Introduction

The nineteenth century, for its great diversity of philosophical thought, is not unjustly abbreviated 'the historical century.' Herder, Goethe, Schiller, Novalis, Hegel, the Humboldts, the Schlegels, the Grimms, Heine, Hartmann, Comte, Marx, Kierkegaard, Dilthey, Rickert, and Windelband – whose thought among these originated in anything other than a deep fascination with the past? The nineteenth is the century of Darwin, Weber, and Durkheim, of Strauss and Renan. It is the century of philologists like Wolf, of Boeckh and Hermann, of Welcker, Lachmann, Haupt, Bergk, Bernhardy, and Müller. It is the century of historians such as Ranke, Niebuhr, Mommsen, Droysen, Tocqueville, Michelet, Treitschke, and Carlyle. And it is the century of Nietzsche, alone among the great nineteenth-century philosophers of history to have been trained to be a professional historian. Nietzsche was a classical philologist. It was the only job he ever had. He was educated by renowned historians and philologists like Koberstein, Corssen, Sybel, Ritschl, and Jahn; appointed at a young age to the University of Basel, arguably the finest historical studies department outside of Berlin; corresponded with the likes of Zeller, Gerlach, Klette, Zarncke, and Taine; feuded with Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, and developed close friendships with historical writers like Deussen, Rohde, Bachofen, Burckhardt, Overbeck, and Rée.

Despite his general neglect by some of the leading historians of historiography, the philosophy of history Nietzsche developed within the context of these influences is itself remarkable, both for the insight of his critique of the limitations of historiography and for his own affirmative theories of its possibilities.[1] Nietzsche was not merely a philosopher interested in history. He was himself a philosopher *of* history. And there is good reason why

[1] For at least anecdotal evidence, Mandelbaum names Nietzsche only once in his survey of historiographical thought – and at that only as a paltry example of romantic history alongside Hölderlin. Mandelbaum (1967), 35. Sanford's introduction pairs Nietzsche with Wagner and Hitler as anti-Enlightenment figures, and is careful to distinguish them from proper philosophers of history. Sanford (1998), 245. Nietzsche is never mentioned in major pronouncements on the field such as Collingwood

this herald of the 'philosophy of the future' was on nearly every page of his writing concerned with the past. The permanence of things, the subsistence of identities, the unalterability of laws of physics or logic, the immutability of values, the univocity of the meaning of truth: these are each topics about which Nietzsche understood he could not in earnest write without reckoning their development, their change over time – in short, their history. "Philosophy, the way I alone regard it, as the most general form of history, as an attempt to somehow *describe and abbreviate in symbols* the Heraclitean becoming . . ."[2] Yet how can one express a reality that is historical through and through? How can a historian employ words with fixed meanings to encapsulate what is unaffixable? If the moral values of today must be understood in some sense as residual products of complicated dynamic historical processes, for example, then the question as to how historical causes may be said to bring about future effects, how ideals and institutions become instantiated over time, and even how we historians, from within a particular historically situated perspective, select, identify, describe, and explain those events at all is necessarily of great philosophical concern. No stranger to these questions, Nietzsche cast his philosophy of history as both the framework through which his claims about morality, society, the natural world – and even claims about himself – are expressed and at the same time a serious and profound reflection on the limits of what can be known and represented by those claims. An accurate exposition and analysis of his philosophy of history is therefore essential for a proper understanding of Nietzsche's philosophy generally.

Yet a comprehensive exposition of Nietzsche's philosophy of history has never been attempted. This is not to say that scholars have ignored the importance of history for Nietzsche. There has indeed been a wealth of literature on the subject. Studies of Nietzsche's views of history and historians have focused largely on questions about human historicity – how history affects our lives and influences our culture and values. Nietzsche is without question one of the first and remains one of the most incisive theorists of the meaning and consequences of living within a continuous temporal sequence, and this book will address his arguments thereon. But such a myopic focus overlooks both his criticisms of epistemological issues in historiography and also how his own later historical writing was meant to be an improvement of then-prevalent historiographical paradigms. To

(1946), Popper (1957), Dray (1993), Evans (1997), and others too numerous to recite. In influential anthologies like Gardiner (1959), Tucker (2009), or Budd (2009), Nietzsche may earn a few pages of discussion, but is rarely accorded an entry of his own.

[2] *NF* June–July 1885, 36[27]; *KSA* 11, 562. See also *GD* "Vernunft," 5; *KSA* 6, 77.

adequately elucidate this aspect of Nietzsche's thought, beyond clarifying an essential and still-underdeveloped theme in Nietzsche studies, also opens up a wealth of insight for contemporary philosophy of history.

Accordingly, this book has three goals. Foremost, it is to make explicit that, alongside his remarks on historicity, Nietzsche's writing contains penetrating critiques of then-dominant meta-historical paradigms as well as his own affirmative view of how history should be written. It is to show, further, the profound development that Nietzsche's thinking on history underwent throughout his career in the context of his biography and his reading. It is, finally, to reveal how Nietzsche's philosophy of history is relevant to and even anticipates certain contemporary positions on historiographical objectivity, description, and explanation.

The first chapter elucidates Nietzsche's philological method. After contextualizing his education at Pforta, Bonn, and Leipzig, I exposit and critically analyze Nietzsche's three earliest historiographical projects: his rendering of the saga of the Ostrogoth King Ermanarich, his reconstruction of the editorial corruption of Theognis of Megara, and his critique of the authorship of Diogenes Laertius. I argue that, notwithstanding any particular errors he may have made, Nietzsche's earliest projects are driven by a joint commitment to skeptical realism and suppositional naturalistic psychological explanation.

My second chapter contextualizes his work within the major historiographical movements of the nineteenth century. I reveal Nietzsche's discomfited relationship with the two leading philological schools of the day – *Sprachphilologie* and *Sachphilologie* – and the roles his teachers Friedrich Ritschl and Otto Jahn played in the development of his historiography. I argue that the decisive break with his philological career resulted from a combination of personal factors and a general dissatisfaction with the representational realism presumed by working philologists.

The third chapter shows how *The Birth of Tragedy* was a radical break from both his earlier skeptical realism and naturalistic mode of explanation. I begin by expositing Nietzsche's adaptation of Schopenhauer's *aesthetische Anschauung*, and proceed to show that such an 'aesthetic intuition' was the means by which Nietzsche believed he could apprehend the idea of tragedy beyond its appearances within historical transmissions of textual evidence. I show that the famous criticism of Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff was an objection precisely to Nietzsche's adoption of Schopenhauer's aesthetic intuition within historiography. In the closing pages of the chapter, I argue that Nietzsche's meta-history in *The Birth of Tragedy* was both an illegitimate cooption of Schopenhauer and internally incoherent.

In the fourth chapter, I outline Nietzsche's 'existential' criticism of history and historians. By looking at his published and unpublished writings from 1873–1877, I demonstrate both that Nietzsche began to psychologize the motivations of historians as the underlying structure of the judgments they make and that, in doing so, Nietzsche broke markedly from *The Birth of Tragedy*'s aim to apprehend history aesthetically. In these years, Nietzsche transforms both his former realism about the past and his view of the aesthetically apprehending subject into a psychological typology that aligns with his newly reconfigured epistemology. The historian can be no objective recorder of the past, but re-presents it according to the typological conditions of his physio-psychological facticities. To illustrate this transition, I articulate Nietzsche's critique of the teleological historiographies of David Strauss, Hegel, and Eduard von Hartmann, and contrast this to his depiction of the 'healthier' psychology of his Basel colleagues: Bachofen, Burckhardt, and Overbeck. It becomes apparent in each of these case studies that Nietzsche never employs his former weapons of source criticism and linguistic philological analysis to show where these historians' representations of the past were accurate or inaccurate; he persistently analyzes the psychological standpoint from which the judgments sprung.

My fifth chapter addresses Nietzsche's naturalist turn and its consequences for his meta-history. I argue that the works from *Human, all-too-Human* to *Beyond Good and Evil* exemplify Nietzsche's dictum that "from now on *historical philosophizing* will be necessary,"[3] while at the same time recognizing the fundamental role played by the subject's physiognomy within historical judgment. I argue that such a framework renders the traditional historian's naive faith in correspondential realism impossible, and that as a consequence the then-prevalent positivistic views of objectivity, description, and explanation must be replaced by a meta-history that acknowledges the essentially perspectival character of historical judgment. In the final two sections, I present what I claim is the distinctive affirmative contribution of Nietzsche's philosophy of history, namely, a representational anti-realist view of judgment combined with a perspectival theory of explanation.

My sixth and seventh chapters exemplify this theory in the practice of Nietzsche's own mature historiography. Granted that Nietzsche rejects the possibility of traditional theories of objectivity, description, and explanation, the structure of his account of the history of European morals will be more sophisticated than a straightforward recitation of presumed historical 'facts.' Accordingly, I analyze in the sixth chapter the meta-historical presuppositions

[3] *MaM* 1, 2; *KSA* 2, 25.

of Nietzsche's most historical expression of his philosophy: the *Genealogy of Morals*. Specifically, I examine Nietzsche's mature conceptions of historical objectivity and the conditions for true historical description in that work, and show how they stand in contrast to Darwinian historiography. Representational anti-realism is revealed to be Nietzsche's preferred mode of historiography on the grounds both that it avoids the ascetic absolutism of traditional realist interpretations of the past and that it admits itself as an interpretation constituted by dynamic power drives. Contrary to postmodern interpreters, I demonstrate that Nietzsche's envisioned genealogy does offer an affirmative account and avoids the appeal of narrative relativism.

The primary focus of my final chapter is Nietzsche's *Ecce homo* as a form of autobiographical historiography. I first argue that the characterization of *Ecce homo* as either the product of an unhinged mind or as a merely fictive narration relies upon a standard of representational realism that Nietzsche rejected. I show how his critique of motivational explanations coheres with his general objections to positivist historiography. I then show how traditional conceptions of introspective description and memory fail to articulate the kind of dynamic process Nietzsche considers the 'self' to be. In a reality characterized as a Heraclitean becoming, traditional interpretations cannot really represent things – including 'selves' – as if they were static objects waiting to be described by static subjects. Introspection and memory turn out to be dynamic and historically contingent expressions of their author's Will to Power. Their expression within the act of autobiography of itself provides a meaningful symbolic representation that makes certain perspectives familiar with Nietzsche's 'self-' development.

In a brief epilogue, I turn away from the expository treatment of Nietzsche and toward a thematic evaluation of Nietzsche's influence on philosophy of history. I show that some of Nietzsche's positions anticipate theories of analytic philosophers of history like Popper, Walsh, and Dray, that continental thinkers from Croce to Heidegger to Derrida adopted aspects of Nietzsche's thoughts about historicity, and that even contemporary theorists like Hayden White, Frank Ankersmit, and Keith Jenkins have employed distinctly Nietzschean themes in their effort to displace positivism for the sake of narrative relativism.

I should also indicate briefly what this book omits. Initially, I had planned a chapter about Nietzsche's views of time and becoming, with special reference to his theory of Eternal Recurrence. On that topic, two recently published books obviate what I could have written: Robin Small (2010) and Paul Loeb (2010). I also came under the impression that Eternal Recurrence was actually tangential to my focus on Nietzsche's philosophy

of history. For if, as some scholars hold, Eternal Recurrence is an actual identity of events over individuated time-sequences, then it has no impact upon the judgment of a historian within any of those loops. Their judgment would be, like everything else, identical with the judgment of each of the other loops at that specific loop-relative moment. Whether or not time is ultimately circular or whether Nietzsche had a worked-out doctrine of time-atoms, historians, including Nietzsche himself, do and perhaps must talk about their objects within a commonplace linear framework of time. Hence, and contray to Karl Löwith,[4] whatever impact his theories of time, becoming, and Eternal Recurrence have for his philosophy generally, they ultimately do not affect his philosophy of history in a way sufficient to warrant extended discussion here.

Furthermore, while I mention the political dimension of Nietzsche's historiography where it demonstrably impacts his development, I would refer the reader to the much more comprehensive studies by Andreas Urs Sommer (1997) and Christian Emden (2008). I also opted to omit a rather lengthy critical discussion dedicated to two other scholars of Nietzsche's historiography: Christian Benne and James I. Porter. Both have presented well-argued though very different visions of Nietzsche's philology and philosophy of history than I do here.[5] Though I draw reference to specific points of disagreement throughout, I make my argument against them more directly in my forthcoming (2013a).

[4] See Löwith (1945), 273–284. [5] See Porter (2000a) and (2000b); and Benne (2005).

CHAPTER I

Philological centaurs

Ermanarich

The history of Nietzsche's historiographical development begins in earnest when he enters Schulpforta at the age of fourteen in 1858.[1] The venerable institution, which had already held its 400th anniversary and counted among its alumni Klopstock, Fichte, and the father of German history, Leopold von Ranke, was long considered the model of humane education in Germany. After the Napoleonic Wars, it was restructured to minimalize its former role in the formation of clergy and to maximize its potential as the preparatory ground for scholars and teachers. To that end, Nietzsche's educators were extraordinarily demanding in its featured subject: classical antiquity, the very field in which Nietzsche showed prodigious talent.

Nietzsche's first sustained effort in the field of comparative philology was an ingeniously bold poem – for a young man of seventeen – on the saga of the fourth-century Ostrogoth King Ermanarich, a project suggested to him by Schulpforta's renowned historian of German literature, Friedrich August Koberstein.[2] In the fall of 1861, Nietzsche, having happened upon Franz Liszt's *Hungaria* symphony, sketched his own composition of a symphonic poem entitled *Serbia*.[3] By February of 1862, he presented to his friends Wilhelm Pinder and Gustav Krug, together with whom Nietzsche forged the idealistic literary circle '*Germania*' two years prior, three additional "Hungarian Sketches" in imitation of Liszt, whose daughter Cosima was

[1] For a detailed account of Nietzsche's reading of historical and historiographical books, see Orsucci (1996), 371–381; Campioni *et al.* (2003); Brobjer (2004), 185–236; and Jensen (2013b). Among the historiography-relevant titles we can prove Nietzsche read at Schulpforta are Cicero's *Epistolae*, Voltaire's *Historie de Charles XII* (1731), Herder's *Der Cid* (1803–1804), and Feuerbach's *Das Wesen Christenthums* (1841).

[2] Preserved as presented to the *Germania* society as *eine Literar-historische Skizze* at *KGW* 1/2, 274–284. For the text of the poem, see *BAW* 2, 32–37. For the complete biographical details surrounding his work, see Blunck (1953), 72–74; Janz (1978) I, 94–96; Cate (2002), 28–33.

[3] On Nietzsche's projected symphony, see Schlechta (1954) III, 101–105.

to become Richard Wagner's wife and for a time Nietzsche's confidante. In November of 1862, Nietzsche outlined the composition of a dramatic production entitled 'Ermanarich.'[4] And as late as the summer of 1865, he was considering the performance of an *Ermanarich, Oper in drei Akten*.[5]

While the musical attempt at an 'Ermanarich Symphony' was abandoned, and though no dramatic performance ever saw the stage, it stands evident in this first sustained thematic enterprise that Nietzsche modulated his ideas from a poetic medium, to a musical form, to a drama, to an opera, and again to – what is most important for our efforts here – a sixty-three-page scholarly treatise.[6] "Scholarship, art, and philosophy," he noticed, were "growing together inside me to such an extent that one day I'm bound to give birth to centaurs."[7] The maturation from the purely artistic to the historical representation of the Ermanarich saga involves Nietzsche's recognition not only of an interesting figure within history, but of how the historical representation of this historical figure was itself a sort of puzzle whose pieces didn't always fit. "Before us is presented the age of Ermanarich, the great and last hero of the Goths before the great migration, whose history really belongs to history, even if we experience the great part of him only through the sources, only in the mythical [*sagenhafter*] clothing of historical events."[8]

Here Nietzsche tried to solve a genuine problem of conflicting historical sources. According to Roman chronicles, Ermanarich had committed suicide in AD 370 out of grief over the impending victory of the Huns over his own Ostrogoths; while Jordanes, a Byzantine monk of Gothic heritage, records a much more sympathetic view, claiming Ermanarich was killed valiantly in battle. In the twelfth century, the chronicler Saxo Grammaticus records the all-too-closely reminiscent tale of an ancient Danish King by the name of 'Jarmarich.' The unreliable chronicle is further marred by an improbably gruesome legend in which Ermanarich, before his death, had ordered his wife to be torn apart by horses – something not only not mentioned in the other accounts, but inconsistent with their portrayal of the king's character. Whoever Ermanarich actually was, and whatever the factual details of his life and death were, are thus likely unrecoverable given the discontinuity of the extant historical evidence.

And this is just the point at which Nietzsche's historical interest in Ermanarich begins. "That he is a historically meaningful personality

[4] *BAW* 2, 144–514. [5] *BAW* 3, 123–124.
[6] Preserved as *Gestaltung der Sage vom Ostgothenkoenig Ermanarich bis in das 12te Jahrhundert* at *BAW* 2, 281–312.
[7] Nietzsche to Rohde, January 15, 1870; *KSB* 3, 95. [8] *BAW* 2, 282ff.

seems to me incontrovertible [*unumstößlich*]."[9] Ermanarich seems on the one hand a noble hero, but on the other hand both a coward and wife-murderer. But how could a single authorial source have so badly described his subject so as to have presented an apparently self-contradictory figure? The philologically responsible reflex would be to suppose the apparent contradiction a result of multiple sources, possibly at different times. Such a hypothesis would serve to supply a natural and sufficient condition for the resulting evidence that is presently observable today.

> There is originally nothing in the saga that attacks Ermanarich, as I will show; but indeed the saga has grown, bit by bit, out of divergent soils, with ever new additions to the image tacked onto what the old saga had constructed, additions which increasingly corrupt the character of Ermanarich to the point where a clear antipathy emerges in the later versions of the saga.[10]

Notice, however, that this says nothing about *why* the original account was changed or *why* the two were combined, and indeed it cannot say anything in a rigorous historical way since this would amount to ascribing psychological motivations to what is without further evidence nothing more than a regulative hypothesis. This, however, is precisely what Nietzsche does next:

> Perhaps it is a repercussion of hate which the conquered people harbor towards Ermanarich, or perhaps it is the hatred of some 'scourge of the people' that was levied against Ermanarich – as if through the saga a large part of the qualities of Attila [the Hun] were transmitted into Ermanarich, while Attila himself sort of shrinks and fades away, to the point that he no longer appears recognizable.[11]

Nietzsche proceeds to trace the hypothetical genealogy that would explain the gradual and layered construction of the saga, from sources in the Near East, Germany, Denmark, and Britain. With a dizzyingly complex heritage, the saga as it now stands turns out to be a blend of misappropriated names, dates, traditions, peoples, and battles that were haphazardly assimilated into a single story. Ermanarich himself, king of Oium in the early 300s, had been confused with various old tribal kings of Gothic Germany, like Hermenrich and Emelrich,[12] and the old Danish tribal leader Jarmarich of whom Saxo Grammaticus spoke. He is named Eormenric in the English epic *Beowulf* and Jörmunrekkr in old Norse songs. His story had been manipulated principally by the choniclers of the Anglo-Saxons, who sought to assimilate the notoriously cruel and rapacious traits of Attila the Hun into their Eastern foes.

[9] *BAW* 2, 283. [10] *Ibid.* [11] *Ibid.* [12] *BAW* 2, 306.

To disentangle the story of Ermanarich, Nietzsche first had to straighten out the sources of what the scribe Jordanes writes in his AD 522 book: the *Getica*. According to Jordanes, at the time of the invasion of the Huns, Ermanarich was betrayed by one of his own tribes, the Rosoman. The name of that tribe, however, derives from a convoluted genealogy within the *Getica*, which was discoverd to have been based on an original chronicle by Kassiodorus: other names in other tales include Rosomonorum, Roxolanorum, Rasomonorum, and Rosomorum.[13] From that tribe, which Nietzsche suspects might have been Jordanes' construct, Ermanarich had chosen to be his bride Suanahild – otherwise known in Kassiodorus' source text as Sonilda, Sunihil, Sanielh, and, last but most recognizably, Swanhilde. But upon discovering her infidelity, according to Jordanes, Ermanarich ordered her drawn and quartered by wild horses. Thereafter Sarus and Ammius, leaders of the Rosomans and brothers of Suanahild, sought their revenge against the king. Attacking together, they injured the powerful Ermanarich, but failed to kill him. Knowing meanwhile their enemy's leader to be wounded and his kingdom in disarray, the Huns seized the opportunity to invade. Unable to bear the emotional wound of Suanahild's infidelity, the mutiny of his own people, and sensing the impending Hun conquest, Ermanarich committed suicide.[14]

But Jordanes' history still burdens Ermanarich with two characteristics that seem unbefitting so worthy a ruler. Why would the otherwise benevolent king have chosen so brutal a death for his wife and why would so adept a military strategist have failed even to attempt a defense against the invaders? Nietzsche's answer: It is the hatred or jealousy of later historians – like Jordanes – that made Ermanarich look simultaneously pathetic and cruel. Suanahild had not actually been Ermanarich's wife, Nietzsche claims, but the wife of one of his advisors, who had betrayed his king by defecting to the invading Huns. To avenge his anger, Ermanarich demanded that the traitor's wife be captured and torn apart by horses – a punishment, Nietzsche remarks, that was traditionally reserved for treason rather than infidelity. Suanahild's brothers had then avenged their sister's murder by killing the aged King Ermanarich. This leads Nietzsche to conclude that Ermanarich had in fact not opted for suicide, but was killed in cold blood without the chance to defend his people.

Nietzsche's solution to the Ermanarich problem has hardly been accepted by any scholarly orthodoxy. It is, as is clear, a creative but speculative attempt to reconstruct the motivations of historical agents who may or may

[13] *BAW* 2, 308. [14] *Ibid.*