Robert SUSKI ✉ * (University of Bialystok, Poland)

The *Annales* of Eutychius and the fate of Valerian

Abstract: *In the chronicle of Eutychius of Alexandria, we find a recast version of the death of Emperor Valerian. Eutychius did not understand the reality of the third century very well. His testimony is interesting, showing that the fate of the unfortunate emperor was not obvious and aroused much conjecture.*

The chronicle of Eutychius, the Melkite patriarch of Alexandria, contains a description of how the son of a Roman emperor was killed by Persian.[1] This story is a transformed narrative of the emperor Valerian's defeat and surrender.[2] According to Eutychius' account, when the emperor Decius died, he was succeeded by Ghalliyūs Caesar and Yūliyānūs Caesar. They ruled together for two years, but after that period Yūliyānūs died and Ghalliyūs was assassinated 18 days later. They were succeeded by

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* Corresponding Author. ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5227-2743. r.suski@uwb.edu.pl

[1] Our knowledge of facts from Eutychius' life is very limited and even what we know is quite problematic (Simonsohn, 2011: 37). In addition, some pieces of information are contradictory, e.g., his dates of birth and death (Breydy, 1985: VI-VII). Most likely, he was born at Fustat in 877. As he himself records, he was born in the 8th year of the caliph Muhammad ibn Abbad al-Mutamid's reign. Originally, he was called Said ibn Batriq or Said ibn Biṭrīq. He was a physician and the author of several medical treatises. His name Eutychius was adopted after his elevation to the office of the Melkite patriarch of Alexandria (held in the years 934-940). His appointment resulted in an internal conflict; as Yahya Ibn Said observes, physicians and the faithful of Fustat opposed the patriarch. As possible causes, M. Breydy (1985: VII-VIII) pointed to being elevated as a layman, or suspicions over this appointment as imposed by the Muslim authorities. Eutychius was the first Melkite author from Egypt to write in Arabic. According to Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿah, Said ibn Batriq wrote a book on medicine. Alī al-Masʿūdī (*Tanbīh*, 154) described the *Annales* of Eutychius in very positive terms. On the manuscripts and editions of the *Annales*, see Breydy, 1983: 42-72; Conterno, 2019: 383-385.

[2] On the third war of Shapur I with the roman empire and the fate of Valerian, see: Ensslin, 1949: 7-31; Gagé, 1965; Mazzarino, 1971; Stolte, 1971; Kettenhofen, 1982: 97-126; Drinkwater, 1989; Potter, 1990: 331-337; Millar, 1993: 166-169; Reiner, 2006; Dignas & Winter, 2007: 80-84; Kettenhofen, 2001; Maksymiuk, 2005: 72-76; Goltz & Hartmann, 2008: 250-251; Woods, 2008; Mosig-Walburg, 2009: 44-49; Rollinger & Wiesehöfer, 2012; Glas, 2014: 181-186; de Blois, 2016: 40-44; Coloru, 2017: 127-157; Caldwell, 2018; Syvänne & Maksymiuk, 2018, 96-107; de Blois. 2019: 76-78; Edwell, 2021: 98-100; Greatrex, 2022: 86.

Ghalititūs Caesar (also called Alāriyānūs Caesar), who ruled for 15 years. Alāriyānūs Caesar decreed inordinately severe measures aimed at persecuting the Christians in the Roman Empire. In the seventh year of his reign, the martyr Quibrianus (St. Cyprian) was killed at a rural location known as Arshaginnah. The ruler's son set out on a campaign against the Persians, but he was captured and taken to Bahram, the son of the Persian king Bahram, who had him executed by decapitation. When Ghalititūs Caesar heard that Bahram, the son of the Persian king Bahram, had his son executed, he felt great pain and ceased to persecute the Christians.[3]

This transformed account on Valerian and Gallienus can be found not only in the manuscripts that served as the basis for the L. Cheikho edition (so-called *Antiochene recension*), but also in the manuscript *Sinait. Arab.* 582, which – according to M. Breydy – was the original version of the *Annales* by Eutychius. Following such a hypothesis, the *Antiochene recension* would have been a complemented version of the work composed by the patriarch of Alexandria,[4] but this proposition has met with criticism. It has been indicated that *Sinait. Arab.* 582 might have been just a source used by Eutychius[5] or the original unrevised version of the *Annales*.[6] In the light of M. Conterno's research, however, it is quite obvious that *Sinait. Arab.* 582 is a summary of Eutychius' work.[7] But unfortunately, just as *Sinait. Arab.* 582 does not

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[3] Eutychius, p. 113, 70v (ed. L. Cheikho).

[4] Breydy, 1983: 29. In his opinion, they were supplemented with various items of information between the 11th and 14th centuries. Thus, the *Annales* may have been supposedly enriched with details from the Bible, the *Romance of Alexander the Great*, Arabic histories composed after the 11th century, historical and theological introductions to acts of the ecumenical councils as well as some other additions drawn from various sources (Breydy, 1983: 73-87).

[5] Ebeid (2016) 184. Around a dozen years after the death of Eutychius, there arose a polemic aimed at his views expressed in the Antiochene recension, and not present in *Sinait. Arab.* 582 (Ebeid, 2016: 171). Possibly, the *Annales* from the *Antiochene recension* were known to Masʿūdī two years after Eutychius' death (Pirone, 1987: 5-6; Ebeid, 2016: 184-185).

[6] Ebeid, 2016: 185-186.

[7] Many descriptions in *Sinait. Arab.* 582 appear to be inadequate summaries of the *Antiochene recension* (Conterno, 2019: 385-388). A depiction of the siege of Jerusalem found in *Sinait. Arab.* 582 seems to be a distorted version of the narrative known from the Antiochene recension (Conterno, 2019: 389). It appears to be more likely that the details on St. Mark's arrival at Alexandria and the rule that the bishop of the city should be elected out of a group of 12 presbyters were added to the *Annales* by the patriarch of Alexandria rather than by the Antiochene editor and continuator (Conterno, 2019: 395-396. For the account on the role of St. Mark in establishing the church in Alexandria, see Wipszycka, 2015: 43-60, 2018: 28-35). Also in some other instances, the *Antiochene recension* contains passages on the Christianity of Alexandria, which are absent in *Sinait. Arab.* 582 (Conterno, 2019: 395-397). M. Conterno (2019: 398 -399) also notes that the text of the *Annales* in the individual manuscripts is more stable than M. Breydy believed. If in the manuscripts of the *Antiochene recension* some interpolations from the Futūḥ Miṣr (added centuries after Eutychius' death) can be actually found, practically all the passages marked as interpolations by M. Breydy are present in all the aforementioned manuscripts, with the exception of digressions directed at Nestorians and Jacobites, of St. Sabas and the canons of Patriarch Nicephoros. Contrary to what M. Breydy claims, Yaḥyā al-Antakī did not state that he emended Eutychius' manuscript (Conterno, 2019: 399-400); in addition, a paleographical analysis indicates that *Sinait. Arab.* 582 was written with the use of the characters similar to those used in the Fatimid or Ayyubid times and thus it cannot be treated as Eutychius' autograph (Conterno, 2019: 400-401).

reflect the original version of the *Annales*, the manuscripts of the so-called *Antiochene recension* were subjected to various interpolations in the following centuries.[8] In the case of Ghalititūs Caesar's reign, the difference between the *Antiochene recension* and the manuscript *Sinait. Arab.* 582 can be reduced to the absence in the latter manuscript of a list of the bishops from the period of the emperor's reign and to the fact that his son was depicted as executed, not (specifically) hanged.[9]

Eutychius is very terse in describing facts from Roman history as he is mostly interested in the relations between the emperors and Christianity.[10] It is easy to notice how distorted Eutychius' representation of the Roman history in the 3rd century is. This observation concerns the Roman emperors' names, although almost all of them may be easily identifiable. Ghalliyūs and Yūliyānūs are most probably Trebonianus Gallus and his son Volusianus. The names of Ghalititūs Alāriyānūs and his son maybe are identified as referring to Valerian and Gallienus. Obviously, the patriarch did not have a very good knowledge of the facts relating to the individual Roman emperors. As he describes it, the ruler who began the persecution of the Christians was the one who terminated it, even though it was actually his son who revoked it. Of course, it was Valerian, not Gallienus, who was taken captive by the Persians. He ascribed facts from Gallienus' life to Valerian (when the old emperor was taken prisoner), while Valerian's fate was attributed (to a large extent) to Gallienus. There are even more errors in the patriarch's chronicle. His attempt at synchronizing the chronology based on the durations of the reigns of the Roman emperors and Persian kings is definitely very far from correct. As he reports, Persia was ruled by Bahram, the son of Bahram (Bahram II) in the time of Decius and Trebonianus Gallus (Ghalliyūs Caesar and Yūliyānūs Caesar).[11]

In spite of such obviously incorrect details, it is worth taking a closer look at how Eutychius recounts the fate of Valerian in Persian captivity (in the patriarch's chronicle: the son of Ghalititūs called Alāriyānūs), especially as – in a general view of events – the narrative of Eutychius contains some actual historical facts: Gallienus' reign was 15 years long, while St. Cyprian was martyred in the seventh year of Valerian and Gallienus' joint reign. It is also true that Valerian persecuted the Christians, waged a war with Persia, and after he was captured by the Persians, it was Gallienus who stopped the persecution. In the essential elements of the narrative

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[8] Conterno, 2019: 403.

[9] Eutychius, 176 (ed. M. Breydy).

[10] Hoyland, 2022: 391.

[11] If Eutychius has a certain difficulty in synchronizing the reigns of the Persian and Roman rulers, he provides fairly correct numbers of years (duration) of the Roman emperors' reigns, with some occasional errors. In general, this is also the case with the periods of the Persian kings' reigns. For the monarchs of Persia, his errors are very much like those of Ṭabarī, which may suggest the errors' provenance in the same source they used.

on Valerian and Gallienus, Eutychius remains true to the facts, except for (obviously) mistaking the identity of the emperor in Persian captivity.

In the *Annales*, the emperor who persecuted the Christians, and whose son was defeated by the Persians, is named Ghalititūs Caesar, also called Alāriyānūs Caesar. The first one is a transformation of the name Gallienus, while the other – of Valerian. This error can be found only in the *Annales* of Eutychius, but it is difficult to say if this is the author's fault or it comes from the source he used. In any event, the author or his source must have apparently misinterpreted the fact that since Valerian and Gallienus reigned at the same time, they were evidently one and the same person. However, Eutychius was not the only one who made a mistake here, misunderstanding the fact that the father and son co-ruled the empire over a certain period. In various lists of Roman emperors, several authors included only one or the other. Thus, Yaʿqūbī mentioned only Valerian, who was reported as ruling six years,[12] while Hamza Işfahani – Gallienus, who ruled for 15 years.[13] Furthermore, according to Dīnawarī, it was Alyaryānūs (Valerian), successor to the king of Rūm (that is, to the Roman emperor), who was taken captive by the Persian enemy, not the emperor himself.[14] Some of the authors do not even call this Roman captive "ruler" (cf. Yaʿqūbī[15] and Ferdowsī).[16]

In the narrative found in the *Annales*, each element has its hidden meaning. This is a story of God who righteously punished the enemy of Christianity and a narrative of the guilt and the punishment which was already known to Lactantius.[17] A modified version of this narrative can be found in the *Annales*. The emperor persecuted Christians (St. Cyprian was among those who were martyred), the Roman Empire was defeated by Persia, and the emperor's son was killed. Consequence the emperor revoked his anti-Christian policy and the Roman Empire was no longer afflicted by defeats and disasters. Perhaps this is why it was cited by the author.

There are certain differences in how the fate of this emperor is represented in the relevant works from the Roman and Byzantine periods. The earliest source referring to the unfortunate fate of the captive emperor is the famous inscription of Shapur I (so-called *Res Gestae Divi Saporis*),[18] where no specific information is given on what may have happened to the emperor during his captivity in Persia. There are also some other Oriental records referring to Valerian's captivity in Persia, but all of

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[12] Yaʿqūbī, 1365.
[13] Hamza Işfahani, 55.
[14] Dīnawarī, 49.
[15] Yaʿqūbī, 1380.
[16] Ferdowsī, p. 296-299.
[17] Valerian's humiliation is represented in *De mortibus persecutorum* in order to demonstrate that the emperor was punished for his opposition to God. Valerian is featured there alongside such figures as Nero, Domitian, Decius, and Aurelian, and – of course – the rulers of the Tetrarchie period (Christiansen, 1980: 64; Zipp, 2021: 12). Thus, Shapur I is seen as someone who became a tool in God's hands (Zipp, 2021: 248-249). See: Constantine`s Letter to Shapur II (Euseb. *V. Const.*, 4.11).
[18] ŠKZ, 22.

these come from the medieval period.[19] It is reported that Valerian was taken captive at Antioch. According to Ṭabarī, Shapur ordered a relocation of the prisoners to Junday Sābūr, assigning Valerian and the other captives to construction work on a dam on the Tustar. When it was finished, Valerian requested Shapur I to release him from captivity as previously promised. As the author recounts, the King of Kings released the emperor (after having his nose cut off) or killed him.[20] The Persian translation of Ṭabarī's work (Balʿamī) contains only the first of these two versions, i.e., the emperor was released, but his nose was cut off as a sign of captivity.[21] According to Dīnawarī, Shapur I invaded the land of Rūm, conquering the cities Qālūqīya and Qabadūqīya. Then he resettled the captives from the Roman Empire in the land of Ahwāz and built the city Jundaysābūr. Alyaryānūs, successor to the ruler of Rūm, was also taken captive by Shapur I. The king of Rūm sent men from his land [to Shapur] in order to build a dam on the river Tustar. When the work was completed, the ruler released the prisoner.[22] A similar account can be found in Yaʿqūbī. Shapur I invaded the land of the Romans, conquering several territories and taking captives, and then built the city Jundaysābūr, relocating the Roman captives there. It is also reported that an unnamed leader of the Romans (*raʾīs al-Rūm*) built a bridge over the river Tustar.[23] Although Yaʿqūbī does not provide any information on the Roman leader's office or his fate following the construction of the bridge, it is quite obvious that Valerian is the figure mentioned in the common source used by Ṭabarī and Yaʿqūbī. Ferdowsī recounts Shapur's good treatment of a captive called Bazanush, who should be most likely identified with Valerian.[24] In the province Shustar, Shapur told the captive that if he constructed a bridge on the river, he would be released or could remain as the king's guest until the end of his life. Bazanush agreed to undertake this task and erected the bridge in three years, after which he returned home.[25] Of course, Ferdowsī's narrative is quite distant from the actual facts and reflects the Persian version of events, where the King of Kings takes advantage of the Roman prisoners by ordering them to work on construction projects connected with improving the infrastructure of Persia, while Valerian is treated with due respect and courtesy. According to Agapius of Hierapolis, Shapur I brought Valerian to Babylon after the emperor was taken captive.[26] In turn, the author of the *Chronique de Séert* reports that Valerian (Oulifranious) died

[19] Coloru, 2017: 14.
[20] Ṭabarī, 827. Cf. Coloru, 2017: 147-150; Caldwell, 2018: 352-353.
[21] Balʿamī, p. 79-80.
[22] Dīnawarī, 49; Sources of Dīnawarī see: Jackson Bonner, 2014: 70-142.
[23] Yaʿqūbī, 1380.
[24] Ferdowsī confused Shapur I and Shapur II, crediting the latter ruler with taking Bazanush captive; cf. Warner & Warner, 1912: 324.
[25] Ferdowsī, p. 296-299.
[26] Agapius, p. 529.

in captivity.[27] When he was out in the East, Gallienus (Djalasious) heard of his father's death and decided to send expensive gifts to Shapur in order to recover the emperor's body. The king of Persia accepted his gifts and agreed to return the body, after which the two rulers became friends and their empires continued to flourish.[28] The amity between the rulers may have been an allusion to the subsequent peace treaty between Persia and the Roman Empire, but the credibility of a mention of the King of Kings' decision to return the emperor's body appears to be questionable. In all these instances, it can be seen that there is a certain measure of courtesy towards the defeated enemy. As suspicious as it may seem, it may have been a deliberate attempt to whitewash the image of Shapur I.[29]

A major part of the sources in question mention the emperor's captivity as a result of the Persian king's betrayal. The Western authors are, in general, reticent in describing the emperor's time in Persian captivity,[30] and only in few sources offer some more details on his deplorable fate. The relevant accounts can be divided into three groups: 1) with general mentions of the emperor's mutilation, 2) with a focus on describing what happened to Valerian's skin, 3) with mentions of the anguish suffered by the emperor before his death in captivity.

Aurelius Victor recounts that Valerian was disgracefully mutilated.[31] Unfortunately, the author does not make it more specific and we do not know what he means by this statement. This may be what the *Epitome de caesaribus* refers to when it calls the emperor *Colobius*.[32] This cognomen is presumably derived from the Greek adjective *kolobos*, which means "crippled". P. Dufraigne makes an observation that Aurelius Victor alluded to the story of the emperor's skin (discussed further on), but – in his opinion – such allegations towards Persians were quite stereotypical and hence not very credible.[33] According to M. Festy, Valerian's cognomen stemmed from the mutilation (when his nose was cut off) as mentioned by Ṭabarī.[34] However, the vagueness of such statements is so considerable that they be interpreted only if confronted with some other sources. The mutilation mentioned by Aurelius Victor might refer to the story of Valerian's skin, but could just as well allude to the account of the emperor's nose known from Ṭabarī. As those statements alone do not explain the issue, it would be difficult to build any plausible hypothesis regarding the emperor's fate on the basis of this particular narrative.

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[27] *Chronique de Séert*, p. 220; See: Wood, 2013: 90-91.
[28] *Chronique de Séert*, p. 223.
[29] Syvänne & Maksymiuk, 2018: 97.
[30] Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.*, 7.13; Eutr. 9.7; Fest. 23; Hier. *Chron.* p. 220g; HA *Gall.*, 3.8-9, 17.1; Zos. 1.36.2.
[31] Aur. Vict. *Caes.*, 32.5.
[32] Aur. Vict. *Epit.*, 32, 1; Michelotto, 1980: 197-205.
[33] Dufraigne, 2003: 156.
[34] Festy, 2002: 151.

A second version of Valerian's fate can be found in Lactantius, *Oratio ad Sanctos*, Agathias, and Peter Patricius. Lactantius relates that the skin was removed from Valerian's body after his death, painted red, and placed inside the temple of the gods in remembrance of the victory. Later on, when the Roman envoys visited Persia on diplomatic missions, the emperor's skin was displayed to them.[35] According to Eusebius of Caesarea, in his letter to the Persian king Shapur II, Constantine the Great pointed out that God punished the emperor for denouncing and rejecting Him. He was captured by the Persians and suffered a shameful humiliation.[36] A reference to Valerian's fate is quite evident in this passage.[37] In the speech attributed to Constantine, the figure is a persecutor who is taken captive, then his body is skinned and preserved at the request of Shapur I.[38] Finally, Peter Patricius makes a reference to the emperor's skin as a digression in his account of the negotiations between the Persians and Galerius. The author remarks that the emperor reproached Aphpharban for the Persians' deceptive treatment of Valerian, namely keeping him in bondage until his old age and preserving his skin after his death.[39]

The third version of the humiliation suffered by the emperor can be found in Lactantius, *Epitome de caesaribus*, and Orosius. According to Lactantius, Valerian in Persian captivity was forced to bend down his neck so that Shapur I could use him as a footstool when mounting a horse or a carriage. On that occasion, the Persian ruler would say with a smile that the whole situation resembled exactly what Romans portrayed on their murals and paintings. The mortification was even more severe as no effort was made to have him released from bondage. A similar (but not identical) description can be seen in the *Epitome de caesaribus*,[40] while Orosius provides a narrative which is very similar to the *Epitome*.[41]

This specific narrative may have formed the basis of the Roman reception of the rock relief at Naqsh-e Rostam, with an image of Valerian kneeling before an equestrian figure of Shapur I.[42] We do not know when this story may have emerged or if it was invented by Lactantius himself. Assuming that he not visit Persia, his

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[35] Lact. 5.2-7; Moreau, 1954: 222-223; 99-102; Schwartz, 1978: 98-102; Creed, 1984: 86.
[36] Euseb. *V. Const.*, 4.11. Cf. Cameron, 1969: 138; Cameron & Hall, 1999: 315.
[37] Cf. Cameron, 1969: 138; Barnes, 1985: 131-132; Cameron & Hall, 1999: 315; Potter, 2018: 29.
[38] Euseb. *Orat. Const.*, 24.2.
[39] Peter Patr. f. 13.
[40] Aur. Vict. *Epit.*, 32.5-6.
[41] Oros. 7.22.4; Some scholars hold the view that Orosius draws the information at this point from Lactantius. I do not agree with this opinion as he must have relied most likely on the transmission in the *Epitome de caesaribus*. The narrative of Orosius differs from that of Lactantius. It does not contain all the elements of Lactantius' story, but it is rich in some that are unknown to the latter author. Therefore, it is difficult to say if there is actually one tradition (derived from Lactantius) or two (one – Lactantius; the other – *Epitome de caesaribus* and Orosius). In the former instance, the narrative might have been invented by Lactantius, while in the latter – it would speak in favour of the credibility of the information transmitted, see Suski, 2020.
[42] Moreau, 1954: 222-223.

inspiration may have also come from Psalm 110, where the author says "I shall lay Your enemies as a footstool under Your feet."[43] References to this psalm can be found in Paul of Tarsus' *First Letter to the Corinthians* as well as in the Letter to the Hebrews.[44]

Lactantius is the only author who cites both narratives (the skinning and the mortifying treatment of the emperor). His work was not very popular and there is very little to suggest any greater impact of its reception. It is a matter of speculation if the author of the *Epitome de caesaribus* have known both of these narratives. One of them is cited directly (humiliations suffered by the emperor when he was still alive in captivity), while Valerian's presumed cognomen may allude to the other story. The question is that there may be more than one way to explain it and this kind of hint is too vague to take it as something certain. Some other authors recounting Valerian's fate mention only one or the other version of his mortification.

Apart from the accounts of Valerian's old age and death in Persian captivity, with different depictions of his treatment, there are also some alternative versions of his fate, according to which he was reportedly murdered by the Persians. The earliest author to communicate this particular version is perhaps Aurelius Victor (in his relation, Valerian was killed during the sixth year of his reign, i.e., in 259/260). With no mention of the emperor's imprisonment, he points out that Valerian was mutilated, thus clearly suggesting his captivity. It is significant that the date of Valerian's death as given by this Roman author would suggest the ruler's quick death.[45]

The author of the *Chronicon Paschale* makes it clear that Valerian was killed by the Persians,[46] while The *Chronographer of 354* also records that the emperor was killed in Syria.[47] Although in one of the versions of the emperor's death found in Ṭaba-rī's chronicle, it is reported that he was murdered, the Arabic historian provides no details. A narrative of the emperor punished after being taken captive by Shapur I is quite likely also known to Agathias. Referring to the testimony of many authors (without mentioning any names), he alleged that the King of Kings initiated some terrible punishment with a horrible defilement involved.[48] Agathias offers no details about this cruel act, but in his depiction of the execution ordered by Chosrow (Chosroes) I Anoshirvan (skinning, then hanging a dead body from a pole), he notes that Shapur I was the initiator of such a method of torture.[49] It is therefore very likely

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[43] Ps. 110:1. Cf. Moreau, 1954: 223.
[44] 1 Cor. 15:25; Hebr. 10:13. Cf. Moreau, 1954: 223.
[45] Aur. Vict. *Caes*., 32.5.
[46] *Chron. Pasch*., p. 508.
[47] *Chronographus anni 354*, p. 148.
[48] Agath., 4.23; Ammianus Marcellinus (23.6.80) wrote about skinning by the Persians. Cf. Rollinger & Wiesehöfer, 2012: 502-504.
[49] Agath., 4.23.

that Agathias was aware of the "emperor's skin" version.[50] As based on his transmission, it is not really clear whether the emperor was flayed alive or after his death, but one could get the impression that he would suggest the former method. Although he makes a remark on many authors having supposedly written about it, such a version cannot be found elsewhere.

Finally, in his account of Numerian's campaign against the Persians, John Malalas mentions that the emperor was killed immediately after being taken captive, and his skin was removed from his body and preserved in myrrh with the aim of keeping it as a reminder of Persian glory.[51] Of course, as it is well-known that the fate of Numerian was completely different, it is quite likely that John Malalas confused the figures of Valerian and Numerian.[52] It is hard to determine, however, to what extent John Malalas distorted the narrative, besides attributing it to a different ruler. Thus, the existence of the "emperor's skin" tradition finds some confirmation here, but it is difficult to say how much the whole story was transformed by the chronicler or to what extent he found it in his sources.

It is difficult to be certain in resolving the question of the sources Eutychius used for his account of Valerian's reign. In this regard, the relation is similar to the story of Constantine's pilgrimage to Jerusalem its a patient with leprosy described by Agapius (another Christian author writing in Arabic), for which no specific source can be identified.[53] As M. Breydy observes, Eutychius could only read Arabic, ignoring sources written in Greek.[54] It is also pointed out that he relied on the Persian literary tradition for his knowledge of the Roman-Persian relations. Th. Nöldeke argued that a lost work called *History of the Persian kings* was translated into Arabic by Ibn al-Muqaffa and the subsequent authors writing in Arabic used it as a source for the Sasanian dynasty.[55] Thus, this author's lost work is indicated as Eutychius' source of knowledge on Iran.[56] It is probable that a number of texts from the Abbasid period functioned as histories of the kings of Persia (Iranians).[57] In the Arabic tradition, Ibn al-Muqaffa is not remembered as an author who served as a bridge between the Sasanian and Islamic historiographies.[58] Even with his Arabic translation of the history of Persia taken into consideration, this work is just one example of many

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[50] Cameron, 1969: 138-139.
[51] According to Malalas (12.35), St. Babylas was a victim of the persecution ordered by the emperor Numerian (in fact, he was executed under Decius).
[52] Bleckmann, 1992: 106.
[53] Conterno, 2020b: 159-161.
[54] Breydy, 1983: 1.
[55] Nöldeke, 1879: XX-XXIII; In this article I do not discuss about the transmission of knowledge between the Persian tradition and Arab historiography, See: Rubin, 2005; 2008a; 2008b: 27-58; Hämeen-Anttila, 2018; Greatrex, 2022: 665-674.
[56] Breydy, 1983: 19; Hoyland, 2022: 392-394.
[57] Hoyland, 2018: 139.
[58] Hoyland, 2018: 140.

translations.[59] Perhaps the divergence of Ibn Qutayba and Eutychius should be explained on the grounds that these two authors did not work from one common source but would draw on multiple available sources.[60]

In Dīnawarī, it is the emperor's successor, not the emperor himself, who is taken captive. Does it mean that the Arabic author and Eutychius may have drawn on the same source? According to Dīnawarī, the king of Rūm's successor was released after the completion of the dam, not killed. Dīnawarī represents the course of the events in the same way as Ṭabarī, concentrating on the construction of the dam on the river Tustar. Ṭabarī was familiar with the tradition of Valerian's being murdered after the completion of the construction project and Eutychius would have needed to distort it in a large degree to create his version of events.

For this particular point of the story, Eutychius does not have to draw on the Persian tradition as he has the Persian and Roman chronologies mismatched. Where he makes references to the Persian tradition, the events are placed correctly within the Persian chronology, but incorrectly in the Roman one (Persians conquering Hatra and Nisibis, Shapur I's invasion of Syria and Cappadocia), while the narrative on Valerian is set correctly in the Roman chronology and incorrectly in the Persian one. In addition, St. Cyprian is mentioned in the narrative under consideration here, and it is hard to conceive that he would have received a mention in the Persian tradition. It is possible that Eutychius found the story of Valerian in some tradition originating from the Roman Empire, but he confused him with Gallienus.[61] After all, the absorption of knowledge about ancient Greco-Roman history by the Muslim world may have been quite complicated sometimes. For instance, we could refer here to the narrative of Hamza Iṣfahani, who had reportedly drawn his knowledge of the Western history from a book written in Roman characters owned by a Roman living in the household of Ahmad ibn Abd al-Aziz ibn Dulaf.[62] Unfortunately, this observation does not help us in indicating the specific sources used by Eutychius. His transmission on the Roman Empire is so laconic that it would be difficult to prove a claim he might have known the *Chronicon Paschale* (at least in some lost Arabic translation). This could point to the fact that there may have existed multiple versions of Valerian's fate in various sources, but a number of such accounts are simply lost.

The story of the death of the emperor's son known from the *Annales* of Eutychius is one of several versions of Valerian's death, according to which he was killed by the Persians after he was taken captive. It is just another testimony to a version of the ill-fated emperor's fate that is alternative to the prevailing picture of his long-term

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[59] Hoyland, 2018: 141.
[60] Hoyland, 2022: 394.
[61] For renditions (produced in Syria) from Greek and Syriac into Arabic, of historical and religious works, see Treiger, 2015; Conterno, 2020a; Hoyland, 2021.
[62] Cf. Zychowicz-Coghill, 2022: 760-762. As nice as it seems, this story comes across as implausible.

captivity in Persia. It is not significant here to what extent this tradition is credible. The fate of this emperor, who was taken into Persian captivity and never returned to the Roman Empire, resulted in a proliferation of diverse narratives on what may have happened to him. The emperor remained imprisoned by the King of Kings forever and, apparently, no one could tell what really happened to Valerian. The more uncertain this situation appeared, the easier it was to continue transforming the whole story. The transmission given by Eutychius may suggest that there might have been more sources claiming the emperor had been murdered instantly by the Persian enemy than the actually are preserved.

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