

CHAPTER VI

ENMANN AND THE *KAISERGESCHICHTE*

On the face of it, what we have presented in Part 1 of this book is a very new theory, one radically at odds with how both the *Historiae abbreviatae* and the *Libellus breviatus* are treated in the scholarly literature, down to the very titles by which we refer to them. It might then come as a surprise to learn that an enthusiast for Roman history who picked up the latest edition of Victor's *HAb* in 1681 would have found this written in the preface:

One matter, dear reader, could give rise to a scruple: namely why, if Aurelius Victor lived under Arcadius and Honorius, he did not go beyond Julian in his lives of the Caesars. Many reasons could be adduced as to why Aurelius Victor stopped his work with Julian. Perhaps he did not so much omit the lives of the remaining emperors, as reserve them for grander craftsmanship in writing (*ad maiorem scribendi diligentiam*), as Eutropius writes about himself. In order to say what I actually think, I believe that the little book on the Caesars was once more expansive (*auctiorem*), and included the life of Theodosius. But a little while later, in almost the same period, someone made an Epitome [*i.e.* the *LB*], either for his own use or for circulation, from this book and others, including Suetonius, Eutropius, and Ammianus, and it came to pass that the little book on the Caesars was gradually neglected and came into people's hands disfigured by many errors and even mutilated of part of it. This unjust fate many authors have experienced at the hands of their abbreviators, Trogus Pompeius, for example, at the hands of Justin, and Livy, at the hands of Florus.¹

Such was the judgement of Anne Le Fèvre, better known as Madame Dacier. In the top tier of classical scholars of her day (and still under-appreciated), she produced a string of editions of Latin texts *Ad usum Delphini* in the decade from 1674 to 1683, including (besides Victor) Florus, Dictys, and Eutropius.² Her edition of the *HAb* appeared almost exactly a century after the text was first published by Schott in 1579: her theory about the *De Caesaribus* – important because she regarded Victor as an *optimus historicus*, better than Florus or Eutropius – shows just how rapidly scholars came to understand that something was amiss in Victor's text and began to work towards the theory we have demonstrated in the first part of this study. The crucial question this raises is why classical scholarship abandoned this approach.

1 Dacier 1681: *praef.*: *Illud tibi, lector, scrupulum movere possit, cur si Aurelius Victor sub Arcadio et Honorio vixerit, idem in Caesarum vitis ultra Julianum non pergat : verum multa etiam in causa esse potuerunt, cur Aur. Victor in Juliano operi suo modum dederit. Nam fortasse reliquorum imperatorum vitas non tam praetermisit, quam eas ad majorem scribendi diligentiam reservavit, quod de se scribit Eutropius. Ut vere dicam quod sentio, libellum de Caesaribus auctiorem olim fuisse reor, et Theodosi vitam amplexum. Sed paulo post quum aliquis*

ejusdem fere ætatis ex hoc libello, et aliis nempe Suetonio, Eutropio, Ammiano, Epitome, vel in sui ipsius, vel in aliorum usum texuisset, ita factum esse ut libellus de Caesaribus paulatim neglectus in manus hominum venerit, et multis mendis inquinatus, et parte sui etiam mutilus. Hanc iniquam sortem per Abbreviatores suos multi alii experti sunt, ut Trogus Pompeius per Justinum, Livius per Florum.

2 On Dacier's life and work, see Farnham 1976.

In this chapter, we follow the trail of Victor's reception – and that of his fellow fourth-century Latin historians – from the seventeenth century to the end of the nineteenth. We show how the idea of the Victorine texts as epitomes was both widespread and never properly refuted. We then investigate the development of the standard model of late ancient historiography in Latin in the later nineteenth century, with a particular focus on two monuments in the history of scholarship. The first of these is Alexander Enmann's theory of a lost imperial history, a *Kaisergeschichte* (*KG*), which supposedly underlies our extant texts, from Victor to the *Historia Augusta*.³ The second is Hermann Dessau's masterful demonstration that the *HA* is not what it purports to be – the work of six authors writing under Diocletian and Constantine – but the composition of a single individual active as much as a century later. These two theories are the bedrock on which twentieth- and twenty-first-century scholarship on the secular Latin historiographic tradition of the fourth century has been built. Yet, as we will show, they are far from compatible with each other. We will then demonstrate that there are fundamental flaws in Enmann's theory of the *Kaisergeschichte*, both in its original formulation and in more recent adaptations. Insofar as Enmann had identified a real problem in the textual relationship(s) between the *HAb*, the *HA*, and Eutropius, the solution lies in Victor's *Historia*.



In 1627, Gerrit Vos (Gerardus Vossius) published his *De historicis Latinis libri tres*, a bold attempt to synthesise all that was then known of the Latin historians. It was also the first major study of Latin historiography *in toto* to appear after Schott's publication of the *Historiae abbreviatae* in 1579. In it, Vossius introduced the adventurous idea that there was not one, but rather three historians named Aurelius Victor.⁴ The first was Aurelius Victor Primus, cited by the *HA* at *Macr.* 4.2, who must have been active before the time of Diocletian.⁵ The second was Sextus Aurelius Victor Afer, who was the author of the *De Caesaribus* (what we call the *HAb*) and the *De viris illustribus*. This Victor was the one mentioned by Ammianus, wrongly identified by Vossius with the consul of 369 who shared the honour with the two-year-old son of Valens, Valentinian Galates.⁶ Finally, there was Sextus Aurelius Victor, the historian who was urban prefect under Theodosius, and the author of the *Epitome* (our *LB*). Vossius was a very fine scholar, but this was not his finest moment: while we might forgive him for stepping into the *HA*'s snare and misidentifying the consul of 369, overlooking the fact that Ammianus' Victor was later urban prefect is a serious blunder. So, in 1669 Martinus Hankius proposed a new theory: the author of the *LB* was not in fact named Sextus Aurelius Victor at all; rather, this was a scribal error.⁷ Originally, he suggested, the title of the *LB* listed a string of authors, the first of whom was Victor, *i.e. breviatus ex libris Sex. Aurelii Victoris, Suetonii, Eutropii*

3 Throughout, we refer to the *Kaisergeschichte* by the abbreviation *KG* – in the scholarship, *EKG* (= *Enmannische Kaisergeschichte*) is also found, often for something rather far removed from Enmann's ideas.

4 Vossius 1627: 183–184 (2.8) and 207–208 (2.15).

5 See Chapter V: Vossius read *Primus* for *Pinius*, as was common in editions of the *HA* from the *editio princeps*.

6 The consul named Victor in that year was actually the Sarmatian *magister equitum* (*PLRE* 'Victor 4').

7 Hankius 1669: 304–305 (1.2.5.1).

etc. The other names were excised to produce the manuscript attribution as we have it.⁸ Both Vossius' and Hankius' theories found adherents over the next two centuries: indeed one, can still find references to *Victor iunior*, *Victor alter*, and *Victor Schotti*, even in such authors as Gibbon, all the way up to the 1860s.⁹

Amidst these rather haphazard attempts to systematise the evidence, there remained some more interesting approaches: the work of those who simply read the two texts and offered their opinion, even if they had not made a systematic inquiry. One student in Altdorf, named Wilhelm Bechmann, composed a short *disputatio* on Victor in 1685. Dacier's Paris edition seems not to have yet made it to Altdorf – Bechmann does not include it in his otherwise comprehensive list of editions – but his feeling from reading the texts was not so different from hers:

The fourth text usually attributed to our Victor [the *LB*] certainly, as present opinion goes, did not issue from him, but was excerpted by someone – whoever he was – from a book of the sort that Sex. Aurelius Victor wrote on the Caesars, with the idiosyncratic character of its diction (it was written earlier on the same subject at greater length), which perished, along with many other volumes of ancient writers, through the depredations of time.¹⁰

In the middle of the eighteenth century, in his vast history of the ages of the Latin language, Johann Funck makes much the same point (with reference to Hankius), albeit with a broader knowledge of the manuscript titles afforded both the *LB* and the *HAb*:

To state my opinion candidly: *Sexti Aurelii Victoris* [in the title of the *LB*] does not designate the author of this little book, but rather the writer of the longer book, from which it was drawn and excerpted, just as the epitomes of Livy and Trogus Pompeius acknowledge very different authors, such that we search in vain for another author of the same name. Let him be whosoever he was: he gives us an epitome of Victor, from that larger work, which has perished through the depredations of time, and of which Victor himself has left behind a more abbreviated history. This is clear enough from its title in the old manuscripts.¹¹

8 This theory has been defended in recent years: see Chapter II above. It also seems to partially underlie Dacier's theory of the *LB* outlined above.

9 Gibbon, *Decline and Fall* ch. 18, n. 90 (ed. Womersley 1994: 1.681): 'the elder Victor'; and, e.g., Görres 1868: 7, with a careful delineation of 'Victor senior' in the 350s and 'Victor iunior' in the 390s.

10 Bechmann 1726: 11: *Quartum Victori nostro adiungi solitum Scriptum, non quidem, uti nunc habetur, ab ipso illo profectum est, ab aliquo tamen, quisquis etiam ille fuerit, ex libro ejusmodi excerptum, qualem Sex. Aurel. Victor de Caesaribus, peculiari dicendi caractere, & majori ac prior de iisdem conscriptus erat amplitudine exaravit, qui tamen cum aliis multis veterum Scriptorum voluminibus injuria temporum periit.* We have done our best with the Latin here, but it seems likely that there is some error in the text (perhaps *enim* for *&*). It is not totally clear whether Bechmann or his professor Daniel Moller actually wrote this disputation. In 1874, Richard Jakobi pointed out that another disputation under Moller from two years later, credited to one Johan Jakob Sturm (1687), makes reference to

Disp. mea de Sex. Aur. Victore, which would seem to imply that Moller wrote both disputations (Jacobi 1874: 4–5). However, the *BnF* online catalogue (<http://www.gallica.bnf.fr/>) lists a total of 100 disputations submitted to Moller, on a stunning variety of subjects. Since they tend to be shorter than twenty pages, it is possible that he wrote all of them, but it seems more likely that Moller added the reference before publication, and the *mea* refers to the fact the *disputatio* was done under his supervision.

11 Funck 1744: 741–742: *Vti vero, quid sentiam, ingenue fatear, Sexti Aurelii Victoris, illius libelli non auctorem designat, sed eum operis diffusioris scriptorem, vnde fuerit haustus atque decerptus; quemadmodum Livi, et Trogi Pompeii epitomae diuersos longe auctores agnoscunt: vt frustra de alio eiusdem nominis scriptore laboremus. Esto, quisquis ille fuerit: epitomen exhibet Victoris, ex illo maiori opere, quod temporum iniuria periit, et cuius ipse historiam magis abbreviatam reliquit. Satis clara in veteribus libris inscriptio.* We have reproduced the curious inconsistency of *v/u* in the original.

What Funck makes clear is that, in his view, both works were epitomes of Victor. The difference was only that the *HAb* was made by Victor himself, while the *LB* was produced by someone else. The same essential notion was mooted in a footnote by Hermann Ulrici in his 1833 study of ancient historiography:

On Sextus Aurelius Victor we have preferred to remain silent . . . That the book *De Caesaribus* and its so-called *Epitome* are both excerpts of one and the same older work made by different hands is very clear, when one sees how some things in both writings correspond verbally, while quite a few others are contained in the *Epitome*, which the main work does not have at all . . . Furthermore, these writings are not history, but a collection of historical notes. The same applies to Eutropius . . .¹²

Both *HAb* and *LB* were, for Ulrici, epitomes and both were derived from one and the same prior work, since sometimes they agree word for word and sometimes the *LB* has material that the *HAb* does not. Once again, however, one gets the sense that this is only an instinctive feeling. Even so, the instinctive feelings of a scholar who had really mastered vast swaths of ancient historiography should carry some weight, or at least push us to question our own assumptions where they differ.

Opitz and Cohn

After these relatively perfunctory treatments, the Victor question suddenly exploded into scholarly controversy in 1872. The spark was provided by a twenty-one-year-old at Leipzig named Moritz Theodor Opitz, a student of Friedrich Ritschl, who obtained *summi in philosophia honores* in the summer of that year with a dissertation entitled ‘Quaestiones de Sex. Aurelio Victore’.¹³ Making connections with a range of eminent scholars – including Ludwig Jeep, Eduard Wölfflin, and Friedrich Nietzsche – to obtain manuscript collations and advice, Opitz looked at the whole subject of Victor with fresh eyes and from the ground up.¹⁴ This study afforded him a crucial insight:

The book *De Caesaribus*, which survives to this day, does not seem to be the history of the Caesars written by Sex. Aurelius Victor, but rather both the *Caesares* and the first eleven chapters of the *Epitome* were excerpted from that work.¹⁵

Most of Opitz’s study is dedicated to a chapter-by-chapter analysis of the two texts, where he highlights the constant breaks in sense and *non sequiturs* of the *HAb*, and (at least for the first eleven chapters) the

12 Ulrici 1833: 156–157 n.: ‘Von Sextus Aurelius Victor haben wir es vorgezogen zu schweigen . . . daß aber das Buch *de Caesaribus* und dessen s.g. *Epitome* beides Excerpte aus einem und demselben älteren Werke von verschiedenen Händen verfertigt sind, ist ziemlich deutlich, wenn man sieht, wie Einiges in beiden Schriften wörtlich übereinstimmt, Anderes und nicht wenig in der *Epitome* enthalten ist, was das Hauptwerk gar nicht hat . . . Außerdem sind diese Schriften keine Geschichte zu nennen, sondern eine Sammlung von historischen Notizen. Dasselbe gilt von Eutropius . . .’. For some

perceptive comments on Ulrici, see Momigliano 1946: 163.

13 Opitz’s dissertation was completed in 1872 and published in part in that year by Teubner; in 1874 a fuller publication followed in the *Acta Societatis Philologiae Lipsiensis* (edited by Ritschl). Throughout, we refer to the extended 1874 version.

14 Opitz 1874: 199–200.

15 Opitz 1874: 210: *Is liber de Caesaribus, qui nunc superstes est, non videtur esse historia Caesarum a Sex. Aurelio Victore conscripta, sed potius et Caesares et Epitomae capita XI priora ex illa excerpta sunt.*

complementarity between it and the *LB*. For the rest of the *LB*, Opitz held (like most contemporary scholars) that it drew on a range of other sources, which he identified as Marius Maximus and Eutropius for Nerva to Elagabalus (cc. 12–23), an unknown source and Eutropius for Alexander Severus to Carinus (cc. 24–38), and Ammianus Marcellinus, with a (hypothetical) continuator, for Diocletian to Theodosius (cc. 39–48).¹⁶ As a hypothesis, strictly speaking, he then makes the final suggestion that all the chapters from *LB* 12–48 could in fact derive from Ammianus, who began his history with Nerva, even though the first fourteen books, which treated the emperors before Constantius II, are lost.¹⁷ Hence, he suggested, the whole of the *LB* could perhaps just be explained as the combination of Victor and Ammianus. This is a seductive theory, which has the virtue of actually trying to account for why the constant correspondences between the *HAb* and the *LB* apparently break off after chapter 11. It has, however, two major weaknesses: that it needs to conjure up a continuator of Ammianus to make sense of the relationship between the texts, and that it can only explain the correspondences between the *LB* and *HAb* after Nerva by recourse to a common source.

Opitz's work did not pass unnoticed. Two other scholars, Ludwig Jeep and Eduard Wölfflin, had evidently both already been engaged in working on the Victor problem. The appearance of Opitz's dissertation gave them the impetus to publish their findings. Jeep, who had written a dissertation (on Claudian) at Leipzig in 1869 and was a teacher at the prestigious Thomasschule in the same city, got his work out the next year in 1873.¹⁸ He argued that Victor had in fact written *two* works of history, the *Historia abbreviata* we have now, and then, decades later in Rome, a much longer history of the emperors from Augustus to Theodosius, which was epitomised to produce our *LB*.¹⁹ In 1874, a more penetrating study by Wölfflin, professor of Latin at Zurich, appeared.²⁰ He supported Opitz's theory almost entirely, with one additional wrinkle: that the compiler of the *Epitome* had himself contaminated Victor's original in the first eleven chapters with Suetonian material, which is why the pronounced Sallustian character of the *HAb* is missing from the *LB*.²¹ Along the way Jeep and Wölfflin touch on many of the points we have developed in this study, although generally in an off-hand fashion. Jeep, for example, wondered whether Ammianus' epithet *scriptor historicus* implies that Victor must have written something more substantial than the *HAb*.²² Wölfflin demonstrated, to a degree never before seen, the literary characteristics of Victor's style and his constant imitation of Sallust and Tacitus.²³ Along the way, he also showed just how much *less classical* the diction of the *LB* is.²⁴ The fact that two established figures of classical scholarship in the German-speaking world had thrown their weight behind Opitz's position was not insignificant. An 1888 Marburg dissertation on Tacitus, for example, could state baldly that Victor's works on the emperors were handed down to posterity as excerpts in the *De Caesaribus* and the *Epitome*, citing Wölfflin, as well as Opitz.²⁵

16 Opitz 1874: 228, 229, 243, 245, 254, 260.

17 Opitz 1874: 265.

18 Jeep 1873. On Jeep, see Tolkieln 1913 – he married Ida Warburg (from a minor branch of the famous Hamburg family) and went on to be a professor at Königsberg.

19 Jeep 1873, summary at 513–514.

20 On Wölfflin, see Dill 2013. Wölfflin would soon move to Erlangen and then to Munich, where he would inaugurate the *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*.

21 Wölfflin 1874: 283 (a warm endorsement of Opitz) and 294–299 (Suetonius in the *LB*)

22 Jeep 1873: 511.

23 Wölfflin 1874: 285–288 (Sallust), 302–308 (Tacitus).

24 Wölfflin 1874: 292–293, cf. Wölfflin 1902, which reaches much the same conclusion.

25 Cornelius 1888: 22.

This apparent consensus – that both works were connected to Victor and that the title of the *LB* was a reliable indicator of its nature – did not last long. In 1884, a little over a decade after Opitz’s work, Arthur Cohn – another young scholar and a student of Mommsen – obtained his doctorate at Berlin with a *dissertatio inauguralis* on the sources of Aurelius Victor (*i.e.* the *HAb*) and the first eleven chapters of the *LB*.²⁶ Cohn argued that not only were neither the *HAb* nor the *LB* epitomes of larger works, they were not even related to each other.²⁷ Instead, their shared material in the first eleven chapters was explained by the fact that they were both drawing on a now lost work: a *Suetonius auctus*, that is, a text of Suetonius enriched with additional materials.²⁸ Cohn made his case with some vigour: ‘Therefore all those careful constructs, built on the weakest of foundations by learned men, crash to ruin’.²⁹

Cohn’s work has its virtues: it is rigorously comparative, for example, and really does attempt (for the first time) a systematic analysis of the sources of the texts (in its fourth and seventh chapters). What concerns us here, however, is Cohn’s attempt to demolish the idea that either Victorine text is a condensation of a longer original: ultimately, this is very far from convincing. While he offers a number of arguments, at their base lies a series of ideas about the nature of the genre of condensed texts. He sets these out with high-flown rhetoric:

For if it is inquired whether the book [the *HAb*] is whole or not, I think that the most certain evidence – than which there can be nothing more trustworthy – is the book itself, of which those learned men [Opitz and Wölfflin] have an insufficient understanding. But if in this there appear clearly defined clues that the book is complete – that is, if we are taught about the life of the author to whom it is attributed, if a great number of opinions appear, if the author makes judgements – certainly no one will consider that that book has been excerpted.³⁰

When Cohn was writing, Latin epitomes were an even more obscure topic than they are today. So, unlike those whose work he attacked, his thesis really did rest on ‘the weakest of foundations’. His argument here is simple nonsense. If the original contained such material and the method of condensation was to extract whole sentences, then of course an epitome might have all these features: that was the point.³¹ In no way do any of the items listed by Cohn guarantee that a book was not excerpted. If they did, we would have to think that Xiphilinus authored Book LXXIV of Dio, for example, since it contains all of those features.³²

Most of Cohn’s other objections cannot withstand rigorous scrutiny. He dismissed the evidence of the manuscript titles as worthless, ‘interpolated by some scribe (*librarius*)’ – an attitude to *tituli* which would not stand today and which is demonstrably wrong in this case.³³ Similarly, he claimed that *abbreviata*

26 Cohn 1884. There is a brief *vita* of him at the end of the dissertation.

27 Cohn 1884: 14–26.

28 Cohn 1884: 26–37 (*LB* using *Suetonius auctus*), 54–57 (Victor using the same); 59 offers a useful diagram of the source relationships as Cohn saw them.

29 Cohn 1884: 26: *corruunt igitur omnia illa artificia a viris doctis in fundamento debilissimo exstructa*.

30 Cohn 1884: 16: *Nam si quaeritur, utrum liber integer sit necne, certissimum testem, quo locupletiore nullum existere*

posse credo, libellum ipsum, cuius illi viri doctissimi parum rationem habuerunt, esse puto. Quodsi in hoc expressa apparent vestigia, librum integrum esse – id est, si de vita scriptoris, cui tribuitur, instruimur, si sententiarum occurrit multitudo, si auctor iudicia facit ; – certe nemo librum excerptum ducet.

31 Chapter III.

32 74.5.2–3: favourable judgement of Pertinax (with details); 12.2, personal anecdote (with first-person verbs).

33 Cohn 1884: 9 and n. 10. Chapter II.

in a title was generally just equivalent to *breviarium*, which is (as we have seen) untrue.³⁴ Cohn simply denied that the *HAb* showed traces of the verbal and intellectual disorder that epitomisation would produce, claiming that in contrast numerous examples could be detected in the *LB*.³⁵ This is the opposite of the truth: the *HAb* is extremely hard to understand, every page showing evidence of clumsy excisions, where the *LB*, whatever its faults, is generally a smooth and easy read.³⁶ Cohn also argued that the *HAb* and *LB* are works of a very different character, as though that proved they could not be epitomes.³⁷ Yet every difference of style, of selection, and of interest between the two summaries of Victor's work can be paralleled in other epitomes of other works produced in late antiquity: the *HAb* is an epitome like that of Julius Paris, consisting of extracts cut out of the original but left internally intact, while the *LB* is like that of Januarius Nepotianus, constantly reworded and sometimes intermixed with material from other sources.³⁸ Of course, as a result the *HAb* is littered with personal judgements and *sententiae*, where the *LB* is more staid and less full of character, but that is simply irrelevant to the question of whether they are condensed texts. Cohn's attempt to explain the overlap between the *HAb* and the *LB* is also simply impossible on statistical grounds. When two texts overlap because they share a common source, the lower limit of the size of that common source can be calculated. In the first eleven chapters, the *HAb* and the *LB* share 635 words out of 2,750 and 2,600 words, respectively. Their common source must thus have been a work that consisted of at least 11,260 words and was probably not much longer than 20,000 – a quarter of the length of Suetonius. There is simply no way, statistically speaking, that these two texts were independently derived from a work that was even longer than Suetonius, that is, a *Suetonius auctus*.

Cohn's argument is thus fundamentally flawed – based on a series of misconceptions about the core question it set out to tackle. Even so, it would take us far afield to trace the contours of this debate in its entirety: the points Jeep makes against Opitz, the arguments Wölfflin deploys against Jeep, the objections Cohn raises to all three. This exercise, while useful and instructive, would have a primarily antiquarian interest: none of these scholars actually proposed the theory that we advance here, nor do they have any contemporary disciples.³⁹ This is because the debate was undercut almost as soon as it began. In 1884, a work was published which would go on to lay the foundation for the next thirteen decades of scholarship on Victor and late Roman Latin historiography more generally: Alexander Enmann's *Eine verlorene Geschichte der römischen Kaiser und das Buch De viris illustribus urbis Romae* (1884). The subtitle is instructive: *Quellenstudien*.

34 Cohn 1884: 9–10. Chapters II and III.

35 Cohn 1884: 18–19, 25.

36 Chapter IV.

37 Cohn 1884: 14–18.

38 On Paris and Nepotianus, both epitomators of Valerius Maximus, see Chapter III.

39 This is not to say that cognate ideas have not occasionally been mooted: Tarrant and Reeve in *T&T* ('*De viris illustribus*'), for example, could say simply about the *HAb*: 'It may of course be either the original or an adaptation by the compiler. A work that too simply proclaims itself

an epitome of the original, *Libellus de vita et moribus imperatorum brevius ex libris Sexti Aurelii Victoris*, survives in about twenty manuscripts' (149). Baker briefly entertains this idea, citing Tarrant and Reeve, and gives some references to scholarship on Victor before Enmann (2014: 91–92). His subsequent analysis, however, conducted in the service of the idea that the *HA* was Victor's source, assumes throughout the identity between Victor's work and the *HAb*, with some possible 'interpolation' by the compiler of the *CT* (see especially 101).

Alexander Enmann

The 1870s were an exciting time in the University of Dorpat, present-day Tartu, Estonia. Though then located in Russian Livonia, 400 miles north-east of Königsberg, the university was a central part of the German intellectual landscape. At the time, Dorpat's leading light was the theologian Theodosius Harnack (d. 1889), a moderate Lutheran, and specialist in liturgy, with an extraordinary family. He had four sons: one would become a famous mathematician, another a chemist, and a third a literary historian.⁴⁰ More famous than all of these, however, was the son who followed in his father's intellectual footsteps: Adolf von Harnack (1851–1930), who studied theology in Dorpat from 1869 to 1872, before moving on to Leipzig.⁴¹ There, in 1873, he completed his doctorate, really the fruit of his time at Dorpat and dedicated to his father. His dissertation investigated the sources for ancient Gnosticism: *Zur Quellenkritik der Geschichte des Gnosticismus*.⁴² Harnack argued that the earliest detailed source for Gnostic thought, Justin Martyr's *Syntagma against all heresies* (Σύνταγμα κατὰ πασῶν τῶν γεγενημένων αἱρέσεων), though lost, could be partially reconstructed through a minute comparison of parallel passages in later sources, such as Tertullian and Irenaeus of Lyons.⁴³ This was very much of a piece with cutting-edge theological scholarship of the day, in which the intellectual energies of liberal and moderate Protestant circles were devoted above all to *Quellenkritik* of the New Testament.⁴⁴ It was in 1863 that Holtzmann published his *Die synoptischen Evangelien: ihr Ursprung und geschichtlicher Charakter* at Leipzig, which set forth in influential and definitive terms the two-source hypothesis for the synoptic Gospels, *i.e.* that Mark's Gospel was prior to Matthew and Luke, and that it, along with an unknown *Quelle* (later dubbed Q) consisting of Christ's sayings, was their source. Adolf von Harnack would himself in 1907 publish at Leipzig a reconstruction of this Q: *Sprüche und Reden Jesu: die Zweite Quelle des Matthäus und Lukas*. These were heady notions, particularly seductive in an intellectual world where philology reigned supreme and there was general confidence that sound *Methode* would give historical studies the kind of certain knowledge available in mathematics and physics, that what had been lost in the messy and complicated process of transmission could be recovered through scientific scholarship. It was inevitable that such methods would also be applied to ancient historical texts. Biblical studies, theology, and Church history, on the one hand, and classical studies and ancient history, on the other, were not in separate siloes, as they are today.⁴⁵ Harnack himself engaged deeply with the Roman world to understand the rise of Christianity and exchanged a series of letters with the greatest Roman historian of his day, Theodor Mommsen.⁴⁶

Dorpat was an important centre for the study of ancient history, so it is hardly surprising to see source-criticism also occupying a place of prime importance there. In 1872, Franz Rühl came to Dorpat from Leipzig, bringing with him a specialism in the *Quellenkritik* of Plutarch, the subject of his 1867 Marburg dissertation. His new project was on Justin, the epitomator of Trogus (whose medieval reception

40 On Theodosius, see Grundmann 2015.

41 For Harnack's early career, see Nowak 1996: 2–5.

42 Harnack 1873.

43 Smith 2014: 49–86 argues against the idea that it was a work of Justin at all.

44 The classic work on this period is Schweitzer's *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, first published in 1906 (translated 1910).

45 A full sense of the range of Harnack's interests, *e.g.*, can be found in the papers in Nowak and Oexle 2001.

46 Edited, with an extensive and helpful contextual introduction, by Rebenich 1997.

had been the subject of his 1871 Leipzig *Habilitation*), and was particularly focused on his sources – it was published in 1872. Rühl would later go on to edit Eutropius (1887). In 1876, he left to take up a chair at Königsberg and was replaced at Dorpat by the celebrated Ludwig Mendelssohn, who would be promoted to *professor ordinarius* two years later.⁴⁷ His energies were devoted to editing ancient and late-ancient Greek historians: Appian in two volumes (1879–1881), Herodian (1883), and Zosimus (1887). At the same time, Mendelssohn was interested in biblical questions, leaving an edition of the *Letter of Aristeas* – a document of fundamental importance for the Septuagint Bible – unfinished at the time of his death in 1896.⁴⁸

It was into this world that Alexander Enmann stepped in 1874. For six years he was in Dorpat, obtaining a degree of *magister historiae universalis* in 1880, for a thesis on the *Quellenkritik* of Pompeius Trogus, doubtless inspired by Rühl, who (along with Mendelssohn) supervised him.⁴⁹ This was a difficult subject and one that remains challenging to this day.⁵⁰ Pompeius Trogus' history does not survive; we have only an epitome made by Justin at some unknown date.⁵¹ Though Trogus wrote in Latin, he focused not on Roman and Italian history, but on the rest of the world, clearly centred on Greece, for which he used Greek materials. Both these facts conspired to make the usual methods of source-criticism unusually difficult. What Enmann ended up doing was triangulating Justin's epitome with Cornelius Nepos and Diodorus Siculus, using parallel passages to identify where they shared a common source. This is not the place to go through his arguments: it suffices simply to note that he identified Timaeus of Tauromenium (d. ca. 260 BC), whose celebrated thirty-eight-book history is almost entirely lost, as one of Trogus' principal sources. What is important for our purposes, however, is that the methods he employed on Trogus were the same as those that he would use in his next work, *Eine verlorene Geschichte der römischen Kaiser* (1884).⁵² By this point, Enmann had left Dorpat to take up a position as librarian at the Imperial St Petersburg Academy of Sciences, although he would continue his formal studies at the university, gaining a doctorate in 1886 with a dissertation on archaic Greek history.⁵³

'Eine verlorene Geschichte' is a work of genius, but not quite in the way that it is made out to be in modern scholarship. Enmann was not, as is commonly stated or implied today, primarily concerned with the rather narrow issue of how a number of fourth-century historical epitomes (alleged or actual) share certain words, ideas, and errors, though he certainly had something to say on that topic.⁵⁴ His lengthy and involved essay has a much broader frame of reference. Enmann's starting point was the events of AD 238, the year of the six emperors.⁵⁵ He noted that Aurelius Victor (*HAb* 26) and Eutropius (9.1.2)

47 On Mendelssohn, see Sandys 1903–1908: 3.198.

48 It was published in 1900 by Wendland.

49 Enmann 1880.

50 On Trogus' sources see, briefly, Forni and Angeli Bertinelli 1982: 1312–1353.

51 On Justin, see Chapter III. On the manuscripts of his work, see briefly *T&T* 'Justinus' (Reynolds).

52 Enmann 1884: 337 (the first page) specifically locates his work in the tradition of *Quellenforschung*, noting the search for Plutarch's and Tacitus' sources as its primary object. Enmann's essay actually appeared in 1883 (see Barnes 1978: 91), though published in the 1884 volume of *Philologus*' supplementary series.

53 For more on Enmann's career, see Gilliam 1980.

54 'Alexander Enmann argued that certain shared errors in the fourth-century epitomes written by Aurelius Victor, Eutropius, and the anonymous *Epitome de Caesaribus* could best be explained by positing a common, now-lost source' (Rohrbacher 2013: 149). 'The *Kaisergeschichte* (KG) was first postulated in 1883 by Alexander Enmann. He noticed that the epitomators Aurelius Victor (writing in mid-361) and Eutropius (ca. 369) wrote (especially about the third century) in such a way as to necessitate a single common source' (Burgess 1995b: 111). 'Close on a century has now elapsed since ENMANN came out with his *Kaisergeschichte*, the common source of Victor and of Eutropius' (Syme 1980b: 267, cf. Syme 1981: 282).

55 On this, see Chapter VIII.

share a cluster of errors (so he judged them) about this turbulent period and suggested (really assumed) that they must have had a common source, which originally made all these mistakes. The existence of that source, Enmann argued, could be demonstrated from a series of passages in the *Historia Augusta* which attacks the views found in Victor and Eutropius.⁵⁶ He was particularly impressed by the resemblance between a passage of Victor (*HAb* 27.1) and these extracts from the *HA* (allegedly written by one ‘Julius Capitolinus’):

The similarity is so striking that one would have to assume that Capitolinus almost had Aurelius Victor before his eyes, if one did not know that the former wrote under Constantine and the latter only under Constantius I [*sic*, for II].⁵⁷

Enmann saw, correctly, that this passage and the *HA* were closely linked and, also correctly, that any direct relationship between them could be explained only by ‘Capitolinus’ using Victor. He took it for granted, however, as most scholars at the time did, that the *HA* had been written by six different authors under Diocletian and Constantine, so it obviously pre-dated the *HAb*. As a result, something else, something much more complex, must be at work: this was a puzzle which required examination of the relationship between Eutropius, Aurelius Victor, the *HA*, and the *Libellus breuiatus*.⁵⁸ The conclusion of Enmann’s study was that the data could be explained only by the existence of a common source to which all these various authors had access: the *Kaisergeschichte*, a lost Latin text that underlay the surviving works of later Roman historians.⁵⁹ This work must have had an extraordinary circulation, despite the fact that it was never referred to by those who quarried it: traces of it were widely scattered in the literature of the fourth and fifth centuries.⁶⁰

Enmann found in the *HA* and Victor (in the first instance) an apparent problem; in the techniques he had previously used for Pompeius Trogus, and those being applied in contemporary New Testament criticism, he thought that he saw a solution. His methods should be, by now, entirely familiar. In essence, what he did was assemble long lists of parallel passages, from which he tried to deduce a common source, making allowances for the way in which that source has been treated by different writers. This was an endeavour very much in the spirit of late-nineteenth-century German philology. Compare von Harnack in 1907 talking about the fate of Q, the supposed lost source for Matthew and Luke:

The final blow to the independent existence of Q was dealt when it was incorporated in the gospels of St. Luke and St. Matthew. In St. Luke it exists, split up and dispersed throughout the gospel in subservience to the historical narrative; in St. Matthew it was treated in more conservative spirit, though in some important passages it has suffered more from revision and shows clearer traces of the particular bias of the evangelist. In most skilful fashion – often only by means of an accent or by an arrangement of the context which seems quite insignificant – the first evangelist has made this

56 Enmann 1884: 334–335. The *HA* passages are: *Gord.* 2.1; *Max. Balb.* 15, 16.7; *Maximini duo* 33.2.

57 Enmann 1884: 339–340: ‘Die Ähnlichkeit ist so frappant, dass man annehmen müsste, Capitolinus habe geradezu den Aurelius Victor vor Augen gehabt, wüsste man nicht, dass ersterer unter Constantin, letzterer erst unter Constantius I. geschrieben hat’.

58 Enmann 1884’s first chapter (340–356) is on Victor and Eutropius. His second, much more substantial chapter (356–396) is largely devoted to Victor and the *HA* (with some analysis of Eutropius). His third (396–407) looks at Victor and the *LB*, while his fourth (407–432) considers the *KG* and the work of Suetonius.

59 Summarised at Enmann 1884: 432 ff.

60 Enmann 1884: 443.

compilation of discourses subservient to his own special interest in the Christian community and its organisation, while St. Luke, who has much more frequently altered the wording of his source, has nevertheless kept so closely to it in essential points that its original character is more clearly perceived in his reproduction.⁶¹

Replace Q with the *KG* and St Matthew and St Luke with Victor and Eutropius, and this might well stand as a summary of Enmann's theory. It could still serve as a statement of the current *communis opinio* on the *KG*.

The importance of the *HA*, and of an *HA* written by six different authors under Diocletian and Constantine, to Enmann's original *KG* can scarcely be exaggerated. His essay's longest chapter, some forty pages, is devoted to unravelling the connections between the *HA*, Victor, and Eutropius, all on the assumption that Capitolinus *et al.* had priority. His delineation of the date and content of the *KG* took it for granted that the *scriptores* could be used to nail down a work written before the era of the Tetrarchs had finished.⁶² So, it was naturally to the *HA* that Enmann compared the abilities and intentions of the hypothesised author of the *KG* (favourably).⁶³ None of this should be surprising, because (as we saw above) it was really the *HA* that structured the problem which Enmann set out to solve. That it antedated Victor and Eutropius, even as it seemed to know their work, was what made it necessary to posit the lost common source that Enmann believed he had discovered. This vital structural role of the *HA* in Enmann's theory can best be seen in the way that he treats the connections between the work of Victor and Eutropius. He starts by attempting to demonstrate that they share a common source for the third century.⁶⁴ He then moves back to their coverage of the second and admits that his method is much less revealing there.⁶⁵ It is at this point that he introduces the *HA*, which allows him, through its overlaps with both authors, to vindicate the idea of a common source. After an interlude on the links between *HAb* and *LB* and the role of Suetonius, Enmann summarises his view of the *KG*.⁶⁶ He then turns back to Victor and Eutropius, admitting that their relationship continues after the early fourth century and saying that we would understand it entirely differently if we analysed these two texts alone.⁶⁷ His solution was to posit, in addition to the *KG*, a separate continuation of the work, completed in roughly 357, which was the common source of Victor and Eutropius after the original ended.⁶⁸

Throughout all this, the putative date of the *HA* plays an absolutely central role in Enmann's argument – as contemporary scholars recognised.⁶⁹ The connections between Victor and Eutropius are really explained around it, rather than for themselves. It was the *HA* that forced Enmann to resort to the awkward conclusion that two authors independently used one common source and then its separate continuation, one of them (Victor) relying on the latter for events only a few years before he himself set to work. That was partly a consequence of the methods of *Quellenforschung* that Enmann adopted, but it was mostly made necessary by his understanding of the *HA*. It should, however, have led him to question the viability of that method and that understanding. If the parallels between Victor and Eutropius had stopped

61 Harnack 1908: 251–252 (a translation of Harnack 1907).

62 Enmann 1884: 432.

63 Enmann 1884: 442–443.

64 Enmann 1884: 340–356.

65 Enmann 1884: 356.

66 Enmann 1884: 432–443.

67 Enmann 1884: 443–444.

68 Enmann 1884: 455–456.

69 *e.g.* Peter 1883.

with (say) the Emperor Carinus, that would have been a powerful piece of evidence for the existence of a lost common source and hence a vindication of the soundness of his methods. The fact that they did not, and that he had to introduce an *ad hoc* hypothesis to save his overall idea, should have caused him to think again.

Even allowing for this flaw, Enmann's was a bold and elegant solution to the problem that he set out to treat – it was received with a good deal of enthusiasm.⁷⁰ It had three major virtues, which can be illuminated by comparing it to other near-contemporary works that treated similar problems. First, Enmann's theory explained a great deal: it seemed to hold the key to understanding the fourth-century historians in general. In contrast, Cohn treated much of the same material as Enmann with very similar methods, but could really only account for the first eleven chapters of the *HAb* and *LB*.⁷¹ Second, Enmann's theory took seriously the texts themselves, working through what they said and trying to understand how they related to each other, but with a sceptical eye. Remarkably, for instance, he cut through much of the bibliographical pettifoggery in the *HA* itself. By way of contrast, compare the 1881 Halle dissertation of Paul Ebeling, entitled *Quaestiones Eutropianae*. Ebeling looks at many of the same passages as Enmann and considers many of the same questions, albeit starting from Eutropius instead of the *HA*. His conclusion is that, for most of the imperial section, Eutropius' source was none other than 'Junius Cordus', the cherished historical authority fabricated by the author of the *HA*.⁷² Enmann avoided falling into traps like this. Third and finally, Enmann's work rendered much earlier scholarship superfluous: if he was right, then there was no real need to read Opitz, Wölfflin, Jeep, or Cohn. Indeed, Enmann refers to them rather less often than one might expect, certainly less than they refer to each other. These parallel efforts show just how much Enmann's theory was part of the general intellectual ferment of the time, but they also highlight the particular strengths of his approach, the things which made his conclusions so appealing – so easy to accept.

Hermann Dessau

Unfortunately for Enmann, the timing for this type of endeavour was not propitious. Just five years later, in an 1889 article in *Hermes*, Hermann Dessau would take up the question of the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* and present the world with a radical solution, a solitary *scriptor Historiae Augustae*. Dessau was a prosopographer, and what bothered him at first were the names in the *HA*: many of these were attested nowhere else and were hardly appropriate to the epoch in which they were placed.⁷³ Other anachronisms emerged as he looked more closely at the text. Through a whole battery of lexical, textual, and historical arguments, Dessau then developed his radical solution: the *HA* was not, as it claimed to be, a collection of lives by six different authors writing under Diocletian and Constantine, but rather the work of a single

70 Peter 1883, though making some perceptive criticisms; Plew 1884.

71 On Cohn, see above.

72 Ebeling 1881: 42, 48 *e.g.*

73 Dessau 1889: 349 ff. Dessau would, of course, go on to play a very important role in the first edition of the *Prosopographia Imperii Romani* – on him, see the papers collected in Schmidt 2009. On names in the *HA*, see now Stover and Woudhuysen 2022a.

author writing towards the end of the fourth century. Looking at the passages on AD 238, the passages that had inspired Enmann to first hypothesise his *KG*, he concluded that the situation was exactly as it appeared on the surface: the author of the *HA* did in fact have Victor before his eyes as he was writing, because he was actually writing decades after Victor. Victor and Eutropius, not their hypothesised source, were the objects of the *HA*'s ire for their supposed errors on the year of the six emperors.⁷⁴ In fact, Dessau documented in remarkable detail quite how much the *HA* owed to Victor and Eutropius, how clearly it was using their works directly, at times verbatim, and how often it wove their narratives together.⁷⁵ His demonstration that the *HA* had simply plagiarised Victor's account of Septimius Severus long remained the single strongest argument that the work was written decades after it purports to have been and hence that the *scriptores* were a mirage.⁷⁶

At one stroke, the pillar which carried so much of the weight of Enmann's *Kaisergeschichte* toppled over. If the *HA* was not itself a work of the Tetrarchic era, then one needed a completely different approach to the texts that the *Kaisergeschichte* purported to explain. Dessau himself, while far too polite to engage in overt polemic against Enmann, clearly saw this. He noted that the 'wörtlicher Uebereinstimmungen' between the *HA*, Victor, and Eutropius had forced the hypothesis that they all shared a common source, since direct use of the latter two by the former had seemed impossible. His re-dating of the *HA* and his demonstration that depended directly on Victor and Eutropius simply removed the need for that hypothesis: 'dies ist indess nicht wahrscheinlich', as he put it, with some understatement.⁷⁷ In fact, Dessau was more generally sceptical about the whole concept of a common source for Victor and Eutropius. He rejected the idea that the *HAb* was an epitome and so could not advance the thesis adopted here. This meant that he had to admit some common lost source for Victor and Eutropius, but he was generally inclined to minimise what they owed to it.⁷⁸ He thought that Enmann's thesis entailed that Victor and Eutropius had followed their common source 'sclavisch'.⁷⁹ That was not so: they shared a common factual core for the second and third centuries derived from it, but they treated their materials very differently. As Dessau pointed out perceptively, where Victor's source was known (Suetonius early on in the *HAb*), he clearly did not reproduce it verbatim.⁸⁰ How likely, then, was he to have followed some lost source in the mechanical fashion Enmann had envisaged? All this called into question not only the specific conclusions of *Eine verlorene Geschichte*, but the methods by which they had been reached. Dessau's essay ought, besides its profound effect on study of the *HA*, to have cut down the *KG* in its prime. Subsequent work might have been expected to turn back to narrower theories of a lost source (*Suetonius auctus* e.g.), or to different conceptual frameworks (abbreviation of Victor, for instance).

Yet something like Enmann's theory stumbled on, apparently unaffected by what ought to have been a crushing blow. There were several reasons for this. Dessau's work was enormously controversial from the very start: it would be decades before his conclusions were widely accepted.⁸¹ In some ways his

74 Dessau 1889: 372–373. Enmann is cited (361, n. 1) for the belief that the *HA* is attacking the sources of Victor and Eutropius.

75 Dessau 1889: 361–374.

76 Dessau 1889: 364–366.

77 Dessau 1889: 361.

78 Dessau 1889: 361, n.1. Barnes 1978: 91 is thus not quite right to say that Dessau 'reformulated the original demonstration' that the *KG* existed (cf. 1976a: 259–260).

79 Dessau 1889: 361.

80 Dessau 1889: 361–363.

81 See Chapter VII.

argument was simply too radical to command immediate assent, too fundamentally challenging to what was known and to the way that the history of antiquity was understood. A text that intentionally set out to deceive its readers about date, circumstance, and sources was a nightmare for *Quellenforschung*. As Arthur Stein put it in his admiring obituary: ‘Dessau has wrested from us large portions of our supposed knowledge of the history of the Roman imperial age’.⁸² Not everyone welcomed that.⁸³ In contrast, Enmann’s work was much more in tune with contemporary intellectual fashion, much easier to digest. At the same time, though it had fundamentally undermined Enmann’s ideas, Dessau’s thesis also removed some more superficial obstacles to them. With the *HA* re-dated, there was no need for the awkward *ad hoc* hypothesis of a continuation to 357. It is for these and other reasons that Dessau’s extraordinary insight did not end up consigning Enmann’s *Kaisergeschichte* to an early retirement. As Syme put it: ‘the postulate stands, since there is no other way of accounting for the literary phenomena’.⁸⁴

The *KG* survived not because, as originally, it made sense of the *HA*’s relationship to Victor and Eutropius, but because of the idea Enmann had organised around that: his explanation of the relationship between Eutropius and Victor. For this new purpose, the *KG* worked admirably, elegantly even. At many points, it looks as though Eutropius is using the *HAb* as we have it, yet at almost every juncture he provides some small addition or alteration which could not have arisen from that text. Given the simplicity of his narrative, its restricted scope, and humble aims, it is difficult to imagine the author of a *breviarium* engaging in extensive research to provide supplemental titbits of information. That Victor and Eutropius shared a common source was what scholars after 1889 took more or less for granted, whether or not they gave that source the name of *Kaisergeschichte*. For Mommsen and Seeck, in their immediate responses to Dessau (both 1890), though the idea was hardly worth sustained comment, a common source was obvious.⁸⁵ In an 1897 book, Hermann Peter offered a more extended treatment, which took it for granted that Victor, Eutropius, and Festus shared a common source and that this was what Enmann (among others) had proved.⁸⁶ Peter’s book was really a handbook of the Roman historians and its inclusion of the *KG* is a sign that Enmann’s hypothesis was well on the way to acquiring that respectability that only reference works can bestow: it soon made its way into Georg Wissowa’s revision of August Friedrich Pauly’s *Realencyclopädie*, volumes of which began to appear in the 1890s.⁸⁷ By the first decade of the twentieth century, it was as though Dessau had changed nothing: the *KG* had become the common source of Victor and Eutropius, to which it was possible that the *HA* had also had access. In 1904, Lécivain devoted an entire chapter to Enmann’s (and it was definitely his) *Chronique Impériale*.⁸⁸

82 Stein 1932: 239: ‘Dessau hat uns große Partien unseres vermeintlichen Wissens um die Geschichte der römischen Kaiserzeit entrissen’.

83 One element in the resistance to Dessau’s theories in Germany perhaps lies in his being Jewish. It is noteworthy that the only two substantial obituaries of Dessau were both written by Austrian Jews working outside Germany: Stein, who was a professor at Prague (Pesditschek 2008) and Salomon Frankfurter (1933), another student of Mommsen who had written a doctoral thesis on the *HA*, before becoming chief librarian at the University of Vienna (Adunka 1956).

There is also a short obituary notice by Meyer 1932. German classics in the 1930s seems to have been keen to forget Dessau.

84 Syme 1980b: 268.

85 Mommsen 1890: 271 ff. (no mention of Enmann); Seeck 1890: 638 (perhaps explained by the fact that the author was, as he mentions, on holiday at the time).

86 Peter 1897: 2.137–138.

87 e.g. in *RE* 5.1 ‘L. Domitius (36) Aurelianus’ (Groag) *passim* under the title ‘Kaiserchronik’. The entry was published in 1903.

88 Lécivain 1904: 423–436.

Lécrivain thought that the *HA* owed a great deal to the *KG*, but he also thought its existence proved by correspondences between Victor and Eutropius and was inclined to see them (along with Festus) as facile copyists of a common source.⁸⁹ In 1911, Ernst Hohl stated baldly that Enmann had proved that Aurelius Victor, Eutropius, and the *HA* shared a common source, which he then set about reconstructing.⁹⁰ In the 1920s, Baynes had recourse to it to deny that the *HA* used Eutropius, in service of his theory of a Julianic date for the former.⁹¹ From thereon, the *KG* was to be a dominant feature of the study of fourth-century historiography. By the 1960s and 1970s, when Sir Ronald Syme began his intensive study of fourth-century historians, the *KG* was comfortably ensconced as the source of Victor and Eutropius.⁹² Through the work of (especially) Barnes and his disciple R. W. Burgess, it has continued to be central to all discussion of the later Latin historians.⁹³ It now finds a home in works of reference, not just in entries for historians actually attested, but as an entity in its own right.⁹⁴ As Burgess himself put it in the *Oxford Dictionary of Late Antiquity*: the *KG*'s 'existence is now universally accepted by scholars'.⁹⁵

Yet the post-Dessau *Kaisergeschichte* was flawed in its very conception. One could not simply remove the underlying structure of Enmann's argument and act as though nothing had happened: the question of the relationship between different fourth-century historical texts ought to have been rethought in its entirety. That, however, is what the scholarship has conspicuously failed to do. Throughout the twentieth century, it was simply taken for granted that – whatever might have happened to some aspects of Enmann's theory – the *KG* was a solid foundation for scholarly activity. As Ernst Hohl put it in 1937:

Even if one leaves the *HA* entirely out of the game, the indispensable nature of Enmann's thesis is already evident from the links between Aurelius Victor, Eutropius, and the *Epitome*, which can be satisfactorily explained only through a common source, as Enmann deduced.⁹⁶

Or as Timothy Barnes said, more than thirty years later, in an extended and influential treatment of the *KG*:

Because Enmann's hypothesis is necessary to explain the resemblances between Victor and Eutropius, the controversy over the *HA* is irrelevant to its existence.⁹⁷

Both these scholars, major figures in the intellectual history of the later Latin historians, treat the *HA* as though it were an incidental irritant in the theory of the *KG*, rather than fundamental to its conception. Not for the first or last time when it comes to Victor, the current scholarly consensus is really a series of accidents, in which conclusions have survived even as their premises have been refuted.

Moreover, unfortunately for the theory of the *KG*, scholarship has continued to progress over the century and a half since Enmann's essay was published. Through this, the *Kaisergeschichte* has furnished a spectacular example of scholarly mission-creep. Enmann's *KG* was used by Victor, Eutropius, and the *HA*,

89 Lécrivain 1904: 426–428, 434.

90 Hohl 1911: 187, 192 ff.

91 Baynes 1926: 48–50.

92 Syme 1968a: 105–106; Syme 1971a: 80 e.g.

93 See below, on the work of these two.

94 *HLL* 5.536 (Schmidt).

95 *ODLA* 'Kaisergeschichte' (Burgess).

96 Hohl 1937: 147: 'Selbst wenn man die *HA* ganz aus dem Spiele läßt, ergibt sich die Unentbehrlichkeit der These Enmanns schon aus den Berührungen zwischen Aurelius Victor, Eutrop und der *Epitome*, die sich befriedigend nur durch eine gemeinsame Quelle, wie Enmann sie erschlossen hat, erklären lassen'.

97 Barnes 1970a: 15.

though he talked rather more vaguely of its traces elsewhere. Over time, its influence has grown: to Festus, to Jerome and Ammianus, to the *Epitome*, and even to Orosius.⁹⁸ Enmann's *KG* author was 'ein höchst achtbarer historiker', but he wrote short summary biographies in the style of Suetonius.⁹⁹ Over time, he has grown in capacities and achievements. He imitated Tacitus; he made ever more extensive use of Greek sources.¹⁰⁰ He took a serious interest in *Verfassungsgeschichte*, or constitutional history.¹⁰¹ Moreover, he went forth and multiplied. Further research using Enmann's method detected correspondences between Eutropius and other texts even after where the *HAb* breaks off in 360.¹⁰² Still more disconcertingly, correspondences between Jerome and the *Epitome* continue even beyond the point where Eutropius concludes, which has led to the hypothesis of a so-called 'breviary of 378'.¹⁰³ This has put scholars into an impossible bind. As Burgess, the most forceful contemporary advocate of the *KG*, put it in 2005:

If we apply the rules and procedures established for identifying the *KG* up to 358 to the material after 358, we are forced to posit three different known recensions of the *KG*: one concluding in 358, used by Victor in 361; one concluding in 364, used by Eutropius and Festus in 369/70; and one concluding in 378, used by Jerome, Ammianus, the *HA*, the *Epitome* . . . This is not a conclusion I adopt lightly. It is awkward, to say the least.¹⁰⁴

This is the point at which someone needs to say that there is some fundamental problem with the 'rules and procedures' which have led to this position: the facts themselves have entailed a *reductio ad absurdum*.

The *KG* is nowadays treated as a sort of timeless verity, so fundamental to scholarship as to be barely worth thinking about. What we have tried to show here is that is actually a historical artefact: the product of a very particular time, place, and set of events. If Enmann had, by some happenstance, delayed the publication of his work until after Dessau, is it really likely that he would have essayed the *KG* in the form that he did? If Dessau had been somewhat less polite about Enmann, would the *KG* really have lumbered on without explicit modification? Yet, beyond the weaknesses that study of the *KG* in its context reveals, the extraordinary fluidity of its nature and the growth of its extent hint that something is wrong with the underlying theory as well. It is this to which we turn next.

Methods of *Quellenkritik*

We are not advocating here for the position of Den Boer, and others, who considers the whole notion of the *KG*, or something like it, to be absurd.¹⁰⁵ The problem identified by Enmann is a real problem, and it will not do to explain the intellectual and verbal similarities between our texts with some fund of orally transmitted details about Roman history, or by reference to the common mental framework of fourth-century education. Consider the parallels between the *HAb* and Eutropius set out in **TABLE 6.1**. Clearly, *something* is going on here. Indeed, even opponents of the *KG*, like Dufraigne, have been forced to posit

98 Orosius: Peachin 1988: 219–221; Sehlmeier 2009: 203. More sceptical is Van Nuffelen 2012: 109.

99 Enmann 1884: 442–443.

100 Festy 1998: 156–159.

101 Nickbakht and Scardino 2021: 214–215.

102 Burgess 2005.

103 Schwartz 1980.

104 Burgess 2005: 190.

105 Den Boer 1972: 21–22, 28. Dufraigne 1975: xxvi–xxvii.

TABLE 6.1 – PARALLELS BETWEEN THE *HAb* AND EUTROPIUS

<i>HAb</i>	Eutropius
20.18: Britanniam . . . muro munivit per transversam insulam ducto utrimque ad finem Oceani.	8.19: Vallum per CXXXIII passuum milia a mari ad mare deduxit.*
21.3: Iuliam novercam . . . coniugem affectavit.	8.20: Novercam suam Iuliam uxorem duxerit.
24.5: Matrisque cultu, quae nomine Mammaea erat, plus quam pius.	8.23: In Mamaeam matrem suam unice pius.
25.1: Gaius Iulius Maximinus, praesidens Trebellicae, primus e militaribus . . . potentiam cepit.	9.1: Maximinus ex corpore militari primus ad imperium accessit.
39.13: Prima ad exercitum contione obstaretur ignarum cladis Numeriani.	9.20: Prima militum contione iuravit Numerianum nullo suo dolo interfectum.
He fortified Britain with a wall across the island, reaching at both ends to the Ocean's edge.	He laid down a ditch through 133 miles from sea to sea.
He desired to have his stepmother Julia as a wife.	He married his stepmother, Julia.
He was more than pious in his devotion to his mother, whose name was Mammea.	He was especially pious towards Mammea, his mother.
Gaius Julius Maximinus, who was governing Trebellica, was the first from among the soldiers to seize power.	Maximinus was the first from the common soldiery to assume imperial power.
At his first address to the army he swore he was ignorant of the destruction of Numerian.	At his first address to the soldiers, he swore that Numerian had not been killed by his treachery.

* On the text of this passage, cf. Chapter V.

their own lost sources to explain similarities between the texts, which is simply smuggling Enmann in through the back door.¹⁰⁶ The textual resonances between our surviving late-antique Latin histories are a genuine conundrum, one that ultimately requires a textual solution. The reason why applying Enmann's methods has led to the current absurd situation is that he failed to make one fundamental distinction: the *KG* is not a text, but a *minimal hypothesis*.¹⁰⁷ A formal analysis can reveal some fundamental weaknesses of Enmann's rules and procedures.

Let x be our lost source. Correspondences in our surviving sources a , b , c , and d in their various combinations (ab , bc , abc , ad , cd etc.) must *ex hypothesi* belong to x , provided we assume that these sources are independent of each other. On this basis, we can describe the minimal content of x as the set of these correspondences. That, however, does not mean that x could not contain other things. Logically speaking, it is very likely that some material from x would show up in only one of its descendants, *i.e.* in one of a , b , c , or d . It is also certain that x must have had material that was reproduced in no surviving source, since no single source is comprehensive of every element of x and our set of surviving sources is just a random sample. Statistical analysis, of the type we have discussed above (the product of the length of the two

106 *e.g.* Dufraigne 1975: xxxiii, with a lost history as the fundamental source of the *HAb* from Diocletian to Constantius II.

107 For this distinction between hypothesis and text, we are indebted to Farrer 1955. See also the amusing critique of the Q hypothesis by Goulder 1996.

sections divided by the length of their shared material), suggests that the population, *i.e.* *x*, is two orders of magnitude larger than the material shared in a pair of its descendants. For example, the eighth book of Eutropius (from Nerva to Alexander Severus) consists of 1,900 words. The corresponding portion of the *HAb* (ca. 12–24) consists of 2,800 words. The overlapping material between these two consists of about 425 words. This suggests that their shared source ought to have consisted of a minimum of 12,500 words (for just the period from 96 to 235) and was in all likelihood quite a bit longer, at ca. 20,000 words.

Fundamental to the reconstruction of *x* is the assumption that our extant sources are independent of each other, but Enmann's method of comparing parallel passages simply cannot demonstrate this. In the case of the *KG*, this is a particularly severe obstacle. Eutropius is, by general agreement, a core *KG* text, central to any reconstruction. Yet almost everyone now agrees that the *HA*, at least, used Eutropius, and there is absolutely no reason why other subsequent witnesses to the *KG* – Jerome, Festus, Ammianus – could not have used his work as well. In fact, *a priori*, when we see that they agree with Eutropius, that is the natural assumption – one that can be amply confirmed by further study.¹⁰⁸ As Farrer put it crisply in his critique of the Q theory for the Gospels:

For if we find two documents containing much common material, some of it verbally identical, and if those two documents derive from the same literary region, our first supposition is not that both draw upon a lost document for which there is no independent evidence, but that one draws upon the other. It is only when the latter supposition has proved untenable that we have recourse to the postulation of a hypothetical source.¹⁰⁹

No one has proved it untenable that the later texts used Eutropius' work. The periodic verbatim overlaps of several of these sources with it, far from demonstrating that this must have been the exact wording of the *KG*, could simply show nothing more than Eutropius' influence – in fact, in the case of Jerome, Festus, and Ammianus, there are excellent reasons to believe that they did indeed know and use his work.¹¹⁰ Out of the texts supposedly indebted to the *KG*, that leaves only the *HAb* and Eutropius as suitable comparands, since the *HAb* precedes his *breviarium*.

This is why, strictly speaking, the *KG* is defined as the common source of Victor and Eutropius. Whatever the (often very compelling) parallels in ideas and arrangement between these two, their wording is never identical *in extenso*. This means that while we might be able to say (like Dessau) that some core of facts goes back to the common source, we have few sure means of reconstructing any of its features in detail. Confident pronouncements about the nature, style, and wording of the common source on the evidence adduced are unwarranted: it is, logically, a coin-toss between the moralising allusivity of Victor and the bare factual narration of Eutropius. Indeed, once we look closely at some of the overlaps between the two, it looks as though the *HAb* must be closer to the common source than Eutropius – at least according to the established rules of *KG-Forschung*. For example, in discussing how Diocletian convinced Maximian Herculeus to step down, Eutropius says that 'his colleague reluctantly submitted to this' (10.27: *cui aegre collega obtemperavit*). This is patently parallel with the *HAb*, and so must reflect

108 On the *HA* and Eutropius, see Chapter VIII.

109 Farrer 1955: 56.

110 On Festus and Eutropius, see Chapter III. On Jerome and Eutropius, see Chapter VIII. On Ammianus and Eutropius, see Kelly 2008: esp. 240–253.

the common source: ‘he brought Herculus most reluctantly to this view’ (39.48: *in sententiam Herculum aegerrime traduxisset*). The key word is the adverb *aegre*. This is its only appearance in Eutropius, yet it was a favourite of Victor’s, occurring some four times in the positive and another four in the superlative in the *HAb*.¹¹¹ In this instance, the common source of Eutropius and the *HAb* seems to be a text that sounds very much like Victor.

A hypothesis stands or falls on how well it works to explain phenomena – a lost text is something for the existence of which we have independent evidence. As soon as one starts considering Enmann’s *KG* – a brief imperial chronicle arranged biographically – as a text that once existed, it becomes completely implausible. No one refers to the *KG* in antiquity.¹¹² No part of it has been transmitted in manuscripts. No scrap of it has been found on papyrus or parchment in Egypt’s sands. Yet *everyone* is supposed to have read it. The *Historiae abbreviatae*, Ausonius, Eutropius, Festus, Ammianus, the *Historia Augusta*, the *Libellus breuiatus*, Jerome, Orosius – *i.e.* every work of secular history from the period and some besides – are alleged to have used this phantom text as a source.¹¹³ Compare an actual lost work that we can be sure was widely read in the period of the *Kaisergeschichte*’s supposed pomp: Sallust’s *Histories*. Transmission is a mysterious process, and it is indeed strange that so important a text should not have survived.¹¹⁴ Yet look what we do have: dozens upon dozens of quotations in the grammarians; careful allusions in later historians, like Victor and Sulpicius Severus; a possible epitome or imitation in Julius Exuperantius; several papyri; fragments of two late-antique manuscripts; excerpted letters and speeches with their own medieval transmission. Or take an example from Christian historiography, from *Kaisergeschichte* to *Kirchengeschichte*: the *Chronicon* of Eusebius. Completed early in the fourth century, Eusebius’ slightly chimeric two-book compilation, with the first containing antiquarian material and the second a world chronicle, was enormously influential and widely read among later Christian authors.¹¹⁵ Somehow the Greek text was lost, though what may be a bifolium from it has been found in a palimpsested manuscript in Vienna.¹¹⁶ Yet we have such extensive evidence that we can reconstruct large parts of this lost work with something like certainty: translations and adaptations into three languages (Latin, Armenian, Syriac), as well as extensive quotations in Byzantine chroniclers.¹¹⁷ This is what we should expect when a text that everyone read somehow failed to survive. Even if the *KG* was lost as a victim of its own success, rendered obsolete by its own utility – a popular, though curious, idea, and one that we are not quite sure actually happened in any existing cases, beyond perhaps Eusebius’ – it would have left many traces of its existence: quotations, references, and so on, scattered along its path towards ubiquity and oblivion. As Burgess himself said in 1993, in relation to a different hypothesised lost source (Croke’s *Stadtchronik*), had such a work existed:

111 For *aegre*: *HAb* 11.10, 13.2, 33.25, 42.20. For *aegerrime*: 9.9, 39.48, 40.23, 41.17.

112 One alleged reference is dealt with below.

113 The situation is the same in New Testament criticism, where the lack of any reference to Q is considered one of strongest objections to the theory. For a critique of Q, see Goodacre and Perrin 2004.

114 On Sallust’s *Histories* in late antiquity, see Stover and Woudhuysen 2022b.

115 On the *Chronicon*, see Grafton and Williams 2006: 133–177, the first part of Burgess 1999, and Burgess

and Kulikowski 2013: 119–126. On its influence, see *e.g.* the second part of Burgess 1999, Crawford 2020, and Hollerich 2021.

116 Grusková 2013.

117 On the various sources for the text of Eusebius, see Mosshamer 1979: 37–83; there is also a good deal of interest to be found in Hollerich 2021. For the Armenian version: Karst 1911 (text); Burgess 1999: 25–26; Drost-Abgarjan 2006. Syriac: Burgess 1999: 26 and Witakowski 1987. Latin, by Jerome: Helm 1956, Burgess 1999: 23–25.

. . . surely every Latin historian of the empire would have used it, given the general dearth of written sources available from the third century. We could not help but have numerous comments about it, as historians referred to it, disputed it, contradicted it, failed to understand it.¹¹⁸

This is exactly what we do *not* have for the *KG*.

Enmann set out to characterise the text that he believed he had discovered on the basis of its minimal content: hence his idea that it was a series of short factual biographies. As we have shown, this is a simple logical and statistical error, but it is one universally made in scholarship on the *KG*. As Alan Cameron has stipulated: ‘the *KG* cannot have been significantly more detailed than its various derivatives and continuations’.¹¹⁹ The contradiction between the narrow text that Enmann delineated and the fecundity of his method – apt to discover ever more and ever wider uses of the *KG* – has led scholarship on late-antique Latin historiography into a dead end. Conceiving of the *KG* as a text – a finite thing rather than an unbounded hypothesis – inevitably leads to the invention of innumerable progeny for it, *ad hoc* explanations for all the material that the underlying method throws up. By 1929, it birthed for Fisher a new source, *Z*, to explain material in the later lives of the *Historia Augusta* which was dissimilar to the other Latin accounts, and its fecundity has not decreased.¹²⁰ Current scholarship on Roman imperial history juggles ten or so hypothetical or lost sources, ‘fashionable phantoms’, as Baldwin termed them: Burgess’s three revisions of the *KG*, the *Leoquelle*, Marius Maximus, *Suetonius auctus*, Syme’s *Ignotus*, the *Annales* of Nicomachus Flavianus, Eusebius of Nantes, and the *Historia Romana* of Symmachus the Younger.¹²¹ This complexity stems from the need to account for what Enmann found within the outmoded framework that he established. We have rightly cast down from their perches the thirty-odd invented sources of the *HA*: Junius Cordus and his crew. Is it progress if we have merely set up other idols in their place? Literally thousands of pages have been devoted to discussing literally senseless questions: which of several hypothetical sources this or that section of the *HA* is using – is it the *KG* here or the *Annales* of Nicomachus Flavianus? Or is the *HA* itself the *Annales*? Did the *KG* use Marius Maximus or *Ignotus*? Is the *Origo Constantini* a combination of the *KG* and a lost biography of Constantine? Did the *Epitome* start out using *Suetonius auctus*, and then switch to the *KG*, before turning to the *Leoquelle*? One account has Jerome’s *Chronicon* using Victor, Eutropius, and the *KG*; another uses four separate stemmata – all containing hypothesised works – to explain the *LB*; another identifies one Eusebius of Nantes as the author of the *KG* because Ausonius is *hypothesised* to have used the *KG* and a note in the margin of a thirteenth-century Latin manuscript says that he used this spectral Eusebius; another wonders whether a different version of the *KG* was translated into Greek.

Let us return to the real world and treat the *KG* as what it really is: an insight that the Latin historians of the fourth century share a good deal of material. Whence came that material? Two of the *KG* texts, the *HAb* and the *LB*, explicitly claim to be derived from Victor. Jerome asked Paul of Concordia for a copy of Victor’s *Historia*. The only contemporary historian Ammianus mentions by name as a historian is Victor. The one fourth-century source that everyone can agree the *Historia Augusta* used was Victor.¹²²

118 Burgess 1993b: 184.

119 Cameron 2011: 674.

120 Fisher 1929.

121 Baldwin 1993: 88.

122 That the *Historia Augusta* had used Victor was acknowledged even by Momigliano 1954: 31; see also Hohl 1955 and further Chapter VIII.

Victor, as we have shown, was the most famous and highly regarded Latin historian of his day. If there is one source that all the fourth-century Latin historians ought to have drawn from, then it is Victor. Only the assumption that the *HAb* is Victor's text, not a witness to it, and the belief that the *KG*, however much it has grown, was a short biographical collection, have obscured the obvious conclusion.

This is why it was so important to lay out the origins of the *KG* in scholarship of the later nineteenth century. We can see now that it, and precursor theories like Cohn's *Suetonius auctus*, are all attempts to solve problems that exist only when it is assumed that the *HAb* as it survives is Victor's work, no more and no less. Cohn's *Suetonius auctus* is the solution to an *HAb*–*LB* problem that simply vanishes if the *HAb* is an epitome – hence why he went to such lengths to dispute that thesis. Similarly, in its original formulation by Enmann, the *KG* solves an *HA*–Victor problem only if one accepts that the *HA* is earlier and that Victor's work survives in its entirety. Enmann's corollary continuation of the *KG* offers the answer to an *HAb*–Eutropius problem, but to arrive at it one has to assume that Eutropius was reading the *HAb*, not Victor's *Historia*. After Dessau, when the chronological problem that had given Enmann's work impetus was removed, the *KG* explained the relationships of the fourth-century Latin historians only on the assumption that the earliest witness to it, Victor, had made from it a simultaneously scrappy and bloviating summary. In all of its manifold formulations, the *KG* makes sense if, and only if, the *HAb* is the entirety of Victor's work. As Farrer said of Q: 'it hangs on a single thread; cut that, and it falls by its own weight'.¹²³ If the original text of Victor does not survive – as we have shown it does not – then Enmann's *KG* simply becomes an unnecessary postulate. He was fundamentally right that our surviving Latin texts reveal *eine verlorene Geschichte der römischen Kaiser*, even if he and his successors have been wrong about the nature, date, and authorship of that text – it was not a scrappy summary of imperial history covering precisely thirty-five Teubner pages (as H.W. Bird calculated with spurious precision).¹²⁴ Instead the common source that bequeathed ideas, facts, and phrasing to a host of later historians was a long, dense, and complicated work, whose original character can be best discerned not in Eutropius but in the *HAb*. In other words, Victor's *Historia* was the imperial history – the *Kaisergeschichte*, one might say, just not Enmann's *Kaisergeschichte* – that served as the source of the later tradition.

From the standpoint of the current scholarly consensus, what we propose is a radical position, and one that will require much of what we think we know about late-Roman historiography to be rethought. It is, however, radical only from the standpoint of contemporary scholarship, because that scholarship takes it for granted that the two Victorine texts are not what their titles say they are. Our interpretation provides a natural and plausible explanation for the evidence that we have, one that takes seriously what has been handed down in the manuscripts and fits the other data available to us. The currently accepted account of the nature of the *HAb* and the *LB*, and their place in late-antique historiography, is actually the extreme position. Enmann was forced to the 'interessante factum' that Aurelius Victor, even in writing the history of his own lifetime, was engaged merely in revising a historical narrative 'written almost simultaneously'.¹²⁵ Matthews suggests that, when they met in Rome in the late fourth century, Aurelius Victor lent to Ammianus a copy, not of his own work, but of the *KG*, from which

123 Farrer 1955: 62.

124 Bird 1989: 95, cf. Bird 1994: xiii. The calculation was cautiously endorsed by Burgess 1995a: 351, n. 13; Burgess 1995b: 113, n. 14 'perhaps a bit short'.

Sehlmeyer 2020: 333 more generously allows eighty pages.

125 Enmann 1884: 455: 'der überarbeitung einer fast gleichzeitig geschriebene geschichtserzählung'.

he had taken his material.¹²⁶ Discussing the manuscript title of the *LB*, Baldwin curtly dismisses it as a ‘quadruple nonsense’: not an abbreviation, and not derived from Victor, with a different terminal date, and sometimes fuller information.¹²⁷ Barnes and Schlumberger can account for the *LB*’s sources only by using four independent complex stemmata, each with multiple lines of influence.¹²⁸ Burgess’s account of the sources of Jerome’s *Chronicon* requires that Jerome did not in fact use the text he had obtained for imperial history, but an entirely different one with a similar set of facts.¹²⁹ Den Boer’s analysis of Victor’s Latin requires that he did not use particles in the way that every other Latin author did.¹³⁰ All of these positions and many more besides, widely accepted in contemporary scholarship, are radically incompatible with our evidence, unlike the theory defended here, which is grounded on the solid rock of what the texts and manuscripts actually say.

What we propose is, in short, a paradigm shift. In recent scholarship, there has been a penchant for extravagant metaphors to describe the work of source-critics: François Paschoud has compared them to astronomers, inferring the position of unseen planets mathematically, and even Alan Cameron has conceded that that might be a fitting description for so great an achievement as the discovery of the *KG*.¹³¹ We would mischievously suggest an alternative formulation. Luminiferous aether offered a working solution to several observed problems in physics, and was widely accepted before Einstein, despite the fact that no experiment was able to prove its existence. With Einstein’s special theory of relativity of 1905, however, luminiferous aether became an entirely superfluous hypothesis: a solution without a problem.¹³² So too the *KG* seems to offer a plausible and elegant solution to several problems in our data, chief among them the relationship of Victor’s *HAb* and Eutropius. If, however, the full text of Victor does not survive, then the problem of the chronology of our sources for Roman imperial history itself evaporates, and with it any need for the *KG* theory. In its place, we can offer something perhaps much more exciting: a long, lost, and Latin history written by a well-informed and scholarly pagan civil servant, who had definite stylistic and historiographical aims, and imperial connections running from Julian to Theodosius, first issued in the middle of the fourth century (around 360), and subsequently extended, possibly revised, or at least updated with additional material to 389.



We have tried to demonstrate that Enmann’s *Kaisergeschichte* was flawed in its conception, reception, and logic. We have argued also that the core insight on which it was based is much better accounted for by the case we have presented here for treating the *HAb* and *LB* as epitomes of Victor’s *History*. It is, however, unusual in the scholarly literature to find the *KG* discussed in these general and conceptual terms: much more often it is presented in a specific and rather rebarbative way. Let us, then, turn to the case that has been made for the existence of the *KG* through detailed discussion of individual passages and examine it.

126 Matthews 1989: 457.

127 Baldwin 1993: 82.

128 Barnes 1976a; Schlumberger 1974.

129 Burgess 2005; Burgess 1995a.

130 Den Boer 1975: 52.

131 Paschoud 1998a: 84–85; Paschoud 2002: 487; Cameron 2011: 628.

132 Darrigol 2005 provides an accessible overview of luminiferous aether and the impact of Einstein.

The case for the *Kaisergeschichte*

Since the 1960s, one scholar in particular has done more than any other to advance Enmann's *KG*: T.D. Barnes.¹³³ In a series of studies in the 1970s, he made a sustained case both for the existence of the *KG* and for locating its terminal point in AD 337, with its composition very soon after.¹³⁴ An impeccably logical scholar, Barnes was always careful to be clear that the *KG* was (strictly speaking) the common source of Eutropius and Aurelius Victor.¹³⁵ Other writers, he maintained, could be shown to have used it (and he assayed several demonstrations), but that was really an ancillary matter: the case rested on the *HAb* and Eutropius' *breviarium*.¹³⁶ Barnes took it for granted that the use of a common source by Victor and Eutropius for most of the third century had been established beyond doubt by Enmann, so did not devote sustained attention to proving that proposition.¹³⁷ He focused, rather, on the period from Diocletian to 337, keen to prove that Victor and Eutropius were remarkably parallel for those years, but not afterwards, and hence had used a common source.

Because of the way that Barnes defined the *KG* as the common source of the *HAb* and Eutropius, that the former is identical with the complete work of Victor is the foundational (if unacknowledged) assumption that underlies his demonstration of the *KG*'s existence. His proofs show this very plainly: he advanced four detailed ones. First, in describing the campaign of Galerius against the Persians in the 290s, the *HAb* (39.34–35) and Eutropius (9.25) give closely parallel accounts, but each has one detail about the emperor's army that is not in the other: the *HAb* says they were 'veterans and new recruits', Eutropius that they were from Illyricum and Moesia. Festus (25) offers something like both (that they were *limitanei* or border troops, from Dacia). Barnes held that, as a result, Eutropius cannot depend on the *HAb* and all three 'have independently used a lost source, namely the *KG*'.¹³⁸ Second, the *HAb* and Eutropius offer interestingly parallel accounts of key events in the history of the Tetrarchy (TABLE 6.2). Barnes says that the texts 'concur in gross error' here, by putting the appointment of the Caesars (293) after various events (the Persian war *etc.*) that occurred later.¹³⁹ Third, the *HAb* (40.5–8) and Eutropius (10.2.3–4, 4.1) share important details on the coup that brought Maxentius to power at Rome (as well as some phrasing *interim Romae* = *Romae interea* to introduce the story, *e.g.*). They also agree in apparent error on the fate of the hapless emperor Severus, sent by Galerius to suppress the usurper: both say he was killed at Ravenna (not Rome). Eutropius, however, supplies one important detail about the turbulent politics of this period not found in the *HAb*: that Licinius, the replacement (so to speak) for Severus in the imperial college, was from Dacia.¹⁴⁰ Fourth and finally, there are some rather vague verbal reminiscences in their accounts of

133 See esp. Barnes 1970a, 1976a, 1978, *cf.* 1970b (mainly devoted to the *HA*). This statement is not mere Anglophone bias: the general bibliography on the *KG* in *HLL* 5.536 (Schmidt) lists a first flurry of work in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a 1953 dissertation by Schön, and then only these three studies by Barnes.

134 Date: Barnes 1970a: 20; 1976a: 259; 1978: 94.

135 Barnes 1976a: 260.

136 *e.g.* Barnes 1978: 94: 'the *KG* has deliberately been defined as the common source of Victor and Eutropius. Its use by other writers requires specific proof'.

137 Barnes 1970a: 15; 1978: 92. He was particularly persuaded by 'errors' that Victor and Eutropius shared, especially (1970a: 16; 1978: 92) the 'battle of the Milvian Bridge' in the reign of Septimius Severus (on which see Chapter VIII).

138 Barnes 1970a: 18.

139 Barnes 1978: 93.

140 Barnes 1970a: 18–19.

TABLE 6.2 – THE *HAB* AND EUTROPIUS ON THE TETRARCHY

<i>HAb</i> 39.21–24	Eutropius 9.21–22.1
[sc. Carausius] Herculii metu, a quo se caedi iussum compererat, Britanniam hausto imperio capessivit. Eodem tempore Orientem Persae, Africam Iulianus ac nationes Quinquegentanae graviter quatiebant. Adhuc apud Aegypti Alexandriam Achilleus nomine dominationis insignia induerat. His de causis Iulium Constantium, Galerium Maximianum, cui cognomen Armentario erat, creatos Caesares in affinitatem vocant.*	. . . [sc. Carausius] a Maximiano iussus occidi purpuram sumpsit et Britannias occupavit. Ita cum per omnem orbem terrarum res turbatae essent, Carausius in Britannii rebellaret, Achilleus in Aegypto, Africam Quinquegentiani infestarent, Narseus Orienti bellum inferret, Diocletianus Maximianum Herculium ex Caesare fecit Augustum, Constantium et Maximianum Caesares . . .
[Carausius] out of fear of Herculius, whom he had learnt had commanded his death, snatched Britain after he had taken up imperial power. At the same time the Persians were causing the East to tremble severely, while Julian and the Quinquegentan nations did the same to Africa. Meanwhile, at Alexandria in Egypt Achilleus (that was his name) had put on the insignia of tyranny. For these reasons, they called into kinship those who had been made Caesars, Julius Constantius and Galerius Maximianus, whose cognomen was Armentarius.	[Carausius], since Maximian had ordered that he be killed, assumed the purple and seized Britain. So, since things had been thrown into turmoil throughout the entire world – Carausius in rebellion in Britain, Achilleus in Egypt, the Quinquegentiani attacking Africa, Narses making war on the East – Diocletian promoted Maximianus Herculius from Caesar to Augustus and made Constantius and Maximianus Caesars.

* The adjectival form *Quinquegentanae*, the transmitted text of both manuscripts of the *HAb*, is likely sound, despite occasional doubts: compare the forms in *ILS* 1194 (*Quinquegentaneis*), *CIL* 8.8294 = 20680 (*Quinquegentaneos*). *Quinquegentiani* is more common in the literary material (Eutropius 9.23; Orosius 7.25.4, 25.8; Jordanes, *Getica* 110, *Romana* 297, 300; *Passio S. Tyspasi veterani* 1 (*BHL* 8354 – likely derived from Eutropius: Woods 1993, *cf.* 1994); *cf.* John of Antioch fr. 247 Roberto: ε' ἀνδρῶν Γεντιανῶν; Zonaras 12.31: πέντε τινῶν Γεντιανῶν), but that probably reflects the influence of Eutropius.

the death of Constantine (*HAb* 41.16 = Eutropius 10.8), but no other works mention the comet that was seen just beforehand.¹⁴¹

In each of these cases, Barnes's argument holds if and only if the *HAb* is the complete work of Victor. If it is an epitome, then his whole case for the *KG* collapses, because it is much more logical to assume that in each instance Eutropius was simply drawing on Victor's full *History*, to which the *HAb* is only a partial witness. In the third case, in particular, this can practically be demonstrated: the *LB* (40.3) tells us that Severus was killed near Rome, at a place called 'Tres Tabernae', which is probably what actually happened.¹⁴² This thus looks very much like a point where Victor offered two parallel accounts of the obscure fate of this obscure monarch, only one of which has turned up in the *HAb* and Eutropius. It is worth noting also that, while it does not say that he was from Dacia, the *LB* offers us much the most detailed account of Licinius' background (41.9). In the second example, Barnes's proof actually helps to demonstrate that the case advanced in this book is correct. Logically, the subject of *vocant* in the *HAb* can

141 Barnes 1970a: 19–20, with the exception of the *Passio Artemii* 7 (from Philostorgius, *HE* 2.16a), plausibly derived from Eutropius in Greek translation.

142 On these events, *cf.* further Chapter X.

only be the various usurpers mentioned just before, but they certainly did not appoint Constantius and Galerius as Caesars: Diocletian has gone missing in the process of abbreviation. Moreover, the chronological confusion here (if such we term the causal connection between turmoil and the creation of the Tetrarchy) has arisen because the source of the *HAb* and Eutropius treated the usurpers from 284 to 305 *en bloc*, rather than distributing them at their proper chronological position. One author who showed a *penchant* for lumping together would-be Augusti was Victor. This is precisely what he did with the Gallic emperors of the mid-third century (from *ca.* 260 to the mid-270s), all included in an extended digression in the middle of the reign of Gallienus (who died in 268).¹⁴³ In other words, Barnes's supposed proof for the *KG* is really a vindication of Victor's *Historia*.

There is also an internal contradiction in Barnes's argument that points in the same direction. He envisaged the common source as a simple, factual text, basically followed faithfully by Eutropius, but also the main (perhaps the only) direct source of Victor.¹⁴⁴ Yet, even on the examples he gives, it would have needed to be substantially more detailed than either the *HAb* or Eutropius. In the case of Galerius's campaign, for example, it ought *ex hypothesi* to have said that his army comprised veterans and new recruits, as well as that it was drawn from the *limitanei* of Illyricum and Moesia. Eutropius also tells us that Galerius undertook scouting expeditions during the campaign. This is not in Victor, but ought to have been in their common source, which must also have contained every detail that they do share. If we extend that logic to every fact in both texts, that source would have been a remarkably detailed document. That sounds rather more like Victor's carefully researched *Historia* than the short and summary *Kaisergeschichte* of Enmann and Barnes.

After the 1970s, Barnes ceased to devote sustained attention to the *KG*, though he maintained his belief in its existence as a text finished soon after 337.¹⁴⁵ Since then, it is R.W. Burgess who has done most to keep the flame of *KG-Forschung* alive.¹⁴⁶ In a series of detailed and closely argued articles, Burgess has, besides offering the most cumulatively comprehensive case for the *KG* since Enmann, advanced a number of specific propositions. First, he argued that the fifth century's most enthusiastic list-maker, Polemius Silvius, used the *KG*, as did Ausonius, a medieval catalogue of whose works reveals that the lost text's author was one Eusebius of Nantes.¹⁴⁷ Next, he offered a detailed case that Jerome used the *KG* directly for his *Chronicon* and, against Barnes, defended a terminal date for it of 357.¹⁴⁸ Finally, Jerome's use of the *KG* was reaffirmed and extended to encompass Festus, Ammianus, and the *LB*, with the rather uncomfortable consequence that the *KG* stopped in 358, was continued to 364, and then again to 378.¹⁴⁹ To this was added the idea that Jerome (*Chron.* 77b^c) explicitly referred to the *KG* as a *Latina historia*.¹⁵⁰ This is a remarkable series of publications, clearly the product of sustained thought over an extended period of time: it would appear to put the existence of the *KG* beyond doubt.

143 *HAb* 33.7–14.

144 Faithful Eutropius: Barnes 1976a: 263; Barnes 1978: 92. Main direct source: Barnes 1970a: 20.

145 *e.g.* Barnes 1991: 347. Of other work at the time, it is worth noting Bird 1973, who put once again the case for a *KG* finishing in 357.

146 Burgess 1993a, 1995a, 1995b, 2005. Burgess collected several of these studies in 2011, with some additional notes.

147 Burgess 1993a. Partially recanted in Burgess 2011: 'Supplementary Notes', 4.

148 Burgess 1995a, 1995b.

149 Burgess 2005.

150 Burgess 2005: 166, n. 4; strictly the *Latina historia* is the collection of which the *KG* forms the imperial part (along with the *DVI* and something like the *OGR*).

To review every one of Burgess's hypotheses would require a substantial essay in its own right, so let us instead consider his argument at its strongest. In 1995, Burgess set out to demonstrate, with Rudolf Helm and against Theodor Mommsen, that Jerome's *Chronicle* made use not of Eutropius, but of the *KG* directly.¹⁵¹ As he put it, this 'also provides final and irrefragable proof of the existence of the *KG*'.¹⁵² He described the paper as 'the most complete and wide-ranging proof for the existence of the *KG* and for its use by Jerome ever assembled'.¹⁵³ At its close, he concluded that 'even the most hardened critic of the *KG*' would have to concede its existence.¹⁵⁴ How does this 'irrefragable' case stack up?

Burgess offers a 'meticulous empirical analysis', arguing on the basis of no fewer than forty-seven proof-texts that minute differences between Jerome and Eutropius prove: (1) that Jerome was using the *KG*, not Eutropius, and (2) that therefore the *KG* must have existed.¹⁵⁵ There is, however, a certain madness in his method. First, a heap of trivialities does not equate to a single piece of solid evidence: 'zero multiplied by ten thousand is still zero', as A.H.M. Jones said in a rather different context.¹⁵⁶ It is normal in Latin for the verb to be in either ultimate or penultimate position and one does not need a common source to explain why it is found that way in multiple texts.¹⁵⁷ In a three-item list – for example Parthicus, Arabicus, Adiabenicus, or Armenia, Mesopotamia, Assyria – there are in fact only six possible arrangements: so it is not exactly unlikely for two sources to independently come up with the same order.¹⁵⁸ Burgess makes no distinction between common and unusual language in assessing parallels between the sources. The participles *dictus*, *appellatus*, and *cognominatus* all mean roughly the same thing: that different sources use different combinations of them when referring to the victory titles that emperors won in late antiquity means nothing.¹⁵⁹ Or, take the language used for the death of the emperor Carus, struck by lightning. In antiquity a variety of expressions was used for lightning strikes: *ictu fulminis*, *fulmine ictus*, and *de caelo tactus* were probably the most common, but there were others.¹⁶⁰ That a number of sources do not use Eutropius' bizarre *vi divini fulminis periit* (9.18) reveals little.¹⁶¹ Nor does Burgess always pay sufficient attention to textual criticism. Before he was struck by lightning, Carus captured Coche and Ctesiphon (the twin cities at the heart of Persian Mesopotamia). Burgess finds it significant that Jerome calls them *nobilissimas*, where Eutropius says *notissimas*: evidently Jerome's account come from reading the *KG*, not Eutropius.¹⁶² One branch of Eutropius' manuscript tradition, however, the only one to transmit Valens' authentic victory title *Gothicus Maximus* and therefore almost certainly containing authentic ancient readings, does in fact read *nobilissimas* at this point.¹⁶³

Even in its more substantive examples, however, Burgess' method does not actually produce results that support his thesis. If we are to believe in the *KG* theory, verbatim agreements between two or more

151 Burgess 1995a: 351–352.

152 Burgess 1995a: 352.

153 Burgess 1995a: 354.

154 Burgess 1995a: 369.

155 Burgess 1995a: 356.

156 Jones 1969: 321 (see Chapter VII).

157 Burgess 1995a: 357: 'Jerome parallels Eutropius in placing the verb in the penultimate position', *cf.* 358 (example no. 4).

158 Burgess 1995a: 361: 'the order of the names is different in Festus, which shows that Jerome is not copying him'; 358 (no. 5).

159 Burgess 1995a: 361.

160 *De caelo tactus* is Livy's favourite (twenty-four instances in the extant books). *Fulmine ictus*: Cicero, *De div.* 2.47; Livy 1.3.9; Valerius Maximus 9.12.1 *e.g.* *Ictu fulminis*: Cicero, *De off.* 3.25.94; Livy 42.20.5; Celsus, *De medicina* 3.26; Tacitus, *Ann.* 15.22.2; Suetonius, *Aug.* 97.2 *e.g.*

161 Burgess 1995a: 365. No ancient text other than Eutropius ever uses this form of words for being struck by lightning.

162 Burgess 1995a: 365.

163 Droysen 1879: 160.

KG sources must represent the reading of the common source. That source was (as for Barnes) ‘by definition, the common source of Victor and Eutropius’, but a text most faithfully reproduced by the latter: ‘a set of short imperial biographies’.¹⁶⁴ Yet in a significant number of cases, using this method produces two competing sets of agreement, both of which have an excellent claim to represent the text of the KG.¹⁶⁵ Consider this cluster of *testimonia* to the death of Verus:

Jerome *Chron.* 205^k: apoplexi extinctus est.

Eutropius 8.10.3: subito sanguine ictus, casu morbi, quem Graeci apoplexin vocant . . .

LB 16.5: ictu sanguinis, quem morbum Graeci apoplexin vocant . . . extinctus est.

HA *Marcus* 14.8: apoplexi arreptus perit.

HA *Verus* 9.11: morbo, quem apoplexin vocant, correptus Lucius . . . detracto sanguine . . . perit.¹⁶⁶

Burgess does not quote the *HAb* on the same events (16.9: *morbo consumptum*), and consequently errs in his conclusions. If we were to follow KG reasoning, we would be forced to conclude that the common source used the word *morbo*, as it features in the *HAb*, Eutropius, the *LB*, and the *HA* (*Verus* 9.11), and in the ablative in both Victor and the *HA*. We would further probably conclude that it must have forms of *ictus* and *sanguinis*, since they are found in both Eutropius and the *Epitome*. How is it then that Jerome (and the *HA Marcus* 14.8) has the ablative *apoplexi* as the cause of death and none of these other features of the common source? In this case, Burgess’s logic would seem in fact to require that Jerome could not have been using the KG.

Alternatively, we might examine these various accounts of the building activities of Caracalla at Rome:

Jerome *Chron.* 213^e: Antoninus Romae thermas sui nominis aedificavit.

Eutropius 8.20.1: Opus Romae egregium fecit lavacri, quae Antoninianae appelluntur.

HA *Sev.* 21.11: . . . et thermas magnificentissimas fecerit.

HA *Carac.* 9.4: Opera Romae reliquit thermas nominis sui eximias.¹⁶⁷

Once again, Burgess does not quote the relevant passage of Victor (*HAb* 21.4: *aucta urbs . . . ad lavandum opera pulchri cultus*). Comparing Victor and Eutropius, we would have to conclude that the common source had a form of the word *opus* and a derivative of *lavare*. How is it then that both Jerome and the *HA* omit this detail, but use the descriptor *thermas nominis sui*? We should note that the *HA* is the only other text in antiquity to use this formula for the names of baths.¹⁶⁸

The same pattern can be seen in various accounts of the accession of Opellius Macrinus:

164 Burgess 1995a: 350.

165 We have selected these examples carefully to exclude instances where a KG advocate might (*ad hoc*) suggest that one of the two competing sets can be explained by an earlier extant text influencing a later one (the *HAb* and *LB* for the first eleven chapters; the *HA* with

Victor and Eutropius *e.g.*). We present these texts as given by Burgess, including ellipses.

166 Burgess 1995a: 369 and 359.

167 Burgess 1995a: 361.

168 *HA Alex.* 25.3; *Gord. Gordiani* 32.7.

Jerome 213^h: Macrinus praefecturam praetorio gerens imperator factus.

Eutropius 8.21: Opilius Macrinus, qui praefectus praetorio erat, cum filio Diadumeno facti imperatores.

HAb 22.1: Opilius Macrinus, qui praefecturam praetorio gerebat, imperator eiusdemque filius Diadumenus nomine Caesar a legionibus appellatur.¹⁶⁹

Burgess does not quote the *LB* here (22.1: *Macrinus cum Diadumeno filio ab exercitu imperatores creati*). Doing so would have disproved his conclusion. Both the *HAb* and Jerome have only Opilius as an *imperator*, whereas Eutropius has both Opilius and his son as *imperatores*: a ‘compression error’ as Burgess calls it. The *LB*, however, has the same idea as Eutropius in similar words. Further, the *HA* also calls both *imperatores* (6.2: *Macrini et Diadumeni imperatorum*). Which version was in the common source?

Precisely the same problem rears its head in discussion of various enemies of the first Tetrarchy:

Jerome *Chron.* 225^{e-g}: Carausius . . . Narseus . . . Quinquegentiani . . . Achilleus.

Eutropius 9.22: Carausius . . . Achilleus . . . Quinquegentiani . . . Narseus.

HAb 39.20–23: Carausius . . . Persae . . . Quinquegentanae . . . Achilleus.¹⁷⁰

Here, Burgess thinks it revealing that Jerome followed the ordering of the *HAb*, but otherwise paralleled Eutropius. Again, however, he does not quote the *LB*. It only has two of these events, but they are in the same order as Eutropius and in words closer to his than to those of any other text (39.3): *Charausio in Galliis, Achilleus apud Aegyptum* ~ 9.22 *Carausius in Britanniiis rebellaret, Achilleus in Aegypto*. Hence, we ought to conclude that the common source had Carausius and then Achilleus, but how then to explain the different order found in Victor and Jerome? Moreover, why does Victor have the adjective (not noun) *Quinquegentanae*, paralleled in the epigraphic evidence, but none of the other sources? One more example that Burgess does not cite can perhaps drive the point home. The *HAb* (21.5), the *LB* (21.5), and Eutropius (8.20) all describe the location of Caracalla’s death as *apud Edessam*. Jerome and the *HA* say *inter Edessam et Carras* (*Chron.* 217^d ~ *Carac.* 17.1 with the elements reversed). So, which version did the common source give?

As these examples make painfully clear, there is no way one can lead back these texts to a unitary common source that was similar to Eutropius’ *breviarium*. They can be explained if the common source was a lengthy and discursive text, one which gave complex accounts of events that might be summarised rather differently, but that is not Burgess’ *KG*. In fact, the real reason that Jerome, the *LB*, Festus, and, at points, the *HA* have so much in common with Eutropius is that they have used Eutropius directly – their departures from his text, where they are not simply explained by late-antique authors being more than copying automata, are best explained by their using other sources to supplement his wildly popular work.¹⁷¹ In making sport of Den Boer’s attempt to attribute commonalities in the sources to shared school education, Burgess points out that *KG*-sceptics would take a different attitude to student essays that turned up with so many similarities as these sources.¹⁷² His argument is equally vulnerable on this score. If two

169 Burgess 1995a: 362.

170 Burgess 1995a: 365.

171 On the popularity of Eutropius see below.

172 Burgess 1995a: 354, n. 25.

TABLE 6.3 – VICTOR AND EUTROPIUS: THE DEATH OF AURELIAN

<i>HAb</i> 35.8	Eutropius 9.15	<i>LB</i> 35.8
<p>Qua causa ministri scelere, cui secretorum officium crediderat, circumventus apud Caenofrurium interiit, cum ille praedae conscientia delictique scripta callide composita tribunis quasi per gratiam prodidisset, quibus interfici iubebantur; illique eo metu accensi facinus patravere . . . 36.2: . . . auctores Aureliani necis maximeque Mucaporem ducem.</p>	<p>Occiditur servi sui fraude, qui ad quosdam militares viros amicos ipsius nomina pertulit adnotata, falso manum eius imitatus, tamquam Aurelianus ipsos pararet occidere; itaque ut praeveniretur, ab isdem interfectus est in itineris medio, quod inter Constantinopolim et Heracleam est stratae veteris; locus Caenophrurium appellatur.</p>	<p>Novissime fraude servi sui, qui ad quosdam militares viros amicos ipsius nomina pertulit annotata, falso manum eius imitatus, tamquam Aurelianus ipsos pararet occidere, ab iisdem interfectus est in itineris medio, quod inter Constantinopolim et Heracleam est.</p>
<p>For this reason, he perished at Caenofrurium, tricked by the wicked crime of a servant, to whom he had entrusted the position of secretary. That man, thinking of his loot and crime, handed over to the tribunes, as if he were doing them a favour, cunningly fabricated documents, in which their death was ordered. They, inflamed by that fear, perpetrated the crime the perpetrators of Aurelian's murder, especially the general Mucapor.</p>	<p>He [Aurelian] was killed by the treachery of his slave, who conveyed to certain military men (friends of the emperor) their names with annotations (he had deceitfully mimicked the emperor's hand) as though Aurelian was preparing to kill them; so, to anticipate this, he was killed by these same men in the middle of the route, which is the old road between Constantinople and Heraclea.</p>	

or more student essays revealed as much verbal overlap as these two sources, we would not hypothesise that they were both drawing on a lost common essay: we would assume that one was copying the other.

An example – the various accounts of the death of Aurelian – illustrates this neatly (TABLE 6.3). According to Burgess' method the words in bold in Table 6.3, occurring as they do in both Eutropius and the *LB*, must represent the actual words of the common source.¹⁷³ Where then does the same story that Victor tells in the *HAb* (and on which the *HA* expatiates) come from, with its richer detail, identifying the traitorous *servus* as a secretary, evoking a plausible chain of command, and naming Aurelian's killer as the general Mucapor?¹⁷⁴ Whatever its source, it is obviously the story which is summarised and simplified in Eutropius and the *LB*. Following the logic of the *KG*, this would require us to believe that the *HAb* had access not to the *KG*, but to the *KG*'s source itself.

In fact, when one starts looking for it, this pattern can be seen over and over again: what must logically be the *KG*'s account of an event, or even its wording, looks as though it has been derived from Victor. If we were to believe Burgess' reconstruction, what must have been the *KG* story of the emperor

173 In fact, of course, the *LB* is dependent on Eutropius here, as we have shown elsewhere: Stover and Woudhuysen 2021.

174 cf. Chapter VIII.

TABLE 6.4 – EUTROPIUS AND JEROME: MAXIMIAN AND THE BAGAUDAЕ

Eutropius 9.20	Jerome, <i>Chron.</i> 287 ^d
Ita rerum Romanarum potitus cum tumultum rusticani in Gallia concitassent et factioni suae Bacaudarum nomen inponerent , duces autem haberent Amandum et Aelianum, ad subigendos eos Maximianum Herculum Caesarem misit, qui levibus proeliis agrestes domuit et pacem Galliae reformavit.	Diocletianus in consortium regni Herculum Maximianum assumpsit, qui rusticorum multitudine oppressa, quae factioni suae Bacaudarum nomen indiderat, pacem Galliis reddidit.
So, when he [Diocletian] had obtained mastery over the Roman state, since the country-folk had stirred Gaul into rebellion (naming their party <i>Bacaudae</i> , with Amandus and Aelianus as their commanders), he sent Maximianus Hercules, the Caesar, to subjugate them; he tamed the rustics in some minor battles and restored peace to Gaul.	Diocletian took Hercules Maximianus as his partner in royal power; by crushing the great mob of country-folk (who had given the name of <i>Bacaudae</i> to their party), he restored peace to Gaul.

Maximian and the Bagaudae, the rustic rebels in Gaul whom he was sent to subdue, can be seen in TABLE 6.4. The structure and compass of Eutropius' and Jerome's brief narratives are nearly identical, and many of the words are the same. Every shared item must represent the actual words of the *KG*. Whence, then, came Victor's much more substantial account (*HAb* 39.17–19)?

Namque ubi comperit Carini discessu Aelianum Amandumque per Galliam excita manu agrestium ac latronum, quos Bagaudas incolae vocant, populatis late agris plerasque urbium tentare, Maximianum statim fidum amicitia quamquam semiagrestem, militiae tamen atque ingenio bonum imperatorem iubet. Huic postea cultu numinis Herculo cognomentum accessit, uti Valerio Iovium; unde etiam militaribus auxiliis longe in exercitum praestantibus nomen impositum. Sed Hercules in Galliam profectus fuis hostibus aut acceptis quieta omnia brevi patrauerat.

For when, at the departure of Carinus, he [Diocletian] learnt that Aelianus and Amandus, having stirred up a band of rustics and brigands (whom the locals call Bagaudae) in Gaul and ravaged the countryside far and wide, were attacking most of the cities, he immediately commanded that Maximian be proclaimed emperor, a man trustworthy in friendship, although half-rustic, good in both his service and character. Later on, this man was given the name Hercules, in honour of that divinity, just as Jovius was given to Valerius; for this reason also the name was assigned to the auxiliary soldiers who were most outstanding in the army. But Hercules set out for Gaul and, after the enemy had been routed or surrendered, in a short time he brought everything to a peaceful conclusion.¹⁷⁵

Once again, it looks like the *KG* is summarising and simplifying what is found in Victor. If we accept the *KG* theory, then, this must mean that Victor is – or was using – the *KG*'s source. If Victor had access to the *KG*'s source, then he was its twin, not its derivative. Yet, this is absurd, because, as Burgess makes clear, the *KG* is *by definition* the common source of Victor and Eutropius. The much simpler, much more logical explanation is that Victor's *Historia* is the common source of the tradition that Burgess has outlined, but that – for those short of time or attention, or both – Eutropius' simple and elegant narrative was irresistible.

175 For the meaning of *Carini discessu*, see Chapter X.

What of Burgess' identification of the *KG* with (part of) the *Latina historia* mentioned by Jerome?¹⁷⁶ The idea here (derived from Enmann and Rudolf Helm) is that Jerome had before him a work comprising something like the *Origo Gentis Romanae*, an epitome of Livy, and the *KG*, which was his basic source for supplementing Eusebius in his *Chronicon*. He referred to this collection as a *Latina historia*, hence proof of the existence of the *KG* (circuitously). This too is a phantom – a sort of *ersatz Corpus tripartitum*. In the *Chronicon*, a notice added to the material translated from Eusebius, Jerome does once refer to *Latina historia* (*Chron.* 77b^c):

In Latina historia ad verbum haec scripta reperimus: Agrippa apud Latinos regnante Homerus poeta in Graecia claruit, ut testantur Apollodorus grammaticus, et Euforbus historicus ante urbem Romanam conditam anni CXXIII, et ut ait Cornelius Nepos, ante Olympiadem primam anni C.

In Latin history, we find this written *ad verbum*: when Agrippa was ruling among the Latins, Homer the poet was famous in Greece, as Apollodorus the grammarian and Euforbus the historian bear witness, 124 years before the foundation of the city of Rome and (as Cornelius Nepos says) 100 years before the first Olympiad.

This is a rather elusive passage: how exactly it ought to be punctuated and understood is not obvious, so caution in interpretation is wise. With *Latina historia*, however, there are two basic possibilities: either Jerome is giving us the title of the work or a description of its nature. As a phrase, *Latina historia* is used almost exclusively by Jerome (ten attestations). The only other instances are in Augustine, Evanthius, and pseudo-Acro.¹⁷⁷ In all three of these cases, the signification is general, and the word *Latina* is used for an explicit or implicit contrast with texts written in Greek. The same is true of every other instance in Jerome.¹⁷⁸ Each of these contains an explicit comparison with Greek, Hebrew, or *barbara lingua*, save *Ep.* 60.5, which has a general meaning and an implicit contrast with Greek sources: 'Why should I mention the Roman generals, with whose mighty deeds, as if with some stars, Latin histories (*Latinae . . . historiae*) sparkle?' At first sight, there is no contrast with Greek in this passage of the *Chronicon*, so one might reasonably conclude that this, uniquely, is a concrete reference to a single work. That impression is, however, misleading. To see why, one needs to put this entry in the overall context of the *Chronicon*. The reason for its inclusion is to provide a date for Homer (in the late tenth century BC) and to correlate him with one of the Latin kings who ruled before the foundation of Rome. Crucially, this is not the only date for Homer that the work provides: he turns up twice elsewhere, once in the 1030s (69b^f) and once in the 1010s (71b^b), both times in entries original to Eusebius. Jerome, in putting him almost a full century later, was departing from his Greek original, on the basis of a Latin source: hence the reference to *Latina historia* here is, as in every other example, designed to draw a broad contrast with the Greek tradition. Consider also the content of the entry: it is obvious that its source was some sort of antiquarian compilation, one which cited many authors, like the text from which the extant *Origo gentis Romanae* was epitomised. That

176 Burgess 2005: 166, n. 4, 183, 190.

177 Augustine, *De civ.* 18.8: *nec Graeca nec Latina novit historia*; Evanthius 4.1: *praetextatas a dignitate personarum tragicarum ex Latina historia*; pseudo-Acro, *In Artem*

Poeticam 287 (355 Keller): *nostris Graecos imitari et historias Latinas scribere*.

178 *In Isaiam* 1.2.7 and 2.5.13; *In Dan.* 2.8; *In Amos* 3.8; *In Abdiam* 1.69; *In Jonam* 1.57; *In Mich.* 2.7; *In Soph.* 1.23; *adv. Iov.* 1.41; *Ep.* 60.5 and 72.2

seems to ill suit a compendium which relied on a scrappy *breviarium* like the *KG* for its imperial section. Finally, the assumption that there was, in fact, an *Ur-Epitome* of Livy, which underlay later brief texts of republican history (and which ought to have formed the first part of Burgess' underlying source for Jerome), has itself been challenged.¹⁷⁹

As for Eusebius of Nantes, if he is not quite phantasmical, then there is a rather ghostly quality to him too. Our only sure attestation of the name is in a marginal note in an autograph manuscript of the *Historia imperialis* by the fourteenth-century Veronese scholar Giovanni de Matociis (BAV Chig. I. VII. 259, f. 119r).¹⁸⁰ This contains a list of works by Ausonius that includes the following item:

Item ad eundem de imperatoribus res novas molitis a decio usque ad diocleianum versu iambico trimetro iuxta libros eusebii nannetici ystorici.

On the emperors who rebelled from Decius to Diocletian, in iambic trimeter, according to the books of the historian Eusebius of Nantes.

This work by Ausonius does not survive, so any discussion of its contents must remain speculative at best. That has not stopped Burgess from making some very specific suggestions about it.¹⁸¹ He re-titles it the *Tyranni* and suggests that the work dealt with unsuccessful claimants to imperial power, rightly noting that the period between Decius and Diocletian was particularly rich in such figures. Because the supposed 'KG texts' show an interest in usurpation, he then argues that Ausonius ought to have used the *KG* for his treatment of these usurpers. Given this and since de Matociis says that Ausonius used the works of Eusebius of Nantes, Eusebius of Nantes must be the author of the *Kaisergeschichte*. This argument has attracted both support and criticism.¹⁸² Critics have pointed out that we actually have references to historians called Eusebius whose works covered roughly the correct period. One, mentioned by Evagrius (*HE* 5.24), wrote a history from Octavian to Carus. Two extracts on sieges from the second half of the third century are quoted in a Greek military compendium (Paris gr. 607) also ascribed to a Eusebius.¹⁸³ Both of these authors wrote in Greek. Obviously, if Ausonius' Eusebius is identified with either of these two – whether or not they are the same as one another – he cannot be the author of a Latin *breviarium* covering the emperors from Augustus to Constantius II.

The one thing that has not been sufficiently brought out in the oft-heated debate over the Eusebii (of Nantes and otherwise) is that the title quoted by de Matociis does not actually make any sense: there is a fundamental contradiction between the *imperatores* and those who *res novas moliti* (rebelled).¹⁸⁴ In the fourth century, *imperatores* were emperors – specifically Augusti – and not rulers in some vague sense,

179 Begbie 1967. In his supplementary notes published in 2011, Burgess claims that Rohrbacher 2009 successfully argues 'that the "Latina historia" was simply another later variant version of the *KG*, but with an epitome of Republican history prefixed' (2011: 4). Rohrbacher makes no such claim – not even mentioning the passage in Jerome – but rather argues that Jerome and Eutropius have a common source for the Republican section which is *not* identical with the *KG*.

180 On whom see Stover and Woudhuysen 2017.

181 Burgess 1993a: 495–499.

182 Usefully surveyed, with full bibliography, in Suski 2005.

183 Sivan 1992 argued that these Eusebii were both identical with Eusebius of Nantes. This has generally been rejected: Bleckmann and Groß 2016: 111–148; Suski 2005; and Burgess 1993a: 496–497.

184 We might also be a little uneasy about *nanneticus*. There is no sure evidence for the name of Condevincum having shifted to *civitas Namnetum* or *Nannetica* before the *Notitia Galliarum*, possibly to be associated

as Suski interprets the title.¹⁸⁵ The fact that two undoubted emperors are mentioned by name, Decius and Diocletian, cannot be coincidental here. For this reason, Green is right to conclude that Burgess' interpretation – which makes Decius and Diocletian mere chronological markers – is impossible. Just as impossible, however, is Green's own idea that Ausonius considered Decius and Diocletian to be illegitimate usurpers.¹⁸⁶ The project implied by Ausonius' transmitted title is about as coherent as a contemporary poet writing a catalogue entitled *Unsuccessful Presidential Candidates: From Ronald Reagan to Barack Obama*.¹⁸⁷ Any extrapolation from this title is fraught with extreme hazard, and the only safe course of action is to indeed assume that Eusebius of Nantes wrote *something* in multiple books which covered the period from Decius to Diocletian. That in itself rules out the possibility that this work is the *KG*. Eusebius' history had different termini from the *KG*, which no contemporary advocate would characterise as a complex multi-book work. We have seen already that H.W. Bird estimated that the *KG* was a mere thirty-five Teubner pages in length.¹⁸⁸ If we compare a putatively contemporary writer whose works are published in a Teubner edition – Firmicus Maternus – we find that his books range from 39 pages (I) to 141 (VI). The works of another putative contemporary, Hilary of Poitiers (also a Gallic author), have not been published by Teubner, but the books of his *De Trinitate* would range from roughly thirty to fifty pages in such an edition. The phrase *iuxta libros* is a recognisable formula for a condensed text, which suggests a work in at least three books (but likely more). In other words, at a minimum, the work of Eusebius of Nantes ought to have occupied at least ninety Teubner pages.¹⁸⁹ Even if one rejects these calculations, the fundamental point remains that the work of Eusebius of Nantes – judging by our one very slight *testimonium* – has no characteristics that match those of the *KG* as Burgess (or any of its other advocates) have envisaged it.

Burgess' case for the *KG* thus turns out to be more fragile than irrefragable. In fact, his own later work has been moving slowly towards recognising this. In his 2014 monograph on the regnal durations in the *Chronography of 354*, Burgess comprehensively surveys the information in the various 'KG texts' on the lengths of emperors' reigns, and concludes that they cannot go back to a single unitary source in any straightforward way.¹⁹⁰ One of the places he ends up is not terribly distant from Den Boer: 'In fact, it may indeed have been the case that what we tend to think of as a specific text of the *KG* really developed into more of a tradition as the fourth century progressed'.¹⁹¹ Whatever else one may say, this spells the end of Enmann's method. The problem demands a completely different solution.

with Magnus Maximus (Harries 1978), though note *CIL* 17.2.387 = 13.8999 (a dedication to the Gallic Emperor Victorinus) where the terminal *cN* has been expanded to *civitas Namnetum*.

185 Suski 2005: 64. Strictly, only Augusti had the title *imperator* and some well-informed contemporaries were precise about such things (Barnes 1982: 25–27). Not everyone observed this distinction strictly, however: Ammianus, for example, calls Julian an *imperator* at a time when he was still a Caesar (16.5.11).

186 Green 1999: 576–578.

187 A solution might perhaps lie in Eusebius having written about the Gallic Empire, which would match the *termini* given for his work rather neatly (Postumus perhaps having begun his career under Decius and

Tetricus surviving into the reign of Diocletian, cf. Eutropius 9.13.2: *privatus diutissime vixit*).

188 See page 213 above. Calculation of length by Teubner pages is deficient in itself (see Stover and Woudhuysen 2022b: 13–14), but we use it here to illustrate a weakness in the *KG* argument.

189 The obvious counter-argument would be to point to the books of Eutropius, which are miniature. His work, however, is an outlier in every sense – no other work has these miniature books – and one gets the strong impression that the fact that there are *ten* is the important fact, as if Eutropius simply divided his work into ten sections. If so, this would give no parallel example. On condensed texts, see Chapter III.

190 Burgess 2014: 135–141.

191 Burgess 2014: 140.

Barnes and Burgess are both votaries of the *KG*, who self-consciously present their work as advocacy for it. A slightly different example can help to reinforce the conclusions reached from close examination of their case for the *KG*. Alan Cameron, among the most influential scholars of late antiquity in general and late-antique literature in particular, began his scholarly career as a *KG*-sceptic. In 1965, he referred to the text as ‘a ghost of which little has been heard in recent years, the hypothetical anonymous *Kaiserchronik* of A. Enmann’.¹⁹² This attitude well suited a scholar who (in Gavin Kelly’s crisp formulation) was ‘willing to cross the road to knock down a bad argument’.¹⁹³ By 1969, however, he had been won round: he accepted both that the *KG* existed and that it was ‘almost certain’ that Festus and Eutropius both used it.¹⁹⁴

In his 2011 *magnum opus*, *The Last Pagans of Rome*, Cameron argued briefly that we have evidence from Greek sources for the Latin *KG*.¹⁹⁵ This was his only sustained treatment of Enmann’s hypothesis and it is an atypical way to approach the subject: coming from a former sceptic, it might be expected to be more persuasive than other arguments, so it is worth probing a little. Cameron’s argument runs as follows. The fragments of the Greek historian John of Antioch (sixth or seventh century: it is a controverted question) often read as a translation of Eutropius, but one very different from the extant fourth-century version of Paeanius.¹⁹⁶ Traditionally, John’s source was identified as the translation made by the Lycian historian Capito (probably *ca.* 500), mentioned by the *Suda* in its entry on him (K.342). Yet another translation of Eutropius, however, was used by yet another historian, Theophanes the Confessor, in the eighth century and we have no explicit evidence to divine which of them (if either) might have used Capito. As a result, we would seem to need three Greek translations of Eutropius to explain the evidence. Cameron doubted that any ‘so utilitarian work’ would have been thrice translated and pointed out that at times John is very close to, but somewhat fuller than, Eutropius. The *ipsissima verba* of Eutropius, but with more material, is almost the definition of the *KG* as it is commonly envisaged. Hence, Cameron suggested, John did not use a translation of Eutropius at all, but rather a translation of Eutropius’ source: the *KG*.¹⁹⁷ If true, this would be a significant breakthrough.

Unfortunately, there are serious problems with Cameron’s argument, which can be easily seen by careful consideration of his proofs. His marquee example is that John includes an *à propos* quotation of Sallust in his account of Sulla (fr. 145.2 Roberto). While Cameron is surely right to think that this indicates that John had access (directly or indirectly) to a Latin source, it was hardly one like the *KG* as it is traditionally conceived, which was (if it needs restatement) a history of the emperors, not the Republic. Cameron does not spell this out, but one has to envisage that the hypothetical *KG* was included in a hypothetical compendium of all Roman history, which Eutropius hypothetically used, cutting out things like the quotation from Sallust. Even granting all this, if that compendium included substantial quotations from cited sources, was it really the kind of short summary of Roman history generally envisaged? Similarly, Cameron is right that John’s claim that Constantius I acquired the nickname Παῦπερ (= Lat. *pauper*), from his frugality in using the silver dishes and couches of private individuals at feasts, implies a Latin source at some point in the tradition.¹⁹⁸ Unfortunately, no extant Latin text makes this claim about him.

192 Cameron 1965a: 249.

193 Kelly 2015: 232.

194 Cameron 1969a: 307.

195 Cameron 2011: 665–668.

196 On which, see below.

197 Cameron 2011: 666.

198 Cameron 2011: 667 for both of these examples.

TABLE 6.5 – THE DEATH OF GORDIAN III: PHILIP AS PRAETORIAN PREFECT

<i>HAb</i> 27.7–8	Festus 22	Jerome 241 ^a	Eutropius 9.2.2–3	<i>LB</i> 27.2
Ibi gesto insigniter bello Marci Philippi praefecti praetorio insidiis periit sexennio imperii.	Isque de Perside rediens victor, fraude Philippi, qui praefectus praetorii erat , occisus est.	Cum victor reverteretur ad patriam, fraude Philippi praefecti praetorio haud longe a Romano solo interfectus est.	Rediens haud longe a Romanis finibus interfectus est fraude Philippi, qui post eum imperavit.	A Philippo praefecto praetorio accensis in seditionem militibus occiditur.

The closest analogue is a story in Eusebius of Caesarea's *Vita Constantini* (1.14.1–6) in which Constantius obtains vast wealth on demand from his willing subjects, in whose hands he generally preferred to leave gold and silver – an episode set off by an accusation of πενία, or poverty, against him. The same story is in Libanius (*Or.* 59.15, perhaps from Eusebius directly) and is clearly modelled on an episode in Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* (8.2.15–20). John may have had a Latin source, but this is a Greek tale. It is also very interesting that John's obituary of the emperor Julian (fr. 272 Roberto) seems to be derived from Eutropius (10.16.2–3), but is substantially longer.¹⁹⁹ That certainly proves that John had access to good material on Julian, but why he should have obtained that from the *KG* specifically (a short and summary work) is never made clear: the additional details in John do not turn up in any other *KG* text, which seems like it ought to be a mark against the idea. Cameron ends his case with the accounts given by Jerome (*Chron.* 227^m), Eutropius (9.27.2), and Zonaras (12.32) of the triumph celebrated at Rome in 303 by Diocletian and Maximian.²⁰⁰ The three texts are interestingly parallel (with Zonaras and Jerome sharing one significant detail), but Zonaras' sources are a famous problem (to which elsewhere Cameron argues the solution must be complex): to simply assert that this came from the *KG*, via John of Antioch, will not do.²⁰¹

Besides these difficulties, it is easy to demonstrate beyond any doubt that John could not have been using what has been identified as the *KG*. For example, Burgess adduces a characteristic series of parallels on the death of Gordian III as evidence for the *KG* (TABLE 6.5). Festus and Jerome are very similar to Eutropius. Both of them, however, along with the two Victorine texts, specify that Philip was praetorian prefect. Hence, Burgess argues, the *KG* must have had *praefecti praetorii*: this is a necessary conclusion of Enmann's method.²⁰² Yet when we turn to the analogous passage in John of Antioch – which is obviously very close to Eutropius and by Cameron's approach ought to be a translation of the *KG* – no trace of the missing phrase is found.²⁰³ Hence, if the *KG* is the source of the post-Eutropian texts that read like Eutropius but have additional details, John of Antioch provides no evidence for its existence. Instead, John offers a parallel case to our Latin sources, wherein Eutropius provides an overall framework into which material could be inserted.

199 The parallels are more extensive than Cameron 2011: 667 would suggest.

200 Cameron 2011: 667–668.

201 Cameron 2011: 688. On Zonaras, see Chapters IX and X.

202 Burgess 1995a: 363.

203 John of Antioch, fr. 225 Roberto: ἐκεῖθεν δὲ μετὰ τὸ πέρασ ἐπανιών, ἔκτω τῆς ἡγεμονίας ἐνιαυτῷ, πρὸς αὐτοῖς ἤδη τοῖς ὄροις τῆς οἰκειᾶς ἀρχῆς ὑπὸ Φιλίππου, τὴν βασιλείαν διαδεξαμένου, τοῦ κατ' ἐκεῖνο καιροῦ τὴν τῶν στρατιωτῶν νεολαίαν ἀσκούντος, ἐδολοφονήθη.

Three cases for the *KG*, two made by its greatest modern advocates, one advanced by a repentant sceptic, and no real proof. In each, the evidence assembled by Barnes, Burgess, and Cameron supports not Enmann's *KG*, but rather Victor's *Historia* as the lost common source. What we see in the complex connections between various historians cannot be explained by all of them mechanically using a single unitary source. Rather, it makes sense in an environment where Victor's work was the landmark study of Roman history and the principal source of Eutropius' imperial section, but where that convenient and condensed narrative also found many readers. More specifically, it was to Eutropius that later authors – Jerome or Paul the Deacon, for instance – often seem to have turned for a basic framework, into which information from Victor could be inserted, if need for it was felt. The *KG* can henceforth be consigned to the grand and growing museum of the history of classical scholarship. Insofar as Enmann's insights have validity, they need to be understood in the framework of Victor's *Historia*, not amidst the ruins of a nineteenth-century idea.

Victor and Eutropius

What then in the final analysis ought we to make of the central problem that the modern *KG* theory solves, the relationship between the *HAb* and Eutropius? We have shown that they must share some source, and the idea that it is Eutropius who most faithfully mirrors that source, rather than the *HAb*, is simple prejudice, at points demonstrably wrong.²⁰⁴ Instead, their common source is Victor's *Historia* – that was where Eutropius turned both for the details of Roman imperial history and for the language in which to describe it. It would, however, be wrong to get the impression that Eutropius merely mined Victor for facts, quarried him for phrasing: we can see his debt on a much larger scale, in terms of the way that he structures his narrative of Rome under the emperors.

Victor had definite ideas about the shape of imperial history, most of which were connected with questions of constitutional arrangement.²⁰⁵ His work (as we have seen) opened with a description of Octavian's position after Actium and a significant chronological calculation.²⁰⁶ The family of Augustus (and it was important to Victor that it was a family) ruled down to the death of Nero (*HAb* 5.17), succeeded after an interval of chaos by another *gens*, the Flavians.²⁰⁷ The first major moment of constitutional transformation came with the accession of Nerva, since this inaugurated a period of political experimentation: in particular, emperors from outside Italy (*HAb* 11.12–13). Significantly, this is also the point at which the *HAb* and *LB* begin to diverge markedly, suggesting that the narrative became more substantial. The next great transition occurred after the death of Alexander Severus with the accession of Maximinus (*HAb* 24.8–11). Surveying the course of Roman expansion from Romulus to Septimius Severus, Victor saw continuous growth, albeit in fits and starts (*certatim*). The succeeding emperors, especially Alexander,

204 *cf.* Burgess 1995: 349: 'Victor's own opinions and peculiar style and vocabulary have no reflection in Eutropius, as they could hardly help but have done if Eutropius had copied Victor'.

205 See further the Conclusion.

206 Chapter IV.

207 Victor specifically identified the Flavians as a *familia* (*HAb* 8.4). *cf.* *HAb* 9.1, where Vespasian is *hoc item ex genere*, referring back to Victor's discussion of the *Caesarum gens* (8.7) and their nature: the word perhaps has a double meaning.

managed to hold the line: ‘the fact that it did not immediately slip was due to Alexander’. The accession of Maximinus was also a new constitutional development for Victor: just as non-Italians had come to the purple after Nerva, so after Alexander there was the first emperor from the common throng of soldiers, a man who came to power *suffragiis legionum*, ‘with the support of the legions’ (*HAb* 25.1). The death of Probus was another turning point (*HAb* 37.5–7, which we discuss further in Chapter VIII), leading to more constitutional experimentation (the Tetrarchy). Finally, a new period begins with the accession of Constantius I as co-Augustus with Galerius (*HAb* 40.1), followed by the swift rise of Constantine, which in constitutional terms meant ultimately the return of a single ruling *gens*.²⁰⁸

This way of thinking about Rome’s past maps very closely on to Eutropius’ history as well. The architecture of his work has never been properly studied, but it is clear that its structure was purposeful and carefully judged. In particular, Eutropius paid close attention to where his individual books had their starting points. For example, Book VI begins, in a sense, far too early: Book V has terminated after just over 1,000 words, half the length of all the other books. Yet the opening of the sixth book comes at a significant moment: the end of the era of Marius and Sulla and the terrible violence that their rivalry visited on the Roman people. The foreshortening of Book V is a sign that Eutropius had arranged this quite deliberately, one that can be confirmed when it is realised that his sixth book’s opening, ‘*M. Aemilio Lepido Q. Catulo consulibus*, after Sulla had set the commonwealth in order, new wars were kindled’ (6.1.1), echoes the famous incipit of Sallust’s *Histories* (1.1R = 1.1M): ‘the history of the Roman people, *M. Lepido Q. Catulo consulibus*, at home and on campaign, I have composed’. Eutropius was hardly alone in looking back to this part of Sallust. One of the few things we know about the mostly lost history of Granius Licinianus (for example) is that he stopped to draw attention to the beginning of the *Histories* when his own work reached that point.²⁰⁹

When we turn to Books VII–X of Eutropius – those which overlap in coverage with Victor and for which Victor was a major source – we find a fascinating structure. Book VII opens a little before the beginning of Victor’s work, and yet the first words closely recall Victor’s own opening (TABLE 6.6). The next book in Eutropius (VIII) begins with Nerva, as does the next phase in Victor’s history. Eutropius baldly notes that this period was marked by prosperity and *boni principes*, but one needs to turn to Victor to find the reason why: because ‘the city of Rome has in particular grown great by the bravery of foreigners and transplanted skills of outsiders’ (*HAb* 11.13). The following book (IX) begins after the death of Alexander Severus, with the accession of Maximinus Thrax. The opening words recall both Victor’s own language and his ideas (TABLE 6.7). What is interesting is that Eutropius’ emphasis on Maximinus’ background as a common soldier responds to Victor’s conception of his reign as an important turning point, but is never explained in his *breviarium*. Finally, Book X of Eutropius begins with the accession of Constantius, once again in phrasing that closely recalls Victor’s (TABLE 6.8). When Victor was writing, the short reign of Constantius I as Augustus was obviously significant, because his grandson (Constantius II) was on the throne. By *ca.* 370, as Eutropius penned his work, the house of Constantine had fallen and yet he retained Victor’s arrangement.

208 Victor was very much aware of the Constantinian dynasty as a dynasty: *HAb* 34.7.

209 See Stover and Woudhuysen 2022b: 16–17.

TABLE 6.6 – VICTOR AND BOOK VII OF EUTROPIUS

<i>HAb</i> 1.1	Eutropius 7.1.1–2
Anno urbis septingentesimo fere vicesimoque, duobus etiam, mos Romae incessit uni prorsus parendi.	Anno urbis septingentesimo fere ac nono interfecto Caesare civilia bella reparata sunt. . . . Quare tres exercitus uni Caesari Augusto paruerunt.
In almost the seven hundredth and twenty-second year of the city, the custom arose at Rome of obeying one man absolutely.	In almost the seven hundredth and ninth year of the city, after Caesar had been killed, the civil wars were renewed . . . On this account, three armies obeyed one man, Caesar Augustus.

TABLE 6.7 – VICTOR AND BOOK IX OF EUTROPIUS

<i>HAb</i> 25.1	Eutropius 9.1
Gaius Julius Maximinus, who was governing Trebellica, was the first from among the soldiers (<i>primus e militaribus</i>) to seize power with the support of the legions, a man almost unacquainted with letters.	After him, Maximinus was the first from the ranks of the army (<i>ex corpore militari primus</i>) to come to imperial power by the will of the soldiers alone.

TABLE 6.8 – VICTOR AND BOOK X OF EUTROPIUS

<i>HAb</i> 40.1	Eutropius 10.1
Igitur Constantio atque Armentario his succedentibus Severus Maximinusque Illyricorum indigenae Caesares, prior Italiam posteriorque in quae Iovius obtinuerat , destinantur.	His igitur abeuntibus administratione rei publicae Constantius et Galerius Augusti creati sunt divisusque inter eos ita Romanus orbis, ut Galliam, Italiam, Africam Constantius, Illyricum, Asiam, Orientem Galerius obtineret , sumptis duobus Caesaribus.
Thereupon, when Constantius and Armentarius succeeded them, Severus and Maximinus, natives of Illyricum, were dispatched as Caesars, the first to Italy, the second to what Jovius had occupied	After they had retired from administering the state, Constantius and Galerius were made Augusti and the Roman world was divided between them, so that Constantius held Gaul, Italy, and Africa, Galerius Illyricum, Asia, and the East – two Caesars were also chosen

It is very suggestive that three of Victor's four divisions of imperial history – divisions which, we must stress, arise solely from an analysis of Victor's text – correspond with book divisions in Eutropius. The fact that the beginning of Victor's *Historia*, which must obviously represent the commencement of a book, also corresponds with a book division in Eutropius, strongly suggests that the others do as well. Of course, confronted by these parallels, one could always have recourse to the *KG*, and claim that this structuring of imperial history was already present in the source of Eutropius and the *HAb*. Indeed, some

of these parallels were picked up by Nickbakht and Scardino, who attributed sophisticated constitutional history to the *KG*.²¹⁰ The periodisation in both texts, however, cannot be divorced from the intellectual apparatus which underpins the *HAb*. This means that the source of Eutropius and the *HAb* was much more similar to the latter than the former: not just a scrappy chronicle but an intellectually rich and reflective treatment of imperial history. In other words, it was Victor's *Historia*.

Though it has escaped attention, Eutropius in fact almost tells us this. At the end of his history, he includes an elegant *envoi* (10.18.3):

For what remains ought to be described in a grander style (*stilo maiore dicenda sunt*), which we do not now so much pass over as keep back for grander craftsmanship in writing (*ad maiorem scribendi diligentiam*).

Eutropius' statement has generally been interpreted as meaning that contemporary emperors should be treated in panegyric, rather than history: it has been compared fruitfully with the ending of Ammianus.²¹¹ While *stilo maiore dicenda* on its own could certainly refer to panegyric, the last sentence – especially *ad maiorem scribendi diligentiam* – cannot, since strictly panegyric is *spoken* not *written*.²¹² Instead, Eutropius must be saying that treatment of the period after 364 awaits the more thorough treatment (*maior scribendi diligentia*) of a historian. After all, the very nature of a *breviarium* as a secondary text presupposes the existence of a *primary* text: where no primary text was available, Eutropius had no material on which to practise his craft. From the perspective of *ca.* 370, there was of course only one historian who might embark on the noble but demanding endeavour of writing contemporary history.

The realisation that Eutropius was heavily indebted to Victor's history might shed new light on what he was trying to achieve. Eutropius' work was an astonishing success. As we have seen, it was translated into Greek by Paeanius in 380, only a decade after its composition, and then again by Capito a century and a half later. It formed the basis of Paul's *Historia Romana*, and from there went on to provide the framework for the study of Roman history for the next 500 years, becoming in Michael Kulikowski's words 'the most influential textbook of Roman history ever produced'.²¹³ It was the model against which Festus reacted, was certainly read and exploited by Ammianus, the *Historia Augusta*, and Jerome as well. It even influenced the text of *Libellus breuiatus*, due to Paul's deep familiarity with it.²¹⁴ Why was Eutropius so influential? Contemporary scholarship has no very good answer to this question. It is generally dismissive of both Eutropius and his work: 'little more than an epitome of the *KG*' (Burgess) by an author who mechanically reproduced his source 'largely unchanged' (Barnes).²¹⁵ On the standard account of the *KG*, where Eutropius was simply summarising a text already very like his own in style and scope, but *slightly*

210 Nickbakht and Scardino 2021: 'Vielmehr war der verfassungsgeschichtliche Einschnitt von 235 bereits in der EKG angelegt, die auch andere erstmalige oder einzigartige Erscheinungen in römischen Staatswesen systematisch erfasst zu haben scheint'.

211 Omissi 2018: 31; Den Boeft *et al.* 2018: 302; Ross 2016b: 295; Cameron 2011: 373; Paschoud 2001: 289; MacCormack 1976: 40.

212 See for example, Quintilian, *Inst.* 3.8.7; Augustine, *Contra Iulianum* 5.3.8; Julius Victor, *Rhet.* p. 103

Giomini/Celentano 1980, *HA Pesc.* 11.5 and *Alex.* 35.1. Only Jerome refers to writing panegyric, e.g. *Ep.* 108.21 or *In Gal.* 3.5.6, but *cf. Ep.* 65.11.

213 Kulikowski 2018: 150. Briefly, *T&T* 'Eutropius' (Reynolds). On the Greek translations, Malcovati 1943–1944; Fisher 1982: 189–193 (on Paeanius).

214 Stover and Woudhuysen 2021.

215 Burgess 2005: 167; Barnes 1978: 92.

fuller in detail, there is simply no reason for his popularity.²¹⁶ Nor is there anything to explain why his work enjoyed such rapid dissemination and sustained influence when the *KG* was buried in silence. The idea of the *KG* has blinded us to Eutropius' actual achievement.

The very fact that we assume that the *Ur*-source of Roman imperial historiography was essentially a slightly longer version of Eutropius is a testament to the success of his project. What if Eutropius' talent lay precisely in cutting through complex accounts, eliminating unusual vocabulary, and pruning away what he saw as extraneous to the historical facts? It is no accident that the short historical texts which come after him – Festus, Jerome's *Chronicon*, the *Libellus breuiatus* – sound very much like him, such was his influence. Once we look at the issue in the correct perspective and consider his actual primary source for the imperial period, Victor, Eutropius' virtues become much clearer. He decocted a complex and obscurely written work into a readable and easy-to-remember format, with a keen eye for the elimination of digression and moralising, matched with a fine sense for how to organise a narrative. This was a rare accomplishment for an epitomator.²¹⁷ It is no surprise that Eutropius' work became *the epitome* for use in place of and alongside the much more difficult and obscure *Historia* of Victor. An astonishing success, then, but astonishing only to us.



The ideas advanced here will be controversial. So complete has been Enmann's triumph that in 2002 François Paschoud could write:

The battle for Enmann's *Kaisergeschichte* is practically won. Even if controversies remain about the exact nature and extent of this work, I do not see today any serious doubt about the existence of a historical work treating in abridged form the imperial period of Roman history, which was used by Aurelius Victor, Eutropius, Rufius Festus, Jerome for his *Chronicle*, the *Historia Augusta* and the *Epitome de Caesaribus*.²¹⁸

This is no different from what Burgess would write in 2018, significantly in a standard reference work, the *Oxford Dictionary of Late Antiquity*, a passage we have quoted in part already:

Although its existence was controversial for almost a century following the first proof by Enmann, its existence is now universally accepted by scholars.²¹⁹

We have argued that Enmann's theory is ultimately a product of its time, one that should have been jettisoned or refashioned root and branch after Dessau, but was instead merely shuffled around to play a

216 He cannot even have been much good as an epitomiser, since the imperial portion of the *breviarium* is some 8,000 words long: only twenty per cent shorter than Bird's calculation of the length of the *KG* (Bird 1989: 95).

217 Brunt 1980: 493; cf. Chapter III.

218 Paschoud 2002: xii–xiii: 'La bataille pour la *Kaisergeschichte* d'Enmann est pratiquement gagnée. Même si des controverses subsistent sur la nature et l'extension

exacte de cette oeuvre, je ne vois pas que soit aujourd'hui mise sérieusement en doute l'existence d'un ouvrage historique traitant sous forme d'abrégé la période impériale de l'histoire romain, que a été utilisé par Aurélius Victor, Eutrope, Rufius Festus, Jérôme pour sa *Chronique*, l'*Histoire Auguste* et l'*Epitome de Caesaribus*'.

219 *ODLA* 'Kaisergeschichte' (Burgess).

slightly different role. The textual correspondences between Eutropius and the *HAb* are real, but far from implying the existence of a historical *breviarium* produced in 357, upon which both texts depend, they are due simply to the fact that the *HAb* is what its name implies: an abbreviated version of Victor's *History*, which history was Eutropius' source. Given the way that scholarship had been moving before 1883, towards a more refined understanding of the fashion in which the two Victorine works were transmitted and of their relationship to each other, this theory would have been reached rather sooner without Enmann. Indeed, at least in embryonic form, it was.

In 1900, the Kiel professor Alfred Schöne published a study of the *Chronicon* of Eusebius and Jerome's continuation, with the most important and penetrating discussion of Victor since the 1870s. Despite the monograph's date, its intellectual affinities really belong to the previous decades, to the world before Enmann. Schöne himself was just two years from retirement. He had been a professor at Leipzig until 1869 – his career partially overlapping with Opitz's time there – before moving on to positions at Erlangen, Königsberg, and Kiel.²²⁰ What sparked Schöne's interest in Victor was the strong parallelism between Jerome and Ammianus on the character of Valentinian I and, in particular, the comparison of him to Aurelian that both make. Since it is *prima facie* unlikely that Ammianus was reading Jerome, this necessitates some common source. What, Schöne asked, is the middle term between Jerome and Ammianus? None other than Sex. Aurelius Victor. With brief reference back to the work of Opitz and Wölfflin, he then goes through the whole argument. The *HAb* and the *LB* are both epitomes. Both share some of the same characteristics throughout, and not just in the first eleven chapters, notably comparison of emperors to earlier historical figures. He makes note of the title *Historia* that our *testimonia* give to Victor's work. He pays closer attention to the transmission of the texts than his predecessors had and even raises the possibility that Paul the Deacon had access not to the *LB* but to Victor's original work.²²¹ He considers the different end-dates of the two works and suggests that there is no need to assume that Victor published his *Historia* all at once.²²² He even suggests that Eutropius could be largely derived from Victor.²²³

The one thing that he was lacking was evidence: the passage in Paul's *Historia Romana* that he discusses, which is simply a stitching together of Eutropius with lines found also in the *LB*, cannot actually be used to show that Paul had access to Victor's full *Historia*. What he needed – the *Scholia Vallicelliana* – would not be published until fourteen years later, and not ascribed to Paul for another sixty years after that. Schöne knew that he was offering no more than a tantalising hypothesis and in the conclusion of this section sets a challenge for future scholars:

It is neither necessary for my task, nor is it possible given the present state of the text of the Victorine epitome, to pursue this investigation any further for now. But it will have to be done one day, taking into consideration the points I have set out above.²²⁴

220 See the *Catalogus Professorum Lipsiensium* (https://research.uni-leipzig.de/catalogus-professorum-lipsiensium/leipzig/Schoene_1194).

221 Schöne 1900: 213–217.

222 Schöne 1900: 218: 'Aber näher liegt noch eine andere Annahme, dass nämlich Aurelius Victor sein Werk nicht auf Ein Mal und als ein geschlossenes Ganzes herausgegeben habe'.

223 Schöne 1900: 215.

224 Schöne 1900: 218–219: 'Es ist für meine Aufgabe weder notwendig, noch bei dem gegenwärtigen Zustande des Textes der Victorischen Epitome möglich, diese Untersuchung für jetzt noch weiter zu verfolgen. Aber es wird einmal geschehen müssen, unter Berücksichtigung der im Vorstehenden dargelegten Gesichtspunkte'.

No one answered this call. This was a retrograde scholarly project, built on the apparently obsolete assumptions of a quarter century earlier. Enmann is cited for a single point only, and one laden with irony: that the future student of the relationship of the works of Roman imperial history to each other must take special care to respect the particularities of each of the authors.²²⁵ This cutting remark suggests that Schöne suspected that the future already belonged to Enmann and his *KG*. More worryingly, ‘die scharfsinnige Hypothese von H. Dessau’ is curtly dismissed with an avowal that the discussion will focus only on Ammianus and Jerome, but Schöne tips his hand when he gives a list of ‘älteren Quellen’, consisting of Livy, Suetonius, and the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*.²²⁶

This brushing over of Dessau is the principal weakness of Schöne’s case: it was also a missed opportunity. Far from being an obstacle, Dessau’s work opened up new vistas for those who might follow the idea of Victor’s *Historia*: he had made it possible, for the first time, to argue that Victor and Eutropius were *sources* of the *HA*, not debtors. The *HA* actually provides, as we shall see, one of the premier points of access to Victor’s lost *Historia*. It would be remiss of us, then, not to broach that most forbidding of topics: the *Quellenforschung* of the *HA*, walled round by generations of scholarship, often seemingly impenetrable, or, to use Barnes’ image, ‘a battlefield long cumbered with the corpses of moribund theories’.²²⁷ Best, then, to approach it indirectly. Let us start by considering a work of much smaller compass, a little jingle on the Roman emperors, written by one of the premier Latin poets of the last decades of the fourth century: the *Caesares* of Ausonius.

225 Schöne 1900: 219 (citing Enmann 1884: 398 ff.): ‘Auch werden, wie schon bisher geschehen ist, im Zusammenhange hiermit Zosimus, Zonaras und die verwandten griechischen Quellen gebührend zu berücksichtigen sein, und vor Allem wird, worin ich der Mahnung von A. Enmann durchaus beistimme, man sich nicht mehr darauf beschränken dürfen, Übereinstimmung oder Widerspruch der einzelnen Schriftwerke unter einander bezüglich ihrer Überlieferung des

Thatsächlichen zu prüfen und zu konstatiren, sondern es soll zugleich auch der schriftstellerische Charakter der einzelnen Quellen, ihr litterarischer Zweck, ihr historisch-politischer Standpunkt und ihr persönliches Verhältniss gegenüber einzelnen Kaisern, mehr erwogen und besser berücksichtigt werden als gewöhnlich zu geschehen pflegt’.

226 Schöne 1900: 206 (quotation); 215 (other sources).

227 Barnes 1975: 373.