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TRUE TO THEIR WORDS. THEODORE LECTOR AND HIS PREDECESSORS

By adding a four book compilation of Socrates, Sozomen and Theodoret to his own *Ecclesiastical history*, Theodore Lector was an innovator in the history of ecclesiastical historiography. As such, he directly inspired the *Historia Tripartita* of Cassiodorus, composed in Constantinople between 544/5 and 551.[1] Innovations, however, rarely appear out of thin air. This chapter offers an inventory of the evidence for earlier ecclesiastical histories that went over terrain already covered by earlier authors, that is, works that we would also call compilations. The evidence is largely fragmentary and as such, the chapter also seeks to complete our knowledge of Greek and Latin ecclesiastical historiography.

As we shall see, Theodore's innovation does not lie so much in the explicit reliance on earlier authors, which was common practice among ancient historians and of which examples can be found among earlier ecclesiastical historians. Rather, it lies in the fidelity to their words and the professed intention to indicate similarities and differences between the three authors. We shall conclude by suggesting that Theodore Lector's *Historia Tripartita* is the result of the impact on historiography of the rise of the so-called *Väterbeweis*: citation of the very words of an authoritative Father of the Church became a necessary argument in theological debate.[2]

[1] Van Hoof – Van Nuffelen 2017, pp. 287–88; Van Ginkel 1995, pp. 52–54 argues that John of Ephesus may have used a collation of Socrates, Sozomen, and Theodoret.

[2] Graumann 2002; Dietrich 2018.

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1. *Eusebius the compiler*

The earliest predecessor of Theodore is Eusebius of Caesarea himself – at least according to Theodore's own interpretation. As all historians, Theodore situates himself in a tradition. In his preface, he aligns his own form of historiography with that of Eusebius, by subtly redefining the latter's project: 'The most admirable Eusebius, called son of Pamphilus, made the effort to collect the learned men who have written about such ecclesiastical matters from the beginnings – I mean not only of writers among the Christians but also among the Jews – and he made a historical narrative until the twentieth year of the Christ-loving and truly ordained by God rule of Constantine the most praiseworthy and blessed'.[3] The formulation picks up exactly the terms used by Theodore to describe his own activity in the preceding lines of the preface.[4] *Sylloge* is a term commonly used for compilations and excerpt collections,[5] and thus Eusebius' ecclesiastical history is redefined as a compilation, just as Theodore's own work. In the preface to his ecclesiastical history, Eusebius had acknowledged using earlier authors (whom he indeed copiously cites), but he made clear enough that these are not historians, that they offered at best fragmentary accounts of their own times, and that he thus was making a coherent historical narrative out of material that was not historical in nature.[6] We do not know if this assessment of Eusebius was shared by other late antique readers and writers, but there can be no doubt that Theodore interpreted the work

[3] Theodore Lector, *Historia Tripartita* 1 (ed. Hansen 1995): Εὐσεβίου τοῦ θαυμασιωτάτου τοῦ ἐπίκλην Παμφίλου κεκμηκότος περὶ τὴν συλλογὴν τῶν ἀνέκαθεν τὰς τοιαύτας ἐκκλησιαστικὰς ὑποθέσεις λογίων ἀνδρῶν συγγεγραφότων, οὐ μόνον λέγω τῶν παρὰ Χριστιανοῖς φιλοσοφησάντων, ἀλλὰ καὶ παρ' Ἑβραίοις, καὶ τήνδε τὴν ἱστορικὴν σύνταξιν ποιησαμένου ἄχρι τοῦ εἰκοστοῦ ἔτους τῆς φιλοχρίστου καὶ ὡς ἀληθῶς ὑπὸ θεοῦ χειροτονηθείσης βασιλείας Κωνσταντίνου τοῦ πανευφήμου καὶ μακαριωτάτου, ...

[4] Theodore Lector, *Historia Tripartita* 1 (ed. Hansen 1995): Ἔκ τινος ψήφου ἐπιξενοῦσθαί μοι λαχόντι κατὰ τὸ ὑμέτερον Παφλαγόνων ἔθνος ἐν μητροπόλει τοὔνομα Γάγγρᾳ, ἐν αὐτῇ τε ἀπολαύσαντι τῆς σῆς ἱερᾶς ὁμοῦ καὶ τιμίας μοι κεφαλῆς, ἠναγκαζόμην παρ' αὐτῆς, ἐξαυτῆς τὰς ὑποθέσεις ληψόμενος, συναγαγεῖν τῶν ἐκκλησιαστικῶν ἱστοριῶν τοὺς ἐκθέντας καὶ μίαν τινὰ ἐξ αὐτῶν ἁρμόσασθαι σύνταξιν.

[5] See the following works, with further references: Manafis 2018; Németh 2018; Odorico 2014.

[6] Eusebius of Caesarea, *Ecclesiastical history* 1.1.3–5 (ed. Schwartz – Mommsen 1999).

of the father of ecclesiastical history in this way because it gave his own kind of writing history a grander pedigree. Possibly, though, his judgement was not merely self-serving: an understanding of Eusebius essentially handing on the testimony of earlier church fathers may well have been shaped by the rise of the *Väterbeweis* noticed above.

2. *Sozomen's* Epitome

One of the authors used by Theodore, Sozomen (writing *c.* 445),[7] had intended to cover the history from the beginning of the church (that is, after the Ascension of Christ) until his own day. When realising that he could not find anything to add to his predecessors, he revised his plan and decided to continue Eusebius. But he did compose an epitome of the period that Eusebius had covered: 'At first, I intended to write that history from the beginning. Realising, then, that others had already tried their hand at it until their own times (Clement and Hegesippus, very wise men who followed on the Apostolic succession, and Africanus the historian and Eusebius called son of Pamphilus, a man intimately acquainted with the Sacred Scriptures and the poets and writers of the Greeks), I composed an epitome in two books of all events that have come to us and that happened to the churches after the ascension to the heavens of Christ until the deposition of Licinius. Now, if God permits, I shall set about narrating what happened after these'.[8] Modern scholarship tends to define an epitome as the abbreviation of a single work, but ancient vocabulary was not that precise.[9] We should understand Sozomen as saying that he wrote what we would call a breviary, that is,

[7] Van Nuffelen 2004, p. 61.

[8] Sozomen, *Ecclesiastical history* 1.1.12–13 (ed. Bidez – Hansen 1995): ὡρμήθην δὲ τὰ μὲν πρῶτα ἀπ' ἀρχῆς ταύτην συγγράψαι τὴν πραγματείαν. λογισάμενος δὲ ὡς καὶ ἄλλοι ταύτης ἐπειράθησαν μέχρι τῶν κατ' αὐτοὺς χρόνων, Κλήμης τε καὶ Ἡγήσιππος, ἄνδρες σοφώτατοι, τῇ τῶν ἀποστόλων διαδοχῇ παρακολουθήσαντες, καὶ Ἀφρικανὸς ὁ συγγραφεὺς καὶ Εὐσέβιος ὁ ἐπίκλην Παμφίλου, ἀνὴρ τῶν θείων γραφῶν καὶ τῶν παρ' Ἕλλησι ποιητῶν καὶ συγγραφέων πολυμαθέστατος ἵστωρ, ὅσα μὲν τῶν εἰς ἡμᾶς ἐλθόντων ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις συνέβη μετὰ τὴν εἰς οὐρανοὺς ἄνοδον τοῦ Χριστοῦ μέχρι τῆς Λικινίου καθαιρέσεως, ἐπιτεμόμενος ἐπραγματευσάμην ἐν βιβλίοις δύο, νῦν δέ, σὺν θεῷ φάναι, τὰ μετὰ ταῦτα διεξελθεῖν πειράσομαι.

[9] Horster – Reitz 2018.

a brief account of events in a given period, normally relying on literary sources. Indeed, his own statement (ὅσα μὲν τῶν εἰς ἡμᾶς ἐλθόντων ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις συνέβη) indeed defines the scope of his work by the events, and not by the source, as would be the case with what moderns call an epitome (e.g. Jordanes' *Getica* is an epitome of Cassiodorus' *History of the Goths*). Even so, one could wonder to what degree Sozomen's epitome would contain anything that was not in Eusebius, for the authors mentioned are all sources of Eusebius and his statement may betray the fact that he had been unable to find anything else than Eusebius. The epitome is completely lost. One factor in that loss certainly was that Sozomen conceptualised his *Ecclesiastical history* as an independent work, prefacing it with a dedication to Theodosius II and a proemium. This implies that *Epitome* and *Ecclesiastical history* circulated separately.

3. *Sabinus the Arian*

In a Syriac list of authors of ecclesiastical history, catalogued per period they wrote on and found in *Parisinus Syriacus* 9 (thirteenth century), we encounter a certain Sabinus the Arian:

> How many writers wrote ecclesiastical histories from Adam until the Messiah: Africanus, Hegesippus, Josephus and Judah who wrote on the weeks of Daniel.
>
> From the Messiah until the time of Constantine the Great: Eusebius of Caesarea, Sabinus the Arian and Rufinus of Rome.
>
> From Constantine the Great until Theodosius the Young: Sozomenus, Socrates and Theodoret.
>
> From Theodosius the Young until Justinian the Elder: John, priest of Antioch, called Glybo, Theodore Lector of the Church of Constantinople, Zachariah bishop of Melitene, Qura of Batna, John of Asia and Daniel of Tur Abdin. End of these things.[10]

[10] Nau 1915, Translation by M. Mazzola:

.ܐܘܣܒܝܘܣ ܕܫܘܪܝܐ ܕܟܬܒ ܒܪ ܫܒܥܝܢ ܫܢܝܢ ܕܡܢ ܐܕܡ ܥܕ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܐܦܪܝܩܢܘܣ ܗܓܝܣܝܦܘܣ ܝܘܣܦܘܣ ܘܝܗܘܕܐ

.ܠܡܫܝܚܐ ,ܡܛܠ ܕܟܬܒ ܠܗ ܥܠ ܫܒܥܝܢ ܕܕܢܝܐܝܠ. ܡܢ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܥܕ ܙܒܢ ܩܣܛܢܛܝܢ ܪܒܐ ܐܘܣܒܝܘܣ ܩܣܪܝ ܕܩܣܪܝܐ

.ܫܒܣܛܝܢܘܣ ܘܣܘܩܪܛܝܣ ܘܬܐܘܕܘܪܛ ܡܢ ܙܒܢ ܩܣܛܢܛܝܢ ܪܒܐ ܥܕ ܙܒܢ ܬܐܘܕܘܣܝܘܣ ܙܥܘܪܐ ܘܪܘܦܝܢܘܣ ܕܪܘܡܝ

.ܝܘܚܢܢ ܕܐܣܝܐ ܘܕܢܝܐܝܠ ܕܛܘܪ ܥܒܕܝܢ. ܡܢ ܙܒܢ ܬܐܘܕܘܣܝܘܣ ܙܥܘܪܐ ܥܕ ܙܒܢ ܝܘܣܛܝܢܝܐܢܘܣ ܪܒܐ ܝܘܚܢܢ ܩܫܝܫܐ ܕܐܢܛܝܟܝܐ ܕܩܪܝ ܓܠܒܘ ܬܐܘܕܘܪ ܩܪܝܛܐ ܕܩܘܣܛܢܛܝܢܘܦܠܝܣ ܙܟܪܝܐ ܐܦܣܩܘܦܐ ܕܡܠܝܛܝܢܐ ܩܘܪܐ ܕܒܛܢܐ

There are too many names mentioned here to be discussed in detail and I refer to our *Clavis Historicorum Antiquitatis Posterioris* for further information on the authors mentioned here.[11] The intriguing reference to Sabinus the Arian is our interest here. A church historian Sabinus is not attested anywhere else. The only possible identification is Sabinus of Heraclea, who belonged to the Macedonians (a branch of Arianism) and was the author of a collection of synods, which ran from the Council of Nicaea to *c.* 370 and was used by Socrates and Sozomen.[12] Yet his work did not run from Christ until Constantine the Great, contrary to what the list states. If we identify the two Sabini, we must accept that the author of the note (or his source) committed an error, possibly by misinterpreting the citations of Sabinus in Socrates and Sozomen as referring to a full-fledged ecclesiastical history. Such an error is rendered likely by the fact that Rufinus is also misrepresented as the author of a history from Christ until Constantine and not (through his translation and continuation of Eusebius) from Christ until Theodosius I.[13] The alternative, that there was another Sabinus, also an Arian, who wrote a proper ecclesiastical history from Christ to Constantine, is intriguing but less plausible. We have no idea what the narrative would have looked like, but we need not expect it to have been substantially different from what we have in Eusebius, for he too had sympathised with Arius and the Eunomian historian Philostorgius simply continued Eusebius.[14]

ܗܕܐ ܕܣܒܝܢܘܣ ܕܗܘ ܡܢ ܗܪܩܠܝܐ ܕܣܘܪܝܐ ܕܡܢ ܐܢܘܢ ܕܡܩܕܘܢܝܐ ܗܘ
ܘܟܬܒ ܟܢܘܫܝܢ ܕܫܪܝ ܡܢ ܢܝܩܝܐ ܥܕ ܩܣܛܢܛܝܢ ܘܐܬܟܠ ܒܗ ܣܘܩܪܛܝܣ ܘܣܘܙܘܡܢ ܘܐܦ ܗܘ ܟܬܒ ܟܢܘܫܝܢ ܕܫܪܝ ܡܢ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܥܕ ܩܣܛܢܛܝܢ ܐܠܐ ܥܕ ܬܐܘܕܘܣܝܘܣ ܗܘ ܙܥܘܪ ܘܠܐ ܫܪܝ ܟܡܐ ܕܟܬܒ ܗܕܐ ܡܢ ܗܠܝ ܕܡܬܚܙܐ ܒܗ ܕܪܘܦܝܢܘܣ ܐܦ ܗܘ ܡܬܚܙܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܗܘ ܟܬܒ ܗܕܐ ܡܢ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܥܕ ܩܣܛܢܛܝܢ ܘܗܕܐ ܡܢ ܗܠܝ ܕܡܬܚܙܐ ܒܐܘܣܒܝܘܣ ܕܡܢ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܥܕ ܬܐܘܕܘܣܝܘܣ ܐ ܗܘ ܙܥܘܪ ܘܠܐ ܫܪܝ ܟܡܐ ܕܟܬܒ ܗܕܐ ܡܢ ܗܠܝ ܕܡܬܚܙܐ ܒܗ ܕܪܘܦܝܢܘܣ ܐܦ ܗܘ ܡܬܚܙܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܗܘ ܟܬܒ ܗܕܐ ܡܢ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܥܕ ܩܣܛܢܛܝܢ ܘܗܕܐ ܡܢ ܗܠܝ ܕܡܬܚܙܐ ܒܐܘܣܒܝܘܣ ܕܡܢ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܥܕ ܬܐܘܕܘܣܝܘܣ ܐ ܗܘ ܙܥܘܪ ܘܠܐ ܫܪܝ ܟܡܐ ܕܟܬܒ ܗܕܐ ܡܢ ܗܠܝ ܕܡܬܚܙܐ ܒܗ ܕܪܘܦܝܢܘܣ ܐܦ ܗܘ ܡܬܚܙܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܗܘ ܟܬܒ ܗܕܐ ܡܢ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܥܕ ܩܣܛܢܛܝܢ ܘܗܕܐ ܡܢ ܗܠܝ ܕܡܬܚܙܐ ܒ

[11] Van Nuffelen – Van Hoof 2020.

[12] Van Nuffelen 2004, pp. 447–54. On collections of documents as a genre distinct from but related to ecclesiastical history, see Van Nuffelen 2004, pp. 207–09.

[13] In Anonymous of Cyzicus, *Ecclesiastical history* pr. 22 (ed. Hansen 2008) Rufinus is said to have participated in the council of Nicaea. In Greek there therefore seems to have been a tradition of Rufinus having been contemporaneous with Eusebius, which we also find in the list.

[14] Bleckmann – Stein 2015.

4. *Jerome*

Jerome had a tremendous impact on the history of chronography by composing a slightly adapted translation of the chronicle of Eusebius of Caesarea. At one point in his life, he had the intention of also composing an ecclesiastical history: 'In the same way I, who have long been silent (for a certain person who finds my talking punishing has forced me to be quiet), wish to train first in a minor work and to scrape off, as it were, a certain patina from my tongue, so that I can proceed to a wider history. What I set out to write (provided that the Lord gives me life and my detractors stop persecuting me now that I am fleeing and locked away) is an account from the arrival of the Saviour until our age, that is, from the Apostles down to the dregs of the present time, how and through whose agency the Church of Christ was born and came of age, increased through persecutions, was crowned through martyrdom; and how, after she reached the time of the Christian emperors, she became greater in power and riches but lesser in virtues'.[15] Derived from the preface to the *Life of Malchus*, one of Jerome's hagiographies, the passage is preceded by a comparison of the writing of lives of saints to the mock battles fought by the navy in preparation for a real encounter. In other words, history is the real thing, hagiography is just an exercise. The passage suggests that Jerome wanted to compose his own, original history and did not intend to translate Eusebius. Admittedly, the scope of the history starts where Eusebius had started his own history, with the Apostles, and there can be little doubt that the work would have undergone his influence in other ways. By reaching until his own age, however, the work would have been more than a mere translation. At the very least it would have

[15] Jerome, *Life of Malchus* 1 (ed. Gray 2015, p. 79, with commentary pp. 106–11): *ita et ego, qui diu tacui – silere quippe me fecit cui meus sermo supplicium est – prius exerceri cupio in paruo opere et ueluti quandam rubiginem linguae abstergere, ut uenire possim ad historiam latiorem. scribere enim disposui – si tamen dominus uitam dederit et si uituperatores mei saltem fugientem me et clausum persequi desierint – ab aduentu Saluatoris usque ad nostram aetatem, id est, ab apostolis usque ad huius temporis faecem, quomodo et per quos christi ecclesia nata sit et adulta, persecutionibus creuerit, martyriis coronata sit et, postquam ad christianos principes uenerit, potentia quidem et diuitiis maior sed uirtutibus minor facta sit*. See also *Chronicle*, pr. p. 7 (ed. Helm 1956).

looked like that of Rufinus of Aquileia, who translated Eusebius' church history and added two books of his own hand.[16]

5. *Gelasius of Caesarea*

Gelasius, the bishop of Caesarea (d. before September 400) is attested to have written an ecclesiastical history, which continued Eusebius and supplemented him.[17] In 1992, P. Nautin advanced the hypothesis that Gelasius wrote a continuation of Eusebius which was simply added to a manuscript of Eusebius, after a prooimion of his own inserted at the end of Eusebius' text. That collection of Eusebius + Gelasius was then excerpted by the compiler of the seventh-century Epitome of Ecclesiastical Histories, our major source for Theodore Lector.[18] This would be the single known example of an ecclesiastical history that consciously continued another one in the same manuscript, discounting the Latin translation and continuation of Eusebius by Rufinus – which as, as a translation, a special case. In fact, Nautin's idea cannot be correct.

Nautin relied on two arguments. First, in the *Epitome of Ecclesiastical Histories*, the excerpts of Eusebius conclude on 'Until here narrates Eusebius' (Ἕως τούτου ἱστορεῖ ὁ Εὐσέβιος). Nautin takes this to be a note drawn from Gelasius, who supposedly had indicated that Eusebius ran until that point, before continuing the narrative himself. This can only seem plausible if one fails to look at the entire lay out of the *Epitome*, as there can be little doubt that it is a marker introduced by the compiler. In fact, the *Epitome* has headings for its major constitutive parts (Euse-

[16] In the fifth century a Greek ecclesiastical history circulated under the name of Rufinus, but which, to judge by the extant fragments, included material not in the Latin history of Rufinus. Scholars tend to identify the work with that of Gelasius of Caesarea: Van Nuffelen 2002.

[17] Gelasius of Caesarea F1b (ed. Wallraff – Stutz – Marinides 2018): κατέκρινεν ἐγγράφως Γελάσιον ἐπὶ τὴν ἱστορίαν τῶν μετὰ Εὐσέβιον καὶ ὧν οὐκ ἔγραψεν ὁ Εὐσέβιος ἐλθεῖν. Cf. Photius, *Bibliotheca* 89 (ed. Henry 1959) = Gelasius of Caesarea, *Ecclesiastical history* T5 (ed. Wallraff – Stutz – Marinides 2018): τὰ μετὰ τὴν ἐκκλησιαστικὴν ἱστορίαν Εὐσεβίου τοῦ Παμφίλου. The edition followed is that of Wallraff – Stutz – Marinides 2018.

[18] Nautin 1992. He is followed by Hansen 2008, p. 22, Wallraff – Stutz – Marinides 2018, pp. xxi, li, lxxxi–ii; Stevens 2018, p. 656.

bius, Theodore Lector and John Diacrinomenus).[19] Yet, between the excerpts of Eusebius and those of Theodore, the excerptor intercalated excerpts from Gelasius and Philip of Side and he thus marked clearly that he had ended his excerpts on Eusebius. The note alerts the reader to this fact. Indeed, we should not forget that the title of the collection was Συναγωγὴ ἱστοριῶν διαφόρων ἀπὸ τῆς κατὰ σάρκα γεννήσεως τοῦ Κυρίου καὶ ἑξῆς τὴν ἀρχὴν ἔχουσα ἀπὸ τοῦ πρώτου λόγου τῆς ἐκκλησιαστικῆς ἱστορίας εὐσεβίου τοῦ παμφίλου ('Collection of various histories from the birth in the flesh of our Lord and further, taking its start from the first book of the ecclesiastical history of Eusebius of Pamphilus'). The reader was thus warned that the collection started with Eusebius and that more would follow: hence the compiler added a note when he ended his work on Eusebius. The compiler was a fairly diligent men, for in the excerpts from Eusebius he noted quite often where he had added information to what Eusebius said and where he had taken it from.[20] He does the same in this instance, signalling that he is now adding from Gelasius of Caesarea and, when he finishes using Gelasius, he signals that he adds something from Philip of Side.[21] Then he inserts a heading that signals his return to a major source, Theodore Lector. As shown by P. Manafis, such indications are common in excerpt collections. There is hence no reason to accept that the note 'Until here narrates Eusebius' derives from Gelasius.[22]

Second, Nautin noticed that Photius does not mention the title of the ecclesiastical history, but only that of a proomion,[23]

[19] Listed in Manafis 2018, pp. 173–74.

[20] Manafis 2018, pp. 173–74; Stevens 2018.

[21] Hansen 1995, p. 160.

[22] Nautin 1992 is also not very consistent, for he argues that the notice on the sons of Constantine, intercalated between the end note on Eusebius and the first excerpt from Gelasius (printed in Gelasius F1b) is not by Gelasius (neither do Wallraff – Stutz – N. Marinides 2018). Thus he accepts intervention by the compiler at the very spot where he sees an original note of Gelasius. His argument would be more convincing if he could prove that the compiler of the excerpt collection had not intervened at all in the excerpts and had simply selected material from Eusebius + Gelasius. Even in Nautin's reconstruction, there is intervention by a compiler, who he thinks he can distinguish from Gelasius. Stevens 2018 has the same illusion.

[23] Gelasius of Caesarea, *Ecclesiastical history* T5a l. 62–63 (ed. Wallraff – Stutz – Marinides 2018): Ἡ δὲ λοιπὴ βίβλος ἐπιγραφὴν μὲν ἔχει τοιαύτην· Προοίμιον

This indicates nothing more than that the manuscript used by Photius did not carry a title before the preface, and it is hazardous to speculate that it reflects the fact that Gelasius did not give his own work a title and simply added it to a manuscript of Eusebius. The title may have dropped out.

If Nautin's two basic arguments are hardly convincing to start with, his hypothesis generates a series of problems. There is substantial overlap between Eusebius and the fragments attributed to Gelasius. The first fragments that go under the name of Gelasius relate to events of AD 305,[24] that is, material that would belong to book 9 of Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical history*. Indeed, there is overlap with Eusebius until F9.[25] This is not what one would expect if Gelasius continued Eusebius in the same manuscript. Why continue Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical history* in the same manuscript if one rewrites the last third of it? The argument that Gelasius might have revised the last books of Eusebius does not offer an escape route. Indeed, Nautin's based his hypothesis on the structure of the *Epitome of ecclesiastical histories* in which excerpts from Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical history* are followed by a few excerpts from Gelasius. He argued that this reflects exactly the structure of Eusebius + Gelasius. Yet the excerpts from Eusebius come from all ten books,[26] which would mean either that Gelasius copied Eusebius and then started with a long section of repetition anyway or that Gelasius had revised all ten books of Eusebius. The latter option also begs the question of why he then started with a long section of overlap.

Another problem for Nautin's hypothesis is the clear contradiction between Eusebius and Gelasius: Gelasius F3, recording how Diocletian and Maximian were executed on order of the

ἐπισκόπου Καισαρείας Παλαιστίνης εἰς τὰ μετὰ τὴν ἐκκλησιαστικὴν ἱστορίαν Εὐσεβίου τοῦ Παμφίλου.

[24] Gelasius of Caesarea, *Ecclesiastical history* F2–3 (ed. Wallraff – Stutz – Marinides 2018).

[25] The statement by Wallraff – Stutz – Marinides 2018, p. li that 'The quotations from Eusebius only reach the reign of Diocletian while the extracts from Gelasius stretch from the time of the persecutions under Diocletian to the revolt of Licinius' is wrong. The last extract from Eusebius is drawn from *Ecclesiastical history* 10.9.6 (ed. Schwartz – Mommsen 1999), the death of Licinius in 325: see Manafis 2018, p. 290.

[26] See Manafis 2018, pp. 275–90.

senate when they tried to regain imperial power, is not only fictitious but flatly contradicts what is in book 8 of Eusebius, as it was excerpted by the epitomator (exc. 103, following the numbering of P. Manafis 2018) noting how Diocletian died of disease and Maximian hung himself. However one construes Gelasius' activity, this is hard to explain. If Gelasius simply continued Eusebius in the sense that his own history constituted a single work with that of Esebius (as Nautin wishes us to believe), it is very curious that such a contradiction would occur: any reader of the manuscript would wonder about the reliability of Gelasius if he reads how the continuation simply contradicts what he had read earlier. If one assumes that Gelasius updated Eusebius by adding material into Eusebius' text, it is impossible that the compiler of the Epitome found Gelasius F3 in his Eusebius + Gelasius. Indeed, if the compiler was able to extract Gelasius F3 from book 8 of Eusebius, this supposes that the compiler would have found there two different versions of the deaths of Diocletian and Maximian next to each other and that he would have been able to identify which version was by Gelasius and which by Eusebius. This would, in turn, entail, that Gelasius marked his additions as such[27] with

[27] Stevens 2018, p. 641 argues something on these lines, although it is only on the basis of knowledge of the standard text of Eusebius that one can identify the additions. For Stevens, the additions to Eusebius found in the Eusebius-excerpts of the *Epitome* were identifiable scholia. Yet the fragments from Gelasius cannot be scholia, for F3–9 are too long for being mere scholia. Stevens also argues that the additions to the excerpts of Eusebius in the *Epitome of Ecclesiastical Histories* have a double origin, a scholiast whom he identifies with Gelasius of Caesarea, and the epitomator himself. His thesis is an modification of that of de Boor 1888, who argued that it was unlikely that a seventh-century epitomator would have been able to consult second- to third-century authors like Pierius, Papias, and Africanus, who are cited in the additions. Hence he supposed that two authors had been active: the epitomator and another individual. De Boor proposed as source of the additions Philip of Side, who is cited in Baroccianus 142, one of the manuscripts from which the Epitome is reconstructed. In identifying the scholiast not with Philip but with Gelasius, Stevens builds on Nautin 1992 and the arguments levelled against Nautin can thus also be levelled against Stevens. Attributing the additions to Gelasius is neat but cannot be squared with the rest of the fragments in the *Epitome*. Stevens does not notice, for example, the contradiction between excerpt 103 and Gelasius F3. He assumes that Gelasius added new material to Eusebius as scholia, but why then does the Epitome not cite the Gelasian fragments among the Eusebian material and postpones it doing so until after its end? If Gelasius simply added his material in Eusebius' text, it would appear earlier in the excerpt collection. If Gelasius certainly cannot be the scholiast, I am not convinced that it is possible to distinguish two layers in the additions

his name or clear authorial indications, so that a compiler could separate out Gelasian material from Eusebian material. This is a procedure unheard of, as a comparison with the way Rufinus blends his additions into his translation of Eusebius' ecclesiastical history shows. This option also forces us to accept that not just the compiler of the *Epitome* but all users of F3–9 of Gelasius (the fragments in which there is overlap with Eusebius) were careful enough to extract the additions by Gelasius from the text of Eusebius and cited them as if deriving from an independent text. If such behaviour in a single compiler would be remarkable, the adoption of a similar method by a series of independent authors working across centuries begs belief – especially as we know that the compiler did add material to the excerpts of Eusebius, drawn from many sources.[28] Nautin's hypothesis demands that he would change his habits only for Gelasius and started *extracting* material from Gelasius that he found mixed with Eusebius.[29] The alternative would be that the compiler diligently checked his manuscript of Eusebius + Gelasius against another manuscript of Eusebius so as to identify additions. The latter option is extremely unlikely and effectively contradicts Nautin's hypothesis that the Epitome of Ecclesiastical histories reflects exactly the single manuscript of Eusebius + Gelasius, for then we would have interference with another manuscript of Eusebius.

It should be clear that Nautin's hypothesis does not fit the method of the compiler of the *Epitome* nor the fragments of Gelasius as they are transmitted to us. It should be laid to rest. Thus, Gelasius composed a self-standing ecclesiastical history, which started his work with a summary of earlier events and thus consciously overlapped a bit with Eusebius (as did Socrates, for example). If the excerpts in the Epitome are anything to go by,

to the Eusebian excerpts, as done by de Boor and Stevens. There is much authorial intervention in the Eusebian excerpts (see Manafis 2018, pp. 275–90, who has a more complete overview, although he does not yet use a manuscript that Stevens did use (R Bodleian, Auctarium E.4.18). Not all results reached by Stevens convince: § 5 and § 7 both cite Pierius, but according to Stevens one would be by the scholiast and another by the epitomist (p. 645).

[28] This is accepted by scholars who follow Nautin, such as Stevens.

[29] Nautin's hypothesis regarding Gelasius was followed by a similar one regarding Theodore lector (Nautin 1994), which is equally untenable: Delacenserie (2016, pp. 73–74).

he started with the beginning of the life of Constantine.[30] This is irreconcilable with the idea of a continuation of Eusebius in the same manuscript, for in no known instance of a historian expressly continuing a predecessor in the same manuscript,[31] a practice that is well-known among chroniclers,[32] the continuator starts with the overlap we witness here. Given the compiler's careful way of working in the Eusebian fragments, where he lists additional parallels, we may be entitled to think that he did not find much of interest in Gelasius except for political history of the years 305–25 or at least nothing that was worthwhile to add to Theodore Lector.

6. *John of Aegeae (?),* Ten books of ecclesiastical history *& Anonymous of Cyzicus,* Ecclesiastical history

In *Biblioteca* 41, the patriarch Photius summarises an ecclesiastical history composed by a certain John:

> Read the *Ecclesiastical history* by a certain John. It begins with the reign of Theodosius the Younger, the heresy of Nestorius and his deposition, and goes down to the time of Zeno and the deposition of Peter the heretic, who had usurped the see of Antioch. The style is clear but florid. The author describes in detail the third council held at Ephesus, and also another council held in the same place, I mean the Robber council, which he deifies together with its president Dioscorus and his companions. He also gives a slanderous account of the council of Chalcedon. This justifies the conclusion that the

[30] I am assuming that the unnumbered and usually unprinted fragment found in Gelasius of Caesarea, *Ecclesiastical history* F1b l. 2–3 (ed. Wallraff – Stutz – Marinides 2018) (which is not in Hansen, nor in Manafis) is by Gelasius. Note that the fragments as printed by Wallraff – Stutz – Marinides 2018 (an edition that should, however, be used with prudence: Van Nuffelen 2019) deal mostly with Constantine and Nicaea. The confusion of Photius between the Anonymous of Cyzicus (the earliest source for Gelasius of Caesarea) and Gelasius of Caesarea is hence not that remarkable.

[31] It is, of course, different if different authors have been copied in the same manuscript.

[32] Nautin only adduces examples from chronography. He also gives the example of the *Life of Origen* by Pamphilus and Eusebius (Photius, *Bibliotheca* 118, ed. Henry 1959), but this is a different case as both were co-authors of the first five books and Eusebius finished it after Pamphilus' death.

> author is John, presbyter of Aegaea, a heretic who wrote especially a book against the council of Chalcedon.[33] The history, according to his statement, is in ten books. I have only read five, containing (as already stated) a record of events from the heresy of Nestorius to the deposition of Peter the heretic.[34]

The manuscript identified the author merely as a certain John and on the grounds of its obvous anti-chalcedonian tendency Photius proposes the plausible but by no means certain identification with the miaphysite presbyter John of Aegeae.[35] The history, as read by Photius, ran from *c.* 428, when Nestorius became bishop of Constantinople and the problems leading to the council of Ephesus (431) started, until *c.* 476, when Peter the Fuller, intermittently bishop of Antioch between *c.* 470 and 488, was deposed by the emperor Zeno (474–91) who had regained power after the usurpation of Basiliscus (475–76).[36] 476 is the only moment when a deposition of Peter the Fuller happened in the reign of Zeno. The five books read by Photius would thus have covered about fifty years. Where do we locate the other five books? They could have followed the account that Photius read. In that case, assuming that the pace of narration was similar and hence that roughly another half a century was covered, John could have been writing in the reign of Justin I (518–27) and Justinian (527–65), during the time of restoration of chalcedonism. The

[33] See Photius, *Biblioteca* 55 (ed. Henry 1959).

[34] Photius, *Bibliotheca* 41 (ed. Henry 1959): Ἀνεγνώσθη Ἰωάννου ἐκκλησιαστικὴ ἱστορία. Ἄρχεται ἀπὸ τῆς Θεοδοσίου τοῦ νέου βασιλείας, ἀπ᾽ αὐτῆς που τῆς Νεστορίου βλασφημίας καὶ καθαιρέσεως, καὶ κάτεισι μέχρι Ζήνωνος καὶ τῆς καθαιρέσεως Πέτρου τοῦ αἱρετικοῦ, ὃς τὸν Ἀντιοχικὸν ὑφήρπασε θρόνον. Ἔστι δὲ οὗτος τὴν φράσιν σαφὴς καὶ ἀνθηρός. Διέρχεται δὲ τὴν τρίτην σύνοδον τὴν ἐν Ἐφέσῳ λεπτομερῶς. Ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν μετὰ ταύτην ἐν αὐτῇ συναγελασθεῖσαν, τὴν ληστρικὴν λέγω· ἣν οὗτος θειάζει, καὶ τὸν ταύτης ἡγεμόνα Διόσκορον καὶ τοὺς σὺν αὐτῷ. Διέξεισι δὲ καὶ τὴν ἐν Καλχηδόνι σύνοδον, διασύρων ταύτην. Ἐξ ὧν ἔστι συμβαλεῖν Ἰωάννην εἶναι τὸν πατέρα τοῦ βιβλίου τὸν πρεσβύτερον τὸν Αἰγεάτην, ὃς καὶ ἰδίως ὡς αἱρετικὸς κατὰ τῆς ἐν Καλχηδόνι συνόδου βιβλίον συνέταξε. Τῆς μέντοιγε ἱστορίας αὐτοῦ δέκα τυγχάνουσι τόμοι, ὡς καὶ αὐτὸς ἐκεῖνος ἐπαγγέλλεται· ὧν ἡμῖν τοὺς πέντε γέγονεν ἀναγνῶναι, περιέχοντας, ὡς ἔφημεν, ἀπὸ τῆς Νεστορίου βλασφημίας μέχρι τῆς τοῦ αἱρετικοῦ Πέτρου καθαιρέσεως. Translation J. H. Freese, adapted.

[35] See further Facundus of Hermiane, *Defense of the Three Chapters* 3.2.20, 5.1.17 (ed. Clément – Vander Plaetse – Fraïsse-Bétoulières 2002–2006). Wright 1872, p. 937 records an attack by John of Aegeae on Theodoret, preserved in Syriac translation.

[36] Kosiński 2010.

other possibility is to locate the five books before the ones read by Photius. In that case, it is likely that John started with Nicaea. This option seems most plausible, given the parallel of the Anonymous of Cyzicus.

The Anonymous of Cyzicus (formerly known as Pseudo-Gelasius of Cyzicus) composed an account of the council of Nicaea because the partisans of Eutyches, having acquired the upper hand under Basiliscus, accused the Chalcedonians of misrepresenting the faith of Nicaea. Indeed, the Encyclical of Basiliscus recognised only Nicaea and Ephesus I and rejected the council of Chalcedon.[37] It became hence important to show that Chalcedon did or did not explicate what was already said in Nicaea. The Anonymous provides an Chalcedonian account of Nicaea to that effect. The work is essentially a compilation of Eusebius, Socrates, Theodoret, Gelasius of Caesarea and Rufinus of Aquileia.[38] If that dependency is not denied, the Anonymous construes an elaborate genealogy of lost sources to enhance the authority of his own work. Indeed, he opens the preface with a reference to an old book, once the property of Dalmatius of Cyzicus, bishop elected *c.* 426–27: 'A very long time ago I had read everything that was said, done and decided in this virtuous and holy synod, when I was still in my father's house. I had found it written in a very ancient book, whose pages contained it all in full detail. They had belonged to the holy and praiseworthy Dalmatius, who was archbishop of the holy and catholic church of the brilliant metropolis of Cyzicus and had come to the then lord of our house, that is, my father in the flesh, who had the position of presbyter in that same holy church'.[39]

[37] Evagrius Scholasticus, *Ecclesiastical history* 3.4 (ed. Bidez-Parmentier 1898).

[38] Hansen 2008, pp. 16–43 whose idea of a reliance on Philip of Side is certainly wrong. A thorough study of how the Anonymous composes his narrative is needed.

[39] Anonymous of Cyzicus, *Ecclesiastical history* pr. 2 (ed. Hansen 2008): πάντα τὰ ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἐναρέτῳ καὶ ἁγίᾳ συνόδῳ λεχθέντα τε καὶ πραχθέντα καὶ διατυπωθέντα πάλαι τε καὶ πρόπαλαι ἀναγνοὺς ἔτι ἐν τῇ πατρῴᾳ οἰκίᾳ διάγων, εὑρηκὼς αὐτὰ ἐν βίβλῳ ἀρχαιοτάτῃ ἐγγεγραμμένα ἐν μεμβράναις ἅπαντα ἀπαραλείπτως ἐχούσαις, γενομέναις μὲν τοῦ θείου καὶ ἀοιδίμου Δαλματίου τοῦ ἀρχιεπισκόπου γενομένου τῆς ἁγίας καὶ καθολικῆς ἐκκλησίας τῆς τῶν Κυζικηνῶν λαμπρᾶς μητροπόλεως, περιελθούσαις δὲ εἰς τὸν τοῦ ποτε ἡμετέρου οἴκου δεσπότην, λέγω δὴ τὸν κατὰ σάρκα πατέρα ἐμόν, τῆς αὐτῆς ἁγιωτάτης ἐκκλησίας πρεσβυτερίου ἠξιωμένον.

The author states that he read the entire book and made many notes from it, for he could not remember everything. The book may have existed,[40] and the Anonymous gives some indications of its content.[41] Yet the reference to an old book reminds one of the pseudo-documentary fictions known from Greek literature,[42] and one suspects here a literary ploy to enhance the claim to authority.

Later he adds that he looked up additional sources to complement his notes, in particular Eusebius and Rufinus. He refers, however, to another, further unknown author: 'John, a certain old and very literate presbyter, in rather old fascicles [did not record] everything'.[43] Again we have no further attestation of this work. It may well be authentic, but it could also be part of a strategy of authentification.[44] Indeed, the Anonymous also turns Rufinus, who wrote about a century after Nicaea, into a participant of the council. At the very least, we may suspect that the information regarding date of the further unknown John given here is not fully reliable.[45]

The strategy of authentification pursued by the Anonymous is thus clear: he obscures the use of later sources, such as Socrates, and suggests that he only used sources that are old and date mostly from close to the council itself. He may be relying on literary fiction; at least, he is willing to turn Rufinus into a participant of the council. Although clearly a compilation, the Anonymous of Cyzicus is in many ways different from Theodore Lector. He focuses on a single, albeit foundational, event and although he regularly references the sources he is using, he obviously composes the narrative in his own words.

[40] Cf. CHAP s.v. Anonymous, Account of the council of Nicaea.

[41] Anonymous of Cyzicus, *Ecclesiastical history* pr. 3–7 (ed. Hansen 2008).

[42] Ni Mheallaigh 2008.

[43] Anonymous of Cyzicus, *Ecclesiastical history* pr. 21 (ed. Hansen 2008): Ἰωάννῃ μέν τινι πρεσβυτέρῳ ἀνδρὶ παλαιῷ, ἄγαν γραφικῷ, ἐν τετραδίοις παλαιοῖς λίαν, οὐ μὴν ὅλα.

[44] Honigmann 1953, p. 173 n. 22; Speyer 1971, p. 74.

[45] A more hazardous identification would be with John of Aegeae. It is not uncommon for ecclesiastical historians to use works from authors deemed heretical: Socrates and Sozomen used Sabinus of Heraclea, and Evagrius Scholasticus relied on Zachariah. In line with his practice to suggest that he used sources that date close to the council, he could have turned John of Aegeae in an old presbyter. By the same token, he would have obscured his reliance on a heretical source.

The Anonymous and his strategies of authentification testify to a debate about Nicaea that was current around the reign of Basiliscus. It seems hence likely to take this as the Sitz-im-Leben for John of Aegeae's work too. It would have been driven by theological concerns about continuity with Nicaea in the other two councils, Ephesus and Chalcedon. It is likely to assume (although we cannot know) that John would have used material he found in Socrates, Sozomen and/or Theodoret, and thus that his first five books would have been compilatory in nature. A further indication of this is that these books circulated separately in the age of Photius: readers may not have felt the need to preserve the first part of his work because it did not offer anything original in comparison with the authoritative accounts of the three 'chalcedonian' synoptic historians.

At any rate, theological debate of the 475s seems to have spurred the writing of ecclesiastical histories that resemble in many aspects Theodore Lector, even if the Anonymous of Cyzicus pursued a different method and literary strategy for claiming authority. How John of Aegeae proceeded we cannot tell.

Conclusions

We are used to seeing the independent historical account that starts where one's predecessor left off as the normal way of writing ecclesiastical history. This is indeed how the sequence Esebius-Socrates/Sozomen/Theodoret-Evagrius presents itself to us. But that picture is misleading. We have surveyed the ways ecclesiastical historians of the fourth and fifth century shaped their works when they wished to write on a period that had already been covered by a predecessor. A limited degree of overlap was usual, and can be observed in Socrates, Sozomen and Gelasius of Caesarea in relation to Eusebius of Caesarea. They briefly recapitulated some of the events narrated by their predecessor, so as to set the scene for their own account. If overlap was greater, the historian composed his own, new account, although it could be heavily based on his predecessors, as we have suggested in the case of Sozomen's epitome and the first five books of John of Aegeae.[46]

[46] I have left aside Philip of Side, who composed a Christian history from Adam until 426, of epic proportions. This was not an ecclesiastical history

That dependency could be tacitly accepted, as in Sozomen, or obscured, as in the Anonymous of Cyzicus, who turns late sources into eye witnesses of Nicaea and suggests reliance on old and thus authentic reports. What we do not encounter is continuation of a predecessor in the same manuscript, as was wrongly suggested for Gelasius of Caesarea – that is, at least not in the same language. Rufinus of Aquileia added his continuation to his translation of Eusebius and Jerome might have done the same thing had he ever composed his own history. But such a translation and a continuation is obviously a different matter than the continuation of a work in the same language, for there was no pre-existing work to which one could simply add sections or books.

How does Theodore Lector fit into this tradition? On the one hand, he shares with his predecessors the wish to create a new, single account: his express wish is to compose a single narrative out of the three accounts of his predecessors. On the other, his undertaking differs clearly from his predecessors by the much stronger fidelity to the very words of his predecessors. This is linked to another difference: preceding authors who covered anew the terrain already covered by a predecessor (usually Eusebius), defined their scope by the events, by a period, e.g. from the beginning of the church (Sozomen, Jerome, Sabinus) or from Nicaea onwards (John of Aegeae). Theodore's task was not to compose a history from Nicaea until the present day, but to make a single account out of the three of his orthodox predecessors. Their starting point is his. The texts are seen as carriers of authority and the events are seen through them. As a consequence, the way Theodore claims authority is different from what we noticed in the Anonymous of Cyzicus. The latter seeks to show that his sources were eye witnesses of Nicaea and that he used old and venerable texts and reports, suggesting that these are eye witnesses too. Such a strategy stands fully in the tradition of ancient historiography, for which eye witness reports had the highest status. Theodore, by contrast, derives his claim to truth from the authority that Socrates, Sozomen, and Theodoret already have as god-

(there is no church before Christ). At any rate, what we know of the work would not change the conclusions reached here: Van Nuffelen 2004, pp. 209–10; Heyden 2006.

beloved and most learned men (θεοφιλεῖς ὁμοῦ καὶ λογιώτατοι ἄνδρες).[47] The re-defining of Eusebius as a compiler picks up the same idea and vocabulary: Eusebius transmits the words of learned men.[48] Attention is shifted away from the events to the texts, which have received authority because they are composed by orthodox and learned men. In this attention to the very words of authoritative writers, we see, I suggest, the impact of the wider cultural shift towards a 'patristic culture', in which the words of figures of authority carried weight. As such, the *Historia tripartita* of Theodore Lector was a work of its times.

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Abstract

The chapter offers an inventory of the predecessors of Theodore Lector who composed ecclesiastical histories that overlapped with histories that had been written before. To that end, it edits the fragments of some fragmentary authors. Theodore does not stand out by relying on the accounts of his predecessors but by adopting their very words. It is suggested that this reflects the change in patristic culture whereby citations from acknowledged 'Church Fathers' became crucial for granting authority to statements.