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# THE *HISTORY* OF ZONARAS

FROM ALEXANDER SEVERUS TO THE  
DEATH OF THEODOSIUS THE GREAT

TRANSLATION BY THOMAS M. BANCHICH AND EUGENE N. LANE  
INTRODUCTION AND COMMENTARY BY THOMAS M. BANCHICH



## THE *HISTORY* OF ZONARAS

While an exile from Constantinople, the twelfth-century Byzantine functionary and canonist John Zonaras culled earlier chronicles and histories to compose an account of events from creation to the reign of Alexius Comnenus. For topics where his sources are lost or appear elsewhere in more truncated form, his testimony and the identification of the texts on which he depends are of critical importance.

For his account of the first two centuries of the Principate, Zonaras employed now-lost portions of Cassius Dio. From the point where Dio's *History* ended, to the reign of Theodosius the Great (d. 395), he turned to other sources to produce a uniquely full historical narrative of the critical years 235–395, making Books XII.15–XIII.19 of the *Epitome* central to the study of both late Roman history and late Roman and Byzantine historiography.

This key section of the *Epitome*, together with Zonaras' *Prologue*, here appears in English for the first time, both complemented by a historical and historiographical commentary. A special feature of the latter is a first-ever English translation of a broad range of sources that illuminate Zonaras' account and the historiographical traditions it reflects. Among the authors whose newly translated works occupy a prominent place in the commentary are George Cedrenus, George the Monk, John of Antioch, Peter the Patrician, Symeon Magister, and Theodore Scutariotes. Specialized indices facilitate the use of the translations and commentary alike.

The result is an invaluable guide and stimulus to further research for scholars and students of the history and historiography of Rome and Byzantium.

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[597] Auriolus, being from a Getic territory later named Dacia and of undistinguished lineage—for he previously was a mere shepherd—, but with fortune resolved to lift him to greatness, became a soldier and, when he had become very adept, was chosen as attendant of the imperial horses. Doing an excellent job with them, he seemed pleasing to the ruler. When the soldiers in Moesia had rebelled and had proclaimed Ingenuus emperor, and when Galienus had taken the field against him near Sirmium with the other soldiers and was leading the Moors, who are said to be descended from Medes, Auriolus, commanding the cavalry, after he had battled nobly with his horsemen, annihilated many of Ingenuus' adherents and turned the remainder to flight, with the result that Ingenuus himself fled in desperation and, as he fled, was killed by his own guardsmen.<sup>73</sup>

Then Postumus next revolted against Galienus. For the emperor, having a son by the same name, both clever and handsome, whom he held as successor of the realm, left him behind in the city of Agrippina to aid the Gauls, who were being raided by Scythians. On account of his son's youth, he also set over him a certain person called Albanus. Postumus, who had been left to guard the Rhine River so as to impede the crossing into Roman territory for the barbarians dwelling beyond, attacked some, who, after they had crossed unnoticed, were taking much plunder as they were returning, and he killed many [598], recovered all the plunder, and immediately apportioned it to his soldiers.

Albanus, when he had learned this, sent messengers and demanded that the plunder be brought to him and to the young Galienus. Postumus called his soldiers together and exacted from them their shares of the plunder, scheming to incite them to rebellion. And that is exactly what happened. With them he attacked the city of Agrippina, and the inhabitants of the city surrendered to him both the son of the sovereign and Albanus, and he executed them both.<sup>74</sup>

Galienus, when he had learned of these things, proceeded against Postumus, and, when he had engaged him, was initially beaten and then prevailed, with the result that Postumus fled. Then Auriolus was sent to chase him down. Though able to capture him, he was unwilling to pursue him for long, but, coming back, he said that he was unable to capture him. Thus Postumus, having escaped, next organized an army. Galienus again marched upon him and, after he had penned him in a certain city of Gaul, besieged the usurper. In the siege, the sovereign was struck in the back by an arrow and, having become ill as a result, broke off the siege.<sup>75</sup>