

THE SOURCES OF THE *DE CAESARIBUS*

In assessing the value of any historical work it is necessary for the investigator to undertake the often frustrating and tedious task of *Quellenforschung*. In the case of the *De Caesaribus* the first substantial attempts began in Germany in 1873 and 1874 with the appearance of two important studies by A. Enmann and A. Cohn.¹ Enmann sought to explain the mass of verbal similarities, numerous errors and shared idiosyncrasies to be found in Victor's *De Caesaribus*, Eutropius' *Breviarium* 7–10, and parts of the *Historia Augusta* by postulating a common source which has subsequently come to be known as the *Kaisergeschichte*. He was so convinced by his findings that he stated (p. 459), 'Victor und Eutrop es beide als Haupt – wenn nicht als einzige Quelle benutzt haben'.

Working quite independently Cohn's examination of the first eleven chapters led him to conclude that from the beginning of Augustus' sole reign to the death of Domitian Victor, Eutropius and the Epitomator followed a common source which he entitled *Suetonius auctus*, an account excerpted from Suetonius with some new material added.² Enmann, however, had already described the *Kaisergeschichte*'s early chapters in this way and the two were readily identified.³

One major problem remained. The traditional date of the completion of the *HA* was still believed to be 305/6; consequently if the K.G. had been used by its *authors* then the K.G. must have been written by that year. Nevertheless notable similarities between Victor and Eutropius continued apparently till 357 and Enmann therefore suggested a continuation of the K.G. until that date. This unsatisfactory hypothesis soon proved unnecessary. Dessau, in 1889, unmasked the pretensions of the *HA*, dating it to the end of the fourth century. He argued cogently that the close relationship between *De Caes.* 20. 1 and 20. 10–30 and *HA Sev.* 17. 5–19. 4 and between Eutropius' *Breviarium* 8. 11–14 and *HA Marc. Aur.* 15. 3–19. 12 could only be explained by the hypothesis that the *HA* derived this material from Victor and Eutropius, i.e. the *HA* was composed after 370.⁴ There seemed no further need to posit a continuation of the K.G.: it continued to 357. Nevertheless, in two recent and notable studies it has been argued that the K.G. ends at 337, for after that date Victor and Eutropius 'exhibit no example of either close verbal similarity or common error or shared idiosyncrasy'.⁵ Verbal parallels do, however, persist although they are considerably less remarkable and less frequent. The two writers are particularly close in their description of Constantine's death and both refer to Constantinople as 'urbem nominis sui'.⁶ When

¹ A. Enmann, 'Eine verlorene Geschichte der römischen Kaiser', *Philologus*, suppl. 4 (1884), 335–501, published in June 1883 (*Deutsche Literaturzeitung* 4 (1883), 861); A. Cohn, *Quibus e fontibus Sex. Aurelii Victoris et libri de Caesaribus et Epitomes XI capita priora fluxerint* (Berlin, 1884).

² Cohn, op. cit. p. 48. P. Ebeling had already suggested this as a source for Eutropius in *Quaestiones Eutropianae* (Diss. Halle, 1881).

³ Enmann, op. cit. pp. 407 ff., 431 f.

⁴ H. Dessau, 'Über Zeit und Persönlichkeit de S.H.A.', *Hermes* 24 (1889), 337 ff.

⁵ T. D. Barnes, 'The Lost Kaisergeschichte and the Latin Historical Tradition', *B.H.A.C.* 1968/69 (1970), pp. 13–43, esp. p. 20; *The Sources of the Historia Augusta* (Brussels, 1978), p. 92. His view is shared by R. Syme, *Emperors and Biography: Studies in the Historia Augusta* (Oxford, 1971), p. 222; but cf. *Ammianus and the Historia Augusta* (Oxford, 1968), p. 106.

⁶ *De Caes.* 41. 16–17; Eutrop. 10. 8. Cf. W. den Boer, *Some Minor Roman Historians* (Leiden, 1972), pp. 21–2, 67–8, 116–19, who denies the importance of verbal parallels.

discussing the character of the usurper Vetranio, Victor and Eutropius differ markedly. Victor denigrates Vetranio for his stupidity, low birth and rustic *vecordia* whereas Eutropius emphasizes his uprightness, his old-fashioned morality and his pleasant civility. Yet both note his lack of education with almost *verbatim* similarity: for Victor he was 'litterarum prorsus experts'; Eutropius described him as 'omnium litterarum expertem'.⁷ Nixon notes that he is 'beguiled by the notion of a common source here because of Eutropius' "omnium litterarum expertem adeo ut ne elementa quidem prima earum..." Even if he read Victor he evidently also used a source which supplied full details.⁸

When Constantius deposed Vetranio both Victor and Eutropius underscore the novelty of the circumstances.⁹ They further remark that Nepotianus seized power with the help of a band of gladiators and described the followers of Magnentius as 'Magnentiani'.¹⁰ One should, of course, expect that Victor and Eutropius were personally better informed about recent events and consequently would have less need to follow their common source if it did, in fact, continue down to 357. As the evidence stands it is impossible to ascertain precisely when the K. G. terminated so the two potential dates, 337 and 357, must remain open. Both were significant. In 337 Constantine died, thus providing a logical conclusion for any series of imperial biographies. On the other hand 357 was the date of Constantius' only visit to Rome, and of the momentous Roman victory over the Alamanni at Strasbourg and the capture of their king, Chnodomar.

The existence of the K.G. has long been widely accepted for it appeared to be a necessary postulate to explain the multitude of resemblances between the *De Caesaribus* and the *Breviarium* and their common errors,¹¹ but recently several scholars have opposed that view. In 1972 den Boer concluded: 'This historian, manufactured in 1874, continues to make his presence felt in the literature of today.'¹² Den Boer's book was subsequently praised by Oost with special reference to its author's refusal to accept the K.G., 'a much cited product of nineteenth-century scholarship'.¹³ Just prior to this Chastagnol asserted that Eutropius had read Victor, which would render dependence upon a common source unnecessary.¹⁴ Finally, in his edition of the *De Caesaribus*, Dufraigne totally rejected the K.G. as a phantom author whose existence is nowhere attested.¹⁵

Chastagnol's view is bolstered by a single example and has already been dismissed.¹⁶ Dufraigne's arguments are similarly weak for he is himself compelled to create phantom sources to explain errors and resemblances between Victor and Eutropius on several occasions, which, in effect, makes nonsense of his refusal to accept the existence of the K.G.¹⁷ Den Boer offers a more intriguing explanation. He feels that

⁷ *De Caes.* 41. 26; Eutrop. 10. 10.

⁸ C. E. V. Nixon, *An Historiographical Study of the Caesares of Sextus Aurelius Victor* (unpublished Univ. of Michigan dissertation, Ann Arbor, 1971), p. 341. Nixon, however, sensibly leaves open the possibility of a common source (see p. 344) while admitting the existence of the K.G. (p. 364).

⁹ *De Caes.* 42. 1-4; Eutrop. 10. 11.

¹¹ Barnes, *op. cit.* p. 14.

¹⁰ *De Caes.* 42. 6; 42. 8; Eutrop. *loc. cit.*

¹² *op. cit.* p. 21. He considered the K.G. a 'historian manufactured in 1874'.

¹³ S. I. Oost, *CP* 71 (1976), 294-5. Ironically Barnes' review article on Schlumberger's *Epitome de Caesaribus* appeared in the same issue.

¹⁴ A. Chastagnol, *B.H.A.C.1971* (1974), pp. 55f.

¹⁵ P. Dufraigne, *Aurelius Victor: Livre des Césars* (Paris, 1975), p. xxvii.

¹⁶ Rightly so, in my opinion, by Barnes, *The Sources of the Historia Augusta*, p. 93.

¹⁷ Dufraigne, *op. cit.* pp. xxx, xxxii, xxxiii, xxxv, xxxvii. Most of these are noted by R. J. Tarrant, *Gnomon* 50 (1978), 356.

the necessarily similar chronological framework of the *Breviaria*, a common heritage of rhetorical training and school textbooks and a shared oral tradition account for the often verbatim parallels between the various fourth-century writers.¹⁸ It would be foolish to deny the powerful influence of the relatively uniform Roman school system on historical and literary tradition in the empire¹⁹ or the existence of a lively oral tradition concerning the basic outlines of Roman history. Victor and Eutropius, then, like countless others before them, were the products of a rather narrow education which, according to Marrou, followed a fixed methodology and a prescribed list of authors.²⁰ But private reading and personal preferences must be admitted and in no way can all the resemblances between Victor and Eutropius be ascribed solely to a common literary and oral tradition. Nor can the very disturbing shared errors, which are quietly ignored by den Boer. Indeed, his approach is far too selective and he 'seriously underestimates the number of verbal parallels in the various works'.²¹ Accordingly one is surely compelled to conclude that none of the aforementioned scholars has brought forward any convincing argument to controvert acceptance of the K.G. as the main source of Victor's *De Caesaribus* and Eutropius' *Breviarium*. A brief examination of Victor's account of Pertinax, Julianus and Septimius should reinforce this view.

Victor clearly knew very little about Pertinax, as his five lines of description demonstrate. He calls him *Aulus Helvius Pertinax*, a mistake not shared by any other writer, and pads his account with a republican *exemplum* and a pejorative note on the army. He also informs us that Pertinax was urban prefect, a scrap of information found in Eutropius, the *Epitome* and the *HA*.²² Finally, he implicates Julianus in the death of Pertinax, as do the three other authors, which may have been a neat piece of Severan propaganda to be revived soon afterwards against Albinus.²³ Nevertheless their information is false; neither Dio nor Herodian carries it. Furthermore the short note in *HA*'s *vita* of Julianus is at variance with the fuller account in the *vita* of Pertinax and the latter agrees with the account of Dio.²⁴ It appears, then, that for this error the *HA* follows Victor or a common source which cannot be extensive otherwise Victor would have known more about Pertinax, i.e. that source could not be Marius Maximus, Ignotus, Dio or Herodian. Eutropius' five-line account of Pertinax states, along with Victor, that the emperor died *octogesimo imperii die* but mentions the praetorians, i.e. it was not copied from Victor, but depended upon a similarly uninformed source.

In discussing Julianus both Victor and Eutropius confuse Didius and Salvius Julianus²⁵ and note the *edictum perpetuum*. But Victor believes that the emperor was responsible for its composition, Eutropius says it was the emperor's grandfather. Both authors then mention Julianus' defeat at the Milvian Bridge and his death in the palace. This battle that never was²⁶ is a reflection of the celebrated battle of 312 between Constantine and Maxentius and is recorded by Victor and Eutropius, but not by the

¹⁸ op. cit. pp. 92, 101, 110, 119. Yet den Boer admits that we know next to nothing of the current education, camp stories or stock anecdotes of the imperial service (p. 187).

¹⁹ See S. Dill, *Roman Society in the Last Century of the Western Empire* (New York, 1899), p. 399.

²⁰ H. I. Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity* (Eng. trans. Toronto, 1964), pp. 358 ff.

²¹ Nixon, *Phoenix* 27 (1973), 408.

²² *De Caes.* 17. 10; Eutrop. 8. 16; *Epit.* 8. 16; *HA Pert.* 4. 3.

²³ *De Caes.* 15. 2; Eutrop. loc. cit.; *Epit.* loc. cit.; *HA Did.* 3. 7; cf. *HA Pert.* 10. 8 ff. For the connection with Albinus see note 33.

²⁴ Dio, 73. 9–10.

²⁵ *De Caes.* 19. 1; 20. 1; Eutrop. 8. 17.

²⁶ cf. Dio, 74. 17.

Epitomator and the *HA*. But Eutropius was not following Victor here either, despite that suggestion by Dufraigne,²⁷ for he does not note Julianus' prefecture of the *vigiles* or make him personally responsible for the *edictum perpetuum*. The last two mistakes are Victor's own; the fictitious battle at the Milvian Bridge and the misnaming of Didius Julianus are the inventions of the uninformed author of the *K.G.*²⁸

When Victor comes to the reign of Septimius Severus his narrative expands noticeably, as does that of Eutropius to a lesser degree. None the less there is a series of errors running through the account which indicate that he was still following a circumscribed and occasionally inaccurate source. First he translated Severus' governorship to Syria, apparently a personal mistake,²⁹ for Eutropius has nothing of this and the Epitomator correctly locates Severus in Pannonia.³⁰ Second, he has Niger killed at Cyzicus, as does Eutropius.³¹ Third, he anachronistically cites Niger as *dux Aegypti* whereas Eutropius merely reveals that Niger rebelled in Syria and Egypt (as does Orosius, 7.17.2) and the *HA* records that he declared himself emperor at the instigation of the Syrian armies.³² Fourth, he shares a story with Eutropius and the *HA* that Albinus assisted in the murder of Pertinax, another blatant piece of Severan propaganda not to be found in Dio or Herodian and probably not in Marius Maximus or any other reliable, contemporary source.³³ Again, neither Eutropius nor the *HA* followed Victor here, for while they relate that Albinus allied himself with Julianus in the murder Victor baldly notes Albinus as the 'Pertinacis auctor occidendi'. Finally Victor makes another error of his own by describing Abgarus as King of the Persians.³⁴ Dio and Herodian both cite him as King of the Osroëniens.³⁵ Indeed, only the *HA*, in a passage manifestly lifted from the *De Caesaribus*, gives Abgarus the same title, *rex Persarum*.³⁶

It is true that Victor's account of the reign of Septimius Severus is considerably longer than his combined accounts of the reigns of Pertinax and Julianus and substantially fuller than the accounts of Eutropius and the Epitomator. Indeed, it contains details found in neither of the latter, though such details are to be found in the *HA*. Nevertheless the abundance of errors, shared and personal, covering this period can only lead one to deduce that Victor did not have a reliable source for the period available at the time of writing or even the 'texta ornatu et fide paribus' of Severus which Victor mentions.³⁷ The necessary inference is that Victor was working (a) with an unreliable source, and (b) from memory, and that his memory was faulty. Finally, a detailed investigation of *De Caesaribus* 26–7 by Nixon³⁸ reveals more

²⁷ op. cit. p. 122. He notes that Orosius had it (7. 16. 6).

²⁸ Nixon (*The Caesars of Sextus Aurelius Victor*, p. 250) states that the hypothesis that Victor follows the *Kaisergeschichte* here seems to be confirmed by this..

²⁹ *De Caes.* 19. 4.

³⁰ *Epit.* 19. 2. But at Savaria, not Carnuntum (*HA Sev.* 5. 1). 'Perhaps a simple mistake, due to the place's later importance. *Savaria* led to confusion with Niger's province, Syria' (A. Birley, *Septimius Severus: The African Emperor* (New York, 1972), p. 158 n. 1).

³¹ *De Caes.* 20. 8; Eutrop. 8. 18.

³² *De Caes.* 20. 9; Eutrop. 8. 18; *HA Sev.* 5. 8.

³³ *De Caes.* 20. 9; Eutrop. 8. 18; *HA Clod. Alb.* 1. 1; 14. 2; 14. 6. This may have appeared in the official version of events in 193 and 195–6. Albinus and Julianus both had connections with Hadrumetum, which would have assisted Severus, the self-styled avenger of Pertinax, as he sought to legitimize his actions against his opponents: see Birley, op. cit. pp. 12, 46, 71, 135, 155, 159, 169 and esp. 185.

³⁴ *De Caes.* 20. 14.

³⁵ Dio, 77. 12. 1a; 80. 16. 2; Herodian. 3. 9. 3.

³⁶ *HA Sev.* 18. 1.

³⁷ *De Caes.* 20. 22.

³⁸ op. cit. pp. 256–97.

evidence of shared errors and parallels of material in Victor's work and that of Eutropius which can only be explained by use of a common source. Further substantiation of the existence of the K.G. would appear to be superfluous: Victor and Eutropius used it, so did the Epitomator, the *HA* and others.³⁹

But did Victor have any recourse to Suetonius and Tacitus for his account of the emperors from Augustus to Domitian? Dufraigne believes so: he tells us that Victor contaminated Suetonius, Tacitus and other Latin sources⁴⁰ and, in addition, was indebted to the scholarly tradition of the rhetors, which would explain the *topoi* in the *De Caesaribus*.⁴¹

First of all it must be admitted that Victor, Eutropius and the Epitomator followed a basically biographical format and, as Nixon noted some time ago, it was virtually impossible in the fourth century to write an account of the early principate which was independent of Suetonian material.⁴² Second, it is highly likely that Victor had read the *De Vita Caesarum* and Tacitus' *Annals* and *Histories* or a *florilegium* of the latter two. Victor states plainly, and I see no reason to disbelieve him here: 'Ac mihi quidem audienti multa legentique...'.⁴³ Earlier, while discussing Agrippina and Nero, he wrote: 'Atque inter haec matrem etiam contaminavisse plures habent... Id ego quamquam scriptoribus diversa firmantibus verum puto.'⁴⁴ Several other comments also appear to indicate that Victor had read quite widely.⁴⁵ The further question which intrudes at this point, however, is which book or books Victor might have had before him when composing the *De Caesaribus*. Cohn has argued carefully and cogently against the direct use of either Tacitus or Suetonius⁴⁶ and the following indications would appear to add weight to his view.

Victor, as he depicts Caligula's popularity with the legions, comments: 'tum quia natus in exercitu'.⁴⁷ The story is in the *Annals* (1. 41. 3) but Suetonius, in a passage which could easily be a model for historical research, goes to great lengths to prove quite conclusively that this was not so and that Caligula was actually born at Antium.⁴⁸ In my opinion Victor could not possibly have had the *De Vita Caesarum* open before him when discussing Caligula's birth and still have written what he did. Suetonius is utterly convincing and Victor writes what he believes to be true, as he clearly states in 5. 9: 'Id ego quamquam scriptoribus diversa firmantibus verum puto.' But did he use Tacitus directly?

Tacitus, when describing the death of Tiberius, informs us simply that Macro had *Tiberius* smothered⁴⁹ whereas Victor relates: 'Claudio febris an insidiis oppresso', demonstrating knowledge of differing views to be found in Suetonius.⁵⁰ Eutropius has no comment on either matter. The Epitomator however, who has apparently been following Victor closely to this point and afterwards, tells us that the emperor 'insidiis Caligulae extinctus est' and that Caligula had received his nickname 'quia natus in

³⁹ Barnes, *The Sources of the Historia Augusta*, pp. 90 ff.

⁴⁰ op. cit. pp. xxviii, xxix.

⁴¹ op. cit. p. xxxi.

⁴² op. cit. p. 149. Cf. Cohn, op. cit. p. 49.

⁴³ *De Caes.* 11. 13.

⁴⁴ *ibid.* 5. 8-9.

⁴⁵ *ibid.* 14. 8; 20. 10; 20. 34; 29. 5; 39. 48.

⁴⁶ op. cit. pp. 49 ff.

⁴⁷ *De Caes.* 3. 4.

⁴⁸ Suet. *Calig.* 8.

⁴⁹ *Ann.* 6. 50. 9. Tacitus and Suetonius generally use the *praenomen Tiberius* to denote Rome's second emperor.

⁵⁰ *De Caes.* 3. 1; cf. Suet. *Tib.* 73. I take Pichlmayr's reading of *Febri an* to be correct.

exercitu fuerat'.⁵¹ Dufraigne's response to this mixture of Suetonian and Tacitean material is that Victor conflated Suetonius and Tacitus.⁵² Nevertheless it is striking that Victor does not even mention *Sejanus* and only notes that *Germanicus* was the son of Drusus whereas Tacitus, in the first six books of his *Annals*, accords great prominence to both. It is difficult for me to believe that an author with the *Annals* open before him would ignore these important personages although it is, of course, possible.⁵³ Perhaps, however, the most convincing passage is that dealing with the appearance of the Phoenix in Egypt, which Victor places in the reign of Claudius.⁵⁴ Suetonius does not have the story; Tacitus and Dio set it in the reign of Tiberius.⁵⁵ Pliny the Elder informs us that the bird appeared in Egypt in A.D. 36 and was brought to Rome for the 800th anniversary of the city during the censorship of Claudius in A.D. 47.⁵⁶ Dufraigne admits that this account owes nothing to Tacitus or Suetonius (or Dio) but thinks it stems from Pliny, Solinus or a handbook of curiosities.⁵⁷ Victor then links with the sighting of the Phoenix the sudden appearance of an island in the Aegean and a lunar eclipse. Seneca, Dio and Orosius all note the appearance of the island, only Victor has the eclipse.⁵⁸ Dufraigne admits that he cannot identify the source but it is perhaps that of Orosius⁵⁹ (whose account is fuller than that of Victor here so that he cannot be following the latter). Nothing precludes that source from being the K.G. Indeed the K.G.'s circumscribed account would already have telescoped events in the reigns of the early emperors by lessening the roles of Germanicus and Sejanus, abbreviating or probably omitting Suetonius' discussion of Caligula's birthplace and re-locating the appearance of the Phoenix.

Victor did not carefully research his material: there are too many arresting errors. Nevertheless a comparison with Jerome has been made to support the contention that he did.⁶⁰ The latter wrote to a friend asking for a copy of Victor's work before publishing his *Chronicle*.⁶¹ In the preface to that work Jerome also informs the reader of his mode of composition: 'nunc addita, nunc admixta sunt plurima quae de Tranquillo et ceteris inlustribus historicis curiosissime excerpsi'.⁶² One must interpret this statement with equal care. We know Jerome possessed a powerful intellect, was an untiring reader, a scholar, and a prolific writer and translator. Yet even he, on his own admission, made his *Chronicle* a rushed composition and dictated it with unseemly speed to his 'stenographer'. His carelessness and haste are evident from the numerous errors he committed, from his indifference to exact dating even when this was provided by his *sources* and from his unwillingness or inability to fill in obvious gaps in those sources.⁶³ In the words of a modern scholar he was 'a thorough-paced compiler and plagiarist'.⁶⁴ His research for his *Chronicle*, then, was at best superficial⁶⁵

⁵¹ *Epit.* 2. 10; 3. 2.

⁵² *op. cit.* pp. 70 ff.

⁵³ Suetonius (*Calig.* 1-7) actually writes a mini-biography of Germanicus in his life of Caligula though his treatment of Sejanus is extremely brief (*Tib.* 55).

⁵⁴ *De Caes.* 4. 14.

⁵⁵ *Tac. Ann.* 6. 28; Dio 58. 27. 1.

⁵⁶ *HN* 10. 2. 5; also see Solinus 33. 14.

⁵⁷ *op. cit.* pp. xxx-xxxi; 80.

⁵⁸ *Sen. Q.N.* 6. 21. 1; Dio 60. 29. 7; Oros. 7. 6. 13.

⁵⁹ *ibid.*

⁶⁰ Dufraigne, *op. cit.* p. xxxv; cf. Nixon, *op. cit.* p. 363.

⁶¹ Hieron, *Ep.* 10. 3.

⁶² *Chron. praef.* 6-7 (Helm): Jerome dedicated his *De Viris Illustribus* to Nummius Aemilius Dexter, who had apparently written a universal history (*De Vir. Ill. praef.* 132).

⁶³ J. N. D. Kelly, *Jerome: His Life, Writing and Controversies* (London, 1975), pp. 73-5; H. von Campenhausen, *The Fathers of the Latin Church* (Engl. trans. London, 1964), pp. 147-8.

⁶⁴ H. Hagendahl, *Latin Fathers and the Classics* (Göteborg, 1958), p. 308. The description is quoted with apparent assent by R. Syme in *Ammianus and the Historia Augusta* (Oxford, 1968), p. 81.

⁶⁵ For his manifest error in locating the Philippopolis of Philip the Arab in Thrace see Barnes, 'The Lost Kaisergeschichte', p. 21.

and presumably consisted of cursory notes from the sources available of whichever facts or anecdotes interested him, after which the consulted work would be firmly set aside. If, therefore, one is to maintain that Victor followed a similar *modus operandi* one should infer that Victor's was similarly superficial.⁶⁶

In conclusion it seems that if one concurs with den Boer, Dufraigne *et al.*, one has to accept that Victor used a substantial number of sources including Suetonius, Tacitus and several unknowns and, at least in writing the first eleven sections (thirteen Teubner pages) of his *De Caesaribus*, that he hopped from one to another of these often extensive accounts. During this process he made a number of historical errors. In his recollections of the general historical tradition further errors accrued. Eutropius, in turn, also made use of the same sources and tradition and must have copied Victor for some, if not all, of their closely paralleled passages and common mistakes.

Dessau's view, on the other hand, remains both more economical and logical. Victor followed and adorned with his own vocabulary and reflections one main source (the K.G.) which Eutropius reproduced more faithfully.⁶⁷ This would readily explain their undoubted similarities of expression, common selection of facts and, in particular, those striking errors which they alone shared and which they might have obviated by consulting any reliable source. Even Dufraigne, when confronted by the most notable of these common errors, is compelled to admit that they reveal the existence of a common source.⁶⁸

Nevertheless this does not mean that all the material in the *De Caesaribus* or in Eutropius' *Breviarium* need derive from the K.G. As Nixon has pointed out: 'All the extant histories, epitomes and chronicles of the fourth century have points in common. There seems to have been a common pool of information about the past which was utilized by each author according to his needs and objectives.'⁶⁹ It was presumably from this general pool of information as well as from his recollections (occasionally faulty) of earlier authors and discussions with colleagues and others that Victor rounded out his basic account. Finally he infused the results of his own experiences and reflections, and it is this which sets the *De Caesaribus* apart from the other epitomes and chronicles of the fourth century.⁷⁰

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⁶⁶ The comparison is hazardous: Jerome was a scholar who dedicated most of his life to writing; Victor was an imperial bureaucrat who wrote, as far as we know, one short work in his spare time.

⁶⁷ *op. cit.* p. 381.

⁶⁸ *op. cit.* p. xxxvii.

⁶⁹ *op. cit.* p. 330.

⁷⁰ I should like to thank Professor A. Birley for making several helpful suggestions after reading the first draft of this paper.