registration office for the imperial determinations, and its members, as has been well said, a choir for drawling conventional hymns of praise in honour of the monarch. Even the nominal restoration of the senate's power at the time of Alexander Severus, and the acces­sion of so-called “ senatorial emperors ” later on, did not efface the work of Septimius Severus, which was resumed and carried to its fulfilment by Diocletian.

No period in the history of Latin literature is so barren as the reign of Severus. Many later periods—the age of Stilicho, for example— shine brilliantly by comparison. The only great Latin writers are the Christians Tertullian and Cyprian. The Greek literature of the period is richer, but not owing to any patronage of the emperor, except perhaps in the case of Dio Cassius, who, though no admirer of Severus, attributes to encouragement received from him the execution of the great historical work which has come down to our time. The numerous restorations of ancient buildings and the many new con­structions carried out by Severus show that he was not insensible to the artistic glories of the past; and he is known to have paid much attention to works of art in foreign countries where his duties took him. But he was in no sense a patron or connoisseur of art. As to religion, if we may trust Dio, one of the most superstitious of historians, Severus was one of the most superstitious of monarchs. But apart from that it is difficult to say what was his influence on the religious currents of the time. He probably did a good deal to strengthen and extend the official cult of the imperial family, which had been greatly developed during the prosperous times of the Antonines. But what he thought of Christianity, Judaism or the Oriental mysticism to which his wife Julia Domna gave such an impulse in the succeeding reign, it is impossible to say. We may best conclude that his religious sympathies were wide, since tradition has not painted him as the partisan of any one form of worship.

Authorities.—Severus himself wrote an autobiography which was regarded as candid and trustworthy on the whole. The events of the reign were recorded by several contemporaries. The first place among these must be given to Dio Cassius, who stands to the empire in much the same relation as Livy to the republic. He became a senator in the year when Marcus Aurelius died (180) and retained that dignity for more than fifty years. He was well ac- quainted with Severus, and was near enough the centre of affairs to know the real nature of events, without being great enough to have

personal motives for warping the record. Though this portion of Dio's history no longer exists in its original form, we have copious extracts from it, made by Xiphilinus, an ecclesiastic of the 11th century. The faults which have impaired the credit of Dio’s great work in its earlier portions—his lack of the critical faculty, his inexact knowledge of the earlier Roman institutions, his passion for signs from heaven—could do little injury to the narrative of an eye- witness; and he gives the impression of unusual freedom from passion, prejudice and insincerity. His Greek, too, stands in agreeable contrast to the debased Latin of the *Scriptores historiae Augustae.* The Greek writer Herodian was also a contemporary of Severus, but the mere fact that we know nothing of his life is in itself enough to show that his opportunities were not so great as those of Dio. The reputation of Herodian, who was used as the main authority for the times of Severus by Tillemont and Gibbon, has not been proof against the criticism of later scholars. His faults are those of rhetoric and exaggeration. His narrative is probably in many places not independent of Dio. The Augustan historians, unsatisfactory compilers, form a principal source for the history of the reign. The numerous inscriptions belonging to the age of Septimius Severus enable us to control at many points and largely to supplement the literary records of his reign, particularly as regards the details of his administration. The juridical works of Justinian’s epoch embody much that throws light on the government of Severus.

The principal modern works relating to this emperor, after Tillc- mont and Gibbon, are—J. J. Schulte, *De imperatore* *L.* *Septimio Severo* (Münster, 1867); Höfner, *Untersuchungen zur Geschichte des Kaisers* *L.* *Septimius Severus* (Giessen, 1875); *Untersuchungen zur römischen Kaisergeschichte,* ed. by M. Budinger; H. Schiller, *Geschichte der römischen Kaiserzeit* (Gotha, 1880-1883) ; De Ceuleneer, *Essai sur la vie et le règne de Septime Sévère* (Brussels, 1880); Réville, *La Religion à Rome sous les Sévères* (Paris, 1886); Fuchs, *Geschichte des Kaisers L. Septimius Severus* (1884). On Julia Domna, see M. G. Williams, in *American Journal of Archaeology,* vi. (1902), ΡΡ· 259-306. (J. S. R.)

SEVERUS, SULPICIUS (c. 363-c. 425), Christian writer, was a native of Aquitania. He was imbued with the culture of his time and of his country, which was then the only true home of Latin letters and learning. Almost all that we know of Severus’ life comes from a few allusions in his own writings, and some passages in the letters of his friend Paulinus, bishop of Nola. In his early days he was famous as a pleader, and his knowledge of Roman law is reflected in parts of his writings. He married a wealthy lady belonging to a consular family, who died young, leaving him no children. At this time Severus came under the powerful influence of St Martin, bishop

of Tours, by whom he was led to devote his wealth to the Christian poor, and his own powers to a life of good works and meditation. To use the words of his friend Paulinus, he broke with his father, followed Christ, and set the teachings of the “ fishermen ” far above all his “ Tullian learning.” He rose to. no higher rank in the church than that of presbyter. He is said to have been led away in his old age by Pelagianism, but to have repented and inflicted long-enduring penance on himself. His time was passed chiefly in the neighbourhood of Toulouse, and such literary efforts as he permitted to himself were made in the interests of Christianity. In many respects no two men could be more unlike than Severus, the scholar and orator, well versed in the ways of the world, and Martin, the rough Pannonian bishop, ignorant, suspicious of culture, champion of the monastic life, seer and worker of miracles. Yet the spirit of the rugged saint subdued that of the polished scholar, and the works of Severus are only important because they reflect the ideas, influence and aspirations of Martin, the foremost ecclesiastic of Gaul.

The chief work of Severus is the *Chronica (c.* 403), a summary of sacred history from the beginning of the world to his own times, with the omission of the events recorded in the Gospels and the Acts, “ lest the form of his brief work should detract from the honour due to those events.” The book was a text-book, and was used as such in the schools of Europe for about a century and a half after the *editio princeps* was published by Flacius Illyricus in 1556. Severus nowhere clearly points to the class of readers for whom his book is designed. He disclaims the intention of making his work a substitute for the actual narrative contained in the Bible. “ Worldly historians ” had been used by him, he says, to make clear the dates and the connexion of events and for supplementing the sacred sources, and with the intent at once to instruct the unlearned and to “ con­vince ” the learned. Probably the “ unlearned ” are the mass of Christians and the learned are the cultivated Christians and pagans alike, to whom the rude language of the sacred texts, whether in Greek or Latin, would be distasteful. The literary structure of the narrative shows that Severus had in his mind principally readers on the same level of culture with himself. He was anxious to show that sacred history might be presented in a form which lovers of Sallust and Tacitus could appreciate and enjoy. The style is lucid and almost classical. Though phrases and even sentences from many classical authors are inwoven here and there, the narrative flows easily, with no trace of the jolts and jerks which offend us in almost every line of an imitator of the classics like Sidonius. It is free from useless digres­sions. In order that his work might fairly stand beside that of the old Latin writers, Severus ignored the allegorical methods of inter­preting sacred history to which the heretics and the orthodox of his age were wedded.

As an authority for times antecedent to his own, Severus is of little moment. At only a few points does he enable us to correct or supplement other records. Bernays has shown that he based his narrative of the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus on the account given by Tacitus in his “ Histories,” a portion of which has been lost. We are enabled thus to contrast Tacitus with Josephus, who warped his narrative to do honour to Titus. In his allusions to the Gentile rulers with whom the Jews came into contact from the time of the Maccabees onwards, Severus discloses some points which are not without importance. But the real interest of his work lies, first, in the incidental glimpses it affords all through of the history of his own time; next and more particularly, in the information he has preserved concerning the struggle over the Priscillianist heresy, which disorganized and degraded the churches of Spain and Gaul, and particularly affected Aquitaine. The sympathies here betrayed by Severus are wholly\* those of St Martin. The bishop had withstood Maximus, who ruled for some years a large part of the western portion of the empire, though he never conquered Italy. He had reproached him with attacking and overthrowing his predecessors on the throne, and for his dealings with the church. Severus loses no opportunity for Laying stress on the crimes and follies of rulers, and on their cruelty, though he once declares that, cruel as rulers could be, priests could be crueller still. This last statement has reference to the bishops who had left Maximus no peace till he had stained his hands with the blood of Priscillian and his followers. Martin, too, had denounced the worldliness and greed of the Gaulish bishops and clergy. Accordingly we find that Severus, in narrating the division of Canaan among the tribes, calls the special attention of ecclesiastics to the fact that no portion of the land was assigned to the tribe of Levi, lest they should be hindered in their service of God. “ Our clergy seem," he says, “ not merely forgetful of the lesson but ignorant of it, such a passion for possessions has in our days fastened like a pestilence on their souls.” We here catch a glimpse of the circumstances which were winning over good men to monasticism in the West, though the evidence of an enthusiastic votary of the solitary life, such as Severus was, is probably not free from exaggeration. Severus also fully sympathized with the action of St Martin touching Priscillianism. This mysterious Western