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AN ATTEMPT AT A NEW TYPOLOGY OF THE LOST LATIN HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE LATE EMPIRE¹

Abstract:

The present paper proposes a new classification of the lost Latin historiography of the third to fifth centuries. Its chief objective is to take into account the entirety of the evidence for the lost historical writing in Latin in this period, including the material that has to date that has been marginalised or has escaped scholarly attention altogether. Moreover, the new classification yields a significant amount of new information on late ancient Latin historiography.

Keywords:

Late Antiquity, Latin lost historiography, new typology

Felix Jacoby, in his monumental *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* (*FrGrHist*), proposed the following classification of historiographic material: I. *Geschichte der Sagenzeit (Genealogie und Mythographie)*; II. *Universal – und Zeitgeschichte. Chronographie*; III. *Geschichte von Völkern und Städten (Ethnographie und Horographie)*; IV. *Antiquarische Geschichte und Biographie*; V. *Geographie*; VI. *Unbestimmbare Autoren. Theorie der Geschichtsschreibung*. Although Jacoby's proposed historiographical genres have been much debated in the decades since, it has almost become an automatism to press all extant, in whole or in part, ancient Greek histories into one of his categories. That is clearly visible in the continuations

¹ The present article anticipates the book: P. Janiszewski, *The Missing Link II. The Lost Latin Historiography of the Later Roman Empire (3rd – 5th century): Authors and Texts*, set for publication in 2023 (research funded by the National Science Centre, Poland, no. 2018/29/B/HS3/00796).

of Jacoby's work.² I myself grouped the material in my book *The Missing Link. Greek Pagan Historiography in the Second Half of the Third Century and in the Fourth Century AD* in the following way: I. *Political Historiography* (1. *Universal histories*; 2. *Contemporary histories*; 3. *Histories of early periods only*); II. *Local Historiography*; III. *Histories and Biographies of Emperors*; IV. *Chronography*. The echoes of Jacoby's classification are easy to detect.

Editors of the fragments of lost Latin historians have followed different paths. Thus Hermann Peter³ attempted to group his authors in a roughly speaking chronological order, starting with the earliest ones and ending with Symmachus the Younger, who was active in the first half of the sixth century, followed (vol. II, pp. 158–161) by several *Scriptores aetatis omnino incertae*. It must be noted that historians of the third-sixth centuries are very sparsely represented in Peter's work which includes only a select few while altogether overlooking most such authors. A similarly chronological order is found in Martine Chassignet's edition of the fragments of the lost annalists of the Republican period⁴ though in this case, four authors⁵ are treated separately under the heading of 'L'autobiographie politique'. Hans Beck and Uwe Walter⁶ also follow a more or less chronological order in their edition of the fragments of the earliest Roman historians. The same goes for Tim J. Cornell with *The Fragments of the Roman Historians*⁷ which closes with Latin authors active in the first half of the third century: Imp. Septimius Severus (no. 100), Marius Maximus (no. 101) and Asinius Quadratus (no. 102).⁸ It is only after them that a few authors are included (nos. 103–110) who cannot be securely dated. Later historians, from the mid-third century to the end of antiquity, are not covered at all.

In a sense, the work edited by Cornell,⁹ finds continuation in Lieve Van Hoof and Peter Van Nuffelen, *The Fragmentary Latin Histories of Late Antiquity (AD 300–620): Edition, Translation and Commentary* (Cambridge University Press, 2020). This book contains entries on 20 Latin historians¹⁰ (plus three more under the

² E.g.: Schepens (ed.) 1999. See also: Schepens 1997: 144–172.

³ Peter 1906–1914.

⁴ Chassignet 1996–2004.

⁵ M. Aemilius Scaurus, *De vita sua*; P. Rutilius Rufus, *De vita sua*; Q. Lutatius Catulus, *De consulatu et de rebus gestis*; L. Cornelius Sulla, *Res gestae*.

⁶ Beck, Walter 2001–2004.

⁷ Cornell (ed.) 2013.

⁸ Although his *Χίλιετηρίς* was written 'in Ionic Greek' (Cornell 2013, I 613 and 615) and *Παρθικά* (and *Γερμανικά*, if it existed) presumably in Greek, too.

⁹ Although the work edited by Cornell ends after the first half of the third century while that by Van Hoof and Van Nuffelen only starts in 300.

¹⁰ 1. Carminius; 2. *Anonymus, On the origins of Padua*; 3. Virius Nicomachus Flavianus; 4. Nummius Aemilius Dexter; 5. Protadius; 6. Naucellius; 7. *Anonymus, History of Rome*; 8. Pseudo-Hegesippus;

heading of *Supria et Dubia*¹¹) in a chronological order. And yet in the introduction¹² Van Hoof and Van Nuffelen make the heroic effort to cram these historians into the following categories:

I. 'Secular history'

1. 'histories with a geographically limited focus' (1. Carminus; 2. *Anonymus, On the origins of Padua*; 5. Protadius)
2. 'histories of Rome that cover a wide time span' (3. Virius Nicomachus Flavianus 6. Naucellius; 7. *Anonymus, History of Rome*; 9. Sulpicius Alexander; 10. Renatus Profuturus Frigeridus; 14. Symmachus the Younger; 15. Maximian of Ravenna; 16. Marcellinus Comes; 17. Cassiodorus; 18. Roterius; 19. Secundus of Trent; 20. Maximus of Zaragoza)¹³
3. 'histories that focus on particular successor kingdoms' (17. Cassiodorus; 18. Roterius; 19. Secundus of Trent; 20. Maximus of Zaragoza)
4. 'a group of works about which we know too little to be able to classify them' (11. Favius; 12. Consentius; 13. Ablabius)

II. 'ecclesiastical historiography' (this class is left empty in the typology used by Van Hoof and Van Nuffelen)

III. 'sacred history' (8. Pseudo-Hegesippus)

IV. 'chronicle' (4. Nummius Aemilius Dexter; 15. Maximian of Ravenna; 20. Maximus of Zaragoza; 21. Bruttius).¹⁴

There is, however, so little we know about the works of historians listed by Van Hoof and Van Nuffelen that their assignment to a particular category is in a number of cases extremely problematic. Furthermore, one of the four main categories (II. 'ecclesiastical historiography') is empty, another (III. 'sacred history') features one work and yet another (IV. 'chronicle') raises more problems than it resolves. Little wonder then that Van Hoof and Van Nuffelen organised their authors in a chronological order with reflections on their assignment to specific historiographic genres relegated as mere hypothetical suggestions to the introduction of *The Fragmentary Latin Histories of Late Antiquity (AD 300–620)*.

It is significant that *Clavis Historicorum Antiquitatis Posterioris* (below as *CHAP*) edited by Van Hoof and Van Nuffelen, which is not restricted to Latin

9. Sulpicius Alexander; 10. Renatus Profuturus Frigeridus; 11. Flavius; 12. Consentius; 13. Ablabius; 14. Symmachus the Younger; 15. Maximian of Ravenna; 16. Marcellinus Comes; 17. Cassiodorus; 18. Roterius; 19. Secundus of Trent; 20. Maximus of Zaragoza.

¹¹ 21. Bruttius; 22. Latinus Alcimus Alethius Rhetor; 23. Tyconius.

¹² Van Hoof, Van Nuffelen 2020, 7–13.

¹³ I use question marks to identify those historians about the character of whose works Van Hoof and Van Nuffelen express doubts of some kind.

¹⁴ Again, I use question marks to identify those historians about whose classification Van Hoof and Van Nuffelen express doubts.

authors, classifies historiography from 300 to 800 by genre – each author is assigned to a specific genre,¹⁵ even if – due to its character as a work of reference – the historians are placed in an alphabetical order.

It should be noted that I consider both works by Van Hoof and Van Nuffelen exceptionally valuable, fundamental for any future study of late ancient historiography. I wish merely to point out that I regard the efforts to impose the framework of historiographic genres on the surviving fragments of Latin authors from this period as futile.

Editions of Latin historians' fragments thus tend to follow a chronological order rather than one based on genres, as is the case with those of Greek historians. This is no doubt due in part to the lesser influence of Felix Jacoby's authority on Latin historiographical studies but there may well be another, rather prosaic reason: since Latin works of history have been preserved so poorly, much of the material is so fragmentary that it is impossible to determine the character of the lost work. That goes for the fragments. But then there are Latin historians that we know by name only and by an uninformative or problematic title of their work. We cannot be sure if it is indeed a title in the strict sense of the word or where it comes from (the author? Later copyists?). At times, all we know is that someone has been referred to as *historicus*, *historiographus*, etc. Many works are purely hypothetical (eg. *Kaisergeschichte* or *Leoquelle*). Any discussion of their genre would thus be purely hypothetical. The chronological order of the editions of the lost Latin historians' fragments is thus partly a matter of tradition and partly an act of despair. As Bruno Bleckmann succinctly put it: 'the history of Roman historiography is the study of completely devastated ruins.'¹⁶

There can be no doubt that the chronological order has many faults. It is often highly tentative since without secure and precise dating of each author, we cannot be quite sure who follows whom. There always remains a group that Peter described as *scriptores aetatis omnino incertae*. Worst of all, it obscures the picture of the development of historiography by failing to provide a sense of the proportions between different types of works and telling us nothing about the lost historiography.

If classification of Latin historians' fragments by genre is impossible or highly speculative, does that leave the chronological order as the only possible option? Not in my view. For it is possible to propose a different classification, which avoids dubious decisions on a work's genre and yet – above all – tells us something about the historiography and the mechanisms that determined the survival or loss of

¹⁵ The work is preceded by an extensive and important introduction with a key section (pp. XXVI – LXXV) titled 'Core genres.'

¹⁶ Bleckmann 2015: 103–115, esp. 113.

a given work. This new classification has other things to recommend it, as can be seen below from the categories I propose, as well as from my final conclusions.

I propose the following classification of the entire Latin historiography of the late third to the end of the fifth century: I. *Fragmenta*;¹⁷ II. *Excerpta*; III. *Ex titulo*; IV. *Ex professione*; V. *Varii* = *Dubii*); VI. *In potentia*; VII. *Falsi* (Appendix: Authors cited only in the *Historia Augusta*); VIII. *Phantasmata*. The basis of the classification is the state of survival of the work (I. *Fragmenta*; II. *Excerpta*) and the degree of our confidence about its existence: real (III. *Ex titulo*; IV. *Ex professione*), potential (VI. *In potentia*), perhaps even erroneous (VII. *Falsi*) or hypothetical (VIII. *Phantasmata*).¹⁸ The classification thus answers the question of what and in what form has survived of the lost work. How do we know that such a work existed at all? It is worth discussing each proposed category in order, listing (in the first footnote) the authors and texts it includes. This will aid understanding of the proposed classification and demonstrate, I hope, its advantages (I use question marks to signal that there are doubts over a particular text or author):¹⁹

I. *Fragmenta*

1. [CHAP 351] Paulinus of Nola, *De regibus* (Aus. ep. 17 Green and Dräger = ep. 23 White)
2. [CHAP 12] Sulpicius Alexander, *Historiae* (Greg. of Tours, *Hist.* II 9)
3. [CHAP 174] Renatus Profuturus Frigeridus, *Historiae* (Greg. of Tours, *Hist.* II 8–9)
4. [CHAP 168] Fabius/Favius (Jord., *Get.* 151)
5. [CHAP 4] Ablabius (Jord., *Get.* 28, 82, 117, 151; 2 Cassiod., *Variae* X 22. 2)
6. [CHAP 284] Lucentius, *Epitoma chronicorum* (Liberatus, *Brev.* 2)

II. *Excerpta*

1. [CHAP 692] Origo *Constantini Imperatoris*
2. [CHAP 493] Sextus Aurelius Victor, *Historiae abbreviatae* (so-called *Liber de Caesaribus*, *Caesares*)²⁰

¹⁷ It is worth pointing at this point to the part of Van Hoof and Van Nuffelen's introduction to *FLHist* (2020b, 13–18), where they show the provenance of the fragments of the now-lost works of late ancient Latin historians.

¹⁸ V. *Varii* – those authors and texts who for some reason do not fit under any other heading.

¹⁹ In the present paper, I only deal with an attempt at a new classification, this is not a study of individual texts or authors. Hence the works and the historians are merely listed (with annotation of the sources from which we know them). An extensive study of the subject is to be found in P. Janiszewski, *The Missing Link II. The Lost Latin Historiography of the Later Roman Empire (3rd – 5th century): Authors and Texts*, set for publication in 2023.

²⁰ G. Woudhuysen, J. Stover, 'Sextus Aurelius Victor Reconsidered', lecture at Prof. Ewa Wipszycka's seminar (5 March 2020) at the Department of Papyrology, University of Warsaw.

3. [CHAP 592] *Libellus de vita et moribus imperatorum brevius ex libris Sexti Aurelii Victoris a Caesare Augusto usque ad Theodosium* (so-called *Epitome de Caesaribus*²¹)
4. [CHAP 535] So-called *Chronica Gallica ad annum CCCCLII*

III. *Ex titulo*

1. [CHAP 392] Proba, 2Constantii Imperatoris bellum adversus Magnentium
- 2.–5. Ausonius (Giovanni Mansionaro, *Hist. Imp.*, Vat. Chig. I. VII 259 folio 119 v):
 2. [CHAP 51] *Chronica*
 3. [CHAP 58] *Fasti*
 4. [CHAP 54] *De regibus qui regnaverunt in Italia*
 5. [CHAP 55] *De imperatoribus res novas molitis*
6. [CHAP 124] Nummius Aemilianus Dexter, 2Omnimoda historia (Hieron. *De vir.* 132)
7. [CHAP 323] Nicomachus Flavianus, *Annales* (CIL VI 1783 = ILS 2948)
8. [CHAP 624] Anonymus, *Romanae rei monumenta* (Symm. ep. IX 110)
9. [CHAP 316] Naucellius (*prisca res publica*²²) (Symm. ep. III 11.3)
- 10.–11. Anonymus / Anonymi, 2A(a)nnales (deeds of Arbogastes the Elder) / *scripta* (deeds of Arbogastes the Younger)²³

IV. *Ex professione*

1. [CHAP 416] Samocus / 2Sam[m]o[ni]cus (Joh. Lyd. *De mag.* III 32)
2. [CHAP 151] Eusebius Namneticus (Giovanni Mansionaro, *Hist. Imp.*, Vat. Chig. I. VII 259 folio 119v)
3. Staphylius (Aus. *Prof.* XX 7-10)
- 4.–5. Crispis and Urbicus (Aus. *Prof.* XXI 25-26)
6. Victorius (Aus. *Prof.* XXII 13-14)
7. Axius Paulus (Aus. ep. 8.22)
8. [CHAP 193] Pseudo – Hegesippus, *Historia*2 (Ps. Heges. *Hist. praef.* 1)
9. [CHAP 105] Consentius Elder (Sid. Apoll. *carm.* XXIII 131–135)
10. [CHAP 206] Herenius / 2Heronius (Sid. Apoll. ep. 9.7)
11. *Alii historiographi* (Agnellus, *Liber Pontificalis Ecclesiae Ravennatis*, ed. Nauwerth, 324.4–8).

V. *Varii (= Dubii)*

1. [CHAP 108] Constantine the Great, 2Commentarii (Joh. Lyd. *De mag.* II 30)

²¹ See preceding footnote.

²² Ed. Callu: *non silebo alterum munus opusculi tui, quo priscam rem publicam + cuiusque huius + ex libro Graeco in Latium / Latinum transtulisti.*

²³ *Epistolae Austrasicae* 23, vv. 27–30, ed. Mathisen; letter of Auspicius bishop of Toul to Arbogastes the Younger (*comes Treverorum*).

- ‡2.–‡3. [CHAP 10 and 11] Latinus Alcimius Alethius (Aus. Prof. II 19-24)
- ‡4. *Anonymus* (Sid. Apoll. *carm.* IX 279–288)
- ‡5. Quintianus (Sid. Apoll. *carm.* IX 289–295)
- ‡6. Consentius the Younger (Sid. Apoll. *carm.* XXIII)
- 7. Secundinus (Sid. Apoll. ep. V 8)
- ‡8. Lampridius (Sid. Apoll. ep. VIII 11)

VI. *In potentia*

- 1. Nemesianus, ‡[poem on martial deeds of Carinus and Numerianus] (Nemes. *Cyneg.* 63–85)
- 2. Eutropius, ‡*Historiae* (Eutrop. *Brev.* X 18.3)
- 3. [CHAP 57] Ausonius, ‡*Historia* (Aus. *Grat. act.* II 9)
- 4. Hieronymus, *Historiae* (Hier. *Chron.*, praef. 7)
- 5. [CHAP 234] Hieronymus, *Historia ecclesiastica* (Hier. *Vita Malchi* 1.3)
- 6. [CHAP 401] Protadius (Symm. ep. IV 18, ep. IV 36.2)
- 7.–9. Sidonius Apollinaris:
 - 7. *carm.* XIII 32-37 (Sidonius Apollinaris promises to ‘preserve for posterity’ the deeds of Emperor Majorian)
 - 8. [CHAP 429] ep. IV 22 (Leon asks for an history – *Historia*‡)
 - 9. [CHAP 430] ep. VIII 15 (Prosper bishop of Orleans asks Sidonius Apollinaris for an history of the siege of Orleans in 451 – *Bellum Attilae*‡)
- 10. Leon (Sid. Apoll. ep. IV 22, VIII 3)
- 11. Burgundio (Sid. Apoll. ep. IX 14)
- ‡12. Namatius (Sid. Apoll. ep. VIII 6)

VII. *Falsi*

- 1. Valentinus (Greg. of Tours, *Hist.* II 9)
- Appendix. Authors cited only in the *Historia Augusta*

VIII. *Phantasmata*

- 1. Syme's *Ignotus*
- 2. [CHAP 590] Enmann's *Kaisergeschichte*
- 3. ‘The Good Source(s)’ of the Bleckmann's *Leoquelle*
- 4. Paschoud's *Historia adversus christianos*
- 5. Michael's *Epitoma Ammiani*
- 6. Opitz's / Mommsen's *Continuator Ammiani*
- 7. Humphries' ‘Non – Annalistic Sources’ of Prosper of Aquitaine
- 8. Morrison's *Chronicle* and McCarthy's *Chronicle* of Rufinus of Aquileia (see CHAP 635. *Irish World Chronicle*)
- 9. [CHAP 560] Mommsen's *Consularia Italica*
- 10. [‡ CHAP 560] Holder–Egger's *Annales Ravennates*

11. Holder – Egger's *Annales Arelatenses*
12. [CHAP 508] Arndt's *Annales Andecavenses*

Appendix. *Exclusi* (in alphabetical order)²⁴

1. *Anonymi, Logographoi* and *poietai* writing about the war of Constantine with Maxentius (Lib. or. 59. 20)
2. [CHAP 695; FLHist 2] *Anonymus, De origine Patavina* (*Origo gentis Romanae* 1.6)
3. [CHAP 697] *Origo gentis Romanae* (as epitome from a larger work)
4. *Anonymus / Anonymi, maiorum gesta*, read by Theodosius I (*Epit. de Caes.* 48.12)
5. [FRHist 103] Aemilius Sura (Vell. Pet. I 6.6)
6. [CHAP 74; FLHist 21] Bruttius (Eus. *Chron.*, ed. Karst 1911, 218; Hieron. *Chron.* A. 96, ed. Helm 1956, 192e; Malal. II 11, VIII 1, X 48, ed. Thurn 2000, 25, 146–147, 199; *Chron. Pasch.* 38 CD and 250 C, ed. Dindorf 1832, 69 and 468; *Chronicle of 724*, ed. Brooks 1904, 119.27–120.1; Synkell. ed. Masshammer 1984, 419–420.
7. [CHAP 82; FLHist 1] Carminius, *De Italia* (Macr. *Sat.* V 19.13)
8. [FRHist 104] Domitius (*Origo gentis Romanae* 12.1, 12.3–4, 18.4)
9. [FRHist 105] Egnatius (*Origo gentis Romanae, titulus*, 23.6)
10. Exuperantius, Lucius? Iulius, *Opusculum*?
11. [FRHist 106] Iuventius Martialis, *Historia* (Sid. Apoll. ep. IX 14.7)
12. Merobaudes, Flavius
13. [FRHist 107] Octavius, Marcus (*Origo gentis Romanae* 12.2, 19.5–7)
14. Pelagios (Kedrenos I 621–622)
15. [FRHist 108; CHAP 72] Rubellius Blandus (Servius, *georg.* I 102–103)
16. Symmachus 'logographus' (Cassiod. *Origo gentis Cassiodorum*; Phoc. *Bibl.* cod. 80, fr. 58 Henry: Σύμμαχος δὲ ὁ λογογράφος)
17. [CHAP 478, 479; FLHist 23] Tyconius, *De bello intestino* and *Expositiones diversarum causarum* (Genn. *Vir. il.* 18)
18. VARIA – Latin texts about Alexander the Great.

Conclusions

What advantages are offered by the classification proposed above? First, a chronological ordering of writers of history is no typology at all and suffers from other flaws, as discussed above (and its adoption has anyway been dictated by the impossibility of marshaling the modest remains of the Latin material according to Felix Jacoby's schema for Greek historiography). Second, any typology is better

²⁴ The authors listed below have sometimes been mentioned in scholarship on late ancient Latin historiography. In my view, however, they do not belong there for various reasons: they were active at an earlier time, wrote in Greek or their works either fall outside historiography even in the broadest sense or have clearly never been written.

than none, telling us something at least about the subject of the study. Third, the classification proposed provides a good deal of information that would otherwise be lost or marginalised.

Such classification thus expands our view of the lost Latin historiography of the late Empire. It is true that works known only by title (e.g. *Annales* by Nicomachus Flavianus) have been present in scholarship. By the same token, not all authors denoted as *historicus* or *historiographus* (or in some other way that shows them active in the field of history) appear in scholarly literature. Grouping them under their own heading IV. *Ex professione* thus seems a good idea. Similarly, the proposed classification helps re-evaluate the works included under the heading VI. *In potentia*, that is those that we only know the author was planning to write or was being persuaded to write. Lists of the fragments of ancient historians tend to overlook this material altogether, with the often unspoken, but intuitively obvious assumption that these texts may never have been written.²⁵ Yet the very idea of writing them is significant and shows continued vitality of the historiographical tradition in this period.²⁶ And besides, maybe they were written after all? Sidonius Apollinaris, for example, clearly did embark on an history of the siege of Orleans by Huns. His other plans and the potential works of Protadius, Leo, and perhaps also Burgundio and Namatius, tend to disappear from view or are completely marginalised. Listing them in a separate category may thus play an important role in research into Latin historiography of the late Roman Empire. Our classification also allows for the inclusion of works of merely hypothetical existence (VIII. *Phantasmata*) as a separate category.²⁷ Under other systems, they would be lost or distributed between different genres of historiography, depending on each scholar's imagination of their hypothetical shape. It would be hard to research late ancient Latin historiography without a reference to the idea of the *Kaisergeschichte* or *Leoquelle*, even if one agrees with those who deny their existence.²⁸

Besides expanding our view of historiography, the proposed typology does something else: it is notable that only for I. *Fragmenta* can we proposed the genre of the work (Paulinus – biography, Sulpicius Alexander and Frigeridus – universal history or contemporary history, Ablabius – history of nations, possibly univer-

²⁵ Van Hoof and Van Nuffelen in *CHAP* include some 'projected works', but in *The Fragmentary Latin Historians* expressly reject them (Van Hoof, Van Nuffelen 2020, 2).

²⁶ See part two of the present work by Aleksander Paradziński (Part Two: *Social and Cultural Phenomena*).

²⁷ Van Hoof and Van Nuffelen in *CHAP* include some of the 'Hypothetical works', but in *The Fragmentary Latin Historians* expressly reject them (Van Hoof, Van Nuffelen 2020, 2).

²⁸ Suffice it to note that I for one am persuaded by Bleckmann's arguments in favour of the *Leoquelle*, though in my case, the source was a fuller, now lost version of Aurelius Victor's work, as discussed in the book here presented.

sal or contemporary history).²⁹ It thus becomes clear that genres are useful when we have fragments of texts. When these are missing, genres become impossible, debatable, highly hypothetical... And this is the situation that obtains for most of the lost Latin historiography of the late Empire.

Finally, the proposed classification points to something else: few fragments (I.6) and excerpts (II. 4), a relatively large number of works known by title alone (III. 11) and authors described as historians (IV. 11), a few works in *In potentia* (VI. 12) and in the inclusive category of *Varii* (V.8); few *falsi* (VII. 1), unless the controversial material from the *Historia Augusta* is included. What is particularly striking is the dearth of fragments surviving from the lost works. This stands in stark contrast to the late ancient Greek historiography, which was clearly exploited by Byzantine writers (who saw in it treasure troves of knowledge, quotations and references). Hence a large number of Greek historians known from fragments. In the West, there is no such continuity of tradition. It looks as if after the fifth century, there was no-one in the West to make use of Latin historians from the third to fifth centuries or that they arose little interest (perhaps Sallustius or Caesar were still being read?).³⁰ In any case, we have little evidence. It is interesting that we have relatively numerous works *In potentia*. It is also clear that they may have been major, classical in form works of political history: on the Hunnic wars (Sidonius Apollinaris) or on Roman-Visigothic relations in fifth-century Gaul (Leo and Sidonius Apollinaris). For a number of reasons, little or nothing came of these plans but their very existence shows that the idea of writing history in Latin was still alive in the later fifth century (at least in Gaul). The idea, it seems, dies last.

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²⁹ Using Jacoby's categories, we obtain: *Zeitgeschichte* (Sulpicius Alexander, Frigeridus), *Biographie* (Paulinus) and *Geschichte von Völkern* or *Universalgeschichte* lub *Zeitgeschichte* (Ablabius).

³⁰ See MacKitterick 1994: 96–114.

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