



23rd

International Congress of
BYZANTINE STUDIES
Belgrade, 22-27 August 2016

Round Table:

BYZANTINE WORLD CHRONICLE AS OPEN TEXT

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Introduction

The Byzantine (world) chronicle has always been of particular interest to current research. At first it was considered to be a historical source providing data which were collected for modern historical works on Byzantium. Contradictory data led to a thorough and detailed examination of the sources, in the course of which the researchers identified the sources of the chronicle and analysed the authors' relationship to his sources, i.e. whose works he used and how he used them. A secondary branch of the research was an attempt to identify the authors of works often passed down anonymously or to connect certain pieces of a historiographical corpus to (the) authors. As the number of works is limited, after a while historians turned away from chronicles, which could no longer provide them with new data. The chronicle was taken over by editors and literary critics. The editors prepared excellent critical editions incorporating new achievements and adopting (partly) new methods of textual criticism. Literary historians used to examine the common features of works classified as belonging to the genre by Krumbacher in order to define the genre. In the course of the examination new approaches and new methods of literary criticism also emerged in Byzantine literary history. The work yielded some significant, partly disputed, partly rejected preliminary results concerning the various types of the chronicle, its relationship to other literary genres, its authors and readers, literary plagiarism and imitation (*mimesis*) as well as the relationship between the chronicle and the imperial propaganda or *Kaiserkritik*. However, the definition of the genre is still a subject of discussion.

The concept of the open text was brought about by a new approach in literary criticism, which focused on the work and later on the reader rather than on the author. As the chronicle contains collected texts, it is suitable for the examination of the interpretative reader and of the writer as the user of borrowings (excerpta, citata, allusions), adapting (and manipulating) the texts of other authors. There is hope that these new directions (e. g. the research in Byzantine narrative) will yield results that can contribute to a better understanding of the Byzantine (world) chronicle.

When defining the genre one must consider the rare but priceless *loci* where the Byzantine authors themselves write about narrations that discuss past events in various genres. Examples of these can be found in several passages of *Chronographia*, where Psellos remarks: *I would rather walk in the middle path between those who formerly wrote of the reigns and achievements of the elder Rome, and those who today are accustomed to compile chronicles, or history is a simple and true narrative, or the historical style should not be too polished* (transl. by Joan Hussey). At the same time certain earlier comments on the presence or absence of rhetorical devices, the presence of the narrator or the (seeming) detachment of the text should not be utterly rejected. Collingwood's remark on the characteristics of Christian historiography seems to be especially useful: *Any history written on Christian principles will be of necessity universal, providential, apocalyptic, and periodized. (. . .) All these four elements were in fact consciously imported into historical thought by the early Christians* (for example by Eusebius of Caesarea).

In possession of the new results it is again the historians' turn to study the chronicle, though this time not in search of data, but to find answers to completely new questions.



Elizabeth Jeffreys

Plus ça change ...

This paper will compare and contrast Byzantine world chronicles from the sixth and the fourteenth centuries in an attempt to assess the rationale behind the texts' construction.



Juan Signes Codoñer

*Movable History: The Author of Theophanes Continuatus I-IV
and the Reuse of Ancient History for the Iconoclast Period*

There has been an intense debate on the authorship of the so-called *Continuation* of Theophanes, at least since the late Ihor Sevcenko started thinking about the publication of the text, some decades ago. We all agree now that the only manuscript of the text (Vat. gr. 167) consists of at least three parts: Part I, composed by an anonymous writer of Constantine VII's team and dealing with the reigns of Leo V, Michael II, Theophilos and Michael III; part II dealing with Basil I and written to a great extent by Constantine VII himself; and part III, added at a later period (perhaps through the agency of Basil Lekapenos, as suggested by Michael Featherstone) and dealing with several reigns from 886 to 963.

If we were to look for a person responsible for most of the writing of Part I (let us call him for the sake of convenience "the Continuator"), we should date his activity to the time of Constantine VII's reign, probably in the fifties of the 10th century, for the man worked after Genesios finished his work. In fact, Genesios boasts about being the first person who wrote about the period and the Continuator works on the same dossier of sources Genesios used.

To identify who the Continuator was is not an easy task. In fact, the Continuator, as Constantine's collaborator, considered his task secondary and concealed his name: all the historical work was put under the name of the learned emperor. We are not even sure that the Continuator was just one person, for the proem of Part I is written in plural. And there are differences between the style of the different books. Despite all these caveats, scholars have been looking for an author of part I, a close collaborator of the emperor working in the fifties. There are some methodological problems with this enterprise.

To begin with, we have to cope with the problem of the dependence from the sources: How can we be sure that this or that expression or literary image was of the Continuator and not taken from his sources? This is always a problem when dealing with historians. In our case, however, we tread some solid ground because we know that Genesios and the Continuator used the same common source: a dossier of texts dealing with the history of the second iconoclasm. Accordingly, when both authors agree in some expression, they have taken it from this common source. Literal coincidences are, however, infrequent, for Genesios took much trouble in creating a baroque style and completely rewrote the original wording of the common source. But at least, the coincidences in content give us a clear guide about the procedure followed by the Continuator when he wrote Part I. Usually, the Continuator rewrote the sources at his disposal but avoided rhetorical excesses. He used supplementary sources (most of them hagiographical) unknown to Genesios. His task can be described as professional or standard, and does not give us many clues about the author.

However, the Continuator did no limit himself to a plain rewriting of his sources, but also added personal remarks or images that are completely absent in Genesios. These are the "personal mark" of his style and allow us to draw a profile of him as author. These additions are mostly

amplifications of the narrative of the sources and personal comments on historical facts. For instance, the Continuator always tries to characterize each emperor according to a fixed pattern of his personality. However, these comments, once the leitmotif of each emperor is identified, are constructed in a very predictable way and do not serve, accordingly, to isolate the style of the Continuator from the classicist mainstream of his age. The same can be said about the tendency of the Continuator to duplicate words, using pairs of synonyms to express a single idea (for instance in Cont. I.2 ἐπληρώθη κατηφείας καὶ ἀχλύος... πλήρης ἀθυμίας καὶ θλίψεως). These “doublets” are lacking in Genesisius, but they appear in other Byzantine writers, so that we cannot make any conclusion on authorship based on them.

It is an interesting fact that the Continuator uses proverbs and phrases which are also absent from Genesisios. Many of them are, curiously enough, also present in the works of Arethas, but this does not mean that the Continuator and Arethas are the same person. It could be that they both consulted the same collection of proverbs and sententiae, or simply that to quote proverbs was à la mode in the period. However, this fondness of the Continuator for sententiae (again absent in Genesisius) is remarkable and, as the so-called doublets, a feature of his style.

In any case, the most important clue for establishing a profile of the Continuator is his reuse of passages taken from ancient Greek historians of the Roman period for colouring the historical episodes he found in his sources on the period of Second Iconoclasm. I will consider four instances, all of them taken from Book I. The authors from whom he reuses or copies material are Dionysius of Halicarnassus (a passage of his *Roman Antiquities*, where the dictator Camillus speaks in front of his army, encouraging them to oppose the Gauls, who were attacking Rome in 367 BC), Plutarch (a passage of his *Life of the Lesser Cato*, where Cato is besieged in Utica by the troops of Caesar in 46 BC), Polybius (the proem of his *History*) and Diodorus Siculus (a passage of his *Library*, where he describes how the Athenian general Phormio was “puffed up with pride” after defeating the Spartans in a naval battle at the entrance of the Corinthian Gulf in 429 BC).

My guess is that the Continuator did not come to these authors by perusing their works, but that he looked for inspiration at the historical excerpts of Constantine Porphyrogenitus, and particularly, in two instances, at the volumes *On speeches* (Περὶ δημηγοριῶν) and *On sieges* (περὶ πολιορκιῶν) (see Németh, A. 2013. “The Imperial Systematisation of the Past in Constantinople: Constantine VII and his Historical Excerpts”, in König, J. and Woolf, G. eds., *The Encyclopaedia from Antiquity to the Enlightenment*, Cambridge, 232-258).

My suggestion is that the Continuator consulted these histories through the corresponding volumes of the encyclopaedia of Constantine. Moreover, that he could be one of his compilers. We cannot even exclude that the emperor himself was responsible for these literary adornments of the text, which are specially present in Book I.

The analysis suggests in any case that the compilation of the historical excerpts could have been conceived as a way for providing materials for historians and that ancient historical texts were reused as a repository of history.



Sergei Mariev

*Defining Byzantine Chronicles:
a Challenge for Historians of Byzantine Literature*

I would like to begin this talk with a lament about a regrettable situation in which I believe all of us who study “Byzantine chronicles” find ourselves today. I refer to the fact that we, as historians of Byzantine literature, actually do not have at present a concept of this genre. We traditionally speak of a number of Byzantine texts as chronicles, but we are not able to agree on the key features that constitute a chronicle and we are equally unable to draw a clear dividing line between chronicles and other historiographical works from the Byzantine period. This has not always been the case.

During the period following the publication of Karl Krumbacher’s *Geschichte der byzantinischen Litteratur*, there existed, albeit for a short time, a comprehensive concept of this genre that was universally accepted by historians of Byzantine literature. I would like to place a special emphasis on the word “comprehensive” and explain briefly what I mean. The concept of monkish chronicles that Krumbacher had proposed not only invested chronicles with a very specific literary identity. It also provided clear criteria that allowed their easy differentiation from works of history and permitted them to be viewed in close connection with a specific group of people within Byzantine society, namely monks, whose spiritual interests and mentality chronicles supposedly reflected and expressed. Monks, who wrote chronicles for other monks, according to Krumbacher, were, on the one hand, “poorly educated” and, on the other hand, “were thirsting for religious instruction”. The simple language in which chronicles were written and the choice of subjects treated in them became easily explicable on the assumption that these texts had been written by monks and for monks. Even the value of studying these texts consisted, according to Krumbacher, in gaining access to the mentality of Byzantine monks.

It was not difficult to criticize this somewhat simplistic and yet comprehensive concept of the “Byzantine monkish chronicle”. Hans-Georg Beck, a successor to Krumbacher’s chair of Byzantine Studies in Munich, did so by pointing out that of approximately 21 authors considered by Krumbacher, only six, i.e. less than one third, actually were monks or became monks towards the end of their lives, and that at least five names on Krumbacher’s list (including several ‘monks’) had earlier in their lives belonged to the same social and intellectual elite which, according to Krumbacher’s view, would have felt nothing but scorn for such low and unlearned texts as chronicles. Beck’s intention was presumably to single out only one strand in Krumbacher’s argument, namely that we have no sufficient evidence to suppose that chronicles had been mostly written and read in a monastic milieu. However, by demonstrating that we have no sufficient evidence to support Krumbacher’s assumption, he brought down the entire conceptual edifice that Krumbacher had erected upon this assumption. The low style of these texts can no longer be explained by pointing out the lack of literary education on the part of their supposed authors and readers, namely poorly educated monks. The same holds true for the constant and recurrent references to the creation of the universe, the history of the Jewish people, church festivities, and omens and portents that are frequently found in chronicles. Most importantly, we lack one of the main reasons to view chronicles

in opposition to works of history, since we can no longer maintain that these two groups of texts were written in two different milieus. With Beck's criticism, the conceptual edifice that had been erected by Krumbacher fell to the ground, converting an entire section of the history of Byzantine literature into nothing more than conceptual rubble.

The need to have a clear concept of this literary genre is acutely felt by anyone who seeks to write a systematic overview of the history of Byzantine literature. After Krumbacher, the next attempt to write this kind of work was made by Herbert Hunger. It is of little surprise, therefore, that while working on his monumental oeuvre "Hochsprachliche profane Literatur der Byzantiner" he formulated a new concept of the chronicle genre, in which he proposed considering chronicles as a kind of Byzantine "trivial literature". As I have previously demonstrated in greater detail, however, his concept of chronicles does not constitute a real alternative to Krumbacher's. Upon closer inspection, it reveals close similarities with Krumbacher's view and actually appears to be nothing more than a slightly modernized version of the same. While Krumbacher had viewed chronicles as works written for poorly educated monks, Hunger believed that they had been written for what he termed an "average sort of fellow" ("durchschnittlicher Zeitgenosse"). The simple language of chronicles, interest in wonders and portents and similar supposedly essential features of this genre were explained by Hunger along much the same lines as by Krumbacher, namely as a consequence of the author's attempt to satisfy the taste of average, poorly educated people. Comparing Hunger's view with Krumbacher's, we notice that Hunger no longer makes any affirmations about the writers of chronicles, of whom we admittedly know very little. However, he still has much to say about their supposed readers, whom he somewhat disparagingly characterizes as average people of Byzantine times. What makes both concepts so similar to each other is the central role that both of them attribute to the lack of education in general (in Krumbacher's view) or lack of literary education in particular (in Hunger's view) when defining the literary nature of chronicles.

It is not my intention here to engage in an extensive polemic against Hunger's view, as the shortcuts of his approach are rather obvious and have already been discussed by me elsewhere. To my knowledge, no other comprehensive concept of Byzantine chronicles has been proposed since the publication of Hunger's "Hochsprachliche Profane Literatur der Byzantiner". This fact constitutes the regrettable situation I mentioned at the beginning of this talk. We are now well aware of the flaws and disadvantages of the two approaches to Byzantine chronicles that had been advanced in the past, but we have nothing else to offer instead. So it would not be an exaggeration to say that we are facing a tremendous challenge. Our task is to elaborate a new comprehensive concept of this genre or, alternatively, to stop talking of Byzantine "chronicles" as a genre altogether because this concept has been proven to be devoid of any substance.

I would like to use the opportunity offered by this round-table to present for discussion another approach that I hope may prove useful for defining the literary identity of a majority of historical texts that have been referred to as chronicles since the publication of Krumbacher's *Geschichte der byzantinischen Litteratur*. I believe that Byzantine chronicles can be defined as a genre -- and also differentiated from works of history -- in terms of what I would like to call here their "literary point of reference". To state the case briefly, I propose to define chronicles as texts whose main literary point of reference is the early Christian chronographical tradition, as represented by the works of Julius Africanus and Eusebios, and which often remains outside the boundaries of histories of Byzantine literature which (following Krumbacher) begin their exposition with the era of Justinian.

Some additional explanations are necessary at this point. When I speak of the “literary point of reference” of a Byzantine chronicle, I take as my point of departure a rather obvious observation that any given literary work at the time of its creation is linked to the preceding literary tradition through a number of works that had been familiar to its author at the time of writing. The “interaction”, or the way in which any work positions itself with respect to the preceding tradition, is not limited to citations from previous works or seeking to imitate or surpass them. The term “interaction” here is broader in scope than the term “literary mimesis” that is very familiar to all students of Byzantine literature. It can also be used to indicate that an author intentionally produces a text that is significantly different from some other text or even group of texts seen as a whole on account of some specific features. Trying to avoid some patterns and consciously preferring to follow instead some others can also be considered as an “interaction” -- this time understood in a converse sense -- with a preceding literary tradition.

Even though the scope of individual texts known to us as Byzantine chronicles and the interests of their authors vary significantly from one work to the other, I believe that we have sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the majority of these texts do have one literary point of reference in common, namely the early Christian chronographical tradition. Let me provide some examples.

The historical work of John of Antioch, even though its main emphasis is on the history of the Roman Republic and Roman Empire, does contain some material that derives from the work of Julius Africanus. The presence of this material in John of Antioch’s corpus is a clear sign that he wanted to link his own work – a product of his own historical research and a compilation of the sources available to him -- with the tradition of Christian chronographical writing represented by Julius Africanus. The historical work of John Malalas begins its chronological structure with Adam, and, in Books 1-9, provides an account of Biblical history from a Christian perspective. The literary interaction of the Paschal Chronicle with an earlier, formative phase of Christian chronological writings is also clearly apparent. This chronicle is not, strictly speaking, a scientific treatise on the intricate problems of chronography, and especially chronography viewed from a Christian point of view, but rather appears to be a Constantinopolitan city-chronicle, whose author was most attentive to the life of the Byzantine capital. However, the intention of its author to establish a link with the early Christian chronography is not difficult to demonstrate. In this chronicle we frequently encounter a running total of the years since Creation, dating by the cycle of Olympiads, notices of indiction and regnal years, etc. The author carried out many of his own calculations, establishing, for instance, the creation of the world as 5509 BC and the crucifixion as annus mundi 5540.

These examples could easily be multiplied in a fuller exposition of the question. For the present, I believe that the three examples I have provided are sufficient to make evident the pattern that I consider to be essential for an understanding of the literary identity of Byzantine chronicles. In each of the texts I have mentioned, and, of course, in many others, we can easily discern two “elements” or two different kinds of material. One of them points towards the early Christian chronographical tradition. It demonstrates, in my view, the intent of the writers of the chronicles to establish a literary link with this tradition. This kind of material deals with such questions as the beginning of time, Biblical history, dates and relative chronology, etc. The other element or the other kind of material that constitutes a Byzantine chronicle significantly varies from one text to another. The differences are so significant, that it is virtually impossible to find a common theme or subject that would be present in all texts that we call chronicles from John of Antioch to Ephraim of Ainos. In

John of Antioch, for instance, it is an interest in the Roman Republic and later in the history of the Roman Empire. In the Paschal Chronicle it is the events that revolve around the public life of the Byzantine capital. The impression that Byzantine chronicles leave on their readers seems to tell us that their authors frequently started off writing a text similar to Julius Africanus or Eusebios and then gradually developed their own, very particular, individuality. So it does make sense, after all, to speak of Byzantine chronicles as a literary genre. Its distinctive feature is the literary interaction with the works written during the formative period of Christian chronography. However, the orientation towards this literary tradition does not prevent chronicles from developing very different individual traits, a kind of literary character that is particular to each individual work.



Tamás Mészáros

Studying the Byzantine Chronicles: Some Preliminary Remarks

“Un livre ne commence ni ne finit: tout au plus fait-il semblent.”

Mallarmé

A separate batch within Byzantine historiography, both in terms of its bulk and its significance, is constituted by the so-called “chronicles” (*chronikon*, *chronographikon*, *chronographeion*, *chronographia*). The examination of Byzantine chronicles has in recent years become one of the most popular topic within Byzantological research. New text editions have been published, large-scale research has been launched to process the oeuvres of individual authors and to prepare the publication of one or another work, and, meanwhile, there has been an encouraging increase in the number of new translations of the source texts into living languages. Several of the participants of the present roundtable have contributed to this development substantially themselves. On the other hand, it is regrettable that besides an investigation of individual authors and texts that is more thorough than ever, the research into *the genre itself* has been pushed somewhat into the background. We can still not define the concept of Byzantine chronicle in a way satisfactory to all parties involved, and we find it equally bewildering to establish why and how one or another work to be researched should be deemed a chronicle, rather than a text belonging to some other genre. This, of course, is neither accidental, nor a fault of the negligence of Byzantinists. Far more appropriate is to highlight the fact that the authors, works, or groups of works traditionally linked with the genre display such variety of content, form, and language, that it is nearly impossible to find their common denominator. On the present occasion, we will barely outline some general aspects in terms of examining the genre of Byzantine chronicles.

In order to illustrate the inherent difficulty of defining the term Byzantine chronicle accurately, as a literary genre considered independent by scientific consensus, let us pick some random examples of works consensually placed into this category. *Nota bene*, as regards the generic classification of individual works, literary histories (Krumbacher, Hunger) and reference books do not always agree. What can be taken for granted is that the number of chronicles defined as such by all runs to at least twenty, but may actually reach as much as forty.

The inaccurately named *Chronicle of Cambridge*, for instance, is considered to be among the Byzantine chronicles, whose Greek text is preserved in two manuscripts (Vat. Gr. 1912; Paris BN Suppl. Gr. 920). Its anonymous author collected notes pertaining to the period between 827 and 965, focusing primarily on the Greco-Arabic wars in Sicily, complete with chronological data. The *Chronica Monembasia* is another chronicle, where the anonymous author, presenting a local historical work, provides a brief description of the Peloponnesian events between the reigns of Justinian and Nikephoros I. The *Chronicle of the Morea* can also be classified as a chronicle: the Greek version of the work preserved in four languages (Greek, French, Italian, and Aragonese) presents the history of the Christian state founded on the Peloponnese in some 9,000 lines of *versus politicus*. The peculiar language of the text is remarkable in itself, for it amalgamates classical Greek

and the Byzantine vernacular, while also borrowing many western (primarily French) expressions. The title of *Chronica Toccoorum* also indicates this generic label, in which some 4,000 lines of *versus politicus* recount the history of the Tocco family ruling in Epeiros between the end of the 14th century and the beginning of the 15th. The *Chronicle of the Turkish Sultans*, written in the late 16th century, can also be considered a chronicle, discussing the sultans who reigned between 1373 and 1513. Yet another type of chronicle can be identified in the one by Konstantinos Manasses. The author, who lived in the court of Manuel I Komnenos (1143–1180), surveyed the history of the world from the creation down to the reign of Nikephoros Botaneiates (1078–1081) in 7,000 lines of *versus politicus*. The text, composed at the request of the emperor's sister-in-law, Eirene Komnene, had gained considerable popularity by the 14th century; its Bulgarian translation was prepared at around that time. And the inventory could be continued endlessly without even having mentioned the best-known items of the genre (Malalas, Chronicon Paschale, Theophanes, Skylitzes, etc.).

Thus the texts belonging to the genre of chronicle vary on an extreme scale in their volume (from a few lines to several hundred *folia*), form (prose, *versus politicus*), as well as authorship (renowned scholars/clerics or anonymous records). In this conspicuously chaotic field, A. Kazhdan attempted to establish some order (in: ODB s. v. chronicle), but that is as far as can be considered (perhaps) generally accepted in regard to the genre today: “As a conventional term, chronicle can designate any one of the following types of works: (1) historical works describing world history from creation, that is the so-called world chronicle (Malalas, Georgios Synkellos, Glykas etc.); or historical works describing large sections of past history that for the most part were not based on the author's personal observations (Theophanes Confessor etc.); The sections of ancient history were derived primarily from Iosephus Flavius, Iulius Africanus, Eusebios of Caesarea and Zonaras; (2) short chronicles that narrated in an annalistic form political events within a limited chronological period; (3) short lists of dated events beginning with the ancient past (ancient empires, emperors, patriarchs, popes etc.); (4) private notes with chronological dates (a list of the children of I. Alexios in Moscow).”

Henceforth disregarding the other types, let us here address the category featuring in the title of the roundtable, i.e. the Byzantine *world* chronicle, a historic work whose narrative, in keeping with the chronological order of the Old Testament, begins with the Creation, then tells of the coming of the Christ, excurses into the main events of Roman history as well as Jewish and Greek events, and finally surveys Byzantine history down to the author's own age.

First of all, it must be clarified what makes Byzantine world chronicles *Byzantine*. In my view, the main reason is that the author of a given world chronicle was active in the realm of the Byzantine Empire while that Empire existed. Despite continuous shifts, the geographical framework seems more solid than mere chronology. The latter would only allow an establishment of *terminus ante quem*, which was the fall of Constantinople (1453). Since all Byzantine world chronicles necessarily presume the fairly broad extent and free practice of the Christian religion, I date the emergence of the genre (choosing symbolic dates) to a period subsequent to the Edict of Milan (313) or, alternatively, the establishment of Christianity as a state religion (380). The exclusive language of Byzantine world chronicles was the official language providing the geographic and chronological context for their emergence, i.e., Greek. If any one of the above three criteria (place, date, language) should prove invalid for a given work, then that work cannot be considered a Byzantine world chronicle.

In terms of the other characteristics occurring in the literature, however, I am more sceptical. As regards the recurrently mentioned linguistic simplicity, rustic or colloquial character of the chronicles, from which some have concluded that either the authors or the reading audience, or both, must have been uneducated, I think the truth lies elsewhere. I assume that the authors of the Byzantine world chronicles consciously and deliberately follow a usage characteristic of the *simple style* (ισχνόν, *gracile*) since this is the most fitting for the genre, and this can reach out most effectively to the target readership, that is, the readers of the Scriptures.

Let me explain the last statement. I believe the intellectual demand that first created this genre lay fundamentally in the phenomenon that formerly accepted chronological systems (lists of consuls, list of archons, Olympic games, etc.) were rapidly repressed with the spread of Christianity. The recent converts of the new religion had not lost their roots completely: they remained Greek, Roman, or Jewish and kept their interest in their own history and culture; nor did they abandon their curiosity for the past. The customary frameworks to date events had, however, proved to be unacceptable for them, and the chronological system had to be adapted to the religious persuasions determining the fundamentals of their everyday lives. In practice, such adaptation is a nearly routine procedure as historic events can be rendered into charts or parallel columns according to individual conceptions of timekeeping. But then, in the shorter or longer connecting texts appended to such columns, it would be alien to use either the sublime or the middle register, I believe.

And finally, a few thoughts concerning world chronicles as *open works*. To our knowledge, the terms closed (*Geschlossen*) and open (*Offen*) works were coined by Heinrich Wölfflin, first applied to creative artworks. This “openness” was later considered to be the fundamental characteristic of all works of art by Umberto Eco, who grasped its essence in that any given work “opens up” an infinite number of various interpretative possibilities according to the activity of the receiver. But in the case of Byzantine chronicles, I consider openness to consist in something else. Due to the peculiar nature of textual traditions, it is *the text per se* that is open, insofar as even the copier was entitled to remove from it elements he deemed insignificant, or add elements thought important, without further ado. The impermanent, open character of the text may influence the volume of the work in both directions. A chronology is a history of events discussed in an orderly manner, but even a mere inventory of names can be freely continued and complemented, even with data contemporary with the person making those amendments. And the opposite is conceivable, too, when someone prepares an abstract from a longer work according to one or another aspect, thus substantially shortening the original volume. If anything, Byzantine world chronicles – due to their annalistic and chronological character – can, indeed, be argued to display the above concept of openness.

Evidently, the changes made in the text may easily draw along a shift in interpretation as well. With this, however, we arrive on a terrain even more swampy than the previous one.



Christian Gastgeber

Open Text Problems of a Chronicle

The Chronicon Paschale confronts researchers with the problem of its text creation and the intention of the author of such an inhomogeneous work. The quantity of information differs in parts of the work, and even these data seem not to be critically revised. Furthermore, under the perspective of an open text, accessible for additions and corrections, the question arises if the version, which was transmitted in Byzantine period and only once copied (the well known codex Vaticanus graecus 1941), represents itself as the result of an open text reworked and modified. The question is justified if one takes into account the differences between detailed historical descriptions on the one hand and nothing more than a list of the calculates years for a very long period on the other hand; moreover, the unbalanced structure of the work becomes significantly apparent in the bulk of information in the contemporary period of the supposed author's lifetime, including inserts beyond the dimension of any other quotation in this or similar chronicles. Thus, the character of the work fluctuates between fasti consulares, annals, and historia. The preface – which was in detail studied by a French research group under Joëlle Beaucamp (Temps et histoire 1: Le prologue de la Chronique pascale, Travaux et Mémoires 7 [1979] 223-301) – reveals at least one intention of the anonymous author: a correct calculation of the dates year by year starting from the creation of world and a mathematical concordance of the historical year, period and era calculations – as used in former chronicles and lists – in reference to the cycles of sun and moon.

In the very case of this Easter Chronicle we are confronted with a triple open text aspect:

1) The sources of the chronicle's author as base of his own work: an open field of works that needed continuation and updating (like the lists); even a work that aimed at a more or less literary level might nevertheless have been anonymous as our chronicle (is this anonymity to explain only due to the defective transmission of the preface of the work or was the work generally intended to be anonymous, an open data collection with an amended sequence of dates?).

2) The work as published in the version of the supposed author in Constantinople at the 7th c. A.D. might or not be corrected and altered by followers, at least until a copy of the whole codex (?) was written at the end of the 10th c. (a first impression seems however to exclude that the scribe of this codex, the mentioned Vaticanus, was himself working on the text or revising it; on the contrary, the scribe was obviously commissioned to just copy an existing manuscript; it appears that he was overstrained by this task at least as regards the correct copying of Greek orthography (provided that the master copy was not already corrupt); if discrepancies as well as linguistic, stylistic, and content-related variations are so extraordinarily striking, critical text analysis must highlight these ruptures and try to find the solution in an author's intention or a post-author reworking. Or, from another point of view, but still under the perspective of open text use, do these ruptures reflect nothing more than the patchwork of an author who quoted his sources tale quale, supplementing his crucial calculation by relevant data (now correctly harmonised in a "logical" diachronic sequence) regardless of stylistic adaption. Language and style are only the negligible mediators for the more essential dates and their corrected sequence.

3) The written manuscript as open text free for further additions: in fact, the codex unicus of the Chronicon Paschale contains such additions and updates, partly already known as the mysterious passages of a Megas Chronographus (this aspect is omitted for this contribution, it will be focused on by Erika Juhász in her paper)

Behind the background of possible manipulations or open text revisions (by the way best documented in the problematic reconstruction of the mysterious Megas Chronographus) it becomes apparent how helpless research is if the first existing manuscripts dates from centuries later than the supposed author's lifetime (if the last dates of the work really coincide with the author's lifespan). In solving these problems, aspects of the author's originality, including closeness to his source or excluding it by stylistic reworking of quoted sources, and of a later review are continuously overlapping and contradicting.

The present contribution is dedicated to this provoking problem and to paths of approaching a result at least of the version the author, interested in the harmonisation of different periodisation used by his sources, concluded with a personal preface.



Erika Juhász

An Intriguing Passage in Chronicon Paschale

The text of the *Chronicon Paschale* written in the 7th century can be regarded as an open text from several viewpoints. The anonymous author did not leave a complete, finished work to posterity. The structure of the text preserved in a 10th century manuscript (*Codex Vaticanus Graecus 1941*) and the contradictions in the content of some passages suggest that the chronicler did not manage to finalize his material. A draft had been handed down to posterity that could serve as a basis for the author, for the later readers or even for the scribe(s) to provide further additions.

Now we do not intend to discuss the straightforward scribal errors due to which former marginal notes had been added to the text. However, in the chronicle a longer passage can also be found, the author of which is still under debate: In the main text, starting from the *verso* of *folio* 240, the author of the *Chronicon Paschale* discusses the reign of Emperor Iustinian. The text ends abruptly on the *verso* of *folio* 241, at the end of line 24 – in the third year of Iustinian's reign, and a space for seven lines remains empty on this page. The next page is also empty, and then on the *verso* of *folio* 242 we can find a 14-line long passage with troubled grammar starting with the fifth year of Iustinian's reign. The lower part of the page (17 lines) is left empty, and the original text continues only on the *recto* of *folio* 243.

In the spaces left empty by the 10th century scribe the fragments of the chronicle attributed to the so-called *Megas Chronographos* can be found. With all probability, the glosses inserted in the left margin of the *verso* of *folio* 272 and in the left margin of the *verso* of *folio* 286 also belong to the same work. The text consists of sixteen short passages.

Posterity has interpreted the sixteen passages in various ways, and the scribes and editors of the text have selected those following different principles. All of the fragments have been edited only by Peter Schreiner, who also added a commentary and a German translation to these passages in the three volumes of CFHB. Seven years later Michael Whitby also published the Greek transcription of the 14 fragments copied in the blank spaces of 241^v-242^v together with textual parallels added in the footnotes.

In his paper published last year, Christian Gastgeber deals with the scribe of the fragments and with the person of the possible *Megas Chronographos* in details – thus, in this presentation we do not intend to discuss these questions. However, it is important to note that with all probability the passages inserted later and attributed to the *Megas Chronographos* were written by an 11th century hand. Apart from the characteristics of the handwriting, this dating can also be supported with another passage inserted later: on the *verso* of *folio* 140 in the Vatican manuscript a list of Roman emperors can be read. On the basis of the handwriting the compiler of the list could have been the same person who also inserted the fragments of the *Megas Chronographos*. Now the list ends with Michael IV Byzantine Emperor, because the end of the text was lost from the lower margin of the page when the codex was rebound. However, from the 16th century copies of the *Chronicon Paschale* we know that the list originally ended with Constantine IX Byzantine Emperor. Thus, the *terminus ante quem* of the insertion of the fragments is the second half of the 11th century, so the passages were definitely written before this date.

Since in the fragments the last event reported is to be dated to 750, the work was composed around the middle of the 8th century at the earliest.

The researchers have tried to narrow down the dating of the composition on the basis of textual criticism. Primarily they studied how the work is related to Theophanes, thus two opposing views evolved: according to the first one, the *Megas Chronographos* was the source of Theophanes, while according to the other it was the unknown author who used Theophanes as his source. This scholarly debate has not been settled yet. In this presentation, we do not intend to argue for either of these two views. However, it is important to mention them since Theophanes' chronicle cannot be neglected even in the discussion of the passage inserted between the *Megas Chronographos* fragments.

The place of the 14-line long text is controversial. The majority of the events mentioned in the *Megas Chronographos* fragments (four earthquakes, the Nika revolt, a pestilent epidemic and the collapse of the altar in the Hagia Sophia) happened during Iustinian's reign. These events are missing from the *Chronicon Paschale* or are presented in another way. Thus, it is no accident that before the first fragment the title Ἰουλιανῶν ἀπὸ τοῦ μεγάλου χρονογράφου is written. With all probability, not only the blank parchment pages, but also the content of the text influenced the 11th century scribe when he decided to insert the fragments exactly in this place. A further binding element is provided by the identical introduction of the Nika revolt in both sources: "In the fifth year of Iustinian's reign."

The fact that the scribe intended to follow the main text can also be supported with his other – already mentioned – entry. After *folio* 140 the *Chronicon Paschale* presents Iulius Caesar as the first Roman monarch, and the 11th century scribe copied a list of emperors to the blank space.

The significance of the scribe of the *Megas Chronographos* fragments does not only lie in the fact that he handed down an otherwise unknown source to posterity. By picking this place instead of other (still) blank *folios* for the preservations of the passages he also directs our attention to a more thorough study of the fragmentary text of the *Chronicon Paschale*.

We could see that the 14-line long text is isolated in the upper part of the *verso* of *folio* 242. On the basis of the events in the chronicle we can confirm that some text is missing between the *verso* of *folio* 241 and the *recto* of *folio* 243. After 241^v we can only find a consular year on 246^v the next time. On the basis of the consular lists it can be deduced that two years are missing between the two dates. These two years were indicated with the postconsulate of Lampadius and Orestes. This could have confused the chronicler, since according to his dating only one year is missing: the 4th year of the 327th *olympias*, which must have been the 9th indictional year and the 4th year of Iustinian's reign at the same time. The numbering runs in continuation with the previous and subsequent pages according to all three chronological systems.

The examination of the *lacuna* leads to the supposition that something is missing both before and after these 14 lines. However, researchers claimed that the scribe left these two and half pages empty, and he attempted to supplement the text from other sources. According to Mary and Michael Whitby, finally he did not manage to find another text, thus he decided to insert only these 14 lines to the blank space, in the upper margin of the *verso* of *folio* 242. Mary and Michael Whitby suppose that this passage might have also appeared in a corrupt exemplar either in an abridged form or in a longer version that was already fragmentary. Paul Maas and Alan Cameron – following in the footsteps of Maas – claimed that the 10th century scribe adopted the passage from Theophanes' text.

In the Vatican manuscript the short passage starts with the breaking out of the Nika revolt in the fifth year of Iustinian's reign. The author describes that when the circus parties took their places in the Hippodrome, the Greens started to agitate against Calopodius; he quotes their agitation word by word. The interpretation of the so-called *Akta dia Kalopodion* has not been settled among the researchers of Byzantine studies for more than 100 years. The complete text is only available in Theophanes' work: there is a relatively long dialogue between the speaker of the Greens and the representative of Emperor Iustinian. Since in the *Chronicon Paschale* this passage shows word-by-word agreement with some parts of Theophanes' text, Paul Maas and Alan Cameron supposed that Theophanes' chronicle could serve as a basis for the 10th century scribe for the selection of the passage.

Upon the thorough examination of the passage we can observe that the text breaks at several places in the Vatican manuscript. At the beginning of the heated dialogue, after the Greens wished a long life to Iustinian, they claim that they had been offended, but they do not dare name the offender. In Theophanes' text, the representative of the Emperor tries to claim that nobody could have offended them, but finally the speaker of the Greens names Calopodius as the offender. The *Chronicon Paschale* presents only this latter sentence from the dialogue, then the dialogue ends there. Then we can find a description reporting that after further blasphemy, the Greens left the Hippodrome, while Iustinian and the Blues continued to watch the chariot race. The last sentence that is attached again inorganically to the preceding part on the surface reports that the Emperor sent some people out to see what/why some are shouting. We do not know who the Emperor sent and who are shouting. Here ends the text on the *verso* of *folio* 242.

In the Vatican manuscript the next page starts with the expression *ὡς ἔτυχεν*, then we are again in the middle of a dialogue, where somebody gives an advice to the Emperor, then Iustinian orders them to go out and find out against what they are revolting. Basileides executes the order and speaks to the rebels.

The question arises why the scribe did not cut off the blank *folio* 242, if he did not manage to supplement the lacuna. In the manuscript we can find examples where the penult *folio* of a *quaternio* was cut off without the mutilation of the text. On the other hand, if the 10th century scribe had indeed attempted to supplement the missing events on the basis of another source, perhaps he could not have been satisfied with such a short and troubled passage.

It is a further question why the scribe adopted and inserted only such a short passage, although he could have supplemented even the whole *lacuna* on the basis of the text preserved in Theophanes' work. Thus, Mary and Michael Whitby's argumentation seems more plausible: the 10th century scribe of the Vatican codex did not insert these 14 lines from another source (from Theophanes); the passage was rather already organic part in the manuscript of the *Chronicon Paschale* he used. This argumentation leads to two possibilities: the passage was either part of the *Chronicon Paschale* originally, or it was inserted later, but before the time of the 10th century scribe.

We could see that the fourth year of Iustinian's reign (at least the beginning of it) is lost from the chronicle. It seems strange that the passage inserted in the *lacuna* starts with the dating *pemptó eté tés basileias Ioustinianou*. The editors and Maas tried to correct this problematic place by supplementing the fifth year next to the fourth year of his reign before the passage. This is, however, an incorrect solution of the problem, because 7 and a half pages later, on the *verso* of *folio* 246 in the chronicle under the first year of the *olympias* 328, the 10th indictional year, the fifth year of Iustinian's reign is written, and there are no traces of the scribe's modification of the text here.

The dating πέμπτῳ ἔτει τῆς βασιλείας Ἰουστινιανοῦ is generally not characteristic of the chronicler's style. His usual practice was to indicate the year with all data possible, then if he could attach any remarkable event to the given year, he introduced it with such expressions as ἐπὶ τούτων τῶν ὑπάτων or ἐπὶ τῶν προκειμένων ὑπάτων. If he intended to report more than one events within a single year, he introduced them with such introductory phrases as καὶ αὐτῷ τῷ ἔτει or τούτῳ τῷ ἔτει. After he introduced the consuls, he never used in the narration such expressions that would date an event purely with the Emperor's regnal year. Rarely we can observe that before the events reported instead of the usual phrase *in this year* the phrase *in this ... year of the reign of ...* occurs, but even there the author added τούτῳ τῷ in each case, and it always followed the year specified with the olympias, indiction, regnal year and name of the consuls.

On the basis of what has been said above, the short passage does not belong to the original text of the *Chronicon Paschale*. In this case, we have to count with the other possibility: a later hand inserted it into the codex seen by the 10th century scribe. But we cannot suppose either that the earlier interpolator intended to supplement the chronicle with such a troubled text. It seems more probable that this interpolated text is also corrupt.

It seems that the passage on the recto of folio 243 cannot continue the last sentence on the previous page. However, in the Bonn edition nothing indicates in the main text that the text here is corrupt and the sentence has no sense. In the apparatus, we can read that at the beginning of the subsequent page Du Cange deleted the part starting with ὡς ἔτυχεν, and he only continued the text from the end of line 3. The first editor, Rader did the same. He had no choice, because he worked from a copy made by the infamous 16th century bookseller, Andreas Darmarios, the Cod. Mon. Gr. 557, and there he already found the text in this state. Darmarios made three copies of the *Chronicon Paschale* and he tried to solve the problem in the same way: he joined the two passages reporting that the emperor sent somebody out to the crowd, deleted the part between them, and from then onwards he copied the text continuously.

According to Cameron, although the 10th century scribe excerpted Theophanes' text on the verso of folio 242, the last sentence was the scribe's own supplementation so that he could replace the grammatically unrelated passage in the next three lines; in the scribe's presentation the text continued with the moment when Basileides went out to negotiate with the rebels upon the emperor's order; the signs in the margin might indicate that the first three lines of the recto of folio 243 are to be disregarded.

This theory is questionable from several viewpoints. If the scribe wanted to give a reason for the sending out of Basileides, why should have he inserted a new binding sentence, when the sentence before Basileides' leave contained similarly the emperor's order and could have also given the transition in the same way? This question already implies the next objection: in our opinion, based on such theory we cannot delete a passage that was written by the scribe in the main text and is correct both regarding grammar and content. We should rather start out from the fact that the passage on the recto of folio 243 mirrors the state of the copied manuscript, and we should find an explanation for the inconsistencies in the previous passages with this fact in our mind.

We cannot reconstruct the layout and the *fasciculi* of the manuscript copied, but it is remarkable that in the Vatican codex 5 folios earlier, on the verso of folio 237 the events of ten years are missing from the text. Since the previous *lacuna* is not far from the passage under examination, perhaps

in the exemplar transcribed the *bifolio* (or possibly *bifolios*) of the same *fasciculus* could have been damaged. Thus, the scribe of the Vatican manuscript did not leave the places mentioned blank with an additional supplementation in his mind; he rather left some empty space in accordance with the amount of the damaged text in his exemplar he was transcribing. It is possible that the last sentence in the verso of folio 242 was added by the scribe to the end of the short passage. However, the function of the sentence was not to provide the continuity of the events by deleting the subsequent passage. It rather summarizes the content of the next few lines to provide a smooth transition. This seems to be a more innocent modification; the scribe tended to modify the text with similar reason in his mind in other passages of the manuscript, as well.

Based on what has been said above, we might assume that the passage originally belonged to a longer report, the so-called *Akta dia Kalopodion*. This text was probably not part of the original text of the *Chronicon Paschale*; it was added to the text of the *Chronicon Paschale* between the middle of the 7th century (the assumed date of the composition of the *Chronicon Paschale*) and the 10th century (the date of transcribing the Vatican manuscript). In the text available to the 10th century scribe the passage discussing the 4th year of Iustinian's reign and the text of the *Akta* were damaged, thus the scribe could only transcribe fragments. We do not need to suppose that he intended to supplement the missing part; this was not his usual habit. It is more probable that he could only see this amount of text, and he supposed the loss of this amount of text before and after the fragmentary passage.

We cannot specify exactly when and on the basis of which source the supplementation was written. We cannot disregard the word-by-word agreements with Theophanes, but the origination from Theophanes (not through the 10th century scribe) and the assumption of a possible common source is similarly possible. Naturally both theories raise the question from who the text took its origin. Since both John of Antioch and the original work of Malalas, which are mentioned in the literature as possible sources, are now lost, this question seems to remain open forever.



Iván Tóth

Plutarch's Vita Alexandri as 'Open Text' in Zonaras' Epitome Historiarum – Some Minor Observations on Zonaras' Source Handling

Due to Byzantologists' persistent research, today the works of Byzantine chroniclers are read in a different manner. We already know, for example, that chroniclers' writings – although they may claim otherwise – are more than mere summaries and simple abstracts of past chronicles and historical writings. Readers must be alert and aware: what they are reading – as always, regardless of the genre – is the interpretation of the author or, more precisely, the chronicler, and this interpretation may at times be radically different from the original message of the used source. Various excellent studies use picturesque examples to illustrate how Byzantine chroniclers could reinterpret their sources by reorganizing the context, inserting (or omitting, for that matter) an adjective or adverb, changing the chronology or using other linguistic or editing tools – even if they cited them almost literally. These modifications and small changes in the text not only proved how the chronicler related to the historical personality, event, period or the author chosen as his source, but also, they naturally shed light on how the period in which the chronicler worked interpreted its past.

The present paper examines (reads) the *Epitome Historiarum* written by John Zonaras, one of the most significant chroniclers of the middle Byzantine period about the history of the world from the Creation to 1118, the death of Emperor Alexius I, taking into consideration the above mentioned aspects. More precisely, it only discusses a brief section of the *Epitome*, the chapters of the chronicle dealing with Alexander's life (*Epitome* IV, 8–14). Except for an anecdote that he probably borrowed from Arrian's *Anabasis* (cf. *Epitome* IV, 14, 353 [3–8]; Arr. *An.* VII, 27, 3), Zonaras wrote the Macedonian king's story based on Plutarch's biography. The Chaironeian historian's biography of Alexander may have offered the Byzantine chronicler an excellent material to work from – similarly to the other Plutarchian biographies used as sources in the *Epitome*, namely *Artaxerxes*, *Romulus*, *Numa*, *Publicola*, *Camillus* and *Aemilius Paullus*. As written in his biography about Alexander, Plutarch in fact was driven by similar guidelines to those of the chronicler when composing the biographies: the ancient biographer also warns his readers that he will not write a detailed account about all the famous events, but will only outline some of them; furthermore, he avoids the great descriptions of battles and long speeches in his narrative, just like Zonaras does later on in his chronicle (cf. *Alex.* 1, 1–3; *Praef.* 1). Despite the similarities in their approach, the Byzantine chronicler naturally modifies or reinterprets his source several times, even if not radically. In the following, I will use some excerpts to explore the traces that offer us some insight into the (interpretative) process, in which the chronicler makes the source document his own. But first let me say a few words about the position Alexander's story assumes in the *Epitome*.

Zonaras recounts Alexander's course of life as a detour imbedded in the story of Jews. As he informs his readers in the sentence introducing the story of the king of Macedon (cf. *Epitome* IV, 8, 329, [9–16]), he intends to give only a brief account (κατ' ἐπιδρομήν διηγήσασθαι) of Alexander's deeds (πράξεις), character (ἦθη) and lineage (ὄθεν κακ τίνων ἔφου), after which he returns to the mainstream of his narration (ἐπαναγαγεῖν τὸν λόγον πρὸς τὴν συνέχειαν), and tells Alexander's

visit to Jerusalem based on Flavius Josephus. It becomes clear from this short introduction – and the reference in the *prooimion* (cf. *Praef.* 3, 10 [21]–11 [7]) – that it was partly Josephus’ – historically doubtful – record to offer relevance to the ‘Alexander *ekphrasis*’, according to which the Jewish people met the world conqueror Macedonian king directly once in history (cf. *JA XI*, 8, 3–6). Beyond the visit, the traditional syllabus of world chronicles also justified the brief outline of Alexander’s story, in which Alexander, who concurred the Persian Empire and this way fulfilled Daniel’s prophecy was granted a steady position.

Faithful to his promise in the introductory sentence, Zonaras begins his record with Alexander’s lineage, but not quite as his chosen source, Plutarch does. Quoting the public opinion (τῶν πάνυ πεπιστευμένων), the ancient historian begins by tracing back the Macedonian king’s origin to Heracles on the paternal line, and to Neoptolemus on the maternal line (*Alex.* 2, 1). However, this datum has no trace at Zonaras; the Byzantine historian settles for ascertaining that Alexander’s father was Philip and his mother was Olympias, then with the expressions *μυθεύεται* and *τοῦτο μῦθος* he introduces the stories and dreams that recount the circumstances of Alexander’s birth and also connect his origin to Ammon, that is Zeus (*Epitome IV*, 8, 329 [17]–330 [7]). Reversing the order provided by Plutarch, Zonaras first mentions Ammon’s visit to Olympias in the form of a snake, followed by Olympias’ dream, in which the queen’s womb was struck by a thunderbolt that started a vigorous fire, and finally describes Philip’s dream where he pressed a seal with an emblem of a lion on his future wife’s womb. We can only guess why Zonaras, who almost always follows Plutarch’s account precisely, changed the order here. However, it seems curious that although the chronicler considers his ancient source’s information an old wives’ tale, he still takes it down, probably because he regarded all three of the stories as amusing and interesting, contrary to Plutarch’s dry list of data about Alexander’s hero ascendants, that he omitted from his chronicle. By the way, Zonaras seldom refers to mythical figures in his *Epitome*. According to Iordanis GRIGORIADIS (*Linguistic and Literary Studies in the Epitome Historion of John Zonaras*. Byzantine Texts and Studies 26. Thessalonica 1998.) the lack of mentioning myths is not due to the author’s ignorance, but on the one hand, the nature of his writing, on the other hand, maybe to his carefulness to avoid the suspicion of infidelity (104). Zonaras apparently does not adapt from Alexander’s biography either the stories that connect the Macedonian king with the characters of some myth like, Amazons, for example. However, in my opinion, this is not due to carefulness – at least in this case –, but the fact that even Plutarch himself and his sources doubted the authenticity of the story. (cf. *Alex.* 46, 1–5) Nevertheless, Zonaras’ word use, namely the expressions *μυθεύεται* and *τοῦτο μῦθος* reflect well the 12th century chronicler’s attitude towards such (pagan) accounts like, for example, the stories about Alexander’s divine origin.

As I mentioned above, Zonaras seldom disrupts the order of Plutarch’s account. If, however, he does do it, the highlighted section never stands out of the new context, as illustrated by the following example. Plutarch also embeds Olympias’ malicious remark on her son’s divine origin in the anecdote describing Alexander’s lineage (cf. *Alex.* 3, 4). Zonaras also includes the queen’s question – that reads as follows: “οὐ παύσεται με διαβάλλων Ἀλέξανδρος πρὸς τὴν Ἥραν;” – in his writing but he puts it at a different place than Plutarch. We meet Olympias’ words much later in the chronicle than in Plutarch’s biography. After his account of Alexander’s visit to the Siwa Oasis, the sudden rain in the desert, the birds guiding the lost king and his companions to Ammon’s oracle and the priest of the oracle who, due to a slip of the tongue, greeted the Macedonian ruler as Zeus’ son (*Epitome IV*, 10, 337 [9–21]), Zonaras writes the following rephrasing the first section of chapter 28 of Alexander’s biography:

κάκεινος πρὸς μὲν τοὺς βαρβάρους ἐμεγαλαύχει τὴν γένεσιν τὴν ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ, **ὡς καὶ τὴν Ὀλυμπιάδα λέγειν “οὐ παύσεται διαβάλλον με πρὸς τὴν Ἥραν ὁ Ἀλέξανδρος;”** πρὸς δὲ τοὺς Ἕλληνας τοῦ λόγου ἐφείδeto. (*Epitome* IV, 10, 338 [1–4]; I cite M. PINDER’s edition.)

In his chronicle, Zonaras found a new place for the queen’s question where it fitted well – maybe even more than in the original Plutarchian context where readers may face some confusion in understanding the chronological order. (Namely about when Olympias uttered these words.) However, highlighting the section and inserting it in a new context proves the creativity of the excerptor, and shows that the chronicler was able to use and reorganize his source freely but competently.

The following examples allude to how the chronicler could modify the accents and meaning of his source document with the help of minor changes. Although Zonaras, as he warns us already in the *prooimion*, refrains from citing long speeches, short one-sentence quotes and few-line dialogues occur in the *Epitome* various times. These, on the one hand, serve to exhilarate the author’s narration, and on the other hand, describe the characters. Zonaras could choose whatever he liked from Plutarch’s biographies that were full of phrases (ῥήματα) illuminating the nature of characters. His selection and modifications of various degrees, however, suggest a highly conscious excerptor and author who at certain times even afforded to equip his characters with short sentences using the narrative sections of his source, this way somewhat changing the meaning and message of the original text.

For example, after summarizing the siege and destruction of Thebes in a short phrase (cf. *Epitome* IV, 9, 332 [15–16]) – abiding by his other guideline defined in the preamble, that is, to avoid long descriptions of battles –, he, similarly to Plutarch, devotes long lines to the encounter of Alexander and Timocleia, the Theban woman brought before him as a captive, who pushed the Thracian captain who had raped her into a well and hurled heavy stones into the well until the captain was dead (cf. *Alex.* 12, 1–6; *Epitome* IV, 9 332 [17]–333 [6]). Plutarch describes the dialogue between the king and Timocleia in indirect speech, while Zonaras composes Timocleia’s answer to Alexander’s question of who she is in direct speech:

ἦν δέσμιον πρὸς αὐτὸν ἀχθεῖσαν ἠρώτησεν ὁ Ἀλέξανδρος ἥτις εἶη. ἡ δὲ ἀτρέστως “Θεαγένους εἰμι ἀδελφή” ἀπεκρίνατο, “ὄς πρὸς Φίλιππον ἠρέθη στρατηγὸς καὶ ὑπὲρ τῆς Ἑλληνῶν ἀγωνιζόμενος ἐλευθερίας ἔπεσεν.” (*Epitome* IV, 9, 333 [1–4])

Although Zonaras remains faithful to the source document, with the *oratio recta* he renders Plutarch original scene more dramatic, and places Timocleia, the female character of the story even more in the centre. He modifies the discussion of Alexander and his general Perdicas in a similarly subtle way. Following Plutarch, Zonaras describes that before going on board to lead his navy to Asia, the Macedonian king distributed land, villages and money deriving from taxes to his Companions. Then he continues with Perdicas, who asked the king what he had left for himself. Alexander replied that he kept hope. But let’s see how Zonaras phrased the anecdote:

Ὁρμήσας δὲ εἰς τὴν ἐν τῇ Ἀσίᾳ στρατείαν οὐ πρότερον τῆς νηὸς ἐπέβη πρὶν τῷ μὲν τῶν ἐταίρων ἀγρὸν ἀπονεῖμαι, τῷ δὲ κώμην, τῷ δὲ πρόσοδον ἄλλην. τοῦ δὲ Περδίκκου “τί δ’, ὦ βασιλεῦ, σεαυτῷ καταλείπεις;” εἰπόντος, “τὰς ἐλπίδας” ἐκεῖνος ἀντέφησε. (*Epitome* IV, 9, 333 [14–18])

And these are Plutarch’s words:

ἤδη δὲ κατανηλωμένων καὶ διαγεγραμμένων σχεδὸν ἀπάντων τῶν βασιλικῶν ὁ Περδίκκας “σεαυτῷ δ’” εἶπεν, “ὦ βασιλεῦ, τί καταλείπεις;” τοῦ δὲ φήσαντος ὅτι τὰς ἐλπίδας, “οὐκοῦν,” ἔφη “καὶ ἡμεῖς τούτων κοινωνήσομεν οἱ μετὰ σοῦ στρατευόμενοι.” (*Alex.* 15, 4; I cite K. ZIEGLER’s edition.)

Comparing Zonaras’ text with Plutarch’s, beyond wording and syntactic differences, we can discover the following two important changes: (1) Zonaras describes Alexander’s one-word answer in *oratio recta* instead of *oratio obliqua*, and (2) he omits Perdiccas’ reply. These two minor interventions immediately change the meaning of the story. Although Plutarch discusses Alexander’s generosity to his friends and soldiers in chapter 15 of the biography, in the short dialogue with Perdiccas he emphasises – through Perdiccas’s answer – the Macedonian soldiers’ commitment to their king. In Zonaras’ text, however, Alexander remains the protagonist – the answer reflecting the king’s character is not followed by any reply that would draw the reader’s attention away from the king.

In the following I will examine how Zonaras adjusts the pagan Plutarch’s text to his own historical approach. But before comparing and analysing these texts, let me say a few words about the Byzantine chronicler’s historical approach and its linguistic manifestation in the *Epitome*. Examining Zonaras’ style, GRIGORIADIS pointed out that the Byzantine historian’s preference of passive sentences is probably linked to his approach to historical events, since he did not regard them as deeds of people but rather as happenings that affect people’s lives. “*Passive syntax*” – writes GRIGORIADIS (117) – “*provides an ideal word structure for an historian whose philosophy concentrates not on human actions but sees humans more or less as the recipients of the course of their destiny.*” As it also becomes obvious from the *Epitome*, Zonaras, in harmony with the period’s Byzantine historical approach, interpreted world history as the accomplishment of God’s plan that will be completed with the second coming of Christ (cf. *Epitome* III, 3, 214 [7–10]), while he identified his own period with the fourth kingdom of Daniel. The following modifications made by Zonaras in Plutarch’s text should be examined based on the above considerations.

Although Zonaras does not tire his readers with lengthy descriptions of battles, he obviously mentions Alexander and Darius’s first great fight in his work, and like Plutarch, he also describes the battlefield briefly, which, besides Alexander’s talent as a general, also assumed an important role in the victory at Issus. Zonaras writes the following:

Ἐν Ἴσσω δὲ τῆς Κιλικίας τῆς μάχης συγκροτηθείσης, πολλὴν μὲν καὶ ὁ τόπος διὰ τὴν στένωσιν παρέσχε ῥοπήν τῷ Ἀλεξάνδρῳ, πλείω δ’ αὐτὸς ἑαυτῷ δεξιῶς στρατηγήσας. (*Epitome* IV, 9, 335 [11–13])

Plutarch describes this as follows:

Ἀλεξάνδρῳ δὲ τὸν μὲν τόπον ἢ τύχη παρέσχεν, ἐστρατήγησε δὲ τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς τύχης ὑπαρχόντων πρὸς τὸ νικῆσαι βέλτιον, . . . (*Alex.* 20, 7)

According to Plutarch, *fate donated* (ἢ τύχη παρέσχεν) Alexander the location, who, owing to his talent as a strategist, exploited *the circumstances offered by fate* (τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς τύχης ὑπαρχόντων). The active subject (τύχη) in the first clause of the Plutarchian description is left out of Zonaras’ record, instead, the object of Plutarch’s sentence becomes the subject in Zonaras’ text; in other words the *location* (ὁ τόπος) is what – due to its scarcity – offered the Macedonian king an advantage (παρέσχε ῥοπήν) in the Byzantine chronicler’s work. So Zonaras, who, as mentioned above, considered history as the accomplishment of God’s plan, banished *τύχη*, the force of Hellenistic

origin that shapes history and is difficult to reconcile with the Christian historical approach, from its narrative. The *passive* participle of the genitive absolute in the clause ἐν Ἰσοῦ δὲ τῆς Κιλικίας τῆς μάχης συγκροτηθείσης may refer to Zonaras' position, who also thinks that this *decisive* battle occurred based on the predestination of some higher power – although not the one defined by Plutarch. The passive participle probably reflects the chronicler's view according to which the events follow an already defined plan – and the planner is no other than God, the implied agent of these passive structures. It may not be by accident that Zonaras uses the same genitive absolute when describing the third, really decisive battle:

τῇ δ' ἐπιούσῃ τῆς μάχης συγκροτηθείσης, ὡς μὲν τινὲς φασιν, ἐν Ἀρβήλοις, ὡς δ' ἕτεροι, ἐν Γαυσαμήλοις, οἱ βάρβαροι ἐνέκλιναν, καὶ ἦν αὐτῶν διωγμός. (*Epitome* V, 11, 339 [21]–340 [2]).

We can discover similar passive structures at the following places: *Epitome* IV, 9, 335 (17–19) (cf. *Alex.* 20, 11); *Epitome* IV, 10, 336 (10) (cf. *Alex.* 24, 4). However, the last sentence of the section relating Alexander's life is the most significant:

Ὁ μὲν οὖν Ἀλέξανδρος οὕτως εἰς μέγα τύχης προαχθεὶς ἐτελεύτησεν. (*Epitome* IV, 14, 353 [9–10])

In my opinion, the passive participle referring to Alexander in the sentence closing the detour almost as a *sphragis* implies all that Zonaras thought about Alexander's fate and – maybe it is not an exaggeration to say – about history, and it also serves as an explanation to why the chronicler changed Plutarch's text as seen in the examples above. In the historical approach suggested by the expression προαχθεὶς the types of sentences – described by GRIGORIADIS's spirited remark or "formula" (117) – like "X did Z" earned little space, while the linguistic formulas like "Z was brought about by X" seemed more adequate where, I think, although it is not stated, X = God.

I have only analysed some chapters, or rather, a few sentences of Zonaras' monumental work. I am aware that such a narrow sample can hardly serve as the basis of general statements, therefore, I put aside any such endeavours and refrain from phrasing such theses. In summary, I can only note that, although within certain limits, Plutarch's biography of Alexander served as an open text for Zonaras. And together with various other factors, it was the excerptor-chronicler's creativity, historical approach and interpretation that developed an old-new text out of its source and turned it into history.