summarized their source while at other times they may have conflated several distinct passages. The excerptors were so careless that they even included

¹⁹⁵ For a full discussion of these, vide Blockley, *Fragmentary Classicising Historians*, 1:97-100.

¹⁹⁶ Examples of this will be detailed below.

¹⁹⁷ Otto Zosel, "De excerptis historicis Constantini Porphyrogentii iussu confectis quaestiones Herodoteae, Thucydideae. Xenophontae" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Griefswald, 1913), 10 ff.; P.A. Brunt, "On Historical Fragments and Epitomes," *Classical Quarterly* 31 (1980): 477-494.

an assortment of scholia, apparently found in their exemplars, probably without even realizing that they were copying something not present in the original text. The same passage was often cited in different sections of the *Excerpta Historica*, and often these passages have a number of key differences. These facts indicate the degree of independence and carelessness with which the compilers of the *Excerpta Historica* worked.¹⁹⁸ This of course means that attempts to use the fragments in order to reconstruct relationships between Eunapius and other authors can be misleading, especially in the case of a short fragment. As Brunt notes: "It is evident that the longer an excerpt is, the better we can discern and evaluate the character of the historian's writing."¹⁹⁹

The fragments preserved in the *Suda* are even less reliable. The compiler of the *Suda* did not look up any original texts. De Boor has demonstrated that the excerpts in the *Suda* were almost all taken from the various volumes of the *Excerpta Historica*, which, as we have just noted, are in themselves problematic.²⁰⁰ Because the quotations from the *Suda* are at least twice removed from their original source, they seldom are completely accurate quotations of the original words of the author.²⁰¹ This should serve as a warning against making too much of the material in the *Suda*. All of the fragments of Eunapius should therefore be used with extreme caution as the text they preserve might well be very different from what Eunapius actually wrote. As we noted before, many of the fragments in the *Suda* are not attributed by name to their authors. Fragments attributed to Eunapius on merely stylistic grounds or other conjectural reasons could just as easily belong to another author. The carelessness of the compiler of the *Suda* also means that fragments may have been ascribed in error.

Since the historical work of Eunapius is now lost, Photius' summary of the work has become the starting point for any investigation on the nature of his original work. In the *Bibliotheca* we find the following in Codex 77:

¹⁹⁸ Compare *Exc. De Legationibus* 7 with *Exc. De Sententiis* 58; although they quote the same passage of Eunapius the "quotations" differ in a number of details.

¹⁹⁹ Brunt, "Historical Fragments and Epitomes," 484.

²⁰⁰ Carl Gotthard de De Boor, "Suidas und die Konstantinische Excerptsammlung," *Byantinische Zeitschrift* 21 (1912): 393-424.

²⁰¹ In many cases, the *Suda* does not even give accurate quotations from the *Excerpta Historica*, q.v. Brunt, "Historical Fragments and Epitomes," 485.

Read the new edition of the continuation of the *Chronicle* of Dexippus by Eunapius, in fourteen books. It begins with the reign of Claudius [II] Caesar, when the history of Dexippus ends, and goes down to the time of Honorius and Arcadius, the sons of Theodosius. The work actually ends at the time when Arsacius, after the banishment of John Chrysostom, was raised to the archbishopric of Constantinople, and the wife of Arcadius died of a miscarriage. This Eunapius was a native of Sardis in Lydia, and an impious heathen. He slanders and abuses in every way and without restraint all who have adorned the Empire by their piety, especially Constantine the Great; on the other hand, he extols the impious, above all Julian the Apostate. Indeed, it almost seems as if the work was written as an elaborate panegyric upon him. His style is elegant, if one cuts out terms and expressions such as "fowl-like," "more deer-like," "more swine-like," "hawk-like," "crow-like," "ape-like," "a tear like a river," and so on, which vitiate and debase the nobility of the rest of the language. He also makes use of figures of speech capriciously, a fault which the rule of historical writing forbids, but in general his forcible style combined with urbanity palliates the offence. His method of composition, his clearness and his use of periods are exactly suited, and appropriate to historical narrative; sometimes, however, the style is wordy with a tendency towards forensic rather than historical language. In construction he introduces numerous innovations, but not so as to cause unpleasantness nor to afford an excuse for attacking his methods. He wrote two volumes, covering the same period. In the first, he bespatters with abuse the pure faith of us Christians, glorifies the heathen superstition, and attacks many pious emperors. In the second volume, which he calls a "new edition," he has cut out the insults and brutal abuse which he had showered upon Christian piety, and, having connected the rest of the body of the work, calls it, as we have said, a "new edition," although it still shows considerable traces of the original frenzy. We have come across old copies of both editions; both in separate volumes and combined, and, having read both, are in a position to estimate the difference. The result is that in the new edition many passages, owing to the omissions, are mutilated and obscure, although generally the author shows a great regard for clearness. Somehow or other in this second edition he has not connected the narrative with due regard to the omissions, and so has spoiled the meaning.²⁰²

Photius is our only source to report that the *Universal History* was divided into fourteen books and that it covered the period from the reign of Claudius II in 270 to the death of Eudoxia in 404. As can be seen above, Photius is clearly hostile to a work he perceives as being prejudiced to Christians. Consequently, his evaluation of the work should be used cautiously. We know that Photius made numerous errors in his work, and was especially prone to exaggeration when a work was written by a Pagan or a non-Orthodox Christian.²⁰³ Treadgold says of Photius' book

²⁰² Freese, *Library of Photius*, 77.

²⁰³ For example, Photius preserves a summary of the ecclesiastical historian Philostorgius (cod. 40), who happened to an adherent of the Arian form of Christianity. Photius describes the work in a most injudicious and prejudiced manner, beginning his extracts by denouncing the writer as an "impious wretch" and an

descriptions that “there are many imprecisions in the titles and the authors’ names, a number of outright errors and blank spaces, and never any specific information such as numbers.”²⁰⁴ We know of numerous errors that Photius committed and there must doubtless be others which we are not now able to detect. One example is Photius’ statement that Zosimus followed Eunapius slavishly when we know he used Olympiodorus for the last part of his work.²⁰⁵ Another is Photius’ report that Eunapius’ history ended in 404 when a fragment of Eunapius is preserved which takes place while Pulcheria was Augusta (414 to 453).²⁰⁶ Photius also gives the wrong number of books for three works that he describes.²⁰⁷ It is clear that whenever Photius is dealing with writers who are not Orthodox Christians his summaries must be used with extreme caution.²⁰⁸ Treadgold has pointed out that Photius greatly admired John Chrysostom and that the *Bibliotheca* describes more works by Chrysostom than by any other writer.²⁰⁹ It is likely that Photius read and reviewed the works of Eunapius and Zosimus only because they dealt with John Chrysostom. If that is the case, Photius was unlikely to pay much attention to accuracy in his descriptions of both of these writers because they both presented Chrysostom in a negative manner.

The fragments of Eunapius fortunately preserve for us two of the original prefaces written for his work. In these prefaces, Eunapius specifically states his goals and objectives. In *Fragment 1*, Eunapius informs us how “the most important of the benefits of history is that concisely and in a short space of time we can become familiar with many, indeed a countless number, of facts and, through a knowledge of past events, gain the experience of old age while

“impudent liar.” Photius says that Philostorgius is an unreliable writer who condemns Orthodox Christians and praises Arian heretics. Bidez has pointed out that this is a deliberate fabrication as Philostorgius not only praised many Orthodox Christians, but also condemned many heretics, q.v. Joseph Bidez, “L’Historien Philostorge,” *Mélanges d’histoire offerts à Henri Pirenne* 1 (1926): 29.

²⁰⁴ Warren Treadgold, *The Nature of the Bibliotheca of Photius* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies, 1980), 83.

²⁰⁵ Phot. *Bibl. cod.* 98.

²⁰⁶ Eunap. *Frag.* 72.1; Pulcheria became Augusta on 4 July 414.

²⁰⁷ Photius says (*Bibl. cod.* 46) Theodoret’s *Eranistes* has three books but then describes four. Photius also reports (*Bibl. cod.* 190) that the *New History* of Ptolemy Chennus has six books but then gives excerpts from seven books. Photius also says (*Bibl. cod.* 200) that the work of Mark the Monk contained eight books but then goes on to describe nine.

²⁰⁸ For more on Photius’ errors see Treadgold’s chapter on “Errors and Omissions” in: Treadgold, *Nature of the Bibliotheca of Photius*, 67-80.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 108-19.

still young, so that we know what is to be avoided and what sought after.”²¹⁰ Eunapius rejects any concern over chronology, believing that chronological accuracy is unobtainable and contributes nothing towards the moral edification of readers. He criticizes Dexippus and other historians who used an annalistic approach for being overly concerned with dates. In order to bring out moral lessons, Eunapius filled his history with rhetorical digressions, in which he passed judgments on individuals and their actions, praising those whom he thought should be emulated and rejecting those whom he considered to be contemptible. Eunapius believed that character was a fixed quality that may be revealed in actions but does not change, and attempted to explain human behavior in terms of natural law.²¹¹ When he had scanty information on a person, he often resorted to presenting stock behavioral patterns and personality types to draw his character and create a psychological portrait.²¹² Eunapius cared little for historical accuracy and twisted historical facts to draw moral lessons for his readers.²¹³ His rejection of accurate chronology led him to organize his material topically around different individuals in a manner similar to that found in his *Lives of the Sophists*.²¹⁴ This arrangement led him to often repeat material that had been previously covered, in an attempt to keep the narrative strictly arranged around individuals.²¹⁵ In *Fragment 8*, Eunapius indicates that the life of Julian is the centerpiece and focus of his work.²¹⁶ This is probably why Photius remarked that the history of Eunapius was a panegyric of Julian.²¹⁷ Eunapius is highly critical of Christianity and has little to say that is positive about Christians. This is understandable considering that the Roman government was

²¹⁰ Eunap. *Frag.* 1.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 11, 33.

²¹² *Ibid.*, 48, 57.

²¹³ According to Sacks, Eunapius alters the story of Theodorus who was an administrator of Antioch during the reign of Valens. Theodorus was implicated, along with a number of people, in a plot to overthrow the emperor Valens. While Ammianus believes (30.1.5-30.2.21) he was an innocent victim, Eunapius presents Theodorus (*Frag.* 38) as a good man gone bad who had been corrupted by the love of power. Eunapius also alters the story of Tatianus, the praetorian prefect of the Eastern Empire in Theodosius' reign, who was accused of wrongdoing. The *Theodosian Code* gives evidence (9.39.9) that Tatianus was guilty of extorting unlawful taxes in order to fill his own purse while Eunapius portrays him (*Frag.* 59) as an innocent victim in order to dramatize his great downfall, which was a direct result of his succumbing to flattery. For a more detailed discussion of Eunapius' method of presentation, q.v. Kenneth Sacks, "The Meaning of Eunapius' History," *History and Theory* 25 (1986): 58-63.

²¹⁴ Eunapius makes references to sections of his history dealing with the life of Julian (*VS* 6.3.8, 7.1.6, 7.3.8, 7.4.10, 9.1.3, 16.1.9) and Constantine (*VS* 6.3.8).

²¹⁵ Eunap. *VS* 485.

²¹⁶ Eunapius even claims (*Frag.* 1) that Julian was worshipped as a god by all men.

²¹⁷ Phot. *Bibl. cod.* 77.

moving steadily towards the total suppression of non-Christian religions during his lifetime. Unlike other Pagan historians who generally maintained a balanced approach, Eunapius completely lets loose with his assault on Christianity.²¹⁸ His general analysis of events was therefore one-sided and simplistic in comparison with other secular historians. For example, Eunapius sees Constantine and Theodosius I as completely evil whereas Zosimus has many good things to say about them.²¹⁹ Eunapius also paid too much credence to what his fellow sophists and intellectuals had to say and thus his works reflect many of the attitudes of his circle. Eunapius also has a tendency to attribute to intellectuals a greater role in affairs of the state than may have been the case in reality.²²⁰ He is very provincial in his attitudes, reflecting the disdain that many of his fellow Lydians probably felt about Rome and Constantinople, as well as westerners and barbarians in general.²²¹

Eunapius informs us that he used both written authorities and oral traditions, in the part of his historical work that dealt with persons and events before his generation.²²² For the earlier part of his history (i.e. that dealing with the period before Julian), Eunapius seems to have gone out of his way to present events in an unbiased manner, but does not mention any of his sources by name for the period before Julian. When Eunapius reached the time of Julian, he began to use the accounts of contemporaries and eyewitnesses, especially those of his friend Oribasius. Eunapius began to use his own personal observations only for the period after Julian's death. A preface marked the accession of Jovian in which Eunapius states that he will now rely on his own observations.²²³ Although Eunapius informs us that he plans to tell only the truth about the contemporary events which occurred in his own time, his approach is quite different.²²⁴ In this portion of his history, from around 362 onward, Eunapius becomes critical of his sources and at

²¹⁸ Ironically, Eunapius may have imbibed this intolerant attitude, which did not characterize the true spirit of Paganism, from his teacher Prohaeresius, who was a Christian.

²¹⁹ Compare the following passages: Eunap. *VS* 6.2.7-6.2.8 and Zos. 2.30.1-2.35.1; Eunap. *VS* 6.1.5 and Zos. 2.29.1; Eunap. *Frag.* 48, 49 and Zos. 4.24.3. A detailed comparison of the differences between Zosimus and Eunapius will follow below.

²²⁰ For example, Eunapius says that Oribasius was responsible for making Julian emperor (*Frag.* 21.2) and later overemphasizes the role of the sophist Eustathius on the embassy that Constantius sent to the Persians (*VS* 6.5.3-6.5.9).

²²¹ Eunap. *VS* 462, 463, 479, 483, 492, 493.

²²² Eunap. *Frag.* 30. This is reaffirmed elsewhere in Eunapius, q.v. *VS* 456.

²²³ Eunap. *Frag.* 30.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, 30.

times exhibits an open hostility.²²⁵ Eunapius' intellectual and class biases became increasing dominant (in the latter part of his work) in his evaluation of contemporary events. This is especially evident by the large and unrealistic role sophists and philosophers play in his historical work. Eunapius reports that Oribasius not only chastised Julian, who acknowledged the accuracy of his advice, but that Oribasius actually was responsible for making Julian emperor.²²⁶ Eunapius' admired and respected Oribasius to such a degree that he accepted uncritically what Oribasius had written in his memoirs, and thus his presentation is naturally distorted.²²⁷ Eunapius seems to have written his work for a specific audience, that is, the circle of Pagan intellectuals headed by Chrysanthius, of which he was a member. Eunapius' unquestioning acceptance of the testimony of Chrysanthius and his circle led him to write a prejudiced account which would have little mass appeal outside of the small group of intellectuals who shared his views.²²⁸

Photius reports that he read two different editions of the history of Eunapius. During his day, both editions were apparently still in circulation and Photius claims to have even seen copies that had both editions bound together in one codex.²²⁹ The nature of these two editions has been the cause of considerable debate among scholars. Photius asserts that the second edition was created to remove the extensive insults and abuse hurled at Christians in the first edition. He also indicates that this revision was carelessly done, making the second edition difficult to read. The revision seems to have characterized by little more than the removal of the offending passages from the text, leaving gaps in the text. Since the *Lives of the Sophists* contain so many bitter statements about Christians, it is difficult to explain why Eunapius should have displayed any modifications of his feelings in the second edition of his history (if, indeed, the work can be attributed to him).²³⁰

Niebuhr believed that the second edition was produced, not by Eunapius, but by a late

²²⁵ Ibid., 66.1.

²²⁶ Ibid., 28.2; Eunap. VS 498.

²²⁷ The fact that Oribasius goes unmentioned in the writings of Ammianus, Libanius and even Julian himself discloses the extent to which Eunapius exaggerated his importance.

²²⁸ Thomas Banchich, "Historical Fragments of Eunapius" (Ph.D. Dissertation, State University of New York, 1985), 114 ff.

²²⁹ Phot. Bibl. cod. 77.

²³⁰ For example, Eunapius bitterly speaks about the monks of Alexandria and Canobus in 391 and even charges them with helping Alaric when he invaded Greece, q.v. Eunap. VS 472, 476.

editor whom he called an *indoctus amanuensis*.²³¹ Niebuhr argued that, at some period between the times of Eunapius and Photius, intolerance of Paganism had grown to such an extent that it became necessary to censor existing books and reissue them in expurgated editions. The careless work of an ignorant editor, who removed especially offensive anti-Christian passages, would explain why the work was hard for Photius to understand. Müller accepted Niebuhr's theory, but did not believe that the second edition of Eunapius' work was the work of this *indoctus amanuensis*. Müller pointed out that Eunapius refers to the first edition of his historical work in the *Lives of the Sophists*.²³² In one passage Eunapius informs us that he hopes to include an account of the death of the sophist Hilarius, who died in the year 396 at the hands of the Goths (during Alaric's invasion), in his history.²³³ Eunapius also refers his readers to his historical work for further information on events, which Müller believed all occurred before the year 395.²³⁴ This led Müller to the conviction that the first edition of the history was published sometime before 405, which was the date he believed the *Lives of the Sophists* to have been published. This first edition dealt with events from the years 270 to 395. Eunapius began work on a second edition, after 414, which was left incomplete at his death. Müller believed that this second edition was later edited by Niebuhr's *indoctus amanuensis*.

De Boor, ignoring the arguments of Müller, reverted back to the belief of Niebuhr that Eunapius had not written the second edition of the history.²³⁵ De Boor, however, offered a different explanation as to how it was produced.²³⁶ He maintained that a publisher of a universal history, who used the historical works of Priscus and Eunapius as his source, was responsible for making alterations in the text of Eunapius and thus created the second edition that was read by Photius. De Boor came to this conclusion after reading a note that introduced the text of the first fragment of Eunapius in the *Excerpta De Sententiis*. This note states that the writer had placed Eunapius after Priscus, and not in chronological order, because a certain book owner had taken a long time in allowing him access to a copy of Eunapius. Since the passages of the *Excerpta De*

²³¹ Niebuhr, *Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae*, 1:xix.

²³² Müller, *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*, 4:8 ff.

²³³ Eunap. *VS* 482.

²³⁴ Müller, *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*, 4:8 ff; Eunap. *VS* 464, 472, 473, 476, 478, 480, 482, 483, 485, 493, 495, 498.

²³⁵ C. De Boor, "Die νέα ἑκδοσις des Eunapios," *Rheinisches Museum* 47 (1892): 321 ff.

²³⁶ Boissevain, *Excerpta Historica*, 4:71.

Sententiis are not in any chronological order, De Boor maintained that the excerptors unknowingly copied this note from the new edition of Eunapius without realizing it was not written by Eunapius.²³⁷ Vollebregt, who also followed Niebuhr, offered a simpler suggestion. He argued that the historical work of Eunapius was rearranged by an editor to present its historical data in a more regular systematic fashion, with a severe pruning of Eunapius' rhetoric and redundant polemic.²³⁸

As Müller demonstrated, the idea that Eunapius was not responsible for the second edition of his history presents serious difficulties. The numerous remarks in the *Lives of the Sophists* about the history he had previously published and how he intended to produce an extended version in the future, seem to rule out the possibility that Eunapius was not responsible for the second edition.²³⁹ Eunapius may have brought out his historical work in installments. His first edition may have consisted of one installment or a set of them. It is clear, in any case, that Eunapius had brought up his history to the death of Valens (at the battle of Adrianople) in 378 when he wrote his *Lives of the Sophists*.²⁴⁰ Eunapius also indicates that he had already recorded some of the disasters that befell Greece during the Gothic invasion of 395 and intended to relate others.²⁴¹ Furthermore, Eunapius seems to imply that he had written about the destruction of the Serapeum, an event that occurred in 391.²⁴² Based on this statement, Müller argued that the first edition of the history had at least reached the battle of Adrianople in 378.²⁴³ The second edition, he believed, would have been an extended and revised form of the work, bringing the history down to (at least) the year 404. Both editions must have had some independent value if they were, as Photius states, often preserved together. The deficiencies of the second edition may be possibly explained by Eunapius' old age and mental decline. This evidence seems to corroborate Müller's assertion that Eunapius was responsible for both editions of the history.

Although there is much controversy over the date and nature of Eunapius' *Universal*

²³⁷ Niebuhr had thought that the note had been written by one of the excerptors of the *Excerpta De Sententiis*, q.v. Niebuhr, *Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae*, 1:xix ff.

²³⁸ Johannes Cornelius Vollebregt, "Symbola in novam Eunapii Vitarum editionem" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Utrecht, 1929), ix-x.

²³⁹ Eunap. *VS* 464, 472, 473, 476, 478, 480, 482, 483, 485, 493, 498.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 480.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 476.

²⁴² *Ibid.*, 472.

²⁴³ Müller, *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*, 4:8 ff.

History, it is clear that Zosimus used Eunapius as the framework for the major part of his history (i.e. from the beginning of the second book to chapter twenty-seven of the fifth book).²⁴⁴ Although Zosimus based his narrative on Eunapius, he did not blindly copy Eunapius as Photius states.²⁴⁵ Unlike Eunapius, Zosimus was not concerned with the teaching of moral lessons; instead he was interested in presenting the reasons for, and the causes, of the demise of the Roman Empire. This required a restructuring of the information found in Eunapius' work and the consultation of supplementary sources. Ridley has shown that there are several noteworthy discrepancies between the history of Zosimus and corresponding details found in the Eunapian fragments. These divergences occur in the narrative proper of Zosimus, not just in his digressions.²⁴⁶ Zosimus condensed the history of Eunapius and removed the unnecessary repetitions, speeches, obscure vocabulary, rhetorical digressions and learned allusions that Eunapius was fond of using, as well as the numerous references to sophists and philosophers.²⁴⁷ Eunapius' detailed and verbose characterizations of different individuals, which were necessary to Eunapius' views of history, were not required by Zosimus.²⁴⁸ Eunapius portrayed his historical individuals as characters who were either completely good or utterly evil, and he blamed any faults of character as the cause of the Empire's ills. Zosimus omitted many of Eunapius' moral judgments and made his own divergent judgments, making a sincere attempt to be honest and objective.²⁴⁹ It is clear that Zosimus added chronological order to the history of Eunapius who is known to have paid no attention to chronology.²⁵⁰ Zosimus then supplemented this basic narrative with information that was consistent with his theme (i.e. the demise of the Rome). As mentioned before, it was a common practice in ancient times for historians to use earlier historical narratives for periods prior to their lifetimes and thus there is no reason to accuse Zosimus of plagiarism.

²⁴⁴ For a detailed discussion, on the nature of the two editions of Eunapius' *Universal History*, see Appendix A.

²⁴⁵ Phot. *Bibl. cod.* 98.

²⁴⁶ Baker, "Eunapius and Zosimus," 585-592.

²⁴⁷ For example, compare Eunap. *Frag.* 18.4 with Zos. 7.3-4 and Eunap. *Frag.* 34.4 with Zos. 4.7.4; Mendelssohn, *Zosimi*, xxxvi; Blockley, "First Book of Zosimus," 401; Also cf. Eunap. *Frag.* 37 with Zos. 4.10.1-2.

²⁴⁸ Eunap. *Frag.* 39.1, 39.8, 44.3, 58.1, 62.2, 65.3, 65.4, 65.5, 67.5, 71.1; *Suda* α.81, α.1860, α.3066, α.3752, α.179, δ.1205, μ.1303, ο.719.

²⁴⁹ Compare Eunap. *Frag.* 55.1, 62.1 with Zos. 4.48.1, 5.1.1-2, Eunap. *Frag.* 69.1-4 with Zos. 5.20-5.21 and Eunap. *Frag.* 59 with Zos. 4.56.

²⁵⁰ Eunap. *Frag.* 1.

Other writers who used Eunapius similarly include Sozomen, Philostorgius, Socrates, John of Antioch and Peter the Patrician.²⁵¹

We will now examine those passages in the *Historia Nova* that confirm Zosimus' use of supplementary sources in addition to Eunapius. The second book of the *Historia Nova* begins with a long digression on the *Ludi Saeculares*. This digression, at 2.1-2.6, is unlike anything we have preserved in the surviving fragments of Eunapius. Since Eunapius was intent upon using his history as a vehicle for moralizing on political, social and economic phenomena it is highly unlikely that he would have included such an antiquarian digression in his work. Ridley pointed out that of the seventeen consular dates given in Zosimus' *New History*, six occur in this digression.²⁵² Since Eunapius disliked chronology and dates, this renders derivation from him unlikely. An antiquarian digression on the *Ludi Saeculares* would have had no place in the historical work of Eunapius because to him events and their context were of little importance. Zosimus, on the other hand, was more interested in showing how events had led to the fall of the Empire than on moralizing on the character of people. Zosimus most likely used another source to write this section, which directly relates to his theme. This section gives us a description of an important traditional Pagan rite that later emperors, beginning with Constantine, failed to continue. The rite is said to have been first performed by a Sabine named Valerius in an attempt to cure the illnesses of his children. It was later revived by the consul P. Valerius Poplicola (in 509 B.C.), who was the first to hold Games with the religious rite. Zosimus gives us the text of an inscription, which Poplicola is said to have inscribed on an altar dedicated to Dis and Proserpina. The form of Poplicola's dedication "has embedded in it the remains of a metrical version framed in elegiac couplets."²⁵³ Mendelssohn suggested that Zosimus probably used the works of Phlegon of Tralles for this section of his work.²⁵⁴ Phlegon was a freedman of the emperor Hadrian and wrote several works in Greek, only two of which are extant.²⁵⁵ One is the *Περὶ θαυμασίων* which a small treatise on wondrous events and oracles that includes quotations from the Sibylline

²⁵¹ Kazhdan, *Dictionary of Byzantium*, 3:1932, 3:1661, 3:1923, 2:1062, 3:1641.

²⁵² Ronald T. Ridley, "Zosimus the historian," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 65 (1972): 288.

²⁵³ C. Pascal, "Fire on the Tarentum," *American Journal of Philology* 100 (1979): 532-537.

²⁵⁴ Mendelssohn, *Zosimi*, xxxvii.

²⁵⁵ Phlegon's chief work was called *Olympiads*. It was an historical compendium in sixteen books, from the 1st down to the 229th Olympiad (776 B.C. to A.D. 137), of which several chapters are preserved in Photius and Syncellus.

oracles, of which Mendelssohn believed that Zosimus had made use.²⁵⁶ Some of the Sibylline oracles quoted by Phlegon deal with the Secular Games and it is quite apparent that Phlegon knew the full metrical dedication of Poplicola. Zosimus quotes a Sibylline oracle, at 2.5.5, which he says has been cited by others as proof that the neglect of the *Ludi Saeculares* will have dire consequences for the Empire. Mendelssohn believed that this made it clear that Zosimus had searched for this material as a matter relevant to his theme. Zosimus utilized a number of sources in order to find oracles (as he himself states at 2.36.2) that would demonstrate how the neglect of tradition had had a detrimental effect on the Empire.²⁵⁷ Scavone argues that the digression on the *Ludi Saeculares* may have been part of Zosimus' response to ecclesiastical historians who had attempted to trace the origins of Christianity into remote antiquity by linking it with the Jewish historical traditions. According to Scavone, Zosimus may have been "consciously reasserting the great antiquity of the old *cultus* in answer to Eusebius and his company."²⁵⁸ Zosimus' accounts of extraordinary phenomena may have been intended to point out that the power of the Pagan Gods remained intact.²⁵⁹ These assertions may also have been a response to ecclesiastical writers, who were fond of narrating miraculous stories as proof of the power of the Christian God.

According to Scavone, Zosimus once again responds to the ecclesiastical historians at 2.16.²⁶⁰ In this location, Zosimus informs us that Maxentius examined the Sibylline books about the outcome of his war against Constantine. Maxentius is reported to have found a prophecy indicating that anyone harming the Romans would experience a miserable death, but wrongly took the statement to be favorable to him. In reality, the prophecy was of his doom since he was responsible for the deaths of many Romans. Hence, Zosimus is here asserting that it was a Pagan prophecy that predicted Maxentius' defeat and Constantine's triumph. The ecclesiastical historians, on the other hand, claim that Constantine received a sign from the Christian God that signified that he would triumph over Maxentius as long as he converted to Christianity. These

²⁵⁶ Mendelssohn, on his note to Zosimus 2.1, traces the line of descent of the account of the origins of the Secular Games through Phlegon, Verrius Flaccus, Varro and Valerius Antias, q.v. Mendelssohn, *Zosimi*, 54-55. The second work of Phlegon is known as the *Περὶ μακροζώνων*. It gives a list of persons who had attained the age of a hundred years in Italy (apparently taken from the registers of censors) along with some more extracts from the Sibylline oracles.

²⁵⁷ Paschoud again disagrees and believes that Eunapius cannot be ruled out as the source from which Zosimus derived his information on the Secular Games, q.v. Paschoud, *Histoire Nouvelle*, 1:xli.

²⁵⁸ Scavone, "Zosimus and his Historical Models," 62.

²⁵⁹ Zos. 2.1-2.7, 3.32, 4.36, 5.5-5.6, 5.24, 5.38.

²⁶⁰ Scavone, "Zosimus and his Historical Models," 63.

ecclesiastical historians conveniently ignore the Sibylline oracle and relate a story in which Constantine supposedly had a vision of Christ before the battle of the Milvian Bridge, who told him that he would win against Maxentius if he placed labarums on the shields of his men.²⁶¹ It is clear that Zosimus was replying to Christian writers when he wrote his account of the war between Maxentius and Constantine. The earliest Christian account of the war, which was written by Lactantius, preserves an account of two Pagan prophecies that had predicted Constantine's victory. The first of these prophecies was an oracular reply that Maxentius had received; it indicated that he would perish if he went outside the gates of Rome.²⁶² The second prophecy was the same Sibylline oracle that Zosimus records. The fact that Lactantius reports these stories seems to indicate that these Pagan versions preceded the later Christian legends.²⁶³ Lactantius, who does not mention any Christian vision, tells us that:

In the meantime, a sedition arose at Rome, and Maxentius was reviled as one who had abandoned all concern for the safety of the commonweal; and suddenly, while he exhibited the Circensian games on the anniversary of his reign, the people cried with one voice, "Constantine cannot be overcome!" Dismayed at this, Maxentius burst from the assembly, and having called some Senators together, ordered the Sibylline books to be searched. In them it was found that: "On the same day the enemy of the Romans should perish." Led by this response to the hopes of victory, he went to the field. The bridge in his rear was broken down. At sight of that the battle grew hotter. The hand of the Lord prevailed, and the forces of Maxentius were routed. He fled towards the broken bridge; but the multitude pressing on him, he was driven headlong into the Tiber.²⁶⁴

Two contemporary panegyrics on Constantine, preserved in the *Panegyrici Latini*, also fail to mention any Christian vision. The other sources on the war between Maxentius and Constantine

²⁶¹ Euseb. *VC* 1.28-29; Socr. *Hist. Eccl.* 1.2; Sozom. *Hist. Eccl.* 1.3; Phot. *Epit. of the Hist. Eccl.* of Philostorg. 1.6. Curiously, Eusebius fails to mention any Christian vision in his account of the war between Maxentius and Constantine in the *Ecclesiastical History* (9.9.2-9.9.8), which was written before his *Life of Constantine*. The *Life of Constantine*, which was written after the death of Constantine, is more of a panegyric than any serious attempt to write a historical biography. Eusebius is likely to have devised his Christian vision in order to eulogize the man whom he believed was the earthly vicar of the Christian God.

²⁶² Lactantius *De Mortibus Persecutorum* 44.1.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, 44.7-44.9.

²⁶⁴ This translation is from the seventh volume of the *Ante-Nicene Fathers* series, q.v. Arthur Cleveland Coxe, *Ante-Nicene fathers. Translations of the writings of the fathers down to A.D. 325*, vol. 7 (Buffalo, The Christian literature publishing company, 1885-96); Lactantius *De Mortibus Persecutorum* 44.5-44.6.

omit and reference to it as well.²⁶⁵ Thus it should come as no surprise that Zosimus ignores the Christian legend surrounding the event, as it seems to have been developed by Christians after Constantine had converted to their religion.

At 2.29 Zosimus informs us of the events that led to the conversion of Constantine to Christianity. Zosimus reports the events in the following manner:

Now that the whole Empire had fallen into the hands of Constantine, he no longer concealed his evil disposition and vicious inclinations, but acted as he pleased, without control. He indeed used the ancient worship of his country; though not so much out of honor or veneration as of necessity. Therefore he believed the soothsayers, who were expert in their art, as men who predicted the truth concerning all the great actions which he ever performed. But when he came to Rome, he was filled with pride and arrogance. He resolved to begin his impious actions at home. For he put to death his son Crispus, styled (as I mentioned) Caesar, on suspicion of debauching his mother-in-law Fausta, without any regard to the ties of nature. And when his own mother Helena expressed much sorrow for this atrocity, lamenting the young man's death with great bitterness, Constantine, under pretence of comforting her, applied a remedy worse than the disease. For, causing a bath to be heated to an extraordinary degree, he shut up Fausta in it, and a short time after took her out dead. Of which his conscience accusing him, as also of violating his oath, he went to the priests to be purified from his crimes. But they told him, that there was no kind of lustration that was sufficient to clear him of such enormities. An Egyptian, who had come to Rome from Spain, being very familiar with the court-ladies, happened to fall into converse with Constantine, and assured him, that the Christian doctrine would teach him how to cleanse himself from all his offences, and that they who received it were immediately absolved from all their sins. Constantine had no sooner heard this than he easily believed what was told him, and forsaking the rites of his country, received those which the Egyptian offered him; and for the first instance of his impiety, suspected the truth of divination. For since many fortunate occurrences had been thereby predicted to him, and really had happened according to such prediction, he was afraid that others might be told something which should fall out to his misfortune; and for that reason applied himself to the abolishing of the practice. And on a particular festival, when the army was to go up to the Capitol, he very indecently reproached the solemnity, and treading the holy ceremonies, as it were, under his feet, incurred the hatred of the senate and people.²⁶⁶

Several major divergences occur between Zosimus' version of Constantine's conversion and the Eunapius version (as related by Sozomen) of the same events.²⁶⁷ Zosimus places the conversion

²⁶⁵ *Panegyrici Latini* 4 (10) 28.4-30.3; 12 (9) 16.3-18.3; *Origo Constantini Imperatoris* 12; Aurelius Victor *De Caesaribus* 40.23; *Epit. De Caesaribus* 40.7; Eutropius *Brev.* 10.4.4.

²⁶⁶ Anonymous, *History of Count Zosimus*, 2.29.

²⁶⁷ Sozom. *Hist. Eccl.* 1.5.

of Constantine in Rome whereas Sozomen places it in Constantinople. Zosimus emphasizes that Constantine took part in the formal ceremonial rites, which required that the army ascend to the Capitol, because he feared the soldiers. Sozomen mentions no such ceremony; he merely states that Constantine repented of his deed and sought purification. Zosimus has Constantine approach several Pagan priests while Sozomen mentions only the philosopher Sopater. Fowden has argued that these divergences between Zosimus and Sozomen indicate that Zosimus was not following Eunapius in this section. Fowden believes that one of the sources that Zosimus may have used, for this section of his work, is the Christian work known as the *Actus Silvestri*.²⁶⁸ Both Zosimus and the *Actus Silvestri* describe Constantine as first agreeing to participate in the rites on the Capitol, and then refusing. Both Zosimus and the *Actus Silvestri* also report that an apparition appeared to Constantine. Sozomen does not mention any of this. Furthermore, both Zosimus (2.30) and the *Actus Silvestri* follow their discussion of Constantine's conversion with an account of the foundation of Constantinople. Fowden believed that Eunapius' version of events is preserved in the narrative of Sozomen. Since Sozomen's account of Constantine's conversion is set at Constantinople, Eunapius cannot have placed the story of the city's foundation after it. This, Fowden asserted, is further evidence that Zosimus could not have been following the history of Eunapius at this point in his narrative. The similarities between Zosimus and the *Actus Silvestri* indicate that Zosimus was not limiting his research to Pagan sources, but was actively employing the works of ecclesiastical writers.²⁶⁹

We find Zosimus quoting another oracle at 2.36. At this point, Zosimus inserts a digression in which he attempts to explain why Byzantium (that is, Constantinople) continues to be a great and prosperous city even after the city of Rome has fallen. In contrast to Eunapius, who criticizes the site of Constantinople, Zosimus believed that the site had been destined to become a great city by the Gods.²⁷⁰ This oracle could obviously not have been in Eunapius as his history ends around the year 404, six years before Rome had been sacked by Alaric in 410. Eunapius would have had no reason to explain to his readers why Constantinople continued to flourish even after

²⁶⁸ Fowden, "Last Days of Constantine," 154-170.

²⁶⁹ The fragments of Eunapius do not preserve any discussion concerning the conversion of Constantine. Whatever the account of Eunapius may have been like, it is certain that it could not have been similar to that preserved by Zosimus as the details he relates are obviously derived, at least in part, from the *Actus Silvestri* which did not show up in Roman sources until shortly after the year 500.

²⁷⁰ Eunap. *VS* 6.2.7-6.2.9.

Rome had fallen. Zosimus informs us how he searched for the oracle in the following manner:

I have, indeed, often wondered, since the city of Byzantium is become so great that no other is equal to it either in felicity or magnitude, that our ancestors had not any prophecy concerning its good fortune. Having directed my thoughts some time to this enquiry, I consulted many historians and collections of oracles, and at length, after much difficulty and taking great pains to interpret them, discovered an oracle, which is attributed to the Sibyl of Erythrae or Phaennis in Epirus.²⁷¹

Mendelssohn does not see any reason to suppose that Zosimus is being dishonest here about his methods of research. Mendelssohn argued that this was clearly an example of Zosimus doing his own independent research to supplement the information he found in Eunapius.²⁷² Zosimus seems to have had great difficulty in unearthing this oracle and ascertaining the oracles' original source. Zosimus' research led him to believe that the oracle he discovered may have come from either the Sibyl of Erythrae or the Sibyl of Phaennis in Epirus. The only other extant source that mentions the Sibyl of Phaennis is Pausanias. Parke has suggested that Zosimus might have looked through anthological collections of oracles in order to locate an oracle that would suit his purpose.²⁷³ Parke believed that the oracles contained in these collections were only given brief descriptive headings, leaving the reader to supply the context. According to Mendelssohn, Zosimus seems to have combined two oracles in this section. Mendelssohn maintained that the last seven lines of the oracle quoted by Zosimus, at 2.37, formed a separate oracle.²⁷⁴ Parke believed that both of the oracles used by Zosimus originally had nothing to do with the city of Constantinople. Parke contended that the first oracle dealt with the city of Ilion and events having to do with the Gallic invasion of Asia Minor in the third century B.C. Parke asserted that the second oracle was an oracle from Apollo Chresterios to the citizens of Chalcedon, who were enquiring at some time of trouble. Scavone asserted that Zosimus probably used these oracles as a reply to a story that he may have found in the *Ecclesiastical History* of Sozomen.²⁷⁵ According to Sozomen, the Christian God is said to have appeared to Constantine and to have led him by the hand to the site

²⁷¹ Zos. 2.36.2.

²⁷² Mendelssohn, *Zosimi*, xxxviii. Paschoud again disagrees and believes that this was derived from Eunapius, following Martin's thesis that Zosimus used Dexippus, Eunapius and Olympiodorus exclusively, q.v. Paschoud, *Histoire Nouvelle*, 1:xli-xlii.

²⁷³ H.W. Parke, "The Attribution of the Oracle in Zosimus," *Classical Quarterly* 32 (1982): 441-444.

²⁷⁴ Mendelssohn, *Zosimi*, 93-95.

²⁷⁵ Scavone, "Zosimus and his Historical Models," 62-63.

of Constantinople.²⁷⁶ Scavone believed that Zosimus was replying to this Christian version of events through the use of very ancient Pagan oracles. Zosimus probably believed that the growth and success of Constantinople could be attributed to the Pagan Gods because the oracles he found antedated Christianity.

At 2.45-2.53, Zosimus gives an account of the Battle of Mursa, which was fought between Constantius II and Magnentius in the year 351. Zosimus is our sole authority for these events. Baynes noted that the “concise chronicle of the historian suddenly swells into an epic fullness of detail, only to shrink once more to its customary dimensions as soon as the Battle of Mursa is fought and won.”²⁷⁷ These chapters are filled with incomprehensible geography, inexplicable troop movements and irrational events. Otto Seeck believed that Zosimus derived his account from a contemporary panegyric, in the form of an epic poem, which celebrated Constantius’ victory.²⁷⁸ Alberto Olivetti pointed out that the source seemed to be unfavorable to Constantius, which would not be consistent with what one would expect of a panegyric. Constantius is made to doubt the outcome of the battle and to try to end it by a truce, and he is even alleged to have bribed the Germans around the Rhine not to accept Magnentius.²⁷⁹ This seems to suggest that the source used by Zosimus was favorable to Magnentius. Olivetti contended that the source was the work of Petronia Proba, who is known to have composed a poem on the war between Constantius and Magnentius.²⁸⁰ Petronia Proba lived in Rome when Magnentius controlled Italy and was married to Clodius Celsinus Adelphinus, who held the office of *praefectus urbi*. Thus if she was the author, the poem must have been a panegyric of Magnentius and not of Constantius, as Seeck believed. Paschoud agreed that the work was a panegyric of Magnentius but left the question of authorship open.²⁸¹ Baker maintained that since Zosimus gives a hostile obituary to Magnentius, he is unlikely to have drawn on a panegyric of

²⁷⁶ Sozom. *Hist. Eccl.* 2.3.

²⁷⁷ Norman Baynes, “A Note on Interrogation,” *Byzantion* 2 (1925): 149.

²⁷⁸ Otto Seeck, “Zur Chronologie und Quellenkritik des Ammianus Marcellinus,” *Hermes* 41 (1906): 483-484; Otto Seeck, *Geschichte des Untergangs der Antiken Welt* (Berlin: Siemenroth & Troschel, 1920), 4:435.

²⁷⁹ Zos. 2.47.1-2.51.1.

²⁸⁰ M. Olivetti, “Osservazioni sui capitoli 45-53 del Libro II di Zosimo,” *Rivista di filologia* 43 (1915): 321-333.

²⁸¹ Paschoud, *Histoire Nouvelle*, 1:254 n. 59.

Magnentius.²⁸² Baker also argued that a panegyric on Magnentius written in the West would have, in all probability, been written in Latin. Baker assumed that it would have been unlikely that Zosimus would have used a Latin source.²⁸³ Baker argued that Zosimus' source must have been a Greek poem or piece of poetic prose that was favorable to Constantius, but is no longer extant.²⁸⁴ There is no reason to believe, however, that Zosimus was not conversant with Latin, especially since he held the post of *advocatus fisci*. Zosimus was also quite capable of using a panegyric account of Magnentius and rewrite it to show a less biased point of view. This is clearly shown by Zosimus' rejection of Eunapius' biased account of Julian, which will now be discussed.

Zosimus' account of Julian begins with a well-known passage that has been intensely debated over by scholars for the last 130 years. At 3.2, Zosimus tells us that that he will pass over the events of Julian's life, which have been written by other historians, and focus on events which were omitted by other writers. Zosimus refers his readers to the works of Julian if they wish to examine the events of his life in detail. Martin argued that Zosimus simply lifted this reference from Eunapius.²⁸⁵ A careful examination of *Fragment 17* reveals that Eunapius is simply referring his readers to a pamphlet by Julian, where they will be able to find additional details concerning the battle of Strasbourg. Zosimus, on the other hand, is stating that he will only be focusing on the details of Julian's life, which have not related by other authors. What were the sources that Zosimus used for this section of his history? Several theories have arisen concerning the nature of the sources that Zosimus consulted for the life of Julian. The focus of this discussion has centered on the section of the *Historia Nova* dealing with Julian's expedition into Persia.²⁸⁶

Sudhaus was the first to do a detailed comparison of the accounts of Zosimus and Ammianus Marcellinus dealing with Julian's Persian expedition.²⁸⁷ He claimed that both accounts

²⁸² Zos. 2.54.1-2.54.2.

²⁸³ As noted earlier, Zosimus may have been familiar with Latin as he held the office of advocate of the fisc, which usually required the use of Latin.

²⁸⁴ Baker, "Eunapius and Zosimus," 75-81.

²⁸⁵ Eunap. *Frag.* 17; Martin, "Fontibus Zosimi," 22 ff.

²⁸⁶ Obvious divergences occur between Eunapius and Zosimus, not only with the Persian expedition, but in the rest of the narrative dealing with Julian. For different accounts of the German Wars compare Eunapius *Frag.* 12 with Zos. 3.6.1, 3.7.6-3.7.7; For different stories about how Julian became emperor compare Eunap. *Frag.* 14.5, 14.6, 14.7, 18.1, 18.2; Eunap. *VS* 476, 498 with Zos. 3.9.1-3.11.2.

²⁸⁷ Heinrich Sudhaus, "De ratione quae intercedat inter Zosimi et Ammiani de bello a Juliano imperatore cum Persis gesto relationes" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Bonn, 1870), 7 ff.

had a number of correspondences, which he believed required some literary affiliation. Sudhaus found that sometimes the narrative of Zosimus was fuller than that of Ammianus and related details that Ammianus did not mention. Conversely Ammianus, in certain passages, gives a fuller account than Zosimus. Sudhaus argued that because of this discrepancy, neither Zosimus nor Eunapius could have used Ammianus. Sudhaus asserted that a common source must have been used by Ammianus and Zosimus. Sudhaus maintained that this common source was the memoir of Oribasius. According to Sudhaus, Zosimus would have made use of Oribasius through the work of Eunapius (who had used him directly), while Ammianus would have made direct use of the memoir of Oribasius.²⁸⁸

Mendelssohn agreed with Sudhaus that Ammianus and Zosimus had used a common source, but he did not believe that this source was Oribasius.²⁸⁹ Mendelssohn argued that Eunapius specifically declares that Oribasius composed a detailed memorandum of the deeds of Julian specifically for his own personal use.²⁹⁰ If this is the case, it is highly unlikely that Ammianus had any access to this work. Mendelssohn believed that Oribasius was a charlatan, who transmitted in his memoirs little more than a series of stories about Julian and a collection of his sayings. Thus in the fragments of Eunapius we find a number of rather anomalous anecdotes whose sole purpose seems to be to idealize Julian. Mendelssohn maintained that Eunapius' account of Julian was little more than a panegyric, making no attempt at being a serious balanced history.²⁹¹ Accordingly, Mendelssohn asserted, Zosimus had to abandon Eunapius' careless narrative on Julian for some better source. Since the fragments of Eunapius that deal with the Persian war have no correspondence with either the narrative of Zosimus or that of Ammianus, Mendelssohn surmised that the common source of Ammianus and Zosimus was to be sought

²⁸⁸ Hecker believed that Julian composed some "commentaries," which were modeled on those of Julius Caesar. Hecker asserted that these commentaries were used by both Ammianus and Zosimus as their main source for the Persian expedition. Hecker pointed out that Zosimus cites Julian's writings a number of times in his history. At 3.3.2, Zosimus cites a lost letter or treatise. At 3.8.2, he cites Julian's *Oration* 1.22, 27a-29a. At 3.11-3.13, Zosimus cites Julian's *Oration* 62a-67b. At 3.10.3-3.10.4, Zosimus cites letters that were written by Julian to the Senate and army in Italy, Athens, Corinth and Sparta after he had been declared emperor, q.v. Hermann Hecker, *Zur Geschichte des Kaisers Julianus* (Kreuznach: Voigtländer, 1886), 81 ff.

²⁸⁹ Mendelssohn, *Zosimi*, xxxviii.

²⁹⁰ Eunap. *Frag.* 15.

²⁹¹ Mendelssohn, *Zosimi*, xxxviii.

elsewhere.²⁹² Both Ammianus and Zosimus mention a certain man named Magnus in their account of the Persian wars. This man is mentioned in connection with the siege of Maiozamalcha, a Persian stronghold that the Romans captured with difficulty. The Romans were able to take the town only after focusing their army and battering rams on one of the gates of the city while a select group of men secretly dug a mine under the walls of the city. So while everyone in town was intent on beating off the engines of war, those in charge of the mine dug through the remaining earth to the surface and came out in the middle of the city. One of the first men to enter the city was a man named Magnus.²⁹³ From the chronicle of John Malalas we know that a Magnus of Carrhae wrote a history of the Persian expedition in which he mentioned events of an autobiographical nature since he was directly involved in the action.²⁹⁴ Mendelssohn identified this Magnus of Carrhae with the man at Maiozamalcha. He argued that this autobiographical detail would have appeared in Magnus' historical account and this explains why both Ammianus and Zosimus mention his name. Mendelssohn maintained that both Ammianus and Zosimus used this account of Magnus directly. Ammianus, since he also participated in the war, would have been able to add his own details from his experience in the Persian war. This, Mendelssohn asserted, would account for the discrepancies in the two accounts.²⁹⁵

The arguments of Mendelssohn have been, for the most part, rejected by various scholars.²⁹⁶ Thompson believed that the Magnus mentioned in the siege of Maiozamalcha cannot be identified with the historian Magnus of Carrhae.²⁹⁷ Thompson argued that because the real Magnus of Carrhae was a member of Julian's general staff, he would not have been doing the work of a common soldier, such as toiling underground to dig a mine. Because of this, Thompson maintained that Zosimus did not use Magnus of Carrhae. Thompson also contended that

²⁹² Fragments 19 to 23 of Eunapius relate random anecdotes that are not mentioned by either Ammianus or Zosimus.

²⁹³ Amm. Marc. 24.4.23; Zos. 3.22.4.

²⁹⁴ John Malalas used the account of Magnus and gives us a summary of some of its contents, q.v. Malalas *Chron.* 13.21 (329), 13.23 (332).

²⁹⁵ Mendelssohn also suggested that Zosimus may have used the writings of Julian in addition to Magnus, q.v. Mendelssohn, *Zosimi*, 113.

²⁹⁶ One of the notable exceptions was Seeck who followed Mendelssohn and believed that Oribasius had been used by both Ammianus and Zosimus (or Eunapius), q.v. Seeck, "Zur Chronologie," 481-539. Hecker argued that for the whole of Julian's reign, Zosimus used two sources, namely, Julian's *Epistle to the Athenians* together with Julian's commentaries. Hecker argued that these commentaries were composed by Julian and added to by a continuator after his death, q.v. Hecker, *Kaisers Julianus*, 17-21, 45-48.

²⁹⁷ E.A. Thompson, *Historical Work of Ammianus Marcellinus* (Cambridge: University Press, 1947), 28-33.

Ammianus and Zosimus did not follow a common source. Thompson believed that Mendelssohn was wrong to believe that *Fragments* 19 to 23 of Eunapius actually dealt with the Persian expedition. Thompson asserted that only one of these five Eunapiian fragments, *Fragment* 22, actually dealt with the Persian war.²⁹⁸ Thompson carefully compared this fragment with the information he found in the accounts of Ammianus and Zosimus. This fragment is divided into four parts. Thompson dismisses the first two parts, 22.1 and 22.2, as simply statements of Julian. He also ignores 22.4 which he says records the sentiments of the troops after the death of Julian. Thompson carefully analyzed *Fragment* 22.3, which he believed was the only fragment of Eunapius actually dealing with the Persian expedition. This fragment (22.3) says:

The great abundance of supplies in the suburbs of Ctesiphon raised the danger that the soldiers would be ruined by excess.²⁹⁹

Thompson believed that this corresponds to the account given by Ammianus, at 24.3.14.³⁰⁰ Here, Ammianus refers to the army's arrival at Maiozamalcha, after a long march during which there was an extreme shortage of food. Since Eunapius fails to mention the town Thompson believes that Eunapius could not have used the account of Ammianus, for he would surely have stated the name of the city if he had found it in Ammianus. The only logical conclusion, Thompson maintained, is that Eunapius made use of Ammianus, either directly or indirectly, and supplemented his narrative with anecdotes from the memoirs of Oribasius.³⁰¹ Thompson's proposition, however, is questionable because Eunapius is not known to have traveled outside of

²⁹⁸ Eunap. *Frag.* 19-23.

²⁹⁹ Eunap. *Frag.* 22.3 (27.5). This quotation is from Blockley's translation, q.v. Blockley, *Fragmentary Classicising Historians*, 2:41.

³⁰⁰ Chalmers offered another correspondence for Eunapius *Fragment* 22.3. He believed that this fragment formed a correspondence with Ammianus 25.1.4. In this location, Ammianus tells us that the army came to a town called Hucumbra where they refreshed themselves for two days with the abundance of supplies they found there. Ammianus, however, does not mention the army's danger from overeating. Chalmers asserted that the editor of the *Excerpta De Sententiis* did not include the name of the town because it was not as well known as city of Maiozamalcha. If the editor never heard of this place, Chalmers argued that it was likely that he would have used the well known city of Ctesiphon to describe the location. If the town of Symbra in Zosimus can be identified with Hucumbra then we also have a parallel in Zosimus 3.27, q.v. Walter Chalmers, "Eunapius, Ammianus Marcellinus and Zosimus," *Classical Quarterly* 10 (1960): 154-55.

³⁰¹ Thompson fails to see that the fragment may say Ctesiphon instead of Maiozamalcha due to a scribal error, a likely event considering the numerous errors committed by the editors of the *Excerpta Historica*. Since the previous fragment, Eunapius *Fragment* 22.2 (or *Exc. De Sententiis* 21), refers to "the plain before Ctesiphon" this was possibly carried over to the next fragment (Eunap. *Frag.* 22.3 or *Exc. De Sententiis* 22) by a careless editor or copyist.

Sardis (during his adult life), where he spent his time teaching, and there is no indication that he knew Latin.³⁰² Thompson also alleged that Zosimus must have followed Eunapius for his account of Julian because he believes that Zosimus would not have abandoned Eunapius just at the point where his *Universal History* became detailed and comprehensive. When Zosimus refers to “the others” at 3.2.4, Thompson believed he was referring, not to Eunapius, but to other writers.

Norman cited an entry in the *Suda* as proof that there was no correspondence between Zosimus and Ammianus.³⁰³ This citation deals with the siege of Maiozamalcha but is not attributed to any author by the compiler of the *Suda*. Norman attributed this entry to the *Universal History* of Eunapius.³⁰⁴ Both Ammianus and Zosimus report that a soldier of the military unit called the *Victores* was the first man out of the tunnel during the siege of Maiozamalcha.³⁰⁵ Ammianus calls this man Exsuperius whereas Zosimus calls him Superantius. Both of them also agree that the second man out of the tunnel was a man named Magnus, whom Ammianus calls a tribune.³⁰⁶ Both Ammianus and Zosimus also agree that Jovianus was the third man out of the tunnel. The *Suda* entry however states only that Magnus was the first man out of the tunnel, without mentioning his rank or title.³⁰⁷ Norman believes that the author of this fragment cannot be Magnus because the author describes the actions of Magnus in haughty terms. Norman believed that this fragment should be attributed to the *Universal History* because it has the “high-flown quality of Eunapius’ diction.”³⁰⁸ Norman goes on to argue that since Zosimus does not mention the rank of Magnus that Eunapius must have not recorded it either.³⁰⁹ Norman believes that this discrepancy along with the one found by Thompson in *Fragment* 22.3 (i.e. the omission of the name of the city of Maiozamalcha) proved that both Ammianus and Eunapius composed their narratives independently. Norman argued that Eunapius would have surely added the information

³⁰² Wilmer Wright, *Philostratus and Eunapius* (London: William Heinemann, 1952), 319-321.

³⁰³ A. Frank Norman, “Magnus in Ammianus, Eunapius and Zosimus,” *Classical Quarterly* 7 (1957): 129-133.

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 129-130.

³⁰⁵ Amm. Marc. 24.4.23; Zos. 3.22.4.

³⁰⁶ Zosimus omits his rank and title, q.v. Zos. 3.22.

³⁰⁷ The first man to breach the defenses of a town in a siege was usually awarded the *corona muralis*. There may have been rival claimants to this reward which led to different versions of the events, q.v. Smith, *Greek and Roman Antiquities*, 1:545-551; Aulus Gellius *Noctes Attici* 5.6.4; Livy *Ab Urbe Condita* 26.4; Suetonius *De Vita Caesarum* Augustus 25.

³⁰⁸ Norman, “Magnus,” 130.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

he found in Ammianus if he had, in reality, had access to his account. Ammianus' history was the most informed as it was a first-hand account that was supplemented by his inquiries with other survivors. Eunapius had to use, at second hand, the account of Oribasius, which was not only written long after the events but was also composed by a physician without military qualifications. Consequently, Norman argued that Eunapius' account was more prone to errors. Norman attempted to reconstruct the information Eunapius originally received and transmitted. According to Norman, Magnus was apparently mentioned as the first out of the tunnel. This was followed by a mention of "the tribune and notary Jovianus," who was second man out of the tunnel.³¹⁰ This was followed with the mention of Superantius coming out third. Norman contended that Zosimus, while following Eunapius (who based his account on Oribasius), made corrections to some of the errors he found by using different sources. Zosimus reverses the order of men but fails to correct other details such as the rank of Magnus or the spelling of Superantius' name. Norman claimed that this explains why some of the details in Zosimus agree with what Ammianus records.³¹¹ Since Zosimus used Eunapius and corrected him here, Norman believed that the idea that Eunapius made use of Ammianus should be discarded. Norman does not know what source Zosimus may have used to correct his narrative, although he thinks it is possible that Zosimus may have used Ammianus. Norman cannot explain, however, why Zosimus corrected only part of his statements. While Zosimus does correct the order of the men, he does not correct the name of Exsuperius or insert the rank of Magnus, as Ammianus has done.³¹²

Chalmers questioned Norman's explanation because he believed that it did not account for "similarities which are often striking" between the texts of Ammianus and Zosimus.³¹³ Chalmers argued that Zosimus could not have read Ammianus (as Norman suggested) because

³¹⁰ Ibid., 132.

³¹¹ Zos. 3.2.4

³¹² Cameron rejected this *Suda* fragment because its attribution to Eunapius is very doubtful. Cameron argued that it is rash to think that this quotation could shed any light on the interrelationship of the various account of Julian's Persian expedition. First of all, this quotation is at least two removes away from the original and may have been compressed or mutilated by the editors of the *Suda*. Secondly, at least five different accounts, written in Greek, by men who had taken part in the expedition, are known to have been written in antiquity, q.v. Alan Cameron, "An Alleged Fragment of Eunapius," *Classical Quarterly* 13 (1963): 232-236.

³¹³ Chalmers, "Eunapius, Ammianus Marcellinus and Zosimus," 156.

Zosimus failed to correct and clarify his account with the information that Ammianus presents.³¹⁴ Chalmers maintained that Ammianus must have consequently used Eunapius' work before publishing his own account. Ammianus is generally believed to have published Books 1-25 of his work sometime after 389, but before 392.³¹⁵ This would seem to make Chalmers' argument chronologically impossible as he had previously asserted that the first edition of Eunapius was published after 395.³¹⁶ Chalmers, however, modifies his position and professes that there is no evidence that indicates that the first edition of Eunapius' history was published all at once. Chalmers contended that Eunapius probably published his history in installments and that the installment that covered Julian appeared early enough for Ammianus to have made use of it.³¹⁷ Ammianus would then have been able to consult Eunapius' text before publishing his own account. Ammianus, according to Chalmers, must have gone through the narrative of Eunapius, accepting or rejecting parts through deliberate choice.³¹⁸ Barnes agreed with Chalmers concerning Ammianus' use of Eunapius.³¹⁹ As has been stated, Barnes believed that Eunapius had published his first edition after the battle of Adrianople, sometime before the end of 380, thus making any further arguments unnecessary. Barnes also contended that any discrepancies between the

³¹⁴ In his account of the siege of Pirisabora, Zosimus describes a siege engine, which Ammianus in his account calls a *helepolis*. While Ammianus attributes this invention to Demetrius Poliorcetes, Zosimus incorrectly attributes it to the emperor Julian. Chalmers believes that it is scarcely possible that Zosimus would fail to correct this mistake if he had read Ammianus' detailed account. (Zos. 3.18; Amm. Marc. 24.2.18) The second example deals with the attack on the first island fortress encountered by the Romans in their journey down the Euphrates. Ammianus gives the name of the fortress as Anathan while Zosimus clearly does not know the name and could only describe the general location. If Zosimus had known the work of Ammianus, Chalmers claims, he certainly would have given the name of the fortress, q.v. Chalmers, "Eunapius, Ammianus Marcellinus and Zosimus," 156-157.

³¹⁵ Thompson, *Historical Work of Ammianus Marcellinus*, 18.

³¹⁶ Walter Chalmers, "The νέα ἔκδοσις of Eunapius' Histories," *Classical Quarterly* 3 (1953): 168-170.

³¹⁷ Chalmers, "Eunapius, Ammianus Marcellinus and Zosimus," 157.

³¹⁸ Chalmers noted that on occasion Ammianus has not changed his mind after reading Eunapius. Ammianus refers to the Naarmalcha when he is in fact describing a canal fed by the Naarmalcha (Amm. Marc. 24.6.1). Ammianus gives a vastly different version of the crossing of what he calls Naarmalcha from that given by Zosimus (Amm. Marc. 24.2.7-24.2.8; Zos. 3.16). Chalmers believed that Ammianus was focused on the hard work involved in crossing while Zosimus (following Oribasius) had merely noted the ease of the crossing after the work had been finished. Zosimus mentions two places, Sitha and Megia, which are not mentioned by Ammianus. Chalmers dismissed these towns as being rather unimportant. Zosimus gives a much more detailed account of the siege of Pirisabora than that given by Ammianus (Zos. 3.17-3.18; Amm. Marc. 24.2.9-24.2.22). Chalmers believed that Zosimus' details on Pirisabora could not have derived from Ammianus and that this supports his conclusion that Ammianus made use of Eunapius' account, q.v. Chalmers, "Eunapius, Ammianus Marcellinus and Zosimus," 157.

³¹⁹ Timothy D. Barnes, *Sources of the Historia Augusta* (Bruxelles: Latomus, 1978), 118-119.

narrative of Ammianus and Zosimus could be explained by the fact that Ammianus had also consulted other sources.³²⁰ Barnes maintained that Zosimus simply copied and abbreviated Eunapius without making use of any other sources.³²¹ Barnes has made these arguments in his attempt to date the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* to the late fourth century. In order to account for the similarities between the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* and the text of Zosimus, Barnes had to argue that the first edition of Eunapius' *Universal History* was consulted by the author of the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*.

Dillemann asserted that the correspondences between the narratives of Zosimus and Ammianus were simply coincidental and did not prove any literary affiliation.³²² Paschoud at first agreed with Dillemann but later reverted to the relationship proposed by Sudhaus (i.e. that Oribasius was the common source used by both Zosimus and Ammianus).³²³ Paschoud believed that the similarities between Ammianus and Zosimus were almost exclusively confined to the treatment of Julian's Persian expedition. Paschoud contended that this fact strengthened his position that Oribasius was their common source. Paschoud proposed that Eunapius supplemented Oribasius by using a lost Latin source written by a vehemently anti-Christian westerner. Furthermore, Paschoud proposed that Ammianus had probably met with Oribasius at Antioch in the autumn of 363, thus providing Ammianus with an opportunity to consult his memoirs.³²⁴ Furthermore, Paschoud asserted that Libanius might have also consulted the memoirs of Oribasius, which Paschoud believes would explain some of the similarities in Libanius' orations. There is, however, absolutely no evidence whatsoever to support this rather fanciful claim. Paschoud has assumed that the existence of Oribasius' memoirs was a matter of common knowledge and fails to account for Eunapius' claim that implies his unique possession of a work written exclusively for him.

All these theories, dealing with the sources of Julian's Persian expedition, have been discounted by Fornara who has argued that the divergent accounts in Ammianus and Zosimus

³²⁰ Bowerstock, Blockley and Matthews have all subscribed to the theory of Chalmers and Barnes. They now assert the direct dependence of Ammianus on Eunapius: Glen Warren Bowerstock, *Julian the Apostate* (London: Duckworth, 1978), 7; Blockley, *Fragmentary Classicising Historians*, 2:vii; John Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus* (London: Duckworth, 1989), 175.

³²¹ Barnes, *Sources of the Historia Augusta*, 120-121.

³²² L. Dillemann, "Ammien Marcellin et les Pays de l'Euphrate et du Tigre" *Syria* 38 (1961): 115-135.

³²³ Paschoud, *Cinq études sur Zosime*, 188-201.

³²⁴ Paschoud, *Histoire Nouvelle*, 2:xii-xix.

derive from two entirely independent eyewitness accounts.³²⁵ Fornara was suspicious of the plethora of arguments that had been offered by scholars over what seemed like similarities between the narratives of Ammianus and Zosimus. Fornara wisely argued that if “the evidence will accommodate any or all of these possibilities, its cogency may be doubted.” According to Fornara, we should expect harmony as to the essential components of the story of Julian’s Persian expedition. The serious discrepancies between the narratives of Ammianus and Zosimus undermine the notion of literary dependency. Fornara argued that these theories offer no credible explanation of source dependency other than it must have been sporadic, unprincipled and unpredictable. Fornara pointed out that scholars have accepted, almost without question, that the similarities originally set forth by Sudhaus prove some sort of literary interdependency. Fornara asserted that, when the texts are examined closely, major differences between the texts become apparent. Fornara argued that these divergences would have been reduced, if not eliminated, if there had been any literary interdependency between Ammianus and Zosimus (or Eunapius).³²⁶

Fornara contended that Eunapius followed Oribasius. Of this we are certain, Fornara asserted, because Eunapius himself declares that Oribasius was his chief authority for Julian’s entire career.³²⁷ Whether Eunapius consulted other writers can neither be affirmed or denied. All we know is that Eunapius did use Oribasius as his main source and that his use of others, if any, would have been subsidiary. Fornara’s second argument is to point out that, although Zosimus heavily depended on Eunapius, there is no evidence that indicates that Zosimus did not supplement his narrative with other sources. Fornara dismissed Norman’s arguments about the quotation in the *Suda*, which Norman had identified as a fragment of Eunapius. The fragment, according to Fornara, proved nothing about Eunapius’ possible use of Ammianus, but simply corroborated that each writer followed an independent tradition. The fragment, Fornara contended, may be a variant tradition that was reported by Eunapius or may not be Eunapius at all. Fornara asserted that Zosimus did not state (at 3.2.4) that he would supplement Eunapius with other materials. Fornara maintained that what Zosimus meant in this passage was that Eunapius, in abbreviation, would supplement the knowledge current in his day. Fornara argued that Eunapius’ history had dropped out of circulation by the early sixth century and consequently

³²⁵ Charles Fornara, “Julian’s Persian Expedition” *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 111 (1991): 1-15.

³²⁶ *Ibid.*, 7-8.

³²⁷ Eunap. *Frag.* 15.

Zosimus believed that he was reviving fresh material. Fornara carefully reexamined the striking similarities, which according to Sudhaus, existed between the narratives of Ammianus and Zosimus.³²⁸ These similarities occur only in the first stage of Julian's itinerary, from Antioch to Gordian's tomb, where the events were clear and well known and the topography was familiar. The structure of these narratives is a straightforward linear arrangement that was dictated by the itinerary. According to Fornara, the fact that the narratives are very similar for the early part of the expedition should occasion no surprise. If the same places occur in the same sequence, however, as progress is made into unfamiliar territory then the case for affiliation is strengthened. "If there is a variation in the names of the places, the stages of the journey or the sequence in which they are set, the case for interdependency of the two itineraries is endangered."³²⁹ The alignment of the texts on simple factual observations argues for their veracity, not for their interdependency. These alignments deal with facts such as the presence of deer at Dura, a bituminous spring in Diacira, a palm grove interlaced with vine and a description of a Roman style palace and royal park.³³⁰ According to Sudhaus, these alignments demonstrated some sort of interdependency, but Fornara accurately called attention to the reality that these were merely factual statements. Substantial disagreement in the narratives of Ammianus and Zosimus begins with the location of Gordian's tomb, just at the point where the Romans were making progress into unfamiliar territory. Fornara maintained that if there was any real affiliation between the narratives of Ammianus and Zosimus, we would find a correspondence between place names as movement was made into unfamiliar regions. The place names, however, are often not spelled the same and are sometimes given entirely different names. Compare the following names: Zaitha/Zautha, Anathan/Phathousas, Diacira/Dacira, Sumere/Souma, Macepracta/Phissenia,

³²⁸ In an attempt to harmonize the texts of Zosimus and Ammianus, Sudhaus amended the text (e.g. the names of Constantianus and Lucillianus, q.v. Zos. 3.13.3; Amm. Marc. 23.3.9) and postulated explanations in order to argue that both texts were in agreement. Sudhaus even contended that apparent disagreement must be illusory since Ammianus and Zosimus are so often in agreement. Sudhaus also submerged disagreement by discussing historical questions in an attempt to avoid discussion of textual disagreement. For example, Sudhaus explains a disagreement between the accounts of Zosimus and Ammianus (Zos. 3.20.2; Amm. Marc. 24.4.4) by arguing that the confusion engendered in the various participants by the rush of events naturally explained the textual disagreement, q.v. Sudhaus, "Zosimi et Ammiani," 7 ff.

³²⁹ Fornara, "Julian's Persian Expedition," 7.

³³⁰ Fornara maintained that it was common for ancient Greek and Roman historians to record ethnographical notes along with notes of events in their histories. As an example, he pointed out that Xenophon recorded such details in his *Anabasis*, q.v. Fornara, "Julian's Persian Expedition," 13.

Pirisabora/Besabora and Ozagardana/Zaragardia.³³¹ To this should be added the names of places which are found in either Zosimus or Ammianus, but which the other fails to mention.³³² The sequence of events in Zosimus and Ammianus are also confused; not only are events located at different locations but the order of events is sometimes given in reverse order. Ammianus places the location of Gordian's tomb at Zaitha, while Zosimus locates it at Dura.³³³ Ammianus reports that Julian's army arrived at a Roman style palace before coming to a Persian royal garden whereas Zosimus reverses the order.³³⁴ Ammianus and Zosimus place the occurrences of Phissenia in a different location within their sequence of events.³³⁵ These major discrepancies, Fornara argued, proved that the basic itineraries are independent of each other.³³⁶ Fornara says that "the case for the utilization of Eunapius or Ammianus by the other of them must sustain itself by a demonstration that one or the other was consulted for ancillary detail."³³⁷ Each writer, however, ignores the supplementary material provided by the other. Each prefers his own set of names, numbers and details.³³⁸ The pattern is of two itineraries which are in comparative agreement for the well-known route from Antioch to Dura but which "diverge from each other in nomenclature and otherwise as progress was made into enemy territory, where landmarks were unfamiliar."³³⁹ A comparison with the account of Julian's Persian expedition given by John Malalas, in his *Chronicle*, reveals a high similarity to the account given by Zosimus and Ammianus for precisely the same early stage (from Antioch to Dura) of the journey.³⁴⁰ As soon as Julian's army entered

³³¹ In these examples, the first name is that found in Ammianus, the second that which is found in Zosimus.

³³² Zosimus mentions the following places: Sitha, Megia, Bithra, Besouchis, Abouzatha, Noorda and the Douros River. Ammianus mentions Achaiachala, Baraxmalcha and a deserted Jewish town.

³³³ Amm. Marc. 23.5.8; Zos. 3.14.2.

³³⁴ Amm. Marc. 24.5.1-24.5.2; Zos. 3.23.1-3.23.2.

³³⁵ Zos. 3.19.3-3.19.4; Amm. Marc. 24.2.6-24.2.7.

³³⁶ Fornara points out many discrepancies between the texts of Ammianus and Zosimus. For more examples see: Fornara, "Julian's Persian Expedition," 8-13.

³³⁷ Ibid., 9.

³³⁸ Compare the very different accounts given by Zosimus and Ammianus concerning the road between Thilutha and Diacira (Amm. Marc. 24.2.2-24.2.3; Zos. 3.15.2). Zosimus states that a number of forts remained neutral while Ammianus knows of only one such fort. Ammianus says that Julian burned a set of forts while Zosimus mentions nothing of this. The itinerary described by Ammianus and Zosimus also differ remarkably (Amm. Marc. 24.2.7-24.2.8; Zos. 3.16). Also compare the differing details concerning the arrival at the Naarmalcha (Amm. Marc. 24.5.7-25.5.12; Zos. 3.24.1). From this point it becomes increasingly difficult to align the two texts as they begin to describe the same route with a different system of names.

³³⁹ Fornara, "Julian's Persian Expedition," 8.

³⁴⁰ Malalas *Chron.* 13.19-13.26.

unfamiliar territory, all of these narratives begin to diverge. In both Ammianus and Zosimus, events are also recorded ever more differently as Julian's army advances into the interior of a sporadically populated area that was intersected by morasses, ditches and canals. That neither writer is indebted to the other for the numbers and other matters of detail is perhaps the best indication of all that they proceeded independently. Consequently, Fornara concluded that the accounts given in Ammianus and Zosimus were derived from two independent eyewitness accounts (i.e. Ammianus and Oribasius).

Fornara was probably correct in asserting that Eunapius had followed Oribasius and that there was no connection between the works of Ammianus and Zosimus. Fornara is wrong, however, in his assertion that Zosimus disavowed any intent to supplement his account by non-Eunapian sources.³⁴¹ The evidence indicates that Zosimus deliberately deviated from the account given by Eunapius. In his account of Julian, Eunapius unambiguously states that Oribasius was responsible for raising Julian to the imperial throne.³⁴² Eunapius states that he plotted with six other conspirators (including a man named Euhemerus from Libya) to depose Constantius and proclaim Julian as emperor.³⁴³ Eunapius also clearly implicates that Julian was involved in the conspiracy before his acclamation. Eunapius asserts that Julian not only summoned a hierophant from Greece but also gathered his strength to destroy Constantius.³⁴⁴ The account of Zosimus is quite different from this.³⁴⁵ Zosimus does not mention Oribasius, Euhemerus or the hierophant. He also reports that Julian did not plan a conspiracy and that he was completely unaware of the plot. According to Zosimus, certain military tribunes scattered pamphlets among the soldiers, who were thereby provoked to revolution. The soldiers burst open the doors of Julian's quarters and declared him emperor. It is clear from this comparison that Zosimus departed from the account of Eunapius for this section of his history. Eunapius was fond of sophists, philosophers and rhetoricians. Consequently, he greatly exaggerated the importance and role of these men in his *Universal History*. Zosimus saw that Eunapius was biased and incorrect, especially in his account of Julian, and because of this, Zosimus turned to different sources to write the history of

³⁴¹ This was based on Fornara's interpretation of Zosimus 3.2 and *Fragment* 17 of Eunapius, q.v. Fornara, "Julian's Persian Expedition," 8-13.

³⁴² Eunap. *VS* 498.

³⁴³ Eunap. *Frag.* 21.3; Eunap. *VS* 476.

³⁴⁴ Eunap. *VS* 476.

³⁴⁵ Zos. 3.9.1-3.11.2.

Julian. At 3.2.4, Zosimus is really telling us that he will be supplementing Eunapius' account with other sources and not, as Fornara believed, disavowing any intent to abandon Eunapius. As a result of all this credible evidence, it should be apparent that the accounts of Zosimus, Ammianus and Eunapius are all derived from independent sources. The sources that Zosimus used are not known, nor can they be ascertained from the texts remaining to us. We can conclude, though, that Zosimus, whatever his sources, did not follow the narratives of either Ammianus or Eunapius for his account of Julian.

Zosimus (at 3.3.2) quotes from the works of Julian in the *Historia Nova*, informing us that Julian reported that Constantius gave him three hundred and sixty troops. The account goes on to state that Julian believed that these troops "knew only how to say their prayers."³⁴⁶ This phrase must be from a lost work, as it is not found in any of Julian's surviving works. The citation does seem to indicate, however, that Zosimus read and utilized the works of Julian for his *Historia Nova*.

A long description of the war that Valens waged against the Goths is given in the *Historia Nova* (4.10-4.11). Valens declared this war because the Goths had offered assistance to Procopius (a usurper who had connections to Julian) in 367. In *Fragment 37*, Eunapius gives a very brief notice of this war. He states that a large-scale war had been expected but that the conflict was speedily resolved by the foresight of the emperor. Since Zosimus gives a detailed account of the conflict, he may have made use of another source for these two chapters. On the other hand, the fragment of Eunapius comes from the *Excerpta De Legationibus Gentium Ad Romanos*, a compilation that was mainly concerned with quotations dealing with embassies. Hence, it is possible that the excerptor of the fragment sharply abridged what he found in Eunapius because he was only interested in what Eunapius said of the Gothic embassy to Valens.

Zosimus (4.18.2-4.18.4) cites a hymn to Achilles composed by a philosopher named Syrianus, which he says he has read, as one of his sources. Mendelssohn believed that Zosimus actually used Syrianus and had not found him quoted in the *Universal History* of Eunapius.³⁴⁷ Syrianus became head of the Neo-Platonic school at Athens upon the death of Plutarch of Athens (not to be confused with Plutarch of Chaeronea) sometime between the years 431-434. The date

³⁴⁶ Zos. 3.3.2.

³⁴⁷ Mendelssohn, *Zosimi*, xxxviii.

in which the hymn was written is unknown. It is unlikely that Eunapius knew the hymn, since he died early in the fifth century. Consequently, this citation should be attributed to Zosimus.

Zosimus (4.20) gives a description of the Huns, who had been unknown to the Romans before their invasions in the late fourth century (around the year 370). The invasion of the Huns forced the Goths (whom Zosimus calls the Scythians) out of their homes, and because of this displacement the Goths were forced to cross the Danube into the Roman Empire in search of a place to live. Zosimus gives us the following account of the Huns:

These were the Huns. It is doubtful whether they were Scythians, who lived under regal government, or the people whom Herodotus states to reside near the Ister, and describes as a weak people with flat noses, or whether they came into Europe from Asia. For I have met with, an account, which relates that the Cimmerian Bosphorus was rendered firm land by mud brought down the Tanais, by which they were originally afforded a land-passage from Asia into Europe. However this might be, they, with their wives, children, horses, and carriages, invaded the Scythians who resided on the Ister; and though they were not capable of fighting on foot, nor understood in what, manner even to walk, since they could not fix their feet firmly on the ground, but live perpetually, and even sleep, on horseback, yet by the rapidity with which they wheeled about their horses, by the suddenness of their excursions and retreat, shooting as they rode, they occasioned great slaughter among the Scythians.³⁴⁸

Zosimus mentions two sources here, Herodotus and an unnamed account. Blockley asserted that Zosimus must have incorporated some non-Eunapian material in this section of his work.³⁴⁹ Blockley was correct in affirming this as there is no reason to doubt that Zosimus, as an educated man and aspiring historian, had read Herodotus.³⁵⁰

In the *Historia Nova*, Zosimus digresses (4.36) on the origins of the office of *Pontifex Maximus*. Zosimus describes the etymology of the word *pontifex* and how Numa Pompilius was the first Roman king to hold this office. Zosimus goes on to report that all of the Roman emperors before Gratian, including the emperors who had been Christians, had assumed this office. Gratian, however, was the first emperor to reject both robes and title when the *pontifices* ceremoniously brought them to him. Gratian considered it impious for a Christian to wear Pagan

³⁴⁸ Anonymous, *History of Count Zosimus*, 4.20.

³⁴⁹ Roger Blockley, *Ammianus Marcellinus: a study of his historiography and political thought* (Bruxelles: Latomus, 1975), 181.

³⁵⁰ Stewart Flory, "Who Read Herodotus' Histories?" *American Journal of Philology* 101.1 (1980): 12-28.

religious robes.³⁵¹ Mendelssohn believed that Zosimus used supplementary sources to gather information for this digression on religious history. Mendelssohn did not believe that a digression on the office of *Pontifex Maximus* would have appeared in Eunapius, as he was more interested in rhetoric and morality than in the history of religion.³⁵² On the other hand, this information was very pertinent to Zosimus who, according to Scavone, was interested in ascertaining the great antiquity of the Pagan religion in relation to Christianity.³⁵³ Scavone believed that Zosimus included this information as a retort to Eusebius and other ecclesiastical authors who had attempted to throw back Christian origins to the beginning of time so that they could claim that their religion was older than that of the Pagans.³⁵⁴

Zosimus refers (4.41) to the works of Libanius as one of his sources. When the people of Antioch had caused massive riots and Theodosius I threatened them with excessive punishment, Libanius is said to have delivered a speech to the emperor in order to appease his wrath. This was followed by a second speech after Theodosius had finally become reconciled to the city. Zosimus is here referring to Libanius' *Orationes* 19 and 21. There is no reason to believe that Zosimus did not consult the works of Libanius at first hand, and this may very well be another example of Zosimus' supplementary research.

A comparison of Zosimus with what remains of Eunapius shows that the former did not follow the latter slavishly. Several examples already have been given above indicating where Zosimus diverges from Eunapius. There are many other instances of divergence between the *Historia Nova* and Eunapius.³⁵⁵ For example, Zosimus believed in the importance of recording oracles, going to great lengths in order to find those that could advance his thesis. Eunapius, on

³⁵¹ Gratian did this under the influence of Ambrose, the bishop of Milan, whose fanaticism was largely responsible for the proscription of Paganism. Zosimus never mentions Ambrose by name in his *Historia Nova*.

³⁵² Mendelssohn, *Zosimi*, xxxviii.

³⁵³ Scavone, "Zosimus and his Historical Models," 61-62.

³⁵⁴ Paschoud agrees with Martin's thesis (see pages 28-29 above) that Eunapius was Zosimus' immediate source, q.v. Paschoud, *Histoire Nouvelle*, 1:lvii, 2:417-418.

³⁵⁵ The following divergences may also be noted: Eunapius says (*Frag.* 45.1) that in a battle against the Goths, Modares employed open fighting to prevent the soldiers from making noise with their weapons. Zosimus says (4.25.2) that since the Goths were paralyzed with food and drink, Modares ordered his men to abandon their heavy armor and rush upon the Goths with their swords and shields. Eunapius recounts (*Frag.* 18.6) an overly long dramatic story about Julian making peace with the Chamavi through a stratagem. This was most likely used by Eunapius as a rhetorical pretext to demonstrate the ingenuity of Julian. Zosimus (3.7.6-3.7.7) ignores the dramatics and simply relates the facts.

the other hand, believed that oracles were not appropriate for inclusion in a formal history.³⁵⁶ In another instance, Eunapius claimed that both Rufinus and Stilicho were guardians of Theodosius' sons whereas Zosimus gives the position to Stilicho alone.³⁵⁷ Not only does Zosimus diverge from Eunapius in factual and historiographical matters but he is also more objective in his judgments. Eunapius calls the Eastern general Timasius an arrogant and haughty man and says that he was always drunk and spent his life in idleness and dissipation.³⁵⁸ The *Historia Nova* describes the same man in favorable terms.³⁵⁹ While the sophist has a eulogy on Sebastianus, calling him an exemplar of virtue and comparing him to the Colossus of Rhodes, the historian simply speaks of his military skill and discipline.³⁶⁰ Eunapius believes that monks are swine in human clothing who enslave the people whereas the *Historia Nova* concentrates on their privileges and mock poverty.³⁶¹ Eunapius says that the barbarians often tricked the Romans by pretending to be Christians, even dressing themselves up as bishops and monks.³⁶² Zosimus ignores this story, which was most likely made up by the sophist who was fanatically anti-Christian.³⁶³ Eunapius blames the monks and the neglect of Pagan rites for Alaric's invasion of Greece whereas the *Historia Nova* blames Gerontius, the commander of the garrison at Thermopylae.³⁶⁴ Zosimus treats the foundation of Constantinople in a more objective fashion than Eunapius. Among other things, Eunapius says that Constantine transported a mob of stupid drunks to Constantinople because he loved to be applauded in the theaters by men so intoxicated that they could not hold their liquor.³⁶⁵ The *Historia Nova* mentions none of this and only obliquely refers to Constantine plundering cities and Pagan temples for treasures with which to beautify his new capital.³⁶⁶ Several other instances of Zosimus' moderation in judgement could

³⁵⁶ Eunap. *Frag.* 26.6.

³⁵⁷ Zos. 5.4.3, 5.34.6; Eunap. *Frag.* 62.2.

³⁵⁸ Eunap. *Frag.* 65.3.

³⁵⁹ Zos. 4.45.2, 4.51.1, 5.57.2, 5.8.3-5.9.7.

³⁶⁰ Eunap. *Frag.* 44.3-44.4; Zos. 4.23.1-4.23.4.

³⁶¹ Eunap. *VS* 472; Zos. 5.23.

³⁶² Eunap. *Frag.* 48.2.

³⁶³ These examples indicate that Zosimus' did not blame the fall of the empire simply on Christians and Christianity, as has been alleged by various writers. Zosimus' views on the causes of the decline and demise of the Roman Empire will be discussed in more detail below.

³⁶⁴ Zos. 5.5.5; Eunap. *VS* 476.

³⁶⁵ Eunap. *VS* 462.

³⁶⁶ Zos. 2.30-2.32.

also be cited.³⁶⁷ Furthermore, Zosimus ignored the moral didacticisms and references to philosophers he found in the work of the sophist. For example, after relating the usurpation and fall of Procopius, the sophist digresses on the morality of punishing the innocent along with the guilty, while the historian simply records the facts.³⁶⁸ In another instance, Eunapius attacks Arbazacius the Isaurian for his greed, lust, avarice and addiction to drink, whereas Zosimus' account shows much more restraint.³⁶⁹ Other instances may also be cited where Zosimus has ignored the moral observations of Eunapius.³⁷⁰ Eunapius mentioned Cynics, Sophists and other philosophers throughout his history, while Zosimus, for the most part, ignored them. For instance, Zosimus, unlike Eunapius, omits all mention of Julian's relations with Cynics and pays no attention to the deaths of various philosophers during Alaric's invasion of Greece.³⁷¹ Eunapius' medical interests led him to include details about Gainas' illness and treatment, a topic that the *Historia Nova* completely disregards.³⁷² Since Eunapius' work was practically a panegyric on Julian we find him praising his administration of justice and his religious policies.³⁷³ Zosimus treats Julian in a much more subdued manner and totally ignores Julian's religious policies, mentioning his Paganism only in passing and focusing on political and military events. Zosimus wrote his work to demonstrate what had caused the downfall of Roman Empire, not to extol the virtues and policies of Julian. The notion that Zosimus was a slavish copier of Eunapius should finally be put to rest as the evidence clearly demonstrates that Zosimus used various sources to compose his *Historia Nova*.

³⁶⁷ The following examples may also be noted: Eunapius fiercely attacks (*Frag.* 65.1) Eutropius, whom he compares to Salmoneus and the Gorgon where Zosimus never engages in this hyperbole. Zosimus reports (5.19.1) that Gainas pretended to be sick so that he could leave Constantinople without suspicion and attempt to take over the city with the help of his accomplices. Eunapius relates (*Frag.* 67.1) that Gainas was actually sick and that he openly declared war on the court officials after he had left the city.

³⁶⁸ Eunap. *Frag.* 34.9; Zos. 4.8.5.

³⁶⁹ Eunap. *Frag.* 71.1; Zos. 5.20.3-5.20.4.

³⁷⁰ The following examples may be noted: Eunapius denounces (*Frag.* 67.5, 67.6) the *magister* Leo, and accuses him of having more whores than soldiers and of drinking more than any of his men and behaving like a lion. Zosimus' sober account (5.14.2, 5.16.5) mentions only his lack of military experience and that he was cowardly and luxurious. The sophist describes (*Frag.* 65.3) the character of the *magister* Timasius in a reproachful manner while the *Historia Nova* gives (5.8-5.10) a favorable account of him.

³⁷¹ Eunap. *Frag.* 25.2, 25.3, 25.4, 26.1, 26.2; Eunap. *VS* 476, 482.

³⁷² Eunap. *Frag.* 71.1; Zos. 5.19.1.

³⁷³ Eunap. *Frag.* 25.1, 28.5.

BOOKS FIVE AND SIX

Since the history of Eunapius ended in 404, Zosimus had to make use of another main source for the last part of his history. Zosimus turned to the work of Olympiodorus of Thebes, whom he mentions in his text as he makes the transition from Eunapius for events after 404.³⁷⁴ This transition occurs at either 5.25 or 5.26.³⁷⁵ That Zosimus used Olympiodorus, for this part of his history, was proven conclusively by Rosenstein.³⁷⁶ In his *Bibliotheca*, Photius described the historical work of Olympiodorus in the following manner:

Read the *Histories* of Olympiodorus, in twenty-two books. They begin with the seventh consulship of the emperor Honorius and the second of Theodosius, and go down to the time when Valentinian, the son of Placidia and Constantius, was proclaimed emperor of the Romans. The author, a heathen, was a native of Thebes in Egypt, a poet by profession, according to his own account. His style is clear but loose and wanting in vigor, and sometimes degenerates into commonplace vulgarity, so that the work does not deserve to be considered a history. Perhaps that is the reason why the author himself, conscious of these defects, declares that his work is not a history, but a collection of materials for a history, so destitute of regular form did he himself consider his style and phraseology. He is not distinguished for form, except so far as one might assert that he now and again approaches simplicity; but even in this, owing to the excessive meanness and paltriness of his diction, he is unsuccessful and gradually descends to vulgar mannerism. He calls his work *Silva*, but divides it into books and strives to embellish it with prefaces. It is dedicated to the emperor Theodosius [II], the son of Arcadius, and nephew of Honorius and Placidia.³⁷⁷

Photius then gives a long summary of the work together with a series of extracts, varying in length between a page and a couple of lines. These extracts summarize the entire contents of the *Histories* (or *Materials for History*) and are divided into forty-five sections. The extracts deal with a diverse amount of material including those of a historical, technical and geographical nature. The description preserved by Photius is our major source of *testimonia* for the lost work of Olympiodorus. Unlike the work of the Eunapius, Olympiodorus' work was not used in the *Excerpta Historica* or the *Suda*. Sozomen, along with Zosimus, also made extensive use of Olympiodorus. Sozomen used Olympiodorus for the last part of his *Ecclesiastical History*, from

³⁷⁴ Zos. 5.25-5.26.

³⁷⁵ Johann Friedrich Reitemeier, "De Zosimi fide," *Bibliotheca Philologica* 2 (1780): 225-235.

³⁷⁶ J. Rosenstein, "Kritische Untersuchungen über das Verhältnis zwischen Olympiodor, Zosimus und Sozomenus," *Forschungen zur Deutschen Geschichte* 1 (1862): 167-204.

³⁷⁷ Freese, *Library of Photius*, 80.

9.4 until its conclusion.³⁷⁸ He preserved many details that are not in Zosimus and seems to have followed Olympiodorus more closely than Zosimus.³⁷⁹ Sozomen includes titles, offices, distances and the names of provinces in a form closer to Latin, frequently directly transliterating the Latin into Greek letters.³⁸⁰ Sozomen's comprehensive narrative extends to the year 412. Sozomen also gave a very compressed and basic outline of later events to the installation of Valentinian III in 425.³⁸¹ It is unclear whether Philostorgius also used Olympiodorus, because his *Ecclesiastical History* is no longer extant.³⁸² The twelfth book of Philostorgius, his final book, covered the entire period of the work of Olympiodorus from 408 to 425. In order to determine the nature of the work, we have to rely chiefly on the summaries of Photius, who wrote an extensive epitome of Philostorgius' *Ecclesiastical History* in addition to writing a review of the work in his *Bibliotheca*.³⁸³ By carefully comparing Photius' summary of Philostorgius with that given for Olympiodorus, Jeep concluded that Philostorgius had used Olympiodorus.³⁸⁴ Mendelssohn asserted, however, that not enough of Philostorgius had survived to make such a claim.³⁸⁵ Bidez, Thompson and Matthews all agreed with Jeep, while Haedicke followed Mendelssohn.³⁸⁶ Apparently, Philostorgius and Olympiodorus held very different views about Stilicho and also reported versions of events that were quite different in many cases. The former is reported to have violently attacked Stilicho in direct contrast to the latter who appears to have presented Stilicho in

³⁷⁸ Two short extracts from Olympiodorus also appear in books two and eight of Sozomen's *Ecclesiastical History*.

³⁷⁹ Sozom. *Hist. Eccl.* 8.25.38, 9.4.3; cf. Zos. 5.26.2 (appointment of Jovian); Sozom. *Hist. Eccl.* 9.6.3; cf. Zos. 5.42.3 (desertion of barbarian slaves); Sozom. *Hist. Eccl.* 9.8.2-9.8.3; cf. Zos. 6.7.2-9 (Attalus' supporters); Sozom. *Hist. Eccl.* 9.8.2; cf. Zos. 6.7.3 (Attalus' speech); Sozom. *Hist. Eccl.* 9.8.5; cf. Zos. 6.8.1 (Attalus' embassy).

³⁸⁰ Edward Thompson, "Olympiodorus of Thebes," *Classical Quarterly* 38 (1944): 48.

³⁸¹ Sozom. *Hist. Eccl.* 9.16 ff.

³⁸² For a list of similarities between the works of Philostorgius and Olympiodorus see: Frank Clover, "Olympiodorus of Thebes and the *Historia Augusta*," *Bonner Historia-Augusta Colloquium 1979/1981* 15 (1983): 136-137.

³⁸³ Phot. *Bibl. cod.* 40; Phot. *Epit. of the Hist. Eccl. of Philostorg.*

³⁸⁴ Ludwig Jeep, "Quellenuntersuchungen zu den griechischen Kirchenhistorikern," *Jahrbücher für classische Philologie*, suppl. 14 (1884): 73-81.

³⁸⁵ Mendelssohn, *Zosimi*, xlvii ff.

³⁸⁶ Joseph Bidez, *Philostorgius Kirchengeschichte* (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1913), xv, cxxxix, 140; Thompson, "Olympiodorus of Thebes," 43; John Matthews, "Olympiodorus of Thebes," *Journal of Roman Studies* 60 (1970): 81; Walter Haedicke, "Olympiodorus," in *Real Encyclopädie der Classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, vol.18 bk. 1 (Stuttgart: A. Druckenmüller, 1939): 201-207.

a favorable light.³⁸⁷ Philostorgius reports a different version of the events surrounding Attalus' proposal to mutilate Honorius from that preserved in Sozomen and Zosimus.³⁸⁸ Photius' *Epitome of the Ecclesiastical History of Philostorgius* contains a peculiar statement about the downfall of Stilicho.³⁸⁹ This fragment reports that some sources state that a man named Olympiodorus, and not Olympius, was responsible for the downfall of Stilicho. Baldwin argued that the text has been corrupted and suggested that it be amended to state that other sources do not say who bought down Stilicho but Olympiodorus reports that it was a man named Olympius.³⁹⁰ Philostorgius marks Theodosius' entry into adolescence with a Latin date, which suggests that he may have been using Olympiodorus' *Materials for History*.³⁹¹ Baldwin has also asserted that there appear to be several linguistic similarities between the fragments of Philostorgius and Olympiodorus.³⁹² Given the fact that the original works of Philostorgius and Olympiodorus are no longer extant and that we can only approach these texts through the paraphrases of Photius, the connection between these two authors can never be known with certainty. Baldwin is probably correct in asserting that "given the absence of other Greek sources for the period, and the likelihood that Philostorgius could not exploit any Latin ones, it is hard to see where else he could have turned" if not to the work of Olympiodorus.³⁹³ Blockley has also noted that the topical treatment and repetition of material found in the fragments of Philostorgius follow what is known to be the basic structure of Olympiodorus' work.³⁹⁴ He suggests that the differences in the texts may be due to the fact that Philostorgius used another source along with the work of Olympiodorus.³⁹⁵ As defective as Photius' *Epitome of Philostorgius* is, it is the only surviving source known to have made use of the latter portion (which covered events after 412) of Olympiodorus' work. Stevens conjectured that Procopius might have also used Olympiodorus for his *History of the Wars*.³⁹⁶ Procopius

³⁸⁷ Phot. *Epit. of the Hist. Eccl. of Philostorg.* 12.1; Phot. *Bibl. cod.* 40, 80.

³⁸⁸ Phot. *Epit. of the Hist. Eccl. of Philostorg.* 12.3; Sozom. *Hist. Eccl.* 9.8; Zos. 6.8.1.

³⁸⁹ Phot. *Epit. of the Hist. Eccl. of Philostorg.* 12.1.

³⁹⁰ Barry Baldwin, "Olympiodorus of Thebes," *L'Antiquité Classique* 49 (1980): 228-231.

³⁹¹ Phot. *Epit. of the Hist. Eccl. of Philostorg.* 12.8.

³⁹² Baldwin, "Olympiodorus of Thebes," 229-230.

³⁹³ *Ibid.*, 231.

³⁹⁴ Photius' epitome of Philostorgius combines several sieges of Rome into one but doubles Sarus' fatal attack in August of 410, q.v. Phot. *Epit. of the Hist. Eccl. of Philostorg.* 12.3.

³⁹⁵ Blockley, *Fragmentary Classicising Historians*, 1:107-108.

³⁹⁶ Procopius may have used Olympiodorus in his *History of the Wars*, in that part (3.2.28-3.2.38) which deals with the elevation and deposition of Attalus, q.v. C.E. Stevens, "Marcus, Gratian, Constantine," *Athenaeum* 35 (1979): 340 ff; Blockley, *Fragmentary Classicising Historians*, 1:28.

begins his *Vandalic War* with a summary of Italian history, which appears to contain a confused version of Olympiodorus' narrative for the years 408-410. Because of the shoddy nature of this summary, Blockley maintained that Procopius could not have used Olympiodorus directly. He suggested that Procopius might have been using the work of a Christian epitomator.³⁹⁷

It is believed that Olympiodorus was born sometime between the years 365-380, in the city of Thebes in Egypt. During this era Thebes was a flourishing center of traditional Greek culture and literary learning, producing many politicians and public figures.³⁹⁸ Very little is known about the life of Olympiodorus, but he seems to have been quite well known in his day as his fame, according to Photius, spread beyond the borders of the Empire.³⁹⁹ Olympiodorus' social class and background are unknown. Thompson carefully examined Olympiodorus' remarks on different segments of society and concluded that he was far below the social status of the senatorial landowners.⁴⁰⁰ Olympiodorus gives us the exact incomes of various Senators in what seems to be a disapproving manner and Thompson argued that this showed his hostility to the incredibly wealthy and parasitic Senators.⁴⁰¹ Olympiodorus observed that the Senators lived in utter dissipation while the vast majority of the populace was living in such misery that they actually welcomed the arrival of the barbarians.⁴⁰² Thompson also pointed out that Olympiodorus, like Claudian, was a staunch supporter of Stilicho and his policies. This places Olympiodorus in direct opposition to the senatorial class who bitterly opposed Stilicho and viewed him as a barbaric megalomaniac.⁴⁰³ Consequently, Thompson asserted that Olympiodorus must have been a minor official who was far enough below the senatorial class to take an objective view of its place in the Roman world. Rohrbacher maintained that the friends and associates mentioned by

³⁹⁷ Blockley, *Fragmentary Classicising Historians*, 1:108.

³⁹⁸ Alan Cameron, "Wandering Poets: A Literary Movement in Byzantine Egypt," *Historia* 14 (1965): 470-509.

³⁹⁹ Olymp. *Frag.* 35.2.

⁴⁰⁰ Thompson, "Olympiodorus of Thebes," 51.

⁴⁰¹ Olymp. *Frag.* 41.2.

⁴⁰² Baldwin believed that these passages do not offer any convincing evidence for the social attitudes of Olympiodorus, pointing out that a social critic would not have "balanced the picture of private affluence in *Fragment* 41.1 with the statistics for the public amenities of the great Baths," q.v. Baldwin, "Olympiodorus of Thebes," 216.

⁴⁰³ Sozom. *Hist. Eccl.* 9.6.6; Claudian *De Bello Gothico*. Baldwin rejected the argument that hatred of Stilicho was a manifestation of class hatred because Eunapius, who was more inconsequential than Olympiodorus and Claudius, vehemently hated Stilicho. Baldwin suggested that Olympiodorus may have believed the panegyric praises of Claudian because he was a fellow Egyptian and poet, q.v. Baldwin, "Olympiodorus of Thebes," 224-225.

Olympiodorus (in the extant fragments) situate him in the literary-administrative class.⁴⁰⁴ A careful examination of the *testimonia* of Olympiodorus reveals more attitudes that only confirm that Olympiodorus could not have been a Senator. Olympiodorus was critical of Attalus, who was largely supported by the senatorial class because of his anti-barbarian policies. Olympiodorus was especially incensed by Attalus' refusal to send barbarian troops to suppress the revolt of Heraclianus in Africa and by his grandiose claims that he would bring the entire Roman Empire under the control of the Roman Senate.⁴⁰⁵ Olympiodorus also had a positive attitude towards Alaric, a barbarian who was viewed with contempt by the senatorial class. He portrays him as a shrewd politician who did his best to win a place of settlement for his people and sought to receive recognition from the Roman government in return for service.⁴⁰⁶

According to Photius, Olympiodorus was a Pagan but he was by no means the fanatic that Eunapius had been. Olympiodorus, like Ammianus, did not deal very much with religion in his work and seems to have been concerned mainly with secular matters. A few of the Photian fragments suggest that Olympiodorus believed in magic, but this was quite common in antiquity.⁴⁰⁷ According to Thompson, Olympiodorus may have been a Neo-Platonist.⁴⁰⁸ Thompson based this belief on a passage in Zosimus that seems to be dealing with Neoplatonic doctrine, but there is no evidence to indicate that this was not a comment made by Zosimus himself.⁴⁰⁹ More convincing evidence is provided by Photius who says that Hierocles, a Neo-Platonic teacher, dedicated his philosophical work *On Providence and Destiny* to Olympiodorus.⁴¹⁰ Hierocles refers to Olympiodorus' travels and successful embassies to various barbarian tribes, making his identification with Olympiodorus of Thebes almost certain.⁴¹¹ Olympiodorus seems to have been friends with Leontius, the father of Aelia Eudocia, and he

⁴⁰⁴ Rohrbacher cites fragments 27, 28 and 31 of Olympiodorus, q.v. David Rohrbacher, *Historians of Late Antiquity* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 74. Matthews also agreed that Olympiodorus could not have belonged to the senatorial class, q.v. Matthews, "Olympiodorus of Thebes," 81.

⁴⁰⁵ Sozom. *Hist. Eccl.* 9.8.2; Zos. 6.7.3-6.7.4.

⁴⁰⁶ Olymp. *Frag.* 1-11; Zos. 5.20.2, 5.41.4, 5.51.1.

⁴⁰⁷ Olymp. *Frag.* 16, 27, 36.

⁴⁰⁸ Thompson, "Olympiodorus of Thebes," 43.

⁴⁰⁹ Zos. 5.25.5; cf. Plotinus *Ennead.* 1.2.6, 3.1.10; also cf. Zos. 5.41.5.

⁴¹⁰ Phot. *Bibl. cod.* 214.

⁴¹¹ Photius' summary of the history of Olympiodorus describes (*Frag.* 19, 28, 35.1, 35.2) some of his travels.

helped him obtain a philosophical chair at Athens.⁴¹² Blockley suggested that if this information were true, Olympiodorus might have had connections to the sophistic circles at Athens.⁴¹³ Ruggini rejected this idea as mere speculation and believed that Olympiodorus had no personal connections with the Neo-Platonists, whom he viewed as reserved, passive and quietist.⁴¹⁴ Ruggini argued that this would have been uncharacteristic of Olympiodorus because the *testimonia* show him to be an outgoing individual who was involved with the world around him. This can be seen from Olympiodorus' great interest in geography and traveling as well as his fondness for poetry. Hence, Ruggini maintained that it was very unlikely that Olympiodorus would have followed the restrained and aloof life favored by the Neo-Platonists. In the extant fragments, Olympiodorus only mentions one of his friends by name, a grammarian named Philtatus, calling him his companion.⁴¹⁵ Philtatus was responsible for ascertaining the proper length of a *colon*, when an inquiry was instituted in Athens concerning the transcription of books by *cola*. His discourse on colometry won him such acclaim that the Athenians raised a statue in his honor.⁴¹⁶

Olympiodorus' lack of anti-Christian rhetoric can be explained by the fact that he dedicated his work to Theodosius II. Even at this period, highly educated Pagans, regardless of their religion, continued to obtain governmental positions even as the Christian emperors continued to proscribe the ancestral Pagan rites. Thompson believed that Olympiodorus might have performed his civil service in the eastern half of the Roman Empire.⁴¹⁷ Maenschen-Helfen maintained that he might have also had some service in the West under Honorius, which is highly probable given his obvious interest in the western half of the Empire.⁴¹⁸ Olympiodorus knew Latin well and he took many opportunities, in his work, to show off his knowledge of it.⁴¹⁹ In the

⁴¹² Olymp. *Frag.* 28; Olympiodorus may have only been acting as a government agent as Leontius seems to have been reluctant to accept the seat.

⁴¹³ Blockley, *Fragmentary Classicising Historians*, 1:38.

⁴¹⁴ L. Ruggini, "Pubblicistica e storiografia bizantine di fronte alla crisi dell' impero Romano," *Athenaeum* 51 (1973): 174-178.

⁴¹⁵ His daughter Athenais married Theodosius II in the year 421 and took the name of Aelia Eudocia, q.v. Andrew Gillett, "Date and Circumstances of Olympiodorus," *Traditio* 48 (1992): 13.

⁴¹⁶ Olymp. *Frag.* 31.

⁴¹⁷ Thompson, "Olympiodorus of Thebes," 43.

⁴¹⁸ Otto Maenchen-Helfen, *The World of the Huns* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 74.

⁴¹⁹ The copious amount of transliterated Latin in the work of Olympiodorus proves beyond a doubt that he was very fluent with the language, q.v. Matthews, "Olympiodorus of Thebes," 85-87.

fifth century, Latin continued to be the official language of the eastern half of the Empire although it was becoming increasingly rare to find men who were conversant in both languages.⁴²⁰ Photius says that Olympiodorus called himself a ποιητής by profession. In the late nineteenth century, a papyrus with a poem called the *Blemyomachia* was discovered at Thebes.⁴²¹ This poem contains a description of a successful Roman battle against the Blemmyes. Enrico Livrea has suggested that Olympiodorus may have been the author of this poem.⁴²² The case for this remains unproven; the only certain example of Olympiodorus' poetry survives in a fragment from Photius.⁴²³

Olympiodorus was an adventurous traveler who seems to have been interested in acquiring all sorts of interesting facts, very much in the tradition of Herodotus.⁴²⁴ For example, in 412-413, the earliest datable event of his life, we find him going on an embassy to the Huns.⁴²⁵ We know that the Huns usually conducted business in Hunnic, Gothic or Latin as very few of them were able to understand Greek.⁴²⁶ This suggests that Olympiodorus may have been chosen to accompany the embassy because of his known competence in Latin.⁴²⁷ On his way to the Huns, Olympiodorus endured a dangerous sea voyage in which he almost perished. Soon after the embassy arrived in the land of the Huns, the negotiations went awry. Donatus, one of the Hunnic kings, was treacherously killed, and the Huns flared up with rage against the Romans. The embassy was only saved after Charaton, the leading king of the Huns, had been appeased with lavish gifts.⁴²⁸ Cameron has suggested that Olympiodorus was intentionally sent on an assassination mission.⁴²⁹ This seems unlikely, however, because Olympiodorus informs us that

⁴²⁰ Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, 2:988 ff.

⁴²¹ Enrico Livrea, *Anonymi fortasse Olympiodori Thebani Blemyomachia* (Meisenheim am Glan: A. Hain, 1978), 36-53.

⁴²² Ibid., 153-156; Olymp. *Frag.* 35.2 indicates that Olympiodorus was well known to the Blemmyes.

⁴²³ For a refutation of Livrea's arguments see: Clover, "Olympiodorus of Thebes and the *Historia Augusta*," 153-156; cf. Olymp. *Frag.* 35.2. Photius preserves for us an epigram (Olymp. *Frag.* 41.1) in the form of a hexameter that was apparently written by Olympiodorus.

⁴²⁴ Olymp. *Frag.* 35.2.

⁴²⁵ Ibid., 19.

⁴²⁶ Priscus *Frag.* 11.2.

⁴²⁷ Olympiodorus may have also been familiar with barbarian languages. *Fragment* 29.1 seems to suggest that Olympiodorus knew some Vandal.

⁴²⁸ Olymp. *Frag.* 19.

⁴²⁹ Cameron, "Wandering Poets," 497.

Donatus was wickedly killed and deceived by an oath.⁴³⁰ There is also nothing (in *Fragment* 19) that suggests that Olympiodorus was at the head of this embassy to the Huns; he was most likely acting simply as an interpreter.⁴³¹ The embassy, which was apparently sent under the auspices of the eastern imperial court, met with the Huns in an unknown location. Blockley suggested that Olympiodorus crossed the Black Sea in order to reach the Huns living on the north of the lower Danube.⁴³² Sirago believed that Olympiodorus traveled from Athens and sailed up the Adriatic to the Huns of the middle Danube.⁴³³ Blockley suggested that Olympiodorus might have also gone to the West for his diplomatic mission to the Huns, since he believed that the embassy might have been sent on behalf of the western imperial court.⁴³⁴ In 415, Olympiodorus made another voyage, this time traveling to Athens.⁴³⁵ As mentioned previously, Olympiodorus, while in Athens, successfully campaigned to get Leontius elected to the sophistic chair.⁴³⁶ Since Leontius did not want the appointment, Baldwin suggested that Olympiodorus might have been given the task of making sure that another candidate, who was less acceptable to the government, did not gain the chair.⁴³⁷ It is also likely that Olympiodorus was connected with the restoration of the Academy in Athens, which seems to have occurred around this time.⁴³⁸ In 421, we find Olympiodorus on yet another sea voyage, this time to Egypt.⁴³⁹ On his way there, he was apparently caught in a violent storm in which a meteorite hit the mast of his ship. Most of the crew drowned and Olympiodorus narrowly escaped.⁴⁴⁰ Olympiodorus had a parrot that he claimed could sing, dance and talk. This parrot, which had accompanied him in all his previous travels, apparently died in the storm.⁴⁴¹

⁴³⁰ Olymp. *Frag.* 19; Matthews, "Olympiodorus of Thebes," 80.

⁴³¹ Baldwin, "Olympiodorus of Thebes," 214.

⁴³² Blockley, *Fragmentary Classicising Historians*, 1:163.

⁴³³ V.A. Sirago, "Olimpiodoro di Tebe e la sua opera storico," *Ricerche storiche ed economiche in memoria di C. Barbagallo* 2 (1970): 7-9.

⁴³⁴ Blockley, *Fragmentary Classicising Historians*, 1:27.

⁴³⁵ Olymp. *Frag.* 28; Sirago, "Olimpiodoro di Tebe," 4.

⁴³⁶ After Leonitus' death, his daughter Athenais, who had been brought up as a Pagan, went to Constantinople to pursue a lawsuit. While she was there, she came to the attention of the Augusta Pulcheria who saw in her a good wife for Theodosius II. Athenais was baptized as Aelia Eudocia and married to Theodosius II in June of 421.

⁴³⁷ Baldwin, "Olympiodorus of Thebes," 214.

⁴³⁸ Chaffin, *Olympiodorus of Thebes*, xlviii.

⁴³⁹ Olymp. *Frag.* 35.1, 35.2; Sirago, "Olimpiodoro di Tebe," 4. Blockley believes that Olympiodorus' trips to Athens and Egypt followed close upon each other and dates the whole journey to the years 415-418, q.v. Blockley, *Fragmentary Classicising Historians*, 1:164.

⁴⁴⁰ Olymp. *Frag.* 35.1.

⁴⁴¹ Ibid., 19, 28, 32, 35.1, 35.2.

While in Egypt, Olympiodorus spent time researching in the area of Thebes and Syene.⁴⁴² Gillett argued that the research that Olympiodorus conducted was associated with his services for the court, not with his historical work.⁴⁴³ Olympiodorus is also known to have visited the Blemmyes in lower Nubia.⁴⁴⁴ Gillett believed that Olympiodorus undertook this journey as part of an embassy for the imperial government, as the Blemmyes are known to have been a threat to the security of the Empire at this time.⁴⁴⁵ Olympiodorus also traveled to the great Oasis of Siwah.⁴⁴⁶ *Fragments* 41 and 42 suggest that Olympiodorus spend some time in the West. In *Fragment* 41, Olympiodorus intimately describes the buildings in the city of Rome as well as the incomes of the Roman nobility. He expresses his amazement at the colossal size of some of the monuments and private buildings in the city. In *Fragment* 42, Olympiodorus argued that Odysseus had wandered over the coasts of Italy, not only over the coasts of Sicily as had been previously thought. These two fragments, Matthews suggested, seem to indicate that Olympiodorus traveled to the West.⁴⁴⁷ Haedicke believed that the duration of Olympiodorus' visit was long and that he resided for some time in Rome as well as at Honorius' court at Ravenna.⁴⁴⁸ Thompson, who argued that there is no direct evidence that Olympiodorus ever went to the West, believed that Olympiodorus may have gone there, but asserted that if he did his stay was brief.⁴⁴⁹ Baldwin believed that Olympiodorus' description of Rome is almost certainly based on personal observation, especially since the city moved Olympiodorus to compose a hexameter line of wonderment.⁴⁵⁰ What prompted Olympiodorus to travel to the West? Matthews maintained that Olympiodorus might have been involved with the restoration of the emperor Valentinian III.⁴⁵¹ Baldwin offered two other possibilities. Baldwin suggested that Olympiodorus might simply have been one of the many

⁴⁴² Ibid., 35.2.

⁴⁴³ Gillett, "Date and Circumstances of Olympiodorus," 13.

⁴⁴⁴ Olymp. *Frag.* 35.2.

⁴⁴⁵ Gillett, "Date and Circumstances of Olympiodorus," 13.

⁴⁴⁶ Olymp. *Frag.* 32, 35.2.

⁴⁴⁷ Matthews believes that *Fragment* 42 may refer to Olympiodorus' travels in northern Italy, q.v. Matthews, "Olympiodorus of Thebes," 89.

⁴⁴⁸ Walter Haedicke, "Olympiodorus," in *Real Encyclopädie der Classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, vol. 18 bk. 1 (Stuttgart: A. Druckenmüller, 1939): col. 201-238; Colin D. Gordon, *The Age of Attila* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1960), 194.

⁴⁴⁹ Thompson, "Olympiodorus of Thebes," 46.

⁴⁵⁰ Baldwin believed that the words that Olympiodorus used implied an on-the-spot reaction, q.v. Baldwin, "Olympiodorus of Thebes," 215.

⁴⁵¹ Matthews, "Olympiodorus of Thebes," 80.

people who rushed to Rome in 425 in the hopes of attracting imperial attention. Baldwin also proposed that Olympiodorus might have been sent on a specific mission. He suggested that Olympiodorus might have been involved in the suppression of the usurpation of John. One task that Olympiodorus may have been suited for was the detaching of Hunnic mercenaries from the cause of John and Aetius. Baldwin also proposed that Olympiodorus might have gone to the West to safeguard the interests of Boniface, the count of Africa, against Aetius.⁴⁵²

Olympiodorus was very interested in geography, which should not be surprising for a man who seems to have traveled so extensively throughout the Roman Empire. The fragments show that Olympiodorus also researched and studied geography in both prose and verse authors.⁴⁵³ In *Fragment* 42, Olympiodorus gives his views on Homeric geography, and he compares the account of Herodotus and Herodorus about the geography of the great Oasis of Egypt in *Fragment* 32. The identity of this Herodorus is unknown. Gudeman suggested that he may be the Herodorus who is known to have written a geographical and historical work on the Argonauts and their voyages.⁴⁵⁴ In *Fragment* 41.1, Olympiodorus cites the geometrician Ammon who had measured the walls of Rome. Thompson asserted that the surviving fragments of Olympiodorus (along with derivative narratives based on Olympiodorus) “contain an accuracy of geographical information which is unsurpassed in ancient historiography.”⁴⁵⁵ Olympiodorus’ wide travel probably contributed to his extensive and unusual understanding of barbarian peoples.

There is some evidence that Olympiodorus may have been a fervent Pagan. As stated before, it is believed that Hierocles, a militant Pagan, dedicated his philosophical work, entitled *On Providence and Destiny*, to Olympiodorus, whom he calls the critic and inspiration of his work.⁴⁵⁶ Kaegi claimed that the fragments preserved by Photius reveal that Olympiodorus may have written his work to demonstrate to Theodosius II, in spite of his anti-Pagan legislation, the value of Paganism to the Empire. In *Fragments* 16 and 27, Olympiodorus ascribes protective power to consecrated Pagan statues that had, as long as they stood, prevented the barbarians from overrunning the Roman Empire. Kaegi also asserted that Olympiodorus recorded Pagan attempts

⁴⁵² Baldwin, “Olympiodorus of Thebes,” 217-218.

⁴⁵³ Thompson, “Olympiodorus of Thebes,” 45.

⁴⁵⁴ Alfred Gudeman, “Herodorus” in *Real Encyclopädie der Classischen Altertumswissenschaft* (Stuttgart: A. Druckenmüller, 1939): 8:988 ff; Thompson, “Olympiodorus of Thebes,” 45.

⁴⁵⁵ Thompson, “Olympiodorus of Thebes,” 50.

⁴⁵⁶ Phot. *Bibl. cod.* 214.

to defend Roman security in the hope that Theodosius II would be persuaded to modify or reverse his anti-Pagan legislation. Kaegi argued that Olympiodorus might have hoped to convince Theodosius II to allow the performance of Pagan rites and permit the preservation of existing Pagan temples.⁴⁵⁷ Baldwin disagreed and maintained that Olympiodorus was careful to be neutral, in the manner of Ammianus and Claudius, especially since he was dealing with a fanatically Christian emperor.⁴⁵⁸ Olympiodorus made no specific references to Christianity in his work. The fact that Sozomen's work became almost completely secular once he began to use the narrative of Olympiodorus refutes Kaegi's view.⁴⁵⁹ Sozomen felt so comfortable with the narrative of Olympiodorus that he did not feel like he had to correct his Pagan source with negative commentary. Furthermore, if Olympiodorus had expressed a substantial amount of pro-Pagan attitudes we would certainly have heard about it from the fanatical Photius, who ardently attacked anyone who expressed sympathies that were not in concert with orthodox Christianity.⁴⁶⁰ This evidence seems to indicate that Olympiodorus, while possibly Pagan, did not advance a Pagan agenda in his work.

Olympiodorus wrote his historical work in Greek and called it ὕλη συγγραφῆς or *Materials for History*. The book was not written in the manner of a traditional chronological history, being essentially a topical compilation of heterogeneous historical information. It seems to have been a common practice for public officials in antiquity to assemble such materials in order that they themselves, or others, could later make use of them as a basis for a proper *Historia*.⁴⁶¹ Olympiodorus' political narrative, in twenty-two books, is concerned only with events in the western half of the Empire. It covered the history of the years 407-425, according to Photius. Reitemeier suggested that Olympiodorus had an introductory chapter on events leading up to the year 407.⁴⁶² He based this on *Fragment 2*, which contains information that predates 405. This fragment is concerned with Stilicho and offers a sketch of his early career. Here Olympiodorus mentions Stilicho's guardianship over the two sons of Theodosius I and also

⁴⁵⁷ Walter Kaegi, *Byzantium and the Decline of Rome* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1968), 87-91.

⁴⁵⁸ Baldwin, "Olympiodorus of Thebes," 215-220.

⁴⁵⁹ Sozom. *Hist. Eccl.* 9.4.

⁴⁶⁰ Phot. *Bibl. cod.* 77, 98.

⁴⁶¹ Lucian *Hist.* 16; Eunap. *Frag.* 15.

⁴⁶² Reitemeier, *Zosimi*, xxv.

Stilicho's marriage to Serena. Matthews suggested that the general introduction of events went back only to the invasion of Radagaisus in 405-406.⁴⁶³ Blockley rejected this idea and argued that *Fragment 2* seems to indicate that Olympiodorus' introduction only offered a sketch of Stilicho's career and covered events from the death of Theodosius I. This introduction expounding on Stilicho's successful career would fit well with Olympiodorus' view of the importance of Stilicho. Blockley believed that the formal beginning of Olympiodorus' history began with the disastrous German invasions of 407, which was provided as a counterpoint to the successes of Stilicho, who was soon to be murdered.⁴⁶⁴ Paschoud pointed out that the first consular date noted in Zosimus was in 408, the year of Stilicho's death. Paschoud concluded that Olympiodorus must have officially begun his work with 408, instead of 407 as Photius stated.⁴⁶⁵ Whatever the case may be, one thing is certain, Olympiodorus had no intention of continuing the history of Eunapius, which not only ended in 404 but also was also heavily concerned with eastern events.⁴⁶⁶

Olympiodorus' history was very detailed as it covered only eighteen years in its twenty-two books. The first ten books dealt with the years 407 to 412, each book covering a little over half a year. These first ten books may have been published separately. They encompassed the period from the downfall and death of Stilicho to the first sojourn of the Visigoths in Gaul and Spain. The last twelve books dealt with the years 413 to 425, with each book containing about one year. These covered the period up to the crowning of Valentinian III at Rome in 425. It has been suggested that Olympiodorus may have left his work unfinished, intending to complete his

⁴⁶³ Matthews, "Olympiodorus of Thebes," 87 ff; Matthews based his argument on the fact that both Zosimus and Sozomen mention events of the year 405-406 (Zos. 4.36; Sozom. *Hist. Eccl.* 9.4). Matthews maintained that Olympiodorus began his history with the year 405 because this year marked the breakdown of Stilicho's relationship with Alaric, which Matthews believed was the origin of Stilicho's fall from power. Matthews argued that a narrative of general events from the year 405 would have enabled Olympiodorus to set the decline of Stilicho's position in its political and strategic context.

⁴⁶⁴ Blockley, *Fragmentary Classicising Historians*, 1:30.

⁴⁶⁵ François Paschoud, "Le Debut de l'Ouvrage Historique d'Olympiodore," *Studia in honorem Iro Kajanto*. Helsinki: Classical Association of Finland (1985): 185-196.

⁴⁶⁶ Buck disagreed and believed that Olympiodorus was continuing Eunapius because of the simple fact that Olympiodorus gives a brief account of Stilicho's rise to power from the death of Theodosius in 395, q.v. D.F. Buck, "Dexippus, Eunapius and Olympiodorus: Continuation and Imitation," *Ancient History Bulletin* 1.2 (1987): 48-50. Blockley has shown that Olympiodorus' introduction dealt with the early career of Stilicho and was not a survey of major events, q.v. Blockley, *Fragmentary Classicising Historians*, 1:30-31.

work in thirty books.⁴⁶⁷ Olympiodorus' education, travels and diplomatic career as well as his connections with politicians would have given him access to good first-hand information. Olympiodorus seems to have spent most of his time in the East, as there is no evidence that he visited the West before the year 425. Scholars debate over whether Olympiodorus personally collected his information or simply followed already completed written sources.⁴⁶⁸ Olympiodorus seems to have had a western bias, which may suggest that he used western sources to compose most of his history. This western bias is indicated by Olympiodorus' attitude to Stilicho, whom he presents as a sincere servant of the Roman state who is above corruption and personal ambition.⁴⁶⁹ This favorable treatment of the *magister militum* is unique among historical writers of his day.⁴⁷⁰ After the death of Theodosius I, Stilicho had claimed guardianship over both the western and eastern emperor and was accused of plotting against the eastern emperor. This naturally led the eastern court to damn his memory. Olympiodorus, however, speaks favorably about the services rendered by Stilicho for the Empire and defends him against the charge that he conspired to place his son Eucherius upon the eastern throne.⁴⁷¹ This is ironic, for the eastern emperor whom Stilicho was intending to supplant, according to this story, was Theodosius II himself, the dedicatee of Olympiodorus' history. Olympiodorus is hostile to Stilicho's enemy, Olympius, whom he views as a traitor, and is critical of the emperor Honorius.⁴⁷² The eastern court seems to have viewed Olympius as a public benefactor, who had warned Honorius of Stilicho's plots before it was too late.⁴⁷³ Olympiodorus is also very hostile to Galla Placidia, the sister of Honorius. He accuses her of engaging in incestuous relations with her brother, and blames her for leading Constantius, her husband and the father of Valentinian III, from virtue to avarice. Galla Placidia was forced to flee to the eastern court with her son upon the death of her husband and was well received there. Since Olympiodorus' attitudes to Stilicho and Placidia are

⁴⁶⁷ Clover, "Olympiodorus of Thebes and the Historia Augusta," 130.

⁴⁶⁸ Thompson, "Olympiodorus of Thebes," 47. (Thompson pointed out that *Fragment* 25 might refer to official documents).

⁴⁶⁹ Sozom. *Hist. Eccl.* 9.4.8; Zos. 5.34.5.

⁴⁷⁰ Eunapius, Orosius, Rutilius Namatianus, Jerome and even Philostorgius all condemn Stilicho for his political ambition and favorable attitude towards the barbarians; Eunap. *Frag.* 62.1-62.2, 72.3; Orosius *History Against the Pagans* 8.38.4 ff.; Rutilius Namatianus *De Reditu* 241 ff; Jerome *Epist.* 123.16; Phot. *Epit. of the Hist. Eccl. of Philostorg.* 12.1.

⁴⁷¹ Olymp. *Frag.* 3 and Sozom. *Hist. Eccl.* 9.4.7.

⁴⁷² Olymp. *Frag.* 5.

⁴⁷³ Phot. *Epit. of the Hist. Eccl. of Philostorg.* 12.1.

the opposite of what we would expect from an easterner, it is reasonable to assume that he must have been reflecting the attitude he found in western sources. Blockley suggested that one of Olympiodorus' sources could have been the history of Frigeridus Renatus, of which only a single fragment survives.⁴⁷⁴ Matthews believed that it was unlikely that Olympiodorus made significant use of this lost Latin work.⁴⁷⁵ According to Matthews, the nature of the history together with Olympiodorus' knowledge, travels and connections make it likely that Olympiodorus composed his work from first-hand sources. Since Olympiodorus' digressions deal with events from his own career as far back as 412, Matthews maintained that it can be presumed that Olympiodorus was already working, by that time, on his history. It could also be argued that Olympiodorus simply inserted these digressions into a narrative that had already been written but this, according to Matthews, seems very unlikely. The detailed nature of the history and the freshness of the digressions, Matthews asserted, make it more likely that Olympiodorus was engaged in assembling his material from the very beginning of the period covered in his history. The years after 408 saw an easing of relations between the East and West that resulted in an increase of diplomatic activity, trade and traveling between the two halves of the Empire.⁴⁷⁶ This, Matthews asserted, may have enabled Olympiodorus to conduct his own research, using first-hand sources, in the eastern half of the Empire. Thompson also believed that Olympiodorus collected his own information from personal inquiries and official documents.⁴⁷⁷ Olympiodorus does not give us much information with which to positively identify those individuals whom he consulted. Blockley and Matthews have suggested two men whom they believed Olympiodorus was likely to have conferred with. The first of these, suggested by Matthews, is a professor of rhetoric named Justinianus, who was an advisor to Stilicho.⁴⁷⁸ Justinianus left Stilicho during the summer of 408, after offering Stilicho some wise advice, which was rejected. He did this in order to avoid association with a man whose downfall he saw as imminent.⁴⁷⁹ Justinianus could have supplied Olympiodorus with much of his material on Stilicho, and this would account for Olympiodorus' favorable treatment of the *magister militum*. Matthews believed that Olympiodorus composed the

⁴⁷⁴ Only one passage is extant, which has been preserved by Gregory of Tours, q.v. Blockley, *Fragmentary Classicising Historians*, 1:139; Gregory of Tours, *History of the Franks* 2.8.

⁴⁷⁵ Matthews, "Olympiodorus of Thebes," 89-90.

⁴⁷⁶ Kaegi, *Byzantium and the Decline of Rome*, 16ff.

⁴⁷⁷ Thompson, "Olympiodorus of Thebes," 47.

⁴⁷⁸ Matthews, "Olympiodorus of Thebes," 89-90.

⁴⁷⁹ Zos. 5.30.4-5.30.5.

first portion of his history at an early stage, using information gathered from the political supporters of Stilicho, and that he did not bother to modify this portion later, when he finally published his work. A second important source, suggested by Blockley, may have been a soldier named Candidianus, who was in Placidia's retinue and who received favorable treatment in Olympiodorus' history.⁴⁸⁰ Candidianus was able to provide many details about the life of Placidia, from her own point of view. Thus we find Olympiodorus presenting Placidia's life with Ataulf, a man whom she willingly married, in favorable terms while presenting Constantius II, whom Placidia was forced to marry, in an adverse manner.⁴⁸¹ Constantius and Placidia were proclaimed Augustus and Augusta respectively by Honorius in 421. These titles were not recognized in the East and Constantius, resentful for this slight, apparently considered a campaign against Theodosius II to unseat him.⁴⁸² Olympiodorus, however, treats Constantius favorably until after he married Placidia, when the historian asserts he became avaricious and parsimonious.⁴⁸³ After the death of Constantius, Placidia was forced to leave Ravenna and flee to the eastern court where she was favorably received. Olympiodorus' attitudes, which are often at complete variance with eastern opinion, confirm that he must have relied heavily on first-hand Western sources for political opinions as well as facts. Olympiodorus mentions only one of his first hand sources directly. This source was an official in Thrace named Valerius, who appears to have been Aelia Eudocia's brother.⁴⁸⁴ Valerius provided Olympiodorus with material for one of his digressions, this one dealing with some interesting silver statues that had been found in Thrace.⁴⁸⁵ The fragments of Olympiodorus provide at least one example of evidence that attests to his use of official documents. Olympiodorus asserts that he had access to the *relatio* of the *praefectus urbi*, Caecina Decius Aginatus Albinus.⁴⁸⁶

Olympiodorus seems to have published his work in Constantinople.⁴⁸⁷ This can be deduced from the fact that he dedicated his work to Theodosius II as well as the likelihood that a

⁴⁸⁰ Olymp. *Frag.* 43.1; Blockley, *Fragmentary Classicising Historians*, 1:34-35.

⁴⁸¹ Stewart Oost, *Galla Placidia Augusta; a biographical essay* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 141ff.

⁴⁸² Olymp. *Frag.* 33.1; Phot. *Epit. of the Hist. Eccl. of Philostorg.* 12.12.

⁴⁸³ Olymp. *Frag.* 37.

⁴⁸⁴ Gillett, "Date and Circumstances of Olympiodorus," 15-16.

⁴⁸⁵ Olymp. *Frag.* 27.

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid., 25.

⁴⁸⁷ Cameron believed that Olympiodorus resided at Constantinople for at least a part of his life, q.v. Cameron "Wandering Poets," 490-491.

diplomat would have regularly been required to be present at the imperial capital. Olympiodorus' work seems to have had limited circulation as it was only used or mentioned by those who are known to have written or worked in Constantinople.⁴⁸⁸ We do not know in what year Olympiodorus finished or published his historical work. Photius tells us that the work extended to the seventh consulship of Honorius, in 425. Since Olympiodorus dedicated his work to Theodosius II, as Photius states, the work must have been published before the emperor's death in July of the year 450. Sozomen who used Olympiodorus, and must therefore postdate him, is currently believed to have published his work either around the year 443 or around the years 449/450.⁴⁸⁹ Tillemont considered these termini (425-450) to be the only reliable dates available.⁴⁹⁰

More recently, an attempt has been made to discover a more precise date of publication. Thompson has proposed that the historical work of Olympiodorus was published soon after the last events he recorded, sometime between the years 425-427. The basis for this is the favorable treatment accorded to Count Boniface by Olympiodorus. In the latter part of 427 Boniface, who held the title of *Comes Africanae*, was declared a public enemy by Placidia. A few years later, in 429, Boniface is alleged to have issued an invitation to the Vandals to enter Africa. In spite of this, Olympiodorus repeatedly expresses admiration for Boniface in his work. He is described as a shining example of a good commander, who not only helped beat back a Visigothic attack on Massilia, but also remained loyal to the Theodosian house during the usurpation of John. Thompson asserted that Olympiodorus must have published his work early in 427, as he is unlikely to have continued to admire Boniface after the events of the latter part of 427. Thompson maintained that Olympiodorus only published the last installment of his work at this time, it being improbable that he would have produced such a large work in only two years. Kaegi and

⁴⁸⁸ Sozomen, Philostorgius, Zosimus and Photius are all believed to have either written in Constantinople or to have been employed there.

⁴⁸⁹ In his ninth book, Sozomen describes events that happened when Proclus was still bishop (*Hist. Eccl.* 9.2.18) and goes on to state that many people are still alive who remember those events. This suggests that Sozomen is writing sometime after the death of Proclus, i.e. sometime in or after the year 446. Since the work is dedicated to Theodosius II, the dedication must have been written before Theodosius' death in 450. The date for Sozomen has also been set around the year 443 because in his preface (which is addressed to Theodosius II) Sozomen refers to an imperial visit to Heraclea Pontica as having occurred in the recent past; an event that has been dated to 443 on the basis of a *Novella* issued by Theodosius, q.v. Theodosius II *Novella* 23 (which is dated to 12th of May, 443).

⁴⁹⁰ Tillemont, *Histoire des Empereurs*, 6:594 ff.

Matthews both accepted Thompson's dates for the publication of Olympiodorus.⁴⁹¹

Baldwin agreed with Thompson that Olympiodorus published his work around the year 427 but rejected the arguments of Thompson about Boniface.⁴⁹² Baldwin asserted that the tradition that Boniface betrayed Africa to the Vandals is only preserved in late sources such as the works of Procopius, Jordanes and John of Antioch.⁴⁹³ Even if the story that Boniface brought the Vandals into Africa was true, Baldwin argued that the African count might have only been reacting to an invading force led by the Goth Sigisvult. This seems plausible enough as it was a common practice at this time to use barbarian federates against other barbarians. Baldwin also maintained that Boniface retained the favor of Placidia upon his return to Italy and received the rank of patrician, even attaining the rank of *magister utriusque militiae* in 432. Baldwin contended, on the basis of this, that Olympiodorus might have written his work to defend Boniface against his detractors, especially the general Flavius Aetius.

Blockley also rejected Thompson's arguments and asserted that the tradition that Boniface invited the Vandals into Africa was false. Blockley agreed with Baldwin that Boniface was actually in favor with the court from 429/430 until his death in 432.⁴⁹⁴ Blockley demonstrated that contemporary sources that mention Boniface consistently show sympathetic treatment. Sidonius Apollinaris, for example, cites Boniface as a great man.⁴⁹⁵ Oddly, Procopius, who is our principal source for the story about Boniface's complicity with the Vandals, also generally presents Boniface in a sympathetic manner.⁴⁹⁶ Procopius blames Aetius, who was jealous of Boniface's appointment as governor of Africa, for maliciously plotting against Boniface. Thus, in Blockley's view, Olympiodorus' attitude towards Boniface has no bearing on the date of his work. Blockley agreed with Thompson that Olympiodorus published his work in installments. According to Blockley, the first ten books of Olympiodorus could have appeared anytime after 417, as this is the latest date mentioned in the fragments for these books (i.e. the

⁴⁹¹ Kaegi, *Byzantium and the Decline of Rome*, 88-90; Matthews, "Olympiodorus of Thebes," 80.

⁴⁹² Baldwin, "Olympiodorus of Thebes," 218-219.

⁴⁹³ Procopius *History of the Wars* 3.3.22-3.3.31; Jordanes *Getica* 167, 169; John of Antioch *Frag.* 196.

⁴⁹⁴ Blockley, *Fragmentary Classicising Historians*, 1:29. For the rehabilitation of Boniface, *vide* Baldwin, "Olympiodorus of Thebes," 218-219; Oost, *Galla Placidia Augusta*, 224.

⁴⁹⁵ Sidonius Apollinaris *Carmen* 9.277-9.288.

⁴⁹⁶ Procopius *History of the Wars* 3.3.14-3.3.36.

marriage of Constantius and Placidia).⁴⁹⁷ Blockley maintained that Sozomen and Philostorgius were only been able to consult the first ten books of Olympiodorus' work and this would explain why their works do not extend beyond this point. Blockley argued that Olympiodorus was closely connected with Eudocia and her circle. Olympiodorus had, for example, helped Eudocia's father, Leontius, obtain the Sophistic chair at Athens.⁴⁹⁸ Blockley believed that Olympiodorus' work, with "its Egyptian and openly Pagan flavor," could only have been published during the tolerant support of the empress Eudocia, sometime between the years 423-444.⁴⁹⁹ Blockley further narrows this by suggesting that Olympiodorus is likely to have dedicated his work to Theodosius II during the ascendancy of the Egyptian Pagan poet Cyrus of Panopolis, which occurred during the years 438-443.⁵⁰⁰

Clover disagreed with Blockley and argued that Olympiodorus finished and published his work sometime between the years 437 and 440. Clover arrived at these dates by making four different analyses or tests and taking the dates common to all of them. The first of these tests he took directly from Andre Chastagnol. Chastagnol analyzed *Fragment* 41.2 of Olympiodorus in his attempt to date the work. Olympiodorus notes here that Petronius Maximus, a wealthy Senator, spent four thousand pounds of gold on his son's praetorship. Chastagnol argued that there is an allusion to the birth of Maximus in the year 396 in the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*.⁵⁰¹ Since Olympiodorus mentions the dates of the praetorships of the younger Symmachus and Probus, Chastagnol believed that Olympiodorus would have mentioned that of Maximus' son had he already served and finished his term. Since in Olympiodorus' day, young men usually held the praetorship in their late teens, Chastagnol calculated a date of composition between the years 430 and 445. Chastagnol argued that Maximus' son would have completed his praetorship by the latter date. For the second test, Clover attempted to date Philostorgius, the first writer known to have used Olympiodorus. He rejected the arguments of Bidez, the founder of the modern edition of Philostorgius, who had asserted that Philostorgius had finished his

⁴⁹⁷ Olymp. *Frag.* 16.

⁴⁹⁸ Ibid., 28.

⁴⁹⁹ Blockley, *Fragmentary Classicising Historians*, 1:29.

⁵⁰⁰ Ibid., 29-30.

⁵⁰¹ *SHA* Probus 3.2.

Ecclesiastical History sometime before 433.⁵⁰² In his twelfth book, Philostorgius inserted a long digression on natural phenomena which he believed were signs that God was angry with mankind because they were not worshipping him in the correct manner (i.e. according to the Arian rite). These events are said to have occurred in the years 418 and 419. Bidez noted that Philostorgius failed to mention a great fire which devastated Constantinople in August of the year 433. Believing that Philostorgius would not have failed to include this event in his list of disasters, Bidez argued that Philostorgius must have finished his work prior to it. Clover disagreed and asserted that Philostorgius assembled various natural phenomena, whether they occurred in 418-419 or not, in order to concoct an apocalyptic vision. According to Clover, the exact date of a solar eclipse given by Philostorgius seems to betray his source. The *Fasti of Constantinople* frequently made a note of natural events.⁵⁰³ Clover believed that Philostorgius simply compiled his list of natural phenomena from the *Fasti*, combining events that occurred from as early as 418 to as late as 437.⁵⁰⁴ Clover also asserted that Socrates, who published his *Ecclesiastical History* around 439, had access to the work of Philostorgius.⁵⁰⁵ In addition, Bidez had found correspondences between the works of Philostorgius and Philip of Side (in Pamphylia), the author of a massive universal history.⁵⁰⁶ Because of these, Bidez had asserted that Philostorgius and Philip of Side were contemporaries. Clover pointed out that Socrates, who published his work in 439, mentions the work of Philip of Side.⁵⁰⁷ Photius also asserts that Philip lived during the years in which Sisinnius and Procius held the office of Patriarch of Constantinople, in 426-427 and 434-446 respectively. This limits the time of composition for Philip of Side to the years 434-439. If Philostorgius published his work in the late 430's, Olympiodorus would have had to have

⁵⁰² Joseph Bidez, *Kirchengeschichte, mit dem Leben des Lucian von Antiochen und den Fragmenten eines arianischen Historiographen*, (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1913), cxxxii-cxxxiv.

⁵⁰³ The *Fasti of Constantinople* is a hypothetical source that is believed to have been used in the composition of various works including the *Chronicon* of Marcellinus Comes and the *Chronicon Paschale*, q.v. Brian Cooke, "City Chronicles of Late Antiquity" in *Reading the Past in Late Antiquity*, ed. G. Clarke (Rushcutters Bay, NSW, Australia: Australian National University Press, 1990): 182-184.

⁵⁰⁴ Clover, "Olympiodorus of Thebes and the *Historia Augusta*," 138.

⁵⁰⁵ In his *Ecclesiastical History*, Socrates complains that the Eunomian Arians base their beliefs on a collection of Arius' letters. Since Philostorgius (who was a Eunomian Arian) mentions such a collection, Clover argued that Socrates was responding to the work of Philostorgius, q.v. *Socr. Hist. Eccl.* 1.6; Phot. *Epit. of the Hist. Eccl. of Philostorg.* 2.1; Clover, "Olympiodorus of Thebes and the *Historia Augusta*," 139.

⁵⁰⁶ Bidez, *Kirchengeschichte*, cxxxiii, 374-378.

⁵⁰⁷ *Socr. Hist. Eccl.* 7.26-7.27.

published his work around the same time or earlier. The third test Clover used to date Olympiodorus has to do with the anachronistic use of the word *patricius/patriciatus*. In fragment 14 of Olympiodorus, we read:

Jovian, after several unsuccessful embassies, remains with Attalus as his *patricius*. Meanwhile, the command of Ravenna devolves upon the *praepositus* Eusebius, who, soon afterwards, by the cruelty of Allobich and by public decree is flogged to death in the sight of the emperor.⁵⁰⁸

At first glance it seems as if Jovian, who was *patricius* under Honorius, retained his title under Attalus' administration. Clover asserted that Olympiodorus is here saying that after Jovian became Attalus' patrician, the principal power in Honorius' government transferred to the *praepositus* Eusebius. Jovian meanwhile became the most influential magistrate in Attalus' government. Clover argues that Olympiodorus was using the word patrician in an uncommon way in this passage. Olympiodorus employed what was in his day primarily a catchword for Master of the Soldiers to "describe a high civil official in the usurper Attalus' government."⁵⁰⁹ This was in contrast to the title of *patricius* which was an honorific title introduced by Constantine for those who had demonstrated faithful service to the Empire. By the end of the fifth century, the title was used mainly to describe the man, usually a general, who held the power behind the imperial throne. This use of the expression, according to Clover, became popular around the year 440. One of the first generals to be styled "the patrician" was Aetius who received the title in September of 435. Clover asserted that Olympiodorus was writing when this expression was new, most likely during the years 435-440. The final test that Clover uses to date Olympiodorus has to do with a sacred statue mentioned in *Fragment* 16. This fragment says:

Rhegium was the chief town of Bruttii, whence the historian says Alaric intended to cross over to Sicily, but was prevented from doing so by a sacred statue. This statue is said to have been consecrated by the ancients as a protection against the fires of Aetna and the passage of barbarians from over seas. In one foot it contained a fire that was never extinguished, in the other a supply of water that never failed. When it was subsequently destroyed by Asclepius, the manager of Constantius and Placidia's Sicilian property, the inhabitants suffered greatly from Aetna and the barbarians.⁵¹⁰

⁵⁰⁸ Freese, *Library of Photius*, 80.

⁵⁰⁹ Clover, "Olympiodorus of Thebes and the *Historia Augusta*," 141-144.

⁵¹⁰ Freese, *Library of Photius*, 80.

In this fragment, Asclepius is mentioned as the steward of the estates of the emperor and his wife. Consequently, this statement could only have been written by Olympiodorus during their married life (i.e. between the years 417 and 421). Olympiodorus says that because of the removal of the statue, the Sicilians suffered from the eruption of Mount Etna as well as a barbarian invasion. The dates of these events can be used to determine a *terminus post quem* date for Olympiodorus. Unfortunately, D.K. Chester has shown that the eruptions of Etna between the years 252 to 812 are not precisely datable, so we must rely solely on the reference to the barbarian incursion.⁵¹¹ Clover maintained that Olympiodorus was referring to a major barbarian attack (not to a small local raid) that would have attracted the attention of the imperial authorities. Such an attack is known to have occurred in the late 430's and early 440's. Prosper Tiro recorded in his *Chronica* that pirate attacks by barbarians occurred in the years 437 and 438 against Sicily and other islands.⁵¹² This activity culminated in the year 440 when the Vandal leader Geiseric launched a general offensive against Sicily.⁵¹³ Clover found that the years common to all of his four analyses or tests were those between 437 and 440. Clover proposed that these years should remain as an approximate date for Olympiodorus until further research or information could produce modifications. In spite of the fact that our current information can offer no more precise date, Clover ventured to guess the specific year in which Olympiodorus published his work. Clover maintained that the year 438 would have been a perfect year for Olympiodorus to have published his work since this was the year in which Theodosius II inaugurated the *Theodosian Code*. Clover proposed that Olympiodorus may have released twenty-two books (of a projected thirty) in that auspicious year but failed to complete his work for some unknown reason.

Gillett disagreed with Clover and believed that Olympiodorus could not have published his work earlier than the year 437. He argued that Olympiodorus most likely published his work in the year 440 or soon after.⁵¹⁴ This date, according to Gillett, offered a reasonable explanation

⁵¹¹ David K. Chester, *Mount Etna: the Anatomy of a Volcano* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1985), Table 3.3; Gillett, "Date and Circumstances of Olympiodorus," 10 n. 40; David K. Chester, "Interrelationships between Volcanic and Alluvial Sequences in the Evolution of the Simeto River Valley, Mount Etna, Sicily," *Catena* 6 (1979): 293-315.

⁵¹² Prosper Tiro *Epitoma Chron.* s.a. 437, 438.

⁵¹³ *Ibid.*, s.a. 440. Cf. Hydatius *Chron.* s.a. 440; *Chron. Paschale.* s.a. 439; Marcellinus Comes *Chron.* s.a. 438.

⁵¹⁴ Gillett, "Date and Circumstances of Olympiodorus," 1-12.

that would clarify why an eastern writer would have spent his time writing such a detailed account of the West. Gillett maintained that it was during this period that the East was preoccupied with their relationship with the West because both halves of the Roman Empire were being threatened by the rising power of the Vandals. Gillett arrived at his date for Olympiodorus in the following manner. Gillett first examined the writers who are known to have used Olympiodorus, namely Philostorgius and Sozomen, in order to establish a date for the work of Olympiodorus. Bidez had previously argued that Philostorgius had finished and published his *Ecclesiastical History* sometime before 433.⁵¹⁵ He had based this on the fact that Philostorgius did not include an account of the massive fires of August 433 (which caused considerable damage to Constantinople) in what Bidez had believed was a catalog of recent disasters. Since Philostorgius seems to have been interested in the urban history of Constantinople, Bidez had concluded that Philostorgius would have included an account of the fires had he written after the year 433. Gillett believed that Bidez has misinterpreted the text. He argued that Philostorgius recorded the misfortunes that befell the city in the years 418 and 419 in a part of his historical narrative dealing with those years (i.e. in the correct chronological sequence with the events of the proceeding and subsequent chapters). A reference to the fires of 433, Gillett argued, in this section would have been intrusive since the rest of the text is in chronological order. Gillett maintained that this “passage is part of Philostorgius’ polemic against contemporary Pagans, stressing God’s mercy. The destructive fires of 433 would have been thematically irrelevant, for in 433 the city was *not* delivered from disaster.”⁵¹⁶ Gillett asserted that Bidez has therefore failed to provide a *terminus ante quem* for the publication of Philostorgius. Gillett concluded that Bidez’s date (433) had no bearing on Olympiodorus since the real date of Philostorgius’ publication cannot be ascertained with the current evidence. The exact date of the publication of Sozomen’s *Ecclesiastical History* is also unknown but since it is dedicated to Theodosius II it must have been published before his death in 450.⁵¹⁷ Thus Sozomen’s use of Olympiodorus, Gillett argued, provided a *terminus ante quem* that may be as late as 450. Socrates, who is

⁵¹⁵ Bidez, *Kirchengeschichte*, cxxxii.

⁵¹⁶ Gillett, “Date and Circumstances of Olympiodorus,” 5.

⁵¹⁷ As stated above (v. n. 528), Sozomen informs us (*Hist. Eccl.* 9.2.18) that he was writing soon after the death of Proclus, who died in 446. Theodosius II, to whom the work is dedicated, died in the year 450. Because the last book is incomplete, it is reasonable to believe that Sozomen died sometime during the years 448-449, making it likely that the work was published posthumously sometime around 449/450.

believed to have published his *Ecclesiastical History* in 439, did not use the work of Olympiodorus.⁵¹⁸ Gillett argued that the work of Olympiodorus could therefore not have been published by that date. Gillett asserted that Socrates was diligent in consulting sources and would have used Olympiodorus if his work had been available. In Socrates' last two books, which embrace the period covered by Olympiodorus, there is a decline in the cohesion of the narrative, and no factual data that can be attributed to Olympiodorus. Since Socrates did not use him, Olympiodorus must have (according to Gillett) published his work after the year 439, the year when Socrates published his work.⁵¹⁹ By this line of argument Gillett reduced the time period for the publication of Olympiodorus to the years 439 to 449. Gillett then looked at the internal evidence offered by Olympiodorus to further narrow his publication date. Gillett took a second look at *Fragment 16*, which Clover had used to argue a *terminus post quem* of 437-438. Clover asserted that the barbarian attacks referred to in this fragment might have been the piratical assault perpetrated by rogue federates on Sicily. Prosper recorded this event in his *Chronicle*, reporting that it occurred during the years 437-438.⁵²⁰ Gillett believed that this date should be pushed forward to the years 440-441. In the year 440, according to the *Chronicle* of Marcellinus and the *Easter Chronicle*, Geiseric suddenly attacked Sicily which "sent tremors of fear through both halves of the Empire."⁵²¹ Gillett goes on to say that "while the raids of the renegade federates in 437/438 were little known, Geiseric's attack on Sicily was infamous; it could be recalled by a simple allusion."⁵²² From these arguments Gillett concluded that Olympiodorus

⁵¹⁸ Gillett rejected Bidez's arguments that Socrates was aware of the work of Philostorgius. Bidez based his argument on three points: 1. Philostorgius seems to represent an early stage of Christian historiography which is still concerned with anti-Pagan apologetics. 2. Philostorgius must have written before Socrates as he fails to reply to his anti-Eunomian criticisms. 3. Socrates and Philostorgius both refer to a collection of letters made by Arius. Gillett rejected these arguments for the following reasons: 1. Anti-Christian apologetic writings continued long after Philostorgius, e.g. the *Ecclesiastical History* of Evagrius. 2. Socrates does not mention or attack Philostorgius; their mutual silence gives no clue as to who wrote first. 3. Socrates says that the letters were used by the Eunomians for apologetic purposes while Philostorgius does not mention that these letters were exploited in any way in defense of the Eunomian position, q.v. Gillett, "Date and Circumstances of Olympiodorus," 7-9; Bidez, *Kirchengeschichte*, cxxxiii-cxxxiv.

⁵¹⁹ Gillett believed that Philostorgius, the first extant (in epitomized form) writer known to have used Olympiodorus, published his *Ecclesiastical History* sometime after Socrates had published his, q.v. Gillett, "Date and Circumstances of Olympiodorus," 9.

⁵²⁰ Prosper of Aquitaine *Chron.* s.a. 440; Clover, "Olympiodorus of Thebes and the Historia Augusta," 141-144.

⁵²¹ Marcellinus *Chron.* s.a. 440; *Chron. Paschale* s.a. 440; Gillett, "Date and Circumstances of Olympiodorus," 11.

⁵²² Gillett, "Date and Circumstances of Olympiodorus," 12.

composed his work not earlier than the year 437 and in all probability in the year 440 or soon after. Gillett believed that the downfall of Cyrus of Panopolis and Aelia Eudocia in the year 441 may provide a possible *terminus ante quem* for Olympiodorus' dedication to Theodosius II, as he was unlikely to have publicized his connections with the empress after her banishment from Constantinople.⁵²³ Considering all these arguments, it seems reasonable to assume that Olympiodorus published his work in 440.

Olympiodorus did not attempt to produce a traditional historical work (i.e. one characterized by the use of formal language, rhetoric, speeches and imitation of classical models), rather his purpose was to provide an unadorned clear and factual account of the events which had occurred in the West. Blockley argued that Olympiodorus' method of inserting his own personal reminiscences, as well as his own personal commentary on events, policies and personalities of the period he treated, led him to free himself from the constraints of formal history.⁵²⁴ Olympiodorus used the vernacular form of Greek current in his day instead of using the traditional literary form (i.e. Attic Greek), which had become the standard for historians in his day. This drew criticism from Photius who describes the work as formless, inept and completely vulgar.⁵²⁵ Olympiodorus seems to have attempted to make his book more acceptable to literary circles by dressing up each of his twenty-two books with prefaces in a more elevated language.⁵²⁶ Olympiodorus also appears to have written some episodes in a dramatically exciting fashion such as his dangerous travels on the sea, the heroic fight of Sarus and the tragic account of the death of Gerontius.⁵²⁷ Olympiodorus' account includes much digressional information that was not normally included in traditional historical accounts. These digressions cover a variety of topics and will be discussed in more detail below.⁵²⁸

Olympiodorus recorded many things that a traditional Greek historian would never have thought of including but which are extremely important for the historian today. For example, he transliterated official Roman political and bureaucratic titles into Greek, which was something that traditional Greek historians did their best to avoid usually offering anachronistic titles in their

⁵²³ Ibid., 17.

⁵²⁴ Blockley, *Fragmentary Classicising Historians*, 1:32.

⁵²⁵ Olymp. *Frag.* 1.

⁵²⁶ Ibid., 1.

⁵²⁷ Ibid., 17.1, 18, 19.

⁵²⁸ Ibid., 7.4, 9, 12, 16, 28, 29.1, 31, 32, 41.1, 41.2, 42.

place.⁵²⁹ Additionally, Olympiodorus uses the traditional Roman methods of dating, often giving consular dates. Furthermore, he provides weights, distances, sums of money and measurements in transliterated Latin and employs Latin geographical names for provinces of the Empire.⁵³⁰ Olympiodorus even gives certain us direct quotations, phrases and inscriptions in Latin, which he transliterated into Greek letters.⁵³¹ Moreover, Olympiodorus included a large number of statistics which were seldom used by traditional classical historians who were more interested in producing works of literature than in recording masses of figures. Olympiodorus includes the size of forces (*Fragments* 2, 9 and 18), the value of estates (*Fragment* 23), the capacity of baths (*Fragment* 41.1), the depths of wells (*Fragment* 32), the length of city walls (*Fragment* 41.1) and periods of irrigation (*Fragment* 32). It is not known whether Olympiodorus used lengthy speeches in his work. Thompson asserted that the surviving fragments show no evidence of any.⁵³² Matthews believed that Photius seems to imply that there were speeches in the history of Olympiodorus because he uses the words λόγοις διαίρει (*Fragment* 1) in reference to the arrangement of the work.⁵³³ Baldwin contended that Photius is describing the structure of the history and is using the word λόγοις to refer to the division of the work into twenty-two books, in order to explain the title ἱστοριχὸν λόγον.⁵³⁴ Blockley agreed with Baldwin because he is confident that Photius is referring to the division of the work into books, especially since he follows this with a reference to the prefaces.⁵³⁵ All we know for certain is that Olympiodorus often gave very short paraphrases and summaries of what people said. When we consider how little of Olympiodorus we possess and how much of what we have is filled with dates, distances, statistics, figures and geography we can only conclude that Olympiodorus' history was unsurpassed for a great number of statistics which would have been invaluable for the modern historian, had his work survived intact.

Although Olympiodorus was a native of Egypt and traveled widely throughout the East, he focused almost exclusively on the Western Roman Empire in his work. Many different

⁵²⁹ Ibid., 4, 8.2, 9, 12, 13.1, 14, 15.1, 23, 38, 41.2, 43.1; Matthews, "Olympiodorus of Thebes," 85-87.

⁵³⁰ Olymp. *Frag.* 7.2, 17.1, 22.1, 23, 38, 40, 41.2; Sozom. 9.4.4, 9.6.2, 9.8.1, 9.8.3-9.8.7, 9.12.6-9.12.7; Matthews, "Olympiodorus of Thebes," 86.

⁵³¹ Olymp. *Frag.* 39.1.

⁵³² Thompson, "Olympiodorus of Thebes," 46.

⁵³³ Matthews, "Olympiodorus of Thebes," 88.

⁵³⁴ Baldwin, "Olympiodorus of Thebes," 225.

⁵³⁵ Blockley, *Fragmentary Classicising Historians*, 1:37.

interpretations have been offered by various scholars as to why this was the case.⁵³⁶ Matthews suggested that since Olympiodorus dedicated his work to Theodosius II, he may have written his work to show how the political unity of the Empire had been restored through the efforts of Theodosius II.⁵³⁷ The conclusion of Olympiodorus' work would (in this case) be a pointed assertion of the ascendancy of the Eastern Empire over the West. Olympiodorus' work also seems to celebrate the growing closeness of the both halves of the Empire under the guidance of Theodosius II. Olympiodorus may have written his work to show the decline of the West and how it had recovered through the help of the East. Olympiodorus began his work with the chaos following the fall of Stilicho in which the relationship between East and West became one of alienation. Olympiodorus then traced the turbulent history of the West to show how chaotic events became without the help of the East. Olympiodorus related a series of disasters including the sack of Rome, the devastations caused by Alaric and the Visigoths, the chaos created by the usurpers of Gaul, Britain and Spain and the invasions of various barbarians. Peace was only restored with the political ascendancy of the Eastern Roman Empire over the West and the imposition of Valentinian III as emperor of the West by Theodosius II in the year 425. Baldwin maintained that Olympiodorus may have written his work as a warning to Ravenna as to what might be the consequences of declaring Boniface a public enemy. Like Stilicho, Boniface had accomplished much for the West, and the disastrous results of Stilicho's murder were made clear by Olympiodorus.⁵³⁸ Blockley asserted that Olympiodorus' work was written as an appeal for the continued cooperation and aid from the East to the West but also suggested another plea. In his history Olympiodorus related how the disasters that befell the West after the fall of Stilicho were the direct result of the anti-German policies of the stubborn western court's blindness. Blockley believed that Olympiodorus may have written his work as a plea for cooperation between the Romans and the Visigoths; a cooperation which he clearly regarded as the key to the survival of Roman power in the West.⁵³⁹ Gillett suggested that Olympiodorus wrote his work as an argument for the continuation of cooperation between East and West in the face of the new barbarian threat,

⁵³⁶ Thompson, "Olympiodorus of Thebes," 46.

⁵³⁷ Matthews, "Olympiodorus of Thebes," 97.

⁵³⁸ Baldwin, "Olympiodorus of Thebes," 224.

⁵³⁹ Blockley, *Fragmentary Classicising Historians*, 1:44-47.

especially the rise of the Vandal power in Africa.⁵⁴⁰ Gillett argued that Olympiodorus' work was the product of a member of a highly literate class of eastern imperial civil servants, who were generally preoccupied with the relationship between the eastern and western halves of the Roman Empire "at a time when both were threatened by the rise of the new Carthaginian power of the Vandals."⁵⁴¹ He believed that its publication came soon after the Vandal occupation of Carthage when the scale of obligation needed by Constantinople to hold up the West, while protecting its own security, was obvious. According to Gillett, Olympiodorus' work came out at this opportune moment, in time to contribute to the political debate that was engaging the East.

We know little about the arrangement of the Olympiodorus' book except for the fact that the first decade brought the narrative down to the year 412.⁵⁴² It is not known how the work was divided, if the books were divided into equal lengths, or whether Olympiodorus published his work in installments. It is debated as to whether the work was arranged chronologically or was loosely organized around topics. Photius' summary seems to indicate that Olympiodorus' *Materials for History* were arranged, not chronologically, but in a topical fashion. We read the following summary of the contents of Olympiodorus in Codex 80 of Photius:⁵⁴³

II. (Fragments 1.1, 3 and 5.1) The rise of Stilicho to power; his appointment by Theodosius the Great to the guardianship of his children Arcadius and Honorius, his marriage to Serena, betrothed to him by her uncle the emperor himself. Marriage of his daughter Thermantia to Honorius, and his rise to the height of his power. His many successful foreign wars. His death at the hands of the cruel and inhuman Olympius, whom he had himself recommended to the emperor.

III. (Fragment 6) Alaric, chieftain of the Goths, whom Stilicho had previously sent for that he might retain Illyricum for Honorius (to whom that prefecture had been assigned by his father Theodosius), in consequence of the murder of Stilicho, and because the promises made to him had not been kept, besieges and sacks Rome. He carries off an enormous amount of booty together with Placidia, the sister of Honorius, who was in the city at the time. Before its capture he declares emperor a distinguished citizen named Attalus, the city prefect. Another reason for Alaric's conduct was that Sarus, also a Goth, captain of a small band, not more than 200 or 300 in number, and a brave and

⁵⁴⁰ Gillett, "Date and Circumstances of Olympiodorus," 24-26.

⁵⁴¹ Ibid., 2.

⁵⁴² Olymp. *Frag.* 19.

⁵⁴³ Roman numerals denote the divisions of codex 80 in the *Bibliotheca* of Photius. Fragment numbers given are given according to the arrangement of Blockley, q.v. Blockley, *Fragmentary Classicising Historians*, 1:485-491.

invincible warrior, had been offered an alliance by the Romans as being hostile to Alaric, who thus became their irreconcilable enemy.

IV. (Fragment 7.1) During the siege of Rome the inhabitants were reduced to cannibalism. Alaric, while Stilicho was still alive, received 4000 pounds of gold for the expenses of his expedition. After the death of Stilicho his widow Serena is strangled, it being thought that she might have been responsible for Alaric's attack on the city. His son Eucherius had already been put to death.

V. (Fragment 7.2) During the reign of Honorius the name *Bucellarii* was given not only to Roman, but also to foreign soldiers; and similarly, the name *Foederati* to a mixed and irregular body of troops.

VI. (Fragment 7.3) Olympius, who intrigued against Stilicho, appointed master of the offices, but afterwards deprived of his post. He recovers it and is again deprived of it. He is beaten to death by order of Constantius, the husband of Placidia, after his ears have first been cut off. Thus the impious wretch meets with due punishment at last.

VII. (Fragment 7.4) The chief men of the Goths with Radagaisus, about 12,000 in number, called *Optimati*, are defeated by Stilicho, who enters into an alliance with Radagaisus.

VIII. (Fragment 8.2) Illness and death of Alaric, who is succeeded by his wife's brother Ataulf.

IX. (Fragment 9) The author says that dry bread was called *bucellatum*, and jestingly suggests that the soldiers were called *bucellarii* for this reason.⁵⁴⁴

Müller maintained that the above summary by Photius showed that Olympiodorus did not follow any chronological order but simply grouped his work around various topics.⁵⁴⁵ He argued that Photius' summary of Olympiodorus clearly showed a topical arrangement not concerned with chronology. The second paragraph of Photius' summary covers the career of Stilicho to his death while the third overlaps and follows the career of Alaric from 405 to 410. The eighth paragraph likewise overlaps the third and follows the career of Olympius. The twelfth and thirteenth paragraphs of Photius' summary provide similar overlapping narratives devoted to Constantine and Attalus. The thirty-fourth covers the years 417 to 421 and overlaps the thirty-fifth and thirty-eight paragraphs. In addition to this, paragraphs eighteenth to thirty-seven regularly give random

⁵⁴⁴ Freese, *Library of Photius*, 80.

⁵⁴⁵ Müller, *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*, 4:57.

details of Olympiodorus' travels which have no obvious bearing on the main narrative.

Matthews believed that Photius' arrangement did not reflect the actual arrangement of Olympiodorus. Matthews asserted that the work was composed in an annalistic form, being carefully dated for each year by the names of the consuls.⁵⁴⁶ Matthews believed that Olympiodorus, at least for the first few books, focused mainly on Italian events, dealing with events in Gaul and Spain in digressions. Photius' arrangement of his summary of Olympiodorus, however, shows a different pattern. The summary is arranged in a topical fashion with no attempt at chronological order. Zosimus and Sozomen arrange their accounts in chronological order but insert their digressions on the affairs of Gaul and Spain in different sections of their narratives.⁵⁴⁷ This seems to indicate that Zosimus and Sozomen took the topical information they found in Olympiodorus and independently made chronological narratives. Twelve out of the forty-six Photian fragments of Olympiodorus are digressions. Thompson believed that possibly a quarter of Olympiodorus' work consisted of various digressions which were intended to help the reader follow and understand the historical narrative.⁵⁴⁸ These digressions dealt with such diverse subjects as geography, ethnography, philology, mythology, social conditions, foundation legends and prodigies. Since the digressions often dealt with eastern events, Blockley believed that they were not well integrated into the narrative, which mainly dealt with the West. He suggested that the digressions may have been used to mark transitions between major events.⁵⁴⁹ The first few fragments deal with the early career of Stilicho, then with Alaric's relations with the western court after the death of Stilicho, then with the affairs of beleaguered Rome, then with the regime of Olympius, then with the death of Alaric and Ataulf's succession and so on. The continual cross-references and frequent repetitions probably made the work confusing to many readers. Blockley maintained that it is very unlikely that Photius would have arranged his summary in this haphazard fashion if the work really did have an annalistic structure.⁵⁵⁰ Blockley argued that Matthews' theory (that the history was an annalistic account of Italian affairs with digressions on Gaul and Spain) did not account for the position of *Fragments* 7.2 and 8.2. If we accept the use of Olympiodorus by Philostorgius, then the apparent use of a topical plan in book twelve of the

⁵⁴⁶ Matthews, "Olympiodorus of Thebes," 87.

⁵⁴⁷ Zos. 6.1.1-6.6.1; Sozom. *Hist. Eccl.* 9.11-9.16.

⁵⁴⁸ Thompson, "Olympiodorus of Thebes," 47.

⁵⁴⁹ Blockley, *Fragmentary Classicising Historians*, 1:35-36.

⁵⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 30-31.

latter's work supports the theory that Olympiodorus arranged his work likewise.⁵⁵¹ Blockley asserted that this evidence justifies the theory that Olympiodorus arranged his material topically rather than annalistically, at the least for his first few books for which we have more evidence. René Henry also believed that Photius' arrangement is an exact reflection of the disorder which caused Photius to describe the work of Olympiodorus as unattractive and shapeless. Henry attributed the coherence of the narratives of Zosimus and Sozomen to the fact that they made their own chronological arrangement of the events they found recorded in Olympiodorus.⁵⁵² This was made possible by the numerous dates they found recorded in the narrative of Olympiodorus.

The fact that Zosimus probably had to chronologically arrange the events he found recorded in Olympiodorus is further evidence that the former was not a mindless copier of his sources. Although Photius states that Olympiodorus wrote in a careless manner without any of the constraints of a formal composition, he makes no such statement about Zosimus. Indeed, while Photius complains about the sloppy, vulgar and loose style of Olympiodorus, he praises the style of Zosimus for its clarity, conciseness and purity.⁵⁵³ The fact that Olympiodorus included many exact dates in his work certainly simplified Zosimus' task. Olympiodorus seems to have done this deliberately to help historians write traditional historical works using the materials they found in his work.⁵⁵⁴ The fact that Zosimus and Sozomen independently constructed their narratives using the dates they found in Olympiodorus is demonstrated by the fact that they both place digressions from Italian events in different positions in their narrative. Sozomen places his treatment of the British usurpers after the third siege of Rome while Zosimus places it before the third siege.⁵⁵⁵ A reference is made in the *Historia Nova* (6.5) to the revolt of Gerontius, which only appears later in the fragments.⁵⁵⁶ Zosimus therefore clearly worked over Olympiodorus' text in order to give some clarity and chronological order to the confused narrative of Olympiodorus. Furthermore, there is evidence that indicates that Zosimus made use of various sources to supplement what he found in Olympiodorus.⁵⁵⁷ Seeck asserted that the two expeditions to Africa (6.9.1 and 6.12.1)

⁵⁵¹ Ibid., 31-32.

⁵⁵² René Henry, *Bibliothèque: Photius* (Paris: Société d'édition Les Belles Lettres, 1977), 1:202.

⁵⁵³ Freese, *Library of Photius*, 80, 98.

⁵⁵⁴ Zos. 5.28.1, 5.34.7, 5.42.3, 6.2.1, 6.3.1.

⁵⁵⁵ Sozom. *Hist. Eccl.* 9.11-9.12; Zos. 6.1-6.5.

⁵⁵⁶ Olymp. *Frag.* 17.1.

⁵⁵⁷ Stevens, "Marcus, Gratian, Constantine," 330.

reported in sixth book of the *Historia Nova* are in fact the same identical expedition. Seeck argued that this was proof that Zosimus was trying to combine information he had found in more than one source.⁵⁵⁸ Demougeot also pointed out a number of repetitions, especially in the sixth book, which seems to suggest that Zosimus had recourse to various sources.⁵⁵⁹ We will now look at the evidence in the last part of the *Historia Nova* that indicates that Zosimus supplemented the information he found in Olympiodorus with other sources.

Zosimus seems to have used the work of Asinius Quadratus (who wrote in the middle of the third century) as he cites him by name at 5.27.1. In this passage, he discusses the origins of the city of Ravenna; a city which according to ancient traditions was formerly known as Rene. Olympiodorus said that Ravenna was named after Remus because he had originally founded the city. Zosimus rejected this explanation and asserted that Asinius Quadratus was correct in claiming that the city was called Rene from the water that flows all around it.⁵⁶⁰ Baldwin believed that Zosimus could have read Quadratus, as he seems to have been a very popular author in late antiquity.⁵⁶¹ Mendelssohn believed that it was also possible that Zosimus could have merely lifted this citation from Olympiodorus. Both Thompson and Matthews believed that Zosimus was simply lifting a citation from Olympiodorus. Thompson argued that because Asinius Quadratus was such a popular author and was extensively used by many authors, Zosimus might have simply lifted this citation from another source.⁵⁶² On the other hand, Zosimus' rejection of Olympiodorus' arguments on the origins of Ravenna indicates that he did not follow his sources slavishly. The fact that Zosimus preferred the arguments of Quadratus shows that he was actively engaging his sources, making use of what he believed was correct and rejecting what he believed to be false.

Zosimus attributes a story about the founding of the city of Emona to the poet Pisander at 5.29.1. Pisander is said to have written upon this matter in his book entitled *The Marriages of Heroes and Goddesses*. This story is also recounted by Sozomen at 1.6.4 in his *Ecclesiastical*

⁵⁵⁸ Seeck, *Geschichte des Untergangs der Antiken Welt*, 5:410, 598.

⁵⁵⁹ Émilienne Demougeot, *De l'unité à la division de l'Empire Romain, 395-410* (Paris: Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1951), 457 n. 90.

⁵⁶⁰ Ravenna is situated a short-distance from the sea coast, near an extensive range of marshes and lagoons, q.v. Smith, *Greek and Roman Geography*, 2: 693; Kazhdan, *Dictionary of Byzantium*, 3:1773-1775.

⁵⁶¹ Barry Baldwin, "Zosimus and Asinius Quadratus," *Classical Philology* 74 (1979): 57-58.

⁵⁶² Mendelssohn, *Zosimi*, xxxix; Thompson, "Olympiodorus of Thebes," 45; Matthews, "Olympiodorus of Thebes," 88.

History. Since Sozomen is known to also have relied on Olympiodorus, Thompson, Matthews and Baldwin believed that Zosimus simply lifted this citation of Pisander from Olympiodorus.⁵⁶³ Zosimus, however, may well have found this citation in Sozomen, whom he seems to have read, and added it to the information he found in Olympiodorus.⁵⁶⁴

At 5.38 Zosimus relates the deaths of Stilicho and Serena, who are said to have died for their acts of impiety. Because of the hostile attitude towards both Stilicho and Serena in this passage, Mendelssohn believed that this report was derived, not from Olympiodorus, but from Eunapius.⁵⁶⁵ He argued this because this criticism seems to contradict Olympiodorus' usual favorable attitude towards Stilicho. Paschoud followed Mendelssohn and believed that this section had been set in the material from Olympiodorus.⁵⁶⁶ Blockley argued that there is no reason to believe that Olympiodorus was not objective enough to criticize the actions of a man he admired.⁵⁶⁷ This section also includes a Latin quotation, which is a typical characteristic of Olympiodorus' work but is nowhere to be found in the *testimonia* of Eunapius. Zosimus gives Latin quotations four times, and these occur only in the portion of his history in which he used Olympiodorus.⁵⁶⁸ On this evidence, Blockley attributed this section to Olympiodorus.⁵⁶⁹

Scavone believed that at 5.41, Zosimus seems to be matching arguments with the ecclesiastical historian Sozomen.⁵⁷⁰ During Alaric's siege of Rome, some Etruscans came to the prefect of the city, Pompeianus, and related how a city called Narnia had been freed from danger through the public performance of the ancestral Pagan rites. Pompeianus, realizing that many of the people were Christians, consulted Pope Innocent I about performing Pagan rites at Rome in order to save the city from the Visigoths. The Pope considered the city's safety more important than his own religious convictions and consented to the performance of the Pagan rites as long as they were performed privately. The Etruscans declared this would not help the city because the customary rites had to be performed publicly. Zosimus implies that therefore the rites were not

⁵⁶³ Thompson, "Olympiodorus of Thebes," 45; Matthews, "Olympiodorus of Thebes," 88; Baldwin, "Zosimus and Asinius Quadratus," 57-58.

⁵⁶⁴ Evidence that Zosimus had read the work of Sozomen will be discussed below in the section dealing with 5.41 of the *Historia Nova*.

⁵⁶⁵ Mendelssohn, *Zosimi*, 265-266.

⁵⁶⁶ Paschoud, *Cinq études sur Zosime*, 140-142.

⁵⁶⁷ Blockley, *Fragmentary Classicising Historians*, 1:107.

⁵⁶⁸ Zos. 5.29.9, 5.41.7, 6.11.2.

⁵⁶⁹ Blockley, *Fragmentary Classicising Historians*, 1:107.

⁵⁷⁰ Scavone, "Zosimus and his Historical Models," 63.

carried out and that the citizens were forced to bribe Alaric at a great expense to the ruin of the citizens. Sozomen, however, indicates that the Pagan rites were performed, but that they proved ineffectual.⁵⁷¹ Since the extant fragments of Olympiodorus do not mention any such story it is very likely that Zosimus was replying to the Christian version of events that he found in some Christian historian, the most likely candidate being Sozomen.

Seeck suggested that the repetitions found in Zosimus' history at 6.9-6.12 indicated that Zosimus was using more than one source for this section. Seeck also pointed out that there were some discrepancies here from the account of Sozomen, who seems to have followed the account of Olympiodorus more closely.⁵⁷² Matthews pointed out that Zosimus also mentions Stilicho's arrival in Rome in 408 twice.⁵⁷³ These repetitions may be ascribed to Zosimus' attempt to combine information from various narratives into his work.⁵⁷⁴ If Zosimus had lived to finish his work, he would have been able to correct and revise this section of his work, which in its present state is obviously an unrevised draft.

In spite of his heavy dependence on the narratives of Eunapius and Olympiodorus, we have seen that Zosimus was not a slave to his sources. Eunapius' history was written with a moralistic preoccupation in a highly rhetorical and hysterical style. Eunapius' fanaticism led him to characterize people as either completely evil or completely good, leading him to make strongly biased judgments. His attempts to teach morals led him to reject chronology and focus strongly on biographical details. Eunapius wrote with a religious preoccupation and a fanatical hatred for Christian emperors whom he believed had gradually destroyed Paganism. As argued above therefore, Olympiodorus seems to have written in the midst of a political debate in the Eastern Empire over the nature of their relationship with the Western Empire. Olympiodorus did not set out to write a true history. His purpose was to make a collection of important facts and information, for what he aptly called *Materials for History*. This would explain why Olympiodorus' work was loosely organized around topics, full of digressions and written in a plain and unadorned style. Furthermore, Olympiodorus seems to have written his work as an argument not only for the cooperation between both halves of the Empire but also for

⁵⁷¹ Sozom. *Hist. Eccl.* 9.6.

⁵⁷² Seeck, *Geschichte des Untergangs der Antiken Welt*, 598-599.

⁵⁷³ Zos. 5.27.3, 5.29.5; Matthews, "Olympiodorus of Thebes," 85.

⁵⁷⁴ Paschoud believes that this section is full of too many errors to make any interpretation possible, q.v. Paschoud, *Histoire Nouvelle*, 1:lx.

accommodation and assimilation with the barbarians.

In contrast, Zosimus wrote his work to account for the ruin and collapse of the Empire. His work was not concerned with teaching morality and was characterized by a relatively even-handed approach. Zosimus was careful to examine both the good and the bad aspects of every important person in his history. Zosimus' main thesis was to show how misguided innovations and the abandonment of tradition and Paganism led to the ruin of the state. Zosimus blamed this neglect of the old ways, and not Christianity *per se*, for all the woes that had befallen the Empire. Zosimus used factual information in Eunapius and Olympiodorus, that suited his thesis, and supplemented it with various other sources. Zosimus was able to treat the same period that Eunapius had covered in fourteen lengthy rhetorical and discursive books, in four concise books.⁵⁷⁵ Zosimus similarly had to rearrange the information he found in Olympiodorus' highly unorganized and topical work in order to write a structured and concise chronological account. As a result of his research, Zosimus had to reject much of what he found in Eunapius and Olympiodorus. For example, Eunapius had asserted that the death of Constantine occurred because he had ordered the execution of the philosopher Sopater.⁵⁷⁶ Zosimus rejected this obviously biased partisan account and reported that Constantine died a natural death.⁵⁷⁷ Zosimus did not subscribe to the methodological and religious ideas of Eunapius, but found Eunapius' oppositional and negative outlook congenial enough to use his historical material for a work on the decline and demise of the Empire. Zosimus similarly rejected Olympiodorus' arguments concerning the founding of Ravenna.⁵⁷⁸ As we have seen above, Zosimus actively sought out information from Pagan sources that pertained to his thesis. Zosimus also engaged and responded to the challenge posed by ecclesiastical writers. In the light of this, it becomes easier to understand why still, at the end of the sixth century, we find Evagrius vehemently refuting Zosimus in his *Ecclesiastical History*.⁵⁷⁹ The old idea that has characterized Zosimus as an unoriginal slavish plagiarizer of Eunapius and Olympiodorus, who failed to attempt any research of his own, should finally be laid to rest.

⁵⁷⁵ This digressive style of Eunapius led Photius to complain about his style and to praise that of Zosimus, q.v. Phot. *Bibl. cod.* 77, 98.

⁵⁷⁶ Eunap. *VS* 464.

⁵⁷⁷ Zos. 2.39.

⁵⁷⁸ Ibid., 5.27.

⁵⁷⁹ For example, *vide* Evagrius *Hist. Eccl.* 3.40-3.41.

PART TWO

EVALUATION: ZOSIMUS' OBJECTIVITY, ACCURACY, AND IMPORTANCE

ZOSIMUS' IMPORTANCE

Zosimus' history is very important not only for the many facts he preserves (that would otherwise be unknown), but also because his account has enabled historians to resolve many historical problems. Zosimus is our sole source for the two Persian campaigns of Odenathus (1.39),⁵⁸⁰ the creation of the nobilissime by Constantine in 335 (2.39), the events between the appointment of Gallus and the battle of Mursa (2.45-2.50), many details (not preserved elsewhere) concerning Julian's Persian campaign (3.12-3.29),⁵⁸¹ the pontificate of the Christian emperors up to Gratian (4.36.3-4.36.4), Gratian's refusal of the title of *Pontifex Maximus* (4.36.5), the exploits of Gerontius (4.40), the events surrounding Theodosius's second journey to Rome (4.59), the indiscriminate massacre of monks (and anyone else wearing gray clothing) in a Christian Church by fanatical Christians who were supporting John Chrysostom in 403 (5.23.4-5.23.6), the consent of Pope Innocent I for the performance of Pagan rites during Alaric's siege of Rome (5.41.2), details about Alaric's demands from Rome (5.41.4), facts concerning the reigns of the usurpers during the time of Honorius (6.2-6.13)⁵⁸² and Honorius' letters in 409 to the cities of Britain (6.10.2).⁵⁸³ Furthermore, the *Historia Nova* provides the most detailed extant narrative for a number of important historical topics.⁵⁸⁴ This is especially true for the part of the *Historia Nova*

⁵⁸⁰ The first campaign occurred in 262-263 while the second occurred in 267, q.v. Pat Southern, *The Roman Empire from Severus to Constantine* (London: Routledge, 2001), 101.

⁵⁸¹ For example, Zosimus is the only source to record events at Batnae (3.12.2), the total number of legions of infantry and troops of horse which Julian reviewed at Carrhae (3.13.1), the attempt by Lucillianus and Victor to outflank the Persians (3.17.1), details surrounding the siege of Maiozamalcha (3.21-3.22) and events that occurred at a city called Meinas Sabath (3.23.3-3.23.4).

⁵⁸² For example, Zosimus is the only source to record (6.5.2) that when Constantine sent his son back to Spain, for the second time, he sent along with him a man named Justus, as Magister.

⁵⁸³ Alan Cameron, "Gratian's Repudiation of the Pontifical Robe," *Journal of Roman Studies* 58 (1968): 96; J.J. Sheridan, "The Altar of Victor – Paganism's Last Battle," *L'Antiquité Classique* 35 (1966): 191; Edward Thompson, "Zosimus 6.10.2 and the Letters of Honorius" *Classical Quarterly* 32 (1982): 445-462.

⁵⁸⁴ Zosimus is our most important source for Aurelian's campaigns against Zenobia (1.50-1.56), for the reigns of Gallienus (1.30-1.40) and Probus (1.49, 1.64-1.71), for Theodosius' victory over Maximus (4.42-4.46), for the career of Rufinus (4.51-4.52), for the fall of Stilicho (5.32-5.34), for the career of Olympius

which covers the years 395 to 410, as Zosimus preserves many details not found elsewhere, such as the manner in which Mascezel was killed and the mock execution performed by Gainas.⁵⁸⁵ Indeed, Gibbon considered Zosimus to be the best extant source for Alaric's conquest of Greece (5.5-5.7).⁵⁸⁶ Zosimus is also very important for our knowledge of the late imperial hierarchy as the names and offices of many officials from the fourth and fifth centuries are only found in his work.⁵⁸⁷

The account of Zosimus has also been instrumental in clarifying events that have been imperfectly understood due to a lack of evidence. For example, Zosimus' detailed account of Aurelian's campaign against Zenobia has been used by Glanville Downey to clarify numerous sketchy references in later chronicles about a battle that was fought at Immae.⁵⁸⁸ Zosimus mentions the first battle between Aurelian and the Palmyrene forces but does not specify a location. Downey argues, by comparing the geographical description in Zosimus with the actual terrain around Antioch, that Zosimus' account shows that this encounter should be identified with the battle of Immae, which is mentioned by various chroniclers. According to Downey, Zosimus failed to mention Immae because the battle covered so much ground. Downey asserts that the battle was not a minor encounter, as has previously been thought, but was a major battle that led directly to the evacuation of Antioch.⁵⁸⁹

Zosimus is also our most objective and trustworthy source for the reigns of Gallienus and Probus. The compiler of the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* as well as Aurelius Victor and Eutropius present Gallienus in a very negative manner. Because of this, Gallienus' reign has traditionally been viewed as that of a bad emperor who was more interested in pursuing pleasure

(5.34-5.46), for the history of Britain in the early fifth century (6.3.1-6.10.2) and for events in general from death of Stilicho to the time just before Alaric's sack of Rome (5.32-5.51). Zosimus also preserves important information (2.10.4-2.10.5) concerning the period of the Tetrarchy, such as the arguments Maximian used to try to persuade Diocletian to resume power. Additionally, Zosimus correctly represents (4.20) the movement of the Goths as a series of migrations instead of a full-scale invasion, a view that is now universally accepted, q.v. Simon MacDowell, *Adrianople 378: The Goths Crush Rome's Legions* (Oxford: Osprey, 2001), 10-11, 13-14.

⁵⁸⁵ Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, 1:170; Zos. 5.11.4, 5.18.9.

⁵⁸⁶ Gibbon, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 2:255 n. 5.

⁵⁸⁷ Ronald T. Ridley, "The Fourth and Fifth Century Civil and Military Hierarchy in Zosimus" *Byzantion* 40 (1970): 91-104.

⁵⁸⁸ Glanville Downey, "Aurelian's Victor over Zenobia at Immae," *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 81 (1950): 57-68.

⁵⁸⁹ Downey, "Aurelian's Victor over Zenobia at Immae," 62-65.

than in performing his duties. Archaeological evidence has, however, upheld Zosimus' portrayal of Gallienus as an active and able ruler.⁵⁹⁰ According to Magie, the negative portrayal of Gallienus in earlier sources was due to senatorial hostility toward Gallienus' policy of excluding Senators from military commands as well as a desire to enhance the glories of his successor Claudius II (the reputed ancestor of Constantius Chlorus).⁵⁹¹ Crees asserts that Zosimus' account is also our most valuable account for the reconstruction of the reign of the emperor Probus.⁵⁹² The panegyric account of Probus given by the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*, the only other significant source dealing with the reign of Probus, cannot be trusted. Zosimus preserves details of Probus' campaigns not preserved elsewhere, such as his wars against the Germans, Burgundians and Vandals (1.67-1.68) and that against the Isaurians (1.69-1.70).⁵⁹³ Zosimus is also the earliest extant source to give the correct details surrounding the death of Probus as well as the accurate length of his reign.⁵⁹⁴

Zosimus' narrative has also been important in determining the nature of Julian's letters, many of which are no longer extant. Thompson has used Zosimus' narrative to show that Julian's output of letters to both Greece and Italy was considerably greater than had been previously thought.⁵⁹⁵ Stopping at Naissus, while on his way to fight against Constantius II, Julian wrote several letters and had them dispatched before advancing to meet his opponent. Thompson has used Zosimus' narrative as evidence that several letters were written to Italy whereas it had previously been thought that Julian had written only one letter there.⁵⁹⁶ Thompson has also shown that Zosimus' narrative indicates that Julian's letter to the Roman Senate must have been written

⁵⁹⁰ Lukas De Blois, *The Policy of the Emperor Gallienus* (Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1976), 83-87, 116-120; L. Homo, "L'empereur Gallien et la crise de l'empire romain au III^e Siècle," *Revue Historique* 113 (1913): 1-22, 225-267.

⁵⁹¹ David Magie, *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* (London: W. Heinemann, 1932), 3:16; cf. *SHA* The Two Gallieni 1-21; Aurelius Victor *Epit. De Caesaribus* 33; Eutropius *Brev.* 9.8-9.11. Zonaras follows Zosimus in giving a favorable account (*Ann.* 12.24-12.25) of the reign of Gallienus.

⁵⁹² James Crees, *The Reign of the Emperor Probus* (London: University of London press, 1911), 71 ff.

⁵⁹³ Much space is wasted by the compiler of the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*, in his life of Probus, over forged documents and worthless verbose panegyric. The much shorter account of Zosimus manages to provide much more important information than the pretentious diffuse panegyric preserved in the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*.

⁵⁹⁴ Zos. 1.71. Zonaras (*Ann.* 12.29) also preserves the same account as Zosimus. Aurelius Victor (*Epit. De Caesaribus* 37.4) and Eutropius (*Brev.* 9.17.2) present a laudatory account that was based on the panegyric biography of Probus included in the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* (Probus 21).

⁵⁹⁵ Edward Thompson, "Three Notes on Julian," *Hermathena* 62 (1943): 83-95.

⁵⁹⁶ Zos. 3.10.3; Thompson, "Three Notes on Julian," 94.

before that which he wrote to the Athenians.⁵⁹⁷

Alan Cameron has argued that Zosimus was correct in asserting that Theodosius visited Rome in 394, in spite of the fact that Claudian only mentions his visit of 389.⁵⁹⁸ Cameron asserts that Claudian, being a poet and panegyrist, was not above distorting the truth for propagandist purposes.⁵⁹⁹ Cameron has shown that Theodore can only be referring to the visit of 394 when he alludes to a visit that Theodosius made to Rome.⁶⁰⁰ The *Chronicle of Theophanes* also records that Theodosius visited Rome after defeating Eugenius, thus confirming Zosimus' account.⁶⁰¹ In addition, Cameron points out that Prudentius, who mentions a visit Theodosius made to Rome (as well as the speech to the Senate which Zosimus also records), must be referring to a visit of 394 as he describes Theodosius as being victorious over two usurpers which Cameron asserts must be Maximus and Eugenius.⁶⁰² The fact that all these sources record a visit made by Theodosius to Rome in 394 confirms the reliability of the *Historia Nova*.⁶⁰³

Zosimus' account has also been important in reconstructing the early career of Stilicho. Baynes used Zosimus to argue that upon the death of Theodosius, Stilicho attempted to rule over both halves of the Empire even though Theodosius had only appointed him as regent over Honorius.⁶⁰⁴ Baynes' interpretation contrasts with that of Mommsen and Bury who have argued that Stilicho's sole goal was to annex Illyria for Honorius (which was important as a recruiting ground for troops) with the aid of Alaric and that he had no interest in ruling the East.⁶⁰⁵ Baynes argued, however, that this only became Stilicho's policy after he had repeatedly failed in his attempt to gain the regency for both halves of the Empire. Baynes used the history of Zosimus to prove his case. Baynes pointed out that Zosimus reports that Stilicho claimed that he had had a

⁵⁹⁷ Zos. 3.10.3-3.10.4; Thompson, "Three Notes on Julian," 94.

⁵⁹⁸ Alan Cameron, "Theodosius and the Regency of Stilicho," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 73 (1969): 247-280.

⁵⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 264.

⁶⁰⁰ Theodore *Hist. Eccl.* 5.23.8; Cameron, "Theodosius and the Regency of Stilicho," 253ff.

⁶⁰¹ Theophanes *Chron.* s.a. A.M. 5886; Theophanes also records (s.a. A.M. 5881) Theodosius' first visit to Rome.

⁶⁰² Prudentius *Contra Symmachum* 1.415-1.506; Cameron, "Theodosius and the Regency of Stilicho," 256-257.

⁶⁰³ Cameron, "Theodosius and the Regency of Stilicho," 261.

⁶⁰⁴ Norman Baynes, "A Note on Professor Bury's History of the Later Roman Empire," *Journal of Roman Studies* 12 (1922): 207-229.

⁶⁰⁵ Theodor Mommsen, *Gesammelte Schriften* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1913), 4:517-518; John Bury, *History of the Later Roman Empire from the death of Theodosius I. to the death of Justinian* (London: Macmillan, 1923), 1:110-111, 1:120, 1:169; Zos. 5.26-5.29.

secret conversation (one which Baynes did not believe had ever occurred) with Theodosius on his deathbed. Baynes asserted that Stilicho made this up in order to claim that the emperor had left him in charge, to direct the policy and command the forces of the entire Empire.⁶⁰⁶ Baynes argued that Stilicho, in an attempt to rule over Arcadius, attempted to overthrow the ministers of the Eastern court. The first of these was Rufinus. During the barbarian raids in Greece, Stilicho sent soldiers under his agent Gainas to Constantinople under the guise of helping out the East in this time of distress. In reality, Gainas was sent to murder Rufinus, a task which he accomplished. Eutropius, however, managed to seize power and this prevented Stilicho from gaining power over the East. Zosimus tells us that Eutropius became so fearful of Stilicho coming to Constantinople that he attempted to prevent his coming by having Arcadius declare Stilicho a public enemy.⁶⁰⁷ Eutropius managed to remove Stilicho's soldiers from the East by generating a revolt in Africa.⁶⁰⁸ The revolt in Africa kept Stilicho busy for a while. When Gainas finally managed to overthrow Eutropius, it was too late for Stilicho. Anti-barbarian feeling, now rampant in the East, made it impossible for Stilicho to wield any power there. In addition, Stilicho was quickly faced with barbarian attacks in the West. Baynes asserted that Stilicho, in despair of ever gaining influence over Arcadius, only then attempted to annex Illyricum to the realm of Honorius.⁶⁰⁹ Baynes believed that Stilicho reverted back to his old policy upon the death of Arcadius, only to die himself shortly thereafter.⁶¹⁰

Alan Cameron has argued that Zosimus' account of Stilicho accurately portrays the facts.⁶¹¹ Cameron points out that the *Historia Nova* reports that Theodosius appointed Stilicho as regent over Honorius and as *Magister Militum per Occidentum* before he began his journey back to Constantinople.⁶¹² On his way back to the East, however, Theodosius unexpectedly became ill. Zosimus reports that Stilicho claimed that he had a conversation with Theodosius when he was on his deathbed and that Theodosius apparently asked him to look after his sons.⁶¹³ Cameron believes that, although Theodosius may have said this, we do not know if he really intended for

⁶⁰⁶ Zos. 5.4; Baynes, "Note on Professor Bury's History," 211-212.

⁶⁰⁷ Zos. 5.11.

⁶⁰⁸ Ibid., 5.11.2-5.11.4.

⁶⁰⁹ Ibid., 5.4; Baynes, "Note on Professor Bury's History," 216.

⁶¹⁰ Zos. 5.31; Zos. 5.4; Baynes, "Note on Professor Bury's History," 217.

⁶¹¹ Cameron, "Theodosius and the Regency of Stilicho," 267-280.

⁶¹² Zos. 4.59.1.

⁶¹³ Ibid., 5.4.3.

Stilicho to act as regent over both of his sons. Cameron asserts that all we know is that this was what Stilicho claimed. Thus Zosimus reports that on the death of Theodosius, Stilicho claimed that he had been left as regent of both of his sons as well as in command of the whole army.⁶¹⁴ Cameron contends that Zosimus' account indicates that he knew that this assertion rested solely on the claim of Stilicho.⁶¹⁵ Cameron argues that Stilicho, who seems to have been very loyal to Theodosius and his two sons, may have genuinely been aware of the failings of the feeble Arcadius. Cameron maintains that since Arcadius was continuously ruled over by self-seeking ministers, Stilicho may have realized that Arcadius was not capable of ruling properly on his own. Cameron concludes that there is therefore no reason to believe that Stilicho was motivated solely by personal ambition.⁶¹⁶

Zosimus is the only extant source to give a detailed description of the violent events that followed the first exile of John Chrysostom from Constantinople.⁶¹⁷ T.E. Gregory had reconstructed the events surrounding Chrysostom's exile by using the text of Zosimus. On the day of Chrysostom's first exile a growing crowd of his supporters frightened Eudoxia into recalling Chrysostom. According to the ecclesiastical historians, no violence or bloodshed occurred during Chrysostom's first banishment.⁶¹⁸ Gregory, however, has shown that the ecclesiastical historians were misrepresenting the truth of what actually happened. Upon hearing that Eudoxia had changed her mind, the monks who opposed Chrysostom seized a church (apparently the Hagia Sophia) and attempted to prevent the people from entering to pray. Upon this, Chrysostom's supporters fell into a fury and fell upon the monks, killing anyone who happened to be wearing gray clothing. Gregory asserts that Christian sources were silent concerning this incident to avoid compromising Chrysostom, whom they glorified as a good Christian.⁶¹⁹ This shows that Zosimus related more contrasting information when compared with ecclesiastical historians, who often omitted any event that might damage the reputation of their Christian heroes.

Zosimus' history is also our most important source for the history of Britain during the

⁶¹⁴ Ibid., 5.4.3, 5.42, 5.34.6; Cameron, "Theodosius and the Regency of Stilicho," 267-268.

⁶¹⁵ Zos. 5.4.3, 5.34.6; Cameron, "Theodosius and the Regency of Stilicho," 268-269.

⁶¹⁶ Cameron, "Theodosius and the Regency of Stilicho," 270-280.

⁶¹⁷ Zos. 5.23; T.E. Gregory, "Zosimus 5.23 and the People of Constantinople," *Byzantion* 43 (1973): 61-83.

⁶¹⁸ Sozom. *Hist. Eccl.* 8.18, Socr. *Hist. Eccl.* 6.16, Theodoret *Hist. Eccl.* 5.34.

⁶¹⁹ Gregory, "Zosimus 5.23 and the People of Constantinople," 80.

years 406 to 410.⁶²⁰ Zosimus has been used to determine the nature of a number of events for this important phase of Romano-British history. Zosimus tells us that the British set up three usurpers because of the threat of a barbarian invasion. The last of these usurpers, Constantine, took British troops to Gaul in order to fight some barbarians, leaving few or no effective forces in Britain. According to Zosimus, this led to a revolution in Britain, which resulted in the final separation of the province from the Roman Empire.⁶²¹ The text of Zosimus has been used to determine the nature of this revolution. Bury believed that the revolt was due to the discontent with the rule of Stilicho.⁶²² Baynes argued that the revolt occurred because the Roman troops remaining in Britain were sick of constant barbarian incursions.⁶²³ Thompson argued, using the text of Zosimus, that this was a social revolution of the poorer classes against the Roman officials and landed gentry. Thompson identifies the revolt as a Bacaudic rebellion, similar to the one that the Romans suppressed in Gaul. This is based on the fact that Zosimus says that Armorica and the other provinces of Gaul imitated the British revolt.⁶²⁴ Myers, also basing his theory on the account of Zosimus, suggests that the revolt may have also had a religious aspect, namely, the adoption of Pelagianism by a large number of people in Britain.⁶²⁵ Frere suggested that the revolt recorded by Zosimus was simply the ejection of the usurper Constantine and that the subsequent appeal to the legal government of Honorius for help prompted the reply that they should look after their own defense.⁶²⁶ E. J. Owens argues yet another theory, saying that the previous interpretations go further than Zosimus' own words. Owens believes that the British revolted shortly after trouble started on the continent because of the failure of the Romans to provide adequate protection for the island coupled with the oppression they had suffered at the hands of the Romans in authority on the island and the excessive demands of the Roman government.⁶²⁷ Owens suggests that the appeal to Honorius may have come from those Romans left in Britain who considered themselves

⁶²⁰ Edward Thompson, "Britain, A.D. 406-410" *Britannia* 8 (1977): 303-318.

⁶²¹ Zos. 6.5.2.

⁶²² Bury, *Later Roman Empire*, 1:187-188.

⁶²³ Zos. 5.4; Baynes, "Note on Professor Bury's History," 219-220.

⁶²⁴ Edward Thompson, "Zosimus on the End of Roman Britain," *Antiquity* 30 (1956) 163-167; Thompson, "Britain, A.D. 406-410," 303-318.

⁶²⁵ J.N.L. Myers, "Pelagius and the End of Roman Rule in Britain" *Journal of Roman Studies* 50 (1960): 21-36.

⁶²⁶ Sheppard Frere, *Britannia: A History of Roman Britain* (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1987), 359-360.

⁶²⁷ E.J. Owens, "Zosimus, the Roman Empire and the End of Roman Britain," *Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History* 7 (1997): 478-504.

to be the legitimate holders of power. Owens also suggests that Honorius may have sent the letter in order to emphasize to the usurpers (such as Constantine) that despite his troubles he was still the legitimate emperor of the West.⁶²⁸

Zosimus has also been instrumental in determining the time of the final Roman evacuation of the island of Britain. Bury, ignoring the account presented by Zosimus, argued that the final evacuation of Britain occurred some time after 428.⁶²⁹ This was based on his interpretation of what was contained in the *Notitia Dignitatum*.⁶³⁰ The text of Zosimus, however, implies that Britain was, in fact, relinquished by the Romans much earlier and this is supported by other evidence.⁶³¹ Collingwood pointed out that archaeological evidence indicates that around the year 410 the coin supply of Britain was suddenly and entirely interrupted and never renewed. Procopius also clearly indicates (*Vandal War* 1.181) that Britain was never recovered by the Romans after the year 410. Collingwood believes that this evidence upholds the account of Zosimus, which specifies that Britain had been lost to the Romans by the year 410.⁶³² Thompson argued that since Zosimus interrupts his narrative of Alaric's march to Rome in late 409 in order to give information on events in Britain and Gaul, the Roman evacuation of Britain should be dated to the year 409.⁶³³ Thompson further argued that the fact that Zosimus (6.10.2) says that Honorius wrote a letter to the cities of Britain in the year 410, in response to a request for aid, indicates that there was no longer any high Roman official on the island to whom he could address his letters.⁶³⁴ Thus Thompson agreed with Collingwood that by the year 410, Britain had been lost to the Roman Empire.⁶³⁵ Other scholars have also based their calculations on the date of the outbreak of the revolt and the date of the final evacuation of Britain on the account of

⁶²⁸ Ibid., 502-503.

⁶²⁹ Bury suggested that 442 may have been the year in which the final Roman evacuation of Britain occurred. He based this argument on an entry in the *Gallic Chronicle*, q.v. John Bury, "The Notitia Dignitatum" *Journal of Roman Studies* 10 (1920): 131-154.

⁶³⁰ Bury, "The Notitia Dignitatum," 146-154.

⁶³¹ Zos. 6.5-6.6.

⁶³² R.G. Collingwood, "The Roman Evacuation of Britain," *Journal of Roman Studies* 12 (1922): 74-98.

⁶³³ Thompson, "End of Roman Britain," 163-167; Thompson, "Britain, A.D. 406-410" 303-318.

⁶³⁴ Thompson, "Letters of Honorius" 445-462; Edward Thompson, "Fifth Century Facts?" *Britannia* 14 (1983): 272-274.

⁶³⁵ Owens also supports the year 410, q.v. Owens, "Zosimus and the End of Roman Britain," 500.

Zosimus.⁶³⁶

Finally, the history of Zosimus has also been important in determining the dates of other events. For example, Alan Cameron has used the account of Zosimus to determine the date of Gratian's repudiation of the office of *Pontifex Maximus*.⁶³⁷ Zosimus is our only extant source on this subject. Cameron argues that Zosimus' placement of this event implies that Gratian refused the Pontifical robe only after his anti-Pagan legislation of 382 and the outbreak of Maximus' revolt.⁶³⁸ This, according to Cameron, would place Gratian's rejection of the office sometime in the year 383.⁶³⁹ Barnes has also used the history of Zosimus to date the execution of Lucianus, the *Comes Orientis* under Rufinus, to the year 393.⁶⁴⁰

ZOSIMUS' OBJECTIVITY

The history of Zosimus is, in general, more accurate and trustworthy than many highly prejudiced accounts of Christian historians. The skepticism and tolerance of the classical mind led Pagan historians to be more objective or, at the very least, attempt to be so. The overriding faith of the Christians, on the other hand, led them to be prejudiced against anything that was unfavorable to their religion.⁶⁴¹ The Christian historians tended to paint a black and white picture of good and bad emperors. Emperors such as Constantine and Theodosius, who promoted Christianity, were deemed to be great. Anyone who dared to oppose the church, such as the emperor Julian, was condemned and denigrated in the most violent of terms. Even Christian emperors who happened to belong to a different sect (than that of the author) were vilified. In contrast to the ecclesiastical historians, Zosimus displays fairness and balance. This can easily be seen by examining Zosimus' liberal attitude towards Christian emperors such as Constantine, Constantius, Gratian and Theodosius I. The fact that Zosimus had many positive things to say

⁶³⁶ Stevens, "Marcus, Gratian, Constantine," 316-347; Baynes, "Note on Professor Bury's History," 217-220; Anthony Birley, *The Fasti of Roman Britain* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1981), 341-344; M.E. Jones and P.J. Casey, "The Gallic Chronicle Restored," *Britannia* 18 (1987): 379-392.

⁶³⁷ Cameron, "Gratian's Repudiation of the Pontifical Robe," 96-102.

⁶³⁸ Cameron verifies the information which Zosimus gives with some statements that are found in Ausonius' *Gratiarum Actio*, q.v. Cameron, "Gratian's Repudiation of the Pontifical Robe," 98.

⁶³⁹ Cameron, "Gratian's Repudiation of the Pontifical Robe," 97-99.

⁶⁴⁰ Timothy Barnes, "The Victims of Rufinus" *Classical Quarterly* 34 (1984): 227-230.

⁶⁴¹ Shotwell has argued that the classical mind was naturally skeptical in comparison to the typical Christian mind that was subservient to an overriding faith, q.v. James T. Shotwell, *The Story of Ancient History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939), 33 ff.

about these Christian emperors shows that he made an honest attempt to be objective.

Zosimus begins his account of Constantine positively. Zosimus takes Constantine's side in his war against Maxentius, in spite of the fact that Maxentius was a fervent Pagan. Maxentius is condemned by Zosimus for treating his subjects in a cruel and violent manner.⁶⁴² The *Historia Nova* contrasts the cruelty of Maxentius with the clemency of Constantine who, after he had defeated the former, only punished a few of his closest associates.⁶⁴³ Zosimus gives us another example of Constantine's clemency, this time in his dealings with barbarians whom he had captured in war.⁶⁴⁴ In addition, he narrates the bravery and adroitness of Constantine's military exploits are narrated by Zosimus in quite a positive manner.⁶⁴⁵ The *Historia Nova* informs us of a fantastic feat in which Constantine, assisted by only twelve of his men, confronted and put to flight the entire army of Licinius at Adrianople, which numbered around 150,000 men.⁶⁴⁶ The account of this brave action would hardly be included by someone who had set out to condemn all things Christian. Eusebius, Evagrius, Sozomen never make any such concession to the emperor Julian, whom they describe as inherently and completely evil. Zosimus has many positive things to say about Constantius II, even though he was the first emperor to pass anti-Pagan legislation. Zosimus supports Constantius II in his war against Maxentius, despite the fact that Maxentius was more willing to allow Pagans to practice their religion freely.⁶⁴⁷ Zosimus pays tribute to Constantius for exerting every effort to save the city of Nisibis when it was besieged and in extreme danger.⁶⁴⁸ He also mentions Constantius' clemency in allowing Vetrano to live out his life in peace after having outwitted him and taken over his army.⁶⁴⁹ Zosimus is surprisingly neutral towards Gratian until the point where Zosimus asserts that he came under the influence of evil courtiers, not identifying any of these by name but probably referring to the great influence of bishop Ambrose and his sect.⁶⁵⁰ This change in policy led to wide-spread

⁶⁴² Zos. 2.12-2.17.

⁶⁴³ Ibid., 2.17.

⁶⁴⁴ Zos. 2.21.

⁶⁴⁵ Ibid., 2.16-2.26.

⁶⁴⁶ Ibid., 2.22.

⁶⁴⁷ Ibid., 2.45-2.54.

⁶⁴⁸ Ibid., 3.33.

⁶⁴⁹ Ibid., 2.44.

⁶⁵⁰ Ibid., 4.12, 4.19, 4.24, 4.32-4.35.

discontent and resulted in a revolution which even extended into his own army.⁶⁵¹ The *Historia Nova* unexpectedly has good things to say even about Theodosius I, who was the emperor who finally proscribed the public performance of the traditional Pagan rites.⁶⁵² When he first appears in the history, Theodosius is portrayed as a victorious general who saves Moesia from barbarian attacks during the reign of Valentinian I.⁶⁵³ Later, Zosimus reports that strange bandits were pillaging the regions of Macedonia and Thessaly under the cover of night, only to return at daybreak to their own lands, leaving no trace behind them.⁶⁵⁴ The *Historia Nova* commends Theodosius who, accompanied by only five of his cavalymen, infiltrated enemy territory incognito in order to find out who was terrorizing and pillaging the vulnerable people of these regions during these repetitive night raids.⁶⁵⁵ Zosimus also praises Theodosius for his humanity in giving the Gothic king, Athanarichus, a magnificent royal burial.⁶⁵⁶ Furthermore, the *Historia Nova* reports that Theodosius attempted to save the life of a man who had been unjustly condemned to death.⁶⁵⁷ In fact, Zosimus expresses amazement at how Theodosius, a man who had done many commendable actions, could also carry out so much that was deplorable.⁶⁵⁸ If Zosimus had been intent on criticizing all things Christian, he could have easily removed the numerous positive references to these Christian emperors in his work. That he did not do this, is clear evidence that Zosimus honestly attempted to write an objective historical work.

Another illustration of Zosimus' objectivity can be observed in his criticism of various emperors who had been favorable to the Pagan cause. Maxentius, who was enthusiastically Pagan, is condemned by Zosimus for his violence and cruelty.⁶⁵⁹ Magnentius was scorned by Zosimus for his cowardice, deceit and avarice, even though he recognized the right of Pagans to worship as they pleased.⁶⁶⁰ Zosimus fails to offer any malicious reflection against Christians in the context of the death of Julian, in spite of the fact that there were rumors that a Christian had

⁶⁵¹ Ibid., 4.35.

⁶⁵² Ibid., 4.34, 4.50, 4.52, 4.58.

⁶⁵³ Ibid., 4.16.

⁶⁵⁴ Ibid., 4.48.

⁶⁵⁵ Zos. 4.48.

⁶⁵⁶ Ibid., 4.34.

⁶⁵⁷ Ibid., 4.52.

⁶⁵⁸ Ibid., 4.50.

⁶⁵⁹ Ibid., 2.12-2.17.

⁶⁶⁰ Ibid., 2.54.

been responsible for the emperor's death.⁶⁶¹ This is especially surprising considering the preposterous tales that were being circulated by Christian writers.⁶⁶² Valentinian I, who had granted complete toleration for all cults at the beginning of his reign, was criticized by Zosimus on several counts.⁶⁶³ An attempt having been made on the throne, Zosimus reports that Valentinian became overly suspicious and began to believe that others were attempting to become emperor. Zosimus relates that a devastating campaign was instituted by Valentinian against anyone whom he considered suspicious. Valentinian gave free sway to informers who, in their attempts to destroy their enemies and gain riches, had numerous innocent people unjustly punished for being at the wrong place at the wrong time.⁶⁶⁴ Zosimus also criticized Valentinian for demanding heavy tribute from his subjects and for refusing to investigate any allegations of corruption among his bureaucrats.⁶⁶⁵ Zosimus also disparages the emperor Attalus, even though he would have been sympathetic to the Pagan cause if he had been able to remove the emperor Honorius with the help of Alaric.⁶⁶⁶

The fundamental spirit of evenhandedness of Zosimus' account is brought out by his failure to capitalize on much that would have been injurious to the reputation of Christianity. Zosimus fails to mention the numerous acts of vandalism perpetrated by militant Christians. For example, many Christians went about destroying and dismantling Pagan temples to such a degree and frequency that even Christian emperors were forced to pass legislation to make such tumultuous acts illegal.⁶⁶⁷ Zosimus says nothing about Constantine's numerous attempts to raise revenue by confiscation of gold, silver and other valuable treasures from Pagan temples.⁶⁶⁸ Zosimus is almost completely silent about Julian's religious policies, which he certainly could have exploited if his intent had been to embarrass the Christians. In addition, Zosimus fails to capitalize on the story that blamed the death of Julian on a Christian, refusing to be involved in

⁶⁶¹ Ibid., 3.29.1.

⁶⁶² For example, see the outlandish tale related by Sozomen (*Hist. Eccl.* 6.2) in which Julian is supposed to have seen Jesus shortly after being wounded and thereupon attempted to throw some blood in the face of Jesus.

⁶⁶³ Zos. 4.16.

⁶⁶⁴ Zos. 4.13-4.15.

⁶⁶⁵ Ibid., 4.16.

⁶⁶⁶ Ibid., 6.7-6.13, Phot. *Epit. of the Hist. Eccl. of Philostorg.* 12.3.

⁶⁶⁷ *Theodosian Code* 16.10.15; 16.10.17, 16.10.18.

⁶⁶⁸ Julian *Or.* 7.228, Libanius *Or.* 30.6, 37, 62.8, Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* 3.1.54, Anonymous *De Rebus Bellicis* 2.1.

any anti-Christian polemic on this subject. Zosimus does not suggest that Jovian's Christianity had any significance with his elevation to the throne, even though the Ecclesiastical historians disingenuously imply this.⁶⁶⁹ Zosimus likewise fails to mention the massacre that was committed by the order of Theodosius in the city of Thessalonica. Zosimus similarly refuses to offer apologetics over the Christian victory at the battle of Frigidus.⁶⁷⁰

In general, the information found in the *Historia Nova* is much more reliable and truthful than that which is found in Christian historical sources. In spite of this, throughout the centuries it has been Zosimus who has been constantly branded as a prejudiced liar by Christians who were shocked to see their heroes treated in anything but a panegyric manner. By examining a typical passage from one of these ecclesiastical historians, it can easily be seen how disingenuous they were. Evagrius violently criticizes the *Historia Nova* in the forty-first chapter of the third book of his *Ecclesiastical History*. An examination of this passage will reveal the errors and prejudices of Evagrius. Evagrius says:

Zosimus, a follower of the accursed and foul religion of the Greeks, in his anger against Constantine, because he was the first emperor that had adopted Christianity, abandoning the abominable superstition of the Greeks, says, that he was the person who devised the tax called *Chrysargyrum*, and enacted that it should be levied every five years. He has on many other grounds also reviled that pious and magnificent monarch; for he affirms that he contrived many other intolerable proceedings against every class of persons; that he miserably destroyed his son Crispus, and made away with his wife Fausta by inclosing her in an overheated bath; and that, after having in vain endeavored to procure purification from murders so detestable at the hands of the priests of his own religion (for they plainly declared its impossibility), he met with an Egyptian who had come from Iberia; and, having been assured by him that the faith of the Christians had the power of blotting out every sin, he embraced what the Egyptian had imparted to him, and thenceforward abandoning the faith of his fathers, he made the commencement of his impiety. The falsehood of these assertions I will forthwith shew, and in the first place treat of the matter of the *Chrysargyrum*.⁶⁷¹

Zosimus was not angry with Constantine because he adopted Christianity, as Evagrius declares. Instead, Zosimus asserted that Constantine's innovations and neglect of tradition were disastrous

⁶⁶⁹ Socr. *Hist. Eccl.* 3.22, Sozom. *Hist. Eccl.* 6.3.

⁶⁷⁰ Zos. 4.58.

⁶⁷¹ The translation of Evagrius used, in this paper, is that of Walford, q.v. Edward Walford, *A History of the Church from A.D. 322 to the death of Theodore of Mopsuestia, A.D. 427* (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1854), 3.41.

for the Roman Empire.⁶⁷² The *Chrysargyron* (also known as the *Collatio Lustralis*), in spite of what Evagrius says, was indeed instituted by Constantine.⁶⁷³ Constantine was also responsible for instituting the onerous tax known as the *Collatio Glebalus* (or *Follis*). Furthermore, Constantine required that all Praetors should finance extravagant games during their term of office.⁶⁷⁴ Evagrius is also dishonest concerning Crispus and Fausta, who were in reality both murdered by Constantine.⁶⁷⁵ In the light of all these blatant lies and deceptions, it is reasonable to assume that Zosimus is also relating the truth when he reports that Constantine, when he began to feel remorseful, did in fact seek purification for his murders and that this was the true reason for his conversion to Christianity. Evagrius continues as follows:

Thou sayest, O evil and malignant demon, that Constantine, wishing to raise a city equal to Rome, first made a commencement of so vast a place by laying strong foundations and erecting a lofty wall between Troas and Ilium; but when he had discovered in Byzantium a more suitable site, he in such fashion encircled the place with walls, so far extended the former city, and embellished it with buildings so splendid, as hardly to be surpassed by Rome itself, which had received gradual increase through so long a course of years. Thou sayest also that he made a distribution of provisions at the public cost to the people of Byzantium, and bestowed a very large sum of gold upon those who had accompanied him thither, for the erection of private houses. Again, thou writest to the following effect: that on the decease of Constantine, the imperial power came into the hands of Constantius, his only surviving son after the death of his two brothers; and that when Magnentius and Vetranio had assumed the sovereignty, he wrought upon the latter by persuasives: and when both armies had been mustered, Constantius, addressing them first, reminded the soldiers of the generosity of his father, with whom they had served through many wars, and by whom they had been distinguished with the most liberal gifts; and that the soldiers, on hearing this, stripped Vetranio of his imperial robe, and made him descend from the tribunal into a private station; and that he suffered no unkindness at the hands of Constantius: who has shared with his father in so much of thy calumny. How thou canst then maintain that the same person could be so liberal, so munificent, and at the same time so paltry and sordid as to impose so accursed a tax, I am utterly unable to comprehend.⁶⁷⁶

⁶⁷² Zos. 2.7ff.

⁶⁷³ Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, 1:110, 1:237, 1:431 ff., 1:871ff. Constantine seems to have introduced this tax sometime between the years 312-320, in the provinces that were then under his control.

⁶⁷⁴ Zos. 2.38.

⁶⁷⁵ H. Pohlsander, "Crispus: Brilliant Career and Tragic End," *Historia* 33 (1984): 79-106; Phot. *Epit. of the Hist. Eccl. of Philostorg.* 2.4.

⁶⁷⁶ Walford, *History of the Church*, 3.41.

Evagrius clearly shows us that he has little evidence to back up his claims as he resorts to insults instead of arguing his points logically. Evagrius conveniently ignores the fact that Constantine pillaged and plundered cities throughout the Roman Empire for their treasures and art so that he could adorn his new city.⁶⁷⁷ Evagrius also ignores the fact that Constantine, in a vain attempt to show Rome how quickly he could build a rival city, spent money on shabbily built structures that were eventually pulled down because they were unsafe.⁶⁷⁸ Evagrius is so carried away by his fanaticism that he utterly fails to recognize that Constantine needed to raise taxes because of his extravagant spending.⁶⁷⁹ The *Epitome De Caesaribus* informs us that Constantine was “for ten years a most excellent man, for the following second ten a brigand, for the last, on account of his unrestrained prodigality, a ward irresponsible for his own actions.”⁶⁸⁰ Zosimus accurately censures Constantius for his lies, trickery, cruelty, jealousy and intolerance. Evagrius continues:

In proof that Constantine did not destroy Fausta or Crispus, nor was on that account initiated by an Egyptian into our mysteries, listen to the history of Eusebius Pamphili, who was contemporary with Constantine and Crispus, and had intercourse with them. For what thou writest, so far from being truth, was not even contemporary hearsay, since thou livedst long after, in the time of Arcadius and Honorius—to which period thou hast brought down thy history—or even after their time. Eusebius, in the eighth book of his ecclesiastical history, has the following words: "After no very long interval, the emperor Constantine, having maintained a disposition remarkable for gentleness in respect to his whole life, kindness towards his subjects, and favor towards the divine word, closes his life by the common laws of nature, leaving behind him, as emperor and Augustus in his own room, a legitimate son, Constantius." And farther on he says: "His son Constantius, having at the very commencement of his reign been proclaimed supreme emperor and Augustus by the armies, and long before by God himself, the universal Sovereign, shewed himself an imitator of his father's piety as respects our faith." And at the end of the history he expresses himself in the following terms: "The mighty, victorious Constantine, distinguished by every religious excellence, in conjunction with his son Crispus, a sovereign highly beloved of God, and resembling his father in all things, obtained his rightful possession of the East." Eusebius, who survived Constantine, would never have praised Crispus in these terms, if he had been destroyed by his father. Theodoret, in his history, says that Constantine partook in the

⁶⁷⁷ Zos. 2.31, 5.24.6, Julian *Or.* 7.228C; Libanius *Or.* 30.6; Jerome *Chron.* s.a. 330; *Chron. Paschale* s.a. 328; Malalas *Chron.* 319.20-321.15; *Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai* 5, 38, 53, 56, 68; Sozom. *Hist. Eccl.* 2.5; Euseb. *VC* 3.52ff.

⁶⁷⁸ Zos. 2.32; *Theodosian Code* 14.7-14.13, 14.17.1; Theodosius *Novella* 5.1.

⁶⁷⁹ *Epit. De Caesaribus* 41.16; Eutropius *Brev.* 10.7; Amm. Marc. 16.8.12; Julian *Caesares* 335B; Euseb. *VC* 3.15, 4.1.

⁶⁸⁰ *Epit. De Caesaribus* 41.16.

saving baptism at Nicomedia, near the close of his life, and that he had deferred the rite till this period, from a desire that it should be performed in the river Jordan.⁶⁸¹

Evagrius conveniently ignores the fact that Constantine left three sons behind him who only divided the Empire amongst themselves after murdering nearly all of their male relatives. Constantius, apparently following in the footsteps of his father, murdered men such as Gallus (his own relative, who had been appointed Caesar) after they had helped him survive through periods of anarchy and war. Eusebius did not know how to distort the death of Crispus to fit in with his picture of Constantine as the virtuous Christian emperor, and consequently it should be of no surprise that he did not mention the incident in his *Ecclesiastical History*. As a matter of fact, the *Ecclesiastical History* of Eusebius was finished shortly after the victory of Constantine and Crispus over Licinius in 324, so the fact that Eusebius does not mention of the death of Crispus should be of no surprise, as the event had not yet occurred when the work had been finished. The death of Crispus was later recorded by Eusebius in his *Chronicle* and is also mentioned in numerous other sources.⁶⁸² Evagrius seems to be ignorant of the fact that Constantine deferred his baptism so that he could be purified from all his sins immediately before his death.⁶⁸³ This was a common practice at that time and was done so that a person could go directly to heaven upon his death without having to suffer in Purgatory.⁶⁸⁴

Thou sayest, O most detestable and polluted one, that the Roman Empire from the time of the appearance of Christianity, fell away and was altogether ruined: either because thou hast not read any of the older writings, or because thou art a traitor to the truth. For, on the contrary, it clearly appears that the Roman power increased together with the spread of our faith.⁶⁸⁵

⁶⁸¹ Walford, *History of the Church*, 3.41.

⁶⁸² Zos. 2.29; Eutropius *Brev.* 10.6; *Consularia Constantinopolitana* 326; Amm. Marc. 14.11.20; Euseb. *Chron.* s.a. 326, Phot. *Epit. of the Hist. Eccl. of Philostorg.* 2.4. In his *Ecclesiastical History* (10.9), Eusebius bestows the highest encomiums upon Crispus, but in his *Life of Constantine*, he does not even dare to mention the name of Crispus. It can be inferred from this silence, that Eusebius was well apprised that nothing could be alleged to excuse Constantine from the murder of his son.

⁶⁸³ Socrates (*Hist. Eccl.* 1.39), Sozomen (*Hist. Eccl.* 2.34), Jerome (*Chron.* s.a. 357), the *Chron. Paschale* (s.a. 335) and even Eusebius himself (*VC* 4.61) all report that Constantine received baptism at the end of his life when he became very ill and felt that he was on the verge of death so that he could be cleansed of his past sins, cf. Rufinus *Hist. Eccl.* 10.12; Theophanes *Chron.* s.a. A.M. 5828.

⁶⁸⁴ A.H.M. Jones, *Constantine and the Conversion of Europe* (New York: Macmillan, 1949), 196.

⁶⁸⁵ Walford, *History of the Church*, 3.41.

Evagrius was writing this, believe it or not, in the late sixth century, long after the western half of the Roman Empire had fallen into the hands of the barbarians. Moreover Evagrius actually wrote this shortly after the failed attempt of Justinian to restore the Roman Empire, when all the territories that Justinian had conquered appeared lost forever and various barbarians (such as the Slavs and Avars) were menacing the Eastern Empire. In spite of all this, Evagrius has the audacity to claim that the Roman power has increased with the spread of the Christian faith. Evagrius continues:

I had, however, nearly forgotten to notice what thou thyself writest respecting the achievements of Constantine, how nobly and courageously he swayed the Roman Empire, while professing our religion, and what befell Julian, thy hero and the votary of thy orgies, who bequeathed to the commonwealth injuries so serious. Whether, however, he has either already received a foretaste of the things which have been foretold concerning the end of the world, or will even receive their full measure, is a question relating to an economy too high for thy comprehension.⁶⁸⁶

The fact that Zosimus has good things to say about Constantine speaks to his evenhandedness. Zosimus, however, makes it clear that Constantine became corrupted with power, shortly after his conversion, with ruinous results for the Empire.⁶⁸⁷ In contrast to this, Evagrius does not deign to say anything good about Julian throughout his entire work. Zosimus does not call attention to the religious policies of Julian although he could of used this opportunity to antagonize Christians.⁶⁸⁸ Evagrius is apparently at a loss for evidence as he tries to insult Zosimus, once again, with his reference to orgies. Evagrius goes on to say:

Let us, at all events, consider under what circumstances heathen and Christian emperors have respectively closed their reigns. [Here follows a catalog of the circumstances surrounding the deaths of the Pagan emperors] ... But from the time that the renowned Constantine succeeded to the Empire, and had dedicated to Christ the city which bears his name, mark me, whether any of those who have reigned there, except Julian thy hierophant and monarch, have perished by the hands of either domestic or foreign foes, and whether a rival has overthrown any of them; except that Basiliscus expelled Zeno, by whom, however, he was afterwards overthrown and killed.⁶⁸⁹

⁶⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁷ Zos. 2.29ff.

⁶⁸⁸ Zosimus only briefly states, at 3.9.3, that he openly declared himself to be Pagan after his elevation.

⁶⁸⁹ Walford, *History of the Church*, 3.41.

After the reign of Constantine, numerous Christian emperors were murdered.⁶⁹⁰ Evagrius' squabble about Christian emperors dying peaceful deaths is absurd. Many of the earlier Emperors died in battle because they were actively ruling instead of being secluded in a palace, like the majority of Christian emperors who later reigned at Constantinople. These Christian emperors were no more fortuitous than the Pagan emperors had been. Their seclusion protected them from being murdered but it did not protect them from illness, as the majority of those who did not die in battle ended up dying from some disease.⁶⁹¹ Lactantius had made much ado over the deaths of various Roman emperors, claiming that many of them had died of disease as a punishment from the Christian God.⁶⁹² It is clear, however, that many of the Christian emperors also died of disease, thereby making Lactantius' argument invalid.

Considering how blatantly Evagrius lies and distorts facts, it is amazing how little scholars have criticized him and other ecclesiastical historians whereas Zosimus has consistently been discounted as a prejudiced historian throughout the centuries. The partisanship of the ecclesiastical historians is especially apparent in the works of Eusebius. Eusebius was also in the habit of devising and distorting events in order to glorify Christianity. This is proven by a statement he makes in his *Evangelical Preparation* in which he declares, "that it will be necessary sometimes to use falsehood as a remedy for the benefit of those who require such a mode of treatment."⁶⁹³ Eusebius goes on to state that the Jews told lies about their God being jealous, falling asleep, getting angry, or being subject to some other human passion for the benefit of

⁶⁹⁰ Constantine II died fighting against his brother Constans, Constans was put to death by his rival Magnentius, Constantius II (who ruled at Constantinople) died mysteriously on his way to confront his rival Julian, Valens (who ruled at Constantinople) was killed during a war against the Goths (his foreign foes), Gratian was put to death by his rival Maximus, Valentinian II was murdered by his *magister militum* Arbogastes, Magnus Maximus was executed by Theodosius I, Eugenius was also executed by Theodosius I, Theodosius I (who ruled at Constantinople) is said to have died fighting against the barbarians, Constans II was executed by Gerontius, Joannes was executed by Theodosius II, Valentinian II was murdered by two members of his bodyguard, Petronius Maximus was butchered by his imperial slaves, Avitus was killed by Majorian, Majorian was killed by Ricimer, Libius Severus was poisoned by Ricimer, Anthemius was murdered by the Burgundian Gundobad, Nepos was killed by his own supporters and Leontius was executed by Zeno.

⁶⁹¹ e.g. Jovian died from complications resulting from his gluttony, Theodosius II died after falling off his horse, Marcian died from gangrene in the feet, Leo I died of dysentery, Justin I died of complications arising from an old war wound in a foot and Justinian I died in his sleep while he was suffering from some ailment.

⁶⁹² Lactantius *De Mortibus Persecutorum* 1.7.

⁶⁹³ Euseb. *Evangelical Preparation* 12.31.

those who needed such an approach. Eusebius compares such lies with medicine because although “truth is beautiful and steadfast, to persuade people of it is not easy.”⁶⁹⁴ An author, like Eusebius, who believes that the distortion of facts is sometimes a necessary medicine can hardly be trusted to be objective. Eusebius also indirectly confesses that he has related whatever might reflect to the glory of Christianity and suppressed all that could disgrace it.⁶⁹⁵ Thus it seems only natural that Eusebius should glorify the man whom he believed was the champion of Christianity, the emperor Constantine, even if this meant he had to misrepresent the facts. Two examples of this distortion include Eusebius’ omission of the fact that Constantine murdered his son and wife as well as his denial of the fact that Constantine was born out of wedlock.⁶⁹⁶ That both of these events did indeed take place is no longer in dispute.⁶⁹⁷ Zosimus records both of these events truthfully.⁶⁹⁸ Zosimus also recorded events that were glossed over by the ecclesiastical historians because they were embarrassing to Christians. At 5.19.5, Zosimus relates how some barbarians who had sought sanctuary in a Christian church were burned to death inside the church. Christians sacrilegiously removed the roof over the altar so that burning brands could be thrown on the barbarians who had sought sanctuary there. Sozomen and Socrates gloss over this incident in their ecclesiastical histories.⁶⁹⁹ Later on, at 5.23, Zosimus reports how a mob of fanatical Christians violently broke into a church and killed all the monks inside (including anyone who happened to be wearing gray clothes), leaving their bodies on the floor of the church. The ecclesiastical historians choose to ignore this episode, simply choosing to report that a general disturbance occurred in the city.⁷⁰⁰ At 5.24.3, Zosimus reports how a group of Christians attempted to destroy the city of Constantinople by burning it to the ground. Socrates reports the

⁶⁹⁴ Ibid., 12.31.

⁶⁹⁵ Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* 8.2; Euseb. *Martyrs of Palestine* 12.

⁶⁹⁶ Eusebius mentions Crispus’ services to the Empire in the early part of the reign of Constantine (*Hist. Eccl.* 10.9.4-10.9.6) and then conveniently ignores him for the rest of his work. In his *Life of Constantine* (1.17-1.19) and in his *Ecclesiastical History* (8.13.12, 9.9.1) Eusebius blatantly lies by implying that Constantine’s mother was the legal wife of his father, Constantius I. Even Christian sources (Orosius *History Against the Pagans* 7.25, Chron. Gallica 445, 306) agree that she was a merely a concubine.

⁶⁹⁷ Alan Bowman, “Diocletian and the First Tetrarchy,” in *Cambridge Ancient History* (Cambridge: University Press, 2005), 12:71-75; Averil Cameron, “The Reign of Constantine,” in *Cambridge Ancient History* (Cambridge: University Press, 2005), 12:96-102.

⁶⁹⁸ Zos. 2.9, 2.29.

⁶⁹⁹ Socr. *Hist. Eccl.* 6.6; Sozom. *Hist. Eccl.* 8.4.

⁷⁰⁰ Sozom. *Hist. Eccl.* 8.18; Socr. *Hist. Eccl.* 6.16.

Christians only attempted to burn one Church.⁷⁰¹ Sozomen, writing after Socrates, apparently decided that the Christians should not even be blamed for that and claims that the fire was sent from Heaven.⁷⁰²

The circumstances of Constantine's conversion have been shrouded in mystery by the legends that have been devised by various zealous Christians. These accounts would have us believe that Constantine converted to Christianity immediately after his victory over Maxentius. Traditionally, historians have blindly accepted the accounts of the ancient ecclesiastical writers without critical investigation.⁷⁰³ Many modern historians, however, have questioned the accuracy of these accounts because of a large amount of evidence that conflicts with the record of events as presented in these accounts.⁷⁰⁴ This evidence, which confirms Zosimus' account, shows clearly

⁷⁰¹ Socr. *Hist. Eccl.* 6.18.

⁷⁰² Sozom. *Hist. Eccl.* 8.22.

⁷⁰³ The first edition of the *Cambridge Ancient History* argued for the authenticity of the Christian accounts on the conversion of Constantine and dismissed conflicting evidence (e.g. *Panegyrici Latini*) on the belief that Constantine had to be tolerant of his subjects (and their interpretations of events) who were for the most part Pagan, q.v. Norman H. Baynes, "Constantine," in *Cambridge Ancient History* (Cambridge: University Press, 1939), 12:683-689. Norman H. Baynes accepted the account of Eusebius and argued that Constantine converted with some reluctance, but that, upon his conversion he sought to establish unity within the church and to attract new adherents, q.v. Norman H. Baynes, "Constantine the Great and the Christian Church," *Proceedings of the British Academy* 20 (1929): 341-368. Andreas Alföldi argued for the complete reliability of the version of events as presented by Eusebius and argued that the concerted retrenchment of a Pagan reaction against Constantine and his policies was the best evidence for this, q.v. Andreas Alföldi, *The Conversion of Constantine and Pagan Rome*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1948), 5-36. A.H.M. Jones also followed the account of Eusebius and discounted any evidence that contradicted his account, q.v. Jones, *Constantine and the Conversion of Europe*, 73-90. T.D. Barnes again attempted to substantiate Eusebius' account of the conversion of Constantine but, like his predecessors, fails to give full weight to potentially contradictory evidence, q.v. T. D. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1981), 270-279. The view that Eusebius is a completely trustworthy historian is a minority view today, being held mainly by Christian scholars. An example of this is an article by Nicholson who absurdly argues that Constantine could have seen a cross in the sky, q.v. Oliver Nicholson, "Constantine's Vision of the Cross," *Vigiliae Christianae* 54.3 (2000): 309-323.

⁷⁰⁴ Gibbon, disregarding the "Christian fable of Eusebius," argued that Constantine used Christianity in order to secure his divine right to exclusive power, q.v. Gibbon, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 3:306-349. In 1852, Jacob Burckhardt, calling Eusebius "the first thoroughly dishonest historian of antiquity," openly asserted that the Christian accounts of Constantine were full of lies and distortions. Burckhardt argued that Constantine was driven by his ambition and thirst for power and simply used Christianity to further that purpose, q.v. Jacob Burckhardt *The Age of Constantine the Great* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1949), 292-336. The first edition of the *Cambridge Medieval History* argued that Constantine did not fully convert to Christianity until he was baptized in 337 (dismissing the date given by Zosimus as being too early) and that previous to this time Constantine had not been able to distinguish the difference between Jesus and the Unconquerable Sun, q.v. H. M. Gwatkin, "Constantine and His City," in *Cambridge Medieval History* (Cambridge: University Press, 1924), 1:4-10. H. Grégoire was a harsh critic of Eusebius's *Life of*

that Constantine, in fact, converted to Christianity long after his supposed vision on the Milvian Bridge.⁷⁰⁵ Constantine, like his father, seems to have recognized all creeds in his attempt to gain the support of as many people as possible. The *Panegyrici Latini*, a contemporary source, preserves information about Constantine's religious practices before his conversion to Christianity. Constantine, in his early years, exhibited such piety and lively interest in the Pagan religion that he excited the approval of the Pagans.⁷⁰⁶ Statues of the Gods were borne in front of Constantine, on several occasions, in order to please him.⁷⁰⁷ Constantine was noted for his conspicuous devotion to the worship of the Sun God.⁷⁰⁸ He often visited the temple of Apollo at Augustodunum and presented it with rich gifts.⁷⁰⁹ In 310 Constantine is said to have had a vision in this sanctuary of Apollo.⁷¹⁰ The Sun God appeared to him, accompanied by Victory, and presented him with crowns of laurel, on each of which was inscribed the sign for the number thirty (XXX). By this sign, the Sun God was promising Constantine that he would have a long life and reign. After this event, Constantine began to foster the cult of the Sun God and began to connect himself with the dynasty that had previously associated itself with the Sun God. Constantine began to claim descent from the emperor Claudius II Gothicus, who is known to have

Constantine and argued that the work was a forgery written long after the death of Constantine and that the author invented his account of Constantine's vision and conversion, q.v. H. Grégoire, "La conversion de Constantin," *Revue de l'Université de Bruxelles* 38 (1930): 231-271; H. Grégoire, "Eusèbe n'est pas l'auteur de la Vita Constantini dans sa forme actuelle et Constantin ne s'est pas converti in 312," *Byzantion* 13 (1938): 560-583; H. Grégoire, "La vision de Constantin liquidée," *Byzantion* 14 (1939): 341-351. T.G. Elliott, while conceding that Eusebius had distorted the truth concerning Constantine's conversion, absurdly argued that Constantine had always been a Christian and that consequently there was no conversion, q.v. T. G. Elliott, "Constantine's Conversion: Do We Really Need It?" *Phoenix* 41.4 (1987): 420-438. More recently, Drake and Digester assert that the accounts of Christian writers (such as Eusebius) have been exaggerated and argue that Constantine embraced Christianity along with all other religions in order to promote religious toleration and concord throughout the Empire, q.v. H.A. Drake, *Constantine and the Bishops: The Politics of Intolerance* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 210-230; Elizabeth DePalma Digeser, *The Making of a Christian Empire: Lactantius and Rome* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), 115-138. The latest edition of the *Cambridge Ancient History* admits the deliberate distortions inherent in the works of Eusebius but does not take a stance on a date for his conversion, simply indicating that Constantine had to be careful in regards to Paganism in an Empire in which Christians were overwhelmingly outnumbered, q.v. Averil Cameron, "The Reign of Constantine," in *Cambridge Ancient History* (Cambridge: University Press, 2005), 12:106-109.

⁷⁰⁵ Julian *Symposium* 336.

⁷⁰⁶ *Panegyrici Latini* 6.21-6.22 (7.21-7.22).

⁷⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 5.8 (8.8).

⁷⁰⁸ Julian *Or.* 7.22 (228b-c).

⁷⁰⁹ *Panegyrici Latini* 6.21 (7.21).

⁷¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 6.21.4-6.21.7 (7.21.4-7.21.7).

promoted the official cult of the Sun God. Constantine also began to mint coins dedicated “to his Companion, the Unconquerable Sun (*Soli Invicto Comiti*).” In the year 312, Constantine turned his attention to defeating Maxentius and taking over his realm. Constantine, realizing that he had a much smaller army than his rival, sought to bring as many people as possible (including Christians) over to his party so that he might be successful in his war against Maxentius. Constantine seems to have openly expressed that he believed that everyone had the right to worship as they pleased, thereby gaining the support of Christians. Even though Constantine sought the support of Christians, he continued to be strongly devoted to the worship of the Sun God. In October of the year 312, Constantine defeated Maxentius in a battle fought near the Milvian Bridge. According to the Ecclesiastical historians some sort of vision occurred before this battle. Lactantius, in his *On the Death of the Persecutors*, preserves the earliest extant account of what occurred before this battle:

Constantine was directed in a dream to cause *the heavenly sign* to be delineated on the shields of his soldiers, and so to proceed to battle. He did as he had been commanded, and he marked on their shields the letter X, with a perpendicular line drawn through it and turned round thus at the top, being the cipher of Christ. Having this sign, his troops stood to arms. The enemies advanced, but without their emperor, and they crossed the bridge. The armies met, and fought with the utmost exertions of valor, and firmly maintained their ground. In the meantime a sedition arose at Rome, and Maxentius was reviled as one who had abandoned all concern for the safety of the commonweal; and suddenly, while he exhibited the Circensian games on the anniversary of his reign, the people cried with one voice, "Constantine cannot be overcome!" Dismayed at this, Maxentius burst from the assembly, and having called some Senators together, ordered the Sibylline books to be searched. In them it was found that: "On the same day the enemy of the Romans should perish." Led by this response to the hopes of victory, he went to the field. The bridge in his rear was broken down. At sight of that the battle grew hotter. The hand of the Lord prevailed, and the forces of Maxentius were routed. He fled towards the broken bridge; but the multitude pressing on him, he was driven headlong into the Tiber.⁷¹¹

Lactantius wrote his account around the year 315. The sign, which Constantine is said to have inscribed on the shields of his soldiers, reminds one of the signs that appeared on the laurel crowns in Constantine's Apollonian vision described by the panegyrist. Lactantius may have

⁷¹¹ This translation is from that printed in the *Ante-Nicene Fathers* series, q.v. Arthur Cleveland Coxe, *Ante-Nicene fathers. Translations of the writings of the fathers down to A.D. 325*, vol. 7 (Buffalo, The Christian literature publishing company, 1885-96); Lactantius *De Mortibus Persecutorum* 44.

rewritten the story in order to make it seem that Constantine became Christian by this time. Lactantius' version of events also preserves the Pagan prophecy (that Zosimus also records), from the Sibylline books, which predicted the fall of Maxentius.⁷¹² Lactantius also preserved another Pagan prophecy that had predicted disaster for Maxentius if he went outside the gates of Rome.⁷¹³ Eusebius only wrote about Constantine's Milvian Bridge vision after the death of Constantine (337), as the story does not appear in his *Ecclesiastical History*. Eusebius has considerably changed the story found in Lactantius in order to glorify his hero, and has completely removed the Pagan prophecy. Lactantius' dream has now become a vision that was witnessed, not only by Constantine, but his whole army. The story appears in Eusebius' *Life of Constantine*, where we read the following:

He (Constantine) said that about noon, when the day was already beginning to decline, he saw with his own eyes the trophy of a cross of light in the heavens, above the sun, and bearing the inscription, Conquer by this. At this sight he himself was struck with amazement, and his whole army also, which followed him on this expedition, and witnessed the miracle. He said, moreover, that he doubted within himself what the import of this apparition could be. And while he continued to ponder and reason on its meaning, night suddenly came on; then in his sleep the Christ of God appeared to him with the same sign which he had seen in the heavens, and commanded him to make a likeness of that sign which he had seen in the heavens, and to use it as a safeguard in all engagements with his enemies. At dawn of day he arose, and communicated the marvel to his friends: and then, calling together the workers in gold and precious stones, he sat in the midst of them, and described to them the figure of the sign he had seen, bidding them represent it in gold and precious stones. And this representation I myself have had an opportunity of seeing ... But the crowning point of the tyrant's (Maxentius) wickedness was his having recourse to sorcery: sometimes for magic purposes ripping up women with child, at other times searching into the bowels of new-born infants. He slew lions also, and practiced certain horrid arts for evoking demons, and averting the approaching war, hoping by these means to get the victory. In short, it is impossible to describe the manifold acts of oppression by which this tyrant of Rome enslaved his subjects: so that by this time they were reduced to the most extreme penury and want of necessary food, a scarcity such as our contemporaries do not remember ever before to have existed at Rome.⁷¹⁴

Eusebius also may have taken the original Apollonian vision of Constantine and replaced it with a Christian vision. The sun, *labarum* and victory are all reminiscent of the elements of the

⁷¹² Lactantius *De Mortibus Persecutorum* 44.8; Zos. 2.16.

⁷¹³ Lactantius *De Mortibus Persecutorum* 44.1.

⁷¹⁴ Euseb. *Vita Constantini* 28-30, 36.

Apollonian vision. Eusebius has also embellished Constantine's dream with a vision of Jesus. Eusebius has furthermore completely removed the Pagan prophecy that predicted the fall of Maxentius. Eusebius, in an attempt to discredit Paganism, has Maxentius perform outrageous acts in order to show his readers the folly of what he believed was Pagan superstition. This propaganda is probably what Constantine would have liked to hear near the end of his life, after he had completely renounced his devotion to the Sun, but it probably does not reflect historical reality.⁷¹⁵ Our confidence in the accuracy of Zosimus is strengthened by the fact that his version of events is quite similar to what had been recorded by Lactantius. Zosimus tells us that:

Constantine, advancing with his army to Rome, encamped in a field before the city, which was broad and therefore convenient for cavalry. Maxentius in the meantime shut himself up within the walls, and sacrificed to the gods, and, moreover, consulted the Sibylline oracles concerning the event of the war. Finding a prediction, that whoever designed any harm to the Romans should die a miserable death, he applied it to himself, because he withstood those that came against Rome, and wished to take it. His application indeed proved just. For when Maxentius drew out his army before the city, and was marching over the bridge that he himself had constructed, an infinite number of owls flew down and covered the wall. When Constantine saw this, he ordered his men to stand to their arms.⁷¹⁶

The fact that Zosimus does not mention the supposed Christian vision of Constantine, which indicated that he should place a cross on the shields of his men, does not discredit him but actually upholds his veracity. Constantine was completely devoted to the Sun God when he defeated Maxentius and attributed his victory to the Unconquerable Sun. This is proven by the arch of Constantine in Rome, which commemorates his victory over Maxentius in 312 and attributes his victory to Apollo, the Sun God. It is the Sun God, not the Christian God, who appears in the foreground of this monument as the God of the army and of the prince. Thus, the Christian dream

⁷¹⁵ The credibility of Norman H. Baynes and A.H.M Jones is seriously damaged by their attempts to prove that Eusebius' *Vita Constantini* is based on trustworthy and reliable information, q.v. Baynes, "Constantine the Great and the Christian Church" 341-368; Jones, *Constantine and the Conversion of Europe*, 73-90. Baynes argues that the letters and edicts provided by Eusebius are authentic, conveniently ignoring all the blatant distortions of Eusebius. Jones has gone to the point of suggesting that Constantine may have seen a rare form of "halo phenomenon" in order to explain Eusebius' account of Constantine's supposed vision. Baynes and Jones ignored the evidence that clearly shows that Eusebius purposely distorted information for his own purposes, q.v. Burckhardt, *Age of Constantine the Great*, 292-336; Averil Cameron, "The Reign of Constantine," in *Cambridge Ancient History* (Cambridge: University Press, 2005), 12:106-109.

⁷¹⁶ Anonymous, *History of Count Zosimus*, 2.16

that Lactantius records may have simply been a story that was invented so that Christians would support Constantine and his tolerant religious policies. The fact that Constantine did not place the Christian God on his monument proves that he himself attributed his victory to Apollo. Those who have attempted to discredit Zosimus because of his failure to mention the supposed Christian vision of Constantine have been sadly misled in their judgment by their passion for Christianity.

The fact that Orthodox Christian sources deliberately try to hide the fact that Constantine murdered his son Crispus in 326 (along with one of his wives, who was named Fausta) indicates that ecclesiastical writers were not above distorting the truth in order to glorify a man whom they believed was God's vice-regent.⁷¹⁷ The fact that Constantine did murder Crispus is no longer contested, not even by historians of the Christian church, but many continue to accept as fact the story of Constantine's conversion as related by the ecclesiastical historians. At 2.29.2, Zosimus recounts his version of the events that led to the conversion of Constantine as follows:

For he put to death his son Crispus, who (as I mentioned previously) had been designated as Caesar, on suspicion of debauching his mother-in-law Fausta, without any regard to the ties of nature. And when his own mother Helena expressed much sorrow for this atrocity, lamenting the young man's death with great bitterness, Constantine under pretence of comforting her, applied a remedy worse than the disease. For causing a bath to be heated to an extraordinary degree, he shut up Fausta in it, and a short time after took her out dead. Of which his conscience accusing him, as also of violating his oath, he went to the priests to be purified from his crimes. But they told him, that there was no kind of lustration that was sufficient to clear him of such enormities. An Egyptian, who had come from Spain and was very familiar with the court-ladies, being at Rome, happened to fall into a conversation with Constantine, and assured him, that the Christian doctrine would teach him how to cleanse himself from all his offences, and that they who received it were immediately absolved from all their sins. Constantine had no sooner heard this than he easily believed what was told him, and forsaking the rites of his country, received those which Aegyptius offered him; and for the first instance of his impiety, suspected the truth of divination. For since many fortunate occurrences had been thereby predicted to him, and really had happened according to such prediction, he was afraid that others might be told something which should fall out to his misfortune; and for that reason applied himself to the abolishing of the practice. And on a particular festival, when the army was to go up to the Capitol to carry out the rites, for fear of the soldiers he took part in the festival, but when the Egyptian sent him an apparition which unrestrainedly abused the rite of ascending to the Capitol, he very indecently reproached the solemnity, and treading the holy

⁷¹⁷ Zos. 2.29; Eutropius *Brev.* 10.6; *Consularia Constantinopolitana* 326; Amm. Marc. 14.11.20.

ceremonies, as it were, under his feet, incurred the hatred of the senate and people.⁷¹⁸

Constantine is known to have visited Rome three times: in 312 (after the defeat of Maxentius), in 315 (on his *decennalia*) and in 326 (on his *vicennalia*). The year of Constantine's conversion to Christianity can be determined if we can establish which visit Zosimus is referring to. The fact that Constantine built his arch, attributing his victory to the Sun God, during his first visit to Rome is proof that Zosimus cannot be referring to his visit of 312. Zosimus says that Constantine's visit to Rome occurred after he began to legislate against private divination. The first law of Constantine that prohibited private divination was published in the year 319.⁷¹⁹ Thus Zosimus cannot be referring to Constantine's second visit to Rome (in 315), leaving us to conclude that Zosimus is referring to Constantine's last visit to Rome, which occurred in the year 326. The fact that Constantine had planned to participate in the festival indicates that, at the time of his visit to Rome, he had not yet fully decided to convert to Christianity. Zosimus is probably correct when he asserts that the remorse felt by Constantine over the death of his son led him to convert to Christianity. No previous Roman emperor had executed his son, not even Septimius Severus whose son, Caracalla, had attempted to murder him. Thus it was only natural that such an act would cause a public outcry among citizens. Constantine sought the help of some segment of society that would accept him, and this group happened to be the Christians, who were only too glad to reap the benefits of the power that they thereby gained. The disturbance that followed Constantine's refusal to participate in the ancestral rites led him to become angry with Rome's population. This anger eventually led him to establish Constantinople as the new capital of the Roman Empire in the year 330.

Zosimus' version of events is corroborated by the testimony of Libanius. In two of his orations, Libanius reports that Constantine visited Rome with two of his brothers and that on this visit the Roman populace assailed him with catcalls.⁷²⁰ Hans-Ulrich Wiemer has shown that this visit must have occurred in the year 326.⁷²¹ Wiemer argues that Constantine's visit to Rome in 312 can be ruled out since a confrontation between the Romans and Constantine after their liberation from the tyrant Maxentius is inconceivable. The visit of 315 is also ruled out by the fact

⁷¹⁸ Anonymous, *History of Count Zosimus*, 2.29. cf. Leo Grammaticus *Chronographia* 84.19.

⁷¹⁹ *Theodosian Code* 9.16.1.

⁷²⁰ Libanius *Or.* 19.19, 20.24.

⁷²¹ Hans-Ulrich Wiemer, "Libanius on Constantine" *Classical Quarterly* 44 (1994): 511-524.

that Constantine's two brothers (Dalmatius and Julius Constantius) were then in the East, in a state of exile, in the part of the Empire which was then under the control of Licinius.⁷²² Wiemer also points out that Gallus was born in Tuscany in 325-326, thereby placing his father (Julius Constantius) in northern Italy during Constantine's visit to Rome.⁷²³ Wiemer believes that "the uneasy atmosphere surrounding the celebration of Constantine's *vicennalia* in Rome helps to explain why he refused to come back to Rome for the celebration of his *tricennalia* and instead made Constantinople his permanent residence."⁷²⁴ Since, as Wiemar has shown, Constantine's two brothers were only able to accompany him in 326, Libanius must be referring (in his two orations) to Constantine's visit to Rome in 326.⁷²⁵ If this is the case, Libanius is providing independent confirmation of the version of events presented by Zosimus.⁷²⁶

When Constantine decided to rebuild Byzantium, in 324, it is clear that he had not yet embraced Christianity. In spite of what the ecclesiastical writers indicate, Constantinople was neither established as a Christian city nor declared to be the new capital of the Empire in 324. The *Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai* describes the Pagan rituals and ceremonies that were performed by Constantine when he began to rebuild the city of Byzantium.⁷²⁷ These ceremonies included the worship of Helios and Tyche and the erection of a statue of Constantine that was the recipient of imperial cult.⁷²⁸ A Pagan philosopher named Sopater is also reported to have assisted Constantine with the performance of the traditional Pagan rites associated with the founding of a city.⁷²⁹ Temples were built to Helios, Artemis and Aphrodite in the area known as the Acropolis.⁷³⁰ The evidence indicates that, at first, Constantine had no intention of making Constantinople a rival of Rome or the new capital of the Empire. These ideas only surfaced after Constantine's conversion in 326 along with his rebuff by the citizens of Rome.

⁷²² Ausonius *Professores Burdigalenses* 17.8-17.12, 18.9.18.13; Libanius *Or.* 14.29-14.30.

⁷²³ *Amm. Marc.* 14.11.27.

⁷²⁴ Wiemer, "Libanius on Constantine" 516-517.

⁷²⁵ Libanius *Or.* 19.19, 20.24.

⁷²⁶ More evidence that Constantine only converted to Christianity in the year 326 is provided by the fact that he issued a coin in that year in which homage is paid to the old Pagan traditions and the eternal glory of the Senate and the Roman people. The imperial heads are raised to the sky in commemoration of the *Vota Vicennalia*, and there is absolutely nothing that can be construed as Christian depicted, q.v. Andreas Alföldi, "On the Foundation of Constantinople," *Journal of Roman Studies* 37 (1947): 14-15.

⁷²⁷ *Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai* 5, 38, 53, 56, 68.

⁷²⁸ *Ibid.*, 56.

⁷²⁹ John Lydus *On the Months* 4.2; *Chron. Paschale* s.a. 328; Malalas *Chron.* 13.7-13.8.

⁷³⁰ Malalas *Chron.* 13.13.

Zosimus gives us a credible report of how this occurred. Before arriving at Rome, Constantine had executed his son Crispus (in the city of Pola, which was situated in Istria in north-eastern Italy). If this is the case, Constantine, having become remorseful, may have consulted with various Pagans when he arrived at Rome in an attempt to seek purification for his crime. As a matter of fact, Christian sources do not deny this. According to Socrates, Constantine consulted with his friend Sopater, a Neo-Platonic philosopher, who told him that such moral defilement could admit of no purification.⁷³¹ Constantine grew angry at hearing this and broke off his relationship with Sopater. Consequently, the Christians may have taken this opportunity to convert Constantine to their religion by promising complete purification from the murder of his son. Constantine was reviled by the Romans when he failed to participate in the traditional rites and this, according to Zosimus, became the motive for his attempt to build a city to rival and overshadow Rome.

There is a large body of evidence that indicates a late date for the conversion of Constantine. In 320, Constantine ordered that augurs should be consulted after an amphitheater had been struck by lightning, thereby confirming his belief in the ancient practice.⁷³² In 321, Constantine ordained that Sunday should be recognized as a holy day of rest but he dedicated this holy day to the Sun God, not to the Christian God.⁷³³ In the year 324, when Constantine began to rebuild Byzantium, he chose Sopater to assist him with the foundation of the city.⁷³⁴ At this time, Sopater was a close confidant of Constantine, something that would have been unlikely if Constantine had already converted to Christianity. Constantine also hired a hierophant named Praetextatus to assist him with the building of the city.⁷³⁵ Sopater and Praetextatus helped Constantine perform the traditional Pagan rites and traditions associated with the founding of a city. Libanius clearly indicates that Constantine only converted to Christianity after he had overthrown Licinius, an event that occurred in 324.⁷³⁶ Constantine continued to issue coins in honor of the Sun as late as the year 325. In fact, three-fourths of the coins minted by Constantine

⁷³¹ Sozom. *Hist. Eccl.* 1.5.

⁷³² *Theodosian Code* 16.10.1.

⁷³³ *Ibid.*, 2.8.1.

⁷³⁴ John Lydus *On the Months* 4.2.

⁷³⁵ *Ibid.*, 4.2.

⁷³⁶ Libanius *Or.* 30.6.

up to the year 325 continued to be dedicated to the Unconquerable Sun (*Soli Invicto*).⁷³⁷ Constantine took an ancient statue of Cybele from Cyzicus and placed it in a portico to watch over the city of Constantinople.

There is evidence that even after his conversion in 326, Constantine continued to embrace aspects of Paganism. Constantine may have been done this as a political expedient in order to assure the allegiance of his Pagan subjects. Zosimus reports Constantine erected temples to Cybele, Rhea and the Dioscuri (Castor and Pollux) at Constantinople.⁷³⁸ In the year 328, Constantine erected a statue of Apollo in Constantinople on a column of porphyry.⁷³⁹ Constantine had the features of this statue changed so that it would portray his own likeness wearing the radiate crown of the Sun God.⁷⁴⁰ A temple dedicated to Jupiter, Juno and Minerva are known to have been erected by Constantine in the city of Constantinople.⁷⁴¹ John Malalas, a strongly anti-Pagan Christian historian, nevertheless is forced to admit that Constantine erected temples to Helios, Artemis and Aphrodite in the city of Constantinople.⁷⁴² Codinus relates that Constantine set up a statue of the Dodonian Zeus in the forum of the city and rebuilt two shrines to Pallas.⁷⁴³ Constantine set up the Delphic tripod, a device that had long been used by Pagans to communicate with the Gods, in the Hippodrome of Constantinople along with a statue of Apollo.⁷⁴⁴ In the year 328, Constantine made a bloodless sacrifice to the Fortune of the City and named her Anthusa, an old name for Rome, which meant flowering.⁷⁴⁵ Constantine also built a temple to Anthusa in which he placed a statue of *Fortuna*.⁷⁴⁶ He furthermore removed the Palladium from Rome and placed it beneath the statue of Apollo that he erected on a column of

⁷³⁷ Maria R. Alföldi, "Die Sol Comes-Münze vom Jahre 325. Neues zur Bekehrung Constantins" *Festschrift Th. Klauser* (1964): 10ff.

⁷³⁸ Zos. 2.52-2.53.

⁷³⁹ *Chron. Paschale* s.a. 328 (Olympiad 277).

⁷⁴⁰ Zonaras *Ann.* 13.3.25.

⁷⁴¹ Cyril A. Mango, *Le développement urbain de Constantinople* (Paris: Diffusion de Boccard, 1985), 388-400.

⁷⁴² Malalas *Chron.* 13.13, 13.39.

⁷⁴³ Codinus *Scriptores Origines Constantinopolitanorum*, q.v. Niebuhr, *Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae*, 16:7.

⁷⁴⁴ Zos. 2.52.

⁷⁴⁵ *Chron. Paschale* s.a. 328 (Olympiad 277); Malalas *Chron.* 13.7.

⁷⁴⁶ Zos. 2.52-2.53.

porphyry.⁷⁴⁷ These events suggest that Constantine was actively trying to build a city to rival and overshadow Rome after the snub he had received from the Romans in 326. In spite of the fact that he had converted to Christianity in 326, Constantine, at first, reluctantly embraced aspects of Paganism in order to assure the allegiance of his numerous Pagan subjects.

Constantine eventually distanced himself from Paganism, probably due to the influence of Christian courtiers. Philostorgius confirms a late date for the dedication of Constantinople as a Christian city. He asserts that Constantine renamed the city of Byzantium to Constantinople in the year 334, the twenty-eighth year of his reign, and called it "*Alma Roma*."⁷⁴⁸ The *Easter Chronicle* also indicates that Constantine proclaimed the city of Constantinople as his new capital, thereby replacing the city of Rome, in 330.⁷⁴⁹ According to Eutropius, Constantine had nothing else in view than to display his power to the Romans and show them that in a few years he could build a city equal to Rome.⁷⁵⁰ The evidence provided by archaeology and coinage confirms that Constantine attempted to make Constantinople the rival of Rome only after 330. The special personification of Constantinople only begins to appear on coinage in 330. Previous to this time coins only representations of the *Dea Roma* appear on the coinage from the mint of Byzantium.⁷⁵¹ Two types of medallions appear after 330, which confirm the new role played by Constantinople after this date. The first of these depicts Constantinople as the *Victoria Augusti* and thus the bearer of sovereignty. The second of these places Constantinople in strict parallelism with Rome, thus confirming Constantinople as the new counterpart of Rome.⁷⁵² When Constantine first began to rebuild Byzantium in the year 324, he began building only within the old city walls, as he did not intend to make the city the new seat of imperial rule. It was only years later, after his conversion and rebuff at Rome in the year 326, that Constantine began to push beyond the old city walls to include a vast area for what would become the new capital of the Roman Empire.⁷⁵³ All this evidence confirms the late date given by Zosimus for the conversion of Constantine in

⁷⁴⁷ Malalas *Chron.* 13.321; Zonaras *Ann.* 13.3.28; Procopius *Gothic War* 1.15; *Chron. Paschale* s.a. 328 (Olympiad 277).

⁷⁴⁸ Phot. *Epit. of the Hist. Eccl. of Philostorg.* 2.9.

⁷⁴⁹ *Chron. Paschale* s.a. 330 (Olympiad 277).

⁷⁵⁰ Eutropius *Brev.* 10.8; Kathleen J. Shelton, "Imperial Tyches," *Gesta* 18.1 (1979): 33.

⁷⁵¹ Alföldi, "Foundation of Constantinople," 11-12; S. MacCormack, "Roma, Constantinopolis, the Emperor, and His Genius," *Classical Quarterly* 25.1 (1975): 131-150.

⁷⁵² Alföldi, "Foundation of Constantinople," 16.

⁷⁵³ *Ibid.*, 12; *Chron. Paschale* s.a. 330 (Olympiad 277).

spite of what the ecclesiastical writers have to say. The blatant distortions of the ecclesiastical historians should indicate how willing they were to misrepresent the facts in order to relate only that which could reflect well on their religion. Zosimus' fundamental trustworthiness is indicated by his efforts to relate both the good and the bad, even when this meant that he had to criticize Pagans.

Zosimus' date for the conversion of Constantine helps to settle problems surrounding the work of Praxagoras. Praxagoras was a Pagan contemporary of Constantine who wrote a biography of Constantine up until the year 324 from the viewpoint of a Pagan citizen of Athens. This work is no longer extant but a summary of this important work was included by Photius in his *Bibliotheca*.⁷⁵⁴ From this summary it is clear that Praxagoras wrote his account of Constantine in a positive manner. This has presented problems for those who accept Eusebius' date for the conversion of Constantine. If we accept Eusebius' early date, we are thereby forced to believe that Praxagoras purposely concealed the new imperial religious orientation and the problems thereby created. It hardly seems possible that any Pagan writer would fail to mention such a drastic break from tradition. The fact that Praxagoras did not mention anything about Constantine converting to Christianity indicates that he did not perceive any religious change in Constantine. If Praxagoras had mentioned anything about Christianity, we can be sure that Photius would have never passed over such an important theme without making some comment. Praxagoras ended his account with the rebuilding of Byzantium in 324. Ulrich von Wilamowitz has argued that Praxagoras handed over his history in person to Constantine on this occasion.⁷⁵⁵ Praxagoras' positive attitude towards Constantine indicates that the latest possible date for the work of Praxagoras is the early part of 326 as it is clear that Constantine had not yet converted to Christianity by the time that Praxagoras dedicated his work. The majority of Pagans, including Praxagoras, seem to have continued to view Constantine as an excellent and capable ruler until the tumultuous events of 326. In this ominous year, Constantine murdered his son, angered the populace of the city of Rome and converted to Christianity. Constantine then set out to found a new capital to replace and rival the city of Rome. Once these events had occurred it is hard to believe that any Pagan would have failed to mention these significant events. This offers yet more evidence for the correctness of Zosimus' late date (326) for the conversion of Constantine.

⁷⁵⁴ Phot. *Bibl. cod.* 62.

⁷⁵⁵ Gabriele Marasco, *Greek and Roman Historiography in Late Antiquity* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 34-35.

Eusebius' claim (that Constantine converted to Christianity in 312) presents so many problems that it is best to attribute this claim to his religious fanaticism and an attempt to eradicate Constantine's early connections with Paganism.

ZOSIMUS' ACCURACY, ERRORS, AND OMISSIONS

Before we take a close look at the errors and omissions in the text of Zosimus it is important to point out two things. First of all, the text as Zosimus left it is unrevised and unfinished. Therefore, it is natural to assume that many errors and omissions would have been fixed if Zosimus had lived to revise and complete his work. Secondly, our text of Zosimus relies on a sole manuscript. Ancient texts are very prone to corruption, and because we have no other manuscripts for comparison, we cannot be positive where errors have crept in due to scribal errors. Also strong evidence exists that the manuscript that we possess has been tampered with by a Christian editor. At 5.18.7, our current text of Zosimus states the following:

The emperor submitted to this, and they met in a place near Chalcedon, where is a church dedicated to the martyr Euphemia, who is honored for her devotion to Christ.⁷⁵⁶

It hardly seems plausible that Zosimus would have mentioned Euphemia's devotion to Christ, even less so that he would have introduced her casually as a martyr. Furthermore, there is evidence that some of Zosimus' text has become corrupted. At 5.18.1, the current text of Zosimus describes the capture of Eutropius thus:

When the emperor Arcadius heard this, he immediately sent for Eutropius, deprived him of all his dignities, and dismissed him. Upon this he immediately fled for shelter to a Christian church, to which he himself had granted right of sanctuary. But Gainas being extremely urgent, and declaring that Tribigildus would never be appeased until Eutropius was removed, they seized him by force, notwithstanding the law for establishing churches as sanctuaries, and sent him to Cyprus under a strict guard.⁷⁵⁷

On the contrary, Eutropius had in fact deprived churches of the right to give sanctuary to

⁷⁵⁶ Anonymous, *History of Count Zosimus*, 5.18

⁷⁵⁷ Ibid.

criminals.⁷⁵⁸ Zosimus is hardly likely to have obscured the irony of this situation. It seems that Zosimus' text has become corrupted here. Another corruption of the text is found at 12.10.4 where Zosimus states that Maximianus went to the city of Carnutum to plead with Diocletian to assume the role of emperor once again. Our current text states that this was a Gallic city, but Diocletian was in fact staying at a city in Pannonia by that name. That Zosimus knew this is proved by the fact that Zosimus has Maximianus returning to Gaul (2.10.5) after his conference at Carnutum with Diocletian. What we have in our text of Zosimus, therefore, is clearly a later gloss by some careless editor or scribe. At 6.8.2, the manuscript says that six cohorts (or units) of men, numbering forty thousand men, arrived from the East at the port of Ravenna during the time of Honorius. This is obviously another error in the manuscript that should be emended, as Sozomen puts the number of men at 4,000.⁷⁵⁹ These examples should be kept in mind while reading Zosimus. They are evidence that many of the problems in Zosimus' text may have been caused by the fact that he was unable to finish and revise his work as well as the fact that the text, as we have it today, has become distorted and corrupted.

Zosimus makes only a small number of chronological errors. At 1.1.1 there is a possible error, as Zosimus seems to be indicating that the conquest of Africa was accomplished by the year 163 B.C., when in fact, it was only completed in the year 146 B.C. But this is the case only if we assume that Zosimus is dating from the battle of Cannae and this is not entirely clear from the text.⁷⁶⁰ The dates for the appointment of Maximus and Balbinus seem to be misplaced, but as the chronology for this period is uncertain, this is also not certain.⁷⁶¹ Zosimus seems to indicate (1.31.3) that the Bosporan monarchy died out in the middle of the third century, when in fact, it continued to rule into the middle of the fourth century. Zosimus may have been misled by dynastic troubles that caused king Rhescuporis IV (239-275) to be temporarily displaced by a usurper named Phrasanzes (253-255).⁷⁶² Zosimus reports (3.30.4-3.31.1) that Jovian concluded a peace treaty with the Persians after the crossing of the Tigris, but according to Ammianus the treaty seems to have been concluded before the Romans re-crossed the Tigris.⁷⁶³ Reitemeier

⁷⁵⁸ *Theodosian Code* 9.40.16.

⁷⁵⁹ Sozom. *Hist. Eccl.* 9.8.

⁷⁶⁰ The battle of Cannae, according to Polybius (6.1.3), took place in the year 216 B.C.

⁷⁶¹ Zos. 1.14.2; Herodian 7.10.

⁷⁶² Hermann Dessau, *Prosopographia Imperii Romani* (Berlin: Georgium Reimerum, 1898), 3.33, 6.134.

⁷⁶³ Amm. Marc. 25.6.11-25.6.15, 25.8.1-25.8.3.

suggested that Zosimus might have become confused by the early crossing of the Tigris by some Gauls and Germans.⁷⁶⁴ Zosimus seems to suggest (4.26) that Theodosius became emperor before Julius' massacre of the Goths whereas Ammianus seems to suggest that the opposite is true.⁷⁶⁵ Ammianus, who concludes his history shortly thereafter, may have included this episode to end his work on a positive note, as his work would otherwise end with the death of Valens who was apparently burned to death by the Goths. Because of this, Ammianus may have not placed this event in precise chronological order. Zosimus relates (4.59) that Honorius was proclaimed Augustus after the campaign against Eugenius whereas another source claims the opposite.⁷⁶⁶ Zosimus places (5.2) Lucianus' death after the death of Theodosius whereas Claudian and Libanius place it before.⁷⁶⁷ Likewise, Zosimus seems to place (6.2.1) Honorius' seventh consulship during the elevation of the usurper Marcus whereas Olympiodorus claims that the elevation occurred shortly before Honorius' seventh consulship.⁷⁶⁸ This date occurs in the sixth book, which as we have already discussed, was apparently only a draft that was left unfinished. Zosimus' chronological divergences from other sources may not be due to error on his part as he may have had access to more reliable sources. The extant authors that disagree with his information are just as likely to be in error.

As a rule, chronology tended not to be a priority for ancient historians, as it was commonly believed that to be a good historian one had only to tell a good story and attain literary excellence. Zosimus seems to have believed that the value of his history lay with the events that had led to the demise of the Empire and so he did not concentrate on giving precise dates, being satisfied to put events in chronological order within the reign of the appropriate emperor. Zosimus gives sixteen consular dates within his history.⁷⁶⁹ In addition to these specific dates,

⁷⁶⁴ Reitemeier, *Zosimi*, s. n. 3.30.4.

⁷⁶⁵ Amm. Marc. 31.68.8.

⁷⁶⁶ *Consularia Constantinopolitana* s.a. 388-389.

⁷⁶⁷ Libanius *Epist.* 1106; Claudian *Rufinus* 1.238 ff.

⁷⁶⁸ Olymp. *Frag.* 13.1.

⁷⁶⁹ Events are dated to the fourth consulship of Marcus Popillius IV (2.4.1), the consulship of L. Censorinus and M. Manlius (2.4.2), the consulship of Chilo and Libo (2.4.3, 2.7.2), the ninth consulship of Diocletian and the eight of Maximian (2.7.2), the third consulship of Constantine and Licinius (2.7.2), the consulship of Taurus and Florentius (3.10.4), the consulship of Rufinus (4.52.1), the consulship of Eutropius (5.17.4), the consulship of Aurelianus (5.18.8), the consulship of Fravitta (5.21.6), the sixth consulship of Arcadius and the first of Probus (6.3.1), the seven consulship of Honorius and the second of Theodosius (6.2.1), the consulship of Bassus and Philippus (5.28.1, 5.34.7), the eight consulship of Honorius and the third of Theodosius (5.42.3) and the consulship of Tertullus (6.7.4).

Zosimus furnishes an assortment of chronological information dealing with the emperors.⁷⁷⁰ Additionally, the *Historia Nova* provides us with miscellaneous chronological information.⁷⁷¹ Zosimus only gives one precise date in his history, dating the execution of Stilicho to the twenty-second day of August in the year in which Bassus and Philippus were consuls (i.e. 408).⁷⁷²

Zosimus makes a number of geographical errors in the *Historia Nova*.⁷⁷³ These inaccuracies, however, deal almost entirely with areas that were no longer part of the Roman Empire that existed in Zosimus' day. A number of events recorded by Zosimus are reported in a different manner in other sources. This is especially true of the history of the third century, for which we have no authoritative source.⁷⁷⁴ The *Historia Nova* is much more consistent with other sources for the fourth century, usually agreeing with the version of events presented by other extant Pagan authors.⁷⁷⁵ For the reign of Julian, the *Historia Nova* once again diverges from other

⁷⁷⁰ Zosimus informs us that Domitian reigned for fifteen years, that Quintillus reigned a few months, that Diocletian died three years after the third consulship of Constantine and Licinius, that Magnentius reigned for three years and six months, that Julian had just turned twenty four when he had successfully provided provisions for the prisoners he had freed, that Jovian reigned for eight months, that Valentinian died in the twelfth year of his reign (after being in Illyricum almost nine months), that Valentinian II was scarcely five years old when he was elevated and that the usurper Gratian reigned four months.

⁷⁷¹ Zosimus reports that Alexander crossed to Asia in the third year of his reign (1.4.1), that a plague occurred at Rome in the first year after the expulsion of the kings (2.3.3), that Constans concealed his hatred for Constantine for three years (2.41), that Julian reached Sirmium eleven days after leaving Rhaetia (3.10.3), that Julian stayed for ten months in Constantinople (3.11.3), that Valentinian kept the barbarians (beyond the Rhine) in fear for nine years (4.12.1), that Gratian's troops skirmished with those of Maximus for five days before Gratian realized that his troops were deserting (4.35.5), that a mutiny occurred at Ticinum after Honorius had stayed there for four days (5.32.3), that Sarus besieged Valentia for seven days (6.2.4) and that Alaric's siege of Rome lasted only a few days (6.6.2).

⁷⁷² Zos. 5.34.7.

⁷⁷³ All of these geographical errors may be easily explained away as simple confusions or errors, which would probably have been corrected, had Zosimus lived to revise his work. For a comprehensive listing of these errors, please see Appendix B.

⁷⁷⁴ In many instances, Zosimus provides the fullest account for events in the third century. For example, he provides (1.12.1) the names of two usurpers (Antonius and Uranus) that are not mentioned in any other literary source. The minor differences that occur are found in the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* and Herodian, both of which are generally believed to be problematic in terms of accuracy. For a comprehensive listing of these differences, see Appendix C.

⁷⁷⁵ All of these differences concern minor details. The most important difference in this section is the dating of the death of Diocletian, which Zosimus places in 316, thereby agreeing with John of Antioch, the *Consularia Constantinopolitana* and Hieronymus (John of Antioch *Frag.* 167; Jerome *Chron.* 2332; *Consularia Constantinopolitana* s.a. 316). Socrates, Lactantius and the *Epit. De Caesaribus* (Socr. *Hist. Eccl.* 1.2.10; Lactantius *De Mortibus Persecutorum* 42.3; *Epit. De Caesaribus* 39.7) place the death of Diocletian in 313. A comprehensive listing of these differences has been collected in Appendix D.

extant sources by presenting conflicting versions of events.⁷⁷⁶ The controversial nature of the reign of Julian, who was criticized by many Pagans as well as by the majority Christians, probably led to many of these divergences. The majority of the divergences deal with the events surrounding Julian's Persian War. Accurate information about this war does not seem to have penetrated into the Roman Empire. In many cases, the sources diverge in the spelling of place names or the itinerary of the expedition. The details surrounding the events of Jovian's reign in the *Historia Nova* also diverge from other extant sources.⁷⁷⁷ Again, the majority of differences occur in details surrounding the Persian war. Zosimus agrees, for the most part, with other sources concerning Valens but diverges in some minor details from other extant sources when he describes events surrounding Valentinian I and Procopius.⁷⁷⁸ The major source of conflict is Ammianus Marcellinus, who was apparently writing in the west or using a western source. As Zosimus was probably writing in Constantinople, he may have reflected a more accurate portrayal of events in the East for the reign of Valentinian I. The details surrounding the history of the western Empire during the reign of Valentinian II in the *Historia Nova* differs in minor details from those presented in other extant sources.⁷⁷⁹ Again the sources that disagree with Zosimus for the reign of Valentinian II are, for the most part, western in origin. Zosimus may reflect events as they were known in the East while those reported in western sources may reflect the official version of events. For the most part, the *Historia Nova* agrees with the reports presented in other sources concerning the life of Theodosius. There are, nevertheless, a few minor differences

⁷⁷⁶ Most of the divergences seem to be partisan in nature, as they occur in Ammianus (who had a more favorable view of Julian than Zosimus) as well as in the writings of Julian himself. A comprehensive listing of these differences have been collected in Appendix E.

⁷⁷⁷ The only serious divergences occur in the accounts of Zosimus (3.35.1-3.35.2) and Ammianus (25.8.8-25.8.12, 25.10.6-25.10.7) concerning the arrangements made by Jovian to make his succession known in the West. A comprehensive listing of the divergences found in the reign of Jovian have been collected in Appendix F.

⁷⁷⁸ For example, the *Historia Nova* relates (4.1.1) that Valentinian was struck by illness on his way to Constantinople whereas Ammianus states (26.4.4) that Valentinian became ill at Constantinople. A comprehensive listing of these minor differences have been collected in Appendix G.

⁷⁷⁹ For example, the *Historia Nova* (4.22.4) relates that Sebastianus left the West in disgust because he believed that Valentinian II did not know how to think for himself and allowed himself to be completely ruled by the whims of his eunuchs. In contrast to this, Ammianus simply says (31.11.1) that Sebastianus was sent to the East by the western emperor at his own request. A comprehensive listing of these differences have been collected in Appendix H.

concerning details surrounding Theodosius' doings in the western half of the Empire.⁷⁸⁰ Wide divergences to other sources occur once more in the account given by Zosimus concerning the time of Stilicho.⁷⁸¹ Since the memory of Stilicho was condemned in the west after his death, Zosimus may have preserved a more balanced and objective view of Stilicho. The sources that disagree with the *Historia Nova* for the events surrounding Stilicho are once again, for the most part, western in origin. The *Historia Nova* also diverges in a number of minor ways from other extant sources when describing the events surrounding the conflicts between Alaric and Honorius.⁷⁸²

A thorough examination of the divergences found in the *Historia Nova* indicates that the majority of them are inconsequential. It is important to realize, however, that in those places where Zosimus significantly diverges from other extant sources, he may, indeed, be reporting variant traditions. These divergences may preserve information from important sources that are no longer extant. The sources Zosimus used were often written from a Pagan perspective and thus serve as a counterpoise to the overwhelming amount of Christian material that has survived from the period. It is therefore important that these variant traditions should be carefully examined and not be dismissed simply as definite errors because they disagree with the extant Christian sources. Pagan and non-Orthodox Christian sources, which only survive in abbreviated excerpts in Byzantine anthologies (such as Olympiodorus and Eunapius) and epitomes (such as Philostorgius) are likely to have become distorted by those Orthodox Christians who compiled them. Zosimus is more likely to have preserved details that might have been unfavorable to orthodox Christians.

The majority of the deviations found in the *Historia Nova* are of a trivial nature and can

⁷⁸⁰ For example, Zosimus claims (4.58.3) that an eclipse occurred during the battle between Theodosius and Eugenius whereas other sources (Socr. *Hist. Eccl.* 5.25; Sozom. *Hist. Eccl.* 7.24; Theodoret *Hist. Eccl.* 5.24; Orosius *History Against the Pagans* 7.35.13-7.35.19; Rufinus *Hist. Eccl.* 11.33; Augustine *City of God* 5.26; John of Antioch *Frag.* 187; Claudian *Third Consulship of Honorius* 89-105; Claudian *Fourth Consulship of Honorius* 72-93; Claudian *Panegyric on Probinus and Olybrius* 10.112; Ambrose *De Obitu Theodosii Oratio* 7; *Consularia Italica* s.a. 394.) indicate that a violent windstorm occurred during the battle. A comprehensive listing of these minor differences have been collected in Appendix I.

⁷⁸¹ A comprehensive listing of these differences has been collected in Appendix J.

⁷⁸² There are very few extant sources for the latter part of the reign of Honorius. Consequently, this part of Zosimus is extremely valuable as it is based on the contemporary account of Olympiodorus and other lost sources. A comprehensive listing of the minor differences between the text of Zosimus and other surviving sources has been collected in Appendix K.

easily be explained. Zosimus seems to have made a number of errors concerning people. The *Historia Nova* states (1.22.2) that Diadumenus (the son of Philip the Arab) was Caesar at the time of his death, but according to coins surviving from his reign he had already been proclaimed Augustus.⁷⁸³ In a similar manner, Zosimus reports (2.9.1) that Constantine was proclaimed Caesar on the death of his father, Constantius Chlorus, whereas other sources state that he was proclaimed Augustus at that time.⁷⁸⁴ Additionally, the *Historia Nova* asserts (2.10.1) that Severus was still Caesar when Galerius sent him to the West to engage Maxentius whereas the *Panegyrici Latini* indicates that he had already been declared Augustus.⁷⁸⁵ A number of similar confusions over rank also occur in the *Historia Nova*.⁷⁸⁶ This confusion over whether someone had been raised to the rank of Caesar or Augustus is not peculiar to Zosimus as it is also a common error in our other extant literary sources.⁷⁸⁷ For example, all our extant sources, including the *Historia Nova* assert (2.19.2) that Aurelius Valerius Valens was elevated to the rank of Caesar by Licinius, after the battle at Cibalís.⁷⁸⁸ According to surviving coinage, however, he held the rank of Augustus and was coregent with Licinius.⁷⁸⁹ Other similar examples may also be cited.⁷⁹⁰ The *Historia Nova* has a number of trivial errors, which can simply be explained as the result of confusion. For example, Zosimus seems (2.11) to have confused the death of Maximianus Herculius, who was murdered by Constantine at Massilia, with that of Maximinus Daia who was killed at Tarsus.⁷⁹¹ Furthermore, the *Historia Nova* asserts (2.39.1) that Fausta was not the woman that Constantine killed for adultery whereas earlier (2.29.2) he had indicated she had been. Other

⁷⁸³ Harold Mattingly, *Roman Imperial Coinage*, vol 4, bk. 3 (London: Spink, 1967), 96, 102.

⁷⁸⁴ Lactantius *De Mortibus Persecutorum* 25; *Panegyrici Latini* 7.8.2-7.8.4; Socr. *Hist. Eccl.* 1.2; *Consularia Constantinopolitana* s.a. 306. The *Anonymous Valesianus* (2-4) agrees with the account of Zosimus. Constantine, by agreement with Galerius, later accepted the rank of Caesar while Severus became the new Augustus, q.v. *Panegyrici Latini* 6.5.3.

⁷⁸⁵ *Panegyrici Latini* 6.5.3.

⁷⁸⁶ The *Historia Nova* reports that Victor, son of Maximus, still held the rank of Caesar after Theodosius defeated his father whereas other sources indicate (*Epit. De Caesaribus* 48.6; Prosper *Chron.* s.a. 388.) he had received the rank of Augustus after Gratian's death.

⁷⁸⁷ These errors are easily rectified by consulting the information preserved on coins and inscriptions. Other examples of this confusion over the ranks of Caesar and Augustus in other authors follow.

⁷⁸⁸ *Epit. De Caesaribus* 40.21; *Anonymous Valesianus* 17.

⁷⁸⁹ Mattingly, *Roman Imperial Coinage*, 7:535, 7:637, 7:638.

⁷⁹⁰ For example, Zosimus also indicates (2.25.2) that Martinianus held the rank of Caesar, again agreeing with other literary sources (*Epit. De Caesaribus* 41.6; *Anonymous Valesianus* 25; Aurelius Victor *Lib. De Caesaribus* 41.9). The surviving coinage, however, indicates that he was appointed Augustus and coregent by Licinius, q.v. Mattingly, *Roman Imperial Coinage*, 7:607, 7:645.

⁷⁹¹ This error may also have been made by a careless scribe.

similar examples may be cited.⁷⁹² Zosimus may have been recording a variant tradition or our text may have become corrupted here. Zosimus seems to have exaggerated some of his numbers and this may represent his attempt, following the classical rhetorical tradition, to achieve a sensational effect.⁷⁹³ In spite of these examples, we cannot be certain that Zosimus intended to exaggerate his numbers. Statistics that have been preserved in various writers (especially for late antiquity) are in general quite divergent and conflicting with each other. Furthermore, in at least two cases Zosimus actually gives a smaller number than other extant sources.⁷⁹⁴ Only one apparent error can be found in the text of the *Historia Nova*, namely the claim (4.41.2) that Libanius was sent as an envoy to Theodosius whereas Libanius' own writings indicate that he was not.⁷⁹⁵ Nevertheless, there may be a reasonable explanation for this. Zosimus may have become confused by Libanius' speeches (which he refers to) by wrongly assuming that Libanius would have delivered his orations to Theodosius in person.⁷⁹⁶

There are a number of awkward omissions in the *Historia Nova*. Zosimus fails to identify various people by name, choosing to refer to them in imprecise terms. For example, Zosimus refers (1.1.1) to the last Macedonian king (Perseus) without naming him. Likewise, he mentions (1.25.1) one of Decius's surviving sons (C. Valens Hostilianus Messius Quintus) without naming him. Similarly, he reports (1.30.2) that Gallienus makes an alliance with a certain unnamed

⁷⁹² The *Historia Nova* confuses (3.4.2) Chnodomarius, who was captured after the battle at Argentoratum and sent to Constantius, with Vadomarius who was captured at the very end of the Gallic campaign, q.v. Amm. Marc. 16.12.65-16.12.66, 21.3.1; Julian *Epist. to the Athenians* 279. Likewise, Zosimus erroneously calls (5.2.3) Eucherius the uncle of Arcadius. In reality, Eucherius was the great-uncle of the emperor Theodosius I, q.v. Themistius *Or.* 16.203. The *Historia Nova* relates (5.34.5-5.35.4) that another Eucherius, Stilicho's son, fled to Rome upon his father's death. Zosimus reports (5.37.4) that Honorius, anticipating the arrival of Alaric (who wanted to protect him from harm), took Eucherius to be executed at Rome before Alaric arrived. Zosimus has apparently forgotten to mention Eucherius' flight from Rome, which he probably attempted in an effort to reach Alaric before Honorius could reach him.

⁷⁹³ For example, the *Historia Nova* asserts (2.15) that Constantine fought against Licinius with 98,000 men while the *Panegyrici Latini* reports (9.3.3) that he had fewer than 40,000 men. In the same passage, Zosimus records that Licinius had 188,000 men while the *Panegyrici Latini* reports (9.5.1-9.5.2) that he had 100,000. A comprehensive listing of these differences have been collected in Appendix L.

⁷⁹⁴ The *Historia Nova* reports (3.1.1) that the Germans captured forty cities on the Rhine whereas Julian asserts (*Epist. to the Athenians* 279) that forty-five cities had been captured. Similarly, Zosimus relates (3.12.5) that 18,000 infantry were left with Sebastianus and Procopius whereas Ammianus (23.3.5) gives 30,000, Libanius (*Or.* 18.214) gives 20,000 and Malalas (*Chron.* 13.21) gives the number as 16,000.

⁷⁹⁵ Libanius (*Or.* 19-20, *Epist.* 238-244) clearly places himself in Antioch at this time and it is therefore unlikely that he traveled to Constantinople.

⁷⁹⁶ Zos. 4.41.3.

German leader. Other similar examples may be cited.⁷⁹⁷ The *Historia Nova* also fails to give specific and precise information about certain locations. Zosimus reports (1.6.2) that Tiberius took refuge on some island (Capri) without naming it. Likewise, he relates (1.20.1) that the Carpi fled to an unspecified fort. Similarly, the location of the battle (1.22) between Philip the Arabian and Decius is not specified (Verona). Other similar examples of this may be cited.⁷⁹⁸ Zosimus also has some additional miscellaneous omissions.⁷⁹⁹ All of these omissions may be explained by the theory that Zosimus was writing an epitome of history that had occurred previous to his time. In the process of choosing what to include, Zosimus may have inadvertently removed pertinent information. Zosimus would have corrected these omissions at a later date, had he lived to complete his work.

CONCLUSION

Although the history of Zosimus was in many ways inferior to that of his predecessors, among his contemporaries he was unsurpassed. Zosimus attempted to be objective and to tell the truth, as he believed it to be. He did not deliberately set out, as many of the ecclesiastical historians had done, to perpetrate falsehoods. Zosimus' effort to show both the good and bad, in even the most Christian of emperors, shows his essential spirit of fairness. This can be seen by the unprejudiced praise he gives to such staunch supporters of Christianity as Constantine and Theodosius. Zosimus could have easily omitted or hid this positive information in order to present, as many ecclesiastical historians did, a misleading one-sided view. Instead of doing this, Zosimus did his best to write an objective and impartial history, a feat that must have been difficult for a member of the last Pagan generation that could remember a time when they had been allowed to practice their religion openly. Zosimus did not live to finish his history and correct his text, possibly because he was persecuted for his beliefs, but the unfinished state of his work should not detract from its importance.

Modern historians who have dismissed Zosimus as a mere compiler not only ignore his

⁷⁹⁷ A comprehensive listing of omissions dealing with persons has been collected in Appendix M.

⁷⁹⁸ A comprehensive listing of these geographical omissions has been collected in Appendix N.

⁷⁹⁹ For example, the *Historia Nova* states (1.60.1) that a man named Apsaeus was responsible for earlier events but does not mention what these events were. Zosimus seems to be suggesting that Apsaeus was responsible for starting the war between Aurelian and Zenobia but this is unclear. Undoubtedly, this omission would have been corrected had Zosimus lived to revise and correct his work. A comprehensive listing of additional omissions has been collected in Appendix O.

own contributions, but also the fact that compilation was the accepted method for historians in antiquity, who were writing about events that occurred before their lifetimes. Zosimus is no more of a compiler than Livy, Diodorus Siculus, Dionysius of Halicarnassus and various other ancient historians, when they described events that occurred before their lifetimes. Zosimus is of great value to modern historians because, in many cases, he is the sole extant source for many events of the fourth and early fifth centuries. His work is unique in preserving the story of the decline and demise of the Roman Empire from a Pagan perspective. Because of this, Zosimus is extremely important in balancing the overwhelming amount of Christian polemic that survives from this period. The majority of historical works written by Pagans who dealt with this period are no longer extant, and we would be forced to rely on the meager works of epitomators, chronographers and panegyrists if we did not have his work. To study the history of the fourth and early fifth centuries, we are compelled to use the works of, in many cases, hostile and fervently anti-Pagan Christian writers. Zosimus is the earliest extant secular source for Constantine, an emperor around whom a massive amount of sanctimonious legends have developed because he is viewed as a saint by Christians.⁸⁰⁰ Zosimus' impression and analysis of Roman history, from the time of Constantine to Alaric's sack of Rome, validly reflects the view held by Pagans of his day. By comparing Zosimus' work to the prejudiced ecclesiastical historians of the fourth and fifth centuries, we can gain a more comprehensive view of the history of this period. It is truly remarkable how often Zosimus has been characterized as prejudiced and disingenuous whereas Christian writers such as Eusebius, Socrates, Sozomen and Evagrius, who flagrantly distorted and invented facts to suit their purposes and made no endeavor to be objective, are not only seldom criticized but are actually held up as paragons of truth. It is hoped that this study will have, at the very least, contributed to eradicating these false notions concerning the history of Zosimus.

⁸⁰⁰ Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, 1:49. Today, Constantine remains a saint in the Eastern Orthodox Church (as he was in the Byzantine Catholic Church), but he has not been officially recognized as such by the Roman Catholic Church.

APPENDIX A
THE NATURE OF THE SECOND EDITION
OF EUNAPIUS' HISTORY

If Eunapius was probably responsible for the second edition of his history, the question arises as to the exact nature of this revision. If Eunapius did remove his anti-Christian polemic, as Photius asserts, a question must be asked.⁸⁰¹ Why would Eunapius have changed his mind about Christianity and have tried to make the second edition of his work less hostile to Christians? This is especially anomalous when we find Eunapius continuing to present Christianity in a negative light in the *Lives of the Sophists*. If the second edition was merely produced to remove anti-Christian remarks, then why did other anti-Christian works, such as the history of Zosimus, escape censorship? Why were both versions of the work still current and, in some cases, bound together on the same codex during Photius' day? This fact surely suggests that each edition was considered to possess some independent merit. Due to the erroneous nature of many of Photius' statements, he may well have been mistaken about the nature of the second edition. There is evidence that Photius did not entirely read every book he cites.⁸⁰² Several hypotheses have been suggested over the exact nature of the second edition.⁸⁰³ None of these hypotheses, however, suggests that the sole purpose of Eunapius' second edition was to remove anti-Christian material. Eunapius was a fanatical Pagan, and there is no indication that he his hatred of Christianity abated in his old age. Photius asserted that both editions of Eunapius' history covered the years 270 to 404, while the evidence of the *Lives of the Sophists* seems to indicate that Eunapius seems to have either published his work in installments or written two works with different temporal spans. In

⁸⁰¹ Phot. *Bibl. cod.* 77.

⁸⁰² In codex 76 (of Photius' *Bibliotheca*), on the *Jewish Antiquities* of Josephus, Photius presents a summary confined to the contents of Book 20.223-20.257. In codex 63, on Procopius' *History of the Wars*, he gives a summary that reaches no further than Book 2.19. Codex 82, on Dexippus of Athens, summarizes only the initial portion (64a.21-b.31) of that author's *Τὰ μετὰ Ἀλεξάνδρον*. This suggests that Photius did not entirely read every book he cites.

⁸⁰³ Sacks offered an interesting theory about the nature of the second edition, q.v. Sacks, "Meaning of Eunapius' History," 65-67. Sacks asserted that the first edition of Eunapius' history focused on the lives of largely Christian and evil emperors. In the second edition, Sacks believed that Eunapius added biographical sketches of philosophers to emphasize his moral laws and to serve as foils for emperors and high officials in illustrating various truths. At the same time, Sacks argued that Eunapius deleted some of his direct attacks of Christianity in order to transform his work into a moral survival kit for Pagans. According to Sacks, Photius probably ignored the new Neoplatonic role models because his only interest was in the apparent reduction of anti-Christian polemic.

the light of these difficulties, many scholars believe that Photius was in error when he indicated that both editions of Eunapius' history covered the same number of years.

Chalmers believed that Eunapius produced two very different editions of his history.⁸⁰⁴ Chalmers carefully analyzed the cross references to the *Universal History* in the *Lives of the Sophists*. He found that, of the fourteen passages he accepted as true cross-references, one referred to a section on Constantine, eight referred to a section on Julian and five referred to events in general (without making reference to a section on a certain emperor) that occurred after 363. Consequently, Chalmers argued that the first edition of the history must have consisted of two separate lives or biographies of Constantine I and Julian, together with a general history of events from the death of Julian (26 June 363) to the death of Theodosius I (17 January 395).⁸⁰⁵ Chalmers believed that Eunapius reorganized the work, for the second edition, in order to form a standard *Universal History* beginning where Dexippus left off and adding an account of events that had taken place since the first edition was published. This edition incorporated the biographies of Constantine and Julian into the narrative. Chalmers argued that in *Fragment 41*, Eunapius informed his readers that he would be incorporating new information on the Huns into the second edition of his history, because new information had become available by then.⁸⁰⁶ Chalmers believed that Photius was wrong to think that both editions were coterminous. The new edition, according to Chalmers, "involved the excision of matter which had more polemic than historical value" and this would explain the apparent changes that Photius observed.⁸⁰⁷ In addition to this excision of extraneous matters, Chalmers maintained that Eunapius expanded his coverage to include more recent events. The second edition, according to Chalmers, covered events from the reign of Claudius II to the year 404. Chalmers maintained that Pagan hopes suffered a "severe setback when Eugenius and Arbogast were defeated at the River Frigidus in 394" and that this might also explain the change of attitude that Photius speaks of.⁸⁰⁸ Chalmers argued that Eunapius was less likely to be as hostile to Christianity because his hopes of a restoration of Paganism had been shattered. The reference to Pulcheria as Augusta in one of the fragments indicates, according to Chalmers, that Eunapius was still working on the second edition in the year 414. Chalmers

⁸⁰⁴ Chalmers, "Νέα ἔκδοσις of Eunapius History," 168-170.

⁸⁰⁵ Ibid., 168-170.

⁸⁰⁶ Eunap. *Frag.* 41.1.

⁸⁰⁷ Chalmers, "Νέα ἔκδοσις of Eunapius History," 169-170.

⁸⁰⁸ Ibid., 169-170.

asserted that the earliest date at which the second edition could have been published was the year 414, the date in which Pulcheria became Augusta.⁸⁰⁹ Chalmers contended that Eunapius would have been at least sixty-eight years old, raising the possibility that old age was behind some of the defects of the second edition.⁸¹⁰ Furthermore, Chalmers offered an explanation as to why the two editions were still preserved in Photius' day. He believed that the first edition "gave a fuller treatment of some matters than did the second" and for this reason it continued to be important enough to preserve.⁸¹¹

Barnes did not believe that the first edition of Eunapius' history extended to the year 395. He contended that the first edition culminated with the battle of Adrianople in the year 378, and that it was published, at the latest, in the year 380. Barnes argued that *Fragment* 41.1 referred to the first edition of Eunapius' history. Here Eunapius seems to be saying that accurate information about the Huns was not available for his first edition. Barnes maintained that this proved that the work must have appeared shortly after 376, when the Romans first met the Huns, but before they had become well known.⁸¹² The most serious obstacle to Barnes' arguments is the presence of two passages in the *Lives of the Sophists* that seem to refer to events of 391 and 396.⁸¹³ The first passage seems to suggest that the destruction of the Serapeum by Christian monks, an event that occurred in 391, had been treated in the first edition of the history. The second passage seems to refer to an earlier discussion of the Gothic invasion of 396, which Eunapius was intending to continue in the second edition. For the first passage, Barnes maintained that Eunapius does not specifically state that he had already covered the destruction of the Serapeum in his history. According to Barnes, Eunapius was simply stating that he had described the general characteristics of Christian monks (such as their fanaticism) in the first edition of his history.⁸¹⁴ Barnes believed the text of the second passage needed to be amended so that it implies that "Eunapius hopes to describe Alaric's invasion at some future date."⁸¹⁵ Barnes also argued that Eunapius elsewhere refers (*Lives of the Sophists* 8.2.3 ff.) to the death of Priscus near Corinth

⁸⁰⁹ Eunap. *Frag.* 72.1.

⁸¹⁰ Chalmers, "Νέα ἔκδοσις of Eunapius History," 170.

⁸¹¹ *Ibid.*, 170.

⁸¹² Barnes, *Sources of the Historia Augusta*, 117.

⁸¹³ Eunap. *VS* 6.11.1-6.11.7, 7.3.4-7.3.5.

⁸¹⁴ Timothy D. Barnes, "Epitome de Caesaribus and Its Sources," *Classical Philology* 71 (1976): 266; Barnes, *Sources of the Historia Augusta*, 115-117.

⁸¹⁵ Barnes, "Epitome de Caesaribus and Its Sources," 266.

during this invasion and similarly declares his intention of describing it in the future.⁸¹⁶ Hence, Barnes concluded that these passages did not stand in the way of his assertion that Eunapius must have published his work soon after the battle of Adrianople as part of a Pagan reaction to recent disasters. This Pagan reaction occurred, Barnes asserted, because many Pagans perceived that the Empire was being destroyed because of the neglect of ancient traditions due to the influence of Christianity.⁸¹⁷

Paschoud alleged that the death of Theodosius I (17 January 395) was a more fitting climax to the first edition of Eunapius' history than the battle of Adrianople.⁸¹⁸ Paschoud maintained that the impetus for Eunapius' history was the ban on Pagan sacrifices along with the closing of the temples that had been instigated by Theodosius on 8 November 392. It was only after the death of Theodosius, Paschoud argued, that Eunapius began to write his historical work. Valens was too interested in Christian sectarian disputes to pay as much attention to Paganism as Theodosius had, leaving Eunapius free to write and publish his history. Paschoud claimed that the *Lives of the Sophists* was published around the year 413. Paschoud insisted that references to earlier events, which have been used by various scholars to establish an earlier date for the *Lives of the Sophists*, merely established a *terminus post quem* of 395/396.⁸¹⁹ Paschoud also maintained that the first edition of the history of Eunapius appeared long after the year 395.⁸²⁰ Paschoud agreed with Barnes that *Fragment* 41.1 opened with a reference to a first edition. However, he did not believe that Eunapius was confessing that the Huns were virtually unknown (as Barnes believed) when he wrote about them in the first edition. Paschoud believed that Eunapius was simply stating that the Huns were better known at the time of the second edition. Therefore, there

⁸¹⁶ Barnes, *Sources of the Historia Augusta*, 116.

⁸¹⁷ Ibid., 120-121.

⁸¹⁸ Paschoud, *Cinq études sur Zosime*, 188-201.

⁸¹⁹ Banchich disagreed with Paschoud and believed that the *Lives of the Sophists* was published slightly after the autumn or winter of the year 399. Banchich pointed out that Eunapius describes (*VS* 479) a general disruption of affairs in Asia, which was coincident with that province coming under the purview of the *praefectus praeterio Orientis*. According to Banchich, Eunapius speaks of this event as if it were contemporaneous with the composition of the *Lives of the Sophists*. Banchich identified the summer of 399 as the only time between the year 395 and the reign of Heraclius (610-641) "when Asia was an active seat of war." Because of this, Banchich placed the publication of the *Lives of the Sophists* late in 399 (slightly after the autumn or winter of the year 399), q.v. Thomas Banchich, "The Date of Eunapius' *Vitae Sophistarum*," *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 25 (1984): 183-192.

⁸²⁰ François Paschoud, "Quand parut la première édition de l'histoire d'Eunape?," *Bonner Historia Augusta Colloquium 1977/1978* (1980): 161-162.

is no reason to believe (as Barnes asserted) that the first edition came out before the battle of Adrianople. Paschoud also disagreed with Barnes over the meaning of the passage in the *Lives of the Sophists* (7.3.4-7.3.5) that seems to refer to an earlier discussion of the Gothic invasion of 396. Paschoud contended that the language of the passage affirms that Eunapius was intending to continue his discussion the Gothic invasion in the second edition. Thus Eunapius may have discussed the Gothic invasion of 391 in the first edition of his history. Paschoud asserted that the anti-Pagan activity alluded to in this passage was the closing of the temples by Theodosius in 392. Paschoud maintained that Eunapius makes it clear in the *Lives of the Sophists* (6.11.1-6.11.7) that he had previously discussed the destruction of the Serapeum, a passage that Barnes had attempted to emend. These conclusions have led Paschoud to place the publication of the first edition of Eunapius' history in the early fifth century. Paschoud contended that the first edition of the history probably appeared in the year 410. Work on the second edition began, according to Paschoud, sometime after the Alaric's sack of Rome in 410. Eunapius' narrative reached the year 404 sometime after 414, in all likelihood after 423, leaving his work unfinished. Paschoud asserted that *Fragment* 72.1, which refers to the reign of Pulcheria as a time of incredible corruption, could hardly have been written before 423. Paschoud maintained that Eunapius could only have written this disparaging remark after Pulcheria was no longer in power. It was only after the year 423, as a consequence of the marriage of Theodosius II with Eudocia, that Pulcheria's power and prestige began to recede.⁸²¹

Although he agreed with Paschoud's arguments for a *terminus post quem* of 395 for the publication of first edition of Eunapius' history, Goulet tried to demonstrate that the coverage of events in the first edition did not extend beyond 364.⁸²² After relating events to the death of Julian, Goulet believed that Eunapius had alluded to future disasters in order to demonstrate how things were becoming worse for the Empire. Goulet arrived at this conclusion by looking at a passage in the *Lives of the Sophists*.⁸²³ In this passage, Eunapius seems to be saying that he will be describing the times in which Prohaeresius lived in some future work.⁸²⁴ Goulet asserted that

⁸²¹ Paschoud, *Cinq études sur Zosime*, 170-174.

⁸²² R. Goulet, "Sur la chronologie de la vie et des oeuvres d'Eunape de Sardes," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 100 (1980): 60-72.

⁸²³ Eunap. *VS* 10.1.1 ff.

⁸²⁴ Banchich has shown that the Greek in this passage is ambiguous and that Eunapius may be referring to himself instead of to Prohaeresius. Banchich suggested that Eunapius might have intended to write an

this passage suggests that the last events recorded in the first edition did not go beyond the latter part of the year 364.⁸²⁵ Goulet believes that Eunapius is indicating here that he will cover events occurring after 364 in the second edition of his history. Two fragments also seem to indicate that Julian's death in Persia was the climax of the original history, thus corroborating Goulet's assertion.⁸²⁶ Goulet maintained that any cross-references to the history, in the *Lives of the Sophists*, to events after 364 must be allusions to events that occurred later than the formal subject matter. This explains the several references to events after 364 found in the *Lives of the Sophists*. According to Goulet, these references only prove that the history was published sometime after the year 395, not that it covered events after the year 364. Goulet also pointed out that several entries in the *Suda* dealt with events from the reigns of Valens and Valentinian. These were placed by the lexicon as occurring ἐπὶ Ἰοβιάνου, which suggests that these notices were references to future events that were included in the section of Eunapius' history that dealt with Jovian. Goulet claims that these references were included in order to show how bad things had become in contrast to the felicity the Roman Empire enjoyed during the reign of Julian.

Blockley argued that Eunapius had published his history in three installments.⁸²⁷ The first installment, according to Blockley, had covered the years 270 to 364, from the time of Claudius II to the death of Julian (or the reign of Jovian). The second installment covered the years 364 to 378. Blockley asserted that the publication of this second installment occurred around 380. Before publishing the third installment of his history, Eunapius finished and published his *Lives of the Sophists*. Blockley agreed with Barnes that the passage in the *Lives of the Sophists* (7.3.2-7.3.5), which seems to refer to a barbarian invasion, did not refer to the Gothic invasion that

autobiography of himself, which would have formed a conclusion to his *Lives of the Sophists*, q.v. Thomas Banchich, "The Terminus of the first edition of Eunapius," *Rheinisches Museum* 131 (1988): 377-380.

⁸²⁵ Goulet observed that his theory suggested that the first edition of the history failed to cover in detail the year of Eunapius' arrival in Athens, an event usually placed in September of the year 362. Goulet therefore proposed setting the events described in the passage of the *Lives of the Sophists* (486), where Eunapius describes his arrival in Athens, in the latter part of 364. Banchich has shown that this reconstruction is improbable, as it would have Eunapius return to Asia in the year 369. Fragment 43.2 (of Eunapius) specifically states that Eunapius was in Sardis at the time of the death of Musonius, the *Vicarius Asiae*. According to Ammianus (27.9.6-27.9.8), Musonius' death occurred in the year 368, which is one year too early for Goulet's reconstruction, q.v. Thomas Banchich, "On Goulet's Chronology of Eunapius' Life and Works," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 107 (1987): 164-167.

⁸²⁶ Eunap. *Frag.* 1, 15.

⁸²⁷ Roger Blockley, "Dexippus of Athens and Eunapius of Sardis," *Latomus* 30 (1971): 713 ff; Blockley, *Fragmentary Classicising Historians*, 1:1 ff.

occurred in 395-396. Blockley argued that Eunapius seems to be referring to events that had occurred during the lifetime of the hierophant Nestorius. Blockley pointed out that Zosimus says that when a number of natural disasters struck Greece in 375, Nestorius of Eleusis was already very old.⁸²⁸ Consequently, Blockley contended that it was highly unlikely that Nestorius could have lived for another twenty years in order to witness the Gothic invasions of 395. Hence, Blockley concluded that the disasters described by Eunapius are those described as happening in 375 by Zosimus. Blockley also agreed with Barnes that *Fragment* 41 seems to indicate that Eunapius knew very little about the Huns when he wrote the first edition of his work. Consequently, Blockley argued that the portion of Eunapius' history published before the *Lives of the Sophists* (which Blockley believed was the second installment) could only have extended to the battle of Adrianople, as the Romans learned a great deal about the Huns after this event. After Eunapius had published the *Lives of the Sophists* he, according to Blockley, wrote and published the third installment of his history, which covered events from 378 to 404, sometime after the year 404.⁸²⁹ Blockley amended *Fragment* 72.1, which refers to the Augusta Pulcheria, because he believed this to be a gloss that was introduced by the compiler of the *Excerpta De Sententiis*. Blockley maintained that the text should refer to the Augusta Eudoxia (who was empress during the years 400 to 404), which would confirm Photius' statement that the history ended in 404.⁸³⁰ These three installments, Blockley believed, comprised the first edition of Eunapius' history. Blockley further contended that Eunapius attempted to revise this whole work to make a second edition in his old age but probably died before he had time to finish it. This, Blockley argued, would account for the defects that Photius noticed. Blockley therefore argued that Photius was

⁸²⁸ Zos. 4.18.

⁸²⁹ Blockley believed that *Fragment* 72.1 (87) of Eunapius, which refers to events during the time in which Pulcheria was Augusta, should be amended to read Eudoxia.

⁸³⁰ Blockley justified his conclusions by referring to *Fragment* 71.4, which refers to events that occurred soon after the death of Fravitta during the Isaurian attacks of the year 404. In this fragment, we are informed that the *Vicarius Asiae*, who was named Lucius Herennianus, arrested a man named Hierax for his extortions in Pamphylia. The next fragment (72.1) again refers to the arrest of Hierax by Herennianus, but places the events during the time that Pulcheria was empress, which would place the event in or after the year 414. According to Blockley, there are two possible conclusions. One conclusion is that Hierax may have been arrested twice by Lucius Herennianus but Blockley believes that this is unlikely. Blockley argues that an error was made by the editors of the *Excerpta De Sententiis* (who are known to have commonly made errors in their excerpts) and that the text should be amended to read Eudoxia (not Pulcheria), thereby placing the event in 404. Blockley believes that both fragments are referring to the same arrest, q.v. Roger Blockley, "The Ending of Eunapius' History," *Antichthon* 14 (1980): 170-176.

correct to assert that both editions of the history of Eunapius covered the same time span (270 to 404). Blockley has also attempted to reconstruct the contents of the history of Eunapius. He believed that the first book was an epitome or summary of history for the years 270 to 355. The narrative in this book basically consisted of short biographies on various men, most of whom were emperors. The history then focused on Julian from the second to the fifth book. The reigns of Valentinian and Valens were covered in the sixth to eighth book. The rest of the history, from the ninth to fourteenth book, covered the reigns of Theodosius I, Arcadius and Honorius. Blockley contended that Eunapius indulged in numerous rhetorical digressions. He included long speeches along with elaborate character sketches and filled his narrative with moral opinions. This reflected Eunapius' attitude regarding the purpose of history, which Blockley asserts was moralistic. Blockley pointed out that Eunapius implicitly stated this when he said that through the study of history a man gains the experience of old age, while still young, in order to know what is to be avoided and what is to be sought after.⁸³¹

Banchich agreed with Blockley that the portion of Eunapius' history, which was published before the *Lives of the Sophists*, only covered events up to the year 378. Banchich offered even more evidence that supported the case for 378.⁸³² Banchich believed that Jerome had used the first edition of Eunapius' *Universal History* as a source for part of his *Chronicle*. For the earlier part of his chronicle, up to the year 325, Jerome had simply translated the *Chronicle* of Eusebius. From 325 to the year 378, the year in which he ends his chronicle, Jerome used numerous literary sources. Banchich asserts that from around the year 361 Eunapius no longer needed to rely on literary sources, such as the memoirs of Oribasius, because he was an eyewitness to events. Banchich argued that if correspondences could be found between the narratives of Eunapius and Jerome, that involved events of 361-378, and which do not appear in other known sources, it could safely be presumed that Jerome must have used Eunapius. Jerome has four notices that, according to Banchich, must have come from Eunapius. One notice, under the year 363, mentions the predicament of Prohaeresius, who was Eunapius' teacher at Athens. Eunapius is the only extant author (besides Jerome) who mentions that Prohaeresius was not

⁸³¹ Eunap. *Frag.* 1.

⁸³² Thomas Banchich, "Eunapius and Jerome," *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 27 (1986): 319-323; Banchich, "Historical Fragments of Eunapius," 164 ff.

allowed to continue his teaching career openly because of the emperor Julian.⁸³³ Another notice, under the year 373, mentions a governor of Asia named Clearchus, whom Eunapius mentions in the *Lives of the Sophists*.⁸³⁴ The third notice, under the year 371, says that a usurper in Britain named Valentinianus was executed. Both the name and date are wrong, Valentinus was executed in 369. Since Zosimus (at 4.12.2) also gives the wrong name, Banchich believes this is another correspondence between Eunapius and Jerome.⁸³⁵ The fourth notice, under the year 368, records that Libanius refused the honorary title of praetorian prefect. Banchich found a reference to this in Eunapius' life of Libanius in the *Lives of the Sophists*.⁸³⁶ Banchich believed that the reference that Eunapius makes, in this location, to his history implies that what stands in the *Lives of the Sophists* is a review of material that had been previously covered by Eunapius in his *Universal History*. Since Eunapius does not mention any events in the life of Libanius between 368 (Libanius' refusal of the prefecture) and 390 (when Libanius died), Banchich asserted that the *Universal History* could only have reached the year 378 when the *Lives of the Sophists* was composed.⁸³⁷ Banchich contended that the first edition of the *Universal History* must have been in circulation before 383. This would have allowed Jerome enough time to have made use of it. Banchich claimed that after Eunapius published his *Lives of the Sophists*, he worked on extending his history from the years 378 to 404. Banchich suggested that Eunapius may have left his work unfinished before dying.⁸³⁸

Baker rejected the arguments of both Banchich and Barnes.⁸³⁹ Baker reverted back to the arguments of Chalmers and Paschoud who had asserted that the first installment of Eunapius' *Universal History* (which he believed was published before the *Lives of the Sophists*) had covered

⁸³³ Eunap. VS 493.

⁸³⁴ Ibid., 479.

⁸³⁵ Banchich is assuming that Zosimus is, at this location, faithfully reproducing the text of Eunapius, q.v. Banchich, "Eunapius and Jerome," 322.

⁸³⁶ Eunap. VS 498.

⁸³⁷ Banchich also found that the presentation of events between 362 and 378 in Jerome's *Epistula ad Heliodorum* (60.15) closely parallel those recorded in Eunapius' history as presented in the Fragments, the *Lives of the Sophists* and the work of Zosimus. In the case of events after 378, the letter sharply diverges from the Eunapian version of events and this lends support to Banchich's assertion that Jerome used an edition of Eunapius that extended to the year 378, q.v. Banchich, "Eunapius and Jerome," 323.

⁸³⁸ Baldini also believed that the first edition of Eunapius' history concluded with the battle of Adrianople in 378. He suggested that the first edition began with the reign of Augustus and that the second edition was to some extent a restructuring and reordering of the first edition, q.v. Baldini, *Eunapio di Sardi*, 100-117, 208-230.

⁸³⁹ Baker, "Eunapius and Zosimus," 19 ff.

events up to the year 395 (or 396). Baker agreed with Paschoud that the *Lives of the Sophists* refers to the destruction of the Serapeum (391) and indicates that it had already been covered in the *Universal History*.⁸⁴⁰ Baker also followed Paschoud in his belief that the *Lives of the Sophists* refers to an earlier discussion of the Gothic wars of 395 (or 396) in the *Universal History*.⁸⁴¹ Baker concluded, in spite of what Banchich and Barnes have to say, that Eunapius undoubtedly states that he has already discussed these events in the first edition of his history. This proves, according to Baker, that the first installment covered events up to the year 395 or 396. Baker, however, rejected the views of Chalmers and Paschoud concerning the nature of the second edition of the *Universal History*. Baker reverted back to the argument of Niebuhr who argued that the new edition of Eunapius' history had been the work of a Christian editor.⁸⁴² Baker maintained this view because he believed that Photius had no reason to lie and did in fact see a censored version of Eunapius' history.⁸⁴³ Baker asserted that "in a history whose hero was Julian the Apostate, the elimination of all that gave offense might have meant the elimination of the work."⁸⁴⁴ Baker argued that, because of this, it is highly improbable that Eunapius could have been responsible for the second edition. According to Baker, the only feasible explanation for the second edition is that it is the work of an incompetent Christian, who attempted to render the book more tolerable for the easily infuriated Christians of his day.

These, then, are the major arguments concerning the nature of the second edition of Eunapius' *Universal History*. The great variance in opinion indicates that the available evidence is too scanty to allow any theory on the nature of the work to stand unchallenged. The matter is unlikely to be resolved unless some new evidence is brought to light.

⁸⁴⁰ Eunap. *VS* 6.11.1-6.11.7.

⁸⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 7.3.4-7.3.5.

⁸⁴² Baker, "Eunapius and Zosimus," 51.

⁸⁴³ In spite of Photius' numerous errors, Baker believes that Photius is a trustworthy authority, q.v. Baker, "Eunapius and Zosimus," 48 ff.

⁸⁴⁴ Aaron Baker, "Eunapius' νέα ἑκδοσις and Photius," *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 29 (1988): 394.

APPENDIX B GEOGRAPHICAL ERRORS

Zosimus states (1.23.1) that the Goths crossed the Tanais (i.e. the Don river), when in fact he means the Danube. Similarly, he describes (1.67.1) certain cities located on the Rhine as Germanic cities, when they would be better designated as Gallic for the period that he is describing. The *Historia Nova* asserts (2.30.3) that the Bosphorus is 300 stades long when it is in fact only about half that length. Zosimus imprecisely describes (2.45) the movements made by Constantius and Magnentius in their war against each other. After the armies met near the city of Mursa, Magnentius sent a messenger to Constantius that he intended to join battle at Siscia. Zosimus tells us that Constantius moved his army to Siscia while Magnentius set up an ambush for Constantius' army in the valley near Adrans, which is near the Alps. Zosimus then has this ambush successfully attacking Constantius' army even though they were apparently on their way to Siscia. Zosimus has either misplaced the ambush or has omitted movements that could make an engagement near the Alps plausible. It is also possible that the manuscript has been corrupted here. Zosimus calls Paris, at 3.9.1, a little town in Germany. Zosimus seems to indicate (3.12.1) that Julian's fleet was assembled in the city of Hierapolis. Zosimus (or some copyist) must be mistaken as Hierapolis is not on the Euphrates and the *Historia Nova* seems to indicate a little afterwards that the place was in fact Circesium.⁸⁴⁵ According to Ammianus, the fleet was assembled at the port of Callinicum (or Circesium, as Zosimus calls it).⁸⁴⁶ Zosimus situates (3.13.1) Carrhae at the border between the Roman Empire and Assyria. This may be a gloss from a later time as in the fourth century the border was located at Circesium, as Zosimus seems to know (3.12.3).⁸⁴⁷ The *Historia Nova* places (3.35.3) Dadastana in Bithynia when, in fact, it is in Galatia. Zosimus confuses (4.45.4) the Apennines with the Alps. Likewise, he describes (5.9.5-5.9.6) the Oasis, an out of the way place wherein various people were exiled, as a terribly wretched place. Zosimus may have been confused here as he is in direct opposition to Olympiodorus who describes the place in very pleasant terms.⁸⁴⁸ Zosimus describes (5.20.3)

⁸⁴⁵ Zos. 3.13. According to Ammianus (23.3.6-23.3.7, 23.3.9), the infantry met at Hierapolis and the fleet at Callinicum.

⁸⁴⁶ Amm. Marc. 23.3.9.

⁸⁴⁷ Ibid., 23.5.2, 24.1.1.

⁸⁴⁸ Olymp. Frag. 32.

Liburnia as a city of Italy when it is in reality a district in Illyricum.⁸⁴⁹ He mistakenly calls a river (5.25.4), situated in Italy, the Danube.⁸⁵⁰ The *Historia Nova* once again (5.29.4) confuses the Apennines with the Alps and also mentions an otherwise unknown river named the Aculis. Zosimus asserts (5.31.1) that Bononia is seventy Roman miles from Ravenna, when in actuality it is less than fifty. The *Historia Nova* seems to be uncertain about the location of Picenum (5.37.3) vaguely describing it as somewhere at the end of the Ionian Bay. Zosimus places (6.2.2) another Bononia (modern Boulogne) in lower Germany when it would more correctly be described as being located in Belgica Secunda.⁸⁵¹ Likewise, he misplaces (6.2.6-6.3.1) the Vandal invasion from the Rhine to the Alps.

APPENDIX C THE THIRD CENTURY

The *Historia Nova* reports (1.10.1) that the emperor Macrinus was proclaimed as emperor by the soldiers of Rome, but according to Herodian (4.13-5.4), Macrinus ascended to the throne in the East and never returned to Rome after that. Zosimus relates (1.12.1-1.12.2) that two men, Antonius and Uranius, were declared emperors by the troops during the reign of Alexander Severus. These usurpers are not mentioned in any other source. The *Epitome De Caesaribus* also reports that two men seized the throne during the reign of Alexander Severus but these do not seem to be the usurpers that Zosimus is describing as one of them is called Taurinus and the other Maximinus.⁸⁵² The *Historia Nova* states (1.13.1) that Alexander hastened to Rome when he heard a revolt had taken place there, only to be murdered after offering pardon to the insurgents. Herodian (6.8-6.9) reports that Alexander was murdered near the Mainz while on his German

⁸⁴⁹ Zosimus may be correct in locating this place in Italy, if he is in fact referring to a sea-port in Etruria that was called Liburnum or Liburni Portus, q.v. Smith, *Greek and Roman Geography*, 2:175; George Dennis, *The Cities and Cemeteries of Etruria* (London: John Murray, 1848), 85-86; U. Benigni, "Leghorn," in *Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: Encyclopedia Press, 1913), 9:131.

⁸⁵⁰ Leunclavius emended the name of the river to the Arno River. Mendelssohn suggested that Zosimus, who is here describing the battle which took place between Stilicho and Radagaisus, had confused the place of the battle with the original home of the barbarians who were in Radagaisus' army, q.v. Mendelssohn, *Zosimi*, 249.

⁸⁵¹ Olymp. (*Frag.* 13.1) places Bononia on the coast of Gaul whereas the *Notitia Galliarum* (6.13) more correctly reports that it is in Belgica Secunda.

⁸⁵² *Epit. De Caesaribus* 24.2.

campaign, while the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* (Alexander 59.6) places his death in Britain or Gaul. At 1.14.1, Zosimus reports that Valerian was one of the ambassadors sent from Africa by Gordian I whereas the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* reports that Valerian was a Senator at Rome and that he was at the head of the Senate when they received the embassy from Africa.⁸⁵³ According to the *Historia Nova* (1.16.1), Gordian I and Gordian II were lost in a violent storm on their voyage to Rome. Both Herodian (7.9) and the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* (Three Gordians 16.2) report that Gordian II was killed in a battle by Capellianus, the governor of Numidia, whereupon Gordian I committed suicide. Zosimus also relates, in the same passage (1.61.1), that Gordian III was the son of one of the late Gordians whereas Herodian states that he was a grandson of Gordian I, but by his daughter.⁸⁵⁴ At 1.16.2, the *Historia Nova* states that Maximus and Balbinus plotted against Gordian III and were executed along with their accomplices. Both Herodian (8.8.5-8.8.7) and the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* (Maximus and Balbinus 14) report that they were slain in a mutiny by their own troops. Zosimus relates, at 1.22.2, that Philip the Arab's son died during a battle at Verona but Aurelius Victor (*Liber De Caesaribus* 28.11) states that he was put to death in the praetorian camp when news of his father's defeat at Verona reached Rome.⁸⁵⁵ According to Zosimus (1.23), Decius died near the Tanais, but according to Dexippus (*Fragment* 22), he died near the Danube at Abrittus. Zosimus relates, at 1.38.2, that the usurper Postumus executed Gallienus' son, Saloninus. The *Epitome De Caesaribus* (32.3) reports that it was Gallienus' elder son, Cornelius, who was killed while Zonaras (12.23) claims it was another son who had the same name as his father. At 1.39.2, Zosimus reports that Odenathus was murdered in Emesa whereas other sources report that he was murdered at Heraclea Pontica.⁸⁵⁶ Zosimus (1.40) relates that Gallienus was killed in a plot on his way back to Italy, thereby agreeing with the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* (Two Gallieni 14.4). On the contrary, Aurelius Victor (*Liber De Caesaribus* 33.17) and Zonaras (12.25) also report that Gallienus was killed in a plot, but they assert that this occurred while Gallienus was besieging Aurelius in Milan. At 1.40.2, Zosimus reports that Heraclianus held the title of

⁸⁵³ *SHA* Three Gordians 9.7-9.8.

⁸⁵⁴ Herodian and the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* agree with Zosimus, q.v. Herodian 7.10.7; *SHA* Three Gordians 19.9.

⁸⁵⁵ Zonaras (*Ann.* 12.19) agrees with Zosimus' in having Philip's son killed at Verona.

⁸⁵⁶ George Syncellus *Chron.* 716-717; *SHA* Thirty Tyrants 15.5, Thirty Tyrants 17.1; Zonaras *Ann.* 12.24; John of Antioch *Frag.* 152; Peter the Patrician *Frag.* 168.

Praetorian Prefect whereas the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* says that he held the title of *Dux* and Zonaras gives him the title of ἐπὶ ὁρχῶ.⁸⁵⁷ The circumstances surrounding the death of Aureolus, related by Zosimus at 1.41, are reported diversely in other sources.⁸⁵⁸ Zosimus reports, at 1.47, that Quintillus reigned for a few months before dying whereas Zonaras (12.26), Eutropius (9.12) and the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* (Claudian 12.5) relate that he only reigned for seventeen days.⁸⁵⁹ The manner of Quintillus' death is also reported variously in the extant sources.⁸⁶⁰ Zosimus (1.47) along with Zonaras report that Quintillus committed suicide whereas Eutropius reports that he was murdered.⁸⁶¹ The *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* reports that Quintillus committed suicide in the life of Aurelian but it then gives the version in which he is murder in the life of Claudian.⁸⁶² Zosimus (1.49) reports that Aurelian defeated and killed thousands of Alamanni who were intending to invade Italy and then went to Rome to put down a conspiracy. The *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* (Aurelian 18.3-18.4, 21.1-21.4) relates that Aurelian suffered a disastrous defeat at Placentia against the Alamanni and that this is what led to a revolt at Rome.⁸⁶³ Zosimus (1.59) informs us that Zenobia died, after being capture by Aurelian, on the march back to Rome. The *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* (Aurelian 33.2, Thirty Tyrants 30.24-30.27) reports that Zenobia survived the journey to Rome and took part in Aurelian's triumph, after which she was given a villa at Tibur. Zosimus (1.61) states that Tetricus, the usurper, was defeated by Aurelian after his triumph at Rome while the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* (Thirty Tyrants 24.5) reports that he surrendered of his own free will to Aurelian before the triumph and that he was displayed, along with Zenobia, in Aurelian's triumphal procession at Rome.⁸⁶⁴ Zosimus (1.63-1.64) implies that the Senate and the people of Rome proclaimed Florian emperor on the death of his brother Tacitus.⁸⁶⁵ According to the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* (Tacitus 14.1), Florian seized power, not on the approval of the Senate but on his own volition, as if the Empire were a hereditary possession, on the death of his brother. Zosimus (1.65) reports

⁸⁵⁷ *SHA* Gallienus 14.1; Zonaras *Ann.* 12.25.

⁸⁵⁸ *SHA* Aurelian 16.2; Claudian 16.3; Zonaras *Ann.* 12.26; Aurelius Victor *Lib. De Caesaribus* 33.19.

⁸⁵⁹ The Chronographer of 354 gives the length of Quintillus' reign as 77 days, q.v. Theodor Mommsen, *Chronica Minora Saec. IV. V. VI. VII.* (Berlin: Weidman, 1898), 1:148.

⁸⁶⁰ Zonaras *Ann.* 12.26; Eutropius *Brev.* 9.12; *SHA* Claudian 12.5; *SHA* Aurelian 37.6.

⁸⁶¹ Zonaras *Ann.* 12.26; Eutropius *Brev.* 9.12.

⁸⁶² *SHA* Claudian 12.5; *SHA* Aurelian 37.6.

⁸⁶³ cf. Aurelius Victor *Lib. De Caesaribus* 35.2; Dexippus *Frag.* 6.

⁸⁶⁴ cf. Aurelius Victor *Lib. De Caesaribus* 35.4-35.5; Eutropius *Brev.* 9.10.

⁸⁶⁵ Zosimus' version of events was followed by Zonaras (*Ann.* 12.29).

that Probus punished Aurelian's murderers and those who had plotted against Tacitus by inviting them all to a dinner, only to fall upon the unsuspecting guests and kill them all. On the contrary, the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* (Probus 13.2) asserts that Probus used mildness and leniency to punish these same men. Zosimus describes (1.66.1) the short elevation, reign and fall of Saturninus. The details of his elevation and demise are at variance with other extant sources.⁸⁶⁶

APPENDIX D THE FOURTH CENTURY

Zosimus places (2.81) the death of Diocletian in the year 316, agreeing with John of Antioch and Hieronymus.⁸⁶⁷ Socrates, Lactantius and the *Epitome De Caesaribus* date Diocletian's death to the year 313.⁸⁶⁸ The *Historia Nova* asserts (2.10) that Flavius Valerius Severus was captured at a place called Tres Tabernae by Maxentius' men and hanged. The details surrounding the death of Flavius Valerius Severus are reported differently in other sources.⁸⁶⁹ Zosimus reports (2.16) that Maxentius died, in a battle near the Milvian bridge, when his cavalry began to retreat back across the bridge. The *Historia Nova* states that the timbers of the bridge were unable to carry the great weight of the retreating army and Maxentius along with many others were swept away down the stream. Aurelius Victor agrees with Zosimus but other sources variously report the details surrounding Maxentius' death.⁸⁷⁰ The *Historia Nova* relates (2.43) that

⁸⁶⁶ *SHA* Firmus 7.1, 9.3; Zonaras *Ann.* 12.29; Syncellus *Chron.* 723; Jerome *Chron.* 2297; Jordanes *Romana* 293.

⁸⁶⁷ John of Antioch *Frag.* 167; Jerome *Chron.* 2332; *Consularia Constantinopolitana* s.a. 316.

⁸⁶⁸ Socr. *Hist. Eccl.* 1.2.10; Lactantius *De Mortibus Persecutorum* 42.3; *Epit. De Caesaribus* 39.7.

⁸⁶⁹ Most sources indicate that Severus was killed at Ravenna, q.v. Lactantius *De Mortibus Persecutorum* 26.8-26.10; Euseb. *VC* 1.26; Eutropius *Brev.* 10.2-10.3; Orosius *History Against the Pagans* 7.28; Victor Aurelius *Lib. De Caesaribus* 40.3. The *Epitome De Caesaribus* (40) simply states that Severus was killed by Maximian in Rome at Tres Tabernae. The *Anonymus Valesianus* (4.9-4.11) states that Severus was deserted by his men and fled to Ravenna. Maximian came to Ravenna, deceived Severus with false oaths, took him to Rome as a captive, kept him as a prisoner in a villa 30 miles from Rome on the Appian Road and finally executed him when Galerius came to Italy, q.v. R. Hanson, "The Death of the Emperor Fl. Valerius Severus," *Hermathena* 118 (1974) 59-68.

⁸⁷⁰ Lactantius (*De Mortibus Persecutorum* 44) reports that the bridge was broken as soon as Maxentius had crossed over to confront Constantine. The panegyrist (*Panegyrici Latini* 9.17) reports that Maxentius and his soldiers were trapped on their retreat to Rome by the narrowness of the bridge. He goes on to report that Maxentius drowned while attempting to cross the river on his horse. The *Epitome De Caesaribus* (40.6) reports that Maxentius was thrown from his horse while attempting to cross a bridge of boats that had been

Vetranio was proclaimed emperor by the legions at Mursa whereas other sources state that it was at Sirmium.⁸⁷¹ Zosimus (along with Socrates) maintains that Vetranio was simply a usurper, who was overcome with the ambition of becoming emperor, whereas other sources assert that Vetranio was really acting under the auspices of Constantia in order to hold Illyricum for Constantius II against the usurper Magnentius.⁸⁷² Zosimus indicates (2.43) that Nepotianus reigned for a few days whereas Aurelius Victor gives him twenty-seven days and Eutropius gives him twenty-eight days.⁸⁷³ The *Historia Nova* reports (2.48) that when Constantius sent Philippus to Magnentius' camp, under the pretense of discussing a truce, he gave a speech to the assembled army and appealed to their sense of loyalty to the family of Constantine and that this nearly provoked Magnentius' army to mutiny. Zonaras does not mention Philippus, indicating only that Constantius sent a letter to Magnentius and that Magnentius was too arrogant to accept it.⁸⁷⁴ Zosimus (2.55.3) implies that Gallus was unjustly tried and executed whereas other sources indicate that he committed various crimes in the East and that he attempted to become emperor.⁸⁷⁵

APPENDIX E THE REIGN OF JULIAN

Zosimus implies that Julian's method for feeding the numerous prisoners that he rescued was his own innovation whereas Ammianus states that this was nothing new.⁸⁷⁶ The number of troops that Julian sent to Constantius II is reported differently in the accounts of Zosimus, Ammianus and Julian. The *Historia Nova* states that Julian requisitioned four troops of cavalry. Ammianus reports that Julian sent four divisions of auxiliaries along with three hundred handpicked men, while Julian asserts that he sent seven levies of infantry and two squadrons of

built a little above the Milvian Bridge. Aurelius Victor agrees with Zosimus and reports (*Lib. De Caesaribus* 40.23) that Maxentius was drowned when he attempted to retreat back across the bridge.

⁸⁷¹ Jerome (*Chron.* 2366) and John of Antioch (*Frag.* 172) agree with Zosimus in placing Vetranio's elevation at Mursa whereas Socrates (*Hist. Eccl.* 2.25) and the *Consularia Constantinopolitana* (s.a. 350; *Chron. Minora* 1.237) report that Vetranio was proclaimed at Sirmium.

⁸⁷² *Chron. Paschale* s.a. 350 (*Chron. Minora* 1.237); Phot. *Epit. of the Hist. Eccl. of Philostorg.* 3.22; Julian *Or.* 1.26.

⁸⁷³ Aurelius Victor *Lib. De Caesaribus* 42.6; Eutropius *Brev.* 10.11.2.

⁸⁷⁴ Zonaras *Ann.* 13.8.

⁸⁷⁵ Amm. Marc. 14.1-14.12; Zonaras *Ann.* 13.8; Socr. *Hist. Eccl.* 2.33; Aurelius Victor *Lib. De Caesaribus* 42.11; Julian *Epist. to the Athenians* 271.

⁸⁷⁶ Amm. Marc. 18.2.3-18.2.4.

cavalry.⁸⁷⁷ Many details recorded by Zosimus concerning Julian's elevation are different from what other sources report.⁸⁷⁸ The *Historia Nova* has military tribunes distributing notes to the troops that suggested that Julian was in grave danger from Constantius, which led them to rise with an uproar and immediately burst open the doors of the imperial quarters and elevate Julian to the rank of Augustus.⁸⁷⁹ The other sources have Julian ordering his troops to set out for the East in response to a letter from Constantius and that this caused great excitement among the troops, leading them to openly revolt because fortune was depriving them of a mild ruler and the lands of their birth. The troops, according to these sources, surrounded the imperial quarters but were compelled to wait for daylight before Julian finally came out, upon which they hailed him as Augustus.⁸⁸⁰ Zosimus depicts (3.9.3-3.9.4) Constantius as extremely unreasonable in his negotiations with Julian whereas Julian and Ammianus report that he was much more evenhanded.⁸⁸¹ The *Historia Nova* reports that Constantius, upon hearing of Julian's elevation to the rank of Augustus, flew into a rage and demanded that Julian renounce not only the rank of Augustus but also the rank of Caesar and submit himself to his will, if he wished him to spare his life.⁸⁸² Julian states that Constantius refused to make terms with him but guaranteed that he would spare his life if he surrendered himself.⁸⁸³ Ammianus reports that Constantius proposed to Julian that he give up the rank of Augustus and be content with that of Caesar.⁸⁸⁴ Zosimus seems to indicate (3.10.2) that Julian divided his army into two parts. One of these divisions was to make for Sirmium by land, while the other division was to go down the Danube with himself. Ammianus states that Julian divided his army into three parts. One division, under Jovinus and Jovius, was sent to Italy, another division, under Nevitta, was sent to Rhaetia and the third division went down the Danube with himself.⁸⁸⁵ The *Historia Nova* reports (3.10.3-3.10.4) that Julian wrote his political pamphlets at Sirmium but Ammianus reports that they were written at

⁸⁷⁷ Zos. 3.8; Amm. Marc. 20.4.2-20.4.3; Julian *Epist. to the Athenians* 280.

⁸⁷⁸ Zos. 3.9.2; Amm. Marc. 20.4; Libanius *Or.* 18.97-18.99; Julian *Epist. to the Athenians* 283-285.

⁸⁷⁹ Zos. 3.9.2.

⁸⁸⁰ Amm. Marc. 20.4; Libanius *Or.* 18.97-18.99; Julian *Epist. to the Athenians* 283-285.

⁸⁸¹ Julian *Epist. to the Athenians* 285; Amm. Marc. 20.8-20.9; cf. Libanius *Or.* 18.106; Zonaras *Ann.* 13.10; *Epit. De Caesaribus* 42.16.

⁸⁸² Zos. 3.9.

⁸⁸³ Julian *Epist. to the Athenians* 285-286.

⁸⁸⁴ Amm. Marc. 20.8-20.9.

⁸⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 21.8-21.9; cf. Libanius *Or.* 18.111ff.

Naissus.⁸⁸⁶ Zosimus asserts (3.11.3) that Julian established the Senate at Constantinople.⁸⁸⁷ The *Anonymous Valesianus*, however, seems to credit Constantine with the establishment of a Senate at Constantinople.⁸⁸⁸ A contemporary source, the *Panegyrici Latini*, however, agrees with the *Historia Nova* and reports that Julian not only restored the Senate's ancient dignity but also added even more new honors.⁸⁸⁹ Zosimus describes (3.14.3) Julian's fleet (for his Persian expedition) as comprising of six hundred wooden ships, five hundred ships of skin, fifty war ships and a number of pontoons. Ammianus reports that the fleet consisted of one thousand transports, fifty warships and fifty pontoons whereas John Malalas simply gives a total of twelve hundred and fifty ships for the entire fleet.⁸⁹⁰ The *Historia Nova* reports that Hormisdas and his scouts were saved from a Persian ambushade by the flooding of the Euphrates, which prevented the Persians from crossing whereas Ammianus simply relates that the ambush failed because the river was too deep (at that point) for the Persians to ford.⁸⁹¹ According to Zosimus (3.17), the crossing of the Naarmalcha took place only after Lucillianus and Victor had outflanked and routed the Persians.⁸⁹² After this, according to the *Historia Nova* (3.17.2), the emperor crossed the river unhindered with the cavalry being ferried over in boats and the infantry being taken across in vessels that were found along the river. Ammianus, however, records that the infantry crossed over in bridges while the cavalry with the pack animals swam across in full armor. According to Ammianus, the Roman cavalry were assailed (during the crossing of the river) by the Persians and were saved by a troop of auxiliaries who were very lightly armed.⁸⁹³ Zosimus seems to suggest (3.18.2) that Julian was responsible for the invention of the helepolis whereas Ammianus says that it had been used long ago by Demetrius Poliorcetes.⁸⁹⁴ The *Historia Nova* records (3.18.4) a Persian general's name as Momoseirus while Ammianus records it as Mamersides.⁸⁹⁵ Zosimus reports (3.19) that the Persians attacked the scouts that were incautiously preceding the Roman army and managed to

⁸⁸⁶ Amm. Marc. 21.10.7.

⁸⁸⁷ Earlier, at 2.31.2, Zosimus simply states that Constantine built some houses for the Senators he brought with him to Constantinople and does not indicate that Constantine actually established a Senate there, q.v. Bury, *Later Roman Empire*, 1:18.

⁸⁸⁸ *Anonymous Valesianus* 30.

⁸⁸⁹ *Panegyrici Latini* 11.24.5.

⁸⁹⁰ Amm. Marc. 23.3.9; Malalas *Chron.* 13.21.

⁸⁹¹ Amm. Marc. 24.2.4.

⁸⁹² This event is not mentioned by Ammianus.

⁸⁹³ Amm. Marc. 24.2.7-24.2.8; cf. Libanius *Or.* 18.224.

⁸⁹⁴ Amm. Marc. 24.2.18.

⁸⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 24.2.22.

kill one of their leaders along with some soldiers and a Roman military standard. The *Historia Nova* asserts that Julian was so furious that he cashiered the leader of the scouts, who had abandoned the standard in order to flee to safety, and held those who had shared in his flight in disgrace. Ammianus does not mention any military standard, merely reporting that Julian discharged the two remaining tribunes (as the others had died) and executed ten of the soldiers who had fled from the field.⁸⁹⁶ Zosimus records (3.19.4) that Julian's army, entering some land with numerous channels and standing pools, cut down trees to bridge the channels and crossed the marshes by throwing earth into them, thereby filling the deep places and widening the narrow parts. Ammianus reports that the standing pools were crossed on bladders and dugouts.⁸⁹⁷ The *Historia Nova* relates (3.20.2-3.20.3) that Julian was almost fatally wounded by a Persian, whereupon Julian's soldiers fell upon the Persian and killed him along with most of his companions; a few managing to escape to a fort nearby. Ammianus reports that the attack on Julian was by two Persian men who were both killed (one by Julian and the other by his soldiers) but whose eight companions managed to flee.⁸⁹⁸ The events surrounding the breakthrough from the mine at Maiozamalcha are related differently by Zosimus, Ammianus and Libanius. The *Historia Nova* (3.22.4) has the completed tunnel coming out, late at night, in the middle of a house where a slave girl was grinding wheat. Zosimus reports that the first of Julian's men, who had come out of the tunnel, killed her because she attempted to cry out. Libanius also has the finished tunnel coming out into a house in the middle of the night but Libanius relates that they found an old woman sleeping with a child, whom they force to keep silent.⁸⁹⁹ Ammianus has the finished tunnel coming out into a room in the daylight and reports that everyone who was found in the room was killed. After this, Ammianus reports that Julian's men were able to cautiously kill all of the men who were on watch without being detected.⁹⁰⁰ The details surrounding the events that occurred in a city called Meinas Sabath are also reported differently by Zosimus and Ammianus. The *Historia Nova* (3.23.3-3.23.4) says that the city was inhabited and that Julian sent some of his scouts to storm the city. The next day, as the emperor was inspecting the walls, Zosimus relates that dead bodies were found hanging on stakes in front of the walls. According to

⁸⁹⁶ Amm. Marc. 24.3.1-24.3.2; cf. Libanius *Or.* 18.229-18.230.

⁸⁹⁷ Amm. Marc. 24.3.11.

⁸⁹⁸ Amm. Marc. 24.4.4.

⁸⁹⁹ Libanius *Or.* 18.238-18.239.

⁹⁰⁰ Amm. Marc. 24.4.23.

the *Historia Nova*, the inhabitants told the Romans that these were the bodies of relatives of a man who had betrayed the city to the emperor Carus. Ammianus reports that these bodies were found in a deserted city that had been destroyed by the emperor Carus and that there was an ever-flowing spring there.⁹⁰¹ Ammianus reports that the bodies were impaled and that they were the kinsmen of the man who had surrendered the city of Pirisabora to Julian earlier in the campaign.⁹⁰² Ammianus goes on to relate how an unnamed town (which may be the town called Meinas Sabath by Zosimus) was besieged shortly thereafter.⁹⁰³ Zosimus says (3.24.1) that Arinthaëus, one of Julian's *Magistri Equitum*, found many prisoners in the marshes before the crossing of the Tigris whereas Ammianus states that this incident occurred after the crossing of the Tigris.⁹⁰⁴ The details in the accounts of Zosimus and Ammianus concerning the crossing of the Tigris are likewise divergent. The *Historia Nova* reports that while the army was attempting to cross a canal that lead to the Tigris, a mass of Persians gathered on the opposite bank to oppose them whereas Ammianus relates that the army crossed the canal on bridges without any resistance from the Persians.⁹⁰⁵ Ammianus reports that a battle was later fought when the Tigris was actually crossed, during the night, whereas Zosimus has the army crossing the Tigris without resistance.⁹⁰⁶ Both Zosimus and Ammianus agree in their reports over the battle that took place, except for the fact that the *Historia Nova* has two ships going across first to meet the Persians whereas Ammianus has five ships.⁹⁰⁷ Zosimus (3.26.2-3.36.3) places the burning of the fleet at a place called Abuzatha and says that only eighteen Roman and four Persian ships were saved. Ammianus places the burning of the fleet at Ctesiphon and says that only twelve ships were saved.⁹⁰⁸ Libanius indicates that fifteen ships were saved.⁹⁰⁹ The *Historia Nova* relates (3.28.2) that when Julian's army came to the village of Maronsa, the Persian forces attacked his rear guard and captured some ships. Ammianus calls the place Maranga, has a bloody full-scale battle (not a

⁹⁰¹ Ibid., 24.5.3-24.5.4; Ammianus does not name the city, simply stating that these events took place somewhere near the city of Coche, which is also known as Seleucia.

⁹⁰² Amm. Marc. 24.5.4, 24.2.21.

⁹⁰³ Ibid., 24.5.5 ff.

⁹⁰⁴ Amm. Marc. 24.7.2.

⁹⁰⁵ Zos. 3.25.1; Amm. Marc. 24.6.2.

⁹⁰⁶ Zos. 3.26.1; Amm. Marc. 24.6.5.

⁹⁰⁷ Zos. 3.25.2; Amm. Marc. 24.6.5.

⁹⁰⁸ Amm. Marc. 24.7.3-24.7.6.

⁹⁰⁹ Libanius *Or.* 18.261-18.263.

mere skirmish on the Roman rear as Zosimus records) and makes no mention of any ships.⁹¹⁰ Many of the place names recorded by Zosimus of Julian's itinerary, during his Persian expedition, diverge in many ways from the form given by Ammianus.⁹¹¹ Zosimus reports that Julian was wounded by a sword, at 3.29.1, while Ammianus, Libanius and Festus indicate it was a spear.⁹¹²

APPENDIX F THE REIGN OF JOVIAN

The battle that was fought shortly after the elevation of Jovian is differently described by Zosimus and Ammianus. The *Historia Nova* (3.30.4) places the battle at the fort of Suma, calls one of the tribunes who died Maximianus and reports that the body of Anatolius was found in the battlefield among the dead. Ammianus places the battle before the fort was reached, calls the tribune by the name of Maximus and reports that the body of Anatolius was found lying along a road.⁹¹³ Zosimus relates that the army crossed the Tigris River before the peace treaty with the Persians whereas Ammianus reports that the crossing took place after the treaty.⁹¹⁴ The *Historia Nova* says, at 3.33.1, that Jovian sent Mauricius to Nisibis for supplies after he concluded peace with the Persians whereas Ammianus says he was sent to Ur.⁹¹⁵ Zosimus records that four provinces were surrendered by Jovian to the Persians whereas Ammianus reports that five provinces were surrendered.⁹¹⁶ The *Historia Nova* (3.34.3) relates that the whole army accompanied the body of Julian on its way to be buried whereas Ammianus mentions only that Procopius accompanied the body.⁹¹⁷ The two-line epitaph recorded by Zosimus is recorded

⁹¹⁰ Amm. Marc. 25.1.11-25.1.19.

⁹¹¹ Zosimus' Circesium (3.13.2) is given as Callinicum by Ammianus (23.3.9), Zautha (Zos. 3.14.2) is given as Zaitha (Amm. Marc. 23.5.7), Dacira (Zos. 3.15.2) is given as Diacira (Amm. Marc. 24.3.2), Zaragardia (Zos. 3.15.3) is given as Ozogadana (Amm. Marc. 24.2.3), Bersabora (Zos. 3.17.3) is given as Pirisabora (Amm. Marc. 24.2.9-24.2.22), Zochasa (Zos. 3.23.3) is given as Coche (Amm. Marc. 24.6.2), Symbra (Zos. 3.27.2) is given as Hucumbra (Amm. Marc. 25.1.4), Maronsa (Zos. 3.28.2) is given as Maranga (Amm. Marc. 25.1.11) and Suma (Zos. 3.30.2) is given as Sumere (Amm. Marc. 25.6.4).

⁹¹² Amm. Marc. 25.3.6; Libanius *Or.* 18.268; Rufus Festus *Brev.* 28. John Lydus agrees with Zosimus' assertion that Julian was wounded by a sword, q.v. John Lydus *On the Months* 4.75. cf. Theodoret *Hist. Eccl.* 3.9; Augustine *City of God* 5.21; Ephram *Hymns* 2-3; Gregory Nazianzus *Or.* 5.12.

⁹¹³ Amm. Marc. 25.6.2-25.6.3.

⁹¹⁴ Ibid., 25.6.11-25.6.15, 25.8.1-25.8.3.

⁹¹⁵ Ibid., 25.8.7.

⁹¹⁶ Zosimus (3.31.1) fails to mention the province of Moxoena; cf. Amm. Marc. 25.7.9.

⁹¹⁷ Amm. Marc. 25.9.12. Zonaras (*Ann.* 13.3) agrees with Zosimus.

differently by Zonaras and agrees only in the second line.⁹¹⁸ There are serious divergences in the accounts of Zosimus (3.35.1-3.35.2) and Ammianus concerning the arrangements made by Jovian to make his succession known in the West.⁹¹⁹ The *Historia Nova* reports that Jovian sent Lucillianus (his father in law), Procopius and Valentinian to the armies in Pannonia to report Julian's death and his elevation.⁹²⁰ Zosimus states that the troops were so upset at this news that they killed Lucillianus and attempted to kill Valentinian, who only managed to escape by flight.⁹²¹ Ammianus only mentions that Procopius and Memoridus were sent by Jovian to bring the news to the West and reports that Lucillianus was already stationed at Sirmium, as a commander of the cavalry and infantry.⁹²² Ammianus states that Lucillianus was later killed by the army at Rheims when an actuary, whom he had wrongly accused of misconduct, falsely proclaimed to the army that Julian was still alive and that Jovian was a usurper.⁹²³ Upon the death of Jovian, Zosimus (3.36.1) relates that Salutius was unanimously elevated to throne by the troops whereas Ammianus asserts that he had been elected upon the death of Julian.⁹²⁴

APPENDIX G

THE REIGN OF VALENTINIAN I

The *Historia Nova* relates (4.1.1) that Valentinian was struck by illness on his way to Constantinople whereas Ammianus states that Valentinian became ill at Constantinople.⁹²⁵ The details surrounding the elevation of Procopius are reported quite differently in the histories of Zosimus and Ammianus.⁹²⁶ According to Zosimus, at 4.5.3, Procopius' special supporter was a rich eunuch named Eugenius whereas Ammianus states that his special supporter was a palatine guard named Strategius.⁹²⁷ Zosimus reports (4.5.4) that Procopius bribed the city guard of Constantinople whereas Ammianus states that two legions, which were resting in Constantinople

⁹¹⁸ Zos. 3.33.3; Zonaras *Ann.* 13.13.

⁹¹⁹ Amm. Marc. 25.8.8-25.8.12, 25.10.6-25.10.7.

⁹²⁰ Zos. 3.35.1.

⁹²¹ Zosimus says (3.35.2) that the soldiers spared Procopius out of respect for Julian's kindred.

⁹²² Amm. Marc. 25.8.8-25.8.12.

⁹²³ Ibid., 25.10.6-25.10.7.

⁹²⁴ Ibid., 25.5.3.

⁹²⁵ Ibid., 26.4.4.

⁹²⁶ Zos. 4.4-4.7; Amm. Marc. 26.6.10-26.6.18.

⁹²⁷ Amm. Marc. 26.6.5.

for two days before continuing their march to Thrace, were bribed by Procopius to join him in his revolution.⁹²⁸ Zosimus (4.5-4.6) reports that Procopius became emperor through an underhanded secretive takeover whereas Ammianus has Procopius gain power openly through his bribery of the troops.⁹²⁹ Zosimus states (4.7.2-4.7.3) that the chieftain of the Scythians sent Procopius ten thousand men because he was a relative of Julian whereas Ammianus calls these barbarians Goths and relates that they sent three thousand men and asserts that they did this because of Procopius' relationship to Constantius.⁹³⁰ Zosimus claims (4.7.4) that Valentinian refused help to Valens in his fight against Procopius whereas Ammianus claims that he was anxious to help Valens but was prevented from doing so by an invasion of the Alamanni in Gaul.⁹³¹ Zosimus (4.16.4) states that, shortly after the usurpation of Firmus, the Sarmatians and Quadi invaded Pannonia and Moesia because of the actions of a garrison commander named Celestius who had treacherously killed their chief. On the contrary, Ammianus reports that they invaded because a praetorian prefect named Marcellinus had treacherously killed Gabinius, the king of the Quadi.⁹³² Zosimus states (4.17.2) that Valentinian died in the twelfth year of his reign whereas Ammianus reports that he died about three months short of his twelfth year and the ecclesiastical historians report that he died in the thirteenth year of his reign.⁹³³ Zosimus simply states (4.17.2) that Valentinian died in Illyricum, but other sources report that Valentinian died at Brigetio, which is on the northern border of Pannonia.⁹³⁴ Zosimus says that Valentinian died after being infuriated at the demands of some barbarian ambassadors, thereby agreeing with Socrates and Sozomen.⁹³⁵ The *Epitome De Caesaribus* reports that Valentinian died of a hemorrhage caused by overeating and satiety whereas Jerome simply states that he died due to a sudden eruption of blood.⁹³⁶

⁹²⁸ Ibid., 26.6.12.

⁹²⁹ Ibid., 26.6.12-26.6.18.

⁹³⁰ Ibid., 26.10.3.

⁹³¹ Ibid., 26.5.11-26.5.13.

⁹³² Ibid., 29.6.1-29.6.16.

⁹³³ Ibid., 30.6.6; Socr. 4.31; Sozom. 6.36.

⁹³⁴ Amm. Marc. 30.6; Socr. *Hist. Eccl.* 4.3; Sozom. *Hist. Eccl.* 6.36; *Consularia Constantinopolitana* 375 (*Chron. Minora* 1.242).

⁹³⁵ Socr. *Hist. Eccl.* 4.31; Sozom. *Hist. Eccl.* 6.36.

⁹³⁶ *Epit. De Caesaribus* 45.8-45.10; Jerome *Chron.* 375.

APPENDIX H

THE REIGN OF VALENTINIAN II

The *Historia Nova* has Valentinian II raised to the throne by two tribunes named Merobaudes and Equitius at a palace in an unspecified location, thereby agreeing with the account of the *Epitome De Caesaribus*.⁹³⁷ Ammianus (along with Socrates, Sozomen and the *Consularia Constantinopolitana*) reports that the soldiers elevated Valentinian II in camp at Aquincum in Valeria.⁹³⁸ Rufinus reports that a prefect named Probus elevated Valentinian II to the throne.⁹³⁹ Zosimus calls (4.20.4-4.20.5) the barbarians, who sought to settle on the Roman side of the Danube during the reign of Valens, Scythians whereas Ammianus calls them Thuringian Goths (i.e. Visigoths).⁹⁴⁰ The *Historia Nova* (4.22.4) relates that Sebastianus left the West in disgust because he believed that the emperor of the West did not know how to think for himself and allowed himself to be ruled by his eunuchs. In contrast to this, Ammianus simply says that Sebastianus was sent to the East by the western emperor at his own request.⁹⁴¹ Zosimus records, at 4.23-4.24.1, that Sebastianus advised Valens to defer fighting against the barbarians until they had been weakened by a lack of provisions and that Valens ignored this shrewd advice. On the contrary, Ammianus asserts that Sebastianus urged Valens to fight promptly against the barbarians and to not wait for assistance from Gratian.⁹⁴² The *Historia Nova* states (4.35.4) that Magnus Maximus was responsible for his own elevation whereas Sulpicius Severus claims that he was forced by his troops to become emperor.⁹⁴³ Zosimus contends (4.35.6) that Gratian was captured at Sigidunum but other sources allege that Gratian was captured at Lugdunum.⁹⁴⁴ The *Historia Nova* reports (4.39.4) that Theodosius was not present at a battle in which Promotus fought against the Ostrogoths (or Grothingi, as Zosimus calls them) whereas Claudian seems to indicate that he was.⁹⁴⁵ Zosimus informs us (4.54.3) that Valentinian II was murdered by

⁹³⁷ Zos. 4.19.1; *Epit. De Caesaribus* 45.10.

⁹³⁸ Amm. Marc. 30.10; Socr. *Hist. Eccl.* 4.31; Sozom. *Hist. Eccl.* 6.36; *Consularia Constantinopolitana* s.a. 375.

⁹³⁹ Rufinus *Hist. Eccl.* 11.12.

⁹⁴⁰ Amm. Marc. 31.3.4-31.4.1.

⁹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 31.11.1.

⁹⁴² *Ibid.*, 31.12.5-31.12.7.

⁹⁴³ Sulpicius Severus *On the Life of Saint Martin* 20.3.

⁹⁴⁴ Prosper of Aquitaine *Chron.* s.a. 383; Socr. *Hist. Eccl.* 5.11; Sozom. *Hist. Eccl.* 7.13.

⁹⁴⁵ Claudian *Fourth Consulship of Honorius* 633.

Arbogastes while he was relaxing outside the palace whereas other sources report the matter differently. Sozomen relates that Valentinian II may have been killed by eunuchs at the solicitation of Arbogastes (and certain other courtiers) or that Valentinian may have taken his own life because he was depressed at not being able to effectively rule.⁹⁴⁶ Socrates claims that Eugenius and Arbogastes incited some eunuchs to strangle Valentinian II.⁹⁴⁷ Philostorgius and Orosius both claim that Arbogastes sent some of his own attendants to strangle Valentinian II and that after they had killed him they tied something around his neck (either a handkerchief or a rope) and hung him on a tree so that it would look like he had committed suicide.⁹⁴⁸

APPENDIX I THEODOSIUS I

Zosimus relates (4.58.1) that Honorius accompanied his father (Theodosius) when he went to the West to attack Eugenius, thereby agreeing with the account of Count Marcellinus.⁹⁴⁹ On the contrary, other sources indicate that Honorius did not accompany his father and that he only came to the West after Theodosius had successfully finished the war and that they met each other in the city of Milan.⁹⁵⁰ Zosimus claims (4.58.3) that an eclipse occurred during the battle between Theodosius and Eugenius whereas other sources indicate that a violent windstorm occurred during the battle.⁹⁵¹ Philostorgius does not indicate that either a storm or an eclipse occurred, simply stating that Theodosius used a stratagem in order to defeat Eugenius.⁹⁵² Zosimus

⁹⁴⁶ Sozom. *Hist. Eccl.* 7.22.

⁹⁴⁷ Socr. *Hist. Eccl.* 5.25.

⁹⁴⁸ Phot. *Epit. of the Hist. Eccl.* of Philostorg. 11.1; Orosius *History Against the Pagans* 7.35.10. Rufinus (*Hist. Eccl.* 11.31) claims that Valentinian II died by a noose for reasons that were still unknown in his day and then goes on to say that some think it was a plot of Arbogastes and others think it was suicide. Cf. Ambrose *De Obitu Theodosii Oratio* 39-40; John of Antioch *Frag.* 187; Augustine *City of God* 5.26; *Fasti Vindobonenses Priores* s.a. 392.

⁹⁴⁹ Marcellinus *Chron.* s.a. 394.

⁹⁵⁰ Phot. *Epit. of the Hist. Eccl.* of Philostorg. 11.2; Sozom. *Hist. Eccl.* 7.24-7.29; Claudius *Third Consulship of Honorius* 73 ff.; cf. Socr. *Hist. Eccl.* 5.26.

⁹⁵¹ Socr. *Hist. Eccl.* 5.25; Sozom. *Hist. Eccl.* 7.24; Theodoret *Hist. Eccl.* 5.24; Orosius *History Against the Pagans* 7.35.13-7.35.19; Rufinus *Hist. Eccl.* 11.33; Augustine *City of God* 5.26; John of Antioch *Frag.* 187; Claudian *Third Consulship of Honorius* 89-105; Claudian *Fourth Consulship of Honorius* 72-93; Claudian *Panegyric on Probinus and Olybrius* 10.112; Ambrose *De Obitu Theodosii Oratio* 7; *Consularia Italica* s.a. 394.

⁹⁵² Phot. *Epit. of the Hist. Eccl.* of Philostorg. 11.2.

states (4.59.1) that Honorius was elevated to the rank of Augustus at Rome, but other sources indicate that this took place in Constantinople.⁹⁵³ Zosimus asserts (4.59.4) that Theodosius died of a disease on his way back to Constantinople, but other sources state that he died at Milan.⁹⁵⁴

APPENDIX J STILICHO

The *Historia Nova* claims (5.7) that Stilicho unsuccessfully attempted to help the Greeks against the attack of Alaric and his barbarians. After sailing back to Italy, Zosimus reports that Stilicho decided to murder Rufinus and therefore he sent some soldiers to the East to murder Rufinus under the pretense that they would be helping Arcadius fight the barbarians. Claudius alleges that Stilicho came to the East with his troops to help fight against Alaric and that he was successful until Arcadius ordered him to leave and surrender the eastern troops that he possessed. Claudius reports that these returning troops murdered Rufinus on their own volition.⁹⁵⁵ Zosimus claims (5.6) that all of Attica (including Athens) escaped unharmed from Alaric's invasion of Greece whereas other sources disagree. Eunapius contends that Hilarius was captured outside of Athens, implying that only those who were inside the walls of the city were safe. Philostorgius claims that Alaric captured Athens, while Jerome implies that Attica was ravaged and Claudian mentions the capture of some Athenian women.⁹⁵⁶ The *Historia Nova* claims (5.9.7) that Timasius, after being banished to Oasis in Egypt, was rescued by his son whereas Sozomen maintains that he either died of thirst or fell a victim to his enemies, being found dead in the sands of the desert.⁹⁵⁷ Zosimus informs us (5.10.4) that Abundantius was exiled to Sidon while, in contrast, Jerome states that he was exiled to Pityus.⁹⁵⁸ Zosimus places Timasius' fall before that of Abundantius whereas Claudius has reversed the order of these events.⁹⁵⁹ The *Historia Nova* reports (5.11) that Mascezel (or Masceldelos) defeated Gildo, his brother, in a great battle while

⁹⁵³ *Consularia Italica* s.a. 394.

⁹⁵⁴ Phot. *Epit. of the Hist. Eccl.* of Philostorg. 11.2; Socr. *Hist. Eccl.* 5.26; *Consularia Constantinopolitana* s.a. 395; Ambrose *De Obitu Theodosii Oratio* 18.

⁹⁵⁵ Claudian *Rufinus* 2.70 ff., 2.197 ff.

⁹⁵⁶ Phot. *Epit. of the Hist. Eccl.* of Philostorg. 12.2; Jerome *Epist.* 60.16; Claudian *Rufinus* 2.191.

⁹⁵⁷ Sozom. *Hist. Eccl.* 8.7.

⁹⁵⁸ Jerome *Epist.* 60.16.

⁹⁵⁹ Claudius *Eutropius* 1.151-1.169; Eunapius (*Frag.* 65.3, 65.8) seems to agree with the order of events given by Zosimus.

Christian sources declare that Mascezel achieved victory without war or bloodshed through the aid of prayers and fasting.⁹⁶⁰ Zosimus claims that Stilicho, being envious of Mascezel's achievements, pushed him off a bridge into a river and laughed while he drowned. Orosius alleges that Mascezel was killed because he had desecrated a church and had dragged certain men from it who had sought sanctuary there.⁹⁶¹ The *Historia Nova* implies (5.17.5) that Gainas was acting alone in demanding the death of Eutropius whereas Claudian indicates that he was really acting on behalf of Stilicho.⁹⁶² Sozomen and Philostorgius present yet another version which reports that Eudoxia was responsible for the overthrow of Eutropius.⁹⁶³ Zosimus (5.18-5.19) states that Gainas stopped at nothing in his attempt to become emperor, even condescending to conspire with the barbarians to devastate and ruin the Empire so that he might enjoy supreme power.⁹⁶⁴ In contrast to this, Synesius reports that Gainas had no intention of harming the Empire or of assuming supreme power himself.⁹⁶⁵ The *Historia Nova* claims (5.19.1) that Gainas feigned illness when he left Constantinople (thereby agreeing with Count Marcellinus) whereas Synesius contends that his illness was real.⁹⁶⁶ Socrates and Sozomen allege that Gainas feigned to be possessed of a demon and, under the pretext of praying, went to a church that was seven miles distant from the city.⁹⁶⁷ According to Zosimus (5.18.10-5.19.3), Gainas secretly ordered his barbarians to remain in the city and wait for the soldiers (who were on their way elsewhere) to leave. After the soldiers had left, the barbarians were to attack the city in its helplessness and then make a signal to notify Gainas that all was ready for him to take over the control of the city. Gainas, instead of waiting for the signal, approached the wall too soon and thus the barbarians were prevented from taking over the city. Synesius claims that the signal was made to call the rest of the army out of Constantinople and that the barbarians, finding out that Gainas had left the city, set out to follow him but were detected and set upon.⁹⁶⁸ Zosimus (5.22.2) and Philostorgius

⁹⁶⁰ Marcellinus *Chron.* s.a. 398; Orosius *History Against the Pagans* 7.36.

⁹⁶¹ Orosius *History Against the Pagans* 7.36.

⁹⁶² Claudian *Eutropius* 2.501-2.508, 2.549-2.553, 2.600-2.602.

⁹⁶³ Sozom. *Hist. Eccl.* 8.7; Phot. *Epit. of the Hist. Eccl. of Philostorg.* 11.6.

⁹⁶⁴ The following sources agree with Zosimus: Eunap. *Frag.* 67.12-67.13; Phot. *Epit. of the Hist. Eccl. of Philostorg.* 11.8; Socr. *Hist. Eccl.* 6.5; Sozom. *Hist. Eccl.* 8.4; Theodoret *Hist. Eccl.* 5.30-5.32; *Chron. Paschale* 567; Marcellinus *Chron.* s.a. 399.

⁹⁶⁵ Synesius *Aegyptius sive de Providentia* 1.15-1.18, 2.1-2.3.

⁹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.1. Marcellinus (*Chron.* s.a. 399) agrees with Zosimus.

⁹⁶⁷ Socr. *Hist. Eccl.* 6.6; Sozom. *Hist. Eccl.* 8.4.

⁹⁶⁸ Synesius *Aegyptius sive de Providentia* 2.1 ff.

report that Gainas was killed in a battle against the Huns whereas Socrates and Sozomen claim that Gainas was killed (along with his attendants) by some Roman troops in Thrace.⁹⁶⁹ The *Historia Nova* gives (5.25.2) the name of a magistrate as Arbazacius but his name is given variously in other sources as Artabazacius (Synesius), Harpazacius (Eunapius) and Narbazaicus (Count Marcellinus and Jordanes).⁹⁷⁰ Zosimus, Olympiodorus and the *Gallic Chronicle* attribute the defeat of Radagaisus to Stilicho whereas other sources credit the Huns under Sarus and Uldin.⁹⁷¹ Zosimus and Sozomen report that Stilicho was suspected of trying to elevate his son Eucherius as the emperor of the East (thereby replacing the young Theodosius II) whereas other sources allege that Stilicho was suspected of trying to elevate his son as the emperor of the West (thereby replacing Honorius).⁹⁷²

APPENDIX K

ALARIC AND HONORIUS

Zosimus claims (5.40.1) that the people of Rome were on the verge of turning to cannibalism (during the Alaric's first siege of Rome) before they finally agreed to sue for peace. Procopius and Olympiodorus allege that the people of Rome actually did turn to cannibalism.⁹⁷³ It is not clear, however, whether this fragment of Olympiodorus refers to Alaric's first siege of Rome and Procopius seems to have confusingly combined elements from all three of Alaric's sieges into one episode.⁹⁷⁴ The *Historia Nova* states (5.49.2) that Jovius took his oath, in which he promised to never to make peace with Alaric, on the head of Honorius whereas Sozomen claims

⁹⁶⁹ Socr. *Hist. Eccl.* 6.6; Sozom. *Hist. Eccl.* 8.4. Philostorgius (Phot. *Epit. of the Hist. Eccl. of Philostorg.* 11.8) agrees with Zosimus in attributing the death of Gainas to the Huns.

⁹⁷⁰ Synesius *Epist.* 135; Eunap. *Frag.* 71.1 (he also gives the same form as Zosimus); Marcellinus *Chron.* s.a. 405; Jordanes *Romana* 321.

⁹⁷¹ Zos. 5.26.4-5.26.5; *Gallic Chron.* 405; Olymp. *Frag.* 9; Orosius *History Against the Pagans* 7.37; Marcellinus *Chron.* s.a. 406; Jordanes *Romana* 321; *Consularia Italica* s.a. 406; Prosper *Chron.* s.a. 406; Paulinus *Life of Ambrose* 50.

⁹⁷² Zos. 5.32.1; Sozom. *Hist. Eccl.* 9.4; Orosius *History Against the Pagans* 7.38; Phot. *Epit. of the Hist. Eccl. of Philostorg.* 11.3, 12.1-12.3; Marcellinus *Chron.* s.a. 408.

⁹⁷³ Procopius *History of the Wars* 3.2.14-3.2.30; Olymp. *Frag.* 7.1.

⁹⁷⁴ Procopius reports that Alaric sacked the city after the same siege (this only occurred at the third siege of Rome) and that Attalus was declared emperor after this same siege (this only occurred after Alaric's second siege). Attalus was deposed before Alaric laid siege to Rome for the third time. Zosimus' narrative ends immediately before Alaric's second siege of Rome, q.v. Procopius *History of the Wars* 3.2.14-3.2.30.

that the oath was taken by the emperor's safety.⁹⁷⁵ Jovius, after becoming Attalus' praetorian prefect, was sent as an ambassador to Honorius where he declared, according to Zosimus (6.8.1), that Attalus would exile him to an island after maiming him. Olympiodorus, however, reports that Attalus specifically told Jovian that he would not maim Honorius after Jovian had suggested to him that Honorius should be mutilated in one limb.⁹⁷⁶ Zosimus claims (6.9.3) that Alaric abandoned the siege of Ravenna because he realized that Attalus was a rash fool who did not know how to rule whereas Philostorgius alleges that Alaric was forced to leave Ravenna after being attacked and defeated by Sarus.⁹⁷⁷ Sozomen alleges that Alaric gave up the siege of Ravenna because he suddenly realized that God disproved of the rule of Attalus, leading him to make a pact with Honorius to deprive Attalus of his sovereignty.⁹⁷⁸ The *Historia Nova* asserts, at 6.13.1, that Constans was elevated to the rank of Augustus after Constantine (his father) left for Italy whereas Sozomen seems to indicate that this took place before Constantine left for Italy.⁹⁷⁹

APPENDIX L NUMBERS

The *Historia Nova* tells us (1.2.1) that 90,000 Persians died at the battle of Marathon but Herodotus reported that only 6,400 Persians died in that battle.⁹⁸⁰ Zosimus states that (1.42.1) during the reign of Claudius II the Goths built 6,000 ships whereas Ammianus states that they only built 2,000 ships.⁹⁸¹ The *Historia Nova* asserts (2.15) that Constantine fought against Licinius with 98,000 men while the *Panegyrici Latini* reports that he had fewer than 40,000 men. Zosimus records, in the same passage, that Licinius had 188,000 men while the *Panegyrici Latini* reports that he had 100,000.⁹⁸² While the *Historia Nova* relates that 60,000 of the enemy died at the battle of Strasbourg, Ammianus says that only 6,000 of the enemy died while Libanius gives

⁹⁷⁵ Sozom. *Hist. Eccl.* 9.7.

⁹⁷⁶ Olymp. *Frag.* 14.

⁹⁷⁷ Phot. *Epit. of the Hist. Eccl. of Philostorg.* 12.3.

⁹⁷⁸ Sozom. *Hist. Eccl.* 9.8.

⁹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 9.12.

⁹⁸⁰ Herodotus *Histories* 6.117.

⁹⁸¹ Amm. Marc. 31.5.15.

⁹⁸² *Panegyrici Latini* 9.3.3, 9.5.1-9.5.2.

8,000.⁹⁸³ Mendelssohn believed this to be a simple manuscript error by some careless copyist.⁹⁸⁴ At one point, Zosimus reports that Julian received from the barbarians such a large host of captives that it could have been appropriated from forty sacked cities.⁹⁸⁵ Julian, however, states in one of his letters that he only received one thousand captives.⁹⁸⁶ The *Historia Nova* asserts that Julian had eight hundred ships built in order to ship grain from Britain to his troops in Gaul.⁹⁸⁷ Julian, however, relates that he only built four hundred new ships and that he used these with the two hundred ships that he already had to bring grain to Gaul.⁹⁸⁸ Zosimus states (3.18.4) that 5,000 prisoners from Bersabora were set free while Ammianus mentions only 2,500.⁹⁸⁹ The *Historia Nova* reports (3.25.7) that seventy-five Romans were killed during the crossing of the Tigris whereas Ammianus only records the death of seventy Romans.⁹⁹⁰ Zosimus declares (3.26.3) that when the Roman fleet was burned only twenty-two ships were saved. According to Ammianus, however, twelve ships were saved while Libanius states that fifteen were saved.⁹⁹¹ The *Historia Nova* relates (4.7.2) that the Goths sent 10,000 men to Procopius whereas Ammianus says he was only sent 3,000.⁹⁹² Zosimus states (5.26.3) that Radagaisus had 400,000 men but we are informed by count Marcellinus that he only possessed 200,000.⁹⁹³ In spite of these examples, we cannot be certain that Zosimus intended to exaggerate his numbers. Statistics that have been preserved in various writers (especially for late antiquity) are in general quite divergent and conflicting from each other. In at least two cases Zosimus actually gives a smaller number than other extant sources. The *Historia Nova* reports (3.1.1) that the Germans captured forty cities on the Rhine whereas Julian asserts that forty-five cities had been captured.⁹⁹⁴ Similarly, Zosimus relates (3.12.5) that 18,000 infantry were left with Sebastianus and Procopius whereas Ammianus gives 30,000, Libanius gives 20,000 and John Malalas gives the number as 16,000.⁹⁹⁵

⁹⁸³ Zos. 3.3.3; Amm. Marc. 16.12.63; Libanius *Or.* 18.60.

⁹⁸⁴ Mendelssohn, *Zosimi*, 113-114.

⁹⁸⁵ Zos. 3.5.1.

⁹⁸⁶ Julian *Epist. to the Athenians* 280.

⁹⁸⁷ Zos. 3.52.

⁹⁸⁸ Julian *Epist. to the Athenians* 280.

⁹⁸⁹ Amm. Marc. 24.2.22.

⁹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 24.6.15.

⁹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 24.7.4; Libanius *Or.* 18.263.

⁹⁹² Amm. Marc. 16.10.3.

⁹⁹³ Marcellinus *Chron.* s.a. 406.

⁹⁹⁴ Julian *Epist. to the Athenians* 279.

⁹⁹⁵ Amm. Marc. 23.3.5; Libanius *Or.* 18.214; Malalas *Chron.* 13.21.

APPENDIX M

OMISSIONS OF PERSONAGES

Zosimus refers (1.1.1) to the last Macedonian king (Perseus) without naming him. Likewise, he mentions (1.25.1) one of Decius's surviving sons (C. Valens Hostilianus Messius Quintus) without naming him. Similarly, he reports (1.30.2) that Gallienus makes an alliance with a certain unnamed German leader. The *Historia Nova* refers (1.39.2) to someone's birthday but does not elaborate. It also mentions (1.40.2) a commander of a troop of Dalmatian horse but does not name him (Cecropius). Zosimus alludes (1.49.2) to certain Senators without amplification. The *Historia Nova* refers (1.66.2) to a revolting governor of Britain without naming him. Zosimus directs attention (2.14.1) to commanders in Gaul and Illyricum without any elaboration. In the like manner, he mentions (2.29.3) a certain Egyptian without naming him. The *Historia Nova* mentions a barbarian tribe (4.3.4) without identifying them as the Alamanni.⁹⁹⁶ Zosimus alludes (4.7.2) to a chief of the Goths without naming him.⁹⁹⁷ Correspondingly, he alludes (4.11.4) to the death of a praetorian prefect without identifying him as Auxonius.⁹⁹⁸ The *History Nova* refers (4.16.3) to an unspecified commander in Mauretania (Romanus).⁹⁹⁹ Zosimus mentions (4.19.1) the mother of Valentinian II without naming her (Justina). Likewise, he fails (4.20.6) to mention the names of the garrison commanders (Lupicinus and Maximus) stationed in the cities on the Danube during the reign of Valens.¹⁰⁰⁰ The *Historia Nova* glosses over (4.22.4-4.23.5) the names of the commanders who were deprived of their office by Valens.¹⁰⁰¹ The name of Maximus' chamberlain is similarly suppressed (4.37.2) by Zosimus. The *Historia Nova* fails to name (4.45.4) the son and daughter of Justina that Theodosius placed, along with their mother, on board some ships heading to Rome. Aelia Eudoxia is never referred to by her name being simply designated as a beautiful girl.¹⁰⁰² Stilicho's daughter, Maria, is mentioned (5.4.1) but is not

⁹⁹⁶ Amm. Marc. 26.5.7.

⁹⁹⁷ Zosimus is most likely referring to Athanaric. cf. Amm. Marc. 27.5.6.

⁹⁹⁸ cf. Zos. 4.10.4.

⁹⁹⁹ Amm. Marc. 28.6, 29.5.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Ibid., 31.4.9.

¹⁰⁰¹ This is described in more detail by Ammianus (31.11.1 ff.) and included the commander Trajanus.

¹⁰⁰² Zos. 5.3.2, 5.23, 5.24, 5.25.

identified by name.¹⁰⁰³ Zosimus alludes (5.15.5) to certain robbers without identifying them.¹⁰⁰⁴ Similarly, he refers (5.24.2) to attendants and eunuchs who dominated Eudoxia without naming any of them. Zosimus mentions, at 5.26.1, the alienation of Arcadius' ministers but fails to mention any by name.¹⁰⁰⁵ The *Historia Nova* informs us (6.13.1) that Constantine dismissed Apolinarius as Praetorian Prefect and replaced him with someone else but does not give any name.¹⁰⁰⁶

APPENDIX N GEOGRAPHICAL OMISSIONS

Zosimus reports (1.6.2) that Tiberius took refuge on some island (Capri) without naming it. Likewise, he relates (1.20.1) that the Carpi fled to an unspecified fort. Similarly, the location of the battle (1.22) between Philip the Arabian and Decius is not specified (Verona). The *Historia Nova* fails to record (1.23) the location where Decius met his death (Abrittus). It also does not name the location of the battle (1.28.3) between Gallus and Aemilianus (near Rome at a place called Interamna). Zosimus describes the first battle between Aurelian and Zenobia (1.50.3-1.50.4) but fails to name the location, which was most likely at Immae.¹⁰⁰⁷ He also fails to mention (1.68) the name of a river by which Probus fights the barbarians. The *Historia Nova* does not specify the location (2.8.2) where Constantine had been staying (Galerius' court).¹⁰⁰⁸ Likewise, it refers (2.18.1) to a province belonging to Licinius (Pannonia) without naming it.¹⁰⁰⁹ Zosimus fails to allude (2.19) to the location of the battle between Constantine and Licinius (Campus Ardiensis in Thrace).¹⁰¹⁰ Zosimus also fails to precisely name the location of the battle at Chrysopolis (2.26.3), only mentioning that the battle took place somewhere between Chalcedon and the Sacred Promontory.¹⁰¹¹ Zosimus fails (2.29) to give the exact location of the

¹⁰⁰³ She is later identified by Zosimus at 5.12.1.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Zosimus is most likely referring to some Isaurian robbers.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Zosimus strangely neglects to mention the very important Anthemius, who was the Praetorian Prefect of the East (Orientis) at this time.

¹⁰⁰⁶ His name was Decimus Rusticus according to Gregory of Tours (*History of the Franks* 2.9).

¹⁰⁰⁷ Downey, "Aurelian's Victor over Zenobia at Immae," 57-68.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Victor Aurelius *Lib. De Caesaribus* 40.2.

¹⁰⁰⁹ *Anonymous Valesianus* 14-15.

¹⁰¹⁰ *Anonymous Valesianus* 17.

¹⁰¹¹ Socr. *Hist. Eccl.* 1.4; *Anonymous Valesianus* 27.

execution of Crispus (Pola, Istria).¹⁰¹² In a similar manner, he reports (2.42) that Constans, concealing his hatred for three years, finally murdered his brother when he entered an unnamed province that was loyal to him (Italy).¹⁰¹³ Zosimus fails (2.44.3) to name the place at which Vetranio met Constantius (Naissus). At 2.53.3, Zosimus fails to record the place at which Magnentius committed suicide (Lugdunum). The location of the execution of Gallus (2.55.3) is also not recorded (Fianonia, in Istria). The *Historia Nova* omits the name of a town (3.3.2) in which Julian found a stockpile of old arms. It likewise fails to specify the name of a fortified island (Anatha), a certain fort (Thilutha), the name of an Assyrian town and an unspecified location near Phissenia (most likely the Macepracta of Ammianus).¹⁰¹⁴ Zosimus reports (3.14.4) that Julian sent the prisoners he had captured, with an escort of soldiers, into Roman territory without naming their destination.¹⁰¹⁵ The *Historia Nova* surprisingly omits (3.20.2) the name of the fort in which Julian was almost mortally wounded (Maiozamalcha).¹⁰¹⁶ Similarly, it describes the battle of Adrianople, at 4.24, but fails to name the location. Likewise, the battle between Gratian and Maximus is described (4.35.5) but not located near Paris. Zosimus strangely describes (4.45.3, 4.46.2) Theodosius as passing through the Apennine passes (or mountains) when it is clear that he, in reality, meant that Theodosius had passed through the Alps. The *Historia Nova* neglects (4.58.1) to locate the battle between Theodosius and Eugenius near the Frigidus River. Zosimus informs us (5.11.3) that Mascezel attacked his brother Gildo but fails to name the location (Theveste).¹⁰¹⁷ Likewise, he reports (5.19.2) that Gainas withdrew to a suburb of Constantinople but does not elaborate where this location is (the church of John the Baptist).¹⁰¹⁸ Similarly, Zosimus indicates (5.19.4) that some barbarians sought asylum in a Christian church near the palace, but does not specify which one.¹⁰¹⁹

¹⁰¹² Eutropius *Brev.* 10.6; *Consularia Constantinopolitana* s.a. 326; Amm. Marc. 14.11.20.

¹⁰¹³ Socr. *Hist. Eccl.* 2.5; Zonaras *Ann.* 13.5; Victor Aurelius *Lib. De Caesaribus* 41.22; Jerome *Chron.* s.a. A.M. 2356; *Consularia Constantinopolitana* s.a. 340.

¹⁰¹⁴ Zos. 3.14.2, 3.15.1, 3.19.1, 3.19.3; Amm. Marc. 24.1.6, 24.2.1, 24.2.6. cf. Libanius *Or.* 18.218-18.219.

¹⁰¹⁵ They were sent to Chalcis in Syria according to Ammianus (24.1.9).

¹⁰¹⁶ Amm. Marc. 24.4; Libanius *Or.* 18.235.

¹⁰¹⁷ Claudian *Gildo* 415 ff.

¹⁰¹⁸ Socr. *Hist. Eccl.* 6.6; Sozom. *Hist. Eccl.* 8.4.

¹⁰¹⁹ cf. Socr. *Hist. Eccl.* 6.6.

APPENDIX O

MISCELLANEOUS OMISSIONS

The *Historia Nova* states (1.60.1) that a man named Apsaeus was responsible for earlier events but does not mention what these events were.¹⁰²⁰ Zosimus mentions (2.35) that new walls were built around Constantinople after Constantine's time; but fails to mention when or by whom they were built.¹⁰²¹ He also fails to mention that Constantius entrusted the government of the West to Florentius, in addition to Marcellus and Salustius, instead of allowing Julian full control.¹⁰²² The *Historia Nova* passes over Julian's Gallic campaigns of 356, 359 and 360, but this may be the result of his attempt to focus on events in Julian's life that had not been sufficiently narrated by others.¹⁰²³ Similarly, it ignores the strategic importance of the forces Julian placed under Sebastianus and Procopius, merely indicating that they were used for defensive purposes.¹⁰²⁴ In a like manner, the significance of Julian's burning of the fleet (3.26.2) is ignored. Zosimus fails to comment on Julian's religious policies, merely hinting (3.9.4) that he declared himself to be Pagan by entrusting himself and his life to the Gods. The *Historia Nova* glosses over the events in Thrace that occurred between the Visigothic crossing of the Danube in 376 and the battle at Adrianople in 378. Zosimus chooses to record only two romantic episodes that occurred during this period.¹⁰²⁵ Furthermore, he not only neglects to mention the massacre at Thessalonica in 380 but also chooses to pass over the struggle over the altar of Victory in the Senate in the 380's. The *Historia Nova* informs us (5.11.3) that Stilicho gave Mascezel a large force and a sufficient amount of ships but fails to precisely indicate any numbers. Zosimus passes over Alaric's invasion of Italy during the years 401 to 402. He also fails to give us an explanation (5.31.6) for Stilicho's failure to go immediately to the East upon the death of Arcadius. Likewise, he fails to give any explanation for Stilicho's dormant behavior, which seems to have resulted in his downfall and murder. The *Historia Nova* indicates (5.45.3) that Heliocrates was removed

¹⁰²⁰ Zosimus seems to be suggesting that Apsaeus was responsible for starting the war between Aurelian and Zenobia but this is unclear.

¹⁰²¹ They were built by Theodosius II in the year 413.

¹⁰²² Amm. Marc. 16.1.5, 16.5, 16.12.14.

¹⁰²³ Zosimus states (3.2.4) that he will focus on recording what others have omitted about the life and deeds of Julian.

¹⁰²⁴ Zos. 3.12.4-3.12.5.

¹⁰²⁵ Ibid., 4.20.

from the office that the emperor had bestowed on him but fails to mention the name of that office.¹⁰²⁶ Zosimus only indirectly refers to Constantine's invasion of Italy in 410, but this may be explained by the fact that the sixth book, which is unfinished, ends abruptly during this year.¹⁰²⁷ This may also explain his neglect to mention (6.3.1) Valentinian's fortification of the Rhine.¹⁰²⁸

¹⁰²⁶ In an earlier passage (5.35.4) Zosimus records that Heliocrates held the office of *Comes Rerum Privatarum*. This must be the office that Zosimus is referring to at 5.45.3.

¹⁰²⁷ Zos. 6.10.

¹⁰²⁸ Zosimus himself had previously (4.3.5) praised Valentinian for fortifying the Rhine but then reports, at 6.31.1, that the usurper Constantine III made the Rhine border completely secure after it had been neglected ever since the time of the emperor Julian.

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