

THE BYZANTINE ROLE IN THE MAKING OF THE CORPUS OF CLASSICAL GREEK HISTORIOGRAPHY: A PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION

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Abstract: The selective survival of the corpus of ancient Greek historiography was in large part due to Byzantine historical and religious interests, combined with the ancient valorization, on literary grounds, of the three Classical historians. Our corpus generally reflects the Byzantine interest in Roman history, especially regime-changes, and sacred history, especially the Hellenistic context of Jewish history. Selections from ancient historians dealing with those themes were, in some cases, circulating independently already from the tenth century. The Byzantines had little interest in Hellenistic or local histories. This paper concludes by examining two moments (or ‘indices’) of survival and selection, Photios’ *Bibliothēke* and the Constantinian *Excerpta*. Our corpus was largely in place by the time of the *Excerpta*, and the loss of some texts read by Photios may have been facilitated by the process of transliteration but was due to the same selective interests.

Keywords: Greek, historiography, Byzantium, selection, survival

Most ancient Greek literature that survives in the original was preserved by the Byzantines, barring texts found on papyrus and inscriptions. The purpose of this paper is to uncover the factors behind the selective transmission of ancient Greek historiography in Byzantium: why do we have the texts that we have? Certainly, a selective process was at work during antiquity itself, so that when Byzantine factors kicked in the corpus was neither ‘complete’ nor uniformly valorized. Choices and ‘market forces’ exerted during the Roman empire constrained and shaped the selection process in Byzantium. We shall consider this background where possible, but my focus will be on the Byzantine role, which was crucial in shaping the corpus that we have. Yet it has received little attention and some even imagine ‘our cherished texts as having survived in “cold storage” between late antiquity and the Renaissance’;¹ or ‘as if cultural goods existed in a sort of strong box, separated from the process by which one appropriates them’.² Byzantium does not appear in standard or introductory discussions of ancient Greek historiography.³ I will argue that the survival of texts was neither random nor a given and can partly be explained by reference to identifiable Byzantine interests.

The corpus promotes Byzantine interests precisely enough that a heuristic case can be made for reversing the normal relationship between classical and Byzantine historiography: instead of viewing the latter as a continuation of the former, the classical corpus may be viewed as a preface to the Byzantine one, shaped by processes of selection to play precisely that role. In many ways, it is the Byzantine historiographical corpus that explains the classical one, as later generations generally reshape the memory of the past to suit their own interests, which affects our access to earlier layers.⁴

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¹ O.L. Smith, ‘Medieval and Renaissance commentaries in Greek on classical Greek texts’, *C&M* 47 (1996) 391–405, at 395.

² R. Brague (tr. S. Lester), *Eccentric Culture: A*

Theory of Western Civilization (South Bend IN 2002) 150.

³ For example, R. Nicolai, *La storiografia nell’educazione antica* (Pisa 1992); J. Marincola, *Authority and Tradition in Ancient Historiography* (Cambridge 1997); J. Marincola (ed.), *A Companion to Greek and Roman Historiography* (Oxford 2007).

⁴ There is a large bibliography on this theme, which I omit to save space for the argument at hand.

There are several (mostly palaeographical) studies of the survival of specific authors through Byzantium, which sometimes attempt to explicate the factors behind it.⁵ But the latter rarely amount to more than the interests of a specific patron or writer who can be associated with a specific manuscript or, failing that, with an ancient text generally (perhaps because he cites it or refers to its author). These chance associations were but moments in a long history and do not reveal the structural aspects of Byzantine intellectual life. The present article will concentrate on broader factors in order to supplement general studies of the mechanisms and institutions behind the survival of Greek literature, such as the schools and libraries of the late Roman and Byzantine periods.⁶ These studies tend to consider survival as a formal process independent of the actual content of the works in question and, when it comes to historiography, they concentrate on the ‘classical’ authors (Herodotos, Thucydides and Xenophon), not the corpus of historiography as a whole. That corpus, I argue, was constituted in its present form by Byzantine intellectual needs and interests, which were not all classroom-oriented. Also, arguments that focus on war and fire (which certainly played a role) are better at explaining loss through random factors than survival through selective ones.⁷ It is not as if the Byzantines set out to keep everything but lost items along the way. Finally, most existing studies tend to focus on the survival of poetry rather than prose.

I have chosen historiography because it is a genre for which, I believe, we can show how Byzantine choices shaped its selective survival. Jacoby’s list of lost historians runs to over 850 names. He was inclusive in what he regarded as a historian, yet ‘of that vast historical literature only the tiniest portion has come down to us’,⁸ according to one estimate, 2%.⁹ A great deal had certainly fallen by the wayside by the later Roman period, but, even so, much more survived than we have now. Beyond that point, I will argue that our small surviving portion is not a random sample but reflects Byzantine priorities. We must become more self-conscious about the latter.

I will begin by exposing broad similarities between the Byzantine view of history, as found in original Byzantine works, and the surviving corpus of Greek historiography. I will then discuss specific aspects of the process of selection, as far as we can reconstruct it. The Byzantines’ view of history had a relatively fixed set of focal points. I will survey them and their genres as they evolved down to 1204, by which point most developments pertaining to the classical corpus had taken place. Byzantinists may find this summary elementary, but it is not meant for them.

The people we call Byzantines were in fact Romans, simply a later phase in the history of the Roman people, and their empire was the direct continuation of ancient Rome. Many of their historians even traced their history back to Troy via Aeneas. At the same time, the Byzantines were also Christians. Their history as a religious community was extensionally identical with their history as Romans ever since Constantine, the first Christian emperor. Between the reigns of Augustus and Constantine, Roman and Christian history shared the same physical space but followed parallel tracks. The reign of Augustus specifically had witnessed two events of decisive importance for the Byzantines’ view of history, who were not unmoved by their coincidence: the Incarnation (and so the beginning of Christian history proper) and the final regime-change

⁵ Cited by A. Kaldellis, ‘Classical scholarship in twelfth-century Byzantium’, in C. Barber and D. Jenkins (eds), *Medieval Greek Commentaries on the Nicomachean Ethics* (Leiden 2009) 1–43, at 5, n.7.

⁶ P. Lemerle, *Le Premier humanisme byzantin: notes et remarques sur enseignement et culture à Byzance des origines au Xe siècle* (Paris 1971); N.G. Wilson, *Scholars of Byzantium* (London 1983); G. Cavallo, ‘Conservazione e perdita dei testi greci: fattori materiali, sociali, culturali’, in A. Giardina (ed.), *Tradizione dei classici, Trasformazioni della cultura* (Rome 1986) 83–172; L.D.

Reynolds and N.G. Wilson, *Scribes and Scholars: A Guide to the Transmission of Greek and Latin Literature* (Oxford 1991). These are useful studies, but none of them discuss the factors that will be raised here.

⁷ For example, M. Finkelberg, ‘Regional texts and the circulation of books: the case of Homer’, *GRBS* 46 (2006) 231–48.

⁸ Marincola, ‘Introduction’, in Marincola (ed.) (n.3) 1.

⁹ G. Schepens, ‘History and *Historia*: inquiry in the Greek historians’, in Marincola (ed.) (n.3) 39–55, at 54, relying on H. Strasburger.

experienced by the Roman polity, this time into a monarchy whose history extended to the Byzantine present. Before the Incarnation, the history of the Christian community was symbolically prefigured in the history of the Jews in the Old Testament. This meant that the Byzantines inherited a tradition of defending Jewish history against competing claims by other cultures whose antiquities were prestigious in the Roman market of ideas, especially Egypt and Greece.¹⁰

These were the main focal points. Now let us survey the genres that presented this history. The history of these genres falls into two periods, the first being, at least from a literary point of view, a relatively stable one stretching from Constantine to the Islamic conquests (called either late antique or early Byzantine), followed by a more evolutionary phase from the eighth century on.¹¹ Early Byzantine historiography is characterized by three main genres: ‘classicizing’ military-political histories; ecclesiastical history; and world chronicles. The aim of the first was to recount, in a detailed way that relied on the models established by Herodotos and Thucydides, the wars and politics of a set period. Ecclesiastical history was inaugurated by Eusebios of Caesarea, whose work begins by bridging the gap between the Old and New Testaments and then traces the history of the Church within the empire. His successors extended that history to their own times but were increasingly (and self-consciously) forced to include more secular history, as Christian and Roman history had now fused.

As for the world chronicle, one of the goals of its Christian version (there were pagan ones too) was to coordinate, starting with the Creation and within the framework of the Old Testament narrative, the early history of the peoples of the Near East, especially the ones that were culturally prestigious (such as the Greek legends, mostly Euhemerized, and foundation stories) and those that were featured in the Bible and had chronologically helpful records (for example, Egypt). These works, and their middle Byzantine adaptations, display almost no interest in the later history of the Greek city-states, being more interested in the Persian empire, which was the context for much of the sacred history of the Old Testament. They were also uninterested in the Hellenistic era, with the exception of the (alleged) Ptolemaic patronage of the Septuagint and the Seleucid role in the Maccabee revolt.¹² They do, however, cover the history of Rome, from the Trojan refugees onward. Some chronicles, when they reached recent history, became summaries of the reigns of the Roman emperors. After all, by some point in their narratives of the Hellenistic period, the various strands of their story were reduced to two, i.e., Roman and sacred history, and those too entered closely parallel tracks in the reign of Augustus and then fused under Constantine into one narrative (that we call Byzantine). From the perspective of these works, Moses could be considered the first historian and Dares of Phrygia the first pagan historian, followed by Herodotos and the mythographers.¹³

In the middle Byzantine period, the chronicle genre exhibited the same biases in its coverage of ancient history, though the same material was reworked in different ways by individual authors. Compare, for example, the chronological coordination and precision attempted by Georgios Synkellos (*ca.* 800) to the stream-of-consciousness storytelling and moralizing of Georgios the Monk (*ca.* 875). In the 12th century, two Romano-centric general histories were produced, by Ioannes Zonaras and Konstantinos Manasses, whose coverage of Rome is prefaced by the usual material from the Old Testament and Greek myth with minimal or no coverage of

¹⁰ See P. Magdalino and R. Nelson (eds), *The Old Testament in Byzantium* (Washington DC 2010). For the defense of Jewish antiquities, see, among many studies, D. Ridings, *The Attic Moses: The Dependency Theme in Some Early Christian Writers* (Göteborg 1995).

¹¹ For surveys, see H. Hunger, *Die hochsprachliche profane Literatur der Byzantiner* I (Munich 1978); A. Karpozilos, *Βυζαντινοὶ ἱστορικοὶ καὶ χρονολογοὶ* (3

vols) (Athens 1997–2009); in general, see A. Kaldellis, ‘The corpus of Byzantine historiography: an interpretive essay,’ in P. Stephenson (ed.), *The Byzantine World* (London 2010) 211–22.

¹² E. Jeffreys, ‘The attitudes of Byzantine chronicles towards ancient history,’ *Byzantion* 49 (1979) 199–238.

¹³ B. Croke, ‘Late antique historiography, 250–650 AD,’ in Marincola (ed.) (n.3) 567–81, at 572.

the Classical Greek and Hellenistic periods, the latter again not focused on the Macedonian kingdoms. They share a bias in terms of coverage even though they are literarily quite different: Zonaras' is a huge and severe 18-book narrative while Manasses' is condensed, exciting and in verse. In their secular coverage, Byzantine chronicles avoid the middle Republic and focus on moments of regime-change, namely from the kings to the consuls and from the consuls to the triumvirs and then emperors. Psellos explains his jump from 'Publius Valerius' to Julius Caesar by stating that the consular government did not provide exemplars of extended personal rule (he was writing his history to give Michael VII advice on how to rule).¹⁴ Manasses also does not cover the Republic. Zonaras does cover it, but when he reaches 146 BC he admits that, in his island exile, he could find no books to bridge the gap to Sulla.¹⁵

The other main genre of middle Byzantine historiography we may call 'imperial biography' as it focuses on the reigns of individual emperors, whether to praise or condemn them. These politicized works became increasingly more detailed so that they came to revive the modes of classicizing historiography (speeches, detailed military narratives, attempts to find causes and even some ethnography).

Those were the main genres of Byzantine historiography and the periods that they covered. Let us consider now what has survived of ancient Greek historiography. We have the following complete texts: Herodotos, Thucydides, all the works of Xenophon, Josephos, Arrian's *Anabasis* (but not his Hellenistic histories) and Plutarch's *Lives* (taking them as a subgenre of historiography). We have substantial portions of Polybios, Diodoros of Sicily, Dionysios of Halikarnassos, Appian, Cassius Dio and Herodian. I will stop in the early third century as by then we are on the threshold of Byzantine historiography.¹⁶ Long fragments of others survive (though little by comparison to their original length), for example Ktesias, Berossos, Manetho and Nicholas of Damascus. The Oxyrhynchos Historian survives via a papyrus, so independently of the Byzantine tradition.¹⁷ How can our survey of Byzantine historiography account for the survival of these authors and the loss of perhaps hundreds of others?¹⁸

One answer for most of them is staring right at us. Polybios, Dionysios, Plutarch's *Roman Lives*, Appian, Dio and Herodian were preserved because they offered information about key periods of ancient Roman history. We have to stress again that the Byzantines were Romans and interested in their national past. But in the Eastern empire few had Latin before 600 AD and almost no one afterwards, so this history had to be preserved in Greek. In some cases the partial survival of these authors can be attributed to more specific aspects of the Byzantine historical outlook. It may not be by chance that only the first half of Dionysios survives, namely the books that cover Roman prehistory and the early Republic as opposed to his coverage of the middle Republic (his *Roman Antiquities* reached to the outbreak of the First Punic War in 20 books; we have all of the first ten, most of 11, so down to 443 BC, and only meagre fragments of the rest). Those first ten books are found by themselves already in manuscripts from the tenth and 11th centuries, which

¹⁴ W.J. Aerts, ed. and tr., *Michaelis Pselli Historia Syntomos* (Berlin and New York 1990) 10-11.

¹⁵ Zonar. *Chr.* 9.31 (T. Büttner-Wobst (ed.), *Ioannis Zonarae Epitomae historiarum* (3 vols) (Bonn 1841-1897) 2.297-98). As an exception, the distribution of Roman material in the *Souda* – not a work of history as such – favours the middle over the late Republic and early empire: G. Zecchini, 'La storia romana nella *Suda*', in G. Zecchini (ed.), *Il lessico Suda e la memoria del passato a Bisanzio* (Bari 1999) 75-88. For the *Souda*, see below.

¹⁶ The gap is bridged by P. Janiszewski, *The Missing Link: Greek Pagan Historiography in the Second Half*

of the Third Century and in the Fourth Century AD (Warsaw 2006).

¹⁷ P.R. McKechnie and S.J. Kern (eds and trs), *Hellenica Oxyrhynchia* (Warminster 1988).

¹⁸ I omit works in the Bible, such as the summary of Iason of Kyrene's five-book history of the Maccabees (i.e., 2 *Maccabees*), the Gospels and *Acts*, which could be (and were) regarded as historical, because their survival needs little explanation (though they challenge our notions both of 'Greek' and 'historiography'); cf. G.E. Sterling, *Historiography and Self-Definition: Josephos, Luke-Acts and Apologetic Historiography* (Leiden 1992).

means that this process of selection was already underway.¹⁹ Jumping over the middle Republic, again, just as do Byzantine chronicles, we find that the best-preserved parts of Appian and Dio are their coverage of the civil wars and the rise of Augustus and the monarchy.²⁰ Appian's *Civil War* is found separately in some of our manuscripts, but the earliest date to the 15th century, so we do not know when this part of the text was first separated from the rest. Dio's *Roman History* reached from Aeneas to the third century AD in 80 books. Again, we find that the best preserved of those, almost intact, cover the period of the civil wars of the late Republic and the first decades of the empire. The earliest manuscripts which contain this sequence of books (with slightly variable starting and ending points) date to the ninth or tenth century, suggesting an early selection (yet copies of the entire work were apparently available in the 12th century, as we will see).

The Byzantines were interested in Roman civil wars, being themselves addicted to them, specifically at the origin of the monarchy in which they were living. They always wanted to understand why they were living under an emperor. The foreign wars of the Republic interested them less, which explains the selective survival of Appian and Dio. In fact, an original argument about the sequence of events that destroyed the free Republic and created the monarchy was made by Ioannes Lydos in the sixth century, and his argument on behalf of Republican 'liberty' casts a shadow over the imperial state of his time. But Lydos, a professor of Latin, had access to many Latin sources.²¹ Later Byzantines had to rely on Greek sources, which are our focus. A forthcoming study proposes that Nikephoros Bryennios' account of the civil wars of the 1070s draws on precisely these Greek histories of civil war in ancient Rome.²²

The fate of Dio's *Roman History* nicely illustrates this thesis regarding the survival of the Greek historians of Rome. Among the versions in which it survives is the long epitome of many of its books made by a certain Ioannes Xiphilinos in the 1070s. When he reached the 'constitutional settlement' of 27 BC, he interjected the following in his own voice:

I will now recount each event to the degree that it is necessary, especially from this point on, because our own lives and *politeuma* depend fully on what happened at that time. I say this now no longer as Dio ... who lived under the emperors Severus and Alexander, but as Ioannes Xiphilinos, the nephew of the Ioannes the patriarch, who am composing this epitome of the many books of Dio under the emperor Michael Doukas.²³

Zonaras' coverage of Roman history also relies to a substantial degree on Dio, being in many sections a paraphrase of the *Roman History*. Zonaras also makes it clear that he regards the transformations in the Roman regime as determinative of political reality in his own time,²⁴ and he focuses extensively on the late Republic. Dio was apparently a widely read author in the 11th and 12th centuries, being cited also by Kekaumenos, the author of a book of maxims (he calls him 'Dio the Roman' and the words that he cites do not appear in any of the fragments that we have, suggesting that he had access to a fuller text).²⁵

¹⁹ Information about manuscript traditions is taken from the website *Pinakes: Textes et manuscrits grecs* published by the Institut de recherche et d'histoire des textes, a unit of the French CNRS (<http://163.9.69.18/>). For individual authors, see the bibliography in K. Friis-Jensen, B.M. Olsen and O.L. Smith, 'Bibliography of classical scholarship in the Middle Ages and the early Renaissance (9th to 15th centuries)', in N. Mann and B.M. Olsen (eds), *Medieval and Renaissance Scholarship* (Leiden 1997) 197–259. We lack the Greek equivalent of L.D. Reynolds, *Texts and Transmission: A Survey of the Latin Classics* (Oxford 1983).

²⁰ A.M. Gowing, *The Triumviral Narratives of Appian and Dio Cassius* (Ann Arbor 1992).

²¹ See A. Kaldellis, 'Republican theory and political dissidence in Ioannes Lydos', *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 29 (2005) 1–16.

²² L. Neville, *Heroes and Romans in Twelfth-Century Byzantium: The 'Material for History' of Nikephoros Bryennios* (Cambridge 2012).

²³ U.P. Boissevain (ed.), *Cassii Dionis Cocceiani historiarum romanarum quae supersunt* (5 vols) (Berlin 1895–1931) 3.526; in general, F. Millar, *A Study of Cassius Dio* (Oxford 1964) 1–4.

²⁴ For example, Zonar. *Chr.* 3.3 (n.15).

²⁵ Kekaumenos, *Strategikon* 5 (M.D. Spadaro (ed. and tr.), *Cecaumeno: Raccomandazioni e consigli di un galantuomo* (Alessandria 1998)).

Polybios' account of the expansion of the Roman Republic was used as a foil by two Byzantine historians to describe later imperial declines, by Zosimos in *ca.* 500 ('Polybios' is his first word) and Attaleiates in 1078 (using him implicitly). Both included extended comparisons between the wicked Roman present in which they lived and the virtuous age of the Republic described by Polybios.²⁶ Polybios, along with a minority of Plutarch's Roman *Lives*, seem to have been the Byzantines' main source for the wars and heroes of the middle Republic, and that is why they are also our main source for them. Roman history was used by Byzantine writers not only in contrast to imperial decline in the present but also, when the empire was expanding, as a panegyric comparison. Dionysios' *Roman Antiquities* is cited many times by Leon the Deacon, who wrote classicizing accounts of the triumphal reigns of Nikephoros II Phokas (963–969) and Ioannes Tzimiskes (969–976), and his panegyric source for Tzimiskes' 971 Balkan campaign modelled its description of the intervention of St Theodoros in battle on ancient accounts of the ride of the Dioscuri at Lake Regillus; it also modelled its account of Tzimiskes' triumph in Constantinople on the triumph in Rome of Camillus as described in Plutarch's *Life*.²⁷ Emperors and generals were compared to Scipio, Fabius and other Roman heroes throughout the Byzantine period. In short, the Byzantines preserved the Greek histories of Rome because they wanted to know about their own past and to find templates and models by which to frame their own successes and failures.

A word on Plutarch. Although we do not yet have a study of his reception in Byzantium, his survival was due to a combination of factors that went beyond the historical and included his philosophical, ethical and encyclopaedic merits as well as literary style. These aspects are praised in the long essay on him by the 14th-century statesman Theodoros Metochites, who presents Plutarch as an ideal sage.²⁸ When Ioannes Mauropous prayed, in the 11th century, that Christ spare Plato and Plutarch because their spirits had such affinity with divine law, he was not thinking of Plutarch as a biographer.²⁹ His *Lives* were not exclusively Roman, of course, and they may well have been read in the spirit in which they were written, as didactic character-studies. But inferences can be made about the interest that was taken in the Roman ones which may have contributed to their survival. Of the 25 extant Roman *Lives*, two are of the founder-kings of Rome, three of statesmen of the early Republic, five of the middle Republic, 13 of the late Republic and two of emperors. A *Scipio Africanus* has been lost along with *Lives* of the emperors from Augustus to Vitellius (only Galba and Otho survive).³⁰ The balance again favours the origins of Rome, the crisis of the later Republic and the first emperors. The *Lives*, whether of monarchs or Republican leaders, had a competitive advantage in the Byzantine context over general histories, which was

²⁶ Zos. 1.1, 1.57, 1.5 for his argument against monarchy; see F. Paschoud, *Cinq études sur Zosime* (Paris 1975) 1–23; F. Paschoud, 'Influences et échos des conceptions historiographiques de Polybe dans l'antiquité tardive', *Fondation Hardt pour l'étude de l'antiquité classique, Entretiens* 20 (1974) 305–44. For Attaleiates' comparison between ancient and modern Romans, see A. Kaldellis, 'A Byzantine argument for the equivalence of all religions: Michael Attaleiates on ancient and modern Romans', *IJCT* 14 (2007) 1–22; for his use of Polybios, D. Krallis, *Michael Attaleiates and the Politics of Imperial Decline in Eleventh-Century Byzantium* (Tempe AZ 2012) chapter 2.

²⁷ A. Kaldellis, 'The original source for Tzimiskes' Balkan campaign (971) and the emperor's classicizing propaganda', *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 37 (2013).

²⁸ Metochites, *Moral Maxims* 71 ('On Plutarch') (K.

Hult (ed. and tr.), *Theodore Metochites On Ancient Authors and Philosophy* (Semeioseis gnomikai 1–26 and 71) (Göteborg 2002) 218–43). For Plutarch in Photios, see J. Schamp, 'La réception de l'histoire chez Photios sous bénéfice d'inventaire', in I. Lewandowski and L. Mrozewics (eds), *L'Image de l'antiquité chez les auteurs postérieurs* (Poznań 1996) 9–26, at 13–17.

²⁹ Mauropous, *Epigram* 43; (P. de Lagarde (ed.), *Iohannis Euchaitorum metropolitae quae in Codice Vaticano Graeco 676 supersunt* (Göttingen 1882)).

³⁰ K. Herbert, 'The identity of Plutarch's lost *Scipio*', *AJPh* 78 (1957) 83–88; P.A. Stadter, 'Revisiting Plutarch's *Lives of the Caesars*', in A. Pérez Jiménez and F. Titchener (eds), *Valori letterari delle opere di Plutarco* (Málaga and Logan UT 2005) 419–36; for other lost lives, see C.J. Tuplin, 'Pausanias and Plutarch's Epaminondas', *CQ* 34 (1984) 346–58. For works extant in the middle Byzantine period but since lost, see below.

that they could serve as models for the genre of imperial biography, and it has been proposed that some of them did just that.³¹ Put differently, Plutarch's *Lives* were the only models that the Byzantines had for writing biographies of important Romans and may have provided templates for the elusive genre of 'secular hagiography'.³² We have seen that the *Camillus* was used as a model for Tzimiskes' triumph in 971, not only the writing of it but the staging itself of the triumph.³³ But my theory cannot explain the loss of most of Plutarch's imperial lives.

Let us turn to other historians. Diodoros of Sicily's *Historical Library*, especially its earlier books, was useful for a different purpose: as a 'universal history' it loosely coordinated accounts of the mythistorical origins of the peoples of the ancient world. It contained important material for a project that was crucial to Byzantine chronographers and Christian apologists, but Diodoros presented that material at greater length than they wanted to reproduce in their own works. The *Library* was originally in 40 books, though only 15 of them survive in full: 1–5 (prehistory) and 11–20 (a general coordinating Mediterranean history of ca. 500–300 AD). Interestingly, these two clusters survived in separate manuscript traditions attested as early as the tenth century, unlike books 21–40, covering the Hellenistic period, which are entirely lost except for fragments. A complete manuscript of Diodoros was seen in the palace library in 1453.³⁴ Still, his earlier sections survive because their diffusion was likely more widespread compared to that of the later ones, and this, I will argue, was partly due to the Byzantines' lack of interest in the Hellenistic period. Moreover, in his preface Diodoros consolidated arguments for the importance of history, a repository useful to Byzantine authors who wanted to preface their own narratives with such programmatic claims.³⁵ Incidentally, it is precisely because they contributed to the project of coordinating the chronologies of 'barbarian' traditions that passages of Berossos and Manetho were preserved, albeit indirectly, through Judeo-Christian authors who wanted to challenge the claims of both Babylonians and Egyptians. It seems that pagan writers paid those authors little attention. One historian, however, who did preserve fragments of those two authors was Josephos, whose apologetic aims ran parallel to those of later Christians (and Byzantines). This is no small debt that we owe to the latter, then: Manetho's organization of Egyptian history into dynasties 'has formed the cornerstone of the historical study of Egypt to the present day'.³⁶

A similar concern explains the survival in full of most works by Josephos. He too seems to have been ignored by his co-religionists in antiquity and by all non-Christian authors.³⁷ He owes his survival solely to Christian historical apologetics because he defended Jewish antiquities, i.e. the Old Testament, against the claims of rival peoples, especially Greeks and Egyptians, and wrote

³¹ R.J.H. Jenkins, 'Constantine VII's portrait of Michael III', *Académie Royale de Belgique: Bulletin de la Classe des Lettres et des Sciences morales et politiques* 5.34 (1948) 71–77; R.J.H. Jenkins, 'The classical background of the *Scriptores post Theophanem*', *DOP* 8 (1954) 13–30.

³² P. Alexander, 'Secular biography in Byzantium', *Speculum* 15 (1940) 194–209; J. Ljubarskij, 'Nikephoros Phokas in Byzantine historical writings: traces of the secular biography in Byzantium', *Byzantinoslavica* 54 (1993) 245–53. See now, M. Gallina, 'Genere letterario e modelli classici: la *Vita Basilii* come esempio di *Kaiserbild*', in C.D. Fonseca and V. Sivo (eds), *Studi in onore di Giosuè Musca* (Bari 2000) 189–99, especially 196–97.

³³ M. McCormick, *Eternal Victory: Triumphal Rulership in Late Antiquity, Byzantium and the Early Medieval West* (Cambridge and Paris 1986) 174.

³⁴ Konstantinos Laskaris, *De scriptoribus Graecis*

Patria Siculis in *PG* 161: 917–18. For the argument of the first five books, see now I. Sulimani, *Diodorus' Mythistory and the Pagan Mission: Historiography and Culture-heroes in the First Pentad of the Bibliothek* (Leiden and Boston 2011).

³⁵ A. Kaldellis, 'The historical and religious views of Agathias: a reinterpretation', *Byzantion* 69 (1999) 206–52; in general, H. Lieberich, *Studien zu den Proömien in der griechischen und byzantinischen Geschichtsschreibung* (2 vols) (Munich 1898–1900). See below for Prokopios.

³⁶ J. Dillery, 'Greek historians of the Near East: Clio's "Other" Sons"', in Marincola (ed.) (n.3) 221–30, at 225.

³⁷ A. Momigliano, *On Pagans, Jews, and Christians* (Hanover NH 1987) 108–19; in detail, H. Schreckenberg, *Die Flavius-Josephus-Tradition in Antike und Mittelalter* (Leiden 1972); L. Feldman and G. Hata (eds), *Josephus, Judaism, and Christianity* (Detroit 1987).

an account of the war between the Romans and Jews that reinforced Byzantine views of those events, provided a historical background for the New Testament and fulfilled prophecies about the destruction of the Temple. According to the new dispensation, the Jews had to be displaced from Jerusalem and so from the stage of sacred history to make way for Christian Romans. What better than for this to be done by pagan Romans, who, the Byzantines knew with hindsight (though Josephos did not), would become the new bearers of God's Word? Josephos was the most highly regarded Jew in Byzantium, but only because he was perceived to have moved away from Judaism and embraced a Scriptural-Hellenic standard with which many Byzantines identified. 'Philo and Josephos', wrote Metochites, 'became more famous than any other Jews from time immemorial for having acquired Greek wisdom in addition to their ancestral beliefs'.³⁸ In sum, both Manetho and Josephos survive because they served the needs of early Byzantine apologetics.

It is also not surprising that the Byzantines kept histories of Alexander the Great (in Plutarch, Diodoros and Arrian, the latter as much a model of style as a historical source). Although they had little interest in either Greek or Hellenistic history, Alexander was an object of fascination at Rome and among all cultures who were touched by him, and beyond. There was in Byzantium a developed 'vernacular' tradition that complemented the many versions of the *Alexander Romance* in circulation.³⁹ Alexander was a folkloric and not only historical figure.

This leaves the three 'Classical' historians: Herodotos, Thucydides and Xenophon. Why did they survive and why in their entirety? I will examine each in turn, but first want to mention a factor which qualifies my thesis that it was the Byzantines who defined the corpus of Greek historiography. These historians had attained canonical status *as authors* already in antiquity for their style, innovative forms, philosophical orientation and importance for understanding a period of Greek history that had, by the early Roman empire at the latest, come to be recognized as 'Classical'.⁴⁰ Fifth-century Greece became a point of reference for comparison and allusion, and an organizing principle for the markers of élite education. It was not so much the history itself that mattered as the common reference and the models it offered for imitation. The historians and many of the poets offered crucial access to it. Their views and style provoked debate in the Roman period among theorists engaged precisely in the project of adapting the Classical past for present use.⁴¹ In his polemical work on *How History Should Be Written*, Lucian reveals that it was Herodotos and Thucydides whom aspiring historians were trying to imitate, and he himself could only recommend a more faithful and substantive imitation of them.⁴²

These authors had become 'canonical' in antiquity itself and their heroes and narratives had to be known by anyone who considered himself educated. This was not true of, say, Hekataios, Hellanikos, Ephoros or Theopompos. This continued in Byzantium. To give a minor example, in the late 12th century, Michael Choniates, bishop of Athens, referred in a letter to 'the plague that fell on Attica, having its origin in Ethiopia – you know the one, for how not? Surely you have it by heart'.⁴³ It would have been vulgar to name it. To Photios, it was ludicrous for a historian to claim that he rivalled Herodotos or Thucydides, but one could boast of having surpassed Hellanikos or Philistos.⁴⁴ The former were not just historians but literary standards. Their works survived independently of the Byzantines' historical interests. But I propose that the Byzantines were drawn to them for historical reasons too, especially Herodotos.

³⁸ Metochites, *Moral Maxims* 16.1.9 (n.28) 152–53.

³⁹ C. Jouanno, *Histoire merveilleuse du roi Alexandre maître du monde* (Paris 2009).

⁴⁰ E.L. Bowie, 'Greeks and their past in the Second Sophistic', *Past and Present* 46 (1970) 3–41. For ancient historical canons, see Nicolai (n.3) 250–339, a technical study of the Alexandrian catalogues that bears on the question of survival only indirectly. For the three

classical historians, see Cavallo (n.6) 130–42.

⁴¹ To cite two well known works, D.H. *Th.*; Plu. *De mal. Her.*

⁴² Lucian, *Hist. Conscr.*, especially 2, 15, 18–19, 25–26, 53–54.

⁴³ F. Kolovou (ed.), *Michaelis Choniatae epistulae* (Berlin 2001) *ep.* 32.5.

⁴⁴ Phot. *Bibl.* 176 (Theopompos); *cf.* Schamp (n.28) 21.

For Christian and Byzantine readers, Herodotos documented the rise of Cyrus and the Persian empire, the stage for so much of the Old Testament, as well as the culture of Egypt before the Persian conquest. He could be read as a historian of the Near East at a critical moment in sacred history, a secular complement to Scripture. The chronicle of Georgios Monachos, for instance, moves from the kings of Jerusalem to those of Persia, whom he takes in order (including ‘Darius the Mede’ from Esther) down to Alexander, who is then followed only by Antiochos IV Epiphanes and his son, and then by Caesar and Augustus.⁴⁵ He was not following Herodotos here but mostly the Bible and Josephos, and was more religiously oriented than any other Byzantine historian, but he shows how the second half of the first millennium BC might have appeared to a Byzantine. In his summary of Herodotos in the *Bibliothèque*, Photios focuses exclusively on the succession of Persian kings, including their usurpations, as if Herodotos had written a *Persika*.⁴⁶ This reading does contain a kernel of truth: the backbone of the *Histories* (including the ethnographic *logoi*) is the sequence of the Persian kings and their conquests.

Photios found Eastern kingdoms more interesting than the Greek states. It has been proposed that, as a Christian Roman, he ‘was interested mainly in the succession of empires in the east (Persia, Macedonia, and Rome)’.⁴⁷ Even when he is summarizing early Byzantine historians (Prokopios and Theophylaktos), Photios focuses on their coverage of the wars with Persia, sometimes exclusively so.⁴⁸ It is worth saying a few words about the *Bibliothèque* because we will return to it when we identify stages in the loss of ancient texts. There was a personal reason why Photios was interested in Persia, beyond its importance for the Byzantine conception of sacred history. He begins his preface by alluding to an embassy to the ‘Assyrians’ (i.e. the Caliphate) to which he had been posted.⁴⁹ It is possible that ‘Persia’ was on his mind for that reason and stayed there after what he saw there (if he actually went). This might explain his bias in favour of Persian material. It is to this also that we owe his long abridgment of the *Persika* and *Indika* of Ktesias of Knidos (fragments of which survive in Diodoros, Plutarch and Athenaios).⁵⁰ We must remember that the survival of some authors or passages was due to idiosyncratic interests and not always to cultural trends (just as their loss sometimes confounds expectations, for example Plutarch’s *Lives* of the first Caesars).

Likewise, in his review of Arrian’s lost *Parthika* (cod. 58), a work narrating Rome’s wars against the Parthians, Photios dwells entirely on the origins of the Parthians, revealing the same eastern bias as in his summary of Herodotos. And while he had all of Appian’s *Roman History* (57), Photios’ summary focuses exclusively on the foundations of Rome, the kings and then on the civil wars, mirroring the general Byzantine bias in the preservation of Roman histories and the composition of new ones. Here a specific scholar’s preferences tally exactly (but independently) with the state of an author’s preservation, strengthening the argument for deliberate choices.

⁴⁵ C. de Boor (ed.) *Georgii Monachi Chronicon* (2 vols) (Stuttgart 1904) 1.270–93.

⁴⁶ Phot. *Bibl.* 60, a perspective given a modern twist by A. Momigliano, *The Classical Foundations of Modern Historiography* (Berkeley 1990) chapter 1. For Photios, see T. Hägg, *Photios als Vermittler antiker Literatur: Untersuchungen zur Technik des Refierens und Exzerpieren in der Bibliothèque* (Stockholm 1975); W. Treadgold, *The Nature of the ‘Bibliotheca’ of Photios* (Washington DC 1980); Schamp (n.28). For *Persika*, see D. Lenfant, ‘Greek historians of Persia’, in

Marincola (ed.) (n.3) 200–09.

⁴⁷ D. Mendels, ‘Greek and Roman history in the *Bibliotheca* of Photius – a note’, *Byzantion* 56 (1986) 196–206, at 204.

⁴⁸ Phot. *Bibl.* 63 (Prokopios), 65 (Theophylaktos).

⁴⁹ W. Treadgold, ‘Photius before his patriarchate’, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 53 (2002) 1–17.

⁵⁰ Phot. *Bibl.* 72 (Ktesias); L. Llewellyn-Jones and J. Robson, *Ktesias’ History of Persia: Tales of the Orient* (New York 2010).

As for Thucydides, the Byzantines had no interest in the Greek city-states or the Peloponnesian War. That is not why he survived. Rather, in addition to the reasons given above, he had become, already in antiquity, a model of elevated Attic style, which many Byzantines imitated. He was also a model for writing a kind of history focused on military and political affairs, studiously impersonal and neutral, and severe in presenting facts and verdicts. What he actually wrote *about* was less important. Like many ancient historians, Byzantine historians wrote narratives as trained rhetoricians. It was the tradition of rhetorical treatises and exercises, including *progymnasmata* and *ekphraseis*, that trained them to write complex prose histories. They practised with speeches for different occasions, character-studies (*ethopoieiai*), and detailed and vivid descriptions of objects and events (*ekphraseis*).⁵¹ These rhetorical trial-runs and mock pieces borrowed many of their themes from history. 'It is generally accepted that ancient historiography is in some sense rhetorical; what is interesting here is that ancient rhetoric turns out to be so historical. History was at the center of a young man's training ... one could not learn how to argue without learning how to argue about history'.⁵² Libanios' first *ekphrasis*, in his collection of exercises, is a land battle.⁵³

Whereas modern readers of Thucydides are ready to see him as a pioneer analyst, Byzantine readers saw his *History* as a set of templates for speeches, battles, sieges, plagues and political revolutions. Even the Melian Dialogue found at least one later imitator.⁵⁴ In fact, an obstacle that the modern study of the Byzantine historians faced was the suspicion that their accounts of sieges and plagues were copied verbatim from Classical authors, especially Thucydides, and so did not reflect contemporary reality. That accusation has been shown to be misleading.⁵⁵ It has recently been pointed out, however, that we have no direct imitations of these Thucydidean set-pieces between the later seventh and early 14th century, though many both before and after. At any rate, Thucydides always remained a linguistic and stylistic model.⁵⁶ He was a textbook of sorts, yet not due to interest in the Peloponnesian War.

We come, finally, to Xenophon. What we would like to account for is not just the survival of his historical works but of his entire corpus, something that happened with extremely few ancient writers. In antiquity itself, Byzantium and early modern times, Xenophon was considered one of the best writers, not only for the clarity of his prose but the depth of his philosophical, political and ethical reflections. In this respect, his survival paralleled that of Plutarch. Byzantines of all periods expressed their admiration for him and some took knowledge of his historical works for granted in addressing their readers.⁵⁷ An original poem that was written to accompany an edition of the *Education of Cyrus* and the *Anabasis*, that was given to Leon VI, begins as follows:

⁵¹ See Nicolai (n.3) 32–176 for ancient historians.

⁵² C.A. Gibson, 'Learning Greek history in the ancient classroom: the evidence of the treatises on *Progymnasmata*', *CPh* 99 (2004) 103–29, at 116; see now, P.-L. Malosse, M.-P. Noël and B. Schouler (eds), *Clio sous le regard d'Hermès: l'utilisation de l'histoire dans la rhétorique ancienne de l'époque hellénistique à l'Antiquité tardive* (Alessandria 2010).

⁵³ C.A. Gibson, *Libanios's Progymnasmata: Model Exercises in Greek Prose Composition and Rhetoric* (Atlanta 2008) 429–33.

⁵⁴ Prokopios *Wars* 6.6.4–12.

⁵⁵ A. Kaldellis, *Procopius of Caesarea: Tyranny, History, and Philosophy at the End of Antiquity* (Philadelphia 2004) chapter 1; for the plague, see A. Kaldellis, 'The literature of plague and the anxieties of piety in sixth-century Byzantium', in F. Mormando and T. Worcester (eds), *Piety and Plague: From Byzantium*

to the Baroque (Kirksville MO 2007) 1–22.

⁵⁶ D.R. Reinsch, 'Byzantine adaptations of Thucydides', in A. Rengakos and A. Tsakmakis (eds), *Brill's Companion to Thucydides* (Leiden 2006) 755–78, especially 758–59.

⁵⁷ For example, Eun. *VS* (the preface is a praise of Xenophon, which has not yet been explained by scholars); Ioannes Kinnamos *History* 1.1 in *PG* 133: 312; Metochites *Moral Maxims* 20 ('On Xenophon') (n.28) 184–91; and the poem in the next note. Indirect use: Basil of Caesarea *How Young Men Ought to Study Hellenic Literature* 5: 'Choice of Herakles', on which see E.L. Fortin, 'Basil the Great and the Choice of Hercules: a note on the Christianization of a pagan myth', in J.B. Benestad (ed.), *The Birth of Philosophic Christianity: Studies in Early Christian and Medieval Thought* (Lanham 1996) 153–68; see below for Choniates.

Nothing is as pleasant as an ancient text oozing with Attic eloquence, especially if it lucidly shows the truth and depicts the state of affairs; then it teaches the wise and renders them even wiser so that they know what to do in life. For it provides courage and readiness for action, procures the most accurate insights and renders the young more mature and aged through its lessons in ancient lore. Speak up, Xenophon, in support of what I am saying!⁵⁸

This nicely encapsulates the reasons for Xenophon's survival. He was esteemed as an author, not just a historian. Unlike most of the other historians, he wrote in many genres. His works were often placed together in manuscripts, indicating that they were prized more for being his than as histories.⁵⁹ We do not yet have studies of his reception in Byzantium, but I will offer remarks that may explain the interest in his historical works specifically.

The Education of Cyrus is, of course, about the founder of the Persian empire, a topic of great importance in the Byzantine scheme, and was used as such,⁶⁰ while the *Anabasis* is both about a later phase in the Persian empire's history and also about territories that would become the eastern borderlands of the Byzantine empire (though I have not yet found a Byzantine author who uses it for that reason). The beginning of the *Anabasis* is also a story of palace intrigue and provincial rebellion, a story close to the Byzantines' own experiences. Niketas Choniates began his history of the Komnenoi by evoking the opening scenes of the *Anabasis*, and his story was accordingly one of intrigue and rebellion.⁶¹ *The Education of Cyrus*, conversely, could be read as a panegyric biography of a great king and general, and so offered inspiration for similar accounts of Byzantine emperors, or at least some flattering comparisons.⁶² As for the *Hellenika*, it is a patent continuation of Thucydides, and was perhaps preserved as such (the Byzantines liked historical 'continuations', and produced many themselves).

By what point had the Byzantine 'canon' of ancient historiography come into being? We can discern it already in Prokopios, who was widely read later. It is apparent from the first words of his *Wars* that he took Herodotos and Thucydides as his main models. In addition, one key passage has been shown to be modelled directly on Xenophon's *Hellenika* (albeit without attribution, so that we would never know it if the latter had not survived).⁶³ Let us consider the authors whom Prokopios uses in the preface to the *Buildings*, a panegyric of Justinian laced with ambiguous references. The only text he cites by name is Xenophon's *Education of Cyrus*, while his comparison of Justinian to 'Themistokles, son of Neokles' alludes to Plutarch's *Themistokles*.⁶⁴ Moreover, Prokopios lifts arguments in favour of history from Diodoros and the preface of his *Buildings* responds to Dionysios' *Roman Antiquities*.⁶⁵ We can then conclude that this set of authors constituted a kind of canon already in the sixth century, but this hardly means that others had ceased to be available or were not also used in the same way: how would we recognize their influence, given that they are lost to us? We will have to find other ways to gauge when texts were lost. But there were patterns in this loss that can help us understand the overall process.

⁵⁸ The poem is in *Parisinus graecus* 1640 (ca. 1320 AD), an important witness to Xenophon, based on an early tenth-century original: A. Markopoulos, 'Ἀποσημειώσεις στὸν Λέοντα ΣΤ' τὸν Σοφὸ', in *Θυμίαμα στη μνήμη της Λασκαρίνας Μπούρα* (2 vols) (Athens 1994) 1.193–201; M. Lauxtermann, *Byzantine Poetry from Pisides to Geometres* (Vienna 2003) 208–12.

⁵⁹ For example, *Vaticanus graecus* 1335 of the tenth century contains the *Education of Cyrus* along with the *Anabasis*, *Apology*, *Hieron*, *Politeia Lakedaimonion*, *Politeia Athenaiion* and *Poroi*. There are other such manuscripts from later centuries.

⁶⁰ For example, by Zonaras: Karpozilos (n. 11) 3.470.

⁶¹ A. Kaldellis, 'Niketas Choniates: paradox,

reversal, and the meaning of history', in A. Simpson and S. Efthymiades (eds), *Niketas Choniates: A Historian and a Writer* (Geneva 2009) 75–99, at 80–81.

⁶² For example, Prokopios *Buildings* 1.1.12 and the texts cited above, some of which (Kinnamos and the *Par. gr.*) invoke Cyrus to praise Byzantine emperors.

⁶³ C. Pazdernik, 'Xenophon's *Hellenika* in Procopius' *Wars*: Pharnabazus and Belisarius', *GRBS* 46 (2006) 175–206.

⁶⁴ Prokopios *Buildings* 1.1.7, 1.1.12–16; see Kaldellis (n.55) (2004) 51–56.

⁶⁵ P. Cesaretti, 'All'ombra di una preterizione: Proc. *Aed.* I 1,1', *Rivista di studi bizantini e neoellenici* 45 (2008) 153–78.

One obvious pattern is the almost total loss of Hellenistic historiography, both that produced during the Hellenistic age and that which later recounted its history. Polybios is not really an exception, for he was preserved as a historian of the rise of Rome. Byzantium is often presented as an outgrowth of 'Hellenistic' culture, but this is misleading, in part because the Byzantines had no interest in Hellenistic history, politics or philosophy. They preserved from this period only a few poems that had little to do with history and some texts about episodes in sacred history. Even the *Souda*, which contains more information about Greek history than do Byzantine chronicles – its aim was to help explain references in literature, not teach history, and it was based more on scholia and lexika than narrative texts – contains few Hellenistic entries.⁶⁶ Yet, judging from Jacoby, the Hellenistic output accounted for the bulk of Greek historiography. It is likely that the appeal of these works had declined already in the imperial period, as their style was condemned by the Atticists and the triumph of Rome had made their protagonists irrelevant, except locally. We will see below how and when possible survivors were allowed to lapse during the middle Byzantine period.

Another pattern is the almost complete loss of local historiography and antiquarianism. Not one of hundreds of such works has survived (unless we count Pausanias), though fragments were preserved as scholia, in quotations or in encyclopaedic works such as the *Souda*. This collapse probably occurred in the Byzantine period and not in antiquity, for in late antiquity the *patria* tradition was still quite strong, drawing on ancient works, though little of it survives either.⁶⁷ This loss may be blamed on the political and ideological dominance of Constantinople over every other place in the empire,⁶⁸ the concentration of most intellectual activity there, and in the fairly unified and homogeneous identity of the population of the empire. It would not be until the later Byzantine period that literary regionalism re-emerged. Moreover, local historiography is likely to have been primarily of local interest and so preserved in many cities in the East, most of which were lost in the seventh century. We should not discount the role of chance in loss or survival. But do we have data from which to reconstruct the broad trends that were culturally determined?

One might look in Jacoby for the last attestation of now-lost authors, but that would be inconclusive. Just as there is no reason to think that an author was lost soon after his last attestation, so too his last attestation may be a second-hand (or worse) reference culled from an earlier text. This is especially true of the *Souda*, many of whose entries were copied from late antique prosopographies, based in turn on ancient works, and the transmission of this information had little to do with whether the author in question survived.⁶⁹ One might alternatively consider the manuscript tradition of extant authors, which does provide some indications. We noted cases where specific parts of some historians seem to have been circulating independently since the tenth century, though this cannot by itself tell us when the rest was lost or when those sections began to be copied separately. But the majority of manuscripts were copied in the 14th and 15th centuries, whereas we will see that the corpus was in place before that, so we cannot reconstruct patterns of loss from them. Moreover, they cannot tell us anything about lost authors, by definition.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ C. Bearzot, 'La storia greca nella *Suda*', in Zecchini (ed.) (n.15) 35–74, at 68–73.

⁶⁷ Janiszewski (n.16) chapter 2.

⁶⁸ P. Magdalino, 'Byzantium = Constantinople', in L. James (ed.), *A Companion to Byzantium* (Oxford 2010) 43–54.

⁶⁹ For the *Onomatologos* tradition, see J. Schamp, *Photios, historien des lettres: La Bibliothèque et ses notices biographiques* (Paris 1987); the papers by M. Giangiulio, F.L. Gattinoni and M.T. Schettino in Zecchini (ed.) (n.15) 89–138; A. Kaldellis, 'The Works

and Days of Hesychios the Illustrious of Miletos', *GRBS* 45 (2005) 381–403.

⁷⁰ For lack of space and expertise, I will not discuss the evidence of papyri. My impression is that not enough lost historians are attested papyrologically to constitute a database by which changes over time can be tracked with statistical significance. Papyri tend to favour historians who were also Classical authors, so perhaps they can tell us little about patterns of loss in the Roman period.

There are, however, two other indexes of survival and selection in the middle period, though neither necessarily gives us a comprehensive picture. These are Photios' *Bibliothēke* and the monumental *Excerpta* commissioned by Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennetos in the tenth century. I will consider each in turn, and compare their evidence.

Photios reviews 22 histories written before the mid third century, whose full versions he had (with one exception). Six survive in full: Josephos' *Jewish War* and *Jewish Antiquities* (codd. 47, 76); Herodotos (60); Arrian's *Anabasis* (91); Herodian (99); and Plutarch's *Lives* (245) (Photios interestingly does not mention the lost *Lives*). Four survive in substantial segments (independently of Photios): Appian (57); Diodoros (70); Dio (71); and Dionysios (83). Finally, 12 are effectively lost: Justus Tiberius' Jewish history (33); Julius Africanus' chronography (34); Arrian's *Parthika*, *Events after Alexander* and *Bithyniaka* (58, 92, 93); Kephalion's chronography (58); Ktesias (72); Phlegon of Tralleis' chronography (97); Amyntianos' *Alexander* (131); Theopompos' *Philippika* (176); Agatharchides of Knidos (213); and Memnon's *History of Herakleia* (224) (of which Photios had only books 9–16). Moreover, in his review of Theopompos, Photios reveals that he also had Ephoros and Douris of Samos, so the total rises to 24, of which 14 are today lost. Photios does not review Thucydides or Xenophon, because they were too well known (but it is certain that he knew them), or Polybios, though he almost certainly knew him too.⁷¹ In sum, Photios seems to have had about 30 ancient histories of which about half are lost today. It is unlikely that these 30 represent the sum total of the ancient historians extant in his day, even in Constantinople, but we cannot guess what fraction of that total he chose (or was able) to review.

The *Excerpta* offer a different index.⁷² The scholars who performed this massive exercise in verbatim cut-and-paste, which is itself mostly lost, had access to the complete texts of the following histories (and chose to use them over other available options): Herodotos, Thucydides, Xenophon's *The Education of Cyrus* and *Anabasis*, Polybios, Diodoros, Dionysios and Nicholas of Damascus' *Autobiography*, *Histories* and *Life of Augustus*, Josephos, Arrian (all but the *Parthika*), Appian and Dio. This list is a closer match to what survives. What we have of Greek historiography is basically what the excerptors used plus three (Xenophon's *Hellenika*, Herodian, Plutarch), minus two (Nicholas of Damascus, the lost works of Arrian). This selection was, of course, precisely designed to project the court's view of history. It is also important, having mentioned the demise of the *Excerpta*, to emphasize that these historians, excepting some fragments, do not survive through the tradition of the *Excerpta* nor because the scholars behind it used them over than others. It is possible that this imperial endorsement of these historians did stimulate more general interest in them, but we have no proof of that. It is as likely that these historians were chosen by the court scholars because they were already generally accepted in learned circles. In this sense, the *Excerpta* is a true index: it reflects what was being read and preserved in Byzantine circles, and we can compare its selection to what has (independently) survived: the match is very good.

The data from Photios reveal that, from many dozens of potentially available histories, his readings were already limited to a selection whose overlap with our own (50%) is statistically significant. The subsequent loss of some of the works he read can, moreover, be explained on the same grounds that we have postulated so far. Whatever was useful in the chronographies of Julius Africanus, Kephalion and Phlegon had probably already been absorbed into Byzantine chronography.⁷³ In his review of Diodoros, Photios even notes that he is more analytical than

⁷¹ Schamp (n.28) 22–25.

⁷² See A. Németh, *Imperial Systematization of the Past: Emperor Constantine VII and his Historical Excerpts* (Budapest 2010).

⁷³ For the absorption of ancient chronography into Byzantine works, see A.A. Mosshammer, *The Chronicle*

of Eusebius and Greek Chronographic Tradition (Lewisburg PA 1979); H. Inglebert, *Interpretatio Christiana: Les mutations des savoirs (cosmographie, géographie, ethnographie, histoire) dans l'Antiquité chrétienne, 30–630 après J.-C.* (Paris 2001) 464–93.

Kephalion in the sections where they overlap. Perhaps this was why only Diodoros was preserved among the non-Christian authors of world chronicles. On the other hand, some scholars assume that more condensed versions had better chances of surviving, so we should not press this criterion too far.⁷⁴

From Photios' hostile report, we can also infer that Justus Tiberius did not present a view of Jewish history that met Byzantine expectations. Photios notes that he was an enemy of Josephos and did not mention Jesus, i.e. he did not benefit from a forged 'Testimonium'. Here we see directly how Byzantine bias created preferences between historians of the same topic. (It is possible, however, that Photios had only Justus' Jewish chronography, whose useful information would have also been absorbed by Christian works.)⁷⁵ The loss of Theopompos, Ephoros, Douris, Agatharchides, Memnon and Arrian's *Events after Alexander* and *Bithyniaka*, which Photios had, reflects the general Byzantine lack of interest in the city-states, Hellenistic era and local antiquarianism. In his review of Theopompos, Photios notes that the first three authors were inferior to Herodotos and Thucydides, i.e. they offered less in style to compensate for their uninteresting contents. Why then do we have books 11–20 of Diodoros and not Ephoros? The answer is probably that Diodoros, anticipating Christian chronography, tried to coordinate the different national histories chronologically whereas Ephoros seems to have treated them separately.⁷⁶ Photios also delivers a negative verdict on the style of Amyntianos' *Alexander*; he was, then, unlikely to compete with Arrian or Plutarch.

Still, Photios seems to have had more works available to him than did the excerptors, and there were probably still more available that he does not review. There are two factors that can explain this lack of correspondence. One is that they were engaged in different projects. Photios was reviewing texts that he suspected his own readers might find interesting, regardless of whether he liked those texts, whereas the compilers were creating 'official' anthologies of historical and moral data, so their choices were more likely to reflect Byzantine preferences. They did not go for oddities or texts that duplicated the contents of other texts. If we correct for this, their choices converge even more (considering always the vast extent of historiography that they did not use or did not have). The second factor is the transliteration of books into the new minuscule script,⁷⁷ a process that was under way in Photios' time but less so in that of the excerptors. It is possible that Photios was reading some of these books in majuscule and that some never made it through the bottle-neck of transliteration, for the reasons suggested above. It is here that authors who were otherwise well known in antiquity were lost, such as Theopompos and Ephoros. They did not make the cut when intellectuals of the ninth- and tenth-century empire decided what was worth keeping. In this connection, it may be significant that Photios is our last reliable contemporary witness to most of the now-lost works that he describes (the *Souda* is later but, as noted above, does not establish the survival of ancient literature to its time). In other words, the difference between what we have and what Photios had reflects the pruning of the remaining corpus of historiography in the century after the *Bibliothēke*.

To paraphrase, by way of conclusion, the question of Plato's *Euthyphron*, did Classical historiography survive through Byzantium because it was classical or is it classical because it survived through Byzantium? Our analysis supports a mixed conclusion. Some historians, especially Thucydides and Xenophon, were canonical already in antiquity. The Byzantines inherited the system of Classical *paideia* and continued to recognize them, but had little interest in the history

⁷⁴ For example, A. Cameron, *The Last Pagans of Rome* (Oxford 2010).

⁷⁵ T. Rajak, 'Justus of Tiberias', *CQ* 23 (1973) 345–68.

⁷⁶ J. Marincola, 'Universal history from Ephorus to

Diodorus', in Marincola (ed.) (n.3) 171–79, at 172, 176.

⁷⁷ See Lemerle (n.6) 125–36; P. Ronconi, *La traslitterazione dei testi greci: Una ricerca tra paleografia e filologia* (Spoleto 2003).

of the Greek city-states as such. Moreover, many Hellenistic and local histories were certainly lost before the foundation of Constantinople and much might have been lost in the Arab conquests. But the majority of what survives can be attributed to specifically Byzantine patterns of interest in particular periods of Persian, Roman and sacred history. We are the heirs and captives of the Byzantines' choices about what to copy and what not. Most of the extant historians survived not because of their style but their subject-matter, which reflected a distinctively Byzantine view of the past. Put differently, if modern scholars could choose 15 ancient Greek historians, their list would probably not overlap greatly with the one we have today.