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PSEUDO-ZACHARIAH OF MYTILENE:  
THE CONTEXT AND NATURE OF HIS WORK



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The 560's A.D. were a time of optimism in the eastern Roman empire. To be sure, the twilight years of Justinian's reign were marked by serious disturbances at Constantinople and increasing financial problems, but across the empire, from Italy, Spain and North Africa to Egypt and the eastern provinces, the situation was calm.<sup>1</sup> For those who lived close to the eastern frontier, the fifty-year peace treaty signed in 562 was of paramount importance, bringing to an end a war that had begun in 540.<sup>2</sup> Although actual hostilities had tended to peter out towards the end of the 550's, the continuing danger of Persian attacks must have been a constant strain on the local populations, as indeed is evidenced by the "abominable and hideous affliction" that struck the city of Amida in 559/60. In this year, according to Pseudo-Dionysius' chronicle, which here derives from John of Ephesus, the citizens of Amida were struck by a sort of mass-panic, believing that the Persian king was on the point of attacking their city; other frontier cities, such as Edessa and Constantia, were prey to similar rumours.<sup>3</sup> There can be no doubt as to the impact of the conclusion of the treaty: as an inscription erected at Hierapolis grate-

fully attested in the wake of the ill-fated Eternal Peace of 532, "The cross extinguished the terrible roarings of war and the measureless hardships of life, as if (they were) a rough wave or a fire."<sup>4</sup>

Not only was the Persian foe at peace, but promising developments were afoot within the neighbouring kingdom—at any rate, if one were an opponent of the Council of Chalcedon. For although there had been intermittent persecutions of Christians by king Khusro in the past, notably after the outbreak of war in 540, their lot had steadily improved over the following years.<sup>5</sup> Several aspects may be noted here. First, the clause appended to the treaty of 562 that guaranteed the freedom of worship of Christians in Persia.<sup>6</sup> Second, the consecration of Ahudemme as bishop of Beth 'Arabaye in 559 by Jacob Baradaeus. The energetic Ahudemme did much to further the progress of Monophysitism among the Arabs on the Persian side of the frontier, apparently with the assent of Khusro, at least until he overstepped the mark and baptised one of the king's sons.<sup>7</sup> Third, the attitude of the king himself. Here it is appropriate to quote from Pseudo-Zachariah (XII.7):<sup>8</sup>

For one week of years the king of Persia also, as those who know relate, has separated himself from the eating of things strangled and blood, and from the flesh of unclean beasts and birds, from the time when Tribonian the *archiatros* came down to him, who was taken captive at that time, and from our serene king came Birowi, a perfect man, and after him Kashowi, and now Gabriel, a Christian of Nisibis. From that time he has understood his food, and his food is not polluted (?) according to the former practice, but rather it is blessed, and then he eats. And Joseph also, the Catholic of the Christians, is high in his confidence, and is closely attached to him, because he is a physician, and he sits before him on the first seat after the chief of the Magians, and whatever he asks of him he receives.

Out of kindness towards the captives and the holy men he has now by the advice of the Christian physicians attached to him made a hospital (*xenodocheion*), a thing not previously known, and has given 100 mules and 50 camels laden with goods (?) from the royal stores, and 12 physicians, and whatever is required is given; and in the king's retinue (?)...

(tr. Hamilton and Brooks, 217.14-218.5/146-7)

These are the closing words of Pseudo-Zachariah's work as it has come down to us; the section then breaks off, and it is uncertain how much more of Book XII there was. Although the section is attended by considerable chronological uncertainty—the date of composition must be later than 552 and before 567, the dates of Joseph's catholicate—its remarkable optimism is not in doubt.<sup>9</sup>

It is clear that the author believed that he was witnessing significant developments, including steps that might even lead to the conversion of the Persian king. Nor was he alone in holding out such hopes: John of Ephesus refers to the creation of a *catholicos* for the Monophysites in Persia, following a debate at the Persian court, while Evagrius notes reports that the king had even been baptised.<sup>10</sup> The role of the Christian Sebokht, Khusro's chief emissary to the Romans in 572, further testifies to the prominence of Christians at court.<sup>11</sup>

It is in this context that the work of Pseudo-Zachariah must be situated. The accession of Justin II was followed by a period of tremendous optimism and dynamism, witnessed by an outpouring of literary works, such as the *Cycle* of epigrams edited by Agathias, the *In laudem Iustini Augusti minoris* of Corippus and others.<sup>12</sup> The opening years of Justin's reign were marked by imperial attempts to improve the empire's finances and to resolve the festering doctrinal divisions that still plagued the empire.<sup>13</sup> With hindsight, of course, it is clear that all these efforts were doomed to failure; the renewal of war in 572 worsened the situation still further. But to a writer in the late 560s or the very start of the 570s, prospects for stability, prosperity, and indeed for the growth of the Monophysite church must have appeared good. It is surely no coincidence that both John of Ephesus and Pseudo-Zachariah terminated their works at this time, thus ending on a high note. Only when divisions among the Monophysites increased and persecution at the hands of Chalcedonians was renewed did John feel the need to produce a continuation of his work.<sup>14</sup>

So much for the context in which Pseudo-Zachariah's work appeared. It re-

mains to consider Pseudo-Zachariah himself and the nature of the work he produced. First, the anonymous compiler himself, who became known as Zachariah in the later Syriac tradition because of his extensive use of the *Ecclesiastical History* of Zachariah, bishop of Mytilene, in Books III to VI.<sup>15</sup> Much has been written on this Zachariah, author of other works, such as a *Life of Severus*, and a convert to Chalcedonianism during the reign of Justinian. Indeed, the tendency has been for Zachariah to eclipse Pseudo-Zachariah in discussions of the latter's work.<sup>16</sup> It is preferable therefore to concentrate on Pseudo-Zachariah, i.e. the author of the entire work in twelve Books. Since we know that Books III to VI were drawn mainly, if not entirely, from Zachariah, we propose to focus on the last six Books; the first two will be considered further below. Book VII concerns the reign of Anastasius and has a notably Amidene flavour:<sup>17</sup> it opens with an anecdote about a certain John *scholasticus*, brother of Dith, who was in Constantinople on a mission from Amida before the accession of Anastasius. He had visions of the future emperor's elevation, about which he informed him, but when, after assuming the throne, Anastasius wished to reward him, he was content with a document he had already received from Zeno.<sup>18</sup> The narrative of the war of 502-5 is detailed and replete with circumstantial detail, especially the siege of Amida.<sup>19</sup> In particular, there is the story of the ambush of the Persian general Glon, or Glones, by a certain Gadono, whom Pseudo-Zachariah (or his source) claims to know personally (VII.5). A detailed account of the downfall of the patriarch Macedonius is quoted (VII.8), drawn from a narrative written by a presbyter Simeon; some have suggested that

he was from Amida, but the evidence is insufficient to be sure.<sup>20</sup> The list of the leading bishops at the end of the Book (VII.15) is also of interest: pope Hormisdas is there said to be still alive, which therefore implies that the statement must have been made before 6 August 523 or a short time thereafter, to allow time for the news to circulate.

It is highly improbable that the author of VII can be identified with the compiler of 569. Someone who knew Gadono in 503 would have to have been at least fifteen at that time; they would therefore have been about eighty years old by 569.<sup>21</sup> It follows that Pseudo-Zachariah was drawing on an early sixth-century source for this Book, or indeed several. Now in VIII, Pseudo-Zachariah offers a detailed account of successive bishops of Amida (VIII.5). Among these was a certain Māre, who became bishop during the reign of Justin but was soon banished to Petra, and subsequently to Alexandria.

And he stayed there (in Alexandria) for a time, and formed a library there containing many admirable books; and in them there is abundance of great profit for those who love instruction, the discerning and the studious. These were transferred to the treasury of the Church of Amida after the man's death.

(tr. Hamilton and Brooks, 79.24-8/54)

It seems plausible to suppose that Māre's library furnished Pseudo-Zachariah with some of his sources, including perhaps a version of Zachariah's *Ecclesiastical History*.<sup>22</sup> On the other hand, if Māre put together his library in Alexandria, it is not likely to have contained such detailed information on Amida itself. We must therefore

rather suppose that Pseudo-Zachariah had access to other local accounts in addition to Māre's library.

Book VIII, devoted to the reign of Justin, shows little sign, apart from the digression on Amidene bishops, of a particular connection with the city. It does however offer a detailed report of negotiations on the Romano-Persian frontier in 524/5 (VIII.5) and of a raid by the Lakhmid chief al-Mundhir. About this last event, Pseudo-Zachariah (or his source) relates that he obtained the information from Dādā the anchorite, who witnessed it himself. Given that the razzia struck the vicinity of Antioch and Apamea, this implies contact with people at some distance from Amida. Book IX covers approximately the first ten years of Justinian's reign. It offers a wealth of detail on events throughout the eastern provinces (1-8), as well as a series of letters exchanged between Severus and Julian of Halicarnassus (9-13) and others between the leading Monophysite patriarchs during the mid-530s (20-26). The introduction to Book X states quite clearly that it was written during the reign of Justinian; it covers the period from 536/7 to 547/8, but most chapters have been lost. Its contents, however, were largely secular, covering both developments in the East (including Lazica) and in Italy. Having narrated the fall of Rome to the Goths, Pseudo-Zachariah then offers a complete chapter devoted to the buildings of the city (IX.16).<sup>23</sup>

While Book XI has been lost entirely, a few chapters of XII have survived. Chapter 4 concerns the image of Christ not made by human hands, the Camuliana. According to Pseudo-Zachariah, a woman of Dibudin (or perhaps rather Diobulion),<sup>24</sup> near Amasea, commissioned a copy of the image for her

village. In 554/5, however, the village and the building in which the image was housed were destroyed by barbarians. Justinian, apprised of the event, provided funds for the rebuilding of the village and, upon the suggestion of one of his advisers, raised further funds by having the original image paraded around the cities of the East. The author further states that this parade had been going on from then until 560/1 and regards it as a sign of the impending return of Christ at the end of the world. Chapter 5 continues in the same vein, relating the shower of ashes that struck the East in spring 556, which is perceived as being a sign of imminent disaster. Chapter 6, on the other hand, goes back to 553 and concerns church politics and the treatment of anti-Chalcedonians in the vicinity of Amida. The last chapter to have survived consists of an epitome of Ptolemy's *Geography*, followed by an excursus on the peoples of the Caucasus. Pseudo-Zachariah claims to have obtained information directly from prisoners taken by Kavadh in 503, who, after spending some fifty years in the Caucasus, returned to Amida. From a description of the conversions of various Hunnic peoples he passes to the extract quoted above concerning Khusro.<sup>25</sup>

Books I and II have so far deliberately been left to one side. They can provide some clues, however, as to his conception of his work. He makes clear in his opening chapter, for instance, that his aim is to provide a history for the edification of his readers, taking up his account where those of Socrates and Theodoret leave off (I.1, p.5/5). Before doing so, however, he feels it necessary to supplement and correct their accounts, and that of Eusebius. The rest of the Book is thus occupied with miscellaneous episodes, such as the story of Joseph

and Asenath (I.6)<sup>26</sup> and the account of Constantine's baptism at the hands of Silvester (I.7).<sup>27</sup> The Book also contains a letter from the author to Moses of Ingilene, requesting the story of Joseph and Asenath, and the latter's reply; in his own letter Pseudo-Zachariah alludes to having initially come across the story in a library at Resaina (I.4). Book II, on the other hand, relates ecclesiastical events from the 440's, setting the stage for the extensive narrative drawn from Zachariah in the succeeding Books.

To build up a picture of Pseudo-Zachariah from such disparate elements is no easy task. The following conclusions, however, may be offered. First, as is generally agreed, our author was a native of Amida and probably a monk. The frequent references to the city in the second half of the work have been noted above; and his concern for the spiritual edification of his readers is also clear.<sup>28</sup> It is highly likely that he built up his account over time, which serves in part to explain the varied chronological indicators as to the date of composition; some of these dates will also no doubt have been transmitted by his sources and left unaltered.<sup>29</sup> The identity and nature of these sources, however, are hard to establish. That he used the account(s) of earlier sources, probably Amida-based, is highly probable: from these were derived the detailed narrative (e.g.) of the siege of Amida in 502-3. We might tentatively put forward the following list of possible sources (leaving aside the obvious Zachariah of Mytilene):<sup>30</sup>

(a) An Amidene source, strongly interested in secular affairs, but offering an account of church history too. This source was acquainted with Gadono (VII.5). Given the detail about Amida and its bishops through-

out the first half of the sixth century, it is quite probable that more than one source is involved here.

(b) A source with close links to Constantinople, responsible (e.g.) for the accounts of the reconquests of Africa and Italy, and the Nika riot, to whom Dominic (IX.18) was known. Of course, (a) and (b) are not mutually exclusive, since, as the narrative of Dith's brother John shows (VII.1), natives of Amida certainly frequented the imperial capital.

(c) Dossiers of correspondence between important ecclesiastical figures, such as Severus of Antioch. Here we must note that Pseudo-Zachariah always strives to keep the length of documents quoted to a minimum (not always successfully), as he frequently insists (IV.6, IV.8, V.2, V.4, VI.7, cf. III.4). The dossiers continued to circulate in a fuller state, however, at least until the time of Michael the Syrian, who on several occasions provides fuller versions of the text; Evagrius too, we may note, had access to the correspondence between Severus and the other Monophysite patriarchs in the 530s (*HE* IV.11).<sup>31</sup>

(d) Oral sources, such as John of Resaina, quoted in XII.7 for the excursus on the Huns.

(e) One might add a chronicle source of some type for the first two surviving chapters of XII. These two chapters stand out from other secular material in VII-XII in several ways. First, they offer more chronological precision than elsewhere: dates are given not only in indiction years, but also by the regnal year of Justinian. Second, their tone is remarkably downbeat: the author of these chapters, writing during Justinian's reign (as is clear from XII.4), clearly believed that the end of the world was impending.

ing. If the earlier chapters of XII were drawn from the same source, one may infer that they contained descriptions of the numerous other natural disasters that swept the empire towards the end of Justinian's reign which can be found in the *Chronicle* of Pseudo-Dionysius of Tel-Mahre (drawn from John of Ephesus).<sup>32</sup> Pseudo-Zachariah breaks off from this chronicle quite explicitly at the end of XII.5, backtracking to 553. The chapter which follows is far more similar to the earlier narrative in VII-IX and contains dating only by indiction year.

Despite the apparent contrast between the first two chapters of XII and the final one, in which Pseudo-Zachariah describes the remarkable progress made by Christianity in his time, both may be pointing to an imminent apocalypse: it was widely believed that the conversion of all peoples was a prelude to the final coming of Christ.<sup>33</sup> Their tone is nevertheless remarkably different, and it is possible that they derive from different sources; part of the final chapter, of course, is based on information supplied by John of Resaina, as Pseudo-Zachariah acknowledges. For a clearer picture of Pseudo-Zachariah's perspective, however, one further issue remains to be addressed.

What sort of work did Pseudo-Zachariah set out to compose? The work is entitled in the principal manuscript "a volume of narrative of actions that occurred in the world".<sup>34</sup> Given the vagueness of this description, scholars have debated as to whether the work should be considered a world-chronicle or a church history.<sup>35</sup> The contents of the work are, as we have seen, disparate and laid out for the most part in chronological order; both secular and ecclesiastical affairs are treated; documents are frequently cited *in extenso*. Yet all of these are charac-

teristics of both genres: they may be found in the chroniclers Theophanes and Michael the Syrian, for instance, but equally in the church historians John of Ephesus, Evagrius and Theodore Lector.<sup>36</sup> To pigeon-hole pseudo-Zachariah in one or the other category would seem therefore to be an exercise in futility—all the more so, perhaps, at a time when the boundaries between genres were steadily being eroded, as several scholars have observed.<sup>37</sup> Rather, it is necessary to look in greater detail at the indications he provides himself and the overall contours of the work.

Pseudo-Zachariah's preface begins with a lengthy series of biblical allusions, all with the common theme of monuments built to preserve the memory of a person or event, including the Tower of Babel and a statue made by Phidias.<sup>38</sup> From this, as we have seen, Pseudo-Zachariah moves on to justify his record of events since the last writers of church histories completed their work. Such a preface bears some resemblance to that of Theodoret's *Church history*, a work cited by Pseudo-Zachariah and available in Syriac, as well as to that of his approximate contemporary Evagrius.<sup>39</sup> He then proceeds to explain the need for the corrections he will make to existing sources in Book I before covering the period with which he is primarily concerned (450-568/9). The first chapter concludes with the following address to the reader:

Now we beg that the readers or hearers will not blame us, if we do not call the kings victorious and mighty, and the generals valiant and astute, and the bishops pious and blessed, and the monks chaste and of honourable character, because it is our object to relate facts, following in the footsteps of

Holy Scriptures, and it is not our intention on our own account to praise and extol rulers with flattering words, or to revile and insult with rebuke those who believe differently, provided only we do not find something of the kind in the manuscripts and epistles which we are about to translate.

(tr. Hamilton and Brooks, 6.18-27/4)

We might compare these words with Socrates' introduction to Book VI of his *Church history*:

The zealots of our churches will condemn us for not calling the bishops "Most dear to God," "Most holy," and such like. Others will be litigious because we do not bestow the appellations "Most divine," and "Lords" on the emperors, nor apply to them such other epithets as they are commonly assigned.<sup>40</sup>

Pseudo-Zachariah seems to have succeeded in fulfilling his objective not to indulge in invective of his opponents: while the persecutions of the anti-Chalcedonians are narrated in detail and Chalcedonians often described as "Nestorians", he (or his source) is prepared to acknowledge that the Chalcedonian bishop of Edessa, Asclepius, was "just in his deeds", while the patriarch Ephraim of Antioch is similarly described (VIII.4). Thus, although one of the usual objectives of church histories was to serve the community for which they were written, it is noteworthy that Pseudo-Zachariah achieves this with a remarkable lightness of touch. The most partisan sections of the work are undoubtedly Books III to VI, which also contain far more detail on church history than the subsequent ones. In other

words, Pseudo-Zachariah emerges as a remarkably moderate Monophysite, consistently loyal to Justinian and willing to report his successes in the West, for instance. He is, thus, close to Evagrius in his outlook, although he devotes more attention to the church history of Justinian's reign than does Evagrius.<sup>41</sup> John of Ephesus, by contrast, was a far more outspoken historian, at any rate for events of his own lifetime; this can undoubtedly be ascribed to his active involvement in these events and perhaps to the afflictions suffered by the Monophysite cause in the 570s.<sup>42</sup>

Given that Pseudo-Zachariah sees himself as continuing the works of Eusebius, Socrates and Theodoret, i.e. their church histories, it comes as a surprise that he should devote the second chapter of his work to correcting errors from Eusebius' *Chronicle* dealing with the dating of generations in the book of Genesis. Clearly, Pseudo-Zachariah was familiar with both works of Eusebius and thought it appropriate to introduce emendations to the *Chronicle* in his work.<sup>43</sup> Nevertheless, in conclusion we shall put forward two tentative arguments in favour of attributing Pseudo-Zachariah's work to the realm of church history rather than chronicle, all the while bearing in mind the ever slighter distinctions between the genres. First, and most importantly, the question of causation: even if Pseudo-Zachariah tends to relate events in chronological order, he is also interested in offering explanations for them. The opening of VII.3 is devoted to explaining the motivation for Kavadh's invasion of Roman territory in autumn 502, for instance; VII.10, concerning the activities of Philoxenus, offers analysis as well as bald narrative, explaining how Flavian was expelled from his

see. Now it is generally agreed that one essential characteristic of the chronicle genre is its very absence of analysis and explanation: it merely offers a sequence of unconnected events.<sup>44</sup> Second, and less convincingly, the presence of a focus or theme. Put more specifically, Pseudo-Zachariah's work has a point: he is writing for the improvement of his readers and because he believes that he is witnessing a period of great historical importance. Chroniclers, such as Michael the Syrian, may write to preserve the memory of past events (portrayed in a certain way) for the sake of a particular community, but their works remain unfocussed: they are essentially a collection of miscellaneous entries with little or

no sense of progress towards a particular point.<sup>45</sup> Pseudo-Zachariah, as we have seen, seems to have had an overall conception of his work and to have been leading up to the remarkable events of his own day. In doing so, he included some remarkably varied material, but this is covered by his statement on wishing to preserve the memory of events. His work, with its concentration on secular and ecclesiastical politics—omitting almost entirely, for instance, descriptions of holy men and their practices, featured prominently in Sozomen, Socrates and Evagrius<sup>46</sup>—should thus be taken as he presented it: as a continuation of the works of Eusebius, Socrates and Theodoret, drawing, like them, upon a wide range of sources.<sup>47</sup>

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> See (e.g.) W. Treadgold, *A History of the Byzantine State and Society* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 210-17, E. Stein, *Histoire du Bas-Empire*, vol.2 (Paris-Brussels-Amsterdam: Desclée de Brouwer, 1949), 558-64, 612-23. As Stein notes, a minor revolt broke out in Africa in 563, however.

<sup>2</sup> Details in G. Greatrex and S.N.C. Lieu, *The Roman Eastern Frontier and the Persian Wars, A.D. 363-630* (London: Routledge, 2002), 131-4; henceforth *REF*.

<sup>3</sup> *Chronicon pseudo-dionysianum vulgo dictum*, vol.2, ed. J.-B. Chabot, CSCO Scr. Syr. 104 (Louvain: Peeters, 1933), tr. R. Hespel, CSCO Scr. Syr. 213 (Louvain: Peeters, 1989), 115-18. Translation in W. Witakowski, *Pseudo-Dionysius of Tel-Mahre, Chronicle, known also as the Chronicle of Zuqnin*. Part III (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1996), 104-7. Cf. W. Witakowski, "Sources of Pseudo-Dionysius for the Third part of his Chronicle," *Orientalia Suecana* 40 (1991) 266. The episode is discussed at length in M. Meier, *Das andere Zeitalter Justinians* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Rupprecht, 2003), 412-24.

<sup>4</sup> Translation from Greatrex and Lieu, *REF*, 97. Inscription in P. Roussel, "Un monument d'Hiéropolis-Bambykè relatif à la paix perpétuelle de 532 ap. J.-C.," *Mélanges syriens offerts à M. René Dussaud*, vol.1 (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1939), 367.

<sup>5</sup> See E. Christensen, *L'Iran sous les Sassanides*, 2nd ed. (Copenhagen: Ejnar Munksgaard, 1944), 426 and B. Martin-Hisard, "Le 'Martyre d'Eustathe de Mxeta': Aspects de la vie politique et religieuse en Ibérie à l'époque de Justinien," in *Eupsychia* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1998), 495-6 on the generally favourable position of Christians during Khusro's reign, despite intermittent persecutions.

<sup>6</sup> Menander. *The History of Menander the Guardsman*, ed. and tr. R.C. Blockley (Liver-

pool: Francis Cairns, 1985), frg. 6.1.398-407, cf. Greatrex and Lieu, *REF*, 133-4. See also A. Guillaumont, "Justinien et l'église de Perse," *DOP* 23-4 (1969-70) 48-50.

<sup>7</sup> He was arrested in 573 and executed in 575: see F. Nau in *PO* 3 (1909) 8-9 with J. Labourt, *Le christianisme dans l'empire perse sous la dynastie sassanide* (Paris: V. Lecoffre, 1904), 198-9. On Ahudemmeh see E. Key Fowden, *The Barbarian Plain. St Sergius between Rome and Iran* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 121-8.

<sup>8</sup> *Historia Ecclesiastica Zachariae Rhetori vulgo adscripta*, vol.2, CSCO Scr. Syr. 39, 42, ed. and tr. E.W. Brooks (Louvain: Peeters, 1924), tr. J.F. Hamilton and E.W. Brooks, *The Syriac Chronicle known as that of Zachariah of Mitylene*. London 1899.

<sup>9</sup> The reference to seven years since the visit of Tribonian, i.e. the doctor Tribunus, attested in Procopius (see *Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*, vol.3, ed. J. Martindale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), s.v. Tribunus 2, is puzzling. He visited Khusro in 545 at the king's request, but not as a captive. If the reference is to this visit, then a date of 552 is implied.

<sup>10</sup> John of Ephesus, *Historiae Ecclesiasticae Pars Tertia*, CSCO Scr. Syr. 54-5, ed. and tr. E.W. Brooks (Louvain: Peeters, 1952), VI.20, tr. R. Payne Smith, *The Third Part of the Ecclesiastical History of John of Ephesus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1860). Evagrius, *Ecclesiastical History*, ed. J. Bidez and L. Parmentier (London: Methuen, 1898), IV.28, tr. M. Whitby, *The Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius Scholasticus* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000). Cf. *The Armenian History attributed to Sebeos*, tr. R.W. Thomson, comm. J.D. Howard-Johnston, with T. Greenwood (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999), ch.9.

<sup>11</sup> See Menander, frg.16.1 with *PLRE* III, s.v. Sebochthes.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. A. Cameron's edition of Corippus' *In laudem Iustini Augusti minoris* (London: Athlone

Press, 1976), 2, 118 with R. Scott, "Malalas, *The Secret History*, and Justinian's Propaganda," *DOP* 39 (1985) 104-6, on the considerable literary output during Justin's early years. M. Whitby, "Theophanes' Chronicle source for the reigns of Justin II, Tiberius and Maurice (565-602)," *Byz* 53 (1983) 320 and n.38, cf. idem, "Greek Historical Writing after Procopius: Variety and Vitality," in A. Cameron and L. Conrad, eds, *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East. I. Problems in the Source Material* (Princeton: Darwin Press, 1992), 55, suggests that the *Ecclesiastical History* to be found in *Anecdota Cramer*, vol.2, also concluded in 565.

<sup>13</sup> See A. Cameron "The Early Religious Policies of Justin II," *Studies in Church History*, vol.13, ed. D. Baker (Oxford: Blackwell's, 1976), 51-67 (= eadem, *Continuity and Change in Sixth Century Byzantium* [London: Variorum, 1981], X), the most detailed account of these attempts, with the briefer analysis in P. Maraval, "L'échec en Orient: le développement des Églises dissidentes dans l'Empire," in L. Pietri, ed., *Histoire du Christianisme des origines à nos jours*, vol.3. *Les églises d'orient et d'occident* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1998), 461-7. Justin's plans to improve the empire's finances emerge in Corippus' panegyric as well as in his *Novels* 148 and 149 (of 566 and 569), cf. Cameron, *In laudem*, 170.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. John of Ephesus, *Lives of the Eastern Saints*, ed. and tr. E.W. Brooks, *PO* 18 (1924) 688, on the optimism generated by Justin's accession. Other church historians, including Eusebius, Socrates, Sozomen and Evagrius, all conclude their accounts at a high point: see (e.g.) T. Urbainczyk, *Socrates of Constantinople* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), 143-5 (on the last sections of Socrates and his praise for Theodosius) with P. Maraval, in his introduction to *Socrate, Histoire Ecclésiastique*, Book 1, Sources Chrétiennes 477 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2004), 19 n.2, and M. Whitby, "The Church Historians and Chalcedon," in G. Marasco, ed., *Greek and Roman Historiography in Late Antiquity* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2003), 489-90 (on Evagrius).

On the date of John's work, see (e.g.) J.J. van Ginkel, *John of Ephesus. A Monophysite Historian in sixth-century Byzantium* (Groningen: Ph.D. thesis, 1995), 48, according to whom part II of John's *Ecclesiastical History* concluded in year 6 of Justin's reign, i.e. 571. Witakowski, "Source," 252, places it rather in 569. Since the work does not survive itself, certainty is impossible.

<sup>15</sup> Pseudo-Zachariah's work was much cited, for instance, by Michael the Syrian. See J. Rist, "Die sogenannte Kirchengeschichte des Zacharias Rhetor: Überlieferung, Inhalt und theologische Bedeutung," in M. Tamcke, ed., *Syriaca. Zur Geschichte, Theologie, Liturgie und Gegenwartslage der syrischen Kirchen* (Hamburg: LIT, 2002), 92. Whether John of Ephesus made use of Pseudo-Zachariah is still debated: Witakowski, "Sources," 269-70, argues in favour of John using Pseudo-Zachariah, cf. P. Allen, "Zachariah Scholasticus and the *Historia Ecclesiastica* of Evagrius Scholasticus," *JTS* 31 (1980) 472 and n.5, while van Ginkel, *John of Ephesus*, 68, believes that both John and Pseudo-Zachariah made use of a common source. M.A. Kugener, "Pseudo-Zacharie le rhéteur," *ROC* 5 (1900) 210 n.3 argues that Pseudo-Zachariah's work is independent of John's. See also E.W. Brooks in F.J. Hamilton and E.W. Brooks, *The Syriac Chronicle*, 6-7.

<sup>16</sup> See (e.g.) Rist, "Die sogenannte Kirchengeschichte," 78-81, P. Allen, "Zachariah Scholasticus," 471-88, E. Honigmann, "Zacharias of Mytilene," in *Patristic Studies* (Rome: Bibliotheca apostolica vaticana, 1953), 194-204.

<sup>17</sup> So also Rist, "Die sogenannte Kirchengeschichte," 88-91. Rist notes that Eustathius of Epiphania's work may lie behind the detail concerning the siege of Amida, but it cannot be the source for the remainder of Pseudo-Zachariah's (and Procopius') account, since Eustathius died in 503. See G. Greatrex, *Rome and Persia at War* (Leeds: Francis Cairns, 1998), 75.

<sup>18</sup> *HE* VII.1. His information came from John, the *scholasticus* and brother of Dith; the latter features several times in Pseudo-Zachariah's work

(also at VII.5, XII.6) and may have been one of his sources.

<sup>19</sup> VII.3-5 on which see Greatrex, *Rome and Persia at War*, 73-6; see also now M. Debié, "Du grec en syriaque: la transmission du récit de la prise d'Amid (502) dans l'historiographie byzantine," *BZ* 96 (2003) 601-22.

<sup>20</sup> See my forthcoming commentary, *ad loc.* L. Duchesne, *L'Église au VI<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris: de Boccard, 1925), 24 n.2, assumes that Simeon hailed from Amida, but the evidence is inconclusive.

<sup>21</sup> It is true, however, that Pseudo-Zachariah seems to have obtained eye-witness testimonies from prisoners seized during Kavadh's 502-5 war (XII.7).

<sup>22</sup> So Rist, "Die sogenannte Kirchengeschichte," 91 with Allen, "Zachariah Scholasticus," 472. An Egyptian slant to III-VI is perceptible, I would argue, in the consistent distinction made between "Romans" and Egyptians in the lengthy sections given over to ecclesiastical affairs in Egypt. On Māre see also R. Duval, *La littérature syriaque* (Paris: Victor Lecoffre, 1899), 361-2.

<sup>23</sup> Such a digression, cf. the epitome of Ptolemy's *Geography* at XII.7, might seem to favour the identification of Pseudo-Zachariah's work as a chronicle, absorbing wholesale other works or epitomes. See, however, E. Argov, "Giving the heretic a voice. Philostorgius of Borissus and Greek ecclesiastical historiography," *Athenaeum* 89 (2001), 514, on Philostorgius' inclusion of geographical and ethnographic excursions.

<sup>24</sup> See E. von Dobschütz, *Christusbilder. Untersuchungen zur christlichen Legende*, Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur 18 (Leipzig: August Prier, 1899), Beilage, 5\*\* n.8 for this emendation of the Syriac.

<sup>25</sup> See p.2 of this version above. On the excursus on the Caucasian peoples see K. Czeglédý, "Pseudo-Zachariah Rhetor on the nomads," in L. Ligeti, ed., *Studia Turcica* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1971), 133-48.

<sup>26</sup> A work that has attracted much attention recently and the earliest version of which is that offered here by Pseudo-Zachariah. The actual dating of the work itself remains controversial. See C.

Burchard, *Untersuchungen zu Joseph und Aseneth* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1965), Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 8, 24-5, 133, R.S. Kraemer, *When Aseneth met Joseph* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 225-37, S. Inowlocki, *Des idoles mortes et muettes au dieu vivant* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2002), 22-6.

<sup>27</sup> On this account, derived from the *Actus beati Silvestri*, see W. Levison, "Konstantinische Schenkung und Silvester-Legende," in *Miscellanea Francesco Ehrle: Scritti di Storia et paleografia*, vol. 2 (Rome: Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana, 1924), Studi e Testi 38, 159-247, esp. 227, 235-9 on Pseudo-Zachariah and other Syriac versions of the legend; also now W. Pohlkamp, "Textfassungen, literarische Formungen und geschichtliche Funktionen der römischen Silvester-Akten," *Francia* 19 (1992) 115-96, esp. 137-8 and M. Amerise, *Il battesimo di Costantino il Grande* (Stuttgart: Steiner Verlag, 2005), 93-111. These apocryphal acts emerged in the second half of the fifth century: see Levison, *art. cit.*, 181, R.J. Loenertz, "Actus Sylvestri: Genèse d'une légende," *RHE* 70 (1975) 439 (placing an initial version in c.432), G. Fowden, "The Last Days of Constantine: Oppositional Versions and their Influence," *JRS* 84 (1994) 154-5. According to G. Fowden, "Constantine, Silvester and the church of S. Polyeuctus in Constantinople," *JRA* 7 (1994) 278-9, cf. *idem*, "The Last Days of Constantine," 162, the *Actus* became known in the East in the first quarter of the sixth century and may be reflected in a Syriac homily ascribed to Jacob of Serug, cf. Amerise, *Il battesimo*, 111. Pseudo-Zachariah (I.1), who refers to depictions of Constantine's baptism, seems to claim direct access to an account from Rome; no other source, to my knowledge, refers to such representations, although it is certain that they enjoyed a great popularity in later times: see (e.g.) the fresco from Santi Quattro Coronati in Rome (twelfth century) in N. Lenski, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Constantine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), fig. 38. Fowden, "Constantine, Silvester," 278, suggests however that Anicia Juliana's church of St Polyeuctus in Constantinople

featured depictions of Constantine being cured of leprosy, for instance, a feature of the Silvester legend (found in Pseudo-Zachariah, I.7, 62-4/44-5), cf. C. Milner, "The image of the rightful ruler: Anicia Juliana's Constantine mosaic in the church of Hagios Polyeuktos" in P. Magdalino, ed., *New Constantines* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1994), 79, Amerise, *Il battesimo*, 111, and S.N.C. Lieu, "Constantine in Legendary Literature," in Lenski, ed., *Age of Constantine*, 300.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. (e.g.) Brooks' introduction to the *CSCO* edition, ii, Kugener, "Pseudo-Zacharie," 202.

<sup>29</sup> See Brooks in Hamilton and Brooks, *The Syriac Chronicle*, 5 for details. Socrates similarly built up his account over time: see Maraval, *Socrate*, 14.

<sup>30</sup> We must note in passing, however, that Pseudo-Zachariah may not have used Zachariah directly: D. Weltecke, *Die "Beschreibung der Zeiten" von Mor Michael dem Grossen (1126-1199)* (Louvain: Peeters, 2003), *CSCO* vol.594, 43 n.82, notes the suggestion of Jan van Ginkel that Pseudo-Zachariah's account was based on a (fuller) Syriac translation of Zachariah as well as on another compilation, which he likewise abbreviated.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Michael the Syrian in J.-B. Chabot, ed. and tr., *Chronique de Michel le Syrien, patriarche jacobite d'Antioche (1166-1199)*, IX.25, p.216 (translation), where Michael has a column's worth of a letter from Theodosius to Severus that Pseudo-Zachariah (or at any rate our version of him) has omitted. Evagr. *HE* IV.11 for the reference to the correspondence. Van Ginkel, *John of Ephesus*, 64, argues instead that Michael had access to a fuller version of Pseudo-Zachariah than we do, which is also possible - although, given that the chief manuscript of Pseudo-Zachariah's work dates from c.600, this would imply a very quick abridgement. We might instead suppose an intermediary source, which included the whole dossier, unabridged. See also Weltecke, *Die "Beschreibung der Zeiten"*, 138, on differences between Michael and Pseudo-Zachariah.

<sup>32</sup> Ps. Dion. *Chronicle*, vol.2, 129-36/116-21. This source also includes a synchronisation be-

tween year 9 (560/1) and 562 years since the coming of Christ. No other such synchronisation is offered in Pseudo-Zachariah, but the calculation is in line with Malalas, *Chronographia*, ed. J. Thurn, CFHB (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2000), tr. E. and M. Jeffreys and R. Scott (Melbourne: Byzantina Australiensia, 1986), X.1 (placing Christ's birth in the 42nd year of Augustus' reign, i.e. 2 B.C.). See H. Inglebert, "Le développement de l'historiographie chrétienne," *MedAnt* 4 (2001) 562-3, on the origins of this chronological system.

<sup>33</sup> See P. Magdalino, "The history of the future and its uses: prophecy, policy and propaganda," in R. Beaton and C. Roueché, eds., *The Making of Byzantine History. Studies dedicated to Donald M. Nicol* (London: Ashgate, 1993), 5-6, citing Matthew 24.14, cf. Romans 11.25.

<sup>34</sup> I.1, p.2.1-2/1, my translation. Cf. Rist, "Die sogenannte Kirchengeschichte," 81, 84. W. Witkowski, *The Syriac Chronicle of Pseudo-Dionysius of Tel-Mahre: a study in the History of Historiography*, *Studia Semitica Upsaliensia* 9 (Uppsala: University of Uppsala, 1987), translates "the book of narratives of events which happened in the world."

<sup>35</sup> See Rist, "Die sogenannte Kirchengeschichte," 84-7, noting the views of earlier scholars, cf. F. Winkelmann, "Kirchengeschichtswerke," in F. Winkelmann and W. Brandes, eds., *Quellen zur Geschichte der frühen Byzanz* (Amsterdam: Gieben, 1990), 205 and n.6 (doubting the appropriateness of the label *Kirchengeschichte*). To the works Rist cites one should add van Ginkel, *John of Ephesus*, 20-2, 83, who views both John and Pseudo-Zachariah as the authors of church histories.

With Pseudo-Zachariah's vague title one might compare the opening words of Pseudo-Joshua's work, which describes his account as "a book of narrative of the period of distress which occurred in Edessa, Amida, and all Mesopotamia" (in J.B. Chabot, *Incerti Auctoris Chronicon Pseudo-Dionysianum vulgo dictum*, vol.1, *CSCO* Scr. Syr. 43 [Louvain: Peeters, 1927], 235, tr. J. Watt in idem, "Greek historiography and the 'Chronicle of Joshua the Stylite'," in G. Reinink and A.G. Klug-

kist, eds, *After Bardaisan* (Louvain: Peeters, 1999), 319, with accompanying discussion, questioning whether this should necessarily be seen as a chronicle). See further P. Nagel, "Grundzüge syrischer Geschichtschreibung," in Winkelmann and Brandes, *op. cit.*, 252-3, on the terminology, with the detailed discussion in Witakowski, *The Syriac Chronicle*, 152-69.

<sup>36</sup>On the components of church histories see R.A. Markus, "Church history and the early church historians," in D. Baker, ed., *Studies in Church History* 11 (Oxford: Blackwell's, 1975), 1-6, 9-12, Inglebert, "Le développement," 567-71, H. Leppin, "The Church Historians (I): Socrates, Sozomenus, and Theodoretus," in Marasco, ed., *Greek and Roman Historiography in Late Antiquity*, 247-53 and M. Whitby, "Greek Historical Writing," 55-6. On chronicles see B. Croke in E. Jeffreys, B. Croke and R. Scott, eds, *Studies in Malalas* (Sydney: Byzantina Australiensia, 1990), 32-3, 37-8 and Witakowski, *The Syriac Chronicle*, ch.3.

<sup>37</sup>See (e.g.) A. Cameron "Images of Authority: Elites and Icons in late sixth-century Byzantium," *Past and Present* 84 (1979) 26 and n.118 [= eadem, *Continuity and Change*, XVIII], W. Liebeschuetz, "Ecclesiastical Historians on their own Times," *Studia Patristica* 24 (Louvain: Peeters, 1993), 162-3, Markus, "Church history," 15-16 (on the Theodosian period).

<sup>38</sup>For which compare Photius, *Bibliothèque*, ed. R. Henry (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1967), 84, a summary of the work of Methodius, cf. G.N. Bonwetsch, ed., *Methodius* (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1917), GCS, *De Resurrectione*, ch.35.3, p.274-5. For some useful remarks on Pseudo-Zachariah's preface in relation to other Syriac histories, see E. Riad, *Studies in the Syriac Preface* (Uppsala: Uppsala University, 1988), 104-5.

<sup>39</sup>Theodoret of Cyrillus, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, ed. L. Parmentier, rev. G. Hansen (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1998), GCS, I.1.1, cf. Evagr. *HE* I.1. Theodoret's work was undoubtedly available in Syriac: see Weltecke, *Die "Beschreibung der Zeiten"*, 43, cf. H. Inglebert, "Le développement," 579. As Witakowski, *The Syriac Chronicle*, 136, notes, Pseudo-Dionysius puts forward a

similar justification for his work, which also contains a moral aim. The preservation of the memory of events is a theme that goes all the way back to Herodotus, of course. As Pseudo-Zachariah mentions in the text cited below, he would have been able to translate both Theodoret and Socrates for himself anyway.

<sup>40</sup>Tr. NPNF, ed. G.C. Hansen, *Sokrates Kirchengeschichte*, GCS (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1995), 310.22-6. Cf. Socr. *HE* V.proem., where he insists on his desire to present the facts (ed. Hansen, 274).

<sup>41</sup>Evagrius, like the fifth-century church historians, tends to reduce the amount of space devoted to church history as his work progresses, cf. Whitby, "Greek Historical Writing," 56-7, Leppin, "The Church Historians (I)," 244-5. On the partisanship of Zachariah see Allen, "Zachariah Scholasticus," 488-9 and M. Whitby, "The Church Historians," 461-6.

<sup>42</sup>Cf. Theodore Lector, who accompanied Macedonius in his banishment to Euchaita and is heavily critical of the opponents of Chalcedon, especially the Emperor Anastasius: see Whitby, "The Church Historians," 469-73. Van Ginkel, *John of Ephesus*, 109, 120-1, underlines the abiding loyalty of John to imperial rule, however.

<sup>43</sup>On the transmission of Eusebius in Syriac see Nagel, "Grundzüge," 253-5 and Witakowski, *The Syriac Chronicle*, 78-9. Inglebert, "Le développement," 578 and n.80, argues that Eusebius' *Chronicle* was only available in Syriac from 600, with a second translation appearing c.692; at any rate, no Syriac version of the work has survived, see Weltecke, *Die "Beschreibung der Zeiten"*, 43. If Inglebert is correct, it would follow that Pseudo-Zachariah was using the original Greek version.

<sup>44</sup>See (e.g.) Liebeschuetz, "Ecclesiastical Historians," 163, Witakowski, *The Syriac Chronicle*, 60. Eusebius is unusual in attributing an active role to God in the causation of events; see T. Morgan, "Eusebius of Caesarea and Christian historiography," *Athenaeum* 93 (2005) 193-208.

<sup>45</sup>As, for instance, does the *Church History* of Eusebius. But as Maraval, *Socrate*, 19, shows, Socrates had no such focus. Philostorgius' work

certainly had an objective, seeing in contemporary developments the result of persecution of the Arians, cf. A. Momigliano, *The Classical Foundations of Modern Historiography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 144 and Argov, "Giving the heretic a voice," 515-17, Inglebert, "Le développement," 570; so too did part III of John of Ephesus' *Church History*, recording the destruction and oppression, secular and ecclesiastical, that foreshadowed the end of the world, cf. Whitby, "The Church Historians," 478-9. On the other hand, Witkowski, *The Syriac Chronicle*, 136-8, argues that Pseudo-Dionysius' *Chronicle*, like Pseudo-Zachariah's work, had a moral aim.

<sup>46</sup>Cf. Leppin, "The Church Historians (I)," 233-4, on the presence of miracle stories in all three Theodosian church historians. On Evagrius see Whitby, *The Ecclesiastical History*, 1 and idem,

"Greek Historical Writing," 56.

<sup>47</sup>This was clearly the perception of the scribe of cod. Vat. syr. 145, in which extracts from Pseudo-Zachariah's work feature after some from Socrates and Theodoret. See J. Assemanus, *Bibliothecae apostolicae Vaticanae codicum manuscriptorum catalogus in tres partes distributus : in quarum prima orientales, in altera graeci, in tertia latini, italici aliorumque europaeorum idiomatum codices*, vol.3 (Rome: Typis sacrae congregationis de propaganda fide, 1759), 253-63, cf. idem, *Bibliotheca Orientalis Clementino-Vaticana*, vol.2 (Rome: Typis sacrae congregationis de propaganda fide, 1721), 54-62. These are followed by brief accounts of the fall of Dara in 573, the sack of Apamea (also in 573) and the death of 2000 virgins, who threw themselves into a river.