

## FURTHER OBSERVATIONS ON THE DATING OF ENMANN'S *KAISERGESCHICHTE*

THE significance of the dating of Enmann's *Kaisergeschichte* in the controversy which has long surrounded the *Historia Augusta* is common knowledge to all scholars who have more than a nodding acquaintance with the period. Enmann himself concluded that the *KG* ended with or shortly after Diocletian's accession.<sup>1</sup> This was a necessary hypothesis for Enmann in 1884 because the *H.A.* had clearly used the *KG* and the self-proclaimed authorship and dating of the former were generally accepted. None the less in Enmann's opinion the resemblances between Victor and Eutropius continued into the sole reign of Constantius II down to the Battle of Strasbourg in 357 and Enmann was compelled to ascribe this to a 'continuation' of the *KG*. The idea subsequently found ready acceptance among conservative scholars who were disturbed by Dessau's findings in 1889.<sup>2</sup> Few nowadays would subscribe to that view. 'The bolt hole is now blocked. The *KG*, clearly later than 312, was presumably composed not long after 357.' Such is the influential opinion of Sir Ronald Syme.<sup>3</sup>

Syme, however, does not argue the case for this different dating of the *KG* but refers the reader to a recent and very cogent article by T. D. Barnes.<sup>4</sup> In his article Barnes states that 'Victor and Eutropius inevitably produce accounts of the reign of Constantine's sons which were factually similar . . . both were compressing the same series of recent events into a very brief compass. But after 337 they exhibit no example of either close verbal similarity or common error or shared idiosyncrasy. The *KG*, therefore, finished with the death of Constantine and was composed not long afterwards, presumably no later than 340.' This is a firm declaration but before it is accepted the evidence merits further consideration.

First it must be admitted that no example of common error or shared idiosyncrasy in the *De Caesaribus* and the *Breviarium* can be adduced for the period 340–57. Nevertheless Barnes himself had previously noted that 'when they are writing of the fourth century, wide divergences between Victor and Eutropius need not imply that they do not both depend on the same written source'.<sup>5</sup> Such divergences are indeed to be expected, for Victor was an idiosyncratic writer and his personal views obtrude more noticeably as he approaches his own times. In his final chapter, sixty-eight lines in all, two sections comprising thirty-three lines (42. 2–5; 42. 18–25) are given over entirely to personal comment and opinion. Moreover, Victor had literary pretensions, Eutropius had not,

<sup>1</sup> A. Enmann, 'Eine verlorene Geschichte der römischen Kaiser', *Philologus* Suppl. iv (1884), 432 ff. For his acceptance of the ostensible dating of the *KG* see pp. 339–40.

<sup>2</sup> H. Dessau, 'Über Zeit und Persönlichkeit der S.H.A.', *Hermes* xxiv (1889), 337 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Sir R. Syme, 'The Son of the Emperor Macrinus', *Phoenix* xxvi (1972), 279. He had previously declared similar views in his *Emperors and Biography: Studies in the Historia Augusta* (Oxford, 1971), p. 222, but cf.

*Ammianus and the Historia Augusta* (Oxford, 1968), p. 106.

<sup>4</sup> T. D. Barnes, 'The Lost Kaisergeschichte and the Latin Historical Tradition', *B.H.A.C.* 1968/69 (1970), pp. 13–43; esp. p. 20. Barnes points out that Seeck had long since concluded that the *KG* (or *Kaiserchronik* as he called it) ended with the death of Constantine. Syme's esteem for Barnes is expressed in his *Emperors and Biography*, p. vii.

<sup>5</sup> Op. cit., p. 17.

hence a valuable contrast.<sup>1</sup> Two examples should suffice. In describing the death of Pertinax Eutropius writes quite simply (8. 16): 'octogesimo imperii die praetorianorum militum seditione et Iuliani scelere occisus est'; Victor moralizes and elaborates (18. 2): 'eum milites, quis exhausto iam perditoque orbe satis videtur nihil, impulsore Didio foede iugulavere octogesimo imperii die.' Immediately afterwards Eutropius (8. 17) describes Julianus as a 'vir nobilis et iuris peritissimus'.<sup>2</sup> Again Victor embellishes (19. 2): 'genus ei pernobile iurisque urbani praestans scientia.'<sup>3</sup>

One should also realize that Victor wrote the *De Caesaribus* in 359/60 under Constantius II<sup>4</sup> and brought his work down to 357, four years before the latter's death. For this reason he may have felt constrained to gloss over the destructive Battle of Mursa and the outstanding exploits of Julian. In contrast Eutropius describes both fully:<sup>5</sup> he was not subjected to such personal pressure. He ended his *Breviarium* with the death of Jovian in 364 and dedicated it to Valens in about 370.

Finally, one should expect that Victor and Eutropius (and, for that matter, the *KG*) would be more accurate about recent events and that they would find less need to imitate their common source. It is, therefore, hardly surprising that Victor and Eutropius exhibit no 'common error or shared idiosyncrasy' in their accounts of the years 340-57.

There are, however, certain indications that both of these authors, as well as the epitomator and Jerome, may have continued to share a common source down to 357. Eutropius (10. 9) remarks that Constans 'amicis pravioribus uteretur': Victor (41. 23) describes that emperor as 'ministrorum pravitate execrabilis'. He thus partially exculpates Constans by blaming the *pravitas* of his *ministri*, a theme to which he reverts in his assessment of Constantius' reign.<sup>6</sup> Subsequently Eutropius notes (*ibid.*) that Constans 'factione Magnentii occisus est', while Victor (*ibid.*) writes 'Magnentii scelere circumventus est'. Further Eutropius informs us (10. 10) that Vetricianus was 'omnium liberalium artium expertem': Victor (41. 26) describes the usurper in synonymous terms as 'litterarum prorsus expertus'.<sup>7</sup>

In his portrayal of Nepotianus' rise to power Eutropius (10. 11) states: 'Romae quoque tumultus fuit, Nepotiano, Constantini sororis filio, per gladiatoriam manum imperium invadente': Victor (42. 6) says: 'interim Romae corrupto vulgo, simul Magnentii odio Nepotianus, materna stirpe Flavio propinquus, caeso urbi praefecto armataque gladiatorum manu imperator fit.' All of the comments listed above may, of course, have been written by each author independently. On the other hand, given Victor's proclivity for stylistic modification, they may well have derived from the common source. But further clues occur.

Both Eutropius (10. 14) and Victor (42. 13) stress that after the death of Gallus Constantius was sole ruler. Thereafter, while sketching Julian's exploits

<sup>1</sup> Syme, *Ammianus*, pp. 104-5.

<sup>2</sup> The anonymous epitomator (*Epit.* 19. 1) gives the same description but is clearly not using Victor or Eutropius here.

<sup>3</sup> For further examples of *amplificatio* see *De Caes.* 32. 5; cf. Eutrop. 9. 7; *Epit.* 32. 5; *De Caes.* 35. 8; cf. Eutrop. 9. 15; *Epit.* 35. 8; *De Caes.* 36. 1-2; cf. Eutrop. 9. 16; *Epit.* 36. 1; *De Caes.* 39. 13; cf. Eutrop. 9. 20.

<sup>4</sup> *De Caes.* 42. 20.

<sup>5</sup> Eutrop. 10. 12; 10. 14-15.

<sup>6</sup> *De Caes.* 42. 24-5.

<sup>7</sup> Victor exhibits a preference for the term *litterae* (*De Caes.* 8. 7; 10. 1; 16. 9; 20. 28; 25. 1; 41. 26; 42. 23). He uses *artes liberales* only once, in describing his fellow countryman Septimius Severus (*De Caes.* 20. 22).

in Gaul, Eutropius (*ibid.*) remarks: 'Rex nobilissimus captus, Galliae restitutae . . . et finibus suis Romanum imperium restitutum.' The epitomator, who was certainly not using Victor or Eutropius at this juncture, writes, 'captus rex nobilis Nodomarius . . . reductus limes Romanae possessionis' (42. 14). Victor, presumably for political reasons, briefly notes (42. 17) that Julian 'nationes feras brevi subegit, captis famosis regibus'. Both Eutropius and Victor describe Constantius as *placidus*, and this is the only place in which the latter author uses that adjective. Thereafter Eutropius (10. 15) says of Constantius that 'cuius in civilibus magis quam in externis bellis sit laudanda fortuna'; the epitomator (42. 18) describes him as 'felix bellis civilibus, externis lacrimabilis': Victor (42. 20) has 'cum externis motibus modo civilibus exercetur'. Again it appears that he was playing down the emperor's shortcomings.

Finally Victor (42. 23) states that Constantius was 'laboris patiens ac destinandi sagittas mire promptus; cibi omnis libidinis atque omnium cupidinum victor': the epitomator (42. 18) has 'mirus artifex in sagittis, a cibo vinoque et somno multum temperans, patiens laboris'.

The epitomator appears to have made little use of the *Kaisergeschichte* after the year 306 and probably used the much fuller source which he shared with Zosimus. None the less it is quite unlikely that he did not finish reading the *Kaisergeschichte* and he may have included details deriving from the work which he remembered, e.g. Constantine's bridge over the Danube (*De Caes.* 41. 18; *Epit.* 41. 13), his burial at Constantinople (*De Caes.* 41. 17; *Epit.* 41. 17), the fact that Vetranio was *grandaevus* (Eutrop. 10. 10; *Epit.* 41. 25) and possibly even his account of the battle of Strasbourg (*Epit.* 42. 13).<sup>1</sup> The evidence of the *Epitome* should not, therefore, be discounted.

Finally, Jerome also comes into the reckoning. It has already been demonstrated that he consulted the *Kaisergeschichte*.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, for the years 340-57 he carries particulars found either in Eutropius or in Victor but not in both. A few examples should suffice. In discussing Nepotianus Eutropius (10. 11) writes: 'caputque eius pilo per urbem circumlatum est: gravissimae proscriptiones et nobilium caedes fuerunt': Jerome (*Migne, Patr.* viii, p. 502) states: 'Nepotiani caput pilo per urbem circumlatum, multaeque proscriptiones nobilium et caedes factae.' Both Victor (42. 11) and Jerome (*loc. cit.*) note the crushing of the Jewish rebellion. It is not in Eutropius. Again, while describing Silvanus' usurpation Eutropius (10. 13) informs us: 'Silvanus quoque in Gallia res novas molitus, ante diem trigesimum extinctus est'; Jerome (*loc. cit.*) writes: 'Silvanus in Gallia res novas molitus vicesimo octavo die extinctus est.' Victor's account is fuller but he relates (42. 16) that Silvanus 'octavum circa ac vicesimum diem trucidatus est' (*cf. Epit.* 42. 10). The close verbal similarity between Jerome and Eutropius should indicate that the former followed the latter but the fact that Jerome allows Silvanus a reign of twenty-eight days (as does Victor) would appear to preclude this supposition. Further examples of verbal similarity between Jerome and Eutropius continue to occur up to the battle of Strasbourg but each author includes particulars not found in the other or in Victor. Both authors, therefore, seem to have been using a common source which ended in 357 and, unless we are to multiply the number of unknowns, that source was presumably the *Kaisergeschichte*.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Eutrop. 10. 14; Ammianus, 16. 12. 63; E. Hohl, 'Vopiscus und die Biographie

des Kaisers Tacitus', *Klio* xi (1911), 227 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Barnes, *op. cit.*, p. 21.