DIVIDING TIME:
THE MAKING OF HISTORICAL PERIODIZATION IN EARLY MODERN EUROPE

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## PART TWO

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This dissertation traces the emergence of modern historical periodization across early modern Europe, from approximately 1500 to 1700. It argues that modern temporal divisions—especially our threefold scheme that divides the past into ancient, medieval, and modern phases—sprang above all from distinctly early modern methods of reading. As documented by recent studies in book history, early moderns endlessly sorted, catalogued, and classified books. Yet fixing a coherent canon or “order of books” (*ordo librorum*) also created a parallel “order of times” (*ordo temporum*), as scholars both sorted texts by time and ordered time by texts. These bookish projects forced scholars to draw ever-sharper distinctions across diverse historico-temporal contexts. In particular, humanists accustomed to trumpeting the exemplarity of Greco-Roman literature had to confront “late” and seemingly less laudable authors who inhabited pasts very different from canonical classical antiquity. Hence, scholars discovered that the past was hardly monolithic; rather it contained a plurality of *pasts*, defined by layers of reception and dialogue with one another. As they grappled with this diversity (including that intervening millennium between antiquity and the present they started to term the *medium aevum* or “Middle Age”), they began to construct explicit narratives of periodizing. These narratives were ultimately formalized with the triumph of the threefold scheme of ancient/medieval/modern in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

*Dividing Time* consists of two parallel parts. Part I, titled “The Order of Books” or *Ordo Librorum*, consists of three chapters that trace the rise of bibliographical thinking in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. These chapters offer case studies in what the dissertation terms
temporal disjunction—the growing awareness that the past was replete with problem sites and fissures, and that not all of its temporal components flowed coherently into one another. Part II, titled “The Order of Times” or Ordo Temporum, examines how, over the course of the seventeenth century, these problems promoted new thinking about temporal division. In this fashion, Dividing Time reconstructs how often-tacit processes of periodizing laid the groundwork for so many of the theoretical, methodological, and ideological problems that still define modern historical thought.
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INTRODUCTION

Why Divide the Past?

A Modern Quandary and Its Early Modern Origins

_modernity and Its Definitional Discontents: The Problem of Periodization_

In her essay “Character in Fiction,” first delivered as a talk to the Cambridge Heretics in 1924, Virginia Woolf offered a formulation as pithy as it was peculiar. Elucidating the difference between Victorian and Edwardian letters on the one hand and the emergence of literary modernism on the other—the new world of “Mr. Forster,” “Mr. Joyce,” “and “Mr. Eliot,” among others—she hazarded what she acknowledged was a potentially “disputable” assertion: “on or about December 1910, human character changed.” From this date forward, “all human relations have shifted—those between masters and servants, husbands and wives, parents and children.” These micro-level changes produced macroscopic shifts: “when human relations change there is at the same time a change in religion, conduct, politics, and literature.” While Woolf’s deliberately provocative assertion is best remembered for its bombast, she nevertheless offered some obligatory qualifications and throat-clearing between stating her thesis and explaining it. She made clear that she was not engaged in excessively literal or facile periodizing. As far as December 1910 itself was concerned, “I am not saying that one went out, as one might into a garden, and there saw that a rose had flowered, or that a hen had laid an egg. The change was not
sudden and definite like that. But a change there was, nevertheless; and since one must be arbitrary, let us date it about the year 1910.”¹

Woolf did not here explain why the final month of the first year of the second decade of the twentieth century merited the status of a world-historical turning point, though it is often supposed that one thing she had in mind was her friend Roger Fry’s organization of the London exhibition “Manet and the Post-Impressionists,” which introduced English audiences to new artistic movements across the Channel. It is perhaps no accident that “Post-Impressionism” was itself a highly periodizing phrase, signaling—albeit in a different domain of creative expression—the arrival of the modernity that Woolf simultaneously celebrated in literature. Of course, Woolf’s remark represents a rather extreme example of the periodizing impulse. Periodizing around discrete moments of political change, war, or revolutionary upheaval often use the dates of such moments as metonyms for the historical mutations they signify: think for instance of 1453, 1517, 1688, 1776, 1789, 1914, or the so-called “events of ’68.” However, more amorphous mutations of culture are rarely dated down to a precise year, let alone a precise month, as Woolf proposed to do. Yet perhaps more significant than her periodizing is the quasi-facetious justification she offered for it. Woolf admitted that the historical change she spoke of had been neither “sudden” nor “definite.” However, she needed to fix its origin, and so she chose December 1910, adding that “one must be arbitrary.” Woolf did not just acknowledge that she herself was being arbitrary; rather, she generalized it: in her wise admission, “one must be arbitrary,” since sometimes arbitrariness offered a useful fiction. At the risk of posing a question that—what stated explicitly—might sound naive, this study seeks to reconstruct how acknowledged arbitrariness of this nature became common practice. How, why, and in spite of

much ambivalence and handwringing, did it become necessary to posit breaks in time, and slice the past into discrete sections, units, and periods?

Others in Woolf’s milieu were simultaneously engaged in more stereotypical acts of cutting and slicing. One of her cited heralds of modernism, “Mr. Forster,” used a far older and much-abused periodization—i.e. the distinction between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance—as an organizing literary conceit. In E.M. Forster’s 1908 Room with a View, partially set in the appropriately Renaissance locale of Florence, the snobbish Cecil Vyse (whose marriage proposal the protagonist Lucy Honeychurch ultimately rejects) is described in derogatory fashion through such periodized tropes. In a chapter titled “Medieval,” Forster summed by Cecil by declaring: “He was medieval. Like a Gothic statue...he resembled those fastidious saints who guard the portals of a French cathedral. Well educated, well endowed, and not deficient physically, he remained in the grip of a certain devil whom the modern world knows as self-consciousness, and whom the medieval, with dimmer vision, worshipped as asceticism.” Forster then added that “a Gothic statue implies celibacy, just as a Greek statue implies fruition.”\(^2\) As we shall see, this purported absence of fecundity—not only understood narrowly as monastic abnegation, but also in the wider sense of cultural fallowness—loomed large in the periodizing of the Middle Ages. But Forster did not stop there: instead, in the final chapter, he announced Italam petimus (a phrase, seemingly evocative of Virgil, invoked several decade before by the poet and Renaissance scholar John Addington Symonds), returning to Florence where Lucy elopes with the far less Gothic George Emerson. This marked the conclusion to both a period and a novel, as Forster tellingly titled his last chapter “The End of the Middle Ages.”\(^3\)

\(^3\) Forster, Room with a View, 237.
It is hardly news that the Middle Ages has often been treated in antagonistic fashion by modern interpreters. Yet these examples are not merely designed to demonstrate that periodization has always been with us, or that—whether around the turn of the twentieth century or the turn of the twenty-first—dividing the past has expressed the tastes, anxieties, and worldviews of the present. Instead, they also illuminate a tortuous genealogy that confirms the inherent slipperiness of the very periodizing terms we use. For Woolf, Forster, and others of their ilk belonged to a literary “period” that, not without reason, came to be labeled Modernism. As summarized in an elegant essay by the American intellectual historian David Hollinger, capital-M Modernism, that loosely defined literary, artistic, and philosophical movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, has always stood in ambivalent relation to modernity as periodized construction—a relationship made all the more confusing by the advent of self-conscious “post-modernisms” in the 1970s and 1980s. As Hollinger remarks, mid-twentieth-century intellectuals understood Modernism as a reaction against notions of rationality and progress that supposedly arose during the eighteenth-century Enlightenment and were then consolidated by nineteenth-century liberalism and positivism. In his words, diverse figures from Lionel Trilling to Carl Schorske celebrated such Modernists for “see[ing] the dark side of what came to be called the modernization process.” Yet with the advent of a new movement that identified itself in appropriately hyphenated and periodized terms as “post-modernism,” and likewise proclaimed its opposition to the purported rationality and positivism of the Enlightenment, capital-M modernism found itself curiously elided with Enlightenment itself. As

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Hollinger notes in a humorous caricature of this view, “all those folks who thought everything had changed on or about December 1910 were kidding themselves. There was a big break, all right, but it did not take place in Bloomsbury on the eve of World War I. It took place in Paris after 1968.” In short, as has happened repeatedly from the Neoterics of the Hellenistic age to the present, the moderns found themselves no longer modern.

More than a simple tale of generational change, this story confirms what so many other narratives in intellectual history have also demonstrated: although exceptionalist in its rhetoric, modernity has always conveyed multitudes. In the last two centuries, the modern has been everything from a reaction against Enlightenment to a defense of Enlightenment; it has been both progressive and hidebound, and has sometimes even read progress itself as hidebound. However, ideological complexities aside, just what it was depended ultimately upon how one divided time. At the present moment, when even aspects of “post-modernity” are spoken of in the past tense without any awareness of grammatical irony, these observations may hardly seem novel. But they suggest a course of research that looks not so much beyond, but rather beneath these endless circles. As argued here, we can only comprehend the periodized perplexities of modernity if we excavate the pre-modern origins of “modern” historical periodization—especially its forgotten antecedents in the centuries before Enlightenment.

Today, we are seemingly inured to the so-called problem of periodization. The questioning and complication of periodized labels have become practiced routine. More often than not, markers of periodization are used with apology, and the apology itself has become something of a cliché. Yet underneath these reflexive qualifications it remains the case that few issues in contemporary historical scholarship can arouse as much unease and debate—whether

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theoretical, methodological, or ideological—as the division of time. Nowhere is this clearer than in the seeming demise of that old tripartite schema of dividing the past (evoked, as we saw above, by E.M. Forster)—which once neatly sliced over two full millennia into those discrete and tidy phases of ancient, medieval, and modern.

Over the course of the last half-century, these formerly commonplace distinctions between antiquity, the Middle Ages, and modernity have fallen prey to vigorous challenge and revisionism. Models of cleaving and compartmentalizing historical periods are now routinely critiqued for their purported anachronism, presentism, and teleology. From late antiquity and early modernity to the so-called long nineteenth century, the porous boundaries of new periodizations, weighed down with adjectival modifiers, reflect rising discomfort with what previous generations of scholarship one deemed sharp breaks and decisive turning points.

Meanwhile, comparative, transnational and global histories challenge the applicability of patently European temporalities to the world at large, highlighting the paradoxes inherent in categories like early modern Japan, medieval India, or the classical phase of Mesoamerican culture. Finally, postmodern critiques of modernity’s origin narratives condemn the dialectic of cultural decline and renewal that undergirds the tripartite scheme. Yet even as the vexed nature of dividing time is increasingly acknowledged, everything from macroscopic textbook surveys to

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micro-historical monographs confirms the surprising resilience of temporal division: revisionism notwithstanding, periodization still constitutes a heuristic too useful to fail.\textsuperscript{10}

This state of affairs is perhaps all the more ironic given the professed anti-periodizing tendencies of contemporary historical and humanistic scholarship, and the palpable anxieties experienced by so many scholars when they are forced, proverbially speaking, to draw a line in the temporal sand. In much of current historiographical discourse, periodization is dismissed as a most dangerous \textit{telos}, while teleology now constitutes one of the dirtiest and most damning of terms in the contemporary humanist’s lexicon. Far from embracing the siren call of grand narrative, many practitioners of the sort of history that came of age in the wake of the cultural and linguistic turns now purport instead to qualify, complicate, and contextualize the ostensibly passé model-making of our predecessors. To use our own chosen keywords, we parse, piece apart, and unpack what previous generations of scholarship are said to have built up in far too facile fashion. “Of course this is an oversimplification, but...” has become our chosen form of throat clearing when wading into periodized waters. At least in their rhetoric, many humanistic disciplines uneasily embrace an anti-paradigmatic paradigm. As a consequence, the division of time—often a necessary precondition to such model making—presents a very vexed problem indeed.

At the heart of this study is a simple proposition—namely, that study of the past, whether in early modern Europe or elsewhere, has \textit{ipso facto} always involved the cutting, compartmentalizing, and subdividing of multiple pasts. This may seem almost tautological when stated directly, but it is a point often overlooked in practice. Nevertheless, periodization of this

\textsuperscript{10} For a recent exploration of these themes in the development of the field of English literature, see Ted Underwood, \textit{Why Literary Periods Mattered: Historical Contrast and the Prestige of English Studies} (Stanford, 2013).
sort has always informed attempts at reconciling the realities of human diversity and difference, whether cultural or temporal, with the siren call of system building and universalism. Divisions of time silently underlie nearly all attempts at articulating systems of culture and value, whether philosophical, ethical, political, literary, or aesthetic, to name just a few of many domains. Just as the periodized past has often celebrated certain eras, ages, and epochs as prologues, origin moments, prescient harbingers of light and the like, it has simultaneously relegated supposedly dark or benighted periods to alien status, casting them as foreign to the cultural achievements of a given present. In this fashion, periodization transforms the messy multi-directionality of historical phenomena into a neat series of steps, horizontally flattening its constituent eras while simultaneously casting the ruptures and gulfs between them as sharply vertical ascents or descents.

In recent years, debates over periodization have extended even to the question of how to constitute history itself as a component phase of human evolution and development. In other words, just when did history begin, and how ought we divide it from what we label prehistory? For instance, the medieval historian Daniel Smail has proposed a turn to what he terms “deep history”—which seeks to replace the traditional commencement of historical narratives in the Mesopotamian civilizations of circa 6000 BCE with a time horizon that reaches back far into the Paleolithic. This extension of history’s timescale vis-à-vis its “prehistoric” counterpart seeks to dislodge the centrality of writing—and of corresponding notions of culture and civilization—to the most macroscopic of all periodizations. But in doing so, one must confront the legacy of periodizations far older than our tripartite scheme of ancient/medieval/modern. Smail aims to loosen what he sees as the ongoing “grip of sacred history,” arguing the nineteenth- and twentieth-century narratives of Mesopotamian origins are but secularized substitutions for an
older biblical temporality, insofar as they date and localize the advent of civilization to that very
time and place long assigned to the account of Creation in the Book of Genesis.

This equivalence had consequences for the development of the tripartite scheme in the
nineteenth century and beyond. As Smail argues, once Huttonian geology and Darwinian
evolution made the old sacred timescale increasingly less tenable, the periodizing tropes of
*historia sacra* were transferred onto the triad of ancient/medieval/modern. Hence, antiquity took
over for “the golden era of antediluvian sacred history,” whereas the European Middle Ages
became “a period of darkness so profound as to duplicate the social state of primitive savagery,”
thereby conjuring that “bestial and primitive world of the immediate postdiluvian age.”

The catastrophes wrought by the biblical Flood became the catastrophes inflicted by barbarian
invaders upon the late Roman world. And so part of the ongoing grip of sacred history was not
only the truncation of history’s timespan, but also the creation of a conveniently
“pseudoprimitive Dark Age”—a task made easier by the fact that eighteenth-century stadial
theory had already equated the inhabitants of post-Roman Europe with “the primitive peoples
that figured in conjectural histories and anthropological prehistories.”

Yet even in the twenty-first century, visions of periodization continue to resurrect and
refashion the old inflection points of sacred history. In their 2012 *Axial Age and Its
Consequences*, a collection of essays inspired by the 1949 coinage of the term “Axial Age” by
the philosopher Karl Jaspers, its editors Robert Bellah and Hans Joas argue that the period 800-
200 BCE constituted a fundamental turning point in world history—a period when various texts
central to prominent religious and philosophical traditions were composed and circulated, from
the Hebrew Scriptures and the Platonic Corpus to Confucius’ *Analects* and the Hindu *Bhagavad

Gita. Following Jaspers, Bellah and Joas assert that this axial “pivot” produced nothing less than the concept of transcendence, which would prove so crucial to the development of monotheistic religion. Other interpreters have used this same periodized pivot to argue for ironically opposite effects. In *Le désenchantement du monde*, the French historian and philosopher Marcel Gauchet memorably theorized that this advent of transcendence began an inexorable process of secularization (a story of disenchantment he continued all the way through Calvinist notions of depravity), insofar as it emptied the world of divine immanence and increasingly separated divinity from the human sphere.

In a recent review of Bellah and Joas’ volume, the ancient historian Glen Bowersock—who has himself done much to revise old periodized verities concerning the end of the classical world—has raised important questions over the validity of such periodizing. In doing so, he approvingly cited the contribution of the Egyptologist and cultural theorist Jan Assmann to the volume, particularly Assmann’s observation that Jasper’s periodizing around the Axial and the pre-Axial represented a “secularized version of the Christian opposition of true religion and paganism or *historia sacra* and *historia profana.*” Arguing against the overhasty nature of Axial periodization, Bowersock offered the following perceptive conclusion—itself a warning against the dangers inherent in dividing time:

Historians simply cannot resist chronological units. These units, which rarely have any intrinsic coherence of their own, undoubtedly help us in thinking about the chaotic and unceasing flow of historical events, personalities, ideas, and movements. We speak confidently about decades (the Thirties or the Sixties) or of centuries (the eighteenth century, or even the long eighteenth century) as if such entirely artificial constructs conferred some kind of meaning on what happened in those time frames. Sometimes simultaneity or contemporaneity are actually meaningful, but often they are no more than coincidence.

As the aforementioned discussion of historia sacra and its secularized equivalents suggest, we might extend Bowersock’s observations one step further, and observe that certain chronological units often retain significance even when the systems of meaning that once canonized them as units no longer appear self-evident. Structures of periodizing, their timescales and inflection points, possess an uncanny ability to outlive the underlying cultures, beliefs, and epistemologies that shaped their contours in the first place. As will be argued throughout this study, the very absence of “intrinsic coherence” in the chronological units of periodization have long allowed them to absorb and express historical narratives of startling diversity. This labile quality may boil down to simple prerogatives of use, but it also reflects the fact that periodization is largely a species of tacit knowledge, and hence resists revision insofar as it resides below outright interpretation.

The above examples confirm that periodization—although perhaps as old as historical writing itself—continues to inform some of the most high-stakes of historical debates. Whether these debates take us to the Levant in the first millennium BCE or Bloomsbury in the first decades of the twentieth century, to various degrees they all reflect the anxieties aroused by a

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17 See Carl Becker, *The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth-Century Philosophers* (New Haven, 1932) for a classic exposition of this theme.
specific historical narrative, whose forgotten prehistory constitutes the subject of this study. There have been many periodizations, but one in particular continues to cause us outsized worries. For this scheme of periodizing proved a necessary precondition to the origin narrative of modernity that first arose in those eighteenth-century European contexts, which—not without some periodized handwringing—we still refer to as Enlightenment. The eighteenth-century triumph of this tripartite scheme of ancient/medieval/modern had immense consequences, still felt today: it supported novel theories of historical progress, new notions of civilization and barbarism, nascent theories of secularization, and the invention of concepts of culture and society that bear some family resemblance to our own. Yet the prehistory of this simple scheme was anything but simple. Rather, it caused endless theoretical and ideological problems. In Reinhardt Koselleck’s estimation, the emergence of the tripartite scheme in the second half of the seventeenth century (explored at length in Chapter Five of this study) not only signaled the demise of millennial expectations and old eschatological periodizations, but it also marked nothing less than the arrival of a distinctive brand of modern self-consciousness. As he put it, after the acceptance of that “triad of Antiquity, the Middle Ages, and Modernity...one has lived in Modernity and been conscious of so doing.”

In recent years, scholars have embraced historical narrative as a common thread that runs through otherwise diverse phenomena that pass under the label of Enlightened. In his multivolume study of Edward Gibbon, J.G.A. Pocock has explored at length what he defines as the “Enlightened narrative,” told in various forms by Voltaire, David Hume, William Robertson, Pietro Giannone and others. This “Enlightened narrative” constituted a very precise story of historical development, which traced how modern Europe had escaped from the twin medieval

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scourges of what Gibbon would deem “barbarism and religion,” as it gradually replaced feudal chaos and monkish superstition with a secular, civil, commercial society that practiced polite manners, bracketed religious and ecclesiological conflicts, and regulated itself through the judicious application of political economy and a stable balance of power between its constituent members.\(^{19}\) Ironically, this happy story was voiced but shortly before Jacobinism, Bonapartism, and assorted waves of reaction produced convulsions of violence and disorder on the European continent that would rival even the most lugubrious visions of the barbarous hordes that had once toppled Rome.\(^{20}\)

However, this modernization narrative was not just about the emergence of civil society, or what Jürgen Habermas famously theorized as the eighteenth-century invention of the “public sphere.”\(^{21}\) Instead, as Pocock has explored in the most recent volume of *Barbarism and Religion*, certain varieties of this Enlightened narrative (at least in its Protestant manifestations) told a very specific story in the history of Reformation and post-Reformation theology.\(^{22}\) According to this story, two centuries of liberalizing challenge from Arminians, Latitudinarians, Socinians, Unitarians and the like gradually loosened the strictures of the old Lutheran and Calvinist orthodoxies that first arose in the decades after 1517, leading ultimately to a religious modernity that questioned both the Trinity and the Incarnation. In a digression in his *Decline and Fall*, Edward Gibbon offered a memorable summary of this tidy genealogy. Faulting their “timidity,”


he lamented that most early Protestant reformers had championed both the Trinity and the inviolability of Scripture. In a memorable footnote that squarely condemned the anti-Trinitarian intolerance of Calvin’s Geneva, he declared himself “more deeply scandalized at the single execution of Servetus, than at the hecatombs which blazed in the Auto da Fé of Spain and Portugal.”23 But whereas, whether Protestant or Catholic, “the nature of the tiger was the same” in the sixteenth century, the Protestant tiger was soon “gradually deprived of his teeth and his fangs.” For Gibbon identified a “secret reformation” at work in the reformed churches, spearheaded by the “disciples of Erasmus” (labeled the “father of rational theology”) and gradually continued by Hugo Grotius, Jean Le Clerc, and the Cambridge Latitudinarians, which promoted what he read as a more moderate and rational Christianity.24 From here, Gibbon posited an easy path to resigned and passive skepticism: as he evocatively concluded, at the close of the eighteenth century, “the volumes of controversy are overspread with cobwebs; the doctrine of a Protestant church is far removed from the knowledge or belief of its private members; and the forms of orthodoxy, the articles of faith, are subscribed with a sigh or a smile by the modern clergy.”25

Hence, whether in its theological or political manifestations, the Enlightened narrative depended upon the precise turning points posited by tripartite periodization. From elegiac accounts of ancient Rome’s succumbing to medieval barbarism to characterizations of both the Reformation and the newly centralized monarchies of early modern Europe as epochal developments, these narratives of modernity’s origins relied, often implicitly, upon precise

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25 Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, IV.54, 37.
demarcations between the ancient, the medieval, and the modern. This vision of Enlightenment’s origin story accords with Dan Edelstein’s recent argument that many eighteenth-century thinkers understood Enlightenment as a category “not epistemological but rather narratological.” According to Edelstein, Enlightenment manifested itself not so much in a new canon of ideas, but rather in second-order shifts in how the history and progress of ideas were narrated. In his pithy formulation, Enlightenment was “not so much a change in the way people thought but rather a change in the way people thought about how people thought.” These second-order shifts pertained not only to religion and politics, but also to how one narrated the progress of learning, science, and the arts, from the supposed revival of letters by Renaissance humanists to the scientific innovations of Copernicus, Galileo, Newton, and the like.

The Enlightened narrative engaged with tripartite periodization in still another way, insofar as the definition of modernity necessitated engagement with antiquity. As Edelstein has posited, it was above all the querelle des Anciens et des Modernes, waged in the French academies in the years around 1700, that constituted the most important stimulant to the emergence of Enlightenment as actor’s category over the course of the following century. In Edelstein’s estimation, by combining a modern narrative of intellectual progress with a valorization of antiquity as the first true siècle des lumières, eighteenth-century philosophes fused the hitherto antithetical stances of the ancients and the moderns. Indeed, dialectics of this sort between antiquity and modernity were hardly exclusive to Enlightenment. As E.R. Curtius

27 Edelstein, Enlightenment, 13.
pointed out long ago, a full-blown *querelle des Anciens et des Modernes* had emerged already by the twelfth century.\(^{29}\) It is hence one of the stranger attributes of European intellectual history that the self-definition of modernity as modernity has always involved obsessive engagement with what various moderns have defined as antiquity. This dialectic persists today. Consider, for instance, the eye-grabbing subtitle of Stephen Greenblatt’s recent account of the Renaissance recovery of the ancient Roman poet Lucretius—a return to antiquity that promises to explain nothing less than “how the world became modern.”\(^{30}\)

However, periodization is not just about narrative building—whether the aforementioned Enlightenment narrative of modernity or otherwise. Rather, it also depends upon that nebulous concept of contextualism, which in turn yokes it to yet another oft-abused index of modernity—i.e. historicism. It is yet another irony of periodizing that the dating of the advent of a mature, modern historicism to the nineteenth century often reads such historicism as a reaction *against* the purportedly ahistorical modernity of the previous century’s Enlightenment.\(^{31}\) Nonetheless, periodization constitutes the oft-overlooked intellectual scaffolding—rather technical and often less glamorous—that has long supported edifices of historicist thought. If we define historicism in admittedly oversimplified terms as predicated upon an awareness of difference, we immediately face two questions of periodizing. First, what units, not just geographic, linguistic, political, economic, or cultural, but also *temporal* constitute viable units of context, within which we can assume a requisite degree of commonality across people, texts, beliefs, etc.? In other words, how homogenous must a given context be to possess a discernable period style or “period


\(^{31}\) For a helpful elucidation of the ambiguous nature of these categories, see Peter Hans Reill, *The German Enlightenment and the Rise of Historicism* (Berkeley, 1975).
“period eye,” and how can such homogeneity be measured?\textsuperscript{32} Granted, this hermeneutic circle quickly leads to a \textit{reductio ad absurdum}. Yet it is nevertheless worth considering the extent to which—for reasons both evidentiary and perspectival—the temporal scope of our accepted periods and contexts only grows wider as we push deeper into the past. While much ink has been spilled elucidating the many differences between temporally neighboring contexts in the recent past (think, for instance, of the stereotyped contextual distinctions we instinctively draw between the America of the 1950s and that of the 1960s), it is rare that the same exactitude is applied to the distant past (consider, for example, how the single adjective “medieval” is asked to perform arduous tasks of contextualization across an entire millennium). In the present, the difficulties of such contextualism are self-evident: it would be a fool’s errand to posit monolithic cultural categories that would offer anything other than a reductive or hackneyed definition of some oft-deployed phrase like “contemporary West.” Yet we are often forced to conjure monoliths of similar temporal scope and scale when sketching contexts in the more distant past—an activity of which the present study is likely guilty as well.

This in turn raises a second, more troubling question of periodization. Once these units of contexts have been established, how can they be linked to one another in coherent fashion? More specifically, how can the narratives such linkages yield avoid rendering comparative judgments across their constituent contexts—judgments that invariably depend upon categories current in the present context that does the narrating?\textsuperscript{33} These ambiguities are evident in the remarkably wide semantic range assumed by the term historicism itself. Thanks above all to Isaiah Berlin, historicism is sometime deemed a Counter-Enlightenment phenomenon, which furnished the

\textsuperscript{32} On the “period eye” as analytical tool, see the classic work of Michael Baxandall, \textit{Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy: A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style} (Oxford, 1972).

intellectual antecedents of modern notions of pluralism. Figures such as Vico and Herder proved the heroes of Berlin’s tale, but even this tale took on an oddly periodized form. As Berlin claimed, Herder was among the first to assert that cultural variety was not only inevitable, but also more desirable than universalism—a claim he then rather oddly bolstered by adding that “the ancient world and the Middle Ages knew nothing” of such a salutary impulse. Even the history of pluralism and heterogeneity itself cannot fully escape the homogenized units of periodization.

Yet there are many historicisms, some of which stray far from the comforting familiarity of cultural pluralism. For instance, setting up historicism as his chief antagonist in his Open Society and Its Enemies, Karl Popper named it the handmaiden of all totalitarian attempts at social engineering, insofar as it reduced history to a set of fixed laws that claimed predictive value for the future.34 Finally, to make matters still murkier, scholars of the past several decades, most notably Amos Funkenstein and Carlo Ginzburg, have pointed out the rich links between modern conceptions of historicism and pre-modern notions of divine accommodation.35 Such a theory, which held that God subtly calibrated his interventions in human history in accordance with the customs and manners of specific ages and peoples, was expressed most programmatically by Augustine, who used it to explain seeming disjunctions between the world of the Old Testament patriarchs and his own contemporary world of early Christianity. If the

God of the former demanded animal sacrifices, whereas the God of the latter did not, this was not mere inconsistency, but rather evidence that different saecula prompted different divine responses—as of which made sense as stages or periods in the master plan of salvation. Hence, even God himself possessed a keen “period eye”—a notion that later found its secularized analogue in Hegel’s *List der Vernunft* or “cunning of reason.” For Augustine and his fellow early Christians, historical contextualism therefore lent credence to a species of supersessionism, itself a teleological narrative that depended upon periodization.

Without wadding directly into endless debates over the nature and merits of historicism, this study will explore the many wrinkles and contradictions in the story of historical context. For periodization is of course dependent upon the contextualization of its constituent periods. But ironically, periodization better fulfills its goal of narrative-building the fewer periods or contexts it allows. Dividing time into antiquity, the Middle Ages, and modernity yields an exceptionally tidy narrative, insofar as reduces the meaningful contexts of history to a mere three. Periodization seeks always to simplify or otherwise abbreviate the contextualizing impulse, and contextualization—to the extent that it must deny the pesky heterogeneity of a given period or era—is already as much an exercise in limitation as enrichment. As a result, dividing time imposes a double limitation or simplification upon historical phenomena: first it must reduce its allowable contexts, and then it must flatten those contexts that remain. Summing up the mathematical paradoxes inherent in this process, Constantin Fasolt has observed that “if the present could really be divided from the past at all, it would have to be divided by as many lines as there are present moments: not one line between one present and one past, but an infinity of lines between an infinity of presents and an infinity of pasts, one for each incremental
movement into the future.”\textsuperscript{36} Of course, carrying any of these operations to their logical extreme would imperil the very intelligibility of our historical narratives. However, it is worth noting that even acts of historical sensitivity and nuance require negotiation and tradeoffs, as historical inquiry must constantly navigate between the Scylla of overweening grand narrative and the Charybdis of incomprehensibility.

The use of periodization as an intellectual straightjacket, today so roundly critiqued, warns us not to read the emergence of contextualism, and with it some variety of “modern” historicity, as a uniformly triumphalist tale. In one sense, at the risk of indulging in hyperbole, the story charted here may count as a tragic one. For it shows how rich and often sensitive investigations of diverse corners of the past—which used imaginative scholarship to unlock multiple pasts from what many once regarded as a monolithic singularity—were ultimately simplified anew. Yet the story is also a timeless one, whose implications are hardly limited to early modern Europe. The making of modern periodizing demonstrates the necessary incongruity between the practice of historical method, dependent upon recognition of the particularity of context, and the requirements of historical theory and historical narrative, which must unite these particularities into something more satisfyingly universal. Although much ink has been spilled in tracing the origins of historical method, historical theory, and their attendant anxieties, the roots of the specific periodizations that give these concepts meaning have rarely been studied in detail.

Indeed, unlike their more illustrious counterparts in science, literature, or the arts, those lucky enough to claim the credit of a first in the domain of historical theory or method are rarely linked to epoch-making turning points. Although so-called priority disputes add both liveliness and vitriol to the history of science, they hardly disturb the more placid annals of historiography.

\textsuperscript{36} Constantin Fasolt, \textit{The Limits of History} (Chicago, 2004), 10.
Periodized phrases like “Newtonian physics” and the “Copernican Revolution” *ipso facto* date and localize themselves, but we possess few such names for the emergence of new historical paradigms. It is all the more surprising that the roots of the most consequential of these historical paradigms remain largely unexplored, even as challenges to its validity have occasioned veritable tidal waves of revisionism. Accordingly, this study reconstructs the forgotten early modern origins of the tripartite division of time into antiquity, the Middle Ages, and modernity—a scheme that first gained widespread acceptance in the eighteenth-century Enlightenment and still constitutes a default framework today.

This task is all the more important given that as we argue over twentieth- or twenty-first century definitions of the “medieval” or the “early modern,” and the proper boundaries between the two, we are grappling with temporalities of patently early modern provenance. Yet the story of their origins is often told only in the barest outlines. It is a long-held trope of early modern scholarship that none other than Petrarch, long styled the first of the moderns, also first conjured the Middle Ages into existence.\(^{37}\) As we are told, Petrarch imagined his *media aetas* as a dark age—a lamentable lacuna between Rome’s fall and her expected return to greatness. Fifteenth-century Italian humanists then added fuller narrative flesh to the scheme that Petrarch first adumbrated. Leonardo Bruni’s *History of the Florentine People* constituted an influential exercise in medieval history, demonstrating how new cities like Florence had risen and flourished in the centuries following the demise of ancient *Romanitas*.\(^{38}\) Still more important to this story was Flavio Biondo, a native of Romagna who worked as a papal secretary and also pursued pioneering antiquarian studies. Biondo’s *Historiarum ab inclinatione Romanorum*

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\(^{37}\) The specific historiography that shaped this view is explored in the next section.

imperii decades or Decades of History from the Decline of the Roman Empire began at Alaric’s sack of Rome and then slogged through the media aetas all the way to the Quattrocento. Not only did Biondo introduce the specific notion of Roman inclinatio or “decline” into humanist historical discourse, but his work also assumed a threefold temporal scheme that anticipated more explicit divisions of time into ancient, medieval, and modern.

But after these confident Italian beginnings, the story of periodization grows murkier. The emergent study of the Middle Ages in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries has long been linked to both confessionalization and state-formation alike, as scholars looked with newfound urgency to the political and religious origins of modern Europe. Although much important work has traced early modern forays into medieval studies, the actual specifics of periodizing in these milieus remain a comparative terra incognita. After this, genealogies of temporal division then extend rather hastily to the Enlightenment, examining how figures like Voltaire, David Hume, William Robertson and others used new notions of stadial theory and philosophical history to fix the transition from antiquity to modernity. This story often reaches its climax with Edward Gibbon, whose Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire made full use of the tripartite scheme, and who (so we are told) finally consigned the Middle Ages to the dustbin it would long occupy in the European historical imagination.

While this constitutes an admittedly simplified view of the standard narrative, it nonetheless recapitulates the truncated story of periodization’s origins we find in many historical studies. Though by no means inaccurate in its particulars, it too reveals its own periodized assumptions and teleologies. As we shall see in subsequent chapters, the story of the origins of our methods of temporal division extend in far more surprising directions, and involve characters

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39 Flavio Biondo, Historiarum ab inclinatione Romanorum imperii decades (Venice, 1483).
and practices that are frequently neglected in standard accounts of European intellectual history. Hence, in what follows, we will consider more closely why early modernity is crucial to the story of historical periodization, and some of the historiographical debates in which this story is still enmeshed.

**Periodizing Time’s Division: Why Early Modernity?**

Early modernity is a loaded term, whose use presupposes that we can identify the parameters of both modernity proper and its nascent or incipient phases. By grammatical necessity, the period between approximately 1400 and 1800 (depending upon how one wishes to periodize) is christened modernity’s prologue, and hence it must reveal a family resemblance to its successor. In short, early modernity must possess some commensurability with the modern—a commensurability that is denied to similarly periodized constructs like the Middle Ages or classical antiquity. As Randolph Starn has warned in critiquing the replacement of the Renaissance with the more amorphous label “early modern,” this “period for our period’s discomfort about periodization,” often replicates the very teleologies it seeks to challenge. Even if this happy period designation is meant to allow “old and new, high and low, texts and contexts, knowledge and power, structure and agency...to mix and mingle in the sun of interdisciplinary tolerance,” it has yet—in Starn’s polemical phrasing—to demolish “crypto- or pseudo-modernization narratives.”40 In Starn’s estimation, far from constituting a kinder, gentler Renaissance, early modernity is perhaps even more Whiggish than that epoch of rebirth it seeks

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to replace, despite its indulgence in what he terms the “notorious Oedipal ritual of Burckhardt bashing.”

While this is not to suggest that we follow Starn’s lead and dispense with the category of early modernity, his indictment of the phrase does invite us to reconsider just what we mean when we speak of a quasi-modernity not quite yet modern. More often than not, we ask for narratives that can run in a straight and simple line from early modernity to modernity proper. And no attribute of the period 1400-1800 is called upon to perform this task more often than its supposed discovery of the past. This assumption does not necessarily deny that a past existed before early modernity; after all, denizens of antiquity and the Middle Ages dwelled upon the temporal past in great and often obsessive detail. But it presupposes that early modernity discovered the pastness of the past—that sense of historical distance that supposedly separates an “us” from a “them,” and imbues the past with its consequent foreignness. Paradoxically, by positing this discovery, we are forced to make early modernity a little less foreign than it otherwise might be.

These are many versions of this story, but the most repeated runs something like this. To modern eyes, renaissance, restoration, and renewal, often expressed using their Latin equivalents renovatio and instauratio, seem perplexing concepts indeed, especially insofar as they are linked to the supposed advent of humanism on the Italian peninsula. As we are told, the humanists of the Quattrocento sought to transform the future by returning to the distant past, and so they excoriated the recent past and bemoaned its supposed stranglehold upon the present. While the first part of the operation required a finely tuned sense of historical distance, the second necessitated some astoundingly ahistorical assumptions. For the past they saw as radically distant

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from the present was in fact a past that never was, and the future they anticipated was equally chimerical. However, slavish imitation soon gave way to sensible intuition: to vary the humanists’ favored Ciceronian dictum ever so slightly, the past could not always be the “teacher of life” or *magistra vitae*, but it still offered the “light of truth” or *lux veritatis*. Humanists failed to recall the ancients back to life again, but they nevertheless reconstructed antiquity as best they could, and in doing so gained a sense of historical perspective that promoted the very cultural advancement they mistakenly first sought in antiquity itself.

Although many features of this tidy story have been challenged in the last half century, one of its key premises is often deemed too uncontroversial to merit mention. This is the claim that the pre-modern past whose alterity early moderns discovered was a past—i.e. a singular entity. Although some portions of this past counted as more exemplary than others, such as those segments of Greco-Roman antiquity that became objects of *renovatio* and *instauratio*, the apprehension of this past has long been characterized in undifferentiated and monolithic terms. Yet as this study seeks to show, it was precisely the discovery of multiple pasts that made early modern historical scholarship a site of such richness and deep contradiction.

However, explorations of these contradictions figure prominently in one of the most recent and most penetrating explorations of early modern historicity. In his aptly titled study of *The Birth of the Past*, Zachary Schiffman has considered the problems spawned by this singular past and its attendant notions of exemplarity. In his estimation, the contextualization of the past produced two related yet seemingly antithetical responses:

As a classical text comes to be seen as specifically Greek or Roman—and, even more so, as referenced to Athens or Ionia, or to republican or imperial Rome—it loses its exemplarity, which dissolves in the solvent of historical and cultural relativism. Indeed, the process of dissolution begins almost immediately
on the discovery of difference...from our modern perspective this process appears dislocating and
disorienting—and surely it was for some—but it offered others an extraordinary opportunity to bridge the
gulf between past and present by means of imitatio.42

According to Schiffman, Renaissance humanists attempted to have their cake and eat it too,
suspending historia in a delicate equipoise where it could remain both lux veritatis and magistra vitae. The act of contextualization—which fractured the past into a multitude of micro-pasts—
necessarily militated against the comforting logic of exemplarity. Something monolithic like the past, radically separate from the present but also devoid of specificity, could easily constitute the “teacher of life.” But as soon as each component of the past acquired a context, it brought with it
the specter of relativism and contingency. Conversely, the more contextual specifics one
acquired, the more one could successfully imitate that past—in other words, the more historicist one’s reading, the more one could harness segments of said past for patently ahistorical ends.
These acts of separation also promoted processes of canon-formation, which judged certain times
more exemplary than others. Hence, the contextualization of exempla, whether classical or
otherwise, necessarily challenged their universal applicability, and thus their very exemplarity.

As early modern scholars began to canonize certain segments of the past, nothing proved
more crucial to the development of periodization than the invention of the canon that we now
label “classical.” Of course, canons often spawn more paradoxes than they solve, and few
canons, whether formed in early modernity or elsewhere, exhibit as much restriction, anxiety, or
boundary policing as that which valorizes Greco-Roman antiquity. As any modern reader
introduced to the so-called classics of the Greco-Latin world almost exclusively through the

42 Zachary Sayre Schiffman, The Birth of the Past (Baltimore, 2011), 143. On these themes see
also the classic essay of George Nadel, “Philosophy of History Before Historicism,” History and
literary products of Periclean Athens and Augustan Rome might sense, defining the classical *ipso facto* presupposes temporal discrimination. Such much lauded “greats” as Sophocles, Thucydides, and Plato (to name but a few) cluster roughly in the former epoch, while Cicero, Virgil, Horace, Livy, Ovid and countless others cluster roughly in the latter. Despite valiant attempts at widening the temporal breadth of this canon, two comparatively meager slices of time, each embracing approximately a century and a half at most, continue to define the reach of the classical in popular imagination. Pre-Socratics and Hellenistic Alexandrians remain as elusive to non-specialists as Silver Latinity, the Second Sophistic, and the many worlds of late antiquity. Given our persistent tendency to both flatten and narrow the ancient, it perhaps seems startling that the temporal distance between, say, Herodotus and Justinian or Thucydides and Procopius is nearly the same as that which stands between our own world and such hoary events as the Norman Conquest or the beginning of the Crusades. In the words of the classicist Charles Martindale, echoed by Richard Thomas in his study of the reception of Virgil, we have long displayed a distortive tendency to perceive antiquity as a something of a “time-free zone.”

Although the ultimate triumph of this narrowed and flattened canon would not have been possible without early modern classical scholarship (or at least its eighteenth- and nineteenth-century heirs), many early modern scholars approached the classical canon in decidedly different fashion. While traditional interpretations of humanism detail a frenetic march to return *ad fontes*, to older, deeper, and hence more exemplary antiquities, many humanists embraced a capacious vision of the ancient past that stretched far beyond Periclean Athens or Augustan Rome. In doing

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43 See Richard Thomas, *Virgil and the Augustan Reception* (Cambridge, 2001), 93-4. See also Charles Martindale, “Descent into Hell: Reading Ambiguity, or Virgil and the Critics,” *Proceedings of the Virgil Society* 21 (1993): 111-50. Thomas also approvingly invokes Martindale’s reminder at 122-3 that “Servius was as far from Virgil as we are from Shakespeare.”
so, they did not posit a single canonical past, but rather encountered a multitude of pasts defined by dialogue with one another—including many canonized as “past” already in antiquity itself.\textsuperscript{44}

Ironically, although the tripartite scheme of ancient/medieval/modern depends upon the flattening of antiquity into a time-free zone, or at least a culturally homogenous whole, early modern periodization sprang from a decidedly different—if not indeed opposite recognition—namely, the realization that antiquity contained temporal multitudes. As unlikely as it seems, in this respect early modern scholars share not a few similarities with those revisionists who have attempted in recent decades to reform and widen the discipline of Classical Studies.

Nowhere is this clearer than in the humanist sense of antiquity as lived tradition—a sense which today has done much to reanimate the study of classical reception. In a recent essay, Mary Beard elegantly summed up the layered nature of the classical tradition and its reception—a process of sedimentation that aptly captures the kind of scholarship practiced by so many of the early modern historians and philologists examined in this study. As she observed, “the study of the classics is the study of what happens in the gap between antiquity and ourselves. It is not only the dialogue that we have with the culture of the classical world; it is also the dialogue that we have with those who have gone before us who were themselves in dialogue with the classical world.” In her estimation, “the classics are a series of ‘Dialogues with the Dead,’ but the dead do not include only those who went to their graves two thousand years ago.”\textsuperscript{45} It is possible to take this one step further, and to observe that our own debates over the boundaries between antiquity and modernity are derived in no small measure from neglected yet surprisingly similar debates

\textsuperscript{44} On this last point see especially Salvatore Settis, “Did the Ancients Have an Antiquity? The Idea of Renaissance in the History of Classical Art,” in Language and Images of Renaissance Italy, ed. Alison Brown (Oxford, 1995), 27-50.

\textsuperscript{45} Mary Beard, “Do Classics Have a Future?” in Confronting the Classics: Traditions, Adventures and Innovation (London, 2013), 11.
that raged amongst the humanists of early modern Europe. Their struggles remain our struggles, even if our scholarly idioms have changed.

Even if challenges to periodization reflect our own period allergy to overarching *teloi* and drastic change, the relationship between antiquity, the Middle Ages, and the Renaissance had already aroused considerable polemical dispute long before the advent of the cultural and linguistic turns. In the 1930s, the Belgian historian Henri Pirenne famously challenged the significance of the *Völkerwanderung* and the fall of Rome, arguing instead for a continuity in the postclassical Mediterranean that remained unaffected until the rise of Islam and the Carolingians.\(^46\) The impact of these new paradigms is visible, albeit obliquely, in a rather facetious introductory remark offered by Arnaldo Momigliano at the beginning of his *Conflict between Paganism and Christianity in the Fourth Century*: “I may perhaps begin with a piece of good news,” he announced. “In this year 1959 it can still be considered an historical truth that the Roman Empire declined and fell.”\(^47\)

This change of fashion was directly related to another contested turning point—whose allusive potential had proven so evocative to E.M. Forster. The early twentieth century also witnessed the dramatically labeled “revolt of the medievalists,” inaugurated in part by the 1927 publication of Charles Homer Haskins’ *Renaissance of the Twelfth Century*. At the beginning of his study, Haskins noted approvingly that scholars had begun to sprinkle renaissances across the Middle Ages, from the Carolingian and Ottonian revivals to that of the twelfth century, thereby

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downplaying the primacy of that most famous moment of renewal in *Quattrocento* Italy.\(^{48}\) As Haskins argued in what became a potent rallying cry to subsequent generations of medievalists, “the great Renaissance [i.e. that of Italian humanism] was not so unique or so decisive as has been supposed.” Moreover, “the contrast of culture was not nearly so sharp as it seemed to the humanists and their modern followers, while within the Middle Ages there were intellectual revivals whose influence was not lost to succeeding times, and which partook of the same character as the better known movement of the fifteenth century.”

To Haskins, “renaissance” still comprised a convenient shorthand for denoting moments of revival. But if early modern humanists saw *their* renaissance as fundamentally new, they remained indebted to the Middle Ages for their very notions of *renovatio*.

These reinterpretations motivated one of the most influential mid-century studies of Renaissance historicism, Erwin Panofsky’s *Renaissance and Renascences in Western Art* (published in 1960 but based upon lectures first delivered in the 1940s). While Panofsky acknowledged Haskins’ contention that the Middle Ages contained innumerable moments of classical revival, he christened them mere transitory “renascences,” once again restricting the exclusive honor of capital-R Renaissance to the Italian *Quattrocento* and the onset of early modernity. According to Panofsky, the most salient point of discontinuity between the medieval and the Renaissance was located—unsurprisingly enough—in the latter’s newfound apprehension of historical difference. Whereas the ahistorical “renascences” of the *medium*

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\(^{48}\) For more recent assessments of these moments of revival, see the essays collected in *Renaissances before the Renaissance: Cultural Revivals of Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, ed. Warren Treadgold (Stanford, 1984).

\(^{49}\) Charles Homer Haskins, *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge, MA, 1927), 5-6. For a reassessment of Haskin’s project, drawn from the proceedings of a conference to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the publication of his magnum opus, see *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century*, ed. Robert L. Benson and Giles Constable (Cambridge, MA, 1982).
aevum had “left antiquity unburied,” the newly historicized Renaissance apprehended antiquity as truly ancient, and hence “stood weeping at its grave.” Through the discovery of this distance that separated antiquity and the present, capital-R Renaissance secured the permanence of its own revival.  

For Panofsky, the Renaissance did not constitute a decisive harbinger of modernity because it pursued cultural renewal along classicizing lines; on the contrary, plenty of medieval milieus revealed identical programs. Rather, the modernity of the Renaissance resided in its apprehension of the classical past as past and its decision to pursue classical revival nonetheless. Both a concession to, and revision of, the theses put forth by those revolting medievalists of the early twentieth century, Panofsky’s approach signaled yet another variation on that longstanding impulse to read contemporary historicism back into the early modern world. In this respect, it also informed important mid-century work on the Renaissance invention of the Middle Ages, itself crucial to the background of this study. In 1946 Theodore Mommsen (a descendant of the nineteenth-century German classical scholar of the same name) published a study that remains a classic in the history of periodization. Entitled “Petrarch’s Conception of the Dark Ages,” Mommsen’s essay named Petrarch the intellectual godfather of the tripartite scheme of dividing time.

Through analysis of Petrarch’s works and correspondence, Mommsen further claimed that Petrarch was the first to characterize this medieval period as one of darkness—to render the medium aevum a saeculum tenebrum, and hence to saddle it with that derogatory designation it had only begun to shake off in the early twentieth century. To Mommsen, the modernity of

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50 Erwin Panofsky, Renaissance and Renascences in Western Art (New York, 1960), 113.
Petrarch’s conception resided in a striking act of inversion, indicative of nothing less than a new theory of history. For whereas “darkness” had hitherto designated the pre-Christian world, Petrarch purportedly reversed the equation, transferring such darkness to the manifestly Christian Middle Ages while recasting classical pagan antiquity as an epoch of light. In this fashion, Mommsen championed his own brand of Renaissance exceptionalism. Although he explicitly agreed with Haskins that it was improper to label the twelfth century and similar medieval revivals benighted periods of darkness, he nonetheless argued that the Italian Renaissance fundamentally differed from its Carolingian, Ottonian, and twelfth-century counterparts. For the former did not simply revivify antiquity, but, following in Petrarch’s footsteps, it championed a “complete break with the traditions of the times immediately preceding.” Moreover, this break presaged a radical rejection of the Christian providential scheme of history, rendering the light darkness and the darkness light. While he allowed that a “sharp line of demarcation between the Renaissance and the preceding period” might seem unpalatable “from our modern point of view,” Mommsen was not concerned with interrogating the efficacy of periodization per se. Instead, arguing for the primacy of “ideas,” he championed Petrarch’s seemingly secular division of time as a harbinger of modernity. Accordingly, drawing in part upon the Italian Neo-Hegelian Benedetto Croce, he offered a sharp distinction between the supposed religious universalism of medieval historical thought and the secular, particular nature of its modern counterpart.

As we shall see, this story of incipient secularization and modernization continues to color—and not infrequently distort—latter-day approaches to early modern periodization.

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52 Mommsen, “Petrarch’s Conception,” 242.
Ironically, Mommsen’s ascription of the origins of secular modernity to the Petrarchan invention of the *medium aevum* stemmed in part from a response to threats against the periodized preeminence of Renaissance itself. If Haskins and others had denied the Renaissance’s monopoly of classical revival, Mommsen and Panofsky could still keep it exceptional by proclaiming either its incipient secularism or proto-historicism. Indeed, it has long constituted a singular temptation to read the so-called Enlightened narrative back into the seventeenth and sixteenth centuries, or plant its seeds still deeper in the *Quattrocento* and *Trecento*. Yet the history of historical thought often follows more tortuous and circuitous paths—precisely the sort of paths that periodization has long sought to clear and straighten.

**Intellectual History, the History of the Book, and Methods**

This study approaches the question of dividing time in a fashion somewhat different from the works discussed above. Although a rich array of literature has explored early modern perceptions of the past with reference to changing cultural, confessional, and proto-nationalistic concerns, few have linked these perceptions to the more precise science of periodization, and still fewer have examined the many connections between periodization and the long history of reading methods. However, with the efflorescence of print and encyclopedism at the onset of the sixteenth century, periodization and compilation developed alongside one another; the ambitious and seemingly endless sorting, dating, and classification of textual inheritances not only produced still larger bibliographies and canons, but also shaped evolving visions of the “order of times” or *ordo temporum*. At the same time, as recent research in the growing field of the history of books and reading has demonstrated, even some of the most innovative of early modern
textual practices—from popular new methods of glossing, annotating, and summarizing to the recondite sciences of conjectural emendation and higher criticism—drew upon deep accretions of textual ordering developed in contexts both late antique and medieval. Such tools of bibliography and compilatio were themselves refined across late antiquity and the Middle Ages to sort and sift increasingly alien ancient pasts, just as they would later furnish early modern scholars with methods for separating multiple antiquities from their various postclassical heirs.

Hence, this study explores an issue of fundamental importance to intellectual history through the lens of the history of the book. In doing so, it builds upon a burgeoning literature in the history of books and reading, which has done so much to transform the study of early modern Europe in the past few decades. By employing this vast accumulation of new insights into how early moderns read their books, it applies these insights to the question of why they read, glossed, catalogued, and compiled in such obsessive and seemingly indefatigable fashion. There are two principal reasons for adopting this approach. First, book history considerably widens the domain of intellectual history by multiplying sites of reception: as a result, we need not trace the transmission of ideas purely through finished and formal texts, but also through acts of individual and often idiosyncratic reading, preserved in everything from marginalia and manuscript notebooks to the records of lectures copied down by students. This also serves to democratize fields that have formerly focused on illustrious individuals. For while many of the acts of reading analyzed in the following pages were performed by prominent philologists, historians, and bibliographers (some of whose annotations were already greatly valued by their contemporaries), this study also draws extensively upon the marginalia and manuscript notes of anonymous, ostensibly less exceptional readers, whose readings may at first glance seem but paraphrastic or laconic. Yet on the level of reading, this study puts the known and the
anonymous, the famous and obscure in constant dialogue, showing how both participated in and precipitated shifts in approaches to the past.

Second, and more importantly, intellectual history and book history must be brought together because so many early moderns did not simply record their thoughts in books, but instead also thought *with* books. This study seeks to recover the status of the codex as both method and metaphor, examining how the structuring principles of books and *bibliothecae* alike imposed forms of *ordo* upon seemingly extra-textual phenomena, historical time included. Although early modern bibliographical science may seem far removed from modern debates over those contested grand narratives linking past and present, the present study seeks to show that even the most abstruse of reading methods can schematize the past, unexpectedly shaping those temporal maps that still underpin our own projects of dividing time. In early modern Europe, the “order of books” or *ordo librorum* was perhaps just as important as the contents of individual *libri*. As a result, the myriad links between texts and temporality—canonized by the many bibliographers and compilers profiled in the following pages—forced lasting parallels between *ordo librorum* on the one hand and the “order of times” or *ordo temporum* on the other, a symbiosis whose legacies we still grapple with today.

Moreover, the story of a concept like periodization must begin with tacit apprehensions of difference, before turning to questions of outright nomenclature and its explicit articulation. For this reason, so much of the evidence gathered here is drawn from the realm of reading—often fragmentary and inchoate by its very nature—as opposed to that which we might more conventionally understand as textual production. The division of the past was first and foremost

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a readerly response. As we shall see so many times throughout this study, periodized reading constituted a natural, dialectical response to texts that sought to do precisely the opposite—i.e. to unify and universalize the past. Furthermore, although such traditions have long been viewed as canons of texts or sets of overtly articulated ideas, this study approaches them as something far more complex: a series of practices whose changes and continuities alike expressed themselves as tacit knowledge.

By tracing the ongoing early modern reception of the Latinate tradition, this study proceeds from the decades around 1500 to approximately 1700. It is divided into two parts, and while it is not organized in rigidly chronological fashion, the center of gravity of each chapter slowly moves across these two centuries. Part I, titled “The Order of Books” or *Ordo Librorum*, consists of three chapters that trace the fortunes of bibliography in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. These chapters offer case studies in what the dissertation terms temporal disjunction—i.e. the growing awareness that the past was replete with problem sites and fissures, and that not all of its temporal components flowed smoothly or coherently into one another. Chapter I opens with the 1545 publication of the Swiss bibliographer Konrad Gesner’s massive *Bibliotheca universalis* or *Universal Library*, which boldly promised to catalogue every book ever written in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. It then examines how Gesner’s predecessors and successors—including Johannes Trithemius, Raffaello Volterranus, Lilius Giraldus, Petrus Crinitus, Jean Bodin, and John Bale, along others—dealt with problems of temporal ordering in their diverse bibliographic endeavors. Chapter II turns to perhaps the most problematic species of temporal disjunction in early modern bibliography, especially in a world riven by increasing religious and confessional strife. It examines how scholars both Protestant and Catholic reconstructed that vexed transition from pagan antiquity to *tempora Christiana* or “Christian
times” in the fourth and fifth centuries CE. This chapter traces the early modern reception of three late antique Latin authors whose religious commitments proved particularly ambiguous or problematic—namely, the poet Claudian, the statesman Quintus Aurelius Symmachus, and the historian Ammianus Marcellinus. Chapter III offers a final case study in temporal disjunction, as it examines how early modern scholars (including Bonaventura Vulcanius, Isaac Casaubon, Henri Estienne, and others), began to theorize overtly about the nature of textual transmission across time. It traces how scholars began to mine late antique and medieval compilatory works (including Isidore of Seville’s *Etymologies*, Macrobius’ *Saturnalia*, and Servius’ Virgil commentaries) for fragments of otherwise lost ancient authors, thereby putting principles of temporal multiplicity into practice.

Part II, titled “The Order of Times” or *Ordo Temporum*, examines how, in the decades after 1600, the problems wrought by temporal disjunction promoted new thinking about temporal division. Chapter IV, set amid emergent Cartesian and Baconian challenges to humanist historical culture, traces how various late humanists used the late antique genre of universal history or *historia universalis* to craft a new yet deeply traditional vision of temporal plurality and postclassical time. Specifically, it offers in-depth case studies of two prominent scholars (the Huguenot Isaac Casaubon and the Dutch Arminian G.J. Vossius) who systematically extended their classical scholarship into the postclassical realms of late antiquity and the Middle Ages, and articulated highly programmatic defenses for their doing so. Chapter V considers how these new seventeenth-century notions of postclassical time and the visions of cultural history they spawned helped formalize tripartite periodization. This chapter explores how experiments in *historia literaria* or the “history of letters” reapplied ancient periodizing schemes (including organic life-cycle metaphors and notions of golden, silver, and bronze ages) to the transition
from classical Rome to medieval Europe, and the corresponding transmutation of the Latin language it entailed. Moving between philology and history, this chapter ends with a close reading of the late-seventeenth-century German compiler Christopher Cellarius’ *Historia universalis in antiquam, medii aevii, ac novam divisa* (*Universal History Divided into Ancient, Medieval, and Modern Times*)—a now-neglected text that did more than any other book to canonize tripartite periodization for a wide pan-European readership. Finally, the conclusion to this study brings us to the world of eighteenth-century Enlightenment, briefly exploring how the tripartite scheme buttressed new narratives of the origins of European modernity, while also highlighting both its deep debts to past precedents and the necessary artificiality of its temporal constructs.
CHAPTER ONE

From Books to Bibliothecae:

Temporal Disjunction and the Problem of Canon-Formation

Universalism and the Bibliographic Imagination

In 1545, the Swiss physician, natural historian and bibliographer Konrad Gesner published his aptly yet quixotically titled Bibliotheca universalis, a massive encyclopedia that stretched to thousands of pages and purported to catalogue all known authors and texts who wrote or were written in Latin, Greek, or Hebrew. The vastness of its scale was counterbalanced by the straightforwardness of its method: in entry after entry, arrayed alphabetically, Gesner offered either a brief identification of a given author or a quick bibliographic précis concerning the author’s text and its transmission history, or often some combination of both. Some entries, laconic in the extreme, filled but two or three lines, while others expanded into whole paragraphs. Some merely recorded the dates when certain authors flourished, while others traced published editions of their texts through the printing houses of Basel, Frankfurt, Paris, and Lyon. Moderns stood side by side with ancients, Gesner’s fellow Protestants appeared with Catholics, Jews, and pagans, and the famous and canonical shared pages with the forgotten and obscure. Gesner’s exhaustive compilation remains one of the more curious specimens of early modern textual culture, not on account of its rather pedantic contents, but rather due to its very claim to
 universality. More than any other text, it embodied that Renaissance dream of the universal library, reflecting a daring bullishness concerning the renovation and resuscitation of lost traditions. At the same time, it encapsulated the universalizing impulse to categorize and classify that would fuel so many latter day critiques of Renaissance humanism. It aspired, in Roger Chartier’s apt formulation, to a dream that so many early modern compilers also shared: a “library without walls.”

Whatever the actual novelties of the Bibliotheca universalis, the very last thing it purported to be was novel. Instead, Gesner showcased numerous precedents for his bibliographical endeavors. Nor was this merely a case of early modern scholarship cloaking innovation under the guise of authoritative tradition. Although Gesner’s bold assertion of bibliographic universality possessed few explicit precedents, the basic bibliographical operations he employed knew a long and venerable history that stretched all the way back to antiquity itself. Bibliography was hence a temporal endeavor in a double sense: not only did it seek to fuse the products of diverse eras and times into a single whole, but it also performed a continuous revision of living traditions that inhabited tempora as diverse as the individual books it catalogued. In terms both theoretical and practical, bibliography simultaneously unified and divided time. Such temporal distinctions are aptly reflected in the series of dichotomies that Gesner incorporated into the long title of the Bibliotheca universalis itself. Entitling the

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57 See Chartier, The Order of Books.
Bibliotheca the “richest catalogue of all writers” (*catalogus omnium scriptorum locupletissimus*), Gesner asserted that it featured authors both “extant and not extant” (*extantium et non extantium*), “ancient and more recent up to this day” (*veterum et recentiorum in hunc usque diem*), “learned and unlearned” (*doctorum et indoctorum*), and “published and still hiding in libraries” (*publicatorum et in Bibliothecis latentium*). Promising to range without discrimination across these four categories, Gesner simultaneously linked divisions of temporality (expressed in his juxtaposition of *veteres* and *recentiores*) to such allied bibliographical operations as the evaluation of textual quality (i.e. the *docti* and *indocti*) and the reconstruction of textual transmission (i.e. the *extantes* and *non extantes*).

Gesner’s overriding concern with transmission, captured in his evocative depiction of texts “hiding in libraries,” prompted him to cast his preface to the Bibliotheca universalis as a mini-treatise on the long history of bibliography. Seeking out ancient antecedents for his own project, he invoked everything from the famous library of Ptolemaic Alexandria to the massive book collection assembled by the church father Origen. But he reserved his most passionate language for laments concerning the inherent fragility of transmission itself. And so he bemoaned both the quality and quantity of books lost, “some consumed by flames and the tumult of wars, some corrupted by neglect, moths, and old age itself, and very many squandered by the neglect and hatred of letters shown by barbarians.” Gesner used his final proffered cause of the destruction of books to connect transmission and textual division, as he equated the “barbarians who formerly invaded Italy” with “the Turks and others of the same religion who invaded

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58 Konrad Gesner, *Bibliotheca universalis...extantium et non extantium, ueterum et recentiorum in hunc usque diem, doctorum et indoctorum, publicatorum et in Bibliothecis latentium* (Zurich, 1545).
Greece, and today possess almost the whole world besides part of Europe.”

Linking this purported contemporary threat to textual transmission with the loss of textual materials occasioned over a millennium earlier by the demise of Rome, Gesner then issued a passionate appeal to members of the international _respublica literaria_ to collect and preserve books.

By staging this historical drama of textual loss—a continual struggle between books and “barbarism” pivoted around epochal turning points like the fall of ancient Rome and the capture of its modern heir Constantinople—Gesner historicized the need for bibliographical compilation, arguing that only the revival of an ancient art could forestall modern repetitions of ancient cataclysms. As Gesner went on to explain, modern threats to transmission did not emanate exclusively from external forms of “barbarism.” Even as the newly regnant “typographic art” had safeguarded and circulated so many texts, it had also deleteriously affected other engines of transmission, often glutting the market with the “trifles and useless writings” of contemporaries, while leaving the forgotten texts of “the ancient and the better” to perish. Hence, the vagaries of transmission followed a broad narrative arc: from the end of the Roman world to the invention of print, alternating deficiencies and surpluses of textual material posed problems that only a durable _ordo librorum_ could solve. Indeed, it was no accident that Gesner’s historical account of transmission invoked precisely those inflection points that would come to define the tripartite

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59 Gesner, _Bibliotheca universalis_, sig. *2v-3r: “Quandoquidem igitur tot et tam pretiosi im omni philosophia libri paulatim amissi sunt, partim flammis aut bellorum tumultibus consumpti, partim ipsa uetustate tineis ac situ corrupti, plurimi uero dissipati negligentia et odio in literas barbarorum, quorum ali olim Italianam inuasere, Turci uero et eiusdem religionis ali barbarissimi Graeciam, imo uniuersam pene orbem praeter aliquam Europae partem etiam hodie tenent: omnes proecto bonos uiros, quibuscasuque respub. literaria cordi est, summa contentione anniti decent, ut pauci etiam illi optimi libri, soli adhuc nobis superstites, et diuinitus ut uidetur per multa saecula conserusati, incolumes custodianit, neque per incuriam nostram pessum eant.”

60 Gesner, _Bibliotheca universalis_, sig. *3r: “Quamuis enim ars typographica librorum conservationi nata uidetur, ut plurimum tamen nostri temporis hominum nugae, ut inutilia scripta, uetustis et melioribus neglectis, in lucem eduntur: quare pro manuscriptis saltem libris opus est Bibliothecis.”
division of time into antiquity, the Middle Ages, and modernity. By invoking the barbarian
invasions of Rome on the one hand and the fall of Constantinople and the invention of print on
the other, Gesner selected purportedly world-historical events that others would later use to
articulate both the ancient/medieval divide and its medieval/modern counterpart. As strange as it
might seem, in the middle of the sixteenth century universal bibliography provided some of the
clearest adumbrations of modern historical periodization, far more so than many of the narrative
histories proper produced during the same decades.

As a champion of bibliographic universalism, Gesner knew that a multitude of other
worlds stood between Greco-Roman antiquity and the birth of the modern typographic arts. And
so he noted that his Bibliotheca universalis hardly neglected the vast world of medieval Latinity.
Specifically, Gesner advertised his reliance upon the compilatory endeavors of the German
Benedictine Johannes Trithemius, renowned for his varied exploits in humanism, historiography,
bibliography and occultism. Continuing those traditions of assembling compendia de viris
illustribus or “on illustrious men,” inaugurated in late antiquity by Jerome, Gennadius, Isidore,
and others, Trithemius published his Liber de scriptoribus ecclesiasticis in 1494. This
compendium boasted a wide variety of medieval writers, and so Gesner affirmed that he had
used Trithemius to catalogue “those barbarous books from a previous age (superiore saeculo),
composed by monks and others.”62 Positing a barbarous superius saeculum somewhere between
his antiqui and recentiores, Gesner trumpeted the ecumenical range of his Bibliotheca, which did
not simply draw inspiration from ancient Rome and Alexandria, but also appropriated late

61 Johannes Trithemius, De scriptoribus ecclesiasticis (Basel, 1494).
62 Gesner, Bibliotheca universalis, sig. *3v: “Plurimi hodie authores omnibus notissimi sunt, qui
procudubio post centum annos paucissimis cogniti in tenebris latebunt. Barbaros libros, cum ab
aliis tum a monachis compositos superiore saeculo, quorum plurimi ex Io. Trittemio
commemorantur, quo uolet cancellare, et obelisco notare poterit, ne saepius in eosdem incidens
fastidiat.”
antique and medieval legacies. Deploying a litotic formulation that so many early modern scholars would later use to characterize the Middle Ages, Gesner pithily declared that “it is not unusual that writers of barbarous style (barbari styli scriptores) fill their pages with things worth knowing for someone of sharp intellect.”

Gesner made his engagement with earlier bibliographic tradition still clearer in the final portion of his preface. Here he introduced a source list with three separate headings: the first enumerated the catalogues of specific libraries he had consulted, the second consisted of general bibliographies from which he had “gathered sparsely” (including the works of Raphael Volterranaus, Petrus Crinitus, and Lilius Giraldus), and the third and last highlighted “catalogues of writers” Gesner “inserted into the Bibliotheca in whole.” This final category constituted the fundamental building blocks of Gesner’s enterprise, and included just three select items: the De viris illustribus of Jerome and his continuators, a collection of vitae assembled by the Frankfurt jurist and biographer Johannes Fichardus, and the aforementioned catalogue of Johannes Trithemius.

Gesner then turned to Trithemius’ bibliography in greater detail. Just as he acknowledged the patchwork quality of his own Bibliotheca, so he also noted the inherently compilatory nature of Trithemius’ bibliography, asserting that by reading Trithemius he had ipso facto read a great many other bibliographical collections. As he explained, “since Trithemius employed the catalogues of other writers in his own work, including those of Prosper, Honorius, Sigebert, Richard de Bury, Philippus Ribotus, and others, I have not labored greatly in chasing after

63 Gesner, Bibliotheca universalis, sig. *3v: “Certe non raro quanquam barbari styli scriptores res cognitu dignas acri ingenio chartis manda runt.”
64 Gesner, Bibliotheca universalis, sig. *6v: Gesner adds the heading “Libri, ex quibus sparsim quaedam decerpsi” and then lists out references to Volterranaus, Crinitus, and Giraldus. Gesner’s final heading, which includes Jerome (and his continuators), Fichardus, and Trithemius, is entitled “Catalogi scriptorum, quos integros inseruimus nostro.”
them.” Other than switching Trithemius’ use of temporal ordo to his own preference for alphabetical arrangement (a decision of great consequence to the history of historico-bibliographic narrative, explored below), he had simply “transferred such sources in whole from Trithemius’ work into my own.”65 In this fashion, Gesner acknowledged his deep debts to a long train of medieval bibliographers, chroniclers and compilers, including the twelfth-century theologian Honorius Augustodunensis, author of a De luminaribus ecclesiae, the twelfth-century Benedictine chronicler Sigebert of Gembloux, whose De scriptoribus ecclesiasticis continued the efforts of Gennadius and Jerome, the fourteenth-century Carmelite Philippus Ribotus, who catalogued many of the luminaries of his order, and the English Benedictine and bibliophile Richard de Bury, whose aptly titled Philobiblon memorialized the rich achievements of late medieval book collecting and library science.

Gesner’s use of Trithemius in accessing the world of Honorius and Sigebert was more than a convenient bibliographical shortcut. Rather, it suggested that the Bibliotheca universalis was as universal in its sources as its contents, as it could range without discrimination from the grammarians of Hellenistic Alexandria to the monastic centers of twelfth-century Europe. But perhaps even more importantly, Gesner’s acknowledgment of this shortcut (framed as a defense of his decision not to consult Trithemius’ sources directly) highlights the extent to which he conceived of his Bibliotheca universalis, and bibliography more generally, as a deeply traditional project. His bibliography quite literally depended upon a continuous process of “handing down” or traditio, and so he affirmed the uniquely layered quality of bibliographical compilation. Even

if Gesner’s proffered universality marked a decisive new turn in the history of *ordo librorum*, its novelty depended upon the material necessity of compilatory precedents.

Gesner did not merely assemble texts and authors; instead, in second-order fashion, his bibliography also assembled and engulfed bibliographies. In this he was no different from his predecessors, or practitioners of universal history and similar genres, who continued predominantly late antique traditions through the Middle Ages and into early modernity. Such projects, as we shall see in far greater detail throughout this study, were marked by operations that might best be characterized as semi-conservative replication, insofar as they inevitably engulfed and replicated the succession of earlier compendia they continued and revised. Both the syntheses and tensions inherent in semi-conservative replication played a central role in the story of dividing time. In a more practice sense, replication and revision of this sort required extraordinary diligence, and so Gesner’s indefatigable work habits soon became legendary, and remained so even after his death. For Gesner did not only catalogue books, but he also applied the same compilatory operations to natural history, producing similarly massive encyclopedias of both plants and animals.⁶⁶ A fitting response to the bibliographic diligence that Gesner brought to bear upon flora, fauna, and books alike is best captured in a reading of Gesner’s collected letters by the seventeenth-century Zurich librarian Conrad Pfister. The librarian’s notes reveal numerous expressions of admiration for Gesner’s great *industria* or “industry.” For instance, not only did Pfister marvel that “the *Herbarium* of Gesner was a work of great labor,” but he also extolled “the industry of Gesner in the naming of plants.”⁶⁷

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⁶⁶ On Gesner as natural historian, and bibliographic approaches to natural history more generally, see Brian W. Ogilvie, *The Science of Describing: Natural History in Renaissance Europe* (Chicago, 2006).

⁶⁷ *Epistolarum medicinalium Conradi Gesneri, philosophi et medici Tigurini, libri III* (Zurich, 1577) now Harvard Houghton Library GC5.G3314.577e (B): at fol.53v Pfister notes “Gesneri
While there was no denying that universal bibliography required prodigious industry, was such industry necessary, or even laudable, when it came to the seemingly less exalted components of such universality—especially those *barbari styli scriptores* or “writers of barbarous style” whom Gesner had encountered in Trithemius? This question leads us to the central problem of temporal disjunction at the heart of this chapter. Many strains of Renaissance humanism are associated, hardly without reason, with ideologies of classicism and canon-formation that set up walls against the “barbarous” and policed these boundaries with ever increasing vigilance. Indeed, many such visions of the canon were current in Gesner’s own day. Accordingly, as our first case study in early modern temporal disjunction, this chapter examines how diverse sixteenth-century practitioners of bibliography sought to navigate between the call of encyclopedic universalism on the one hand and the dictates of canonicity on the other, while forging visions of *ordo librorum* and *ordo temporum* that could reconcile their seeming contradictions. In doing so, it will explore how an enterprise that presupposed a basic level of unity or commensurability across diverse *tempora* and contexts responded to processes of canon-formation that discriminated and differentiated between such *tempora*—even judging the products of some not worth reading at all. As argued here, this tension defined disparate aspects of sixteenth-century intellectual life. Over and over again, exemplarity fought battles with encyclopedism. Moreover, this simultaneous need for bibliographic differentiation and bibliographic synthesis—a need to unite authors of different *tempora* together even while separating them into distinct ages and eras—played a powerful yet paradoxical role in the advent of historical periodization.

*herbarius multi laboris opus,* and at fol.73r he remarks “Industria Gesneri circa plantas nominandas.”
In an immediate sense, this problem reflected new practicalities. As charted most systematically by Ann Blair, the sheer volume of texts made available by print poured new urgency into longstanding debates over the relative merits of a broad canon or a narrow one. In a world of too many books, made so by the typographic arts that even Gesner acknowledged had produced a surfeit of “trifles and useless writings,” it was all the more important to determine the proper number of books to read. As Blair charts, the projects of Gesner and others took inspiration from the old Plinian injunction that no book was so bad that some profit could not be extracted from it, whereas others followed the equally venerable lead of Seneca in recommending that one read a narrow list of the best authorities.68 These debates provide important context to what have long been interpreted as some of the most divisive and consequential of disputes within humanist hermeneutics—i.e. those questions of classicism and literary imitatio that pitted devotees of Cicero against champions of a more eclectic canon, memorialized most famously in Erasmus’ Ciceronianus. While these scuffles in the more rarefied realm of literary theory are not often linked to the less glamorous bibliographic projects of figures like Gesner and Trithemius, they are both crucial to understanding the problems of temporal disjunction that marked the first half of the sixteenth century. In a world of too many books and too many authorities, temporal discrimination proved a potent means of separating the supposed wheat from the chaff. Granted, we do not often approach questions of history, exemplarity, and imitatio through what might seem a technical “auxiliary” science like bibliography; yet as argued here, bibliography took up questions of canon-formation in practice far more so than any other enterprise could do. In firsthand fashion, it encountered the many contradictions that bedeviled the ordo librorum.

68 See Blair, Too Much to Know, esp. 12-15.
But just what constituted this *ordo librorum* in the first half of the sixteenth century? Notwithstanding its energetic revival of what we now understand as *classical* Latin and Greek, it is manifestly the case that many in the Renaissance still viewed the renewed and renovated canon through a distinctly late lens. After all, at least in the Latin West, it was above all the world of late antiquity that found its way most directly into the scriptoria of the early Middle Ages, and (via everything from Carolingian revival to increasingly sophisticated twelfth- and thirteenth-century book production) thence to Renaissance print. As a result of this (admittedly simplified) story of transmission, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and even beyond, one could still begin an encyclopedic education with Isidore of Seville, learn the contours of universal history from Jerome’s Eusebius and Orosius, memorize the basics of Rome’s past from the likes of Eutropius, apprehend the aesthetics of classicizing Christian poetry from Prudentius, absorb the foundations of grammar and rhetoric from Servius, Donatus, and Priscian, and embrace the broad sweep of the liberal arts via Martianus Capella and Macrobius. Early modern responses to many of these texts will be examined in detail throughout this study.

Ironically enough, such later sources—which not only spawned new traditions but also codified and repackaged old classical ones—were some of the first to roll off the newly created printing press. And so, as Edward Gibbon remarked with bafflement in his youthful *Essay on the Study of Literature*, Renaissance printers had not always begun at the beginning—i.e. with the oldest and the best. Judging that the taste of Renaissance editors “was not equal to their zeal,” the future author of the *Decline and Fall* noted with resigned bemusement that, in that eager age of incunabula, “the authors of the Augustan History appeared before Livy; and Aulus Gellius was
brought out before they thought of Virgil.” It is of course ironic that Gibbon would go on to devote his immense scholarly energy to the late world of the Historia Augusta, while hardly as much as glancing at the world of Livy. But by looking back across three centuries, Gibbon highlighted a fundamental transformation that has rarely been explored in literary histories. In the memorable words of E.R. Curtius, writing in his mid-century magnum opus European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages, neglected late sources of this nature (and even still later ones that we would definitively label medieval) formed nothing less than the backbone of modern European literary traditions: taken as a unit, they lined that “crumbling Roman road from the antique to the modern world.” Yet he bemoaned that these sources were later dismissed by increasingly narrow definitions of classicism. As Curtius noted, even in the latter half of the seventeenth century the French scholar Pierre Daniel Huet, editor of the Delphin Classics, brought out editions of surprising temporal eclecticism, including such late authors as Aurelius Victor, Eutropius, Dictys, and others. Observing such range even at the zenith of so-called French Classicism, Curtius concluded that “it would be a useful task for literary science to determine how the canon of antique authors has changed from 1500 to the present, i.e. how it has diminished.”

However, change was already afoot in the decades around 1500. Indeed, when compared to the ancient canon of its medieval predecessors, it is manifestly the case that the ancient canon of the Renaissance grew more “ancient” in a literal temporal sense. Part of this transformation reflected the new discoveries of humanist philology: not only did humanists recover Greek texts either unknown or unread, but they also brought forth Latin ones that had received scant

70 Curtius, European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages, 19.
71 Curtius, European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages, 263.
attention in the Middle Ages, either on account of taste or the vagaries of transmission. Even if classical *auctores* like Cicero, Virgil, and Ovid had always proved popular in the Middle Ages, they could now be read alongside Livy, Catullus, Lucretius and so many others that the Middle Ages had passed by. And soon those who sang the praises of Cicero and Virgil also began to laud the salutary nature of their *tempus*, which would soon be christened a Golden Age. However, this view hardly constituted a new *consensus omnium*, nor must we think of it as one more point of opposition between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. On the contrary, the long history of early modern canon-formation was marked by a continual dialectic between forms of classicism and eclecticism, which (as we shall see in Chapter Five) could still spark vigorous debate in the age of Huet.

In fact, the decades preceding the publication of Gesner’s *Bibliotheca universalis* marked a moment of particularly intense debate over these points. As charted by Carlo Dionisotti, John D’Amico, Anthony Grafton, William Pigman, Christopher Celenza and many others, the ancient canon of the latter half of the fifteenth century—especially in its Italianate contexts—was marked by an eclecticism that simultaneously extended to sources both late and archaic.72 This was principally embodied in the work of Poliziano, who not only took the comparatively late Aulus Gellius as his model, but also turned his attention in the other temporal direction,

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exploring (like Gellius himself) the lost world of archaic Latinity. Far earlier in the century, late sources had already proven crucial to some of the most famous exercises in humanist historiography. After all, Leonardo Bruni made extensive use of Procopius, and Flavio Biondo relied upon a fuller version of Ammianus Marcellinus than survives today, as both historians sought to explain the intervening centuries between Rome’s decline and the Italy of their own day.\footnote{Biondo’s use of the late Roman historian is also touched upon in Chapter Two’s examination of Ammianus Marcellinus’ early modern fortunes.}

From this perspective, the exclusive embrace of Ciceronian Latinity as the one worthwhile object of literary imitatio, so pilloried by Erasmus in his 1528 Ciceronianus, constituted a comparatively late development.\footnote{Erasmus, Dialogus cui titulus Ciceronianus sive de optimo genere dicendi (Basel, 1528).} This in turn prompted another reaction, visible not only in the emergence of Tacitus and others as alternative models for imitatio, but also in the trumpeting of a specifically patristic late antiquity, centered around Jerome, which is most often today associated with Erasmus’ 1516 edition of Jerome’s opera and his corresponding vita of the saint.\footnote{Jerome, Opera omnia, ed. Erasmus (Basel, 1516).} Hence, both late fifteenth-century eclecticism and its sixteenth- and seventeenth-century equivalents (with which the bulk of this study is concerned) must be read as components of a far longer story of literary canonization. Nor must this story neglect the de facto eclecticism of the canon that prevailed in the Middle Ages. As Curtius pointed out more than half a century ago, one of the most striking features of the medieval canon was the lack of discrimination among its constituent auctores, whether by tempora or otherwise. Even if the state of textual transmission meant that many of the Middle Ages’ “ancients” or veteres hailed from fourth- and fifth-century contexts that we now consider late antique, these auctores stood side by side with a good number of their “classical” counterparts, whether in the monastic library or the schoolroom. In

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\footnote{Biondo’s use of the late Roman historian is also touched upon in Chapter Two’s examination of Ammianus Marcellinus’ early modern fortunes.}
\footnote{Erasmus, Dialogus cui titulus Ciceronianus sive de optimo genere dicendi (Basel, 1528).}
\footnote{Jerome, Opera omnia, ed. Erasmus (Basel, 1516).}
characterizing this state of affairs, Curtius observed that “all auctores are of the same value, all are timeless. This is and remains characteristic of the entire Middle Ages. No distinction is made between Augustan and late Antique literature, or between Theodulus and the early Christian poets.” 76 Elsewhere, Curtius put it even more succinctly, maintaining that “all the authors were authorities. They form the imposing block of tradition.” 77

Yet it would be a mistake to read the relative absence of ordo temporum in the medieval ordo librorum as a species of ahistorical imprecision. The presence of tradition in an “imposing block” did not imply that it was unmoored from historical context. For many of techniques used to explicate items in the medieval canon—especially the circumstantiae of the accessus ad auctores—were predicated upon forms of historical contextualization inherited from the ancient commentary tradition. Indeed, one of the first things that medieval readers of Virgil learned was a nugget of political contextualization—namely, Servius’ contention that Virgil had composed the Aeneid in order to win the favor of Augustus. Hence, what perhaps most distinguishes sixteenth- and seventeenth-century visions of temporal eclecticism and multiplicity—visions that culminated in modern historical periodization—from their earlier counterparts is precisely the fact that they now framed themselves against a highly articulated discourse of classicism, which had already canonized a very specific slice of the ancient past as a Golden Age. Late humanists were by no means the first to embrace late worlds, but they were perhaps among the first do so in contexts where a still earlier corner of the past had earned “most-favored” status. Moreover, as we will see in this chapter, a bibliographic universalism that embraced late tempora became ever

76 Curtius, European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages, 51.
more necessary as new national and ecclesiastical prerogatives grow more urgent over the course of the sixteenth century. In this world, any viable universal *ordo librorum* had to grapple with new narratives of sharp disjunction and discontinuity.

If some strains of humanist scholarship promoted the temporal narrowing of the canon, or what we might label its classicization, others simultaneously encouraged its widening into comparatively less vaunted *tempora*. Granted, it is an open question whether the universal *bibliothecae* dreamed up by Gesner and his fellow bibliographers constituted canons in the strict sense of the term. After all, Gesner did not claim that the contents of his bibliography *should* be read, but merely that they could be read. Yet whatever definition of the canonical we adopt, it remains one of the most perplexing facets of early modern intellectual history that humanist scholarship writ large is alternately deemed synonymous with the quixotic dream of the universal library and the anxious advent of classical canon-formation. Even if both impulses betray a tendency to classify and categorize, their similarities seemingly end there. This contradiction forms the basis of both this chapter and those that follow, which examine more specific facets of temporal disjunction.

The following survey will take us through diverse contexts: a German Benedictine world still heavily influenced by late medieval monasticism, a newly anxious Italian humanism that grew up in the decades following the French invasions, forms of Erasmian pedagogy that flourished in Spain and the Low Countries, the print culture of reformed Zurich and Basel, England in the tumultuous years after the Act of Supremacy, and finally France in the grip of its own Wars of Religion. Although these milieus were shaped by vastly different political, cultural, and confessional currents, they shared underlying commonalities, as scholars in all such contexts
labored towards constructing a coherent *ordo librorum* in the face of myriad difficulties both practical and conceptual.

Cataloguing a *Superius Saeculum* and Its Origins: Johannes Trithemius

As Gesner himself made clear, the *Bibliotheca universalis* did not simply resuscitate a dormant genre last practiced in late antiquity. Instead, Gesner’s project possessed far more recent antecedents in early modern bibliography. Bibliography was pursued by many whom, despite their acknowledged importance to sixteenth-century learning, are today rarely counted as exemplary representatives of Renaissance humanism. Yet Gesner’s claim to universality would not have been possible without their contributions to the art of cataloguing books and authors. Moreover, the very desirability of such universality was bolstered by their attempts at reconciling significant tensions within the canon. This section examines various bibliographers and compilers who flourished in the first half of the sixteenth century and whose works served as crucial precedents for the *Bibliotheca universalis*. Albeit with differing degrees of ambivalence and enthusiasm, Gesner’s predecessors grappled with the temporal diversity of the Latin canon, as they incorporated late sources of divergent moments and milieus into their bibliographic purview. And by stringing together the *vitae* of their chosen authors into a coherent whole, they showed how one could construct continuous narratives of literary history. This concatenation of the building blocks of bibliography was hardly foreordained, and was to have enormous consequences for subsequent narratives of history and histories of narrative.

This study begins with those compilers who themselves inspired Gesner’s project, including Johannes Trithemius, Petrus Crinitus, Raffaello Volterranus, and Lilius Giraldus. The
techniques of sorting employed by each played a signal role in the origins of historical periodizing. As we saw, Gesner mentioned them all in his preface to the *Bibliotheca universalis*: while he had “gathered sparsely” from Crinitus, Volterrano, and Giraldus, Trithemius was one of the three select sources he incorporated into his bibliography *in toto*. And so we start with Trithemius, who not only furnished the *Bibliotheca universalis* with so many of its entries from that *superius saeculum* or “previous age” of monkishness and supposed barbarism, but also provided Gesner with a compelling framework for his own universal compilation. Not coincidently, Trithemius was not only a pioneer in the science of bibliography, but also one of the first of the humanists to turn to the serious study of late antiquity and the Middle Ages. A German Benedictine who served as abbot at Sponheim and later at Würzburg, Trithemius pursued an eclectic array of endeavors (many of which touched upon the occult), and is hardly remembered exclusively as a bibliographer today. In addition to composing various works in the chronicle tradition (and a notorious forged history of the Franks), Trithemius spent much of his career compiling collections of *de viris illustribus*—a project that developed symbiotically with his lifelong preoccupation with manuscript collecting. Not only did he assemble a comprehensive *Catalogus illustrium virorum Germaniae*, as well as several collections of *de viris illustribus* for both the Carmelites and his own Benedictines, but he also wrote up a comprehensive *De scriptoribus ecclesiasticis*, printed by Amerbach in 1494 and designed to

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78 Anthony Grafton characterizes the eclecticism—and consequent openness to medieval studies—that defined Trithemius and others in his milieu as follows: “Self-conscious scions of a people whose greatest power and richest cultural achievements lay in the Middle Ages, many of the Germans—like the Italian humanists of the later fifteenth century—represented humanism and scholasticism, eloquence and erudition, and natural and moral philosophy as complementary.” See Anthony Grafton, “A Contemplative Scholar: Trithemius Conjures the Past,” in *Worlds Made by Words: Scholarship and Community in the Modern West* (Cambridge, MA, 2009), 64-5.
continue those traditions of ecclesiastical bio-bibliography begun by Jerome and his successors.\(^\text{79}\) Given that cataloguing of this sort allowed one to observe the clustering of authors in specific temporal milieus, Trithemius demonstrated the presence of numerous learned \textit{scriptores} in the age of Charlemagne, and so he is credited as one of the first early moderns to apprehend a Carolingian renaissance.\(^\text{80}\)

Like Gesner, who would later acknowledge his extensive indebtedness to Trithemius’ cataloguing, Trithemius himself acknowledged his bio-bibliographical debts at the outset of his \textit{Catalogus illustrium virorum Germaniae}. Defending his decision to treat living authors (himself included) in addition to dead ones, and hence to catalogue illustrious men not only past but also present, he fittingly invoked past precedents. “Even if I ought not to praise a man before death for those things which make him meritorious,” he acknowledged, “I am not prohibited from consigning to letters the intellect, which is common to good and evil men—something that I consider Jerome, Prosper, Gennadius, Isidore, Honorius, Sigebert, and many others as having done.”\(^\text{81}\)

With these words, Trithemius issued an apology for bibliography as living tradition by appealing to its status as lived tradition throughout the past, from Jerome’s late antiquity to Sigebert’s twelfth century. In more ways than one, Trithemius sought to erect a big bibliographic tent. In this spirit, he did not limit his \textit{De scriptoribus ecclesiasticis} to ecclesiastical authors narrowly defined; rather, he also announced that it would include writers of “secular letters.”

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This thoroughgoing fusion of the ecclesiastical and the secular allowed Trithemius to practice not only literal bibliography but also an incipient form of bibliographic *historia literaria* or the “history of letters,” which would emerge (as we shall see in Chapter Five) as a distinct genre in the latter seventeenth century. By accumulating bio-bibliographies for as diverse a set of *viri* as possible, Trithemius captured the surprising richness of late antiquity and medieval learned culture. In this manner, Trithemius sought to universalize a specifically ecclesiastical genre—a choice that rendered his appropriation by Gesner all the more understandable. As a result, perhaps the evolution of bibliography from Jerome to Gesner would not have been possible without Trithemius.

Within his constituent entries, Trithemius followed a standardized approach. He nearly always praised authors for being “most skilled” or “most erudite” in the study of “divine scripture” and “secular letters,” lauded them for their knowledge of Latin and Greek or their mastery of poetry and prose, and celebrated them as “second to none in their time.” While a rather formulaic species of panegyric, such affirmations of an author’s status as *nulli suo tempore secundus* nonetheless constituted a means, however perfunctory, of contextualizing a given author within his *tempus*. Yet much more significantly, Trithemius’ many formulaic commendations not only burnished the reputations of individual *auctores*, but also delivered a generally positive assessment of the erudition and learning of those *tempora*—i.e. late antiquity and the Latin Middle Ages—that filled the bulk of his catalogue. For instance, when discussing Isidore of Seville, Trithemius was even more effusive than his typically effusive entries, as he extolled a key late antique practitioner of his own genre of *de viris illustribus*. Isidore was “a man most erudite in divine scripture, and second to none in his time in secular letters. He shone

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82 On Trithemius’ integration of secular sources and his creation of a form of cultural history, see Grafton, “A Contemplative Scholar,” 69-70.
forth subtle in genius, bright in feeling, composed in eloquence, excellent in both verse and prose, and remarkable no less in sanctity than in learning.”

However, even this glowing treatment paled in comparison to the praise Trithemius lavished upon Jerome, the acknowledged founder of his genre. Rather than simply comparing him to others *suo tempore*, Trithemius deemed Jerome “the most erudite among all doctors.” And then the Benedictine bibliographer deployed one of his most striking tropes, praising the church father for producing with indefatigable industry an “almost infinite number of books (*pene infiniti libri*).”

While it should hardly surprise us that Trithemius the bibliographer evinced profound concern for textual production and transmission, he also displayed a parallel obsession with reception and appropriation. Not only did he compare late antique authors with their classical counterparts, but he also documented how such authors reworked and responded to the classical inheritance. For instance, when cataloguing Boethius, whom Trithemius (dispensing with his usual “second to none” formulation) deemed “the most erudite of all in his time,” he trumpeted his success at the avowedly Ciceronian task of “translating Aristotle and other philosophers from the Attic tongue into Latin,” and then deemed Boethius “not inferior to Cicero in his language.”

In perhaps his most involved depiction of the transformation of the classical canon, Trithemius also offered a paean to the “most elegant woman” Proba, the fourth-century Christian poet best

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84 Trithemius, *De scriptoribus ecclesiasticis*, 238-9: “BOETIUS Manlius Seuerinus, consul ordinarius Romanus, philosophus, orator et poeta insignis, in diuinis scripturis doctus, et in secularibus litteris omnium suo tempore eruditissimus, gener Symmachii patricii fuit. Vir Graeco et Latino copiosissime imbutus eloquio, quippe qui multa volumina tam Aristotelis, quam aliorum Philosophorum de Attica lingua transtulerit in latinam, ingenio subtilis, sensu promptus atque catholicus, sermone nec Tullio inferior...”
known for composing a cento that retold the Gospel narrative in lines of Virgilian poetry.

Trithemius declared that Proba had “conquered her sex through her erudition,” and was “instructed to perfection in Greek and Latin letters.” Then, Trithemius marveled that “since she had memorized Virgil verbatim, she thought to narrate both the New and Old Testaments from Virgilian verses.” By “carefully proceeding through all the books of Virgil, and carefully manipulating each and every verse,” she effected a remarkable transmutation of the text, stringing together an entirely new Christian work from pagan raw material “with miraculous industry” (mirabili industria).\(^8^5\) Far from viewing late antiquity as a moment of decline into darkness and barbarism, Trithemius advanced a vision of a rich early Christian textual culture, defined by *pene infiniti libri* and a *mirabilis industria* that both preserved and refashioned the ancient *ordo librorum*.

Trithemius’ vision of bibliography was essentially one of genealogy: put simply, the lineage and transmission of books were just as important as the contents of books themselves. Both books and their authors followed clear patterns of derivation; moreover, the genealogy of books proved most robust and successful when they survived in numbers *pene infinita*. Within this world of traveling books, bibliographies possessed special genealogical properties, as each bibliography set the stage for the next and all contributions to the genre possessed the requisite apparatus to guarantee their own transmission through time. Furthermore, texts traveled not only

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through outright continuation but also via transmutation: Proba, skilled in the arts of semi-conservative replication and gifted with “miraculous industry,” had reworked no less an auctor than Virgil into something entirely new. Even the many authors of de viris illustribus (Trithemius included) irreparably altered and transmuted the very bibliographies they extended and updated. From this perspective, Trithemius was keenly interested in origins and lineage in a double sense—that is, both bibliographically and historically. As we shall see time and time again throughout this study, early modern scholars understood order and lineage, whether temporal or otherwise, in this parallel manner: the ordo and origo of books confirmed extratextual ordines and origines, and vice versa.

Furthermore, Trithemius’ bibliographies were deeply informed by the many physical books he collected and ordered. He combed these many books for genealogies of the other sort—an interest reflected in his historical (and pseudo-historical) writings on the distant pasts of the non-Roman gentes that transformed the geopolitics of the old classical order. At the same time, he was quick to grasp the inherently compilatory origins of books themselves. This keen eye for the compilatory is perhaps best illustrated by a seemingly pedestrian addition Trithemius made to a manuscript of Cassiodorus in his possession at Würzburg. On the final folio of Cassiodorus’ Historia tripartita, Trithemius copied some additional notes in his own hand, which, interestingly enough, took the form of a bio-bibliographical entry. This vita of sorts (distinct from the entry for the sixth-century Italian scholar that Trithemius had included in his formal printed De scriptoribus ecclesiasticis) focused especially upon Cassiodorus’ methods of compilation, and the resultant textual genealogy of his Historia tripartita. Utilizing formulaic language reminiscent of his own de viris illustribus, Trithemius closed out the text with the following note:
Cassiodorus, a monk of the order of the divine father Benedict endowed with sanctity and knowledge, flourished in Italy in the year of the Lord 560. Most skilled in both Greek and Latin, he fashioned an ecclesiastical history from three Greek authors—Socrates, Sozomen, and Theodoret. He brought them together into a single book that he rendered into Latin. He entitled this history the *Historia tripartita* in memory of these three preceding writings, and he divided it into twelve books, as is evident to one who counts them.  

Having charted a brief textual history of the *Historia tripartita*, he then signed this notice “Abbot Johannes Trithemius, 1516”—indicating that he entered this information into the codex in the final year of his life, some two decades after he had composed his original *vita* of Cassiodorus in his *De scriptoribus ecclesiasticis*. While the contents of this bio-bibliographical snippet were hardly noteworthy in themselves, as they simply repeated that Cassiodorus church combined translations of Socrates, Sozomen, and Theodoret, they indirectly highlighted something far more consequential—namely, the labile boundary between bio-bibliography and the physical codices of the texts it catalogued. Trithemius had assembled his bibliographies from the many manuscripts in his possession, entering bio-bibliographical information on their very flyleaves (a process that we shall also see at work in seventeenth-century *historia literaria*). The above addition to Cassiodorus illustrates the logical extreme of this compilatory process, as Trithemius plugged bibliographic genealogies back into the very codices from which he had

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constructed his catalogues of “illustrious men” in the first place. This ad hoc vita dwelled not so much upon Cassiodorus’ life and work per se, but rather upon the gritty details of the Cassiodoran ordo librorum. Not unlike Proba, Cassiodorus had also performed compilatory alchemy: he had transformed three books into one, expertly ordered and arranged them, translated them into Latin, and then divided them once more into twelfths. Like the German abbot, Cassiodorus had been a consummate compiler, whose legacy Trithemius memorialized through further recomposition.

Trithemius’ Würzburg manuscripts also reveal his interests in origins and genealogy in a literal historical sense. In a twelfth-century copy of the German Benedictine Ekkehard of Aura’s Chronicon universale that Trithemius described on its flyleaf as a “history of the Goths, Saxons, and Huns by uncertain authors,” his sparse marginalia concentrated on the origines of such gentes and their conflicts with Rome. In the chronicle’s history of the Goths—in fact a version of Jordanes’ Getica recompiled by Ekkehard and his predecessors—Trithemius flagged a discussion of the origins of the Venetians and linked Jordanes’ Slovenians to the Slavs. But a few folios later, in some of the few complete notes that Trithemius entered in the entirety of the codex, he drew attention to some key events in Gothic struggles with other peoples. Directly before Jordanes described how Julius Caesar tried to conquer the entire known world, but still could not subdue the Goths, he noted Jordanes’ invocation of Gothic prowess, repeating in the margin “the Goths devastated Francia in the year 56 before Christ.” On the very next folio,

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87 Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek MS M.p.h.q.2, flyleaf: “In hoc libro continentur opuscula sequentia: excerpta siue vita Alexandri M. Macedonum regis historia Gothorum et Saxonum Hunnorum authoribus incertis.”

88 Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek MS M.p.h.q.2, fol.41r: Trithemius writes “Vnde Veneti.” Directly below, where Jordanes notes “Quorum nomina licet nunc per varias familias et loca mutentur, principaliter tamen Sclaueni et Antes nominantur,” Trithemius adds “Sclaui” in the margin.
Trithemius scribbled down that “the Goth Dorpaneus defeated the Romans under the emperor Domitian.” Finally, arriving at that epoch-making year of 410, he tersely declared “Rome is captured by the Goths” next to where Jordanes recorded that Alaric, king of the Goths, had seized Rome.\footnote{Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek MS M.p.h.q.2, fol.45r: Trithemius records “Franciam gothi deuastant...anno ante nativitatem domin<i> lvi.” At fol.46r he writes “Dorpaneus gothus vicit romanos sub domiciano.” Finally, at fol.56v, Trithemius announces “Roma capitur a gothis.”}

This obsession with genealogy also influenced Trithemius’ description of such codices in his printed bibliographies. For instance, in his entry for the Pantheon of the twelfth-century chronicler Godfrey of Viterbo, Trithemius observed in rather wordy fashion that among Godfrey’s works “there is extant a large book (grande volumen) dedicated to Pope Urban III, which mixes prose and verse and treats Creation, the entirety of the Old and New Testament, the ages of the world, and all the times, deeds, and histories of kings.”\footnote{Trithemius, De scriptoribus ecclesiasticis, 280: “E quibus extat grande volumen ad Vrbanum Papam tertium carmine et soluta oratione mixtum, de mundi principio, de vniuerso Veteri et Nouo Testamento, et aetatibus mundi, temporibus, gestis, ac historiis omnibus regum, quod praenotauit.”}

In characterizing this book as extant, as he did in so many other cases, Trithemius alluded to a codex that he himself had seen, and indeed a copy of Godfrey’s universal compilation survives among Trithemius’ Würzburg manuscripts. This codex features but a single annotation throughout its many folios, written in what appears to be Trithemius’ own hand. As might be expected, it concerned origins, as Trithemius proclaimed “the beginning of the Franks” (Francorum inicium) next to a genealogy that Godfrey grandly and expansively entitled “the origins of the kings of the Franks, from Adam to Charlemagne and thence to the Emperor Frederick and his son Henry.”\footnote{Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek MS M.ch.f.23, fol.219v: At a genealogy in the manuscript which is entitled “Origo regum francorum ab adam usque ad karolum magnum et usque ad imperatorem fridericum et filium eius henricum,” a note in a hand which appears to be Trithemius’ records “francorum inicium.”}
that vast *spatium* between Creation and the Carolingians, Godfrey dwelled especially upon the Franks’ supposed Trojan origins—a subject that (as we shall see below) did much to exercise Trithemius’ fertile creative imagination when he composed a forged history of the Franks that he attributed to the imaginary Hunibald.92

While the annotations discussed above are sparse and anecdotal, they nonetheless yield important clues to how Trithemius catalogued genealogies of books and peoples, composing histories and bibliographies that both recorded and invented origins. In doing so, he utilized a repertoire of late antique and medieval methods: his unique brand of bibliography and monastic humanism emulated the practices of late antique scholars like Cassiodorus, Carolingian luminaries like Alcuin and Rhabanus Maurus, and twelfth-century lights like Honorius and Sigebert. Above all, his vision of this postclassical millennium was one of intense and laudable bookishness, filled with *viri* (and some *feminae*) whose intellectual productions and “miraculous” literary industry transmitted both texts and their own names to posterity. Strikingly enough, Trithemius’ vision of what we now call late antiquity and the Middle Ages lacked any ambivalence, or any inkling of the temporally based critique of such late *tempora* simultaneously current among humanist exponents of classicism. And it was this vision that found its way—not overtly or boisterously, but rather through the silent imperatives of semi-conservative replication—into the bibliographic universalism of Conrad Gesner.

Though necessarily speculative, it is tempting to consider just how Trithemius’ example, and the millennium of precedents that buttressed it, may have informed Gesner’s explicit refusal to judge those *barbari styli scriptores*. This proffered lack of judgment different significantly from the stance adopted by other sources, especially the Italian humanist bibliographers from

92 Johannes Trithemius, *De origine regum et gentis Francorum* (Mainz, 1515).
whom Gesner “gathered sparsely.” Through the wholesale co-opting of the work of a Benedictine monk and enthusiastic occultist, the Swiss Protestant Gesner achieved a species of bibliographic universality that might otherwise have proven impossible.93 Yet it came at a cost, reflective of both the practical exigencies of compilation and the realities of temporal disjunction. By proceeding chronologically from late antiquity through the Middle Ages and into his own age, Trithemius’ had used ordo temporum to illuminate the contexts of his texts and authors, as seen for instance in his apprehension of the Carolingian Renaissance or his sensitivity to Proba’s metamorphoses both textual and temporal. Yet due to its status as universalis, Gesner’s bibliotheca was simply too large for a viable ordo temporum, as he acknowledged when he shifted Trithemius’ chronological order to an alphabetical one. In dealing with so many texts and tempora, Gesner had no choice but to suspend ordo temporum itself. As we shall see, periodization would emerge as one response to this impossibility, even as it simultaneously promoted discriminations and distinctions that threatened the very universality it promised to convey.

“Books From Which I Gathered Sparsely”: Gesner’s Italian Sources

Meanwhile, in a world very different from the monastic humanism practiced at Sponheim and Würzburg, Italian humanist scholars were also hard at work augmenting traditions of bio-bibliography and de viris illustribus. Several generations removed from the many luminaries of the early Quattrocento, the scholars and compilers examined here are today often less celebrated

93 For a rather different comparison between Trithemius and Gesner, which judges the former, unlike the latter, as one “perpetually held in check by the conditions of scribal culture,” see Eisenstein, Printing Press, Vol. I, 97-8.
than their earlier counterparts. Yet they played an extremely important role setting the parameters, both temporal and otherwise, of what came to be conceived of as the classical canon. As they did not share Trithemius’ desire to glorify a patently non-Roman world of “barbarous” gentes, they evinced a much more tortured and ambivalent relationship to the late traditions of the superius saeculum that the Benedictine abbot had extolled so unreservedly. These Italian bibliographers of the first half of the sixteenth century—from whom Gesner claimed to have “gathered sparsely”—were hardly about to praise the uniformly “miraculous industry” of late antique and medieval scriptores. Yet neither did they ignore them altogether. Instead, even as they valorized canons of classical aesthetics, they linked the classical canon to what they understood as its postclassical codas or appendices. And so we turn from Trithemius to this world, beginning with another practitioner of bibliography invoked by Gesner—namely, Petrus Crinitus.

Crinitus, a Florentine humanist and pupil of Poliziano who flourished around the turn of the sixteenth century, marks a fitting bridge between Quattrocento humanism and its successors. As Anthony Grafton pointed out in reconstructing the Italian background of Joseph Scaliger’s textual criticism, both Crinitus and his fellow bibliographer Raffaello Volterrano (another of Gesner’s sources examined slightly later in this chapter) helped usher in that aforementioned narrowing of the canon: in contrast to the manifest eclecticism of Poliziano, who was drawn to late antiquity and famously modeled his work as a miscellanist upon Gellius, both Crinitus and Volterrano favored “compact encyclopedias and pure imitation of Cicero.”94 When these scholars turned to late traditions, they were on their guard. In addition to his De honesta

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94 Grafton, Joseph Scaliger I, 43. For an evocative comparison of Poliziano and Gellius’ own scholarly orientations, see Christopher Celenza, “Late Antiquity and the Florentine Renaissance,” esp. 30-2. See also D’Amico, “Progress of Renaissance Latin Prose.”
disciplina, a collection of maxims and adages, Crinitus also published a bio-bibliographical anthology De poetis Latinis in 1505, which divided the history of Latin literature into five books and filled each constituent book with vitae of Latin poets. Although his first four libri covered ancient terrain, his fifth and final installment extended into definitively late antique territory, offering a treatment of poetry “from the time of the Antonines up to Theodosius and Constantius.” Hence, Crinitus concluded his bibliography in those tempora in which Trithemius began.

Acknowledging that he wrote of times when “the majesty of the empire declined and good arts were in great part abandoned,” Crinitus offered an obligatory apology for testing the limits of acceptable classicism. Invoking a hypothetical readership of eruditi homines, he asked that “erudite men grant me pardon” and forgive his decision to include poetae who might seem “a little more inept and inelegant” (paulo ineptiores atque inelegantes) than the earlier authors he had hitherto surveyed. In a continued show of his supposed restraint, he went on to point out that, when dealing with late antique Christian poets (including figures like Juvencus or Fortunatus), he would above all treat them “moderately.” For the recent “mutation” of religion had also altered the “innate character and grace of poetry.”

95 See Petrus Crinitus, De poetis Latinis (Paris, 1513 [first published Florence, 1505]), fol.124r: “In hocextremo uolumine operis nostri Cosime Pont. Arretine seruatum est a nobis: ut de his Poetis ageremus: qui Antoninorum temporibus usque ad Theodosium et Constantios Caes. uixerunt, neque enim uisum est pertinere ad institutum nostrum de omnibus scribere declinata Imperii maiestate: bonisque artibus magna est parte destitutis. Itaque dabunt mihi ueniam eruditi homines: qui cum legent hos libros: uidebunt a nobis referri Poetas illos: qui re vera paulo ineptiores atque inelegantes haberi possunt: quales sunt Iuvencus Fortunatus et alii generis eiusdem, in quo moderate me gessi, nam mutata religionie mutarunt etiam indolem atque gratiam carminis, quo circa minime mirari oportet (praecipue cum uniuersa Italia magnis atque uariss cladibus confecta esset distrahenibus eam plurimas populis atque Barbaris nationibus) si antiquorum elegantia atque puritas uiolata est, et simul inscritia bonarum litterarum atque imperitia succrevuit, nostra uero tempestate magnopere debemus letari…”
Crinitus played a signal role in fueling the ideology of Ciceronianism that marked the latter stages of the Italian Renaissance, and contributed to more rigid policies of canon-formation precisely in the decades before Gesner and others embraced bibliographic universality. Crinitus’ critiques of late authors, however obliquely or insinuatingly expressed, aroused the ire of one of the most famous of Ciceronianism’s avowed enemies—namely, Erasmus. In his vita of Jerome, which did so much to present a coherent life-like vision of late antiquity to early modern readers, Erasmus attacked Crinitus for ironically suggesting that the late antique saint, who famously castigated himself for being more a Ciceronian than a Christian, hardly needed to worry about such a charge. In Crinitus’ estimation, Jerome’s eloquence was far inferior to that of the much-vaunted Cicero. Moreover, Jerome’s purported departures from “Roman purity and grace of style” were attributable to both his time and his religion, since, as Crinitus maintained, “among Christians faults in life, not eloquence, are targets of reproach.” Expressing incredulity at Crinitus’ narrowness of vision, Erasmus derisively exclaimed: “his self-importance and arrogance are so strong that you would think a Varro was speaking, and not a Petrus Crinitus!” In his vita of the late antique saint, he dryly noted that “there are very many so devoted to pagan literature that wherever they see the words of a Christian character they see a lack of learning, maturity, and quality.”96 Yet ironically, even Crinitus’ avowedly classical sensibilities stimulated

an unlikely expansion of the canon; although he consigned his treatment of late Latin poets to an appendix of sorts, and while he hardly minced words when assessing the qualities of such late authors, he nevertheless deemed them worthy of inclusion in the *De poetis Latinis*. And so Gesner, seeking out information on all manner of *auctores* from all manner of *tempora*, found Crinitus’ compendium useful.

Although Crinitus grudgingly helped consolidate a late antique canon while critiquing the infelicities of its contents, other Italian humanists took a more forgiving view of late Latinity, especially when it came to Christian *scriptores* and *poetae*. In several cases this promoted an anthologizing impulse that brought together specifically Christian authors as distinct from their classical pagan counterparts. For instance, in 1501-1502 the famous Venetian printer Aldus Manutius published his *Poetae Christiani veteres*, a collection of early Christian poets. Later in the century, Protestants like Georg Fabricius would also gather together Christian compendia of this nature. Advertising his anthology as an ideal tool for schoolroom instruction, Manutius (himself a close associate of Erasmus) argued that laudable Latinity and Christian *veritas* were by no means mutually exclusive. As befitted this terrain, he tied his collection together through a series of *vitae* culled from the bio-bibliographical tradition, assembling a life of Juvencus from Jerome’s *De viris illustribus*, a life of Sulpicius Severus from Gennadius, and *vitae* of Arator and Sedulius patched together from what he described as “various books.” Moreover, Manutius


employed the tools of bio-bibliography both to fix his authors in time and shed light on their reception and transmission. Consider, for instance, his incisive yet economical use of Gennadius to illuminate both Sedulius, a fifth-century poet who (not unlike Proba) authored a *Carmen paschale* in Virgilian style that retold the Gospel narrative, and Arator, a sixth-century poet from Liguria who retold the Acts of the Apostles in two books of hexameters:

I am amazed that Gennadius, who wrote of illustrious men after Jerome, did not mention Sedulius, and hence I judge that the books of Sedulius went into hiding for a certain time. Nor is there mention of Arator in Gennadius, because Arator flourished more than a hundred years after him.  

Manutius’ methods show how, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, one could use bio-bibliography to flesh out the many intricacies and complexities of the canon. Especially for periods when a paucity of evidence made gauging reception difficult, even comments as brief and laconic as Gennadius’ furnished valuable clues to how (or whether) a given author was read. In Manutius’ estimation, the fact that Gennadius flourished after Arator made the latter’s absence from the former’s *de viris illustribus* perfectly understandable; however, Gennadius’ similar silence about Sedulius proved rather more perplexing. Yet this furnished Manutius with a valuable clue to Sedulius’ rocky literary afterlife, and so he judged that the early Christian auctor had temporarily “gone into hiding,” almost—yet not completely—succumbing to the injuries of time. However, deductions of this sort were only possible if one could date the component parts of the bio-bibliographical tradition itself, and collections such as Manutius’ prompted many

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readers in the first half of the sixteenth century to do precisely that. For instance, the takeaway that one anonymous reader of Manutius gleaned from this passage did not concern the poets themselves, but rather their bibliographers, as he jotted down in the margin “Gennadius wrote his \textit{De viris illustribus} after Jerome.”\textsuperscript{100} Similarly, when Erasmus included Gennadius’ catalogue in his massive 1516 edition of Jerome’s \textit{opera}, another anonymous reader similarly flagged the temporal relationship between Jerome and his continuator, writing directly below the title of Gennadius’ catalogue that “Gennadius flourished in the time of Pope Gelasius, one hundred years after Jerome.”\textsuperscript{101}

For Manutius, bio-bibliography constituted a continuous gloss upon the texts it catalogued, providing the necessary glue to bind together a collection or anthology of \textit{scriptores}. Bio-bibliography was not just to be read solo; it could also function as a feature of apparatus in broader projects. In this spirit, sometimes it also served as but one component of a still more expansive encyclopedic endeavor. In 1506 another of Gesner’s acknowledged sources, the Italian humanist and Servite Raffaello Volterranus, published his massive and idiosyncratic \textit{Commentariorum rerum urbanarum libri XXXVIII}, an encyclopedia that divided its thirty-eight books into three constituent parts.\textsuperscript{102} The first part, titled \textit{Geographia}, included (as its name suggests) a large storehouse of geographic lore and erudition. The second, which Volterranus labeled the \textit{Anthropologia}, featured a staggering quantity of terse bio-bibliographical \textit{vitae},

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\textsuperscript{100} Aldus Manutius, \textit{Poetae Christiani veteres} (Venice, 1501), now Munich Bayerische Staatsbibliothek 4 A.lat.c.9 x-2, fol.2v: Annotator remarks in margin “Gennadius post Hiero: de viris illus. scriptis.”
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\textsuperscript{101} Jerome, \textit{Opera: tomus secundus}, ed. Erasmus (Basel, 1516), now Dunwoodie NY, St. Joseph’s Seminary 128, fol.156v: Annotator underlines “GENADII” in Erasmus’ title “GENADII ILLUSTRIUM VIRORUM CATALOGUS” and then writes directly below: “Scrispit tempore Gelasii papae, post Hieronimum 100 annis.”
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\textsuperscript{102} Raffaello Volterranus, \textit{Commentariorum rerum urbanarum libri XXXVIII} (Lyon, 1552 [first published Rome, 1506]).
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executed in the tradition of *de viris illustribus*. And the third and last, named *Philologia*, constituted a curious grab bag of sundry facts and narrative excurses, on everything from the origins of poetry to ancient eating habits. Bio-bibliography now took its place alongside parallel traditions of cataloguing, even those (as illustrated by Volterranus’ patchwork final section) that resisted easy schematization.

Within his middle volumes devoted to *Anthropologia*, Volterranus carefully articulated his chosen system of *ordo*. Overall, he arranged his individual entries in alphabetical order, and in this respect he anticipated Gesner’s own easy methods of organization. But Volterrano did not only alphabetize, as Gesner would later do. Instead, he divided the constituent books of his *Anthropologia* into two broad sections: he devoted the first section to *veteres* or “ancients” exclusively, while he filled the second with a curious mélange of ancients and moderns alike. In his introductory table of contents, Volterrano had already explained that the *Anthropologia* would be divided into two parts, thereby mixing pure alphabetical arrangement with some species of *ordo temporum*. And in the introduction to the twenty-first book of the encyclopedia (which marked the relevant switchover), he explained this division still further. Now that he had “enumerated the names of the ancients,” Volterrano remarked that “some ancient and some modern [names] remain (*restant partim noua, partim uetera*).” He then made clear that this new joint exploration of the ancient and the modern concerned a very specific domain—namely, the history of the church. The following books of the *Anthropologia* would focus especially on those whom Volterrano deemed meritorious “in the Christian religion” (*de Christiana religione*). And so he began by cataloguing the members of various religious orders, extending from the age of early Christianity to his own times. After this, he added lists of both the popes and the Roman
emperors, once more crossing boundaries both ancient and modern.\(^{103}\) Hence, whereas Crinitus had used the “mutation of religion” to imbue his fifth and final book of Latin poets with a new thematic perspective, Volterrano took the bibliographic representation of this disjunction one step further. Not only did he equate the rise of Christianity with the end of the *veteres*, but he also used it as a structuring principle to divide his otherwise undifferentiated bibliography in two.

While Volterrano’s laconic entries left little room for overt judgment, they nonetheless betrayed ambivalence towards late authors, even those who still counted in some sense as *veteres*. Unlike Trithemius, he did not uniformly praise nearly every author he catalogued for an endless litany of virtues like learning, genius, and erudition. Instead, like Crinitus, he too displayed classicizing prejudices. For instance, in his entry for Isidore of Seville, his criticism of the Spanish encyclopedist took the ironic form of an apology for early Christian sanctity. Volterranus deemed Isidore a “philosophic man not so much in learning (*doctrina*) but in life (*vita*), and in speaking not so much rude (*rudis*) as unpracticed (*inexercitatus*).”\(^{104}\) This was a far cry from Trithemius’ glowing description of Isidore as “remarkable no less in sanctity than in learning.” In Volterranus’ estimation, Isidore possessed far more of the former than the latter.

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Yet his terse description featured another wrinkle: even if Volterranus did not hold Isidore’s *doctrina* in high esteem, he could not bring himself to indict the language of the encyclopedist as rude and barbarous; rather, he judged him *inexercitatus*—a bit unskilled and inexperienced in the finer arts of pure Latinity.

Whatever his estimation of the individual authors he catalogued, Volterranus adopted a comprehensiveness—apparent in his hundred and hundreds of entries—that offered Gesner a crucial precedent. But whereas Volterranus had assembled laconic entries for as many authors as possible, another of Gesner’s acknowledged sources composed more detailed *vitae* for a smaller subsection of *auctores*. Lilius Gregorius Giraldus of Ferrara likewise utilized the techniques of bio-bibliography to travel Curtius’ “crumbling Roman road between antiquity and modernity.”

Framed along Ciceronian lines as a learned dialogue, Giraldus’ *Historiae poetarum Graecorum ac Latinorum dialogi decem* (published in two volumes of five dialogues each) offered an expansive survey of Greek and Latin poetry, beginning in the deep past of classical mythography. Although not published until 1545 at Basel, the dialogue itself was set in 1503, and it would appear that Giraldus began this work around that time. A similar set of dialogues concerning contemporary poets, *De poetis suorum temporum*, appeared in 1551. In addition, Giraldus’ encyclopedism drew him to many domains beyond bio-bibliography: his *De deis gentium* offered a detailed guide to pagan mythology, and he likewise explored everything from the Roman calendar to the history of shipbuilding. Yet it was his exploits in bio-bibliography that

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108 Lilius Giraldus, *De poetis suorum temporum* (Basel, 1551).
secured his posthumous reputation in early modern scholarship. Giraldus’ dense vitae marked a decisive turn in the history of the genre: indeed, his lives still adorned the prefatory matter of editions of Greek and Latin poets produced well into the seventeenth century. Much like Crinitus, Giraldus used the closing dialogues of his two volumes to reach beyond the classical world proper. While the final portions of his fourth dialogue included some late antique pagan authors, he reserved his fifth and final dialogue for Christian writers, thereby fashioning his ordo librorum according to religious mutation just as Crinitus and Volterranus had done before him. This succession of Christian poetic vitae soon left even late antiquity in the dust. For Giraldus used bio-bibliography to weave together a continuous narrative from the age of Constantine all the way to Dante’s Florence.

Giraldus’ readings of late writers were mixed, although more charitable than those served up by Crinitus. For instance, in his vitae of Prudentius he freely admitted that the fourth-century Christian poet was “a man of much and varied erudition.” Yet in a judgment similar to Crinitus’ invocation of the literary consequences of “religious mutation,” he simultaneously contended that due to his “desire for piety and faith,” Prudentius either placed little value in “the eloquence and purity of language,” or else neglected such things altogether. Hence, Giraldus offered yet another ambivalent interpretation of late antique Christian aesthetics: on the one hand, the ostensible religious rejection of the blandishments of poetry and rhetoric served an exculpatory function, while on the other such exculpation constituted an insinuating and ironic damning of the late canon with faint praise. However, Giraldus also recognized that late antique aesthetics

\[109\] As we shall see in Chapter Four, Giraldus also served as a source of significant inspiration for the encyclopedic works of G.J. Vossius.

\[110\] Giraldus, Dialogi, 634: “Fuisse uero hominem multae quidem eruditionis ac uariae, uerum in eloquentia ac linguae castitate uel parum ualuisse, uel potius neglexisse, desiderio uidelicet pietatis ac fidei.”
sometimes involved enthusiastic classical *imitatio*: for example, he characterized Lactantius (already adopted as a model by none other than Lorenzo Valla) as the “one particular emulator of Ciceronian eloquence among the Christians.”

However, when Giraldus moved from the fourth to the fifth century, entering a very different world of late antiquity in which Rome faced political collapse, he proved less forgiving. For instance, he deemed the writings of the fifth-century Gallo-Roman aristocrat Sidonius Apollinaris “redolent of something barbarous or Gallic,” and declared in no uncertain terms that he would not encourage their reading. Furthermore, he explained Sidonius’ unpalatable nature by recourse to his *tempora*, noting that he had inhabited “those times which were already stained by filthy language.”

His judgment of the fifth- or sixth-century Christian mythographer Fulgentius, who among other works produced an allegorical interpretation of the *Aeneid* as a meditation on the ages of man, was even more acerbic. While he acknowledged Fulgentius’ Christianity, he added that the mythographer was “harsher and more affected in his style, so much so that it seems he inserted spikes in his writings, and shrill words, or rather thorns for words.” Giraldus then offered a conclusion as harsh and thorny as Fulgentius’ style: “there are other things written in pious and Christian fashion that are not so frightful.”

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111 Giraldus, *Dialogi*, 622: Giraldus here refers to Lactantius as “unus eloquentiae Ciceronianae inter Christianos praecipiuus aemulator.”


113 Giraldus, *Dialogi*, 645-6: “Fulgentii uero paucos libros uidi, in quibus de Christiana religione bene sentit: sed duriusculus in primis, et affectatior stylo est, adeo ut in scriptis suis spinas, et uerborum asperitates, si non aculeos potius, pro uerbis inseruisse uideatur: et in primis in Mythologico: nam alia quidem pie et Christine scripta, non tam horrida sunt.”
Florid metaphors and invective notwithstanding, Giraldus nevertheless adumbrated a
historico-literary macro-narrative that gradually became standard bio-bibliographical fare over
the following century and a half. In particular, his closing dialogue illustrated how one could link
the *antiqui* and their successors through the mere insertion of a final chapter or coda—an
appending impulse that simultaneously bolstered and subverted the prerogatives of the canon.
Even if such final chapters began life as denigrated appendices or afterthoughts to the classical
canon proper, they nevertheless placed a distinct corpus of late authors alongside those
*antiquiores* whose purported virtues made their own supposed vices so glaringly transparent. In
one sense, such comparisons highlighted the inferiority of late authors. But comparison, even if
unflattering, still constituted a species of inclusion. Nor were bio-bibliography and *de viris
illustribus* simply technologies of comparison; instead, they also constituted tools of
continuation, that could stretch the late into still later temporal domains. For instance, they
allowed Giraldus’ treatment of ancient Greco-Latin poetry to reach well into the Middle Ages
and even brush up against those first supposed harbingers of Renaissance. And so, from Sidonius
and Fulgentius, Giraldus moved quickly to Boethius, and thence to Bede, Paul the Deacon,
Alcuin and Rhabanus Maurus. From this moment of Carolingian revival it was but an easy step
to purveyors of twelfth-century classicism like Walter of Châtillon and Alan of Lille, and finally
to Dante and the transition from Latinity to the modern vernaculars.

Over the course of this millennium-long journey, Giraldus did not neglect those authors
whose writings had not survived the gauntlet of transmission. Even as he lambasted Sidonius, he
took care to enumerate some of the many other poets whom Sidonius himself had mentioned in
his works, including those who were now nothing but “naked names” or *nuda nomina*.114 As we shall see, this bibliographic impulse to catalogue both the known and unknown—echoed in Gesner’s claim to have collected authors “both extant and not extant”—played an essential role in shaping early modern perceptions of periodization. At the same time, Giraldus displayed an obsessive concern for cases of mistaken identity and confusion within the canon. He made sure to catalogue the many instances in which two distinct *auctores* from two distinct *tempora* coincidentally possessed the same name, especially when a well-known *auctor* shared his *nomen* with a figure either lost or comparatively obscure—a practice of disaggregation that would be taken to new lengths by seventeenth-century *historia literaria*. And so he admonished his readers not to confuse the Ligurinus mentioned in an epigram of Martial with the Cistercian Gunther of Pairis’ epic *Ligurinus*, which commemorated the deeds of the twelfth-century Frederick Barbarossa, just as he warned them not to conflate the court poet Claudius Claudianus with the fifth-century theologian Claudianus Mamercus, or mix up Martianus Capella, the fifth-century author of the *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii*, with a “far older” Capella, an elegiac poet briefly invoked in Ovid’s *De Ponto*.115

As Giraldus’ compendium makes clear, at its core bio-bibliography catalogued *nomina*, even as it endeavored to assign such *nomina* to texts and contexts alike. Whether in Hellenistic

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114 Giraldus, *Dialogi*, 648: “Fuere per haec eadem tempora et poetae alii, quorum quia ab ipso et ab aliis facta est mentio, tantum uobis nomina commemorabo: Quintianus, Paulinus, Ampelius, Leo, Petrus, Messala, Anthedius, Eritius, Lampridius, Consentius, Secundinus, alii, ne uos nudis nominibus fastidiam.” Sidonius was used as an important source of references to authors—especially *nuda nomina*—throughout the early modern period. In a particularly vivid example of such use, when the late-seventeenth-century English divine Abednego Seller annotated his 1662 copy of G.J. Vossius’ *De poetis Latinis* (itself a bio-bibliography of poets executed in the tradition of Giraldus), he inserted numerous names both in the text itself and its index that he had collected from his reading of Sidonius. See G.J. Vossius, *De veterum poetarum temporibus libri duo: qui sunt de poetis Graecis et Latinis* (Amsterdam, 1662), now Cambridge University Library Adv. d.44.1.

Alexandria or the medieval Latin schoolroom, the simplest form of a canon had always been a mere list of names. But unlike more restrictive exercises in canonization, bibliography was always open to expansion and augmentation via those processes of semi-conservative replication discussed above. Nor did these projects require the emergence of a new Jerome or a new Gesner; instead, very often they were accomplished at the micro-level by otherwise unknown readers—an activity we shall see repeated time and time again throughout this study. Moreover, the apparatus and *mis-en-page* of bibliographies readily facilitated such augmentation. Sometimes this expansion functioned as a species of correction, as readers documented how a given bibliography was incomplete, or perhaps even incorrect. And there were few better ways to perform these corrective or expansionary tasks than to take advantage of that key finding-aid that proliferated throughout early modern print—namely, the index.

Indices—especially those that enumerated texts and authors—were always popular sites of annotation. In this respect, Giraldus’ compendium proved no exception. For instance, an anonymous reader of the *Dialogi* devoted considerable time to the appropriately Giraldan task of adding still more *nomina* to Giraldus’ already-extensive index. Although his added *nomina* included well-known authors like Aulus Gellius and Eusebius, whom Giraldus’ printed index had accidentally omitted, they also encompassed some of the bibliographer’s more obscure allusions, as the annotator jotted down entries for “L. Crastitius, grammarian,” “Theon, a slanderous poet,” and “the fragments of Cato’s *De originibus*” (i.e., the remains of Cato the Elder’s lost work on Roman history and genealogy). In this process of augmenting Giraldus’ index, the annotator devoted special attention to those pioneers of poetry who supposedly resided

in that distant mythic past. Under the index’s headings for “O” and “P” respectively, he added entries for “Orionius, the British poet,” and “Plemmydius, the British poet,” two murky figures of dubious history whom Giraldus had located in primeval British antiquity—and whom the antiquary John Leland, citing Giraldus, would later celebrate as some of the earliest of British writers. In the case of another murky first, the annotator even went beyond the contents of the Dialogi altogether, adding a name that Giraldus had not included in his text. In a curious entry under “O,” he wrote out a reference to the “poems of Oroebantius of Troezen, who as Aelian attests predated Homer,” while citing the relevant passage in Aelian’s Historia varia—a miscellany of mythography and erudition likely composed in the third century. When it came to the bibliographic mapping of the mythic past, the annotator did not simply construct a fuller finding-aid to Giraldus’ text; instead, he used Giraldus’ own iteration of nomina as a site for amending the contents of Giraldus’ accompanying text, cataloguing names that the bibliographer himself had overlooked. As we shall see, the commanding status of dubious chronological “firsts” like “Oroebantius of Troezen” would play a powerful role in defining both the possibilities and limits of bibliography’s ordo temporum. Moreover, as this admittedly anecdotal reading of Giraldus suggests, bio-bibliography was digested through the enumeration of still


more *nomina*, whatever their historicity. By embracing everything from the late antique “naked names” of Sidonius Apollinaris to the deep British past of Oronius and Plemmydias, bio-bibliography proved a powerful tool for expanding the chronological reach of the canon, in directions both early and late. However, doing so raised troubling questions of temporal disjunction that only grew more pronounced over the course of the sixteenth century.

**Canon-Formation and the Imperatives of Pedagogy: Juan Luis Vives**

While Italian humanists and bibliographers were tackling questions of canon-formation, others in very different geographic and cultural milieus were hard at work on similar problems, particularly members of the growing international Erasmian *respublica literaria*. Defining the proper reach of the canon and judging its component authors were hardly idle enterprises; on the contrary, they were intimately tied up with practical pedagogical questions of how to guide students through the various phases of the past. And perhaps no one did more to fuse pedagogy and bibliography in the first half of the sixteenth century than the Erasmian scholar Juan Luis Vives. A Spaniard whose scholarly pursuits took him to Paris, Leuven, Oxford, and finally Bruges, Vives is today best remembered for his championing of Erasmian humanism and his consequent attacks against scholastic education, expressed especially in his 1531 *De causis corruptarum artium*. A companion-piece to this treatise, Vives’ *De tradendis disciplinis*, also played an outsized role in early modern canon-formation. Framed as a suggested curriculum to

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120 Juan Luis Vives, *De causis corruptarum artium* (Bruges, 1531) and Juan Luis Vives, *De tradendis disciplinis* (Bruges, 1532). Vives was also well known for his influential commentary on Augustine’s *De civitate dei*.

121 See most recently Valerio Del Nero, “The *De Disciplinis* as a Model of a Humanistic Text,” in *A Companion to Juan Luis Vives*, ed. Charles Fantazzi (Leiden, 2008), 177-226. See also Karl
hypothetical pupils, Vives’ guide tackled many crucial questions concerning canonicity and its discontents: how ought the canon balance elements both pagan and Christian? What was the proper mix between “ancients” or antiqui and “more recent ones” or recentiores? And how were students to read and absorb sources whose Latinity was supposedly not as pure as that of their earlier counterparts? Although Vives eschewed the formal vitae of de viris illustribus in favor of hortatory admonitions concerning individual authors, he too was engaged in the construction of a continuous literary history via bio-bibliography. And although Gesner did not explicitly name him as a source of material for his Bibliotheca, Vives helped make clear the practical and educational considerations at stake in debates over bibliographic universality. Moreover, his reflections on the disjunctions that marred both ordo librorum and ordo temporum played an important role in the prehistory of historical periodizing.

Vives’ treatment of late authors featured both the usual tropes and the usual ambiguities. Like Crinitus and Giraldus, he offered a rather hedging assessment of Prudentius, recommending that students read him while making clear that there was “much to be desired in [his] Latinity.” Although he gave largely positive reviews to Claudian and Ausonius, they proved an exception rather than the rule; in the same breath, Vives summed up his mixed judgments through a pithy metaphor, proclaiming that the writings of Juvencus, Sedulius, Prosper of Aquitaine and Paulinus of Nola resembled “muddy and disturbed rivers, whose waters are nevertheless health-giving.” Hence, even if the Latinity of such auctores was undesirable, the underlying contents of their works proved edifying. Yet when it came to poor Sidonius

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122 Juan Luis Vives, De tradendis disciplinis, trans. Foster Watson (Cambridge, 1913), 137.
Apollinaris, Vives was altogether less forgiving, announcing that he would “spare the philologist” the labor of reading him.\textsuperscript{124}

Despite his castigations of late Latinity, Vives offered a sensitive and systematic exposition of a key transformation in \textit{ordo librorum} that accompanied the end of the classical world. As he recognized, this transition had not just “muddied and disturbed” formerly pristine sources of language and learning; instead, it had also spawned entirely new textual genres. After surveying authors of both \textit{historia ecclesiastica} and \textit{historia Romana}, he charted the origins of a new and inherently non-ancient historical genre, best characterized as something akin to “national” history. Drawing a neat one-to-one correspondence between political upheavals (including the grand drama of decline and fall) and mutations in literary history, he explained that “when the Roman Empire was cut up and dismembered, each separate people, relying on its own strength, carried on its own domestic and foreign affairs, and from thence arose separate histories of different countries.”\textsuperscript{125} Just as a single political order had fractured into multiple and divergent polities, so a formerly unitary vision of Roman \textit{historia} gave way to ramified and more circumscribed \textit{historiae}, each devoted to individual \textit{gentes}. This distinction allowed Vives to range across that remarkably wide postclassical landscape that Giraldus had traversed in his fifth dialogue and Trithemius had reconstructed in such exhaustive detail. Cataloguing various writers of these so-called “separate” histories (whether late antique, medieval, or modern), he proceeded all the way from Jordanes’ \textit{Getica} and Einhard’s \textit{vita} of Charlemagne to such near-contemporary works as Hector Boethius’ history of Scotland and Beatus Rhenanus’ account of German origins. Along the way, he also offered up some unexpected judgments: for instance, while he faulted the twelfth-century Saxo Grammaticus for trafficking in fables concerning the history of the Danes,

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\item \textsuperscript{124} Vives, \textit{De tradendis}, trans. Watson, 155.
\item \textsuperscript{125} Vives, \textit{De tradendis}, trans. Watson, 245.
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he nevertheless urged his imagined pupils to “wonder at the words and elegance of his diction,”
given that Saxo wrote “in that age and in such a country.”\textsuperscript{126}

Vives also make clear that one could not absorb literary history without at least a
rudimentary grasp of historical chronology and something approximating historical
periodization. Before introducing students to individual historians, he proposed that teachers
sketch a “general view” of historical time, “with divisions into some well-known periods and
named like well-known roads.”\textsuperscript{127} The sample divisions Vives then suggested ranged from the
ancient to the modern, and pivoted around such temporally diverse epochal moments as the
founding of Rome, the conquests of Alexander the Great, the birth of Christ, the conversion of
Constantine, the reign of Charlemagne, and the fall of Constantinople, among others. As he
argued, fixing these periods and roads required familiarity with the many late antique and
medieval chroniclers—from Prosper of Aquitaine to Sigebert of Gembloux—who had continued
and augmented the \textit{ordo temporum} first set out by Eusebius. As a result, libraries needed to stock
these essential “auxiliary works of reference.” Hence, Vives suggested that some of the chief
textual fruits of Trithemius’ \textit{superius saeculum} were necessary to orientate oneself temporally
within the canon, even within those periods that had ostensibly outshone such late ages. More
generally, Vives’ \textit{De tradendis} urged bibliography to travel down those “well-known roads”
furnished by \textit{historia}—essential signposts for guiding readers through the canon’s many twists
and turns, muddy rivers and all.

From Trithemius to Vives, practitioners of bibliography in the first half of the sixteenth
century laid the groundwork for Conrad Gesner’s declaration of its status as a universal genre.
Regrettably, the figures examined here are not often accorded priority in traditional accounts of

Renaissance humanism, or in longstanding narratives of European intellectual history that still privilege purported signs of discursive creativity over acts of seemingly ceaseless compilation. Yet compilations of this sort required considerable interpretive work, as they both fixed and bent those “well-known roads” that both *ordo librorum* and *ordo temporum* could traverse. Even if certain segments of these roads seemed but afterthoughts, appendices, or otherwise subordinated elements of more vaunted *viae*, bibliography constituted a powerful technology for charting all such temporal paths, no matter how benighted or inhospitable. This emergent “order of books” would go on to shape notions of *historia* and its potential divisibility in profound and often unexpected ways.

**Localizing Bibliotheca Universalis: John Bale’s Fusion of Bibliography and History**

Thus far we have examined sixteenth-century works that appeared before Conrad Gesner’s *Bibliotheca universalis* transformed the scope and scale of early modern bibliography. In the remainder of this chapter we will consider how the linkage between bibliography and history developed in the decades following the appearance of Gesner’s universal library. When viewed in relation to both his predecessors and successors, Gesner’s relative inattention to historical transformations marks him as something of an outlier among early modern bibliographers. While the sources examined above dealt in one form or another with problems of temporal *ordo*, Gesner bypassed this conundrum, instead listing his texts and authors according to the “artificial order” or *ordo artificialis* of the alphabet.  

128 He explicitly acknowledged this shift in the preface to his *Bibliotheca universalis*. When describing his wholesale incorporation of Trithemius into

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128 On Gesner’s approach to alphabetizing, see Blair, *Too Much to Know*, 141-2 and 162.
his own bibliography, he noted that he had done so *iuxta ordinem literarum* (i.e. alphabetically), whereas Trithemius himself “follow[ed] the order of time” (*ipse enim temporis rationem sequitur*). As Gesner realized, a purportedly universal compilation like his was far too complex and unwieldy to submit to the rigors of *ordo temporum*. After all, many of his texts were undated, and an imprecise chronology would have hardly been the easiest means of consulting such an overwhelming reference work. And so the largest and most ambitious of sixteenth-century bibliographies eschewed those “well-known roads” of history that Juan Luis Vives had judged such essential guides.

Notwithstanding its relative absence from the *Bibliotheca universalis* itself, compilatory endeavors like bibliography were intimately linked to the practical workings of *historia*. Not only did Gesner make this abundantly clear in his prefatory remarks, which outlined a drama of textual loss and recovery that adumbrated the tripartite schema of dividing time, but this connection was also confirmed by Trithemius, Volterrano, Crinitus, Giraldus, and Vives, all of whom imposed some species of historical *ordo* upon their catalogues. *Historia* continued to play a central role in compilations that otherwise followed in Gesner’s footsteps. Indeed, *historia* and *compilatio* easily bled into one another, and the former was often expressed as a function of the latter. As a case in point, consider the endlessly capacious *Theatrum vitae humanae* or *Theater of Human Life* of the Swiss encyclopedist Theodor Zwinger, begun in 1565. Not unlike Volterrano’s compendium, Zwinger’s *Theatrum* subsumed bio-bibliographies into a larger encyclopedic project, which stretched beyond mere *vitae* to offer a comprehensive guide to knowledge and the disciplines. In a section that catalogued historical writers, Zwinger introduced a telling subject heading for writers of *historia universalis*. When explaining the seemingly straightforward fact that works in this genre charted the history of the world in chronological...
order, he wrote that the composers of *historia universalis* “wove together (*contexuerunt*) the history of diverse nations and many ages by the order and succession of times” (*ordine et serie temporum*).\textsuperscript{129} Not only did this definition highlight how time constituted a species of *ordo*, but it also suggested that expansive *historiae* of this nature were products of “weaving together” or *compilatio*. In the most literal of senses, Zwinger’s bibliography made clear that both history and the books that contained it were strung together by *ordines* and *series*—a mode of structuring that would dominate early modern periodization.

Ironically, the sixteenth-century work that offered perhaps the clearest fusion yet of bibliography and history was also the compendium most directly inspired by Gesner’s avowedly ahistorical *Bibliotheca*. In a further irony, this compendium was anything but universal; instead, it used the methods of bibliographic universality to create a highly localized catalogue, arranged according to a very specific *ordo temporum*. John Bale is today chiefly remembered as a strident anti-papal polemicist who authored the *Scriptorum illustrium Maioris Britanniae catalogus*, the first comprehensive bio-bibliography of British writers. Bale was likewise a well-known dramatist, who penned the history play *Kynge Johan*. In addition, he wrote a commentary on the Book of Revelation that equated the rise of the Antichrist with the development of the Roman Church. Bale was intimately involved in the tumult of the English Reformation: he first fled England for the Low Countries after the fall of Thomas Cromwell, returned and was made a bishop during the reign of Edward VI, fled again—this time living in exile in Basel—upon the accession of Mary, and was finally named a prebendary of Canterbury when Elizabeth became

queen. Throughout this eventful life, he associated with some of the leading figures of both English and Continental Protestantism: not only was he intimately aware of the work of the Magdeburg Centuriators on ecclesiastical history, while drawing greatly upon the work of Flacius Illyricus, but he also played an important role in shaping John Foxe’s famous martyrrology, the *Acts and Monuments*. Finally, he associated with both Matthew Parker and John Leland, with whom he shared a passion for church history and manuscript collecting alike.

Bale’s Swiss exile most immediately influenced his work as a bibliographer. While he had also produced a *Summarium* of British authors in the 1540s, his bibliographic enterprise grew far more comprehensive in the intervening decade. While in Switzerland he not only lived and worked with the Basel printer Johannes Oporinus (who would publish his *Catalogus* in 1557-9), but he also enjoyed contacts with none other than Conrad Gesner, to whom he dedicated his British bibliography. Organized in roughly chronological fashion, Bale’s *Catalogus* ranged from deep antiquity to the present. In addition, the explanatory notes that Bale added to his various biographical entries—placed beneath each *vita* in italic type under the label “Appendix”—extended well beyond each author’s life and oeuvre, surveying not only local details of the medieval British past, but also key events in the broader history of the European Middle Ages. In this fashion, Bale blended practical bio-bibliography with elements of *historia universalis*, which Vives had deemed essential for ordering books. As a result, far more so than Gesner’s predecessors, Bale explicitly concerned himself with the division of the past—a

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131 On Gesner as inspiration for Bale’s project, see Blair, *Too Much to Know*, 163.
concern that the long title of the *Catalogus* made abundantly clear. Noting that his catalogue extended across some 3620 years since the days of Noah’s son Japheth, and that it was “collected” from such diverse authorities as Gennadius, Bede, Honorius, Trithemius, Gesner and Leland (to name but a few), Bale averred that he had enumerated far more than mere *vitae*; instead, his obsessive list-making promised to encompass “antiquities, origins, annals, places, successions, facts, words, discussions, writings, deaths, and other things not unworthy of knowing.”

Bale published his bibliography together with a companion volume of papal *vitae*—the *Acta pontificum Romanorum*—designed to chart the degeneration of the Roman Church. And as he had explained in the *Catalogus*’ long title, he wished to illuminate the deeds of the elect and the reprobate “both historically and fittingly” (*historice et apte*), through “the individual ages of the same church” (*aetates eiusdem Ecclesiae singulas*). Bale defined these *aetates* in the preface to his *Catalogus*, noting that his companion work offered an enumeration and description of the Roman pontiffs, “divided into three as though into classes and orders” (*classes ac ordines*). In Bale’s “first and pure age,” which extended from Christ’s apostles to Pope Sylvester I (pontiff at the time of Constantine), the Roman church was “uncorrupted and untouched” (*incorruptum integrumque*). His second *aetas*, which stretched from Sylvester to Boniface III’s early-seventh-century pontificate, was “moderately sound and tolerable” (*mediocriter sana, et tolerabilis*). Yet

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his third and final age, which ranged from Boniface III to Paul IV (i.e. from the seventh century to the present), proved far direr, as Bale deemed this vast expanse of nearly a millennium “most depraved and most contaminated” (*deprauatissima et contaminatissima*). Thereafter, Bale linked his threefold division of the history of the papacy to an ancient Greco-Roman method of periodizing, proposing that his three *classes ac ordines*, marked off by the pontificates of Sylvester, Boniface, and Paul respectively, could be conceptualized as ages of gold, silver, and iron—precisely those ages that, as Bale maintained, were once used to sort “secular poets” in series. As we shall see in Chapter Five, seventeenth-century appropriations of this ancient metaphor would profoundly shape emergent divisions of time into antiquity, the Middle Ages, and modernity.

As his *Catalogus* reveals, Bale was thoroughly obsessed with all manner of *ordines* and *series*. Indeed, many of the appendices he attached to his *vitae* consisted purely and simply of lists—several of which engaged in periodizing. For instance, one appendix featured a numbered list of pontiffs corresponding exactly to Bale’s golden age of the early church. As Bale put it, “here follows the first class of the Roman bishops, from the Apostles to Sylvester: they were all simple shepherds without mitres, continually laboring towards martyrdom in the harvest of the Gospel.” Integrated into the *mis-en-page* of the *Catalogus* itself, Bale’s schematic visions of

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historical *ordo* constituted extended glosses upon his bibliography. Moreover, through such
glossing, he universalized an otherwise local or “national” bibliography, as evidenced by his
addition of historical *ordines* from far beyond British history proper. Hence, just as Bale had
localized Gesner’s universal collection, so he then rejoined his bibliography to universal genres,
especially the medieval chronicle tradition and *historia universalis*. Bale’s extension of his
project far beyond both Britain and bibliography alike marked a new departure for an ostensibly
particularized *de viris illustribus*. As we shall see, this more capacious approach was well
appreciated by one of the most eminent and voracious of early modern readers—namely, the
Elizabethan scholar and occultist John Dee.

Like Bale, Dee was also obsessed with bibliography, book collecting, and the
reconstruction of the early British past. He assembled one of the largest libraries in sixteenth-
century England, while also serving as a political advisor to Elizabeth I.\(^{135}\) Indeed, in urging
Elizabeth to pursue British expansion in the Americas, he is often credited as the first to have
coined the phrase “British Empire.”\(^{136}\) In addition, he maintained extensive interests in
mathematics, alchemy and the occult, authoring a treatise titled *Monas Hieroglyphica* on a
mystical symbol of unity that he himself had designed, and even claiming (in one of the more
notorious episodes of his life) that he communed with angelic spirits. But as William Sherman
and others have shown, Dee was far more than a magus obsessed with esotericism and the occult.
Instead, as both reader and interlocutor, he participated in some of the most important projects of
pan-European historical, textual, and bibliographical scholarship, as he sought to construct an
*ordo librorum* that could illuminate pasts both British and universal. In fact, he even played a


\(^{136}\) On Dee’s imperial project see Sherman, *John Dee*, esp. 182-92.
supporting role in the story of bibliographic universality: when the Zurich bibliographer Josias Simler published a revised and augmented edition of Gesner’s *Bibliotheca universalis*, he appealed to others across Europe to help him augment this universal bibliography still further, and to supply him with texts and authors he might have missed. Dee responded with enthusiasm, and filled his copy of Simler’s revised *Bibliotheca* with a copious supply of new names, many of which he culled from his own manuscript collection.\(^{137}\)

When Dee read Bale’s *Catalogus*, he focused not only on Bale’s iteration of names, but also on the wider historical context in which the British bibliographer had enmeshed them. Like John Leland and the aforementioned annotator of Giraldus’ *Dialogi*, Dee was especially interested in origins and the deep British past. Yet in a fitting irony, he adorned the flyleaf of his Bale with a meditation on *origines* from a source whose own claim to the deep past was itself altogether spurious. For Dee began by copying out a nugget of wisdom from one Myrsilus Lesbius, supposedly an ancient Greek historian, which observed that “concerning the origins and antiquity of a people (*gentis antiquitate et origine*), more is believed by the people itself and its neighbors, than by peoples remote and foreign.”\(^{138}\) However, these were not the actual words of any venerable ancient *auctor*, but rather one component of that highly intricate modern forgery concocted by Annius of Viterbo—whose commentary on this false underlying text Dee also cited

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\(^{138}\) John Bale, *Catalogus* (Basel, 1557-9), now Oxford Christ Church W.b.4.8, flyleaf: Dee writes “Canon pro habenda veritatem historiae” and then adds the following quotation from Annius of Viterbo: “De gentis antiquitate et origine, magis creditur ipsi genti atque uicinis, quam remotis et extremis. Magis igitur creditur ipsis Lydis et Turrehenis atque his uicinis Romanis, et qui consentiunt in eorum patria historia et origine quam quibusuis aliis, quamuis alias eruditissimis. Myrsilus Lesbus in libello de bello Pelasgico cap. 3. Vide Annii annotationes etc.” On Dee’s copies of Bale, Leland, and Geoffrey of Monmouth, all of which are held at Christ Church, see Sherman, *John Dee*, 92-3.
in his excerpt.\textsuperscript{139} As we shall see at greater length below, ironies of this sort constantly plagued attempts at fixing the distant beginnings of any valid \textit{ordo librorum}. However, one of the first notes Dee entered in his copy of the \textit{Catalogus} appealed precisely to such “remote and foreign” authorities to corroborate Bale’s account of the earliest British writers. One of the \textit{Catalogus’} first entries concerned the legendary Celtic king Bardus Druydius, whom Bale—following pseudo-Berosus, another of Annius’ notorious forgeries—deemed an inventor of music and poetry amongst the Britons and hence the etymological origin of the term “bard.” To bolster this narrative, Bale cited discussions of bards in such ancient authorities as Diodorus Siculus, Strabo, and Nonius Marcellus. Dee then augmented this list still further, appealing to none other than Giraldus and remarking in the margin that “I see from the first dialogue of Lilius Giraldus on the history of poets that, besides those cited here, Diodorus, Pompeius, Ammianus Marcellinus and Athenaeus make very clear mention of the bards.”\textsuperscript{140}

As Dee followed Bale into less murky and more recent portions of the past, he used the \textit{Catalogus} as a guide to key inflection points in late antique and medieval history. In particular, Dee showed great interest in the connections Bale drew between Britain on the one hand and the


\textsuperscript{140} Bale, \textit{Catalogus}, 4: Bale’s entry for “BARDUS DRUIDIUS” begins: “Bardus Druydius, ex praedicti Druydis filio, Celtarum rex quintus, carminum inuentione celebris in Beroso claret... ab huius regis nomine, et utraque canendi arte, processerunt illi quos Bardos appellant authores.” Dee writes in the margin “Ex Lilii Gyraldi dialogo 1 de poetarum hystoria, Diodorum, Pompeium, Ammianum Marcellinum, Athenaeum, citari praeter istos uideo, qui Bardorum praecclaram facere mentionem.”
wider postclassical world on the other—once more demonstrating how readers could use bibliography to wrestle with forms of temporal disjunction and absorb schemes of historical periodization. For instance, Dee highlighted two of Bale’s observations concerning the simultaneous calamities that befell Rome and Britain at the beginning of the fifth century. First, he paraphrased Bale’s remark in the appendix to his vita of Sylvius Bonus that in the year 410, “the Britons lost their liberty with the Empire.” Just a few pages later, where Bale cited Bede on the end of Roman rule, Dee repeated in the margin that “in the year 410 the rule of the Romans over the Britons ceased.”\textsuperscript{141} In other cases, Dee highlighted Bale’s reflections on the synchronicity of historical turning points and took them one step further. In a lengthy appendix that introduced his third phase of the papacy—that “most depraved and most contaminated” age beginning in the seventh century—Bale explained that “Papism and Mohammedism arose at the same time, and in many regions they corrupted, obscured, and undermined doctrine concerning the Son of God.” In addition, he offered a detailed account of how the Byzantine emperor Phocas overthrew his predecessor Maurice and ceded control of Rome to the papacy. In the margin, Dee succinctly summed up the equivalence Bale posited among these three developments, remarking “Papism, Mohammedism, and the ruin of the Roman Empire, or at least its greatest diminishment, all at the same time.”\textsuperscript{142}

\textsuperscript{141} Bale, \textit{Catalogus}, 39: At the end of his entry for “SYLVIUS BONUS,” Bale writes “Claruit Syluius anno Christi 410, quo Brytanni libertatem cum Imperio amiserunt.” Dee then flags in the margin “Brytanni libertatem et imperium amittunt.” At p.44, Dee underlines the last sentence in Bale’s historical appendix to “LEPORIUS AGRICOLA” thus “Anno Domini, 410, Romani, iuxta Bedam, in Brytannia regnare cessant, qui a tempore Iulii Caesaris in ea dominum habuerant.” He then writes in the margin “Romanorum Imperium in Brytannos, cessauit anno 410.”

\textsuperscript{142} Bale, \textit{Catalogus}, 68: In an extended appendix that introduces the third and most corrupt phase of his history of the papacy, beginning in the seventh century, Bale notes “Papismus et Mahumetismus simul sunt exorti, qui multis in regionibus doctrinam de Dei filio corruperunt, obscurarunt, labefactarunt...Sequitur nunc tertia classis de Papis Ro. quae diuiditur in quinq.
In this fashion, the geopolitical narrative of the waning of Romanitas was wedded to an emergent Protestant historia ecclesiastica that viewed Roman Catholicism and Islam together as twin medieval heresies. Yet Dee, like Bale himself, did not read these purported calamities as inaugurating an inevitable slide into decline and fall, especially when it came to Britain itself. Rather, he highlighted Bale’s evocations of medieval renaissance. For instance, Bale spoke in idealized terms of a revival of learning under King Alfred, praising how he “summoned learned man as councilors and teachers,” promoted the liberal arts, and devoted a considerable portion of each day to his personal studies. When Bale listed out a number of these viri docti, including Asser and Johannes Scotus Eriugena, Dee took special note, highlighting in the margin “learned men coeval in this age” (viri docti hac aetate synchroni). Like Trithemius’ recognition of a Carolingian Renaissance, Dee seized upon the amalgamating function of bibliography to identify a similar moment of Alfredian efflorescence—expressed here in strikingly periodizing terms as the synchrony of the learned within a single aetas.143

As John Dee realized, Bale’s Catalogus constituted a potent exercise in both early Protestant historia ecclesiastica and British national history, conveyed through the workings of bio-bibliography. However, this project possessed some unlikely origins. Before he joined the vanguard of sixteenth-century Protestant scholarship, Bale had been a devoted Carmelite, who (like the Benedictine Johannes Trithemius) used his bibliographical skills to memorialize the history of his order. And while his acrimonious split with the Carmelites did much to color his subsequent bibliographical endeavors, the tools of his craft remained deeply monastic in origin.

sectiones.” Summarizing this material, Dee remarks “Papismus et Mahumetismus, et Imperii Romani ruina, uel maxima saltem Imminutio simul.”

143 Bale, Catalogus, 125: In Bale’s entry for “ALPHREDUS MAGNUS,” he asserted that “Velut alter Dauid, fratrum suorum minimus, ad regnum tandem perueniens, in consiliarios ac praeeceptores accerasebat viros doctissimos.” Dee then notes “Viri docti hac aetate synchroni.”
Indeed, his initial forays into British bio-bibliography greatly mirrored the projects executed at Sponheim and Würzburg by Trithemius, who incidentally also composed a collection of Carmelite *vitae*.\(^{144}\) Like Trithemius, Bale illuminates the various feedback loops that long connected bibliography and canon-formation to physical codices themselves. Thanks to the early-twentieth-century publication of the primary working notebook that Bale used to compose his *Catalogus*, modern scholars now possess a much clearer picture of these feedback loops, illustrated through Bale’s repeated references to the actual medieval codices in which he found his *scriptores*.\(^{145}\) However, the remainder of Bale’s unpublished manuscripts and notebooks, preserved today at the Bodleian, demonstrate the profoundly medieval and monastic origins of these bibliographical labors, gesturing backwards to that unfettered passion for list-making practiced by mendicant librarians and others in the later Middle Ages.\(^{146}\) Even more significantly, they point to Bale’s perpetuation of that longstanding symbiosis between bio-bibliography and the universal chronicle tradition—once more demonstrating how two interlinked traditions of late antique and medieval provenance remained conjoined in early modern visions of time.

Bale’s most thorough fusion of history and bibliography with the rich remains of medieval manuscript culture is found in a Bodleian notebook (now MS Bodley 73) dating from around 1525—that is, well before both the Act of Supremacy and Bale’s bitter break with the Carmelites.\(^{147}\) In it, the young Bale gathered materials for a specifically Carmelite *de viris*

\(^{144}\) See Johannes Trithemius, *De laudibus ordinis fratrum Carmelitarum* (Mainz, 1494).

\(^{145}\) See John Bale’s *Index of British and Other Writers*, ed. Reginald Lane Poole (Oxford, 1902), based upon Bale’s notebook now Oxford, Bodleian MS Selden supra 64.


illustribus: he assembled an endless series of lists ranging from notices of medieval chronicles and monastic foundations to the tenures of specific abbots and records of their burial places. Although the particulars of this notebook were parochial enough, Bale’s method of ordering their contents proved highly significant. He organized nearly every list, whether minute or expansive, local or universal, biographical or bibliographical, around schemes of ordo he identified as either “according to ages” (secundum aetates) or “according to times” (secundum tempora). While in several instances this ordering was implicit, as when Bale chronologically arranged everything from those “illustrious men” buried at the Carmelite monastery in Norwich (stretching from 1281 to the present) to those “professors of theology” interred at the Carmelite seat in London (from 1316 onwards), in many cases he explicitly invoked tempora and aetates in the titles of his lists.”

For example, one of his very first lists enumerated “the names of the monasteries of England sorted by the ages and times (secundum aetates et tempora) of their foundations.”

In other cases, his lists extended beyond the confines of medieval England, both geographically and temporally. Bale displayed this universal approach to compilation in a comprehensive chronological listing of monastic orders, titled “the ages and beginnings (aetates et initia) of the separate orders approved by the Roman Church”—a list that he perhaps copied or compiled from various medieval chronicle sources. Ranging all the way from Egypt to England and across vast stretches of ancient, late antique, and medieval territory, Bale began with desert fathers like Anthony and Pachomius and ended centuries later with the late medieval

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148 Oxford Bodleian MS Bodley 73, fol.51v: Here two of Bale’s representative underlined headings read “Hi sunt viri illustres qui sepeliuntur in conuentu Norwici” and “Hii theologie professores quiescunt Londoniis in conuentu.”
149 Oxford Bodleian MS Bodley 73, fol.3v: “Nomina conuentuum Anglie secundum etates et tempora fundacionum.”
150 Oxford Bodleian Bodley 73, fol.43r: “Incipiunt etates et inicia diuersorum ordinum per Romanam ecclesiam approbatorum”
Franciscans.\textsuperscript{151} As he noted, the very first \textit{ordo monasticus} was inaugurated by Saint Anthony in the year 250, followed over the course of the next century by such specific \textit{ordines} as the \textit{ordo sancti Pachomii} and the \textit{ordo sancti Basili}.\textsuperscript{152} Bale then recorded such milestones as the sixth-century establishment of the Benedictine Rule and the origins of his own Carmelites, before concluding with the inauguration of “the order of the brothers and sisters of the third rule of Saint Francis.”\textsuperscript{153}

This exhaustive enumeration of the \textit{aetates et initia} of monastic history yields several important insights. First, it demonstrates that Bale anchored his plans for even the most local and circumscribed of compendia \textit{de viris illustribus} in the broadest of temporal, geographic, and cultural contexts. One could not write of medieval English Carmelites without fixing them in the \textit{ordo temporum} of monasticism writ large. Second, it suggests that the necessity of ordering phenomena \textit{secundum aetates} was by no means restricted to the narrow realm of bibliography. On the contrary, Bale ordered monastic foundations just as he ordered Carmelite theologians buried in London and would later order the whole corpus of medieval British \textit{scriptores}. Third, this overriding concern for temporal \textit{ordo} explains why Bale could not practice bibliography without the aid of the chronicle tradition. For amidst his collecting of Carmelite \textit{vitae}, he devoted a significant chunk of this notebook to excerpts from an anonymous medieval codex, which he

\textsuperscript{151} The full list, from fol.43r to fol.48r, is also transcribed and excerpted in an appendix to Thora Balslev Blatt, \textit{The Plays of John Bale: A Study of Ideas, Technique and Style} (Copenhagen, 1968). Blatt’s study posits that Bale’s monastic lists later provided important source material for his drama \textit{Kynge Johan}. See Blatt, \textit{The Plays of John Bale}, 53-4 and 235-43.

\textsuperscript{152} Oxford MS Bodley 73, fol.43r: “Ordo monasticus incepit sub beato Antonio in Thbaydae partibus anno domini 250 qui tamen ordo post plures annos a fratibus susceptus est sicut habetur infra in ordine suo sub regula sancti Augustini cuius maior in conuentu uocatur primas. Ordo sancti Pachomii sub regula eiusdem patris militia...Ordo sancti Basili sub regula eiusdem patris solus, eius maior uocatur archimandrita. 366.”

\textsuperscript{153} Oxford Bodleian MS Bodley 73, fol.48r: “Ordo fratrum et sororum de tertia regula sancti francisci...”
titled straightforwardly enough “the chronicle of a certain Carmelite whose name is unknown.” Unsurprisingly, most of the material Bale copied from this codex concerned Carmelite activity in medieval Britain. However, he did not exclusively read the chronicle as an internalist history of his order. Instead, beginning at Creation itself, he excerpted such diverse items as Aeneas’ arrival in Italy, Julius Caesar’s campaigns in Britain, the death of the Virgin Mary, John’s composition of the Book of Revelation, Helena’s purported discovery of the true cross, and the first appearance of the Pelagian heresy. Moreover, throughout these more ancient entries (which spanned the globe more widely before the latter portions of the chronicle settled down in England), Bale rubricated several items, especially those that dealt with British matters. For instance, one of the first excerpts herubricated repeated the much-invoked claim that the legendary British king Lucius had converted to Christianity, “along with the whole nation of the Britons,” some two centuries before Constantine. Subsequent rubricated entries detailed the martyrdom of Saint Alban, the years that Merlin purportedly flourished, Ethelbert’s conversion to Christianity through the efforts of Augustine of Canterbury, and the life of Bede, fittingly christened the “doctor of the English” (doctor Anglorum).

The aforementioned entries highlight how Bale could condense the contents of a medieval codex into yet another list ordered secundum aetate. And so his notebook offered a

154 Oxford Bodleian MS Bodley 73, fol.83r: “Hec habentur ex cronica cuiusdam carmelite cuius nomen ignoratur.”
155 Oxford Bodleian MS Bodley 73, fol.83v: the first rubricated excerpt from the chronicle records “Anno ante incarnationem do. 55 intrauit Iulius Caesar in Britanniam…” At fol.84r-85r, the following entries are rubricated: “Anno do. L Maria mater dei obiit et erat erius assumpcio,” “Anno do. clxxii Lucius rex Britonum suscepi fidem Christi cum tota gente Britonum sub Elutherio papa,” “Anno do cxc Albanus in Britannia primus martyr effectus est,” “Anno do cccvi Helena inuenit sanctam crucem,” and “Anno do cccxii Pelagius haereticus asseruit sine gracia dei hominem posse saluari...”
156 Oxford Bodleian MS Bodley 73, fol.85r: for instance, Bale records “Anno do. cccclxiii Merlinus uates in Britannia floruit” and “Anno do. dcxc Beda doctor Anglorum floruit.”
motley collection of chronological lists, including numerous excerpts from the world chronicle or *Enneades* of Marcus Antonius Sabellicus and a record of early Roman pontiffs up to the third-century Pope Dionysius (of special significance given his subsequent periodization of papal history in his *Catalogus*). Significantly enough, Bale even produced a separate collection of excerpts from Trithemius’ own bio-bibliographies, thereby freely drawing upon the acknowledged master of his genre. And immediately before excerpting Trithemius, he also listed out the sources he required for composing his own Carmelite compendium. These sources proved strikingly heterogeneous: ever the bibliographer, Bale jotted down references to numerous authors and texts both ancient and medieval, pagan and Christian, including (among many others) Peter Comestor’s *Historia scholastica*, Cassiodorus’ *Historia tripartita*, the annals of Sigebert of Gembloux, Godfrey of Viterbo, Josephus, Macrobius, Pliny, Eusebius, Bede, Gildas, Ambrose, Paul the Deacon, Suetonius, Geoffrey of Monmouth, and the *Mirabilia urbis Romae*.

Just as Bale’s own working methods blended bio-bibliography with the chronicle tradition, combining the allied fruits of *de viris illustribus* and *historia universalis*, so his compilations encouraged readers to effect similar fusions and syntheses. And just as Bale had augmented his *Catalogus* with a continuous historical narrative, copied from the chronicle tradition into his succession of appendices, so Bale’s bibliographical cataloguing could in turn add literary flesh to the more skeletal sections of *historia universalis*. In fact, some of Bale’s readers used his encyclopedic guide to British writers to fill in the blank spaces that surrounded

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157 See Oxford Bodleian MS Bodley 73, fols.64v-66r and fol.136r.
158 Oxford Bodleian MS Bodley 73, fol.159r: “Ex cathalogo illustrium uirorum Germanie Io. abbatis Spanheimensis.”
159 Oxford Bodleian MS Bodley 73, fol.156r: Bale titles his list of sources “Opera pro conficiendis cronicis Carmelitarum.”
many of the contemporaneous entries in the universal chronicle tradition. For instance, in a
volume of *historia universalis* that contained Eusebius, Sigebert of Gembloux and others, and
was printed by the elder Henricus Stephanus at Paris in 1513, an anonymous reader not only
continued the chronicle in manuscript from the earth thirteenth century up to the mid sixteenth
century, but also filled up Sigebert’s margins with terse references—fitted into the appropriate
year—to many of the authors Bale catalogued.

This annotator marked his additions from Bale with a single “B” at the end of each entry.
In doing so, he introduced into *historia universalis* such medieval British luminaries as Anselm
of Canterbury, William of Malmesbury, Henry of Huntingdon, Joseph of Exeter, and the twelfth-
century Koran translator Robert of Ketton. Echoing Bale, the annotator deemed Ketton “most
learned in the Arabic language,” while also praising Joseph of Exeter as a “most elegant poet”—
phrasing taken from Bale’s *vita* of the twelfth-century poet, where, following John Leland, he
had pronounced Joseph capable of rivaling the most celebrated poets of antiquity. Other
entries concerned comparatively more obscure figures, including the ninth-century monk Neot,
whom the annotator, following Bale, described as a “most learned man.” And while Bale
provided the vast majority of these entries, he was by no means the annotator’s only source for
bibliographical adornments. Elsewhere, looking deeper into the British past, he also made use of
one of Bale’s own principal inspirations—namely, Johannes Trithemius—when adding an entry

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for the Anglo-Saxon priest Godelbertus at the end of the fifth century. As both Bale and his readers make clear, bibliography organized *secundum aetates* and *secundum tempora* constituted an essential companion to histories both particular and universal. Moreover, it could narrate a very specific tale of historical change, which transformed the vagaries of late antique and medieval history into a neatly periodized story that fit both national and confessional aims.

**Bibliography and the Limits of Historical Method: Jean Bodin**

In worlds very different from the English and Swiss Protestant contexts traversed by John Bale, others simultaneously fused practices of bibliography and history through other means. This proved a special obsession of sixteenth-century pioneers of the emergent genre of the *ars historica* or “art of history.” Among these students of the historical arts, perhaps no author is more famous—or more famously contradictory—than the French *politique* jurist Jean Bodin. Bodin published his groundbreaking treatise on historical criticism—the aptly titled *Methodus ad facilem historiarum cognitionem* or *Method for the Easy Comprehension of History*—in 1566. Yet Bodin is probably even better known for his pursuits outside Clio’s realm, especially his 1576 *Six livres de la République*—which articulated a theory of sovereignty developed in response to the French Wars of Religion and its concomitant civil crises. When viewed within the long history of historical thought, Bodin’s *Methodus* appears quintessentially early modern in the full sense of that oxymoronic periodizing phrase: modern in its confident discussions of

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162 Sigebert, *Chronicon*, fol.22r: at the bottom of the page near the year 498, the annotator writes “Godelbertus presbyter Anglosaxonum in Britannia clar. Tritem.”
historical objectivity and its sociological ambitions, yet also surprisingly “early” in its frequently bizarre and credulous assertions. In histories of historical theory, Bodin has long enjoyed preeminence. In his 1963 study, Julian Franklin praised Bodin and his fellow late humanists for effecting a “union of history and social science,” while crediting the politique jurist with inventing the category of the “critical secondary author.” Yet despite Bodin’s disquisitions on the theory of historia, the Methodus did not always succeed in applying this spirit of criticism to judging the fides of individual historiae. This apparent dissonance has caused no small problems for those who have sought to slot Bodin into established narratives of history of historical thought. In Anthony Grafton’s apt words, the Methodus “has proved a textual Greenland that has killed off interpreters for centuries.”

Although a fervent English Protestant obsessed with eschatology and a politique French Catholic sometimes valorized as a harbinger of modern sociology might seem to possess little in common, both John Bale and Jean Bodin—albeit in different ways—saw bibliography as essential to historical narrative. For Bale, a distinct subsection of vitae could be “woven together” (to borrow Theodor Zwinger’s telling phrase) to form something approximating a continuous national history. Similarly, even if Bodin was a theorist—rather than a practitioner—of historia, his exposition of method ended, appropriately enough, with a catalogue of books. In his tenth and final chapter of the Methodus Bodin shifted from a discursive to a bibliographic


mode. He titled this appendix of sorts *De historicorum ordine et collectione* or “on the order and collection of historians.” This *ordo et collectio* of historical writers advertised an especially “easy” method of comprehending history—namely, as a chronologically arranged canon or *ordo librorum*. Tellingly, Bodin conceived of both history and bibliography alike as a species of *ordo*. As we shall see, such cataloguing—and its aversion to authorial judgment—shared much in common with Gesner’s methods, even if Bodin’s list was a mere drop in the bucket compared to the *Bibliotheca universalis*. When viewed together, Bodin and Bale illustrate how both the pressures of canon-formation and the dream of the universal library, however contradictory, coalesced to inform visions of history—especially in those decades before historical periodization became a potent topic of debate within European humanism.

Although it has often been overlooked in discussions of the *Methodus*, Bodin’s *ordo et collectio* played an important role in the text’s early modern reception and appropriation. This catalogue of historians, which Bodin divided into myriad lists and subdivisions according to subject matter, nationality, and genre, proved eminently recyclable.167 For instance, Theodore Zwinger incorporated versions of its entries into the historical section of his *Theatrum*, bringing Bodin’s *ordo librorum* into the sprawling tradition of late Renaissance encyclopedism. Even those who vehemently disagreed with Bodin could not help but make use of his bibliography: for instance, the Italian Jesuit Antonio Possevino used it as the basis for the catalogue of historical writers in his *Bibliotheca selecta*, itself designed as a Counter-Reformation riposte to Gesner’s *Bibliotheca universalis*. Although Possevino significantly modified the *Methodus*’ bibliography according to his visions of philological criticism and post-Tridentine orthodoxy, his proposed

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167 As we shall see, the cut-and-paste nature of Bodin’s bibliography speaks to his encyclopedic working methods. On Bodin’s use of encyclopedic methods in the production of his *Universae naturae theatrum*, see Ann Blair, *The Theater of Nature: Jean Bodin and Renaissance Science* (Princeton, 1997).
ordo legendi or “order of reading” preserved the structure and much of the contents of Bodin’s ordo et collectio.\textsuperscript{168}

Although Bodin’s ever-protean ordo et collectio was inserted into diverse contexts throughout the remainder of the sixteenth-century and beyond, its original placement in Bodin’s text followed logically from the Methodus proper. For Bodin placed his bibliography after a series of chapters in the latter half of the Methodus that themselves considered issues of ordo temporum and origines. Here Bodin famously debunked the theory of the Four Monarchies—the periodizing scheme derived from apocalyptic readings of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream in the Book of Daniel, and recently given new life by Philipp Melanchthon, Johann Carion, and others who read it as confirmation of German world-historical preeminence. By arguing that one could not possibly reduce the vast stretch of world history to a mere four political actors, each slotted into neat tempora, Bodin highlighted the dangers of facile and overhasty periodizing. Yet his argument was not merely a call for complexity and nuance. Instead, as Bodin struck against the myth of the Golden Age—itself linked to the logic underlying the Four Monarchies—he proposed an ordo temporum of diametrically opposed directionality. As Bodin contended, the Golden Age, deep in the distant past, had been anything but golden. With a curious mixture of Whiggish teleology and cultural relativism, he made this first metallic age the last, concluding that “the age which they call ‘golden,’ if it be compared with ours, would seem but iron.”\textsuperscript{169} In the very next chapter, he argued for the centrality of chronology to historical method, just as Vives had done in his De tradendis disciplinis. Here he distilled his point into the pithy

\textsuperscript{168} On Possevino’s methods of bibliography and his response to Gesner, see Zedelmaier, Bibliotheca universalis, 128-49, and Luigi Balsamo, “How to Doctor a Bibliography: Antonio Possevino’s Practice,” in Church, Censorship and Culture in Early Modern Italy, ed. Gigliola Fragnito (Cambridge, 2001), 50-78.

\textsuperscript{169} Jean Bodin, Methodus ad faciлем historiarum cognitionem, trans. Beatrice Reynolds (New York, 1945), 296.
observation that “those who think they can understand histories without chronology are as much in error as those who wish to escape the windings of a labyrinth without a guide.”\textsuperscript{170} Finally, he devoted the last chapter of the Methodus proper (i.e. directly before its bibliographical appendix) to origines, remarking that “no question has exercised the writers of histories more than the origin of peoples.”\textsuperscript{171}

After discussing both the ordines of chronology and the origines of peoples, it only natural—as Trithemius and others had done before—to link them to the origines and ordines of books. And after explaining just how to read histories, it was only logical—as Juan Luis Vives and practitioners of humanist pedagogy had made clear—to furnish a list of historians to read and a suggested ordo in which to read them. And so, at the very beginning of his De historicorum ordine et collectione, Bodin immediately set about describing—in a manner that echoed Vives’ invocation of chronology’s “well-known roads”—how readers of historia should first read “the briefest chronicles,” next master slightly more detailed “chronologies,” then move on to “histories a little more diffuse,” and finally dive into “complete histories” of discrete tempora.\textsuperscript{172} After this introductory admonition, he turned to the lists themselves. In a manner reminiscent of Gesner’s Bibliotheca, his brief bibliographical entries recorded both the titles of historical books and when their authors flourished. Thus, Bodin’s bibliography also functioned as a continuous chronology—the best of all means to escape the windings of the historical labyrinth. Next to each entry, he systematically supplied the dates of the given author in the

\textsuperscript{170} Bodin, Methodus, trans. Reynolds, 303.
\textsuperscript{171} Bodin, Methodus, trans. Reynolds, 334.
\textsuperscript{172} Bodin, Methodus (Paris, 1566), 587: “Auspicandum erit a breuissimis Chronicis, puta Bulingeri, Lutheri, aut similibus: deinde ad chronologias, videlicet, Funccii, Phrygionis, Eusebii: hinc ad historias magis aliquanto diffusas veniendum: quales sunt, Carionis, Melanchthonis, Peuceri: postremo ad consummatam historiam cuiusque temporis, omnia, aut pulcherrima quaeque complectentem.”
accompanying margin, using the formulaic “he flourished” or claruit followed by an estimated year. However, Bodin used multiple types of ordo: within each subcategory, he seemed to order his texts by a rough approximation of the chronological scope of their contents, while in the margin he recorded the chronology of their composition. As a result, although these claruit dates usually went in chronological order, they did not always produce a perfectly linear sequence, especially when the tempora of which an author wrote and the time in which he flourished were not identical. Unsurprisingly, this method of ordo led to errors. For example, although the Carolingian bishop Frechulf of Lisieux flourished under Charles the Bald in the ninth century, his universal Chronicon had only managed to reach from Creation until the middle of the sixth century. As a result, Bodin rather too hastily placed Frechulf’s claruit at 560, some three centuries before he actually lived and wrote.\footnote{Bodin, Methodus, 588: “Phreculphi epitome historiarum, ab orbe condito usque ad annum Christi DL. Clar. 560.”}

Bodin began his bibliographical appendix with “writers of universal history” (universalis historiae scriptores). Including the Pentateuch under the rubric of historia universalis, he started with none other than Moses, whom (in a telling evocation of his preceding chapter on origines) he christened the author of a “book of origins” (originum liber), extending from “the creation of the world to the migration of the Jews from Egypt into Palestine.”\footnote{Bodin, Methodus, 587: “Universalis historiae scriptores: Mosis originum liber ab orbe condito usque ad migrationem Hebreorum ex Aegypto in Palaestinam, historiam uniuersi mundi complectitur annum II. M. CCCCL. Claruit ante Christum annis 1519.”} Bodin’s very next universal history, however, was that of “Berosus the Chaldean,” in reality one of the many figments—as we saw in our discussion of Bale’s Celtic bards—conjured up by Annius of Viterbo.\footnote{Bodin, Methodus, 587: “Berosi Caldaei, quae dicuntur, fragmenta uniuersae historiae, ab orbe condito usque ad annum mundi III. M. CXXX. In Sardanapalo desit, ut Metasthenes scribit. Clar. ante Christum anno 330.” Bodin’s insertion of “quae dicuntur” does indicate some equivocation over Berosus’ ultimate veracity.}
Thereafter, Bodin offered entries for Herodotus, Polybius, Pompeius Trogus, Diodorus Siculus, and pseudo-Philo. Then, after a gap of some three hundred years, he took up his bibliography again with the late antique emergence of Christian *historia universalis*. Commencing with the *Chronicon* of Eusebius, he then added a single composite entry that succinctly summed up more than a millennium of contributions and continuations to the genre:

Jerome added fifty years. Prosper of Aquitaine then added sixty. Palmerius Florentinus continued this by some one thousand and forty years, and to this Palmerius Pisanus added thirty years more. The *De temporibus* of Julius Africanus extends from the creation of the world to the year 320 after Christ.\(^{176}\)

This entry highlights with material immediacy the cut-and-paste nature of Bodin’s bibliographical practice. After all, Prosper and the two Palmieri of Florence were hardly alone in continuing Jerome’s own continuation and translation of Eusebius. Yet they had been gathered together into a single book in a specific incunabular printing of the augmented *Chronicon*—published at Venice in 1483 by the famous German early printer Erhard Ratdolt.\(^{177}\) As this entry makes clear, Bodin’s bibliography was not merely an abstracted list of texts and authors; instead, it was composed first and foremost of material books, whose own codicological sequencing and arrangement helped determine the larger *ordo historicorum* of his bibliography. Bodin’s penchant for thinking of bibliography in codicological terms is also evident in his entry for the twelfth-century monk Sigebert of Gembloux. Bodin described Sigebert’s contribution to the Eusebian chronicle tradition as extending “from the year of Christ 381, that is, from the end of

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\(^{176}\) Bodin, *Methodus*, 588: “Hieronymus annos adiecit L. Prosper Aquitanus LX. Palmerius Florentinus MXL. Palmerius Pisanus XXX. Iulii Africani de temporibus, ab orbe condito usque ad annum Christi CCCXX.”

\(^{177}\) *Chronicon* (Venice, 1483).
the *Historia tripartita*, to the year 1113,” before adding that “with the appendix of an unknown author, it reaches to the year 1216.”\(^1\) Not only did Bodin draw an interesting equivalence between the start of Sigebert’s chronicle and the end of Cassiodorus’ *Historia tripartita* (whose own codicological structuring, as we saw above, Trithemius had dissected in such detail), but he once more catalogued continuators of *historia universalis* by describing a specific printed book—namely, the aforementioned volume of Eusebius, Sigebert, and others printed in 1513 by the elder Stephanus.

Like John Bale, John Dee, and the aforementioned reader of Lilius Giraldus’ *Dialogi*, Bodin also devoted considerable attention to purported bibliographic firsts. This is evident not only from his entries on universal history, but also in his ordering of more circumscribed historical subfields. Here, however, Bodin again fell into errors. He began his catalogue of Greek historians with the late antique pseudo-authors Dares Phrygius and Dictys Cretensis, accepting their fabulous claims to have been eyewitnesses to Trojan War and hence dating them both to 1129 years before Christ.\(^2\) Similarly, when Bodin catalogued *historici Francorum*, he made none other than Hunibald his second oldest entry (preceded only by Julius Caesar and his *De bello Gallico*), describing him as the author of eighteen books *de Francis* that began with the derivation of the Franks from the Trojan Antenor.\(^3\) But just as his second oldest entry under *historia universalis* was the forged Berosus of Annius of Viterbo, so Hunibald (as discussed

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\(^1\) Bodin, *Methodus*, 589: “Sigeberti Galli chronicon, ab anno Christi CCCLXXXI. id est, a fine tripertitae historiae, usque ad annum M.CXIII. cum appendice incerti autoris usque ad annum M.CCXVI. Clar. 1130.”


\(^3\) Bodin, *Methodus*, 600: “Hunibaldi libri XVIII de Francis, quos a bello Troiano ad mortem Antenoris sex prioribus libris deducit: consequentibus sex ad Waramundum usque deinceps, in Clodouei temporibus desinit.”
above) was a fictional personage invented by Johannes Trithemius—part of the abbot’s attempt to concoct an illustrious past for the Franks. These errors constituted far more than mere problems of dating, or simple mix-ups between an author’s claruit and the tempora of which he wrote. Two of Bodin’s most important bibliographic firsts were hardly firsts at all; rather, they had been written mere decades before he himself flourished, and for patently duplicitous purposes at that.181

As Bodin’s appendix makes clear, bibliography perpetuated itself, even in its errors. Moreover, the Methodus speaks to one of the principal problems of temporal disjunction that marred bibliographic canon-formation. The formulation of a viable ordo librorum was impeded by the fact that many of the texts that paraded as bibliographic firsts were in reality far from it. Instead, they often erroneously gained priority thanks either to inadvertent mix-up and misattribution or conscious and duplicitous forgery. Although the establishment of a proper ordo temporum depended first and foremost upon fixing the relevant dates of its corresponding ordo librorum, this proved exceptionally difficult. Gesner had recused himself from the arduous task of separating the true from the false, and by accepting spurious sources both Bale and Bodin ended up following his lead in practice. Yet this difficulty was not just one of detecting outright falsehoods. Instead, it also extended to a far grayer area. Namely, could one string together otherwise disparate books, whether genuine or spurious, into a coherent species of ordo, while still faithfully reading such books as unique embodiments of unique tempora? In the chapters that follow, we will examine the diverse answers that diverse scholars offered to this question.

181 On Bodin’s acceptance of Annius, along with Dares and Dictys, see Grafton, “Invention of Traditions,” 29 and Clark, “Authenticity, Antiquity, and Authority,” 194-5.
Conclusion: Bibliography and the Problem of Disjunction

In their dealings with authors and texts of multiple *tempora*, all of the bibliographers examined above wrestled with problems of temporal disjunction. By incorporating numerous *libri* and *auctores* into a single compilatory whole, they were forced to reconcile their attempts at bibliographic unity with the stubborn reality that the constituent phases of the past (or, more accurately, what would come to be defined as its constituent phases) did not flow neatly and smoothly into one another. Instead, *ordo temporum* contended with breaks and fissures, false starts, contradictions, and even some gaping chasms. In response, bibliographers marshaled various strategies. Some, such as Crinitus and Giraldus, constructed appendices that bracketed late traditions when linking them to their earlier counterparts. Others, like Volterr anus, eschewed temporal ordering altogether, save for that one nebulous transition from the ancients to the moderns. And while Gesner acknowledged multiple forms of temporal disjunction in the preface to his bibliography, he kept all such distinctions far from the pages of the *Bibliotheca universalis* itself. Finally, successors to Gesner like Bale and Bodin sought a solution in the opposite direction, overtly ordering their bibliographies *secundum aetates et tempora* (with sometimes idiosyncratic results).

Despite the diversity of their responses, the aforementioned sixteenth-century bibliographers all confronted the fact that certain texts and times appeared more canonical and exemplary than others. Not all *viri* were equally illustrious, not all *tempora* boasted pure *Latinitas* or a pure *ecclesia*, and not all historical milieus contained productions of miraculous *industria*. Even the differing quantity of texts and authors in a given context spoke to a lack of commensurability between the various eras of the past. To use John Dee’s phrase, not every
aetas revealed a happy synchrony of viri docti. In many cases, these changes in the order of books stemmed from phenomena external to the world of textuality and bibliography, from the “mutation of religion” that Petrus Crinitus linked to a new poetic aesthetic, to the disintegration of Rome, which—in Juan Luis Vives’ estimation—had spawned the new genre of national history. In the chapter that follows, we will examine more closely how one of the most consequential of these disjunctions—namely, the messy and complex emergence of Christianity out of the pre-Christian world—challenged early modern perceptions of both historical and bibliographical unity.
CHAPTER TWO

From Ancient Paganism to *Tempora Christiana:*

Temporal Disjunction and the Problem of Religion

Criticism, Canonicity, and Controversy

In the first chapter of his *Institutiones,* Cassiodorus, the great monastic scholar of sixth-century Ostrogothic Italy, took up a particularly troublesome component of the patristic inheritance—namely, the frequent heresies of the third-century Greek father Origen, whose reputation for virtuoso scholarship was often overshadowed by his departures from what had since come to pass as orthodoxy in the late antique church.182 As a sign of warning to his monks at Vivarium, Cassiodorus declared that he had corrected copies of Origen’s writings through the insertion of the sign *achresimon*—that is “unusable”—next to doctrinally erroneous statements.183 Hence, in rather offhand fashion, Cassiodorus proposed to treat the history of doctrine in a manner akin to that adopted by the grammarians of Hellenistic Alexandria, who would place an obelus next to spurious or interpolated passages in the Homeric corpus—a practice that, ironically enough, Origen himself had employed. As James O’Donnell points out, Cassiodorus deemed this

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“affectation of a scholiastic term in the margin” a sufficient means of acknowledging heresy—far easier, indeed, then excising whole chunks of text or producing a cumbersomely bowdlerized edition. Likewise, as Celia Chazelle has argued, Cassiodorus feared the loss of textual inheritances—hardly a mere academic concern in the sixth century—even more than the re-airing of hoary heresies. After all, this sixth-century luminary of Ostrogothic Italy was a consummate bibliographer, whose obsession with the cataloguing and collecting of texts fittingly prefigured the indefatigable spirit of such early modern compilers as Trithemius, Volterrano, Bale and Gesner. As Johannes Trithemius had recognized, he had applied such compilatory industry to the production of the Historia tripartita, transforming three books into one.

Through Cassiodorus’ passing allusion to Origen’s favored critical marker, the critical language of bibliographical sorting entered, however obliquely, into the far more capacious (and perhaps more consequential) domain of theological and ecclesiological controversy. The technical, recherché world of criticism and commentary furnished a potent and robust metaphor for oft-disputed distinctions between orthodoxy and heterodoxy. Indeed, metaphor is perhaps altogether too weak a term for this relationship. For Cassiodorus, like many of his late antique counterparts, apprehended an organic linkage between two allied processes of discrimination. Despite the distance of more than six centuries, Aristarchus correcting the great but primitive Homer proved surprisingly akin to Cassiodorus scolding the great but suspect Origen.

Such parallels assume still greater significance in the context of Cassiodorus’ project at Vivarium as a whole. Cassiodorus of the Institutiones was also Cassiodorus the author of the De orthographia, a treatise that accorded new prominence to the oft-dismissed “auxiliary discipline”

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of orthography, and set the stage for so much of textual culture in both the Middle Ages and beyond. Cassiodorus helped show how, in a very precise and technical fashion, one could think with texts about weighty matters far outside the immediate realm of textuality. More specifically, one could deploy everything from criticism to codicology—categories developed in order to construct a satisfactory *ordo librorum* out of sometimes messy components—to impose *ordo* upon categorical clutter in diverse fields beyond the book, including the always fraught territory of *veritas* and *religio*. Indeed, it was no accident that the nascent late antique genre of ecclesiastical history was *ipso facto* a project marked by almost hyper-textuality—not only reliant upon documentary proof to a degree unsurpassed by other historiographical genres, but also highly dependent upon the very structural principles of the codex to order its narratives.\(^{185}\) Although textual traditions of this sort possessed deep ancient antecedents, they crystallized in late antiquity—with the ironic result that this late period furnished the classical revival of early modern Europe with so many of its working tools and conceptual assumptions.

This point in turn begs a more difficult question, crucial to temporal disjunctions and their resolution: namely, how did the early modern inheritors of these late antique traditions interpret and appropriate Cassiodorus’ proffered parallelism? To what extent did early modern students of the end of the ancient world approach those myriad problems of orthodoxy and heterodoxy, religious affiliation and difference, and even the great transition from paganism to Christianity through an understanding of this *late* world as a world of texts—a textual world that helped forge those very categories of bibliography and *ordo librorum* that early moderns employed to reconstruct antiquity writ large? And to what extent did bibliography itself bring to

\(^{185}\) The classic articulation of this point is found in Arnaldo Momigliano, “The Origins of Ecclesiastical History” in *The Classical Foundations of Modern Historiography* (Berkeley, 1990).
life the blurred and porous boundaries that marked the disjunctive world of late antiquity? As we saw in the previous chapter, religious affiliation was itself one of the most potent markers of distinction in bibliographical endeavors, visible in everything from Crinitus’ quasi-apology for the “mutation of religion” that affected the stylistic merits of authors like Juvencus and Erasmus’ defense of Jerome against Ciceronian critics to Trithemius’ constant pairing of Christian piety with authorial industry and diligence. By focusing particularly on the last category—that is, distinctions between Christianity and paganism in the late antique literary canon—we can more fully appreciate the extent to which the language of texts, criticism, transmission, and imitation informed early modern attempts at imposing *ordo* (whether bibliographical or otherwise) upon those vexing religious issues raised by the ancient world’s demise. Indeed, this distinction of religion constituted the ultimate temporal disjunction for early modern scholars who sought to construct a coherent order of books. Although they had very clear reasons for drawing a line in the sand sometime in the fourth century—around such epochal events as Constantine’s conversion to Christianity and the concomitant Christianization of the empire—they also possessed equally strong reasons for downplaying the significance of this gulf, and for positing an underlying continuity in the classical inheritance. Indeed, as Christopher Celenza has proposed in an elegant and perceptive article, various aspects of Renaissance culture shared a unique affinity for the late antique, in realms as much religious as textual. Lamenting that these connections were often ignored or elided in eighteenth and nineteenth century scholarship, Celenza uses Renaissance Florence as a window into an early modern late antique, visible in everything from the revival of that spirit of religious syncretism that marked late Neoplatonism, accomplished by Marsilio Ficino and others, to Poliziano’s embrace of Aulus Gellius and late
antique traditions of learned, recherché philology.\textsuperscript{186} Hence, this present chapter seeks to complement Celenza’s contribution, highlighting yet another domain in which early moderns emulated their late antique forbears—thereby forging a nascent vision of late antiquity itself.

Given their conflicting aims, far from simply reading Latin late antiquity as a site of fevered and unchecked religious conflict (as many later classical scholars would do), a diverse set of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century humanists came to see late Roman antiquity as a highly complex world where religious difference and controversy were always mediated by (and perhaps inseparable from) literary and textual categories designed to sort and sift earlier classical inheritances. This view had the ironic effect of allowing early modern scholars to forge a robust and compelling vision of late antiquity \textit{avant la lettre}—as they reconstructed a world of continuation, codification, and compilation, alternately defined by appropriation, emulation, and \textit{imitatio}. Moreover, much like Cassiodorus appropriating the language of the asterisk and the obelus, they reconstructed this comparatively obscure corner of antiquity using critical tools of distinctly late antique provenance.

Perhaps nowhere is this clearer than in early modern uses of the so-called \textit{Decretum Gelasianum}, that guide to books to be accepted and rejected that was itself falsely attributed to the fifth-century Pope Gelasius. For the \textit{Decretum} presupposed a fundamental equivalence between two distinct measures of canonicity, equating the textually genuine with the doctrinally orthodox, and the doctrinally suspect with the textually suspect or corrupt. In the course of his polemic with Poggio, Lorenzo Valla invoked the \textit{Decretum} when attacking his opponent’s acceptance of the letters supposedly exchanged between Jesus and Abgar of Edessa.\textsuperscript{187} Similarly, the Portuguese humanist Gaspar Barreiros copied a lengthy excerpt from these pseudo-Gelasian

\textsuperscript{186} See Celenza, “Late Antiquity and the Florentine Renaissance.”
\textsuperscript{187} See Lorenzo Valla, \textit{Antidotum in Poggium, Opera} (Basel, 1540), 356.
decretals in his *Censura* against Annius’ Berosus, as he offered a long history of textual duplicity and corresponding attempts to counter it. ¹⁸⁸ In other words, as trivial as it might seem, questioning the authorship or attribution of a given text (i.e. and hence where it fit in those chronological *ordines* and *series* attempted by Bodin, Bale, and others) was but a logical extension of questioning the orthodoxy of its contents. Taken together, the heterodox and the apocryphal served as allied categories of textual discrimination—potent concepts with which to police the ever-porous boundaries of an evolving canon.

Accordingly, whether in late antiquity or early modernity, a text like the *Decretum Gelasianum* also functioned as bread-and-butter bio-bibliography, in a manner akin to the compendia *de viris illustribus* of Jerome, Gennadius, and Isidore, or their early modern heirs like Gesner, Bale, and Trithemius. As bibliography, it left direct material traces in copies of the very texts it canonized and catalogued. For instance, among other obligatory adornments, the 1566 Lyon edition of the early Christian poets Juvencus, Sedulius, and Arator featured a brief *vita* of Sedulius culled from Trithemius’ *De scriptoribus ecclesiasticis*. Yet a copy from the library of the Dutch classical scholar Nicholas Heinsius also boasted a further layer of bibliographical apparatus, added in manuscript. The top margins directly above the opening titles of both Juvencus and Sedulius reveal cramped and scribbled entries for each author copied from the *Decretum Gelasianum*, quoted—in an perfect example of temporal layering—from a collection of decretals assembled by the eleventh-century canonist Burchard of Worms. As such notes make clear, bibliography was simultaneously a tool of identification and authorization, lending

the decretalist’s imprimatur to that “laborious work of Juvencus” and the “venerable man Sedulius.”

Hence, the Decretum also constituted a source of judgments on aesthetics and erudition, as it confirmed Juvencus’ laborious industry much like how Trithemius would later laud Proba and her ilk. Moreover, in this realm of aesthetic judgment, such late antique Christian scriptores sometimes required a special form of authorization, just as much as they sometimes proved vulnerable to a special type of criticism. As we saw in Chapter One, many Renaissance bibliographers dismissed the early Christian canon, faulting Christian auctores for failing to best or even equal the style of their earlier classical counterparts, while critiquing their awkward and maladroit attempts at imitatio. But at the same time, they deployed a much-used trope of exculpation, which pardoned such infelicities of style given that early Christian auctores were ostensibly concerned with more weighty matters than classicizing propriety and the avoidance of Latin solecisms. As discussed earlier, Crinitus had claimed to treat Juvencus “moderately,” due to the “mutation” of religion in his times. Volterrano had charitably deemed Isidore of Seville a philosopher in life, but not necessarily one in learning. Giraldus had forgiven Prudentius for not devoting greater care to the “eloquence and purity of language.” And Vives had pithily distilled this ambiguity by comparing the works of both Juvencus and Sedulius to “muddy and disturbed rivers, whose waters are nevertheless health-giving.” Projects of bibliographical ordering already performed a delicate balancing act when assessing the aesthetic merits of the Christian canon,

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189 C. Iuvenci, Coelii Sedulii, Aratoris sacra poesis (Lyon, 1566), now Bodleian Library, Lincoln 8º D 236, 7: A note directly above the beginning of Juvencus’ Carmen paschale reads “Gelasius PP apud Burcardum lib 3 decreti cap 120 fol.112b. Item Iuvenci nihilominus laboriosum non spernimus, sed miramur.” At 131, the beginning of Sedulius, an identically placed note records “Gelasius PP apud Burcardum lib. 3 decreti c. 120 fol.112b. Item uenerabilis uiri Sedullii Paschale opus quod Heroicis descriptis uersibus, insigni laude praeferimus.”
especially when comparing its authors (whether explicitly or implicitly) to the classical pagan 
auctores who preceded them.

But delicate bibliographical sorting was not only necessitated by ambiguous early modern categories of literary evaluation and canon-formation. Instead, these early modern ambiguities were derived ultimately from forms of late antique temporal disjunction, which themselves reflected the troublesome reality that late antiquity was a world of blurred and porous boundaries. And nowhere were such boundaries blurrier than in the religious sphere. Juvencus’ “laborious” poem, for instance, had further blurred one of the most salient of these late antique distinctions, as it retold the Gospel narrative in none other than Virgilian epic verses. And in a domain of perhaps far greater consequence that narrowly aesthetic evaluations of the late antique canon, late antique categories of orthodoxy and heterodoxy remained very much alive. As confessional wars flared throughout Europe—on both literal battlefields and in manuscript and print as well—the early centuries of the Christian church took on ever-increasing importance as both exemplar and reflecting mirror. But they were not simply read as moments of schism, heresy, and constant internecine struggle within Christian communities. Scholars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries helped trace the divergent paths of Donatists, Arians, Nestorians, Pelagians and the like, and confessional adversaries were quick to liken the views of their theological adversaries to those once condemned by venerable church fathers and councils. But this muddled landscape of religious divergence possessed another element that further complicated matters: despite the seeming advent of “Christian times” or tempora Christiana, the fourth and fifth centuries were still home to rich and complex varieties of paganism—every bit as energetic (and heterogeneous) as their Christian counterparts. This proved a fundamental problem of temporal disjunction for scholars and bibliographers alike—as it pointed to a
neglected species of continuity that persisted through even the seemingly most radical of changes. As we shall see, it was precisely this coexistence of change and continuity at the end of the classical world that would later prove a stimulant and a contradiction to historical periodization.

This chapter examines how a varied cast of early modern classical scholars and bibliographers understood the seeming persistence of paganism in Christian late antiquity—itself one of the most troubling forms of temporal disjunction to threaten the unity and coherent of ordo librorum. The reception of this pagan canon (if it can be described as such) not only illustrates how early moderns interpreted the great religious mutations of Rome’s long autumn, but it also provides an ideal window into the nascent periodizing impulses of early modern scholarship, demonstrating the ways in which humanists related an emergent Christianity to earlier classical and pre-Christian pasts. By their very nature, these late pagan sources resisted easy classification. Unlike that venerable cast of virtuous classical pagans, often sanitized through allegory or related hermeneutical strategies, those authors who seemingly elected not to embrace Christianity after its post-Constantinian or even post-Theodosian triumph could not so easily be excused for flourishing in a world ignorant of Christ.

However, when reading millennium-old textual inheritances, in literal and practical terms it sometimes proved difficult to ascertain just who was a follower of Christ, and who was not. After all, Eutropius the late pagan historian shared a name with Eutropius the presbyter, leading some to misrepresent his religious proclivities. As Lilius Giraldus observed, the classicizing court poet Claudius Claudianus was sometimes conflated with the fifth-century Gallic theologian Claudianus Mamertus.¹⁹⁰ And some medieval and early modern readers of the sixth-century

¹⁹⁰ See Lilius Giraldus, Dialogi, 571-3.
grammariam Priscian (himself undoubtedly a Christian) even expressed concern that the Julian who appeared as the dedicatee of one of Priscian’s works might be confused with the fourth-century pagan revivalist Julian the Apostate.\textsuperscript{191} Hence, a quintessentially late antique problem necessitated a quintessentially late antique solution: policing the boundaries of the pagan and the Christian called for constant bibliographic vigilance, of the sort pursued by numerous early modern heirs to the \textit{Decretum Gelasianum}. 

After briefly surveying post-Renaissance approaches to questions of late antique religious mutation (themselves crucial to the formalization of modern periodization), this chapter reconstructs the early modern \textit{Nachleben} of three late Latin authors of particularly problematic religious identity and affiliation—namely, the aforementioned Claudius Claudianus, the statesman and man of letters Quintus Aurelius Symmachus, and the historian Ammianus Marcellinus—in order to examine the manner in which religion, that most potent of dividers, served as a source of early modern temporal disjunction. Although Claudian and Symmachus’ style was frequently praised, and Ammianus’ was just as frequently denigrated, all authors enjoyed an impressive early modern circulation, and unlike so many other late antique sources who focused on the reconstruction (whether antiquarian or otherwise) of the past, they were uniquely valued for what they revealed concerning the vexed late antique present. (The reception of the many late antique compilers who plumbed the depths of the ancient past will be explored at great length in the following chapter). Present-centered authors of this nature afforded early

\textsuperscript{191} In a heavily annotated copy of the 1475 Venice edition of Priscian’s grammatical works, now Bodleian Library, Auct. N. inf. 2.24, a contemporary reader added a bio-bibliographical entry, culled from the \textit{Liber de vita et moribus philosophorum} (once misattributed to the English scholastic Walter Burley), that addressed this curious confusion: “Priscianus grammaticus claruit tempore Iustiniani imperatoris. Hic scriptis Iuliano consulci ac patricio volumen maius de partibus orationis scriptis et volumen minus de constructione et alium minimum de accentibus… Patet etiam eos errare qui dicunt eum fuisse tempore Iuliani apostata[e] qui fuit antea longo tempore. Sed scriptis Iuliano consulci ac patricio sicut legitur in titulo ipsius libri.”
modern scholars a firm textual basis for much wider (and more speculative) explorations of late antique religion and the quandaries of temporal disjunction it raised. From prefaces and bibliographies to annotated copies of printed editions, the following pages explore how the tools of bibliography helped carve out a distinctive world of late antiquity, while charting the decidedly non-linear transition from paganism to Christianity. In parsing late antique religio, early modern scholars came face to face with yet another way in which both the order of books and the order of times did not always cohere. And in attempting to resolve these troubling incongruities, they indirectly helped forge new templates of historical periodizing.

“A Little Bad Humor”: Pagan Late Antiquity and the Gibbonian Paradigm

By his own account, Edward Gibbon first came upon the notion of chronicling the decline of Rome while sitting amidst the ruins of the Capitoline, listening to Franciscan friars performing their liturgical offices in the Ara Coeli. As Gibbon famously recounted in his Memoirs, it was precisely here, on the 15th of October, 1764, “while the bare-footed friars were singing vespers in the Temple of Jupiter,” that he began to contemplate the purportedly profound revolutions that had transformed the ancient world into the modern. Like all such literary anecdotes, the genesis moment of the Decline and Fall is today appreciated more for its atmospheric effects than its literal veracity. However, regardless of whether or not this future paragon of Enlightenment scholarship actually underwent such a moment of transfiguration atop the Capitol, the implications of Gibbon’s statement are made abundantly clear by the Decline and Fall itself. The

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192 Edward Gibbon, Memoirs of My Life and Writing, in The Miscellaneous Works of Edward Gibbon (London, 1837), 82: “It was at Rome, on the 15th of October, 1764, as I sat musing amidst the ruins of the Capitol, while the bare-footed friars were singing vespers in the temple of Jupiter, that the idea of writing the decline and fall of the city first started to my mind.”
transformation and disintegration of the late Roman world, related by Gibbon as the stuff of high world-historical drama, was indisputably intertwined with the demise of paganism and the concomitant rise of Christianity. It was not simply a historical irony or a felicitous outcome of providence fulfilled that members of a mendicant order founded in the Middle Ages now prayed in a space once reserved for the worship of Jupiter himself. Rather, it formed the very crux of a powerful grand narrative, the product of a *Kulturkampf* of the greatest possible magnitude.

As is now well known, such a narrative of Roman late antiquity, which saw conflict and contestation between a moribund paganism and ascendant Christianity as key to the story of Roman decline, dominated much of classical scholarship for nearly a century and a half after Gibbon, at times blithely reading the assumptions of eighteenth-century philosophical history into the world of the fourth- and fifth-century Mediterranean. While Gibbon did not invent the above paradigm *ex nihilo*, he helped give it flesh and incorporated it into his sprawling sketch of over a millennium of Roman history. Even the many challenges and qualifications aimed at this model in the last half century have had to reckon with the terms of the debate as first articulated by Gibbon and his emulators. Yet as several Gibbon scholars have rightly pointed out, the author of the *Decline and Fall* offered far more direct hints at this coming story well before his famous Capitoline moment. For he began to build the framework of his narrative, albeit in rather less romanticized fashion, from late antique pagan writers: figures who, rather unlike their earlier classical counterparts, could not readily be excused for flourishing in a world ignorant of Christ. An analysis of one of these sources, the fifth-century poet Rutilius Claudius Namatianus, appears in an entry in Gibbon’s journal dated December 17th, 1763, almost a year before the *Decline and Fall*’s supposed Capitoline genesis.

Namatianus, who tenaciously saluted the Roman *urbs aeterna* even after Alaric’s sack and related calamities, composed his elegiac *De reditu suo*—a description of his voyage from Rome back to his ancestral Gaul—sometime in the early fifth century. Along the way, he also issued a passionate denunciation of the follies of Christian monasticism. However, despite its importance to religious history, Namatianus’ depiction of fifth-century Rome initially caught Gibbon’s interest as he contemplated writing in antiquarian fashion of the topographical decline of the *city* of Rome and its built environment—a well-worn theme common to the erudite scholarship of late humanism. Well versed in both the triumphs and foibles of humanist *érudits*, Gibbon amusingly described how he first encountered Namatianus in “one of those Dutch editions, *cum notis Variorum*, in which the text only peeps out amidst a heavy mass of commentary.” After roasting his various commentators for undue pedantry and castigating Namatianus himself on points of style, he then offered some musings on the *De reditu*’s religious invective. As a self-styled philosophical historian, Gibbon acknowledged that “I could wish indeed that his [i.e. Namatianus’] feelings had been expressed with more philosophical moderation, and rested on a better principle.” Yet this Namatianus “was a pagan, who beheld his religion sinking under the weight of years, and involving the empire in its fall.” And even worse, “the Christians had insulted the decline of his sect,” thereby hastening the demise of Rome herself. Thus, as the future author of the *Decline and Fall* concluded, “a little bad humour was excusable.”

But exactly what this “bad humor” might have connoted to fifth-century audiences is today a more vexed question. Indeed, the pervasiveness of pagan-Christian conflict, like so many

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other assumptions concerning that Gibbonian world of “barbarism and religion,” has met with a dramatic tide of revisionism over the course of the last half century—itself part and parcel of that larger period discomfort with facile periodizing charted in the Introduction. At least in historiographical terms, such changes have proven almost as drastic and dramatic as the supposed high drama that accompanied the “fall” of Rome herself. However, those who wrested the late classical world from the rubric of decline and fall did not simply establish late antiquity as an epoch worthy of evaluation on its own terms, while breaking down those sharp dichotomies that once separated the ancient from the medieval. Instead, scholars like Peter Brown, Glen Bowersock, and Alan Cameron have painstakingly reconstructed the sheer complexity of late antique religion, showing that—as with labels like “ancient” and “medieval,” “pagan” and “Christian” are hardly simple binaries. Not only has recent work highlighted the considerable intramural tensions within each respective camp, but it has also downplayed the salience of religious conflict writ large and the very identification of such respective groups as “camps.” These trends have culminated in the recent publication of Cameron’s magnum opus, The Last Pagans of Rome—a title that, as Cameron himself admits, is more ironic than anything else. Instead, Cameron argues that the period between Constantine and Theodosius and even beyond was hardly defined primarily by epic pagan-Christian clashes; instead, elite pagans and Christians alike appropriated classicizing literary culture as a powerful tool for asserting both Rome’s temporal continuity and their own social distinction.


These reassessments have also occasioned significant bibliographical changes within the canon—contemporary attempts at realigning *ordo librorum* and *ordo temporum*. One of the most unexpected of such moments occurred over forty years ago, when Cameron first turned his attention to the date and identity of Macrobius—author of the famous *Saturnalia* and an equally influential commentary on Cicero’s *Dream of Scipio*. As the quintessential late antique antiquarian, Macrobius had long been identified as one of the most important of those “last pagans” who jealously guarded Rome’s ancient literary treasures against the threats of Christian parvenus (although as we shall see in the next chapter, early modern readings of his work focused on rather different themes). Yet Cameron argued that the *Saturnalia* was probably composed in the 430s and not in the 380s (a claim affirmed by Robert Kaster in his recent edition), and that Macrobius himself – expert on Virgilian and Varronian erudition, solar theology, the arts of augury and the like – was in all likelihood a fairly conventional fifth-century Christian, who saw no incongruity in showcasing his encyclopedic knowledge of the pagan past.¹⁹⁸

This in turn brings us to a broader and more speculative point. A generation of classical scholars who came of age in the 1960s and 1970s has thoroughly dismantled that wall of separation that hitherto separated late antiquity from its properly ancient counterpart. In turn, that vast gulf knew a lengthy history that extended not only to the great disciplinary consolidation of Classics in the nineteenth century, but even further to the so-called philosophical historians of

Gibbon’s age—the antecedents of which will be examined at the very conclusion of this study. This genealogy extended far beyond Gibbon’s moment back to those much stereotyped classicizing impulses of Renaissance humanism, the ambiguities of which have been analyzed in depth in Chapter One. But as argued here, this oft-told origin narrative represents a considerable oversimplification. Rather, as unexpected or ironic as it might seem, early modern scholars shared more than a few similarities with their late-twentieth-century counterparts. And while we would be just as presentist or Whiggish as earlier purveyors of decline and fall if we were to celebrate those ways in which early modern histories of late antiquity resemble our own, it is nevertheless salutary to consider what this unlikely confluence of period styles reveals about broader cycles of temporal disjunction, temporal division, and their assorted discontents. Albeit for very different reasons, early moderns too did not read late antiquity as a radically discontinuous world. Even if their scholarly assumptions contributed to the eventual erection of such fixed walls, most classical scholars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries would hardly have wished to construct them, and would perhaps not have known how to if they had.

As we shall see in so many other contexts, the now-standard tropes and assumptions of modern periodizing frequently developed in such fashion, springing from that very apprehension of complexity and disjunction that is now—ironically enough—often used to deconstruct the periodizing enterprise. One could easily read the Gibbonian narrative of the transition from the ancient to the medieval as an essential corollary to those Whiggish narratives (perfected by eighteenth-century stadial theory and related projects) of the transition from the medieval to the modern. But this rather unexpected genealogy also highlights the unforgiving logic of periodization itself when one views it in the longue durée. Born of that confusing mixture of change and continuity that so often marks the apprehension of temporal disjunction, periodizing
schemes often, out of the sheer necessity of coherence, end up privileging the latter. And while such an observation may seem trivial or clichéd, especially to those now inured to the rhetoric of anti-periodizing revision, it remains a far more crucial (and indeed far less straightforward) task to recover how even dramatic expressions of rupture (ostensibly at the heart of the periodizing impulse) could paradoxically emerge from deep awareness of temporal sedimentation and historical continuity.

Claudius Claudianus: Confusion and Contradiction in the Pagan-Christian Middle

The many blurred boundaries endemic to late antique religion proved particularly vexing when it came to authors who occupied that vast and nebulous pagan-Christian “middle.” Tracing recognitions of this middle ground not only sheds intriguing light on comparative early modern views of confessional polarization, but also highlights how early moderns could discern numerous shades of gray in the story of Christianity’s rise. And perhaps no late antique writer more pointedly conveyed these ambiguities than the court poet Claudius Claudianus, who flourished around the turn of the fifth century. Today, Claudian is known as the author of oft-read classicizing poems like the De raptu Proserpinae, historico-poetic works like the De bello Gothico, spirited invectives against Eutropius and Rufinus, and various panegyrics to Stilicho and Honorius. Often held with some hyperbole to have been the last of the classical poets, Claudian was sometimes counted a lukewarm Christian and sometimes deemed an accommodationist pagan, or even accorded a still fuzzier status somewhere between the two.

Given his concern for clearing up potential confusions in the canon, Lilius Giraldus unsurprisingly took up the question of the poet’s religion in his entry for Claudian in the Historia
poetarum. He began by noting that the fifteenth-century commentator and Florentine Neoplatonist Cristoforo Landino had affirmed that Claudian evinced “Christian piety,” and thereafter quoted those verses, ostensibly by Claudian, which praised the Christian god. But, as he soon pointed out, both Augustine and Orosius, contemporaries of Claudian himself, had demonstrated that this was false. According to Augustine, after all, Claudian was said to have been “alien from the name of Christ.” And Orosius, with rather less subtlety, had even deemed him a “most obstinate pagan” or *paganus pervicacissimus*. Hence, Giraldus judged these authorities “almost of the same age as Claudian” to have more *fides* than Landino and others “of our time.” And in the same breath, he presented two potential explanations for this mix-up. First, it could have resulted from simple bibliographic confusion, and such invocations of Christ derived from “the poems of another Claudian.” Second, Claudius Claudianus himself could have perhaps indeed composed them, but only in order to secure “the goodwill of the most Christian emperor” (i.e. Theodosius). Either way, however, Claudian’s Christian verses were not to be taken as genuine. For Giraldus, it was only a question of whether their deceptive nature sprang from the ambiguities of attribution that infected antiquity writ large or else derived from those specific religio-political ambiguities that marked the Theodosian era. After all, Giraldus pointed out, such religious ambiguity was hardly unusual in late antiquity, especially in imperial contexts. Citing the *Suda* and cleverly echoing Augustine’s own judgment of Claudian, he closed out this discussion by noting that Justinian’s Tribonian, the famed compiler of the *Corpus iuris*, was also *a Christi religione alienus*, and nonetheless he still wrote “admiring things about Christ and the Trinity.”

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199 Giraldus, *Dialogi*, 571-2: “Christophorus Landinus Claudianum Christianae pietati addictum affirmatuisse, illum enim scribit, primo quidem tempore diis gentium initiatum, umer mox mutata in melius sententia, Christianum factum. Ob illud uidelicet, ut reor, ipsius epigramma ad
Like so many other vitae that filled up the sixteenth-century bio-bibliographies surveyed in Chapter One, Giraldus’ discussion of Claudian was often extracted from the Historia poetarum as a whole, and then recompiled as a feature of introductory apparatus in printed editions of Claudian’s works. Through such textual migrations, Giraldus continued to play an important role in literary scholarship of both the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. For instance, Giraldus’ vita appeared at the beginning of the 1571 Plantin edition of Claudian’s collected opera, a copy of which was owned and annotated by Isaac Casaubon. As his annotations suggest, Casaubon read Giraldus’ bio-bibliography carefully. Indeed, he underlined Giraldus’ reference to Landino’s contention that Claudian exhibited “Christian piety,” writing rather incredulously in the margin “can it be that Claudian was Christian?” And when he got to Claudian’s opera themselves, he continued to consider this theme. For instance, in Claudian’s panegyric to Stilicho, when the poet praised the general’s many positive attributes, he exclaimed: “the deadly spirits (numina) that Tartarus sends up from his abysses full of monsters fly far from you.” After taking note in the margin of the “various virtues (variae virtues) of Stilicho,”

Christum Deum, Christe potens rerum, redeuntis conditor aeuí, / Vos summi sensusque Dei, quem fudit ab alta / Mente pater, etc. Idem et alii nonnulli asserunt, qui et alia Claudiani poemata ad Christum asserunt, ut illud, Proles uera Dei, cunctisque antiquior annis, / Nunc genius, qui semper eras. Et item alia, que paulo ante sunt in Germania publicata. Sedenim qui eadem ferme Claudiani acetate claruerunt, Aurel. Augustinus et P. Orosius id ex toto falsum esse docent. Ab illo enim in v. de ciui Dei, Claudianus a Christi nomine alienus dicitur, ab hoc in historiis paganus, ut eius urbis utar, et quidem perucacissimus, cum quibus et hac in re Paulus Diaconus conuenit. Quibus usque adeo maior est fides habenda, quam Landino, et nostrae tempestatis ceteris, ut illa etiam ego carmina uel alterius Claudiani putem, uel potius in Christianissimi Imperatoris gratiam composita. Nam et Trebonianus, si Suidae stamus, a Christi religionie alienus, ex Iustiniani Imperatoris sententia in Pandectis, de Christo et Trinitate admiranda scrispt.”

200 Claudian, Opera (Antwerp, 1571), now British Library 1068.b.2.(1), 10: Casaubon underlines the following line thus “Christophorus Landinus Claudianum Christiane pietatis addictum affirmat fuisset…” and then writes in the margin “Claud. an Christianus.”
Casaubon seized upon this invocation of Tartarus and pluralized numina, asking “could this pertain to the Christian religion?”

Yet as the remainder of his annotations suggest, Casaubon was also drawn to Claudian’s account of a different form of late antique mutation, not so much religious as geopolitical. This meshing of religious transformation with other markers of historical change constituted a favored early modern means of digesting late antique sources. And so Casaubon read this late antique court poet as a valuable firsthand source for the barbarian incursions that rocked the Roman world around the turn of the fifth century. Hence, his poems were not only late but pleasing additions to the ancient poetic canon (and hence valuable repositories of erudition), but also important contemporary accounts of systemic change in the autumn of the Greco-Roman world. Casaubon neatly summed up this assessment in a note he jotted down on the title page of his Plantin Claudian, declaring: “this poet is very useful for both ancient fables and the history of his own time, and most worthy of reading.”

Throughout Claudian’s collected opera, Casaubon’s annotations highlight the poet’s usefulness for understanding the “history of his times,” as he distilled key observations both factual and atmospheric about the Roman world in the years around 400. He observed in Claudian’s biting Ad Rufinum that “barbarous peoples (barbarae gentes) were admitted into the

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201 Claudian, Opera, 241: Casaubon underlines as follows “Constantia, futile ne quid / infirmumque geras, procul importuna fugantur / Numina, monstriferis quae Tartarus edidit antis...” Here, after noting the “variae virtutes St[iliconis],” Casaubon jots down “An hoc de relig. Chr.” For the translation used (in modified form) here, see Claudian, Opera, trans. Maurice Platnauer (Cambridge, MA, 1922).

202 Claudian, Opera, title page: “Poeta hic ad historiam eius temporis et veteres etiam fabulas utilissimus, et lectu digniss.” For a similar appreciation of the late antique Eunapius, whom Casaubon deemed worthy of reading for the light he shed on “the last efforts of a dying paganism,” see Anthony Grafton and Joanna Weinberg, “I Have Always Loved the Holy Tongue”: Isaac Casaubon, the Jews, and a Forgotten Chapter in Renaissance Scholarship (Cambridge, MA, 2011), 12 and 12 n.47, citing Casaubon’s note at Oxford, Bodleian MS Casaubon 25, fol.113r.
Roman world by Rufinus,” while in Claudian’s *De bello Gothico* he remarked upon the poet’s evocation of the “terror at the arrival of the Goths in Italy.” In still other instances, he highlighted “the peace given to the Germans,” and noted tellingly that “Italy was attacked more often by barbarians.” Likewise, and perhaps most importantly, he was quick to comment upon those ways in which the “old” world of Claudian’s own time differed markedly from earlier antiquities. For instance, in a panegyric to Honorius that detailed the emperor’s preparations for a triumphal entry into Rome, Claudian had *Roma* herself speak, making her bemoan the fact that her emperors no longer resided within the once grand confines of the *urbs aeterna*, now a comparative backwater. Flagging the moment in which she asks “why do my palaces which have given their name to all palaces grow squalid in neglected old age?” Casaubon wrote in the margin “Note, in that age the emperors were not willingly dwelling at Rome,” thereby highlighting one more way that a new geopolitics separated *illa aetas* from earlier phases of the ancient past, even as it preserved so many of the classical world’s old forms. Whether or not he was a Christian or a pagan, or some combination of both due to either religious feeling or political expediency, Claudian was also a guardian of old traditions in a new and rapidly changing world. In the pithy words of the French historical theorist Christophe Milieu, writing in his proposed outline of a history of learning, Claudian had accomplished a singular feat: he had

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204 Claudian, *Opera*, 185: Casaubon writes “pax data Germanis;” while at 152 he notes “Italia a barbaris saepius tentata.”

succeeded in composing “varied and especially learned poems (*docta Poemata*)” despite residing in the “final ages of the erudite (*extremis eruditorum temporibus*)”\(^\text{206}\).

**Quintus Aurelius Symmachus: Purveyor of Controversy and Paragon of Eloquence**

Quintus Aurelius Symmachus, consul, urban prefect, man of letters and exemplary representative of the *crème de la crème* of the late Roman aristocracy—that so-called *melior pars generis humani*—is today best remembered for championing the restoration of the Altar of Victory in the Roman Senate, an unsuccessful entreaty which aroused the swift and spirited opposition of Ambrose of Milan and later prompted the Christian poet Prudentius to compose his famous invective, the *Contra Symmachum*.\(^\text{207}\) Symmachus’ appeal, directed to a youthful Valentinian II, is alternately read as a swan song to the moribund civic cult of late paganism, or lauded (with not insignificant doses of anachronism) as a forward-looking plea for religious tolerance. Recent scholarship has attempted to revise some of these longstanding conceptions, arguing that, far from simply comprising a nostalgic invocation of dying tradition and an ecumenical call to pluralism, the *Relatio* was also informed by a complex set of political calculations, defined just as much by fiscal maneuvering and conflicting imperial and senatorial prerogatives as by competing worldviews both pagan and Christian.\(^\text{208}\) Nonetheless, Symmachus and his *Relatio* remain enduring symbols of the conflictual religious climate long imagined as endemic to the fourth-century Roman world.

\(^{206}\) Christophe Milieu, *De scribenda universitatis rerum historia libri quinque* (Basel, 1551), 291.

\(^{207}\) For a biographical overview, see Cristiana Sogno, *Q. Aurelius Symmachus: A Political Biography* (Ann Arbor, 2006).

However, early modern readers did not uniformly approach Symmachus as a purveyor of the arts of controversy. Granted, they were well aware of his central role in the Altar of Victory affair, and the famous conclusion of his *Relatio* that, in matters of religion, “there is no one path to so great a mystery.” Moreover, they often digested his writings through the mediating influence of his prominent Christian antagonists Prudentius and Ambrose, though (as we shall see) these Christian interlocutors offered ambiguous responses to the *Relatio* that colored its early modern afterlife in some surprising ways. Put simply, many early modern scholars were not primarily concerned with Symmachus’ status as some partisan spokesman for late paganism. Instead, first and foremost, the pagan aristocrat played an exemplary role in a very specific domain of the classical inheritance—namely, epistolary writing. As such, he was vaunted as a model of classical (or perhaps classicizing) eloquence, irrespective of the contents of his letters themselves. And beyond his *Relationes*, early moderns also avidly absorbed Symmachus’ numerous personal *epistolae*, many of which (addressed to such late antique *literati* as Ausonius) were altogether unconcerned with the transition from paganism to *tempora Christiana*.

To many early moderns, Symmachus’ correspondence belonged to the venerable canon of ancient letter collections, worthy of digestion alongside such oft-read works as Cicero’s *Epistolae ad familiares* or the *Epistulae* of Pliny the Younger. No less a luminary than Angelo Poliziano praised Symmachus at the beginning of his own collection of letters, directly after lauding the likes of Cicero and Pliny. As Poliziano allowed, “If I seem to resemble Symmachus, I will not be ashamed, as he is celebrated for his brevity and smoothness (*brevitas et rotunditas*).”"209 In similar fashion, Erasmus grouped him together with exemplary letter-writers

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both ancient and modern in his treatise on epistolary composition, *De conscribendis epistolis*, where he discussed Symmachus alongside Cicero, Pliny, and Poliziano himself. And in his mock dialogue *Ciceronianus*, Erasmus likewise invoked the late Roman letter-writer when spiritedly poking fun at those humanist hyper-purists who regarded Cicero as the sole embodiment of exemplary Latinity.\(^{210}\)

On the whole, Symmachus seems ultimately to have aroused more controversy in the stylistic realm than the religious. For he enjoyed something of a cameo role in those acrimonious sixteenth-century disputes over the temporal reach of the Latin canon, which saw devotees of Tully arrayed against champions of a more expansive literary corpus. Of course, such debates were not without religious overtones, especially given Erasmus’ memorable defense—launched in his *vita* of Jerome and discussed in the previous chapter—of late antique Christian literature against hyper-literal and ahistorical Ciceronian exactitude.\(^{211}\) Yet significantly enough, such controversies also involved figures like Symmachus, a contemporary of Jerome far on the opposite end of the religious spectrum. In 1549 the Bohemian humanist Sigismund Gelenius, himself an admirer and correspondent of Erasmus, published a new Froben edition of Symmachus’ *Epistolae*, which began with an epigraph, culled from Prudentius’ own *Contra Symmachum*, that (although lamenting Symmachus’ opposition to Christianity) described Symmachus as surpassing “Cicero himself” (*ipse Tullius*).\(^{212}\) In his preface, Gelenius wasted no


\(^{211}\) On Jerome’s fortunes in the period discussed here, see Eugene Rice, *Saint Jerome in the Renaissance* (Baltimore, 1985).

\(^{212}\) Symmachus, *Epistolae*, ed. Sigismund Gelenius (Basel, 1549), front matter: “PRUDENTIUS DE SYMMACHO / O linguam miro verborum fonte fluentem / Romani decus eloquii, cui cedat et ipse / Tullius, has fundit diues facundia gemmas / Os dignam aeterno tinctum quod fulgeat..."
time highlighting the limitations of excessive classicism, especially of the sort which attempted to read the canon through a purely Ciceronian lens. Defending Symmachus’ literary merits, he programmatically declared that “I do not fear to differ from those who are almost excessively Ciceronian, who think it right to enclose eloquence within the limits of a single age” (unius seculi pomoeriis). Rejecting such artificial boundaries, Gelenius continued in a highly Erasmian vein, arguing that “Cicero himself would have spoken in a different language, if he had inhabited the age of that ancient Cato, or [the era] of this very Symmachus.” Furthermore, despite such stylistic or linguistic differences, Symmachus and Cicero shared many similarities; after all, “Symmachus held the ears and swayed the mouths of the Senate no less than Tully changed the hearts of those fathers wavering between Pompey and Caesar.” Ironically enough, even those who sought to free Symmachus from the shackles of Ciceronianism could not resist conjuring vivid portraits of the historical Symmachus fulfilling a decidedly Ciceronian role and function in Roman political life.

This rhetoric of anti-Ciceronianism was well appreciated by at least one anonymous contemporary reader of Gelenius’ Symmachus, whose copiously annotated and augmented copy of the aforementioned edition now resides at the British Library. In the margins at this precise point in the preface, this reader tersely but tellingly juxtaposed those “immoderately Ciceronian”

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*auro / Si mallet laudare deum, cui sordida monstra / Praetulit, et liquidam temerait crimine uocem."

 Symmachus, *Epistolae*, preface: “Nec enim uereor dissentire ab istis pene immodice Ciceronianis, qui eloquentiam unius seculi pomoeriis includere fas putant, non intelligentes ipsum Ciceronem diuersa lingua locuturum fuisse, si aut in Catonis illius prisci aetatem incidisset, aut huius ipsius Symmachi, qui non minus ora in se conuerit auresque detinuit praesentis senatus, quam Tullius patrum illorum inter Pompeium et Cesarem fluctuantium, et iam tum de gradu ut libertatis, ita eloquentia paulatim decedentium.”
with “the eloquence of Symmachus.”"\textsuperscript{214} Meanwhile, directly below the edition’s printed epigraph from Prudentius, he also added the aforementioned judgment of Poliziano, reaffirming that Symmachus’ epistles showcased both his \textit{brevitas} and \textit{rotunditas}.\textsuperscript{215} Indeed, numerous sources, following the venerable example of Poliziano, were quick to laud the Roman patrician’s smoothness and brevity in a manner almost perfunctory. Yet such eloquence was hardly an ahistorical virtue. Instead, in many such cases, it was intimately linked to the very moment and milieu which Symmachus inhabited—not merely a world of moribund paganism and ascendant Christianity, but rather an autumnal world of deep literary tradition, defined by baroque and mannered consolidation.

Here the ambiguities that defined the early modern late antique and its position vis-à-vis classical antiquity emerge in sharp relief. For despite the objections of some ardent Ciceronians, Symmachus was by no means dismissed as a corrupt or derivative imitator of earlier and “purer” Latinity. On the contrary, he and his age were frequently read as well versed in the arts of \textit{imitatio}, and—even more significantly—they were frequently praised for it. Symmachian eloquence was \textit{ipso facto} taken as emulative eloquence. For example, according to the Austrian humanist Johannes Cuspinianus, Symmachus was not simply “a most eloquent and most learned man, who defended the cause of the pagan gods with most brilliant oratory.” Rather, when he praised the late Roman statesman in his \textit{Commentarii} on the Roman consuls, he went on to remark that “this foremost denizen of the school of Cicero (\textit{Ciceronis Academiae}) also wrote

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item Symmachus, \textit{Epistolae}, ed. Sigismund Gelenius (Basel, 1549), now British Library 10905.c.37, sig. *2v: In the margin facing Gelenius’ discussion of Ciceronianism, the annotator records “immodice Ciceroniani” and “Symmachi eloquentia” directly below.
\item Symmachus, \textit{Epistolae}, sig. *1v: Directly below the printed excerpt from Prudentius, the annotator writes: “Angelus Politianus. Symmachum si cui referre videbor, non pudebit: ut cuius et breuitas celebretur et rotunditas.”
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extremely elegant personal letters, of remarkable brevity and smoothness.” In a certain sense, the fourth-century Symmachus could seem almost as earnest an emulator of Ciceronian ideals as Tully’s more exacting Renaissance imitators.

But unlike other well-known late antique practitioners of imitatio, Symmachus himself was hardly counted as a committed Ciceronian. That honor instead went to the Christian Lactantius, confidante of Constantine himself, whose Divine Institutes sought to offer a systematic refutation of pagan doctrine. Lorenzo Valla had famously extolled Lactantius’ imitative style, and Giraldus had deemed him “the one special emulator of Ciceronian eloquence among the Christians.” With respect to Symmachus’ exemplars, many scholars maintained instead that his first allegiance was to an altogether different model—namely, the younger Pliny. While also a copious letter-writer, Pliny represented a decidedly different age and style of Latinity, albeit one which (at least by the age of Symmachus) also placed him in the company of venerable veteres. For as Alan Cameron has argued, the fourth century in fact embraced a far wider cast of veteres than had appealed to the archaizing sensibilities of earlier eras, as it turned away from an exclusive focus on republican or Augustan authors and digested anew a vast collection of post-Augustan sources, including such representatives of Silver Latinity as Statius and Juvenal. Although Cameron maintains that there is scant evidence of Symmachus himself seeking to emulate Pliny or his letter collection, this modern scholarly commonplace possessed

216 Iohannes Cuspinianus, De consulibus Romanorum commentarii (Basel, 1553), 519: “...Symmachus, vir Consularis et Vrbi Praefectus eloquentissimus et doctissimus, Ausonii frater: qui causam gentilium Deorum luculentissima oratione defendit apud Theodosium et Valentinianum Imperatores: quae oratio libro quinto epistolarum inseritur. Contra quam ardentissime scripsit D. Ambrosius, et Aurelius Prudentius, qui circa haec tempora floruit, duobus elegantissimis libris, versu Heroico...Scirpsit autem epistolam quoque famillares elegantissimas, mirae breuitatis ac rotunditatis, Ciceronis Academiae primus accola.”

217 Lilius Giraldus, Dialogi, 622: Giraldus characterizes Lactantius as “unus eloquentiae Ciceronianae inter Christianos praecipuus aemulator.”
deep late antique roots, and hence it is no accident that several early editions of Symmachus’ *Epistolae* began by recording this salient fact—itself expressed self-consciously by Symmachus’ near contemporaries.  

This claim is well illustrated by the prefatory matter to Jacob Lectius’ 1587 edition of Symmachus, which began with a fairly typical feature of introductory apparatus (analyzed more systematically in the following chapter), deeply rooted in the bio-bibliographical tradition. Lectius’ Symmachus began with a collection of so-called *testimonia*—painstakingly assembled excerpts “of ancient and more recent authors” (*veterum aliquot et recentiorum authorum*) who mentioned or invoked the late pagan aristocrat. In this fashion, early modern readers visually encountered a full millennium of Symmachian reception, stretching all the way from Symmachus’ own late antique milieu to the present day. With encyclopedic breadth, these *elogia* created a fascinating dialogue between pagans and Christians, *veteres* and *recentiores*, as they reproduced brief snippets from a diverse set of sources including Ammianus Marcellinus, Prosper of Aquitaine, Sidonius Apollinaris, Cassiodorus, and Sigebert of Gembloux.  

Appropriately enough, Lectius culled his very first *testimonium* from Macrobius’ *Saturnalia*, that oft-read work of late antique erudition which featured Symmachus as one of its principal interlocutors. In this excerpt, Macrobius divided styles of speech (*genera dicendi*) into four broad categories, each typified by a venerable *auctor*. This first, so-called copious style was dominated by Cicero, whereas Sallust was equated with brevity and Fronto with restraint and dryness. The fourth category, however, was that of speech both “rich and florid” (*pingue et*  

\[218\] See Cameron, *Last Pagans*, 415-16.  
floridum), in which “formerly the Younger Pliny, and now, no less than the ancients, our own Symmachus is renowned.”

As Macrobius made clear, even in late antiquity Symmachus was already lauded for his imitative prowess, and juxtaposed self-consciously with still earlier veteres. This highly significant passage highlights a curious blend of reverence and one-upmanship directed at an antiquity already demarcated as ancient in the fourth and fifth centuries. Moreover, this equation of Symmachus with a very specific ancient exemplar was by no means lost on early modern readers, especially as they sought to contextualize his own late Roman moment. For instance, when Isaac Casaubon read Macrobius’ Saturnalia, he took care to underline the portion of the aforementioned passage that related Symmachus and Pliny. In addition, in a note on the title page, he directed his attention back to this passage, jotting down a page reference to the “rich and florid style of Pliny and Symmachus.” In this fashion, Symmachus earned a precise and rather technical place in the long history of ancient literary style, keeping worthy company with veteres who flourished several hundred years or more before he wrote. At the same time, Casaubon took care to highlight the purported historical setting of the Saturnalia, and the real-life personages lurking behind its imagined interlocutors. At the very top of the title page, he scribbled a reminder concerning the dialogue’s historical context, noting, “I should think that the

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221 Macrobius, Saturnalia (Leiden, 1565), now British Library 1089.f.16, title page: Casaubon remarks “378. stilus pinguis et floridus Plinii Secundi et Symmachi.”
Servius who speaks in the *Saturnalia* is the interpreter of Virgil [i.e. Maurus Servius Honoratus]…and the Symmachus who speaks is [Quintus] Aurelius Symmachus.”

Elsewhere, Casaubon also showed particular interest in Symmachus’ “rich and florid” style. In one of his surviving working notebooks, titled “Ancient customs observed *passim,*” the classical scholar devoted a lengthy section to practices of letter-writing in antiquity, filling numerous sheets with page references to ancient sources that discussed the epistolary craft. The source he invoked by far most frequently was Symmachus’ own collection of *Epistolae.*

Overall, Casaubon used a range of texts as much late antique as ancient and Christian as pagan, mixing references to Symmachus, Jerome, Augustine, Servius, Cassiodorus, Libanius and Synesius with citations of more traditional classical authorities like Cicero, Suetonius, and Pliny. But it was the late antique Symmachus who provided the most detailed guide to the technical minutiae of ancient epistolary composition: under a heading entitled “certain rules for writing letters,” Casaubon quoted Symmachus on everything from the nature of epistolary prologues and titles to the precise definition of a *relatio* and the difference between epistles *legitimae* and *precariae.* Hence, as Casaubon sought to reconstruct the material history of a specific ancient textual practice, he turned to Symmachus as both the natural culmination of that history and an unrivaled guide to its earlier stages and customs.

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223 Bodleian Library, MS Casaubon 59, fol.2r: Casaubon’s heading reads “Mores ueteres passim obseruati.”

224 MS Casaubon 59, fol.2r-19r.

However, even if it often overshadowed discussions of religious controversy, valorization of Symmachus’ stylistic merits was itself rooted in the specifics of late antique religious contestation. For Symmachus’ Christian antagonists (especially Prudentius and Ambrose) were quick to stress the Roman statesman’s literary and rhetorical prowess. Such a move served two purposes: not only did this allow them to proclaim the ultimate inefficacy of classical rhetoric in the face of Christian *veritas*, but it also accorded them a worthy adversary who rendered their own rhetorical triumphs altogether more commendable by comparison. And in a more direct material sense, such projects of refutation perpetuated the transmission of the larger Symmachian corpus in both late antiquity and the Middle Ages, beginning with Ambrose’s strategic decision to copy the *Relatio* alongside his own counter-appeal to Valentinian. Even in the Renaissance, numerous printers and editors continued this tradition of codicological juxtaposition (and hence of an unlikely brand of accommodation) whose roots were traceable all the way back to that distant moment of controversy in the 380s. For they often elected to print versions of Prudentius, Ambrose, and Symmachus directly alongside one another. Just as we possess so many fragments of Varro thanks to Augustine’s polemical refutation of the Roman antiquary in his *De civitate deae*, so Symmachus’ own transmission was but aided and abetted by the polemical rejoinders of Ambrose and Prudentius. Significantly enough, this did not simply affect the circulation of the single most consequential of Symmachus’ official *Relationes*, but rather his epistolary corpus as a whole, much of which was blithely unconcerned with pagan-Christian conflict. In this fashion, one more potential source of late antique disjunction was (albeit partially) elided through material practices of recompilation.

Indeed, such traditions of juxtaposition also inspired more direct textual interventions. Not only did Ambrose’s refutation of the *Relatio* frequently appear in early modern editions of
Symmachus’ *Epistolae*, but Symmachus also crept into early modern collections of Christian texts. One of the most striking examples of this phenomenon is found in a volume of Prudentius’ *Opera* assembled by the humanist legal scholar Johannes Sichardus, and printed at Basel in 1527. In a decision that would surely have made Prudentius himself proud, Sichardus chose to preface his version of the *Contra Symmachum* with the complete text of Symmachus’ *Relatio*. Titling the *Relatio* an address “in favor of the worship of the ancient gods, and against the Christians,” the Basel jurist began by justifying his inclusion of pagan rhetoric in the collected works of a venerable Christian poet. As he noted, the *Relatio* was not to be read merely for its elegance, which (although readily apparent) was rendered suspect on account of its contents. Instead, its efficacy was rooted in those promises inherent in critical contextualization. In other words, the *Relatio* was worth reading “so that those things which the most elegant poet [i.e. Prudentius] chose to refute in it might be understood more easily.” Moreover, no one could properly understand Symmachus’ rhetorical aims unless they undertook to return *ad fontes*, and to “read him in whole.” Ironically enough, only by completely absorbing the writings of this late pagan could one hope to establish a distinctly Christian literary canon—of the sort that Aldus Manutius had proposed in his *Poetae Christianae veteres*. As Sichardus declared at the end of his prefatory remarks, he had elected to print Symmachus’ *Relatio* so that “this book of Prudentius, which we wish to make most familiar in the schools, might be read with a little less hindrance.”

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226 Prudentius, *Opera*, ed. Johannes Sichardus (Basel, 1527), 345: “Eam uero orationem, quum esset inter diui Ambrosii Mediolanensis episcopi opera relata, consilium fuit Prudentio inserere, non tam ob elegantiam, quae pro re suscepta, et temporum ratione, tolerabilis est, quam ut facilius intelligantur ea quae ex eadem relatione elegantissimus poeta sibi conuellenda desumpsit. Nominatim enim, quibus respondeat, subinde quaedam suis admiscet, sed ita, ut non satis intelligas quid Symmachus prae se tulerit, nisi integram legeris. Quam nunc exhibemus uobis, nihil ueriti, quod quaedam essent mendosa, ne solidam a uobis gratiam iniremus. Quid
antique precedent: for he faithfully replicated the compulsory strategy pursued by Prudentius and Ambrose a full millennium earlier.

Yet contextual reading assumed complex forms in early modern scholarship. Casaubon, for instance, read Prudentius’ *Contra Symmachum* in the collection of Christian poetry assembled by Georg Fabricius—a compendium similar to Aldus’ *Poetae* in its scope and aims. And here Prudentius’ poem provided a window, however obscured or distorted, into that very world of pagan religious practice it sought to counter and repudiate. For Prudentius had approached Symmachus just as Augustine famously appropriated Varro, using the *Relatio* as a pretext for extensively cataloguing the purported follies of Greco-Roman paganism.²²⁷ Indeed, as Cameron has pointed out, the *Contra Symmachum* was “not in fact an invective against Symmachus,” whom Prudentius treated with “remarkable courtesy” in the course of his poem.²²⁸ Nor was this lost on Casaubon. Casaubon was a keen student of the practice of ancient Greco-Roman worship, and so most of his sparse and scattered marginalia dealt not with Prudentius’ polemic, but rather with the antiquarian details present underneath his critique. Indeed, many of Casaubon’s notes simply read *mos* or custom, highlighting everything from the ceremonial rites and objects associated with ancient sun cult to Prudentius’ vivid description of Roman animal sacrifice.²²⁹ Furthermore, he called attention to those *loci* in which Prudentius, in a deft

²²⁷ See P.C. Burns, “Augustine’s Use of Varro’s *Antiquitates Rerum Divinarum* in His *De Civitate Dei*,” Augustinian Studies 32 (2001), 37-64.
²²⁸ Cameron, *Last Pagans*, 337.
²²⁹ Georg Fabricius, *Poetarum veterum ecclesiasticorum opera christiana* (Basel, 1564), now British Library C.76.d.7. Two such examples are especially illustrative: At p.221 in the *Contra Symmachum* Casaubon underlines “Post trabeas et eburnam aquilam sellamque curulem / cerneat ora senex barbatus et oscula figit / cruribus aenipedum, si fas est credere, equorum…” and writes
deployment of the rhetoric of anti-rhetoric, praised Symmachus’ supposedly unrivaled eloquentia, writing Symmachi laus where the Christian poet hyperbolically declared that “none in our time has greater power of speech to leap and roar and thunder and swell in storms of eloquence,” and Symmachi elogium next to that aforementioned passage, used by Gelenius as an epigraph for his edition Symmachus’ Epistolae, in which Prudentius deemed the pagan senator “the glory of Roman eloquence, to whom Tully himself must cede.”

The interlinked fortunes of Prudentius and Symmachus demonstrate the extent to which both pagan and Christian antiquity were received in dialogic fashion, as each built upon the other and spawned fuller and more variegated textual traditions. Yet dialogue, whether adversarial or otherwise, was never too far from outright confusion and conflation. And so we cannot take leave of Symmachus without mentioning the most bizarre way in which some early moderns appear to have sanitized the writings of the late pagan statesman, while obscuring both ordo librorum and ordo temporum in the process. This confusion suggests that, at least to some, Casaubon’s aforementioned identification of the Macrobian Symmachus with Quintus Aurelius Symmachus was hardly as obvious as it might seem. For Symmachus belonged to a large and venerable patrician gens hardly dominated by recalcitrant pagans. Not only was this adversary of


Ambrose later pardoned and promoted by the Christian Theodosius, but his descendants also seem to have soon converted to Christianity. One of the most illustrious of these, Quintus Aurelius Memmius Symmachus, was himself a Christian scholar and statesman who played an active role in the politics of the sixth-century Ostrogothic court and even adopted the learned Boethius as his son-in-law.

Accordingly, when early modern readers encountered an elegant epistolary collection ascribed to a certain Symmachus, some seem to have deemed it the work of the sixth-century Christian Quintus Aurelius Memmius Symmachus, and not that of the pagan Quintus Aurelius Symmachus, his likely great-grandfather. The perceived importance of this error to the history of Symmachian reception is well illustrated by the numerous sources, from editorial prefaces to bibliographical compendia, which confidently refuted it. Yet as is often the case in the history of scholarship, when the very refutation of an error itself becomes a trope primed for constant replication, the original source of this purported misunderstanding remains disappointingly (or perhaps tellingly) elusive. Indeed, it is unclear how the avowedly pagan Relatio was read in light of this misattribution, or if the confusion (if it was indeed widespread) was restricted primarily to Symmachus’ personal letters.

Curiously, however, one of the earliest refutations of the purported mix-up between the Christian and pagan Symmachus appears in one of the earliest editions of the Epistolae, printed at Strasbourg in 1510. Here, after sketching a brief life of Symmachus and acknowledging his “most brilliant oratory” (oratione luculentissima) in defense of the Roman gods, the preface immediately turned to tackling this supposed problem of the two Symmachi, noting that some were wont to transfer these letters to “another author, the father-in-law of Boethius.” But this, so the preface claimed, was patent nonsense. For as it sardonically noted, “this Symmachus, the
father-in-law of Boethius (who was killed by Theodoric) could not have written any letter to Valentinian, except if he should have written from his cradle, or (if we should accept palingenesis) if he should have been born anew from the Elysian Fields.”

Similarly, in the preface to his 1549 Basel edition, Gelenius also took aim at this mix up, albeit in less colorful language. He simply but forcefully noted that “they who think this Symmachus is the father-in-law of Boethius are mistaken.” After all, as Gelenius averred, this identification patently violated the dictates of ratio temporum. “For when Boethius flourished in every type of learning, the eternal city was subject not to Roman emperors, but rather to barbarian kings, and they tore away the ancient ceremonies of the Roman Senate, which the city had tenaciously retained with the winking approval of the Christian Caesars.” Hence, Gelenius introduced yet another interpretive wrinkle to Symmachus’ reception: while he correctly noted that the Boethian Symmachus had flourished under the Ostrogothic Theodoric, long after the deposition of the last Western Roman emperor in 476, he took this moment, and not the world of late-fourth-century Rome, as a far more consequential turning point, not only in a political sense but also indeed in matters religious. For his memorable and remarkably astute assessment of those “winking” (conniventibus) Christian emperors captures something of that delicate equipoise between Christianity and paganism that prevailed as the “eternal city” retired into her

231 Symmachus, Epistolae familiares (Strasbourg, 1510), preface: “Neque enim Symmachus ille Boecii socer (qui Anno Domini DXXI a Theoderico occisus est) ullam Valentiniano epistolam nisi vel in cunis scripsisse potuit: vel (si palingenesiam concedimus) ex campo elysio priusque denuo nasceretur.”

old age. In this fashion, Gelenius marshaled some delicate historico-political analysis to solve a problem of apparent temporal disjunction.

Finally, Josias Simler, in his entry for Symmachus in his epitome of Conrad Gesner’s Bibliotheca universalis, resolved the problem even more succinctly. Departing from Gesner’s usual strategy of abstaining from discussions of attribution and otherwise not judging the provenance of texts, Simler (after citing Gelenius’ 1549 edition) took care to note that Symmachus, the famous urban prefect, was “distinct from Symmachus, the father-in-law of Boethius,” and that “whoever first edited these letters at Strasbourg erred concerning them, because he wrote that they were the same.” Yet strangely enough, in refuting this error Simler seems to have fallen into a bibliographic error of a rather different order: for the Strasbourg edition, discussed above, hardly perpetuated this supposed mistake, but rather appears to have been one of the first sources to point it out and challenge its biographical conflation.

This curious bibliographical mix-up constitutes a fitting place to conclude our brief survey of Symmachus’ early modern fortunes, as it highlights some of the more extreme contortions required to resolve the ambiguous status of an “ancient” author neither classical nor Christian, yet nevertheless deemed canonical by the complex standards of both categories. In the following section, we shall trace decidedly similar attempts to categorize another troublesome late pagan who inhabited Symmachus’ world—namely, Ammianus Marcellinus.

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As it descends into the murky controversies of post-Constantinian Rome, Gibbon’s *Decline and Fall* abounds with repeated invocations of one source above all. For the Enlightened author of Rome’s waning days frequently appealed to the “impartial Ammianus”—deeming him a model of objectivity and dispassionate analysis whose exemplary history far surpassed the questionable veracity of the era’s quarrelsome ecclesiastical historians. Ammianus Marcellinus had composed his *Res gestae*—primarily an account of Rome’s turbulent fourth-century politics—sometime in the 390s, just decades before the empire experienced some of its most dramatic moments of Gibbonian “decline and fall.” Almost a millennium and a half later, Gibbon would avidly mine the *Res gestae* in search of source material supposedly free of ecclesiastical partisanship. Of course, Gibbon himself was no stranger to religious controversy, as his notorious Chapters XV and XVI on the rise of early Christianity famously set off a maelstrom of clerical vitriol in certain Anglican circles, thereby igniting one of the more colorful literary battles of the eighteenth century. Despite Gibbon’s manifest desire to exhibit philosophical serenity, his name was not destined to be synonymous with impartiality. The author of the *Decline and Fall* would not go on to enjoy those appellations today still lavished upon Ammianus Marcellinus.

From Gibbon onwards, Ammianus and his much-lauded objectivity have elicited frequent scholarly investigation, and even today the historian’s political and religious affinities remain vexingly difficult to pigeonhole. Though the *Res gestae* concludes with Ammianus’ famous self-identification as “a former soldier and a Greek” (*miles quondam et graecus*), the remainder of his

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history is conspicuously devoid of autobiographical detail. However, despite this dearth of source material, it is now generally accepted that Ammianus was something of a pagan in the traditional Roman sense, perhaps placing him at some remove from both Christianity and certain fashionable varieties of Neoplatonic thought and Iamblichan theurgy that achieved such prominence in some late antique pagan circles (and which, as charted by Celenza and others, did much to endear some early moderns to late antiquity). However, much ink has been spilled in parsing the exact particulars of his religious sympathies, particularly with respect to the nature and extent of his purported opposition to Christianity.\(^{235}\) While recent scholarship has roundly dismissed old Gibbonian platitudes concerning Ammianus’ commendable lack of bias, debates over his motivations remain very much alive: for instance, Timothy Barnes has argued that Ammianus frequently engaged in covert anti-Christian polemic, while Cameron and John Matthews have downplayed the salience of religious conflict in the Res Gestae, arguing that Ammianus sought to appeal to a much wider audience than a narrow rump of pagan “true believers.”

Of course, there are numerous reasons why one would have tiptoed around precise declarations of religious partisanship. As a pagan writing in Theodosian Rome in the 390s, perhaps Ammianus understood that ambiguity, restraint, and predilection for compromise were necessary virtues. Ammianus’ rather vague and nebulous invocations of a celestial deity or numinous force, not dissimilar from Tyche or Fortuna but also by no means incompatible with the god of the Christians, perhaps reveal more in what they omit than in what they enumerate.

Yet at the same time, Ammianus worked within the strictures of a genre known for its comparative silence on matters religious, in which the ascription of causality to numina was perhaps more a narrative trope than a precise statement of confessional commitment.

Such generic requirements played an essential role in early modern approaches to Ammianus, as humanists and classical scholars read his project first and foremost as one of continuation, executed within the specific sphere of political history. This emphasis upon textual continuation was itself a gesture of continuity that could counter temporal disjunction. For at the very end of the Res gestae, which concluded with the disastrous battle of Adrianople in the year 378, Ammianus had characterized his narrative as one extending from the reign of the emperor Nerva to Valens’ untimely death at Adrianople. While the first fourteen books of the Res Gestae—which ostensibly chronicled the period from Nerva to Constantine—do not survive, they began exactly at that point where Tacitus’ own Annales drew to a close. Accordingly, Ammianus was understood—as he frequently still is—as having continued an essentially Tacitean narrative of political machination and military maneuvering well into late antiquity. Hence, just as Symmachus was often linked to the Younger Pliny, so Ammianus was frequently associated with Tacitus; early moderns saw both late antique authors as engaged in the stylistic imitation and temporal continuation of specific “ancient” exemplars. However, although recent scholarship has not entirely discarded this rubric, modern students of Ammianus are rather more cautious about claims of exemplarity. Barnes, for instance, acknowledges that Ammianus saw himself as Tacitus’ continuator, but argues that specific evidence of Tacitean imitatio is scant.

and that the *Res gestae* and *Annales* differ far too significantly in both narrative and stylistic terms.\(^{237}\)

Whatever the actual merits of their linkage, Ammianus and Tacitus possessed similar postclassical afterlives. First and foremost, much like Tacitus, Ammianus was almost completely forgotten in the Middle Ages. Instead, knowledge of late antique history was principally derived from those traditions of abridgment and epitomizing pursued by Eutropius, Festus, and others of their ilk. But much like Tacitus’ corpus, the recently rediscovered *Res gestae* soon assumed an outsized role in early modernity. Already in the fifteenth century, Flavio Biondo, who himself did so much to inaugurate a nascent vision of tripartite periodization in Renaissance scholarship, relied upon an otherwise lost fuller version of Ammianus when piecing together the postclassical world.\(^{238}\) And as Arnaldo Momigliano memorably proposed, thanks in part to the revival of political history of the sort pursued by Ammianus, “the conditions which made Machiavelli and Guicciardini possible originated in the fourth century AD.”\(^{239}\) Ammianus’ fortunes were manifestly linked to the exploding taste for Tacitean narrative that spread rapidly across sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe, driven by new confessional divisions and new geopolitical realities. At the same time, regnant Tacitism reflected a broader reaction against Ciceronian excess, as it embraced the Latinity of a slightly different age and moment as an equal, if not superior, object of emulation. However, as many early modern scholars soon recognized,


Ammianus had to contend with a problem that had conveniently eluded his master Tacitus—namely, Christianity.

Although Ammianus’ religious identity was an established subject of debate in humanist circles, it was inextricably interlinked with textual and philological evaluations of both the *Res Gestae* and its fourth-century milieu. Religion was hardly the first category through which one read Ammianus, as Christianity and paganism often appeared only in more in-depth examinations of the author and his work. Hence, religious matters are conspicuously absent from those many cursory assessments of Ammianus found within the bio-bibliographical tradition. For instance, when the indefatigable Swiss encyclopedist Theodor Zwinger catalogued Ammianus in his *Theatrum vitae humanae*, he copied nearly verbatim an entry culled from Jean Bodin’s *Methodus*. Without making any mention of matters pagan or Christian, this entry began by highlighting an altogether more salient point—namely, that “Ammianus attempted to admire and imitate Tacitus above all else.” Indulging in the sort of literary and stylistic critique typically absent from such bibliographical *vitae*, Zwinger went on to observe tartly that “nevertheless Ammianus differs from Tacitus, insofar as Tacitus followed the dignity of Roman speech.” In contrast, “Ammianus wrote with Latin words in a Greek manner, and more often indeed not even in Latin.”

This brief bio-bibliographical snippet perfectly distills two overriding early modern critiques of the author of the *Res gestae*: not only did Ammianus live in a late and corrupted age marked by the lamentable decline of proper Latinity, but his already diminished Latin was further adulterated by his persistent Graecisms, rendering his very eligibility for membership in

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the Latin canon dubious. Similar sixteenth-century compilations offered similarly uncharitable assessments. Christophe Milieu, who elsewhere praised Claudian’s erudition, dismissed Ammianus with but a single sentence, writing that he wrote history with “hindered oratory.” Yet this judgment was rather mild compared to that already proffered by Juan Luis Vives in his *De tradendis disciplinis*, which condemned the *Res gestae* as “the work of one neither an orator nor a historian.” Yet despite their seemingly pejorative treatments of linguistic change, filtered through humanist standards of classicism, these critiques never rejected the world of late antiquity outright. Obligatory carping notwithstanding, Ammianus was still deemed eminently worthy of reading.

When one dug a little more deeply, one uncovered a world of profound religious complexity. Unlike compilers who peddled swift and summary literary judgments, those who read Ammianus closely and in full could hardly avoid the question of Christianity. Hence, one of the fullest treatments of the historian’s religion is found in one of the earliest complete *vitae* of Ammianus, composed by the sixteenth-century French classical scholar Claude Chifflet. Chifflet, perhaps most notorious today for alleging that his former friend Justus Lipsius had stolen several of his conjectural emendations to the text of Tacitus, was also well versed in late antique sources, and had even studied late Roman jurisprudence with the great Jacques Cujas. Although his idiosyncratic conclusions were largely discredited in the following century, they nevertheless deserve credit for initiating the many investigations into Ammianus’ religious views that continue to this day. After discussing comparatively duller points of the textual history of the *Res gestae*, Chifflet boldly dropped a surprising conclusion: “unless I am deceived, Ammianus

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241 See Christophe Milieu, *De scribenda universitatis rerum historia libri quinque* (Basel, 1551), 291.
243 See for instance the discussion of previous views outlined at Rike, *Apex Omnium*, 2.
was a Christian by profession.” Immediately thereafter, in a more sensitive recognition of the heterogeneity of late antique religious life, he added a subtler qualification. Whatever Ammianus’ formal religious status, “at least he was not unconnected in spirit and vow from the Christians.” As Chifflet knew well, Ammianus’ ultimate beliefs were perhaps best expressed in litotic terms.

Far from smacking of unmitigated fancy or mere wishful thinking, Chifflet’s reasons for supposing Ammianus a Christian offer some intriguing insights into late antique religion, even if their conclusions were ultimately erroneous. Not unlike today’s late antique scholars, Chifflet highlighted conciliation over conflict, observing that Ammianus “writes and feels honorably towards Christians at various points in his history,” and that he “makes mention of them not with hate, as spiteful writers do, but rather with approval.” Presenting his case in systematic fashion, Chifflet noted that Ammianus praised Jovian’s knowledge of Christian law, criticized Julian for banning Christians from the teaching of grammar and rhetoric, and extolled the exemplary virtues of simple provincial bishops. Yet one of his most emphatic arguments depended upon an ingenious (though ultimately ill-applied) interpretation of those old and venerable Roman categories of religio and superstition. Like so many others, he was drawn to Ammianus’ memorable distinction between “pure and simple Christian religion” (Christianam religionem absolutam et simplicem) and the “old-womanish superstition” (anili superstitione)

244 Claude Chifflet, De Ammiani Marcellini comitis vita (Louvain, 1627), 18-19: “Fuit Ammianus (ut et hanc vitae ejus dotem exsequar) professione Christianus, nisi fallor, aut saltem animo et voto a Christianis non alienus: de quibus honorifice in tota historia sparsim sensit, et scribit, dataque occasione libens eorum mentionem interserit, non in odium, ut maligni scriptores, sed commendationem potius.”
245 Chifflet, De Ammiani vita, 19-20.
supposedly embraced by the emperor Constantius.\footnote{Cf. Ammianus, \textit{Res gestae} 21.16.18, ed. Seyfarth, 248-9: “Christianam religionem absolutam et simplicem anili superstitione confundens, in qua scrutanda perplexius quam componenda grauius excitauit discidia plurima, quae progressa fusius aluit concertatione uerborum, ut cateruis antistitum iumentis publicis ultra citroque discurrentibus per synodos, quas appellant, dum ritum omnem ad suum trahere conatur arbitrium, rei uehiculariae succideret neruos.”} Ironcally enough, this famously ambiguous passage could also lend credence to precisely the opposite conclusion. Indeed, some two centuries later Gibbon reproduced the entire excerpt in a footnote to the \textit{Decline and Fall}, declaring that “so curious a passage well deserves to be transcribed.”\footnote{Edward Gibbon, \textit{The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire}, Vol. 2, 330: “The sentiments of a judicious stranger, who has impartially considered the progress of civil or ecclesiastical discord, are always entitled to our notice, and a short passage of Ammianus…is perhaps of more value than many pages of theological invectives.”} To Gibbon, however, Ammianus’ generous treatment of primitive Christianity was but one more sign of his enlightened paganism, rendering him perhaps more at home in the coffee shops of eighteenth-century Edinburgh than at aristocratic audiences in the fourth-century \textit{urbs aeterna}. For the Gibbonian Ammianus was above all a “moderate historian” and a “judicious stranger”—an impartial referee of sorts of internecine Christian quarrels.

However, to a sixteenth-century committed Christian like Chifflet, Ammianus’ reference to “old-womanish superstition” placed him in an altogether different religious camp. For \textit{religio simplex} equaled Christian orthodoxy, whereas \textit{superstitio} signaled the indulgent excesses of heresy—a dichotomy that surely resonated with anyone who lived through the French Wars of Religion. Remarking that the annals of ecclesiastical history had with “one voice” convicted Constantius of “Arian depravity,” Chifflet enthusiastically proclaimed that “Ammianus understood heretical opinions under the name of \textit{superstitio}.” After all, as Chifflet pointed out, Ammianus had likewise used the label \textit{superstitio} when speaking of none other than the
Manichees.\textsuperscript{248} In Chifflet’s analysis, a dichotomy with deep roots in Roman civic cult and philosophic discourse could easily be transferred to emergent distinctions between Christian orthodoxy and heresy. Having culled an impressive array of citations from the \textit{Res gestae}, Chifflet deemed Ammianus a Christian beyond a reasonable doubt: as he declared with triumphant confidence in the middle of his exposition, “No man of pagan spirit would sanely speak in such a way.”\textsuperscript{249}

Yet despite Chifflet’s considerable enthusiasm, his portrayal of Ammianus as some docile Christian fellow traveler hardly represented the \textit{consensus omnium} among humanist scholars. On the contrary, others read the \textit{Res gestae} in a thoroughly opposed fashion, suggesting that early moderns were as divided (if not more so) as their modern counterparts in divining the text’s very meaning and motivation. In another scholarly milieu far removed from the \textit{politique} sentiments of French humanists and jurists, some unhesitatingly branded Ammianus a pagan, while warning their readers of the pernicious nature of the \textit{Res gestae}. For instance, when the Italian Jesuit Antonio Possevino compiled his \textit{Bibliotheca Selecta}—that response to Gesner’s \textit{Bibliotheca universalis} that consisted of bowdlerized lists of “select” texts deemed consonant with post-Tridentine orthodoxy—he did not reserve kind words for Ammianus Marcellinus. Significantly enough, Possevino’s religious critique was simultaneously a philological critique. Much like his fellow bio-bibliographers, he began by stating that “Ammianus, who was a soldier and a Greek, was very little versed in the Latin language, which was most corrupt in his time.” Only after indicting the Latinity of both Ammianus and his age did Possevino further condemn


\textsuperscript{249} Chifflet, \textit{De Ammiani vita}, 20: “Nemo sane Pagani spiritus homo sic loqueretur.”
the *Res gestae* for “distorting” or “misrepresenting” (*detorquens*) the true nature of fourth-century Christianity. And this charge soon gave way once more to a renewed exposition of textual and literary matters, as Possevino then alleged that the *Res gestae* was written in “rough, harsh, inept, and plainly confused speech,” with the result that one “could scarcely follow what Ammianus said.”

Just as certain proponents of Ciceronian classicism often bemoaned the stylistic shortcomings of late antique *Christian* authors, so Possevino eagerly lambasted the stylistic blemishes of a late antique pagan. But despite such vitriol, Possevino tellingly refused to strike Ammianus from the canon of readable authors. Instead, just as Jean Bodin had done from a very different perspective, he sought a solution by proposing a specific “order of reading” or *ordo legendi*. For he simply recommended that before digesting Ammianus’ account of the fourth century, one should first read an account of the same era in the veritable gold standard of Counter-Reformation ecclesiastical history—i.e., Cesare Baronio’s *Annales*. Possevino’s admittedly unenthusiastic accommodation reflected the lamentably sparse nature of the late antique historical record. Despite his multiple errors and confusions both philological and doctrinal, Ammianus was “nonetheless useful…since he writes of matters that better authors do not possess.”

250 Possevino, *Apparatus ad omnium gentium historiam* (Venice, 1597), 125: “Ammianus Marcellinus, vti ipse de se loquitur, Gaecus miles; et in Latino sermone, qui suo tempore corruptissimus erat, parum versatus, Latine historiam Romanam scribere aggressus est, ab obitu Domitian ad Valentis Imperatoris, sub quo vixit, interitum, libris uno et triginta, ex quibus priores tredecim nobis desunt, ubi ad temporum suorum historiam, quae libris, qui extant, continentur, deuenit, diligenter scripsit, sed ea quae pertinent ad christianos traducens, ac *detorquens*: Adeo autem duro, aspero, inepto, et plane turbato sermone, ut vix, quod dicat, consequi alioquin possis; librariorum quoque errore mutilus est, et deprauatus, utilis tamen est, ubi intellelexeris, nam ea scribit, quae meliores auctores non habent. At expedit omnino praegere *Annales Caesaris Baronii Cardinalis eorum temporum: de quibus Ammianus suam historiam scripsit, sic enim, si qua utilitas ex eo capietur, poterit esse sine noxa.”
Amid the confessional strife of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe, the late-fourth-century author of the *Res gestae* could morph into everything from a sympathetic defender of Christian orthodoxy to a libelous propagator of pagan untruths. But whatever one’s views of his religious sympathies, his language was subjected to near universal censure. However, in one of the more intriguing twists in early modern approaches to the late antique canon, this was not wholly negative; on the contrary, Ammianus’ very status as a late source not only shielded him from outright condemnation, but sometimes also occasioned ironic exculpation and ambivalent praise. Although late Christian writers often earned this exculpatory treatment, Ammianus of course offered no expressions of Christian piety that might forgive his questionable Latinity. For a telling example, we must return to Chifflet. Whereas the French classical scholar confined his memorable discussion of Ammianus’ Christianity to but several paragraphs, he devoted a far lengthier stretch of his *vita* to Ammianus’ Latinity. Although his language was more measured than Possevino’s, he readily argued that Ammianus possessed nothing of the “grace, magnificence, or brilliance of Tacitus or Livy.” As he explained, Ammianus’ “words are turned upside down, his sentences are interrupted, his narrations are confused, and all these things divert the reader.” Yet in a deft historical contextualization, he did not blame Ammianus alone for such deficiencies and blemishes. Such faults were “not so much those of the author, but rather of his time and his copyists.” Even if classical Latinity was still manifestly superior to its comparatively late counterpart, late antique authors themselves could hardly be blamed for the tenor of their age. As we shall see, this common

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251 Chifflet, *De Ammiani vita*, 50: “Genus scribendi sequitur pro conditione temporum, laetum ac floridum: nihil enim ad Livii aut Taciti venustatem, magnificentiam, nitorem Ammianus…”


253 Chifflet, *De Ammiani vita*, 52-3: “Quae non tam auctoris, quam temporis, ac describentium vitia sunt, ea nos maxima ex parte aut sanavimus, aut indicavimus.”
rhetorical trope would play an important role in the apprehension of postclassical time and the rise of historical periodization.

Awareness of the cultural and textual proclivities of Ammianus’ *tempora* likewise governed Chifflet’s assessment of the historian’s thin transmission history. As Chifflet explained, “mention of Ammianus is rare among the ancients, because immediately after Theodosius [i.e. when Ammianus presumably composed the *Res gestae*] the majesty of the Roman Empire declined, and his successors, arousing its memory secondhand, preferred to follow collectors of epitomes and excerpts, rather than original authors of living history.”

In Chifflet’s estimation, cultural-political *inclinatio* found expression through one of late antiquity’s great textual mutations, as he perceptively sensed the rise of those traditions of epitomizing, abridgement, and compilation that would define so much of late antique and medieval textual culture (and which form a central theme of the following chapter). After all, as he pointed out, the Carolingian Paul the Deacon, who continued the epitomized *Breviarium* of Ammianus’ near contemporary Eutropius, made no mention of Ammianus himself. It was Eutropius, not Ammianus, who conveyed the history of late antique Rome to the Carolingians and beyond. And so “living history”—that ancient mode of contemporary political narrative pursued by Thucydides, Livy, Tacitus, and even Ammianus himself—was gradually replaced by the triumph of the epitome, itself an alternative means of linking the present to the ancient past. As Chifflet

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254 Chifflet, *De Ammiani vita*, 57: “Rara est autem apud veteres Ammiani mentio, quia statim post Theodosium lapsa fuit Rom. Imperii majestas, et maluerunt posteri redivivam ejus memoriam excitantes, epitomarum, ac defloratorum collectores sectari, quam vivae historiae conditores. Eoque Paulus Diaconus, cum supplementum Eutropii ex illo scriptorum grege confecisset, Ammianum non attiguit.”

implicitly suggested, Ammianus had the misfortune of writing of the present in an age of textual consolidation that increasingly valorized the distant past.

Hence, Chifflet’s specific claims concerning Ammianus’ religion cannot be understood in isolation; rather, they must be read against his vitae as a whole, and his efforts to historicize the paradoxical world of simultaneous change and continuity that Ammianus inhabited. Yet others, critical of several of Chifflet’s conclusions, would take this project even further. And so we cannot take leave of Ammianus without discussing one last attempt at parsing his religious sympathies—offered in the mid-seventeenth-century world of postclassical and ecclesiastical scholarship that will be explored at length in Part II of this study. Just as historico-philological contextualization could explain the seeming failures of Ammianus’ language and genre, so contextualization of the varieties of late antique religion current in Ammianus’ world could forge an acceptable via media between Chifflet’s sympathetic Christian and Possevino’s pernicious pagan. In 1636 the French classical scholar Henri Valois or Henricus Valesius brought out a new edition of Ammianus, accompanied by substantial commentary. Like Chifflet, Valesius was a keen student of late antiquity, who would later publish a substantial new edition of Eusebius’ Historia ecclesiastica. But Valesius knew that Ammianus was no Christian, and so he devoted but a single sentence of his preface to religion (inserted, appropriately enough, after a discussion of Ammianus’ stylistic blemishes). However, although the Valesian Ammianus was certainly a pagan of some variety, he did not necessarily oppose Christianity in the actively disparaging manner that a Possevino might have supposed. Declaring that Ammianus was not simply useful, but rather necessary reading for students of ecclesiastical history, Valesius summed up his case in measured terms:
Even though Ammianus was bound to the worship of the pagan gods, which one certainly cannot deny, nevertheless he speaks of Christian matters with such faithfulness, sincerity, and temperance that—except for the fact that it is apparent from very many places throughout his whole work that he worshipped the pagan gods— he could deserve to seem a Christian.\textsuperscript{256}

With these words, Valesius transformed Ammianus into every Christian’s favorite pagan, while admitting how easily others could suppose him a full-fledged Christian. Though he did not elaborate on Ammianus’ religion beyond this crisp summation, his younger brother, the royal historiographer Hadrianus Valesius, offered a much fuller treatment of the matter in a separate preface to his elder brother’s text. Here the younger Valesius spoke in more strident tones. Criticizing Chifflet’s conjectures, he maintained that Ammianus “never attaches himself to the Christians, never and nowhere does he add himself to their number, and he makes Julian the Apostate his hero, whom he seems to me to praise so much and so often—especially for forsaking the Christian religion for the worship of the pagan gods.”\textsuperscript{257} But he followed these comments with a surprisingly intricate assessment of late antique religious diversity, rather more complex than Gibbon’s comparatively simplistic embrace of the “impartial Ammianus.” Noting that it was “due to the prudence with which he related the affairs of the Christians, moderately, sincerely, and even sometimes kindly, that some have thought him one of us,” he proposed two

\textsuperscript{256} Ammianus Marcellinus, \textit{Rerum gestarum qui de xxxi supersunt, libri xvii}, ed. Henricus Valesius (Paris, 1681), 6: “Denique, ut paucis absolvam, cum ad rerum civilium, tum ad Ecclesiasticae historiae cognitionem hic Scriptor non modo utilis est, sed etiam necessarius. Etsi enim Deorum cultui mancipatus fuit, quod certe negari non potest, ea tamen fide, sinceritate, modestia de Christianorum rebus loquitur, ut nisi ex plurimis locis toto opere sparsis constaret eum cultorem numinum fuisse, Christianus non immerito posset videri.”

\textsuperscript{257} Hadrianus Valesius, “Ad lectorem praefatio in posterioriorem Ammiani M. Marcellini,” in Ammianus Marcellinus, \textit{Rerum gestarum qui de xxxi supersunt, libri xvii}, ed. Henricus Valesius (Paris, 1681), sig. e iii v: “Numquam Christianis se adjungit; numquam et nusquam eorum se numero adscribit: et Julianum A. quem suum heroa fecit, hanc praeceptum ob causam mihi videtur toties et tantopere laudare, quod a Religione Christiana ad numinum cultum desciverit.”
hypotheses to account for this confusion. The first was a practical expression of *realpolitik*, mixed with an important distinction between personal belief and its public counterpart. Perhaps, so he suggested, “a good, sound, and wise man might understand that he could safely not follow the Christian religion, but would not dare to condemn publicly what was diffused across almost the whole Roman world and had been accepted even by its princes.” His second hypothesis was still more striking, as he began to envisage a late antiquity far beyond simple confessional polarities. In a statement seemingly reflective of early modern irenic sensibilities (which, as we shall see, proved a powerful stimulant to the study of the postclassical world) Valesius mused that “perhaps Ammianus did not condemn the diversity of religions, and held himself convinced (just as Symmachus said concerning knowledge of god) that one path alone could not arrive at so great a mystery.”

Hence, Ammianus’ seeming impartiality emerged as a product of his very ambiguity, itself as much a problem of temporal disjunction as religious difference. Like Symmachus, his rather unlikely bedfellow, the author of late Rome’s “living history” eluded categorization by those very tools of canonicity his now distant age had helped to codify.

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258 Hadrianus Valesius, “Ad lectorem,” sig. e. iii v: “Qua tamen erat prudentia, adeo modeste atque sincere, ac nonnumquam etiam benivole de Christianis rebus commemorat, ut aliqui unum ex nostris putaverint. Nimirum sicuti existimo, vir bonus, integer et sapiens Religionem Christianam non sequi, tuto se posse intelligebat: eamdem Principibus suis acceptam et toto fere orbe Romano diffusam palam damnare non audebat. Sed et forsitan religionum diversitates non improbavit persua sumque habuit (sicut ait de notitia Dei Symmachus) una via non posse perveniri ad tam grande secretum.” For a similar reading of a late antique text in this fashion, see Isaac Casaubon’s note on the title page of his copy of Cassiodorus’ *Variae*, now British Library C.80.a.1, in which he repeated Theodoric’s injunction that “we cannot command religion.” This annotation and its significance to Casaubon’s meditations on religious toleration is discussed in Grafton and Weinberg, “*I Have Always Loved the Holy Tongue,*” 22 and n.86.
Conclusion: Late Antique Religion and Early Modern Temporality

The scholars, editors, and men of letters surveyed above worked in vastly different contexts and milieus. Some were fervent partisans of the Counter-Reformation, some were equally enthusiastic champions of Protestant reform, and others hovered somewhere near the via media of Gallicanism. Some preferred the sprawling comprehensiveness of the bibliography or encyclopedia to the exactitude of the critical edition, while others privileged the lofty promise of philological close reading over the Herculean labors of ceaseless compilation. Some were notably tolerant of literary or philological diversity, while others were quick to point out stylistic blemishes and seeming barbarisms. Some championed a broad canon; others favored a narrow one. But despite the divergent nature of their assorted tastes and conclusions, their responses to wrinkles and disjunctions within the canon—especially those occasioned by religious change—betray several common underlying assumptions, crucial to the story of dividing time.

First, in one way or another, the scholars examined here apprehended late antiquity as precisely that—i.e. as both fully “ancient” and fully “late.” Indeed, they may even have understood this seemingly paradoxical union with an intuitive ease that eludes us—denizens of an early twenty-first-century world not only post-classical and post-Christian, but perhaps also now even fully post-Gibbonian. Although their assessments of late sources frequently revealed classicizing prejudice, they hard regarded lateness itself as cause for condemnation, or automatic exile from the canon. Rather, they read the late as an insoluble mixture of continuity and discontinuity. This is hardly trivial. For early modern readings of late antiquity and its complex religious mutations were ipso facto predicated upon notions of both appropriation and comparison. In the realm of appropriation, Symmachus emulated the “rich and florid” style of
Pliny, just as Ammianus “continued” Tacitus and Lactantius emerged as a latter-day Cicero. In the realm of comparison, Ammianus’ language proved lamentably unequal to that of Tacitus or Livy, even as Symmachus seemed a worthy heir to Ciceronian ideals. In many respects, such discussions of transmutation via imitation harken back to those assessments of Boethius and Proba offered by Johannes Trithemius. The judgments of the late antique authors considered here were predicted upon recognition of what Trithemius had deemed Proba’s “miraculous industry”—an industria that could tirelessly and continually re-appropriate the ancient past for new ends. Whether or not such comparisons were ultimately flattering to a given late antique author, constant comparison of the late to the ancient remained a favored hermeneutical strategy throughout early modern scholarship.

Nowhere is this perhaps clearer than in a seemingly inconsequential note that the French philologist Dionysius Lambinus or Denys Lambin included in his 1569 edition of the Roman biographer Cornelius Nepos. Lambin’s voluminous edition included a passing reference to the fourth-century Gallo-Roman poet Ausonius—like Claudian, a denizen of that pagan-Christian “middle” whose fuzzy religious commitments had long proved difficult to parse. A correspondent of Symmachus, Ausonius composed classicizing poetry that earned generally positive reviews from early modern critics. When citing Ausonius, Lambin—himself a great champion of Ciceronian classicism—described the late antique poet in terms as striking as they were puzzling: he glossed Ausonius as “not an ancient poet, but a prudent and diligent imitator of ancients” (non vetus, at veterum diligens et prudens imitator). This definition proved important enough to at least one early modern reader, who dutifully noted it and then copied it
again as one of his only additions to Lambin’s copious index.\textsuperscript{259} As Lambin’s characterization and his reader’s repetition make clear, this fourth-century occupant of the pagan-Christian middle occupied a position of unique temporal indeterminacy. Ausonius was very old, of course, but he did not quite belong to that exclusive club of \textit{veteres} or ancients. Rather, he was defined above all by his reception of the \textit{veteres}—by his \textit{imitatio} and \textit{emulatio} of them—and hence exhibited a simultaneous closeness \textit{to} and distance \textit{from} the vaunted realm of true antiquity.

Yet these not-so-ancients also possessed their own significance. For early modern students of reception and comparison knew that this late world—inhabited by those who were not quite \textit{veteres} but close enough to said ancients to imitate and emulate them diligently—marked the beginnings of a textual culture that had survived into their own day. Moreover, this textual culture was intimately related to the rise of a religion that they still practiced, and which more than anything else separated them from an earlier, more alien world of Greco-Roman paganism. Hence, perhaps in ways that we are not, the scholars examined here were ever attuned to the essential role of textuality itself—conveyed in everything from bibliographies and catalogues to epitomes and epistolary conventions—in framing the great mutations and consolidations of the autumn of the ancient world. Chifflet linked the late antique vogue for compilation and abridgment to a newfound privileging of the distant past, just as Sichardus and Casaubon recognized the role of compulsory juxtapositions in simultaneously emphasizing and

\textsuperscript{259} \textit{Aemilii Probi seu Cornelii Nepotis liber de vita excellentium imperatorum}, ed. Dionysius Lambinus (Paris, 1569), now Leiden Universiteitsbibliotheek 760 E 5, 577: In a discussion of the word \textit{opulens}, the annotator underlines mention of Ausonius as follows: “...quo et \textit{Ausonius utitur}, poeta si non \textit{vetus}, at \textit{veterum diligens et prudens imitator}, atque \textit{adeo aemulator}. Sic igitur ille in catalogo urbi, de Mediolano loquens. \textit{Templa, palatinaeque arces, opulensque Moneta}.” Then, at p.654, in one of his few additions to Lambin’s index, he draws a line to the space between its entries for “A. Manlius” and “Autaricus Gallus” and in the bottom margin writes: “\textit{Ausonius, poeta si non vetus, at veterum prudens et diligens imitator, atque adeo aemulator 577}.”
muting Christian-pagan conflicts. In so many ways, early modern scholars proved themselves fitting heirs to Cassiodorus and the *Decretum Gelasianum*. Furthermore, even as a confessionalized age recognized the profound importance of Rome’s great transition from paganism to Christianity, its very tools and templates of reception (whether classical or otherwise) always revealed still more powerful continuities underneath the most radical of temporal changes and disjunctions. And as we shall see, recognition of that ever-delicate equipoise between change and continuity—especially in so contested a subject as the rise of Christianity—would prove a powerful if paradoxical stimulant to the project of dividing time.
CHAPTER THREE

From Compilations to *Nuda Nomina*:

Temporal Disjunction and the Problem of Transmission

Preserving *Nuda Nomina*: Bonaventura Vulcanius Edits Isidore of Seville

In 1577 the Belgian humanist Bonaventura Vulcanius published a new edition of both Isidore of Seville’s *Etymologiae* and Martianus Capella’s *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii*. Although he ultimately settled into a chair of philology at Leiden, he printed these texts together at Basel during his travels through Switzerland—one stop on a lengthy series of peregrinations through the pan-European *respublica literaria*. In his preface, Vulcanius proclaimed the universal breadth of these late antique compilations, just as Conrad Gesner had trumpeted the eponymous universality of his *Bibliotheca universalis* several decades earlier. Echoing the phrasing of an admonition from the first-century Roman rhetorician Quintilian, and deftly reapplying it to texts produced centuries after Quintilian’s age, Vulcanius declared that, unlike specialized texts devoted to single disciplines, both Isidore and Capella “embrace the whole circle of the sciences, which the Greeks call encyclopedism.”

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261 Isidore of Seville, *Originum libri viginti ex antiquitate eruti* (Basel, 1577), sig. 2r: “Quum vehementer optandum sit, Illustrissime ac Reuerendissime Princeps, ut veteres authores qui de singulis artibus et scientibus scripserunt integros emendatosque habeamus: tum praecipue eos qui
place in the canon, just as they had for centuries throughout the Middle Ages. And both would continue to prove pivotal even as they were gradually replaced by their early modern heirs, including Gesner, Theodor Zwinger, and countless others. As we shall see in the following chapter, a youthful Hugo Grotius—who himself studied with Vulcanius at Leiden—would publish yet another edition of Capella in 1599, itself a significant moment in the humanist turn to late classical and postclassical worlds.

Given the great importance of etymological reasoning to medieval and early modern literature and hermeneutics, Isidore was unsurprisingly valued for the many derivations he offered of specific words. Yet to Vulcanius, Isidore’s project was fundamentally one of archaeology, which extended far beyond the narrow grammatical explication of etymological linkages. In other words, Isidore had concerned himself not simply with *verba*, but rather with their underlying *res*. As Vulcanius explained, Isidore had labeled the *Etymologiae* his “books of origins,” because “he did not explicate the naked etymologies of words...but rather the origins of things themselves.” In doing so, the late antique encyclopedist had furnished his readers with “the foundations of every art.” Isidore was concerned above all with the recovery of “origins” or *origines*, a quintessentially late antique response to the harsh realities of cultural transformation and textual loss.

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263 Isidore of Seville, *Origines*, sig. 2r: “Eosque libros Originum vocuit: quod iis non nudas vocum etymologias...sed rerum ipsarum origines ostenderit, artiumque omnium fundamenta iecerit.”
Although Vulcanius lacked any precise temporal designation for these obscure corners of the sixth and seventh centuries, he nonetheless characterized Isidore’s patently postclassical world as a distinctive temporal entity. Simultaneously, he proposed a subtle narrative of how texts traveled in time. In a passage that perfectly captures the theme of this chapter as a whole, Vulcanius observed that “in the age of Isidore (Isidori aetate) many writings of the ancients—which now have perished due to the injury of times (iniuria temporum)—still then existed whole. From them Isidore constructed this most beautiful work, as can easily be sensed from the many authors whom he cites, who exist today as nothing save naked names (nuda nomina), which are themselves altogether unknown to us.” In this nebulous aetas Isidori, ancient but nonetheless distinct from the proper temporal domain of the ancients or veteres, many of the veteres themselves were rescued from outright oblivion through Isidore’s compilatory industry, and were gathered together—as they had been by Macrobius, Servius, and others several centuries earlier—into a “most beautiful work” or pulcherrimum opus. As a result, even if texts that were still integra in late antiquity no longer retained their wholeness in early modernity, assiduous readers of the latter period nevertheless possessed an (admittedly thin) record of them as “naked names” or nuda nomina. The much-invoked “injury of times” (iniuria temporum) was thankfully not completely lethal. And so Isidore’s work was “most beautiful” not only on its own merits (i.e. its encyclopedic distillation of the origins of the arts and disciplines), but also thanks to the fragments of other works—and sometimes even the mere names—it transmitted and preserved in the process.

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264 Isidore of Seville, *Origines*, sig. 2r: “Neque id immerito, quum hoc certo constet, Isidori aetate multa veterum scripta, quae nunc iniuria temporum interciderunt, integra tum adhuc extitisse, e quibus pulcherrimum hoc opus construxit: ut facile perspicui potest ex multis authoribus quos citat, quorum nihil hodie praeter nuda nomina, atque ea ipsa nobis ignota, exstat.”
Vulcanius had not initially linked Isidore to the explicit preservation of nuda nomina in this fashion. Rather, this concept emerged from a subtle yet important correction that the humanist added to the manuscript draft of his prefatory remarks. In fact, Vulcanius had originally written that the many authors who populated Isidore’s compendium had completely perished, and that “not even their names are extant today.” But he then offered a subtle revision of this statement, altering “not even their names,” to the comparatively more hopeful assessment that such ancient sources survived as “nothing save naked names” (nihil praeter nuda nomina). With respect to such names, Vulcanius even possessed a manuscript of unknown provenance that contained exactly that, as it featured exhaustive lists—organized under Isidore’s own chapter titles—of the many names mentioned by the encyclopedist. Although it is unclear how Vulcanius himself used this manuscript, it offered a distillation of those countless nomina—some nuda, and others not—that rendered the Origines such a treasure trove for fragment hunters, and doubtlessly proved crucial to Vulcanius’ longstanding obsession with Isidore, who had occupied his time during his sojourns in both Spain and Switzerland.

The primacy that Vulcanius assigned to textual transmission is evident from the very title he chose for Isidore’s work: his title page did not refer to etymologiae, but instead inscribed the text as “twenty books of origins plucked from antiquity” (ex antiquitate eruti). Once more, he placed Isidore at a crucial distance from antiquitas itself. Moreover, he seemingly suggested that antiquity possessed a wide enough semantic range to encompass both a specific period of the past and the passage of time in general. At the same time, Vulcanius’ invocation of “plucking”

265 Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek MS Vulcanianus 36, fol.109r. Vulcanius in his initial draft writes “...ut est videre ex multis authoribus quos citat quorum ne nomina quidem hodie extant,” and then crosses out “ne” and “quidem” and changes it thus: “...ut est videre ex multis authoribus quos citat quorum nihil praeter nuda nomina hodie extant,” with “nihil” and “nuda” rendered in superscript, and “praeter” added to the left margin.

266 See Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek MS Vulcanianus 24 A.
connoted a continuous process: just as the seventh-century Isidore had rummaged through antiquity, so early modern scholars could comb through Isidore’s text, scrutinizing its many fragments culled *ex antiquitate*. Isidore and Vulcanius alike were engaged in classical reception, and both were keenly aware of the power of transmission. Moreover, in a portion of his manuscript draft that he ultimately did not include in his final printed preface, Vulcanius offered an important contemporary parallel to Isidore’s *Origines*. After declaring that Isidore did not offer “only etymologies of words,” but rather origins, as the encyclopedist himself had characterized his work in a letter to his seventh-century associate Braulio of Zaragoza, Vulcanius mused that perhaps the work “ought to be called a theater of human life” (*theatrum vitae humanae*), before crossing out this phrase. Just as Gesner had done in his preface to the *Bibliotheca universalis*, Vulcanius drew an important—albeit aborted—parallel between late antique compilations and their early modern counterparts. Many an early modern encyclopedic compendium boasted the name *theatrum*, including most prominently Theodor Zwinger’s aforementioned *Theatrum vitae humanae*, which—like Volterrano’s compilation—mixed straightforward bio-bibliography with a wider encyclopedic purview.²⁶⁷ Hence, just as early

²⁶⁷ Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek MS Vulcanianus 36, fol.106v. In a highly messy and confused draft passage Vulcanius writes “...quasi solas uocum Etymologias tradat quam libri Originum, ut ipse eos in epistulam quadem ad Braulonem <sic> uocat aut potius Theatrum Vitae Humanae sit appellandum...” First he crosses out “Theatrum Vitae Humanae” and then places excision marks across the entire passage. On the early modern connotations of *theatrum*, see Ann Blair, *The Theater of Nature*. Vulcanius owned a copy of Zwinger’s *Theatrum vitae humanae*, which he donated to Leiden’s fledgling university library, along with (among many other books) his copies of Gesner’s *Bibliotheca* and Isidore himself. See Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek MS AC1 100, fol.66r: among the titles listed here as received from Vulcanius are “Conrardi <sic> Gesneri Bibliotheca universalis duobus voluminibus,” “Theodori Zwingeri Theatrum vitae humanae,” and “Isidori Hispanensis opera.” On Vulcanius attempt, together with Ambrosius Froben, to produce a censored version of Zwinger’s *Theatrum* for Catholic audiences, see Anthony Grafton, *The Culture of Correction in Renaissance Europe* (London, 2011).
modern compilations styled themselves as heirs to late antique projects, so Vulcanius read late antiquity through the scholarly productions of his own world.

Given this expression of intellectual kinship, Vulcanius subsequently concluded that “not less, but rather more varied and multifarious utility can come to the Christian respublica from these books [i.e. Isidore’s] than from Varro, Nonius Marcellus, Verrius Flaccus, and other such writers.” Diversely encyclopedic in every possible sense, Isidore even surpassed Varro, that ancient prince of the antiquarians. But like his appeal to nuda nomina, this comparison was also a later addition to Vulcanius’ manuscript draft. Vulcanius had originally assessed Isidore in isolation, declaring that his books were of the “highest utility” (summam utilitatem) for the Christian respublica. However, he then crossed out “highest” or summam and replaced it in superscript with “greater” (maiore), before adding in a marginal note that Isidore’s Origines possessed “greater, and more varied utility” (maior, magisque variam...utilitatem) than Varro’s De lingua Latina and other sources. In this fashion, Vulcanius boldly judged there to be greater usefulness in an unquestionably late author like Isidore than in a variety of more properly ancient sources of erudition, ranging from the fourth-century Nonius all the way back to the Augustan world of Flaccus and the late republican world of Varro. Yet in the final printed version of his preface he backed away ever so slightly from this claim, replacing maior with the appropriately litotic “not less” or nec minorem. Rather than explicitly asserting the superiority of a late work over its more ancient counterparts, he opted for a more ambiguous

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268 Isidore, Origines, sig. 2v: “Quae quum ita sint, penitusque mihi partim experientia duce, partim doctissimorum virorum iudicio approbationeque persuaserim, non minorem, et certe magis variam ac multiplicem ex hisce libris utilitatem, quam ex Varrone, Nonio, Marcello, Verrio Flacco, et aliis id genus scriptoribus ad Rempub. Christianam peruenire posse.”
expression of commensurability or equality.\textsuperscript{269} Even this concession revealed a paradoxical species of disjunction: as Vulcanius had already made clear, so much of Isidore’s superiority, or at least his lack of inferiority, derived from Isidore’s temporal distance from \textit{antiquitas} itself, and his corresponding ability to pluck and gather its fruits in \textit{post hoc} fashion. The very fact that Vulcanius deemed this temporal comparison with classical works necessary for the defense of his project suggests much concerning the anxieties of canon formation and boundary policing in early modern scholarship.

Throughout his life and work, Vulcanius sought to explore this late world and its patterns of transmission with the same zeal and detail that other humanists had applied to the classical realm of Flaccus and Varro.\textsuperscript{270} Hence, the two themes that united Vulcanius’ otherwise disparate projects included both a preoccupation with the fragmentary and a corresponding fascination with late traditions, whether Latin, Greek, or “barbarian.” His Greek projects included a longstanding obsession with the church father Cyril of Alexandria—a monumental edition of which he only partially competed in his lifetime. And in the last category, he even did pioneering work in the reconstruction of the ancient Gothic language, thereby helping to inaugurate an entirely new field of study.\textsuperscript{271}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[269] Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek MS Vulcanianus 36, fol.109r. Vulcanius’ original draft reads: “...mihi persuasissem, summam ex hisce libris utilitatem ad Rempublicam Christianam redundare posse...” However, Vulcanius subsequently crosses out “summam” and replaces it with “maiores” in superscript. Then, in the left margin, he writes out the relevant addition thus: “maiores, magisque variam ex hisce libris utilitatem quam ex Varrone de Lingua Latina aut Nonii aut aliorum id genus scriptorum.”
\item[270] For a perceptive examination of both Vulcanius and Joseph Scaliger’s turn to the world of late Rome and Byzantium, see Dirk van Miert, “Project Procopius: Scaliger, Vulcanius, Hoeschelius and the Pursuit of Early Byzantine History,” in \textit{Bonaventura Vulcanius, Works and Networks}, 361-86.
\item[271] Bonaventura Vulcanius, \textit{De literis et lingua Getarum, sive Gothorum} (Leiden, 1597).
\end{footnotes}
Variations on this constellation of interests repeated themselves over and over again among Vulcanius’ late humanist contemporaries. And Vulcanius’ obsession with diverse forms of late tradition also informed his many interactions with such contemporaries across the international *respublica literaria*. Like Isidore, Vulcanius himself was a keen compiler, who aimed to assist others in collecting the *nomina* of authors (whether naked or otherwise) in Isidorian fashion. As one known to both Josias Simler and the Zurich compiler J.J. Frisius, who published a revised edition of Simler’s *Epitome* of Gesner’s *Bibliotheca* shortly after the former’s death, Vulcanius wrote to both at various points describing two specific sources he deemed useful for the expansion of Gesner’s universal bibliography. The first was none other than a copy of Johannes Trithemius *De viris illustribus* that Vulcanius characterized as containing important additions: “although the many authors who are added here,” he explained to Simler, “are schoolmen (*scholastici*), I nevertheless think they will be of use for the enrichment of your *Bibliotheca*.” Vulcanius described the second item rather vaguely as an “index of some Greek authors, some of whom I possess, and others of whom I have seen.”

Hence, his proposed additions to the universal bibliographical record seem to have been of an avowedly late

272 In a 1575 letter to Josias Simler, Vulcanius writes “Quod hactenus humanissimis amicissimisque literis tuis non responderim, id in causa fuit quod ipse istuc proficiscisi statueram ut coram de Cyrillo alisque rebus literariis tecum conferrem, quod meum consilium tametsi nondum mutavi quam D. Goulartus me hodie tuo nomine salutaret, sequi ad te scribere diceret, nolui committere quin exemplar Tritemii cum iis additamentis quae habebam ad te mitterem, ac licet plerique autores qui hic adjecti sunt, scholastici sint, puto tamen tibi ad locupletandum Bibliothecam tuam usui fore. Mitto una indicem aliquot scriptorum graecorum quos partim habeo, partim vidi.” See *Correspondance*, 112-13. Along with this obsession with cataloguing *nomina*, Vulcanius also possessed a penchant for copying down titles of books in the libraries of others. For example, for his manuscript transcription of books in the library of the Spanish scholar Antonio Augustin, see Leiden Universiteitsbibliotheek MS Vulcanianus 106, unfoliated.
nature, presumably combining medieval scholastic authors with the products of his labors in Byzantine literature.²⁷³

As these anecdotes make clear, Vulcanius possessed a taste for worlds very different from those studied so often by his humanist colleagues and predecessors, and this preoccupation with difference shared not a few similarities with his own convoluted biography—in which we frequently find him cast as an outsider. For Vulcanius’ Swiss sojourn ended not in triumph but dismay, especially due to clashes with Henri Estienne, and even when he finally secured a prestigious chair in Leiden he was hardly immune from conflict, as he was frequently involved in physical altercations in the streets—some of which made their way into Leiden’s police records.²⁷⁴ Other scholars sometimes found him unresponsive and ill-suited to collaboration. Moreover, like those of many of the other scholars examined in this study, Vulcanius’ religious affinities proved notoriously difficult to pigeonhole, so much so that approximately a century after his death Pierre Bayle would memorably insinuate in his Dictionnaire historique et critique that Vulcanius was some sort of heterodox freethinker.²⁷⁵ Sometimes he seemed a Catholic in

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²⁷³ Vulcanius’ surviving manuscripts reveal a thorough obsession with late antiquity. For instance, in one of his manuscript notebooks, he copied out a complete transcript of the so-called Notitia dignitatum, an administrative “org chart” of sorts that listed out political and military positions in both the eastern and western halves of the late Roman Empire. See Leiden Universiteitsbibliotheek MS Vulcanianus 21, fol.17r: “NOTITIA DIGNITATUM OMNIUM TAM ciuilium quam militarum in partibus Occidentibus.” Then, at fol.19v, Vulcanius transcribed the corresponding “Notitia dignitatum omnium tam ciuilium quam militarum in partibus Orientis.”

²⁷⁴ For mention of court and police records that detail Vulcanius’ misadventures, see Facebook in the Sixteenth Century? The Humanist and Networker Bonaventura Vulcanius: Catalogue of an Exhibition in Leiden University Library, ed. Kasper van Ommen and Hélène Cazes (Leiden, 2010), 27-8.

²⁷⁵ See Pierre Bayle, Dictionnaire historique et critique, Vol. IV (Amsterdam, 1740), 488-9, where at the end of his entry for “Vulcanius” he rather obliquely notes that “Son Oraison funebre fit murmurer quelques Censeurs.” For the controversy surrounding the absence of mention of Christ or religion in Vulcanius’ funeral oration, delivered by Petrus Cunaeus, see Chris L. Heesakkers and Wilhelmina G. Heesakkers-Kamerbeek, “Petrus Cunaeus, Oratio in obitum B.
Catholic lands and a Protestant in Protestant ones. He studied in his youth with the noted irenicist George Cassander, and later worked in Spain for the cardinal Francisco Mendoza de Bobadilla, an Erasmian who had been on friendly terms with Juan Luis Vives during the latter’s lifetime. It was here in Spain, appropriately enough, that Vulcanius first set to work on editing the Spanish Isidore. Yet in both Geneva and Leiden he also associated with some of the leading lights of Protestant philology. Such ambiguity was aptly captured by a sardonic quip recorded in Joseph Scaliger’s table talk, which declared that Vulcanius not only failed to understand the difference between religions, but also possessed no religion save “dice and cards.” Yet whatever Vulcanius’ actual religious proclivities, varieties of irenicism and newfound appreciation of forgotten corners of the past often went hand in hand in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries—an intriguing confluence whose implications will be explored more closely in the next chapter.

Vulcanius did much to pioneer a method of reading that was at once novel and—like so many of late humanism’s new methods—deeply traditional. This method was taken up by an increasing number of his fellow inhabitants of the respublica literaria, whether Protestant or Catholic or somewhere in between, in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. As

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278 On these contradictions and Vulcanius’ seeming irenicism, see Hugues Daussy, “L’insertion de Bonaventure Vulcanius dans le réseau international protestant,” in Bonaventura Vulcanius, Works and Networks, 167-83.

279 Scaligerana: Editio altera, ad verum exemplar restituta... (Cologne, 1667), 266: “Vulcanius est de la Religion des dez, & des cartes; il ne sçait de quelle Religion il est, ni de la difference des Religions.”
many late humanist scholars learned to do, one could read the history of transmission through late and seemingly derivative or inferior texts, moving from compilations to *origines* and back again. Like those other components of early modern bibliography examined in the previous two chapters, this theorization of transmission raised vexing issues of temporal disjunction. As we shall see, it too constituted a necessary, albeit overlooked, precondition to those divisions of historical time that remain with us today.

**Fragments, Transmission, and Temporal Disjunction**

The previous chapters have dealt with both the bibliographic problems wrought by temporal disjunction and the solutions proffered by early modern scholars, as a host of editors, bibliographers, and philologists sought to schematize pasts that resisted easy schematization. The present chapter, which marks the end of Part I of this study, offers a final case study in disjunction, considering yet another manner in which sixteenth- and seventeenth-century readers engaged with late classical or postclassical worlds that were themselves engaged with already distant and distinct antique legacies. All these case studies reveal how scholars and readers digested the early through the late, and vice versa. All underscore the primacy of emulation and *imitatio*, and the enduring power of textual *auctoritas*. All speak to the importance of bibliography as a sorting mechanism and the many contradictions inherent in canon-formation. And all reveal reading strategies that sought to link divergent periods or epochs to one another, even before such periods and epochs possessed consistent names.

Our final exploration of temporal disjunction concerns those texts defined by Vulcnius as *nuda nomina*—perhaps the most difficult type of source to integrate into a coherent *ordo*
librorum. Although Vulcanius himself used the term rather narrowly, “naked names” belonged to a broader class that encompassed multiple types of severing and separation between author and text. In some cases, entire texts were no longer extant, while in others mere fragments or echoes survived. Sometimes titles remained, even accompanied by references to book and chapter numbers. Yet in many other cases, lines of salvaged text emerged without attribution to any known author. But as Vulcanius’ statement makes clear, this confused state of affairs was not cause for outright pessimism. Conrad Gesner, as we saw at the beginning of Chapter 1, had promised in the very title of his *Bibliotheca universalis* to catalogue texts “both extant and not extant,” and this union of the lost and the found was often understood as an essential precondition to bibliographic universality. Less than two decades earlier, no less eminent a humanist as Erasmus had produced a catalogue of non-extant texts in his edition of Seneca.\(^{280}\) While scholars were always aware of the acute drama of textual loss (made dramatically explicit in Gesner’s preface to the *Bibliotheca universalis*), they never stopped praising the possibilities of textual reconstruction and resurrection. Moreover, transmission itself was often valorized for its resilient and quasi-miraculous powers, linked to notions of discovery and *inventio*. For instance, when publishing new editions of classical texts, early modern editors indulged in well-worn tropes that closely reflected this theme: in preface after preface, they bemoaned how careless and unlearned scribes had mangled and corrupted a once pristine work, celebrated how humanist philologists had then procured and analyzed a trustworthy *codex vetustissimus* or *codex antiquissimus*, and finally rejoiced that even the thinnest threads of transmission could ultimately triumph over *iniuria temporum* or the “injury of times.”

\(^{280}\) Seneca, *Opera* (Basel, 1529), front matter: This comprehensive table of contents is titled “Catalogus eorum, quae hoc volumine continentur.” Among these, Erasmus includes a list of works “Falso Senecae tributa” and “Quae non extant.”
But this triumphalist narrative proved easier to accept when its protagonists were whole and complete texts. Fragments, on the other hand, yielded more ambiguous outcomes. Even intrepid fragment-hunters knew they could never bring a lost text fully back into the light. As argued here, although poorer with respect to the quantity of materials transmitted, the transmission of fragments often told a richer story than the travels of whole texts. Put simply, fragments brought the power of reception into its sharpest possible relief, directly linking it to the vagaries and vicissitudes of transmission.²⁸¹ Although the recovery of complete texts certainly said a great deal about reception, especially as scholars scoured medieval manuscript exemplars, the recovery of fragmentary bits and pieces demonstrated how other authors and compilers—in ages and contexts equally removed from both a text’s original ancient composition and its (partial) early modern recovery—had digested, dissected, split, cited, and otherwise re-appropriated elements of the ancient literary inheritance. And more often than not, as early modern fragment-hunters discovered, the era or context that yielded the richest collection of broken literary treasures roughly corresponded with what we now label late antiquity. As this chapter suggests, this attempt at augmenting ordo librorum when so many of its component libri had perished did not merely represent a quixotic conjuring of a lost world. Instead, it also solidified a whole new set of temporal distinctions between antiquitas and its late successors. These distinctions proved essential to dividing time. The bibliographic reconstruction of textual

transmission did not merely illustrate how late worlds differed from their earlier counterparts, but rather demonstrated with material and visible immediacy how the past—far from constituting an undifferentiated domain of *veteres*—was itself composed of temporal phases in which the textual remnants of still earlier pasts were collected, preserved, and transmitted.

Granted, terms like reception and transmission are perhaps as cumbersome as they are anachronistic. But they nevertheless capture something of the assumptions implicit in quite literal practices of reading between the lines—practices that stimulated recovery of fragments and *nuda nomina*. Such literary excavations would have proved impossible without the widespread recognition that texts themselves absorbed, engulfed and preserved other texts—its key insight of the bibliographical tradition examined at length in Chapter 1. As a corollary (made clear by Vulcanius) texts could not be evaluated solely on their own internal merits; instead, they also acquired worth and authority thanks to their status as vessels or repositories. Such *libri* both conveyed and shared the *auctoritas* of other texts, or perhaps even the *auctoritas* of a mere name. In this sense, they served as analogues to those chains of *imitatio* and *emulatio* examined in the previous chapter, through which late authors like Symmachus and Ammianus partook of the authority lodged in Pliny and Tacitus, their supposed objects of imitation. And as this chapter argues, *auctoritas* proved eminently transferable, despite the unflattering comparisons its transference sometimes engendered. This vision of authority linked texts to one another in continuous loops and chains, whose paths were made clearer by early modern cataloguing and bibliography.

Acceptance of the transferability of textual authority depended in turn upon the recognition that many texts were inherently composite things, and in this early modern scholars were hardly novel; rather, as so often proved the case in the history of scholarship, they but
expanded upon a theory of textuality articulated in the very late antique and medieval
compilations they mined. Medieval scholars and exegetes had already fashioned a fourfold
hierarchy of textual *auctoritas* that began with authors themselves and then proceeded to
commentators, compilers and scribes respectively.\(^{282}\) Although *auctores* of course possessed the
greatest *auctoritas*, *compilatores*, commentateurs, and even mere scribes nonetheless achieved
varying degrees of authority by trafficking in the authority of others, and ferrying authors
through the many stages of textual production and transmission.\(^{283}\) Although overlooked by
those who have assumed medieval textual culture to be largely ahistorical, these distinctions *ipso
facto* possessed a temporal dimension (albeit unarticulated)—distinctions hardly alien to
Vulcanius’ more explicit temporal differentiation between *antiquitas* and the *aetas Isidori.*

In this sense, the increasing volume of fragment-oriented scholarship found in the latter
half of the sixteenth century hardly emerged *ex nihilo.* And while a rich body of literature has
expertly analyzed early modern articulations of the fragmentary in the antiquarian or art
historical realm of objects, far less has been done to explore the parallel early modern embrace of
fragmentary texts.\(^{284}\) Indeed, as we saw in Chapter One, many of those who embraced stylistic
eclecticism and bibliographic universality were necessarily interested in both fragmentary and
non-extent texts. As John D’Amico has shown in his exploration of Apuleianism, many of those

\(^{282}\) On this hierarchy see Alastair J. Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic Literary
Attitudes in the Later Middle Ages*, 2\(^{nd}\) Ed. (Philadelphia, 1988), Malcolm B. Parkes, “The
Influence of the Concepts of *Ordinatio* and *Compilatio* on the Development of the Book,” in

\(^{283}\) On the comparatively high status accorded to compilers, see for instance Louis Lobbes, “Les
recueils de citations au XVIe siècle: Inventaire,” in *La transmission du savoir dans l'Europe des

\(^{284}\) See especially Leonard Barkan, *Unearthing the Past: Archaeology and Aesthetics in the
Making of Renaissance Culture* (New Haven, 1999) and Paula Findlen, *Possessing Nature:
Museums, Collecting, and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Italy* (Berkeley, 1994).
humanists in the decades around 1500 who developed a taste for varied and archaic Latinity found rich storehouses of *exempla* in late lexical and grammatical works. As he demonstrated, the desire to imitate Ennius, Plautus, and their pre-classical contemporaries took humanists in the opposite temporal direction, as they found remnants of such archaic works not only in Apuleius and Aulus Gellius, but also in Nonius, Sidonius Apollinaris, Fulgentius, Paul the Deacon’s abridgment of Festus, and other sources that seemed to push beyond the accepted limits of the *veteres*. Poliziano, after all, who modeled his scholarly project after Gellius, assiduous searched out Ennian fragments. In this sense, the late humanist fragment-hunters examined here revived and expanded a practice of fusing the early and the late whose roots stretched back to the end of the *Quattrocento* and the beginning of the *Cinquecento*.

However, several contemporary developments fueled a still more concerted turn to textual fragments in the second half of the sixteenth century. First, more systematic analysis of the fragmentary reflected a consolidation or maturation of classical scholarship itself, as more sophisticated and practiced philological methods made reading for echoes and intertexts a fertile sub-discipline in its own right. Second, fewer and fewer whole texts remained to be edited and reconstructed; as a result, more unconventional projects were necessary to stimulate scholarly discovery and burnish scholarly reputations. Third, many new texts appeared in print—especially in the parallel realm of Greek scholarship—that boasted rich storehouses of fragments, from Stobaeus and Eustathius to the Byzantine *Suda*. Once again, these compilatory works became vital to reconstructing a specific archaic tradition—namely, the world of pre-Socratic philosophy, mainly preserved in fragments, that proved so important to the nascent enterprise of the history of philosophy. Finally, in a different domain the development of so-called legal

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humanism, associated above all with the *mos gallicus* and the extensive historical excavation of the Justinianic *Corpus iuris*, helped foster newfound interest in composite and compilatory textual traditions—so much so that the recovery of fragments became an important tool in the study of Roman jurisprudence.\(^{286}\) This new approach to the Justinianic Corpus also stimulated newfound interest in the distinctly late antique world that had produced so comprehensive a compilation of legal tradition. Finally, the rise of the fragment as an object of scholarly investigation speaks to the sheer accumulation of raw textual materials—spurred on by the great bibliographical projects of the sixteenth century examined at length in Chapter 1—that rendered identification of echoes, fragments, and intertexts possible in the first place.\(^{287}\)

Even more specifically, fragment hunting in the Latin tradition was both facilitated and inspired by a number of important publications. In 1564 the prominent scholar-printer Henri Estienne released his *Fragmenta poetarum veterum Latinorum*, completing a project begun initially by his father Robert Estienne to systematically catalogue the extant fragments of archaic Latin poetry littered across the Latin literary inheritance.\(^{288}\) Estienne’s work possessed an important precedent: but five years earlier, the Italian humanist Carlo Sigonio published a comprehensive collection of Ciceronian fragments, described by A.C. Dionisotti as the first early modern textual production “consisting entirely of literary fragments preserved by quotation.”\(^{289}\)

\(^{286}\) The literature on French legal humanism is extensive: see for instance the work of Julian Franklin and Donald Kelley, cited in the discussion of Jean Bodin in Chapter One.

\(^{287}\) See for instance *Sammeln, Ordnen, Veranschaulichen: Zur Wissenskompilatorik in der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Frank Büttner, Markus Friedrich, and Helmut Zedelmaier (Münster, 2003) and Nelles, “Reading and Memory in the Universal Library.”


\(^{289}\) *Fragmenta Ciceronis variis in locis dispersa Caroli Sigonii diligentia collecta et scholiis illustrata* (Venice, 1559). See Dionisotti, “On Fragments,” 24. Dionisotti also points out that Estienne dedicated his collection of *Fragmenta* to Sigonio. Among important precedents for the proliferation of fragment hunting that marked the final decades of the sixteenth century,
Meanwhile, the French philologist and antiquary Pierre Daniel discovered a much lengthier version of Servius’ Virgilian commentaries, which circulated for several decades before he finally published it in 1600.\(^{290}\) This much-interpolated version of the commentator’s text, often referred to simply as \textit{Servius Danielis} and now believed to have been compiled sometime after the life of the historical Servius, was replete with fragments of earlier ancient sources and many \textit{nuda nomina}. Daniel’s Servius also proved exceptionally valuable to Joseph Scaliger’s reconstruction of another compilatory and fragmentary textual tradition—that of the encyclopedic Latin lexica assembled by the Roman grammarian Verrius Flaccus and his heirs (discussed in more detail at the end of this chapter). Along with the rise of legal humanism, both Estienne and Daniel’s efforts paved the way for the systematic organization of the fragmentary—however contradictory the organization of disorganized shards might seem.

As John Considine has observed, Estienne worked in a late milieu in which the once vast supply of \textit{inedita}, especially Latin ones, was rapidly dwindling to a narrower stream.\(^{291}\) Yet the world of \textit{fragmenta}, hiding in plain sight in many ancient texts that had been printed repeatedly by the mid 1500s, represented a comparative \textit{terra incognita}. Especially if one were willing to slog through the dense compilatory endeavors of late antiquity, surprising archaic gems awaited. Although Estienne’s fragment hunting ranged widely across all ages of Latin literature, he not surprisingly focused heavily on late authors. These excavations raised a singular temporal irony,

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insofar as late sources—including Macrobius, Nonius Marcellus, Servius, and even the seventh-century Isidore—were often the best or only witnesses to a lost early world—defined by such archaic Latin poets as Ennius, Accius, Naevius, and Caecilius—that preceded the likes of Cicero and Virgil by centuries.292

When Estienne reconstructed the verses of that most famous archaic Latin poet, Ennius, he culled his very first excerpt from Nonius Marcellus, who most likely flourished over six hundred years after Ennius in fourth- or fifth-century Africa. Over the next fifty or so pages, he then assembled small and fragile excerpts, mainly but a line or two each, from Aulus Gellius, Macrobius, Priscian, Festus, Lactantius, Donatus, Augustine, and others.293 Strikingly, his list included far fewer citations of canonical classical sources, and some of these (such as Ennian borrowings in Virgil), were themselves only identifiable via late antique exegesis. Hence, that figure often celebrated as Rome’s earliest poet—without whom, indeed, it seemed impossible to imagine the subsequent achievements of the so-called Golden Age of Virgil, Ovid, Horace, and others—was to be reconstructed almost entirely from late and often derivative compilations. In second order fashion, these compilations themselves bore witness to a rich awareness of temporal layering felt already during antiquity’s supposed dénouement. For instance, many of Macrobius’ excerpts from Ennius occurred when the Saturnalia’s learned coterie documented numerous lines that Virgil had borrowed and adapted from Ennius’ corpus.294 In one such passage, Macrobius made his fictionalized Servius express sentiments that would have doubtless

292 In addition to late antique technical works, medieval florilegia also proved important sites of transmission. For instance, on their importance to the reconstruction of Martial, see Martial, Liber spectaculorum, ed. Kathleen M. Coleman (Oxford, 2006), xxi–xxv.  
293 For Estienne’s list of fragments from Ennius, see Fragmenta, 79-136. Notable exceptions to this predominant use of late sources are seen in his collection of Ennian fragments in Cicero and Varro.  
struck a cord with Estienne, Vulcanius, or even Conrad Gesner, as he bemoaned that “since our age (saeculum nostrum) has abandoned Ennius and the whole library of ancient writers (omni bibliotheca vetere), we are ignorant of many things that would not lie hidden if the ancients’ texts were our constant companions.”

Much like Gesner’s Bibliotheca universalis and related bibliographical projects, Estienne’s collection of fragmenta also provided a labile framework for addition and augmentation, as other scholars added still more fragments to the bits and pieces he had already published. This proved one of the most popular ways of digesting the Fragmenta poetarum veterum Latinorum. For instance, when the Dutch classical scholar Janus Dousa read the Fragmenta, he filled the margins of his copy with frequent and copious new finds, often introduced with the simple imperative adde or “add.” Though he pulled many of these additions from such usual late antique suspects as Nonius, Macrobius, and Priscian, he also drew upon more unusual late sources, as seen in a fragment of Ennius he extracted from the little-read fifth- or sixth-century Virgilian commentator Junius Philargyrius. Moreover, he augmented his Estienne with additions from a contemporary discovery, as he repeatedly filled the pages of his

295 Macrobius, Saturnalia 6.9.9, ed. and trans. Kaster, 136-9: “Nam quia saeculum nostrum ab Ennio et omni bibliotheca vetere descivit, multa ignoramus, quae non laterent si veterum lectio nobis esset familiaris.” As Kaster notes in his edition, it is perhaps ironic that Macrobius made his fictionalized Servius express such archaizing sentiments, given that the real Servius, unlike such archaizers as Aulus Gellius and others, did much to embrace and document the far more recent world of Silver Latinity at the expense of older Republican-era writers. See Kaster’s note at Saturnalia 6.9.9, 138 n.79 and also Alan Cameron, Last Pagans, 415-19.
296 Janus Dousa’s son, Franciscus Dousa, was likewise drawn to the fragmentary, and published an edition of the fragments of the archaic Roman satirist Lucilius in 1597.
As mentioned above, Daniel’s Servius comprised a veritable boon to fragment hunters—some of whom (thanks especially to Scaliger) made valuable use of this Servian recension before Daniel finally published his edition in 1600. This must be understood in terms more complex than that of mere instrumental use. Rather, in a manner akin to how Vulcanius praised Isidore, the case of Daniel’s Servius explicitly illustrates how the auctoritas lodged in a late and often derided text increased at a rate proportionate to the number of lost and obscure auctores—many of them nuda nomina—it could cough up. Albeit in implicit terms, this sense of Servius’ renewed prestige is aptly conveyed by a short poem that graced the front matter of Daniel’s edition. Daniel confidently asserted that he had restored Servius to his rightful place of honor among the commentators, and so his edition’s laudatory verses, built around a clever pun upon Servius’ (in fact probably doubtful) cognomen, proclaimed that “SERVIUS, striped of ancient honor, was ashamed / for he was both polluted and mutilated / now, when he senses that innumerable lacunae are filled by a better fate, and that glory is given by his art / the worthy [Servius] rejoices in his cognomen HONORATUS / and he who once blushed so easily denies that he can grow red.”

See Stephanus, Fragmenta, 32, where Dousa adds the following excerpt to Estienne’s fragments of Accius: “Adde ex Servio Danielis nondum edito: Accius Pelopidis: Nec tibi me in hac re gratari decet.” Just a few pages later at p.34, he adds another fragment to Accius, writing “Adde ex Schedis Servianis nondum editis, quas citat Scalig. ad Festum.” For the annotation and correction of Stephanus’ Fragmenta by Lucas Fruterius, see Grafton, Joseph Scaliger: A Study in the History of Classical Scholarship I: Textual Criticism and Exegesis, 269-70 n.120.

Servius, Commentarii ex antiquiss. exemplaribus longè meliores et auctiores (Paris, 1600), front matter: “SERVIVS antiquo puduit spoliatus honore, / tam maculatus erat, tam mutilatus erat/ Nunc vbi persentit fato meliore lacunae / Expleri innumeras, et decus arte dari: / Gaudet HONORATI cognomine dignus, et olim / Qui facile rubuit, posse rubere negat.” On Daniel’s Servius and these verses, see Frederic Clark, “Glossing Glossators: Reading Servius Reading
gained both *honestas* and *auctoritas* by transmitting the authority of others. Yet as we shall see in the following section, this story of transmission could not be told in abstract terms alone; rather, one had to *show*, not *tell* this tale. This was accomplished above all through visualized forms of glossing—bolstered by elaborate features of apparatus and mise-en-page—that commentators and *compilatores* like Servius and Isidore had themselves pioneered a millennium earlier.

*Laudation and Citation: The Uses of Paratext in the History of Transmission*

Among the many features of paratext and apparatus found in early modern books, many (if not most) are readily familiar today. Book historians have traced in exacting detail how printers and editors, drawing upon antecedents from the world of manuscript, helped refine such obligatory textual accoutrements as indices, tables of contents, prefaces, title pages, and even continuous pagination—codifying conventions that still govern the modern book and homogenize the expectations and habits of its diverse readers. But several paratextual devices have no easy modern analogues. Instead, they speak to the seemingly alien aspects of early modern textuality, illuminating forgotten reading practices that possess more in common with that which came before than with that which would follow. Two such related features of apparatus—both expressive of the aforementioned transferability of *auctoritas* and the salience of *nuda nomina*—played a central role in developing early modern notions of textual transmission, demonstrating how even novel modes of reading sprang from deep traditions. The former, which traced borrowings, citations, and fragments of other authors in a given text, was often styled a

“catalogue of authors” or *catalogus auctorum*, and either appeared in the front of an edition by its prefatory matter, or in the back near its index. The latter, often referred to as a collection of “testimonies” or “praises” (*testimonia* or *elogia*) documented authors who in turn cited or borrowed from the text. Together, these apparatuses served the twin purposes of laudation and citation, tracing in Janus-faced fashion both what an author received and how others in turn received that author.

Given his preoccupation with transmission, it should hardly surprise us that Bonaventura Vulcanius constructed such a feature of apparatus in his Isidore. Vulcanius did not simply praise Isidore for tracing the origins of things through the writings of the ancients; instead, he demonstrated this dependence visually. In a prominently displayed paratextual apparatus, found directly after the table of contents and immediately before the beginning of the *Etymologiae* proper, Vulcanius included a schematic display of some of Isidore’s principal sources. In bold capitals, he titled this list the “names of those authors (*nomina* authorum*) whom Isidore cites in these books of origins.”

Below this, while leaving ample blank space throughout (perhaps in order to facilitate annotation and further citation by readers), he then listed out forty-six distinct *nomina*, alphabetically arranged under letter headings that mimicked the organizational schema of a commonplace book. This apparatus did not serve any clear indexical function, unlike the large and comprehensive “Index in Isidorum” which appeared after the conclusion of the *Etymologiae*. Not only did these forty-six sources represent an infinitesimal fraction of all the *nomina* cited and utilized by Isidore, but each *nomen* also lacked any corresponding page number or similar means of placing it within Isidore’s text. This catalogue was only a finding aid.

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300 Isidore, *Origines*, sig. 6r: “Nomina authorum quos in his libris originum citat Isidorus.”
in the most abstract of senses. Rather, it constituted an advertisement of *auctoritas*—of the *auctoritas* lodged in Isidore’s *Etymologiae* thanks to its appropriation of the authority of others.

Vulcanius’ *nomina* were strikingly heterogeneous. Interspersed among such canonical authorities as Cicero, Virgil, Sallust, Ovid, and Horace were many *nuda nomina*, or at least fragmentary names—obscure figures preserved through the saving grace of Isidorian encyclopedism. For instance, Vulcanius’ catalogue boasted such fragmentary curiosities as Turpilius, the lost Roman comic poet and contemporary of Terence, Dorcatius, the author of some lost lyrics on Roman ball games, the Augustan-era didactic poet Aemilius Macer, and that prince of archaic Latinity, Ennius. Ironically enough, Isidore himself had deployed these authorities in a manner strikingly similar to Vulcanius’ *catalogus auctorum*. Isidore’s invocation of Aemilius Macer, for instance, occurred amid a wide-ranging survey of ornithology, where the encyclopedist, discussing swans, quoted a line of Macer’s that deemed the swan “always the most fortunate bird in omens.”

However, already in the *aetas Isidori*, this was a secondhand fragment, as Isidore had not extracted this line from Macer directly, but rather from an excerpt made in Servius’ commentaries, produced some two centuries earlier.

The creation of such catalogues played a prominent role in Vulcanius’ scholarship. Sometimes he also used them to focus exclusively on the fragmentary: when Vulcanius published an edition of Apuleius in 1600, he constructed a catalogue of “fragments and titles (*fragmenta et tituli*) of the books of Apuleius that are no longer extant,” which assembled references to, and pieces of, lost Apuleian works from late antique sources above all—including

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Ausonius, Priscian, Servius, and Isidore himself. As Vulcanius had maintained some two decades earlier in his preface to Isidore, the aetas Isidori and related contexts proved a fertile source of clues concerning otherwise forgotten ancient books. Vulcanius also utilized similar techniques when digesting contemporary works devoted to alternative non-classical antiquities—similar to those seemingly alien domains he would explore in his own work on the Goths.

Among Vulcanius’ manuscripts is a cut-and-paste index he assembled to Antonius Schoonhovius’ treatise on the origins and history of the Franks. Having produced a plethora of references on separate slips of paper, which included such topics as the potential derivation of the Franks from the Trojan Hector and the first appearance of the Frankish name around the time of the emperor Galienus, Vulcanius then transformed these snippets into multiple indices, one of which he titled an “index of authors cited in the little book of Schoonhovius.”

This catalogus auctorum ranged from ancients like Caesar and Pliny to moderns like Beatus Rhenanus, while including such late antique and medieval nomina as Jordanes, Procopius, Sulpitius Severus, and Gregory of Tours along the way.

Paratextual collections of authors’ names were hardly uncommon in either manuscript or print. Indeed, no less an ancient authority than Pliny made a point of comprehensively listing out

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302 Apuleius, Opera omnia (Leiden, 1600), 431: “L. Apuleii fragmenta et tituli librorum qui non exstant.” The very last page of Estienne’s Fragmenta also contained a catalogus auctorum made up entirely of the fragmentary authors collected in his volume. See Estienne, Fragmenta, 433: “Poetarum nomina quorum hic fragmenta habes.”

303 The raw materials of Vulcanius’ Frankish index are found in Leiden Universiteitsbibliotheek MS Vulcanianus 20, fols.63r-68v. At fol.68r, Vulcanius assembles two snippets that read “Georgius Sabinus notatus quod Francos ab Hectore deducat. 70.b,” and “Francorum nomen sub Galieno imperatore primum inclaruit. 69.” For the final catalogus, see Leiden Universiteitsbibliotheek MS Vulcanianus 106, unfoliated: “INDEX Authorum qui in libello Antonii Schoonhovii citantur.” A rough draft of this list of authors, with an identical title, appears at MS Vulcanianus 20, fol.66r.
his authorities in his encyclopedic *Historia naturalis*. And as Ann Blair notes, the specific feature of the *catalogus auctorum* knew a lengthy history that stretched back deep into late antiquity and the Middle Ages. As she records, one of the earliest examples is found in that quintessential late antique project of textual consolidation—the Justinianic Corpus—whose compilers assembled lists of the various authorities they utilized. Thereafter, *catalogi* of this nature are attested in a number of medieval manuscript compilations. Such catalogues were in fact but a logical extension of the prefatory function of the medieval *accessus ad auctores* (anticipated already in the late antique commentaries of Servius and others), which offered such exegetical aids as a brief *vita* of the text’s author, a division of the text into discernable book or chapter numbers, and brief statements concerning authorial *intentio*. Hence, *catalogi auctorum* were fundamentally distinct from finding devices, serving rather as crucial advertisements of prestige. They functioned as visual endorsements of that guiding compilatory principle of unity through diversity—displaying the sheer multiplicity of texts from which a single book could emerge. As Vulcanius’ Isidore attests, the contents of *catalogi auctorum* were hardly restricted to sources deemed authoritative or canonical in any conventional sense: instead, many of the authors catalogued enjoyed an *auctoritas* predicated upon their very obscurity. And although they graced texts of all genres and all periods, they seem to have played a special role in validating late works. In a fitting expression of continuity, they helped validate such lateness by visually expressing a fundamentally late antique and medieval bibliographical impulse.

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304 Pliny, *Historia naturalis*, Praefatio, ed. Karl Mayhoff (Leipzig, 1906). Some of the unexpected ironies surrounding Pliny’s decision will be discussed later in this chapter.  
305 See Blair, *Too Much to Know*, 133-5.
As another example, consider the labors of the German philologist and lexicographer Friedrich Lindenbrog, an important figure in the development of medieval studies. Like Vulcanius, Lindenbrog was deeply interested in the end of antiquity, paying equal attention to textual traditions both Greco-Roman and “barbarian.” Although like Vulcanius he is rather forgotten today, he and other late humanists of his generation did much to legitimate the serious study of the Middle Ages, while demonstrating just how easily one could transition from the mature field of Greco-Latin classical scholarship, with its many set canons and conventions, to the emergent study of supposedly alien cultures like the Goths and Vandals or foreign tongues like Old Frisian. And just like Vulcanius (who may have actually produced an edition of Paul the Deacon traditionally attributed to him), Lindenbrog released editions of late sources that prominently featured lists of *nomina auctorum*. Not only did he include such a catalogue in his 1610 edition of Ammianus Marcellinus, but he likewise did so when compiling a volume he titled *Diversarum gentium historiae antiquae scriptores tres*—a tripartite collection of non-Roman histories that consisted of Jordanes on the Goths, Isidore on the Goths and Vandals, and Paul the Deacon on the Lombards. Even as they went their respective ways into uncharted postclassical territories, these authors, labeled “narrators of barbarian history” by Walter Goffart, nonetheless linked the distant pasts of their respective gentes to venerable ancient antecedents.

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This impulse was made explicit by Lindenbrog’s *catalogus auctorum*, which he filled with the many classical *auctores* that all three writers cited. 309

However, lists of *nomina* were not always consigned to separate features of apparatus. Instead, sometimes *catalogi* of sorts even migrated to the very title of a work, rendering the authorities deployed therein components of the text’s basic descriptive identifier. For instance, a 1583 Paris edition of another late antique work, Jordanes’ *Gothic History* or *Getica*, incorporated Jordanes’ many sources into the title of the *Getica* itself, describing the text in rather unwieldy fashion as follows:

The chronicle of Jordanes, bishop of the city of Ravenna, concerning the origins and language of the Goths…and selected from authorities (*sumptaque ex auctoribus*), namely [Cassiodorus] Senator, Ablabius, Priscus, Josephus, Lucan, Pomponius, Dio, Pompeius Trogus, Virgil, Dicineus, Comofacus, Zamolxis, Zeuta, Dexippus, Titus Livy, Orosius, Symmachus, Strabo, Cornelius, and Claudius Ptolemy. 310

Like Vulcarius’ Isidorian *catalogus*, this loud banner advertisement of Jordanes’ compilatory prowess united a remarkably diverse cast of characters, blending canonical *auctores* with sources lost, obscure, and sometimes downright bizarre. In this world of *compilatio*, Virgil shared space with Zamolxis, whom Jordanes described as a primordial Gothic ruler of “remarkable erudition

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and philosophy,” and Livy appeared alongside the early Gothic sage Zeuta, whose immense learning—in Jordanes’ estimation—rendered the Goths more similar to the Greeks than to other barbari. ³¹¹

Although not made explicit here, several features of Jordanes’ text and world may have rendered such authorizing strategies especially necessary. First, both Jordanes’ late age and his rather exotic subject matter placed him at considerable distance from canonical antiquitas, and so it was important to highlight his dutiful dependence not only upon eminent classical authorities, but also upon hazy figures of dubious historicity who inhabited spaces far removed from the Greco-Latin canon. Second, the Getica was viewed as essentially derivative, insofar as Jordanes claimed to have simply reworked a fuller (and unfortunately lost) Gothic history composed by Cassiodorus. As a result, the late and seemingly barbarous Jordanes was thought to be working with borrowed auctoritas. Accordingly, when tracing how Jordanes had constructed his work ex auctoribus, this 1583 Paris edition included a brief addendum directly below its title, explaining that “Cassiodorus Senator wrote twelve books of the history of the Goths, just as he asserts in the prologue to his letters. The bishop Jordanes abridged a summa of this history, and of other things he noted down, into a single book.” ³¹² Hence, one could imagine the Getica as simultaneously derivative and additive, insofar as it combined the fruits of Cassiodorus’ scholarship with those “other things” that Jordanes himself compiled. As we saw in Chapter One, Johannes Trithemius had described Cassiodorus’ own compilation of the Historia tripartita in strikingly similar terms. For Cassiodorus’ Gothic abridger was here also credited with transmuting many libri into a single text—“selected from authorities” or sumpta ex auctoribus.

³¹² Jordanes, Getica, title page: “Cassiodorus Senator scripsit xii libros historiae Gothorum, sicut ipse asserit in prologo epistolarum suarum. huius historiae summam, aliorumque praenotatorum, Iordanus Episcopus in unum coartavit.”
Given these aims, *catalogi auctorum* developed alongside paratextual collections of *elogia* and *testimonia* that traced the passage of a given author through time. Both *catalogi* and *testimonia* told the story of reception and transmission through the reproduction of mere names: whereas the former detailed those authorities that bolstered a given work, the latter traced how that work was cited, praised, and appropriated, just as it had once cited and appropriated others. We have already examined in Chapter 2 how such *testimonia* could chart continuous reception histories when discussing the *elogia* printed in Jacob Lectius’ edition of Symmachus. Much like *catalogi auctorum*, these collections of *testimonia* fulfilled an essential authorizing function; indeed, they served as amalgamations of dust-jacket praise gathered through the centuries. More importantly, they suggest that transmission history itself sometimes constituted a central feature of early modern books—visually represented alongside such common elements of apparatus as the title page, preface, *capitula* list, and index.

Even more so than *catalogi auctorum*, collections of *elogia* invited temporal divisions, dictated by their very contents. Although the former frequently followed the *ordo artificialis* of the alphabet, the latter were often arranged in rough chronological order. As seen in the case of Lectius’ Symmachus, many such guides were divided between ancients and moderns, or at least ancients and those “more recent,” as they catalogued citations and invocations *tam veterum quam recentiorum*. Yet this raised a central bibliographical quandary: when cataloguing authors whom we now label late antique or medieval, where in this binary scheme did one place them? Such difficulties are well illustrated by the Jesuit scholar Martinus Antonius Del-Rio, who published notes on another important late antique author examined in the last chapter—the poet Claudian—

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313 Here it is important to distinguish such catalogues of *elogia* as collections of learned references from more expansive poetic *elogia*, often inserted in praise of a contemporary author or editor, which are likewise found in so many early printed texts.
in 1572. At the very end of his commentary Del-Rio added a *catalogus*, without any accompanying page numbers or clear indexical function, of those authors whom he had cited and discussed in his preceding notes. He divided his list into three categories, and arranged his authors alphabetically in each. The first two lists, titled *Graeci* and *Latini* respectively, were by far the longest, and included both early sources like Homer, Herodotus and Cato the Elder and late sources like Capella, Jordanes, and Isidore, without any temporal differentiation whatsoever between them. After this exhaustive catalogue Del-Rio then inserted a final and much shorter list of moderns or *Neoterici* cited in his glosses. This list included such prominent humanists as Angelo Poliziano, Pierre Pithou, and Denys Lambin, among others. But in addition to these names, Del-Rio curiously counted the ninth-century chronicler Frechulf of Lisieux (discussed with reference to Jean Bodin in Chapter 1) among his neoterics. Thus, although not articulated explicitly, Del-Rio’s apparatus posited an implicit temporal gap or rupture between Jordanes’ sixth-century world and Frechulf’s ninth-century milieu—made manifest through the necessities of bibliographical choice.

As Del-Rio’s catalogue demonstrates, the simple juxtaposition of *veteres* and *recentiores* often posed problems of classification, while raising questions of temporal disjunction. By the middle of the seventeenth century, this binary sometimes gave way to more complex temporal schemes of tracing an author’s *Nachleben*—schemes that we will explore in far more detail in Part II of this study. For instance, when the German classical scholar Kaspar Barthius published his own edition of Claudian in 1650, he constructed a catalogue of *testimonia* that divided its cited authors into not two, but rather three temporal classes. In an intriguing anticipation of the

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Ad Cl. Claudiani V.C. opera Martini Antonii Del-Rio notae (Antwerp, 1572), unpaginated: under the heading “NEOTERICI,” Del-Rio’s catalogue alphabetically enumerates “ALCIATUS / Amatus / BARBARUS / Brodaeus / CAELIUS / Cantesus / FRECULPHUS / IUNIUS / LAMBINUS / Lazius / NAUCLERUS / Pithoeus / Politianus / Pontanus / SABELLICUS.”
tripartite schema of historical periodization, which illustrates the remarkable verbal contortions required of would-be periodizers before the fixing of periodizing conventions, Barthius inserted a rather oxymoronic cohort of “semi-ancients” or semi-veteres between his veteres and recentiores.315 Although he opted for one complete listing instead of three, his chronological record of those who cited or echoed Claudian made clear which author belonged to which category. While Barthius’ veteres consisted of Claudian’s near contemporaries, and his recentiores included a staggering number of early modern humanists, his semi-veteres ranged widely across what we would term the Middle Ages, as he catalogued references to the poet in Paul the Deacon, Otto von Freising, Sigebert of Gembloux, and John of Salisbury, among many others. Along the way, Barthius also showcased some far more obscure medieval finds, including an allusion to Claudian by the “author of a book titled Communiloquium”—a preaching manual compiled by the thirteenth-century Franciscan John of Wales.316

Barthius’ documentation of Claudian’s reception via testimonia was exhaustive, and filled approximately thirty pages in his edition. But Barthius’ endeavor possessed ample precedents, as it emulated the practices of the most prominent late humanist scholars who flourished in the decades around 1600. One of the richest collections of such testimonia appeared in the 1605 printing of Isaac Casaubon’s Suetonius, which expanded upon the edition of the Roman biographer that Casaubon had first published in 1595.317 The title of Casaubon’s

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315 Claudian, Opera (Frankfurt, 1650), sig. b1 r: Barthius’ catalogue is titled “Auctorum veterum, semiveterum, nonnullorum de recentibus de Cl. Claudiano testimonia.”
316 Claudian, Opera, unpaginated: “Auctor Libri qui inscribitur Communiloquium, pag. LXXV. De hoc Claudianus egregie, alloquens Theodosium. Tu licet extremos.”
317 Suetonius, De XII Caesaribus libri VIII: Isaacus Casaubonus recensuit et animadversionum libros adiectit (Geneva, 1595). Although Casaubon’s original 1595 edition featured an extensive introductory collection of testimonia, it did not include as many names and citations as those presented in 1605. Casaubon also released an updated edition in 1610. On Casaubon’s Suetonius
collection highlighted the intrinsic linkage between citations, echoes, and the fragmentary, describing its excerpts as “testimonies of ancient authors concerning Suetonius and his writings, and certain fragments.”

Although he labeled them *veteres*, these *auctores* were in fact as much late antique and medieval as ancient. However, his very first entry was culled from no less an ancient than Suetonius himself. For Casaubon began his *testimonia* with the *testimonium* of Suetonius on Suetonius, using various asides in his writings to ascertain just when the author flourished. After excerpting four passages from the *Caesares*, including one in which Suetonius mentioned his own adolescence during the reign of Domitian, Casaubon concluded, “it appears that the birth of Suetonius occurred during the reign of Vespasian, or certainly not far removed from it.”

Although this act of dating represented a straightforward evaluation of internal evidence, what is most striking about Casaubon’s conclusion is its context, both codicological and conceptual. By discussing Suetonius’ own *vita* in the space of a *catalogus auctorum*, not unlike a late antique commentator’s introductory explication of the *circumstantiae* of a text’s composition, or a medieval compiler’s assemblage of *accessus ad auctores*, Casaubon presented Suetonius’ birth under Vespasian as a logical propaedeutic to logging a further thousand years of Suetonian *testimonia*. Fixing an author in time was inherently linked to fixing the temporal

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318 Suetonius, *De XII Caesaribus libri VII* (Geneva, 1605), sig. *1r: “De Suetonio et eius scriptis, veterum auctorum testimonia, et fragmenta quaedam.” These appear directly after a *catalogus auctorum* titled “Nomina auctorum qui a Suetonio in hoc opere laudantur.” Intriguingly, this list also includes a heading with ample references to what Casaubon termed “uncertain writers” or “Incerti scriptores.” The spatial juxtaposition of this catalogue of *nomina* with its accompanying catalogue of *testimonia*, on verso and accompanying recto, nicely illustrates their complementary nature in early modern textual culture.

parameters of his postmortem reception; an author’s life and afterlife flowed together as one continuous chain of citations, visualized through elaborate mise-en-page.

After having established Suetonius’ age from his *Caesares*, Casaubon turned to the testimony of others. His collection culled *testimonia* from Pliny the Younger, Tertullian, Aulus Gellius, the *Historia Augusta*, the Suida, Ausonius, Sidonius Apollinaris, Priscian, Isidore of Seville, Servius, Orosius, Ioannes Tzetzes, Jerome, and Censorinus. Much deeper in the Middle Ages, Casaubon also found an offhand reference to Suetonius in the *Policraticus* of John of Salisbury, a central figure in what we now sometimes term the twelfth-century renaissance.\(^{320}\)

But Casaubon’s collection of *testimonia veterum* was not simply a history of citation; rather, it was also an exercise in fragment hunting and the recovery of *nuda nomina*. Of course, Suetonius was far from a *nudum nomen* in any absolute sense, but many of his *texts*—beyond his oft-circulated *Caesares*—had unfortunately been reduced to “naked names.” And so, in a fashion not unlike his father-in-law Estienne’s volume of poetic *fragmenta*, Casaubon’s collection also reconstructed references to Suetonius’ lost works. The late antique Servius in particular furnished a wealth of information on this front, as Casaubon documented references in his commentaries to such curiously titled Suetonian *libri* as *De vitiis corporalibus*, *De re vestiaria*, and even *De rebus variis*.\(^{321}\)

The systematic manner in which Casaubon constructed this *catalogus* is visible from his working copy of Suetonius, utilized when preparing his own edition. Casaubon owned a 1591 copy of Laevinus Torrentius’ Suetonius, whose margins he filled with copious notes and


\(^{321}\) Suetonius, *De XII Caesaribus*, sig. *4r*: Casaubon finds references to a *De vitiis corporalibus liber* in Servius’ glosses on *Eclogue III*, a *De re vestiaria liber* in Servius on *Aeneid VIII*, and a *De rebus variis liber*, also mentioned in Servius on *Aeneid VII*. 
corrections. And in it, Casaubon showed himself hard at work at fragment hunting. On the very top of the front flyleaf, he added a heading that he titled “fragments of Suetonius,” before glossing it with considerable exactitude as “loci of ancient writers who either recorded something concerning Suetonius or drew something from his writings.” Hence, Casaubon’s list purported to capture two distinct forms of transmission, including both overt citations of an author and sometimes silent borrowings. His ad hoc list contained much of what would later populate his printed catalogus, including numerous references to late antique sources like Servius, Priscian, Isidore, and the Suida. And at the very bottom of this list, he jotted down those references that would appear at the very top of his printed catalogus, aptly styling them here “Suetonius concerning himself” or Suetonius de se.

An even more enticing clue to Casaubon’s working methods in the field of fragments appears elsewhere on this page, in a little column that Casaubon marked off from his larger list of echoes and citations. Here he constructed a “to do” list of sorts with a highly abbreviated instruction to “diligently read and compare these writers”—presumably with Suetonius himself. Below, in addition to Isidore, he also jotted reminders to consult Martianus Capella, Julius Firmicus, John of Salisbury, and others. And while nothing from Capella or Firmicus appeared in his final printed catalogus, he did (as mentioned above) publish a reference to Suetonius taken from John of Salisbury’s Policraticus, thereby confirming his hunch that this twelfth-century

323 Suetonius, *XII Caesares*, flyleaf: “Suetonius de se.”
bishop of Chartres had invoked Rome’s imperial biographer in his own classicizing compositions. Fragments and citations alike could travel a very long time indeed.\footnote{On the rear flyleaf Casaubon attempted to construct a parallel \textit{catalogus} that would trace Suetonius’ own borrowings. But evidently he did not finish this list, since he only enumerated two references. Casaubon writes: “Index auctorum a Suetonio citatorum.” The only two names it includes, both taken from p.38, are “M. Brutus p. [blank] et 38” and “C. Memmius p.38.”\footnote{Suetonius, \textit{De XII Caesaribus}, 7. At the beginning of the life of Julius Caesar, Casaubon writes in the top margin “Multi huius res gestas scripserunt sed Sidon. Apoll. p.222 hos eximios facit, Liium, Suetonium, et Balbum qui scripsit Ephemeridem, et Iuuencum Martialem qui scripsit historiam.” Cf. Sidonius Apollinaris, \textit{Opera} (Leiden, 1552), now British Library 1082.c.6, 222: “Nanque eminet tibi thematis celeberrimi uotiuam redhibitio, laus videlicet peroranda, quam edideras Caesaris Iulii: Quae materia tam grandis est, ut studentum, siquis fuerit ille, copiosissimus, nihil amplius in ipsa debeat cauere, quam ne quid minus dicat. Nam si omittantur, quae de titulis Dictatoris inuicti scripta Patauinis sunt uoluminibus, quis opera Suetonii, quis Iuuenci, Marcialis historiam, quise ad extremum Balbi ephemeridem fando adaeqauauerit?” Casaubon underlines portions of the passage and then adds a manicule and writes “Sueton.” in the margin.} These forays into realms far distant from Suetonius’ own milieu continued to animate Casaubon’s reading—inaformed in part by his interest in what we would understand as late antique perceptions of \textit{antiquitas}. For instance, on the very first page of Suetonius’ first biography—that of Julius Caesar—Casaubon cited a positive evaluation of the \textit{vita} by the fifth-century Sidonius Apollinaris, whose own style (as we saw in Chapter 1) Lilius Giraldus had harshly condemned as “redolent of something barbarous or Gallic.” Referring to a passage in one of Sidonius’ epistles in which Sidonius urged a young friend to compose a declamation on Julius Caesar and then furnished him with a reading list of ancient authors who treated the life of the emperor, Casaubon declared in his very first note at the top of the page that “many have written of his deeds [i.e. Caesar’s], but Sidonius Apollinaris deems these writers excellent,” before copying Sidonius’ endorsements of Suetonius, Livy, and such \textit{nuda nomina} as Balbus and one “Iuvencus Martialis.”\footnote{326}
Casaubon’s temporally layered reading confirms his deep interest in how ancient writers were received by their late antique and medieval heirs. Yet this was no abstract or haphazard research agenda; rather it was prompted and facilitated by a feature of textual apparatus and a method of bibliographical enumeration that was itself eminently late antique and medieval in nature. Although this *catalogus* did not contain what was perhaps Casaubon’s most famous discovery when reading Suetonius—namely, that Einhard’s ninth-century life of Charlemagne was directly patterned upon Suetonius’ Augustan *vita*—Casaubon’s cataloguing methods confirm that even the most virtuoso performances of source criticism did not occur in a vacuum. Instead, Casaubon’s recognition of Einhard’s appropriation of Suetonius (an important moment in the articulation of postclassical time discussed extensively in the following chapter) flowed naturally from the collection of *testimonia*, the chasing of *fragmenta*, and the resultant fixing of texts and their receptions in a coherent *ordo temporum*.

Casaubon did not read in this manner only when beginning the highly technical process of producing a new edition. For when he digested the encyclopedic geography of the Roman polyhistor Gaius Julius Solinus—another late work not far removed from those many late authors featured in his Suetonian *catalogus auctorum*—he employed nearly identical methods. Sometime in the third or fourth century Solinus had assembled an appropriately titled *Collectanea rerum memorabilium* or *Collection of Memorable Things*. Extending from the origins of Rome to the seeming limits of the known world, Solinus’s *Collectanea* bequeathed endless erudition to scholars both medieval and early modern. The more perceptive of his readers easily recognized that Solinus was more a *compilator* than an *auctor*: as early as the twelfth century, William of Malmesbury remarked that most of Solinus’s material was derived
essentially unchanged from Pliny’s *Historia naturalis*.\(^{327}\) And as we shall see in the following section, references to Solinus as the *simia* or “ape” of Pliny had become commonplace by the sixteenth century. Yet like many who recompiled the words of another, Solinus also boasted numerous references to far earlier (and in many cases far obscurer) authors. Hence, like Isidore or Jordanes, he also proved an ideal candidate for a *catalogus auctorum*, especially since his introductory section on Rome’s origins featured a high proportion of *nuda nomina*.

When Casaubon read the *Collectanea*, he appropriately approached it as derivative, repeatedly flagging Solinus’s many echoes and borrowings (ranging from Virgil and Dionysius of Halicarnassus to Pliny himself). And when reading the prefatory *vita* of Solinus composed by the *Collectanea*’s editor, the Vienna humanist Johannes Camers, Casaubon even observed in the margin that “nothing is Solinus’ own.”\(^{328}\) Yet the very derivative nature of the *Collectanea* rendered it a ready source of classical erudition, especially concerning the murky question of Rome’s *origines*. Accordingly, after annotating Solinus’ compendium with detailed references to his sources, on the final page of the text Casaubon sketched a box of some four columns, writing at its top “those authors who are named by Solinus, up to page 26.”\(^{329}\) In each column, he alphabetically arranged a selection of *auctores* invoked in the first twenty-six pages of the *Collectanea*, much of which was devoted to the early history of Rome. While he diligently noted the presence of such well-known names as Cicero, Cato, Varro, and Cornelius Nepos, he also catalogued many *nuda nomina*, especially writers belonging to the lost annalistic tradition of early republican historiography—those fabled initiators of Roman history itself. Hence,


\(^{328}\) Solinus, *Polyhistor*, (Geneva, 1577), now Cambridge University Library, Adv.b.3.4. At p.8, Casaubon remarks “Nihil proprium S.” in the margin. At pp.13-17, Casaubon extensively annotates Solinus’ treatment of the origins of Rome, paying particular attention to his sources.

\(^{329}\) Solinus, *Polyhistor*, 106: Directly below the conclusion to the *Collectanea*, Casaubon constructs his catalogue, which he titles “Auctores qui a Solino nominantur usque ad pag. 26.”
Casaubon noted Solinus’ use of such obscure sources as Agathocles, Bocchus, Cosconius and Lutatius—clues to both the deep Roman past and the Collectanea’s compilatory project.

But Casaubon did not stop with the mere construction of a catalogus auctorum. Rather, he simultaneously attempted to date Solinus, just as he had done when placing Suetonius himself in his collection of Suetonian testimonia. Solinus’ text sometimes circulated with a spurious dedicatory letter that the author purportedly wrote to Augustus; however, as Camers pointed out, this clearly violated ratio temporum. Solinus could not possibly have lived in the Augustan age, since he copied his work almost entirely from Pliny the Elder, and mentioned the emperor Vespasian. However, although Camers seemed content to place Solinus somewhere generally near the age of Vespasian, Casaubon was not satisfied. Instead, he nudged the Collectanea much further into the late classical world. Next to Camers’ mention of Vespasian, he declared that “rather, I gather that Solinus lived much after Vespasian,” before jotting down two page numbers whose contents supported this opinion.330 While the second page reference revealed a straightforward violation of ordo temporum, as Solinus declared that “the capital of Judaea was Jerusalem, but it was destroyed” (thereby establishing a terminus post quem for Solinus’ text at Titus’ destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE),331 the first represented a far subtler signal of temporal distance. In a rather curious section concerning human height, Solinus made a passing reference to the era of the emperor Claudius (who died approximately a decade and a half before Vespasian’s reign began), which he retrospectively termed “that age” (aevo isto). Casaubon underlined this seemingly insignificant phrase, and announced in the margin that “Solinus was

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330 Solinus, Polyhistor, 6: Casaubon underlines Camers’ vita thus: “Constat enim Solinum Vespasiani principis in hoc opere meminisse,” and then writes in the margin “Imo molto post Vespasianum vixisse coniicio ex p.19 et p.80.”
331 Solinus, Polyhistor, 80: Casaubon underlines and flags Solinus’ statement that “Iudaeae caput fuit Hierosolyma, sed excisa est,” and then adds a notational mark in the margins.
therefore greatly distant from the time of Claudius.”^332 Hence, even a little phrase like *aevo isto* could communicate a perspectival feel of relative temporal distance—thereby forming an important clue in the dating and periodizing of works of Latin literature.

From citation to laudation, borrowing to allusion, archaic *nomina* and canonical *classici* to late antique compilers and even their medieval and modern heirs, paratextual *catalogi* helped capture a considerable diversity of both modes of authorship and *auctores* themselves. In addition, their presence—whether in print or manuscript—encouraged the placement of a given author in multiple temporal contexts both past and future. Therefore, forms of bibliographical apparatus that simply iterated names, and hence seemingly occupied a space below outright interpretation or exegesis, played a crucial role in confronting yet another species of temporal disjunction. Moreover, such catalogues and lists of *nomina* not only aided in the theorization of transmission, but also helped imbue transmission with a perspectival feel of temporality—so aptly captured in categories like Vulcanius’ *aetas Isidori*, Del-Rio’s *neoterici*, or even Barthius’ rather convoluted *semiveteres*. Catalogues of this nature not only highlighted the temporal distance that separated a text from its heterogeneous sources (including many sources both lost and archaic), but they also promoted the temporal schematization of a text’s postmortem reception, sometimes even extending through the depths of the Middle Ages to the present day. Both *catalogi auctorum* and *testimonia auctorum* alike demonstrated that texts were never static products of a single temporal milieu, but were instead always engaged in forms of dialogue between *antiquitas* and those more nebulous and less exemplary *tempora* that followed. Far from

^332 Solinus, *Polyhist*, 19. Casaubon flags where Solinus writes “Sed ante Augustum, annis ferme mille, non apparuit forma hiusmodi, sicut nec post Claudium visa est. Quis enim iam *aeuo isto* non minor suis parentibus nascitur?” Then, underlining “*aeuo isto*” he places a notational mark by this phrase and next to the corresponding mark in the margin writes “Multum ergo afuit a temporibus Claudii.”
being mere passive witnesses to this dialogue, early modern scholars and fragment hunters soon added another layer of active participation to the conversation, as they finessed forms of bibliographical *ordo* first developed in the late very *tempora* they now embraced as distinctive contexts.

**Castigating the *Fucus Authorum Omnium*: Late Texts and the Problem of Borrowing**

As seen above, the hunt for fragments, citations, and *nuda nomina* proved most fruitful in compilatory or otherwise derivative works. This made perfect sense: effective *compilatio* required creative use of sources as heterogeneous and obscure as they were numerous. Granted, even ostensibly original texts made great use of their predecessors, and early modern students of transmission always knew the line between *auctor* and *compilator* to be inherently blurry. But some late works were compilations in another, less venerable, sense. They abridged, borrowed, condensed and plucked text—often without attribution—from more immediate intermediaries, occasionally exchanging creative *compilatio* for what we might label outright plagiarism.

Although Solinus culled materials from obscure “naked names” in the early Roman past, he also pilfered the vast majority of his material from Pliny’s *Historia naturalis*, including (in second-order fashion) Pliny’s own references to obscure early Roman authorities.333 Jordanes composed his *Getica*, including its deep history of Gothic antiquity, by abridging a lost work of Cassiodorus. And even a monumental compilatory endeavor like Isidore’s *Etymologies* obtained much of its ancient erudition from less temporally alien late antique sources, especially Servius’

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commentaries. This more silent and ambiguous aspect of transmission in late works—and the debates it engendered in early modern scholarship—raised still more problems of temporal disjunction.

As mentioned above, Solinus’ commentator Iohannes Camers readily acknowledged Solinus’ wholesale borrowings from Pliny. Yet Camers ranged far beyond Solinus himself to offer a comprehensive examination—and spirited defense—of textual borrowing among the veteres and their later counterparts. In Camers’ judgment, Solinus “drank nearly everything from the Plinian font.” But one could not fairly accuse Solinus of a sin so many others routinely committed. As Camers asked, “what of Macrobius, who often took whole pages from Gellius, or Placidus, who borrowed from Servius, or Acro, who copied Porphyrio?” Transmission of this sort was inherently multidirectional, as the borrowers soon morphed into the borrowed. Just as Solinus had copied so liberally from Pliny, so Solinus was later copied and appropriated by others. Macrobius’ antiquarian analysis of the Roman calendar, so Camers pointed out, seemed to derive entirely from Solinus. In addition, many patristic authors—most notably Jerome, Ambrose, and Augustine—“borrowed the pronouncements of Solinus with almost the same words.” Solinus stood at the center of a long tradition of textual borrowing,

334 On Camers, see Dover, “Reading ‘Pliny’s Ape’ in the Renaissance,” 433-4.
336 Solinus, Polyhistor, fol.2r: “Quid de Macrobio, qui integras saepe paginas ex Gellio, de Placidio, qui ex Seruo, Acrone, qui ex Porphyrione? Quid de sexcentis aliis, qui longas commentationes, suppressis unde sumperint auctoribus, ad uerbum sibi omnia tribuerunt?”
337 Solinus, Polyhistor, fol.2v-3r: “Solini, ni fallor, sunt omnia, quae de annorum diuisione, et diebus intercalaribus a Macrobio sunt relata. Doctores praeterea ecclesiastici, D. Hieronymus, Ambrosius, Augustinus, item doctiores alii, iisdem fere uerbis Solini saepe sunt sententias mutuati.” Henry Savile repeated Camers’ formulation in his entry for Solinus in his notes
whose pace seemed to quicken in the later reaches of antiquity. And while many had christened Solinus the “ape of Pliny,” this did not necessarily constitute a critique; rather, it was part and parcel of an aesthetic of emulation with deep roots in antiquity itself. Taking up the comparison at the heart of Macrobius’ Virgilian exegesis, Camers remarked that even Virgil had frequently copied—and from no less illustrious a source than Homer. Borrowing constituted a crucial index of auctoritas for both the borrower and the borrowed. As Camers pithily concluded, “to emulate the very best author in the very best manner is no small virtue.” Yet whereas poetic borrowings were often praised for the manner in which the poet transformed what he borrowed, thereby rendering it his own, Camers did not decree such transformations necessary, and instead simply lauded the act of copying itself.

Camers’ theory possessed a crucial corollary. Many early modern scholars charged abridgers, epitomizers, and assorted other simiae with a related crime: according to this assessment, their derivative works stanched the proper flow of transmission, and had almost threatened to reduce venerable ancients to nuda nomina. For why would one read Pliny when one had an easy digest of the Historia naturalis in Solinus? Why would one read the lengthy

338 Solinus, Polyhistor, fol.2v: “Nec dedecori Solino ascribendum, quod passim fuerit Plynium aemulatus, sicut nec Maroni dandum crimini, quod toties ueterum poetarum, Homeri praesertim uersus in suum opus transtulerit. Non enim parua uirtus, auctorem optimum optime aemulati.”
Decades of Livy when one had an easy epitome produced by Florus? And who needed Aulus Gellius when Macrobius had repackaged so much of his digressive erudition in a far more accessible and organized format? Indeed, sources like Florus, Solinus, and Macrobius had proven immensely popular in the Middle Ages, and the loss of large chunks of Livy was often blamed on Florus’ comparative popularity, especially in the medieval schoolroom. Yet Camers rejected the hypothesis that Solinus, who failed to acknowledge his principal source, had wished Pliny to perish. Far from seeing derivative compilation as antithetical to transmission, he imagined the former as a symbiotic stimulant to the latter, insofar as it had safely ferried broader textual traditions through otherwise benighted tempora. This in turn prompted Camers to engage in a rather vague and inchoate species of undated periodization—as he posited a general process of decline and rupture that proved far more disruptive to transmission than mere simiae. As he put it, marshalling an exhaustive list of nomina that included many lamentably nuda archaic authors:

If only this [i.e. the derivative work of simiae] were the sole cause of the loss of so many good authors, then the monuments of noble authors, whose disappearance is a great loss to scholars (magna Studiosorum iactura)—such as Cato, Varro, Nigidius, Sallust, Hyginus, Celsus, Ennius, Furius, Varius, Actius, Naevius and Pacuvius—would still be extant today.\footnote{Solinus, Polyhistor, fol.2r-v: “Esset utinam tot bonorum auctorum amissionis haec sola causa. Extarent hodie Catonis (ut Graecos interim missos faciam) Varronis, Nigidii, Sallustii, Hygini, Celsi, Ennii, Furi, Vari, Actii, Neuii, Pacuuii, nobilium auctorum monumenta, quae magna studiosorum iactura, perierunt.”}

\footnote{On Erasmus’ blaming of Florus for the loss of large portions of Livy, discussed in Adages 3.1.1, see Blair, Too Much to Know, 18, 341 Solinus, Polyhistor, fol.2r-v: “Esset utinam tot bonorum auctorum amissionis haec sola causa. Extarent hodie Catonis (ut Graecos interim missos faciam) Varronis, Nigidii, Sallustii, Hygini, Celsi, Ennii, Furi, Vari, Actii, Neuii, Pacuuii, nobilium auctorum monumenta, quae magna studiosorum iactura, perierunt.”}
Far from precipitating such a tragedy, perhaps derivative sources like Solinus had made a tragic situation a little less tragic, preserving *fragmenta* of works that otherwise might have fully succumbed to the injury of time. Even more significantly, Camers linked *iniuria temporum* to a distinctive cultural process—a *magna studiosorum iactura* that itself connoted a sense of dramatic disintegration. As we shall see, such conceptual linkages of textual transmission and cultural decline, however vague, would prove enormously consequential to early modern efforts at dividing time.

By joining Solinus to a host of other *simiae*, Camers sought to defend Solinus by highlighting the seeming ubiquity of his practices, especially in the latter portions of antiquity. Yet his other *simiae* were hardly immune from related forms of criticism. Indeed, by invoking Macrobius and Gellius as a fitting parallel to Solinus and Pliny, Camers indirectly weighed in on what was perhaps the most problematic case of late antique literary copying, and a subject of early modern debate far more pointed than discussions of Solinus.

Macrobius is now believed to have composed his *Saturnalia* sometime in the 430s, some two decades after Alaric’s sack of Rome and those related calamities that presaged still more dramatic geopolitical transformations to come. His imagined dialogue, which celebrated the erudition of its fictionalized interlocutors (including such late antique literati as Symmachus and Servius), went on to assume a central role in the medieval canon, serving—along with sources like Isidore, Capella, and Servius himself—as a precious storehouse of *antiquitas*. For discussion, see especially Cameron, *Last Pagans.*
to the *Saturnalia* even contained an elegant paean to compilation—which fittingly encapsulated one of the underlying features of late antique, medieval, and indeed early modern textual culture. As Macrobius explained, “I have organized [these] diverse subjects, drawn from a range of authors (*auctoribus diversa*) and mix of periods (*confusa temporibus*), as though in a body, so that the things I initially noted down all a jumble, as an *aide mémoire*, might come together in a coherent, organic whole.”

Through borrowing and compilation, both *auctoribus diversa* and *confusa temporibus* could achieve an essential *ordo*, and hence adhere as a *corpus* in every possible sense of the term. As Macrobius continued, he had sought to imitate the bee, blending varied and diverse nectars into a “single taste.” Ironically enough, this artful metaphor put his defense of the derivative into practice in more ways than one, as he had copied this invocation of the bee almost verbatim from Seneca’s *Epistles*.

Thus, Macrobian compilation was simultaneously simpler and more complicated than Macrobius claimed it to be. As Camers acknowledged, Macrobius himself had not performed any arduous apian tasks, since his honey possessed a crucial intermediary. Much of the material he claimed to have gathered from a “range of authors” and a “mix of periods” was in fact copied straight from the *Noctes Atticae* of Aulus Gellius, who had already bought together such

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343 Macrobius, *Saturnalia* Praef. 3, ed. and trans. Kaster, 4-5: “Nec indigeste tamquam in acervum congessimus digna memoratu, sed variarum rerum disparilitas, auctoribus diversa, confusa temporibus, ita in quoddam digesta corpus est, ut quae indistincte atque promiscue ad subsidium memoriae adnotaveramus, in ordinem instar membrorum cohaerentia convenirent.”

variarum rerum disparilitas some three centuries earlier. When the avowedly archaizing Gellius assembled learnedly digressive table talk, he embraced the random logic of the miscellany, aptly understood by his early modern emulators as a species of *ordo* that lacked order, or *ordo fortuitus*. In this sense, early moderns placed both Gellius and Macrobius in an ongoing tradition of miscellaneity, as much ancient and modern. Yet these connections masked an important difference between the two works. Far from simply offering evidence of pilfering, Macrobius’ fifth-century transformation of Gellius’ second-century *Noctes* signaled an important shift in textual culture. In short, Gellius’ *Noctes Atticae* made a strenuous case against thematic or textual unity, while Macrobius’ *Saturnalia* made an equally strenuous case for it. Whereas Gellius was content to mimic the bee and sample the honey of many a source, Macrobius argued that diverse forms of honey should be brought together into a coherent whole, or as he put it, a *corpus*. A compilation of this sort *ipso facto* had to be *in ordinem*, and hence Macrobius anticipated the encyclopedic efforts of figures like Cassiodorus and Isidore, whose obsession with organization and cataloguing so influenced medieval manuscript culture. But when constructing his corpus, he had utilized an unacknowledged shortcut—namely Gellius. Hence, Macrobius, late antique compiler *par excellence* and star witness to so many fragments and *nuda*

346 But see Holford-Strevens, *Aulus Gellius*, 35, where he remarks “[Gellius’] unusual words are not thrown haphazardly together; they embellish a distinctive style that was much to the taste of later readers.”
347 On this crucial difference between Macrobius and his chief source, and one view of its potential implications for our readings of the Roman past, see Erik Gunderson, *Nox Philologiae: Aulus Gellius and the Fantasy of the Roman Library* (Madison, 2009), esp. 12-13. As Gunderson concludes, “Gellius the author of shards is shredded and recomposed so as to forge a whole. The diverse feast of Gellius remains in its diversity, and yet it is now presented as a single event and a discrete sense of meals. Macrobius’ perversity consists in his sense of the whole, in his construction of unity, in his showing us the rules of appropriation such that we too can turn ourselves into ancient Romans...”
nomina, stood accused of plagiarism. The fortunes of this charge as it was adjudicated in early modern scholarship illustrate the many contradictions inherent in compilation, and their ongoing effects upon problems of temporal disjunction.

None other than Erasmus included a version of this charge in his famous collection of maxims and quotations, the Adagia. Granted, the Adagia was itself a rather Gellian or Macrobian project, and Erasmus often used the Saturnalia much as Macrobius had used Gellius. After all, collecting the dicta of the veteres and surrounding them with dense webs of exposition were eminently late antique practices. Hence, it is perhaps ironic that one of Erasmus’ passing asides in the Adagia included a rather snarky assessment of Macrobian plagiarism. When discussing the ancient dictum that “we have as many enemies as we have slaves” (quot servos habemus, totidem habemus hostes), Erasmus began by observing that Macrobius reproduced the adage in his Saturnalia, as his imagined interlocutors debated its meaning and origins. But Erasmus then noted that Seneca had used essentially identical words in his Epistles (also, incidentally, the source of Macrobius’ introductory bee metaphor). Accordingly, he accused Macrobius of having stolen Seneca’s very verba, deeming the late antique compiler the “drone of all authors” (fucus authorum omnium), due to his penchant for silent borrowing.\(^{348}\) In similar fashion, Erasmus’ adversary Petrus Crinitus (discussed in Chapter 1) had even harsher words for Macrobius, excoriating him for his many borrowings from his chief source. As he noted in his De honestis disciplinis (itself another miscellaneous project), when discussing the Roman toga praetexta, Macrobius had considered this in great detail in his Saturnalia. But he then pointed out that

Macrobius had copied such passages from the *Noctes Atticae* with “greater zeal than judgment.” Thereafter, cleverly inverting Pliny’s prefatory admonition in his *Historia naturalis* that “it is obliging and full of generous modesty to acknowledge those [authors] through whom you have made your work,” Crinitus concluded that “it is the mark of a guilty mind and a most wretched nature never to acknowledge the authors through whom you have accomplished your work.” Hence, two preeminent works in the realm of Renaissance commonplacing indicted Macrobius for the silent shortcuts that marked his own late antique commonplacing.

The prominence of these critiques is well illustrated by a copy of the 1519 Paris edition of Macrobius’ *Saturnalia* and *Commentarii in somnium Scipionis*, annotated throughout in a contemporary hand. Among this edition’s front matter, its reader offered a number of observations on Macrobius, including two succinct and pithy judgments culled from Erasmus and Crinitus respectively. The one simply observed that “Erasmus calls Macrobius the drone of all authors,” while the other, citing *De honestis disciplinis*, noted that “Macrobius borrowed many things from Gellius, even as he suppressed his name.” Yet this reader did not merely establish Macrobius’ unoriginality and then call it a day. Rather, he also constructed a selective *catalogus auctorum* of sorts, as he filled the right margin of the title page with a list of the

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350 Macrobius, *De Somnio Scipionis; Saturnalia* (Paris, 1519), now British Library 11350.g.2, sig. A 1r. One annotation reads “Macrobiun uere fucum omnium authorum uocat Eras. In pro. Quot. ser. hab. totidem. hab. et hostes,” while another, directly below, notes “Macrobius suppresso nomine multa ex Gellio mutuatus est teste Crinito de ho. discipl. li. 20 cap.7.”
numerous authors—including many *nuda nomina*—cited by Macrobius in his discussions of chronology. Even if Macrobius were a derivative *fucus* who dishonestly borrowed from others, he remained a unique and valuable witness to some otherwise lost realms of ancient learning.\textsuperscript{351}

This focus on transmission did not simply color readings of Macrobius; it also influenced parallel readings of Gellius. For instance, when Joseph Scaliger read the *Noctes Atticae*, he pointed out those many places where Macrobius, without citing his source by name, had borrowed from Gellius. Next to Gellius’ amusing anecdote concerning the young Papirius, who concealed the true contents of the Senate’s deliberations from his mother by concocting a tale that the senators were debating whether a woman should have two husbands or a man two wives, and was hence honored with the cognomen *Praetextatus* for his wit and discretion, Scaliger remarked that “this chapter is nearly repeated by Macrobius in the first book of the *Saturnalia*, with the name of Gellius suppressed,” before adding that “Petrus Crinitus rightly charged him [i.e. Macrobius] with the offense of ingratitude for this reason.”\textsuperscript{352} At *Noctes Atticae* 1.8 he flagged a borrowing by Macrobius “with the name of Gellius suppressed as is his custom.” At *Noctes Atticae* 3.2 he exclaimed that “Macrobius in his *Saturnalia* recites almost this whole chapter as his own.” And at *Noctes Atticae* 2.6 he marveled at the seeming brazenness of this


fucus omnium auctorum, writing that “nearly this entire chapter is in Macrobius, with no mention of the name of Gellius.” Throughout his reading of Gellius’ compilation, Scaliger conveyed his disbelief at just how much Macrobius had borrowed from the Noctes Atticae, without so much as even hinting at his source. Hence, both a preeminent classical scholar like Scaliger and an otherwise anonymous annotator of the Saturnalia agreed that Macrobius had engaged in a rather improper form of transmission. For he had used his principal source with his “name suppressed” (suppresso nomine), just as the simia Solinus had copied so much from Pliny without acknowledging the true author of his words—precisely the opposite of what Pliny himself had deemed the honorable thing to do. For both the anonymous annotator and Scaliger, the problem was not only one of borrowing or copying per se; rather, they reacted more pointedly against dishonest or duplicitous borrowing. As we have seen, the iteration of nomina was integral to recovering the long story of transmission, and hence the suppression of such nomina was inherently deleterious to transmission itself. Sometimes simiae exacerbated problems of temporal disjunction, as they sought to hide, rather than trumpet, those auctores they transmitted. As we shall see, recognition of such deliberate effacement prompted a whole new set of periodized judgments, as an author’s performance of transmission itself furnished yet another means of evaluating late sources in relation to their earlier counterparts.

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353 Aulus Gellius, Noctes Atticae, fol.10v: At Noctes Atticae 1.8, Scaliger writes “Macrob. 2. Satur. suppresso vt solet Gellii nomine.” At Noctes Atticae 2.6 he notes “Totum hoc caput fere est apud Macrobr. nulla Gelliani nominis mentione.” And at Noctes Atticae 3.2 (fol.57v), he observes “Hoc caput fere totum pro suo recitat Macrobr. in Satur.” Although he did not dwell upon it as much as Scaliger, Casaubon did note in his working copy of Macrobius (discussed in Chapter 2 above) that rare instance in the Saturnalia where Macrobius actually cited Gellius by name. See Macrobius, Opera (Leiden, 1565), now British Library 1089.f.16, title page: Casaubon writes “Gellii mentio est pag.108.”

354 Scaliger himself was the victim of similar borrowing without attribution. On his reaction to the classical scholar Willem Canter’s unattributed use of his conjectures, see Grafton, Scaliger I, 106-8 and 276-7.
To early modern scholars, the temporal dimensions of transmission proved a two-edged sword. On the one hand, the very lateness of late contexts rendered them fertile territory for reconstructing the transmission of *antiquitas* in all its diverse temporal stages. But lateness, as seen in the previous two chapters, also connoted processes of cultural and textual decline, which—depending on how one interpreted them—had themselves served as unlikely stimulants to compilation. Indeed, as Vulcanius and others seemed to imply, an *opus pulcherrimum* like Isidore’s *Etymologiae* had been compiled as a Noah’s Ark to save some lucky remnants of *antiquitas* from the deluge that supposedly marked its end. But compilations of this nature raised the more troublesome question of whether late sources had performed transmission in a fundamentally proper manner. In their zeal for shortcuts, had the *simiae* of late antiquity failed not only at authorial originality, but also at honest and effective *compilatio*? And in doing so, had they destroyed more of *antiquitas* than they preserved? As explored throughout this chapter, it was no accident that those who hunted fragments and reconstructed transmission histories helped stimulate newfound interest in the end of antiquity. As the above examples suggest, wading into the waters of transmission did not simply force one to evaluate specific texts and authors. Instead, it simultaneously prompted more expansive evaluations of the *tempora* from which they sprang.

Although Joseph Scaliger did not link his castigations of Macrobius to Macrobius’ temporal milieu, in other contexts he far more directly blamed maladroit transmission upon the benighted *tempora* of late compilers. Like Claude Chifflet’s analysis of the late antique and
medieval popularity of Eutropius’ slim abridgment of Roman history over Ammianus Marcellinus’ expansive *Res gestae* (discussed in the previous chapter), Scaliger interpreted the triumph of the epitome as a leading index of cultural decline. Unlike Solinus’ editor Johannes Camers, he took an altogether different view of the role of such *simiae* in the story of transmission. In 1575 Scaliger published a new edition of the *De verborum significatu* of the second-century Roman grammarian Sextus Pompeius Festus—itself an abridgment and reworking of a massive lexicographical encyclopedia assembled by the Augustan-era grammarian and antiquary Verrius Flaccus (invoked by Vulcanius, as we saw, in comparison with Isidore). Festus’ repackaging of Flaccus was itself subject to further rounds of epitomizing and abridgment in the Middle Ages, of which the most well-known was accomplished in the eighth century by the Carolingian scholar Paul the Deacon. Unfortunately, the entire textual tradition had reached the sixteenth century in a rather corrupted state. But as alluded to earlier, Scaliger was able to restore a great deal of it by drawing upon the fragments preserved in another late source—namely, Pierre Daniel’s Servius.355

In his preface, Scaliger dwelled in great detail on how the work of Flaccus and Festus had reached such a sorry condition—in language that suggests just why he judged Macrobius’ silent pilfering of Gellius so problematic. Scaliger did not mince words in blaming not only Paul the Deacon, but also the whole class of compilers and epitomizers for destroying so much of the ancient inheritance. And he began by assigning this destruction a temporal dimension, as he invoked the Gothic incursions and bemoaned the “great destruction of letters” and the “neglect of

all culture and the more refined cultivation of minds” that followed the end of antiquity.\textsuperscript{356}

Scaliger then went on to mourn the fact that so little of antiquity had actually survived these onslaughts. Like Conrad Gesner, Scaliger lamented that “very few [books] have survived out of so many, and not all of those are whole, but by this maimed part [of ancient literature] they increase our thirst more than they sate it.”\textsuperscript{357} This sorry condition was not due simply to a neglect of learning. On the contrary, Scaliger blamed “another and more monstrous pest, and a particular blemish of books.” Thereafter, he identified this pest in greater detail:

I refer to those who wrote epitomes of authors as men whose diligence is totally misapplied...not to mention that they have unjustly snatched glory and a name for themselves through their mutilation of good authors, what evil have they not done, when they have laid a path for the neglect of others by their own diligence? For there was almost no one who did not favor their epitomes over whole writers, and thus did not prefer to carry Florus or I know not who else in the fold [of his cloak], than to read all of Livy in a library. That disease—that itch for wrongly gaining things from good authors—has persisted


\textsuperscript{357} Festus, \textit{De verborum significatione}, sig. * ii v-iii r: “Quod sane difficile non erat in tanta studiorum contentione, si ex illa priscorum librorum copia quosdam saltem nobis reliquis fecisset vetustatis injuria, quibus hodie si frueremur, aliorum desiderium aequo animo ferre posse mus. Iam vero paucissimi ex tot supersunt, atque non omnes illi integri, sed parte sui trunca magis sitim nostram accedunt quam explent. Neque hoc fine stetit malum. Alia atque immannior pestis, ac praecipua librorum labes fuit. homines nempe praepostere diligentes. Isto dico, qui auctorum Epitomas conscripserunt: quos quomodo appellam nes cio. Nam ut taceam, quod ex bonorum auctorum mutilatione gloriam sibi ac nomen in iuste auncupabantur: quid mali non fecerunt, cum diligentia sua alienae negligenceiae viam munierunt? Nemo enim fere e titit, qui illorum Epitomas integris Scriptorib. non praetulerit: atque adeo qui non maluerit in sinu suo Florum, aut nescio quem alium gestare, quam totum Liium in Bibliotheca legere. Permanuit ab illis temporibus ad nostra tempora scabies illa, ac cacoethes de auctoribus bonis male merendi. Inuenies enim etiam hodie, qui et illas veteres Epitomas malint, et nouas ultimo conscribant.”
from these times to our own. You will find men even today who may both prefer those ancient epitomes and compose new ones besides.”

Although Florus was to be castigated for stealing from Livy and hence contributing to the loss of so much of his history, he was not the worst offender. While Scaliger condemned all epitomizers, he pronounced the Lombard Paul the Deacon most worthy of condemnation, judging him to be a man “most confident, and most inept.” Nor was Scaliger the first to indict Paul the Deacon in such terms. Already in 1513, Aldus Manutius attacked the Carolingian compiler when he published his edition of Festus, indicting Paul the Deacon together with Florus and Justin as mutilators of the fuller and more worthwhile texts of Festus, Livy, and Pompeius Trogus.358 But unlike Manutius, who confined his remarks to a prefatory swipe, Scaliger took care to contextualize Paul’s distinctly postclassical milieu in considerable detail, explicitly tying his project of classical epitomizing to the new geopolitical realities of the nascent Carolingian world. In a pithy formulation that sardonically played upon differing forms of redemption and damnation, Scaliger explained both the motives and consequences of Paul’s ostensibly disastrous compiling:

Captured by the emperor Charlemagne from the defeated and overthrown Desiderius, the last king of the Lombards, Paul thought he might enter into the great favor of both the victor [i.e. Charlemagne] and

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358 Fragmenta Perotti cornucopiae de lingua Latina (Venice, 1513), 1123-4. On Manutius’ comments see Ian MacLean, Scholarship, Commerce, Religion: The Learned Book in the Age of Confessions, 1560-1630 (Cambridge, MA, 2012), 91. MacLean singles out Manutius’ assessment of Paul the Deacon as helping inaugurate a trend of “scholarly contempt...directed against epitomes”—a rhetoric later aimed against Ramism and other seeming shortcuts to learning.
posterity if he mutilated Sextus Pompeius Festus, in whom the Latin language does not possess a more useful writer, and redeemed himself with the victor through so great a damnation of posterity.”

Rather than preserving Festus, Paul the Deacon had but mutilated him further. But this raised an important paradox, which so many of the scholars examined in this chapter were forced to confront, whether explicitly or implicitly. As we saw in our examination of bibliographical appendices in Chapter 1, comparison—even that of a critical or condemnatory nature—constituted an ironic species of inclusion. And sometimes such comparisons were necessary if one desired to read through—or perhaps behind—late tempora to recover their more pristine, yet fragmentary predecessors. Paul the Deacon may have been guilty of destroying large parts of Festus, but he remained an (albeit compromised) agent of transmission nonetheless—without whom any reconstruction of Festus would have been close to impossible. If one wanted to bring Festus’ classical erudition back into the light, and even if one knew that such a project would remain inherently tentative or incomplete, one had no choice but to enter Paul the Deacon’s postclassical world, aided (as in Scaliger’s case) by other products of late compilation like Daniel’s Servius. Scaliger elegantly summed up the temporal differences between the classical and the postclassical by pointing out that, whereas Festus used the present tense when describing Roman rituals, Paul the Deacon switched these descriptions to the imperfect. Hence, even grammar itself confirmed that what remained living practice in the second century had become a foreign past in the Carolingian epoch. Indeed, Scaliger would play a signal role in recognizing the profound importance of Paul the Deacon’s late world to the story of temporality writ large.

For his massive project of correcting Eusebius’ Chronicon brought him face to face with late and so-called “barbarous” figures who proved essential to one of the most complex and consequential stories of textual transmission, despite their seeming barbarism.
Yet criticism of late and inept transmission still served an important purpose in early modern scholarship. Such criticism even proved noteworthy to scholars who otherwise celebrated both the quantity and quality of classical reception accomplished in late antiquity and the Middle Ages. When none other than Bonaventura Vulcanius read Scaliger’s Festus, he filled one of his manuscript notebooks with a series of excerpts he labeled *formulae criticorum* or “the formulae of critics.” These were in fact a collection of acerbic phrases used by Scaliger to indict the errors of the “most inept” Paul the Deacon. One simply read “these words ring of error,” while another contained one of Scaliger’s more creative put-downs, proclaiming “you easily recognize the sub-aerated coinage of Paul” (*subaeratum Pauli numisma*). Finally, Vulcanius even jotted down “behold, the itch for tainting good authors” (*en cacoethes bonos authores corrumpendi*), copying a lament in one of Scaliger’s glosses that echoed his prefatory condemnation of epitomizers.\(^{359}\) As Vulcanius seemingly recognized, encounters with late works—especially those of a compilatory or derivative nature—invited employment of the art of criticism, including its sometimes-unforgiving language.

Yet there is perhaps no better example of this seemingly paradoxical approach to late sources and their role in the story of transmission than Isaac Casaubon’s intensive reading of the sixth-century grammarian Priscian. A *grammaticus* who flourished in Constantinople, Priscian produced various works of Latin instruction that not only proved essential to the medieval curriculum, but also remained important in early modern learning. As he explicated numerous Latin grammatical forms and constructions, Priscian quite naturally illustrated them with

examples drawn from across the entire spectrum of Latin literature, and so his tiny exemplary
snippets constituted a veritable treasure trove of *fragmenta* and *nuda nomina*. In a summary
judgment he offered on the title page of his copy of a collection of Priscian’s works, Casaubon
acknowledged that Priscian was “most diligent and most skillful in his art,” before castigating
him in highly colorful language for the manner in which he presented such skill and diligence.
As he put it, “in his writings—especially his last book—so many things are confusedly related,
and the same things are repeated so many times, that you should think a drunk wrote such things,
and not Priscian, a learned and sober man.”360 But elsewhere on the title page, Casaubon made
clear that Priscian, despite seeming more *ebrius* than *sobrius*, was still essential reading. For in
another note he marveled that “you have almost an infinite number of Latin authors cited by
Priscian, whose names you shall scarcely find elsewhere.”361 Just as Vulcanius lauded Isidore, so
Casaubon valued Priscian as a repository of *fragmenta* and *nuda nomina*, many of which
belonged to periods of Latin literature that far predated the *aetas Prisciani*. Even if Priscian’s
“drunken” confusions and frequent repetitiousness made him a poor practitioner of *compilatio*,
he still deserved praise (and reading) for the “almost infinite” number of *auctores* he compiled.

Casaubon did not stop here. Instead, he then jotted down several page numbers that
boasted an especially heavy selection of these “almost infinite” *auctores*. Both here and in many
other places throughout the text, he employed a systematic notational method to flag and
catalogue such *nomina*. When Priscian invoked a *nomen*, whether *nudum* or otherwise, Casaubon
often entered the author’s first initial or a similarly appropriate abbreviation in the text’s inner

360 Priscian, *Opera* (Venice, 1527), now British Library 625.c.3, title page: Casaubon writes
“Auctor est artis suae peritiss. et diligentiss. sed in cuius scriptis, praeertim lib. ult. tam multa
confuse traduntur, et toties eadem repetuntur, ut ebrium putes illa scripsisse non Priscianum
uirum sobrium et doctum.”
361 Priscian, *Opera*, title page: “Infinitos paene Lat. linguae auctores habes a Prisciano citatos:
quorum uix alibi nomina reperias. uel uide p.92, 93, 94 etc.”
margin, flooding his working copy with a sea of letters to guide him through the endless *nomina* cited by late antiquity’s preeminent grammarian. This method yielded some important observations. And perhaps none proved more intriguing that Priscian’s quotation of what remains the only extant snippet from the emperor Trajan’s lost *Dacica*, an autobiographical guide—presumably not unlike Julius Caesar’s *De bello gallico*—to his military exploits in the province of Dacia. Elucidating a grammatical point, Priscian copied a line he attributed to “Trajan in the first book of the *Dacica,*” in which the emperor recorded his approach to the Dacian towns of Berzovia and Aizis. Having underlined Priscian’s *in primo Dacicorum,* Casaubon drew a further textual inference in a corresponding note he entered on the title page, observing that “Trajan wrote his *Dacica* in multiple books.”

Hence, an inept and metaphorically inebriated sixth-century Constantinopolitan grammarian provided the only clue to both the contents and the structure of a celebrated Antonine emperor’s war journal—composed some four centuries earlier at the seeming height of Rome’s imperial sway. Like Servius and Isidore and others, Priscian had gathered together an exhaustive bibliography of Latin literature in all its diverse *tempora*—a form of encyclopedism that Casaubon, Vulcianius, and their colleagues across the late humanist *respublica literaria* recognized as indispensible to the recovery of *antiquitas* writ large. As a result, one had to to pay diligent heed to Priscian’s every line, since nearly every line—no matter how drunkenly or confusedly constructed—possessed a fragment or a name.

In closing, it is worth emphasizing that these methods of sorting and visualizing textual transmission persisted long after the deaths of Vulcianius and Casaubon. Indeed, they remained

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an active part of bibliographical scholarship well into the eighteenth century, when the forms of
temporal differentiation anticipated here had long since morphed into less labile and more
conventional methods of historical periodizing. As our last example, we return to Vulcanius’
Isidore, with which this chapter began. Over a century and a half after Vulcanius had published
his edition, his very catalogus auctorum continued to furnish both a visual and conceptual
storehouse for the further accumulation of the many fragments and citations lurking within
Isidore’s encyclopedia. In a copy of Vulcanius’ Isidore once owned by the English historian
Thomas Birch (himself a friend of Benjamin Franklin), a prodigious eighteenth-century
annotator filled the many blank spaces around Vulcanius’ nomina (whether nuda or otherwise)
with dizzyingly dense references to the many places where Isidore discussed such sources—so
much so that Vulcanius’ bare and elegant catalogus was soon flooded by a choppy sea of
manuscript notes that tracked and sometimes reproduced the precise excerpts that Isidore had
offered from Valgius, Macer, Dorcatius, and many others.\footnote{Isidore of Seville, \textit{Origines}, now British Library 625.i.18, sig.6r. Next to the various names in Vulcanius’ catalogus, the annotator supplies Isidore’s corresponding excerpt along with Vulcanius’ page and line number. For instance, next to “Cecilius” he writes “Si confidentiam habes, confide omnia. 239.5,” and next to “Dorcatius” he reproduces Isidore’s quotation “Neu tu parce pilos viuaces condere cerui. Uncia donec erit geminam super addita libram. 452.”} In addition, this annotator took
Vulcanius’ catalogus as a challenge to locate still more nomina omitted from the original list,
and so, in the blank spaces between Vulcanius’ names, he inserted further finds in alphabetical
order. As a result, the Roman orator Hortensius now appeared between Vulcanius’ listing of
Gracchus and Jerome, the archaic tragic poet Pacuvius squeezed in before the Christian
Prudentius, and the comic playwright Atta now sat above the similarly fragmentary Aemilius
Macer.\footnote{Isidore of Seville, \textit{Origines}, sig. 6r. For instance, the annotator writes “Atta. Vertamus vomerem in ceram mucroneque aremus osseo,” and “Hortensius primus ceruicem dix. 263.60.”} As happened so often, the mere presence of empty white space—itself in ample supply
around Vulcanius’ *catalogus*—ably facilitated continuous bibliographical cataloguing across the centuries.

This copious eighteenth-century expansion of Vulcanius’ late sixteenth-century edition perfectly captures the many material continuities that underlay practices of bibliographical reading in early modernity and (depending on how we may wish to periodize) beyond. Just as Casaubon had praised Priscian for citing an “almost infinite” quantity of Latin *auctores*, so this eighteenth-century reader used Vulcanius’ apparatus to demonstrate Isidore’s parallel command of a seemingly infinite canon. Efforts such as these, whether executed in the late Renaissance or the early Enlightenment, raise the question of just what ends scholars and readers sought to satisfy by embarking upon such comprehensive (and indeed time consuming) projects. While one ought never to underestimate the appeal of finding for finding’s sake in the history of scholarship, many of the reading methods surveyed here hint at something more than the purely instrumental use of texts as mines to be quarried—although such an impulse obviously stimulated fragment hunting and the search for *nuda nomina*. On the contrary, it suggests a fundamental yet largely neglected development in the relationship between textual authority and historical time—predicated upon a vision of *antiquitas* at once unified and multiple.

As early modern scholars came to realize, late traditions, however corrupt or barbarous, played an indispensable role in the great drama of transmission, and insofar as late traditions partook of earlier texts, scholars began to assign them a powerful species of *auctoritas* all their own. Ironically, this recovery of late traditions as unique and consequential moments of reception and transmission hinged upon late humanists emulating their late antique counterparts,

For an interesting parallel case of a sixteenth-century fragment-hunting project extensively annotated by an eighteenth-century reader, see the extensive notes of the bishop and classical scholar Francis Hare in an interleaved copy of Stephanus’ *Fragmenta poetarum veterum Latinorum*, now British Library C.45.b.6.
as those seemingly obscure and benighted tempora like the aetas Isidori assumed newfound distinctiveness when one emulated the textual techniques of Isidore himself. As Vulcanius and others began to ascertain, Isidore and his ilk constituted some of the greatest initiators of that drive towards encyclopedic bibliography at the end of antiquity—a drive they not only benefited from but also sought to perpetuate. And as they painstakingly catalogued lists of nomina and testimonia, scholars made the active transmission of these late worlds visible through bookish methods of cataloguing and bibliography at once profoundly late antique and profoundly early modern.

Taken together, these points lead to a final conclusion, which marks a fitting end to Part I of this study and will thereafter guide Part II’s exploration of the more overt development of historical periodization from the decades around 1600 until the dawn of the eighteenth century. As with so many other aspects of the rich bibliographical scholarship that flourished in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, second-order identifications of textual transmission as transmission confirm that the much-invoked (and oft-abused) antecedents of modern historicism cannot simply be ascribed to the early modern discovery of the pastness of the past per se, whether classical or otherwise. For such insights were not merely predicated upon the binary differentiation of past and present. Rather, they also required finer micro-level distinctions between one past and another—and hence a multitude of comparative judgments. As Vulcanius distinguished between antiquitas and the aetas Isidori, he also felt the need to declare Isidore’s utility superior (or at least not inferior) to similar encyclopedic endeavors executed by Varro and other inhabitants of the canonical classical past. Yet distinctions of this nature did not completely close the door to connections and continuities. Late humanists scholars were not simply interested in reading the sixth and seventh centuries in addition to the second or the first; instead,
they also sought to understand how readers very different from themselves had read the second and first centuries in the seventh or the sixth. Hence, in far subtler pluperfect mode, we are perhaps best advised to locate the origins of historical periodizing in that apprehension of the uses of the past in the past. This pluperfect vision was made arrestingly clear by sedimentary layers of texts and nomina alike, whose numbers (in Isaac Casaubon’s perceptive words) sometimes seemed to approach the infinite. Just how this story unfolded will comprise the subject of Part II of this study, devoted to the rise of historical periodization out of the problems wrought by temporal disjunction.
CHAPTER FOUR

Universal History and Historical Plurality:

The Discovery of Postclassical Time

Among figures of ostensibly epochal significance in seventeenth-century Europe, few rank higher than René Descartes or Francis Bacon. More specifically, no two individuals are perhaps more frequently invoked when tracing new challenges to humanist learning in general and early modern historical culture in particular, especially that of the pedantically compilatory sort discussed throughout Part I of this study. Whereas humanists had attacked sometimes-stereotyped notions of scholasticism in the age of Erasmus and his contemporaries, self-conscious moderns or moderni like Bacon and Descartes attacked a confused amalgam of the two—itself often depicted as a kind of late-sixteenth-century normal science. While Descartes professed his distaste for Jesuitical theological speculation, he simultaneously questioned humanist practices of historical reading, and the theory of exemplarity that undergirded them. If history were a conversation with the dead, literal travel in the flesh could facilitate a more useful conversation with the living, and against those admirers of the ancients, Descartes the modern famously declared his own historical period “just as developed, and as productive of good minds, as any previous age.”

Thus Descartes famously indicted history with a self-confidently presentist rhetoric. Even more damningly, in a far less noticed passage of his Discourse on Method, his very first solitary

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musing offered an apology for solitary cogitation itself, and so took indirect aim at that seemingly antithetical model upon which so much of the historical scholarship examined in Part I was based. One of Descartes’ very first axioms held there to be “less perfection in works composed of several parts, and made by the hands of a variety of contributors, than in those on which only one person has worked.”

As Descartes saw it, “ancient cities,” developed slowly and in ad hoc spurts, paled in comparison to the newly engineered towns of the modern world, designed symmetrically and ex nihilo. The accretive, compilatory, collaborative, and temporally heterogeneous were thus patently inferior to a supposedly individual process of intellectual creation ex nihilo. Perhaps nothing constituted a harsher rejection of the humanist historical culture that defined so much of sixteenth-century scholarship. Yet even Descartes, despite his proffered iconoclasm, could hardly refrain from grudgingly accepting the exemplarity inherent in the past, admitting in an aside that the “memorable deeds of history” could uplift the mind and fortify the judgment.

Similarly, another self-conscious modern (albeit one whose convictions were diametrically opposed to the anti-collaborative tendencies of Cartesianism) likewise could not shake off all the practices of the old humanism that undergirded the past’s exemplarity. Notwithstanding his opposition to the old erudition, Francis Bacon nevertheless deemed the accretive and the compilatory critical to his new science. When conjuring his utopian New Atlantis, he placed his so-called “Compilers” at the very center of Salomon’s House (alongside those rather more romantic sounding “Miners,” “Pioneers,” “Mystery Men” and “Merchants of Light”), charging them with sorting the experiments of others into “titles and tables” that could

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367 Descartes, *Discourse on Method*, 11.
368 Descartes, *Discourse on Method*, 8.
extract “observations and axioms” from the raw stuff of empiricism.\(^{369}\) In a manner that would have made his humanistic predecessors proud, Bacon carved out a textual space for the seemingly pedantic and encyclopedic indexing of empirical discovery.\(^{370}\)

As is often the case, self-confident endorsements of a new avant-garde by no means signaled the wholesale repudiation of old practices and assumptions. Recognition of this fact constitutes a key theme of this chapter. For Bacon and Descartes and others who counted themselves enemies of traditional erudition wrestled with a problem that—albeit from a different angle—also occupied the energies of humanist historical culture itself. Granted, historia and its discontents helped add considerable fuel to the Cartesian and Baconian fires. Yet far from simply promoting the denial of historical exemplarity, or the replacement of history’s auctoritas with presentism, this parallel problem also stimulated a newfound exploration of the meaning of historia itself—and ultimately, attempts at cutting and compartmentalizing it into coherent and more manageable sections. Part I of this study examined how notions of an exemplary past—stimulated and supported by large-scale efforts to recover as much of antiquitas as possible—confronted the troubling fact that a unitary vision of this past was ultimately chimerical. As not a few historical scholars came to realize, the past contained multitudes, and was riven by breaks and turning points that rendered certain resultant fractions or segments of said past more canonical and exemplary than others. In Cicero’s famous formulation, repeated almost ad nauseam by many an early modern humanist, history was the “teacher of life” or magistra

\(^{369}\) Francis Bacon, New Atlantis, ed. Jerry Weinberger (Wheeling, IL, 1980), 81.
vitae. Yet the past that furnished the material of historia did not speak with a single voice; rather, it featured multiple magistrae, who often said very different things with differing levels of perceived auctoritas.

In the chapters preceding this, we have referred to this discovery and its attendant anxieties as the apprehension of temporal disjunction—a discovery of sharp breaks, ruptures, and divergences in what might be called the feel of different historical milieux and periods, teased out before they were explicitly identified as milieux and periods. The thesis of this chapter is simple: in the decades around 1600, scholars responded to the quandary of temporal disjunction by embracing a nascent vision of temporal plurality—a vision which more than anything else set the stage for the emergence of historical periodization over the course of the next century. Rather than manifesting itself as an external challenge to the culture of historicity, such as that of a Baconian or Cartesian variety, this quandary of temporal disjunction originated from within the bounds of historia itself. As we saw, it was a conundrum whose fruition was based not on abstract theorizing or epistemic shift; rather, it was nourished by the compilatory and accretive tools, methods, and reading practices of historical scholarship itself. Both its problems and solutions alike were expressed in the workaday tasks of scholarly practice.

Hence, simultaneous with the Baconian or Cartesian challenge (or rather a bit before it), there arose an implicit challenge to the temporal unity that made historical exemplarity possible in the first place. As argued here, the story of this tension and concomitant attempts to resolve it—a story that involves names far more celebrated in the history of scholarship than the history of ideas—proved perhaps just as consequential as those new "isms" (from Cartesianism and Baconianism to Lockeanism, Pyrrhonism, and Newtonianism) that so transformed the history of

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371 On early modern theories of historical exemplarity, see especially Nadel, “Philosophy of History Before Historicism.”
thought over the course of the seventeenth century. Unlike the story of such assorted “isms,” it is a story that has rarely been told. However, it was a story of real and substantive change, albeit one couched in both the rhetoric and the reality of profound continuity. Furthermore, as argued here, modern historical periodization could not have emerged without this apprehension of temporal plurality, even if the ultimate species of periodizing that triumphed in the eighteenth century and beyond frequently assumed a normative stance that denied the very vision of plurality that had first stimulated it.

As befits a study of periodizing, the following pages cluster near temporal moments that have long been identified as cultural-intellectual turning points. We stand at that moment Michel Foucault famously identified as a shift in *episteme*, from a sixteenth-century world ruled by categories of confluence and similitude to what he deemed a Classical epoch, whose discourses of representation in turn paved the way for what Foucault posited as still another rupture—that is, the creation of the human sciences in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.\(^{372}\) Perhaps nothing better exemplifies the Foucauldian sixteenth century than those traditions of bibliographic universality, with which we began this study in Chapter 1. Yet as we shall see, that encyclopedic world persisted in many surprising ways throughout the seventeenth century and beyond, and provided much of the impetus for the periodizing impulse that concerns us here.

Similarly, we hover not far from the beginning of that process identified by Reinhart Koselleck as a shift in orientation from past to future. As Koselleck argued, a turn towards futurity destroyed the static stability of the past, not only replacing eschatological prognostication with political calculation, but also demonstrating that narrating history of the

past depended above all upon one’s relative position to it. Yet long before Koselleck, Foucault, and many others sought to theorize this shift, the specific history of historical thought had long found itself linked to broader prologues to Enlightenment, modernity, and the like—prologues that often trumpeted inevitable teloi. Specifically, the world examined in this chapter directly preceded the late-seventeenth-century world that Paul Hazard, writing in the 1930s, famously identified as one of crisis—a crisis purportedly engendered in no small fashion by skeptical challenges to the efficacy of historia and its critical practices. And it stands but several decades before that moment christened by Marc Bloch as “the decisive moment in the history of the critical method.” For Bloch, this was the year 1681, when the Benedictine Jean Mabillon published his *De re diplomatica*—that founding manifesto in the history of paleography and itself a creative response to the problem of epistemic doubt raised by both Cartesianism and Pyrrhonism. Yet as was sometimes the case, stories of this nature (especially those that partook of Hazard’s “crisis”) were predicated upon a crucial slippage, which conflated the history of historical method with an emancipatory history of free-thought. And in not a few of these formulations, Bayle’s *Dictionnaire* and Spinoza’s *Tractatus* often took their respective places alongside the likes of Hobbes and La Peyrère, and scholarship was all too easily confused with skepticism. As we shall see in the following chapter, this world of ostensible crisis also produced responses to the paradoxes of historicity that were in many respects deeply traditional.

However, while all theorizations of such turning points offer diverse and rich insights into the transition that we (periodizers ourselves) often identify as a shift from early modernity to

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373 Reinhart Koselleck, *Vergangene Zukunft.*
modernity proper, unadulterated by any adjectival modifier, it is worth noting that few such
theses have attempted to historicize the logic of the turning point itself. At the same time, they
have largely neglected the manner in which concepts of temporal plurality and multiplicity
subtly affected perceptions of the past. Yet understanding this move toward temporal plurality—
from singular past to dueling and divergent pasts—is all the more important given that a
developed sense of historical periodization was itself a necessary precondition for the self-
definition of modernity as modernity. Nowhere is this clearer than in discourses of eighteenth-
century Enlightenment—i.e., in the century directly following the contexts examined here. As
Dan Edelstein has argued, Enlightenment was above all an exercise in narrative building. At its
core, it was a narrative built upon the logic of periodization. For as Edelstein pithily declares,
“More than anything, the Enlightenment seems to have been the period when people thought
they were living in an age of Enlightenment.”376

Taking this argument one step further, the present study seeks to demonstrate that this
Enlightened narrative (built in no small fashion upon the tripartite schema of
ancient/medieval/modern) depended upon templates of periodization whose origins cannot be
considered enlightened under any conventional, historically specific meaning of the term. This is
a singular irony. But as long as we continue to invest such intellectual genealogies with
significance (and continued handwringing over the meaning of Enlightenment at the dawn of the
twenty-first century confirms that we do), we would do well to furnish them with a history,
however surprising its contents. Here it is worth quoting a memorable admonition of Herbert
Butterfield, offered in his pioneering mid-century study of the history of scholarship, Man on His
Past. For Butterfield, who likewise elucidated the category of Whig history, the seemingly

376 See Edelstein, The Enlightenment, 73.
familiar beginnings of modern historical thought yielded origins that were in fact anything but familiar; rather, such a search for origins not only led one into the thorny thickets of classical and biblical scholarship, but also revealed “a fantastic miscellany of strange and unexpected things which, after being kicked out by the door, are summoned back by the window.”

Nowhere is this “fantastic miscellany” more evident than in the late humanist discovery of temporal plurality—derived from many a late antique and medieval curiosity that self-confident moderns may have supposed “kicked out by the door” with finality.

The preceding chapters have traced how early modern scholars grappled with various species of temporal disjunction, from the paradoxes of canon-formation and distinctions between the pagan and the Christian to the problems posed by textual fragments. Of course, these were far from the only domains of disjunction and fissure to bedevil early modern scholarship. Yet when taken together, these assorted problem sites demonstrate just how intensely scholars grappled with the troubling fact that not all moments of the past flowed smoothly or coherently into one another. As has been traced in the preceding chapters, nowhere was this more apparent than in the vexed transition from the classical to what we might now understand as the postclassical—that is, from the bounded world of classical Greco-Roman antiquity, alien yet exemplary, to a confused post hoc world that faced denigration or disapproval even as its comparative closeness to European modernity (not least in the realms of politics and religion) won implicit recognition. Hence, while the following chapter will trace the explicit articulation of periodization in the latter half of the seventeenth century and beyond, the present chapter is concerned with a crucial

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intermediate step between temporal disjunction and temporal division—namely, the discovery
(*avant la lettre*, of course) of postclassical time.

As Part II of this study seeks to demonstrate, the emergence of modern historical periodizing did not begin and end with the apprehension of temporal difference. After all, unmitigated difference would have rendered periodizing a logical impossibility, as periodizing required a macro-level narrative of commensurability *within* which change and difference could manifest themselves intelligibly. It was not enough to recognize (whether correctly or incorrectly) that large gaps separated the classical from the postclassical. On the contrary, periodization necessitated robust visions of postclassical time itself—one not merely reducible to the decline, absence, or inverse of the classical. Yet the story of “how we got here” with respect to modern temporal periodizing is hardly one of teleological inevitability. Rather, very specific developments in the decades around 1600 made periodizing both possible and palatable, although such developments have themselves often been marginalized in traditional accounts of the history of ideas. Ironically enough, a key moment in the history of periodization has long been obscured or effaced by the periodizing impulse itself.

Moreover, disjunction in the sense used throughout Part I tells but half the story. Temporal disjunction was never far from technologies and ideologies of temporal continuation and consolidation—themselves formalized many centuries earlier during that transition from the classical to the postclassical. While such resources did not necessarily erase or elide temporal distinctions, they constituted a potent language for linking various *tempora* to one another. Given its significance to postclassical time, and the role it played in discourses of temporal disjunction, this chapter begins by analyzing the early modern uses of the most important of these resources—namely, universal history or *historia universalis*, associated above all with the
chronicle of Eusebius-Jerome. Although *historia universalis* possessed deep ancient roots, it crystalized in late antiquity, and has been touched upon throughout Part I. Indeed, *historia universalis* constituted a fitting counterpart to the dream of a universal bibliography or *bibliotheca universalis*, with which we began Chapter I. And in many respects, universal history was derived from the same world that formalized such practices of bibliography. Even the personal connections between the two genres are notable. Although bio-bibliographical compendia *de viris illustribus* and *historia universalis* cannot claim Jerome as their direct originator, he more than anyone else was responsible for transmitting both to the Latin West. Textual developments around the turn of the fifth century occupied a central role in the workings of *historia*, and went on to inform the rise of temporal divisibility around the turn of the seventeenth.

More specifically, precisely when scholars began to extend and ramify the purview of the past, they turned to universal history as the standard default for structuring that past. In doing so, scholars in the decades around 1600 attempted to fashion something new out of very old materials. For the plurality that promoted difference within a larger rubric of continuity and commensurability grew out of the rich tradition of *historia universalis*—itself ironically born in the same late epoch that seventeenth-century periodizing gradually sliced away from what it took to be the genuinely ancient. Moreover, *historia universalis* was very much at the forefront of scholarly achievements in the early years of the seventeenth century, thanks especially to Joseph Scaliger’s systematic reconstruction and exposition of the Eusebian chronicle tradition in his massive *Thesaurus temporum* of 1606. As a result, the story of the invention of postclassical

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time must begin with *historia universalis*, perhaps the most curious of phenomena that (to use Butterfield’s phrase) must be “summoned back by the window.” Granted, *historia universalis*—designed to illustrate the master plan of Christological salvation throughout world history—was long imagined as antithetical to a modern secular periodizing that denied the validity of eschatological or soteriological premises. Over half a century ago, Wallace Ferguson argued that modern historical periodizing took so long to develop precisely because it remained trapped in the straightjacket of universal sacred history, especially as expounded in Protestant university curricula since the days of Melanchthon and his successors.\(^{379}\) However, these assertions of discontinuity between universal sacred history and modern periodization (frequently linked to narratives of incipient secularization) mask the latter’s profound intellectual debts to the former. As strange as it may seem, *historia universalis*—born in the depths of late antiquity as a means of visualizing temporal unity—played a powerful role facilitating visions of temporal divisibility in early modernity.

We begin with a brief survey of the early modern uses of *historia universalis*, before examining how the apprehension of postclassical time grew out of this tradition, and surveying how two representative late humanist scholars (the Huguenot Isaac Casaubon and the Dutch Arminian G.J. Vossius) used the tools and templates of universal time to conceptualize both the nature and limits of the postclassical—thereby setting the stage for their successors to concoct far more formal schemes of temporal division.

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\(^{379}\) See Wallace Ferguson, *The Renaissance in Historical Thought: Five Centuries of Interpretation* (Cambridge, MA, 1948), esp. 75-7.
It its most literal sense, *historia universalis* functioned as a foolproof mechanism of continuity and continuation: like practitioners of *de viris illustribus*, chroniclers of universal history simply added new yearly entries to the old, continually carrying into the present a story that had begun in the distant past. Throughout the Middle Ages, if one sought to produce a record of events in Carolingian Francia, Ottonian Bavaria or Anglo-Norman England, one built a highly particularized history upon the macroscopic skeleton offered by Eusebius-Jerome—a suitable “prologue” that stretched all the way from Creation to the fall of Rome. All histories, however local, came encased in a supposedly universal shell.

In more subtle fashion, this tendency towards continuation and consolidation marked several allied genres that also flourished in that transition from the classical to the postclassical. Consider the case of Roman history or *historia Romana*, whose status as a unique historical genre is often overlooked. It too was given to continual updating, especially by those who eagerly sought to co-opt the Roman mantle. In the fourth century, the abbreviator Eutropius produced a concise epitome or *Breviarium* of Roman history that drew heavily upon Livy. Several centuries later, the Carolingian historian Paul the Deacon continued the *Breviarium*, extending Roman history well into the Middle Ages. Finally, around the turn of the millennium, the Lombard Landolfus Sagax continued this Roman account further still, carrying his narrative past Charlemagne and adding new materials on the Eastern emperors. Each new account took care to copy its earlier installments. And so, from Livy and Eutropius to Paul the Deacon and
Landolfus Sagax, *historia Romana* formed a single continuous chain, fused together through the apparatus of the manuscript codex.\(^{380}\)

In 1569, Pierre Pithou published an edition of this composite Roman history. Not only was Pithou well versed in classical scholarship, but he was also keenly interested in the postclassical world, as he edited Carolingian texts and carried out pioneering work on medieval jurisprudence. Indeed, Pithou belonged to a rich sixteenth-century French juridical tradition, which—as charted by Donald Kelley and others—was inspired above all by Jacques Cujas, pioneer of the *mos gallicus*. Together with such figures as his brother Francis, Claude Dupuy, Paul Petau, and Pierre Daniel (whose important work on Servius was discussed in the previous chapter), Pithou amassed a large collection of medieval manuscripts, which he and his fellow French scholars used for their pioneering reconstruction of medieval textual culture writ large.\(^{381}\)

Hence, it was no accident that Pithou turned his editorial energies to medieval continuations of ancient textual traditions, bringing to his project a focus on the codicological technologies that facilitated the extension of such traditions across the centuries. Fittingly enough Pithou christened his continually expanding Roman narrative the *Historia miscella* or *Mixed History*,

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\(^{380}\) On the uses of codices to form continuous histories, see for instance Rosamond McKitterick, *Perceptions of the Past in the Early Middle Ages* (Notre Dame, 2006).

\(^{381}\) For an overview of Pithou’s contributions to medieval scholarship, see Donald Kelley, *Foundations*, 241-70. On the library amassed by Dupuy, an essential source for postclassical studies in France, see Jérôme Delatour, *Une bibliothèque humaniste au temps des guerres de religion: les livres de Claude Dupuy: d’après l’inventaire dressé par le libraire Denis Duval (1595)* (Paris, 1998). For another compilation of medieval texts executed in the spirit of Pithou, which gathered together materials on the Crusades, see Jacques Bongars, *Gesta Dei per Francos, siue Orientalivm expeditionvm, et regni Francorvm Hierosolimitani historia a variis, sed illius æui scriptoribus, litteris commendata* (Hanover, 1611). See also A. Carlotta Dionisotti, “From Stephanus to Du Cange: Glossary Stories,” *Revue d’histoire des textes* 14-15 (1984-5), 303-36. Describing the primacy of this scholarly movement in late sixteenth-century France, Dionisotti remarks at pp.325-6 that “the centre of the scholarly stage was held by the study of later antiquity, coloured by a search for national roots: from the Gothic law-codes to the Carolingian Capitularies, from Hilary of Poitiers to the Gallican Councils, Salvian, Sidonius: the school of Cujas as developed by the brothers Pithou.”
aptly distilling its heterogeneous contents. In his preface, he stressed the need to absorb histories from all eras of the past, and hence to expand one’s purview beyond those “most polite and most elegant authors” of classical Rome.\textsuperscript{382} Moreover, Pithou’s very title page explicitly highlighted the composite and “miscellaneous” character of \textit{historia Romana}, as it listed out all the sources—both ancient and medieval—from which Paul the Deacon and Landolfus had “collected” their patchwork compilation.\textsuperscript{383}

Yet Pithou was hardly alone in executing such a project. To cite but one precedent, in 1513 the French scholar-confessor Guilelmus Parvus or Guillaume Petit edited a version of the world chronicle of Sigebert of Gembloux, itself one of many medieval “continuations” of Eusebius-Jerome. Eusebius had famously divided the \textit{Chronicon} into distinct columns for various \textit{gentes} or “peoples,” and throughout the Middle Ages, Franks, Lombards, Saxons and others once relegated to the margins of the Greco-Roman world eagerly affixed their own columns to a compilatory tradition that had inconveniently omitted them. In this sense, they created sophisticated comparative histories through the skilled manipulation of \textit{mise-en-page}, highlighting how textual transmission through time also prompted rewriting across spatial and geographical boundaries. However, while the British were conspicuously absent from Sigebert’s original text, Petit printed Sigebert’s continuation by the late-twelth-century Norman monk Robert of Torigni, who had simply interpolated various British entries into the larger “universal” chronicle tradition. Appropriately enough, these British portions were derived from none other than the twelfth century Geoffrey of Monmouth, whose pseudo-historical \textit{Historia regum

\textsuperscript{382} Pierre Pithou, \textit{Historia miscella} (Basel, 1569), fol.2r-3r.

Britanniae, complete with its apocryphal story of Trojan-British origins, had long cast a shadow of fabrication over the British past.  

In this fashion, early modern scholars helped incorporate a rather parochial medieval pseudo-history into a late antique model of world history, deploying a strategy of amplification and continuation that itself flourished throughout the postclassical world. Ironically, four centuries earlier Geoffrey of Monmouth had himself incorporated entries from the Eusebian Chronicon into his forged British history, establishing specious parallels between Trojan, Roman, and biblical pasts and his own narrative of the early Britons. And just as it had proved intuitive to Robert of Torigni, such comparative layering was hardly foreign to early modern readers of Geoffrey. A telling example of such response is found in Cambridge, Sidney Sussex MS 75, an early-thirteenth-century manuscript of the Historia annotated throughout in what appears to be a sixteenth-century hand. Such marginalia reveals how Geoffrey’s history could not only be read as an account of British origines, but also functioned as a window into a deeper, more universal, ancient past – conjured from that fusion of the classical and biblical first formalized in Eusebius’ Chronicon. For the annotator showed especial interest in Geoffrey’s excerpts of “universal” history, flagging his references to the founding of Rome, the life of Homer, and biblical figures like Saul, Samuel, and Isaiah.  

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modern readers absorbed *historia universalis* through the unlikely conduit of a forged twelfth-century British history.

But this process was a two-way street. While universal history and its allied genres were assembled in piecemeal and accretive fashion, the basic building blocks of *historia universalis* were often simultaneously peeled back and deconstructed. The reading of universal history often necessitated the simultaneous deployment of aggregation and disaggregation. And nowhere is the quotidian coexistence of both clearer than in the Swiss humanist Heinrich Glareanus’ encounter with the chronicle tradition. An associate of Erasmus, best known for his contributions to musical theory, Glareanus was but one of many humanists to annotate his personal copy of the *Chronicon* of Eusebius, which he digested in a crisp new Stephanus edition complete with additions from Jerome, Prosper of Aquitaine, Matthias Palmerius and others whose entries extended the chronicle all the way up to the Renaissance.\(^{386}\)

First and foremost, Glareanus’ reading underscored the divisibility of time, as he marked the key turning points of universal history and outfitted his copy with small protruding tabs on which he recorded everything from *Troia capta* or “Troy Captured” to Solomon’s construction of the Temple and the date of the first Olympiad.\(^{387}\) For Glareanus, historical turning points doubled as bookish finding-aids. But at the same time he also obsessively differentiated universal history’s sedimentary layers: whereas the running title throughout Stephanus’ edition merely

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\(^{387}\) For instance, at fol.30r Glareanus appends a tab reading “Egressus Israel”; at fol.40r, another tab announces “Troia capta;” his tab at fol.44r reads “Aedificatio Templi I sub Salomone;” and his tab at fol.54r reads “Olympias Prima.” These signposts continue up to the birth of Christ.
read *Chronicon Eusebii*, regardless of whether the *Chronicon* found itself in ancient Persia or medieval Germany, Glareanus assiduously added the name of each relevant continuator throughout, repeatedly crossing out *Eusebii* and changing the running title to read *Chronicon Hieronymi, Chronicon Prosperi, or Chronicon Palmerii*, depending on the years covered.\(^\text{388}\)

Finally, as Eusebius’ continuators reached farther into the future, his notes became increasingly additive and idiosyncratic. In the year 719, where the chronicle recorded that “the Germans were converted to proper faith in Christ,” Glareanus commented with the supposed benefit of hindsight that “today, [they possess] a miraculous faith in the Lord.”\(^\text{389}\) And when this composite chronicle reached the fifteenth century, he inserted a lengthy entry on how a certain Johannes Gutenberg had invented nothing less than a *novam scribendi formam* or “a new form of writing.”\(^\text{390}\) Finally, in the right margin next to the year 1488, he added an event of more dubious world historical significance, jotting down *hoc anno Glareanus natus est*, or “in this year Glareanus was born.”\(^\text{391}\) Although the proffered unity of *historia universalis* necessitated deconstruction, it remained a labile framework for historical addition and accretion, even in the humorously insignificant realm of personal detail.

\(^{388}\) Eusebius, *Chronicon*, fol.96v-11r: Beginning at fol.96v, the last page of Eusebius proper before the beginning of Jerome’s continuation, Glareanus writes “Eusebii” on the same page next to “Chronicon.” Meanwhile, he crosses out the printed “Eusebii” on the corresponding recto (fol.97r), instead writing “Hieronymi Chronicon.” Then, at every following recto from 97r to 101r, Glareanus writes “Hieronymi” after repeatedly crossing out “Eusebii.” At fol.102r-107r, Glareanus identifies Prosper of Aquitaine’s continuation, crossing out “Eusebii” on each recto and writing “Prosperi” instead. At fol.108r-111r, Glareanus crosses out “Eusebii” and adds “Palmerii,” while from this point onwards he writes “Palmerii flo,” until he eventually stops correcting for continuations and simply lets “Eusebii” stand.

\(^{389}\) Eusebius, *Chronicon*, 120v: At the year 719, the *Chronicon* observes “Germani ad rectam fidem Christi convuertuntur.” Glareanus adds in the margin “Hodie mirabilem domini fidem.”

\(^{390}\) Eusebius, *Chronicon*, fol.151v.

\(^{391}\) Eusebius, *Chronicon*, fol.170r: In the right margin for the year 1488 Glareanus writes “Hoc anno Glareanus natus est.”
As the case of Glareanus suggests, universal history and its allied genres were *ipso facto* concerned with historical turning points, and so they furnished a rich source for meditations on such twists and turns in humanist scholarship. Hence, it is perhaps a singular irony that the *reading* of universal history, committed above all to bringing all history together, furnished the tools for peeling it apart. And it is for this reason that so much of the discovery of temporal plurality (and with it the apprehension of postclassical time) took place at the level of reading, as opposed to more overt acts of authorial creation. From the working papers and *adversaria* of well-known scholars to the marginalia of anonymous readers, the digestion of texts facilitated encounters with the multiplicity (and divisibility) of *tempora*—a multiplicity often occluded in more formal specimens of textual production.

Moreover, much of this implicit theorizing took place in the reading of genres whose early modern vitality would have made the compilers of late antiquity proud. Universal history often found its way into easily digestible epitomes and compendia, which condensed the chronicle tradition into slimmer, more user-friendly volumes. When that consummate early modern reader Gabriel Harvey read Achilles Gasser’s bare bones *Epitome* of universal history, he devoted especial attention to the contours of key turning points.\(^{392}\) In many cases, Harvey simply described such moments in Gasser’s compendium as “noteworthy” or *notabile*. In doing so, he flagged in the margins such important historical inflections as “Caesar, perpetual dictator,” “the first division of the empire,” “the first Christian Caesars” (next to Gasser’s contention that Philip the Arab was a Christian), and “Alaric demolishes Rome” (after the Gothic sack in

Similarly, following the birth of Christ, which Gasser (in eminently traditional fashion) christened the start of his sixth age or *sexta aetas*, Harvey added a prominent large-lettered *Epocha Christiana* at the top of the page.

But Harvey saved his most florid and involved annotations for a key historical mutation within this *epocha Christiana*: he devoted particular attention to the demise of the Roman Empire in the West, and the manner in which it affected his native land. Switching from Latin to English, his annotations noted such calamitous events as “the invasion of the Scotts, and Picts into the north of Britain.” Elsewhere, summing up this moment of “barbarian” invasion and resultant conflagration, both in Britain and elsewhere, he remarked with high drama: “Commonly troblesom, and busy tymes, at on tyme, in sundry places.” And in defining the tenor of this age, he bemoaned those “divers terrible and fierce warres of Barbarous nations, upon more ciuill people.” In this fashion, Harvey not only accepted some key turning points in universal history, while depicting them hyperbolically as a global clash of civilization and barbarism, but he also took an explicitly comparative view, using such designations as

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393 Achilles Gasser, *Historiarum et chronicorum totius mundi epitome* (Strasbourg, 1538), now British Library C.60.e.13: at p.97, Harvey records “Caesar, perpetuus Dictator” and writes in the entry itself “notabile”; at p.112, below Gasser’s entry for M. Antonius Verus, he writes “Imperii prima Dichotomia” and then adds in left margin “Imperium per duos iam primum administratum”; at Gasser’s entry for Philip the Arab at p.120, he underlines “Hii primi Christiani Cesares fuisse,” writes “notabile,” and then comments in the left margin “Primi Christiani Caesares;” at p.140, Harvey highlights Gasser’s relevant entry for Alaric, writing “notabile” and “Alaricus Romam diruit.”

394 Gasser, *Epitome*, 101: interestingly enough, on the page directly preceding this (p.100), Harvey added a prominently displayed bio-bibliography for the Roman poet Propertius, which announces “Propertius, Maecenatis (Augusto charissimi) Ovidii et Tibulli amicus a Quintiliano laudatus, poeta elegans, obiit anno aetatis suae 42. Christi circiter 30.”

395 Gasser, *Epitome*, 144: Harvey underlines “Scoti et Picti totam Britaniae ab Aquilone partem, cedentibus Rhomanis, capessunt” and writes at the top of the page “The invasion of the Scotts, and Picts into the north of Britain.”

396 Gasser, *Epitome*, 144.
“commonly,” “sundry,” and “divers” to link the specifics of British history to the periodizing signposts of universal time.

These “busy tymes” of late antiquity and the early Middle Ages furnished a wealth of world-historical turning points. This is especially clear in the *Chronographiae libri quatuor* of Gilbert Génébrard, the French Benedictine and partisan of the Catholic League best known for his Hebraic scholarship. Génébrard also tried his hand at chronology and universal history, and in his four-book “chronography” he made generous use of medieval sources, from Sigebert and Regino of Prum to William of Nangis and Otto von Freising. At the beginning of his fourth and final book, which began with Charlemagne, Génébrard spoke in rather positive terms of why this Carolingian moment constituted an epochal turning point, remarking “we shall begin this final book from Charlemagne, because with his imperium the kingdom of the Church obtained its greatest increases, especially in our North.” Thanks to Carolingian expansionism, from Germany, Saxony, and Denmark to Poland, Bohemia, Bulgaria, and Muscovy, formerly “perfidious and barbarous” gentes had begun to taste the “sweetness of Christ.” Thereafter, Génébrard credited this period with “marked and memorable mutations” (*insignes atque memorabiles mutationes*) felt across the entire world, “which can rightly claim a specific book for themselves.” However, Génébrard elected to leave such historical specificity to others,

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preferring to transform those “marvelous vicissitudes of the ages” (*mirabiles illae saeculorum vicissitudines*) into a more macroscopic *historia universalis*.

Whereas Génébrard’s chronography constituted a highly elaborate attempt to map “marked and memorable mutations” in the historical record, including the inauguration of a new medieval world order, others (albeit in much more *ad hoc* fashion) took up Génébrard’s call for historical specificity, using the technologies of the chronicle tradition to document aspects of that great mutation or turning point that culminated a new postclassical order. Consider, for instance, an idiosyncratic sixteenth-century manuscript chronicle (now Leiden Universiteitsbibliotheek MS Vulcanianus 87) that survives in the collection of Bonaventura Vulcanius, whose fragment hunting we surveyed in the previous chapter. While not in Vulcanius’ own hand, the chronicle traversed a historical world that occupied much of Vulcanius’ scholarly energy. Billed as a chronicle of Roman emperors, and composed of dates taken from Hubert Goltzius and Antonius Contius, it extended from Julius Caesar to the year 548. Yet while it assiduously recorded the dates of each Roman emperor, it also charted that vexed transition from *historia Romana* to the history of new non-Roman *gentes*—or, as we might understand it, from Roman antiquity to the post-Roman Middle Ages.

Hints of this transition emerge early. Between the years 262 and 263 (a particularly crowded time for emperors amid Rome’s supposed third-century crisis), the chronicler inserted the first avowedly “non-Roman” entry in the otherwise blank right column, recording the

`relinquimus. Interim quia mirabiles illae saeculorum vicissitudines in animis pingere possunt universae historiae breuem quandam imaginem, ad quam adumbrandam comparatur Chronographia, priusquam pergimus, lubet id illustrare exemplo et duum mille annorum res memorabiliores per singulos centenarios insigni humanarum rerum inconstantiae documento exortas attingere.”`
emergence of the Franks. Such right-hand non-Roman entries only became more frequent as the chronicle marched forward into the fourth and fifth centuries—where parallel to the continued succession of Roman imperatores is found everything from the “beginning of the Frankish kingdom” under Pharamond to the establishment of the Salic Law and the appearance of Attila the Hun. Meanwhile, in addition to iterating emperors, it augmented the left-hand Roman column with a more ominous series of entries, beginning in 410 with the announcement “Rome first captured by the Goths,” and continuing with successive captures of the city. Finally, this makeshift chronicle ended with a terse yet telling juxtaposition: while its entry for the unfortunately named Romulus Augustulus recorded that he was “the last of the Roman emperors until Charlemagne,” several lines below the opposite column offered a telling harbinger of new political realities to come, as its prominent closing entry for Clovis described the French monarch as the Primus Rex Christianus or “first Christian king.”

As MS Vulcanianus 87 makes clear, early modern chronicles continued to function as compilations in the most literal of senses, assembled from a liberal combination of manuscript and print that often “recycled” snippets of the latter medium back into the former. Just as such

398 Leiden Universiteitsbibliotheek MS Vulcanianus 87, fol.2r: Between the years 262 and 263, the first note in the right column reads “Francos, qui olim Sicambri, postea Menapii dicti, consederant ad eum locum quo Mare Rhenus influit, sibi ascivit, atque Imperium apud hos Decennio possedit...”

399 Leiden Universiteitsbibliotheek MS Vulcanianus 87, fol.3v. The entry for the Franks reads: “Francorum Regnum circa hoc tempus Initium capit. Rege Pharamundo Regn. Annos. ii.” Directly below another note reads “422. Lex Salica hoc tempore condita.” And directly below this we find an entry for Attila the Hun in the year 454.

400 Leiden Universiteitsbibliotheek MS Vulcanianus 87, fol.3v: the first of such notes reads “Roma Primo Capta: a Gothis,” while the second, around the year 455, records “Roma II. Capta. a Wandaleis.” At 4v, the very final two entries of the chronicle, for the years 543 and 548 respectively, read “Urbs Roma III. Capta a Gothis” and “Roma IV. Capta a Gothis.”

compilations could highlight a particular “turning point,” so they often used the global underpinnings of *historia universalis* to localize their narratives, and produce highly particularized *national* histories. This was precisely the approach taken by the seventeenth-century English antiquary William Dugdale, who also indulged an appetite for makeshift chronicle assemblage. Dugdale, who also compiled a comprehensive *Antiquities of Warwickshire*, possessed a keen interest in the history of medieval England, and spent much of his time working in Oxford’s new Bodleian Library. Among his surviving manuscripts is an ambitious chronicle that—although plainly centered in medieval England—stretched from the birth of Christ all the way to the year 1624. In a fitting example of material-textual recycling that mirrored his recycling of a more textual-historical variety, Dugdale composed his chronicle in the blank spaces of a half-filled theological commonplace book kept by none other than John Dee. As revealed by Dugdale’s elaborately constructed introductory table of abbreviations, he employed everything from the chronicle of Marianus Scotus (complete with its Bodleian shelf-mark) and Génébrard’s aforementioned chronology to the histories of William of Malmesbury and Matthew Paris, printed at London in 1596 and 1640 respectively. Like Glareanus, he too outfitted his chronicle with book tabs. These protuberant adornments emphasized his particular brand of *historia universalis*: whereas the first tab marked the birth of Christ on the very first

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403 Oxford Bodleian MS Dugdale 24: Dee’s crossed-out excerpts are seen throughout, under such headings as “Theologia” and “Scriptura.”
folio, the second, placed at the twenty-first folio, arrived already at Harvey’s “busy tymes” and read *Saxonum adventus*—fixing the arrival of the Saxons in Britain in the fifth century.  

Rather frenetically, in the space of but twenty-one folios Dugdale transformed his chronicle from a “universal” history of ancient and late antique Christianity, centered in those capitals of the new religion like Rome, Antioch, Constantinople, and Jerusalem, into an avowedly national history of Britain. As he reached this latter phase, he layered time by the order of books, fully meshing *ordo temporum* and *ordo librorum*. In his entry for the year 689, he recorded that Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *Historia regum Britanniae* concluded at this time with the death of the Welsh king Cadwaladr. Yet Dugdale then added that Geoffrey himself flourished far later, in the twelfth century under King Stephen, and that even more recently, his history had been printed at Heidelberg in 1587. Similarly, in his entry for the year 1100, he reconstructed the layers of the chronicle tradition, noting that here ended both Bede’s continuators (printed in that same Heidelberg edition) and the chronicle of Sigebert, as found in a manuscript in the Arundel collection. By stringing multiple books together into one, this English antiquary extended *historia universalis* all the way into the seventeenth century—thereby mimicking the very compilatory strategies of the medieval texts he so diligently compiled.

Even an anecdotal survey of early modern *historia universalis* affirms that the chronicle tradition remained an authoritative yet labile resource for fixing historical “turning points.” But more significantly, early modern scholars and readers (whether celebrated or obscure, known or

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405 Oxford Bodleian MS Dugdale 24, fol.21v.
anonymous) imagined such turning points through a textual apparatus that was itself devised within that greatest and seemingly most consequential of turning points—i.e. in those centuries that separated antiquitas proper from the nebulous, inchoate world that followed. Thus, it is to the discovery of this postclassical world—old and hoary but not quite ancient in a rigidly taxonomical sense—that we now turn.

**Figuring Postclassical Time in Late Humanist Scholarship**

Since at least antiquity itself, there have always been ancients and moderns, antiqui and moderni, and the latter have always responded to the former with everything from silent appropriation or loud veneration to outright contestation or even condemnation.⁴⁰⁸ Yet some tempora always fell into the cracks between antiquity and modernity. And conceptualization of these gulfs and fissures is a story of ever-shifting goalposts reset with newfound intensity around the turn of the seventeenth century. In this world of ostensibly “late” humanism, correspondingly “late” milieus became increasingly appealing subjects of investigation. The confessionalization of church history or historia ecclesiastica directed newfound attention to those centuries of early Christianity and its medieval successors, due in part to the dueling narratives set forth by the Protestant Magdeburg Centuriators and the Catholic Cesare Baronius.⁴⁰⁹ At the same time,

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⁴⁰⁸ For analysis of pre-modern modernities, see Walter Freund, Modernus und andere Zeitbegriffe des Mittelalters (Cologne, 1957). See also Curtius, European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages, esp. 251-5.

centralizing monarchies and other political actors searched out alternative “national” antiquities to rival or supplant the hegemony of the classical Greco-Roman past, a process at work everywhere from Spain and Britain to Holland and the German states. Finally, in the realm of classical scholarship itself, a seeming exhaustion of the canonical nodes of Greco-Roman antiquity (especially in the realm of textual editing) helped direct its practitioners to late and hitherto neglected contexts—part and parcel of a process of saturation that transformed a discipline that did not yet even possess the name of classical.410

Even in Part I of this study, we began in a world—defined by the likes of Lilius Giraldus, Juan Luis Vives, and Conrad Gesner—often assessed as “late” when viewed against the intellectual fervor of the early Renaissance. And in the world of their successors, lateness grew only more pronounced. For sixteenth- and seventeenth-century humanists are still often marginalized in favor of their more “original” Quattrocento predecessors. Credited with encyclopedic exhaustiveness but correspondingly denied insightfulness, they are easily slotted into the latter stages of those “cycles of creativity and routinization” posited by Peter Burke in his recent Social History of Knowledge.411 Moreover, as explained at the beginning of this chapter, late humanists are still often depicted as “on the defensive” against the rhetoric of anti-erudition—a common view which, as Donald Kelley once observed, spawned “nearly universal agreement that the seventeenth century, ridden with Baconian mistrust and racked with Cartesian

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410 On this point see Considine, Dictionaries in Early Modern Europe, esp. 72-3.
411 Peter Burke, A Social History of Knowledge: From Gutenberg to Diderot (Cambridge, 2000), 38.
doubt, was a poor field for the cultivation of history.”

Yet far from comprising a mere consolidating “normal science,” late humanism reveals important innovations. Above all, the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries helped redefine antiquity as a multi-temporal, multicultural, polyglot world. As Peter Miller has remarked, the antiquaries of the later Renaissance widened antiquity’s temporal and geographical reach, rendering Christian Rome just as worthy a subject as its earlier pagan counterpart, and simultaneously extending their research from this central node of imperial Romanitas in two directions—namely, both “back to the Hellenistic East and forward to the early medieval West.”

Janus-faced scholars in this mode can be cited almost ad infinitum from the world of late humanism. Joseph Scaliger simultaneously delved into the “pre-classical” remains of Egypt and Babylon and the postclassical terra incognita of Merovingian and Byzantine chronologers, spurred on by his engagement with historia universalis and Eusebius’ Chronicon. Pierre Pithou, who once castigated classical hyper-purists for never straying beyond “the age of Cicero and Augustus,” while tolerating nothing other than “Sallusts, Caesars, and Livys,” looked both forwards and backwards from that hypothetical Golden Age, exploring both Carolingian Francia and archaic Latinity. Hugo Grotius not only wrote on the Indies and Americas, but also began his scholarly life with an edition of Martianus Capella’s fifth-century compendium on the liberal

413 Peter N. Miller, Peiresc’s Europe: Learning and Virtue in the Seventeenth Century (New Haven, 2000), 9.
414 See Grafton, Joseph Scaliger II.
arts. And Grotius’ onetime adversary John Selden, a pioneer of Oriental scholarship, also edited the twelfth-century English monastic historian Eadmer.

In a striking number of cases, to discover postclassical Latin and Greek (and the many European vernaculars) meant also to discover a non-Roman world of Jewish and Near Eastern antiquity, or worlds still more distant both geographically and temporally. Such a sense of eclecticism, mixed with attendant awe, is aptly communicated by a Chinese chronological computus that Bonaventura Vulcanius (himself hardly a conventional “classicist”) copied into one of his manuscript notebooks. Writing out the key periods of Chinese history from “one thousand two hundred and five years before the exodus of the Hebrews to the year of Christ 1581,” Vulcanius then remarked with appropriate terseness: “So great is the antiquity of that kingdom.” As those in Vulcanius’ world knew well, antiquitas was hardly an exclusively Greco-Roman phenomenon, and diverse antiquities possessed their own unique ordo temporum.

Indeed, nothing captured the sheer eclecticism of antiquitas (especially that of a late variety) like Martianus Capella’s *Marriage of Philology and Mercury* or *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii*—that fifth-century compendium of the artes that Vulcanius (as we saw in Chapter 3) had printed with his edition of Isidore of Seville’s *Etymologies*. Yet those who read such “late” texts often had to bracket their own assumptions, whether aesthetic or otherwise. Hence, in the preface to his edition (produced two decades after Vulcanius’ printing), Grotius admitted with

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418 Leiden Universiteitsbibliotheek MS Scaliger 60 B, fol.84r-85v: Vulcanius draws up a “Conspectus temporum ex libris Chinarum a mille ducentis quinque annis ante Exodum Hebraeorum, ad annum Christi 1581. Hoc est, ab anno Periodi Iulianae 2012 ad annum 6294.” At the end of his conspectus at fol.85v, Vulcanius concludes: “Tanta est vetustas illius regni.”
litotic ambivalence that there was much in Capella of value: “in him you will find many things that will neither be tiresome to learn nor displeasing to know.” Moreover, Grotius acknowledged that his own evaluation of the text differed markedly from far earlier moments in Capella’s reception. As he observed, “Capella did not escape the notice of those men of the barbarous age (Barbari seculi), among whom he possessed so great a name.” So great was this name, indeed, that the Frankish historian Gregory of Tours (consigned to that unfortunate barbarum saeculum) had invoked Capella in much the same way—to Grotius’ great surprise—one “might have named Aristotle, Cicero, or Varro.”

This brief statement perfectly encapsulates the late humanist apprehension of the postclassical. First, Grotius accepted the premise that non-classical texts were “useful” despite the infelicitous manner in which they conveyed their usefulness. Second, he highlighted in pluperfect fashion how the postclassical Capella had been received in a still later slice of the postclassical—a period that Grotius’ conjured in grandly capitalized terms as the “barbarous age” or Barbarum seculum. And in doing so he noted important second-order disjunctions at the level of reception—marveling that for Gregory of Tours, writing near the close of the sixth century, the fifth-century Capella was no different than such exemplary representations of the canonically Greco-Latin “classical” as Aristotle, Cicero, or Varro, a gulf which (as Grotius knew well) formed one of the greatest chasms in the scholarship of his own day.

When viewed against his later works and deeds, and his contributions to religion, politics, and jurisprudence, Grotius’ youthful engagement with a fifth-century encyclopedist might seem

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419 Capella, De nuptiis, ed. Grotius, preface: “De Artium tractatione taceo: pauca enim referre, inutile, omnia, molestum: Ad ipsum te Martianum relego, in quo plurima inuenies que nec discere taedebit, nec didicisse poenitebit. Neque hoc ipsos Barbari saeculi homines latuit, apud quos quanti nominis fuerit Capella, vel solus Turonensis satis superque docebit, qui eum in fine libri non aliter nominat, quam si Aristotelem, Ciceronem, Varronem nominasset.”
the least “consequential” of his scholarly endeavors, and indeed it has often been treated as such. However, even these seemingly more consequential aspects of Grotius’ career also hinged on the contested terrain of postclassical time that he first tackled as a youth, as disputes between Arminians and orthodox Calvinists over grace, free will, and predestination took both sides back once more to the fourth and fifth centuries, occupied by Augustine and other church fathers.\(^{420}\) Indeed, reading the oft-inscrutable intentions of those who inhabited Capella’s milieu became a vital task over the course of the seventeenth century. For instance, it would even motivate Grotius’ close associate G.J. Vossius (examined extensively later in this chapter) to pen a comprehensive history of the Pelagian controversy, which applied the tools of humanist historical scholarship to the far messier history of doctrine.\(^{421}\)

Granted, the effects of confessionalized *historia ecclesiastica* upon perceptions of the postclassical cannot be overstated, especially given the extent to which *historia* became the chosen judge and jury for questions of *theologia* in the decades around 1600. However, this confessional dialectic did not always work in the manner one might expect. Even in the world of Italianate Catholic erudition (defined by names like Bellarmine, Possevino, and above all Baronius) the rhetoric of *semper eadem* or “always the same” with respect to doctrine, ritual and ecclesiology by no means precluded rather unhappy assessments of *cultural* discontinuity, especially concerning the external world the church inhabited during that so-called *barbarum seculum*.\(^{422}\) Ironically, it even perpetuated narratives of rupture, insofar as *historia ecclesiastica*, like *historia universalis*, required its own macroscopic periodizing moves. This is perhaps one of


\(^{421}\) G.J. Vossius, *Historiae de controversiis, quas Pelagius eiusque reliquiae moverunt, libri septem* (Leiden, 1618).

\(^{422}\) On notions of *semper eadem*, see especially the discussion in Ditchfield, *Liturgy, Sanctity and History*. 
the most surprising features of Catholic historical erudition in the decades around 1600. And while the story of periodizing and the postclassical presented here largely concerns contexts both Protestant and Northern (especially given their ultimate importance to the rise of the tripartite schema), many actors in these contexts (not unlike Bonaventura Vulcanius and his association with the Spanish cardinal Francisco Mendoza de Bobadilla, discussed in the previous chapter) engaged in creative and even irenic fashion with various religious, geographic, and cultural “others”—who pursued varieties of periodizing for their own ends.

Surprisingly enough, it was none other than Baronius who, in the very depths of his *Annales*, promoted the identification of that still-inchoate *medium aevum* as a “dark age” or *saeculum obscurum*—deploying a term whose cultural connotations continue to haunt perceptions of the Middle Ages today. In this fashion, Baronius also promoted periodizing moves within the postclassical. For instance, when speaking of Charlemagne, the cardinal credited him with restoring “those good letters that had fully collapsed” (*bonas litteras penitus collapsas*). But while he praised the Carolingian revival, in a manner akin to Johannes Trithemius’ assessment of the epoch (discussed in Chapter One), he did not count it a permanent stanching of decline and fall. Instead, Baronius identified the tenth century as both turning point and nadir (and conveniently this also marked the seeming low point of the papacy, before its transformation into a more potent political force by reforming pontiffs like Gregory VII). As he memorably put it, “from here a new age is begun, which has become accustomed to be called iron on account of its harshness and the sterility of the good, leaden on account of its deformity and surfeit of the bad, and dark (*obscurum*) on account of its lack of writers.”

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the *medium aevum* were “dark” or “obscure” in a fitting double sense: not only was the general cultural moment benighted, but as a result the historical record had also thinned out and rendered the period largely inaccessible. Hence, the theorization of the postclassical as an expanse of cultural degeneration was hardly limited to Protestant critiques of popery (even if such critiques did play an important role in the history of periodization); on the contrary, it is striking how closely Baronius’ iron and leaden ages echo the invective of figures like John Bale, who (as we saw in Chapter 1) used precisely such periodizing techniques to indict the medieval papacy itself.

Furthermore, oppositional responses to Baronius stimulated still more involved meditations on the nature of temporal plurality within the postclassical. Perhaps no scholar more fully conveyed such temporal eclecticism than Baronius’ principal antagonist, Isaac Casaubon, who is examined at length in the following section. As Anthony Grafton and Joanna Weinberg have shown in their recent work uncovering Casaubon’s Hebraic scholarship, the classical scholar’s interests were hardly restricted to canonical classical antiquity. As they remind us, we are perhaps better suited than previous scholars (including Casaubon’s Victorian biographer Mark Pattison) to understand the nature of Casaubon’s non-classical endeavors, not least given that transformation of antiquity itself associated with names like Peter Brown and Arnaldo Momigliano, among others. As we shall see, Casaubon’s explorations of Hellenistic Judaism formed an important parallel to his simultaneous forays into postclassical Latinity—a pattern of multidirectional eclecticism likewise visible in the work of Scaliger, Selden, Vulcanius, and so many other late humanists. Ironically enough, it was precisely through his thorough grounding in the canonically *classical* that Casaubon saw the postclassical or extra-classical in such sharp

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425 Grafton and Weinberg, “*I Have Always Loved the Holy Tongue.*”

relief. This was similarly the case with Vossius, analyzed here after Casaubon. Although his scholarship also remained centered around Greco-Roman antiquity, he too did not shy away from cultural and temporal eclecticism. Like Casaubon, he also immersed himself in Judaic studies, reconstructing aspects of both rabbinic and Hellenistic Judaism. Moreover, not only did so many of his works extend deep into the terrae incognitae of postclassical Europe, but his pioneering handbook of comparative religion also took him all the way from Greco-Roman paganism to pre-Columbian America.\footnote{See G.J. Vossius, \textit{De Theologia gentili} (Amsterdam, 1641). On early modern comparative religion, see Guy G. Stroumsa, \textit{A New Science: The Discovery of Religion in the Age of Reason} (Cambridge, MA, 2010) and Martin Mulsow, “Antiquarianism and Idolatry: The \textit{Historia} of Religions in the Seventeenth Century,” in \textit{Historia: Empiricism and Erudition in Early Modern Europe}, ed. Gianna Pomata and Nancy G. Siraisi (Cambridge, MA, 2005), 181-210.}

Yet eclecticism and irenicism frequently led to marginalization. The two scholars examined in the remainder of this chapter suffered such slings and arrows, whether in their own day or in subsequent evaluations by posterity. Casaubon’s descent into ecclesiastical history and the Middle Ages, driven by his project of countering Baronius, was long told in quasi-tragic terms—as is made especially clear by Pattison’s nineteenth-century biography.\footnote{Mark Pattison, \textit{Isaac Casaubon: 1559-1614} (London, 1875). It is interesting to note that Pattison’s critique also struck in periodizing terms against the world of late humanism, especially in contrast to a particularly rosy vision of the \textit{Quattrocento} (and, for that matter, nineteenth-century German \textit{Wissenschaft}). Consider for instance his remark at p.288, where he criticizes James I’s focus on ecclesiastical scholarship: “When historians credit James with surrounding himself with learned men, it should be added that it was with learned divines only. There did not exist in this country any distinct class of scholars, or guild of learning, such as had been found in Italy in the 15th century, or as is formed by the German professoriate of our day.”} And Vossius was often deemed the unoriginal practitioner of a dying scholarship, associated above all with the excesses of erudition for erudition’s sake.\footnote{Two important studies that have traced Vossius’ scholarship in detail are C.S.M. Rademaker, \textit{Life and Work of G.J. Vossius}, trans. H.P. Doezema (Assen, 1981), and Nicholas Wickenden, \textit{G.J. Vossius and the Humanist Concept of History} (Assen, 1993).} Similarly, in contemporary religious, ecclesiastical, and even political terms Vossius and Casaubon also existed “on the margins,” so
to speak. This is not to say that they did not enjoy success in an academic or otherwise worldly sense of the term. Throughout his career, Vossius successfully leveraged competing offers into a generous salary and high honors, whether at Leiden or Amsterdam, and Casaubon enjoyed close relationships with multiple European monarchs.

But success did not come without troubles and contradictions, particularly given the endemic religious turmoil that marked the decades around 1600. Vossius, who enjoyed a close friendship with his fellow Arminian Hugo Grotius, repeatedly found himself in trouble for confessional reasons. Casaubon was likewise never at home in religio-confessional terms, whether first at the court of Henri IV in France or later that of James I in England. Often he found himself hounded by Jesuits and Puritans alike, even as (given his cultural and linguistic status as an outsider) he could not integrate himself seamlessly into Anglicanism’s self-professed via media. Though it would be far too facile to argue that such figures were rosily ecumenical in their approach to both religion and benighted corners of the past, it will suffice to note that, in both spheres, they often confounded easy categories and labels. As we shall see, such ambiguity often aided their apprehension of multiple—and contradictory—pasts. And so we turn to Casaubon, whose discovery of the postclassical (largely hidden in his marginal notes and manuscript notebooks) emerged above all from of a potent confluence of historia ecclesiastica and “conventional” classical scholarship.

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430 For discussion of Casaubon’s confessional quandaries, see Grafton and Weinberg, esp. 170-80.
As we saw throughout Part I, few classical scholars were as engaged in postclassical time as Isaac Casaubon. Chapter 2 examined his digestion of such late antique sources as Symmachus, Prudentius, Macrobius, and Claudian, exploring how they shaped his perceptions of late antique religion. And Chapter 3 traced his engagement with the fragmentary, as we saw him not only cataloguing fragments of the ancient and archaic in Solinus and Priscian, but also using fragments and echoes to offer a de facto reception history of Suetonius—stretching throughout late antiquity and the Middle Ages.

Casaubon’s Suetonius marks a fitting entry into the classical scholar’s far more systematic project of postclassical discovery. Unsurprisingly, this project was predicated in great measure upon the recovery of imitatio—a key category of classical scholarship whose importance to temporal disjunction formed a central theme of Chapter 2. Although absent from his introductory catalogus auctorum, Casaubon announced a tantalizing echo in the notes accompanying his Suetonius. For he repeatedly catalogued how Einhard, the ninth-century biographer of Charlemagne, had written his vita of the Frankish emperor “almost entirely with the sentences and words of Suetonius.”431 Specifically, Einhard had modeled his Charlemagne on Suetonius’ Augustus—a fitting parallel that nicely matched the rhetoric of Western imperial restoration advanced by the Carolingians themselves. But Casaubon did not consider Einhard’s imitatio successful. Noting how he had borrowed supposed details of Charlemagne’s personal habits from Suetonius’ Augustus, he remarked that Einhard “had read these words of Suetonius negligently, which he believed to cohere with the following things, and so by inept emulation

(inepte aemulatione) of this author, he mixed together the most alien things in a single sentence."\(^{432}\)

However—and this is perhaps most significant for Casaubon’s approach to the postclassical writ large—he hardly considered such *imitatio* inherently flawed or misguided. Charlemagne and Augustus were not inherently incommensurable. On the contrary, two rulers merited comparison, but Einhard had badly mangled this task. As Casaubon asked rhetorically, “who may deny either that Charlemagne reflected the nature and genius of Augustus in so many things, or that as long as this writer [i.e. Einhard] followed in the footsteps of Suetonius (*Suetonii vestigia*) ineptly, he stupidly counterfeited so many things for that prince?”\(^{433}\) Einhard had deployed Suetonian *vestigia* ineptly, but such *vestigia* (tellingly conveyed by Casaubon through the language of the fragmentary) were nonetheless valuable resources for linking those eight centuries that separated the worlds of Augustus from Charlemagne.

Nor was this the only instance in Casaubon’s vast reading when he identified highly programmatic medieval *imitatio*. And in at least one instance, he found a medieval *imitator* worthy of praise for his classicizing exploits. When he read Tacitus’ *Agricola* in the *Opera omnia* assembled by Justus Lipsius, he declared in a little note in the top margin above the title that Tacitus’ account of his pious father-in-law shared many similarities with an anonymous twelfth-century *vita* of the Holy Roman Emperor Henry IV, recently printed in Justus Reuberus’ collection of German imperial texts. Rather unlike his treatment of Einhard, here he had nothing

\(^{432}\) *Suetonius, De XII Caesaribus*, 102-3: “Operaet pretium est videre quam ingeniose hunc locum Eginhardus imitatione expresserit....Negligenter legerat verba haec Suetonii, quae cum sequentibus cohaerere credidit: ita res alienissimas inepta aemulatione huius scriptoris in vnam periodum commiscuit.”

\(^{433}\) *Suetonius, De XII Caesaribus*, ed. Casaubon, 104b: “Quis neget aut Magnum Carolum Augusti genium atque ingenium in plerisque expressisse, aut scriptorem illum dum inepte Suetonii vestigia premit, multa affinxisse illi principi insulse..?”
but praise for both Tacitus and his unlikely twelfth-century emulator, writing with imperative directness that one ought to confer or “compare” Tacitus’ “golden book” with that “most elegant little book (libellum elegantissimum) on the life of Henry IV.” What is perhaps most striking about this note is the material context in which Casaubon wrote it: the very first thing he observed when reading a canonical classical author like Tacitus was that he had been elegantly mimicked by an obscure twelfth-century biographer. Such imitatio was perhaps all the more commendable given that Tacitus remained largely “lost” throughout the Middle Ages. But more importantly, Casaubon did not end his search for classical imitatio in late antique or early medieval contexts; instead, he extended it three whole centuries after Einhard and the Carolingians (a decision that, as we shall see, Vossius also adopted after initial hesitation). Even in the ostensibly darkest corners of the medium aevum, Casaubon located surprising rays of imitative light.

That Casaubon was so intrigued by the further reaches of the postclassical may seem initially surprising. Unlike, say, Pithou, who edited everything from Frankish annals to Carolingian law codes, little of Casaubon’s published output concerned the medium aevum per se. While he was deeply interested in late Latin and Greek and the world of early Christianity, and released editions of important late antique texts like the Historia Augusta and the third letter of the fourth-century Cappadocian father Gregory of Nyssa, much of his published editorial and interpretative work was conventionally classical, touching on such varied sources as Suetonius, Polybius, and Theophrastus. But precisely because Casaubon possessed such a thorough grounding in the classical, he was able to discern new spaces for the postclassical—not least due

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434 Tacitus, Opera omnia, ed. Justus Lipsius (Antwerp, 1581), now Cambridge University Library Adv.d.3.14, 546. At the opening page of the Agricola, Casaubon writes in the top margin “hoc aureo libro confer libellum elegantiss. de vita Henrici III qui in volumine scriptorum Germanicorum a Reubero editorum habetur.”
to his concern for reception and *imitatio*. Yet while such grounding was necessary, it was not sufficient: instead, it was above all through *historia ecclesiastica* that Casaubon extended his purview deep into postclassical time. And when Casaubon took up the task of producing an official response to Baronius’ *Annales* (the first part of which appeared at the end of his life as his *Exercitationes*) he filled his manuscript notebooks with numerous fragmentary observations and readings from this “late” world. But these fragments (which we could perhaps even style *vestigia*) were not purely polemical or instrumental in purpose; on the contrary, they were part and parcel of a surprisingly subtle recovery of an alien yet eminently consequential world—foreign to the present and the canonical past alike.

Casaubon’s surviving manuscripts yield many surprises concerning just how he accessed this alien world. One such manuscript notebook, now Oxford Bodleian MS Casaubon 60, reveals that Casaubon found a convenient entry into the postclassical through two multivolume Catholic editorial projects that brought together late antique and medieval texts—namely, the *Bibliotheca patrum*, begun in 1575 by the French patristic scholar Marguerin de la Bigne, and the *Antiquae lectiones*, assembled in 1601-4 by Henricus Canisius (the nephew of the German Catholic apologist Petrus Canisius). Significantly enough, Canisius’ collection of medieval texts was one of the very few sources from the early seventeenth century to refer explicitly to the Middle Ages, and this explicit reference occupied a prominent place in Casaubon’s own summary. Canisius had titled each volume of his *Antiquae lectiones* or “ancient readings” a collection of “ancient monuments for illustrating the history of the Middle Age.” In his preface, Canisius raised a fundamental distinction between the underlying *res* of a text and the *verba* that conveyed them—a trope of simultaneous criticism and apology that (as we shall see) was deployed

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repeatedly by both editors and readers of postclassical texts. In his estimation, “the style (*stilus*) of this whole work is indeed feeble and barren, and not at all appropriate to a purer form of writing, as was common in those times.” Yet he then repeated the claim advertised in his subtitle, asserting: “but its contents (*res*) pertain as greatly as possible to illustrating the history of the middle age.” By linking the deficient “style” (*stilus*) of his particular texts to the general character of “those times” (*illa tempora*) in which they were composed, Canisius advanced a negative judgment of the *medium aevum* writ large. Yet he simultaneously affirmed that the *res* of such *tempora* were *ipso facto* worthy of preserving and collection, no matter how feeble or barren the language that conveyed their contents.

When summarizing Canisius’ volumes in his manuscript notebook, Casaubon affirmed that “many writings of the ancients are held in these tomes—either never before been seen or not in such complete form—which pertain to the history of the Middle Age, and especially ecclesiastical history.” Beyond this unusual use of the phrase itself, two things stand out in Canisius’ conjuring of the *media aetas* and Casaubon’s corresponding response. First, following Canisius, Casaubon accentuated a telling overlap between *historia mediae aetatis* and *historia ecclesiastica*, a confluence of categories that does much to explain his overall engagement with the postclassical; second, both he and Canisius linked the *media aetas* to *antiquitas* writ large,

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436 Canisius, *Antiquae lectiones*, sig. 3r-v: “Stilus quidem totius huius operis pertenuis et ieiunus est, minime accommodatus ad puriorem scribendi modum, prout illa tempora ferebant, sed res, ad illustrandum mediae aetatis historiam, quam maxime pertinent.”

437 Oxford Bodleian MS Casaubon 60, fol.42r: Casaubon writes out the heading “Antiquae lectionis tomi a Canisio editi,” and then notes “Multa habentur scripta ueterum in his tomis aut nunquam prius uisa, aut non ita plene quae ad historiam mediae aetatis pertinent et maxime ad historiam ecclesiasticam, rerum Germanicarum pleraque habet Canisius a M. Velsero, II Augustano.” Interestingly enough, in one of the few other places in which Casaubon mentions the *media aetas* in his manuscript notes, he also deploys it in conjunction with a reference to the *veteres* or “ancients.” Cf. Oxford Bodleian MS Casaubon 59, fol.6v: Under the heading “Formatae litterae,” Casaubon writes “de formatis litteris veterum mediae aetatis patrum mentio est apud Pamel. in Tertullianum p.1033.”
visible in Canisius’ *antiqua monumenta* and Casaubon’s own reference to the texts in question as *scripta veterum*. Hence, and this is of no small significance to the paradox of periodizing, the inchoate “middle age” was simultaneously distinct from, yet subsumed within, a generalized sense of pastness or “antiquity.”

After offering this introductory summation, Casaubon devoted several manuscript pages to the specific contents of Canisius’ compilation. When Casaubon got to the massive, sprawling world chronicle of the eleventh-century polymath Hermannus Contractus, found in Canisius’ first volume, he offered a succinct yet facetious judgment of medieval encyclopedism, writing “his book is big enough.” At the same time, he kept he eye out for instances of medieval *imitatio*, of the sort he identified in Einhard and the anonymous *vita* of Henry IV. When he reached Canisius’ printing of the *Quirinalia*, composed by the twelfth-century Bavarian poet Metellus of Tegernsee, Casaubon jotted down that Metellus was the *summus imitator* or “highest imitator” of the Roman poet Horace.438

Given his strong Carolingian interests, Casaubon also found much of interest in Canisius’ printing of the letters of Alcuin, commenting on how Alcuin referred to Charlemagne as King David and observing that “he wrote many things, held everywhere in libraries.”439 In offering such comments, Casaubon—in an intriguing expression of continuity with the bio-bibliographical practices surveyed in Chapter One—consulted the *vita* assembled by Johannes

438 Oxford Bodleian MS Casaubon 60, fol.42v: After excerpting the title of Hermann Contractus’ work, Casaubon writes “Liber est satis magnus.” At 43r, Casaubon takes notes of “Metelli Tegerseenensis Quirinalia, in Laudem S. Quirini M,” and observes “de hoc ad Horatium notamus: cuius poetae summus est imitator.”

Trithemius. But when reading Alcuin he also faulted Canisius for letting confessional
commitments color his narrative of the medium aevum. In fact, he took issue with the fact that
such commitments had led Canisius out of the medium aevum itself. As an appendix of sorts to
Alcuin, Canisius had printed a letter of the English Jesuit martyr Edmund Campion to the bishop
of Gloucester, Richard Cheney. Campion had been executed in 1581, but Canisius appended his
letter to the epistles of a Carolingian monastic scholar, claiming (despite the temporal distance
between them) that they merited joint reading since both their authors were British. Deeming
the insertion a distraction from Canisius’ proffered temporal range, Casaubon exclaimed that
“here there is such great zealotry in Canisius that he reveals his fervor everywhere, especially in
the way that he often mixes the writings of more recent figures with the ancients” (recentiorum
scripta antiquis immiscet).

What is perhaps most striking about this note is not the manner in which the Protestant
Casaubon responded to the Catholic Canisius, as they both waged wars over the fraught territory
of historia ecclesiastica, but rather how Casaubon’s critique depended upon Canisius’ specific
violation of ordo temporum. In Casaubon’s estimation, Canisius’ confessional zealotry had
inappropriately conflated the ancient and the modern. Yet Casaubon’s aside also highlights the
unique temporal indeterminacy occupied by the likes of Alcuin himself, itself echoed in
Canisius’ dual use of media aetas and antiquitas: Alcuin was clearly among the antiqui when
compared to a recentior like Campion, yet he was also ipso facto a denizen of that medium
aevum whose categorical existence Canisius had loudly proclaimed on his title page. Moreover,

440 Canisius, Antiquae lectiones, 124: “Epistolis Alcuini Britanni adiungimus alterius Britanni
epistolam, Campiani, inquam, qui Christo amorem et fidem sanguine fuso assere voluit.”
441 Oxford Bodleian MS Casaubon 60, fol.42r-v: “Campiani epistola. Hic Canisio tantus zelota
est, ut feruorem suum ubique prodat. maxime in eo quod saepe recentiorum scripta antiquis
immiscet. Ut heic post Alcuini epistolas subiicit Campiani unam: quae scripta est paullo ante
eius obitum in Anglia ante annos opinor quindecim.”
he was simultaneously “recent” enough to provoke comparison—however specious, tangential,
or partisan—to the true recentiores of Casaubon and Canisius’ own day.

But confessionalized criticism did not stop Casaubon from combing through the Antiquae lectiones in detail. And when it came to the Bibliotheca patrum, he adopted a similar attitude: while he deemed the compendium “useful and worthy of praise” for having compiled so many patristic sources, he also added a subtler criticism, exclaiming thereafter “if only somewhat more faithfulness and erudition had been present in its editors!” Incidentally, Bonaventura Vulcanius also made good use of this patristic compendium, mining it for information on one of his greatest obsessions—the history of the early Franks. Yet it was not Frankish material that most drew Casaubon to the Bibliotheca patrum, but rather its inclusion of the De excidio Britanniae of the enigmatic monk Gildas, that bleak and dire sixth-century account of late antique Britain. In a summary and judgment of the text, Casaubon duly set the scene amidst those “troublesome and busy tymes” invoked by Gabriel Harvey, explaining that Gildas “lived in those times when the Scots, Picts, and other barbarians extinguished the Roman Empire in the British Isles.” As he put it, “Gildas bewails the calamities of Britain, the cause of which he turns back upon the sins of the Britons themselves.” For Gildas had turned his ire against kings, nobles, and clergy alike, and as Casaubon made sure to highlight, his final book concerned “bitter corruption in the ecclesiastical order.” Given all this, he declared the De excidio “most

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worthy of reading, both on account of the gravity of its argument and the erudition of its
author.”

Although it did not appear in the Bibliotheca patrum, Casaubon also included in this
same manuscript notebook a lengthy analysis of a similar postclassical source—namely, Paul the
Deacon’s history of the Lombards or Historia Langobardorum. However, whereas Casaubon had
only positive things to say about Gildas, he treated Paul far more ambivalently. At the very
outset, he deemed him a semidoctus or “semi-learned” author, who had traced the history of the
Lombards from their ostensible origins to the time of Liutprand. Yet one still had to read the
semidocti: “even if there is not much that may entice the reader, nevertheless it is permitted to
observe a few things extremely worth knowing and which you shall not soon find elsewhere.”
However, although the Historia Langobardorum, like the De excidio Britanniae, was eminently
worth reading, it was by no means immune from criticism. And so Casaubon concluded that
Paul’s text also contained “certain exceedingly eccentric things, redolent of the barbarism of his
age.”

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444 MS Casaubon 60, fol.220r: “Percurrebam nactus paullulum otii tertium tomum Bibliothecae
patrum. inter alios, de q. alibi ibi habetur Gildas sapiens. Hic de excidio Britanniae duos libros
fecit. Vixit illis temporibus quibus Scoti, Pictique et alii barbari Romanum imperium in ea insula
extinxerunt. Igitur ut Saluianus conquestus est de improbitate suorum Gallorum per quam fieret
ut cederent in barbarorum possessionem, sic Gildas duobus illis libris deflet calamitates
Britanniae, earumque causam reiicit in peccata ipsorum. Prior liber est contra nobiles et diues.
Primus agit in genere de vitis Britannorum: deinde styllum uertit in duces et proceres quorum
praecipuos nominatim appellat et increpat grauissime, ut Aurelium canonem Vortiporem,
Cuneglosium (uox Romane sonat lanio fuluus) et Maglocunum. Posterior liber inscribitur In
ecclesiasticum ordinem acris correptio. Uterque et propter argumenti grauitatem et propter
hominis eruditionem digniss. lectu....”

445 Oxford Bodleian MS Casaubon 60, fol.324r. Under the heading “Ex Paulo Diacono De
Langobardorum origine et gestis,” Casaubon writes: “Auctor est semidoctus qui historiam
Langobardorum ab ipsa origine id est, eo tempore cum exierunt e patria perrexit usque ad
Liuthprandi vel ut alii scribunt Liutprandi qui fuit rex XIX, obitum libris sex. In eo etsi non
multa sunt quae lectorem alliciant, paqua tamen scitu perquam digna et quae temere alibi non
reperias, obseruare licet. quaedam etiam valde ατοξα et barbariem eius saeculi resipientia.”

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From here, Casaubon went on to enumerate such signs of the eccentric and barbarous, conveyed with appropriate wonderment. As he sensed, much of Paul’s text seemed more suited to *fabulae* than *historiae*. Repeating Paul’s fanciful etymology for *Langobardus* (i.e. from “long beard” or *longus* and *barba*), Casaubon intoned *vide fabulam*. And as he summarized Paul’s strange version of the legend of the so-called Seven Sleepers, he announced with mock wonder *vide miram fabulam*.\(^\text{446}\) However, Casaubon also realized that the *Historia Langobardorum* contained far more than mere legend. In one of his very final notes to the text he highlighted its documentation of a very real historical mutation, writing “before the end of this book there is much mention of the Saracens, who during those times seem first to invade Egypt, and then to come into Spain and other provinces.”\(^\text{447}\) As suggested by Casaubon’s *videntur*, Paul shed light on what were otherwise sketchy or temporally indeterminate events—a symptom of that historico-textual drought that none other than Baronius had ascribed to the *saeculum obscurum*.

Hence, Casaubon’s judgment of Paul the Deacon basically mirrored his judgment of the grammarian Priscian, examined earlier in Chapter 4. Strikingly, he even repeated that same *non alibi* formulation he entered on the title page of Priscian’s grammar: both Priscian and Paul featured things found “not elsewhere.” However, the value of Paul the Deacon did not lie in the fragments of otherwise unknown past *auctores* he collected, but rather in the otherwise unknown *historical* phenomena he conveyed. Like Priscian, whose immersion in sixth-century Constantinople made him appear inebriated, Paul was to be faulted for the barbarism inherent in


\(^{447}\) Oxford, Bodleian MS Casaubon 60, fol.328v: “Sub finem libri huius multa mentio de Sarracenis, qui per illa tempora primum vastare Aegyptum, indeque in Hispaniam et alias prouincias videntur.”
an eighth-century semidoctus. Yet at the end of the day he was still worthy of reading. And ironically enough, Paul the Deacon’s readable worth was itself a byproduct of the “barbarism of his age” (eius seculi barbariem); he was all the more historically valuable given the dearth of historical sources from his very tempora.

Here it is worth pausing to observe the development of an emergent apology for the reading of the postclassical, advanced as much by Casaubon as others. Put simply, the reading of the postclassical was not necessary for purposes of exemplarity, whether moral, linguistic, or rhetorical (although in his reading of Gildas, Casaubon did credit the text with a species of exemplarity, especially given its critique of ecclesiastical corruption). Instead, postclassical sources possessed a different sort of utility (and it is significant that such justifications were still couched in that robust language of utilitas). Postclassical sources derived their worth from their very historicity; they were to be read because they—and they alone—illuminated the historia of their tempora. But why learn the history of benighted times? Many around 1600 might have replied with good justification that one needed to excavate this strange non-classical past to understand the tumultuous politics and ecclesiology of the present. Indeed, Casaubon and others often performed precisely this operation. But it is important to recall that we have not yet reached that moment of self-conscious Enlightenment when overt narratives of “decline and fall”—and hence a kind of negative exemplarity—would justify the reading of Harvey’s “troublesome and busy tymes” or Baronius’ saeculum obscurum. Rather, appeals to the intrinsic worth of the historicity of an otherwise maligned text might seem a very strange species of historicism indeed, and hardly the prologue or prefiguration that champions of capital-H “Historicism” might desire or expect. Yet when viewed as a component of the far lengthier history of bibliographic encyclopedism (itself always seeking to balance the dream of
comprehensiveness with the rigors of canonicity) it perhaps makes far greater sense.

Comprehensiveness across all times was ipso facto a virtue. And one needed to read Paul the Deacon because he said things said “not elsewhere” or non alibi, and hence he contributed to the consummation of both historia universalis and bibliotheca universalis alike.

Yet what is perhaps most striking about such an apology for the postclassical is that it hardly refrained from stinging criticism. Casaubon manifestly did not savor the reading of Paul in any positive sense; rather, he judged his text strange and barbarous, and by invoking its indulgence in many a “marvelous fable,” he seemed decidedly uneasy about even accepting its status as historia in the first place. Hence Casaubon enacted an ambivalence present in so many encounters with the postclassical. And nowhere is this ambivalence clearer than in Casaubon’s hedging use of the qualification semidoctus. As we shall see, the use of such semi designations was surprisingly common in late humanist scholarship. Through it, Casaubon could—in quasi-facetious terms—distinguish Paul from a true doctus, while simultaneously affirming that he was not wholly or completely unlearned. Nor was this the only time that Casaubon deployed the term when reading a postclassical text. At the beginning of his copy of Fulgentius, the late antique mythographer who interpreted the Aeneid as an allegory of the ages of man and proposed many fanciful etymologies in the process (and whom Lilius Giraldus, as we saw in Chapter One, had accused of substituting “thorns for words”), Casaubon deemed the book “not worthy of anyone other than a semi-learned (semidocto) but rightly and wholly impudent monk.” Interestingly enough, although Casaubon here deployed semidoctus primarily as a term of derision, he also

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448 Virgil, *Opera* (Heidelberg 1589), now British Library 1000.e.3: At the top of the first page of Fulgentius’ commentary, included in this edition of Virgil’s collected works, Casaubon determined “Liber est [illegible due to page cropping] nec alio dignus quam semidocto sed bene et nauiter impudente monacho.”
assigned it a somewhat exculpatory function, as his concessive use of *sed* explicitly *contrasted* Fulgentius’ semi-learning with his supposed monkish impudence.

As Casaubon’s Fulgentius makes clear, the *semidocti* were by no means unique to the eighth century, but had rather emerged at least several centuries earlier, at a moment we alternately characterize with some ambivalence as either early medieval or late antique. Yet how had the postclassical world reached such a state, in which the semi-learned not only flourished, but also constituted the only source of historical information? While Casaubon did not supply any explicit answer to this question, he repeatedly deployed a common verbal tic in characterizing this turn of events as a series of interrelated historico-temporal mutations. The classical scholar frequently introduced postclassical phenomena with variations on the prefatory phrase *iam eo tempore* or “already at this time.” Beyond the specific case of Casaubon, such language appeared throughout late humanist evaluations of the postclassical, where *iam eo tempore* highlighted how a given mutation was *already* present in a given year or century, whether in geopolitics, culture, literature, or language. Sometimes *iam eo tempore* came tinged with a sense of wonderment concerning temporal disjunction itself, or at least its relative positioning. Paradoxically, it served as a simultaneous index of both the early and the late: on the one hand it connoted a sense of the incipient, of still greater changes and historical mutations to come, yet it also suggested that the emergence of such phenomena would not necessarily seem unexpected in a later context, but was rather noteworthy by virtue of its very earliness.

This is especially apparent in another of Casaubon’s notebooks, now Bodleian MS Casaubon 53, largely devoted to Baronius. Here Casaubon discussed Gregory the Great, denizen of a rapidly changing sixth-century Italy, which— in Peter Brown’s evocative estimation—had lost that traditional noisiness of Latinate culture and education, formerly marked by engines of
oral transmission like recitation and declamation. Casaubon found Gregory a perfect window into this changing world. Deploying that trope of *iam eo tempore*, he jotted down a passing reference to the “ignorance of languages (*ignorantia linguarum*) already from the times of Gregory the Great.” With these words, he expressed implicit surprise that such *ignorantia* emerged so early—in a world that perhaps still constituted the “late” reaches of antiquity itself. Directly below, he added that “it [i.e. linguistic ignorance] was indeed so great that few at Rome understood Greek and few in Constantinople understood Latin, and so Gregory the Great acknowledges the public ignorance of his age (*seculi sui publicam ignorantiam*) in many places.”

Through *iam eo tempore*, Casaubon also hinted at how ostensible linguistic degeneration signaled incipient cultural divergences, especially that severing of the Latin West from the Byzantine East that would mark so much of the *medium aevum*. Hence, *iam eo tempore* was not simply a cultural index of the transformation of the classical into the postclassical, but also illuminated the changing face of *historia ecclesiastica*. This is also apparent in Casaubon’s reading of the Frankish chronicler Aimoinius and his continuators, where he noted that “already in the times of Charlemagne (*iam temporibus Car. M*) there was work for reforming councils,

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449 See Peter Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and Diversity, AD 200-1000, 2nd Ed* (Malden, MA, 2003), esp.197-211.
450 Oxford Bodleian MS Casaubon 53, fol.1v: Casaubon notes “*Ignorantia linguarum iam inde a Greg. Mi temporibus*” and then goes on to add “ea quidem tanta fuit, ut pauci Romae essent qui Graeca intelligerent: pauci Constantinopoli, qui Latina. itaque suam et seculi sui publicam ignorantiam multis locis fatetur Gr. M. ut lib. 6 ep.2 ind. 15 et lib. 6 ep. 27 ind. 15 vide t.8.74.75.” Continuing this theme of linguistic ineptitude, Casaubon also drew attention to the existence of so-called “Greco-Latin characters,” which he found discussed in Baronius, noting: “it is miraculous (*mirum*) that around the year 850 in Constantinople there was in use a most inept type of characters, which were concocted from Greek and Latin.” Cf. MS Casaubon 60, fol.14v: “Grecolatini characteres: Mirum circa a.d. 850 ete fuisse Constantinopoli in usu characterum ineptiss. genus quiddam, qui e Gr. et Lat. erant conflat. Ut in illis numeris quos habet B. in anno 866 et 870 et 970.”
and they were held in France without the authority of the pope.” Drawing a telling contemporary parallel, he then concluded: “those who are in charge of such things today ought to read this.”

However, despite his repeated invocations of *iam eo tempore* and barbarous *semidocti*, Casaubon by no means endorsed a unidirectional narrative of postclassical decline. Rather, as suggested by his discussions of the Carolingian world, he also sought out evidence of classicizing revival or *renovatio* throughout the Middle Ages. Consider Casaubon’s account of the Byzantine philosopher Leo the Mathematician, around whom he charted the beginnings of what we now identify as the so-called Macedonian Renaissance of ninth- and tenth-century Constantinople. In the pages of MS Casaubon 60, Casaubon scrawled down Leo’s purported story: a private tutor who taught lessons in an obscure “corner of the New Rome,” Leo was catapulted to fame when the Abbasid caliph captured one of his students in war. The caliph was supposedly so impressed by the student’s learning that, as Leo’s fame spread, the embarrassed Byzantine emperor finally conveyed great honors upon this formerly obscure philosopher. In a telling statement, Casaubon placed this little story under the heading *literae restitutae* or “letters restored.” Deeming Leo’s story “a matter most worthy of knowing,” Casaubon began with an evocative description of how “letters lay buried throughout the Roman Empire (*sepultae erant toto imperio Ro. Literae*)” until they were stoked by the felicitous flames of *renovatio*. Thus, albeit with not a little hyperbole, Casaubon used this little tale to distill the logic of postclassical *renovatio*—captured in his evocatively sharp juxtaposition of *literae sepultae* and *literae restitutae*.


\[452\] Oxford Bodleian MS Casaubon 60, fol22r-v: Casaubon introduces a note entitled “Literae restitutae,” which reads as follows: “Hoc saepe factum Constantinopoli: et notant historici. sed
The above examples, while admittedly anecdotal, suggest that Casaubon’s descent into the *medium aevum* was driven by far more than mere confessionalized trench warfare. Instead, such scattered notes, sprinkled throughout his manuscripts and annotated books, reveal something approximating a sketch, however atmospheric, and at times even blinkered or prejudicial, of the culture of the postclassical writ large. Of course, the “narrative” inherent in this sketch may hardly seem consonant with later attempts at narrating the postclassical, such as that found most notoriously in Gibbon’s *Decline and Fall* and other Enlightenment histories. After all, Mark Pattison roundly critiqued Casaubon’s response to Baronius not only for the nature of its contents, but also for the fragmentary, *ad hoc* manner of its presentation and composition. But as Casaubon’s manuscript notes make clear, this “fragmentary” approach was but a logical extension of Casaubon’s extensive trafficking in *vestigia*—itself a product of late humanism’s deep engagement with those compilatory traditions that continued to imbue *historia universalis* and *bibliotheca universalis* with such vitality. Precisely because such constellations of fragments resist facile coherence, they are often neglected in that ongoing drama of shifting early modern perceptions of the past. But as argued above, they were essential actors in this story. Moreover, their very fragmentary nature allowed them to disrupt and even contradict still larger grand narratives had held the postclassical to be unworthy of systematic examination.

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sub Michaele F. Theophili accidit res scitu dignissima. Sepultae erant toto imperio Ro. literae: Leo philosophus priuata διδασκαλίᾳ vitam leuiter sustentabat latens in angulo nouae Romae. accidit ut inuenis aliquis doctus ab ipso et leuiter imbutus studiis matheseos caperetur et ad Saracenorum regem Maurum deduceretur. Is ab hoc captivo cognouit doctores suos quos in tanto pretio habebat prae Leone rudes et imperitos esse. Mittit rex ad Leonem et magnis conditionibus eum vocat ad se. Literae ostenduntur Imperatori qui pudore ictus literarum cultum restituit, et cum ipsis, tum Leoni debitum honorem detulit.”

Furthermore, these vestiges of Casaubon’s fragmentary reading suggest that, in those decades around 1600, a member of the vanguard of European classical scholarship could harness all the tools and techniques at the disposal of his discipline to apprehend a world very distinct from, yet also intimately related to, that canonical world of Greco-Roman antiquitas. In this process, he could begin to fashion an apology for the reading and study of worlds that did not meet traditional tests of exemplarity and canonicity. And he could recognize the ambiguity that had left such worlds sandwiched uneasily between the deep past on the one hand and the present on the other. But this was but the beginning of the story. In order to chart how this apology for postclassical reading advanced over the course of the seventeenth century, we must turn to an oft-forgotten scholar who presented himself as a disciple of Casaubon and his ilk—namely, G.J. Vossius.

G.J. Vossius: The Postclassical between Encyclopedism and Historia Universalis

In the 1630s, G.J. Vossius followed the lead of many of his late humanist colleagues and compiled a universal history, upon which he lectured in Amsterdam and whose bare outlines were later published in his posthumous Opera omnia. Lured from Leiden by the offer of a higher salary at the new Amsterdam Athenaeum, an infant institution whose Arminian leanings mirrored his own, he set out on a new chapter of his life in a radically new environment. In this hybrid world of urbanity and erudition so often identified with the Dutch “Golden Age,”

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455 G.J. Vossius, Opera in sex tomos divisa (Amsterdam, 1695).
Vossius finished his lectures promptly each morning so that the merchants in his audience could
make the opening of the stock exchange. 457

Writing roughly a quarter century after the death of Casaubon, Vossius belonged in one
sense to a new generation of late humanism. But in many other respects he remained a
traditionalist, wedded not only to the methods of this preceding generation but also to far deeper
and hoarier ways of reading. Given this orientation, Vossius made detailed use of the most
traditional assumptions of historia universalis. As his surviving lecture notes reveal, Vossius’
universal history first and foremost required a method of dividing time, and like Eusebius and
Jerome more than a millennium before him, he found one in the compartmentalization of the past
via successive world monarchies. As the very first loose sheet of his notes declared, “the
universal history of the world” was contained in six parts. The first part concerned the Hebrews
or res Hebraeorum, the second the Assyrians, Medes, and Persians, the third the Greeks, and the
fourth the Romans. So far, so good. Now it was with such res Romanorum that traditional
historia universalis usually stopped, even in those continuations that harnessed the rhetoric of
translatio imperii to extend themselves throughout the Middle Ages and early modernity. But
instead of ending with res Romanorum, Vossius added two new stages. Although hardly
revolutionary in their specific contents, each boldly heralded a newly schematized approach to
the postclassical. In rather convoluted fashion he titled the fifth stage of his historia universalis a
history “of those peoples (gentium), who invaded the Roman Empire, and of those who
succeeded them.” Thereafter, he devoted his sixth and final phase to another seeming world-
historical mutation, namely res Christianorum or “matters of the Christians.” Yet Vossius soon
thought better of this capacious term. After all, res Christianorum also embraced primitive,

457 For this anecdote, see Rademaker, G.J. Vossius, 244.
apostolic Christianity, and was not merely coterminous with the late antique and medieval church and its tortuous history of popes, councils, and theological controversies. Accordingly, crossing out res Christianorum, Vossius changed his final age to the narrower—and perhaps more temporally appropriate—res ecclesiasticae.458

As his introductory notes suggest, Vossius simultaneously employed two methods of dividing time, one deeply rooted in the old assumptions of Eusebian historia universalis, and the other a seeming harbinger of the full canonization of the medium aevum in early modern historical thought. Though offered from a very different perspective, his pregnant pairing of res gentium and res ecclesiasticae presciently anticipated Edward Gibbon’s notorious christening of the medieval millennium as an age of “barbarism and religion,” offered a century and a half later.459 Yet Vossius did not throw the Eusebian baby out with the bathwater. Rather, like those chroniclers examined in the first part of this chapter, Vossius found historia universalis a potent resource for the delineation of postclassical time. And like those readers of historia universalis we examined above, Vossius knew how to delineate temporal breaks and fissures within a broader field of continuity. And so he diligently instructed his Amsterdam students in the laborious art of chronicle writing precisely in those heady days when Rene Descartes had taken up residence in the same city. As we shall see both here and in subsequent chapters, the emergent tripartite schema represented a fitting consummation of historia universalis, even as it seemingly replaced it.

458 Amsterdam Universiteitsbibliotheek MS RK III F 9[a], unpaginated (underlining indicates crossed-out text): the first loose sheet of Vossius’ lecture notes reads “Uniuersa orbis historia sex partibus continetur. Quae explicantur res I Hebraeorum II Assyriorum, Medorum, Persarum III Graecorum IV Romanorum V Gentium, quae Romanum imperium inuaserunt, et earum quae his successerunt VI Christianorum Ecclesiae.” Cf. the discussion of this scheme in Wickenden, G.J. Vossius, esp 134-5.

459 See most importantly J.G.A. Pocock’s exploration of this Gibbonian theme in Barbarism and Religion, Vols. I-V.
Vossius’ surviving lecture notes reveal numerous attempts at visualizing and schematizing universal history, especially that transition from the classical to the postclassical. For instance, he constructed an elaborate chronological computus roughly approximating what we identify as Roman late antiquity. Ever fond of tripartite divisions, Vossius carved out a chunk of 170 years from Constantine to Romulus Augustulus, which he then sliced in turn into three component parts, each separated by significant turning points. The first, from the beginning of the reign of Constantine to his founding of the eponymous Constantinople, occupied but twenty-five years. The second, stretching from the founding of Constantinople to the “division of the empire made by Arcadius and Honorius,” was longer, clocking in at sixty-five years. And the third and final slice proved longer still, as Vossius counted some eighty years from this division into East and West to the defeat of Romulus Augustus by the usurper Odoacer.460

This “late” and liminal space was bookended by two events of signal importance to the final two phases of Vossius’ historia universalis: it began with the political triumph of res ecclesiasticae under Constantine, and ended with the advent of post-Roman res gentium under Odoacer. Indeed, while Vossius did much to link them to the formal schematization of the postclassical, the epochal significance of all these “turning points” possessed rich and ample precedents. As we saw, Casaubon, when reading the poet Claudian, had declared the history of Arcadius and Honorius and the splitting of the empire to be a matter most worthy of knowing. Finally, the significance of the unfortunately named Romulus Augustulus cannot be overstated,

460 Amsterdam Universiteitsbibliotheek MS RK III B 9 (a) ii, unpaginated: Vossius begins his computus by remarking: “A Constantino Magno, ad Augustulum Momillum an.—170.” He then divides these 170 years into three constituent units: the first reads “Nam a Constantini initio ad Constantipolin conditam—25,” the second records “Inde ad diuisionem Imperii ab Arcadio et Honorio factam—65,” and the third concludes “Hinc ad Augustulum Momillum ab Odoacreo Herulo deuictum finemque Imperii Orientis <sic>—80.” Below these components Vossius then writes “Summa—170.”
as we have already seen in the closing entries of MS Vulcanius 87, and will see in still more vivid detail in the following chapter.

However, Vossius’ interests in transition were hardly limited to contexts that we would define as conventionally late antique. Instead, he was also drawn to that corner of Roman history often now labeled the third-century “crisis.” In this era of rapid imperial turnover, Rome was not only riven by a newfound degree of internal strife, but also faced simultaneous external challenges from those gentes who would soon occupy their own phase in Vossius’ historia universalis. Hence, Vossius offered a series of entries highlighting the incipient. At the year 265, in a telling harbinger of things to come, he recorded that “under Valerianus and Galienus, the Franks, Celts, Saxons, and Suevians invaded the provinces of the Romans.” Nor did Vossius ignore challenges from the other side of the empire, as he also recorded that the Persian king Sapor I “attack[ed] the borders of the Romans” around the year 240.

From here, Vossius went on to chart the full mutation of historia Romana into historia ecclesiastica and historia gentium. Indeed, the extent to which Vossius tackled the last of these is well illustrated by a lengthy manuscript note he wrote up on the Normans, which identified them with present-day Norwegians and traced how a group of former pirates from the European periphery ultimately occupied the very center of the continent’s geopolitics. This path to the postclassical was a path that Vossius had trod before, and he was intimately acquainted with its complexities and contradictions. For by the time he assembled his universal history he was best

461 Amsterdam Universiteitsbibliotheek MS RK III B 9 (a) ii , unpaginated: “Sub Valeriano et Galliano Romanorum prouincias inuasere Franci, Celti, Saxones, Sueui circa annum Chr. 265”
462 Amsterdam Universiteitsbibliotheek MS RK III B 9 (a) ii, unpaginated: “Sapores I Persarum Romanos fines infestat 240.”
463 See Amsterdam Universiteitsbibliotheek MS RK III B 9 (a) ii, unpaginated: Vossius’ note titled “De Normannis” begins as follows: “Normanni e Scandia siue Scandinavia prefecti (sunt enim idem qui Noruegii hodie dicuntur) piraticam faciebant duce Rholone.”
known not as a historian, but as an encyclopedic compiler. Vossius had assiduously assembled collections of *vitae* in his oft-used *De historicis Graecis*, first published in 1624, and his *De historicis Latinis*, released in 1627; furthermore, he would go on to assemble similar bibliographies for both the Greek and Latin poets. These compendia became invaluable bibliographic guides to the workaday tasks of late humanist scholarship, fulfilling a role in the seventeenth century akin to that served by Lilius Giraldus and Conrad Gesner in the sixteenth. And in both his *De historicis Latinis* and *De historicis Graecis*, Vossius had already negotiated far subtler distinctions between the classical and postclassical. For these compendia did not end with the conventional end of Greco-Latin *antiquitas*, but rather reached far into those vast and still unknown realms of the Middle Ages.

In the preface to his *De historicis Latinis*, Vossius began with an impassioned defense of this decision to treat the medieval in conjunction with the ancient. With a quasi-confessional immediacy rather unusual to a prefatory *Ad lectorem*, he boldly acknowledged an abrupt change of course. He had originally planned to end his collection with Charlemagne, as was “easily manifest from the beginning of this book.” But in hindsight he chalked this up to classicizing prejudice (and it is perhaps significant that Vossius had already elected to extend his purview all the way to Carolingian times). As he first reasoned, those authors that followed Charlemagne were “read by very few.” In addition, those who resided in these “later ages” or *seculis posterioribus* lacked that expertise found in older writers. They often “begot nausea,” as they wrote in “clearly rustic speech.” Their writings were frequently marred by solecism or “twisting” (*stribliginis*)—a fittingly evocative term that Vossius borrowed from that arch-archaizer Aulus Gellius.464 And if all this was not enough, Vossius was “terrified by the immense

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copiousness” of their texts, many of which remained hiding in libraries “with moths and bookworms.” But then Vossius confessed an abrupt change of course. As he explained, “I suddenly changed plan (consilium repente mutavi), and with a new mind I began to look also upon those following ages (seculis sequentibus).” His account of this “conversion experience” is worth quoting in full:

Evidently I realized that divine providence, whose mirror I knew history to be, shines in every age. And so I inferred that the human spirit, which was made in the image of God, must be diffused through every age. Nor was I worried anymore by crude speech, because I learned that the purity of words (castimoniam verborum) could be sought elsewhere, but that the deeds of nations (gesta nationum) and matters of the church (res Ecclesiae) should be sought here. Besides, I understood that those who are commonly called barbarians did not lack genius; indeed, there was often a singular eloquence and erudition in them—for the age in which they lived.465

As Vossius went on to explain, he would not end his De historicis Latinis with Charlemagne, but rather extend it all the way to Charles V, just as he had extended his De

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hisoricis Graecis all the way to the fall of Constantinople in 1453. With these words, he offered a narrative—as personalized as it was dramatic—of how a classical scholar could embrace the full unsightly depths of the postclassical. Like Casaubon, he offered a justification based upon historia, especially a robust encyclopedic vision of historia universalis. The exemplarity inherent in the “purity of words” or castimoniam verborum could be found elsewhere—presumably in texts of more canonically classical tempora. Far from earning canonicity via linguistic purity, writers from these sandwiched ages of comparative positioning—i.e., those who resided in seculis posterioribus or seculis sequentibus—obtained their worth through their very historicity. As Vossius made explicit, they furnished their readers with “deeds of nations” (gesta nationum) and “matters of the church” (res ecclesiasticae). These two categories would explain the tortuous transition from the ancient world to its modern counterpart. In fact, they would perform precisely this task in historia universalis. Fittingly enough, Vossius inserted this explicit pairing of gesta nationum and res ecclesiasticae directly into his universal history, assembled but several years later. And here their union became central to his periodized vision of the past, elevating those seculi posteriores to the status of a coherent unit in universal time.

But even more significantly, Vossius’ preface offered an impassioned defense of historia as an enterprise both universal and encyclopedic. History was ipso facto composed of eras and ages (aeva and saecula), and history was also ipso facto required to embrace them all in equal measure, without selectivity or prejudicial canonicity. Two centuries before Ranke far more famously deemed each historical period unmittelbar zu Gott, a seemingly traditionalist and pedantic late humanist advanced a similar conclusion, albeit from a very different set of
assumptions. And when doing so he could not even bring himself to use that often abused designation *barbarus*; rather, he pinned it on others, referring obliquely to those “commonly called barbarous.” Moreover, and albeit with some ambivalence and condescension, he even praised such “barbarous” authors for an eloquence and erudition dependent upon their very historicity, deeming them learned “for the age in which they lived.”

True to this programmatic prefatory statement, Vossius’ encyclopedic compendia embraced the classical and postclassical in equal measure. And in cataloguing authors in both domains, or in that nebulous zone between the two, he employed sources as diverse as his subjects. Consider, for instance, how Vossius constructed his entry for Martianus Capella, that quintessential specimen of “late” eclecticism. Vossius owned a copy of his friend Grotius’ edition, and the copious notes he entered into its title page and flyleaf reveal the similarly eclectic manner in which he assembled his *vita* of the late antique encyclopedist. By collecting the *vestigia* strewn throughout his working copy, we can reconstruct nearly verbatim the final printed entry for Capella that eventually appeared in his *De poetis Latinis*. Unsurprisingly, he began with one of his immediate predecessors, citing Lilius Giraldus’ entry for Capella as a useful starting point for bio-bibliographical information. Seeking to fix Capella’s *tempora*, he jotted down that the Italian Jesuit astronomer Giuseppe Biancani had dated Martianus Capella to the sixth century, as had Blancanus’ fellow Jesuit astronomer Christoph Scheiner. He offered

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467 For a similar defense of barbarism by Scaliger in his *De emendatione temporum*, see Grafton, *Joseph Scaliger II*.
468 For discussion of encyclopedic working methods, see Blair, *Too Much to Know*.
details concerning Capella’s printing history, noting that Thadaeus Ugoletus had first printed the text. And in keeping with the conventions of his philologically informed encyclopedism, he even enumerated some codices extant in Cambridge, as listed in the catalogues of Thomas James, the first Bodleian librarian. Quoting James, Vossius enthused that one such codex was “a most ancient exemplar, written in most ancient letters.” Finally, Vossius did not neglect Capella’s medieval transmission history, as he established that the thirteenth-century English scholar Alexander Neckham had composed a commentary on Capella’s *De nuptiis*.

But when compiling these *vestigia* of reception and transmission, Vossius could hardly avoid the nettlesome and far more subjective question of Capella’s authorial worth. As he repeated on the flyleaf, the Jesuit Scheiner had judged Capella “a reasonably learned author” (*auctorem sane doctum*). Yet none other than Joseph Scaliger had far more harshly deemed Capella a “barbarous writer” (*barbarem scriptorem*). In an accompanying gloss on this reference to Scaliger, offered in a cramped makeshift column down the side of the flyleaf, Vossius acknowledged that Capella was barbarous—“by fault of the age in which he lived, the vices of his *gens*, for he was African, and his love of varied forms of learning, to which he paid greater

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472 After citing Scheiner’s position on Capella’s dating, Vossius adds “Capellam auctorem sane doctum vocat idem Scheinerus capite eodem.” On the next page, preceding his discussion of Capella’s medieval reception, he reports that “Martianum Capellam barbarum scriptorem vocat Ios. Scaliger notis ad Cirin.”
attention than to Roman speech.” While Vossius agreed that Capella should be placed among the barbari, he simultaneously apologized for aspects of this purported barbarism. Not only did he invoke in exculpatory fashion that “age in which he lived” (just as he had when dismissing the supposed barbarism of postclassical authors in his De historicis Latinis), but he also tellingly contrasted a vision of late antique eclecticism with supposed classical rigor, juxtaposing narrow Romana dictio with Capella’s expansive varia doctrina.

But in the final printed version of the De poetis Latinis, Vossius subtly yet significantly altered this disquisition. These revisions strikingly mirrored that abrupt change of purpose he claimed in his De historicis Latinis. First, Vossius changed his vague allusion to “the age in which Capella lived” to the more pointed observation that Martianus Capella “flourished when the Roman language was collapsing”—i.e. in that strange liminal zone where Latinitas, itself the greatest index of classicism, was rapidly mutating into a very different beast. An author could not be held responsible for all the sins of his age. Given this, Vossius simultaneously revised Scaliger’s characterization of Capella. Putting into overt dialogue those two excerpts from Scaliger and Scheiner found in his working copy, he declared both opinions easily reconciled: Martianus Capella was “erudite but semi-barbarous (semibarbarus).” But this was no mere idle act of editing; rather, it marked a subtle classificatory shift. Vossius was ultimately unwilling to count Capella among the barbari: instead, ambivalently hedging, he placed him a bit more forgivingly among the semibarbari, just as Casaubon had counted Paul the Deacon and

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473 Martianus Capella, De nuptiis, flyleaf: “Barbarum, ex culpa aetatis qua vixit, vitio gentis, quippe Afer, et variae doctrinae amore, cui magis attendit, quam Romanae dictioni.”
474 G.J. Vossius, De veterum poetarum temporibus libri duo qui sunt de poetis Graecis et Latinis (Amsterdam, 1662), 67: “Quod ad auctorem ipsum, barbarum vocat Iosephus Scaliger Notis ad Cirin. Auctorem sane doctum appellat Scheinerus in Rosa Ursina capite ante memorato. Quae facile conciliantur. Nam scriptor eruditus quidem, sed semibarbarus, partim vitio gentis, quia Afer erat; partim aetatis, quoniam collabente vixit sermone Latino; partim quia multijugae dictioni attendit magis, quam sermoni Romano.”
Fulgentius among the *semidocti* in simultaneously critical and quasi-exculpatory fashion. Yet in using such a hedging designation Vossius was hardly novel, as *semibarbarus* was itself a popular ancient term used by late antique sources like Jerome and the *Historia Augusta*.\(^{475}\) Co-opting a more specific term that was itself derived (like so many other early modern temporal classifiers) from the very epoch he struggled to classify, Vossius weighed the gradations of the barbarous, and ultimately replaced unqualified barbarism with a subtler yet fuzzier vision of the incipient postclassical.

Vossius’ use of the *semi* prefix confirms that, like many others in the first half of the seventeenth century, he lacked a consistent name for the eras he so frequently engaged and occasionally even defended. As seen earlier, he sometimes referred to them as *secula posteriora* and *secula sequentia*—phrases predicated upon their relative position to *antiquitas*.\(^{476}\) But Vossius did make occasional use of another positional phrase that had not yet achieved widespread currency in the early seventeenth century—namely, *medium aevum* and its equivalents. In one of his few printed uses of the term, discussed by Nicholas Wickenden and offered in the widely quoted *Ars historica* of 1623, Vossius invoked the so-called *media aetas* in more negative fashion.\(^{477}\) When discussing the difficulties inherent in discerning historical truth from falsehoods, he cited the ignominious example of the chronicle of pseudo-Turpin. As he put it, “if we search out the writers of the middle age (*medii aevi scriptores*), how fabulously did

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\(^{475}\) See for instance *Historia Augusta* 19.2.5, which refers to the future emperor Maximinus Thrax as “adulescens et semibarbarus et uix adhuc Latinae linguae,” thereby equating “semi-barbarity” with inept Latinity (the term which governs the genitive “Latinae linguae” appears to be missing). See also Alain Chauvot, “Remarques sur l’emploi de Semibarbarus,” in *Frontières terrestres, frontières célestes dans l’Antiquité*, ed. Aline Rousselle (Paris, 1995), 255-71.

\(^{476}\) This classical scholar Christian Daumius also referred explicitly to *sequioris aevi scriptores*, whom, intriguingly enough, he joined together with *ecclesiastici scriptores*, while contrasting both with *classici scriptores*. See Christian Daumius, *De causis amissarum quarundam Latinae linguae radicum* (Utrecht, 1642), 1.

\(^{477}\) See Wickenden, *G.J. Vossius*, 150.
Turpin, archbishop of Reims, write the life of Charlemagne—provided the text does not feign his authorship with this title?” Albeit implicitly, Vossius linked the untrustworthiness of pseudo-Turpin to the vices of his benighted tempora. And like Casaubon, Vossius recognized that so many “histories” from this media aetas were more properly fabulae.

When charting the transition from antiquitas to this medium aevum, Vossius—again like Casaubon—made occasional use of iam eo tempore. For instance, when he read Bede’s Orthographia in Elias van Putschen’s collection of Latin grammarians both ancient and medieval, he zeroed in upon early medieval phonological and orthographic changes. Underlining Bede’s observation that “aequor must be written with a diphthong, because it is a word made from aquae,” Vossius concluded in the margin that “already in the time of Bede (iam Bedae tempore) they seem to have pronounced E and AE in the same manner.” By recognizing a common feature of medieval Latinity—i.e. its tendency to render the diphthong “ae” as simply

478 G.J. Vossius, Ars historica (Leiden, 1653), 48: “Si medii aevi scriptores quaerimus, quam fabulose Karoli magni vitam scripsit Turpinus, Archeiepiscopus Rhemensis, qui ejusce imperatoris et Ludovici filii temporibus vixit? Si modo inscriptio non mentitur auctorem.” Interestingly enough, there is also an explicit use of “Middle Age” as a bibliographical sorting device among surviving manuscript pages of Vossius’ library catalogue (albeit copied in a hand that is not Vossius’ own). See Amsterdam Universiteitsbibliotheek MS RK Ar 42, where a loose sheet with entries for Peter Damien, Fulbert of Chartes, John of Salisbury and others is headed “Theologi medii aevi.” Other headings on other pages reveal simultaneous use of confessional and temporal organizing schemes, including “Theologi Pontifici” and “Theologi Recen<to>iores Reformati.” Finally, as pointed out by Paul Lehmann in his foundational study of the emergence of medium aevum and related terms in early modern usage, Vossius invoked the medium aevum in a chapter of his De arte Grammatica devoted to the metrical infelicities of medieval Latin poets. See G.J. Vossius, De arte Grammatica (Amsterdam, 1635), 302: “Caput XXXIX: Non fidendum medii aevi poetis, cum passim in metrum peccent.” It is worth noting that here, as in his above example from his Ars historica, Vossius employed such terms as media aetas and medium aevum while advancing critiques of medieval literary culture. Cf. Paul Lehmann, “Von Mittelalter und von der lateinischen Philologie des Mittelalters,” in Quellen und Untersuchungen zur lateinischen Philologie des Mittelalters (Munich, 1914), 8-9.

479 Grammaticae Latinae auctores antiqui, ed. Elias van Putschen (Hanover, 1605), now Leiden Universiteitsbibliotheek 761 E 2, 2334: Vossius underlines Bede’s contention that “Aequor per diphthongon scribendum, quia ab aquae est nomen factum,” and then writes in the margin “Iam Bedae tempore videntur eodem modo pronunciasse AE et E.”
“e”—he confirmed that an important index of postclassical language change had emerged already in eighth-century Northumbria. *Iam eo tempore* could help date a subtle marker of temporal disjunction with greater precision. Unsurprisingly, Casaubon’s readings of postclassical language change had produced similar observations. For instance, in his working copy of that *semidoctus* Fulgentius, Casaubon underlined the late antiquity mythographer’s misuse of *ei,* writing “note the confusion of *ei* and *ii* at that time” (*eo tempore*).\(^{480}\) Of course, identifying error and corruption in late texts was hardly a new pastime for early modern humanists. Yet as these statements suggest, Vossius and Casaubon were not primarily interested in ahistorical categories of correctness; rather, the crux of their observations hinged upon their use of *iam eo tempore,* and hence harnessed language itself as a means of illuminating historico-temporal transformations.

Especially for Vossius, postclassical language change was no mere isolated interest. On the contrary, it reflected his pioneering engagement with so-called “barbarous” Latinity—a subject that, as we shall see in the following chapter, played a greater role than perhaps anything else in shaping explicit schemes of seventeenth-century periodizing, which gradually migrated from language in particular to history writ large. In Vossius’ *On the Faults of Speech* or *De vitiis sermonis,* published in 1645, he tackled the problem of postclassical Latinity in comprehensive fashion. One of the last works that Vossius published, *De vitiis* hardly constitutes some all-encompassing *magnum opus,* yet it marks a fitting culmination of the many themes that occupied his career—and hence also a fitting conclusion to our survey.

Just as he had borrowed the phrase *semibarbarus* from the ancients, so Vossius likewise co-opted an ancient periodizing scheme to periodize the history of Latinity itself. Whereas the

\(^{480}\) Virgil, *Opera*, 18: Casaubon writes “No. ei et ii eo tempore confund.”
ancient epitomizer Florus had divided Roman history according to the phases of the life-cycle,\(^{481}\) Vossius argued that the Latin language could also be compared to a man, since it too possessed “an age of ascent, an age of descent, and its vigor between the two of them.”\(^{482}\) This period of increase coincided with boyhood and adolescence: boyhood signified first beginnings, whereas adolescence began with what we classify as “archaic” Latinity (i.e. the world of Livius Andronicus, Ennius, and Naevius), before culminating in more familiar names like Terence and Plautus. From here Vossius moved to his period of vigor or maturity—that Golden Age of Cicero, Caesar, Sallust, Nepos, Ovid, Virgil, and so many others. But vigor, naturally enough, was followed by decline. As Vossius asserted, authors like Suetonius, Seneca, Quintilian and Tacitus had “already lost a little of their ancient vigor.”\(^{483}\) From here, things got only worse; that “Silver” age of slightly less vigor soon morphed into the more worrisome \(aetas decrepita\) or “decrepit age,” which Vossius extended “from Alexander Severus to the barbarian invasions in Italy, and the loss of the empire by Romulus Augustulus.”\(^{484}\) Unlike earlier phases in the linguistic life-cycle, the end of the \(aetas decrepita\) coincided with a definitive geopolitical event.

\(^{481}\) The early modern uses of Florus’ life-cycle metaphor will be examined extensively in the following chapter.

\(^{482}\) G.J. Vossius, *De vitiis sermonis et glossematis Latino-Barbaris libri quatuor* (Amsterdam, 1645), preface: “Cum Romana lingua, imo et aliis, comparatum est, uti cum homine. Habuit sermo Latinus aetatem crescentem, habuit decrescentem, habuit inter utramque vigorem suum.” On the earlier use of this scheme by J.C. Scaliger, see Walther Rehm, *Der Untergang Roms im abendländischen Denken: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichtsschreibung und zum Dekadenzproblem* (Leipzig, 1930), 154 and 162.

\(^{483}\) Vossius, *De vitiis*, preface: “Vigorem vero, ac maturitatem, in prosa habent Cicero, Caesar, Caelius, Sallustius, Cornelius Nepos, Livius, Velleius, M. Seneca: in carmine, Lucretius, Catullus, Maro, Horatius, Tibullus, Propertius, Gratius, Ovidius, Podo Albinovanus, et his aequales...Quamquam in horum aliquibus videas, jam paulum remisisse vigorem antiquum.”

\(^{484}\) Vossius, *De vitiis*, preface: “Horum crudae, ac viridi senectuti successit aetases decrepitas. Videlicet a Severo Alexandro usque ad irruptiones barbaricas in Italiam, amissumque a Momyllo Imperium.”
that Vossius had once marked with great finality in his late antique *computus*—namely, the demise of the Roman Empire in the West.

Yet even in this age of decrepitude, Vossius’ narrative was not completely unidirectional. He noted, with a characteristically litotic depiction of the “late,” that some writers of this period “neglected the language of their own age,” and “not unhappily” followed the example of the ancients. Not unlike Lambin’s characterization of Ausonius, Vossius then enumerated instances of late antique *imitatio*, noting that under Constantine, there flourished Lactantius, that *Ciceronis aemulus*, and under Honorius there flourished a *Sallustii aemulus*, Severus Sulpicius. After this, he singled out none other than Claudian for praise, deeming him a “poet of great spirit.”

However, this renaissance of *imitatio* was soon followed by destruction: “afterwards Rome was first under Odoacer, and then under the Goths, and its empire was miserably mangled by those various peoples whom the Romans called barbarians.” And the end of *imperium* also brought the inglorious end of its language. Just as Rome herself had been “miserably mangled,” now Roman speech was “no longer decrepit, but I should say, moribund, or rather deceased, more similar to a cadaver than a living body.”

Through such dire hyperbole, Vossius brought *antiquitas* to a close—not with a whimper but a resolute bang. At first glance, Vossius’ characterization of this nadir may hardly seem a generous apology for the postclassical, as he indulged in some of the very prejudicial tropes he had so vehemently castigated in his *De historicis Latinis*. Yet even here, when bemoaning the

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485 Vossius, *De vitiis*, preface: “Quidam tamen tum quoque, neglecta sui seculi lingua, non infelicitet se composuere ad veterum exemplum. Qualis sub Constantino Lactantius, sub Honorio Severus Sulpicius; ille Ciceronis, hic Sallustii aemulus. Ac Severo Claudianus aequalis, magni spiritus poeta.”

486 Vossius, *De vitiis*, preface: “Posteaquam vero Roma, prius sub Odoacro, mox sub Gothis, fuit; ac a variis gentibus, quas Romani barbaras vocarunt, misere discerptum est imperium: sermonem Romanum, non jam quasi decrepitum, sed dixero moribundam, vel potius emortuum, magisque cadaveri, quam vivo similem corpori...”
ruin of Rome and the desecrated “cadaver” of Latinitas, Vossius still could not bring himself to utter barbarus directly. Rather, he hurled the word back upon those Romans who purportedly saw their language and empire demolished by the arrival of new gentes—those central actors in the fifth phase of Vossian historia universalis. Moreover, and far more importantly, the very structure of his De vitis belied this neat and tidy conclusion to his life-cycle metaphor. The end of the traditional metaphor was not the end of the story, but rather its beginning. Although Vossius’ prefatory comments wept over the cadaver of classical Latinity, his De vitis as a whole sought to chart the rise of a new form of life, derived but distinct from the old. In other words, it sought to treat postclassical or medieval Latinity as a distinct phenomenon, albeit one manifestly “inferior” to its deceased predecessor.

The ambivalence inherent in this project is aptly conveyed by the two-part subtitle of De vitis, which proclaimed the text “partially useful for speaking purely, and partly useful for better understanding writers of the later ages (posteriorum seculorum scriptores).” Invoking those seculi posteriores once more, Vossius simultaneously appealed to categories of exemplarity and encyclopedic historicity. On the one hand, like the Dickensian Office of Circumlocution, barbarous Latinity taught one how not to do it, promising through negative exempla to promote the acquisition of true and classical linguistic purity. But on the other hand, the mastery of “late” linguistic forms was necessary to read late authors, and it was salutary to read them. The posteriorum seculorum scriptores formed a distinct and coherent cultural system, the reading of which Vossius treated as ipso facto desirable and laudable. After all, divine providence shone in every age, even ones littered with the cadavers of earlier and “better” eras. Hence, in the middle decades of the seventeenth century, the postclassical world of gesta nationum and res

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487 Vossius, De vitis, title page: “Partim utiles ad pure loquendum, partim ad melius intelligendos posteriorum seculorum scriptores.”
ecclesiasticae achieved an ambiguous commensurability or consanguinity with the canonically classical—made possible above all through the encyclopedic promises of one of its principal textual legacies, historia universalis.

**Conclusion: From Plurality to Periodizing**

At the beginning of his *Great Instauration*, Francis Bacon famously declared the learning of antiquitas to be but the “boyhood of knowledge,” and possessed of the “characteristic property of boys.” Whereas the ancients could only speak, the moderns could instead *do*. For Bacon, that old dichotomy between antiqui and moderni merited reversal; the ancients were but youths while the moderns were very old indeed. As discussed in the introduction, Bacon and Descartes and others (despite the great differences between them) participated in a widespread attack against the authority inherent in antiquitas—a challenge which was itself often read (especially in discourses of eighteenth-century Enlightenment) as something akin to a foundation myth of modernity. Periodization, so we were often told, emerged in part out of such triumphalism, which ever more vigilantly policed the boundaries between modernity and its “others.” Yet perceptions of the past changed in more ways than one, and historia—far from withering—found new and inventive solutions. One such response, charted at length above, was to be found through pluralism, which transformed historia into discrete and ramified historiae.

The preceding pages have surveyed a world in flux, in which those “late” humanists who delved into “late” corners of the past found themselves repeatedly unable to define lateness itself in any fixed fashion. Instead, they encountered a third space between antiquity and modernity that defied easy summation and invited hedging qualification. Nor was this third space easily
expressed in a scholarly idiom used to speaking in more monolithic terms of the *antiqui* and *antiquitas*. Drawing the line between *antiquitas* and its successor-states was no light task: as a result, scholars like Casaubon and Vossius deployed terms of deliberate ambiguity like *semidoctus* or *semibarbarus*, which—by tweaking categories borrowed from antiquity itself—mixed the old and the new along with criticism and forgiveness. Such hedging would reach new and humorously fitting heights with the mid-seventeenth-century classical scholar Kaspar Barth, who in several instances even described denizens of the Middle Ages as “semi-ancients” or *semiveteres*. These contortions point above all to the endurance of that wider tension outlined in the introduction. Even if the past could no longer retain its singularity, those categories of exemplarity and canonicity that depended upon such singularity often resisted direct repudiation.

But it would be incorrect and indeed anachronistic to read such ambivalence as the failure of an old “normal science” to adjust to new paradigms. Rather, ambiguity itself was crucial to the discovery of the postclassical, and by wrestling with it, the scholars examined here were able to grasp in richer detail a world that had similarly wrestled with the paradoxical coexistence of change and continuity. After all, such paradoxes were visible in everything from the syntheses offered by *historia universalis* and the simultaneous preservation and transformation of *Latinitas* to the decision of a ninth-century biographer to memorialize Charlemagne as though he were the emperor Augustus himself. As Casaubon, Vossius, and many others discovered, *imitatio* and *renovatio*—always framed with reference to *antiquitas*—remained central features of cultural life throughout postclassical time. As they came to realize, it was none other than this “middle”

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488 See Barth’s unpublished continuations to his sprawling *Adversaria*, now Cambridge, MA, Houghton Library MS Riant 3, where he deploys *semiveteres* and its equivalents at fol.242r and fol.265r. For example, in a marginal note affixed to his discussion of the term “cloaca” at fol.265r, Barth cites medieval glosses upon Isidore of Seville and remarks “Semiveteribus Cloacam Burcam dictam docent glossae Isidori.”
world that had largely invented those categories of reception and transmission that defined so much of their own relationship to deeper and more distant pasts.

In doing so late humanists stumbled upon a more universal problem—which would go on to bedevil many a would-be periodizer. With words more indicative of the anxieties of the late twentieth century than the conundrums of the early seventeenth, none other than Michel Foucault memorably acknowledged the profound ambiguities inherent in dividing time. Noting that “establishing discontinuities is not an easy task even for history in general...and certainly even less so for the history of thought,” he admitted that we often “wish to mark off a period,” and so slice and dice the story of the past into neat and discernable units. “But,” he asked with rhetorical flourish, “have we the right to establish symmetrical breaks at two points in time in order to give an appearance of continuity and unity to the system we place between them?”

As we have seen, this was a task that proved equally nettlesome to the culture of late humanism. Could one really establish a clean symmetrical break between antiquitas and some yet defined medium aevum? And could one treat either as monolithic unities, ascribing canonicity and exemplarity to the one while denying it to the other? Could one always distinguish the learned from the unlearned, the elegant from the rustic, or the civilized from the barbarous? Many could, and would, of course; but paradoxically enough one could not posit such dichotomies without encountering a world that militated against dichotomy itself, yielding instead overlapping layers and temporal plurality. These tension would have immense consequences for defining the possibilities of periodization, whether in the later seventeenth century, the Enlightenment, or in still more “modern” worlds beyond.

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489 Foucault, Order of Things, 50.
But more broadly, periodization emerged out of a far larger story of change within continuity, and of selection and classification within purported universality. For in attempting to effect a comprehensive *historia*—that which could earn the age-old designation of *historia universalis*—one had no choice but to divide and subdivide an ostensibly universal expanse into smaller units, a process which could purportedly begin to tell the story of how the distant past had been transmuted into the present. This task and the “fantastic miscellany” of scholarly methods it spawned must be “summoned back by the window,” to use Butterfield’s phrase, and restored to a central place in the longer story of dividing time. For as long as periodization remains with us (whether for good or for ill), it is a story that eminently deserves recovery. Hence, in the following chapter, we will examine just how periodization emerged in the generations that followed this revitalization of *historia universalis* and discovery of postclassical time.
CHAPTER FIVE

The Medium Aevum Between Ancients and Moderns:
Inventing Tripartite Periodization

G.J. Vossius did not explicitly use the tripartite scheme that divides historical time into ancient, medieval, and modern phases—the triumph of which forms the subject of this final chapter of our study. As we saw, he rarely used *media aetas* or “middle age” in print. Nevertheless, Vossius did possess a taste for neat and tidy triads. Among his lecture notes on universal history—in which he carved out those two unique postclassical phases of *gesta nationum* and *res ecclesiasticae*—he jotted down an introductory schema that tersely declared “the history of all time is tripartite” (*omnis aevi historia est tripartita*). Committed to the broadest sweep of *historia universalis*, Vossius outlined his three periods of universal history as follows: the first would extend from Creation to the calling of Abraham into Canaan, the second from the calling of Abraham to the birth of Christ, and the third from Christ’s birth to the present.⁴⁹⁰ For Vossius, microcosm reflected macrocosm: just as all of history was divisible into three parts, so—as seen in the previous chapter—something as temporally infinitesimal as late Roman antiquity, a mere blink of an eye compared to *omnis aevi historia*, was likewise severable into three successive periods. Its first phase stretched from the beginning of Constantine’s reign to his founding of Constantinople, the second from the founding of Constantinople to the division of the empire.

⁴⁹⁰ Amsterdam, Universiteitsbibliotheek MS RK III F 9[a], unpaginated: Vossius writes at the very top of a loose sheet: “Omnis aevi historia est tripartita.” He then goes on to note that “Prima pars est ab orbe condito usque ad vocationem Abrahæ ex Charran Mesopotamiae in terram Canaan, sive Palaæstïna. Altera est a vocatione illæ Abrahæ usque ad nativitatem Christi. Tertia pars est a nativitate Christi usque ad annum hunc.” On Vossius’ various schemes for the division of time, see Wickenden, *G.J. Vossius*, 127-30.
into East and West under Arcadius and Honorius, and the third from the division of the Empire to the demise of its western half under Romulus Augustulus.

Whether organized around Christ or Constantine, such triadic groupings affirmed the historical significance of their corresponding boundaries and turning points. But they did more than that: forcing history into patterns of geometric regularity served humbler practical or mnemonic goals, while bolstering the aesthetics of historical narrative. Nurtured by medieval traditions of the chronicle and the *computus*, these divisions imbued history with an essential, almost naturalized narrative order, rendering its messiness more easily digestible in the process. Given that Vossius enthusiastically utilized such triads for both the largest and smallest of timescales, it may seem surprising that he did not make formal use of that still-inchoate intermediate triad that remains with us today, and would flourish long after historians had lost their taste for Eusebian chronology and universal sacred history (a taste for universalizing they have regained, ironically enough, in our own current age of world history). Although he did not explicitly employ it, that triad of ancient/medieval/modern owed much to Vossius and his world. The Dutch scholar, often dismissed as a stodgy traditionalist, proved a crucial intergenerational link between those humanists who flourished in the decades around 1600 (including Casaubon, Scaliger, Vulcanius, and others surveyed in previous chapters) and the neglected periodizers examined here.491 As we shall see, these latest of late humanists, active in the late seventeenth

491 For a typical characterization of Vossius’ unoriginality, but also an expression of his importance to a certain accepted genealogy of classical scholarship, see Rudolf Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship from 1300 to 1850* (Oxford, 1976), 129. In Pfeiffer’s words, “But the elder Gerard John Vossius...belong[s] to a quite distinct group of antiquarians and ‘polyhistors’. Their contribution to classical scholarship consisted in enlargement and consolidation rather than originality. But to put in order and make easily accessible the accumulated treasures of the creative age from Agricola and Erasmus to Grotius was no mean service, and later generations have been duly grateful for it.”
and early eighteenth centuries, often acknowledged their deep debts to Vossius when they explicitly divided time.

As one who did not directly employ tripartite periodization, Vossius sometimes struggled with the inherent fuzziness of the Middle Ages. When cataloguing the historical texts he owned, he settled upon a familiar binary distinction for historians and their books: some he named *veteres*, and other he styled in appropriately comparative fashion as *recentiores*. Yet as we have seen before, this distinction often created classificatory problems for those texts and authors who inhabited the space that would become the *medium aevum*. Vossius counted such figures as diverse as Bede and the eleventh-century Byzantine historian George Cedrenus amongst his *historici veteres*, placing them alongside such unambiguous “ancients” as Diodorus Siculus and Aelian. Several pages later, he even catalogued Matthew of Westminster, the purported author of the thirteenth-century *Flores historiarum*, as a *historicus vetus*. In contrast, his *historici recentiores* consisted of names that we would consider definitively early modern, including Flavio Biondo, Johannes Trithemius, Carlo Sigonio and Jacques-Auguste de Thou. Unlike others who read it as an early chapter in the history of modernity, Vossius seemed to conceptualize his unnamed *medium aevum* as a late province of the ancients. But elsewhere he revealed signs of potential ambivalence or confusion. When Vossius listed such authors as Sigebert of Gembloux, the twelfth-century Byzantine chronicler Zonaras, and even pseudo-Turpin himself (the very source that had prompted Vossius’ use of *media aetas* in his *Ars historica*), he added a crucial emendation. Although he initially wrote out *historici rec* atop this page, presumably as shorthand for *historici recentiores*, he then crossed out *rec* and replaced it with what appears to read *vet*, presumably to signify *historici veteres*.492 Perhaps Vossius was unsure of whether historians of

492 Amsterdam, Universiteitsbibliotheek MS RK III D 11 (a).
the twelfth century were true *veteres*. Granted, one must never read too much into what was perhaps a mere slip of the pen. Yet as we saw in Vossius’ subtle replacement of *barbarus* with *semibarbarus*, or Vulcanius’ revisions of his preface to Isidore’s *Etymologiae*, sometimes the most quotidian forms of self-correction yield unexpected insights into the ambiguities of temporal classification. This proved especially true when scholars struggled to define a temporal space that did not possess a fixed or certain name.

Ironically, though Vossius did not possess a well-stocked arsenal of terms to link this middle space to its ancient predecessors and modern successors, he nonetheless articulated a dramatic historical narrative that adumbrated tripartite periodizing. Nowhere is this perhaps clearer than in the work that Vossius composed at the very end of his life, and with which we closed the previous chapter. As surveyed above, the preface to *De vitiiis sermonis* began by dividing the history of Latin literature according to the stages of the life cycle. Nor was Vossius the first to use this ancient scheme. Julius Caesar Scaliger—the father of Joseph Scaliger—had introduced such a division in his posthumously published *Poetices* of 1561, where he slotted Latin poetry into five ages. These included ages of boyhood, maturity, senility and the like (the last of which, like Vossius’ period of *senectus*, included such late antique authors as Ausonius and Sidonius Apollinaris). But the elder Scaliger maintained that his five ages of poetry were not absolutely commensurate with the four ages of man. For his fifth age of *recentiores*, which began long after late antiquity, constituted a renewed boyhood—a decidedly non-mortal form of rebirth or resurrection that occurred approximately a millennium after Latin poetry’s supposed senility and resultant death. In Scaliger’s estimation, a “new boyhood” began with none other
than Petrarch, and from that point forward poetry had risen to such heights that it now rivaled its ancient counterpart.\textsuperscript{493}

Although Vossius and the elder Scaliger used the same life-cycle metaphor to characterize the changing nature of Latinity, they could not have done so in more disparate contexts. Scaliger did so when penning a treatise on poetic criticism centered on such canonical classical authors as Aristotle and Cicero. In contrast, Vossius did so while compiling a glossary of postclassical or “barbarous” Latin. Thus, Scaliger passed over the vast stretch of postclassical time that separated his Renaissance-era recentiores like Petrarch and Poliziano from the senile world of Ausonius and Sidonius. In the age of the elder Scaliger, such schematizing did not often prompt overt mediations on the gulf between the classical and the postclassical. Although the battle over Ciceronianism—in which Scaliger and Erasmus fought on opposing sides—concerned the proper temporal reach of the canon, competing visions of literary imitatio were mostly adjudicated according to general categories of temporal difference, not explicit temporal turning points.\textsuperscript{494} However, when Vossius wrote almost a century later, he participated in a growing dialogue on just how to divide historical time. His \textit{De vitiis} offered a much richer


\textsuperscript{494} See here Pigman, “Imitation and the Renaissance Sense of the Past,” and Pigman, “Versions of Imitation in the Renaissance.” As we shall see, however, several of the late-seventeenth-century periodizers surveyed here explicitly invoked Ciceronian debates when articulating their schemas for dividing time.
narrative of what had happened in the lacuna that Scaliger had passed by—thereby adding narrative flesh to what would soon become the tripartite scheme of ancient/medieval/modern.

In Vossius’ estimation, all had not been lost in the period that we now refer to as the early Middle Ages. He praised the Carolingian revival, although he added that Carolingian schools had excelled more at teaching *doctrina* than instructing students in the Latin that conveyed such learning. But he judged the central and later Middle Ages more harshly, especially from the tenth century onwards. After the disintegration of Carolingian Europe, “nearly all learning was routed from the world (*prope omnis eruditio ab orbe est profligata,*),” and as a result it “withdrew for all of four hundred years, punished with a cruel exile” (*crudeli multata exilio*). 495 This view animated the lexicographical critiques of *De vitiis* itself. In one case it even prompted Vossius to deploy the temporal identifier *medium aevum,* just as he had when mounting passing critiques of medieval literary culture in his *Ars historica* and *De arte grammatica.* When glossing the medieval Latin verb *devio* (“I detour” or “I stray”), he deemed it “by no means infrequent among writers of the middle age” (*mediae aetatis scriptoribus,* while ascribing preferable forms like *deflecto* or *declino de via* to “authors of proper Latin” (*idoneis Latinitatis auctoribus,* 496 On the same page, he likewise referred to *descidere,* when used for *decidere* (“to cut” or “to detach”), as a form “of the barbarous age” (*barbari saeculi,* thereby drawing an implicit equivalence between the *barbarum saeculum* and the *medium aevum.* 497 Likewise, by contrasting writers of the *medium aevum* with authors who employed *idonea Latinitas,* Vossius posited an explicit

495 Vossius, *De vitiis,* preface: “Caroli genere extincto, quod decimo a Christo seculo fuit, prope omnis eruditio ab orbe est profligata. Totisque annis quadringentis delituit crudeli multata exilio.”
497 Vossius, *De vitiis,* 702.
antithesis between a marker of temporality on the one hand and an attribute of literary canonicity on the other.

After its tragic absence of four centuries, Vossius announced the triumphal return of *eruditio*, called forth (as Scaliger and so many other early moderns had described) by none other than Petrarch. However, Vossius refused to believe that the intervening *tempora* between late antiquity and Petrarch were unworthy of study, even if they exhibited a near complete absence of culture. Reprising the point he had offered nearly two decades earlier in the preface to his *De historicis Latinis*, he argued that proficiency in the language of such times was vital. Without it one could not understand how this still inchoate *medium aevum* fit within the far broader story of universal history. Nor were the events that filled this lacuna of learning without consequence. On the contrary, they contained *gesta nationum* and *res ecclesiasticae*, essential for grasping the complex politics and ecclesiology of contemporary Europe. So Vossius had compiled *De vitiiis* “lest the chasms (*hiatus*) in history be multiple.” For without this history “we cannot know what the church was like during those times, or the causes and the ways in which the Roman Empire weakened little by little, and new kingdoms and republics rose from its ruins.”

With such words, Vossius gave voice to the essential ambiguity that would shape the invention of the *medium aevum* in the decades following his publication of *De vitiiis*. The creation of the *medium aevum* occupied the center of ongoing debates over the relative merits of *res* and *verba*, barbarism and something approximating civilization. It seemed self-evident to Vossius—just as it had been to Scaliger, Lorenzo Valla, and so many other humanists—that both

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498 Vossius, *De vitiiis*, preface: “Partim ne hiatus sit multiplex in historia; sine qua scire non possimus, vel qualis Ecclesiarum facies quibusque fuerit temporibus: vel caussas, modosque, quibus paullatim corruit imperium Romanum, et ex huius ruinis assurrexere nova regna, ac Respublicae...” As Carlotta Dionisotti noted, Vossius “extended the old grammarians’ category *de vitiiis sermonis*... into a wide-ranging investigation of late and medieval Latin.” See Dionisotti, “From Stephanus to Du Cange,” 335.
Latinity and the culture it animated had sunk into senescence and decline in the last reaches of antiquitas, only to be reanimated in that moment now conventionally deemed the Renaissance. But if the verba of the intervening period between senescence and rebirth were ipso facto barbarous, the res of its underlying culture (if indeed that culture could be spoken of as a singular entity) were not similarly condemnable. For one, the logic of encyclopedic universalism, expressed in the apprehension of eclecticism and temporal plurality that (as argued earlier) came to define late humanism, refused to countenance any hiatus in historia, however benighted the times. And more immediately, Vossius and his contemporaries realized that a rich paradox underlay the birth of so-called “modern” Europe. On the one hand, standards of literary, aesthetic, and cultural exemplarity depended upon a very precise temporal narrative of classical efflorescence followed by decline—a narrative that became almost clichéd by the middle of the seventeenth century. On the other hand, the origins of so much in contemporary European politics and religion were only derivable from a segment of the past altogether distinct from antiquitas—a period alternately condemned when read as a coda to the distant past, or embraced when read as a prologue to the present, yet present in humanist historical consciousness since at least the time Flavio Biondo and Leonardo Bruni. To make matters more complex, up to now this nebulous time had not earned a stable name.

Just how the medium aevum acquired this stable and conventional name, and thereby fixed a new scheme of periodizing, forms the subject of this final chapter. Late humanist scholars who worked in the decades around 1600 did not formalize a new scheme of historical

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499 Peter Miller has explored a variation on this view in Peiresc, drawing an equivalence between the antiquary’s fascination with “non-classical” periods and his investigations of “objects of no aesthetic intentionality.” See Peter Miller, “Peiresc’s History of Provence: Antiquarianism and the Discovery of a Medieval Mediterranean,” Transactions of the American Philosophical Society 101 (2011), 90.
periodization. However, their explorations of temporal plurality allowed scholars in the following generations to do precisely that. This process of canonization began in the second half of the seventeenth century and extended into the first decades of the eighteenth—a slice of time that, depending upon how one periodizes in our own current parlance, either constituted the latest reach of early modernity or the first dawn of Enlightenment. As we shall see, the contradictions inherent in “humanism” and “Enlightenment” as period markers—and the cultures of scholarship with which they are equated—are themselves central to the story of dividing time.

“The Age of Herculean Diligence”: Temporal Maps between Erudition and Enlightenment

One of the final products of Edward Gibbon’s literary life is the draft of an incomplete “Address,” composed in the 1790s and posthumously included in collections of his miscellaneous works. Here the author of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, often thought to have treated medieval culture with irony and disdain, called for reinvigorated study of the European Middle Ages. He lamented that England had failed to reconstruct its national medieval past along those lines now pursued in France, Germany, Italy, and elsewhere. Even tiny Denmark, he observed, was editing its medieval texts. In a memorable phrase invoked by Arnaldo Momigliano, Gibbon bemoaned that his native land “knew not where to seek our English Muratori”—a reference to the eighteenth-century antiquary Ludovico Muratori, the ducal librarian of Modena whose multi-volume Antiquitates Italicae medii aevi and related

works had so illuminated the Italian Middle Ages.\textsuperscript{501} To remedy this problem, Gibbon proposed
the creation of a series of \textit{Scriptores rerum Anglicarum} to edit England’s own copious supply of
medieval Latin historical texts. Although Gibbon did not manage to put this plan into action, his
proposal offers important insights into historical periodization as it crystalized in the closing
decades of the eighteenth century. The foremost author of Rome’s long decline not only
expressed his gratitude for the wealth of erudite medieval research (especially of French
Benedictine origin) that had facilitated his scholarship, but also concluded that compiling his
own country’s medieval past constituted the ideal continuation of the work he had begun with
the \textit{Decline and Fall}.

In his proposal, Gibbon bemoaned that few of his contemporaries could reconstruct such
languishing corpora of medieval texts, since “the age of Herculean diligence, which could
devour and digest whole libraries, is passed away.”\textsuperscript{502} Writing at the close of the eighteenth
century, he invoked a seemingly lost world of encyclopedic erudition that had flourished but a
century before, and whose achievements littered the many footnotes of the \textit{Decline and Fall}.
Although he did not explicitly credit it with this feat, Gibbon looked back with nostalgia upon an
age that had canonized the Middle Ages as a delineated object of study. As to medieval writers
themselves, Gibbon refused judgment: “Instead of condemning the MONKISH HISTORIANS
(as they are contemptuously styled) silently to molder in the dust of our libraries; our can-
dor, and even our justice, should learn to estimate their value, and excuse their imperfections.”\textsuperscript{503} Chief
among these imperfections, of course, was these historians’ Latinity. Like many a humanist

\textsuperscript{501} Gibbon, “An Address,” 476. Cf. Ludovico Muratori, \textit{Antiquitates Italicae medii aevi} (Milan,
(1954): 450-63; esp. 452 for his discussion of Muratori. On Italian medievalism, see Eric W.
\textsuperscript{502} Gibbon, “An Address,” 476.
\textsuperscript{503} Gibbon, “An Address,” 470.
before him, Gibbon averred that “their Latin style is far removed from the eloquence and purity of Sallust and Livy.” Yet lack of classical eloquence did not render “monkish historians” hopelessly inscrutable. Rather, “the use of a permanent and general idiom has opened the study, and connected the series of our ancient chronicles, from the age of Bede to that of Walsingham.”

With these words, Gibbon asserted that one could study the period from the seventh century to fifteenth as a singular entity, thanks above all to linguistic commonality. The discovery of this “permanent and general idiom” was no accident; rather, it was due above all to G.J. Vossius and other late humanists who charted the language of postclassical Latinity that Gibbon could apprehend a common culture behind this chain of chronicles.

Like Vossius more than a century before him, Gibbon valued medieval writers for the light they shed on their dark and unknown world. But unlike Vossius, and albeit with some of his trademark condescension, he did not merely agree that the historical utility of medieval texts excused their lack of aesthetic merit; instead, he argued that the latter had materially increased the former. As he put it, “these monkish historians are even endowed with a singular, though accidental merit; the unconscious simplicity with which they represent the manners and opinions of their contemporaries: a natural picture, which the most exquisite art is unable to imitate.” In other words, medieval authors lacked the requisite artifice and literary consciousness to offer anything but a “natural” and unmediated view of the manners of their times. And as Gibbon had sought to demonstrate in the Decline and Fall, recovering the manners of this benighted middle time was essential to understanding antiquity’s strange metamorphosis into modernity.

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As this proposal confirms, Gibbon’s views on the European Middle Ages were hardly as one-sided as some caricatures suggest. Most notably, his praise of “monkish writers” set him apart from many other Enlightenment “philosophical” historians. For instance, the Scottish stadial theorist Adam Ferguson—in his 1767 *Essay on the History of Civil Society*—expressed what might pass as a stereotypical Enlightened view of medieval historical culture. Here Ferguson condemned medieval historians, “generally bred to the profession of monks, and confined to the monastic life,” who “applied themselves to record what they were pleased to denominate facts, while they suffered the productions of genius to perish.” Such monkish historians had failed at the chief task of historical writing, at least as a stadial theorist might see it: they could not produce “any representation of the active spirit of mankind in any condition.” But Gibbon took a decidedly more ambivalent view of such authors and their world. After much soul-searching, he chose to continue the *Decline and Fall* deep into this “monkish” territory. Although he had originally planned a circumscribed ancient history, Gibbon ultimately ended the *Decline and Fall* not at such traditional marks of “fall” as 410 or 476; instead, he extended his final volumes all the way to the capture of Constantinople in 1453, a full millennium after the demise of the Roman Empire in the West. Like Vossius continuing his *De historicis Latinis* deep into the *medium aevum*, Gibbon united the ancient and medieval into a single narrative, despite earlier inclinations to the contrary.

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506 For an important exploration of this territory see Peter Brown, “Gibbon’s Views on Culture and Society in the Fifth and Sixth Centuries,” *Daedalus* 105 (1976): 73-88. At p.73 Brown remarks that the *Decline and Fall* represents “the peak of a century of scholarship conducted in the belief that the study of the declining Roman Empire was also the study of the origins of modern Europe.”


508 It is instructive to consider how Gibbon’s professed ambivalence to the medieval chronicle tradition mirrored that evinced by one of his project’s chief intellectual forebears—namely, the
This synthesis of divergent times was predicated upon a synthesis of divergent methods, for which Gibbon remains far better known today. In an essay titled “Gibbon’s Contribution to Historical Method,” Arnaldo Momigliano argued that Gibbon had fused two distinct historical impulses: the first the pursuit of dense antiquarian erudition, and the other a far more recent development—i.e. the emergence of so-called Enlightenment philosophical history, which showed relatively little concern for facts and footnotes and instead painted, with broad strokes, the ebb and flow of custom, culture and what began to be termed civilization.\footnote{See Momigliano, “Gibbon’s Contribution.”} As Gibbon’s elegiac invocation of that lost world of “Herculean diligence” suggests, he found himself uncomfortable with what Momigliano memorably deemed the invasion of historical scholarship by a “fanatic gang of philosophers who traveled very light.”\footnote{Momigliano, “Gibbon’s Contribution,” 452.} If Adam Ferguson—stadial theorist and philosophical historian \textit{par excellence}—had faulted medieval historians for credulously amassing facts instead of depicting the “active spirit of mankind,” Gibbon worried that his Enlightenment contemporaries did not possess the requisite command of facts in order to discern such a highfalutin thing as “spirit.”

Despite their many differences, erudition and Enlightenment shared a common “feel” for the contours of the past. As argued here, “light traveling” historians of Enlightenment had unknowingly smuggled a temporal map from the very world they claimed to repudiate. This act of spoliation or \textit{translatio studii} deserves to be counted alongside other more celebrated examples of cross-cultural appropriation and trans-historical transmission. For this map did not

\footnote{sixteenth-century Archbishop of Canterbury Matthew Parker, whom elsewhere in his “Address” Gibbon praised for having “strenuously applied himself to revive the study of the Saxon tongue, and of English antiquities.” On Parker and his scholarship, see Madeline C. McMahon, \textit{“Ani one example of the primitue churche”}: \textit{Church History and Confessional Identity in Sixteenth-Century England}. BA Thesis, Princeton University, 2013.}
emerge *ex nihilo*, but rather owed itself to one of the last—and most lasting—inventions of late humanist erudition: the threefold division of time into antiquity, the Middle Ages, and modernity. At first glance, this elegant periodization killed two key Enlightenment birds with one stone—it could advance a tragic tale of decline and fall whose twin culprits were post-Roman barbarism and Christian superstition, and bolster a triumphalist story of cultural renewal that culminated in secular, civil European modernity. If Enlightenment historians had not inherited the pleasingly simple temporal triad that underlay this narrative, surely they would have had to invent it. Yet to expand Momigliano’s metaphor, Enlightenment historiography traveled with a form of baggage—specifically temporal baggage—that it did not know it carried.

The presence of this baggage, transported largely undetected from seventeenth-century erudition to eighteenth-century Enlightenment, would prove immensely consequential to the history of historical thought. We in the twenty-first century are still wrestling with such trunks, and the consequences of our amnesia concerning their origins and genealogy, as we continue to argue over the efficacy and justifiability of dividing time. Late humanist “Herculean diligence” not only gave birth to the systematic study of the medieval world, but also canonized the periodization that made the Middle Ages an intelligible category in the first place. In other words, without seventeenth-century purveyors of diligence, Gibbon would not even have been able to use the very term Middle Age, nor could he have articulated the narrative of decline and fall that became its logical corollary. When Gibbon, justifying his decision to continue the *Decline and Fall* far past the end of ancient *Romanitas*, remarked with litotic ambivalence that “the darkness of the middle ages exhibits some scenes not unworthy of his notice,” he appealed not only to a certain consensus concerning the ambiguous cultural merits of the Middle Age, but also took for granted just what this historical period was, and which centuries it occupied. One
could not have taken such things for granted in the world of Scaliger, Vulci
nus, Casaubon, Vossius, and their immediate successors. Yet the “Middle Age” was fixed enough to require almost no explication whatsoever when Gibbon wrote roughly a century and a half later. How this consensus emerged, and the acts of judgment and cleaving it required, will be traced in the pages that follow.

While Momigliano’s study of Gibbon’s method considered the historian’s use of antiquarian medieval research, his definitive publication on the subject—which inspired so much twentieth-century interest in early modern antiquarianism—focused, as its title suggested, on the antiquarian recovery of classical Greece and Rome.511 Hence, as Peter Miller has recently commented, Momigliano’s “Ancient History and the Antiquarian” may require a companion “Medieval History and the Antiquarian,” especially given the importance of erudite and antiquarian methods to the emergent study of medieval Europe in the seventeenth century.512 These methodological distinctions must be put in dialogue with more nebulous distinctions of temporality. If on one axis we place the ostensible struggle between erudition and Enlightenment, then on the other we must place that far longer give and take between two temporal constructs often deemed antithetical—namely, classical antiquity and the Middle Ages. This is not to say that erudition was confined exclusively to the study of the Middle Ages, or that philosophical history exclusively valorized classical pagan antiquity.513 But as suggested here, each of these distinctions—the one of historiographical genre, and the other of historical subject—cannot be understood without the other.

511 Cf. Momigliano, “Ancient History and the Antiquarian.”
512 See Miller, “Peiresc’s History of Provence,” 85.
Hence, it is all the more ironic that the world that did more than any other to advance both practices of erudition and the study of the Middle Ages—that is, seventeenth-century late humanism—was long omitted from accounts of modern medievalism, which focused disproportionately on nineteenth-century Romanticism and historicism. In the preface to his 1946 *Attitudes of Seventeenth-Century France toward the Middle Ages*, published several decades after the “revolt of the medievalists” had bolstered the status of medieval studies in the twentieth-century university, Nathan Edelman lamented that still his very title seemed oxymoronic. Summarizing previous work on the topic, he observed that “the sixteenth [century], chronologically closer to the Middle Ages, and the eighteenth, closer to romanticism, appeared no doubt the more promising fields of research, as if there alone medieval survivals, like growths in borderlands, could be found.”

Yet the recovery of the *medium aevum*, and with it the development of the tripartite scheme of ancient/medieval/modern, was hardly the product of intellectual “borderlands,” even if some early modern medievalists felt engaged in a marginal enterprise. Rather, both modern and early modern rhetoric notwithstanding, medievalism emerged directly out of a European humanist tradition whose aesthetic and ideological commitments have long been read as exclusively classical in orientation. Hence the confusion that still greets Edward Gibbon’s defense of the “monkish historians” of medieval Europe and the “Herculean diligence” needed to preserve them. Surprising as it may seem, Gibbon’s twin fusion of periods and methods—of the ancient and medieval, the erudite and the philosophical—represents an eminently logical climax to a forgotten story of dividing time.

The much-dissected struggle between erudition and philosophy was but one of the many conflicts that bedeviled the practice of history in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Just as tripartite periodizing traveled so easily from seventeenth-century erudition to eighteenth-century philosophical history, so it also became a pragmatic and sometimes professedly artificial _via media_—an _ad hoc_ response to seemingly insoluble historical quandaries that surfaced during this transition. For the triumph of the tripartite model of ancient/medieval/modern in the decades on either side of 1700 coincided with significant intellectual tumult across Europe—a form of tumult that (as alluded to in Chapter Four) Paul Hazard famously christened nothing less than a “crisis of European consciousness.”

According to Hazard, _historia_ as practiced along traditional humanistic lines faced a threefold challenge whose intensity grew stronger throughout the seventeenth century. First, the plucky self-sufficiency of Cartesian rationalism made the exemplarity of the past appear superfluous or even deleterious. Second, the Augustinian-inspired pessimism of the Jansenists rejected the “curiosity” required for historical investigation. Finally, last but by no means least, skepticism and Pyrrhonism, born out of renewed study of Sextus Empiricus and other ancient philosophers, challenged the very notion of historical certitude.\(^{515}\) It was precisely this skeptical challenge that Momigliano would deem a great spur to antiquarian research, insofar as antiquaries’ reliance on material evidence—from coins and inscriptions to charters and ruins—helped bypass thorny questions concerning the veracity of historical _texts_.\(^{516}\) As Hazard chronicled, skepticism called the origins of Rome herself into question, as debates swirled not only concerning the historicity of the Romulus legend, but also over the trustworthy nature of


anything concerning the distant Roman past. In another famous episode, also alluded to in the previous chapter, the Jesuit Daniel Papebroch alleged that a vast quantity of medieval documents, including supposed Merovingian charters that protected the prerogatives of the Benedictines, were in fact forgeries. In response, the Benedictine Jean Mabillon produced his systematic De re diplomatica, which formalized rules for the nascent discipline of paleography. Finally, in a less famous but rather more ludic footnote to the history of historical doubt, the French Jesuit Jean Hardouin infamously alleged that almost all classical texts were fakes—forgeries produced by an insidious cabal of late medieval monks.

When Hazard published La crise de la conscience européenne in 1935, study of this transitional world had not yet blossomed. As he saw it, previous scholars had often focused either exclusively on the seventeenth century or the eighteenth, shifting their attentions according to their ideological predilections and the fashions of the day. Hence, between these two centuries lay “a vague tract, a sort of dubious no-man’s-land, in which all kinds of discoveries and unlooked-for adventures may await the explorer.” However, since Hazard did his pioneering work in this area in the 1930s, his “dubious no-man’s land” has grown more crowded with narratives that locate the origins of some species of Enlightenment in the space between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Once more, historical periodization has found itself caught in more specific debates over how to periodize the era in which it was formulated.

From a variety of different perspectives, such scholars as Joseph Levine, John Pocock, Jonathan Israel, Keith Baker, Blandine Barret-Kriegel, Françoise Waquet, April Shelford, Jacob Soll, and Dan Edelstein have argued for the significance of this transitional moment to the intellectual movements of the following century and beyond.521

In addition, challenges to the old primacy of “High Enlightenment” have placed the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in a more equal dialogue of give and take, thereby questioning the long-held opposition between the erudite and the enlightened. Thanks to such revisionism, it is far more difficult today to imagine the Encyclopédie of Diderot and D’Alembert without the collective, collaborative publishing projects of Jesuits and Benedictines, public cultures of critique without the learned networks of the Latinate respublica literaria, or the rise of Aufklärung without polyhistors like J.A. Fabricius and Daniel Georg Morhof.522 When viewed in this light, eighteenth-century indictments of the recent past appear as markers of


closeness rather than distance, products of enmity engendered by small differences rather than insurmountable ones. This is not to suggest that important distinctions do not separate seventeenth-century erudition from eighteenth-century Enlightenment, or that such terms cannot capture the intellectual life of their respective centuries writ large. But this line of inquiry does invite reconsideration of the humanist tradition in the generations prior to its purported assault by those Enlightened *philosophes* who “traveled very light.”

Indeed, just what constituted late humanist “normal science” has sometimes suffered undue neglect in received accounts of intellectual history. In her recent study of Richard Bentley, another liminal figure who straddled the worlds of erudition and Enlightenment, Kristine Haugen has reminded us that one of the central projects of seventeenth-century humanism—especially in the English and Northern European contexts examined here—is simply omitted by two common stereotypes of early modern scholarship. Far from focusing on the aesthetic properties of ancient texts, as their early Renaissance counterparts had, or the historical properties of ancient objects, as their antiquarian colleagues did, a sizeable number of seventeenth-century scholars pursued increasingly recondite historico-philological analyses of ancient texts.523 While such an intellectual enterprise might not seem hospitable to methodological innovation, its deeply traditional practices—successively inspired by Alexandrian textual critics, late antique grammarians, and medieval chronologers—helped forge nothing less than a new vision of historical time.

523 See Kristine L. Haugen, *Richard Bentley: Poetry and Enlightenment* (Cambridge, MA, 2011), 15: Haugen characterizes this as “a model far removed from the fixation on Greek and Roman eloquence and poetry that we associate with fifteenth- and sixteenth-century humanism, and only occasionally concerned with the antiquarian study of inscriptions, coins, and ruins that many have regarded as the most forward-looking trend among seventeenth-century historical scholars.”
New temporalities also spawned a new temporal nomenclature. Already in the world of Vossius and contemporaries there emerged a growing trickle of explicit references to that middle space between antiquity and modernity. Increased circulation of *medium aevum*, in both its Latin variants and vernacular equivalents, formed the subject of several pioneering studies in the early twentieth century. To cite but a few examples documented in these works, the German historian Melchior Goldast was perhaps the first to use the exact phrase *medium aevum* in 1604, the anti-Cartesian Dutch theologian and ecclesiastical historian Gisbertus Voetius deployed the designation *intermedia aetas* when describing the pre-Reformation past, and the polymath John Selden invoked the “middle age” in his *History of Tithes*—potentially the first appearance of the term in the English vernacular.524

We close this section with a brief analysis of one of the most curious uses of *medium aevum*, which captures the ambiguous quality of the term in the decades before the tripartite scheme of ancient/medieval/modern achieved conventional status. In perhaps the first use of “middle age” as a structural division in a universal history, the Leiden historian Georgius Hornius or Georg Horn employed the phrase *medium aevum* in his 1666 *Arca Noe* or *Ark of Noah*. This historical compendium, designed for easy schoolroom consumption, appeared but two decades after Vossius’ death. In one sense, Horn’s work represented a novel seventeenth-century trend: the transformation of the old universal history into something like “general

history,” designed for easy consumption and pedagogical use. At the same time, it blended old and new in surprising ways. On the one hand Horn’s work was novel in its global scope, as it integrated detailed accounts of Africa, Asia, and the Americas into its universal history—the products of extra-European encounters that Paul Hazard deemed so dangerous to old verities—yet on the other it used the most traditional of biblical frames, namely Noah’s ark, to chart this global diffusion of peoples and cultures. Whether deliberately or not, the Arca Noe constituted one more attempt at forging a via media; one more response to a world in which both the structure and contents of historia found themselves in flux.

In both the Arca Noe and its companion Historia ecclesiastica, Horn employed some curious varieties of tripartite periodization. In a manner befitting its title, the former work divided the history of the distant past into three, labeling the first period antediluvianus (“from the Creation of the world to the Flood”), the second, and of course the shortest, subdiluvianus (“from the beginning of the Flood to the drying of the land and the exit from the ark”), and the third, rather nebulously, postdiluviana (“from the exit from the ark up to our memory”). Horn used tripartite schemes of a very different nature in his ecclesiastical history. Explicitly labeling his temporal divisions “periods” or periodi, here he employed a neat parallelism: just as ecclesiastical history before the birth of Christ was divisible into three parts, so too was ecclesiastical history after the birth of Christ. The turning points of the former were simple enough: from Creation to Moses, from Moses to the Babylonian Captivity, and from the Babylonian Captivity to Christ. Yet the latter scheme was far more pointed and polemical. In a manner reminiscent of John Bale (discussed in Chapter One), Horn extended his first phase of

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525 Georgius Hornius, Arca Noe, sive historia imperiorum et regnorum a condito orbe ad nostra tempora (Leiden, 1666), 3: “Quippe triplex Mundi hujus status fuit. Antediluvianus ab Orbe Condito usque ad diluvium; Subdiluvianus ab initio diluvii ad excicationem terrae et egressum ex arca. Postdiluviana ab egressu ex arca ad nostram memoriam.”
church history “from Christ to the origins of the Antichrist,” his second “from the origin of the Antichrist to the Reformation,” and his third “from the Reformation up to our own times.”

Chronologically at least, these periods coincided almost perfectly with the division points of the ancient/medieval/modern that would soon dominate “secular” accounts of general history.

Strange as it might seem, Horn did not refer to the *medium aevum* when he elucidated these threefold distinctions. Rather, he employed the phrase when describing the *twofold* structural division that governed his *Arca Noe* as a whole. He split the entire history of the world according to that binary so familiar to early modern scholarship—i.e. into *historia antiqua* and the appropriately comparative *historia recentior*. Horn defined *Historia recentior* as “that which encompasses the empires and kingdoms of the middle and more recent age (*medii et recentioris aevi*), which survive and endure today.” Oxymoronically, Horn made the *medium aevum* a subdivision of modern history, emphasizing—in a manner akin to Vossius’ invocation of *gesta nationum*—the essential political commensurability between this middle age and the present.

These “middle” and “more recent” polities differed fundamentally from their ancient counterparts. And the most salient difference between them was one of scale: as Horn put it, “more recent history is far more ample than ancient history, in the extent of its lands and the multitude of its peoples.” Not only did *historia recentior* stretch across Europe, Asia, and Africa, but it also encompassed both “the New World and southern lands not yet clearly known,” which

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526 Georgius Hornius, *Historia ecclesiastica* (Leiden, 1666), 25: “HISTORIA ECCLESIASTICA N. TEST. Complectitur III magnas Periodos. I. A Christo ad originem Antichristi. II. Ab origine Antichristi ad Reformationem. III. A Reformatione usque ad nostra tempora.” Horn’s equation of the Middle Ages with the period of the Antichrist is alluded to by Demandt, *Der Fall Roms*, 222.

stretched all the way to the “Antarctic Pole.” While Horn’s story of global expansion clearly postdated the *medium aevum*, it is nonetheless telling that his *medium aevum* and *recentior aevum* together formed a single temporal phase. Perhaps no example better captures the deep structural paradoxes that characterized the birth of the Middle Ages. Just a decade before Christopher Cellarius—in a book very similar to the *Arca Noe*—canonized the division of universal history into ancient, medieval, and modern phases, even a historian obsessed with triadic temporal schemes could not fully wrest the *medium aevum* from that old dyad of *antiqui* and *moderni*.

Having surveyed some of the problems raised by the transition from humanist historical scholarship to Enlightenment historiography, and the need to place periodization at the center of this story, the remainder of this chapter will trace the emergence of antiquity, the Middle Ages, and modernity as separate and distinct entities. It will first return to the field of postclassical philology developed by Vossius and his successors, examining their accounts of the degeneration of classical Latinity into its late and “barbarous” counterpart. In doing so it will also chart in greater detail how ancient metaphors of temporal change—especially Florus’ life-cycle metaphor—were re-appropriated to depict antiquity’s supposed slide into the post-antique. It will then consider how the new seventeenth-century genre of *historia literaria* or the “history of letters” transformed such philological narratives of language charge into far more capacious

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narratives of cultural change. This chapter will then close with a detailed treatment of
Christopher Cellarius, who combined these new methods of postclassical lexicography and
historia literaria with old traditions of historia universalis, and in doing so forged a vision of the
past cleaved into the ancient, medieval, and modern.

Mortals and Metals Transmuted: Ancient Metaphor and Modern Literary History

In 1764, slightly more than a decade before Gibbon’s released the first installment of his Decline
and Fall, in a very different corner of the Enlightened Republic of Letters Johann Joachim
Winckelmann published his Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums. Like Gibbon, Winckelmann
has often been read as a transitional figure in classical scholarship—a harbinger of nineteenth-
century Altertumswissenschaft and German Philhellenism. And like Gibbon, he too has been
credited with methodological synthesis. In Momigliano’s study of Gibbon’s methods, he
remarked that, “[Winckelmann] too assimilated all the work of the antiquarians who had studied
the artistic remains of Greece and Rome and interpreted them according to philosophic
norms.” Yet in a less appreciated act of appropriation, Winckelmann also found in the erudite
humanist inheritance an artful metaphor for dividing time.

In a passage whose assumptions reflected new canons of Neoclassical aesthetics, and an
emergent celebration of the “freedom” of the ancient Greek polis, Winckelmann proposed that
the history of Greek art could be divided into five distinct ages, corresponding to five distinct
styles. As he proclaimed, “just as each action or event has five distinct parts or stages—namely,
beginning, development, plateau, waning, and end—like the five scenes or acts in theatrical

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plays—so it is with the chronological succession of Greek art."\(^{531}\) As Winckelmann understood it, art and culture alike followed organic processes of birth, growth, stasis, and decay. Moreover, in this last age of decay, excessive imitation triumphed over originality. Yet this eminent eighteenth-century Neoclassicist merely proposed to do for the history of the visual arts what so many others had done already for the history of literary texts. When speaking of *imitatio*, he made this connection explicit: in language the evoked those humanist critique of *simiae* discussed in Chapter Three, Winckelmann remarked “and just as by the use of excerpts from the great writings of the ancients, the originals were lost, so through the work of compilers in art, the great original works came to be neglected.”\(^{532}\) Nor did Winckelmann claim any novelty in drawing these connections between the textual and the visual: instead, when introducing his ages of Greek art, he acknowledged that his stages mere followed those that Julius Caesar Scaliger had proposed two centuries earlier for dividing ancient poetry.\(^{533}\)

As discussed above, Scaliger, Vossius, and others who periodized according to the stages of the life cycle used an ancient schema developed by the Roman epitomizer Lucius Annaeus Florus. Little is known about Florus, save that he most likely lived in the age of Trajan and composed an *Epitome* of Roman history from Romulus to Augustus. The popularity of this *Epitome*, which drew mainly upon Livy, soon outstripped that of its more venerable source. Throughout the Middle Ages, Livy himself was little read, whereas Florus became a foundational school text. As we saw in Chapter Three, Florus was often depicted as the *simia* of Livy, just as Solinus was derided as the ape of Pliny. Yet sometimes *simiae* added things to their


\(^{532}\) Winckelmann, *Geschichte*, 238.

\(^{533}\) See Rehm, *Der Untergang Roms*, 76 and 162.
texts altogether absent from the originals they abridged and epitomized. Specifically, Florus imposed a new organizational schema upon the res gestae he digested from Livy. He announced in his preface that “if anyone wishes to contemplate Rome as he would a single individual, and review its whole life, how it began, how it grew up, how it arrived at the maturity of its manhood, and how it subsequently reached old age, he will ascertain four distinct stages of progress.”534 The first period, when Rome was ruled by kings and was a single city struggling for local hegemony, constituted infancy. The second—the age Florus termed one “of extreme activity for Rome’s soldiers and their arms,” when the city became a republic and conquered Italy—equaled youth. Then, when war gave way to peace and tranquility in the later years of the Republic, Rome reached its manhood or “robust maturity.” And finally, in that fourth and final stage when Rome fell under the sway of emperors, including unsavory ones like Caligula and Nero, Florus lamented that the Roman people “grew old” and “lost their potency.”

Florus was hardly the only ancient writer to characterize his contemporary moment as an epoch of senility. As the Roman world progressed towards what we now label late antiquity, invocations of Rome’s senectus multiplied. Quoting an otherwise lost history of the elder Seneca (from whom Florus himself may have copied his periodizing metaphor), the fourth-century Christian apologist Lactantius noted in his Divine Institutes that Rome had long ago succumbed to old age, and that old age was but one step removed from death.535 For Lactantius, the life

535 Lactantius, Divinae institutiones 7.15.14-17, ed. Eberhard Heck and Antonie Wlosok (Berlin, 2011), 699-700. Lactantius ends his summary of the life cycle by asking “Quodsi haec ita sunt, quid restat nisi ut sequatur interitus senectutem? For discussion of such tropes and especially notions of senescence in the Roman world, see Alan Cameron, Claudian: Poetry and
cycle metaphor proved that all empires, Rome included, would crumble and fall just as surely as
they had risen. Albeit for rather different purposes, the pagan Ammianus Marcellinus also
characterized Rome as “declining into old age,” under what he deemed the “watchful
guardianship” of her “adopted children”—the Caesars.\footnote{Ammianus Marcellinus, \textit{Res gestae} 14.6.4-6, trans. John C. Rolfe (Cambridge, MA, 1950), 36-9.} Far from languishing near death,
Ammianus’ Rome had embraced a graceful and placid retirement. Such invocations of old age
were long read as symptomatic of the cultural life of late antiquity writ large. As E.R. Curtius
once argued, explicitly invoking Carl Jung’s then-fashionable theory of archetypes, pervasive
literary \textit{topoi} of youth and old age were symptomatic of the exaggerated self-consciousness of
ostensibly “late” periods.\footnote{See Curtius, \textit{European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages}, 98-101.}

Like many other ancient epitomes, Florus’ history proved a favorite in the early modern
classroom—a fact that explains its outsized importance to the history of early modern
periodizing. Florus was repeatedly glossed and lectured upon by prominent humanists, including
such seventeenth-century luminaries as Oxford’s first Camden professor of history, Degory
Wheare, and the Dutch classical scholar Johann Fredrick Gronovius. Their readings reveal how
Florus’ temporal metaphor was further canonized via interlocking webs of commentary and
erudition. In an introductory lecture delivered to Oxford undergraduates in 1631, Wheare began
by declaring that Florus had divided Roman time in a fashion “hardly inept.”\footnote{Oxford, Bodleian MS Auct. F.2.21, 4: “Lucius Anneus Florus, in Proaemio sui operis, Populum Romanum tanquam hominem considerans, cuius ortum, incrementum, imperique progressum, in quatuor aetatis gradus, haud inepe dispertiuit: ducentos quadraginta quatuor primos annos, quos sub Regibus habuit, Infantiam esse uolui t, totidem inde alios numerando annos, ad primum usque Bellum Punicum, sub Consilibus, Decemuiris, et militum Tribunis, Adolescentiam nominuit. Ex eo tempore ad Caesarem Augustum, recensentur ducentum circiter}
Florus “follows the first age briefly and elegantly, and he grazes through the second age with equal elegance and compendiousness.” While Wheare’s own glosses were anything but brief, he spoke of brevity and compendiousness as attributes that were ipso facto admirable in historical narrative, and he made clear that periodizing played an essential role in attaining them. The author of a contribution to the genre of the ars historica titled The Method and Order of Reading Civil and Ecclesiastical Histories, Wheare was a natural advocate of abbreviation. As we shall see, this argument for periodizing as a means of imposing truncated ordo upon the sheer messiness of unorganized res gestae was intimately bound up with the logic of epitomizing, and would find powerful expression in the work of Christopher Cellarius.

Florus and his method of periodizing still enjoyed prominence in the second half of the seventeenth century. In an exposition of the Epitome offered in 1665, the Leiden classical scholar Johann Friedrich Gronovius dwelt at length upon the intrinsic elegance of Florus’ life cycle metaphor. True to his office as a glossator, he zeroed in upon several key words—namely, census, gradus, and fretum—which captured the allusive nature of Florus’ periodizing. Like Wheare, he affirmed that Florus’ “elegantly utilized a simile,” when he produced a census of a nation just as if it were an individual. As Gronovius explained, in the traditional Roman census “the conditions, abilities, and honors of individual men were described”—precisely what Florus

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539 Oxford, Bodleian MS Auct. F.6.18, fol.1r. The title page reads “Johannis Frederici Gronovii V.Ci. Notae in L. Annaeum Florum” and is dated 1665.
did when producing a catalogue of the achievements of Roma herself. Among these lines, when discussing Florus’ allusion to the *quatuor gradus* or “four stages” of Rome’s life cycle—i.e. her infancy, youth, maturity, and senility—Gronovius cited a passage from Cicero’s *Brutus* that mentioned the *gradus* of oratorical learning. And when discussing Florus’ allusion to Rome’s passage through the *fretum adolescentiae* or the “strait of adolescence,” he explained that “a strait is a narrow passage between two lands, where the sea rages and billows strongly...therefore Florus refers to the strait of adolescence, because in adolescence the fervor and passion of the blood is greatest.”

Finally, when Florus defined Rome’s third age as one of “vigorous maturity,” Gronovius explained that *robur* or “vigor” was that time “in which one arrives at a virile age, around one’s thirtieth year”—a fact he embellished with an anecdote concerning Alexander the Great.

Yet this classical Roman scheme could also be read comparatively; it did not have to reside exclusively in a specific slice of Roman history. This comparative impulse—linked to that apprehension of temporal plurality and multiple antiquities analyzed in the previous chapter—is

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540 Bodleian MS Auct. F.6.18, fol.2v: Gronovius glosses “totamque eius aetaetem percenseat” as follows: “Eleganter utitur similitudine scilicet census, in censu enim describantur singulorum hominum conditiones, facultates, et honores etc.” Directly below this he glosses “quatuor gradus” as “quatuor temporum articuli.” Then in the right column he adds a further note on “gradus,” noting “Quatuor intervalla incrementorum. Cicero in Bruto cap: 65. gradus processusque studiorum.”

541 Bodleian MS Auct. F.6.18, fol.24v: At the beginning of Florus’ age of adolescence, Gronovius glosses “fretum istud adolescentiae” as follows: “fretum est angustia inter duas terras, ubi ualde aestuat et saevit mare. Iustinus lib: 3. Cap: 1: de freto Siculo. Nusquam alias tam torrens fretum, nec solum citato impetu, verum etiam saevo. Ideo autem Florus dicit adolescentiae fretum, quia in adolescentia maximus est aestus et fervor sanguinis.”

542 Bodleian MS Auct. F.6.18, fol.2v: Gronovius glosses “robusta maturitas” as follows: “Robur tribuitur iuventuti, et iuvenes, qui prope virilem aetatem venerunt, dicuntur robusti, et corroborati. Iustinus lib: 3, cap: 1: Artabanus, cum septem robustissimis filiis regiam vesperi ingreditur.” He then adds the following explanation in the right column: “Robur id tempus, quo ad virilem aetatem acceditur, circa annum trigesimum. Iustinus lib: 11. Cap: 6. de Alexandro loquens. non iuvenes robustos nec primum florem aetatis elegit. Et Florus infra lib: 2. cap:1.”
perfectly conveyed by the manner in which Isaac Casaubon digested Florus. In his working copy of the epitome, Casaubon diligently copied out Florus’ scheme, dividing the populi Romani aetates or “ages of the Roman people,” into periods of infancy, adolescence, maturity, and senility according to the date ranges Florus had assigned to each. On the facing page, he then jotted down a parallel schema for the populi Iudaici aetates or the “ages of the Jewish people” that he had found in Augustine’s De civitate dei. According to this Florus-like scheme, infancy extended from Creation to the Flood, boyhood from Noah to Abraham, and adolescence from Abraham to David. Captured here with visual immediacy, Casaubon’s comparative hermeneutics encouraged him to read the classical in dialogue with other antiquities. And in the rear flyleaf of his Florus he expanded further on the many ancient parallels to Florus’ periodizing, under a heading he titled “comparison of a man and a respublica, similar to the first chapter of Florus.” Here Casaubon recorded additional uses of this naturalizing metaphor by Seneca, Plutarch, and others. Comparative readings of this nature helped transform a classical Roman periodizing scheme into a seemingly universal story of growth, plateau, and decline. One could

543 Florus, Rerum a Romanis gestarum libri IV (Cologne, 1592), now Leiden Universiteitsbibliotheek 761 F 18, flyleaf: Casaubon writes the heading “Populi Romani aetates” and then paraphrases the schema found in Florus’ prologue as follows: “I aetas, siue infantia: anni prope CCL sub regibus. Hoc toto spatio circum matrem suam cum finitimis luctatus est. II aetas, siue adolescentia: anni fere CCL a Bruto Collatinoque consulibus, in Appium Claudium. Q. Fuluium Coss. hoc tempore Italian subegit. III aetas, siue iuuenta imperii: anni fere CC ad Augustum, qui totum orbem pacavit. Anni C priores fuere aurei. C posteriores ferrei et cruenti. Vide 2.19, p.68 et 89. IV aetas, siue senectus imperii: anni fere CC ad tempora Flori qui sub Traiano et Hadriano vixit.” On the facing verso he adds the parallel heading “Populi Judaici aetates ex Augustino De ciuit. D. 16.42,” and then copies the following schema: “A conditu mundi ad diluuum, infantia. A Noe ad Abraham, pueritia. Ab Abraham ad Danielem, adolescentia. Etc. Vide pag. 1396 in fine eius operis.” At p.1 of Florus’ prologue, Casaubon notes that Ammianus Marcellinus also utilized the life-cycle metaphor, writing in the bottom margin “Populi Romani histioriam per aetates diuidit et Ammianus Marcell. p. 1418 lib XIV. sed paulo aliter quam Florus. Vide.” On Casaubon’s Jewish scholarship, see Grafton and Weinberg, “I Have Always Loved the Holy Tongue.”

544 Florus, Rerum a Romanis gestarum libri IV, rear flyleaf: Casaubon titles this list “Hominis et Reip. comparatio ac simil. ad cap. I. Flori.”
extend Florus’ ages of man not only synchronically—i.e. into other ancient cultures and ancient genres—but also diachronically, into largely uncategorized reaches of postclassical time. As we saw, this latter extension was precisely what Vossius would do in his *De vitiis*.

However, several decades before Wheare began lecturing on Florus at Oxford, other scholars in very different milieus raised some potential objections to his preferred form of periodization. Could a model originally devised for ancient Roman political history extend beyond history to apply to literary canon-formation, and could this model of canon-formation apply to *tempora* far beyond Roman antiquity itself? These meditations appeared in an unlikely place: the preface to an edition and commentary on the twelfth-century *Ligurinus* of the German Cistercian Gunther of Pairis, published by the Altdorf humanist and jurist Conrad Rittershusius in 1598. Like many legal scholars, Rittershusius studied late traditions, and he too participated in that turn to the postclassical traced in the preceding chapter. For instance, both he and Bonaventura Vulcanius shared a deep interest in the letters of the fifth-century desert father Isidore of Pelusium. Yet Gunther struck closer to home. The *Ligurinus* was not only an important work of medieval classicizing epic, but it also appealed to Rittershusius as a specimen of the German past, which commemorated the deeds of Frederick Barbarossa and his wars in Italy. As we saw in Chapter One, it was sometimes confused with things of actual classical

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545 See Dirk van Miert, “Project Procopius,” in *Bonaventura Vulciani, Works and Networks*, 369-70.
provenance: as Lilius Giraldus had reminded his readers, one was not to mix up the Ligurinus invoked by Martial with Gunther’s epic treatment of Barbarossa.

Rittershusius’ preface began with a mini-history of the life cycle metaphor, duly traced through Seneca, Florus, and Lactantius. Yet he described it in terms both litotic and ambivalent. Noting (in a formulation that Lactantius himself used) that ancient authors had “not ignorantly” (non inscite) divided the Roman past according to the four ages of man, he observed that “so we seem able—perhaps not absurdly (haut fortasse absurde)—to establish the same number of classes of Latin writers, especially historians and poets.” He then recapitulated this application of Florus’ periodization to Latin literature, agreeing that the third age of maturity—the age of Cicero, Virgil, Horace, Livy, and the like—was marked by a “certain vigor of knowing and speaking” and so constituted the apex of Latinity. But soon Rittershusius disavowed the implications of this periodization. In language akin to Pierre Pithou’s castigation of those who tolerated nothing save the age of Cicero and Augustus, he declared that “I have always distanced my opinion from those who have so delicate a stomach...that nothing pleases them—nothing, I say, except that which is contained in that third and most perfect and best class of authors [i.e. those of the third age of “vigor”]. All other things, which either preceded this class or followed it later, they disdain, and spurn and remove far from themselves.”

However, it was not simply out of ecumenical broadmindedness that Rittershusius called for upending Florus’ scheme and reading more than the optima perfectissimaque classis auctorum. Rather, other benefits accrued from late sources like Gunther’s Ligurinus:

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547 Gunther of Pairis, *Ligurinus*, preface: “Semper enim ego sententiam meam ab illis seiunxi, qui ita delicatum habent stomachum, vt nisi quod antiquum et omnibus numeris absolutum sit, ipsis placeat nihil: nihil, inquam, nisi quod in Tertia illa et opt. perfectissimaque classe auctorum contineatur: alia omnia, si qua vel praecesserint illam, vel secuta sint posterius, fastidiant, atque ab se spermant segregentque procul.”
We must descend a little bit to lower [authors], and come closer to our times (*nostra tempora*), and so much as it is possible, we must collect something of a continuous series of particular things and times from such writers. We must gather them up as in a little bundle, for all that one may have written better and more purely or less desirably and in more soiled fashion than another. For what we must look for here it is not so much the splendor and dignity of speech but the knowledge of things, and however much these things are more appropriate to our customs and manners (*nostros usus ac mores accommodatores*), so much the less must we be ignorant of them.\(^{548}\)

With this programmatic declaration, Rittershusius offered two points later expanded upon by Vossius and others. First, he defended the merits of medieval sources via the fundamental distinction between *res* and *verba*: one did not read Gunther and his contemporaries for their “splendor and dignity of speech,” but instead for the “knowledge of things” they offered. Second, this knowledge was not merely useful for illuminating a historical *terra incognita*. Rather, texts from the still-unnamed *medium aevum* shed important light on “our customs and manners”—i.e. the social and cultural world of the present—far more so than writers of that alien “third and perfect class” could ever hope to do. As Vossius would later make clear, these customs and manners fell under the rubric of *res ecclesiasticae* and *gesta nationum*, rendering them indispensible to the story of the origins of modern Europe.

But Rittershusius’ treatment of Florus and Gunther contained another ambiguity. While his castigation of classical purists and their “delicate stomachs” signaled his rejection of the

\(^{548}\) *Gunther of Pairis, Ligurinus*, preface: “Sed et descendendum aliquando ad inferiores, et ad nostra tempora veniendum est propius: ac quantum omnino potest, continua quaedam series temporum et rerum praecipuarum ex quibusuis scriptoribus colligenda, ac veluti fasciculo comprehendinga est, quamuis alius alio melius et purius vel deterior et inquinatus scripserit. Non tam enim hic orationis splendor et dignitas, quam spectanda est cognitio rerum, quae quanto sunt ad nostros usus ac mores accommodatores, tanto minus ignorari a nobis debent.”
value judgments latent in Floran periodizing, he nevertheless still judged Gunther according to the implicit standards of that *optima perfectissimaque classis auctorum*. Paradoxically, although Rittershusius wished to break free from the stranglehold of classical standards, he nonetheless praised Gunther for transcending his *age* via *imitatio* of those very same standards. At the beginning of his commentary, he asserted that “our Gunther was neither suppressed nor soiled by the crudities and infelicity of his age.” On the contrary, the author of the *Ligurinus* had risen above his times by sprinkling his poem with “traces of learned antiquity” (*vestigia eruditae antiquitatis*). 549 As these laudatory words suggest, latter-day reception and *imitatio* proved inherently contradictory. If writers were to be read from all corners of the past, not just the narrow world of Cicero, Virgil, and the like, the worth of such authors did not reside only in the knowledge they furnished of their unique historical contexts, but also in their successful imitation of that earlier, more canonical world. As we have seen so many times before, humanist scholars regarded *imitatio* as the surest means of conquering the “crudities and infelicities” of a late age. Gunther could defy the unforgiving logic of the philological life cycle, but only by adopting and affirming the aesthetic criteria that gave it force in the first place. The presence of classical reception in the postclassical world simultaneously bolstered and undercut stagist models for periodizing the history of literature. This was no small irony. Rittershusius’ response to a twelfth-century Latin epic suggests that, by 1600, battles over stylistic *imitatio* and temporal difference had expanded into explicit debates over historico-literary periodization—at the heart of which resided an insoluble contradiction. This debate only grew more pronounced over the course of the seventeenth century.

549 *Ligurinus*, “Notae ad Guntherum,” 3: “Neque vero ita seculi sui infelicitate et inficietiis inquinatus aut depressus est Guntherus noster, quin passim os coelo attollens, supra illud adsurgat, et plurima in eo passim appareant vestigia eruditae antiquitatis, quae ipse studiose institit...”
One of Rittershusius’ former pupils—who achieved far greater fame (and infamy) than his one-time teacher—ended up tackling these issues more directly. The German humanist and polemicist Gaspar Scioppius not only pursued classical scholarship, but also zealously participated in various inter- and intra-confessional battles in the seventeenth-century Republic of Letters. After converting to Catholicism, he attacked prominent Protestant scholars, including Joseph Scaliger. At the same time, he composed numerous tracts against the Jesuits, against whom he harbored much bitterness. Along the way, he even sent Rittershusius a firsthand account of Giordano Bruno’s execution at Rome. While interest in the periodization of Latin literature is hardly what he was best known for in his day, Scioppius shared this interest with his onetime teacher. In 1609 he published his Observationes linguae Latinae, which utilized the ancient metaphor of metallic transmutation and divided Latinity into ages of gold, silver, bronze, and iron. And in 1636, he brought forth his wide-ranging plans for curricular reform, titled Consultationes de scholarum et studiorum ratione, which sought to counter the preeminence of Jesuit education in Catholic Europe and replace it with a version of Neo-Stoicism along those lines championed by Justus Lipsius.

As a pedagogical treatise, not unlike Juan Luis Vives De tradendis disciplinis (discussed in Chapter One), Scioppius’ Consultationes quite naturally periodized the selections of Latin literature he urged his hypothetical students to read. In doing so, Scioppius posited an implicit moment of disjunction somewhere around the fourth or fifth century, although his selection of

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auctores made this break rather murky, as he placed approximately coeval authors on opposing sides of this proffered gap. For instance, when discussing grammarians, Scioppius anticipated the tripartite scheme of ancient/medieval/modern and divided his reading list into three categories: vetere, recentiores, and novissimi. His vetere ranged from unambiguous ancients like Varro to such late antique grammarians as Servius, Macrobius, and Donatus. Yet his recentiores then picked up right around this moment, as he named Priscian, Charisius, and Diomedes “more recent” grammatici. Finally, his novissimi were definitively early modern, beginning with none other than Lorenzo Valla. Hence, whereas a capacious category like the recentiores usually extended towards the present, Scioppius highlighted the comparative degree of this adjectival descriptor by explicitly juxtaposing his recentiores with their superlative counterparts, the novissimi. In this fashion, even if their break from the vetere appeared nebulous and imprecise, Scioppius’ recentiores occupied a temporal space broadly akin to late antiquity and the Middle Ages.

Elsewhere in his Consultationes, Scioppius eschewed such comparative language and instead returned to his original analogy of metallic transmutation, once more positing successive ages of gold, silver, bronze, and iron Latinity. This last category brought him squarely into late antiquity, as he extended his aetas ferrea from the end of the reign of Hadrian to the age of the

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552 Gaspar Scioppius, Consultationes de scholarum et studiorum ratione (Amsterdam, 1665[1st published Padua, 1636]), 39: Scioppius describes his recentiores as follows: “ex recentioribus vero Charisius, Diomedes, Priscianus, caeterique in corpore Latinorum Grammaticorum a Putschio comprehensi...” On Scioppius’ Consultationes within the context of his broader pedagogical project, see Jill Kraye, “Teaching Stoic Moral Philosophy: Kaspar Schoppe’s Elementa philosophiae Stoicae moralis (1606),” in Scholarly Knowledge: Textbooks in Early Modern Europe, ed. Emidio Campi, Simone de Angelis, Anja-Silvia Goeing and Anthony Grafton (Geneva, 2008), 249-84, esp. 260.

553 This is further bolstered by the fact that Scioppius also counted among the recentiores those Latin grammarians found in the anthology assembled by Elias van Putschen, which contained a great number of medieval writers and in which (as we saw in the previous chapter) Vossius encountered Bede’s Orthographia.
younger Theodosius—i.e. roughly from the latter part of the second century to the early portion of the fifth. Here he delivered hedging and ambivalent assessments of late antique authors, of the sort we encountered in the preface to Vossius’ *De Vitiis* or the catalogues of Lilius Giraldus and Juan Luis Vives. Unlike his teacher Rittershusius, Scioppius took a decidedly mixed view of late antique *imitatio*. For instance, he declared that “Prudentius is certainly a tolerable poet, but sometimes he is snatched away by the custom of his age, while in other cases he excessively indulges in the use of archaic words (*priscorum verborum*) and the imitation of Lucretius.” However, Scioppius judged that Lactantius “imitated Cicero happily enough,” and that Claudian and Ausonius mimicked the style of “better ages” (*melioribus saeculis*). These assessments show Scioppius weighing both the merits and limitations of “iron age” imitation. But perhaps most intriguing is what he placed *after* his age of iron. For Scioppius followed his *ferrea aetas* with still more degeneration—a “wooden and clay age” (*lignea et lutea aetas*), which embraced the Justinianic era and the “ruin of Roman speech” (*sermonis Romani interitus*) that purportedly followed.

In response to the periodizing of Latin literature by J.C. Scaliger, Vossius, and Scioppius, the Danish chemist, physician, and philologist Olaus Borrichius—among other distinctions a teacher of the geologist Nicholas Steno who helped stimulate Steno’s interest in fossils—published his 1675 *Cogitationes de variis Latinae linguae aetatibus* or *Meditations on the Various Ages of the Latin Language*. In describing these “various ages,” Borrichius recapitulated

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554 Scioppius, *Consultationes*, 43: “Lactantius Ciceronom satis felicitatem imitatur...Prudentius sane tolerabilis est Poeta, sed alias aetatis consuetudine abripitur, alias priscorum verborum usui et Lucretii imitationi nimium indulget. Ausonius, et Claudianus vel melioribus saeculis inserere se possunt.”

555 Scioppius, *Consultationes*, 43: “Scriptores, qui Lignea et Lutea aetate vixerunt (quorum illam Justiniani Imp. Temporibus definio, haec non multo post non magis Imperii, quam sermonis Romani interitum vidit)...”
two key periodizing metaphors: one, utilized by Vossius and the elder Scaliger, saw Latin literature as a “living and breathing simulacrum of human life,” while the other, deployed by Scioppius, used the trope of metallic transformation, dividing Latin literature into ages of gold, silver, bronze, and iron. 556 Speaking of the former, Borrichius floridly observed that just as human life experienced its infancy, growth, and maturity, and then “sadly withdrew into senility, and thence into death itself,” so language followed a similar pattern; after enjoying its virility, it too saw its “strength flee, and its dignity lapse,” until it “ended either at last in inglorious death, or in an eclipse indeed similar to a languid death.” 557

Although the bulk of the Cogitationes consisted of (sometimes polemical) amendments to Scioppius’ periodization scheme, Borrichius’ text also became a full-fledged history of Latin literature, akin to the new genre of historia literaria that achieved such prominence in the second half of the seventeenth century. As we shall see, Borrichius’ extensive survey of Latin authors, including medieval ones, greatly influenced Christopher Cellarius’ subsequent forays into postclassical lexicography, which in turn informed Cellarius’ tripartite periodization. Borrichius used his meditations on the ages of Latinity to date the individual authors who comprised each metallic epoch, relying above all in this endeavor upon Vossius’ De historicis Latinis. For


557 For an interesting example of an ad hoc dictionary of sorts culled from Borrichius’ Cogitationes by an unknown reader, see Copenhagen, Royal Danish Library MS Rostg. 196.
instance, when speaking of Justin, the epitomizer of Pompeius Trogus, Borrichius remarked that “Scioppius wrongly places Justin among the writers of the golden age, since it is clear from both Vossius’ *De historicis Latinis* and Justin’s own diction that he flourished in the reign of Antoninus Pius.” Similarly, when it came to Solinus (whose ambiguous dating was discussed in Chapter Three), Borrichius observed that “Solinus, whom Scioppius joins in the same class with Pliny, Tacitus, and Suetonius, is unworthy of so honored a place.” Instead, he argued that Solinus wrote far after this epoch, while citing Vossius to bolster his case.

Borrichius’ language of periodization grew more detailed and evocative as he descended into the world of late Latinity. In a passage strongly influenced by his chemical and geological interests, Borrichius took issue with a portion of Scioppius’ age of iron, declaring that, “perhaps it should more truly be called bronze, as though of ambiguous color.” He went on to discuss how Japanese bronze shone intensely red, whereas bronze of Norwegian or Swedish provenance possessed a more moderated hue; moreover, bronze took on a white color when mixed with arsenic, and appeared yellow when mixed with zinc oxide. Elegantly employing a chemical metaphor to characterize the tenor of this age, Borrichius maintained that a bronze-like ambiguity of hue more truly captured the late era that Scioppius had mistakenly labeled iron—when so many “foreign writers” entered the confines of Rome and her empire, and Latin literature grew correspondingly more heterogeneous. As his concluded, this age was one of

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559 Borrichius, *Cogitationes*, 15.
“variegated and altogether ambiguous type.” Thus, Borrichius did not merely judge the metal bronze as a convenient analogue or placeholder for the third stage in a four-phase process of degeneration. On the contrary, he read his metallic metaphor in strikingly naturalized terms: if one were to periodize properly, the intrinsic properties of a given metal had to reflect the intrinsic qualities of the *aetas* it signified.

What followed this ambiguous age of bronze proved far worse. Borrichius then announced “an age partly of iron, and partly of clay,” just like the feet of the statue of Nebuchadnezzar described in the Book of Daniel. “Whatever was newly made in this age—when barbarians were already prowling across the whole world—shall without doubt be judged barbarous,” Borrichius averred, while adding by way of amendment that such a judgment ought to be “pronounced more timidly” against the preceding age of bronze, when the Roman Empire still possessed tenacity. Instead, deploying that term invoked by Vossius when describing Martianus Capella, and invoking its ancient Suetonian provenance, he declared in hedging fashion that bronze-age authors should instead be styled *semibarbari*. But the age of iron and its successors merited no such hedging. Here Borrichius mixed his periodizing metaphors in a fashion as much hyperbolic as eclectic. When he reached what we would understand as the Middle Ages proper, he reverted to the old juxtaposition between darkness and light (found, as discussed in the previous chapter, in Baronius and others). For instance, after discussing the

561 Borrichius, *Cogitationes*, 16: “Aenea tamen verius forsan appelletur, quasi ambigui coloris. Quemadmodum enim aes Japanicum rubet intensius, Norwegicum, Suecicumque; remissius, aliud paene liuet; nec deest, quod adulterio arsenici transeat in alborem, mistura cadmiae in colorem flauissimum: ita aetas haec ambigui omino, variique generis est...”
562 Borrichius, *Cogitationes*, 20: “Tandem sequitur aetas partim ferrea, partim figlina, ut et hoc commune habeat cum statua Nebuchadnezaris. Hac aetate quicquid nove confictum est, barbaris jam per omnia grassantibus, barbarum haud dubie aestimandum erit, quod de aetate aenea timidius pronunciandum, movente se adhuc vivaciter Romana Republica. Amarem potius vocem semibarbari (ut Suetonius loquitur) in quibusdam aetatis aeneae scriptoribus...”
compilation of the Justinianic Code, he remarked that “still more dark times followed.” Although this age of darkness still possessed a few good authors, they troubled themselves, as Rittershusius and Vossius had also argued, “more with things than words.” And sometimes authors shone only in comparison to the dark skies above them. In this spirit, Borrichius deemed Charlemagne’s biographer Einhard “a writer clean and polished enough in the darkness of Latinity.” Finally, in a fitting end to his tour through the Middle Ages, Borrichius explicitly synthesized the two metaphors for dividing philological time that he had discussed at the beginning of his Cogitationes. Combining minerals and mortality with dramatic flourish, in the very last sentence of his medieval section he condemned the scholastic Walter Burley and the poet Alan of Lille to “the extreme senility of the age of clay” (extrema aetatis figlinae senecta).

Having hit a veritable rock bottom, Latinity and the wider culture it animated had nowhere to go save up. And so, in language akin to the preface of Vossius’ De vitii, Borrichius ended by narrating those first stirrings of renaissance, invoking such usual suspects as Petrarch and Dante. Mixing physiological images of rebirth with yet another metaphor of darkness and light, he ushered in this new age with great aplomb: “humane studies, which—for nine whole centuries and more—had been assailed with squalor and filth from the time of Alaric, began

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563 Borrichius, Cogitationes, 22: “Successere tempora magis adhuc tenebricosa, quibus tamen nec defuere illustria quaedam ingenia, pauca illa tamen, et quae de rebus magis, quam verbis laborant.”

564 Borrichius, Cogitationes, 22: “Secutus eum Eginhardus, ultima Caroli Magni aetate, scriptor in is latinitatis tenebris satis nitidus, tersusque.”

565 Borrichius, Cogitationes, 23: “Decimo quarto seculo floruit Alanus de Insulis, Anticlaudianus dictus, item Robertus Bestonus, et Gualterus Burley, extrema scilicet aetatis figlinae senecta.” Like many other early modern scholars, Borrichius here misdated the twelfth-century Alan of Lille, erroneously supposing that he flourished in the fourteenth century.
again to breathe, and to emerge from its darkness.”

Hence, from the elder Scaliger and Conrad Rittershusius to G.J. Vossius, Gaspar Scioppius, and finally Olaus Borrichius, ancient metaphors for dividing time—temporally extended, generically re-appropriated, and even occasionally combined with one another—furnished a powerful language for narrating that long, uneven road to modern literary efflorescence, complete with its hiccups, ambiguities, and supposed dark lacunae.

**Periodizing Letters and Culture: Historical Bibliography and *Historia Literaria***

In one sense, Borrichius and his predecessors were engaged in a very old enterprise. Not only did they apply ancient metaphors to temporalities both medieval and modern, but they also furthered that quintessentially late antique task of cataloging individual authors and incorporating them into a larger encyclopedic whole. By so doing, they became direct heirs to Conrad Gesner and his fellow sixteenth-century bibliographers, themselves the professed heirs of Jerome and other scholars who hailed from the *senectus* of the ancient world. Indeed, Jerome himself—a practitioner of both *historia universalis* and *de viris illustribus*—inaugurated a method for historically contextualizing literary biography that enjoyed a powerful legacy in the Latin West. He used his translation and continuation of Eusebius’ *Chronicon* to fashion what arguably became the first systematic attempt at a Latin literary history, sprinkling this record of world empires and Christological salvation with terse *vitae* of Latin poets, grammarians and historians.

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566 Borrichius, *Cogitationes*, 23: “*Studia humaniora, (quae integra novem secula, et eo amplius, cum sordibus et squalore, ab Alarici tempore, conflictata fuerant) respirare coeperunt, et e tenebris suis iterum emergere.*”
As a result, Jerome became a first resort for medieval and early modern readers seeking to date and contextualize the Latin literary canon.\textsuperscript{567}

The tripartite scheme of ancient/medieval/modern did not just emerge out of meditations on postclassical language change, even if this is the clearest domain in which to trace its intellectual genealogy. Seventeenth-century humanist scholarship witnessed the emergence of another new genre, deeply indebted to the aforementioned literary vision of Jerome. As the work of Scipio, Borrichius, and others makes clear, late humanists required a more systematic means of characterizing the cultural life and historical context of a given literary era. And this was all the more important given that scholars of the preceding generations like Isaac Casaubon had transformed classical scholarship into a set of practices for specifically postclassical research. This legacy made it especially urgent to unite the classical and the postclassical into a coherent, continuous narrative. And it was thanks in part to this urgency that another project was born—namely \textit{historia literaria} or the “history of letters.” While it is beyond the scope of this study to offer a full survey of \textit{historia literaria} and its genesis, its vision of literary history proved crucial to the division of time. Most importantly, \textit{historia literaria} demonstrates the avowedly bibliographical, non-narrative origins of the historical macro-narrative that emerged from tripartite periodization.

\textit{Historia literaria} has sometimes been depicted as a prototypical late humanist retreat into tired compilation and reductive shortcuts to erudition. Perhaps the most enduring stereotype of this enterprise is that of consumers of \textit{historia literaria} memorizing the titles, authors, and dates of books they had not read, and never would. Even if \textit{historia literaria} could be used in

\textsuperscript{567} On such a use of Jerome by Petrarch and others, see Mark Vessey, “Cities of the Mind: Renaissance Views of Early Christian Culture and the End of Antiquity,” in \textit{A Companion to Late Antiquity}, ed. Philip Rousseau (Malden, MA, 2009), 43-58, esp. 50.
“Cliffs Notes” fashion, this view ignores its rich antecedents, both in the distant past of late antiquity and the recent past of sixteenth-century bibliography. The new history of letters was but a logical continuation of that old encyclopedic impulse to universality—its original of late antique and medieval origin—with which we began Chapter One of this study. This continuity is well illustrated by the publication of opera omnia editions of both Johannes Trithemius and Lilius Giraldus at either end of the seventeenth century—two figures who had used the building blocks of bibliographic vitae to construct visions of the literary and cultural lives of successive tempora, and thus became oft-cited authorities for historia literaria. Even when it did not periodize explicitly, the “history of letters” depended upon the logic of periodization for its very intelligibility.

As argued here, tripartite periodization grew out of two distinct yet overlapping genres, both of which took significant inspiration from G.J. Vossius. The first was the emergence of postclassical language change as a distinct subfield of study, from Vossius’ own De Vitiis through the philological treatises of Scioppius and Borrichius. As we saw, such work canonized so-called “barbarous” Latinity as a temporally distinctive phenomenon, while raising the question of just what extra-linguistic forces had reduced classical Latin into its “senile” and


569 See Johannes Trithemius, Opera historica (Frankfurt, 1601) and Lilius Giraldus, Opera omnia (Leiden, 1696).
“corrupt” postclassical shadow. As its name suggests, the second genre—namely *historia literaria*—focused not so much on language as on a nascent vision of “literature,” understood above all as culturally and historically contingent. If the former project drew inspiration from Vossius’ *De vitiiis*, the later relied heavily on Vossius’ many encyclopedic reference works, especially his 1627 *De historicis Latinis*. And perhaps no one did more to continue Vossius’ dating, description, and contextualization of postclassical sources than the Hamburg scholar and future Viennese imperial librarian Peter Lambeck or Petrus Lambeius. Although *Historia literaria* would culminate in the massive works of such polyhistors as J.A. Fabricius and Daniel Georg Morhof, it was Lambeius who officially inaugurated it in the middle of the seventeenth century.  

Lambeius’ *historia literaria* was hardly a hidebound enterprise. Indeed, no less self-conscious a modern than Francis Bacon had called for a “history of letters” that could equal well established genres like civil and ecclesiastical history, and trace the emergence of the various disciplines of learning, along with their principal authors and schools and various historical moments in which they flourished. But it was Lambeius who showed how to perform *historia literaria* in practice, and thereby carve the history of letters and learning into distinct periods. Born in Hamburg, he was drawn to a life of scholarship by his uncle Lucas Holstenius, a German Lutheran humanist who converted to Catholicism and became Vatican librarian under Pope

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Much like his uncle, Lambecius also eventually embraced both Catholicism and librarianship, taking up the post of imperial librarian to the Holy Roman Emperor Leopold I in Vienna. Lambecius inherited from Holstenius not only an abiding interest in library science, but also a deep engagement with postclassical texts—many of which he catalogued in his massive *Commentarii de augustissima bibliotheca Caesarea Vindobonesi*, the fruits of his tenure in Vienna.

These commentaries constituted an unparalleled achievement in the realm of *historia literaria*, as they systematically used material texts to reconstruct the contours of medieval literary culture writ large. It particular, they offered a detailed model for how to describe a given medieval codex, analyze and reproduce its scripts, and use such material evidence for purposes of both dating and localization. Indeed, they proved indispensible to that founding work in the history of paleography—namely, Mabillon’s *De re diplomatica*. Mabillon relied on the Vienna *Commentarii* throughout his treatise, and praised Lambecius himself in his preface. But before Lambecius assumed his position as librarian, and produced the catalogues that would guarantee him preeminence throughout the *respublica literaria*, he was already toiling in the fields of the nascent *historia literaria*. In 1659 Lambecius published his *Prodromus historiae literariae*, based on lectures or “private disquisitions” he gave at Hamburg in 1656-7.\(^\text{573}\) Despite his grand plans for a comprehensive history of letters, its very comprehensiveness doomed this project to incompletion from the beginning: for his published *Prodromus* could not extricate itself from the distant past, and managed to reach only as far as the age of Moses.

\(^{572}\) Holstenius enjoyed wide connections throughout the Republic of Letters: on his links and correspondence with Peiresc, see Miller, *Peiresc’s Europe.*

Fittingly enough, Lambecius built his enterprise upon the skeletal remains of sixteenth-century bio-bibliography. He constructed his historia literaria lectures by revising—and often polemically disputing—the 1592 Bibliotheca philosophorum classicorum authorum chronologica of the Zurich bibliographer J.J. Frisius, who himself had also revised and continued none other than Konrad Gesner’s Bibliotheca universalis. Although Lambecius never published his complete guide to historia literaria, the results of his so-called “private” lectures upon Frisius—which stretched all the way to the fifteenth century—have survived in a curious hybrid of manuscript and print. Preserved today in the British Library is an interleaved copy of Frisius’ Bibliotheca with copious annotations and manuscript additions, titled “excerpts from private lectures of Petrus Lambecius, in which he partly supplemented, partly corrected, and partially elucidated the Bibliotheca classicorum autorum chronologica of Johannes Frisius.”

As this note suggests, Frisius presented Lambecius with an ideal if ironic combination of attributes—not only was the Bibliotheca comprehensive in scope, but it was also riddled with innumerable errors, especially since it had accepted numerous supposititious works as genuine. Lambecius presumably distributed copies of Frisius to the students at his lectures, furnishing them with a carcass-like base text upon which he could build up the new historia literaria. As this composite book suggests, historia literaria grew out of bio-bibliography in the most literal,
material of senses: whereas its first half, entirely in manuscript, contains Lambecius’ century-by-century account of authors both sacred and secular, stretching from deep antiquity to the fifteenth century, the second consists of Frisius’ printed text, with Lambecius’ corrections, excisions, and augmentations entered in both the margins and interleaved pages.\footnote{The auction catalogue of the library of the Dutch classical scholar Nicolaas Heinsius, the Bibliotheca Heinsiana, was likewise used by some as a comprehensive base text for constructing historia literaria.}

Although Lambecius “corrected” and “elucidated” the entirety of Frisius, a significant amount of his outright supplementation occurred in the latter portions of the Bibliotheca, where his Hamburg lectures charted the transition from antiquity to the Middle Ages. In contrast, Frisius’ self-professed focus on classici auctores had left relatively scant room for late or postclassical sources. Yet it was this moment of transition that seems to have interested Lambecius the most: for his catalogue of fourth-century authors boasts by far the most numerous and detailed entries. Here Lambecius’ historia literaria presented itself as a series of admonitions, in the style of pedagogical treatises like Vives’ De tradendis disciplinis. These admonitions combined a triad of topics that had long shaped perceptions of the postclassical, from the ostensible degeneration of literary style to the emergence of historia ecclesiastica and the uncertain transition from paganism to Christianity. Lambecius’ approach to the vicissitudes of this transitional age are best summed up by his repeated use of the Vives-like injunction caute legenda est or “it must be read cautiously.” Such calls for caution grew especially loud during his frequent unmasking of spuria and pseudepigrapha, much of it accomplished by simply disaggregating two authors that Frisius (and many of his contemporaries) had confused with one another.\footnote{As examined in Chapter One, this form of disaggregation between different authors was practiced with particular diligence by Lilius Giraldu.}
Lambecius also urged special circumspection when it came to potential sources of heterodoxy in the early Christian church. Alongside Frisius’ entry for Eusebius, Lambecius declared: “Eusebius was an Arian, and hence his writings must be read cautiously.” Similarly, he asserted that Lactantius’ “writings must be read cautiously on account of his many errors,” while citing Bellarmine’s *De scriptoribus ecclesiasticis* for a fuller treatment.\(^578\) In his entry for Socrates, a fifth-century continuator of Eusebian *historia ecclesiastica*, he added: “he must be read cautiously, since he was a Novatian”—a reference to the heretical sect that Socrates had described in detailed and positive terms.\(^579\) Indeed, he repeatedly characterized many ostensibly heterodox early Christian writers as members “of a peculiar sect” (*peculiaris sectae*). But Lambecius did not confine his cautionary injunctions to weighty matters of doctrine; instead, he also extended them to seemingly less consequential questions of Latin style. Regarding the Christian aristocrat and man of letters Paulinus of Nola, he announced that “Paulinus was a contemporary of Augustine and Jerome, and his poems must be read with caution, since he rather frequently neglects the quantity of syllables.” He then directed his students to Vossius’ discussion of Paulinus in his compendium of Latin poets.\(^580\) As this notes suggest, the new history of literature could blend forms of criticism and correction both doctrinal and textual, just as Cassiodorus and other late antique scholars had done over a millennium before. It was not simply the contents of certain texts that were to be read “cautiously” or *caute*; rather, it was also


their very language. As Lambecius suggested, deficiencies of form and content alike could lead to error if readers did not approach such works with circumspection.

Finally, Lambecius waded directly into the debates surveyed in Chapter Two, frequently arguing that late antique authors who seemed Christian were in fact pagan. Citing Augustine and Orosius, Lambecius asserted that “Claudian was a pagan and indeed an obstinate one,” who ought not to be confused with the Gallo-Roman theologian Claudianus Mamertus. And when it came to authors in that nebulous pagan-Christian middle, Lambecius came down firmly on one side. “Ausonius was a pagan man,” he declared, “and so those things from his writings that taste of Christianity are supposititious.” Like the late antique Decretum Gelasianum (discussed at the beginning of Chapter Two), Lambecius drew an explicit connection between the heterodox and the spurious. As he implicitly suggested, historia literaria could “clean up” potentially pernicious ambiguities in both domains. Lambecius fully displayed such goals when he revised Frisius’ entry for the late Roman historian Eutropius. Frisius, frequently confused, had contended that “Eutropius the presbyter wrote ten books on the deeds of the Romans.” In response, Lambecius emphatically crossed out “presbyter” and set then the record straight: “Eutropius was an Italian sophist and indeed a pagan. They err who confuse this Eutropius with Eutropius the presbyter, a disciple of Saint Augustine.”

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581 Frisius, Bibliotheca, 49: Lambecius remarks “Hic Claudianus gentilis fuit et quidem pervicax...itaque non confundendus est cum Claudiano Mamerto de quo uid: pag: 64.” As discussed earlier, Lilius Giraldus also alluded to this confusion.
582 Frisius, Bibliotheca, 52: Lambecius remarks “Ausonius fuit homo gentilis, itaque ea ex ejus scriptis quae Christianismum sapiunt, supposititia sunt.”
583 Frisius, Bibliotheca, 54: Frisius’ original entry reads in part “Eutropius Presbyter scripsit de gestis Romanorum libros 10...” Having crossed out “presbyter,” Lambecius then remarks “[Eutropius] Sophista Italus et quidem gentilis. Errant, qui hunc Eutropium cum Eutropio Presbytero S. Augustini discipulo confundunt.” At p.55, Lambecius crossed out a portion of another of Frisius’ entries for “Eutropius presbyter” which, after detailing letters he wrote concerning virginity, claimed that “his books of histories are printed everywhere” (excisions here
As Lambecius continued his *historia literaria* form the ambiguous world of late antiquity into the depths of the *medium aevum*, he cited one set of sources above all: Vossius’ *De historicis Latinis* and *De historicis Graecis*. In fact, from the sixth and seventh centuries through the late Middle Ages, his entry for nearly every author featured an accompanying reference to Vossius. Yet Lambecius—who delivered his *historia literaria* lectures before his official conversion to Catholicism—had already found membership in two distinct scholarly worlds: the one a world of Protestant polymathy, of which Vossius and others were leading lights, that he encountered in locations like Hamburg and Amsterdam, and the other a world of Catholic erudition, centered at Rome, where Holstenius had guided his young nephew’s studies for several years. As a result, the sources of Lambecius’ *historia literaria* reveal considerable confessional eclecticism, akin to that spirit of irenicism that had helped fuel the turn to the postclassical in the decades around 1600. Even if the Arminian Vossius provided the vast majority of his references, his *historia literaria* came littered with frequent invocations of Bellarmine, Baronius, and the Antwerp ecclesiastical historian Aubertus Miraeus, among many other Catholics. As we shall see, though the ultimate formalization of tripartite periodization occurred amongst Northern Protestant polyhistors, it was shaped by a surprising brand of eclecticism both historical and confessional.

Lambecius’ *historia literaria* engaged in both explicit and implicit forms of periodizing, two examples of which are especially important to the prehistory of the tripartite schema. First, Lambecius added temporal divisions altogether absent from Frisius’ original *Bibliotheca*. Whereas Frisius’ catalogue had simply proceeded chronologically through its authors, without

indicated with underlining): “*Eutropius* presbyter, scipsit ad duas sorores, quae ob deuotionem virginitatis, a parentibus sunt exhaeredatae, epistolas consolatorias. N. an. ext. *Historiarum libri* sunt impressi passim.”
section breaks, Lambecius provided a division precisely at the moment of transformation he documented most thoroughly. At the transition from the fourth to the fifth century he announced the beginning of his “Part II of profane writers” or *pars secunda de scriptoribus profanis*. Hence, the year 400, not far from long-canonized turning points in political history like Alaric’s sack of Rome or the division of the empire under Arcadius and Honorius, became a parallel moment of inflection in the history of letters.

Second, Lambecius demonstrated how *historia literaria* could capture moments of cultural revival or efflorescence. While his cataloguing of so-called “profane” writers dwindled to a mere trickle with each passing century of the Middle Ages, Lambecius suddenly reversed course in the twelfth century. In this epoch, *scriptores profani* multiplied: whereas Lambecius had enumerated a mere five secular authors in the eleventh century, he listed so many in the century following that he had to subdivide them once more according to subject and genre, just as he had done earlier when cataloguing *scriptores profani* in classical antiquity. These subdivisions included such diverse groups as jurists, physicians, mathematicians, historians, and grammarians. Much like Johannes Trithemius’ bibliographical apprehension of the Carolingian revival, Lambecius’ *historia literaria* engaged not in telling but in showing, as he made twelfth-century revival visible through this clustering of diverse *auctores*. In this fashion, *historia literaria* promoted a newfound vision of the so-called twelfth-century renaissance as a revival of “secular” learning and a harbinger of modernity—another turning-point narrative elaborated

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584 Lambecius, “Excerpta,” 48. This highly idiosyncratic selection of eleventh-century *scriptores profani* consists of Hermannus Contractus, Michael Psellus, Lambertus Schaffenburg, Marianus Scotus, and Simeon Seth.
585 Lambecius, “Excerpta,” 49-51. Lambecius’ list of *scriptores profani* filled two pages. At p.50, Lambecius enumerated his “illustrious historians” or *historici illustres*, including such figures as Sigebert of Gembloux, Otto von Freising, Helmodus, Anna Comnena, and Gunther of Pairis, among others.
throughout the eighteenth century and beyond. Indeed, Lambecius would take these techniques of diachronic representation to new heights in his printed *Prodromus*. For a large portion of the text consisted of chronologically sequenced tables which laid out the various authors who flourished during a given *saeculum*, thereby capturing the cultural tenor of a given period through bibliographic amalgamation and conveying it in visual and schematized form.\(^{586}\)

As mentioned above, Lambecius continued his work on *historia literaria* as imperial librarian at Vienna, especially through his comprehensive cataloguing of the library’s holdings. Again like Trithemius more than a century before him, Lambecius used the physical codices at his disposal as sites for recording bibliographic webs of *historia literaria*. Firsthand evidence of these methods are preserved in a catalogue of the imperial library’s manuscript holdings, based upon the classification system first devised by Lambecius’ predecessor, Sebastian Tengnagel and itself extant today in manuscript.\(^{587}\) Whoever assembled this catalogue also saw fit to transcribe the marginal notes that Lambecius added to a number of the library’s medieval codices. Intriguingly enough, many of these notes referred to Vossius. For instance, in an entry for a manuscript of a hagiographic compilation assembled by one Wolfhardus, a ninth-century German monk, the transcriber of the catalogue added: “in a hand that I think is Lambecius’ has been written ‘concerning this Wolfhardus, a monk of the monastery of Hasenried, see Vossius, *De historicis Latinis*, book 3 and 4, page 761.’”\(^{588}\) In another entry, the transcriber took note of


\(^{587}\) The catalogue is now Cambridge, MA, Houghton Library MS Lat. 387, and is titled: “Catalogus manuscriptorum, theologorum, juridicorum, historicorum, philosophicorum et philologorum, medicorumque: Bibliothecae Augustissimae Caesareae Vindebonensis.”

Lambecius’ attention to those chains of continuation that defined late antique and medieval iterations of *historia Romana*—itself a subject (as we saw in the previous chapter) elucidated by Pierre Pithou. When cataloguing a “history of the Romans from the founding of the city to Justinian”—i.e. the *Historia Romana* of Eutropius with Paul the Deacon’s continuations—the transcriber remarked: “in the margin, in a hand that I think is Lambecius,’ has been added: ‘the *Historia miscella* of Paul the Deacon was continued by Landulphus Sagax, up to the year 806.’” Hence, Lambecius used the very margins of this codex to note how the historical narrative it contained would be augmented and continued still further by subsequent medieval compilers. These examples highlight how both library cataloguing and direct engagement with material texts made possible a richer form of *historia literaria*. And as this indirect transmission of Lambecius’ manuscript jottings makes clear, subsequent bibliographers considered scattered snippets of *historia literaria* crucial equipment for digesting medieval codices.

In producing these notes, Lambecius was merely engaging in the family business. His uncle Holstenius, whose career also culminated in an enviable library post, had been obsessed from the beginning of his scholarly life with cataloguing and describing medieval codices. In his youth Holstenius set out on a research tour of English libraries, in the hope of collecting materials for an edition of ancient geographers. Although Holstenius never published his

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praefatione in Iunium liquet, manu et puto Lambecii adscriptum erat. De hoc Wolfhardo monacho coenobii Hasennetani <sic>, vide Voss: de hist: Lat: lib: 3 et 4 pag. 761.”

Cambridge, MA, Houghton Library MS Lat. 387, unfoliated: “52. Historiae Romanorum ab V.C. usque ad Iustinanum <sic> fol. memb. in margine manu ut puto Lambecii additum erat. Pauli Diaconi historia miscella a Landulpho Sagaci aucta, usque ad annum Chr: 806.” Also, the entry for a copy of Jordanes’ *Getica* reads as follows: “140. Iornandis Historia Gethorum, manu ni fallor Lambecii, additum erat: Excerptum ex historia Gallica a Lazio editum quod etiam extat in Marci Velseri rerum Augustan: historia pag. 186.”

planned geographical work, his so-called Commonitorium—an aide-mémoire of sorts to manuscripts in the Bodleian and various Oxford college libraries that he encountered during his trip—survives in manuscript. Holstenius’ Commonitorium adumbrated many of the concerns that would define Lambecius’ historia literaria—from the righting of the spurious to a thorough appreciation of the materiality of medieval texts and their relationship to time. For instance, in his entry for a twelfth-century Oxford codex of the Cosmographia of Aethicus Ister—a strange eighth-century collection of geography and mythography that spuriously claimed to have been translated into Latin by none other than Jerome—Holstenius described the text in highly florid language as “gushing forth with portentous lies and fables” (scatens portentosis mendaciis et fabulis) and “translated in a barbarous enough style (stilo satis barbaro) by Jerome, a certain presbyter.”

In addition, Holstenius’ paid great attention to the style of medieval scripts, using them to form rough impressions of the dates of his codices. In this fashion, his catalogue entries mixed aesthetic and temporal categories of evaluation. He showed himself especially partial to that favored designation of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century periodizing—namely recens “or recent” and its comparative equivalents. And when using this phrase to discuss the paleography of manuscripts, he frequently juxtaposed forms of beauty and degrees of temporal recentness in concessive fashion. For example, he characterized a copy of Seneca’s Tragedies as written “beautifully (pulchre) but recently.” In his very next entry, he glowingly catalogued a manuscript

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591 Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek MS Perizonius Q 8, fol.5r: “L. Holstenii Commonitorium de Codicibus MSS bibliothecarum Academiae Oxoniensis.” This copy of the Commonitorium was transcribed by the Leiden classics professor Theodor Ryckius, and is preserved in one of his manuscript notebooks.

592 Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek MS Perizonius Q 8, fol.6v: “*Huic Solino Aethici Cosmographi opusculum quoddam subjunctum videbis...scatens portentosis mendaciis et fabulis et stilo satis barbaro translatum ab Hieronymo quodam presbytero...” This is presumably Oxford, Bodleian MS Auct. F.3.7, a twelfth-century codex that contains Solinus followed by Aethicus.
of Cicero’s orations, exclaiming “never with my own eyes have I seen something in parchment [written] more elegantly (elegantius), yet more recently.” And but several entries later, he took note of another Ciceronian codex—this one containing the De senectute and De amicitia—written in a “good (bona) but recent hand.” Hence, Holstenius transformed his Commonitorium into something far more than a mere finding aid; on the contrary, his catalogue offered a kind of literary history via material texts, which expressed surprise that forms of pulchritude and elegance could coexist with the material productions of the recentiores.

As Lambecius and Holstenius’ projects suggest, the literal cataloguing of books by librarians and library patrons proved indispensable to the conceptual cataloguing of historical moments performed by historia literaria. Once more, ordo librorum and ordo temporum developed symbiotically with one another. And perhaps no source better illustrates how these analogous forms of cataloguing gave force to the new periodization than the Systema bibliothecae of the Parisian Jesuit Jean Garnier, with which we close this section. The case of Garnier also illustrates how historia literaria and its vision of library science spread far beyond their original German and Dutch Protestant contexts. A prominent Jesuit theologian and patristic scholar who served as librarian at the Parisian College de Clermont, later renamed the College Louis-le-Grand, Garnier released his Systema in 1678. He likewise made significant

593 Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek MS Perizonius Q 8, fol.12r: Holstenius describes a copy of Seneca’s Tragoediae as “in papiro, pulchre sed recenter.” Directly below, he describes a copy of Cicero’s orations as follows: “Numquam vidi oculis meis quid elegantius in pergameno sed recenter. At fol.12v, Holstenius adds a reference for “Cicero de senectute et amicitia...in charta, bona sed recenti manu.”


595 For biographical details (and an evaluation of the Systema from the perspective of twentieth-century library science), see William Terence Kane, Jean Garnier: Librarian (Chicago, 1940). Garnier also appears in Carlos Sommervogel’s massive bibliography of Jesuit writings, the Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jésus.
contributions to the historical study of the early Christian church, publishing seven lengthy
dissertations on the Pelagian heresy in 1673.\textsuperscript{596}

Intriguingly enough, Garnier also shared close associations with two figures in the story
of historical Pyrrhonism and skepticism charted by Hazard and others—demonstrating how
seemingly radical forms of historical and epistemic doubt could coexist with traditional pedantry
and erudition. Specifically, Garnier encouraged his fellow Jesuit Pierre-Daniel Huet to edit the
works of the church father Origen. As traced by April Shelford in particular, Huet’s work
resuscitating an early church doctor often accused of heresy served as a fitting proxy for
contemporary disputes with the Jansenists, designed to counter what he saw as their uncritical
valorization of Augustine.\textsuperscript{597} In his \textit{Memoires}, Huet praised Garnier’s own work on the Pelagian
controversy, and commended his mentor for urging him to investigate Origen with due attention
to historical context and chronological \textit{ordo}.\textsuperscript{598} Yet anti-Jansenist polemic sometimes produced
unexpected responses. Huet is perhaps best remembered not for his patristic scholarship but
rather for his posthumously published \textit{Traité philosophique de la faiblesse de l'esprit humain},
framed as a critique of Jansenism and Cartesianism, which in fact offered a thorough defense of

\textsuperscript{596} Marius Mercator, \textit{Opera quaecumque extant prodeunt nunc primum studio J. Garnerii...qui
notas etiam ac dissertationes addidit} (Paris, 1673). Garnier’s dissertations on the Pelagians are
appended to his edition of Mercator, a fifth-century church historian and ally of Augustine.
\textsuperscript{597} Pierre-Daniel Huet, \textit{Commentaria in sacras scripturas} (Cologne, 1685). On Huet and Origen,
see Shelford, \textit{Transforming the Republic of Letters}, 146-53. On Huet’s attachment to the old
humanist methods of reading, see Anthony Grafton, “The Humanist as Reader,” in \textit{A History of
Reading in the West}, ed. Guglielmo Cavallo and Roger Chartier (Amherst, 1999), esp. 210-12.
compagnie de savants hommes que je fréquentais alors, Jean Garnier tenait très bien sa place. Il
était déjà connu par quelques ouvrages, mais il le devint bien autrement par son édition de
Marius Mercator, lequel vivait au siècle de saint Augustin et qui attaque vigoureusement les
hérésies de Pélage et de Nestorius. Ce serait une omission coupable que de passer sous silence le
concours diligent et fécond que me prêta cet excellent homme, lorsque je dressais l’histoire
d’Origène et qu’il me fallait placer chaque chose à son rang et suivant l’ordre chronologique.”
Cf. Shelford, \textit{Transforming the Republic of Letters}, 34 and Catherine Northeast, \textit{The Parisian
ancient skeptical philosophy. Likewise, Garnier also collaborated closely with his fellow Jesuit Jean Hardouin, who (as alluded to above) would later contend in one of Pyrrhonism’s wilder flights of doubt that almost all classical texts were forgeries. Hardouin was also capable of less dramatic pursuits, and in these he was greatly assisted by Garnier. Just as he had encouraged Huet’s work on Origen, Garnier also arranged for Hardouin to edit Pliny’s *Historia naturalis*, and Hardouin likewise completed some editions of patristic sources that Garnier had originally begun. In fact, Hardouin would go on to succeed Garnier as librarian of the College de Clermont, and there is even some speculation that as a young Jesuit he assisted Garnier in both the arrangement of the library and the publication of the *Systema*. Meyer's *Systema* was at once a guide to the contents of the actual College library and, more abstractly, a map for the organization of knowledge and the disciplines. Although the *Systema* did not list the specific items that the College library held at its disposal, it enumerated hundreds of minute divisions and subdivisions for categorizing the library’s printed books, manuscripts, scrolls, inscriptions, and even coins. Having drawn its inspiration in part from Gabriel Naudé’s *Advis pour dresser une bibliothèque*, Garnier’s method was appropriated by many eighteenth-century Parisian booksellers, and was also expanded upon by figures like Prosper Marchand, Gabriel Martin, and Guillaume-François de Bure. Adrien Baillet, author of the multivolume *Jugemens des savans* and himself hardly a friend of the Jesuits, lauded Garnier for his “most beautiful method,” asserting that “his system could serve as a plan for the whole

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600 Northeast, *Parisian Jesuits*, 82.
world.”603 In the words of Pierre Bayle—himself the practitioner of a very different brand of encyclopedism—Garnier had outlined “different methods of arranging the books, and he speaks well of curious things.”604 And according to the German polyhistor Daniel Georg Morhof, Garnier’s Systema boasted a “most elegant arrangement,” befitting not only a physical library, but also, appropriately enough, a historia literaria.605 As we shall see, Garnier’s de facto history of letters enthusiastically embraced the new periodization, while also exposing several of its inherent complexities and contradictions.

In the section of the Systema devoted to historia (by far the longest portion of the catalogue), Garnier divided each of history’s generic and geographic subsections according to the ordo temporum he deemed most apposite for its given bibliography. This ordo corresponded quite literally to his proposed physical placement of books on shelves, so that Garnier’s invocations of a historical media or “middle” likewise connoted an intermediate shelf on a library’s walls. This diversity of temporal ordines—or what Garnier referred to as his dispositio librorum or “arrangement of books”—prompted the Jesuit librarian to invoke periodizing metaphors both old and new. Like Vossius before him, he simultaneously used the old Floran metaphor of the life cycle and new periodized designations like medium aevum, deploying the one or the other depending upon context. Yet unlike Vossius, Garnier invoked the medium aevum as part of an explicitly tripartite temporal scheme.

603 Adrien Baillet, Jugemens des savans sur les principaux ouvrages des auteurs, Vol. II (Paris, 1685-6), 275: “Nous en avons deja dit beaucoup de bien un peu au deflus, et nous ajoutons ici, que comme sa methode est tres belle, son Systeme petu servir de plan a tout le monde, pour donner une bonne situation aux Livres d’une Bibliotheque telle qu’elle puisse estre.”
Before he introduced his variations upon the tripartite, Garnier took Florus’ metaphor of the life cycle and reapplied it to an avowedly postclassical terrain—i.e. the Greek patristic canon. As he explained it, “the ages of the Greek fathers can be divided into four: adolescence, which precedes the Council of Nicaea and contains the three prior centuries; adulthood or the period of erudition, which contains the next three centuries until the Seventh Council, the elderly phase, which extends from the Seventh Council until the Photian Schism, and the age of senility, from then until our own time.” But then Garnier soon abandoned the old life cycle metaphor for the new periodization. He offered his first threefold division when charting his dispositio librorum for Latin poetry, noting that “there were three ages of Latin poets: first (prima), middle (media), and last (postrema).” According to his specific divisions, “the first age ends with Claudian, that is, at the end of the fourth century, the middle extends from there to the sixteenth century, and the last from that time to our own. The first is an age of purer Latinity, the second one of more corrupt Latinity, and the third an age of renewed efflorescence. The middle age boasts exceedingly few poets, besides some sacred writers.” This schema employed several traditional tropes: not only did Garnier end antiquity around the year 400 with the poet Claudian (just where Lambecius had divided his historia literaria into two), but he also explicitly linked the tripartite scheme to that narrative of Latinity’s corruption and rebirth articulated in Vossius’ De vitis and so many of its Renaissance predecessors. Finally, like J.C. Scaliger, not only did he

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606 Garnier, Systema, 21: “Grecorum Patrum distinguui possunt aetates quatuor; Adolecens, quae ante Concilium Nicaenum, quaeque tria priora saecula tenuit; Adulta sive erudita, quae tria consequentia, usque ad septimum Concilium; Provecta, quae a septimo Concilio ad Schisma usque Photianum; Senescens, quae inde ad nostra usque tempora.”

fault his *media aetas* for deficient Latinity, but he also spoke pejoratively of an age that had almost completely extinguished poetry itself.

Garnier made further use of the tripartite scheme when he turned to *historia* proper. He divided his *dispositio librorum* for Greek history into ancient (*vetus*), medieval (*media aetas*), and modern (*recens*) times: “that which is called ancient extends from the earliest times until the establishment of the empire at Constantinople [i.e. in the early fourth century], the Middle Ages proceeds from the founding of Constantinople until its storming by the Turks [i.e. in 1453], and the modern stretches from the storming of Constantinople up to this day.”608 As Garnier explained, the first and oldest period was to retain the eponymous designation Greek, the middle was to be styled Byzantine, and the final was to be labeled Turkish. Next, Garnier outlined his *dispositio librorum* for Roman history, stating that “the history of Rome ought to be divided like the Greek; into the ancient, the medieval, and the more recent (*in veterem, mediae aetatis, et recentiorem*).” Here he proposed a considerably more idiosyncratic method for slicing time in three. While Garnier’s proffered Roman turning points corresponded to undeniably significant moments of political transition, their chronology differed dramatically from their Greek counterparts. As Garnier here proposed, “the ancient extends from the founding of the city until the emperors, the middle age, from the emperors until the translation of the empire, and the more recent, from the translation of the empire up to our own times.” While the first period, like its

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608 Garnier, *Systema*, 64: “Quae vetus dicitur, a primis temporibus ad constitutum Constantinopoli Imperium extenditur: quae mediae aetatis, a condita Constantinopoli ad expugnationem a Turcis: quae recens, ab expugnatione Constantinopolis ad hunc usque diem. Vetus Historia nomen Graecae retinuit; quae mediae aetatis, Byzantina dicitur; recens, Turcica est.”
Greek counterpart, was to retain the eponymous designation of Roman history, the second would be labeled Augustan, and the third simply termed imperial.\textsuperscript{609}

Although Garnier’s division of Greek history into ancient, medieval, and modern phases roughly matched the chronology of the tripartite scheme soon to be adopted by Christopher Cellarius and others, his demarcation of Roman history revealed an entirely different time-scape. His Greek history had separated the ancient from the medieval at the fourth century, and fixed the transition from the medieval to the modern in the fifteenth, utilizing such well-worn epochal events as Constantine’s founding of Constantinople for the former and the Ottoman capture of Constantinople for the latter. But Garnier’s turning points for Roman history, even if they proved eminently logical in their own Roman context, were nowhere near such familiar periodizing events. Instead of inaugurating Rome’s “middle age” with Constantine’s founding of Constantinople, the Christianization of the Roman world, Alaric’s sack in 410, or the final demise of the Western Empire in 476, he fixed the birth of its \textit{media aetas} some four centuries earlier, with Rome’s transition from republic to empire under Augustus in the first century BCE. Furthermore, his transition from Rome’s “middle age” to “more recent times” occurred in the very middle of what Garnier elsewhere named the \textit{medium aevum}, even in so closely allied a field as Latin poetry. By invoking the \textit{translatio imperii} as the instigator of Roman modernity, Garnier’s nebulously comparative “more recent times” of Rome presumably began more than six centuries before its Greek analogue, with Charlemagne’s imperial coronation in 800.

\textsuperscript{609} Garnier, \textit{Systema}, 65: “Historia Romana dividi debet perinde ac Graeca; in veterem, mediae aetatis, et recentiorem. Vetus ab Urbe condita ad Imperatores; mediae aetatis, ab Imperatoribus ad translationem Imperii; recentior, a translatione Imperii ad nostra usque tempora extenditur. Prima, propria est Romanae Reipublicae; secunda, Imperii Romani; tertia, Imperii Occidentalis. Prima retinuit nomen Historiae Romanae, secunda dicitur Augusta, tertia Imperii simpliciter.”
Further proof of the contingent and circumstantial nature of Garnier’s periodizing emerges from his proposed *dispositio librorum* for the histories of the nations and peoples of “modern” Europe. As he made clear, the tripartite scheme did not apply equally well to all histories, especially those that lacked a properly classical beginning. In the most literal of senses, one could not construct a *dispositio librorum* with a meaningful “middle age” for contexts whose “antiquity” possessed few if any books. Bibliographically speaking, it would be oxymoronic to mark a beginning as a middle space. Hence, when Garnier sketched his *dispositio librorum* for French historical texts, he declared that “Gallic history, unlike that of Greece and Rome, cannot be divided into antiquity, a middle age, and a more recent period.” As Garnier asserted, this would prove nearly impossible, for “no one committed matters to letters prior to the foundation of the kingdom [i.e. by the Franks],” except for those Romans who wrote of ancient Gaul. As a consequence, French history possessed no discernable *media aetas*, since that which might seem its “middle” phase (and which corresponded to the *media aetas* of both Greeks and Romans), was in fact a beginning, and hence marked the domain of France’s *veteres*.

As Garnier’s *Systema* demonstrates, temporal divisors like antiquity, the Middle Ages, and modernity first and foremost served bibliographical ends. At this comparatively early stage in their development, they did not comprise inflexible or absolute designations; on the contrary, they offered an easily intelligible means of ordering texts in a widening diversity of genres, disciplines, and *tempora*. For Garnier, there was no universal *medium aevum*, and hence he saw

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610 Garnier, *Systema*, 67-8: “Historia Gallica non perinde potest, atque Graeca et Romana, dividi in veteran, mediae aetatis, et recentiorem; si nomine veteranis intelligatur ea, quae ab antiquissimis temporibus ad fundationem Regni Francorum in Gallias pretendentur; si mediae aetatis, quae a fundatione Regni, ad tertiae Regum prosapiae initia; recentioris, quae exinde ad nostra tempora. Res enim fundatione Regni priores nemo literis mandavit, qui vel Romanam Historiam aliamve non scripsierit, vel rerum ejusmodi finibus ita se continuerit, ut ad posteriorma tempora non sit provectus.”
no need to fit multiple generic, geographic, national, and religious contexts into a single periodizing straightjacket. Temporal designations of this sort seemed inherently labile and elastic, and sometimes even relative. Not all contexts could accommodate all the same periodized categories: the Roman *medium aevum* preceded the Greek *medium aevum* by at least four centuries, while France and other European nations possessed no *medium aevum* whatsoever. As a result, even as the new *historia literaria* reshaped both bibliography and the very structure of the library catalogue, it reaffirmed that bibliographical *ordo*—and the age-old prerogatives of *dispositio librorum*—would continue to determine history’s moments of transition and inflection. Whether it arranged texts by century, genre, authorial background, or some combination of each, *historia literaria* taught a degree of contextual specificity that hitherto seemed unattainable. Such contextualization had proven so difficult that the previous century’s most ambitious attempt at bibliographic universality—Conrad Gesner’s *Bibliotheca universalis*—had been forced to adapt the artificial ease of alphabetical arrangement when ordering its entries. Like the temporal contextualization of “barbarous” Latinity, *historia literaria* furnished tools for contextualizing the seeming ebbs and flows of *ordo librorum* itself. Paradoxically, this both abetted and hindered attempts at universal periodization. Just how these competing impulses coalesced in one of the first systematic attempts of this sort—namely, Christopher Cellarius’ *Historia universalis*—forms the subject of the following section.

**Christopher Cellarius: Canonizing the Ancient/Medieval/Modern**

Before the German classical scholar Christopher Cellarius canonized the scheme of tripartite periodization in his *Historia universalis in antiquam, et medii aevi, ac nova tempora divisa* or
Universal History Divided into Ancient, Medieval, and Modern Times, he had already established himself in the field of lexicography. Born at Schmalkalden in Thuringia, Cellarius became a leading professor at the University of Halle, where he also made a career as a compiler of easily digestible textbooks in history, geography, and other fields—similar to the sort of compendium that Georg Horn assembled in his Arca Noe.\(^{611}\) These textbooks enjoyed such success—not only in Cellarius’ own day but also throughout the following century—that Johann Wolfgang von Goethe lamented their ubiquity when recounting his youthful education, remarking that Cellarius “could impart no kind of interest” whatsoever.\(^{612}\)

Before Cellarius gained fame for these other endeavors, he tackled the problem of postclassical Latinity, just as Vossius, Scioppius, Borrichius and others had before him.\(^{613}\) In the preface to his Antibarbarus Latinus, his glossary of “barbarous” Latin first published in 1678, Cellarius announced that he would continue the project begun by Vossius’ De vitis, referring to the Dutch humanist as “so great a Hercules of learned men” even as he promised to remedy the inadequacies of his work.\(^{614}\) Cellarius’ oeuvre once again confirms the central role of Vossius—that long-overlooked link between two distinct moments of European humanism—to the project of dividing time. The intellectual genealogy that extends from Vossius to Cellarius demonstrates how notions of periodizing traveled from the restricted domain of Latinate philology to the wider


\(^{612}\) See *The Autobiography of Goethe: Truth and Poetry from My Life, Vol. I*, ed. and trans. Parke Godwin (New York, 1846), 22. Goethe likewise remarks in a memorable passage at 21-2: “My father taught my sister Italian in the same room in which I had to commit Cellarius to memory. As I was soon ready with my task, and was yet obliged to sit quiet, I listened with my book before me, and very readily caught the Italian, which struck me as an agreeable softening of Latin.”

\(^{613}\) On the broader sixteenth- and seventeenth-century tradition of postclassical lexicography, see Dionisotti, “From Stephanus to Du Cange.”

\(^{614}\) Christopher Cellarius, *Antibarbarus Latinus* (Zeitz, 1678), sig. 2v-3r.
reach of general history. Put simply, schematizing linguistic change helped divide the underlying cultural contexts that supposedly conditioned language, and sometimes caused it to degenerate.

Cellarius’ *Antibarbarus* largely followed the established parameters of the genre. Like Vossius, he composed a catalogue of Latin solecisms and barbarisms, useful not only as negative *exempla* of Latin eloquence, but also for decoding postclassical sources. In describing his work in dramatic fashion as the *Antibarbarus*, Cellarius used a term that was first introduced into the field of lexicography (as John Considine has pointed out) by the Frankfurt scholar Johann Martin Lydius in 1613. Intriguingly, Lydius also continued a signal work in the history of periodizing—namely, John Bale’s historical survey of the papacy (discussed in Chapter One).  

These dual interests once more illustrate the interlinked nature of postclassical lexicography and postclassical bibliography, and the importance of each in the development of historical periodization. But despite Cellarius’ invective against barbarism, he made clear in his preface that neither did he subscribe to inflexible standards of classicism, noting with dismay: “I have already seen that many critics are so rigid that they record as barbarisms whatever they do not find in the books of Cicero, thereby casting Livy, Curtius, the Plinys, and Tacitus off the bridge with intolerable audacity.” With these words, Cellarius indicted dismissals of non-Ciceronian authors through a clever allusion to the Roman proverb concerning the *sexagenarii de ponte*, discussed in Ovid’s *Fasti* and other sources. According to this archaic legend, in early Rome men in their sixties, deemed no longer useful for society, were thrown off bridges so that their

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615 On Lydius’ *latino-barbarus* and his continuation of Bale, see Considine, *Dictionaries in Early Modern Europe*, 258. See Johann Martin Lydius, *Scriptores duo Anglici coaetanei ac conterranei de vitis pontificum Romanorum: videlicet Robertus Barns et Iohannes Baleus* (Leiden, 1615).

younger counterparts alone could exercise the right to vote. Through such dramatic imagery, Cellarius made his point perfectly clear: a rigid program of *imitatio* would result in nothing less than the demise of many worthwhile authors—including venerable *auctores* like Tacitus, Pliny, and Curtius who occupied *tempora* that just so happened to postdate that hypothetical Golden Age. Hence, just as much as his attempts at purging barbarism, Cellarius’ critique of the temporal narrowness of the canon—especially in its curricular contexts—would powerfully shape his conception of universal history.

In the same year that Cellarius published his *Antibarbarus* in the small German town of Zeitz, the French lexicographer Charles Du Cange published his massive three-volume dictionary of postclassical Latinity at Paris. Significantly enough, 1678 also saw the release of Jean Garnier’s *Systema*. Du Cange’s *Glossarium ad scriptores mediae et infimae Latinitatis* or *Glossary to the Writers of Middle and Lowest Latin* proved immensely influential in the development of medieval studies, and is still often consulted today. Both Garnier and Du Cange worked in a Paris where medieval scholarship was fast gaining great prominence, especially among Jesuits and Benedictines. In fact, Du Cange enjoyed a close association with none other than Jean Mabillon, who published his *De re diplomatica* some three years later in 1681, and who vociferously praised the lexicographer in his preface to that work. Du Cange’s

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Glossarium was far more than a mere dictionary; rather, it advertised itself as a guide to the seemingly alien cultural world of the medium aevum. Its title page promised not only to explicate Latin vocabulary of “new meaning and rarer use,” but also to shed light on “many rites and customs of the Middle Age (complures medii aevi ritus et mores)” and furnish—in recognition of the necessity of postclassical Latin for legal scholarship—“the formulae of laws, municipal customs, and more recent jurisprudence.”

Du Cange’s directly took up the question of periodization in his preface to the Glossarium—a lengthy treatise he titled De causis corruptae Latinae or On the Causes of Corrupt Latinity. Here Du Cange built upon the narratives of postclassical language change developed by Vossius, Scioppius, and others. Summarizing previous methods of periodizing, he observed that Latinity was divisible not only into ages of gold, silver, bronze, and iron, but also into periods of adolescence, growth, and senescence—the last of which he deemed commensurate with the age of Macrobius and other writers we now identify as late antique. Just as Vossius had rather lugubriously characterized the fall of Rome in the preface of his De vitiiis, so Du Cange also used hyperbolic language to link political upheaval to linguistic cataclysms. Whereas Vossius had likened Latinity to a cadaver following 476, Du Cange asserted in florid fashion that things had been rotten in the house of Latinity since as early as the third century. As he put it, “from that time of course the remains of Latin purity were wholly extinguished; barbarism invaded everywhere, not only Italy, but also Rome herself, and then the other provinces of the Roman Empire, in which the purity of the Latin language had hitherto

620 Cf. n.124 above. On the significance of this title, see Considine, Dictionaries in Early Modern Europe, 267-8. Also, in an important marker of continuity with the traditions examined in Chapter Three, Du Cange’s glossary featured a catalogus auctorum titled “Index scriptorum medii aevi Latinitatis,” which featured an exhaustive list of medieval writers.
621 For discussion of this treatise, see Considine, Dictionaries in Early Modern Europe, 269.
622 Du Cange, “Praefatio ad glossarium: De causis corruptae Latinitatis,” iii-iv.
been preserved, as far as the Republic and the Empire were still flourishing.” Thereafter, Du Cange extended the old metaphor of linguistic personhood in new and more dramatic directions, declaring that “as the barbarians spread through these places [i.e. the provinces of the empire], not only the inhabitants, but also language itself suffered servitude as though sent under the yoke (sub jugum missa).” By lugubriously lamenting that Latinity was “sent under the yoke,” Du Cange, like Cellarius, alluded to another violent ancient ritual. As Livy had reported, the Roman dictator Cincinnatus decided “to send under the yoke” (sub jugum mittere) the defeated army of the Aequi by forcing them to cross underneath a metaphorical yoke of sorts, fashioned from three spears. As Du Cange’s allusion makes clear, now the tables were turned, as Latin found itself subjected to the same acts of subjugation and humiliation that its speakers had once inflicted upon their adversaries. Thus, far from merely succumbing to the natural senescence dictated by the life cycle, Latinity degenerated as a result of external violence inflicted by literal barbarians and linguistic barbarisms alike.

Thanks to Du Cange’s coinage of the phrase “middle and lowest age” or media et infima aetas, once more the medium aevum conveyed an expression of oxymoronic temporality. For Du Cange’s pairing of media and infima seemingly contradicted the very middling status of the medium aevum itself. He lexicography did not establish them as two distinct and separate temporal subunits, but rather hinted at a species of commensurability between the two. Unlike earlier evocations of commensurability, like Heinrich Canisius’ subtle equation of antiquitas and

623 Du Cange, “De causis corruptae Latinitatis,” iv: “Ab eo quippe tempore penitus extinctae sunt Latinae puritatis reliquiae, et barbaries undequaque, non modo Italian, sed et Romam ipsam invasit, atque caeteras exinde provincias Romani Imperii, in quibus utcunque Latinae Linguae puritas hactenus servata fuerat, florente adhuc Republica ac Imperio. Tunc enim barbaris has pervadentibus, non incolae duntaxat, verum etiam Lingua ipsa quasi sub jugum missa servitutem passa est...”

the *media aetas*, or Kaspar Barthius’ hedging invention of the *semi-veteres*, Du Cange’s muddled *media et infima aetas* looked forward, not backward. Rather than possessing an indeterminate past, it possessed an indeterminate conception of futurity, not unlike Georg Horn’s equally fuzzy *medium et recentior aevum* and its kingdoms that survived into the present. But this was not the only ambiguity embedded in the phrase. For *infima* itself conveyed a fraught double meaning: not only did it conjure “lowest” in the literal temporal sense of the newest or *recentissimi*, but it could also connote “lowest” in that more pejorative—though by no means atemporal—sense of inferior or base. Thanks to the many contradictions inherent in the periodizing project, the “lowness” of the Middle Age depended upon how one wished to interpret lowness itself. Yet despite its idiosyncrasy, this formulation would enjoy considerable popularity, mirroring the success of Du Cange’s own glossary. Intriguingly, the next edition of Cellarius’ *Antibarbarus*, printed at Jena just four years later in 1682, now assigned the text a double title, inscribing it as *De Latinitate mediae et infimae aetatis liber, sive Antibarbarus* or *On the Latinity of the Middle and Lowest Age, or, the Antibarbarus*.625 Subsequent reprints of the text through the eighteenth century bore this title. In the meantime, some six years after Du Cange’s periodized formulation appeared in Cellarius’ lexicography, the *medium aevum* would also find its way into Cellarius’ universal history.

In the opening of this second edition of his *Antibarbarus*, and in keeping with the spirit of its dual title, Cellarius took up questions of periodization in greater detail. As he explained, he had compiled together in a single work words “introduced into speech during the barbarous ages” (*barbaris saeculis*), and words which, although coined “before Roman speech expired” (*antequam Romana lingua exspiravit*), were nevertheless deemed barbarous “in the judgment of

625 Christopher Cellarius, *De Latinitate mediae et infimae aetatis liber, sive Antibarbarus* (Jena, 1682).
classic writers” (classicorum censu). Yet Cellarius then complicated this simple binary between the classici and the barbari, and the neat temporal categories that underlay it. Like Vossius and Borrichius before him, he drew a much finer distinction between barbarous and “semi-barbarous” Latinity, while assigning the latter category its own unique aevum. As he explained, “a word thought barbarous is often found to have hidden itself in a writer of the semi-barbarous age” (aevi semibarbari scriptorem). But though he acknowledged theoretical problems with eliding distinctions between the barbari and the semibarbari, he argued that they could be ignored for practical, pedagogical purposes: “Thus, in this class I treat both barbarous and semi-barbarous words together, since they must be shunned with equal care and zeal by students of pure Latinity.” For Cellarius, instructional imperatives trumped the finer subtleties of temporal differentiation, however accurate those subtleties might be. Yet throughout his attempts at periodizing, Cellarius found himself caught between two irreconcilable aims. Like Vossius, he expressed discomfort with blanket declarations of unmitigated barbarism. But he also viewed the supposed beginning of barbarism as an indispensible division point in narratives of language and history. These dueling goals would come into conflict once more in Cellarius’ Historia universalis.

In his Curae posteriores de barbarismis et idiotismis sermonis Latini, a companion piece of sorts to the Antibarbarus first published in 1680, Cellarius defined the temporal parameters of the semibarbarum aevum more directly. This definition was but one part of what had now become a standard tale of Latinity’s corruption. But Cellarius transformed this well-worn story

627 Cellarius, De Latinitate, 2: “Etenim, quae huius ordinis sunt, difficulter distinguuntur, quod saepe vocem, quae barbara putatur, apud aevi semibarbari scriptorem latitasse reperitur. In hac itaque classe iunctim et barbara vocabula et semibarbara tractamus, quem pari cura atque studio Latinitatis purae studiosis fugienda sint.”
into a surprisingly detailed survey of Latin literary history. Not only did he divide Latinity into various metallic ages, but much like Olaus Borrichius, he also used Vossius and others to date precisely when various writers had flourished within these ages. In doing so he produced a mini-treatise of sorts on Latin historia literaria, not unlike Lambecius’ lectures. In addition to using such conventional temporal identifiers as the ages of gold, silver, and bronze, Cellarius also coined some creative new markers of linguistic periodizing—including an age of cadens Latinitas (“falling Latinity”) and prolapsa Latinitas (“prolapsed Latinity”). It was in distinguishing between these two lamentable periods that Cellarius defined his semibarbarum aevum with greater exactitude. Like Du Cange, Cellarius tied the rise of linguistic barbarisms to the arrival of real flesh-and-blood barbarians in the old heart of the Roman Empire. Whereas the period of cadens Latinitas extended from the era of the Antonines to the emperor Honorius and the barbarian incursions, the era of prolapsa Latinitas constituted “that time in which the Goths and the Lombards brooded over Italy, for which reason some call it semi-barbarous [Latinity].”

Hence, the Cellarian semibarbarum aevum corresponded to that nebulous transition between late antiquity and the early Middle Ages.

The Curae posteriores continued the critique of narrow classicism that Cellarius had begun in his Antibarbarus. In a manner reminiscent of the ideology of historia literaria, he suggested that both periodization and proper contextualization could serve as antidotes to blinkered notions of canonicity. Here Cellarius invoked a bit of family history. His great-grandfather, Iacob Cellarius, had published a revised and expanded edition of the Thesaurus Ciceronianus of the Italian Jesuit Marius Nizolius—a lexicon of vocabulary from the extant

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corpus of Cicero that figured prominently in sixteenth-century debates over Ciceronianism. Cellarius declared that neither his great-grandfather nor Nizolius himself had ever judged words not found in the Ciceronian corpus to be *ipso facto* barbarous. Rather, they had concerned themselves with the “purity of Latin style” in a more capacious sense, which had permitted them “to drink from rivers that flowed from that golden age [i.e. the age of Cicero] into the following era.” Through an explicit contrast between this Golden Age and Latin late antiquity of the fourth through sixth centuries, Cellarius then expanded these remarks into a general principle, castigating those who “stretch Latinity too far, and judge all things by the same standard, whether they be works of Cicero and his contemporaries, or those of Ammianus, Sidonius, Cassiodorus and the like.” Adopting an agricultural metaphor, he maintained instead that “just as fields that bring forth the most copious crops bear less fruit at other times, or altogether cease to be fruitful, so the fruitfulness of learning and the arts must be distinguished by ages and times (*saeculis et temporibus*).”

Just as Francis Bacon had famously argued in his *Advancement of Learning*, Cellarius maintained that one could not judge the language of a given author without taking into account the quality and fecundity of language and literature in his time. Words such as these point to a surprising and often overlooked intellectual genealogy. Practitioners of *historia literaria* like

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630 Cellarius, *Curae posteriores*, “Prolegomena,” 3-4: “Nec vero illi magnopere laudandi sunt, qui nimis extendunt Latinitatem, et eodem censu aestimant omnia, siue Ciceronis sint et aequalium, siue Ammiani, Sidonii, Cassiodori et similium. Non semper ingeniiorum messis est, aut aequalis prouentus studiorum, sed vt agri, qui copiosissimos fructus gignunt, alio tempore minus ferunt, aut omnino cessant fructuosi esse: ita doctrinae et artium ubertas saeculis et temporibus distinguenda est.”
Morhof and others frequently repeated the Baconian injunctions that had become the new discipline’s programmatic manifesto. Bemoaning the lack of a coherent history of learning, Bacon had declared that its absence made “the history of the world [appear] like the statue of Polyphemus, without its eye; the part that best shows the life and spirit of the person.” Moreover, in a point-by-point enumeration of what this history ought to contain, Bacon explained that for each form of learning and the arts, events and particularities had to be “coupled with their causes,” in order to illuminate “the nature of countries and peoples,” “their disposition and indisposition to different kinds of learning,” and the “accidents of time, whether favorable or destructive to the sciences.” If faithfully executed, so Bacon proclaimed, this exercise in periodization and contextualism would accomplish a feat of resurrection—“whence the literary genius of every age may at pleasure be raised, as it were, from the dead.”

Yet in outlining these aims, Bacon was hardly novel: rather, even if he expressed opposition to aspects of humanist historical scholarship, he was deeply indebted to one of the great historical projects of the sixteenth century—namely, the development of historia ecclesiastica as practiced by the Magdeburg Centuriators. As Anthony Grafton has shown, much of the spirit of the new historia literaria came from the far older domain of historia ecclesiastica, imbued with renewed vigor by both Flacius and his Catholic adversaries. Not only did Flacius organize and Bacon champion (in the New Atlantis’ famous sketch of “Salomon’s House”) a large collaborative research enterprise that depended upon bibliographic compilation, but both also believed it vitally necessary for histories to capture the spirit of their constituent

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632 Francis Bacon, The Advancement of Learning 2.4 (London, 1900), 50-2.
periods through precise chronological narrative. Hence, by explicitly arguing for the periodized contextualization of authors in a philological and lexicographical work that did just that, Cellarius put Baconian prescriptions into practice, and tried to capture nothing less than the “literary genius” of Latinity’s successive ages. As a result, it is all the more ironic that late humanist compilers like Cellarius would later face criticism from those very partisans of Enlightenment who simultaneously extolled Bacon as a metonym for the New Science and the Royal Society—christening him a harbinger of modernity and a man before his time.

Yet Cellarius also highlighted some of the contradictions and limitations inherent in this program of *historia literaria*, even if he practiced it nonetheless. One had to read authors according to the “fruitfulness of learning and the arts” in their various “ages and times.” But while this was a necessary start to interpretation, it hardly counted as sufficient. At the end of his prefatory *historia literaria*—itself an exercise in distinguishing *ubertas* through *saecula* and *tempora*—Cellarius issued a surprising warning concerning the inadequacies of this enterprise:

Thus we have followed the course of Latin writers from the golden age to the times of Charlemagne...however, no one should interpret this to mean that authors of the same age are of the same worth in all things. Forms of talent, learning, and diligence differ even in a single age, and it often turns out that some later author surpasses an earlier one in the elegance and purity of his language. When judging authors, one should not only consider their times, but also their inborn character, their learning, and their discipline. Nor were all things conceived and brought forth after the age of Charlemagne barbarous. Even in those times the church had many whose talents we ought not blush at...

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633 See Grafton, “Where Was Salomon's House?”
634 Cellarius, *Curae posteriores*, 49-50: “Sic Latinos scriptores ab Aurea aetate ad Caroli Magni tempora persecuti sumus...Non autem hoc quisquam ita intelligat, ut, qui eiusdem aetatis sunt, per omnia eiusdem dignitatis putet. Differunt unius quoque temporis ingenia, studia, industria, et saepe fit, vt posterior aliquis sermonis elegantia et castitate superiorem vincat. Non ad tempora
With these words, Cellarius confessed to a deep and surprisingly nuanced awareness of the limits of periodization—either as a tool of historical explanation or a basis for literary hermeneutics. This may seem a rather remarkable admission by the seventeenth-century scholar who would canonize the most enduring scheme of modern historical periodizing. Nor did Cellarius simply dispute the common directionality of periodizing, as when he contested the supposed barbarism of the post-Carolingian world or allowed that a late, postclassical author could surpass an earlier, classical one in the “elegance and purity of language.” More importantly, he questioned the very notion that a given era or epoch possessed temporal unity, thereby rejecting facile applications of historical context just as pointedly as he had rejected ahistorical standards of classicism. It was a pleasing fiction, he suggested, that “talent, learning, and diligent” had been everywhere the same across a “single age.” Although he did not explicitly say so here, Cellarius seemed to agree that the homogenous temporal periods that made periodization intelligible (i.e. those horizontal plateaus of each constituent stair that made the staircase of historical narrative traversable in the first place) lacked some intrinsic truth-value. Nevertheless, as we shall see, Cellarius regarded the period as something of a necessary untruth, useful for approximating a reasonably accurate narrative of both historical continuity and change. This artificial provisionality stood in stark contrast to those ancient naturalizing metaphors of temporal change from which modern regimes of periodizing had first derived their force. In these ancient schemes, ages of iron followed ages of bronze and ages of senility

sola in iudicandis auctoribus; sed ad indolem etiam, studium, exercitationem respiiciendum est. Nec barbara omnia, quae post Caroli M. concepta et edita fuerunt aetatem. Etiam illis temporibus Ecclesia habuit, quorum ingeniiis non erubescendum...” Cellarius goes on to cite such post-Carolingian examples as Rhabanus Maurus and Lupus Servatus, Fulbert and Ivo, bishops of Chartres, and the poet William Brito.
followed ages of maturity with an ineluctable logic that transcended the mere convenience of analogy. Historia and philologia alike followed a natural ordo, and in many cases that ordo dictated decline. But even as it applied this baleful vision of decline to antiquity’s metamorphosis into the Middle Ages, the new periodizing shed itself of the naturalizing ordo that had once made such degeneration seem predetermined and inevitable.

However, this is not to suggest that the classical world possessed a uniformly static or simplistic vision of temporal change. On the contrary, antiquity contained its own rich explorations of linguistic and historical contingency, and these meditations would prove eminently useful to its modern heirs. Indeed, just as ancient metaphors of temporal change so shaped modern periodizing—so the words of a venerable, canonical auctor sometimes offered the best distillation of the paradoxes of periodization and canonicity alike. These paradoxes were aptly conveyed by a quotation that an anonymous eighteenth-century reader scribbled on the flyleaf of his copy of the Curae posteriores. In order to capture both the spirit and the limitations of Cellarius’ lexicographical project, he copied out the following passage from the Ars poetica of Horace—himself an esteemed member of what Conrad Rittershusius had called the optima perfectissimaque classis auctorum. In his poetic treatise, Horace had dwelt upon the relationship between language and custom, ironically confirming the relative nature of those very standards that would later make his own Latinity exemplary. As Horace had predicted, “many terms that have fallen out of use shall be born again, and those shall fall that are now in repute, if usage so will it, in whose hands lies the judgment, the right and the rule of speech.”


636 Christopher Cellarius, De Latinitate mediae et infimae aetatis liber, sive Antiharbarus (Jena, 1695), now Cambridge, MA, Houghton 5293.4*, flyleaf: Annotator writes “Multa renascentur,
millennium and a half after Horace had written these words, one of his readers chose to inscribe them on a catalogue of *vocabula* that were now very much *not* held “in repute” or *in honore*. As Horace had understood long before debates over proper diction and style engulfed latter-day interpreters of his ancient world, *usus* or “usage” was temporally determined, and thus inherently unstable. But it was easy enough to extend this disavowal of judgments from *verba* themselves to the authors who used them. And if this could be done, perhaps no definition of barbarism, however airtight, could transcend the vicissitudes of history and *usus*. Narratives of periodization, whether linguistic or historical, would always depend upon changing notions of canonicity—themselves periodically determined.

Already by 1680, Cellarius was openly grappling with how, and indeed whether, philology could periodize its own subject matter. In these final pages we must turn, together with Cellarius, from philology to history—from *verba* to the underlying *res* they signified. *Res gestae* increasingly occupied Cellarius’ attention in the decades following his lexicographical publications. Not unlike Edward Gibbon a century later, he first composed a circumscribed *Historia antiqua*, originally based on lectures and subsequently published in 1685. In 1688 he followed this with a *Historia medii aevi a temporibus Constantini Magni ad Constantinopolim a Turcis captam* or *History of the Middle Age from the Time of Constantine the Great to the Capture of Constantinople by the Turks*—thereby using a variant on *media aetas*, which (as we saw) he had first employed in the extended title of his 1682 edition of the *Antibarbarus*. Finally, in 1696 he wrote up a modern history that covered the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and in 1702 he published all three together with a new prologue as his *Historia universalis in quae iam cecidere, cadentque, Quae iam in honore sunt vocabula: si volet usus, Quem penes arbitrium est, et ius et norma loquendi. Horat. de art. Poet.” Cf. Horace, *Ars poetica*, 70–2, trans. H Rushton Fairclough (Cambridge, MA, 1936), 456-7.
antiquam, et medii aevi, ac nova tempora divisa. In his Renaissance in Historical Thought, Wallace Ferguson characterized Cellarius as an “indefatigable writer of textbooks,” who embraced “the pedagogical value of a simple, precise method of organization.” Precision and ease of arrangement were indeed hallmarks of Cellarius’ work, and helped guarantee the outsized popularity of the Historia universalis throughout the following century. As we have seen, Cellarius’ taste for neat, simple schematizing came in no small measure from his zeal for philological and lexicographical classification. In Herbert Butterfield’s estimation, when Cellarius proposed his tripartite periodization he “acted confessedly under the influence of his preoccupations as a philologist.” Once more, philologia informed historia: if one could chart the metamorphoses of language in incremental or stagist manner, one could easily do so for the vicissitudes of history as well.

In his Prooemium generale to the Historia universalis, Cellarius extolled the practical benefits of periodization. As he explained, “this universal history is divided into three parts, so that its entire content may be more ordered and distinct (ordinatior distinctiorque), lest it trouble or confuse the reader by constant multiplication of subject matters (multitudine continua).” Moreover, the very title of the Historia universalis proclaimed that its accompanying contents were breviter ac perspicue exposita or “briefly and clearly set forth.” Periodization constituted the most useful form of abbreviation; whether or not its divisions perfectly expressed some underlying historical reality, it facilitated the easy digestion of historia by students and other

637 For this chronology of the various components of Cellarius’ universal history, see Kamp, Vom Paläolithikum zur Postmoderne, 90.
638 See Ferguson, Renaissance, 75.
639 Butterfield, Man on His Past, 45-6. See also Spangenberg, “Die Perioden,” 11.
640 Christopher Cellarius, Historia universalis breviter ac perspicue exposita, in antiquam, et medii aevi, ac nova tempora divisa (Jena, 1730[first published 1696]), 10-11: “Vt vero res omnis ordinatior distinctiorque sit, nec multitudine continua lectorem turbet aut impediat; in tres partes uniuersa haec Historia est distributa...”
readers who did not always have time for the complexities wrought by temporal disjunction, or
the pesky heterogeneity of a given *tempus*. In short, dividing time made it easier to communicate
the past “briefly” or *breviter*, and this was *ipso facto* desirable in a compendium of general
history. Moreover, *historia* required narrative: for without *ordo* of some sort, it would consist
only of a troubling and confusing *continua multitudo* of disjointed *res gestae*.

In his accompanying *Ad lectorem*, Cellarius described in greater detail just how his
history, like Caesar’s Gaul, was divisible into three parts, and would hence save his lucky *lector*
from confusion. Although antiquity and modernity were long established categories, a
comparative neologism like *medium aevum* required a little glossing. Thus Cellarius explained
his understanding of the term, and his decision to incorporate it into his tripartite scheme, as
follows:

The learned adopt an idiom (*doctorum loquendi consuetudo*) when they call those things that occurred in
the barbarous ages (*barbara saecula*), or were not all that far from them, matters of the MIDDLE AGE.
Therefore we will seem to have composed this history in a rather appropriate fashion if we extend ancient
history to Constantine the Great, the history of the middle age (*medii aevi historiam*) to the storming of
Constantinople, and then modern (*novam*) history to our times, so that the first phase might embrace all of
paganism, the second might contain the times of the Constantinopolitan empire of the Christians, and the
third might examine the new appearance of the reigning world and the reformation of states.\(^{641}\)

\(^{641}\) Cellarius, “Ad Lectorem,” sig. 6r-v: “Accedit doctorum loquendi consuetudo, qui illa MEDII
AEVI vocant, quae in barbara saecula inciderunt, aut ab illis abfuerunt propius. Accommodatus
ergo facturi videmur, si antiquam ad Constantinum Magnum: medii aevi historiam, ad
Constantinopolis expugnationem: nouam denique, ad nostra tempora deducemus, ut ista
complexatur uniuersam gentilitatem: illa temporibus imperii Christianorum Constantinopolitanorum
contineatur: haec nouam regnantis orbis faciem rerumque publicarum reformationem recenseat.”
As this passage suggests, Cellarius proceeded with surprising circumspection when defining the *medium aevum* and its place in the tripartite scheme. First and foremost, he ascribed the very term to others, noting that by periodizing thus he was merely following an accepted consensus—nothing less than the *doctorum loquendi consuetudo*. Though he did not identify any members of this learned cohort, it is tempting to consider whether this constituted an oblique reference to Du Cange, given that Cellarius’ first invocation of this “middle,” in his 1682 reissue of the *Antibarbarus*, explicitly replicated the French lexicographer’s *media et infima aetas*. Such a train of transmission and appropriation would confirm the profoundly philological origins of Cellarius’ periodization.

Second, when still speaking through those “learned men,” he introduced a small temporal wrinkle—conveyed as a bit of verbal throat-clearing—into what he took to be their definition of the *medium aevum*. Even as he explicitly linked the *medium aevum* to the “barbarous ages” or *barbara saecula*, whose own contradictions he had already pondered in his philological analyses of “barbarous” Latinity, he nonetheless made clear that the two constructs were not absolutely coeval or synonymous. The *medium aevum* did not just refer to the *barbara saecula*, even if

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642 Cellarius was deeply interested in that transitional age he seemed to posit between the start of the post-Constantinian *medium aevum* and the onset of those *barbara saecula* (although he does not date it precisely, perhaps he imagined this latter epoch beginning around 410, 476, or sometime shortly thereafter). The fullest expression of this interest is found in Cellarius’ edition and commentary on the *Historia Romana* of Eutropius, who wrote in the late fourth century. In his preface, he discussed Eutropius within the context of periodizing: not only did he acknowledge that Eutropius was not the “most ancient writer” (“Eutropium commendo, non antiquissimum quidem scriptorem...”), but also, when recommending the *Historia Romana* as a school text, he bemoaned how many students read only “comedies, fables, and some badly understood letters of Cicero”—a point that accords with his critique of Ciceronianism in his *Antibarbarus* and *Curae posteriores*. See Eutropius, *Historia Romana*, ed. Christopher Cellarius (Zeitz, 1678). Eutropius also proved an important source for Cellarius’s *Historia universalis*, appearing frequently in his footnotes alongside references to the Eusebian *Chronicon*, Ammianus Marcellinus, Sextus Aurelius Victor, Paul the Deacon, Sigebert of Gembloux and many other late antique and medieval sources.
the two possessed considerable overlap; instead, the former also encompassed those times “not all that far” (*abfuerunt propius*) from such barbarism. As we saw, Cellarius had already dwelled at great length upon both the scope and limits of barbarism as an explanatory category. While he did not say so explicitly, he seemed to imply that the age of Constantine, his official start to the *medium aevum*, did not yet constitute a *barbarum saeculum*—and in this he agreed with many of his humanist predecessors. Hence, in acknowledging that the *medium aevum* and the *barbara saecula* did not exactly cohere, and that the Middle Ages were hence not wholly barbarous, Cellarius once again demonstrated the provisionality of periodization. Sometimes one had to cut slight corners when rendering history *ordinatio* and *distinction*. Granted, we must never read too much into potentially insignificant turns of phrase, even those penned by a lexicographer. Yet the equivocation that pervaded Cellarius’ very diction is striking. By employing the passive *videmur*, he suggested that his periodized history might “seem” *accommodatus* or “more fitting.”

Cellarius was perfectly aware of the fact that he was constructing a narrative: he did not comment on the merits or reality of the tripartite scheme in any absolute sense; rather, like a rhetorician adopting a given style to accord with the circumstances of his subject and his audience, he only wished to make his temporal scheme seem fitting, suitable, and apposite to those who digested it. In other words, periodization was an exercise in “accommodation” in the most literal sense of the word.

But Cellarius did not consider his periodization wholly relative or arbitrary—far from it. Even as he brushed over some gritty details, he used his “more fitting” narrative to communicate a very real historical transition—i.e. those transformations of religion that had posed such seemingly irreconcilable problems of temporal disjunction. Like Vossius, who also hesitated to link the medieval and the barbarous, Cellarius had no such qualms equating the *medium aevum*...
with res ecclesiasticae. Moreover, the entirety of his tripartite scheme communicated an ecclesiastical narrative. Antiquitas equaled pagan empire, the medium aevum its Christian successor, and modernity the reform of the latter, in both religious and political terms.\(^{643}\) Hence, it was the beginning of the tempora Christianorum, and not the start of the barbar a saecula, that actually inaugurated history’s middle phase. These divisions militate against readings of Cellarius that have sometimes too hastily cast him as a proto-Enlightenment figure. According to Wallace Ferguson, writing shortly after the Second World War, Cellarius fit snugly into a secularization narrative—whose beginnings in the realm of periodization his contemporary Theodore Mommsen had traced all the way to Petrarch. In Ferguson’s estimation, it was Cellarius and his tripartite schema of ancient/middle/ modern that finally broke the old stranglehold of universal history upon German Protestant curricula—a form of historical teaching that, so he recounted, had held sway since Melanchthon and others had championed the Four Monarchies.\(^{644}\) However, not only did Cellarius periodize around religious categories, but he also made clear that no truly universal historia universalis could cleave the sacred from the secular. To put it in Vossian terms, he knew that res ecclesiasticae were inextricably interlinked with gesta nationum. As he argued elsewhere in his Prooemium generale: “we do not wish that matters of the church be severed from civil affairs, because neither history can be perfectly understood without the other; rather, sacred history aids and explains civil history, just as civil history aids and explains its sacred counterpart.”\(^{645}\)

\(^{643}\) Here see Kamp, Vom Paläolithikum zur Postmoderne, 96-100 and Demandt, Der Fall Roms, 216.

\(^{644}\) See Ferguson, Renaissance, 75-7.

\(^{645}\) Cellarius, “Prooemium generale,” 9: “Ecclesiae quoque res nolimus seiunctas a ciuilibus esse, quia neutra historia sine altera perfecte cognosci potest, sed sacra ciuilem, ciuilis sacram iuuat et explanat...” In the spirit of this connection between ecclesiastical and political history, in the same year Cellarius released the medieval installment of the Historia universalis, he also
Hewing to this ecclesiastical narrative sometimes made the work of periodization more difficult. But several pages after asserting this symbiosis between the civil and ecclesiastical, Cellarius issued another qualification—this time concerning not the beginning, but rather the end of the *medium aevum*. Speaking of this second component in his tripartite scheme, he explained how “the second period encompasses twelve centuries, setting forth the varying fates of the East and the West for as long as the city of Constantine was under the authority of the Christians, and a little further.” This otherwise conventional definition included a puzzling qualifier: namely, *et paullo ultra* or “and a little further.” Just as Cellarius had equivocated when fixing the transition from *anticuitas* to the *medium aevum*, so he likewise hedged when marking the passing of the *medium aevum* into modernity. As his subsequent discussion of modern history or *historia nova* would suggest, this nebulous “further” space most likely comprised the intervening decades between the fall of Constantinople in 1453 and the onset of the Reformation in 1517.

While cleaving time around the rise and fall of a single city offered an irresistible narrative climax, and a good dose of pathos besides, the Lutheran Cellarius could not ignore the origin story of his own confessional commitments, and their ostensible importance to the birth pangs of European modernity. Hence his *medium aevum* both did and did not end in that epochal year of

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647 On Cellarius and the Reformation, and his use of *et paullo ultra*, see Kamp, *Vom Paläolithikum zur Postmoderne*, 97.
1453—that very date that Conrad Gesner had once used to periodize the history of bibliography and textual transmission.

As we have seen throughout this study, humanist attempts at dividing time had always provoked ambivalence. But whereas Cellarius’ predecessors had expressed this ambivalence through the hedging imprecision of their nomenclature, captured in their conjuring of the *semidocti*, the *semibarbari*, the *semiveteres* and the like, Cellarius manifested his uncertainty through his demarcation of time itself. He had finally crossed the periodizing Rubicon, sort to speak, and had defined antiquity, the Middle Ages, and modernity as three fixed and separate ages. Having done so, he could no longer quarrel with the conceptual viability of the periods he canonized. Rather, he could only equivocate when fixing the specifics of their chronology.

After Cellarius had defined the second phase of his history, he turned at last to the third. As he acknowledged, his three *tempora* were by no means chronologically equal: “in the third part, the last two centuries are explicated more copiously than is standard in this genre, because these latest times are more fruitful (fecundiora) than prior eras, and they supply more memorable things (plures memorabiles res) to write about.” In language reminiscent of that agricultural metaphor he first deployed in his *Curiae posteriores*, Cellarius made his *tempora nova* into *tempora fecundiora*: as he had explained more than a decade before when speaking of language and literature, cultural fecundity had to be measured by ages and times. Moreover, these *tempora fecundiora* and *plures memorabiles res* were as pragmatic as they were memorable: “knowledge of these things is especially necessary to make use of the political prudence that now prevails, and for ecclesiastical matters, on account of the reformation of sacred things.”\(^648\) Hence,

\(^648\) Cellarius, “Prooemium generale,” 11-12: “Tertia parte duo postrema saecula copiosius, quam pro forma instituti, explicantur, quia suprema haec tempora fecundiora sunt prioribus, et plures memorabiles res ad conscribendum suppeditant, quarum cognitio ad usum politicae prudentiae,
Cellarius justified his quantitative emphasis on modernity via two key attributes of the *tempora nova*: first, they furnished practical political insights into what he elsewhere described as the *rerum publicarum reformatio*, and second, they explained that equally momentous, and intimately related, *sacrorum reformatio*. In other words, Cellarius justified the reading of modern history in a fashion that echoed Vossius’ justification for reading its medieval counterpart: it revealed the climax to that millennium-long story of *gesta nationum* and *res ecclesiasticae* that had begun with the demise of Roman antiquity. From this perspective, Cellarius’ periodization did not simply tell a tale of postclassical degeneration, as had many of its philological predecessors; rather, it offered an origin narrative for a very particular vision of “modern” Europe, and the new political and religious order that defined it.

As we shall see in our conclusion to this study, Cellarius’ emergent apology for modernity was expanded in far more explicit fashion throughout the following century—in many cases by readers of Cellarius himself. Yet Cellarius’ own scholarly trajectory—from studying barbarous Latinity to explicating the *tempora fecundiora* of European modernity—was also inflected by one of the oldest and most pressing quandaries of humanist scholarship as it had been practiced in the last two centuries of his “more fruitful times.” If one constant defined Cellarius’ otherwise diverse oeuvre, it was opposition to rather narrow and facile classicism—an opposition made apparent in his repeated critiques of those who only valorized Cicero and his Golden Age contemporaries, and deemed their standards applicable to the past writ large. The antidote to this parochialism, so Cellarius the pedagogue imagined, was to immerse a new generation of students in the study of all *tempora*, no matter their fecundity. But, practically speaking, doing so required a history that was “briefly and clearly set forth,” with component

*quae nunc obtinet; etiam ecclesiasticae propter sacrorum reformationem, in primis est necessaria.”*
parts “more ordered and distinct.” And that in turn necessitated periodization, whose narrative of decline and revival bolstered many of the assumptions behind humanist ideologies of classicism. Despite its proffered university, this tidy narrative inevitably ended up privileging tempora that were supposedly fecundiora. By making use of the new methods of historia literaria, Cellarius explicitly promised to chart the crests and troughs of learning in this periodized fashion. “Nor is the history of literature and learning untouched in these books,” he explained, “especially that which explains the diminution of letters, their oppression—which lasted long enough—and finally, by the rise of a happier age (laetioris saeculi exortu), their restoration and propagation.”\(^649\) Hence, the tempora fecundiora of modernity were also laetiora saecula, marked by a trifecta of reform and renovation in religion, politics, and learning.

\(^649\) Cellarius, “Prooemium generale,” 12: “Nec litterarum et studiorum historia in his libris est intacta, praeertim illa, quae deminutionem litterariae rei, oppressionemque satis diuturnam; et tandem, laetioris saeculi exortu, restitutionem illius et propagationem exponit.”
CONCLUSION

Periodization and Enlightenment:

Narrating the Origins of Modernity

Cellarius’ *Historia universalis* enjoyed immense popularity in the century after it was written, not only due to the abbreviated and accessible nature of its narrative, but also thanks to its straightforward method of dividing time. And while Cellarius offered relatively little in the way of interpretation of his chosen periodization, save for the aforementioned observations in his preface, he provided a skeletal structure for his readers to do precisely that—to meditate on just what it meant to divide the past into antiquity, the Middle Ages, and modernity. In many respects, Cellarius’ bare-bones universal history proved a fitting successor to Florus’ sparse epitome of Roman history. Just as seventeenth-century readers of Florus used his text as a means of constructing, via commentary, a far more capacious reading of Rome’s *aetates* of youth, maturity, senility, and the like, so eighteenth-century readers found Cellarius an ideal template for dissecting the complexities of the new tripartite periodization.

One particularly rich example of this process is found in an interleaved copy of a 1718 printing of Cellarius’ *Historia medii aevi*, filled with copious notes by an unknown annotator and now in the British Library. In the spirit of the author himself, this annotator’s very first remark—offered on the accompanying interleaved page—engaged in a further temporal division *within* what was now definitively the *medium aevum*, as he remarked that “first of all one must note what occurred before the time of Charlemagne, and what occurred after the time of
Charlemagne."\textsuperscript{650} This annotator also emphasized another key turning point within Cellarius’ Middle Age (perhaps that very moment when the \textit{medium aevum} also became \textit{a barbarum saeculum})—namely, the demise of the Western Roman Empire in 476, when the German Odoacer deposed that unfortunately named last Western emperor, Romulus Augustulus. Aware of the rather tragic ironies in such a name, the annotator summed up the entirety of Roman political history with a pithy mnemonic formulation, writing “Rome began under Romulus, the monarchy began under Augustus, and under Romulus Augustulus all the authority and dignity of the Senate was assumed by Odoacer.”\textsuperscript{651} Intriguingly, in the lead-up to this lamentable moment, the annotator also made use of a formulation that, as we saw in Chapter Four, proved so common in characterizations of the changing nature of the postclassical world—namely, \textit{iam eo tempore} or “already at that time.” For instance, when Cellarius mentioned the fourth-century Licinius II, who was named Caesar while his father Licinius I served as Augustus, the annotator remarked in the margin that “already at that time (\textit{iam tempore}) it was the custom to bestow the empire upon boys,” while underlining \textit{ad pueros} to emphasis the questionable nature of this practice still further.\textsuperscript{652}

However, it was the subtler dimension of religious and ecclesiastical change that most intrigued this annotator—a subject not always afforded detailed treatment in Cellarius’ laconic iterations of the reigns of kings, popes, and emperors. He showed himself especially concerned

\textsuperscript{650} Christopher Cellarius, \textit{Historia medii aevi a temporibus Constantini Magni ad Constantinopolim a Turcis captam deducta} (Jena, 1718), now London British Library 580.a.19, 1: The annotator’s very first interlinear note reads “Primum notandum est quae contigit ante tempore Caroli M. et quae, post tempore <sic> Caroli Magni.”

\textsuperscript{651} Cellarius, \textit{Historia medii aevi}, 51: Here the annotator adds the following gloss on Romulus Augustulus: “In Romulo cepit Roma in Augusto Monarchia / in Romulo Augu / Senatui omnis auctoritas et dignitas ab Odoacro est adem<\textsuperscript{p}>ta...”

\textsuperscript{652} Cellarius, \textit{Historia medii aevi}, 8: Annotator writes “Iam tempore illo mos erat \textit{ad pueros} imperium deferre.”
with that crucial aspect of temporal disjunction explored in Chapter Two, as he sought to establish just who was Christian and who remained pagan in the supposed *tempora Christiana* that followed Constantine’s conversion. Unlike some of his sixteenth-century counterparts, he did not incorporate any late pagans into an imagined Christian fold. However, he sometimes proved a bit too hasty in the opposite direction, as he was quick to identify paganism in figures who did not necessarily profess it. For instance, when Cellarius mentioned Ammianus Marcellinus, the annotator agreed with what had largely become conventional wisdom since Valesius’ edition of the *Res gestae*—namely, that “Ammianus was a pagan writer.” But when it came to Cellarius’ mention of Boethius, the annotator offered a far more curious assessment, jotting down: “Boethius left behind books on *The Consolation of Philosophy*, partly in prose and partially in verse. He wrote them in prison, but it is doubted whether he was Christian.”

In one of his more extensive notes, this annotator explicitly linked the evolution of religious practice to broader patterns of temporal change, including novelties derived from seemingly secular domains. Next to Cellarius’ discussion of the sixth century, the annotator appropriately singled out six phenomena that—in his words—“were born in this age,” and which he enumerated in a conveniently numbered list. These included signs of decadence and degeneration often invoked in traditional Protestant narratives, as the annotator took note of such things as “consecrations of churches,” “superstitions concerning the remains of the saints,” the appearance of “multicolored vestments,” and “the beginning of the Mass, according to the opinion of some.” These were also paired with such developments as the rise of dueling and

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654 Cellarius, *Historia medii aevi*, 72: Having underlined Cellarius’ brief references to Boethius, Cassiodorus, Gregory of Tours, Priscian, and others, the annotator then adds the following observation on Boethius: “Boethius reliquit libros de consolatione Philosophiae partim in prosa partim in versibus, scrispit in custodia sed dubitatur an christianus fuerit.”
“trial by fire.”

Taken together, these sparse “bullet points” represented a hasty attempt at capturing the tenor of a changing age, in a realm of culture far beyond such traditional markers of temporal delineation like the reigns of popes and emperors. In doing so, they demonstrate how Cellarius’ formal periodization of time into ancient, medieval, and modern components could prompt readers to devise their own visions of cultural history in miniature, entered into the margins of the *Historia universalis*.

Again like Florus, Cellarius also became an important fixture in the eighteenth-century curriculum. In 1719 the Huguenot scholar Michel Rossal offered a series of lectures upon the medieval section of Cellarius’ *Historia universalis* at the University of Groningen. Rossal had begun studying at Groningen in 1688, just a few years after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and he was named a professor at the same institution in 1706. As charted most recently by Esther Mijers, Rossal—like his more well-known contemporary Jacob Perizonius, who offered a similar series of lectures on universal history at Leiden—played an important role in the education of Scottish students who would later return to their home country and reshape the history curricula of Glasgow and Edinburgh. Hence, figures like Rossal offer an intriguing link between the late humanist world of Cellarius and his ilk and the Enlightenment world of Scottish stadial theory and philosophical history, defined by far more famous names like Adam Ferguson and William Robertson.

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More specifically, Rossal’s lectures—a dictation of which is today preserved at the Royal Danish Library in Copenhagen—demonstrate how readings of Cellarius’ tripartite periodization could buttress both the old edifice of universal sacred history and new Enlightened narratives of modernity’s origins. For Rossal began his lectures on Cellarius by zooming out still further, and remarking—in a manner akin to G.J. Vossius’ lectures on universal history—that “all time from the creation of the world is divided into eight periods.” Explicitly invoking such *periodi*, Rossal used the parlance of his times. But the turning points he then enumerated confirmed that the old *historia universalis* remained alive and well in the post-Cellarian world of “modern” historical periodization. Beginning at Creation, he then proceeded to the Flood, the Abrahamic Covenant, the Exodus from Egypt, the erection of the Temple of Salomon, the Babylonian Captivity, the advent of the Maccabees, and finally the birth of Christ. Christ inaugurated the eighth and final period, which extended all the way to “our age” (*aetatem nostram*). While this reiteration of the broad sweep of biblical history was but a prologue to hundreds of pages of in-depth engagement with the Cellarian *medium aevum*, it is nonetheless telling that Rossal began in such fashion. Still more intriguingly, Cellarius’ *antiquitas, medium aevum,* and *tempora nova* were presumably but subdivisions of this eighth and last period that stretched from the Incarnation to the present. As useful as they were, they did not merit explicit inclusion in this still broader scheme of seemingly far more consequential turning points. Hence, Rossal affirms that one could read the new periodizing as but one small component of a far larger method of dividing time according to the old parameters of sacred history. Tripartite periodization did not so much

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*Copenhagen, Kongelige Bibliotek MS NKS 421, 2: “Omne tempus a mundo condito dividitur in 8 periodos: 1a a mund. cond. ad diluvium, qui continet annos 1656. 2a a diluvio ad vocationem Abrahami ex Ur Chaldaeorum, ubi vid. p. [blank]. 3a a vocatione ad exitum Israelitarum ex Aegypto. 4a ab exitu ad templum Salomonis. 5a a templo ad transportationem Babylon. 6a a transportatione ad regnum Macabaeorum et Assamoneorum 7a a regno ad Christi natum. 8a a Christo ad aetatem nostram.”*
supplant \textit{historia universalis} as further articulate and elucidate its most recent, and still ongoing, phase.

Yet if the first item of Rossal’s lecture confirmed his traditionalism, its very last item signaled innovation. Unlike Cellarius himself, Rossal did not dwell at great length upon the capture of Constantinople in 1453, electing instead to gloss over Cellarius’ chosen turning point in his own glossing. Instead, Rossal ended his lectures with a paean to one of the key elements in the story of the emergence of European modernity. For his very last note concerned nothing less than the invention of the “typographic art” or \textit{ars typographica}. In a reflection of the new global parameters of \textit{historia universalis}, already adumbrated in the \textit{Arca Noe} of Georg Horn, he began this discussion with some observations on forms of printing practices in China. Yet in a highly significant formulation, which anticipated those Enlightenment narratives that would soon emerge from the pens of historians in locations as diverse as Edinburgh, Paris, and Naples, he declared with terse confidence that “the typographic art is an invention of our Europe (\textit{nostrae Europae}); this is clear enough.”\footnote{Copenhagen, Kongelige Bibliotek MS NKS 421, 487: “Ars typographica est inventum nostrae Europae; hoc est satis constat.”} Hence, it was the invention of print that marked the advent of the \textit{tempora fecundiora} of \textit{nostra Europa}—programmatically articulated here in a narrative that still saw fit to catalogue everything from the Flood and the Exodus to the Babylonian Captivity with obsessive exactitude.

Indeed, over the course of the eighteenth century, Cellarius’ universal history found its way into what might seem some unlikely hands. While it should hardly surprise us that Edward Gibbon owned several installments of Cellarius’ historical and geographical works, rather more surprising is the ownership inscription found in a copy of the 1702 printing of Cellarius’ \textit{Historia universalis}, now in Princeton University’s Firestone Library. This copy bears the autograph of
none other than James Boswell, who recorded that it was a gift from his friend Samuel Johnson, given to him in the year 1775.\textsuperscript{659} Hence, but a year before Gibbon released the first volumes of his \textit{Decline and Fall} (and a series of tumultuous events erupted across the Atlantic), some of the most prominent of English literati saw fit to exchange a Latin historical compendium produced by a German polymath nearly a century before.

But six years before Johnson presented Boswell with Cellarius, William Robertson released a work that might have seemed a more appropriate gift from the author of the \textit{Dictionary} to his future biographer. Robertson’s \textit{History of the Reign of Charles V} typified what John Pocock and others have referred to as the Enlightened narrative, insofar as narrated the origins of European modernity and its happy escape from the purported darkness of the Middle Ages. Robertson prefaced his \textit{History} with a sketch he titled \textit{The Progress of Society in Europe: A Historical Outline from the Subversion of the Roman Empire to the Beginning of the Sixteenth Century}. This exercise in philosophical history attempted to capture the spirit of the times—something which Adam Ferguson had faulted medieval historians for altogether failing to do—and in doing so it condemned the \textit{medium aevum} in resolutely harsh language. With a good dose of hyperbole, Robertson declared that in those centuries following the fall of Rome “the human mind, neglected, uncultivated, and depressed, sunk into the most profound ignorance. Europe did not produce, during four centuries, one author who merits to be read, either on account of the elegance of his composition, or the justness and novelty of his sentiments.”\textsuperscript{660} Unlike some of his

\begin{footnotes}
\item See \textit{The Library of Edward Gibbon,} 91. Christopher Cellarius, \textit{Historia universalis in antiquam, et medii aevi, ac nova tempora divisa} (Jena, 1702), now Princeton University Library Taylor 18\textsuperscript{th}-43. It bears the autograph of James Boswell, and the inscription “Donum Samuelis Johnson, 1775.”
\item William Robertson, \textit{The Progress of Society in Europe: A Historical Outline from the Subversion of the Roman Empire to the Beginning of the Sixteenth Century}, ed. Felix Gilbert (Chicago, 1972), 20.
\end{footnotes}
late humanist predecessors, Robertson condemned both the verba and the underlying res of medieval scriptores.

Yet in explaining his decision to adopt what was essentially the tripartite scheme of historical periodization, he offered a defense that both affirmed a triumphalist tale of European modernity and acknowledged the necessary artificiality of its temporal scaffolding. Indeed, he adopted something akin to the Cellarian notion of the “continuous multitude” of res gestae, while explicitly linking it to modernity’s cultural achievements—including that typographic art so lauded by Rossal. Explaining why he had chosen to begin the story of modernity proper with Charles V, he explained in rather striking terms why one had to draw such a line in the temporal sand:

The universal progress of science during the last two centuries, the art of printing, and other obvious causes, have filled Europe with such a multiplicity of histories, and with such vast collections of historical materials, that the term of human life is too short for the study or even the perusal of them...Some boundary, then, ought to be fixed in order to separate these periods [i.e. between the Middle Ages and modernity]. An aera should be pointed out, prior to which, each country, little connected with those around it, may trace its own history apart; after which, the transactions of every considerable nation in Europe become interesting and instructive to all.661

Hence, as Robertson made clear, modernity began when nostra Europa could truly call itself nostra Europa in the full sense of the term, as opposed to signifying an otherwise disparate collection of polities and histories that just so happened to share a continent. But synchronic synthesis necessitated diachronic divergence, and so the “progress of society” that so marked the

661 Robertson, The Progress of Society in Europe, 3-4.
Europe of the last two centuries had to be severed from its antecedents—even if such severance took a necessarily artificial or provisional form, just as Cellarius had acknowledged it had to nearly a century before.

A Modern Paradox: Tradition, Universalism, and Periodization as Via Media

How might we sum up the fortunes of that millennia-old endeavor that Cellarius—one of the last of the late humanists—bequeathed to his Enlightenment successors? As Cellarius and others realized, a project as broad as universal history—which embraced not only the ecclesiastical and the secular but also the decline and rebirth of letters—first and foremost required a species of ordo. Even if this ordo ended up accomplishing something very new, it was built upon structural principles that were very old. At the end of the day, historia universalis—born in the late antiquity of Eusebius and Jerome, continued and consolidated in the scriptoria of the Middle Ages, and given new force in the gymnasia of Melanchthon’s Germany and the lecture halls of Vossius’ Amsterdam—proved the only form of textual technology labile and capacious enough to express the new periodization, and hence the new origin narrative of modernity soon canonized by Enlightenment historiography.662 Similarly, the clearest way to articulate the breaks, gulfs, and disjunctions in this universal narrative was through the language of ancient metaphor, from the transmutation of metals to Florus’ life cycle. It is one of the principal paradoxes of modern historical periodization that it emerged from such deeply traditional practices, terms, and assumptions.

Yet this was not the only contradiction—and so this study closes with one more paradox, itself not so much a conclusion as an invitation to further reflection and research. Earlier we invoked the “crisis” that ostensibly enveloped both the practice of history and its epistemic foundations at the very moment when tripartite periodization emerged triumphant. As we have seen, periodization formed an easily traversable *via media* not only between tradition and innovation, but also between those forms of antiquity and modernity that so often staged quarrels and battles during these years of transition. But it would be far too simplistic to declare that the new tripartite scheme of ancient/medieval/modern rose, Phoenix-like, from the ashes of universal sacred history, and thence call it a day. For as hinted at above, periodization also constituted another sort of *via media*—itself one of the strangest features of that origin narrative of modernity that took shape in the decades around 1700. Periodization worked a bit like the rules of criticism that Mabillon had outlined in his *De re diplomatica*. As Mabillon showed, one could spot a forgery only through acts of contextualization that depended upon an amalgamation of genuine texts and documents derived from a specific historical milieu, even though contextualization itself furnished no independent, failsafe means of verifying the genuineness of the items that made up this amalgamation. In similar fashion, periodization proffered a means of linking history’s constituent *tempora* to one another in a fashion “more ordered and distinct,” thereby fulfilling the salutary goal of making *historia* accessible and intelligible, even though it offered no foolproof means of defining such *tempora* without recourse to periodized tropes and comparisons. As Cellarius and others recognized, it was perhaps impossible to square this hermeneutic circle.

In realms beyond historical scholarship, parallel solutions to such seemingly insoluble problems have in more recent decades been linked to discourses of Enlightenment. As Keith
Baker argued in a perceptive essay, the Enlightenment invention of “the social”—that capacious term, in the words of Diderot and D’Alembert’s *Encyclopédie*, “newly introduced into the language”—constituted not a bold emancipation from the shackles of tradition, but rather an act of resigned modesty in the face of assorted crises both theological and epistemic. In this spirit, Baker elsewhere playfully proposed a new motto for Enlightenment—suggesting that we ought to replace the Kantian dictum *aude sapere* with the equally pithy *aude non sapere*. It was not radical to turn from the abstract and the abstruse to the *hinc et nunc* of what came to be known as society; instead, it constituted an admission that there were certain things one did not dare to know, insofar as they could not be known in any practical, actionable sense. In Baker’s words, the eighteenth-century embrace of society constituted “the invention of a human middle-ground between certainty and doubt, religion and relativism, grace and despair, absolute power and anarchy”—all binaries that had wrought such seeming havoc in the preceding century.

Periodization partook of this same underlying logic; it too was an exercise in daring not to know. Dividing time required embracing the *ad hoc* provisionality that seemed necessary to make historical reality, in all its messiness, intelligible. As many late humanist scholars realized, discourses of barbarism, of decline and fall, of Golden Ages and the like, were full of exceptions and disjunctions that made their underlying categories seem often tenuous. Nevertheless, they could not be discarded if one wanted to chart the emergence of the *tempora fecundiora* of modernity, and determine what in *antiquitas* and the *medium aevum* this more fecund present

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had inherited and discarded. And so it is perhaps the richest of ironies that the temporal
classicizing of modernity’s origin narrative, so embraced by William Robertson and his fellow
pursuers of philosophical history, was constructed from an impulse that was anything but
Whiggish—even if its befuddling fusion of tradition and resignation gave force to a triumphalist
tale of “how we got here” now so often critiqued as the most Whiggish of all teleologies.
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