

ANNALISTS AND HISTORIANS

Western Historiography from the Eighth to
the Eighteenth Century

Denys Hay

ROUTLEDGE LIBRARY EDITIONS:
HISTORIOGRAPHY



ROUTLEDGE LIBRARY EDITIONS:
HISTORIOGRAPHY

Volume 17

ANNALISTS AND HISTORIANS

Page Intentionally Left Blank

ANNALISTS AND HISTORIANS
Western Historiography from the Eighth to
the Eighteenth Centuries

DENYS HAY

First published in 1977 by Methuen & Co Ltd

This edition first published in 2016

by Routledge

2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

and by Routledge

711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

© 1977 Denys Hay

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

Trademark notice: Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-138-99958-9 (Set)

ISBN: 978-1-315-63745-7 (Set) (ebk)

ISBN: 978-1-138-19301-7 (Volume 17) (hbk)

ISBN: 978-1-138-19350-5 (Volume 17) (pbk)

ISBN: 978-1-315-63961-1 (Volume 17) (ebk)

Publisher's Note

The publisher has gone to great lengths to ensure the quality of this reprint but points out that some imperfections in the original copies may be apparent.

Disclaimer

The publisher has made every effort to trace copyright holders and would welcome correspondence from those they have been unable to trace.

DENYS HAY

*Annalists and
Historians*

WESTERN HISTORIOGRAPHY
FROM THE EIGHTH TO
THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

LONDON
METHUEN & CO LTD
11 NEW FETTER LANE EC4

First published in 1977
by Methuen & Co Ltd
11 New Fetter Lane, London EC4P 4EE
© 1977 by Denys Hay
Photoset by Red Lion Setters, Holborn, London
and printed by Richard Clay & Co, Bungay, Suffolk

ISBN 0 416 81180 9 (hardback)
0 416 81190 9 (paperback)

Distributed in the USA by
HARPER & ROW PUBLISHERS, INC.
BARNES & NOBLE IMPORT DIVISION

Contents

Preface	iv
1 Ancient historians: Greeks and Romans	1
2 The Bible: Jewish and Christian Time	12
3 The Birth of the Medieval Chronicle	38
4 Medieval Historiography at its Prime: from the Thirteenth to the Fifteenth Centuries	63
5 The Humanist Historian in Fifteenth-century Italy	87
6 The Sixteenth Century	111
7 History and Scholarship in the Seventeenth Century	133
8 Historians and Antiquaries in the Eighteenth Century: the Emergence of the Modern Method	169
Notes	186
Index	209

Preface

I have contemplated writing a book on historiography for many years, perhaps almost since I first began working on the English history of Polydore Vergil in 1938. I have clear memories of reading translations of the main Greek and Latin historians during the often lengthy boredoms of the war. I find, too, that I have kept a letter dated October 1943 from my former tutor, V.H. Galbraith, professor of history at Edinburgh, in which he indicated in reply to a question I had put to him that there was indeed room for a history of historiography — though he wisely did not designate me as its author. In those days I envisaged some vast multi-volume treatment of the vast subject, which would have run from Babylon to Marc Bloch. What I attempt here is infinitely more modest.

Some such book is, I believe, desirable if not necessary. Even if what follows is not what I would have wished for, or what others may expect, the fact is that there is no comparable book in which a general survey of at any rate a long portion of the story is attempted, a portion, moreover, which seems to me to be critical. There are, of course, many admirable partial studies, although some are now out of date and they usually treat the writings of an historian, or of the historians of a period, mainly as source material, on a par with other materials available to later scholars. Such are the masterly volumes of W. Wattenbach and O. Lorenz for Germany, and of A. Molinier for France. There is nothing, even old-fashioned, to compare with these books for England.[1] Let us nevertheless honour the erudition of Sir Thomas Duffus Hardy (1804-78), and salute Mrs Antonia Gransden, who has begun to produce what will be undoubtedly a very complete discussion of English narrative sources in the Middle Ages.[2] What I am concerned with is the evolution of a *genre*, not the

validation of authorities. Here we have only limited help from earlier books.

The intelligent, short but stimulating *Introduction to the History of History* by James T. Shotwell (1922) only goes to the brink of the Middle Ages. Other more ambitious books are scarcely worth reading, at any rate those that have come my way. The lengthy two-volume compilation by James Westfall Thompson, *A History of Historical Writing* (1942), is mainly scissors-and-paste; wherever one can check them, the facts are often wrong and the interpretation banal. The briefer work of Harry Elmer Barnes has the same title (1937) and is shorter, and that is about all one can say for it. Similar works of even less merit and sometimes of much greater tendentiousness exist in other languages; I was astonished at the fairly recent reprinting (1946) of G. Lefébure's inferior *cours de Sorbonne*. Recently there has fortunately been a new interest in historians as craftsmen, as men operating in a particular literary tradition. In particular, reference will be made in the following pages to several admirable works on one or two medieval chroniclers and Renaissance historians. But the only wide-ranging work which commands respect remains E. Fueter's *Geschichte der neueren Historiographie* (1911, and, despite claims of publishers, virtually not revised after the French translation of 1914: see below p.88 and p.196). Brilliant though the work of this Swiss journalist is, it is often over-schematic and some of his general ideas have to be treated with caution.

There are reasons enough why no one has produced the modern treatment which the subject needs. There is no history worth the name of Latin literature in the medieval and Renaissance periods. Histories of vernacular literatures normally ignore contemporary Latin works unless by authors who wrote in both a vulgar and a learned tongue; in English only C.S. Lewis's critical works earn added praise for the way they integrate discussion of English and Latin works in this way. Yet in most scholarly fields Latin writers were much more sophisticated and influential than vernacular writers, at any rate down to the seventeenth century. Most serious Latin prose in the Middle Ages was either exegetical, didactic or historical and there were legions of medieval historians. For half a

century they have been somewhat neglected. The Rolls Series in England came to an end in 1897; the German *Monumenta* has only just survived the second world war; the 'new' Muratori seems to have died. Despite the efforts of a handful of individual editors, one gets the feeling that this kind of scholarship is becoming a thing of the past. Just as schoolchildren are no longer expected to be able to spell or express themselves grammatically, so young historians are no longer expected to read foreign languages and the texts written in them.

The chapters that follow must inevitably appear unbalanced. My own small competence draws me to Britain, Italy and France. If I drag in a word on Spain, Germany or the northern world, if I venture a remark on a Byzantine historian, it is because they have imposed themselves on my ignorance, so to speak. (I can hear the cynical reader exclaim 'not *that* old *topos* again'.) Even a partial discussion seemed worthwhile rather than no survey at all and I can assure the reader that in some form or other I have actually read a decent part of the writers whose names appear below. The book may seem uneven in another way, since it moves occasionally from large scale generalisations to passages of detailed analysis. Such detail tends to occur when I have not found the matter dealt with adequately by others or to illustrate a point from somewhat inaccessible material.

It must again be stressed that what follows does not pretend to cover thoroughly the 'narrative sources', as the methodologists call this type of record. Of these there are multitudes, including a number of impressive writers, who are not mentioned. Nor does the book deal directly with 'speculative' history, those larger schemes from Polybius down to Vico and Marx which have strangely little influence on the actual writing of history. I have not been able to disregard such ideological forces entirely. The Bible and Joachim are mentioned, although providential history was singularly marginal to the practices of the chronicler, despite what Croce and Collingwood say. Had either of them actually read a thirteenth-century chronicle?

Finally, why this period? I am convinced that we must knock down the flimsy fences which have been erected between

'medieval' and 'modern'. In the Italy of the Renaissance, when these divisions were slowly erected, men rethought the past and there gradually emerged two manners of writing about events in time. There was the recording of contemporary events, which is broadly speaking what ancient historians and medieval chroniclers had concerned themselves with, and which humanist historians continued albeit in a more stylish Latin. But with the Renaissance there was also born the notion of looking at the past as the past, and so emerged the antiquary. Thus the Renaissance witnessed the division of what we would call history into two types of activity: some historians became antiquarians and some became men of letters; and of course some were a bit of both. These distinctions were not much affected by the passionate propaganda of many humanist hacks or by the poisonous fumes of the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation, and by the seventeenth century the antiquarian researchers had attained an extraordinary standard of scholarship, even if 'history' for most readers still meant the contemporary and political narrative, void of significant analysis. And then, by the second half of the eighteenth century, the historian and the antiquary came together. With Robertson and Gibbon we have practically arrived at the mature historiography which was to be so dominant an intellectual interest in the nineteenth century. All this I first said, though as an aside, both in a lecture of 1950 (*Scottish Historical Review*, xxx, 1951) and in my *Polydore Vergil* (1952). The argument now appears in a more extended form. I had indeed intended to prop it up still further by appending substantial lists of scholarly works produced by the *érudits* of the sixteenth, seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. But without a commentary I think this would have had little meaning and it would have turned an essay into a manual. As it is, the reader may sometimes feel there is too much name-dropping.

I do not think I should have realised that there was a place for some such book as this if I had not for many years taught much of the matter in it. I have done this at two levels. For twenty years I have had a graduate course, called, perhaps too grandly, 'An introduction to medieval and Renaissance bibliography'; the background of this was a list of books in

Edinburgh libraries (for how good they are see below, p.74), including a substantial section covering the scholarship discussed in what follows; latterly other colleagues have kindly assisted in this course. And ten years ago we began a remarkably tough undergraduate course in 'Theory and history of history'. This was started 'from an idea' (as they say in radio credits) of Dr Henry Kamen, then on the Edinburgh staff, but realised with the essential cooperation of my friend and colleague, Professor W.H. Walsh, and other members of the History and Philosophy Departments.

I must give my sincere thanks to Mr Tony Goodman for critical observations on this book, and likewise to the learned readers of the publisher for their perceptive observations. Of course I alone am responsible for errors of fact or judgment.

*Edinburgh,
December 1975*

DENYS HAY

1 Ancient Historians: Greeks and Romans

The chapter after this deals with another group of ancient historians, those whose writings form part of the Bible. The influence of the Bible on medieval historiography was to be far deeper than that of classical authors. Yet it seems sensible to begin with a short examination of the history written in Greece and Rome since from time to time during the Middle Ages, and with powerful persistence during and after the Renaissance, the writers of antiquity were regarded as models of both method and style. The word 'history' is itself, after all, a Greek word which came into European use through Latin. But it only occurs in the Latin Bible once or twice in the Apocrypha.

There is no need to attempt even a succinct account of classical historiography as such, partly because plenty of surveys already exist, partly because most classical historians are bad historians — or perhaps one should rather say that they were attempting to do something completely different from what is now regarded as the historian's task. This observation is less applicable to Greek writers than to Latin, but it was to be the Latin historians who were most influential in Western Europe down to the seventeenth century and many of their severer limitations were for long to frustrate the development of a sophisticated study of the past.

The three greatest Greek historians are Herodotus and Thucydides, who were both at work in the fifth century B.C., and Polybius, who lived in the second century B.C. Herodotus wrote about the war between Greeks and Persians which had ended in his boyhood, but he felt obliged to provide an elaborate geographical and social background to his work which takes him out of the contemporary world and out of his own milieu, thus compelling him to make comparisons (e.g.

between the chronologies accepted in Greece and Egypt) which in more propitious circumstances might have led him to a maturer sense of historical enquiry. In essence, however, Herodotus was a contemporary historian, differing from Thucydides only in that his canvas was much wider and he thus had to take great trouble to find out material which was not to hand. Thucydides, was, on the other hand, a statesman and soldier out of office, to be likened to Guicciardini or Clarendon and, like them, a severe and serious analyst of the events in which he had participated, the Peloponnesian war. Two centuries later Polybius came in many ways nearer to our modern notion of a historian: he was writing about a past which he had not witnessed; he was dealing with a problem and not merely telling a story or depicting a political situation. The period covered the years 221-144 B.C. and the problem was the rise in those years of the dominion of Rome in the Mediterranean area.

Rome never produced historians as inherently significant as these three Greeks.* But in the Latin west, Latin historians were later read as a part (admittedly not by any means indispensable) of the process of mastering the language, and we shall see that subsequently they were sometimes admired as models of the narrative genre. The notable Roman historians were: Caesar (d. 44 B.C.), Sallust (d. 34 B.C.), Livy (d. 17 B.C.), Tacitus (d. after 115 A.D.), and Suetonius (d. about 140 A.D.). The influence of these writers was exerted unevenly and Tacitus had to wait for the Renaissance before his work was rediscovered; indeed the emulation of Roman historiography as a mode of composition had in general to wait until the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It is interesting to note that the modern low estimation in which Latin historians are held was shown by the reading public of the Hellenistic world. Substantial portions of the historical works of the writers named have not survived; only of Caesar and Suetonius have we a fair amount of what they originally composed. There is every reason to suppose that the neglect which this suggests was

*It must be emphasised that in these pages I am not discussing the value of ancient historians as sources of information for the history of Greece and Rome.

evinced at an early date. It was the Romans who lost the missing Decades of Livy, preferring the epitomisers (Florus, for instance), and these epitomisers were also to be of use in the medieval world. This lack of interest of the latter day Latins for the best of their historians contrasts with the better preservation of the texts of Herodotus and Thucydides. If the text of Thucydides is admittedly incomplete this is probably because he continually revised it and it was never finished. Of Polybius only a small portion has survived. But the blame for this should presumably be laid at the door of the unappreciative Romans. All in all the respect of the Romans for their own past did not lead to a sustained interest in detailed narrative or analysis.

Roman historiography nevertheless had certain good features which should not be overlooked. Like many other historiographical traditions it derived from humble annals. (We shall encounter this process on two occasions in the medieval period.[1]) These annals are abrupt, undigested. They frequently related the important event alongside the ephemeral. It was the merit of the Roman historians, and notably Livy, to apply the canons of rhetoric to narration, to make the writing of history as serious an undertaking as any other form of composition. Hence the adornment of narrative with orations in both direct and indirect speech, the avoidance in the more classical writers of *recherché* expressions and unfamiliar words. The historian tried to grip his reader, if necessary in a poetical or mythological way, and was freer than the contemporary orator to deal with a large section of life. He could likewise regard his work as having a political and moral function. Polybius regarded it as axiomatic that 'The knowledge of past events is the sovereign corrective of human nature'. He added that this was the note 'on which almost all historians have begun and ended their work, when they eulogised the lessons of history as the truest education and training for political life'.[2] Livy's elaboration of this theme was to dominate medieval and Renaissance justification of the historian's activity.

What chiefly makes the study of history wholesome and profitable is this, that you behold the lessons of every kind of

experience set forth as on a conspicuous monument; from these you may choose for yourself and your own state what to imitate, from these mark for avoidance what is shameful in the conception and shameful in the result.[3]

In a later phrase: history was moral philosophy teaching by example.

It was also meritorious that classical literary theory accepted that the historian must at all costs seek out and set forth the truth. Here the weightiest statements come from Cicero's dialogue on rhetoric:

Who does not know history's first law to be that an author must not dare to tell anything but the truth? And its second that he must make bold to tell the whole truth? That there must be no suggestion of partiality anywhere in his writings? Nor of malice?

And in addition there should be a presentation not only moving but methodical:

The nature of the subject needs chronological arrangement and geographical representation: and since, in reading of important affairs worth recording, the plans of campaign, the executive actions and the results are successively looked for, it calls also, as regards such plans, for some intimation of what the writer approves, and, in the narrative of achievement, not only of a statement of what was done or said, but also of the manner of doing or saying it; and, in the estimate of consequences, for an exposition of all contributory causes, whether originating in accident, discretion or fool-hardiness; and as for the individual actors, besides an account of their exploits, it demands particulars of the lives of such as are outstanding in renown and dignity.[4]

This, one of the few statements of the theory of history in classical Rome, not unfairly represents the best of Greek and Roman practice.

Yet when all these solid advantages of the ancient historians are put in the balance they seem to be outweighed by even more striking defects. Cicero said — it is a pretty obvious point — that 'the nature of the subject needs chronological arrangement'. Even today, the sequence of the years lays a

heavy hand on the scholar. Earlier situations or pressures must be isolated and discussed before later ones. In the narratives which were to predominate in historical writing until a half-century ago chronology was even more important. Yet in classical antiquity there was virtually no system of chronology available to historians. In the absence of an era the clumsiest alternatives were adopted. The commonest reckoning of longish periods of time was by generations, but how erratic they may be appears from Herodotus where they are occasionally treated as lasting some twenty-three years, and at other times the more conventional third of a century. That Herodotus did some fairly sophisticated calculations with this blunt instrument is a tribute to his ingenuity, but would have been avoided if there had been a reasonable and recognised way of reckoning the passage of time. It is true that some Greeks used the Olympiad. This was a cycle of four years starting in what (in our terms) was 776 B.C. In using the Olympiad one had therefore to indicate which of the four years was being referred to. The Olympiad continued for centuries to have a shadowy official existence in Byzantium, and it is found (though rarely), along with other modes of calculating time, in the western Middle Ages. Livy invented a scheme of reckoning *Ab urbe condita*, from the foundation of Rome which, when transferred into modern reckoning, was supposed to have occurred in 753 B.C. But no one but Livy made much use of this era and even Livy himself often uses the more familiar reference to magistracies. Here is how Thucydides begins book II of his *History*. Let us remember that he is in most respects the ablest narrative historian of classical antiquity.

The war between the Athenians and Peloponnesians and their allies on either side now really begins.... The history follows the chronological order of events by summers and winters. The thirty-year truce which was entered into after the conquest of Euboea lasted fourteen years. In the fifteenth, in the forty-eighth year of the priestess-ship of Chrysis of Argos, in the Ephorate of Aenesias at Sparta, in the Archonship of Pythodorus at Athens, and six months after the battle of Potidaea, just at the beginning of spring....[5]

What Thucydides is warning his reader is that, after the initial indication of the exact date, he will be usually on his own, having to reckon the years for himself, season by season. And in reading ancient historians one is usually in doubt as to the year. It needs constant alertness not to lose oneself, an alertness one is usually spared by the careful apparatus of the modern editor. There were also stylistic pressures against littering the text with awkward references to archonships or consulates. 'This day was the fifth before the Kalends of April, in the consulship of Lucius Piso and Aulus Gabinius', is a sentence which must have seemed almost as ugly to Caesar in Latin as it looks in an English translation.[6]

Of course the annalistic framework within which even elaborate histories were written helped in such reckoning. History was about war and ancient war (like medieval war) tended to be an activity of the spring and summer. But to recall this is to encounter a further and perhaps more crippling limitation of ancient historiography and one which was to have unfortunate consequences in and after the Renaissance. For ancient historians did write almost exclusively about war and high-level diplomacy. This again is implicit in the passages from Polybius, Livy and Cicero quoted above. Polybius most explicitly states that history is a preparation for a full political life for important people:

The young are invested by it with the understanding of the old; the old find their actual experience multiplied by it a hundred-fold; ordinary men are transformed by it into leaders; men born to command are stimulated by the immortality of fame which it confers to embark upon noble enterprises; soldiers, again, are encouraged by the post-humous glory which it promises, to risk their lives for their country; the wicked are deterred by the eternal obloquy with which it threatens them from their evil impulses; and, in general, the good graces of History are so highly praised that some have been stimulated by the hope of them to become founders of states, others to introduce laws contributing to the security of the race, and others to make scientific or practical discoveries by which all mankind has benefited.[7]

In his ponderous way, leaving nothing to chance or

imagination, Polybius is addressing the governing class of the Hellenistic world for which he and other ancient historians wrote their works. The general and the legislator should study history if they wish to be successful.

It is indeed remarkable that of the three Greek historians named above two were important public figures and only Herodotus can be described as a scholar. Of the Romans, Caesar's historical works are commentaries on his public career; Sallust, Tacitus and Suetonius were prominent politicians; and only Livy was primarily a man of letters. It is hardly surprising that such men wrote of and for their own small segment of society. They lived in a largely illiterate world and in their concern for writing they constituted an élite within an élite. Their concerns were not with cultural or economic matters. They took for granted their mastery of the world and the security of its social basis. For them public affairs were predominantly, almost exclusively, the only thing that mattered and by public affairs they meant the military conquests of Greek and then Roman imperialism and the struggle between prominent leaders and their factions. The poor, the merchants, even the spiritual leaders were more or less totally ignored. It is also to be expected of such authors that they should in the main concern themselves with events they had directly observed rather than with a remoter antiquity. Only Polybius, as I have noted, is to be reckoned as totally concerned with events before his birth. Livy, who begins with Romulus and Remus, acknowledges that his contemporaries would prefer the history of their own day (pref., 4). Such a concentration on the familiar did not encourage writers or readers to look at a larger social context. They took the facts of their small world for granted. They wrote about each other. The point is worth stressing, since the Roman dominions covered large portions of three continents and the generals and proconsuls occasionally give the impression of being exposed to fruitful contact with new civilisations. Herodotus did have such a curiosity and his account of Egypt is a remarkably interesting portion of his book; and Tacitus in the *Germania* gave the only account we have of the primitive northern tribes who were later to master so much of the Roman world. But in general the cultural

ambience of the historians we have been discussing is extremely limited, their political circle narrowly circumscribed.

Since they were talking about grand people they used grand language. The science of verbal communication was called rhetoric and the rules that applied in antiquity both controlled the form and largely determined the language in which exposition was couched. Cicero, it is true, exempts the historian from the rigorous conventions that governed speech in the courts but in practice there are many speeches, in both direct and indirect diction, in all classical historians, and the conventional shape and ornamentation of ancient artistic prose permeates their works. The question of speeches is indeed a complicated one. During antiquity, the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, many occasions presented themselves for oratory that were not to be found later. Councils and committees could not be briefed with duplicated memoranda but had to hear lengthy verbal summaries; ambassadors tried by persuasive language to capture the sympathy of the court to which they were sent; in wars where critical actions were often fought by small units, troops were harangued by their commanding officers. Nevertheless, the historians who tried to provide so much correct oratory did so following the prescription of Greek rhetoric, which divided the matter into three types — the judicial (for use in law courts), the demonstrative (of which laudatory speeches, funeral orations and other set pieces are examples) and the deliberative, this last comprising the addresses referred to above — in governing assemblies, battlefields and so on. A recent authority gives us an indication of what this meant to Livy:

Of the surviving books ... by far the greater number of speeches are constructed according to the divisions of rhetorical theory. There is always a formal *exordium*, inserted by Livy himself if his source has plunged *in medias res*. The various methods of capturing the good will of an audience (*captatio benevolentiae*) can all be exemplified. A common form is a speaker's concentration of attention on himself ... as when Camillus in his speech opposing the projected transference of the capital to Veii, states in his

commencement that his return from exile is not from personal motives but to oppose the abandonment of Rome....[8]

And so to the end of the *exordium*. Then follows the 'statement of facts', the 'proof and refutation', and conclusion. [9]

Indeed the splendour of oratorical composition coloured all prose, and history more than most since the historian was allowed to use poetical language, employ unusual words, surprise with verbal paradoxes and delight with mazy patterns of phrases. For these adornments complicated lists of verbal devices were catalogued. In one celebrated manual of rhetoric we find 45 different 'figures of Diction', [10] which were of course the figures of speech which were to dominate stylistic prose in Latin and vernaculars almost to our own day; a selection of them was certainly drilled into pupils of some Edinburgh schools in the 1950s. Auerbach [11] has pointed out how the Roman historians from Sallust onwards took a more sombre view of life and expressed it in a gradually more colourful way. But he stresses how their view of life was uniformly aristocratic, how they looked down on the world and regarded the people with contempt tinged progressively with apprehension, until the process reaches its furthest development in the 'mannerism' of Ammianus Marcellinus, a general and historian who died at the end of the fourth century A.D.

It has seemed sensible to spend a short time dealing with ancient historians and with their rhetorical assumptions not only because of the influence they were to exert in the Renaissance and later but also because their influence was felt in many of the writings of the Christian Fathers; after all Eusebius, Jerome, Augustine and Orosius were roughly contemporaries of Ammianus Marcellinus and it will be argued that even the Venerable Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* is best regarded as coming at the end of the patristic and thus the classical tradition of historiography rather than at the beginning of a new medieval tradition.

It should not, of course, be assumed that all or even most of the Greek and Roman historians have been touched on. Many others have survived in even more fragmentary form than

those mentioned, and one or two longer works, such as Plutarch's parallel *Lives* (written about 110 A.D. in Greek), were to encourage the trend towards ethical historiography in the Renaissance. Nor was Greek rhetorical theory purveyed solely by Cicero or by the treatise *Ad Herennium* so long ascribed to him. Quintilian (who probably died soon after A.D. 100), in his *Institutio oratoria*, produced a sensible manual on education which was neglected by his contemporaries, was unknown in the Middle Ages, but, when rescued by Poggio in the early fifteenth century,[12] proved very much to the taste of humanist educators and writers.

Finally, a word of warning should be addressed to those who did not heed the initial remark that classical historians were not trying to do what modern historians aim for. Those who did seek a wider framework in which to place their story found themselves tied up in singularly unproductive schemes of causality which, indeed, inhibited any desire to explain. Speculative concepts of a pattern in the passage of time were to be found: a notion of change through which the Ages of the World progressed — poetically enough — from gold through silver, bronze and iron: the verse of Hesiod is appropriately the fullest statement of the theme which is found occasionally in later writers. The idea of decline had more artistic attraction than the cyclical theories of Plato in the *Timaeus*, though this was adopted by Polybius. The Wheel of Fortune is introduced to account for rapid transformations, but this is a literary device, more or less devoid of interpretative significance. In fact these cyclical or other cosmic schemes play very little part in the work of ancient historians.[13] Their consciousness of significant social or constitutional change was not much developed and in any case they accepted, more or less tacitly, that what really motivated day to day events was human nature. The engine of change was essentially moral. Men acted well from good instincts and their baser appetites made them act ill. It was because of this assumption that history could claim to be a teacher. 'Testis temporum, lux veritatis, vita memoriae, magistra vitae, nuntia vetustatis', these phrases from Cicero's *De Oratore*[14] were acceptable descriptions of the art because of the eternal fame or infamy that the true historian could confer.