

# THE FRAGMENTARY LATIN HISTORIES OF LATE ANTIQUITY (AD 300–620)

Edition, Translation and Commentary

Lieve Van Hoof  
Peter Van Nuffelen





## THE FRAGMENTARY LATIN HISTORIES OF LATE ANTIQUITY (AD 300–620)

The first systematic collection of fragmentary Latin historians from the period AD 300–620, this volume provides an edition and translation of, and commentary on, the fragments. It proposes new interpretations of the fragments and of the works from which they derive, whilst also spelling out what the fragments add to our knowledge of Late Antiquity. Integrating the fragmentary material with the texts preserved in full, the volume suggests new ways to understand the development of historiography in the transition from Antiquity to the Middle Ages.

LIEVE VAN HOOFF is Professor of Ancient History at Ghent University. Trained as a classicist, historian and political scientist, she studies the socio-political role of literature under the Roman Empire. Her publications include *Plutarch's Practical Ethics: The Social Dynamics of Philosophy* (2010) and *Libanius: A Critical Introduction* (2014). Together with Peter Van Nuffelen, she has published the *Clavis Historicorum Antiquitatis Posterioris* (2020), a full inventory of late antique historiography, and a translation of Jordanes' *Romana* and *Getica* (2020).

PETER VAN NUFFELEN is Professor of Ancient History at Ghent University, where he has led an ERC-funded team on late ancient historiography. He has published widely on Late Antiquity, early Christianity, and ancient religion and philosophy. Recent books are *Orosius and the Rhetoric of History* (2012) and *Penser la tolérance dans l'Antiquité tardive* (2018).



THE FRAGMENTARY LATIN  
HISTORIES OF LATE  
ANTIQUITY (AD 300–620)

*Edition, Translation and Commentary*

LIEVE VAN HOOFF

*Universiteit Gent, Belgium*

PETER VAN NUFFELEN

*Universiteit Gent, Belgium*



CAMBRIDGE  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

**CAMBRIDGE**  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA

477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia

314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre, New Delhi – 110025, India

79 Anson Road, #06–04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)

Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9781108420273](http://www.cambridge.org/9781108420273)

DOI: 10.1017/9781108333047

© Lieve Van Hoof and Peter Van Nuffelen 2020

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2020

Printed in the United Kingdom by TJJ International Ltd, Padstow Cornwall

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.*

ISBN 978-1-108-42027-3 Hardback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

# Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	page vii
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	ix
Introduction	i
1 Scope	i
2 Methodology	4
3 Genre	7
4 Circulation	13
5 Social and Political Context	18
6 Conclusion: The ‘End’ of Latin Historiography?	24
1 Carminius	28
2 Anonymous, <i>On the origins of Padua</i>	32
3 Virius Nicomachus Flavianus	36
4 Nummius Aemilianus Dexter	59
5 Protadius	64
6 Naucellius	68
7 Anonymous, <i>History of Rome</i>	73
8 Pseudo-Hegesippus	77
9 Sulpicius Alexander	81

10	Renatus Profuturus Frigeridus	99
11	Favius	131
12	Consentius	134
13	Ablabius	137
14	Symmachus the Younger	146
15	Maximian of Ravenna	166
16	Marcellinus Comes	182
17	Cassiodorus	194
18	Roterius	226
19	Secundus of Trent	232
20	Maximus of Zaragoza	246
	<b>Spuria et Dubia</b>	249
21	Bruttius	250
22	Latinus Alcimius Alethius Rhetor	262
23	Tyconius	264
	<i>Bibliography</i>	268
	<i>Indexes</i>	314
	<i>Index locorum</i>	314
	<i>Index nominum et rerum</i>	325



## *Acknowledgements*

The entries on Nummius Aemilianus Dexter and Maximian of Ravenna substantially reprint L. Van Hoof, ‘The Omnimoda Historia of Nummius Aemilianus Dexter: A Latin Translation of Eusebius’ Chronography?’, *Vigiliae Christianae* 71 (2017): 199–204 and L. Van Hoof, ‘Maximian of Ravenna: Chronica’, *Sacris Erudiri* 55 (2016): 259–76. They are republished here with the kind authorization of (respectively) Koninklijke Brill NV, Leiden, The Netherlands, and Brepols Publishers, Turnhout, Belgium. The editions of Favius, Ablabius, and Cassiodorus use material from P. Van Nuffelen and L. Van Hoof, *Jordanes: Romana and Getica* (Translated Texts for Historians), Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2020. Except for Dexter and Maximian, all entries are fully co-authored, with Lieve Van Hoof focusing on the editions and translations of the texts, and Peter Van Nuffelen on the introductions and commentaries; he is also responsible for the general introduction to the volume. Since, however, we have read, commented upon, and contributed to each other’s work, we both assume full responsibility for the whole volume. We thank Sara De Decker for help with the editions and translations and Dr Tine Scheijnen for checking them. Thanks also to Dr Lorenzo Focanti, Dr Andy Hilken, and Dr Marianna Mazzola for help with the entry on Bruttius, and to Dr M. O’Farrell for improving our English. The bibliography and notes were formatted by Lotte Van Olmen. We owe thanks to P. Blaudeau, R. Collins, G. Galdi, H. Reimitz, J. Wijnendaele, and J. Wood, as well as to the reviewers for Cambridge University Press for their feedback and suggestions. We owe a great debt to our copy-editor John Jacobs for his thoroughness and expertise, which have been of great benefit to this volume. Obviously, we assume responsibility for all remaining errors and opinions expressed in this book. The research leading to these results has received funding from the European Research Council under the European Union’s Seventh Framework Programme (FP/2007–2013) / ERC Grant Agreement

n. 313153. This book was finalised when both authors were research fellows at the Otto-Friedrich-Universität Bamberg in 2019–2020, funded by the Alexander von Humboldt Stiftung and the Research Foundation – Flanders (Lieve Van Hoof), and the ERC Starting Grant ACO, directed by P. Riedlberger (Peter Van Nuffelen).

## Abbreviations

BHL	<i>Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina</i> , 2 vols. Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1898–1901, with a supplement by H. Fros, 1986.
Blaise	A. Blaise, <i>Dictionnaire latin-français des auteurs chrétiens</i> , 2nd ed., rev. and augm. Turnhout: Brepols, 1962.
BNJ	I. Worthington, ed., <i>Brill's New Jacoby</i> . Leiden: Brill, 2005–. <a href="https://referenceworks.brillonline.com/browse/brill-s-new-jacoby">https://referenceworks.brillonline.com/browse/brill-s-new-jacoby</a> .
CCSL	<i>Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina</i>
CHAP	P. Van Nuffelen and L. Van Hoof, eds., <i>Clavis Historicorum Antiquitatis Posterioris</i> . Turnhout: Brepols, 2020. <a href="http://www.late-antique-historiography.ugent.be/database/">www.late-antique-historiography.ugent.be/database/</a> .
CIL	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum</i>
CPG	M. Geerard et al., eds. <i>Clavis Patrum Graecorum</i> , 6 vols., <i>Corpus Christianorum, Series Graeca</i> . Turnhout: Brepols, 1974–98.
DMLBS	K. Ashdowne, R. R. Howlett, and R. E. Latham, eds., <i>Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources</i> . British Academy: Oxford, 2018.
DNP	H. Cancik, H. Schneider, and M. Landfester, eds., <i>Der neue Pauly: Enzyklopädie der Antike</i> , 18 vols. Stuttgart: Metzler, 1996–2003.
FGrHist	F. Jacoby, ed., <i>Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker</i> . Berlin: Weidemann and Leiden: Brill, 1923–, continued by G. Schepens, S. Schorn, and H. Gehrke.
FHistLA	<i>Fragmentary Histories of Late Antiquity</i> , referring to this volume. A second volume with fragmentary Greek chronicles is in preparation.
FRHist	T. J. Cornell, ed., <i>The Fragments of the Roman Historians</i> , 3 vols. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.
HRR	H. Peter, ed., <i>Historicorum Romanorum Reliquiae</i> , 2 vols. Leipzig: Teubner, 1906 (vol. II) and 1914 <sup>2</sup> (vol. I).

ILS	H. Dessau, ed., <i>Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae</i> , 5 vols. Berlin: Weidmann, 1892–1916.
L&S	C. Lewis, C. Short, E. A. Andrews, et al., <i>A Latin Dictionary</i> . Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975.
LSA	<i>Last Statues of Antiquity Database</i> . <a href="http://laststatues.classics.ox.ac.uk/">http://laststatues.classics.ox.ac.uk/</a> .
PCBE 1	A. Mandouze et al., <i>Prosopographie de l’Afrique chrétienne (303–533)</i> (Prosopographie chrétienne du Bas-Empire 1). Paris: École française de Rome, 1982.
PCBE 2	J. Desmulliez et al., <i>Prosopographie de l’Italie chrétienne (313–604)</i> (Prosopographie chrétienne du Bas-Empire 2). Paris: École française de Rome, 1999.
PCBE 3	S. Destephen, <i>Prosopographie du Diocèse d’Asie (325–641)</i> (Prosopographie chrétienne du Bas-Empire 3). Paris: École française de Rome, 2008.
PG	Migne, J.-P. et al., eds., <i>Patrologiae Cursus Completus: Patrologia Graeca</i> . Paris: J.-P. Migne, 1844–55.
PL	Migne, J.-P. et al., eds., <i>Patrologiae Cursus Completus: Patrologia Latina</i> . Paris: J.-P. Migne, 1857–68.
PLRE	A. H. M. Jones, J. R. Martindale, and J. Morris, eds., <i>The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire</i> , 3 vols. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971–92.
RE	A. F. Pauly, G. Wissowa, et al., eds., <i>Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft</i> , 81 vols. Stuttgart: Druckenmüller, 1893–1978.
TLL	<i>Thesaurus Linguae Latinae</i> . Stuttgart, Leipzig, and Munich: Teubner, 1900–.

Abbreviations of epigraphical works follow F. Bérard, D. Feissel, P. Petitmengin, and M. Sève, *Guide de l’épigraphiste: Bibliographie choisie des épigraphies antiques et médiévales* (Paris: Editions rue d’Ulm, 2010).

## *Introduction*

This introduction falls into two parts. First, we discuss the scope of this volume of Latin fragmentary historians and the methodology used to edit them. In the second and longer part of this introduction, we situate the works edited here in the context of later Latin historiography, with a particular interest in the genre and circulation of the texts, as well as their social and geographical context.

### **I Scope**

This edition presents, in roughly chronological order, the fragments of Latin histories from the period AD 300–620, that is, works that are not preserved in the direct tradition but are cited by later authors. This material has never been edited before. The classic collection of Latin fragmentary historians by H. Peter sought to be comprehensive up to the reign of Constantine and included only three later authors.<sup>1</sup> The new standard collection of Roman historians by T. Cornell and his collaborators ends in the first half of the third century, and claims that with the fourth century a new chapter in the history of Latin historiography begins.<sup>2</sup> Albeit traditional,<sup>3</sup> this claim does not survive close scrutiny and this collection makes available material that will give us a more nuanced view of Latin historiography in Late Antiquity.<sup>4</sup>

Any collection of this kind needs to make choices regarding selection. The selection in this collection has been guided by four principles.

<sup>1</sup> HRR. He includes Nicomachus Flavianus (FHistLA 3), Naucellius (FHistLA 6), and Symmachus the Younger (FHistLA 14).

<sup>2</sup> Cornell 2013, I, 10: ‘The historiography that resumed in the fourth century represents the start of a new era, differing radically from what preceded, above all the rise of Christian historical writing.’

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Marincola 2007.

<sup>4</sup> See the conclusion to this introduction.

First, we collect fragmentary works in the sense defined above, which is indebted to the seminal work of F. Jacoby on Greek fragmentary historians (FGrHist): we gather works that are explicitly attested in later authors as having been written, but that are not preserved in the manuscript tradition. This excludes three types of works that are sometimes also called fragmentary in a less technical sense of the word: hypothetical works, partial works, and projected works. *Hypothetical* works, such as the *Enmannsche Kaisergeschichte*, are those that have been reconstructed by modern scholars without ever having been identified as a distinct work in the ancient tradition.<sup>5</sup> Even if scholarship in this case largely agrees on its existence, such *Quellenforschung* must always remain hypothetical, and cannot be treated in the same way as fragmentary works, which have a stronger claim to existence. *Partial* works are, as the name implies, partially preserved in the manuscript tradition. Ammianus Marcellinus would be a case in point, but chronicles are also regularly preserved in this way.<sup>6</sup> Such works have usually received editions and discussion. Finally, *projected* works are works that an author intended to write or was asked to write without there being any indication whether the design was ever actually executed.<sup>7</sup>

Second, we seek to avoid any overlap with other major collections available. We do not include authors who might date to after 300 but have already been discussed in FRHist.<sup>8</sup> The pseudonymous authors of the biographies of the *Historia Augusta*, for example, have been discussed there, and we shall not repeat those conversations here. As R. Burgess and M. Kulikowski are currently preparing an edition of all Latin chronicles from Late Antiquity,<sup>9</sup> we have also excluded chronicles.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Enmann 1884; CHAP s.v.

<sup>6</sup> Two examples are the *Continuation of Marcellinus Comes* (CHAP s.v.) and the *Chronicle of 565* (Dumville 1973; CHAP s.v.).

<sup>7</sup> E.g. the ecclesiastical history of Jerome (Jerome, *Life of Malchus* 1; CHAP s.v.); the history of Ausonius (*Discourse of thanksgiving* 2; CHAP s.v.); the history of Sidonius Apollinaris (*Letter* 4.22; CHAP s.v.). It is uncertain whether or not Protadius (FHistLA 5) and the anonymous historian of Rome (FHistLA 7) actually finished their works as the fragments only attest that they were busy writing. But at least they had moved beyond mere intention.

<sup>8</sup> Only two authors would qualify: Rubellius Blandus (FRHist 108) and Bruttius (FRHist 98), who could date to the early fourth century. We make one exception for Bruttius (FHistLA 21), where we offer a more complete edition of the fragments than Cornell and a different interpretation.

<sup>9</sup> Burgess and Kulikowski 2013a is the introductory volume. Note that the team of Bruno Bleckmann and Markus Stein plans an edition and German translation of some of the works edited here: <http://www.geschichte.hhu.de/lehrstuehle/alte-geschichte/unsere-forschung/kleine-und-fragmentarische-historiker-der-spaetantike-kfhist.html>.

<sup>10</sup> See further below pp. 11–13.

Third, we exclude texts that belong to other genres.<sup>11</sup> This is particularly relevant in two instances. In line with our predecessors we have excluded poetical works that dealt with historical subjects. Poetry and prose histories followed different generic conventions, even if it could be said that Lucan was more an historian than a poet.<sup>12</sup> Contrary to our predecessors we also exclude biography. This is a genre that in Antiquity could be situated within or outside of historiography and one that, in the guise of Christian hagiography, flourished in Late Antiquity. As research tools for and extensive scholarship on Latin hagiography already exist, we have decided to leave biography out.<sup>13</sup>

Finally, we have excluded the putative sources used by Nennius, *History of the Britons* – a work dated to the ninth to eleventh century.<sup>14</sup> It contains references to the *Books of the elders*,<sup>15</sup> the *Annals of the Romans*,<sup>16</sup> the *Annals of the Scots*,<sup>17</sup> and the *Annals of the Saxons*.<sup>18</sup> Much is uncertain about Nennius, and hence also about the sources he claims to have used. If the references are to real texts, there is a theoretical possibility that some might fall within the temporal limits of this volume, even if a date before 620 would be remarkably early.<sup>19</sup> Given these uncertainties, we have opted not to include these works.

The material we have excluded obviously needs to be taken into account when writing the history of later Latin historiography, and, in fact, it can be easily accessed in the *Clavis Historicorum Antiquitatis Posterioris* (CHAP). We shall refer to works left aside in this edition later

<sup>11</sup> On genre, see below p. 7–13 and, more extensively, the introduction to Van Nuffelen and Van Hoof 2020a.

<sup>12</sup> Jordanes, *Getica* 43 with Kimmerle 2013. This means that we exclude the following works: the epic on Magnentius attributed to Proba (CHAP s.v.), which is, in fact, most likely spurious (Schottenius Cullhed 2015, 114–17); Ausonius, *On usurpers* and *On pre-Roman kings* (Green 1991, 720; CHAP s.v.); the portraits of contemporaries by Avianus Symmachus (Symmachus, *Letter* 1.2–4; CHAP s.v.); the paraphrase of Livy attributed to Avienus, which is, in any case, spurious (Servius, *On Aeneid* 10.388; Murgia 1970; CHAP s.v.); and the paraphrase of Suetonius by Paulinus of Nola (Ausonius, *Letter* 23; CHAP s.v.).

<sup>13</sup> See esp. BHL. Some examples of fragmentary Latin biography include: Severus Acilius, presumably an autobiography from a Christian perspective (Jerome, *On illustrious men* 111; Schmidt, in Herzog 1989, 211; CHAP s.v.); Petronius, *Historia monachorum* (Gennadius, *On illustrious men* 42; CHAP s.v.); Jordanes, *Life of Boethius* (possibly spurious; CHAP s.v.). See also the works of Avianus Symmachus and Paulinus of Nola in the previous n.

<sup>14</sup> Dumville 1975–6; Morris 1978; CHAP s.v.

<sup>15</sup> Nennius, *Historia Brittonum* pr., 17–18, 27; CHAP s.v.

<sup>16</sup> Nennius, *Historia Brittonum* pr., 10; CHAP s.v.

<sup>17</sup> Nennius, *Historia Brittonum* pr., 12–15; CHAP s.v.

<sup>18</sup> Nennius, *Historia Brittonum* pr., 57–61; CHAP s.v.

<sup>19</sup> Note also that here we might be dealing with chronicles. Mommsen 1898, 143 suggests that the *Annals of the Romans* is in fact the chronicle of Jerome.

in this introduction, when we situate the fragmentary texts in the wider context of late ancient historiography.

## 2 Methodology

For the edition of the fragments, we rely on the best available edition of the citing authorities, signalling relevant variant readings. Delimitation of fragments is difficult at the best of times, and we try to give sufficient content to allow the reader to understand the context in which the fragment appears. In contrast to other collections of this type, such as FGrHist and FRHist, we have not tried to indicate what part of the fragment may reflect what the lost historian actually said and what part derives from the citing authority. Even if in some cases this may be clear from the text itself, it is a well-known fact that even seemingly literal quotations may have been altered by the citing authority. At any rate, we discuss the delimitation of the fragment in the commentary.

Regarding the selection of fragments, we follow the habitual rules as used in the study of classical fragmentary historians and most rigorously set out by F. Jacoby for his collection of Greek fragmentary historians. In his view, a collection of fragments should display what the ancient and medieval tradition reports. As a consequence, it only includes fragments that are explicitly attributed to a particular author or work. In other words, we do not include fragments that have been attributed to particular works on the basis of modern *Quellenforschung*, that is, modern hypothetical reconstructions of the relationship between various texts. Indeed, Jacoby was adamant that one should clearly distinguish collecting fragments from reconstructing a lost work.<sup>20</sup> The former task allows us to see precisely what tradition attributed to the lost text and thus provides a relatively certain basis for understanding the work. It shows, as Jacoby said, what we can know and what we cannot know. Reconstructions of lost works, on the other hand, are necessarily hypothetical, as they fill in the blanks that fragments leave, a fact that the user of a collection of fragmentary authors should be able to see clearly in order to form his or her own judgment. Indeed, Jacoby established his rules to protect scholars from themselves: the certainty of results reached through *Quellenforschung* 'is usually

<sup>20</sup> Jacoby 1923, vi. Note also the warning of Barnes 1970, 268 against attaching names to anonymous sources reconstructed by *Quellenforschung*.



overestimated'.<sup>21</sup> The principles just formulated are self-evident in classical scholarship,<sup>22</sup> but, as if Late Antiquity really were a different field, they are rarely adopted in studies of fragmentary historians from this period. Indeed, some late antique scholarship still conflates collecting fragments, *Quellenforschung*, and reconstruction of the work.<sup>23</sup> We hope this volume will demonstrate the profit to be gained from adopting Jacoby's principles. This does not mean that *Quellenforschung* cannot be a worthwhile pursuit, but one should be aware of the limits of what it can show. In one minor aspect we deviate from Jacoby's counsel. He separates fragments attributed to specific books of a lost history from those only attributed to the work in general. In this volume, this rule would only apply to Sulpicius Alexander (FHistLA 9) and Frigeridus (FHistLA 10), the only cases for which we have fragments that have book numbers as well as fragments that do not,

<sup>21</sup> Jacoby 1926, vi–vii: 'es ist doch eine banale wahrheit, daß in der mehrzahl der fälle die tradition, wie sie von den primären autoren geformt ist, bis sie zu den uns erhaltenen kompilationen gelangt, durch eine reihe von händen gegangen ist und zahlreiche, kleine oder große, tiefgehende oder oberflächliche veränderungen erfahren hat. die aufnahme unter bestimmtem namen ist nicht möglich, und noch weniger kurze hinweise im anhang oder in einem besonderen apparat zu den einzelnen büchern und fragmenten, ohne daß sicheres mit allen graden von unsicherem gemischt und der benutzer, der schon im allgemeinen nur zu geneigt ist, solche sammlungen als autoritativ anzusehen, getäuscht wird über das maß dessen, was wir wissen und wissen können. ich kann hier nicht auf die methodischen fragen nach art und berechtigung unserer üblichen quellenkritik und dem nach der lage der sache jeweilig erreichbaren grad von sicherheit ihrer resultate eingehen. aber das glaube ich behaupten zu dürfen: diese sicherheit wird meist überschätzt.'

<sup>22</sup> Cornell 2013, I, 15–16 does not even feel the need to articulate them.

<sup>23</sup> Roberto 2005 and Mariev 2008 offer two fundamentally different editions of the fragments of John of Antioch, each reproducing one side of the nineteenth-century debate: see Van Nuffelen 2012b. The response made in Mariev 2016 is inadequate, arguing that Jacoby's principles cannot be applied to Byzantine texts, apparently ignoring the fact that many of the lost classical Greek historians are known from Byzantine sources. Moreover, contrary to what Mariev claims, the *Excerpta Constantiniana*, our main source for John of Antioch, do distinguish between John Malalas and John of Antioch, thus allowing the listing of nominally ascribed fragments. Equally problematic are Hoyland's edition of Theophilus of Edessa (Hoyland 2011, with the criticism in Conterno 2014 and in the chapters by Conterno and Debié in Jankowiak and Montinaro 2015; in the same volume, Hoyland offers somewhat of a *retracatio*) and that of the church historian Gelasius of Caesarea (Wallraff et al. 2018, on which see Van Nuffelen 2019). Treadgold 2007 *passim* freely identifies 'fragments' of lost authors like Candidus on the basis of tendencies in later sources that seem to fit the tendency of the lost author. The series *Kleine und fragmentarische Historiker der Spätantike* directed by B. Bleckmann and M. Stein (Düsseldorf) also edits hypothetical works, such as the so-called *Fastenquelle* of Socrates (Becker et al. 2016) and the *Ennmannsche Kaisergeschichte*. The *Kaisergeschichte* is one of the few hypothetical sources whose existence scholars generally accept, but there is a significant variety in the reconstructions (CHAP s.v.) There is, we would argue, a need for a methodological consensus when dealing with late antique fragmentary historians. Since there is no meaningful difference in transmission between classical and late antique historians, it is hard to see why late antique scholars should not adopt the consensus of classical scholars, which has led to proven results.

and in those cases a strong case can be made that Gregory of Tours transmits the fragments in the order they appeared in the lost works.

In line with Jacoby's guidance, the aim of this collection is to give the reader a clear sense of what we know and what we do not know. Our starting point is to understand the fragments correctly: as the reader will notice, we argue that many reconstructions of the works in this collection are based on mistaken or questionable interpretations of the Latin. No amount of circumstantial evidence can force the meaning of a text. If there is a logical, coherent, and grammatically correct interpretation of the text, it must take priority over circumstantial arguments. We then bring together the information the fragments provide in order to make clear to the reader the parameters within which a possible reconstruction of the work has to situate itself. Only then will we offer a reconstruction that we think most likely. Scholars have claimed a great afterlife for some of the authors edited in this collection, detecting their influence in a vast array of texts through *Quellenforschung*. This is especially the case for Nicomachus Flavianus (FHistLA 3) and Symmachus the Younger (FHistLA 14). We do not follow these hypotheses in our reconstruction, but discuss them in a separate section. In each case, it becomes clear that Jacoby's prudence is warranted. The case of Cassiodorus (FHistLA 17) may help us to see why. We have the full text of the *Getica* of Jordanes, which explicitly claims to have summarized the *History of the Goths* of Cassiodorus. Yet it is extremely difficult to identify unquestionably Cassiodorean material in the *Getica*. A fortiori, in cases where there is a whole set of intermediaries, this becomes even more difficult.<sup>24</sup> In sum, this volume distinguishes the certain and the possible from the hypothetical. This is the precondition for making progress with this material, and we hope that this collection will spur wider interest in later Latin historiography.

The entries are headed by the name of the author and the English title of the work: e.g. Carminius, *On Italy*. After a discussion of the person and general features of the work, fragments are presented, preceded by a Latin title. We can rarely be certain that the fragments and testimonia give us the original title: in doubtful cases we add a question mark. The commentary on the fragments is mainly focused on historiographical issues and less on historical ones. We offer elucidations regarding *realia* mentioned in the fragments mainly through notes to the translation, whilst the commentary on each fragment seeks to spell out how it informs us about the lost work.

<sup>24</sup> See, again, the quotation from Jacoby in n. 21.

When both interact (as in Frigeridus FHistLA 10 Fr, where the dating of events impacts on our understanding of his position in the historiographical tradition), the issue is discussed in the commentary.

### 3 Genre

Relying on explicit statements by late antique writers<sup>25</sup> and on recurring formal features of the works themselves, late ancient historiography can be divided into four main genres: secular history, ecclesiastical history, sacred history, and chronicles.<sup>26</sup> As for biography, ancient authors rank it with historiography, but also differentiate both types of text.<sup>27</sup> Here we do not consider biography further as it does not fall within the scope of this collection. The aim of this section is to examine how the fragmentary works in this collection relate to these genres and their development.

Secular history comprises all works that stand in continuity with narrative Latin historiography of the Empire.<sup>28</sup> Whilst grand-scale histories of contemporary events, like those of Tacitus and Ammianus Marcellinus, are the paradigmatic form to ancient and modern minds,<sup>29</sup> the genre was much more varied. In the material edited for this collection, we observe several clusters of material.

The first cluster consists of histories with a geographically limited focus. Two of these have an explicit interest in the distant past and have therefore been called ‘antiquarian history’. The anonymous *On the origins of Padua* (FHistLA 2) explains a passage from Vergil and is also cited to that effect. Carminius was a grammarian and gathered religious traditions from Italy (FHistLA 1). If both are late antique, they would date to the first half or middle of the fourth century. Whilst they are obviously related to Rome, they do not focus explicitly on Rome itself: the anonymous author wrote about Padua and Carminius about Italy with, so it seems, a particular interest in nations other than the Romans. This finds an interesting parallel in the work Protadius planned to write about Gaul (FHistLA 5): relying on Roman sources like Caesar, it was bound to be a Roman history, but

<sup>25</sup> Sulpicius Severus, *Chronicle* pr.1–4; Cassiodorus, *Institutions* 1.17; Evagrius Scholasticus, *Ecclesiastical history* 5.24. See also Sidonius Apollinaris, *Letter* 4.22.

<sup>26</sup> For a full justification of this division and reflections on a flexible use of the concept of genre, see Van Nuffelen and Van Hoof, Introduction, in Van Nuffelen and Van Hoof 2020a.

<sup>27</sup> See Stadter 2007 for an overview and Van Nuffelen 2017 on the relation between both in the *Historia Augusta*.

<sup>28</sup> For a justification of the term ‘secular’, see Van Nuffelen and Van Hoof 2020a, XXV–XXVI.

<sup>29</sup> An eloquent statement of this fact can be seen in Sidonius Apollinaris, *Letter* 4.22. See below p. 25 on Ammianus Marcellinus as the ‘last’ Latin historian.

of a particular region. Such a local focus is not attested in preserved works and only seems to recur at the end of the period with works written from the perspective of particular kingdoms.<sup>30</sup>

A second cluster consists of histories of Rome that cover a wide time span. The *breviarium* has often been claimed to be the paradigmatic type of Latin historiography in the fourth century,<sup>31</sup> an impression generated by the preservation of Eutropius, Festus, Aurelius Victor, and the anonymous *Epitome de Caesaribus*.<sup>32</sup> In this collection, we encounter a number of works that display similarities with these histories. The anonymous historian of Rome (FHistLA 7) composed a history of Rome; Naucellius (FHistLA 6) translated a Greek book on the early history of Rome; and the work of Nicomachus Flavianus (FHistLA 3) is considered to be a history of Republican and/or Imperial Rome. If these date to the fourth century, the history of Symmachus the Younger (FHistLA 14) from the end of the fifth or early sixth century fits the pattern, as well, as does the sixth-century history of Marcellinus Comes (FHistLA 16). That of Maximian of Ravenna (FHistLA 15) certainly ran up to his own day, but its starting point is unclear. It is also possible that the history of Frigeridus (FHistLA 10) more closely resembled the *Epitome de Caesaribus* than the *Res gestae* of Ammianus Marcellinus. If the term *breviarium* still suggests a fundamentally derivative nature, it must be underscored that all four extant works covered contemporary history, as well, as Frigeridus certainly did. At any rate, this overview suggests that the dominant model of later Latin historiography was a work that covered a long time span of Roman history: even Ammianus, who started where Tacitus had left off, conforms in some way to that model. Works that focused only on contemporary events are rare. One exception may be Sulpicius Alexander (FHistLA 9), who is usually taken to be a successor of Ammianus and said to cover events from 378 until 395. But his extant fragments cover only events from 388 until 393, with the first fragment derived from book 3: we could also imagine a work on the lines of that of the Greek historian Zosimus (c. 500), whose first books quickly cover the rise of Rome and the history of the Empire

<sup>30</sup> See below pp. 9–10.

<sup>31</sup> For later Latin historiography, Marincola 2007 has chapters only on Ammianus Marcellinus and the epitomizing tradition (Banchich 2007). *Breviaria* were often supposed to indicate a decline in learning. See the memorable phrase of Syme 1968, 105: ‘Who would otherwise have written, who would read them?’ Cf. Momigliano 1963, 85–6; den Boer 1972, 10; Schmidt 1988, 94; Brunt 1980; Bird 1984, 71–2; Schlmeier 2009, 140–212. The idea has been refuted often enough: G. Kelly 2010; Sánchez Vendramini 2012.

<sup>32</sup> One could also add the *Histories* of Orosius.

before the coverage expands when narrating the fourth century. Frigeridus (FHistLA 10) is similarly taken to be a successor of Sulpicius and an historian of exclusively contemporary events, but the high number of books (at least 12) and the rapid pace of his narration suggest either that the work consisted of short books or covered a substantial time span. The works written under the successor kingdoms mirror the common practice of historians covering a large chunk of Roman history. The *History of the Goths* of Cassiodorus (FHistLA 17) covered the past of the Goths from their distant origins until the reign of Theoderic. Other works took the establishment of the current rulers as a starting point and narrated from there until their authors' own times: Secundus of Trent (FHistLA 19) seems to have started with the arrival of the Langobards in Italy, whilst Maximus of Zaragoza (FHistLA 20) may have started when the Visigoths settled in Spain. The evidence for Roterius (FHistLA 18) is too meagre and problematic to allow conclusions. Still, by starting with the establishment of a particular kingdom, these later historians by and large conform to the pattern observed for earlier historians of Rome, who covered the whole of the history of Rome or chose a constitutional change as a starting point.

A third cluster within secular historiography has already been described: histories that focus on particular successor kingdoms.<sup>33</sup> Usually, such histories were written from within the kingdom they dealt with (Cassiodorus, Secundus of Trent, Roterius, Maximus of Zaragoza), but the earliest preserved example, the *Getica* of Jordanes, is an exception to the rule, for it was written in Constantinople by someone who had served in the Roman army.<sup>34</sup> This shows how the tradition of historiography transplanted itself into new political surroundings.

Finally, there is a group of works about which we know too little to be able to classify them (Favius (FHistLA 11), Consentius (FHistLA 12), and Ablabius (FHistLA 13)). In each case, there is doubt as to whether they even deserve a place in this collection, but if they do, they would be classified as secular histories.

The second major genre, ecclesiastical historiography, is a rare bird in later Latin historiography. Within the time frame of this volume, only two instances can be cited, each modelled on a Greek work. In 402–3 Rufinus of Aquileia translated the *Ecclesiastical history* of Eusebius of Caesarea

<sup>33</sup> This is what medievalists call national histories and *origo* writing: Wolfram 2003a; Pizarro 2003; Plassmann 2009, 2016. We do not adopt such a usage: see Coumert 2007; Van Nuffelen and Van Hoof 2020a, XXXVI; Pohl 2020.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Van Hoof and Van Nuffelen 2017 and 2020.

and continued it until the reign of Theodosius I (379–95). Around 545, Cassiodorus modelled his *Historia tripartita*, containing translated extracts from the Greek church historians Socrates, Sozomen, and Theodoret, on a similar work by Theodore Lector, composed c. 518.<sup>35</sup> The only ecclesiastical history with no direct link to the East is that of Bede, composed in 731.<sup>36</sup> Each of these works is formally distinct from the others, illustrating that there was no clear tradition of writing ecclesiastical history in the West. The reasons why ecclesiastical history did not take off in the West are difficult to determine. Lack of literary authority may have played a role. Jerome's translation of Eusebius' chronicle became the point of reference for most of the Latin chronicle tradition, with almost all of them continuing his work or his continuators.<sup>37</sup> Jerome also planned to compose an ecclesiastical history,<sup>38</sup> but this work never eventuated, and one is left wondering if it would have had the same impact on later historiography as his chronicle. It has also been suggested that the See of Rome sought to legitimize its dominant position in the West by focusing on its foundation by St Peter and was therefore reluctant to submit itself to a historical narrative that could illustrate how Rome had changed its position in the past. Instead, the history of the See of Rome was the *Liber pontificalis*, a series of biographies of its bishops, showing how they preserved (or occasionally did not preserve) the Petrine heritage.<sup>39</sup> Thus, the ecclesiastical centre did not promote historiography as a favoured genre either. More broadly, it is clear that besides chronicle writing, the preferred literary medium for Christians to write about the past was biography, as the flowering of hagiography in this period illustrates. Whilst in Greek we see ecclesiastical histories often taking positions in doctrinal disputes, with evidence for church histories being written by all sides,<sup>40</sup> there is little evidence for such a role in the West – even though there are good reasons to believe that Cassiodorus' *Historia tripartita* wished to make a statement about Justinian's church policy and the condemnation of the Three Chapters.<sup>41</sup> For example, Donatism, which was the longest-lasting schism in the West

<sup>35</sup> For the date of Cassiodorus, see Van Hoof and Van Nuffelen 2017, 287.

<sup>36</sup> Note that in the ninth century, Anastasius the Librarian planned to write an ecclesiastical history for which he drew on Greek sources: see CHAP s.v. Around 800, a scribe at Lorsch called a compilation of Gregory of Tours and Pseudo-Fredegair *historia ecclesiastica*: Reimitz 2015b.

<sup>37</sup> Burgess and Kulikowski 2013a, 126–31.

<sup>38</sup> Jerome, *Life of Malchus* 1.

<sup>39</sup> Kany 2007, 576; Blaudeau 2016, 129.

<sup>40</sup> Van Nuffelen 2018a.

<sup>41</sup> As was noticed by Gregory the Great, *Letter* 7.31; Beatrice 2001b, 255–6; Delacenserie 2016; Van Hoof and Van Nuffelen 2017, 287.

and one in which history played an important role, did not produce histories, nor did African Catholics. A historical content has been alleged for two lost works by the Donatist Tyconius, but as we argue below, these were in fact theological treatises (FHistLA 23). In sum, the absence of ecclesiastical history in this collection reflects its weak position in later Latin historiography in general.

Under the label *sacred history* we place histories that deal with biblical history. Moses, as author of the Pentateuch, and the authors of the historical books of the Old Testament were ranked as historians, and the Gospels were considered to be accurate histories of the life and deeds of Christ.<sup>42</sup> By extension, the label also includes other works that narrated the same subject matter. There are not that many examples of non-biblical works that limit themselves to sacred history, whilst sacred history was an obvious part of chronicles. Arator's versification of the Acts of the Apostles belongs here, as do the *Histories* of Pseudo-Hegesippus (FHistLA 8), which narrated the history of the kings of Israel. The other work of Pseudo-Hegesippus points to a somewhat larger group of works that are also ranked as sacred history: histories of the Jews, especially those adapted from Flavius Josephus.<sup>43</sup> Besides Pseudo-Hegesippus' adaptation of Josephus' *War*, a translation of that same work is (probably wrongly) attributed to Rufinus of Aquileia, whilst in the sixth century Cassiodorus ordered a translation of the *Jewish Antiquities* of Flavius Josephus to be made.<sup>44</sup> Another translation from a Greek work on Jewish antiquities circulated under the name of Philo.<sup>45</sup> The presence of only a single work belonging to this genre in this collection reflects the fact that it was a genre that was rarely practised, even if sacred history as a subject was ubiquitous in chronicles and exegesis.

As has already been said, we have excluded chronicles from this collection. Yet the genre deserves a brief discussion here because there are some points of contact with the fragmentary works edited in this collection. We use the term chronicle here to designate any type of chronographic work. Following Burgess and Kulikowski (2013) with some modifications,<sup>46</sup> the

<sup>42</sup> Augustine, *On Christian doctrine* 2.27; Sulpicius Severus, *Chronicle* 2.14.3; Evagrius Scholasticus, *Ecclesiastical history* 5.24; Isidore of Seville, *Etymologies* 1.51–3.

<sup>43</sup> Pseudo-Hegesippus, *On the destruction of Jerusalem*. Somenzi 2009; Leoni 2016; CHAP s.v. For the position of Flavius Josephus within sacred history, see Van Nuffelen and Van Hoof 2020a, XLIX.

<sup>44</sup> For further references, see CHAP s.v. and Levenson and Martin 2016, who argue that the attribution to Rufinus is in fact humanistic.

<sup>45</sup> Jacobson 1996; CHAP s.v.

<sup>46</sup> See further Van Nuffelen and Van Hoof 2020a, L–LVII.



genre can be subdivided into several subgenres: *chronica*, works that offer year-by-year entries on the model of Jerome; *chronographies*, works that collect various materials that provided information about chronology such as king lists and Easter tables; *consularia*, annotated lists of consuls; *fasti*, unannotated lists of consuls; *chronicle epitomes*, that is, compact presentations of the course of history that abandoned the year-by-year format of *chronica* (e.g. the chronicles of Isidore of Seville and Bede). If we were to include chronicles, there would not be that many additional entries. Indeed, we know of only three fragmentary (in the sense specified above) Latin chronicles attested: the *Chronicle* and the *Fasti* by Ausonius<sup>47</sup> and the *Epitome chronicorum* by Lucentius.<sup>48</sup> This suggests either that chronicles had a higher rate of survival and/or that many chronicles were used without acknowledgement by later authors and thus that it is harder to trace lost chronicles.<sup>49</sup> The reconstruction of the extensive circulation of the *Consularia Constantinopolitana*<sup>50</sup> and of the hypothetical *Consularia Italica*,<sup>51</sup> which were widely used but never acknowledged, implies that the latter was a major factor. Interestingly, in our extant record chronicles are just as numerous as secular histories in Latin historiography for the period AD 300–800,<sup>52</sup> but if we are right in assuming that chronicles were used differently, it may be that chronicles were in fact the dominant genre – at least in numerical terms. Second, the generic boundaries between chronicles and narrative histories (that is, the three genres surveyed above) were not firm. The *Chronicle* of Sulpicius Severus explicitly states in its preface that it combines sacred, secular, and ecclesiastical history, whilst its title refers to chronicle writing. Yet its narrative form sets it apart from most other chronicles. Similarly, Fulgentius' *On the ages of man* turns the material found in chronicles into narrative. These works, which one might call *narrative chronicles*,<sup>53</sup> hardly fit the classification proposed by Burgess and Kulikowski.<sup>54</sup> A similarly narrative work was the *Chronicle* of Maximian of Ravenna, which is said to follow both Jerome and Orosius – a *chronicon*

<sup>47</sup> Green 1991, 160–1 and 720; CHAP s.v.

<sup>48</sup> Liberatus, *Breviarium* 2; CHAP s.v. Lucentius probably wrote after Prosper Tiro, whose chronicle has the same title as his. It has been suggested that Lucentius is an error for Prosper (cf. CHAP s.v.), which would eliminate this work from our catalogue.

<sup>49</sup> Note that lost chronicles have been hypothesized as sources for extant ones.

<sup>50</sup> Burgess 1993, 195.

<sup>51</sup> Mommsen 1892, 249–339.

<sup>52</sup> Each has about 70 items out of a total of 232 Latin items in CHAP.

<sup>53</sup> Van Nuffelen and Van Hoof 2020a, LIII; CHAP s.v.

<sup>54</sup> Burgess and Kulikowski 2013a, 49. Hydatius, *Chronicle* 30 (37a) calls the chronicle of Severus 'a different chronicle from this one' (*qui et chronica alia quam haec sunt ...*).



and a secular history (FHistLA 15). Moreover, precise definition of its nature is not helped by the fact that in medieval Latin and Greek *chronicon* and *chronographus* could indicate any history or historiographer.<sup>55</sup> We leave the precise genre label open for Maximian, even if we think a narrative history is ultimately more likely. Secundus of Trent (FHistLA 19) is traditionally said to have composed a chronicle, but we argue that the standard reconstructions of his work are wrong and that the work was narrative in nature. In turn, the *historiola* of Maximus of Zaragoza (FHistLA 20) may have been a chronicle, but we have no evidence to decide the issue. The *omnimoda historia* of Dexter (FHistLA 4) is usually called a history, but its title suggests that it may have been a chronography. Finally, when scholars take Bruttius (FHistLA 21) to be a Christian author, they have tended to assume that he wrote a chronicle – tacitly linking chronography and Christianity. In fact, it is doubtful if he even wrote a history. Thus, while this collection excludes works that are certainly chronicles, we have included fragmentary works about which doubt may exist. Such doubt is itself interesting; it illustrates that the two main genres of historiography interacted, that authors may have formally innovated, and that complications are generated by the ambiguous vocabulary used in later periods to designate works of history.

To conclude, this collection of twenty-three fragmentary historians cannot lay claim to be representative of the entire field, but we do see general trends reflected in the collection: the paucity of ecclesiastical and sacred history; the interaction between narrative works and chronicles; the dominance of works that cover substantial swaths of Roman history, often relying on earlier sources, up until the sixth century; and the continuation of historiography in the successor kingdoms. Only in the fragmentary historians do we find evidence for a local, non-Roman, focus in the fourth century.

#### 4 *Circulation*

The testimonies and fragments of the fragmentary works edited in this collection reveal several patterns of citation, each hinting at limited forms of circulation.

The first and by far most dominant pattern is citation by individuals who were in personal contact with the author of the work, a pattern

<sup>55</sup> See also Paulinus of Nola, *Letter* 3.3, who defines Eusebius' chronicle as *de cunctis temporibus historia*.

visible in eleven out of the twenty authors in this collection. The historiographical endeavours of the senators Protadius (FHistLA 5), Naucellius (FHistLA 6), and their anonymous colleague (FHistLA 7) are only attested in the letters of Symmachus. The histories of Nummius Aemilianus Dexter (FHistLA 4) and Maximus of Zaragoza (FHistLA 20) are only attested in the *On illustrious men* written by their respective acquaintances Jerome and Isidore of Seville. The possible historiographical activity of Consentius (FHistLA 12) is known through Sidonius Apollinaris, who was in touch with his son. The history of Nicomachus Flavianus (FHistLA 3) is only attested in inscriptions set up by his descendants. The history of Symmachus the Younger (FHistLA 14) is attested in Cassiodorus, an acquaintance of Symmachus, and Jordanes, who was probably using the works of Cassiodorus. The known readers of the preserved *Chronicle* of Marcellinus Comes are, again, Cassiodorus and Jordanes, with the former responsible for bringing a manuscript from Constantinople to the West, thus triggering the Western circulation and survival of this text. It is likely that these three individuals moved in the same Latin-speaking circles in Constantinople.<sup>56</sup> Marcellinus' lost works (FHistLA 16) are only attested in Cassiodorus. In turn, Cassiodorus' own *History of the Goths* (FHistLA 17) is only attested in his own *Variae* and *Ordo generis Cassiodororum* and in Jordanes, who was in some way or another in contact with him during his stay in Constantinople. Indeed, Jordanes is also the earliest known user of Cassiodorus' *Historia tripartita*, composed in the Eastern capital.<sup>57</sup> As a final, and most extreme example, Pseudo-Hegesippus offers the only witness to his own lost rewriting of Old Testament history (FHistLA 8) through a reference in the preface of his extant reworking of Flavius Josephus' *War*. These patterns are too pervasive to be accidental. As is well known, literary works in Antiquity circulated first among family and friends. Appreciation there would determine whether or not a work would achieve a wider circulation, independent of that original circle.<sup>58</sup> The pattern just observed implies that the lost histories did not get beyond this first level of circulation: it can hardly be chance that more than half of the authors collected here display the same pattern. Interestingly, some works of this group were written for presentation or reading at court (certainly Cassiodorus' *History of the Goths*; possibly the histories of Nicomachus Flavianus and Symmachus the Younger; likely also the comparison of

<sup>56</sup> Full discussion in Croke 2001a; Van Hoof and Van Nuffelen 2017 and 2020b.

<sup>57</sup> Van Hoof and Van Nuffelen 2017, 283–90.

<sup>58</sup> Starr 1987; Schipke 2013, 163.

Jerusalem and Constantinople by Marcellinus Comes). This clearly was not a guarantee of literary longevity: we should not imagine that the *History of the Goths* of Cassiodorus was passed from hand to hand among the elite of Ostrogothic Italy. History could be as ephemeral as panegyric.

The second pattern is that of local preservation. Secundus of Trent (FHistLA 19) is cited by Paul the Deacon, active in the same region, and one excerpt survives in a manuscript. The chronicle of Maximian of Ravenna (FHistLA 15) is cited only in the *Liber pontificalis* of Agnellus of Ravenna. Assuming that the *Life of Severus of Agde* citing it is a local composition, the history of Roterius (FHistLA 18) seems to have circulated only in Visigothic territory. Likewise, the histories of Sulpicius Alexander (FHistLA 9) and Frigeridus (FHistLA 10) are cited only by Gregory of Tours, who presumably found them in a local manuscript. It is unlikely that these were Gallic compositions, for they are clearly written from an imperocentric perspective. There are also instances where there is geographical proximity, but great temporal distance (a century or more) between author and citing authority. Geographical proximity between author and citing authority can, logically, also be observed for works that circulated in a limited circle of friends and acquaintances. In only a few of those cases is there any geographical distance between author and citing authority, and in these cases we can explain why: Dexter was presumably in Spain but in contact with Jerome through letters; Cassiodorus wrote his *History of the Goths* in Italy but brought it himself to Constantinople, where Jordanes used it; Cassiodorus wrote the *Institutions*, in which the lost works of Marcellinus Comes, composed in Constantinople, are attested, in Italy after his return from exile in the East; and Symmachus the Younger wrote his history in Italy, which was presumably used by Cassiodorus and cited via Cassiodorus by Jordanes in Constantinople.

A third pattern is the similarity in social context between author and citing authority. The two local histories edited in this collection (the anonymous on Padua (FHistLA 2) and Carminius (FHistLA 1)) were composed by grammarians and are cited by works that are themselves heavily indebted to the learned tradition of school knowledge (Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, *Origo gentis Romanae*; Macrobius, *Saturnalia*). The senatorial circle around Symmachus was responsible for quite some historiographical production, and, as we shall detail below, there is additional evidence for historiography as a suitable elite pastime in Italy at the end of the fourth century. Symmachus the Younger and Cassiodorus belonged to the same social group. Christian belief or ecclesiastical function could also forge a bond between two authors, such as that between Dexter and Jerome,

or between Maximus of Zaragoza and Isidore of Seville. There are obviously also instances of social difference between the authors. The bishop Gregory of Tours citing two secular historians, Sulpicius Alexander and Frigeridus, may be the clearest illustration, but it is likely that there was also a social gap between Jordanes and Cassiodorus.<sup>59</sup>

Fourth, several of the authors edited here are said to have composed other, non-historiographical works, but the majority of these have been lost, too. The other works of Nicomachus Flavianus, Consentius, Symmachus the Younger, Maximian of Ravenna, and Maximus of Zaragoza are not preserved. The exceptions are Cassiodorus, whose corpus is well preserved, Marcellinus Comes, whose chronicle circulated in the West, presumably thanks to Cassiodorus, and Pseudo-Hegesippus, whose reworking of Flavius Josephus seems to have filled a need in the West for more detailed knowledge about the fate of the Jews. Regarding the first group, either the authors themselves were not sufficiently famous to keep interest in their works alive, or later generations did not find that their works filled a particular need.

Fifth, when looking at citations and the use of non-fragmentary works, i.e. works preserved in the manuscript tradition, we notice that they tend to have wider citation patterns that are less bound by personal acquaintance or geographical and social proximity. This implies that these works had a wide circulation fairly soon after their publication. To give a few examples: Ammianus Marcellinus is preserved in two manuscripts, which derive from the same archetype.<sup>60</sup> This is not an extensive tradition, but citing authorities provide evidence for a wider circulation: Priscian cites Ammianus in his grammar, composed in the early sixth century in Constantinople,<sup>61</sup> whilst the *Getica* of Jordanes clearly used Ammianus, most likely through Cassiodorus.<sup>62</sup> This would signal knowledge of Ammianus in early sixth-century Constantinople as well as Italy. It has been suggested that Claudian (in Rome) and Jerome (in Bethlehem) knew Ammianus' work even earlier.<sup>63</sup> The breviary of Festus is well represented in two classes of manuscripts, one from Spain, the other from Africa, and was used by Ammianus soon after its publication in 370.<sup>64</sup> In the sixth

<sup>59</sup> Van Hoof and Van Nuffelen 2017, 290–6.

<sup>60</sup> Kelly and Stover 2016.

<sup>61</sup> Priscian, *The institutes of grammar* 9.51.

<sup>62</sup> Jordanes, *Getica* 116–38 with Heather 1989, 111–16; Van Hoof and Van Nuffelen 2020b.

<sup>63</sup> G. Kelly 2008, 182; Cameron 2012b, 351–2. But the link with Jerome argued for by Cameron has been rejected: Rosen 1982, 34, likely rightly so.

<sup>64</sup> Arnaud-Lindet 1994; G. Kelly 2010.

century it was used in Constantinople, by Jordanes for his *Romana*, and by Isidore of Seville in Spain.<sup>65</sup> Eutropius' *Breviarium* was an absolute success story, with a wide circulation in both the West and the East, including a rare instance of the translation of a history from Latin into Greek. Use of the work, usually unacknowledged, is widespread in Latin and Greek historiography.<sup>66</sup> Even more of a success story in the West were Orosius' *Histories*, with a vast manuscript tradition and translations into European vernacular languages and Arabic, but also many citations and traces of use from Spain to Constantinople, as early as the fifth century.<sup>67</sup> Less popular but extant works also reveal the same pattern: the *Epitome de Caesaribus* was used by Orosius in Africa a few decades after its publication, but also by Jordanes in Constantinople in the sixth century.<sup>68</sup> If there is, broadly, a correlation between survival through the manuscript tradition and a wide spread of citing authorities in Late Antiquity, there are obviously exceptions. There are no traces of the *Historia Augusta* in Late Antiquity, except in the history of Symmachus the Younger.<sup>69</sup> The two works from which the *Excerpta Valesiana* are drawn, the *Origo Constantinis imperatoris* and a work on the reign of Theoderic the Great, also have no known users.<sup>70</sup> Yet such examples cannot undermine the general conclusion that survival in the manuscript tradition and wide citation coincide in many cases: indeed, both together imply a wider circulation than what we observe for most of the works edited in this collection.

These five observations suggest that there were reasons why the works edited here were lost. A substantial proportion seems to have fallen at the first hurdle; that is, they never circulated outside of the circle of the author's intimates.<sup>71</sup> Indeed, public performance, as we may suppose for the history of Cassiodorus, was clearly not a guarantee for wider circulation. A second hurdle for a work was to achieve more than a geographically restricted circulation. This could be helped by the author achieving sufficient fame for his works to become sought after – but notwithstanding the praise that our witnesses heaped on Nicomachus Flavianus and

<sup>65</sup> Mommsen 1882, xxvi; Wood 2012, 117.

<sup>66</sup> Bird 1993; Bleckmann 2018.

<sup>67</sup> Mommsen 1882, xxvii; Arnaud-Lindet 1990; Wolf 1999, 14–16; Fear 2010, 24–5.

<sup>68</sup> Festy 1999; Van Nuffelen 2012a, 105–9; below p. 152.

<sup>69</sup> For an overview, see Callu, Desbordes, and Bertrand 1984–5; Zecchini 2010; see also below pp. 160–1. For the argument that the *Historia Augusta* was a family treasure of the Nicomachi, to whom Symmachus the Younger was related, see Festy 2004.

<sup>70</sup> König 1987, 1997; Aiello 2014.

<sup>71</sup> One might add that the actual first hurdle was finishing the work: we have no proof that Protadius (FHistLA 5) and the anonymous historian of Rome (FHistLA 7) ever finished their works.

Symmachus the Younger, there is no indication that they actually achieved such a status. This conclusion has an important consequence. Some of these histories, in particular those of Nicomachus Flavianus, Cassiodorus, and Symmachus the Younger, are said to have been widely used in the later tradition and to have left unacknowledged traces in a wide array of texts.<sup>72</sup> We argue for each of these authors that there are good reasons to doubt such ascriptions, and the pattern of circulation just observed also argues against any assumption of a wide circulation, too. We have no reason to suppose that these lost works were the success stories that some scholars have made them out to be. This does not mean that they were not good or well-informed histories (we simply cannot tell), but they did not make it past the hurdles typical of ancient literary culture.

## 5 Social and Political Context

Besides clustering in various genres and displaying distinct patterns of circulation, the fragmentary histories collected in this volume also reflect changing social and political contexts. We have too little information about some of these authors to contextualize them and their works (like Favius (FHistLA 11) and Ablabius (FHistLA 13)). Others, however, reflect particular roles played by historiography in society. In the following pages, we shall discuss the social, religious, and political roles of late antique Latin historiography.

Starting with the social context, a first cluster is formed by Nicomachus Flavianus (FHistLA 3), Protadius (FHistLA 5), Naucellius (FHistLA 6), and the anonymous historian of Rome (FHistLA 7). The last three are all known from the letters of Symmachus, and all four reflect the historiographical activity of the senatorial elite at the end of the fourth and the beginning of the fifth century. As we have seen, it is highly likely that all four produced works that covered substantial parts of Roman history and thus relied on earlier traditions. This fits into an interest in the more distant Roman past, in contrast to contemporary history, which, as the following examples will show, can be observed more widely in this period and social group.<sup>73</sup> Pontius Paulinus, later bishop of Nola, composed a versified epitome of Suetonius, *On Roman kings* – presumably before

<sup>72</sup> See our discussion below pp. 39–45, 148–53, 203–7.

<sup>73</sup> Demandt 1982; Näf 2010, 84 notes the lack of interest in contemporary history, with reference to Symmachus, *Letter* 4.18.5; Croke 2012, 412–15.

his conversion to the ascetic life.<sup>74</sup> Similarly, Ausonius composed several historical works in verse: the *Caesars*, tetrasticha on every emperor since Caesar, maybe running up to his own time;<sup>75</sup> *On pre-Roman kings*, a work attested only in a fourteenth-century list of Ausonius' works;<sup>76</sup> and *On usurpers*, also attested only in the same list and based on the elusive Eusebius of Nantes.<sup>77</sup> In addition, Ausonius tried his hand at a consular list, the *Fasti*, presumably also versified – a rare example of a consular list produced by a named elite individual.<sup>78</sup> He also produced a chronicle, which is again attested only in the medieval list mentioned above.<sup>79</sup> That same list also adds two works on Hebrew: *On Hebrew and Athenian names of months* and *One book on the learning of the Hebrews and the interpretation of Hebrew names*.<sup>80</sup> L. Aurelius Avianus Symmachus, senator, urban prefect in 364–5, and father of Quintus Aurelius Symmachus, asked his son to help him complete a series of eighty epigrams on recent and contemporary individuals. These epigrams are said to complement books of prose recently written by Avianus Symmachus, and their model are the epigrams in the *Hebdomades* of Varro. He quotes a couple of examples.<sup>81</sup> His son Symmachus politely refuses to help his father, praising the quality of his verse over that of Varro.<sup>82</sup> Not enough information is given to assess the nature of the work Avianus was preparing. Given that all quoted examples relate to contemporary senators, and that the model is Varro's *Hebdomades*, a series of portraits of famous men, it is conceivable that Symmachus intended to produce a similar series of portraits, to which the epigrams were to be added as decoration. Alan Cameron interprets the work as an update of Varro's *Hebdomades*,<sup>83</sup> but the text does not allow that inference: the *Hebdomades* function as a model for the mixture of prose and poetry, possibly also for the biographical focus,

<sup>74</sup> Ausonius, *Letter* 23; Paulinus, *Poem* 3. On the works discussed in this paragraph, see CHAP s.v.

<sup>75</sup> Green 1991, 161–8; Green 1999. His method of composition, with monosticha on lengths of reigns and descriptions of deaths remind one of the *Breviarium Vindobonense* (cf. Burgess 2014), a work that listed emperors with precisely that sort of information. Ausonius seems to have turned low-level historical genres into high art.

<sup>76</sup> Green 1991, 720.

<sup>77</sup> Green 1991, 720; Cameron 2011, 404–5. On Eusebius, presumably early fourth century, see FGrHist 101; BNJ 101; CHAP s.v.; De Cicco 2013–14 and 2018; Bleckmann and Gros 2016.

<sup>78</sup> Green 1991, 160–1; Coskun 2002.

<sup>79</sup> Green 1991, 720. Croke 2001b, 300 argues that it was intended to rival Jerome's translation of Eusebius. Burgess and Kulikowski 2013a, 128 suggest a Christianized version of the earlier chronicles of Nepos and Castor.

<sup>80</sup> Green 1991, 720.

<sup>81</sup> Symmachus, *Letter* 1.2.

<sup>82</sup> Symmachus, *Letter* 1.3–4. Cf. Courtney 2003, 447–51.

<sup>83</sup> Cameron 2011, 371–2.



but there is no hint that Symmachus planned a continuation. This interest in history and in traditional models reflects the nexus between elite status and education that marks the Roman world.<sup>84</sup> The early history of Rome was taught in schools, as the anonymous fourth-century *Origins of the Roman people* and *On illustrious men of Rome*, incorporated into the corpus Aurelianum, testify. But to possess that knowledge was only part of the elite habitus in the fourth century: one also ought to be able to deploy it aptly and in novel ways. In Ausonius we sense a real urge to do something original with that traditional body of knowledge by offering versifications of well-known facts or of the prose work of other authors. Similarly, the versification of Suetonius by Paulinus combines deference to a literary model, antiquarian interest, and literary creativity. Avianus Symmachus followed a model (or maybe unearthed one: there is not much evidence for imitation of the *Hebdomades*), but applied it to contemporary events. Such a desire to be original may lie behind Protadius' decision to write a history of Gaul, albeit based on Caesar and Livy. Naucellius shared the interest in the distant past of Rome and contributed to it by translating a Greek work on the topic. The desire to do something original with political biography, which had a rather negative reputation in this period, may be one of the driving forces behind the *Historia Augusta*.<sup>85</sup> We thus have good evidence for historiography as a suitable elite pastime, one pursued by reworking traditional knowledge into new forms and by applying old forms to recent events. As most of our evidence comes from two geographically and socially diverse sources, Ausonius and Symmachus, there may be reason to think that historiography was practised equally intensely elsewhere, wherever good educational institutions and literary circles existed. But this must remain speculation.

The elite individuals we see enjoying themselves with history are mostly pagan, and this has led to the idea that writing history and circulating manuscripts of Roman historians like Livy was part of the so-called 'pagan

<sup>84</sup> For this nexus in relation to historiography in Late Antiquity, see Eigler 2003; Cameron 2011; Van Nuffelen 2012a, 63–92. For Antiquity in general, Nicolai 1992.

<sup>85</sup> Van Hoof and Van Nuffelen 2013 on Julian, *Misopogon* 29.358CD; Van Nuffelen 2017 on Ammianus Marcellinus and the biographer Marius Maximus (Ammianus 28.4.14: 'Some of them, hating learning as they hate poison, read Juvenal and Marius Maximus with tolerably careful study; though, in their profound laziness, they never touch any other volumes; why, it does not belong to my poor judgment to decide. Whereas, considering the greatness of their fame and of their parentage, they ought to pore over many and varied works...' tr. Rolfe) and the *Historia Augusta*.



resistance' against the new Christian empire.<sup>86</sup> For some individuals their interest in the Roman past may indeed have been supported by their paganism: the interest in Neoplatonism and antiquarianism in Rome that we find in the oeuvre of Macrobius probably betrays his paganism.<sup>87</sup> This dynamic can also be observed in reverse among Christian authors: Jerome intended to give Latin Christians a history, and Dexter (FHistLA 4) likely wished to do the same. That does not mean that the Roman past was *always* used polemically by pagans against Christianity, that an interest in the Roman past was a sign of paganism, or that Christians wrote history only for apologetic reasons. Rather, as we have seen, interest in the Roman past was part of the social habitus of being an elite Roman. Indeed, a Christian like Ausonius fully shared in this habitus; in fact, besides the letters of Symmachus, his works are our best evidence for it. Pontius Paulinus, later Paulinus of Nola, also dabbled in historiography. The history of Nicomachus Flavianus (FHistLA 3), in some scholarship held to be the prime example of an anti-Christian history, might have been dedicated to Theodosius I, a very Christian emperor, rendering it unlikely that it was an anti-Christian polemical work. Nor was secular historiography practised only by pagans: Ausonius is a case in point, and Renatus Profuturus Frigeridus (FHistLA 10) was a Christian. In some cases, it may be possible to detect polemical digs against Christianity, like those some scholars have perceived in Ammianus Marcellinus and the *Historia Augusta*.<sup>88</sup> Yet in the works edited in this collection there is no evidence for such polemic, and we must start out from the fact that the late fourth-early fifth century interest in historiography was first and foremost a social habitus. In sum, we do not deny that particular literary interests often went hand in hand with paganism, but religion was always only one factor in the social

<sup>86</sup> E.g. de Labriolle 1948; Alföldy 1952; Bloch 1963; Momigliano 1963; Paschoud 1975a; Bonamente 1979; Lana 1979; Zecchini 1993; Festy 2004; Ratti 2011, 2012. 'Pagan historiography' is often considered to be a useful label: Birley 2003; Liebeschuetz 2003. An extensive critique of the idea can be found in Cameron 2011, with a riposte in Lizzi Testa 2013. See also Jones 2014 for a view close to that of Cameron.

<sup>87</sup> Cameron 2011, 253–65; Kaster 2011, xxi argues that Macrobius was a Christian. The idea is untenable: Goldlust 2010, 11–19; Jones 2014, 151–7; Chiai 2013; Van Nuffelen 2016.

<sup>88</sup> On Ammianus Marcellinus, see Barnes 1998, 79–94; on the *Historia Augusta*, see now Rohrbacher 2016. *Historia Augusta* scholarship has detected so many allusions to Christian literature that its supposedly strongly anti-Christian author has become the most avid reader of contemporary Christian literature in the fourth century. Given the way such works circulated in personal networks, we are to assume that the author was well embedded in Christian networks. This would, in fact, make it likely that he was actually a Christian (see Mundt 2001). If one wishes to avoid this conclusion, scholars should raise the bar significantly for what counts as an allusion.

motivation of individuals in this period. We thus reject the idea that an opposition between paganism and Christianity was the defining feature of late Roman social and literary life. It was one element in a complex social mix, which played a greater or smaller role depending on the precise circumstances and individuals. At any rate, it is important to stress that there is little or no evidence to substantiate a strongly anti-Christian outlook for any of the works edited in this collection.

Finally, there is the question of the political role of late antique Latin historiography. In line with earlier tradition, Latin historiography of the fourth and early fifth century had its geographical centre in Rome and Italy: as we have just seen, there was a clear nexus between senatorial social status, elite education, and interest in, and the writing of, histories on Rome. That nexus was perpetuated in the schools, and it is unsurprising that we notice that grammarians and teachers of rhetoric also produced historiographical works. As a literary genre that was closely tied to the political centre, historiography was obviously affected by the rise of a multipolar world in the Latin West. The abundant evidence for the writing of chronicles in Italy implies that historiography held strong there.<sup>89</sup> For narrative history, the Ostrogothic kingdom may have provided a new impetus in terms of historiography: Symmachus the Younger (FHistLA 14) produced (presumably) a history of Rome in the traditional mould, whilst Cassiodorus drew on Roman ethnography to innovate and to compose a history of the Goths (FHistLA 17). Maximian of Ravenna (FHistLA 15) wrote when Italy was still under Ostrogothic rule, but the fragments we have point to a distinct interest in the East, where he had lived for quite a while. We do not know why Secundus of Trent was motivated to write a history (FHistLA 19), but he may have taken the arrival of the Langobards as a starting point. This does not yet turn his work into a predecessor of the seventh-century *Origin of the Langobards* or the *History of the Langobards* by Paul the Deacon (middle of the eighth century). Yet it does show that new rulers seemed to mark a new age that demanded historiographical treatment. In the sixth century, Constantinople had become a centre for Latin literature,<sup>90</sup> as evidenced by the activity of the grammarian Priscian and the epic poems of Corippus. This was reflected in historiography, too. In this collection, evidence for this assertion is provided only by the two lost works of Marcellinus Comes (FHistLA 16), but

<sup>89</sup> Van Nuffelen forthcoming sketches the changing representation of Italy in late antique historiography under the influence of the collapse of the Western Empire.

<sup>90</sup> Rochette 1997.

his Latin continuation of the chronicle of Jerome is an important witness to this trend. Written from a point of view favourable towards Justinian, it shows that there was an interest in Latin works of historiography at the highest echelons of society.<sup>91</sup> Almost diametrically opposite to Marcellinus Comes stands Jordanes, who composed in late Latin a *breviarium* of world and Roman history and an *epitome* of Cassiodorus' *History of the Goths*. The *Romana* is rather critical of Justinian, whilst the low linguistic level of his works makes Jordanes an unlikely candidate for court historiography. Yet we know that Jordanes was in contact with other Latin speakers: he was clearly acquainted in some way with Cassiodorus; he is the earliest user of Marcellinus Comes; and he shares a Latin source with the unknown continuator of Marcellinus.<sup>92</sup> The impulse for writing history in Latin in Constantinople clearly was generated not only by the court but also by those groups of Latin speakers that lived in Constantinople and, at least in the case of historiography, seem to have been in contact with each other in some way or another. Constantinople also provided inspiration for new forms of historiography. Cassiodorus became acquainted with the *Historia tripartita* of Theodore Lector (c. 518), and c. 545 he produced a similar work in Latin. Maximian of Ravenna may have been inspired by the narrative chronicles or chronological histories that crop up in the East from about 500<sup>93</sup> – even if there is no evidence that he became acquainted with them in Constantinople itself. For a brief time, then, in the first half of the sixth century, Constantinople was a real centre of Latin historiography. That it did not hold this position for very long is one reflection of the general shift towards Greek in the East that becomes marked in the later sixth century. By the end of the sixth century, in particular after its conversion to Catholicism under Reccared I in 587, the Visigothic state attained a new centrality in historiographical texts produced in Spain. In his chronicle John of Biclar traces a transfer of the focus of divine benevolence from Rome to Spain, a process that is most fully visible in the history of Isidore of Seville.<sup>94</sup> The *Libri regnorum diversarum gentium* by Roterius (FHistLA 18) was written under Reccared and may have traced the divinely willed unification of the Spanish peninsula – although the preserved fragment may raise doubts about its authenticity. The *History of*

<sup>91</sup> Croke 2001a.

<sup>92</sup> Van Hoof and Van Nuffelen 2017 and 2020b.

<sup>93</sup> The first seems to have been Eustathius of Epiphaneia, writing ca. 500. A bit later are Hesychius of Miletus and John Malalas: CHAP s.v. On the term 'chronological history', see Van Nuffelen and Van Hoof 2020a, XXXIV.

<sup>94</sup> Wood 2012, 231; Humphries 2019.