

DEXIPPUS AND THE REPELLING OF THE GOTHIC INVASION
IN THE YEARS 267–268

A NEW PIECE OF EVIDENCE (*CODEX VINDOBONENSIS HIST. GR.* 73,
FF. 192V–193R) WITH AN EXPLANATION OF AN ERROR
COMMITTED BY THE AUTHOR OF THE *HISTORIA AUGUSTA* (*HA GALL.* 13, 7)

by

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ABSTRACT: Our knowledge about the life of the historian Dexippus is rather limited. In *HA Gall.* 13, 7 there is a mention of Dexippus' participation in the repelling of a Gothic incursion to Greece in the end of Gallienus' reign. This information is strange, because there is no reference to Dexippus' leadership in this war in a honorific inscription dedicated to him by his children. Nonetheless many scholars believe that Dexippus organised the Athenian defence against the Heruli. In this paper a new hypothesis is presented. Fragments of the recently discovered *Scythica Vindobonensia* (which probably came from Dexippus' *Scythica*) shed new light on the role of Dexippus' in the repulsing of the Goth/Heruli invasion. The *Scythica Vindobonensia* mention a boeotarch for the fifth time named Dexippus as one of Greek leaders who helped the Roman army. This Dexippus could not be the same person as the Athenian historian. I suggest that the author of the *Historia Augusta* confused two men bearing the name Dexippus, the Athenian historian, and the boeotarch from Thebes.

In chapter 13 of Gallienus' biography, the author of the *Historia Augusta* mentions the repelling of a Gothic raid on the eastern provinces of the Roman Empire, in which the historian Dexippus is said to have participated. At first, the Byzantion-born commanders Cleodamus and Athenaeus carried on fighting near the Pontic coast, while Venerianus defeated the "Scythians" (Goths) in a naval battle. Despite these efforts, the Goths managed to devastate Kyzikos, as well as the provinces of Asia and Achaëa. It was then that the Athenians, led by the famous historian Dexippus, defeated the enemy¹. Subsequently, the Goths would go on to pillage Epirus, Macedonia and Boeotia, which finally caused Gallienus to take action and vanquish them in Illyricum². The fighting did not stop, however, and the operations continued, with more or less success, under

¹ *HA Gall.* 13, 6–8.

² *HA Gall.* 13, 8 f.