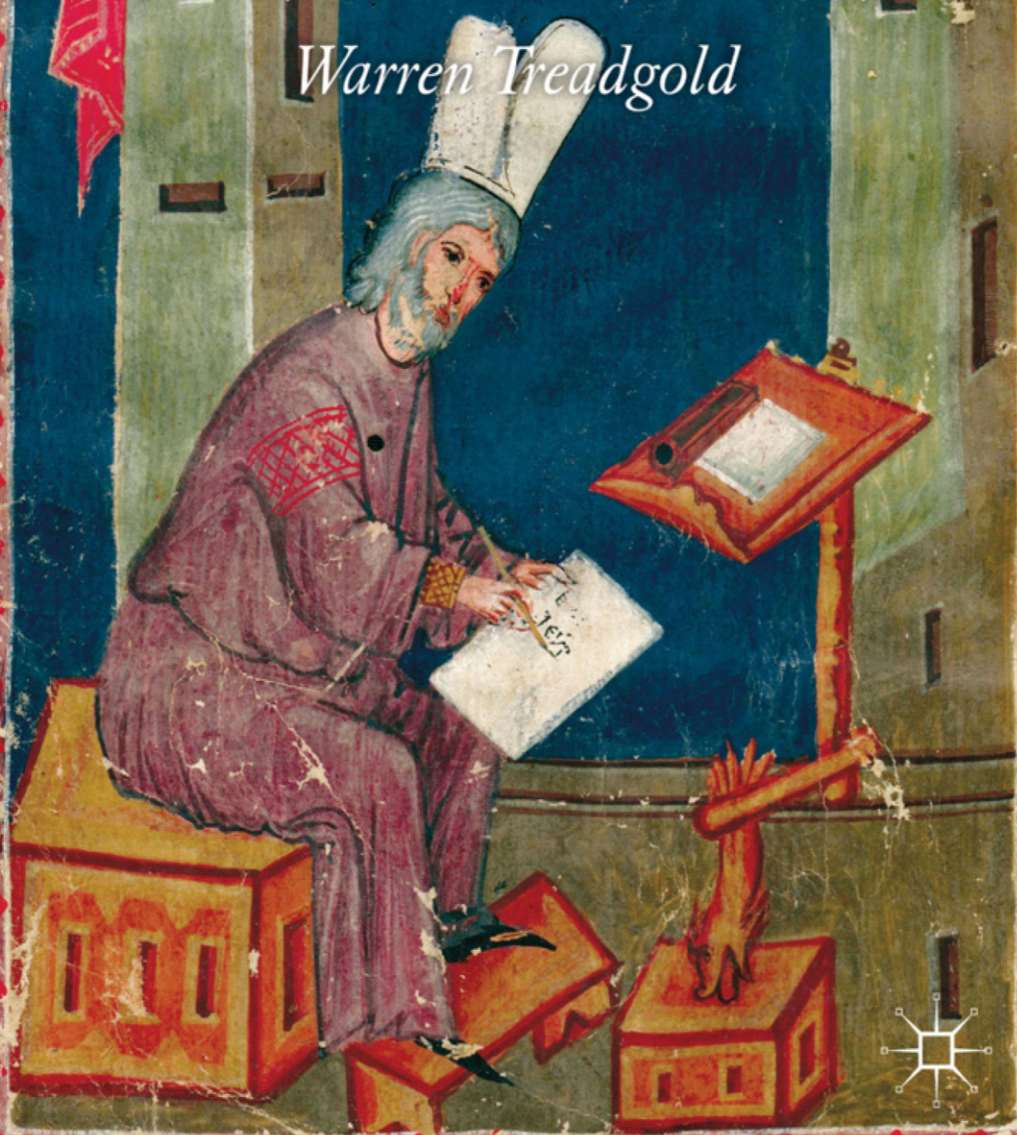


ἡ ἀρχὴ καὶ οὐκ ἐστὶν ἀρχὴ τοῦ βλαστῆτος

THE MIDDLE BYZANTINE HISTORIANS

Warren Treadgold



John Zonaras

John Zonaras' *Epitome of Histories*, which begins with the Creation and concludes with 1118, is the longest history written in Greek up to its time that has reached us intact.² While we know that Zonaras was a high-ranking bureaucrat who later became a monk, reconstructing his life is complicated, because most of his work is derivative, and his references to himself are few and vague. Apparently while he was still a junior official, he was commissioned by an emperor to write an extensive commentary on canon law, which still survives.³ Zonaras also wrote several poems, speeches, and commentaries on religious subjects, some of which remain unedited, and he may have compiled a lengthy lexicon, though its authorship is disputed. The most complete form of the title of his history calls him "John Zonaras, former drungary of the Watch and protoascretis, who was a monk in the holy monastery of the island of St. Glyceria."⁴ Presumably Zonaras became protoascretis before he held the still higher office of drungary of the Watch, then became a monk on St. Glyceria, a small island in the Sea of Marmara, not far from Constantinople.

In his preface, which he must have composed last, Zonaras says that he had "long ago" retired voluntarily to his monastery after God "broke my bonds by depriving me of those dearest to me." The plural evidently means that he had been widowed and lost at least one child, because only a marriage bond would have made him ineligible to enter a monastery, while only a child would have been as close to him as a wife and needed his presence. Zonaras confesses that for some time after his tonsure he did nothing in particular, implying that he was demoralized and wrote nothing. His friends, however, urged him to use his leisure to compile a summary of previous histories that would have literary merit but would omit the detailed descriptions and invented speeches that they considered useless distractions.⁵ These friends may have visited him on St. Glyceria or written letters to him there; or perhaps some of them were monks there themselves. Zonaras says that he resisted them at first, because of the labor and the many books that the task would require, but finally he agreed, worn down by his

² On Zonaras, whose long and problematic history needs further study, see Karpozilos, *Βυζαντινοί ιστορικοί* III, pp. 465–89, Hunger, *Hochsprachliche profane Literatur* I, pp. 416–19, Beck, *Kirche*, pp. 655–57, Banchich and Lane, *History* (for Zonaras on the third and fourth centuries), Bleckmann, *Reichskrise* (for Zonaras on the third century, now mostly superseded by Banchich and Lane), Trapp, *Militärs*, pp. 9–22 (for Zonaras on the tenth and eleventh centuries), Konrat Ziegler in *RE* XA (1972), cols. 718–32 (with cols. 732–63 by Klaus Alpers on the lexicon attributed to Zonaras, which Alpers believes is by someone else), Grigoriadis, *Linguistic and Literary Studies* (arguing on pp. 183–208 that the lexicon may well be by Zonaras), and Heinemann, *Quaestiones* (old but still useful).

³ Zonaras, *Commentary*, ed. Rhalles and Potles, *Σύνταγμα* II, pp. 1–2. (Cf. the comments of Banchich and Lane, *History*, p. 4.)

⁴ See P. Leone, "Tradizione," p. 234; the MS is *Ambrosianus graecus* 411.

⁵ I am not persuaded by the argument of Afinogenov, "Some Observations," that Zonaras' preface was designed to criticize George the Monk. Zonaras seems not to have consulted George's chronicle at all.

friends' persistence and realizing that his idleness was endangering his spiritual welfare.⁶ His preface gives no indications of dates.

Zonaras' *Epitome of Histories* becomes an independent source only with 1079, and for some time before that it relies mainly on the histories of Psellus and Scylitzes, both of which Zonaras cites by name.⁷ He shows no sign of being aware of the histories of Attaliates, Bryennius, or Anna Comnena, which he would presumably have used for the final part of his *Epitome* if he had known of them. Zonaras' preface includes a brief summary of his whole history that ends with the remark, "Thus my work concludes its narrative, reaching those who were emperors in my time."⁸ Since he concludes with the death of Alexius I, in 1118, putting these "emperors" in the plural implies that Zonaras had lived under at least one emperor before Alexius I, and was therefore born no later than the short reign of Nicephorus III (1078–81), and more probably under Michael VII (1071–78). Besides, Zonaras mentions in his commentary on the canons that he had once "seen" the celebration of the second marriage of an emperor. Except on the arbitrary and unlikely assumption that this is a later interpolation, it must mean the second marriage of Nicephorus III, around the end of 1079; the second marriage of Manuel I, in 1161, came too late, especially for a work written before Zonaras' retirement, and no other such marriage occurred between 1079 and 1161.⁹ If Zonaras could remember seeing a wedding celebration at the end of 1079, he could scarcely have been born much later than 1074.

As for the date when he wrote his *Epitome*, Zonaras remarks on the events of 1118, "It used to be said by the emperor himself, [John II] the Porphyrogenitus, and by others, that he had not made his entrance into the palace without the consent of his father, but that this outcome was granted to [John] by [Alexius I], and that as a sign of it [John] took [the emperor's] ring from his father."¹⁰ This statement suggests both that John II was dead when Zonaras wrote and that Zonaras had served in John's administration in a capacity that allowed him to hear what the emperor and his advisers said. Moreover, in a short conclusion to his *Epitome*, Zonaras explains that he has chosen to stop with 1118 "because I have judged it neither advantageous nor opportune to commit the remaining

⁶ Zonaras, *Epitome*, preface 1–2, pp. 3–9. Ziegler in *RE* XA (1972), cols. 720–21, hypothesizes that Zonaras' retirement was not voluntary, as Zonaras says it was, but the result of his having favored the succession of Nicephorus Bryennius and Anna Comnena in 1118 or 1119; but this seems implausible, because Zonaras, *Epitome* XVIII.28.21, supports John II's claim to the throne, and Zonaras' expressed opinion of Alexius I is much less favorable than Anna's.

⁷ Zonaras, *Epitome* XVIII.7.2 (Psellus), XVIII.7.5 ("the Thracesian," which must mean Scylitzes), and XVIII.15.5 (Psellus).

⁸ Zonaras, *Epitome*, preface 4, p. 15.9–10 (καθ' ἡμᾶς); cf. Zonaras XIII.3.26, describing the statue of Constantine I as having stood on its column "until our times [μέχρις ἡμῶν]" after it fell on April 5, 1106 (cf. Comnena XII.4.5), surely within Zonaras' lifetime.

⁹ Zonaras, *Commentary*, ed. Rhalles and Potles, *Σύνταγμα* III, p. 80. (Cf. the comments of Banchich and Lane, *History*, pp. 6–7, where their reference is misprinted as "II, p. 80.") For the date of the marriage, see above, p. 328 and n. 86.

¹⁰ Zonaras, *Epitome* XVIII.28.21.

events to writing.”¹¹ Therefore Zonaras had enough information to continue his work into John’s reign, but by doing so might have displeased either his friends, other influential people who had been active under John, or perhaps John’s son Manuel I. We may plausibly conclude that Zonaras disliked the way the empire had been governed during John’s reign. Because Zonaras, like most Byzantine historians, arranges his material by reigns, he would probably have felt no need to explain why he ended his history with 1118 had he finished writing before John II’s death, in 1143. If Zonaras was born around 1074, he was then nearing seventy. This seems quite possible, though had he been born much earlier than 1074 he would probably not have undertaken a task he finished only after 1143.¹² Since he completed his history in time for Constantine Manasses to use it for his own history, around 1150, Zonaras must have finished writing around 1145.¹³

The Zonaras family were not aristocratic landowners—their name means “Beltmaker,” presumably the profession of an ancestor—but neither were they altogether obscure.¹⁴ They may have been successful Constantinopolitan merchants who entered the bureaucracy. A Zonaras appears in our sources as early as 945, as an assistant to an allegedly corrupt prefect of Constantinople.¹⁵ In the late eleventh century a Nicholas Zonaras attended a church council in 1088 as a judge of the Hippodrome and grand chartulary. This is presumably the same Nicholas Zonaras who is attested on a contemporary seal as a judge of Thrace and Macedonia, at a somewhat earlier stage of his career.¹⁶ A seal dated to the late eleventh century belonged to a Basil Zonaras with the rank of *vestes*, who would have been about the right age to be Nicholas Zonaras’ brother.¹⁷ Either Basil or Nicholas would have been of an age to have become the father of John Zonaras, around 1074.

Another Nicholas Zonaras is attested as *protoascretis* in both 1157 and 1176, and as *drungary* of the Watch on a twelfth-century seal.¹⁸ This Nicholas cannot of course be the same as the Nicholas who had attended the council of 1088, but was probably that Nicholas’s grandson, since the Byzantines habitually named their sons for their grandfathers. The younger Nicholas, who may have been born around 1115, was the right age to be the son of the historian John Zonaras; but since the historian speaks of having lost “those dearest to me” before he began a history that he finished as a monk around 1145, he is unlikely to have had a son

¹¹ Zonaras, *Epitome* XVIII.29.29.

¹² Heinemann, *Quaestiones*, pp. 9–11, also puts Zonaras’ birthdate around 1075, though I find some of his arguments inconclusive.

¹³ See below, pp. 399 and 402 with n. 67.

¹⁴ On the name, see Heinemann, *Quaestiones*, pp. 5–9.

¹⁵ *Theophanes Continuatus* VI, pp. 441–42.

¹⁶ I would therefore identify PBW, Nikolaos 205 (judge of the Hippodrome in 1088), with Nikolaos 20308 (judge of Thrace and Macedonia on a seal of the last third of the eleventh century), and probably also with Nikolaos 20159 (owner of a seal of c. 1100, with no office specified).

¹⁷ PBW, Basileios 20107.

¹⁸ PBW, Nikolaos 198.

who survived until 1176. The younger Nicholas Zonaras is therefore more likely to have been the son of an otherwise unattested son of the elder Nicholas. Obviously from the late eleventh century onward the Zonaras family held high judicial and secretarial posts in the bureaucracy, which commanded high salaries and a certain prominence in society.

We have some further information about the Zonaras family. A twelfth-century commemoration of a church in the Monastery of St. Glyceria, where the historian became a monk, mentions a Zonaras with the monastic name of Naucrati¹⁹. This text says that the monastery had been abandoned before the arrival of a certain Gregory Taronites, its "first founder," who appears in the same manuscript in a commemoration of his own. According to the commemoration of Gregory, he became a monk soon after 1081, spent more than eight years at a monastery in Constantinople, stayed for unspecified but apparently not very long periods on the nearby islands of Oxia and Iatros, and finally moved to St. Glyceria. There he headed a community of about forty monks and began to build a monastery, but died, perhaps around 1110, before completing its church. The next abbot, Basil, "the second founder," continued work on the monastery church from his own funds and those of "our common brother of blessed memory, the most reverend monk Naucrati¹⁹ Zonaras, former drungary of the Watch." Perhaps around 1120, Basil also died before the church was finished, and was succeeded by a third abbot, Joseph, who "after some years" as abbot of St. Glyceria became abbot of the Pantocrator Monastery in Constantinople, evidently when it was founded, in 1136. The church of the Monastery of St. Glyceria, which must have been a rather expensive and elaborate structure, was finally consecrated in 1142.¹⁹

Although the historian John Zonaras became a monk in the same monastery, John must have been his name as a monk, while his baptismal name, unless it was also John, is unknown. In any case, the difference in names shows that John Zonaras cannot have been the same monk as Naucrati¹⁹ Zonaras. Because by this time monks often took monastic names that began with the same letter as their baptismal names, Naucrati¹⁹ seems likely to have been the monastic name of Nicholas Zonaras, who must therefore have become drungary of the Watch sometime after 1088, the date when he still held the lower rank of a judge of the Hippodrome. Basil, "the second founder" and the second abbot of St. Glyceria, may in fact be the former vestes Basil Zonaras, who could have kept his baptismal name as his monastic name in honor of St. Basil of Caesarea, author of the most respected Byzantine monastic rules.²⁰ Like Naucrati¹⁹ Zonaras, Basil had enough

¹⁹ See Mango, "Twelfth-Century Notices," who entertains the possibility that "the first founder" Gregory Taronites was the same Gregory Taronites (*PBW*, Gregorios 106) who rebelled against Alexius I in 1103/4, "although it must be admitted that in that case our hagiographical text has been extremely economical with the truth" (p. 226). I find it much easier to suppose that the abbot was another Gregory Taronites, of whom there seem to have been several (*PBW*, Gregorios 20110, 20131, 20132, and 20142).

²⁰ On Byzantine monastic names, see Talbot and McGrath, "Monastic Onomastics."

money to contribute significantly to the construction of the monastery church, and perhaps to construction of the other monastic buildings as well.

These considerations allow us to make a plausible if conjectural reconstruction of John Zonaras' life and family history. The elder Nicholas Zonaras may have been born around 1055, served as a provincial judge and then as a judge of the Hippodrome by 1088, then become drungary of the Watch. Either Nicholas or his brother and fellow bureaucrat Basil probably became the father of John Zonaras, around 1074. Not much before 1100, and perhaps some years later, Nicholas probably became a monk under the name of Naucratus in the recently refounded Monastery of St. Glyceria, whose second abbot, Basil, may well have been Naucratus' brother. In any case, Naucratus and Basil used their own wealth to advance the construction of the monastery's church. Meanwhile the future historian John Zonaras, aided by his family connections and literary accomplishments, enjoyed a distinguished career in the bureaucracy, for which he had been suitably educated in Constantinople. A man of serious religious and literary interests, he wrote poems, speeches, and perhaps a lexicon. Commissioned to write a commentary on canon law, probably by Alexius I, John Zonaras became head of the chancery as protoasecretis, perhaps under Alexius, and then head of the judiciary as drungary of the Watch, probably under John II.

While pursuing his career as a high official, the future historian married and evidently had a child or children. (We have seen, however, that the younger Nicholas Zonaras, born around 1115, was probably the son of a brother or cousin of the historian.) Yet John Zonaras, apparently without questioning the right of John II to the throne, became dissatisfied with what he saw of the imperial administration during that emperor's reign. At an uncertain date, perhaps around 1130, Zonaras' wife and child or children died. Deeply affected by his loss, and feeling that he had nothing more to hope for from this world, John became a monk in the Monastery of St. Glyceria, where he surely had a family connection, though by that time he may not have had surviving relatives among the monks. After a period of lethargy in the monastery, when he wrote nothing, John was persuaded by his friends, perhaps around 1135, to write a history. He completed his lengthy compilation around 1145, when he was about seventy. His friends soon circulated his work in Constantinople, where it was already used by Constantine Manasses, around 1150.²¹

John Zonaras had the literary and legal training that fitted him for the highest offices in the bureaucracy. His literary style, though in general clear and not ostentatious, is formal and Atticizing, as we would expect of an educated man who wanted to write elegantly.²² In accordance with the request of his friends as described in his preface, Zonaras avoids inventing (or copying from his sources) long speeches, descriptions, or digressions.²³ While he employs the optative mood

²¹ See below, p. 402 and n. 67.

²² The best treatment of Zonaras' style is in Grigoriadis, *Linguistic and Literary Studies*, though its insistence on Zonaras' originality (and especially on his sense of humor) is questionable.

²³ Zonaras, *Epitome*, preface 1, pp. 4–7.

in his first sentence and uses the dual number for Adam and Eve and often thereafter, such archaisms had become standard in formal Attic prose.²⁴ Even though Zonaras implies in his preface that he lacked some of the books he needed and describes his monastery as remote, St. Glyceria was only about forty-five miles across the Sea of Marmara from Constantinople, an easy day's voyage in good weather; in any case, Zonaras was able to draw on a fine collection of books on Roman and Byzantine history, including important texts that are lost to us today.²⁵ Such works cannot have been part of the library of any ordinary monastery, let alone one that had been recently founded. Therefore Zonaras had presumably brought some of them with him from a personal library that he had assembled before his retirement, then had other books sent to him from Constantinople by his friends, who had urged him to write a history after they had consulted other histories and found them wanting.

Although the editors of our printed editions have divided Zonaras' *Epitome* into eighteen books for purposes of convenience, our Byzantine manuscripts, evidently following Zonaras himself, divide it into just two gigantic books, corresponding to Books I–IX and X–XVIII in our editions.²⁶ Zonaras seems to have employed his book divisions not as convenient markers for reference but as signs that he was writing a classicizing history, as a means of setting off the history of the early Jews and Romans in his Book I from the history of the later Romans in his Book II, and (as we shall see) as an acknowledgment of a gap in his source material between Books I and II. Especially for a history called an epitome, Zonaras' work is of extraordinary length. Almost half as long again as either Procopius' *Wars* or the chronicle of Pseudo-Symeon—the longest surviving Byzantine histories up to this time—Zonaras' *Epitome* is also longer than the combined chronicles of George Syncellus and Theophanes Confessor. While some ancient authors like Diodorus and Cassius Dio had compiled longer histories than Zonaras', they had written before the Byzantine period, and large parts of their works are lost today. Zonaras must have called his work an epitome not because it was short but because it epitomized its sources. Large parts of these, including much of Dio's history and some other works that are harder to identify, are now known to us only from Zonaras' *Epitome*.

After his preface, with his description of how he came to write the *Epitome* and his summary of its contents, Zonaras begins his Book I with the history of the Jews from the Creation to the Babylonian Captivity, epitomized from the Septuagint and Josephus' *Jewish Antiquities*. He continues the story of the Jews down to the Roman victory in the Jewish War, including the history of the Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, and Romans as each of them affected the Jews. While still making

²⁴ Zonaras, *Epitome*, preface 1, p. 3 (ἀν τις εἴποι), and I.2, p. 22 (ἀμφοῖν).

²⁵ Zonaras, *Epitome*, preface 2, p. 8. Büttner-Wobst, "Abhängigkeit," pp. 168–70, whose expectations seem to me unrealistic, believes that all Zonaras' sources were in the library of St. Glyceria and is disappointed by their limited range.

²⁶ See Zonaras, *Epitome* IX.31, p. 298, and X.1, p. 298, with the apparatus in Pinder's edition.

most use of the Septuagint and Josephus, Zonaras also draws on Epiphanius of Salamis' *On Weights and Measures*, Theodoret of Cyrrhus' *Commentary on Daniel*, Plutarch's *Artaxerxes* and *Alexander*, Xenophon's *Education of Cyrus*, Herodotus, Josephus' *Jewish War*, and possibly the "Paschal Chronicle." Thus far Zonaras appears to have used only sources that survive today. Next he turns to the history of early Rome from Aeneas to the Roman destruction of Carthage and Corinth (146 B.C.). Here his main source was evidently Books I–XXI of Dio's history, now lost to us, supplemented by Herodotus' *Histories* and Plutarch's *Romulus*, *Numa*, *Publicola*, *Camillus*, and *Aemilius Paullus*.²⁷

Since Zonaras says that he concluded his Book I with 146 B.C. because he was unable to find proper sources for Roman history after that date, his set of Dio's history must have lacked Books XXII–XLIII.²⁸ He accordingly begins his Book II by summarizing the next sources that he found for Roman history, Plutarch's *Pompey* and *Caesar*, beginning with Pompey's birth, in 106 B.C. From Julius Caesar's assassination, in 44 B.C., to Dio's second consulship, in A.D. 229, Zonaras follows Dio's history from Book XLIV apparently to its final Book LXXX, supplementing Dio with Plutarch's *Brutus* and *Antony*, Eusebius' *History of the Church*, Luke's Gospel, and Josephus' *Jewish War*. Zonaras also includes some information not in our text of Dio that must derive either from a more complete text of Dio or from another source. After our text of Dio breaks off with Book LX, Zonaras supplies some parts of it that are not preserved in the Constantinian *Excerpts* or Xiphilinus' epitome, although he appears to have made use of Xiphilinus' epitome as well.²⁹

Which sources Zonaras used for the third through sixth centuries, after Dio's history ended, remains a matter of doubt and controversy.³⁰ While he evidently continued to use Eusebius (and in one case Dio) as a supplementary source, up to this point Zonaras had preferred to rely on a single main source, first Josephus' *Jewish Antiquities* and then Dio's *Roman History*.³¹ Therefore, following the practice with which he had begun, we might have expected him to adopt a single main source for the subsequent period. The most likely candidate to be this main source from 229 to around 500 is the now fragmentary seventh-century *Chronological*

²⁷ See the *fontes* listed in the apparatus to Pinder's edition of Zonaras, *Epitome* I–IX, especially pp. 205 (a possible reference to the "Paschal Chronicle" and to Epiphanius) and 355 (another reference to Epiphanius). For more detailed treatment, see Büttner-Wobst, "Abhängigkeit," pp. 123–50.

²⁸ Zonaras, *Epitome* IX.31, pp. 297–98. On the transmission of parts of Dio's history, see above, pp. 310–11 and n. 8.

²⁹ See the *fontes* listed in the apparatus to Pinder's edition of Zonaras, *Epitome* IX–XII.14, and Büttner-Wobst, "Abhängigkeit," pp. 150–68. Note that Zonaras, *Epitome* X.35–38, XI.2, and XI.6–11, adds information not in our text of Dio's Books LV–LVII and LIX–LX, and that the information from Appian's *Roman History* in *Epitome* XI.16 and XI.21 and from Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius* and *Lives of the Sophists* in *Epitome* XI.19–20 may well have reached Zonaras by way of Dio's history.

³⁰ For a good summary of the controversy, see Banchich and Lane, *History*, pp. 8–11.

³¹ Note that Zonaras, *Epitome* XIII.3.13–21, cites Dio twice by name when quoting from his description of Byzantium under Septimius Severus.

History of John of Antioch, which for this period plagiarized the sixth-century *Chronological Epitome* of Eustathius of Epiphania. For the second, third, and fourth centuries Eustathius seems to have relied heavily on the history composed in Latin by Ammianus Marcellinus, including its lost Books I–XIII, covering the years from 96 to 353.³²

Zonaras' narrative of the poorly attested period from 229 to 353 is surprisingly detailed and accurate, often recording the lengths not just of imperial reigns, as Byzantine histories often do, but also of the emperors' life spans, as Byzantine histories seldom do. An interest in emperors' ages at their death is characteristic both of the preserved part of Ammianus' history and of the part of John Malalas' chronicle based on Ammianus by way of Eustathius.³³ Zonaras reports plausible life spans for fifteen emperors from the period covered by the lost books of Ammianus' history, from Hadrian to Constans I.³⁴ Zonaras agrees with Ammianus on the life span of Jovian and probably differs with him about the life span of Julian only because Eustathius misunderstood Ammianus' Latin.³⁵ Zonaras provides us with perhaps our best record of the flight of Prince Hormisdas from Persia, an incident that Ammianus mentions having recorded in one of his lost books.³⁶ Zonaras also includes passages that seem to come from a lost fourth-century Arian history used by Eustathius.³⁷ Thus Zonaras appears to preserve unique fragments that modern

³² See Banchich and Lane, *History*, especially pp. 8–11, and Roberto, *Ioannis Antiocheni Fragmenta*, especially pp. clxvii–clxviii. On John of Antioch, see Treadgold, *Early Byzantine Historians*, pp. 311–29, and “Byzantine World Histories.”

³³ See Treadgold, *Early Byzantine Historians*, pp. 318–19.

³⁴ Zonaras, *Epitome* XI.24, p. 521.16–17 (Hadrian: 62 years, 5 months, 19 days); XII.3, p. 531.14–15 (Marcus: 59 years less 38 days); XII.5, p. 538.12–13 (Commodus: 31 years, 4 months); XII.8, p. 542.13 (Pertinax: 67 years less 4 months); XII.7, p. 545.22–23 (Didius Julianus: 60 years, 4 months, 4 days); XII.12, p. 560.15 (Geta: 22 years, 9 months); XII.12, p. 564.3–4 (Antoninus [Caracalla]: 29 years); XII.17, p. 578.9–10 (Maximinus: 65 years); XII.17, p. 579.4–5 (Maximus [Pupienus] and “Albinus” [Balbinus]: 74 and 60 years, respectively); XII.17, p. 579.19–20 (Gordian I: 79 years); XII.22, p. 592.3–4 (Aemilianus: 40 years); XII.28, p. 608.5–6 (Tacitus: 75 years); XIII.4.27 (Constantine I: 65 years) and XIII.6.12 (Constans: 30 years). Note that Zonaras records a life span for Constantine (65 years, implying a birthdate of 273) different from Malalas XIII.14 (60 years, 3 months, implying a birthdate of 278) and is apparently correct (see Barnes, *New Empire*, pp. 39–43 and 46, arguing for a birthdate of 272 or 273), probably because Malalas miscopied Eustathius but John of Antioch did not.

³⁵ Cf. Zonaras, *Epitome* XIII.13.34 (Julian: 31 years) and XIII.14.15 (Jovian: 33 years), with Ammianus XXV.3.23 (Julian: 32 years, *anno aetatis altero et tricensimo*, which Eustathius seems to have misunderstood to mean 31) and XXV.10.12 (Jovian: 33 years). However, either Eustathius or Zonaras must have used a source different from Ammianus for the age of Valentinian I; cf. Zonaras XIII.15.20 (84 years), with Ammianus XXX.6.6 (55 years, presumably correct).

³⁶ Cf. Zonaras, *Epitome* XIII.5.17–33, with Ammianus XVI.10.16; cf. *PLRE* I, Hormisdas 2.

³⁷ Cf. Zonaras, *Epitome* XIII.11.28, XIII.12.1, and XIII.12.44, with Banchich and Lane, *History*, pp. 227 (nn. 95 and 97) and 232–33 (n. 109). Note that the last passage provides a link with John of Antioch in a parallel with Nicephorus Callistus Xanthopoulos, who used Eustathius. (See above, p. 71 and n. 134.) On the lost Arian history (or histories), see above, p. 69 n. 123.

scholars have mostly overlooked from John of Antioch, Eustathius, Ammianus, and the lost Arian history. In addition, Zonaras took from Psellus' *Concise History* two sayings dubiously attributed to Constantine I, along with Psellus' idea that Theodosius I came from the "city" of Spain.³⁸

Zonaras seems to have continued to use John of Antioch as his main source through the fifth century. The question of his chief source, however, is complicated by the fact that Zonaras also used John Malalas, whose history resembles that of John of Antioch, because both of them plagiarized Eustathius.³⁹ To complicate matters further, Zonaras seems also to have used the ecclesiastical history of Theodore the Lector, which survives today only in fragments. Moreover, the histories of Theodore and John of Antioch seem both to have been used by Theophanes and Pseudo-Symeon, and Zonaras knew Theophanes and either Pseudo-Symeon or George Cedrenus, who plagiarized Pseudo-Symeon.⁴⁰ For the reigns of Justin I and Justinian, Zonaras' main source was evidently the final version of Malalas' chronicle, which ended with Justinian's death, in 565.⁴¹ From 565 to 813 Zonaras' main source is Theophanes' *Chronography*, apparently supplemented by either Pseudo-Symeon or Cedrenus, the patriarch Nicephorus' *Concise History*, and two epigrams from Agathias' sixth-century verse anthology, which is now lost in its original form.⁴² Since determining the interrelation of these texts

³⁸ Cf. Zonaras, *Epitome* XIII.4.34 and XIII.17.9, with Psellus, *Concise History* 55 and 62.

³⁹ Cf. Zonaras, *Epitome* XIII.2.5–19 (Eudocia's marriage to Theodosius II) and 27–39 (their estrangement), with Malalas XIV.4–6 and 8, "Paschal Chronicle," pp. 575–79 and 584–85, Symeon I, 97.1–2, and Cedrenus I, pp. 590–91; cf. Zonaras, *Epitome* XIV.1.9–11 (the trial of the quaestor Isocasius), with Malalas XIV.38, "Paschal Chronicle," pp. 595–96, and Theophanes A.M. 5960; cf. Zonaras, *Epitome* XIV.3.28–30 (the defeat of Vitalian's fleet), with Malalas XVI.16, and John of Antioch, fr. 311; and cf. Zonaras, *Epitome* XIV.3.31–37 (rioting in Constantinople over Anastasius' addition to the *Trisagion*), with Malalas XVI.19, and Cedrenus I, pp. 631–32.

⁴⁰ In most cases, Zonaras, Theophanes, and Pseudo-Symeon (copied by Cedrenus) all seem to have used Theodore's full text. Cf. Zonaras, *Epitome* XIV.1.14–19 (a fire in Constantinople), with Theodore the Lector, fr. 394, Theophanes A.M. 5954, and Cedrenus I, pp. 609–11; cf. Zonaras, *Epitome* XIV.2.4–6 (the rebellion of Basiliscus), with Theodore the Lector, frs. 401–2, Theophanes A.M. 5967, pp. 120–21, and Cedrenus I, pp. 615–16; cf. Zonaras, *Epitome* XIV.3.23–25 (Theoderic "the African" [an error] and the orthodox deacon), with Theodore the Lector, fr. 463, Theophanes A.M. 5991, p. 142, and Cedrenus I, p. 68; cf. Zonaras, *Epitome* XIV.4.1–7 (the conversion of the Saracen Alamundarus), with Theodore the Lector, fr. 513, Theophanes A.M. 6005, pp. 159–60, and Cedrenus I, pp. 631–32. On Theodore, see Treadgold, *Early Byzantine Historians*, pp. 169–74.

⁴¹ See the references to parallel passages in Zonaras (beginning with "3,144,10–15") in the Index Locorum of Thurn's edition of Malalas, p. 551, most of which show dependence of Zonaras on Malalas (though note that our MS of Malalas often epitomizes Malalas' original text).

⁴² For the epigrams, cf. Zonaras, *Epitome* XIV.7.5 and XIV.10.6, with *Greek Anthology* IX.641 and IX.657 (attributed to Marianus Scholasticus in the MSS; but see Waltz et al., *Anthologie grecque* VIII, p. 18 n. 1, for a defense of Zonaras' attribution to Agathias); see Alan Cameron, *Greek Anthology*, pp. 71–72, for the case that Zonaras used Agathias' original *Cycle*, not the *Palatine Anthology* (with its attribution of the second epigram to Marianus, which Cameron accepts). For Pseudo-Symeon, cf. Zonaras, *Epitome* XIV.10.8–21 (Justin II's justice),

often depends on minor textual differences, Zonaras' sources are unlikely to be identified satisfactorily until we have better editions of Zonaras, Pseudo-Symeon, and Cedrenus. From 813 to 1081 Zonaras' main source is the second edition of John Scylitzes' history, supplemented until 1025 by the lost histories of Theodore of Side and Theodore of Sebastea, and after 976 by the second edition of Psellus' *Chronography* and one of Psellus' letters.⁴³

The only part of the *Epitome* substantially composed by Zonaras himself is on the reign of Alexius I. Apart from a few dates, it contains information that well-informed officials like Zonaras and his friends could easily have remembered.⁴⁴ Zonaras' is the sole contemporary account of Alexius' reign that we can compare with Anna Comnena's, though as part of a world history his version is only about a twentieth as long as hers. The two historians actually differ in tone more than they disagree about facts. Without Anna's sympathetic presentation and interpretations, Zonaras presents the sort of catalogue of calamities that Alexius reportedly feared a history of his reign would be.⁴⁵ Minimizing Alexius' reconquests from the Turks, Zonaras records the brutal sack of Constantinople by Alexius' troops in 1081, the emperor's desperate confiscations of property, the devastating Norman, Pecheneg, and Cuman invasions, the frequent conspiracies against Alexius, his long and crippling illness, and the bitter conflict over the succession between his son John and the empress Irene, her daughter Anna, and Anna's husband, Nicephorus. The reader receives the accurate impression that the emperor spent most of his time averting one disaster after another. Zonaras admits that Alexius had few private vices, aside from insufficient respect for learned men. (The historian-monk seems not to have considered Alexius' philandering, which he has mentioned earlier, important enough to count as a private vice.)⁴⁶ In Zonaras' opinion Alexius' main faults were public, because he favored his relatives and

with Cedrenus I, pp. 680–83 (from John of Antioch?); cf. Zonaras, *Epitome* XIV.12.41–46 (Chosroës II's prophecy), with Cedrenus I, p.696 (from Theophylact Simocatta V.15.3–7); cf. Zonaras, *Epitome* XIV.13.1–4 (the succession of the patriarch Cyriacus), with Cedrenus I, p. 699 (from John of Antioch?); cf. Zonaras, *Epitome* XIV.14.12–14 (the burial of Maurice's family in the Church of St. Mamas), with Cedrenus I, pp. 707–8 (from John of Antioch?); cf. Zonaras, *Epitome* XIV.14.43–51 (the execution of Phocas), with Cedrenus I, pp. 712–13 (from John of Antioch, fr. 321?), and Nicephorus, *Concise History* 1; cf. Zonaras, *Epitome* XIV.15.9–10 (the death of Heraclius' wife, Eudocia), with Nicephorus, *Concise History* 3; and cf. Zonaras, *Epitome* XIV.15.22–33 (Heraclius' interrogation of "Crispus" [Priscus]), with Nicephorus, *Concise History* 2.

⁴³ See the Index Locorum in Thurn's edition of Scylitzes, pp. 576–79, and (for the sources of Zonaras' Books XVII–XVIII) Trapp, *Militärs*, pp. 13–19. For Zonaras' use of the history of Theodore of Side and its continuation by Theodore of Sebastea, see above, pp. 248–49.

⁴⁴ Zonaras, *Epitome* XVIII.21.23 (Eustratius was patriarch for 3 years [1081–84]), XVIII.25.7 (Nicholas [III] Grammaticus was patriarch for 27 years [1084–1111]), XVIII.28.13 (Alexius died on August 15 of the 11th indiction [1118]) and XVIII.29.11–12 (Alexius died after a reign of 37 years, 4 months, and "some" [actually 14] days, in A.M. 6626 [1081–1118]). Note that Zonaras can only guess Alexius' age, "some 70 years or something very near that").

⁴⁵ Comnena XV.11.1.

⁴⁶ Zonaras, *Epitome* XVIII.24.14.

failed to uphold Byzantine traditions or to honor senators. Yet Zonaras, echoing Psellus, concedes that no other emperors were perfect either.⁴⁷

The main reason for Zonaras' expressed dissatisfaction with Alexius—and presumably for the dissatisfaction with John II implied by Zonaras' declaring his reign "neither advantageous nor opportune" to record—was that the Comneni accorded their officials too little respect. In describing Constantine I's inauguration of Constantinople in 330, Zonaras mentions the horoscope of a certain Valens that predicted the city would last 696 years. Since the year 1026 had long passed, Zonaras observes that either Valens was wrong "or one must think that he referred to the years in which the customs of the state were observed and the constitution and the senate were honored," so that the empire was not a "tyranny" in which the rulers exploited their subjects for private gain as they did later.⁴⁸ Obviously Zonaras resented the fact that under the Comneni learned bureaucrats like himself had lost much of the wealth and influence that they had enjoyed earlier in the eleventh century, as his relatives had presumably told him. (Zonaras seems not to have realized that Basil II, who reigned from 976 to 1025, had shown scant regard for any of his subordinates.) Under the Comneni real wealth and influence were reserved for the highest military officials, and especially for relatives of the emperors. Probably Zonaras' reasons for retiring to a monastery included not just his bereavement but his disappointment that, even after reaching the top of his profession as drungary of the Watch, he enjoyed much less income and respect than generals and imperial relatives.⁴⁹

Despite its great length, Zonaras' *Epitome* survives in a remarkable number of manuscripts and became one of the few Byzantine histories to be translated into Slavonic.⁵⁰ Its popularity was largely deserved. Besides being a useful work of reference full of interesting facts that were otherwise hard or impossible to find, its narrative could and can be read with interest by any serious student of history. Its comprehensiveness and range of sources are impressive, and show that by the standards of Byzantine world historians Zonaras did some real research, trying to find the best sources he could for each segment of his work. Even today, his *Epitome* remains an important witness that has yet to be fully exploited for several lost texts that have yet to be conclusively identified. Zonaras' Atticizing style is proficient, and his comments are sensible. Though his organization is simply

⁴⁷ Cf. Zonaras, *Epitome* XVIII.29.26–28, with Psellus, *Chronography* VI.25–28.

⁴⁸ Zonaras, *Epitome* XIII.3.5–9. "Valens" is probably a confused reference to the second-century astrologer Vettius Valens (see *RE* VIIIA2 [1958], cols. 1871–73), though the existence of a fourth-century astrologer named Valens is conceivable (*RE* VIIA2 [1948], col. 2139). This horoscope is also mentioned by Cedrenus I, p. 497, and attributed by Pingree, "Horoscope," to a certain Demophilus writing c. 990. If Pseudo-Symeon was Cedrenus' source for the horoscope, Pingree's reconstruction would imply that my date of c. 978 for Pseudo-Symeon is too early; but the reference to the horoscope may not have been in Pseudo-Symeon's original text, or Demophilus (or someone else) may have cast the horoscope at a somewhat earlier date.

⁴⁹ Cf. Magdalino, "Aspects," especially pp. 329–33.

⁵⁰ See Jacobs, *Zōnaras-Zonara*.

chronological and he generally adopts his sources' point of view, he had a genuine interest in history and love for the past that make his history more than a mere scholarly exercise. Zonaras' *Epitome* ranks in its scope with Photius' *Bibliotheca*, the Constantinian *Excerpta*, and the *Suda* as a monument of middle Byzantine scholarship.

Constantine Manasses

More a poet than an historian, Constantine Manasses was the first Byzantine to write a chronicle in verse.⁵¹ He seems to have been born in Constantinople around 1125.⁵² His family, without being rich or famous, were socially well connected. They were apparently related to the Apocaucus family, who had held important military and civil positions since the late tenth century. Constantine Manasses was also presumably a younger relative of Athanasius Manasses, who became the representative at Constantinople of the Monastery of St. John on Patmos, then in 1157 was named Greek patriarch of Antioch by the emperor Manuel I.⁵³ Constantine Manasses received an excellent literary education. At an early age, in one way or another he came to the attention of the sebastokratorissa Irene, the widow of Manuel I's brother Andronicus and a patron of literature. Manasses wrote a poem about astrology for Irene, and she commissioned him to compose a world history in verse. He must have finished his *Chronological Synopsis* around 1150, since he wrote it after Manuel's accession, in 1143, and after the completion of Zonaras' *Epitome*, around 1145, then delivered the poem to Irene before she died in 1153. The appearance of Zonaras' massive *Epitome* may in fact have inspired Irene to request something shorter and easier to read. She must have liked Manasses' *Synopsis*, because despite complaining of how much work it was to prepare he was pleased with how much she paid him.⁵⁴

Manasses never wrote history again, but he composed a good deal more poetry. The most ambitious of his poems was a verse novel in nine books, *Aristander and Callithea*, now preserved only in fragments, which he seems to have finished

⁵¹ On Manasses, see Karpouzilos, *Βυζαντινοί ιστορικοί* III, pp. 535–57; Hunger, *Hochsprachliche profane Literatur* I, pp. 126 and 419–22, and II, pp. 126–28 and 161; Lampsidis, *Constantini Manassis Breviarium*, pp. xi–clix; E. Jeffreys, "Attitudes," especially pp. 199–215 and 234–38; Trypanis, *Greek Poetry*, pp. 483–84, 485–86, and 488–89; *PBW*, Konstantinos 302; and Magdalino, "In Search," especially pp. 161–64.

⁵² The birthdate of c. 1130 suggested by Horna, "Hodoiporikon," p. 320, is often repeated and should be roughly correct, but the *Chronological Synopsis* looks more like the work of a man of twenty-five than of a man of twenty. Lampsidis, "Zur Biographie," pp. 104–10, dates the *Chronological Synopsis* around 1142/43 and Manasses' birth around 1115, but for reasons that fail to persuade me.

⁵³ On the Apocaucci, see Kazhdan in *ODB* II, p. 134; on Athanasius Manasses, see Failler, "Patriarche."

⁵⁴ Manasses, *Chronological Synopsis*, p. 4 (his dedicatory epigram) and vv. 7–17 (his labor and payment) and 2509–11 (his reference to Manuel I). On Irene, see E. Jeffreys, "Sevastokratorissa," and *PBW*, Eirene 20115.