

ON TWO LACUNAE IN ZOSIMUS' *NEW HISTORY*

The retired Byzantine bureaucrat, Zosimus, wrote his *New History* in the early sixth century.<sup>1</sup> This work is not only one of the primary sources for the history of the Later Roman Empire in the fourth and early fifth centuries A.D., but it is also the primary witness to the now fragmentary *Histories* of Eunapius of Sardis (A.D. 347–c. 414)<sup>2</sup> which it faithfully epitomizes.<sup>3</sup> In the last part of the *New History* which depends upon Eunapius, two lacunae have been detected which are of interest with respect to the original texts of both authors.

The first lacuna occurs between chapters 22 and 23 of Book 5. Chapter 22 ends with the Magister Militum Fravitta's successful campaign against the brigands who were ravaging Thrace after the suppression of Gainas' revolt in 400. Chapter 23 begins in mid-sentence with the release and return of some of Arcadius' ministers whom Gainas had forced into exile during his brief ascendancy (5.18.7–9). There is no mystery about this lacuna itself, for a page has been removed from the only extant manuscript of Zosimus, Vaticanus Graecus 156,<sup>4</sup> but there are questions about the content of the missing page and its relationship to Eunapius' *Histories*.

The first problem concerns the exiled ministers. According to Zosimus (5.18.8), there were three: the consul Aurelian, the ex-consul Saturninus, and the courtier, later Count, John. As will be seen below, Count John's exile is important for the date of Fravitta's execution which, in turn, helps to limit the possible content of this lacuna. Paschoud, however, conjectures that Eunapius, followed by Zosimus, confused John Chrysostom with Count John and that hence the latter was not exiled by Gainas.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, Cameron finds confirmation for Zosimus in the fact that Chrysostom was accused at the Council of the Oak of informing against Count John during a mutiny. He concludes that this mutiny must have been Gainas' revolt and that Chrysostom probably refused Count John sanctuary in a church.<sup>6</sup> There are two additional reasons for agreeing with Cameron and Zosimus against Paschoud. First, far from confusing the two Johns, Zosimus carefully distinguishes between 'John' and 'John, the Bishop of the Christians' in the crucial chapter (5.23.2). Second, the fact that only Zosimus mentions Count John's exile<sup>7</sup> is no reason not to believe him in this case. Eunapius, Zosimus' source, would have been far more interested in Count John's whole career than were other historians like Socrates and Sozomen, since Count John was responsible for the death of Fravitta, one of Eunapius' favourite pagan heroes (fr. 85).

The second problem with the first lacuna is determining what part of Eunapius'

<sup>1</sup> The precise date of composition remains elusive. See the discussion by F. Paschoud, *Zosime, Histoire Nouvelle* I (Paris, 1971), pp. xii–xvii and III, 2 (1989), pp. 80–1.

<sup>2</sup> R. J. Penella, *Greek Philosophers and Sophists in the Fourth Century A.D.* (Leeds, 1990), pp. 2–4. The fragments of Eunapius' *Histories* are cited according to the numbering of C. Müller, *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum* IV (Paris, 1868).

<sup>3</sup> On Zosimus as a reliable guide to the content of Eunapius' *Histories*, see Photius, *Bibliotheca*, cod. 98; R. C. Blockley, *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire* I (Liverpool, 1981), p. 2; and Paschoud, *Zosime* III, 2, pp. 82–4.

<sup>4</sup> Paschoud, *Zosime*, I, p. lxxviii and III, 1 (1986), n. 45, p. 170.

<sup>5</sup> Paschoud, *Zosime* III, 1, n. 37, p. 149; n. 46, pp. 175–6; and 'Zosime et la fin de l'ouvrage historique d'Eunape', *Orpheus* 6 (1985), 54–5.

<sup>6</sup> A. Cameron, J. Long, and L. Sherry, *Barbarians and Politics at the Court of Arcadius* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1993), pp. 234 and 240–1.

<sup>7</sup> Paschoud, *Zosime* III, 1, n. 37, p. 149.

*Histories* the missing page covered. Paschoud thinks that it was the section represented by fr. 83 and 85–8, namely, the rest of Fravitta's career and his death, Hierax's character, activities, and eventual punishment under the empress Pulcheria, and a comparison between Stilicho and those in power in the East.<sup>8</sup> His solution is predicated on the standard view that Fravitta was executed in 401, soon after his victory over Gainas.<sup>9</sup> Cameron, however, argues on several grounds that Fravitta met his end in 405.<sup>10</sup> He finds nothing in the ancient sources to suggest that Fravitta was executed shortly after his victory over Gainas and, indeed, the evidence of Arcadius' column and the marble liburna which commemorated Gainas' defeat is inconsistent with this scenario. Rather, Eunapius' fr. 85–7 connect Fravitta's demise with Hierax, who, when governor of Pamphylia in 404, collected the evidence which was used to condemn Fravitta (fr. 86).<sup>11</sup> As for Count John, since he really was, it appears, one of those exiled by Gainas, Fravitta's death, in which he played a part (fr. 85), cannot have been treated by Zosimus in this lacuna.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, there are at least two reasons in addition to Cameron's for rejecting Paschoud's ideas on the content of this lacuna. Even if Fravitta were executed in 401, it is doubtful that a mere fifty-two lines would have sufficed to summarize all the narrative which Paschoud's hypothesis requires and, as will be demonstrated below, in Eunapius' *Histories* this part of the material on Fravitta actually followed the section on Chrysostom. Thus, since Paschoud's hypothesis is unacceptable and none of Eunapius' fragments seems to correlate with the missing page of the *New History*, all that can be said is that this lacuna must have contained the conclusion to Fravitta's campaign against the brigands in Thrace and the story of Saturninus, Aurelianus, and Count John after Gainas exiled them from Constantinople.

The second lacuna is the one which L. Mendelssohn detected at the end of the Eunapian section of the *New History* (5.25). He hypothesized that there is a lacuna because Zosimus mentions only the deposition of Chrysostom and not the elevation of Arsacius and the death of Eudoxia which are cited by Photius to delimit the end of Eunapius' *Histories*.<sup>13</sup> Paschoud acknowledges that the transition between the Eunapian and Olympiodoran sections lacks continuity, but he states that Vaticanus Graecus 156 displays no evidence of a lacuna.<sup>14</sup> However, Paschoud's conclusion that therefore Zosimus 5.23–5 preserves *une image fidèle des pages finales d'Eunape*<sup>15</sup> is based upon two assumptions. The first, that the material on Fravitta's later career and death fell in the first lacuna, is demonstrably false. The second is pure speculation: that Eunapius died or was otherwise prevented from completing his *Histories*, and that Photius thus found his three limiting events, not in Eunapius' supposedly incomplete

<sup>8</sup> Paschoud (n. 7), n. 46, p. 175.

<sup>9</sup> Cameron *et al.* (n. 6), p. 236.

<sup>10</sup> Cameron *et al.* (n. 6), pp. 236–52. Strictly speaking, this puts Fravitta's death after the accepted end of Eunapius' *Histories* in 404, but, given Eunapius' regnal dating and rather cavalier attitude towards chronology (cf. fr. 1), as well as the absence of precise dates in Cameron *et al.*'s evidence, the conflict may be ignored in this discussion. The year 401 is rejected in favour of 404 by R. C. Blockley, 'The ending of Eunapius' History', *Antichthon* 14 (1980), 173, and J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, *Barbarians and Bishops* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 124–5.

<sup>11</sup> Cameron *et al.* (n. 6), pp. 242–5 for the correct interpretation of ἐπὶ τῷ Φραβίθου φόνῳ as an expression of purpose.

<sup>12</sup> Cameron *et al.* (n. 6), p. 241.

<sup>13</sup> L. Mendelssohn (ed.), *Zosimi Comitis et Exadvocati Fisci Historia Nova* (Leipzig, 1887), note to 5.25 (p. 248, line 3), and Photius, *Bibliotheca*, cod. 77.

<sup>14</sup> Paschoud (n. 7), n. 46, p. 175. The absence of a lacuna in the manuscript is confirmed by Cameron *et al.* (n. 6), p. 240, n. 180.

<sup>15</sup> Paschoud (n. 7), n. 46, p. 175.

*Histories*, but in the *Paschal Chronicle*.<sup>16</sup> However, it is possible to explain the discontinuity in Zosimus without having to suppose either a lacuna at 5.25 or Eunapius' inability to finish his *Histories*.

It is clear from Zosimus' narrative that Eunapius concluded his account of Chrysostom before he related Fravitta's downfall and death. Zosimus 5.24 describes Chrysostom's second exile and the subsequent burning of Hagia Sophia and the Senate. Then the story of Fravitta's demise begins in 5.25, which records the Isaurian raids of 404 and the misconduct of the general Arbazacius who was sent to combat them. This is the same Arbazacius who is pilloried by Eunapius in fr. 84, and these are the same raids alluded to in fr. 86. Since Hierax went to Pamphylia to gather evidence against Fravitta after the Isaurian troubles of 404, Blockley is correct to place fr. 84 before fr. 83, thus restoring the connection between frs. 83 and 85.<sup>17</sup> It is also clear that Eunapius completed his account of Fravitta, for the last of the fragments from the *De Sententiis*, and thus the last in chronological sequence, fr. 88, is concerned with Stilicho. This indicates that Eunapius wrote a conclusion to the narratives about Chrysostom and Fravitta which compared the state of the Eastern and Western empires.<sup>18</sup>

Thus the final problem raised by these two lacunae is to discover the reason why the story of Fravitta's later career, his downfall, and its sequel does not appear in the *New History*, for it is highly unlikely that Zosimus would willingly have omitted it.<sup>19</sup> Zosimus found Fravitta sufficiently interesting to summarize quite fully what Eunapius wrote about his earlier career, as a comparison of fr. 60 and 4.56 reveals, and these later episodes of sequential extortion linking Hierax, the vicar of Asia Herennianus, and the praetorian prefect Eutychianus<sup>20</sup> would surely have appealed to Zosimus as much as those involving the sausage-seller Bargas, the general Timasius, and the eunuch Eutropius (frs. 70 and 71; 5.9–10). Since it is clear that this material did not disappear into the lacuna between 5.22 and 23, and because there is no lacuna in the *New History* after 5.25, the conclusion must be that Zosimus' copy of Eunapius' *Histories* was incomplete. The obvious explanation is that it had lost its final pages. This solution accords with the evidence and accounts for the discrepancy between the end of the Eunapiian section of the *New History* and Photius' description of the terminal point of Eunapius' *Histories*.

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<sup>16</sup> Paschoud (n. 7), n. 46, p. 174.

<sup>17</sup> Blockley (n. 10), p. 173. Because fr. 84 is from the *Suda*, it is not fixed in a chronological series like those fragments preserved in the *Excerpta de Sententiis*. See Cameron *et al.* (n. 6), p. 241.

<sup>18</sup> Another example of this type of conclusion can be found in Zosimus (5.12–13.1).

<sup>19</sup> Pace Cameron *et al.* (n. 6), p. 241, who opine that Zosimus did not wish to include Eunapius' 'scurrilous biographical material'.

<sup>20</sup> Blockley (n. 10), pp. 174–5.