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Did Sozomen use Eunapius' *Histories*?

By David F. Buck, Prince Edward Island

The written sources which Sozomen (c. 380–c. 450)[1] used in writing his *Church History* of the period from 324 to 425 have long since been identified[2]. However, while there is no reason to question Sozomen's dependence upon his major Christian sources like Socrates' contemporary and nearly co-extensive *Church History,* it is prudent to ask whether or not the consensus that he drew upon the *Histories* of Eunapius of Sardis is correct. Despite the fact that no scholar would maintain that Eunapius was one of Sozomen's important sources, the question is worth asking, and not just because the fragmentary state of Eunapius' *Histories* inevitably makes the task of *Quellenforscher* difficult and their conclusions uncertain. With respect to Sozomen, the question has a bearing upon the quality of the information in his *Church History,* especially about secular and pagan affairs, as well as upon his attitude towards pagan Greek culture and literature. In Eunapius' case, the issues are the extent and nature of his readership, and whether or not Sozomen's *Church History* can be used, albeit in a minor way, in reconstructing his *Histories.* Lastly, the question is important because contemporary scholars accept that Sozomen used Eunapius and some rely upon this assumption in their argumentation[3]. For all these reasons, it is appropriate to re-examine the evidence.

The sophist, philosopher, and historian Eunapius of Sardis (c. 347/8–c. 414)[4] wrote the principal pagan Greek account of the years from 270 to 404. His *Histories* were a vigorous and outstanding example of the Hellenic reaction to the Christian Empire, for they blamed the decline of the Roman Empire principally on Constantine and Theodosius the Great, and heroized Julian the Apostate[5]. Not surprisingly, the antipathy of Christians for Eunapius was as strong as his dislike of them. For example, the Byzantine Patriarch Photius declares in his *Bibliotheca* that, "He slanders the Emperors who adorned their

1 A.-J. Festugière/B. Grillet/G. Sabbah (edd.), *Sozomène: Histoire ecclésiastique,* livres I–II, SC 306 (Paris 1983) 12 and 24.

2 J. Bidez/G. C. Hansen (edd.), *Sozomenus Kirchengeschichte*, GCS 50 (Berlin 1960) xliv–lxiv.

3 E.g. J. Harries, "Sozomen and Eusebius: the Lawyer as Church Historian in the Fifth Century", in: *The Inheritance of Historiography 350–900,* edd. C. Holdsworth/T. P. Wiseman, Exeter Studies in History XII (1986) 45–52; G. Fowden, "The Last Days of Constantine: Oppositional Versions and their Influence", *JRS* 84 (1994) 146–170.

4 R. J. Penella, *Greek Philosophers and Sophists in the Fourth Century A. D.* (Leeds 1990) 2 and 9, respectively.

5 For Julian, see Eunapius fr. 1 and D. F. Buck, "Some Distortions in Eunapius' Account of Julian the Apostate", *Anc. Hist. Bull.* 4 (1990) 113–115. For Theodosius, see D. F. Buck, "Eunapius of Sardis and Theodosius the Great", *Byzantion* 58 (1988) 36–53.

reigns with Christian piety, disparaging them continually and in every way, especially Constantine the Great"[6], while a Christian copyist of the *Histories* lost his patience with Eunapius' pagan propaganda and exclaimed, "Why do you continue to babble on in this way? You really are a most stupid and ignorant fool"[7]. Clearly, Eunapius does not appear to have been the sort of author to whom a Church historian would have had willing recourse.

It is indeed unlikely that Sozomen would have felt differently about Eunapius' *Histories* than did Photius and the long-suffering copyist. His pedigree as a Christian was impeccable, for his grandfather, one of the leading members of the Christian community of Bethelia in Gaza, was forced to flee a local persecution during Julian's reign, along with other members of his family (V,15,14–17). Sozomen himself was educated by monks[8], and writes an encomium of them (I,12) which, incidentally, is in complete contrast to Eunapius' diatribes against Christian monks[9]. His lack of sympathy for classical literature and his aggressive promotion of Christianity are clear in his praise for the classicizing versions of the Bible written by Apollinarius as a substitute for the authors which Julian forbade Christians to each (V,18,3–5). In this, he differs greatly from his main source, Socrates, who endorses the study of classical literature (III,16)[10].

Moreover Sozomen, who came to Constantinople to seek his fortune sometime after 425[11], would have had other reasons than his personal beliefs and preferences for taking an aversion to Eunapius' *Histories*. Since the court of Theodosius II was the first one in centuries to patronize literature "on a grand scale"[12], and since the "dominating literary preoccupation of the age was ecclesiastical history and hagiography"[13], it is not surprising that Sozomen wrote a history of the Christian Church and dedicated it to the emperor. Sozomen, apparently an unashamedly sycophantic historian, even beseeched Theodosius II to edit his *Church History*: "Come thou, who knowest all things and possessest every virtue, especially that piety, which the Divine Word says is the beginning of wisdom, receive from me this writing, and marshal its facts and purify it by thy labors, out of thy accurate knowledge, whether by addition or by elimina-

6 Photius, *Bibliotheca, cod.* 77, as translated by R. C. Blockley, *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire* II (Liverpool 1983) 3.

7 Fr. 23, as translated by Blockley, *op. cit.* (n. 6) 135.

8 Chester D. Hartranft, *The Ecclesiastical History of Sozomen (Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers)* (Grand Rapids repr. 1989) 193.

9 E.g. *Lives* 472 and Zosimus V,23,4. Cf. F. Paschoud, *Zosime, Histoire Nouvelle* III 1 (Paris 1986) 179–181 n. 47.

10 Cf. Alan Cameron, "The empress and the poet: paganism and politics at the court of Theodosius II", *YCS* 27 (1982) 282–284.

11 Glenn F. Chesnut, *The First Christian Histories*, 2d ed. (Macon 1986) 201.

12 Cameron, *op. cit.* (n. 10) 270.

13 *Ibid.* 279.

tion."[14] Very likely, Sozomen intended his *Church History* to celebrate and glorify the Theodosian Golden Age and the Christianization of the Empire[15]. It is clear, too, that Sozomen was very cognizant of, and wrote in tune with, contemporary court politics. For example, he never mentions the disgraced empress Eudocia, whom his predecessor, Socrates, praises (VII,21.47), but he trumpets Pulcheria's virtues (IX,1)[16]. Indeed, Sozomen probably intended to end his *Church History* in 439 so that he would not have to deal with such unpleasant events of the next decade as Eudocia's alleged adultery with the *magister officiorum,* Paulinus, and her exile in the Holy Land[17].

Moreover, it is doubtful that Eunapius' *Histories,* or a Church history which used them as a source, would have been welcomed at the court of Theodosius II. The view that there was a strong traditionalist party at court which favored and fostered pagan intellectuals is not supported by the evidence. The praetorian prefect Cyrus did not fall from power because of Hellenic sympathies, but because he was defeated by his political rival, Chrysaphius[18]. Similarly, the idea that the empress Eudocia remained a crypto-pagan is mistaken, for both her actions and her acceptance by her sister-in-law, the pious Pulcheria, testify to the reality of her conversion[19]. Indeed, as Sozomen himself relates, the palace at Constantinople was a virtual monastery[20]. Theodosius II's older sister, Pulcheria, "strove chiefly, to lead him into piety, and to pray continuously; she taught him to frequent the church regularly, and to honour the houses of prayer with gifts and treasures; and she inspired him with reverence for priests ..." (IX,1)[21]. This statement is evidence not only about the court, but also about Sozomen's own opinion of it, and must raise doubts about the likelihood that he would have used Eunapius' *Histories* as a source when they were so much at variance with both.

This picture of Sozomen's aversion to pagan sources may appear to be contradicted by the fact that Olympiodorus of Thebes was the principal source for the ninth book of his *Church History.* However, Olympiodorus was a very different kind of pagan from Eunapius[22]. If Olympiodorus had been a militant pagan, Photius would probably have mentioned it, as he does in the case of Eunapius and Zosimus. Moreover, the extant fragments betray little interest in

14 Bidez/Hansen, *op. cit.* (n. 2) *Widmung* 18, as translated by Hartranft, *op. cit.* (n. 8) 237.
15 Chesnut, *op. cit.* (n. 11) 204.
16 Cameron, *op. cit.* (n. 10) 265–266.
17 *Ibid.* 266, n. 158.
18 *Ibid.* 256 and 269.
19 *Ibid.* 277. For a similar view of Eudocia's religion, see Julia Burman, "The Athenian Empress Eudocia" in: Paavo Castren (ed.), *Post-Herulian Athens, Aspects of Life and Culture in Athens A.D. 267–529* (Helsinki 1994) 70–72.
20 K. G. Holum, *Theodosian Empresses: Women and Imperial Dominion in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley 1982) 91.
21 As translated by Hartranft, *op. cit.* (n. 8) 419.
22 B. Baldwin, "Olympidorus of Thebes", *AntCl* 49 (1980) 220.

religion, with the exception of frr. 15 and 27 which describe statues which had the power to ward off barbarian invasions. Indeed, it may even have been politically astute for Olympiodorus to write about the statue which had kept Alaric from crossing over to Sicily (fr. 15), since it was removed by Galla Placidia's agent and she was not popular with Constantinople[23]. There is also the possibility that Olympiodorus had a long-standing connection with Eudocia's family, for he may have helped her father Leontius gain the chair of rhetoric at Athens in 415 (fr. 28)[24]. Clearly, Olympiodorus was the same sort of pagan as the Constantinopolitan philosopher and courtier Themistius who served every Christian emperor from Constantius II to Theodosius the Great[25]. Sozomen must have known that Olympiodorus was a well-placed and trusted career diplomat whose history reflected the opinions of the imperial court around the year 440[26], and thus his use of him is easily explained.

On the other hand, a perusal of the *wörtlich zitierte Schriften* and the *Quellen- und Parallelschriftsteller* given by Bidez and Hansen in their edition of the *Church History* reveals that Sozomen's approach to the writings of two important Hellenes of the fourth century, the sophist Libanius and the emperor Julian, was quite different from that towards Olympiodorus' *History*[27]. Since Sozomen devotes a large proportion of the *Church History* to Julian, *viz.* the whole of Book V and the first two chapters of Book VI, he might be expected to make considerable use of the emperor's own works. However, he quotes only Julian's *Letter to Arsacius* (ep. 84a [49]), and his purpose is polemical, for he wants to prove that Julian tried to promote paganism by making it similar to Christianity in terms of its organization, priestly purity, and charity. There is little evidence that he knew Julian's writings apart from this letter and the *Misopogon,* to which he refers briefly (V,19,2–3). The other entries cite various of Julian's letters, but as parallels rather than as sources. The situation with respect to Libanius is similar, for Sozomen quotes him only once, and for the polemical purpose of proving that Julian was killed by a Christian. The quotation is from *Or.* XVIII (274f.), the *Epitaphios,* or funeral oration for Julian, as are the majority of the parallel passages collected by Bidez and Hansen. Moreover, Libanius is often cited as only one of several parallels. Indeed, there is no compelling evidence that Sozomen had read any of Libanius' works other than *Or.* XVIII. Clearly, Sozomen's very limited acquaintance with two of the most famous and important fourth-century Hellenes lessens the probability that he used Eunapius, who was a much less renowned, but at least as intransigent a pagan.

23 *Ibid.*

24 Cameron, *op. cit.* (n. 10) 274. Cf. Andrew Gillett, "The Date and Circumstances of Olympiodorus of Thebes", *Traditio* 48 (1993) 15.

25 *PLRE* I s.v. Themistius 1.

26 Gillett, *op. cit.* (n. 24) 18.

27 Bidez/Hansen, *op. cit.* (n. 2) 413 and 418–419.

The current consensus that Sozomen used Eunapius' *Histories* is founded upon Georg Schoo's 1911 monograph, *Die Quellen des Kirchenhistorikers Sozomenos*[28]. It is thus appropriate and necessary to re-examine the nine passages in the *Church History* which Schoo thinks derive from Eunapius' *Histories,* for they would constitute the fundamental proof, if proof they were, that Sozomen utilized Eunapius' *Histories.* It must be noted that, as in any study of Eunapius' fragmentary *Histories*, Schoo had to depend mostly upon Zosimus' *New History,* a sixth-century epitome, for evidence of what Eunapius himself wrote[29].

Sozomen I,5/Zosimus II,29,1–4/Schoo pp. 80–81
Constantine's conversion to Christianity

The prime and most popular example of Sozomen's supposed use of Eunapius is his refutation of the pagan explanation of Constantine's conversion to Christianity. Jill Harries, for instance, who emphasizes the anti-pagan purpose of the *Church History* and thinks that its target was Eunapius' *Histories,* gives Constantine's conversion as one of her two illustrations[30]. For Garth Fowden, the similarity between Zosimus' and Sozomen's versions "constitutes in fact our surest proof that Sozomen's main source was indeed Eunapius' *History*"[31]. Indeed, he believes that Sozomen actually gives a truer reflection of what Eunapius wrote about the conversion than does Zosimus whom he imagines to have added material from the *Actus beati Silvestri*[32]. However, although it is not impossible that Sozomen knew Eunapius' account of Constantine's conversion to Christianity[33], the evidence is insufficient to conclude that Sozomen is refuting Eunapius specifically, or even that he read him.

Sozomen wants to disprove pagan allegations that Constantine became a Christian in order to absolve himself of the guilt for killing his son Crispus and his wife Fausta, and he makes several compelling arguments. The most effective is that Constantine and Crispus had jointly issued laws in favour of Christianity. He is probably taking aim at a generic pagan account, for he begins by attributing the accusation to Hellenes, rather than to Eunapius whom he might be expected to cite by name as he does Julian and Libanius. Moreover, there are some conspicuous differences between what Zosimus and Sozomen write.

28 Georg Schoo, *Die Quellen des Kirchenhistorikers Sozomenos*, Neue Studien zur Geschichte der Theologie und der Kirche 11 (Berlin 1911).

29 On Zosimus as a faithful reflection of Eunapius, see: Photius, *Bibliotheca, cod.* 98; R. C. Blockley, *op. cit.* I (n. 6) 2; and F. Paschoud, *Zosime, Histoire Nouvelle* III 2 (Paris 1989) 82–84.

30 Harries, *op. cit.* (n. 3) 49.

31 Fowden, *op. cit.* (n. 3) 163.

32 *Ibid.* 165. For a refutation of Fowden's conjectures about Sozomen, Zosimus, and the *Actus beati Silvestri,* see F. Paschoud, "Zosime et Constantin. Nouvelles controverses", *MusHelv* 54 (1997) 17–28.

33 See Paschoud's cautious remarks, *op. cit.* (n. 32) 18.

Zosimus states that Constantine killed Crispus and Fausta, while Sozomen says that he executed some of his nearest relatives, names only Crispus, and never mentions Helena or Fausta. Zosimus says that Constantine approached pagan priests for absolution, Sozomen that he went to the leading Neoplatonist, Sopatros. Finally, Zosimus tells how Constantine was converted by an Egyptian who had come to Rome from Spain, while Sozomen speaks of Christian bishops. Schoo recognizes that there are differences, but concludes that Sozomen was more precise in using Eunapius with respect to Sopatros, and Zosimus with respect to the Spanish Egyptian. Both A. Baldini and V. Aiello find the differences sufficiently bothersome to hypothesize that Sozomen used the first edition of Eunapius' *Histories* and Zosimus the second[34], while Fowden invokes the *Actus beati Silvestri* to explain the discrepancies between Sozomen and Zosimus[35]. For his part, Paschoud suggests that Sozomen and Zosimus may each have substituted a vague plural for an individual – the Egyptian from Spain and Sopatros, respectively – which was a frequent practice in ancient historiography[36].

Surely a more efficient and plausible solution is to accept that Sozomen's source was not Eunapius, rather than to attempt to rationalize the divergences between Zosimus and Sozomen. After all, Eunapius would not have been Sozomen's only possible source for the pagan explanation of Constantine's conversion. The idea that Constantine became a Christian in order to expiate unspecified crimes of seduction, murder, and sacrilege is found in Julian's *Caesares* (336 a–b), and Fowden thinks that there was already a pagan version a generation before Julian[37]. The *Epitome de Caesaribus* (XLI,11ff.), moreover, gives an account of the executions of Crispus and Fausta similar to the one in Zosimus, although it does not connect them with Constantine's conversion.

Sozomen I,6,3–4 & 6/Zosimus II,16.17.18,2–4; 20,1/Schoo p. 81
Constantius I and the Christians; division of the Empire after the Battle of Cibalis

Schoo admits that he cannot say for certain that Sozomen used Eunapius, but opines that he seems to have drawn upon a *Profanhistoriker,* and that his information is such, to judge by Zosimus, as he could have found in Eunapius.

34 A. Baldini, *Ricerche sulla Storia di Eunapio di Sardi* (Bologna 1984) 166; and "Il filosofo Sopatro e la versione pagana della conversione di Costantino", *Simblos. Scritti di storia antica* a cura di L. Criscuolo, G. Geraci, C. Salvaterra (Bologna 1995) 286 and n. 49. V. Aiello, "Costantino, la lebbre e il battesimo di Silvestro", in: *Costantino il Grande dall'antichità all'umanesimo*, edd. G. Bonamente/F. Fusco, I (Macerata 1992–1993) 49–50. Both are cited by Paschoud, *op. cit.* (n. 32) 21.

35 Fowden, *op. cit.* (n. 3) 163–164.

36 Paschoud, *op. cit.* (n. 32) 21.

37 Fowden, *op. cit.* (n. 3) 158.

Here the question of sources is complicated by the fact that Sozomen had previously written a history in two books about the period from the Ascension to the overthrow of Licinius (I,1,12). In fact, the material in sections 3 and 4 is so jejune that no positive conclusions can be drawn about Sozomen's source, although it is improbable that Sozomen found the story about Constantius I's testing the faith of his courtiers in a pagan history. In section 6, Sozomen has a more accurate account than Zosimus (II,20,1) of the division of the Empire between Constantine and Licinius after the battle of Cibalis. Schoo declares that Sozomen thus copied Eunapius more accurately than did Zosimus. This conclusion rests upon two unproved assumptions: that Eunapius had accurate information, and that Sozomen used him. It is more likely that Sozomen used a different and better source, especially since section 5, which concerns the Argonauts, finds its parallel in the Olympiodoran part of Zosimus (V,29,1–4)[38].

Sozomen I,7,1–5/Zosimus II,22ff.28/Schoo p. 81
Constantine vs. Licinius at Chrysopolis

The final battle between Constantine and Licinius took place at Chrysopolis outside Chalcedon. Licinius fled to Nicomedia where he capitulated on the following day[39]. Because Socrates (I,4) says that Licinius surrendered at Chrysopolis in Bithynia, while Sozomen (I,7,5) and Zosimus (II,28,1) say that he surrendered at Nicomedia, Schoo concludes that Sozomen's source was Eunapius. However, the place of Licinius' surrender is the only significant similarity between the two accounts, and the fact that the fourth-century historian Eutropius, who is independent of Eunapius, also places Licinius' surrender at Nicomedia (X,6,1) indicates that Sozomen could have had a source other than Eunapius for this information. Indeed, the two versions of the war are fundamentally different, for Sozomen describes Constantine's defeat of Licinius as a triumph of Christianity over paganism, while Zosimus, who concentrates on the military campaigns, ignores the religious aspect since he places Constantine's conversion after his victory over Licinius. Similarly, Zosimus says nothing about Licinius' attempt to predict the future by means of oracles and divination, nor is the pagan propagandist Eunapius likely to have reported false prophecies of Licinius' success against Constantine. Thus, when Sozomen ascribes stories of such prophecies to Hellenes, he does not mean that Eunapius was his source. It is also worth noting that Bidez and Hansen find parallels not with Zosimus, as does Schoo, but with Eusebius' *Life of Constantine* (I,46 and II,4)[40].

38 Bidez/Hansen, *op. cit.* (n. 2) 15.

39 T. D. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius* (Cambridge, Mass. 1981) 77. Barnes' note 163 does not, however, cite sources which place the surrender at Nicomedia.

40 Bidez/Hansen, *op. cit.* (n. 2) 15.

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Sozomen II,3,2–6/Zosimus II,30.31/Schoo p. 81
The founding of Constantinople

These passages describe the founding of Constantinople, and Schoo thinks that they both derive from Eunapius, although he says that Sozomen must have had an oral source for section 3 since no pagan writer would have related God's command to Constantine to seek another site for his city. Actually, their only common element is the statements that the structures which Constantine began to erect at Troy were still visible from the sea, and even this parallel is not compelling, for Zosimus (II,30,1) speaks of a wall (τείχους) and Sozomen (II,3,2) of gates (πύλας). Indeed, since these structures were visible, and since both Zosimus and Sozomen were residents of Constantinople, there is no need to posit a written source for what must have been a common observation[41].

Sozomen II,5,5/Zosimus I,58,1/Schoo pp. 81–82
The miraculous fire at Aphaca

Both passages describe the miraculous fire which used to appear at the pagan shrine at Aphaca, and, in both, the fire occurs at the time of religious festivals. Schoo thinks that Sozomen learned of this fire from Eunapius since Eusebius (*V. C.* III,55), his main source for this part of the *Church History*, does not report it. However, the contexts of the two descriptions are quite different, for Zosimus speaks of the shrine in connection with Aurelian's Palmyrene War and Sozomen in connection with Constantine's suppression of two pagan shrines. Moreover, unlike Sozomen, Zosimus does not say that the fire sinks into a river (ποταμόν). In fact, Zosimus does not mention a river at all, but describes how offerings were thrown into an artifical-looking lake (λίμνη). Again, as in the case of the structures at Troy, this fire was a public phenomenon and Sozomen may not have been dependent on one written source, or a written source at all, for his knowledge of it.

Sozomen V,1,3 & 8/Zosimus III,3,1; III,9,5.6/Schoo p. 82
Julian's revolt against Constantius

According to Schoo, Sozomen goes beyond Socrates, his main source for this section, and apparently uses a *Profanquelle* since he says that pagans told about prophecies which encouraged Julian to revolt against Constantius. However, there is nothing in Zosimus about the omens of the grapes and the drops of dew shaped like crosses which are recorded by Sozomen (V,1,3f.). Moreover, Zosimus' mention of Constantius going to war with Persia is in the

41 François Paschoud, *Zosime, Histoire Nouvelle* I (Paris 1971) 225 n. 40 points out that Constantine could not have built these structures. However, this fact need not have prevented them from being ascribed to him in local oral tradition.

context of Julian's arrival in Gaul; in Sozomen, it is in the context of Julian's revolt against Constantius. The second passage of Zosimus is also quite different from what is in Sozomen since it says nothing, for example, about divination. Also, Sozomen ascribes the account to "the Hellenes". While "Hellenes" may be a rhetorical plural, the literal interpretation that such stories were common and widespread may be correct, and there is no need to assume that Sozomen could have got his information only from Eunapius.

Sozomen VI,6,4/Eunapius fr. 6 [Zosimus III,30,2]/Schoo p. 82
The Jovian and Herculean Legions

All three passages say that the Jovian and Herculean legions were named after Jupiter and Hercules. Yet the contexts in which Zosimus and Sozomen place this information are quite different, while the fragment of Eunapius is from the *Suda* and has no context. Zosimus mentions these legions in his account of a battle during the retreat from Persia after Jovian became emperor, and Sozomen says that they were commanded by Valentinian when he served under Julian in Gaul. Given that the origin of their names was likely common knowledge, and would not have been impossible to figure out, there is no reason to assume that Sozomen was dependent upon Eunapius.

Sozomen VI,35,1–7/Eunapius fr. 38 [Zosimus IV,13–15]/Schoo p. 83
The conspiracy of Theodorus

This section concerns the treasonous activity of Theodorus and the subsequent purges. Schoo states that Sozomen has more information than Socrates (IV,19) and that all the additional material is found in Zosimus with the one exception that Zosimus does not say that the tripod was made of laurel wood. Schoo then concludes that Sozomen used Eunapius more accurately than did Zosimus, despite the fact that Eunapius fr. 38 says nothing about any tripod. Thus, given the extant texts, Schoo's point is actually evidence that Sozomen did not get his information from Eunapius. Moreover, although Schoo is correct to say that Sozomen's version resembles Zosimus' more closely than Socrates', there are significant differences between the pagan and the Christian accounts. Eunapius emphasized Theodorus' good qualities and ascribed his downfall to men who wanted to use him to acquire wealth and public office. In a similar vein, Zosimus tells how Theodorus was seduced by those who wanted to know Valens' successor, relates the trials for magic prompted by Fortunatianus' accusations, and closes this episode by recalling that it all began with Theodorus. Sozomen, however, makes hatred of the Christian religion, not the desire for wealth and power, the motive of Theodorus' corrupters. He says little about Theodorus, but delivers a lecture on how both Valens and the philosophers had acted absurdly: Valens was foolish to think that he could execute his successor

and, if the philosophers believed that the next emperor was determined by the stars, they should just have waited.

In addition, there is simply too much surviving evidence of the Theodorus affair to be able to assume that Sozomen's source was Eunapius. The longest account is found in Ammianus Marcellinus (XXIX,1), and there is also a fairly full one in Philostorgius (IX,15). The episode is alluded to by Libanius[42], and John Chrysostom refers to it in such a way as to reveal that it was well known in 380/381[43]. Even the *Epitome de Caesaribus* (XLVIII,3–4) includes Theodorus in its chapter about Theodosius the Great. There are also accounts in Zonaras (XIII,16,37ff.) and Cedrenus (I,548,13), although by their time the story had mutated. Libanius the sophist and Iamblichus, the teacher of Proclus, are said to have used, not a tripod, but a cock which pecked grains off a lettered board.

Sozomen VI,37,3–4/Eunapius fr. 41 [Zosimus IV,20,3]/Schoo p. 83
The coming of the Huns

Zosimus and Sozomen have different stories about the coming of the Huns. Since Eunapius mentioned that he had given more than one version in the *Histories,* Schoo concludes that Sozomen and Zosimus each took one of them. However, since there were various sources of stories about the origin of the Huns, it is more likely that Sozomen preserves one of the non-Eunapian speculations. The most famous, though not the most accurate, surviving description of the Huns is found in Ammianus Marcellinus (XXXI,2,1–11)[44].

It is thus clear that none of the nine parallels detected by Schoo proves that Sozomen used Eunapius, although they include the most likely ones. Other parallels, however, have been suggested, and it is worth briefly considering the passages in Eunapius and Zosimus which Bidez and Hansen cite as *Quellen- und Parallelschriftsteller*[45]. As in the case of Julian and Libanius, these citations are at best parallels, not sources, and are most often one of several references to accounts of the same historical event. Two of the more specious examples will be sufficient illustration that none of them really supports the idea that Sozomen used Eunapius' *Histories.*

Sozomen VII,15,5/Eunapius, Lives 472
The destruction of the Serapeum

There is no evidence that Sozomen was familiar with Eunapius' *Lives of the Philosophers and Sophists*[46], but Eunapius does say here that he also dealt

42 Libanius, *Orr.* I,225; XXIV,13–14; XXVII,7.

43 Chrysostom, *Tractatus ad viduam iuniorem,* 343B = *PG* 48, col. 604.

44 Charles King, "The Veracity of Ammianus Marcellinus' Description of the Huns", *A.J.A.H.* 12 (1987 [1995]) 77–95.

45 Bidez/Hansen, *op. cit.* (n. 2) 416 and 428, respectively.

46 *Pace* Fowden, *op. cit.* (n. 3) 157.

with this episode in the *Histories*. The strongest correspondence between Sozomen and Eunapius is that they both date the destruction of the Serapeum according to the terms in office of the *comes Aegypti* Romanus and the *praefectus Augustalis* Evagrius[47]. However, many people might be expected to remember who was in charge when the Serapeum was attacked, and this public fact thus has little persuasive force. Moreover, Eunapius and Sozomen tell quite different versions and probably follow different traditions about the conversion of the Serapeum. Sozomen seems to have written in the same mould as Socrates, Theodoret and Rufinus, while Eunapius appears to have been reacting to a tradition descending from the bishop Theophilus[48].

Sozomen VII,14,5–7/Zosimus IV,46
Theodosius vs. Magnus Maximus

Zosimus gives a much fuller account of the campaign than does Sozomen who devotes only a few sentences to it. Both Zosimus (IV,46,2) and Sozomen (VII,14,6) concur on the doubtless well-known fact that Magnus Maximus was deposed by his own troops, and both also agree that his general, Andragathius, drowned himself to avoid capture. However, they give quite different locations for the suicide, and hence this passage cannot be used as evidence that Eunapius was Sozomen's source for this campaign. Zosimus (IV,47,1) tells how Andragathius drowned himself in the sea (εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν) which he was patrolling at the time, but Sozomen (VII,14,6) says that he jumped into a river (εἰς ποταμὸν)[49].

In conclusion, Sozomen emerges from this examination of his text and context as a Church historian who spurned classical Greek culture and literature and drew very little of his historical information from pagan sources. Although it remains possible that Sozomen read Eunapius' *Histories*, all the evidence indicates that he did not. Hence any scholarly conclusions based on his supposed use of Eunapius must either be abandoned or be defended on other grounds, nor can Sozomen any longer be regarded as a witness to Eunapius' lost *Histories*. Indeed, Eunapius' readership was probably more restricted and his influence on later historians less profound than has been generally assumed.

47 *PLRE* I s.v. Evagrius 7 and Romanus 5.

48 T. Orlandi, "Uno scritto di Teofilo di Alessandria sulla distruzione del Serapeum?", *P.P.* 22 (1968) esp. 303–304.

49 Zosimus' version is confirmed by Claudian (IV, cons. Hon., 91ff.) and Orosius (VII,35,5) while Sozomen follows the erroneous tradition in Socrates. See F. Paschoud, *Zosime, Histoire Nouvelle* II 2 (Paris 1979) 444 n. 194.