

AN IDENTIFICATION IN THE *SUDA*: EUNAPIUS ON THE HUNS

An unattributed entry in the *Suda* alleges that the Huns, accustomed as they were to life on horseback, found it difficult to walk (A 1018): Ἀκροσφαλεῖς: ἄκρως ἐσφαλμένους. ὁ δὲ ἐκέλευσε χωρεῖν ἐπὶ τοὺς ἄποδας καὶ ἀκροσφαλεῖς Οὐννοὺς. ἄνευ γὰρ ἵππων οὐ ῥαδίως ἂν Οὐννος τὴν γῆν πατήσειεν.¹ Although O. J. Maenchen-Helfen suspected that the now-lost *History* of Eunapius of Sardis was the *Suda*'s ultimate source for this entry, he advanced no arguments for the identification, and his suggestion has attracted little notice.² Three considerations, however, do in fact point toward Eunapius.

First, it has long been recognized that the *Suda* took its historical entries from the *Excerpta Historica* of Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus rather than from the historical works themselves.³ Eunapius' *History* is one of eight now-fragmentary texts known to have been used in the *Excerpta* from which material on the Huns could have been derived. (The works of Candidus, John of Antioch, Malchus, Menander, Peter the Patrician, Philostorgius, and Priscus are the others.) Second, ἀκροσφαλής appears frequently in Plutarch, Eunapius' favorite author.⁴ Finally, and most important, there is a parallel passage in Zosimus, who is universally acknowledged to have depended on Eunapius, which also remarks on the Huns' inability to walk (4. 20. 4):⁵

παρελθόντες δὲ ὁμῶς τοῖς ἵπποις καὶ γυναιξὶ καὶ παισὶ καὶ οἷς ἐπεφέροντο, τοῖς ὑπὲρ τὸν Ἰστρον κατωκημένοις ἐπήεσαν Σκύθαις, μάχην μὲν σταδίαν οὔτε δυνάμενοι τὸ παράπαν οὔτε εἰδότες ἐπαγαγεῖν (πῶς γὰρ οἱ μῆτε εἰς γῆν πῆξαι τοὺς πόδας οἱοῖ τε ὄντες ἐδραίως, ἀλλ' ἐπὶ τῶν ἵππων καὶ διαιτώμενοι καὶ καθεύδοντες), περιελάσσεσι δὲ καὶ ἐκδρομαῖς καὶ εὐκαίροις ἀναχωρήσεσιν, ἐκ τῶν ἵππων κατατοξεύοντες, ἄπειρον τῶν Σκυθῶν εἰργάσαντο φόνον.

Together these three factors all but clinch the identification of the immediate source of the *Suda* as the Eunapian section of one of the volumes of the *Excerpta Historica*. On the basis of the context provided by Zosimus, this new fragment should be placed between fragments 41 and 42 in the editions of Müller and Blockley.⁶

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1. Cf. A 1019 Ἀκροσφαλεῖς: ἐν τῷ βαδίζειν σφαλλόμενοι. τούτέστιν οἱ Οὐννοὶ. The gloss ἄκρως ἐσφαλμένος of A 1018 is from a scholium to Pl. *Resp.* 404B2.

2. "The Date of Ammianus Marcellinus' Last Books," *AJP* 76 (1955): 392, n. 47. There is no mention of *Suda* A 1018 in any edition of the fragments of Eunapius, for which see now R. C. Blockley, ed., *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire*, vol. 2 (Liverpool, 1983), pp. 2–150, which supersedes *FHG* 4:7–56 (ed. C. Müller) and other earlier collections.

3. The dependence of the *Suda* on the *Excerpta Historica* was demonstrated by C. de Boor, "Suidas und die Konstantinische Excerptsammlung," in two parts, *ByzZ* 21 (1912): 381–424 and 23 (1914–19): 1–127; see also A. Adler, "Suidas (Lexicograph)," *RE* 4A.1 (1931): 700–706, and, for a convenient list of the contents of the *Excerpta*, P. Lemerle, *Le premier humanisme byzantin* (Paris, 1971), pp. 285–87.

4. Cf. *Mor.* 68D, 561E, 620E, 628C (ἀκροσφαλῶς ἔχειν), 713A, *Dion* 958E, *Phil.* 357D, and *Phocion* 742B. On Eunapius' debt to Plutarch, see C. Cobet, "Ad Eunapii Fragmenta," *Mnem.* 10 (1882): 26–30.

5. Photius' position on the derivative nature of the *Historia Nova* (*Bibl.* cod. 98. 27–38, 2:66 Henry) has been slightly modified by R. T. Ridley, "Eunapius and Zosimus," *Helikon* 9–10 (1969–70): 574–92, and A. Baldini, *Ricerche sulla "Storia" di Eunapio di Sardì* (Bologna, 1984), pp. 19–74.

6. For the relationship of *Suda* A 1018 to similar comments on the Huns by Jerome (*Epist.* 60. 17), see T. M. Banchich, "Eunapius and Jerome," *GRBS* 27 (1986): 319–24.