

**CARACALLA AND HIS LATE-ANTIQUÉ BIOGRAPHER:
A HISTORICAL COMMENTARY ON THE *VITA CARACALLI*
IN THE *HISTORIA AUGUSTA***

by

Michael Louis Meckler

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Doctoral Committee:

Associate Professor David S. Potter, Chair
Professor Rudi P. Lindner
Professor Sabine G. MacCormack
Associate Professor James I. Porter

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DEDICATION

*Revae Zuravsky Lipson
in memoriam ac benedictionem*

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obscure emperors and pseudepigraphic texts, this dissertation is dedicated to her memory.

ABBREVIATIONS

Throughout this work the abbreviation *HA* will be used to refer to the *Historia Augusta*. Abbreviations for individual biographies in the *Historia Augusta* are adapted from those of Carolus Lessing, *Scriptorum historiae augustae lexicon* (Leipzig, 1901-6), and are as follows:

<i>A</i>	<i>Aurelianus</i>	<i>Gd</i>	<i>Gordiani tres</i>
<i>AC</i>	<i>Avidius Cassius</i>	<i>H</i>	<i>Hadrianus</i>
<i>Ael</i>	<i>Aelius</i>	<i>Hel</i>	<i>Heliogabalus</i>
<i>AP</i>	<i>Antoninus Pius</i>	<i>MA</i>	<i>Marcus Antoninus</i>
<i>AS</i>	<i>Alexander Severus</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>Maximi duo</i>
<i>C</i>	<i>Commodus</i>	<i>MB</i>	<i>Maximus et Balbinus</i>
<i>Car</i>	<i>Carus, Numerianus, Carinus</i>	<i>OM</i>	<i>Opilius Macrinus</i>
		<i>P</i>	<i>Pertinax</i>
<i>Cc</i>	<i>Caracallus</i>	<i>PN</i>	<i>Pescennius Niger</i>
<i>Cl</i>	<i>Claudius</i>	<i>Pr</i>	<i>Probus</i>
<i>CLA</i>	<i>Clodius Albinus</i>	<i>Q</i>	<i>Quadrigae tyrannorum</i>
<i>Dd</i>	<i>Diadumenus</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>Severus</i>
<i>DJ</i>	<i>Didius Iulianus</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>Tyranni triginta</i>
<i>G</i>	<i>Geta</i>	<i>Tac</i>	<i>Tacitus</i>
<i>Gall</i>	<i>Gallieni duo</i>	<i>V</i>	<i>Verus</i>
	<i>Val</i>		<i>Valeriani duo</i>

The abbreviation *Epit.* refers to the *Epitome de Caesaribus*, the collection of brief biographies of emperors from Augustus to Theodosius. Citations from the fragmentary books of the historian Dio are followed by the source of the fragments in parentheses: (*Xiph.*) refers to Xiphilinus, (*Exc. Val.*) refers to the *Excerpta Valesiana*, and (*Exc. Vat.*) refers to the *Excerpta Vaticana*.

Abbreviations for journals and series follow those in *L'année philologique* 61 (1990), xv-xxvii. Other abbreviations are as follows:

ANRW	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt</i> (Berlin, 1972-present)
BAR	<i>British archaeological reports</i>
BHAC	<i>Bonner Historia-Augusta-Colloquium, Antiquitas,</i> Reihe 4 (Bonn, 1963-1986/89)
CIL	<i>Corpus inscriptionum latinarum</i>
CGL	Georg Goetz, Gustav Löwe and Gotthold Gandermann, <i>Corpus glossariorum latinorum</i> (7 vols., Leipzig, 1888-1923)
CJ	Paul Krueger, <i>Codex Iustiniani</i> (Berlin, 1877)
CTh	Paul Krueger, <i>Codex Theodosianus</i> (Berlin, 1923)
D	Theodor Mommsen and Paul Krueger (Latin eds.), Alan Watson (English ed.), <i>The Digest of</i> <i>Justinian</i> (Philadelphia, 1985)
FGrHist	Felix Jacoby, <i>Die Fragmente der griechischen</i> <i>Historiker</i> (repr. Leiden, 1954-68)
IGRR	<i>Inscriptiones graecae ad res romanas pertinentes</i> (4 vols., Paris, 1906-27)
ILS	Hermann Dessau, <i>Inscriptiones latinae selectae</i> (Berlin, 1892-1916)
LSJ	Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott and Henry Stuart Jones, <i>A Greek-English lexicon</i> (Oxford, 1968)
MGH AA	<i>Monumenta Germaniae historica, auctores</i> <i>antiquissimi</i> (Berlin, 1877-1919)
OGIS	Wilhelm Dittenberger, <i>Orientalis graeci inscriptiones</i> <i>selectae</i> (Leipzig, 1903)
OLD	<i>Oxford Latin dictionary</i> (Oxford, 1982)
PIR²	<i>Prosopographia imperii romani</i> (2nd ed., Berlin, 1933-present)
RIC	Harold Mattingly, Edward O. Sydenham <i>et al.</i> , <i>Roman imperial coinage</i> (London, 1923-81)
SDAWG	<i>Sitzungsberichte der Deutschen Akademie der</i> <i>Wissenschaften zu Berlin, Klasse für</i> <i>Gesellschaftswissenschaften</i>

PREFACE

Commentaries represent a curiously yoked pair of opposite beasts. One animal strives toward the particular, demanding that the text be divided into separate passages for individualized examination. Yet the other animal requires that the text still be treated in a holistic manner, the individual bits of information contextualized both within the unity of the composition as well as in the larger spheres of contemporary history and comparative literature.

Often the only way to control these two creatures is to separate them, allowing particularism to run rampant in the commentary proper while a holistic treatment is provided only in a distant introduction. In trying to control this commentary on the life of Caracalla in the *Historia Augusta*, I am guilty of such drastic measures.

In my defense, it must be said that this struggle between particularism and unity is confounded with a text like the *Historia Augusta*. Too many questions cloud understanding of this pseudepigraphic collection of legitimate emperors and imperial wannabes: Is the *HA* to be taken seriously? On what level can one speak of literary or historical unity? Can the *Quellenforschung* grimpen ever be drained?

I do not pretend that this slender study of the biography of Caracalla either definitively answers or even adequately addresses these questions. My thoughts are hardly original but represent the adaptation (I would not dare call them "refinements," though others might opt for "distortions") of the views of other scholars, most notably Ronald Syme, Johannes Straub, Tim Barnes and

David Potter. Before turning to larger issues brought up in this study, I shall first revel in some of the many minutiae.

The pun at *Cc* 4.1 on the murder of Papinian provides strong support for the view that Dio's contemporary history (books 72-80) was put together in consultation with other literary sources, especially that of Marius Maximus, a known source for the *HA*. That Dio was using historical writings from the 220s in turn supports a late date (into the 230s) for the composition of Dio's history, or at least, the composition of the later books.

Dio's reliance on a written source also used by the author of the *HA* confounds the issue of the reliability of these two author's works for reconstructing events in the Severan period. Traditionally Dio has been viewed as the most reliable historical text, while the *HA* has been the text of last resort. This view may have to be changed, for the *HA*'s version of a particular event may well be closer to what was written by Marius Maximus than the adapted, abridged and translated version in what survives of Dio. And concerning events where Dio is not relying on Marius Maximus, it may also be that the original text of Marius Maximus contained more reliable information. Marius Maximus seems to have been both a more prominent individual in Rome as well as perhaps a couple of years older than Dio, and hence Marius Maximus should be reckoned to have had a greater accessibility to reliable information. Of course, information in the *HA* must always be viewed with the utmost caution because of the *HA* author's penchant for distorting, supplementing and falsifying his sources. But in particular cases, the *HA* may provide the most reliable information on events of the period.

One such case involves the death of Geta. Working from *Cc* 2.4-4.10 as the most reliable narrative, I have found it necessary to propose a new date for Geta's assassination, namely 25 December 211. Of course, the nature of the

evidence may preclude a definitive answer to the question of on precisely which late December day Geta was killed. My proposal, however, adds an intriguing twist to the dating of Geta's life. His birthday was rediscovered only a generation ago through a careful reading of the account of the martyrdom of Perpetua, a death that took place on a *natalis Caesaris*. A saint was killed on Geta's birthday, and in turn, Geta may have been killed on what, for modern readers, is the *natalis Christi*.

Turning to the issue of the *Historia Augusta* as a work of literature, it seems strange that the text has received little notice from literary critics. About 15 years ago three dissertations — by Scholtemeijer, by den Hengst and by Stubenrauch — appeared, each professing literary rather than historical concerns. More recent examples include the dissertations of Bertrand-Dagenbach and of Scheithauer. These investigations have since been used primarily to discuss issues of composition rather than to generate active literary-critical engagement with the *HA*. The present study, alas, does not provide the thorough literary analysis needed to propel *HA* studies forward (though I have the excuse that this commentary is supposed to have a historical focus). Nonetheless, I would like to propose a few ideas that may point the way for future literary studies.

One reason historians have been so baffled by the *HA* is the text's refusal to be authoritative. Emperors, usurpers and athelings are all given official biographies in which true and false are tossed together and the essential and trivial given equal time. The disfiguring of the text's biographical models is especially troubling to readers accustomed to generic modes of interpretation. The *HA*'s defiance of expectation raises questions: Is it valid to provide a method for reading the *HA* based on those used for other texts when those texts are similar in form to the *HA* but different in function? Is our definition of

historical writing too Tacitean, and our definition of biography too Suetonian to be of much use? Does the subversion of authority provide some sort of unity for the *HA*'s form and content?

One place the *HA* does *not* defy expectation involves the reputations of emperors. Good emperors, like Marcus Aurelius, are still good. Bad emperors, like Gallienus, are still bad. Middling emperors, like Hadrian, are still middling. The author is deliberately refusing to overturn the received tradition about Roman history. In this regard, he is not the oft-described *Fälscher* indiscriminately fabricating events. Rather, his fabrications serve to enhance the received tradition. The author may have been reconstructing a Roman ethnicity by adapting the historical record. (Modern parallels might be the development of Kwanzaa or the Nation of Islam among African-Americans.) The *HA* may have been an attempt to provide a way of defining what it meant to be Roman through this enhanced recollection of the past. The details of Roman history provided by the *Historia Augusta* are more than Roman: they are *hyper-Roman*. And this *hyper-Roman* nature of the *HA* deserves further examination.

The style of the *HA* — with its sensory overload of details — may be acquiring some quite recent parallels. Postmodern writing has elevated the trivial to the essential. Disjointed arguments and unconnected details are hallmarks of a recent form of criticism that eschews the purportedly objective and seemingly anonymous pronouncements of earlier scholarship. Such criticism often blurs the distinction between writing as analysis and writing as performance. Similarities with the *HA* are striking, and the aesthetics of postmodernism may provide interesting approaches to the study of the *HA*.

New approaches to the *HA* may also cause us to rethink our notions about late antiquity. Late antiquity has been seen as a period of transitions, though those transitions often remain poorly defined. The most notorious of these poor

definitions involves the still quite hazy movement from paganism to Christianity, for we cannot yet be certain as to what exactly it meant when certain individuals are classified as "pagan" or "Christian." Other transitions — from security to disorder, from public to private, from cosmopolitan to provincial — may also be only too vaguely defined.

I hope the reader is not disappointed because the present study fails to tackle the fundamental concerns mentioned in this preface. These concerns, however, should be read as a subtext into the present study and are reflected (though perhaps far too dimly) in the commentary and its introduction. As these concerns were in the back of the mind of the study's author, I feel they should also be in the back of the mind of the reader.

Finally, I wish to send the reader off in the spirit of the *HA* by paraphrasing the text's final words (*Car* 21.2-3): I started this commentary not because I thought I had any skills as a writer or scholar but because I was interested in the material. Perhaps a more capable individual shall take up this material and find my work of use. In any event, do not be too harsh, for I know full well my desire to write this study far surpassed my ability.

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INTRODUCTION

Caracalla: emperor in an age of soldiers and intellectuals

The Roman emperor known today as Caracalla was born (L.?) Septimius Bassianus on 4 April 188 at Lyon.¹ His father, L. Septimius Severus, was a native of Lepcis in Africa who was then serving as governor of Gallia Lugdunensis. His mother, Julia Domna, was the daughter of the high priest of the temple at Emesa in Syria.

Caracalla's background is representative of the new, multicultural aristocracy that came to the fore during the Antonine age. While non-Italians had been entering the senate and the higher echelons of the imperial service in increasing numbers since the days of the early principate, it is in the Antonine age that these provincials come to the fore.² The sons and daughters of Spain and Gaul, Greece and Asia, Syria and Africa gained positions and status in this developing international ruling class. The Asian orator Aelius Aristides (in a praise of Rome written during the reign of Antoninus Pius) aptly noted that the term "Roman" no longer meant the resident of a city but rather applied to the cultural *mélange* coming together from throughout the Mediterranean.³

This acceptance as "Romans" of people from different ethnic and social backgrounds percolated throughout the empire, even to the very top. Marcus

1 The praenomen is not known. Lucius, being Severus' praenomen, is a likely candidate. The cognomen is that of Julia Domna's father. The date is computed from Dio 78.6.5, confirmed by the *Feriale Duranum*, P. Dura 54.ii.2, Welles-Fink-Gilliam, pp.199-200. On the families of Severus and Julia Domna, see A. R. Birley, *Severus*², esp. pp.212-26.

2 Syme, "Antonine government," pp.676-88.

3 Aelius Aristides, *Ῥώμης ἐγκώμιον* 214-15 Jebb; on the perceptions of Mediterranean culture during the Antonine and Severan periods, see Bowersock, *Greek sophists*.

Aurelius kept as a guiding principle the Stoic idea that all human beings were equally citizens of the universe,⁴ and that prejudice and harsh criticism were out of order when dealing with those whose educational background may have made them seem inept or uncouth.⁵ Any man who could show competence in military or administrative matters could aspire even to entering the imperial family.⁶ Two of Marcus' sons-in-law had equestrian fathers (Ti. Claudius Pompeianus, married to Lucilla after the death of her first husband, the emperor Verus; and M. Petronius Sura Mamertinus, married to Cornificia), and three were from provincial families (Pompeianus, from Antioch in Syria; Faustina's husband Cn. Claudius Severus, whose family's origins were in Pompeiopolis in Paphlagonia; and Vibia Sabina's first husband L. Antistius Burrus, whose father came from Thibilis in Numidia).⁷

Governing this amalgam of Mediterranean communities involved cooperation among various constituent authorities. Soldiers made up one such constituency, bureaucrats another, senators a third, and there was enough fluidity to allow a few individuals to change constituencies or, perhaps more properly, to be part of more than one.⁸ At the center of this system was the emperor, whose job it was to balance the various constituencies and respond adequately to their concerns.⁹ Marcus handled this balancing act well enough:

4 Marcus, *Tὰ εἰς ἑαυτὸν* 4.4: εἰ τὸ νοερὸν ἡμῖν κοινόν, καὶ ὁ λόγος, καθ'ὄν λογικοὶ ἔσμεν, κοινός, εἰ τοῦτο, καὶ ὁ προστακτικὸς τῶν ποιητέων ἢ μὴ λόγος κοινός, εἰ τοῦτο, καὶ ὁ νόμος κοινός, εἰ τοῦτο, πολῖται ἔσμεν, εἰ τοῦτο, πολιτεύματος τίνος μετέχομεν, εἰ τοῦτο, ὁ κόσμος ὡσανεὶ πόλις ἐστὶ. See also Farquharson, *Meditations*, pp.311-12.

5 Marcus, *Tὰ εἰς ἑαυτὸν* 1.10; see Rutherford, *Meditations*, pp.52-53.

6 Herodian 1.2.2.

7 Pflaum, "Gendres."

8 On the various interest groups in Roman government, see Millar, *Emperor*, pp.59-131.

9 Modern sociologists and political theorists have cited the Roman empire as a model of how competing interest groups manipulate government, Weber, *Economy*, p.990; see also Lane, *Public sector*, pp.47-68.

during his reign there was but one serious attempt to replace the emperor, and that attempt was driven by misinformation more than reform.¹⁰

But Marcus was dead. The imperial office now rested with his son Commodus, a young man of very different temperament and judgment. Commodus was not as successful at this balancing act as was his father, and there were plenty of willing alternatives available. From the start Commodus' reign had been disfigured by a series of revolts and rebellions involving other Roman aristocrats, including the emperor's closest relatives. Balance was shifting away from senators and bureaucrats, but the troops were not the only group gaining influence and authority.¹¹

The emperor held an office, but he was also a human being, with the day-to-day living requirements of any other human being. Those servants and freedmen who responded to the personal needs and wants of the emperor and of his family formed a constituency of their own, that of the imperial household. Commodus, an emperor born to the purple and raised by the imperial household, altered the balance of Roman government toward his personal help.

Those senators serving in government, like Severus, often found themselves buffeted from favor to disfavor depending what the emperor was hearing from his household staff. Severus may have fallen out of Commodus' favor a few years earlier, in the wake of a conspiracy led by the emperor's sister Lucilla. Severus had recently been restored to the emperor's good graces, perhaps through the influence of Cleander, the emperor's chamberlain and the latest in a long line of former slaves who had become imperial favorites.¹² In the

10 Dio (Xiph.) 71.22.3-23.2 says that Avidius Cassius launched his attempt to become emperor under the mistaken impression that Marcus had died; see Syme, "Avidius Cassius."

11 On Commodus' support of and among soldiers, see now Speidel, "Commodus."

12 A. R. Birley, *Severus*², pp.60-62, 73-75.

same year as Caracalla's birth (188), Cleander was given the title secretary of the dagger (*a pugione*) and placed in charge of the praetorian prefects and thus the praetorian guard.¹³

Severus, Julia and their son Bassianus returned to Rome early the following year. Julia shortly gave birth to another boy on 7 March 189.¹⁴ The child was named P. Septimius Geta after Severus' father. Then the family traveled to Sicily, where Severus took up a new position as governor.

But there would be little stability. Cleander was murdered the following spring after riots broke out in Rome.¹⁵ The new favorite was Eclectus, Cleander's replacement as chamberlain. Eclectus, however, had an especially difficult time trying to keep Commodus' ever more erratic behavior in check. The emperor had come to identify himself with Hercules, ordering statues be erected of himself dressed as Hercules. Commodus gave himself twelve names and had those names applied to the months of the year. The emperor even renamed the city of Rome as "Commodiana" and enjoyed giving public displays of his hunting skills.¹⁶

Eclectus feared he was following Cleander's career path a little too closely, and in the interest of preservation devised a plot within the imperial household to eliminate the emperor. Even Marcia, Commodus' mistress, was included. For such a plot to succeed, other constituencies needed to be involved. Disgruntled senators were an obvious choice. Several leading aristocrats lent support, most notably Pompeianus, the emperor's erstwhile brother-in-law.

13 A. R. Birley, *Severus*², p.78.

14 Barnes, "Acta," pp.521-25.

15 A. R. Birley, *Severus*², pp.79-80.

16 Dio (Xiph., Exc. Val.) 72.15-21 details the spectacle; see now also Speidel, "Commodus."

Finally, a ready successor to Commodus was needed. The plotters settled on P. Helvius Pertinax.¹⁷

Pertinax was one of these Antonine "new men." He was the son of a freedman who spent the first part of his adult life earning a living as a teacher. In his mid-30s, Pertinax changed careers, entering the army as a low-level officer in charge of a cohort.¹⁸ He rose quickly through at first military, then later civilian administrative positions, and he could count on Marcus' son-in-law Pompeianus as a patron.¹⁹ Pertinax was adlected into the senate in the early 170s and probably served as a legionary commander before becoming consul in 175 with Didius Julianus as a colleague. Pertinax was governor of a series of provinces, including the prestigious post of Africa, before being picked by Commodus to run the city of Rome in 189.

The conspirators decided to act on the final evening of 192, before the soldiers would give their loyalty oaths for the new year. Marcia gave the emperor poison, but he vomited the drugs, after which his personal trainer was called in to strangle the emperor in his bath.²⁰ The following day Rome awoke to new consuls, and a new emperor.

Severus was serving as governor of Upper Pannonia, having been sent to the province in 191. Severus duly took an oath of loyalty to the new emperor, under whom he had served in Syria a little more than a decade before.²¹ Julia may have been with Severus, but Caracalla and Geta remained in Rome.²²

17 On the role of Pertinax in the conspiracy, see A. R. Birley, *Severus*², pp.87-92.

18 The early career of Pertinax is examined in detail by Alföldy, *Heeresgeschichte*, pp.326-48.

19 A. R. Birley, *Severus*², pp.63-67.

20 Dio (Xiph.) 72.22.1-6; cf. Herodian 1.17.8-11.

21 A. R. Birley, *Severus*², p.68.

22 Herodian 3.2.4 mentions that Commodus required the children of provincial governors to stay in Rome as possible hostages in case of revolt, a situation Severus was able to use to his advantage once he entered the city as emperor. Certainly the son of the emperor

Shortly before Caracalla's fifth birthday, events were to change the boy's life forever.

For a Roman emperor to rule successfully, he had to keep a balance among various constituencies. Pertinax was a man with close ties to bureaucrats and senators, groups slighted by Commodus. Pertinax tried to adjust the balance more toward these administrators who decided government policies. There was, however, danger in alienating the soldiers who had to enforce those policies. Both groups were essential to good government, and to each other. Soldiers needed bureaucrats and senators to organize the government and its revenues, thus providing the troops with the means (financial and otherwise) for their livelihood; the administrators needed soldiers to affix this organization onto the surplus-poor and potentially unstable communities that made up the ancient Mediterranean world.

In the city of Rome, the coup that brought Pertinax to the purple had been welcomed by the administrative constituencies in the government but only uneasily accepted by the praetorian guard, for Commodus had been quite popular among soldiers. Pertinax wanted to restore the government's financial health, and the troops became less and less happy about the belt-tightening. By early March the praetorians had been involved in two failed coups. On 28 March a group of soldiers mutinied, and in a clumsy attempt to quell the disturbance, Pertinax was killed.²³

What followed was one of the most notorious episodes in Roman history. T. Flavius Sulpicianus, the father-in-law of Pertinax then serving as praetorian

Pertinax remained in Rome while his father was away, Dio (Xiph.) 73.7.3; see Commentary on Cc 4.8.

23 A. R. Birley, *Severus*², pp.89-94.

prefect, and Didius Julianus, a colleague of Pertinax in the consulship a decade and a half earlier, made competing promises to the praetorians to gain their support for the imperial office. The auction-like atmosphere involved Sulpicianus inside the praetorian camp and Julianus standing on the outside wall while the two made their financial offers to the troops.²⁴ Julianus carried the day, and with the soldiers' backing was duly confirmed emperor. His authority would not last long.

Upon hearing of the assassination of Pertinax, Severus quickly made sure Caracalla and Geta were in safe hands before having his troops proclaim him emperor on 9 April.²⁵ Severus and his army then marched on Rome, gathering support along the way. By the time he reached Interamna, 80 km north of Rome, even the praetorians had abandoned Julianus. On 1 June, Julianus was executed by one of the soldiers, and the senate confirmed Severus as emperor.²⁶ The new emperor entered Rome without a struggle.

But Severus was not the only Roman governor that April who considered himself ready for imperial office. D. Clodius Albinus in Britain may have been saluted as emperor by his troops, but for the time being he remained content with the title of Caesar and heir offered by Severus.²⁷ C. Pescennius Niger in Syria was proclaimed emperor in the provincial capital, Antioch, and the eastern provinces quickly went under his authority. Egypt, for example, was already in Niger's camp by the end of May.²⁸

24 Dio (Xiph., Exc. Val.) 73.11.

25 Herodian 3.2.4; A. R. Birley, *Severus*², p.97, suggests Fabius Cilo may have safeguarded Caracalla and Geta.

26 Dio (Xiph.) 73.17.3-5.

27 Dio (Xiph.) 73.14.3-15.2; *CLA* 1.2; Herodian 2.15; see Whittaker, *Herodian*, vol.1, p.243 n.4.

28 An edict of the Egyptian prefect dated 30 May 193 names Niger as emperor, *P. Gron. 1*; Sijpesteijn, "Bermerkungen," pp.161-63. It is interesting to note Didius Julianus fails to

Byzantium became the base of operations for Niger, who realized that only through defeat of western armies could he successfully maintain his imperial position. An attempt to increase his authority in Europe brought about an attack near Perinthus against hastily gathered troops loyal to Severus. While Niger's troops seem to have suffered fewer casualties than those under the command of Severan loyalist L. Fabius Cilo, no territorial advance was made and the troops returned to Byzantium.

Niger's early success was not maintained. In late December 193 or early January 194, Niger was defeated in a battle near Nicaea and fled south. Asia and Bithynia quickly fell under Severus' control. Egypt recognized Severus' authority on 13 February.²⁹

By late spring, Niger was defeated near Issus and the remainder of his support collapsed. Syria was pacified and Antioch taken by Severan troops. Niger was killed while fleeing the city.³⁰ Antioch saw its status diminished, replaced as capital by and placed under the control of its neighbor and rival Laodicea.³¹

Byzantium, however, refused to surrender to Severan forces. Niger's head was sent to the city to convince the besieged citizens to give up but to no avail. The Byzantines held out for another year before surrender. The walls of the city were destroyed, and Byzantium was placed under the jurisdiction of Perinthus.

While Byzantium remained under siege, Severus decided to seek a foreign enemy. An attack on Nisibis by Osrhoeni, Adiabeni and Scenite Arabs

appear as emperor in any Egyptian documents. One assumes Julianus' authority was never accepted there, Martin, "Évènements," p.92.

29 Hasebroek, *Severus*, p.59; Herz, "Dies imperii," p.285; Rubin, *Propaganda*, p.204.

30 Herodian 3.4.6; cf. Dio (Xiph.) 74.8.3.

31 Herodian 3.6.9; Downey, *Antioch*, p.241 n.29.

provided the opportunity.³² Severus led his armies across the Euphrates, annexing much of the kingdom of Osrhoene. Nisibis was occupied, and by the end of the summer of 195 Severus had claimed three victories.³³

With one rival defeated, Severus could turn his attention to another. Trusted men were moved into commands farther and farther west. While Severus was still in Mesopotamia, he proclaimed himself the son of Marcus Aurelius and brother of the now deified Commodus. Bassianus' name was changed to M. Aurelius Antoninus.³⁴ The moves were a clear signal not only that Severus wished to attach his legitimacy to that of the Antonines, but also that Severus was reaching out to those constituencies who approved of Commodus — most notably, the military. Albinus quickly realized Severus no longer had any need for him and was now courting Albinus' supporters. By the end of 195 Albinus had himself proclaimed emperor; Severus had him proclaimed a public enemy.³⁵

The emperor returned to Rome late in the summer of the following year, displaying Caracalla as his heir to troops in Viminacium along the way.³⁶ Severus remained in the capital but a few weeks before moving north in preparation for an attack on Albinus. Caracalla may have accompanied his father as far as Pannonia, where he could have been left in the care of Fabius Cilo, then governor of Upper Pannonia.³⁷ Severus assembled his forces and

32 A. R. Birley, *Severus*², p.115.

33 One victory each against the Osrhoeni (*imperator V*), the Scenite Arabs (*imp. VI*) and the Adiabeni (*imp. VII*). All three victories may have been proclaimed by the end of August, see Rubin, *Propaganda*, pp.205-7 and n.36.

34 The "adoption" of Severus into the Antonine family took place in the summer of 195, and before the victories over the Scenite Arabs and the Adiabeni, *RIC* 5.136; cf. *IGRR* 4.566 = *ILS* 8805, and see Rubin, *Propaganda*, pp.207-9; Mastino, *Titulature*, pp.44-45.

35 A. R. Birley, *Severus*², p.121.

36 *S* 10.3; A. R. Birley, *Severus*², p.122.

37 A. R. Birley, *Severus*², p.124.

entered Gaul from Upper Germany.³⁸ After an initial battle near Tournous, the Severan forces pursued Albinus' armies to Lyon. The city was sacked, and Albinus committed suicide.³⁹

Once Albinus had been defeated, Severus' concerns returned to the eastern frontier. The emperor may have decided on a Parthian war as early as the defeat of Niger,⁴⁰ but it was only in the summer of 197 that planning began. Later that summer Severus, accompanied by Julia and their sons Caracalla and Geta, crossed the Euphrates and once again visited Nisibis. After a brief return to Syria, the emperor and his forces again crossed the Euphrates, moving south. The goal this time was Ctesiphon, the Parthian capital. Severus met little resistance along the way, capturing the undefended cities of Babylon and Seleucia. The Parthian emperor fled Ctesiphon, and the conquest of the city was proclaimed on 28 January 198.⁴¹

That same day Caracalla was elevated to the rank of Augustus. The choice of day was significant. Exactly one century earlier, Trajan became emperor.⁴² Severus had already given his son the same name as the emperor Marcus. Now Severus provided Caracalla with the same *dies imperii* as Trajan, once again linking the boy with the dynasty founded by Nerva.

As the victorious armies returned west, Severus reorganized the eastern frontier. A new province of Mesopotamia was established east of Osrhoene in the hinterlands between the upper Tigris and the upper Euphrates. Nisibis was the military and administrative center, and stationed there were the legiones I

38 Dio (Xiph.) 75.6.1 says a 150,000 troops were involved in the war between Severus and Albinus. One interpretation of troop strength is by Graham, "Lugdunum."

39 Dio (Xiph.) 75.6.1-7.4; Herodian 3.7.2-7; S 11.1-9.

40 A. R. Birley, *Severus*², p.115.

41 A. R. Birley, *Severus*², p.129-30.

42 Guey, "28 janvier"; Welles-Fink-Gilliam, pp.198-99, 206, on P. Dura 54.i.14-16 (*Feriale Duranum*).

and III Parthicae which had been raised for this expedition. The only blemish of the campaign was the failure of Roman forces (on two occasions) to capture Hatra, only 100 km from the new frontier.⁴³

In Syria Phoenice, Palmyra became a Roman *colonia* and the city's troops regular units in the Roman army. Some of the southern portion of Syria Phoenice was transferred to the province of Arabia. Arabia was seeing its defenses strengthened, with construction work attested on roads and fortresses.⁴⁴

Late in 199 Severus proceeded to Egypt. While there he promoted the governor Q. Aemilius Saturninus as a colleague to the praetorian prefect C. Fulvius Plautianus, who may have been a kinsman of the emperor.⁴⁵ Plautianus was not pleased, and within the year Saturninus was deposed and murdered.⁴⁶ Once again sole praetorian prefect, Plautianus was amassing an unprecedented amount of wealth and power, receiving better treatment in the provinces than even the emperor himself.⁴⁷ Plautianus' ascendancy had serious consequences for Caracalla.

Upon Severus' and Caracalla's return to Rome in the spring of 202 (as part of the celebration of Severus' *decennalia*), Caracalla was married to Plautianus' daughter Plautilla. Caracalla was not pleased. He hated Plautilla and tried, as much as he could, to avoid having anything to do with her.⁴⁸ The marriage and Plautianus' growing influence with Severus (the prefect was consul *ordinarius* of 203 with the emperor's other son, Geta) developed in

43 A. R. Birley, *Severus*², p.132-33.

44 A. R. Birley, *Severus*², p.134-35.

45 The possible kinship is reported by Herodian 3.10.6. On how Plautianus and Severus may have been related, see A. R. Birley, *Severus*², pp.220-21.

46 A. R. Birley, *Severus*², p.137.

47 Dio (Xiph.) 75.14-15.

48 Dio (Xiph.) 75.3.1; Herodian 3.10.8.

Caracalla a strong hatred of his father-in-law. Caracalla seems to have been involved in having Plautianus dismissed and executed in January 205, some at the time believing the young man forged the documents implicating the praetorian prefect in a plot to murder Severus.⁴⁹ Caracalla also was able to get the divorce he wanted, and Plautilla was banished to the island of Lipara.

With Plautianus executed, the post of praetorian prefect was once again open. Severus reverted back to the practice of having two prefects: Q. Maecius Laetus was an administrator who had recently served as governor of Egypt;⁵⁰ Aemilius Papinianus, possibly a relative of Julia Domna, was a jurist and legal counselor in the imperial court.⁵¹

Caracalla was nearly 17 years old. Geta was almost 16. During the next three years the behavior of the brothers took a turn for the worse.⁵² An intense rivalry developed between them. On one occasion a chariot race got out of hand, and Caracalla was thrown from the vehicle. His leg was broken and it took some time to heal.⁵³ Severus began to feel the luxuries of Rome and the lack of necessary activities were detrimental to his sons' maturity.

Small-scale fighting against the Caledonians and Maeatae was already going on in the north of Britain, and significant gains looked possible.⁵⁴ In 208 the emperor used the fighting as an opportunity to move his family out of Rome and expose them to the rigors of a military campaign.⁵⁵

Eboracum, the home of the legio VI Victrix, became the headquarters for the operation. Severus and Caracalla together led the army northward, perhaps

49 Dio (Xiph.) 76.1-6; cf. Herodian 3.11.4-12.12; see also Grosso, "Plauziano."

50 *PIR*² M 54; Howe, *Prefect* no.21; Pflaum, *Carrières* no.219.

51 Howe, *Prefect* no.22; Kunkel, *Herkunft* no.56; Honoré, "Severan lawyers," pp.205-7.

52 Dio (Exc. Val., Xiph.) 76.7.1; Herodian 3.13.1-2.

53 Dio (Exc. Val., Xiph.) 76.7.2.

54 Dio (Xiph.) 76.10.6; A. R. Birley, *Severus*², pp.170-73.

55 Dio (Xiph.) 76.11.1; Herodian 3.14.2.

all the way to the Moray Firth, during the campaign of 209.⁵⁶ Early the following year a British victory was proclaimed, but by this time Severus was in ill health, crippled by gout.⁵⁷ A second year of fighting ensued, but under Caracalla's sole command; Severus remained behind at Eboracum.

The dying emperor had little trust that his elder son would protect his younger. During the British campaign Severus promoted Geta, making him Augustus along with his father and brother.⁵⁸ Even during this illness Severus continued to try to reconcile the young men.⁵⁹

Severus died at Eboracum 4 February 211.⁶⁰ His body was cremated on the spot, and plans were made to return the remains to Rome.⁶¹ A new government and a new household needed to be organized. Concerning the latter, several particularly odious freedmen were executed. Among the murdered were the chamberlain Castor and the tutor Euodus.⁶² Word was also sent back to Italy to have Caracalla's exiled ex-wife Plautilla put to death.⁶³

56 A. R. Birley, *Severus*², pp.180-81.

57 Dio (Exc. Val., Xiph.) 76.16.1; Herodian 3.15.1.

58 Numismatic evidence points to Geta's promotion coming in 209, for coins exist for Geta with the legend *TR P IIII*, *RIC* 5.cxc-cxci, 425, 429. Since such coins would have to have been minted between 10 December 211 and Geta's death later that month, his promotion would thus have taken place between 10 December 208 and 9 December 209. One does not seem to be able to deduce the year of the promotion from epigraphic evidence, Mastino, "Potestà," p.68 (chart); id., *Titolature*, p.41. A. R. Birley, *Severus*², pp.186-87, gives the year as 210, citing on p.256 n.28 a paper given by Ginette Di Vita-Evrard at the Eighth International Congress of Greek and Latin Epigraphy. The paper, titled "De la date du procès d'Hérode Atticus à l'ère d'Hadrien et à l'association au pouvoir de L. Septimius Geta," was evidently published in volume 2 of the proceedings, *ΠΡΑΚΤΙΚΑ ΤΟΥ Η' ΣΥΝΕΔΡΙΟΥ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΛΑΤΙΝΙΚΗΣ ΕΠΙΓΡΑΦΙΚΗΣ* (Athens, 1987), but I have not been able to see the volume.

59 Dio (Xiph.) 76.15.2.

60 Dio (Xiph.) 76.15.12.

61 Dio (Xiph.) 76.15.3, Herodian 3.15.7, S 24.2.

62 Dio (Xiph.) 77.1.1. Buraselis, *ΘΕΙΑ ΔΩΡΕΑ*, pp.57-64, has recently claimed that Euodus was a Christian, but his evidence is not substantial enough to draw such a conclusion.

63 Dio (Xiph.) 77.1.1, though cf. Herodian 4.6.3; see Commentary on Cc 1.7; Grosso, "Plauziano."

With regard to the former, one of the first acts of the new regime was the promotion of Papinian into the senate.⁶⁴ Perhaps it was imagined that the eminent jurist would act as a sort of *éminence grise*, protecting the interests of the young emperors among the senatorial aristocracy and counseling Caracalla and Geta on securing the succession. On the other hand, the promotion may have been merely an honorable way of removing Papinian from his job, though the jurist must have retained some influence, for his protégé Valerius Patruinus was installed in his place as praetorian prefect.⁶⁵

But there were more urgent needs demanding attention. Roman troops were still preparing for continuation of their campaign against the Britons. Caracalla returned to the north to make peace, abandoning territory and fortifications north of Hadrian's Wall.⁶⁶

Peace negotiations delayed the already long journey back to Rome.⁶⁷ Once the sad trip began, relations between Caracalla and Geta worsened. Each brother tried to protect himself from what he saw as murder attempts and conspiracies by the other.⁶⁸ The residents of Rome already suspected hostility

64 Dio (Xiph.) 77.1.1 notes the end of Papinian's service at praetorian prefect, though the historian views the change as a dismissal. On Papinian's entrance into the senate, see Commentary on Cc 3.2.

65 On Patruinus, see Howe, *Prefect* no.23.

66 Dio (Xiph.) 77.1.1; Herodian 3.15.6; A. R. Birley, *Severus*², p.188.

67 The death of Severus is first noted in an Egyptian papyrus on 30 May 211, *BGU* III 711. If one assumes a generous 80-day gap for transmission of the news from Rome to Egypt, that would have the news of Severus' death reach Rome on 11 March. While this date seems improbably early, it must be noted that under urgent conditions (and without having to transport the entourage of the imperial family) a journey from Eboracum to Rome would have taken at least a month and a half. It is more likely that the return of Julia Domna, Caracalla, Geta and the rest of the imperial court took two months and probably three. While Herodian describes the emperors as rushing back to Rome (ἐξ τῆν Ῥώμην ἠπειγόντο, 4.1.1), any haste would have been tempered by task of such a journey, and besides, Herodian's reliability in such matters is suspect. On travel times and the spread of news in the empire, see Duncan-Jones, *Structure*, pp.7-29.

68 Dio (Xiph.) 77.1.3, Herodian 4.1.1-2.

had broken out between the two emperors long before the imperial party arrived in the city sometime in the middle of the summer.⁶⁹

The funeral was a spectacular event, during which a wax effigy of Severus lay in state for a week. The effigy was then burnt on an elaborate pyre and an eagle released from the pyre to soar skyward.⁷⁰ The remains were then deposited in the mausoleum of Hadrian, which was by that time strongly associated with the Antonine family and provided a final link between Severus' family and that of Marcus and Pius.⁷¹

After the funeral, the relationship between Caracalla and Geta continued to deteriorate. Neither brother was willing to cooperate with the other, and the operations of government came to a standstill as the two bickered on government appointments and policy decisions.⁷² A later story claimed the two were even considering dividing the empire but were prevented by their mother.⁷³ Caracalla was being urged by his advisors have Geta murdered,⁷⁴ and an attempt may have been made at the start of the normally joyous Saturnalia.⁷⁵ It was becoming more and more urgent that Geta be eliminated before soldiers took their loyalty oaths at the beginning of the new year.

The murder was carried out during the day of 25 December 211.⁷⁶ The version of events later promoted as the truth by Julia Domna's sister Julia Maesa ran as follows: Geta was lured to come without his bodyguards to a meeting with Caracalla and their mother Julia Domna to discuss a possible

69 Dio (Xiph.) 77.1.4-6; on the date of the arrival, see Commentary on Cc 2.4.

70 Herodian 4.2 describes the ceremony in detail. See also MacCormack, *Ceremony*, pp.93-106.

71 Dio (emend. from Xiph.) 76.15.4 calls the tomb the 'ΑΥΤΑΥΤΕΙΟΝ.

72 Herodian 4.4.1.

73 Herodian 4.3.5-9.

74 Cc 3.4 relates there were among the emperor's advisors *suasores Getae mortis*.

75 Dio (Xiph.) 77.2.1.

76 On the date of Geta's death, see Commentary on Cc 2.4, 2.7, 4.2.

reconciliation. When Geta arrived, he was attacked by some centurions. Wounded and bleeding, he ran to his mother and clinging to her, died.⁷⁷

However Geta was killed, the murder required the emperor to seek the loyalty of the military forces stationed near Rome. Caracalla immediately visited the praetorian camp, arriving in the late afternoon or early evening. He told the soldiers that his brother had been killed for plotting against Caracalla's life, and the emperor promised the troops a donative and a pay increase.⁷⁸

With the loyalty of the praetorians assured, Caracalla then traveled at night to Albinus and the camp of the legio II Parthica. The legionary soldiers were far more difficult to placate than the praetorians. For several hours the emperor was refused admittance to the camp. When Caracalla was finally let in, he gained the soldiers' loyalty only by stressing over and over again that Geta had been plotting to kill him. The offers of a donative and extra pay also helped soothe the soldiers' feelings.⁷⁹

Fatigued by a night of travel and negotiations with his troops, Caracalla returned to Rome the following morning to address the senate. The emperor was still wearing a breastplate and was surrounded by an armed guard. His throat was sore and he spoke little, merely a brief defense of Geta's murder and the announcement of a general amnesty allowing the return of exiles to their homelands.⁸⁰

77 Dio (Xiph.) 77.2.1-6; cf. Herodian 4.4.2-3; on Julia Maesa as the source of the story, see Commentary on Cc 2.4.

78 Cc 2.4-6; Dio (Xiph., Exc. Val.) 77.3; Herodian 4.4.

79 Cc 2.7-8.

80 Dio (Xiph., Exc. Val.) 77.3.3; Exc. Vat. 136; Cc 2.9-3.1.

The young emperor did not yet feel safe. Perhaps he feared attractive alternatives were already being eyed as possible emperors, and the difficulties in dealing with the troops the night before may have weighed heavy on his mind.

Caracalla decided to return to the praetorian camp to spend the night.⁸¹ His presence alone would have indicated his vulnerability to the troops. The soldiers began to demand immediate cash, and Caracalla gave them permission to plunder temples and treasuries. The praetorians also wanted to get rid of the punctilious jurists who had been commanding them, so the emperor approved the murders of Patruinus and his recent predecessor Papinian. Their bodies would be dragged through a city street, perhaps an indication of how much these two were hated by the troops.

The following day the emperor made a visit with the empire's most prominent men to the temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus on the Capitoline, the center of Rome's civic religion. As an attempt to reassure the senate and the city, Caracalla left the Capitolium arm-in-arm with his father's old supporters Cilo and Papinian. Those accompanying Caracalla at the temple would not have known that some of them had already been marked for destruction. The emperor, now gaining confidence in his own security, returned to the imperial residence on the Palatine.⁸² By that evening, the city would erupt in violence as Caracalla accelerated the change in government he initiated with Geta's murder. Rome was witnessing another bloody purge.

81 Cc 3.1.

82 Cc 3.2.

Purges were a regular feature of Roman imperial government, going back all the way to Augustus.⁸³ With the transformation from a system in which officials faced elections and held power for fixed terms to one where appointees controlled the machinery of government, a method was needed to bring changes in personnel and policy when those changes were controversial.

This is not to say that more peaceful means of changing the government did not exist. During the Severan period the senate seems to have taken on one characteristic of today's House of Lords in Britain: a convenient place to which administrators could be retired. Severus' praetorian prefect Papinian was "kicked upstairs" on Severus' death, and the same seems to have happened to Papinian's colleague Laetus, perhaps in the wake of Geta's assassination. But for some individuals, this was not possible.

Once an individual declared himself emperor, there was no means of abdication, and those who attached their fortunes to that individual often had no alternative for preserving their power and their lives. The four years of civil wars marking the beginning of the Severan period (193-97) can be seen as a series of "changes of government" or purges, sometimes directed by the emperor and sometimes against him. These purges were a regular feature of changes in government. During the Severan period, upheavals among the ranks of the ruling elite took place every four-to-six years. There may have

83 In the banishment for immorality of his daughter Julia in 2 BC, Augustus also had a son of Mark Antony killed and several other prominent senators exiled, giving the appearance to modern scholars that political changes were the true reason for the upheaval; see Syme, *Roman revolution*, pp.426-27.

been a purge in 200.⁸⁴ A major shakeup took place after the fall of Plautianus in 205. Then came the changes from Severus' death which were accelerated on the murder of Geta (211-12). Looking forward, a two-year upheaval, 217-19, would take place after Caracalla's own death. Another purge would come in 222, again in 228-29 and, of course, in 235. Seen from this angle, the purge in the wake of Geta's assassination was not particularly unusual and, chronologically speaking, was right on time.

Purges bring disaffected constituencies to the fore. Caracalla preserved his authority by handling the disaffection in various ways. Soldiers were given money and the opportunity to exact revenge on disliked commanders and former commanders. Thus the praetorians murdered Papinian and Patruinus. The urban cohorts tried to kill the former urban prefect Cilo.⁸⁵ They may also have targeted C. Julius Asper, the current urban prefect and incoming consul who was quickly sent away from Rome, perhaps on 1 January 212, the day his consulship began.⁸⁶ To disaffected bureaucrats Caracalla proclaimed an amnesty, reaching out to those who, for whatever reason, had been removed from government under Severus. Caracalla also moved to eliminate alternative emperors for the disaffected by ordering the murders of those with historical connections to the purple: a grandson of one emperor (Pompeianus, a grandson of Marcus), the son of another (P. Helvius Pertinax the younger) and the cousin of a third (L. Septimius Aper, a relative of Severus and Caracalla).⁸⁷

84 The praetorian prefect Saturninus was killed in that year in a move that marked Plautianus' ascendancy.

85 Cc 4.6 as opposed to Dio (Xiph.) 77.4.2-5.

86 Dio (Exc. Val.) 77.5.3; cf. Commentary on Cc 4.7. For a similar reason Dio was warned to stay away from Rome at the beginning of 229, Dio (Xiph., Exc. Val.) 80.5.1-2.

87 Cc 3.6-8, 4.8.

What was most shocking about this purge, however, was not its occurrence but its bloodiness, for one constituency was targeted for complete annihilation: Geta's household staff. Among those murdered were Geta's guards, his freedmen, his counselors, his servants, his teachers, his personal trainers, his entertainers and retainers. Dio puts the casualty figures at 20,000.⁸⁸

Geta's memory was condemned. His name was chiseled out of inscriptions⁸⁹ and removed from papyri.⁹⁰ Portraits of Geta were destroyed.⁹¹ Attempts were made to eliminate any indication that Geta had ever existed or was emperor. Laws promulgated in the names of Antoninus and Geta (or Severus, Antoninus and Geta) were reissued without Geta's name — and Antoninus' name was added to laws issued by his father before 198.⁹²

The business of constituting a new government kept Caracalla occupied and in Rome for the rest of 212. New praetorian prefects were needed to replace Laetus (who may have been retired to the senate in the wake of the rioting) and Patruinus (who was murdered in the rioting). A new urban prefect was also needed for the dismissed Asper. As an emergency measure the emperor initially put Sex. Varius Marcellus (the husband of Julia Sohaemis, a first-cousin on his mother's side) in charge of both the praetorian guard and the urban

88 Dio (Xiph., Exc. Val.) 77.4.1.

89 Mastino, "Erasione."

90 Mertens, "Damnatio."

91 The best-known example is the tondo from the Fayum, now in the Staatliche Museen in Berlin. Nodelman, *Portraiture*, pl.E. The tondo shows an imperial family portrait ca.200: Caracalla and Geta in front of Severus and Julia. Geta's head was subsequently erased from the picture.

92 CJ 3.28.1; see Honoré, "Severan lawyers," pp.171-72.

cohorts.⁹³ Soon, however, the young emperor found experienced men for these top positions. As praetorian prefects, Caracalla picked a career soldier and a longtime bureaucrat. M. Oclatinus Adventus rose through the ranks of the army, beginning as a common soldier during the reign of Marcus. Adventus was eventually promoted into administrative work, appearing as a procurator in Britain shortly before Severus' campaigns on the island. Perhaps Caracalla met Adventus in Britain. At the time of Adventus' appointment as praetorian prefect, the soldier must have been nearly 60 years old, if not older.⁹⁴ To help with administrative and legal decisions Caracalla appointed M. Opellius Macrinus, a man in his mid-to-late 40s. Macrinus was a native of Mauretania Caesarea with nearly two decades in the imperial service.⁹⁵

Caracalla was able to maintain the loyalty and service of most of the supporters of his father, Severus. Perhaps this was to some degree due to the steadfast and public support Caracalla received from his mother, Julia. Julia handled most of Caracalla's correspondence and acted as his official hostess.⁹⁶ Such public activity after the murder of Geta may have lead a few observers to view Julia's devotion to Caracalla as something other than motherly.⁹⁷

During the year important administrative changes were made. Roman citizenship was made universal, and with it came a greater standardization of

93 *CIL* 10.6569 = *ILS* 478 = *IG* 14.911 = *IGRR* 1.402, as interpreted by Halfmann, "Verwandte," pp.226-34. On dating Marcellus' *vice* prefectures to 212, see Commentary on Cc 4.7.

94 *PIR*² O 9; Pflaum, *Carrières* no.247.

95 *PIR*² O 108; Pflaum, *Carrières* no.248.

96 Dio (Xiph., Exc. Val.) 77.18.2-3; cf. Julia making her own reply to a request by a citizen of Ephesus, Schönbauer, "Inschriften," pp.105-8; *AE* 1966, no.430; Oliver, *Constitutions*, pp.512-15 (no.265).

97 Herodian 4.9.3 notes that the Alexandrians took to calling Julia by the name Jocasta, Whittaker, *Herodian*, vol.1, p.423 n.3. By the early fourth century, more elaborate stories were circulating that Julia and Caracalla had an incestuous relationship, Hohl, "Witz," pp.15-16 n.11; see also Commentary on Cc 10.1-4.

legal and fiscal practices throughout the empire.⁹⁸ Caracalla and his advisors also busied themselves by hearing appeals in a large number of cases, including several on legal guardianship of children.⁹⁹ The emperor also improved the conditions of soldiers beyond fulfilling the pay increase promised after Geta's murder. Soldiers were now allowed to bequeath the wealth they acquired in the service, even if they died before their fathers did and were still legally in their fathers' power.¹⁰⁰ A soldier, in some circumstances, could now also be classified among those regularly deemed to have "ignorance of the law" (*ignorantia iuris*) and thus be eligible for certain indulgences in the legal process.¹⁰¹ But Caracalla was indulgent to civilians as well, for others of his early rescripts often show a lenient tone.¹⁰²

The grant of universal citizenship, often referred to by modern scholars at the *Constitutio antoniniana*, can be seen as one the important markers in the bureaucratization of Roman government.¹⁰³ As the workings of Roman rule and the relationships between individuals and the government became more regularized and regulated, it was necessary for legal experts to come to the fore. Already under the Antonines jurists had a permanent place in the emperor's

98 While scholars have recently tended to stress the religious aspects of the *Constitutio antoniniana* (see, e.g., Oliver, "Piety"; id., *Constitutions*, pp.495-505; Buraselis, ΘΕΙΑ ΔΩΡΕΑ) based on the introduction to *P. Giss.* 40 I, the document is fundamentally an act of government reform, Honoré, *Ulpian*, p.29. Despite Dio's obvious dislike for Caracalla, the historian's observation that the edict came out of concern for the operation of government (i.e., taxation) cannot be ignored. On *P. Giss.* 40, see below, pp.71-72.

99 Honoré, "Severan lawyers," pp.176-77; id., *Emperors and lawyers*, p.21; rescripts on *tutela* from 212: *CJ* 5.28.2, 5.37.3, 5.43.1, 5.51.1, 5.53.2, 5.58.2, 5.71.1, 5.75.1.

100 *CJ* 6.21.2; cf. *D* 49.17.19 and see below, p.73.

101 *CJ* 1.18.1; cf. *D* 22.6.9.1.

102 For example, *CJ* 9.23.1, 9.47.2; cf. *D* 48.22.12. Honoré, *Emperors and lawyers*, pp.41, 65-67, believes the leniency stems from the secretary a *libellis* for the period, whom he wishes to identify with the jurist Arrius Menander. While Honoré's analyses of legal fragments provide merely attractive suggestions but hardly proof about holders of the office a *libellis*, it is important to keep in mind the office's importance when discussing imperial policy.

103 Cf. Weber, *Economy*, p.978.

“cabinet,” the *consilium*.¹⁰⁴ Caracalla himself grew up in a court dominated by legal scholars, one of whom (Papinian) held the second most powerful post in the empire, that of praetorian prefect.¹⁰⁵ It was natural that Caracalla should continue to rely on jurists to set policy in the first year of his sole reign.

The reformist tone of the new government can also be seen in the emperor’s new official portrait. The serene, bearded figure of the Hellenistic philosopher had provided the model of what the Roman emperor should look like for Severus, the Antonines and all the way back to Hadrian. Caracalla broke with tradition, displaying himself with a short beard cut close to the face, his head turned sharply with bulging muscles in his brow. The portrait was one of a man of action more than that of a man of contemplation.¹⁰⁶

Plans for a tour of the provinces were also drawn up, and early in the following year Caracalla traveled to Narbonne. The emperor personally overhauled the governing of the province, including the execution of the provincial governor.¹⁰⁷ Caracalla then traveled up along the Rhône and into Upper Germany, finally arriving in Raetia in early-to-mid summer.¹⁰⁸ At this time there was some disturbance along the frontier, and in response Caracalla launched a minor military operation lasting a few weeks. By October the emperor had already declared victory and taken the epithet Germanicus.¹⁰⁹

During his time in the region, Caracalla went to visit the shrine of the healing god Apollo Grannus.¹¹⁰ The emperor may have fallen seriously ill during

104 Millar, *Emperor*, pp.94-97.

105 On jurists of the period, see Honoré, “Severan lawyers”; cf. below, pp.72-73.

106 Fittschen-Zanker, “1. Alleinherrschartypus” (Nr.91-93, Taf.109-14); Nodelman, *Portraiture*, “Type V”; see Figure 1. Nodelman, p.365, believes the portrait recalls the Pergamene or Asiatic style of energetic sculpture.

107 Cc 5.1-2.

108 Okamura, *Alamannia*, pp.63-67; cf. Cc 5.4.

109 CIL 6.2086 = ILS 451.

110 Dio (Xiph.) 77.14.2.

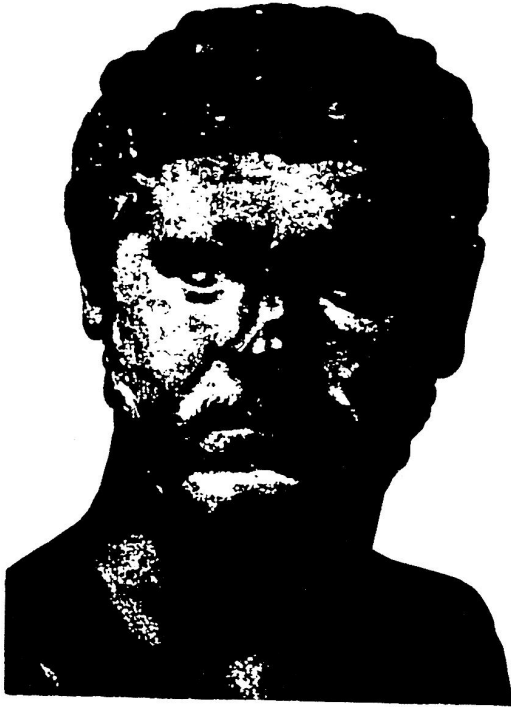


Figure 1. Portrait of Caracalla. Capitoline Museum, Galleria 40, Inv. 277. Fittschen-Zanker Nr.93, Taf.114, "1. Alleinherrschertypus" (= Nodelman, *Portraiture*, "Type V"). Photograph © 1985 by Philipp von Zabern.

the campaign,¹¹¹ though detractors wished to see signs in the visit that Caracalla was being divinely punished for the murder of his brother.¹¹² With the German war over, the emperor returned to Rome for the winter.¹¹³

Caracalla must also have been considering a visit to the east, hoping to mimic his father's success in a new war against the Parthians. The new Parthian king, Vologaeses VI, faced a revolt led by his brother, Artabanus IV. The time looked opportune for further Roman conquests. Already in preparation for such a campaign, the Romans in 213 deposed the Edessene king Abgar Severus and took control of all of Osroene. Roman troops also tried to take over Armenia, and while some members of the ruling family fell into Roman hands, the country would not peaceably accept Caracalla's authority.¹¹⁴

In the spring the emperor departed northward with the eventual goal of reaching the east. He visited Milan, Aquileia and Sirmium before again encountering frontier problems, this time in Dacia.¹¹⁵ A tribe of Scythians were the cause. The situation hardly warranted any major operation, and Caracalla's concerns were farther east. The brief fighting did change the emperor's travel plans, for he proceeded down the Danube to its mouth and along the Black Sea, entering Thrace from the coast rather than from the interior.¹¹⁶ In Thrace the emperor emulated his boyhood hero Alexander the Great, recruiting a

111 Cc 5.3.

112 Dio (Exc. Val.) 77.15.2-7; *Epit.* 21.3.

113 See Commentary on Cc 5.4.

114 Dio 77.12; Millar, *Near East*, pp.472-81; Chaumont, "Arménie," pp.154-56; Maricq, "Chronologie," pp.297-302; Schippmann, *Grundzüge*, pp.70-72; Debevoise, *Parthia*, pp.262-63.

115 The *Itinerarium Antonini* gives the planned route, van Berchem, "Annone." Caracalla also used the trip to reorganize the Pannonian provinces, including transferring the legio I Adiutrix at Brigetio from Upper to Lower Pannonia, see Fitz, "Grenzberichtigung"; id., "Pannonia."

116 Van Berchem, "Annone"; cf. Cc 5.4.

phalanx of 16,000 Macedonians for the upcoming war.¹¹⁷ Caracalla began presenting himself as a new Alexander, a move that surely had propaganda uses for a Parthian campaign.¹¹⁸ But the emperor's emulation, to the point of having his portrait done as Alexander¹¹⁹ and being influenced in a legal case because the defendant had the name Alexander,¹²⁰ seemed to some to be going a bit too far.

While crossing the Hellespont Caracalla was involved in a shipwreck and had to be rescued.¹²¹ The brush with death may well have influenced him to visit the shrine of another healing god, Asclepius, at Pergamum. Caracalla also visited Achilles' tomb at Ilium before settling for the winter in Nicomedia.¹²²

Caracalla's first winter as an emperor away from Rome proved frustrating for his advisors and officials. He seemed to fritter away his time racing chariots and hunting animals. The emperor rarely kept his appointments concerning government business, and when he did he was often not in a condition that was conducive to productivity. Senators and bureaucrats noticed a shift in the balance of power toward soldiers and the imperial household.¹²³ The shift was highlighted by Caracalla's encouragement to soldiers to act as informants, and the emperor made it clear he did not trust senators or like them around.¹²⁴

In the following spring, the emperor left Nicomedia for Antioch, traveling overland through Galatia, Cappadocia and Cilicia.¹²⁵ Meanwhile

117 Herodian 4.7.8.

118 Letta, "Leoni."

119 Herodian 4.8.2.

120 Dio (Xiph., Exc. Val.) 77.7-8.

121 Cc 5.8.

122 Dio (Exc. Val., Exc. Vat.) 77.16.7-8; Herodian 4.8.3-5.

123 Dio (Xiph.) 77.21.2-4; cf. Cc 5.9.

124 Dio (Xiph., Exc. Val.) 77.17-18.

125 There has been some debate over Caracalla's route from Nicomedia to Antioch in 215. Levick, "Caracalla's path," argued against Magie, *Asia Minor*, pp.685, 1553 n.43 (among

Severus' personal legion, the legio II Parthica, had arrived from Italy and set up camp in Apamea.¹²⁶ A pretext for war had been devised: the Parthians were protecting a member of the ruling family of Armenia as well as a Cilician suspected of anti-Roman activities. Caracalla demanded the return of both, and to his surprise, Vologaeses complied.¹²⁷ Lacking the pretext he wanted, Caracalla suspended the attack on Parthia and instead ordered his generals to send additional troops into Armenia to establish firm Roman control, a task which had only mixed results.¹²⁸ The government's finances were also in poor shape, bringing about currency reform which also had the effect of devaluation. The aureus was reduced in weight by nearly ten percent. A new silver coin, the antoninianus, was also introduced. While the antoninianus was valued at two denarii, the coin itself weighed but one and a half times the denarius.¹²⁹

Caracalla may have also issued a new official portrait. The furrowed brow was now smooth, the turn of the head not as abrupt, the appearance far more serene. After more than three years of sole rule, perhaps the emperor was wanting to promote contemplation more than action, continuity more than change.¹³⁰

others), that the emperor imitated Alexander the Great by traveling south and west from Nicomedia to Smyrna, then along the coast to Pamphylian Side, then north through Pisidia, eventually reaching Ancyra, and from there through Tyana and Tarsus to Antioch. While such behavior would be entirely understandable from Caracalla, Levick's proposal forces her to dismiss epigraphic evidence from Prusias concerning an imperial visit. Halfmann, *Itinera*, pp.223-30, esp.p.227, accepts the evidence from Prusias and agrees with the more direct, overland route given by Magie. On Caracalla's journey through Cilicia, see Ziegler, *Prestige*, pp.79-85.

126 Baity, "Apamea," p.99.

127 Dio (Xiph., Exc. Val., Suda) 77.19, (Xiph.) 77.21.

128 Dio (Xiph.) 77.21 blames an incompetent command; cf. Cc 6.1, and see Millar, *Dio*, p.156.

129 Walker, *Metrology*, pp.62-63; *RIC* 5.ccciii.

130 Fittschen-Zanker, "2. Alleinherrschartypus (Typus Tivoli)" (Nr.94, Taf.115-16); Nodelman, "Type IV"; see Figure 2. Fittschen-Zanker, p.111, date the beginning of this portrait type to 215 through comparison of sculpture with coin portraits, but Nodelman

In the fall the emperor decided to see Egypt, revisiting the country he had seen with his father more than a decade and a half ago. Caracalla established his headquarters in Alexandria at the temple of Serapis, the god to whom Severus had been especially devoted.¹³¹ Rioting accompanied the imperial visit, and retribution was swift. The governor was executed, as were thousands of the city's young men. The city was also cordoned off into zones to prevent free movement of residents, and games and privileges were revoked. The punishment seemed to some Romans excessive even for the notoriously riot-prone Alexandrians.¹³²

Caracalla's visit to Egypt served no military or strategic purpose. Intellectual pursuits provided the reason for the excursion. That Caracalla often behaved as an intellectual should not be neglected. The Second Sophistic movement in Greek literature was continuing to produce scholars and orators, some of whom gathered around the emperor's mother, Julia.¹³³ Prominent intellectuals were brought in to give the young Caracalla a literary education.¹³⁴ The emperor enjoyed listening to poetry and declamations.¹³⁵

(among others) supported the earlier view of dating this type to before Caracalla's sole reign, from ca. 206-11.

131 Dio (Xiph.) 77.23.2.

132 Dio (Xiph.) 77.22.1-23.2 claims, with disapproval, that Caracalla murdered his welcoming committee before conducting a general massacre throughout the city. Herodian 4.9 says the emperor was angered because the Alexandrians mocked him for killing Geta. On the events, see Benoit-Schwartz; Millar, *Dio*, pp.156-58; and cf. *Cc* 6.2-3.

133 For a reasoned examination of Julia's circle of intellectuals, see Bowersock, *Greek sophists*, pp.101-9.

134 His teachers included the Latin poet Serenus Sammonicus (see Champlin, "Serenus Sammonicus," and cf. Commentary at *Cc* 4.4) and the Greek orator and historian Aelius Antipater (Philostratus, *Vitae sophistorum* 2.24.607).

135 A poet from Apamea dedicated a hunting poem to Caracalla and may well have given a reading before the emperor in Antioch, Oppian, *Cynegetica* 1.1-15, 4.20; a reference in the poem to the capture of Ctesiphon in 198 (at 1.31) may indicate the work was completed before the campaign of 216, as one might expect the taking of Arbela to be mentioned were the poem written later.



Figure 2. Portrait of Caracalla. Capitoline Museum, Stanza degli Imperatori 45, Inv. 465. Fittschen-Zanker Nr.94, Taf.115, "2. Alleinherrschertypus (Typus Tivoli)" (= Nodelman, *Portraiture*, "Type IV"). Photograph © 1985 by Philipp von Zabern.

He would sprinkle verses of Euripides into his dinner conversations.¹³⁶ If, while hearing law cases, he was impressed by a particular attorney, Caracalla might well ask the advocate to declaim on a standard rhetorical topic, such as Demosthenes defending himself against a charge of cowardice.¹³⁷

Intellectual inquiry may also be seen in the emperor's frequenting of cult sites. During the German campaign of 213, Caracalla visited the shrine of Apollo Grannus. While in Asia the emperor saw the temple of Asclepius in Pergamum, and during his Alexandrian trip he stayed in the temple of Serapis. All three deities were associated with intellectual activity as well as with healing, and both the Pergamene Asclepium and the Alexandrian Serapeum were centers of scholarship and literary activity.¹³⁸

Caracalla returned to Antioch the following April.¹³⁹ The situation in Parthia looked somewhat different in 216 than it had the year before, and the emperor had a new target, the ever more powerful Artabanus IV. Artabanus had wrested control of upper Mesopotamia from his brother Vologases, who continued to command the lower stretches of the Tigris and Euphrates.¹⁴⁰ Caracalla demanded Artabanus' daughter for his wife, a demand that in earlier times would surely have been problematic for Caracalla had it been granted.¹⁴¹ By the early third century, however, the communities of the Near East and their

136 Dio 78.8.4-5.

137 Philostratus, *Vitae sophistorum* 2.32.626.

138 Connections between healing and intellectual creativity were drawn decades earlier by the orator Aelius Aristides; see Behr, *Aristides*.

139 On Caracalla's return to Antioch, see Schwartz, "Note," pp.120-23; Whitehorne, "Return."

140 Schippmann, *Grundzüge*, p.70; Debevoise, *Parthia*, pp.265-66.

141 Dio (Xiph.) 78.1.1; Herodian 4.10-11. One wonders about the comments Caracalla would undoubtedly have received that he was *coniuge barbara turpis maritus* (Horace, *Odes* 3.5.5-6).

dynastic political organization had become of central importance to the Roman empire.¹⁴²

While Caracalla's request to marry Artabanus' daughter was certainly an imitation of Alexander the Great's nuptials with a daughter of Darius, the meaning went far beyond Alexander-mania. Caracalla was making a political statement that Rome intended to consolidate, expand and maintain control of Mesopotamia through the legitimacy of the traditional power structure. Such a move is not surprising coming from an emperor whose mother belonged to one of these Near Eastern dynasties, that of the city of Emesa.¹⁴³ But Rome's increasing involvement in the region also changed local concepts of legitimate power. Symbols of Roman government began to take on legitimacy within Near Eastern civic and regional life, so much so that throughout the rest of the third century, dynasts would exploit the nomenclature of Roman imperial titles and offices in attempts to consolidate local power in the Near East.¹⁴⁴

With the marriage offer refused and a pretext established, Caracalla set off from Antioch for war against the Parthians in 216. Roman armies easily crossed the Euphrates and the Tigris, Arbela was sacked, the royal tombs of the Parthians opened and their bones scattered.¹⁴⁵ While the emperor declared the campaign a success, there was little contact with the Parthians on the battlefield. Artabanus' troops preferred to retreat than fight, and while this made conquest easy, the lack of combat helped cause the discipline of the army

142 Millar, *Near East*, pp.142-47.

143 A. R. Birley, *Severus*², pp.69-72, 221-24. Millar, *Near East*, pp.303-4, is hesitant to call Julia Domna's family a "dynasty" because of the lack of information both on the family's links with the Emesene kings of the first century BC as well as on the social structure of Emesa in the Antonine period. Millar, however, recognizes that Julia's family was exceedingly important in the city and closely connected with the cult of local sun god, Elagabal.

144 Obvious examples are the Emesene Uranius Antoninus in the 250s and the Palmyrenes Odenathus and Zenobia in the 260s and early 270s, Potter, *Prophecy*, pp.323-28, 381-94; Millar, *Near East*, pp.308-9, 334-35.

145 Dio (Xiph.) 78.1.2; Magie, *Asia Minor*, p.686.

to break down. Roman soldiers often ended up fighting over their loot and arguing in front of the emperor over their shares of booty.¹⁴⁶ The troops returned west of the Euphrates that fall, and the emperor spent the winter at Edessa.

Caracalla's staff must have become concerned that there were few benefits accruing from the Parthian war, and prospects for an upcoming third year of fighting seemed poor. In some parts of the empire, it was believed Caracalla would soon declare the war over and won.¹⁴⁷ Rumors abounded in Rome and elsewhere that a coup was in the offing, some of these rumors centered on the praetorian prefect Macrinus, even though he was not of senatorial rank.¹⁴⁸ The only senator on the scene, a certain Aurelianus, was extremely unpopular with the troops.¹⁴⁹ As spring arrived and a new season of warfare loomed, the need to have Caracalla murdered became more and more urgent. An upcoming visit to a nearby shrine would provide the opportunity.

Caracalla left Edessa on his birthday, 4 April, to visit the temple of the moon-god Sin at Carrhae, roughly 40 km away. The temple's annual festival may have been held around that time, and the emperor's trip could have been made to be present and a participant.¹⁵⁰ Two days later, the emperor set out to return

146 Dio (Xiph.) 78.1.3-4; cf. Commentary on Cc 6.4.

147 Cc 6.5 claims Caracalla sent letters to the senate proclaiming a victory and that in turn he received the title *Parthicus*. An inscription set up in Tarragona on or after 10 December 216 gives Caracalla such a second Parthian victory: *PART(hicus) II MAX(imus)*, Stylow, "Änderungen," pp.387-99.

148 Dio 78.4 says a letter from the urban prefect Flavius Maternianus warning Caracalla about Macrinus failed to reach the emperor in time because the emperor's mail first had to go through Julia in Antioch. Herodian 4.12.5-8 claims Macrinus intercepted the letter before Caracalla could read it.

149 Dio 78.12.2-5; Aurelianus was the first victim of the new regime, and his death was announced in Rome at the same time as the naming of Macrinus' son Diadumenianus as Caesar, Dio 78.19.1.

150 T. M. Green, *Moon god*, pp.150-51. On the date of the festival, see Commentary on Cc 6.6.

to Edessa. The party traveling with Caracalla was carefully chosen. He was escorted by bodyguards under the command of Triccianus (commander of the legio II Parthica), and accompanying them were the praetorian tribunes Nemesianus and Apollinaris. Serving as the emperor's personal assistant was the soldier Martialis, a man reputed (or so the later, official version of events would claim) to have been on not the best of terms with Caracalla.

One must rely on the official version of events for what happened on the return: During the journey Caracalla had to defecate, and for this was left alone with Martialis. Martialis used the opportunity to exact personal revenge and stabbed the emperor. Martialis then rode off pretending to be on a mission, but his sword was spotted by the emperor's bodyguard. The guards threw their spears in pursuit, and Martialis was killed. One of the guards was also killed.¹⁵¹

Years later other reports supplemented the story. Some said the entire party was said to have been in on the conspiracy and that Martialis was a scapegoat. Others said just the commanders and Martialis were involved in the plans. The dead bodyguard was rumored to have been killed by the tribunes in an attempt to hinder the pursuit of Martialis, and that the guard killed was the one whose own spear felled Martialis. The truth is impossible to discern. It is enough to say that when the soldiers returned to Edessa, they brought with them three corpses: that of a bodyguard, that of Martialis, and that of the emperor M. Aurelius Antoninus.

The emperor's body was cremated in Edessa. The ashes were sent to Rome, probably through Antioch where Julia Domna was residing.¹⁵² Julia, who

¹⁵¹ The problem of untangling the stories on Caracalla's murder is a vexed one. For the information in this paragraph and the next, see Commentary on Cc 6.6-7.2.

¹⁵² Herodian 4.13.8; *OM* 5.2-3.

was already suffering from breast cancer, wavered between open resistance to Macrinus and suicide.¹⁵³ She eventually starved herself to death.¹⁵⁴

In Rome Caracalla's remains were given a state funeral.¹⁵⁵ The ashes were buried in the Mausoleum of Hadrian,¹⁵⁶ and Caracalla was given divine honors.¹⁵⁷ Contemporaries were not kind when evaluating the dead emperor.¹⁵⁸ Dio even snickered that Caracalla's ashes entered Rome at night because the emperor had been so disliked.¹⁵⁹

The bureaucrat Macrinus did not last long as emperor. Already offensive to some senators because he assumed the imperial office while but an equestrian, Macrinus further angered the aristocrats through a series of inappropriate appointments, the most notorious of which was naming his colleague in the praetorian prefecture, the old and rough soldier Adventus, to run the city of Rome. Within months Adventus had to be replaced with a man more to the senate's liking, the longtime Severan supporter Marius Maximus.

But far more damaging to Macrinus were his mistakes in handling the army. The emperor tried to bring the Parthian war to a quick conclusion but got bogged down in negotiations. A battle was fought against Artabanus' troops near Nisibis, a battle which could charitably be called a draw.¹⁶⁰ Talks resumed and continued into the early part of 218. The deal that was struck reversed recent gains. The Armenian royal family was returned to power, and reparations of 500 million HS were paid to Artabanus.¹⁶¹ Macrinus declared victory¹⁶² but

153 Dio 78.23.1-3.

154 Dio 78.23.6; Herodian 4.13.8.

155 Cc 9.2,12; Victor 21.6; Eutropius 8.20.2.

156 Dio 78.9.1; Cc 9.12; Victor 21.6.

157 Dio 78.9.2; cf. Welles-Fink-Gilliam, p.199.

158 Dio 78.9.3: πολλά καὶ κακὰ ὑπὸ πάντων ἤκουεν αἰεὶ.

159 Dio 78.9.1.

160 Herodian 4.15 gives a fantastic account; Dio 78.26.5 calls it a defeat.

161 Dio 78.27.1.

162 RIC 5.212; Whittaker, *Herodian*, vol.1, p.467 n.2.

had trouble paying the troops at the levels established by Caracalla.¹⁶³ The idle troops were ripe for rebellion. When, on 15 May 218, Julia Domna's sister appeared before the legio III Gallica at Raphanea with her 14-year-old grandson Avitus claiming Caracalla was the boy's father, the legion acknowledged the boy as emperor.¹⁶⁴ Within a month Macrinus was a deposed fugitive, and shortly thereafter he was captured and put to death.

Avitus took the name M. Aurelius Antoninus, but hardly anyone was fooled.¹⁶⁵ He is known to history as Elagabalus, after the Emesene sun-god to whom he was hereditary priest and devotee. His arrival in Rome the following year was eagerly anticipated by a populace yearning for the stability of the Severan age. The spectacle, however, was disappointing, and once again the empire was subjected to a government controlled by the imperial household.¹⁶⁶

Both senators and bureaucrats saw his cousin Alexander a more promising figure. Within four years they deposed Elagabalus, and Alexander was made emperor. The new emperor did not take the name Antoninus, hearkening instead to Severus and Marcus with the nomenclature M. Aurelius Severus Alexander. The old supporters of Severus once again returned to the fore, including the historians Marius Maximus — who was consul II *ordinarius* for 223 — and Dio — who took his second consulship as *ordinarius* in 229.

163 Dio 78.28.

164 The boy's real father was Sex. Varius Marcellus, whom Caracalla temporarily placed in charge of the troops in Rome during the rioting after Geta's murder, see Commentary on Cc 4.7.

165 Dio frequently calls him Ψευδαυτονίνοϛ.

166 For the details of his reign, see what remains of Dio, book 79; cf. Herodian, book 5; *Hel*; a recent synthesis is by Turcan, *Héliogabale*.

The *Historia Augusta* and the meaning of Roman history in the Latin West of late antiquity

One of the most important literary sources for Caracalla's life is the biography that appears in the collection known as the *Historia Augusta*. The *HA* contains biographies of Roman emperors and usurpers from Hadrian to Carinus (with a lacuna covering the lives of Philip, Decius, Gallus and some others, as well as the beginning of the life of Valerian). Manuscripts ascribe the various biographies among six authors — an Aelius Spartianus, a Julius Capitolinus, a Vulcacius Gallicanus, an Aelius Lampridius, a Trebellius Pollio, and a Flavius Vopiscus — all of whom seem to have been writing under the reigns of Diocletian, Constantius or Constantine.

Glaring inconsistencies concerning the attributions of authorship as well as obvious anachronisms within the text led Hermann Dessau in 1889 to propose that the biographies were not the work of six authors writing at the beginning of the fourth century, but rather the opus of a single author writing at that century's end.¹⁶⁷ Dessau's argument for a single author gained at first few adherents,¹⁶⁸ but by the 1960s — when renewed interest in the *HA* was generated through annual colloquia in Bonn organized by Johannes Straub¹⁶⁹ — most historians accepted that there was but one author of the *HA*.¹⁷⁰

While there is now general agreement on the date of the *HA*'s composition, nothing close to a definitive view has arisen. One would need a

167 Dessau, "Persönlichkeit."

168 Those who accepted unitary authorship included Otto Seeck, Alfred von Domaszewski and, in the following generation, Ernst Hohl.

169 These meetings have regularly appeared as the *Bonner Historia-Augusta-Colloquium* in the fourth series of *Antiquitas* monographs published by Rudolf Habelt Verlag, Bonn.

170 Chastagnol, *Recherches*. Momigliano, "Forgery," remained unconvinced, continuing to support the view of Mommsen, "Scriptores," that there was insufficient reason to disregard the authorial attributions of the manuscripts and that the errors and anachronisms in the text were due to a compiler working decades after the six authors completed their biographies.

chart to indicate the many and diverse opinions of individual scholars.¹⁷¹ Two dates, nonetheless, predominate: ca.395 (Ronald Syme was the leading proponent) and ca.410 (supported by Straub). While the difference may be muddied by describing the work only as *Honorian*, it is important to realize that the Roman world of 395 was not that of 410.¹⁷²

The year 395 began with Theodosius triumphant. The Spaniard had initially risen to the purple on the action of the young emperor Gratian in 379, only a few months after Gratian's uncle Valens was killed by the Visigoths at the disastrous battle of Adrianople. After three years of fighting and negotiation Theodosius was able to restore stability to the eastern half of the empire. Such stability proved more elusive in the west.

In 383 another Spanish general, Magnus Maximus, was proclaimed emperor by an army in Britain. Maximus crossed over to Gaul, and Gratian, then resident in Trier, was deserted by his troops and killed. Gratian's 13-year-old brother Valentinian II kept some authority in Milan, and Theodosius and the young emperor at first accepted Maximus' control of the western third of the empire. But Maximus was not satisfied, and in 387 invaded Italy. Valentinian II fled to Thessalonica and asked Theodosius for help. The following year Theodosius marched with an army to Italy, defeating Maximus twice in battle before Maximus surrendered and was executed.

Theodosius restored the western empire to Valentinian II, who was sent to Gaul under the care of the Frankish general Arbogast. When the young emperor tried to dismiss Arbogast in 392, the Frank had him killed and proclaimed an obscure rhetoric teacher named Eugenius as the new emperor.

171 John, *Kaiserbiographie*, p.46, provides just such a chart, though see the review by Syme, "Propaganda."

172 For an expanded summary of the history of the period, see Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, pp.156-216; a far more detailed account is in Matthews, *Western aristocracies*.

Theodosius returned to the west, where in September 394 he defeated Eugenius and Arbogast at the battle of the Frigidus. At this point Theodosius was the sole ruler in both the eastern and western halves of the Roman empire, the last time such unity would be achieved.

The unity did not last long. Theodosius died in Milan on 17 January 395. In the east he was succeeded by his elder son Arcadius, still only in his late teens. In the west Theodosius' younger son Honorius became emperor at the tender age of 10. Honorius was entrusted to the general Stilicho, who was the power behind the throne. Stilicho, whose daughter was married to the young emperor three years later, had an uneasy relationship with the Roman aristocracy, both for his Germanic origin and his stringent taxation. There were also serious security problems, with Visigoths in the Balkans, Moors threatening Africa and various Germans ready to cross the Rhine.

Stilicho was also hampered by bad relations between the eastern and western halves of the empire, and a series of usurpers began springing up in Britain, Gaul and Spain. In 408 Stilicho lost the support of the soldiers and of Honorius and was killed. Although Honorius was now well into his 20s, he remained aloof from active decision-making, allowing the bureaucrat Olympius to become the new power behind the throne. But Olympius and his aggressive policies proved incapable of dealing with the Visigoths and their ever-demanding leader Alaric. Olympius fell from power, and attempts at entente were made between the imperial government and the Visigoths, who were now pillaging Italy.

The factors that hampered Stilicho once more caused the breakup of this entente: mutual mistrust between Romans and Germans, the unwillingness of wealthy Romans to subsidize the Goths or help them settle on Roman land, and the inability of either group to sustain a credible military campaign. In

frustration, Alaric and the Visigoths entered Rome on 24 August 410 to sack and pillage the city. The event sent shock waves throughout the empire as refugees arrived with harrowing tales, and Christians and traditionalists pointed fingers at each other in trying to explain how the center of empire could be so easily taken.

In trying to date the *HA* within this period, some scholars have seen allusions in the work to specific events of the late fourth and early fifth centuries. One scholar believed Hadrian's equation of Christians and Serapis-worshippers demands a date before the destruction of the Serapeum in Alexandria in 391,¹⁷³ another claimed the reference to the Sibylline Books makes sense only if the Sibylline Books had already been destroyed (which took place not more than a few years before 410),¹⁷⁴ and another may argue that since Ravenna is not mentioned in the *HA*, the work must predate Honorius' move in 403.¹⁷⁵ Certainly there are allusions to events contemporary to the *HA*'s writing, but the notion of a one-to-one correspondence not only seems at odds with the nature of the work, but if taken to extremes could support almost any date for the *HA*'s composition.¹⁷⁶

Since the study of purported allusions has not allowed for a commonly accepted date of composition, it seems far preferable at this point for a modern reader to decide on his or her own a date based on the tone and general themes of the work, topics I shall discuss shortly. Between the Syme and Straub dates I personally tend to the latter, primarily because I find quite attractive the notion that the *HA* was composed sometime after it was apparent that although

173 Momigliano, "Popular beliefs," pp.145-46. On dating the destruction of the Serapeum to 391, see now Barnes, "Ammianus," pp.61-62.

174 Seeck, "Tendenzgeschichte," p.604.

175 Or so François Paschoud claimed in a discussion reported to me by David Potter.

176 Domaazewski, working from the same type of prosopographical argument later used by Syme, believed in a sixth-century date of composition, *Personennamen*, pp.18-31.

Honorius had become an adult, he remained incapable of acting like one. In addition, the military and political turmoil of the first decade of the fifth century provides a more pathetic context for the *HA*'s idealized view of the past.¹⁷⁷

The disagreements over the *HA*'s composition date are minor compared to the wildly variant proposals on the purpose of the work. Some scholars have seen the work as a virulently anti-Christian reaction to the increasing influence of the Church.¹⁷⁸ Others have maintained the work promotes a senatorial aristocracy against meddling from the imperial court.¹⁷⁹

Syme dismissed any attempts to find a meaningful theme. "[I]t is a misconception," he wrote, "to assume a serious purpose.... The text discloses a rogue scholar, delighting in deceit and making a mock of historians. Perhaps a professor on the loose, a librarian seeking recreation, a civil servant repelled by pedestrian routine."¹⁸⁰

Syme's description has its allure,¹⁸¹ and certainly he was correct to stress the trivial in the *Historia Augusta*. The work is filled with exotic recipes,¹⁸² arcane poetry,¹⁸³ bizarre behavior,¹⁸⁴ and *recherché* humor.¹⁸⁵

177 The political themes of the *HA* are discussed in greater detail below, pp.45-49.

178 Straub, *Geschichtsapologetik*.

179 Johnes, *Kaiserbiographie*.

180 Syme, "Controversy," p.221.

181 Henry Chadwick, however, recently told me, "The one telling argument against Syme's description of the author is the incredible similarity to Syme himself. It is quite unlikely that two such men would ever have existed."

182 *H* 21.4: "inter cibos unice amavit tetrafarmacum, quod erat de fasiano, sumine, perna et crustulo."

183 *Gall* 11.8: "ite, agite, o pueri, pariter sudate medullis omnibus inter vos, non murmura vestra columbae, brachia non hederiae, non vincant oscula conchae."

184 *Ael* 5.10: "iam illa leviora quod cursoribus suis exemplo Cupidinum alas frequenter adposuit eosque ventorum nominibus saepe vocitavit, Boreum alium, alium Notum et item Aquilonem aut Circium ceterisque nominibus appellans et indefesse atque inhumaniter faciens cursitare."

185 *Cc* 5.6: "et cum Germanicos subegisset, Germanicum se appellavit vel ioco vel serio, ut erat stultus et demens, adserens, si Lucanos vicisset, Lucanicum se appellandum."

Modern historians often dismiss these details as either improbable (which many are) or impossible (which many also are). The author, however, may have seen significance in his trivia.

In the lives of Carus, Carinus and Numerian, the author — here as Flavius Vopiscus — excused his literary style (or lack thereof) by using the term *curiositas* to justify his composition (*meum munus ... non eloquentiae causa sed curiositatis in lumen edidi*, *Car* 21.2). The term *curiositas*, which is also used to justify trivial information in the life of Aurelian (*A* 10.1), should be seen as an active inquisitiveness with regard to minute details about one's cultural heritage.¹⁸⁶ This curiosity is the starting point for the late antique translation of the *De excidio Troiae*.¹⁸⁷ Jerome, who was torn between admiration and disgust when contemplating the non-Christian past,¹⁸⁸ described his investigations into Suetonius and other Roman historians as being carried out in the spirit of curiosity.¹⁸⁹ Such an inquisitiveness drives the author of the *HA*, whose work is similar to Suetonius' *De vita Caesarum* but larger in scale and scope. The concerns of the *HA* author extend beyond the lives of individual emperors and usurpers. His purpose is fundamentally to preserve a *cultural history* of Rome.

But how can one call the *Historia Augusta* history, let alone *cultural history*? Would not the term "antiquarianism" be more apropos?¹⁹⁰ To speak of cultural history with regard to ancient Rome requires a discussion of the semantics surrounding history and antiquarianism. The differences between

186 Den Hengst, pp.127-28, believes the term would have indicated to the original readers that the *HA* was a sort of "petite histoire." On the pejorative connotations of the term, see Joly, "Curiositas."

187 Dares 1.1: "cum multa Athenis agerem curiose, historiam inveni."

188 See below, pp.45-46.

189 Jerome, *Chronicon* 2.1: "quae de Tranquillo et ceteris curiosissime excerpti."

190 Fornara, *History*, p.187, writes of the *HA*'s "antipodal distance ... from historiography."

antiquarianism and history have always been difficult to define.¹⁹¹ General guideposts have been proposed for these differences: history must be written in narrative while antiquarianism need not be; history must be organized chronologically while, again, antiquarianism need not be; antiquaries are primarily concerned with things, historians are primarily concerned with ideas; historians are interested in the general while antiquaries focus on the particular.¹⁹²

Specific examples can always be adduced to confound such guideposts, but by and large these guideposts are helpful so long as it is kept in mind that this concept of history is based only on a peculiar type of historical writing, namely that carried out by Thucydides and Tacitus. Using these authors as models, the historical writings of entire periods of antiquity have often been damned as non-historical.¹⁹³ Digressions, documents and details are dismissed as irrelevant to proper history because they may not elucidate the grand theme of the narrative, such a theme being "How did the Athenians lose the Peloponnesian War?" or "How did the Romans lose their liberty?" The theme itself is explained only by means of a linear progression through the text, and so detours are deemed a waste of time.

This reduction of history is incapable of embracing wider inquiries into the past, such inquiries being lumped by modern scholars of the ancient Mediterranean into the category of antiquarianism. The more recent concepts of social history, intellectual history and, even, cultural history — all embraced

191 Scholars are often reduced to the same response the late U.S. Supreme Court justice Potter Stewart once gave with regard to obscenity: "I can't define it, but I know it when I see it."

192 Momigliano, *Foundations*, pp.54-79; Fornara, *History*.

193 E.g., Hellenistic historians with the possible exception of Polybius, or late-antique historians with the possible exception of Ammianus. Biography is often considered a separate entity from history, or at best, a sub-genre created under the influence of Hellenistic philosophy, Fornara, *History*, pp.169-93; Momigliano, *Foundations*, pp.64-66.

in the modern discipline of history — are often to be found in the antiquarian studies of the Romans. Through this shift in definition can the *Historia Augusta*, along with other antiquarian writings, be seen as a repository for cultural history.

Roman antiquarianism had, for a long time, used the detail as a method of inquiry. Cato collected the foundation legends of Italian peoples in the *Origines*. Varro looked at the etymologies of words in *De lingua latina*. The elder Pliny catalogued works of art in his *Naturalis historia*. All these authors accumulated seemingly trivial details in examinations of the past.

The end of the fourth century and the beginning of the fifth saw a resurgence in Roman antiquarianism, and the *HA*'s concern with preserving Rome's cultural history has parallels in other contemporary literary works, most notably in Macrobius' *Saturnalia*. The *Saturnalia* describes a three-day symposium supposedly held in Rome in 384 among some of the most learned men of the age.¹⁹⁴ In the preface Macrobius tells his son Eustachius that the purpose of this literary work is to provide the young man with a storehouse of Roman traditions, words and deeds.¹⁹⁵ The *Saturnalia*'s content is emphasized over its style, in wording similar to that of the *HA nom de plume* Flavius Vopiscus (*praesens opus non eloquentiae ostentationem, sed noscendorum congeriem pollicetur, Sat. 1.praef.4*).

This is also the age of the correcting and gathering of the classics of earlier Latin literature. Leading Roman aristocrats painstakingly edited Cicero, Livy, Juvenal and others, and on completion of their works these editors

194 My understanding of the *Saturnalia* owes much to Kaster, "Macrobius." On the dating of the work to ca. 430, see Alan Cameron, "Date."

195 Macrobius, *Sat. 1.praef.2*: "et quasi de quodam litterarum peno, siquando usus venerit aut historiae quae in librorum strue latens clam vulgo est, aut dicti factive memorabilis reminiscendi, facile id tibi inventu atque depromptu sit."

subscribed their names.¹⁹⁶ This careful attention to the past can also be seen in the veneration shown to the grammarian as the “guardian of history.”¹⁹⁷

Concern for preserving Rome’s cultural heritage was especially acute during this age because the transition between the fourth and fifth centuries also marked a transition in the way in which many Romans reconstructed the past. The ascendancy of Christianity meant human history began with Adam and human salvation with Christ.¹⁹⁸ Details of Roman customs, practices and government lost their primacy in the new historical order. The emperor Marcus Aurelius was now recognized less for his philosophical investigations or even for the barbarians he conquered than for the Christians he martyred.¹⁹⁹

This is not to say, of course, that Christianity could not go hand in hand with earlier Roman culture. By the late fourth century there were plenty of intellectuals who, while they happened to be Christian, actively maintained the traditional culture. The best-known example is Ausonius, the tutor of the young emperor Gratian. This academic eventually became consul, and his poetry is exuberantly fulsome in its traditional allusions.²⁰⁰ The same accommodation was also seen in small towns, where local teachers of the classical tradition could be found among those making donations for construction of a church.²⁰¹

196 The most famous *subscriptions* appear in the manuscripts of Livy’s first decade, Ogilvie, “Manuscript”; id., *Titi Livii*, pp.vii-viii. On *subscriptions*, see Jahn, “Subscriptions”; Bloch, “Pagan revival,” pp.214-17; Alan Cameron, “Paganism,” pp.26-28. Zetzel, “Emendatio,” points out that the purpose of such editing was for personal erudition rather than improving the text, but the trouble taken to explain Livy 8.15.7 by citing the Hadrianic author Phlegon of Tralles amply demonstrates these editors’ concerns for their cultural heritage.

197 Augustine, *De musica* 2.1.1; Kaster, “Macrobius,” pp.219-22; id., *Guardians*.

198 Croke, “Origins”; Quinn, “Time,” p.219.

199 Orosius 7.15.4.

200 R. P. H. Green, *Ausonius*, pp.xxvii-xxxii.

201 Kaster, *Guardians*, pp.254-55 nos.29-30; cf. pp.80-81.

Even pagan intellectuals like the poet Claudian could quite easily use their talents to promote the programs of their Christian patrons.²⁰²

Not everyone was willing to accept accommodation. Unfamiliar names and legends were given primacy in the new ordering of time.²⁰³ The study of the human past was itself denigrated, for learning the deeds of others was seen merely as a means and not an end.²⁰⁴ For those still subscribing to the old intellectual priorities, this revisionism was sometimes too much to bear.

In a previous generation, the emperor Julian forbade Christians from being teachers in the traditional program of Roman education, a move criticized as extreme even by other pagans.²⁰⁵ Decades after the ban's repeal, even the most genteel supporters of the old historical order had a difficult time maintaining their composure when dealing with the revisionists.²⁰⁶

What may have distressed the supporters of the traditional culture even more was the defection of some of their best and brightest to the new ideology. Meropius Pontius Paulinus was a man of consular status whose literary accomplishments were firmly rooted in the old cultural traditions. When, in 394, Paulinus joined the priesthood and accepted the new order, he abandoned not only his physical wealth, but the cultural heritage of ancient literature. As Paulinus of Nola, he wrote in a new style with a new set of historical allusions to replace the old Roman ones. Paulinus' behavior shocked his teacher Ausonius,

202 Alan Cameron, *Claudian*, pp.189-227, argues the poet may have professed a "nominal Christianity," but Cameron admits Claudian was thought by contemporaries to have been a pagan. Compare also the career of Eutropius, who seems not to have been a Christian yet has been characterized as a "recruiting agent" for Theodosius, Matthews, "Supporters," pp.1076-77; id., *Western aristocracies*, p.97.

203 Ambrose, for example, discussed how Plato's teachings were later than those of Jeremiah, see Molland, "Three passages."

204 Augustine, *De doctrina christiana* 2.109 (28.44): "aliud est enim facta narrare, aliud docere facienda"; see also Quinn, "Time," pp.216-31.

205 Ammianus 22.10.7, 25.4.20.

206 Matthews, "Enemies."

who sent unanswered letters asking his student why he was so eager to offend traditional Roman sensibilities.²⁰⁷ The culturally conservative could not understand the attraction of this revisionism. To a traditionalist like Rutilius, the new ideology was a drug, distorting the minds of the young and their perceptions of the world.²⁰⁸

Two decades before Paulinus' ordination, a governor of Liguria and Aemilia named Ambrose was made bishop of Milan. As the son of a praetorian prefect, Ambrose received a traditional education, but the sense of history displayed by this aristocrat-turned-bishop adheres rigidly to the new Christian order. Moses provides the model: a man educated in all phases of the traditional culture who then rejects his cultural heritage to contemplate and promote an alternative understanding of the world.²⁰⁹

The Biblical exegete and translator Jerome was himself a student of the fourth-century commentator Donatus.²¹⁰ Jerome, however, showed an ambivalence toward his Roman cultural heritage. On the one hand, Jerome was attracted to the sophisticated blending of language, mythology and history that formed his education. He felt guilt at how colorless Christian culture seemed in comparison, and in a dreamlike "otherworldly experience," Jerome claimed the Heavenly Judge accused him of being more a follower of Cicero than of Christ

207 Ausonius, *Ep.* 24.50 (Green): "quae tibi Romulidas proceres vexare libido est?" See Witke, *Numen litterarum*, pp.3-65; Lienhard, *Paulinus*.

208 Rutilius, *De suo reditu* 1.525-26: "num, rogo, deterior Circaeis secta venenis? / tunc mutabantur corpora, nunc animi." See Doblhofer, *Rutilius*, vol.2, pp.224-28.

209 Ambrose, *Hexameron* 1.2.6-7: "Moses utique ille eruditus in omni sapientia Aegyptorum...et cum esset in aula educatus regia, maluit tamen pro amore iustitiae subire exilium voluntarium quam in tyrannidis fastigio peccati perfunctionem deliciis acquirere... Moses aperuit os suum et effudit quae in eo Dominus loquebatur...non in persuasione humanae sapientiae nec in philosophiae simulatoris disputationibus, sed in ostensione spiritus et virtutis." These words were delivered Monday 30 March 386, in a sermon heard by Augustine, Courcelle, *Confessions*, pp.93-103.

210 On Donatus see Kaster, *Guardians*, pp.275-78 no.52.

and had Jerome flogged.²¹¹ Jerome swore he did not look at a non-Christian text for 10 years afterward, though analysis of his writings seems to show the temptation was too strong for the saint.²¹²

In an attempt to help fix this new historical order, Jerome translated into Latin and expanded the *Chronicle* of Eusebius of Caesarea. The work joins the personages of Scriptural history with those of other Mediterranean cultures.²¹³ The chronology began with Abraham and followed, year by year, important events among the Hebrews, Assyrians and Egyptians, each culture having a separate column. Later columns were added for the Persians, Greeks and, finally, the Romans, when each of these later cultures emerged into this new history. Jerome's translation became the standard reference work for the history.²¹⁴

Historians of the old tradition seem to have ignored Christianity, as much as they could. Neither Sextus Aurelius Victor in his *Caesares*, nor Eutropius in the *Breviarium* (both written in the 360s) mention Christianity at all. More telling is the author of the *Epitome de Caesaribus*, whose description of the emperor Theodosius ignores the religion of this quite devout Christian ruler.²¹⁵

Only the contemporary history of Ammianus survives, which would require the historian to mention Christians and their religion. There are, however, fewer than 30 references in the *Res gestae*, marginalizing the

211 Jerome, *Ep.* 22.30.

212 Hagendahl, *Latin Fathers*, pp.269-330.

213 On the sources for Eusebius' *Chronicle*, see Croke, "Origins."

214 Croke, "Origins," pp.125-27.

215 On the differing views of Christians and non-Christians on Theodosius, see Matthews, *Western aristocracies*, pp.248-52.

movement in the historian's conception of events. It seems doubtful Christianity came up in the *Res gestae* before 303, and perhaps not until 312 or even 324.²¹⁶

It is significant that Christianity is also marginalized in the *Historia Augusta*, but it is even more significant in a work whose final biographies end in the year 284 that Christianity appears at all. The *HA* has but ten episodes that refer to Christianity or its adherents. But chronologically the Christians have percolated all the way to the first years covered by the work. Already the emperor Hadrian (Q 7.5-8.10) is seen writing about the religion, though his equation of Egyptian Christianity with Serapis worship appears risible.²¹⁷

Half a dozen references to Christianity appear in the life of Alexander, and it should be no surprise such prominence comes in this fantastic fiction on the ideal prince.²¹⁸ Alexander shows familiarity with Christian literature, citing the Golden Rule (AS 51.7-8),²¹⁹ and the emperor uses an example from Christian law (albeit a dubious one) to justify a decision in an imperial rescript concerning punishments for unsubstantiated prosecutions by provincial officials (AS 45.6-7).²²⁰ The most famous occurrence of Christianity comes in the oft-quoted description of Alexander's lararium, with its images of Apollonius of Tyana, Abraham, Orpheus and Christ (AS 29.2). In all of the cited passages, Christianity is coupled with other faiths. The author may have done so not to denigrate the religion but rather to incorporate it within Rome's cultural history, giving Christianity the albeit small role it was felt to merit. In this regard, the *HA* provides a reasoned reaction to the new historical order, for the

216 On the condensed nature of Ammianus' lost books, see Matthews, *Ammianus*, p.27-30.

217 Schmid, "Koexistenz," saw the episode as a harkening for an imagined era of religious tolerance in light of the destruction of the Serapeum in Alexandria in 391.

218 Bertrand-Dagenbach, *Alexandre Sévère*, provides a recent study of the life.

219 Straub, *Geschichtsapologetik*, pp.118-24.

220 Calu, "Manus," p.243.

author accommodates Christianity to the old history rather than the other way round.²²¹

For all we know the author of the *HA* himself could have been a Christian. The tone and mood of the *HA* bear similarities to the *Saturnalia* of Macrobius, who quite possibly was Christian.²²² But if the *HA* author was Christian, his religious sensibilities are not at all militant. Tolerance and moderation seem to be favored, and Diocletian was seen by the author as the Father of the Golden Age (*Hel* 35.4) rather than as the Great Persecutor.²²³

The *Historia Augusta* may not be a *historia adversos Christianos* as posited most forcefully by Johannes Straub. Straub, however, was correct to note that the *HA* is fundamentally a work of historiography. The rhetorical flourishes of the incredible, unlikely and impossible that appear within its pages are included primarily to fill out descriptions of a Roman past the author wished to preserve.²²⁴

Preserving Rome's cultural heritage is not the only theme of the *HA*. The lives are also political documents that interpret the role of the emperor in Roman government. Probably the most important concept in the work is the notion that usurpers as just as deserving of biography as emperors. In the life of Avidius Cassius, who is the first usurper given a biography, the author, in the guise of Vulcacius Gallicanus, explains to Diocletian that he intends to write about all who took the imperial name, even if unjustly, so that Diocletian might

221 Momigliano, "Popular beliefs," pp.145-47.

222 Alan Cameron, "Date," pp.34-36. Cameron, "Paganism," pp.22-26, would qualify his earlier view by stressing that the *Saturnalia* would have appealed equally to both Christian and non-Christian readers.

223 Diocletian receives a positive portrayal throughout the *HA*, being linked both with Marcus Aurelius (*MA* 19.4) and the Five Good Emperors of the later third century (Claudius, Aurelian, Tacitus, Probus and Carus — the list appears in *Car* 3.6-8; Diocletian's connections to them appear in *A* 29.2-3, 44.1, 44.4-5 [in comparison with *Car* 14.2-3] and *Pr* 22.3).

224 Straub, *Geschichtsapologetik*, pp.183-93.

understand them all (*AC* 3.3). Both here and in the life of Pescennius Niger (there writing under the name of Aelius Spartianus) the author complains about the difficulty of gathering the facts about potential emperors who became usurpers only because they lost a battle. Even then, history was written by the winners.

The author even criticizes earlier historians for overlooking usurpers. In the lives of the usurpers Firmus, Saturninus, Proculus and Bonosus (the first two under Aurelian, the last two under Probus), the author — here as Flavius Vopiscus — notes that Suetonius never devoted books to Mark Antony or to Vindex and that Marius Maximus,²²⁵ who continued Suetonius down to Elagabalus, mentioned Avidius Cassius only in the life of Marcus, Niger and Clodius Albanus only in the life of Severus (*Q* 1). By treating usurpers just like emperors, the author is confounding notions of legitimacy of rule. A usurper is just as legitimate as the emperor, and if he can defeat him, the usurper becomes legitimate. Is this how we explain the Gordians? Gordians I and II reigned over Africa and Italy for less than a month before their revolt against Maximin Thrax was put down. But because their revolt in Africa led to the revolt in Italy that ended Maximin's reign and that the elder Gordian's grandson (Gordian III) was then hailed as emperor, Gordians I and II are legitimated. Macrinus, on the other hand, ruled for more than a year but is labeled a usurper (*Hel* 3.2).²²⁶ And some usurpers, notably Postumus (*T* 3), are viewed as better than the legitimate emperor.

Also confounding the concept of legitimacy are the biographies of heirs apparent and imperial children. The mid-third-century emperors are described

²²⁵ On Marius Maximus, see below, pp.55-69.

²²⁶ Confusing the question of Macrinus' legitimacy is the debate whether Marius Maximus wrote a biography of him, on which see below, pp.60-61.

in father-son pairs, with two Maximins, two Valerians, two Gallieni — not to mention three Gordians.²²⁷ Earlier there are lives of Macrinus' son Diadumenus,²²⁸ of Severus' son Geta, and of Lucius Verus. The practice begins in the *HA* immediately after the very first life, for Hadrian's heir apparent Aelius Caesar is given a biography.

Legitimacy is of particular concern to the author of the *HA*. The author recognizes legitimate emperors are not always good emperors and that legitimacy is more a function of survival than of responsible government. Usurpers, then, gain an allure for the author, for they may represent the possibility of a better handling of the empire.

The inclusion of usurpers may also be connected to the *HA*'s style. The work contains a large number of seemingly irrelevant documents and digressions. When a history is crammed with details, it may be up to the reader to determine what is important.²²⁹ In a similar way, the choice of which emperors are legitimate also falls to the reader. The author of the *HA* refuses to bestow legitimacy, instead providing plenty of alternatives among whom his readers may choose and allowing readers, in a sense, the chance to rewrite history.

Another theme in the *HA* is the criticism of young emperors.²³⁰ Commodus, who had complained to his father Marcus about being assigned

227 Although the lives of Philip and Decius are missing, their biographies, too, were written as father-son pairs. A 2.1 specifically mentions a biography of the *two* Philips, and more than one Philip are mentioned as the murderers and successors of Gordian III (*Gd* 33.4-34.5). Decius' son was his consular colleague in 251 and mentioned as such in V 5.4. The plurals given in A 42.6 for Philip and Decius are not necessarily significant.

228 His cognomen was actually Diadumenianus, *PIR*² O 107.

229 Modern writers on aesthetics have highlighted the issue of choice when discussing the realm of the detail. Barthes, *Chambre*, pp.69-96, found choice both essential and troubling, because picking out the important among various details may not necessarily involve reason; cf. Schor, *Detail*, esp. pp.90-97.

230 The evidence is assembled by Hartke, *Kinderkaiser*, pp.190-206.

upright guardians, got rid of his father's senior advisors as soon as he had the chance (*C* 2-3). Elagabalus was so much under the control of his mother that he never conducted business without her, even bringing her into the senate to draft legislation (*Hel* 2.1, 4.1-2). Gordian III did well while his father-in-law Misitheus²³¹ was alive running the show, but after Misitheus' death, the young Gordian was helpless against the intrigues of Philip the Arab (*Gd* 30). And Gallienus, it seems, never grew up, playing at being emperor while devoting his energies to luxurious living (*Gall* 4.3).

In contrast, it is interesting to note that Severus Alexander, who is presented in his biography as an ideal prince, comes across as an adult at his accession and not as the teenager he was. Only at the very end of his biography, in a brief notice about his death, is it mentioned that he always followed his mother's advice and that she was killed with him (*AS* 60.2).

The author of the *HA* does not accept that a child is capable of running the empire. Such children are always under the control of adult advisors, and for every good advisor (e.g., Misitheus) there is always a bad one waiting round the corner (e.g., Philip). And while a child on the throne may initially check the rivalries among various political and military leaders, such internal calm rarely lasts.

Finally, special notice must be paid to the lives of Gallienus and the Thirty Tyrants. The criticisms of Gallienus stem from his refusal to do anything about barbarian attacks or uprisings of usurpers. The Thirty Tyrants, which is a list of several usurpers inflated with the names of generals who probably were never proclaimed emperor, is meant to stand as an indictment of inactivity on the part of an emperor.

231 His cognomen was actually Timesitheus, *PIR*² F 581.

The political concerns of the *HA* — that legitimacy for an emperor or usurper is earned through victories, than an emperor must be a mature adult, that inactivity and compromise are the bane of imperial leadership — may be seen as a reflection of the turbulent years at the end of the fourth and the beginning of the fifth centuries.²³² And, as I noted above, there is an added poignancy to the text if we imagine the writer and his audience enduring years and years of an ineffective Honorius on the throne, years of barbarian invasion, years of uprisings and revolts.²³³

Yet the nature of the *HA* remains predominantly gentle and humorous. Despite the military, political and religious upheavals of the age, the author has constructed a serene world of erudite pseudonyms and intellectual curiosity. It is a world in which a carriage ride involving a scholar and an aristocrat can give rise to a discussion on Latin historiography (*A* 1.1-2.2), or where an antiquarian can go the trouble of composing a biography even though he suspects no one may read it (*Ael* 7.5). This erudition is also the basis for much of the *HA*'s wit. The audience must know the names of sausages (*Cc* 5.6), the poetic reputation of Cicero (*Gd* 3.2), and the manufactured products of northern Gaulish tribes (*Gall* 6.6).²³⁴

Bulging bibliographies are testament to the fascination modern scholars have with the *HA*.²³⁵ That fascination continues to grow in part because the work remains elusive of scholars' attempts to explain it.²³⁶ The *HA* is so elusive

232 See above, pp.35-38, for a brief summary of the history of the period.

233 The legitimacy of Honorius was a concern even for supporters such as the contemporary Christian historian Orosius 7.42; Röeger, "Usurpatorenviten," pp.371-82.

234 Cf. Syme, *Ammianus*, pp.176-91.

235 Elke W. Merton's bibliography of scholarship containing references to particular passages in the *HA* runs to four volumes, *Stellenbibliographie zur Historia Augusta* (Bonn, 1965-87).

236 Both the *Collection Budé* and *Antiquitas* series are currently producing commentaries on the work. In the *Budé*, volumes 1.1 (ed. Callu-Gaden-Desbordes, 1992) and 3.1 (ed. Turcan,

because it absorbs the concerns of its Honorian context but chooses to respond in an oblique way by creating a past far more attractive than either the past of its historical sources or the contemporary age with its many turmoils.

Sources for the *Vita Caracalli* and other sources for Caracalla's reign

Once the *HA* has been securely classified as pseudepigraphic, the reliability of its information must be called into question. Certainly scholars had long noted that there are incredible episodes in the biographies, but one of the mainstays of the Bonn colloquia has been the gathering of historically inaccurate details scattered throughout the lives. The search for falsehoods (and the attention and value shown them) has given the impression that there is little merit in the most detailed Latin source for the history of the second and third centuries.

Much work has been done analyzing the sources of lives in the *HA*.²³⁷ For the *Vita Caracalli* it has been noted that material in the life confirms information in the histories of Caracalla's contemporaries, Cassius Dio and Herodian.²³⁸ The *Vita Caracalli* contains a sizable number of personal names, many of which are confirmed by these authors (especially Dio). The use of language, while at times anachronistic, also betrays knowledge of technical terms of the early third century.²³⁹ Finally, the biography mentions events that

1993) have appeared, while in the *Antiquitas* series, Lippold's commentary on *Max* was published in 1991.

237 Many of the papers in the *BHAC* volumes involve the positing of sources for various episodes. Systematic approaches are provided by Barnea, *Sources*, and more recently, Callu-Gaden-Desbordes, pp.xiv-lxx.

238 An early analysis of the literary sources for Caracalla's reign was carried out by Schulz, *Kritik*, pp.87-129.

239 See the use of *protectores* at *Cc* 5.8, 7.2.

are neither in Herodian or what survives of Dio but are confirmed from other sources.²⁴⁰

Dio was a senator from Nicaea who was a loyal supporter of the emperor Severus.²⁴¹ His history of Romans from mythical times down to his own day (ca. AD 229), a work written in Greek, has survived primarily in fragments from epitomators, though a substantial portion exists covering the late republican and Augustan periods. For the reign of Caracalla, these epitomes preserve material covering most of the period, but the story of the emperor's death survives in Dio's own words, from pages in a Vatican codex. Herodian also wrote Roman history in Greek, though Herodian's work covers only the period from the death of Marcus through the year 238. Less is known of Herodian's life, though the author claims to be writing the history of his own lifetime.²⁴²

Wilhelm Reusch examined the sources of the *Vita Caracalli* for his Heidelberg dissertation, revising an earlier investigation by Charles Lécrivain.²⁴³ Reusch was struck by similarities in the *Vita Caracalli* with events told by Dio and Herodian, and following the views of his advisor, Johannes Hasebroek, proposed a direct relationship.²⁴⁴ The author of the *Vita Caracalli* read both Dio and Herodian and borrowed directly (though sometimes confusedly) from them.²⁴⁵

240 The trip to Narbonne Cc 5.1 is confirmed by Philostratus, *Vitae sophistorum* 2.32.625; the shipwreck while crossing the Hellespont is confirmed by an inscription, *CIL* 6.2103a, see Whittaker, *Herodian*, vol.1, p.415 n.6.

241 On Dio's life and career, see Millar, *Dio*; Barnea, "Composition."

242 Herodian 1.2.5; 2.15.7; see also Whittaker, *Herodian*, vol.1, pp.ix-lxxii.

243 Reusch, *Caracallavita*; Lécrivain, *Histoire Auguste*, pp.174-81.

244 Hasebroek was influenced by his own advisor, Domaszewski, and under Domaszewski's advice analyzed the sources of the lives of Severus, Niger and Albinus (on which see Hasebroek, *Untersuchungen*); cf. Domaszewski, *Personennamen*, pp.59-74.

245 Reusch, *Caracallavita*, pp.1-8. Reusch's conclusions were heavily drawn upon by Kolb in his dissertation, subsequently published as *Beziehungen*, see esp. pp.92-135. Kolb reviewed many of the passages in Cc in an attempt to show the HA's reliance on Dio and Herodian.

This conclusion poses some difficulties. The author of the *HA* delights in naming his sources. Many of these sources are fictitious, but legitimate sources are also named.²⁴⁶ Dio's name, however, never appears in the *HA*. Since the author's love of trivia and antiquarianism prompts him to name as many authors as he can imagine, it would seem unlikely that had the author been using Dio that Dio's name would not appear anywhere in the *HA*. A more reasonable explanation is that the author of the *HA* never knew of Dio's history nor that such a historian ever existed. Confirming this explanation is the parallel between *Cc* 4.1 and Dio (*Xiph.*) 77.4.2. The Latin contains a play on words missing from the Greek, leading to the conclusion that the Greek version is a misunderstood borrowing from the Latin.²⁴⁷

Positing Herodian as a source of the *Vita Caracalli* has a different problem. The author of the *HA* knew who Herodian was and mentioned him as a source at least nine times.²⁴⁸ But curiously enough Herodian is not mentioned as a source in the biographies of "legitimate" emperors until Alexander — that is, Herodian's name does not appear in the lives of Commodus, Pertinax, Didius Julianus, Severus, Caracalla, Macrinus or Elagabalus. Also, in the lives after Alexander, Herodian's name is always paired with that of the Greek annalist Dexippus. Finally there are significant differences between the *HA* versions of events and those appearing in Herodian, and this has led some to speculate that the author of the *HA* read Herodian only in an epitomized, Latin translation.²⁴⁹

If neither Dio nor Herodian was a source for the *Vita Caracalli*, there is a third possibility to explain the accurate information in the biography — the

246 See, e.g., the joining of fictitious authors to real ones at *Pr* 2.7; Syme, *Ammianus*, p.99.

247 See Commentary on *Cc* 4.1.

248 *ClA* 1.2, 12.14; *Dd* 2.5; *AS* 52.2, 57.3; *Max* 13.4; *MB* 15.3-5, 16.6; *T* 32.1. Herodian is possibly meant when "Arrianus" is mentioned as a source, *Max* 33.3; *G* 2.1; *MB* 1.2.

249 Potter, *Prophecy*, pp.363-69.

historian Marius Maximus, who is mentioned as a source 28 times by the author of the *HA* as well as being noted by Ammianus and a scholiast on Juvenal.²⁵⁰ The author is identified with L. Marius Maximus Perpetuus Aurelianus (*PIR*² M 308), *cos. II ord.* 223. Marius Maximus was born probably in Rome in the latter years of Antoninus Pius or the early years of Marcus Aurelius.²⁵¹ The son of a civil servant who rose steadily through the equestrian rank, Marius Maximus' early career marked him for senatorial prominence, being a *IVvir viarum curandarum*²⁵² and a tribune to both the Legio XII Primigenia at Mainz and the Legio III Italica at Regensburg. After two more administrative positions (*curator viae Latinae* and *curator reipublicae Faventinorum*), Marius Maximus became commander of the Legio I Italica at Novae in Moesia (near modern Svistov, Bulgaria). During the civil wars of 193-97, he commanded an army of Moesians at the siege of Byzantium (against supporters of Niger) and later at the battle of Lyon (against Albinus).

Marius Maximus became part of the elite circle of trusted officials Severus used to run the empire. Marius Maximus soon became governor of Belgica and received a suffect consulship in 198 or 199. He was transferred to

250 On Maximus and his writings, see A. R. Birley, *Severus*¹, pp.308-26; d'Elia, "Note"; della Corte, "Ausonio e Mario Massimo"; R. P. H. Green, "Marius Maximus."

251 On the date, see A. R. Birley, "Coups," pp.276-77; Pflaum, *Carrières* no.168. Birley contends the family was of African origin, based primarily on the appearances of the names Marius and Perpetuus, as well as that of the Quirina tribe, in African inscriptions. Birley, *Severus*², p.205, also notes the appearance of a C. Marius Perpetuus as a patron of Thugga under Domitian, *CRAI* 1962, p.55. Birley was arguing against the views of Pflaum, who in analyzing the careers of Marius Maximus' presumed father (*CIL* 13.1810 = *ILS* 1389) and grandfather (*ILAFr* 592), pronounced them to be "une famille de Romains de Rome." Pflaum made his pronouncement based on the grandfather's position as a *scriba quaestorius* to a proconsul of Africa, as well as the father's holding a priesthood and passing a procuratorial career spent almost exclusively in the city of Rome. Birley is right to point out that not all *scribae* were Italians, but the career of Marius Maximus' presumed father is solidly equestrian, administrative and Roman. Even if Marius Maximus' grandfather was African, his father from early adulthood (if not before) was living in Rome, and in all probability, at birth Marius Maximus was already at least a third-generation resident of the city of Rome.

252 On the position and its association with later higher office, see A. R. Birley, "Notes," p.241.

Lower Germany, then to Syria Coele, from which messages he sent to Dura in 208 still survive.²⁵³ He retained his high standing under Caracalla, achieving both the governorship of Africa and then, for two years, holding the governorship of Asia.²⁵⁴ Marius Maximus was on hand to accompany Caracalla through the province on the emperor's journey east in 215.²⁵⁵

Presumably Marius Maximus then returned to Rome, at least by the fall of 216. He remained a formidable figure, and after the disastrous few months of having Adventus as urban prefect, Macrinus appointed Marius Maximus to the job. Marius Maximus maintained his support among the Severan family, and he received a second consulship, as *ordinarius* for 223.

Syme argued that Marius Maximus was not the main source of Cc but rather another lost Latin author, an *Ignotus*, needed to be posited.²⁵⁶ The view has been taken up and elaborated by Timothy Barnes.²⁵⁷ Barnes' argument for *Ignotus* is careful and sober and must be examined in detail.

Barnes does not (nor did Syme, for that matter) deny the use of Marius Maximus by the author of the *HA*. Barnes' position is only that Marius Maximus was not the *primary* source of the lives from Hadrian to Caracalla (with the exceptions of *AC*, *PN* and *CLA*). Part of the reason for this position concerns the *HA*'s tone. The early lives contain a great deal of reliable information that can

253 Wells-Fink-Gilliam, pp.217-20.

254 The confused situation in determining the governors of Asia under Caracalla has become even more confused with the recent inscription from Yarıalı (ancient Takina) naming two previously unknown proconsuls during the early years of the reign, Sahin-French; *AE* 1989 no.721. These additions are difficult to reconcile with previously developed lists of proconsuls and make it even harder to determine whether Marius Maximus was governor in 213-15 or in 214-16, Leunissen, *Konsuln*, pp.224-25; but see also Barnes, "Proconsuls."

255 *OGIS* 2.517 = *IGRR* 4.1287.

256 Syme, *Ammianus*, pp.89-93. Lécivain, *Histoire Auguste*, pp.191-98, was an earlier proponent of this view, though Lécivain accepted the validity of the six authors named in the manuscripts.

257 Most notably in Barnes, *Sources*, pp.98-107.

be confirmed elsewhere.²⁵⁸ This makes Ignotus, to his supporters, a “good biographer” — as opposed to Marius Maximus, who has been characterized both by the author of the *HA* (posing, curiously enough, in the guise of the loquacious Vopiscus) and by Ammianus as a gossipy scribbler.²⁵⁹ But in denying Marius Maximus as the primary source, Barnes is forced to posit Ignotus as an author who, writing in the years 217-22, would make serious blunders about recent events.²⁶⁰ Pescennius Niger is said at *S* 9.1 to have been killed at Cyzicus, while both Dio and Herodian note that Niger was killed fleeing Antioch.²⁶¹ Caracalla at *Cc* 9.1 is said to have died at age 43; he was, in fact, 29.²⁶² This would make the “good biographer” appear a mediocre (if not downright incompetent) historian.²⁶³

Furthermore, the *HA*’s opinions on particular emperors are curious. Hadrian gets a mixed response — at times favorable (e.g., *H* 9.7-8, 17.6, 20.1), at times not (e.g., *H* 11.6-7, 23.7-9). Since Marius Maximus is specifically cited by the author in some of the criticisms of Hadrian (*H* 2.10, 12.4, 20.3, 25.4), it has been adduced by supporters of Ignotus that the positive comments must derive from a different source.²⁶⁴

The *HA*’s tepid opinion of Hadrian accords well with the views of others in late antiquity. Hadrian was never described as a bad emperor, but he was not necessarily reckoned among the good. Symmachus notably omits Hadrian from a list of good emperors in a letter to Ausonius.²⁶⁵ Ammianus, too, leaves Hadrian

258 Barnes, *Sources*, pp.32-54; cf. Syme, *Ammianus*, p.92.

259 *Q* 1.2; Ammianus 28.4.14.

260 Barnes, *Sources*, p.106.

261 Dio 74.8.3; Herodian 3.4.6.

262 Dio 78.6.5.

263 These two passages in the *HA* are better explained as deriving from the so-called *Kaisergeschichte* or from the *Kaisergeschichte*-derived writings of Victor and Eutropius, on which see below, pp.61, 69-70.

264 Barnes, *Sources*, p.102.

265 Symmachus, *Ep.* 1.13.3 (Seeck).

off his good list when the historian compares Julian to the emperors of old.²⁶⁶ It should not be surprising if this so-so opinion of Hadrian went back to Marius Maximus, whose works were popular during the later fourth century, thus eliminating the need for a second source.

Barnes also notes the significant amount of reliable information in the *HA*'s life of Verus, concluding that the biography goes back to a reliable source that cannot have been Marius Maximus.²⁶⁷ The determination of which emperors received biographies by Marius Maximus is usually based on the list of twelve post-Suetonian emperors in Ausonius' *Caesares*: Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus Pius, Marcus Aurelius, Commodus, Pertinax, Didius Julianus, Severus, Caracalla, Macrinus and Elagabalus. While there is no strong link between Ausonius' poem and Marius Maximus' lives,²⁶⁸ the parallel with the twelve lives of Suetonius is attractive enough to accept the list. From the citations of Marius Maximus in the *HA* and elsewhere, biographies are confirmed for Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus Pius, Marcus Aurelius, Commodus, Pertinax, Severus and Elagabalus.²⁶⁹ What, then, was the source for the *HA*'s life of Verus?

Perhaps the source was Marius Maximus' life of Marcus. The biographer may have included junior emperors in the lives of senior Augusti. The life of Severus seems to have continued nearly ten months after the emperor's death, to the assassination of Geta.²⁷⁰ Marcus' life, which was in two books,²⁷¹ may well have contained all the information the author of the *HA* needed to compose

266 Ammianus 16.1.4. The list includes Titus, Trajan, Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius. Another form of the list pops up in a discussion of Valentinian in Ammianus 30.8-9, where Trajan and Marcus are the prototypical "good emperors" and Antoninus Pius is portrayed as the ideal of serenity and clemency. Hadrian also comes up in this passage, though as an example of the envious emperor.

267 Barnes, "Hadrian."

268 R. P. H. Green, "Marius Maximus."

269 A. R. Birley, *Severus*, p.308; D'Elia, "Note."

270 D'Elia, "Note"; see Commentary on *Cc* 2.4.

271 *AC* 9.5.

the life of Verus.²⁷² Similarities between the two lives (cf. V 6.7-7.10, M 8.10-9.6) may also lend support for a common source.²⁷³

Another argument for Ignotus has been the tone of the life of Didius Julianus.²⁷⁴ Julianus receives a sympathetic portrayal as a humble, polite man who suffered the lies and attacks of Romans angered at the assassination of Pertinax.²⁷⁵ Marius Maximus, as a supporter of Severus, is viewed as an unlikely source for such views. But the source seems someone familiar with Julianus, the senate and Rome, someone whose information is often confirmed by Dio.²⁷⁶ Marius Maximus remains an obvious possibility and as such should affect our thinking about Julianus' support among the senatorial class in Rome.

The life of Macrinus has also been used to support Ignotus. Macrinus' biography is one of the least reliable in the *HA*.²⁷⁷ The *nom de plume* Julius Capitolinus reappears, along with an elaborate introduction on the difficulties of writing biographies of emperors who reigned but a short time.²⁷⁸ Moreover, the introduction is used to present the fictitious historian Julius Cordus as an authority.²⁷⁹ The cumulative effect is the appearance that something has happened to the *HA*'s main source.²⁸⁰

There can be no denying that there is very little of what could be called a main source for the life of Macrinus. Yet the argument has been made that Marius Maximus may have written only a very short biography of this short-

272 A. R. Birley, *Severus*¹, pp.318-21; d'Elia, "Note"; della Corte, "Ausonio e Mario Massimo."

273 Barnes, "Hadrian," p.70, resolves the difficulty by calling M 8.10-9.6 a borrowing from his Ignotus' life of Verus.

274 Barnes, *Sources*, p.103.

275 *DJ* 3.7-4.10; 9.1-2.

276 Dio (Xiph.) 73.12.1-13.5.

277 Lécivain, *Histoire Auguste*, pp.182-90.

278 Den Hengst, *Prefaces*, pp.44-57.

279 Syme, *Ammianus*, pp.96-98.

280 Schwartz, "Vita Marci," pp.258-62, thought Marius Maximus ended his biographies with Caracalla.

reigning emperor.²⁸¹ In addition, even scholars critical of the historicity of the life have been loath to distance *OM* from the primary source of the earliest *HA* biographies.²⁸²

The most obvious argument against Marius Maximus is in many ways the hardest to resolve. Marius Maximus is cited by the author of the *HA* to confirm information or to augment the biographies with curious details.²⁸³ Such citations imply Marius Maximus was a supplement to whatever the main source may have been. While the author of the *HA* does not name his borrowings from Victor or Eutropius, those authors wrote after the *HA*'s "dramatic date," and no mention should be expected.²⁸⁴ One could argue that Marius Maximus merits citation only when the information he provides seems amazing or incredible to the *HA* author. Moreover, the large number of fictitious authors cited in the *HA* makes any discussion of citation problematic.

Since it is not improbable that Marius Maximus provided much of the factual information in the main lives from Hadrian to Elagabalus (and including the life of Verus), it seems preferable to accept an attested author, Marius Maximus, as the primary source for the life of Caracalla, rather than take the leap of faith necessary to posit an *Ignotus*.

Reusch's investigation into the sources of *Cc* should then be revised to indicate which passages derive from Marius Maximus, which come from other

281 A. R. Birley, *Severus*¹, pp.321-22, thinks the brevity would have been due to political reasons. Comparison might also be made to the size of Suetonius' lives of Otho and Vitellius.

282 Lécivain, *Histoire Auguste*, p.182.

283 Lécivain, *Histoire Auguste*, pp.193-98.

284 A writer Aurelius Victor, "cui Pinio cognomen est," is mentioned at *OM* 4.2. The citation is fictitious, the name in all likelihood there to create an eponymous ancestor for the fourth-century historian, Syme, *Ammianus*, p.193. This may confirm that the author of the *HA* read and borrowed directly from Victor rather than from Victor's source in the *Kaisergeschichte*. As no such *Ur-Eutropius* appears in the *HA*, perhaps the *HA* author did not use Eutropius but rather read Eutropius' *Kaisergeschichte* source. On the vexing problem of the relationship between the *HA* and the *Kaisergeschichte*, see Barnes, *Sources*, pp.90-97.

authors (notably Victor and the *Kaisergeschichte*/Eutropius), and which seem the *HA*'s creation.

It is difficult to make a *Quellenforschung* for the introductory passage (Cc 1.1-2.3) because of the rhetorical nature of such a description of a young emperor's life.²⁸⁵ Certain authentic details, however, must have derived from Marius Maximus, such as the restoration of civic privileges to Antioch and Byzantium, Caracalla's dislike of Plautianus (Cc 1.7) and the future emperor's fascination with Alexander the Great (Cc 2.1-2). It seems probable that the gentle tone of the description of Caracalla's childhood may also have come from Marius Maximus, but the details of the boy's fright at the games (Cc 1.5) and his playmate's Jewish behavior (Cc 1.6) can hardly be confirmed.

Reusch posited Eutropius 8.19.2 as a source for Cc 1.1, and a note by Lécivain provides support.²⁸⁶ The similarities are especially profound if Petschenig's supplement of *Antoninum* is accepted, though I offer a slightly different reading of the line which makes Eutropius less likely as a source. Lécivain also noted similarities in Cc 2.3 with Eutropius 8.20.1 and Victor 20.33.²⁸⁷

The events immediately after the assassination of Geta (Cc 2.4-4.10) provide reliable information often confirmed by other sources and must, therefore, derive quite closely from Marius Maximus. The trip to Gaul, the German campaign and the march to the East (Cc 5.1-9) also contain reliable information, though the joke about Lucanian sausage and the discussion of

285 Reusch, *Caracallavita*, pp.9-12.

286 Reusch, *Caracallavita*, p.9; Lécivain, *Histoire Auguste*, p.181 n.2, pointed out that the name *Bassianus* does not appear in sections of Cc that come from the author's primary source.

287 Lécivain, *Histoire Auguste*, p.174.

Caracalla's rescripts (*Cc* 5.6-7) are late-antique additions by the *HA* author.²⁸⁸ The discussion of Caracalla's exploits hunting boars and a lion (*Cc* 5.9) may also have been found in *Marius Maximus*.²⁸⁹

Caracalla's wars in the East and his visit to Egypt are given a very abbreviated notice (*Cc* 6.1-5). Some of the details are questionable, especially mention of the Cadusii and Babylonians and the remark that Caracalla was called Germanicus while Severus was still alive (*Cc* 6.4-5).²⁹⁰ The discussion of Caracalla's murder is a mess, though the information in *Cc* 6.6-7 seems accurate enough. The "retelling" in *Cc* 7.1-2 is more problematic because the *HA* author gives a slightly different version and demonstrates his misunderstanding of a Sallustian phrase.²⁹¹ The "two versions" can be reconciled to one source, but significant tampering must have taken place in the second version.

The digression on Lunus seems an invention of the *HA* author (*Cc* 7.3-5).²⁹² Then follow stories on the murder of Papinian (*Cc* 8.1-10). A section on Papinian may well have been included in *Marius Maximus* (the *HA* author claims to have read several sources, *Cc* 8.1), though parts of this passage have similarities to Victor (cf. *Cc* 8.5-7, Victor 20.33-34; *Cc* 8.10, Victor 22.1-2).²⁹³ Eutropius 8.20.2 or Eutropius' source in the *Kaisergeschichte* seems the origin of the age at death and funeral notice of *Cc* 9.1. *Cc* 9.2 accepts Victor 23.1 for the assertion that Elagabalus was the son of Caracalla.²⁹⁴ *Cc* 9.3 is a rhetorical commonplace for which it is hard to posit a single source. The source of the

288 Straub, *Geschichtapologetik*, p.53; Syme, *Ammianus*, pp.34-35. The final rescript mentioned in *Cc* 5.7 bears a striking resemblance to a crime mentioned by Ammianus 19.12.14 as being prosecuted under Constantius.

289 A coin from Pergamum associated with Caracalla's visit shows the emperor hunting a lion, *Harl. Coins*, Pl.17.4 = Von Fritze, *Pergamon*, pl.vii.9.

290 Syme, *Ammianus*, pp.35-36; *Cc* 6.5 conflicts directly with *Cc* 5.6.

291 See Commentary.

292 Domaszewski, *Personennamen*, p.74.

293 Reusch, *Caracallavita*, pp.53-55.

294 Eutropius 8.22.1 is a little more suspicious.

episode on buildings Caracalla left behind in Rome (*Cc* 9.4-6) is likewise unknown, though the topic seems a predilection of the *HA* author.²⁹⁵ Mention of Caracalla's dress, the Via Nova, the rites of Isis and Caracalla's burial place (*Cc* 9.7-11) seem to have a source in Victor 21.1, 21.4, 21.6.²⁹⁶

The story of Caracalla's affair with Julia, and the notorious "si libet, licet" phrase (*Cc* 10.1-4), are paralleled in Victor 21.3. Sources for the other stories rounding out the life are harder to find, though the mention of Goths (*Cc* 10.5-6) makes the *diasyrticum quiddam* of Helvius Pertinax a late-antique creation.

The sources, then, of *Cc* break down this way:

<u><i>Cc</i> (chapter.section)</u>	<u>contents</u>	<u>source</u>
1.1-6	Caracalla's childhood	unknown (though perhaps following tone of Marius Maximus with vocabulary taken from <i>Kaisergeschichte</i> or Eutropius)
1.7-2.2	restoration of civic privileges to Antioch and Byzantium; hatred of Plautianus; emulation of Alexander the Great	Marius Maximus
2.3	comparison of Caracalla with Severus and Geta	<i>Kaisergeschichte</i> ? (cf. Eutropius 8.20.1; Victor 20.33)
2.4-4.10	aftermath of Geta's assassination	Marius Maximus

295 Cf. Domaszewski, *Topographie*, p.7.

296 Reusch, *Caracallavita*, pp.57-59.

5.1-5.5	visit to Gaul; German campaign	Marius Maximus
5.6-7	Lucanicus joke; three rescripts on <i>maiestas</i>	unknown (though cf. Ammianus 19.12.14)
5.8-6.2	travel through Thrace; Hellespont shipwreck; hunting; Armenian war; visit to Alexandria	Marius Maximus
6.3	Alexandrian slaughter in emulation of Ptolemy Euergetes	Marius Maximus?
6.4-5	Cadusii and Babilonii; wild beasts sent against the enemy; the title Parthicus	unknown, though perhaps heavily elaborated Marius Maximus
6.6-7	Caracalla's murder	Marius Maximus
7.1-2	Caracalla's murder	heavily altered Marius Maximus
7.3-5	Lunus digression	unknown
8.1-3	Papinian	perhaps an elaboration of Marius Maximus
8.4-7	reasons for Papinian's murder	Victor 20.33-34 or <i>Kaisergeschichte</i>
8.8-9	Papinian's prophecy	unknown
8.10	Diadumenus named Antoninus	Victor 22.1-2 or <i>Kaisergeschichte</i>
9.1	length of Caracalla's life and reign	<i>Kaisergeschichte</i> or Eutropius 8.20.2

9.2	funeral and offspring	Victor 23.1 or <i>Kaisergeschichte</i>
9.3	Caracalla's character	<i>Kaisergeschichte?</i> (cf. Eutropius 8.20.1)
9.4-6	the Baths of Caracalla	unknown (though cf. Victor 21.4, Eutropius 8.20.1)
9.7-12	the caracalla cloak; buildings in Rome; Egyptian rites; burial place	Victor 21.1, 21.4, 21.6 or <i>Kaisergeschichte</i>
10.1-4	Caracalla's "marriage" to Julia	Victor 21.3 or <i>Kaisergeschichte</i>
10.5-11.7	Geticus joke; Severus' desire to have Caracalla killed; Caracalla's deification	unknown

The information that comes from those sections of *Cc* whose source seems to have been *Marius Maximus* can be relied on in determining the history of the period. Those episodes that have other sources cannot be.

In a further development, one can try to reconstruct what *Marius Maximus'* biography may have looked like, though such a reconstruction be highly speculative. After some brief introductory remarks (which may not necessarily have borne any resemblance to *Cc* 1.1), *Marius Maximus* may have discussed Caracalla's childhood character. *Marius Maximus* seems to have put the future emperor's childhood in a positive light (cf. *Cc* 1.3-8). Three factors may have been at work in such a positive depiction: standard representation of imperial children; Severan propaganda, especially with regard to the granting of favors and privileges in Caracalla's name; and anger and resentment at the

power then held by Plautianus, the praetorian prefect whose daughter the unwilling Caracalla was forced to marry.

As Caracalla grew older, a change in character may have been noted (cf. Cc 2.1-3). The adult Caracalla seemed much more serious and a lot less friendly. His heroes now were great military leaders like Alexander and Sulla, and if Severus had been a new Augustus, perhaps Caracalla saw himself as a new Tiberius. At this point Marius Maximus may have skipped to the immediate aftermath of Geta's assassination, as the details of the British campaign, Severus' death, the return to Rome and the murder of Geta would have been included in Severus' biography.²⁹⁷ The events immediately after Geta's murder have been preserved in Cc 2.4-4.10, including Caracalla's visits to various troops, the purge of Roman notables that came immediately afterwards, as well as the rioting and unrest that plagued Rome as the year 212 began.

Marius Maximus may have turned his discussion to Caracalla's travels in 213, including his campaign against the Germans and his illness that year (cf. Cc 5.1-3). The biography at this point may have remained more *militiae* than *domi*, with Marius Maximus probably going over Caracalla's plans for an eastern campaign (cf. Cc 5.4) and the emperor's not uneventful trip east in 214 (cf. Cc 5.8).

The rest of Caracalla's life was spent in the East, and Marius Maximus' biography probably continued its narration with the Armenian campaign of 215 (cf. Cc 6.1), and the emperor's visit to Alexandria later that year, including the unrest that Caracalla had brutally put down (cf. Cc 6.2-3). The campaigns of 216 should also have been noted (cf. Cc 6.4-5) before Marius Maximus began

²⁹⁷ See Commentary on Cc 2.4.

narrating in detail the story of Caracalla's murder outside Carrhae in the spring of 217 (cf. *Cc* 6.6-7.2).

Marius Maximus probably finished the biography by providing telling anecdotes concerning Caracalla's character, some of which undoubtedly involved the jurist Papinian, who was murdered on Caracalla's orders (cf. *Cc* 8.1-7). Details of Caracalla's age at death and burial may also have been given, as well as a short evaluation of the emperor and his reign (cf. *Cc* 9.1-2).

From this hypothetical reconstruction, one might say Marius Maximus did not have an entirely negative view of Caracalla, for he may have spoken positively of the emperor's youth. Marius Maximus, who served as Prefect of Rome under Macrinus, may also have been acutely aware of the difficulties in running a city. Marius Maximus may have dwelt in detail both on the rioting and attempts to restore order in Rome after Geta's assassination, and on similar upheavals in Alexandria during Caracalla's visit in 215. Other contemporary writers were not as reserved in their opinions of Caracalla.

Dio was far more hostile to Caracalla than Marius Maximus seems to have been.²⁹⁸ The ever chatty Dio rarely has a good word for the emperor, whose reign the historian characterizes as the continuous slaughter of various prominent Romans — murders seemingly committed on the emperor's whim — coupled with the appointments of inappropriate individuals to high office.

Dio was narrating events during his lifetime, events in which he sometimes played a part.²⁹⁹ Dio revels in the anecdotal and seems little interested in recounting the details of governance, details which often have to be teased from his material (for example, that throughout Caracalla's reign, whether he was in Rome or on campaign, his mail was sifted through by Julia

²⁹⁸ On Dio's views of Caracalla, see Millar, *Dio*, pp.150-60.

²⁹⁹ On Dio's use of personal experience, see Barnes, "Composition," pp.252-55.

Domna and forwarded to him).³⁰⁰ Dio's reliability on matters like military operations and administrative decisions is sometimes questionable, but on stories about the lifestyles of the Severan rich and famous he is generally unimpeachable. On the whole Dio remains an excellent sieve for trying to extract the truth about Caracalla. Where Dio confirms a story in *Cc*, that story is generally accurate.³⁰¹ Where there is a dispute between Dio and *Cc*, then two questions must be asked: is it likely that the *Cc* passage stems from Marius Maximus? would Marius Maximus' information on this matter be more or less likely to be correct than Dio?

Herodian saw Caracalla as a violent and temperamental man better suited to the camp than to civic life.³⁰² Herodian is explicit about the contemporary nature of his history, and he applied his own judgment to the stories he read or heard and to that mixture he added his own memories.³⁰³ Herodian was also not ignorant of the rhetorical, which, while it makes his history enjoyable to read, often removes from the work the accuracy demanded by modern scholars attempting to reconstruct events. Moreover, Herodian was a "visual" writer, often describing events as they appeared in paintings hung up to act as ancient newsreels (e.g., Caracalla as a symbolic Alexander, 4.8.1-2; the portrait of Elagabalus, 5.5.6; the battles of Maximin Thrax, 7.2.8).

Details in Herodian must be confirmed either by Dio or by what seem to be the Marius Maximus-passages in *Cc* in order to be accepted. Individual details appearing in Herodian alone may well have a basis in fact, but

300 Dio (*Xiph., Exc. Val.*) 77.18.2-3, 78.4.2-3.

301 Though it seems likely that Dio's work postdates that of Marius Maximus and thus Dio could have borrowed information from Marius Maximus, Barnes, "Composition," pp.253-54; cf. Commentary on *Cc* 4.1.

302 See, e.g., Herodian 4.3.3-4, 4.9.3, 4.12.8.

303 Herodian 1.1.5, 2.15.7.

Herodian's unreliability as a historical source means such details must be viewed with skepticism.

The fourth-century historical summaries by Victor, Eutropius and the author of the *Epitome de Caesaribus* add little knowledge, as they tend to provide not necessarily accurate details on Caracalla's personal behavior, though Victor shows an interest in Caracalla's building program. The three works are believed to be based on a common source, the so-called *Kaisergeschichte*, written shortly after 337.³⁰⁴ Additional information on Caracalla's reign can also be gleaned from Philostratus' *Lives of the sophists*, though that information consists of only a few details almost entirely concerning the emperor's intellectual proclivities.

But literary texts are not the only sources for the period. Hundreds of papyri survive from Caracalla's lifetime, and at least 150 are dated between Severus' death in 211 and Caracalla's murder in 217.³⁰⁵ Most concern the daily lives of individual Egyptians, but a few bear directly on Caracalla's goings-on. The most important papyrus concerning his reign (and, arguably, one of the most important documents in Roman history) is *P. Giss. 40*, which contains three of the emperor's edicts.

The first edict (cited as *P. Giss. 40 I*) concerns a widespread grant of Roman citizenship. The text is connected by many scholars with Dio (Xiph.) 78.9.5 and a fragment of Ulpian (*D 1.5.17*). This edict has come to be called (from Ulpian's reference) the *Constitutio antoniniana*, through which Caracalla extended Roman citizenship to all those without it who were living under

304 Barnea, "Kaisergeschichte"; cf. id., *Composition*, pp.104-7.

305 Institut für Papyrologie der Universität Heidelberg, *Gesamtverzeichnis der griechischen Papyrusurkunden Ägyptens* (electronic database, status as of 31 December 1993).

Roman authority.³⁰⁶ The second edict (*P. Giss.* 40 II; another copy is *P. Oxy.* XXXVI 2755, and the edict is confirmed by a fragment of Ulpian, *D* 50.2.3.1, as well as by *CJ* 10.61.1) clarifies and expands an earlier amnesty from exile granted by the emperor on the day after Geta's murder. This amnesty is mentioned in *Cc* 3.1 (see Commentary) as well as by Dio (*Xiph., Exc. Val.*) 77.3.3.³⁰⁷ The final edict (*P. Giss.* 40 III) orders the expulsion of ethnic Egyptians from the city of Alexandria during Caracalla's visit as sole emperor, a visit discussed in *Cc* 6.2-3 (see Commentary), by Herodian 4.8.6-9.8 and by Dio (*Xiph., Exc. Val.*) 77.22-23.³⁰⁸

Several other papyri (*BGU* I 266; *P. Got.* 3; *P. Oxy.* XLIII 3090-91, LI 3602-5; *P. Strasb.* IV 245) discuss the requisitioning of supplies either for Caracalla's visit to Egypt or for the eastern campaign or for both.³⁰⁹ Still others (*P. Berol.* inv. 7216, a copy of *P. Mich.* IX 529) describe a legal response made by the emperor while in Egypt.³¹⁰

Other legal sources can also illuminate the period. Thousands of legal opinions and decisions survive from the writings of Severan-era jurists, writings later collected in the *Digest*. Caracalla's lifetime marked the last great age of Roman classical jurisprudence, and the court in which Caracalla grew up contained eminent lawyers and rising legal scholars such as the praetorian prefect Papinian (whose life Caracalla would sacrifice to the troops in the wake of Geta's murder), as well as Callistratus, Arrius Menander, Julius Paulus and

306 There is a very extensive bibliography on the *Constitutio antoniniana*, a summary of which may be found in Oliver, *Constitutions*, pp.495-505.

307 Oliver, *Constitutions*, pp.505-7, 510.

308 The expulsion is specifically mentioned by Dio (*Xiph.*) 77.23.2; Oliver, *Constitutions*, pp.508-9.

309 Schwartz, "Note"; Whitehorne, "Return"; on the economic demands of an imperial visit, see Millar, *Emperor*, pp.28-40.

310 Oliver, *Constitutions*, pp.515-18.

Domitius Ulpianus.³¹¹ Papinian's murder notwithstanding, major efforts in jurisprudence continued during Caracalla's sole reign: Ulpian and Paul each wrote several books,³¹² Claudius Tryphoninus completed his *Disputations*,³¹³ and Tertullian may have written his book on property acquired by a soldier while in service (*peculium castrense*), a topic of particular interest to Caracalla.³¹⁴ In addition to writing legal treatises, most of these jurists served as legal counselors to the emperor, helping draft his rescripts and edicts.³¹⁵ Nearly 250 of the emperor's legal pronouncements are preserved in Justinian's *Code*.³¹⁶ The legal material shows both the continuity of this age of jurists and their importance in government, as well as enlightening particular policies involving universal citizenship, return of exiles, as well as the growth and development of soldiers' legal rights.³¹⁷ Through this legal material can scholars discern particular concerns of the period, as well as particular concerns of the emperor. Those concerns can also be seen directly through the edicts of Caracalla preserved in Justinian's *Code*.

Inscriptions provide additional information on Caracalla's journeys and activities.³¹⁸ Epigraphic evidence often provides a chronology onto which other

311 On the lives of these jurists, see Honoré, "Severan lawyers," pp.205-226; Kunkel, *Herkunft* nos.56 (Papinian), 59 (Menander), 61 (Callistratus), 67 (Paul), 68 (Ulpian).

312 Ulpian wrote at least a dozen titles during Caracalla's reign, including his massive studies on the *Edict* and on the writings of the first-century jurist Sabinus (*Ad Sabinum*). On Ulpian's writings, see Honoré, *Ulpian* (though results of his linguistic analyses must be viewed with skepticism); cf. Lenel, *Palingenesia*, vol.2, coll.1247-48 no.83; Paul probably wrote at least half that many, Lenel, *Palingenesia*, vol.2, col.1247 no.82.

313 *D* 49.17.19 shows knowledge of Caracalla's edict on *peculium castrense*, *C* 6.21.2; Lenel, *Palingenesia*, vol.2, col.351 n.1 and col.374 fr.68.2; see also Kunkel, *Herkunft* no.58.

314 Caracalla issued an edict in 213 on the topic, *CJ* 6.21.2; cf. previous note; for Tertullian's dates, see Kunkel, *Herkunft* no.62; Lenel, *Palingenesia*, vol.2, col.341 n.2.

315 On this process, see Honoré, *Emperors and lawyers*.

316 Numbers taken from the list in *CJ*, pp.490-91.

317 On the development of military law and the Severans' interest in soldiers' rights, see Vendrand-Voyer, "Origine"; ead., *Normes*, pp.177-328.

318 For examples spotlighting Caracalla's legal activities, see Roussel-Visscher; Oliver, *Constitutions*, pp.495-525.

information can be placed. Inscriptions can also confirm or elaborate information from other types of sources. The sheer numbers of inscriptions — along with their geographic spread — make it difficult to create an entirely comprehensive study of the information they provide, though thorough analyses of Caracalla's offices and titles have been completed.³¹⁹

More manageable are the facts that can be gained from coins. Like inscriptions, some coins indicate Caracalla's activities, especially the commemorative issues struck in Asia during the winter of 214-15.³²⁰ The weight of coins and the introduction of a new coin, the double denarius or antoninianus, show the economic health of the government and the empire. Coins also reveal the ideology of the regime, not only through their legends, but through their imagery and portraiture as well.³²¹

The portraits of Caracalla in various media (coins, paintings, sculpture) should also be considered part of imperial propaganda, and as such tell a great deal about the emperor's ideology. Finally, as portrait types change over time, those changes allow the modern historian to see development in the way the emperor wished to be perceived.³²²

Manuscripts and editions of the *Historia Augusta*

While more than three dozen medieval and early modern manuscripts of the *HA* survive, only a handful are important for restructuring the text.³²³ The

319 Mastino, "Potestà"; id., *Titolature*.

320 Von Fritze, *Pergamon*.

321 On the ideology of coins and the operation of government, see Harl, *Coins*.

322 On Caracalla's portraiture, see Fittschen-Zanker Nrr. 86-94; Nodelman, *Portraiture*, pp.136-203.

323 Fundamental work has recently been carried out by Callu, "Diffusion"; "Pétrarque"; "Historiographie" (with Desbordes and Bertrand); "Quattrocento" (with Desbordes). Callu's

most important manuscript is also the oldest: Palatinus Latinus 899, an Italian manuscript of the second quarter of the ninth century.³²⁴ This manuscript, commonly designated P, is the source for most of the later manuscripts.³²⁵

There are, however, several manuscripts which share characteristics not found in P, including a different ordering of the lives, numerous additional lacunae, and a supplement (from Paul the Deacon's *Historia Romana*) to fill in the lost lives of Decius and Aemilianus.³²⁶ These manuscripts have been grouped together as the family Σ and are designated as such when they agree. The Σ manuscripts, while they derive independently of P, are much later in date, the earliest coming from the end of the fourteenth century.³²⁷ The readings of the Σ manuscripts are generally inferior to those of P, because the family tends either to ignore difficult readings (e.g. *Pr* 24.1: P has "circa Veronam acunacum [corrected by a humanist to "ac Benacum"] et Larium"; Σ has a blank space in place of the nonsense "acunacum") or to alter difficult readings into more familiar ones (e.g. *Cc* 4.2: P has "Patrous" [emended by Borghesi to "Patruinus," see Commentary]; Σ displays the much more familiar name "Petronius").³²⁸ The important manuscripts of Σ are Laurentianus "Santa Croce" 20 sin. 6 (Callu's D), Ambrosianus C 100 inf. (X), Chigianus H VII 239 (Ch), and Vaticanus Latinus 1898 (v).

investigations supplement and supersede the earlier work of Hohl, "Beiträge"; "Textkritisches"; "Textgeschichte."

324 Fohlen-Jeudy-Riou, pp.75-76.

325 I will use Callu's sigla throughout the Commentary. The sigla P and Σ are identical in both Callu's edition and in Hohl's.

326 Callu-Gaden-Desbordes, pp.xcix-c; Hohl, "Beiträge," pp.393-94; the supplement is printed by Peter, *Scriptores*, vol.1, pp.xxii-xxiii.

327 Callu-Desbordes, p.258.

328 Hohl, "Beiträge," pp.387-410.

The first printed edition, by Filippo da Lavagna, was produced in Milan in 1475.³²⁹ There was an Aldine edition (1516), as well as editions by the early seventeenth-century scholars Isaac Casaubon, Jan Gruter and Claude de Saumaise.³³⁰ In the middle of the nineteenth century the text came under renewed scrutiny by German scholars, including Heinrich Jordan and Franz Eyssenhardt (who produced an edition published in Berlin in 1864) and Hermann Peter (who prepared the first Teubner edition of 1865, revised in 1884). Ernst Hohl, whose scholarship revolutionized the study of the text, produced a new Teubner edition in 1927 (reprinted with minor corrections and additions by Chr. Samberger and W. Seyfarth, 1965). At the same time David Magie was preparing a Loeb translation. Magie based his text on Peter's for the first two volumes (1922, 1924) but was able to use Hohl's text for the third (1932).

Currently the Collection Budé is preparing a new edition of the entire text. The work is being carried out by a team of editors. So far two volumes have appeared: 1.1 (*H, Ael, AP* — edited by Callu, A. Gaden and Olivier Desbordes [1992]) and 3.1 (*OM, Dd, Hel* — edited by Robert Turcan [1993]).

The edition in this study was compiled from the manuscript readings provided by Hohl's edition, with recourse to Peter's edition and various remarks by other textual critics. The sigla in the apparatus are those of the Budé series,³³¹ though there are uncertainties due to the lesser degree of discrimination in Hohl concerning the handwriting in manuscript P. Wherever Hohl printed "Σ, P corr." in his apparatus, the assumption is that "P corr." corresponds to the Budé P³, who corrected P from a Σ manuscript. As I have not

329 On early printed editions, see Bellezza, *Edizioni*.

330 Bellezza, *Edizioni*; see also Callu-Gaden-Desbordes, pp.cvi-cvii.

331 Callu-Gaden-Desbordes, pp.cv-cvii.

been able to inspect manuscripts personally, I have placed a question mark after the numeral: P³ (?). From Hohl's notation I have also tentatively ascribed an emendation at Cc 5.5 and a marginal note at Cc 8.3 to P², identified as the protohumanist Giovanni de Matociis. As, again, I have not had the chance to inspect manuscripts, I have placed a question mark after the numeral, and I may very well be wrong about these writings coming from P².

The apparatus does not pretend to be comprehensive. Noted only are difficulties in the text, places where the readings of P and Σ differ, and a few other items discussed in the Commentary. In the Translation, the spellings "Caracallus" and "Chilo" are given to correspond to HA usage. In the Commentary the names used are "Caracalla" and "Cilo."

LATIN TEXT

(sigla are those of Callu-Gaden-Desbordes, pp.cv-cvii; emendations from editions not personally seen by the current editor are cited with the source edition in brackets — e.g., *Casaubon* [teste Peter] indicates the emendation is noted in Peter's edition as coming from Casaubon; variants within the Σ family are noted with a slash — e.g. uirentem/iurentem Σ)

INCIPIIT ANTONINUS CARACALLUS

1.1. ex duobus liberis, quos Septimius Severus reliquit, quorum unum exercitus, alterum pater dilexit, Geta hostis est iudicatus, Bassianus autem optinuit imperium. 2. de cuius maioribus frustra putamus iterandum, cum omnia in Severi vita satis dicta sint. 3. huius igitur pueritia blanda, ingeniosa, parentibus adfabilis, amicis parentum iucunda, populo accepta, grata senatui, ipsi etiam ad amorem conciliandum salutaris fuit. 4. non ille in litteris tardus, non in benivolentis segnis, non tenax in largitate, non lentus in clementia, sed sub parentibus visus. 5. denique, si quando feris obiectos damnatos vidit, fleuit aut oculos avertit. quod populo plus quam amabile fuit. 6. septennis puer, cum conlusorem suum puerum ob Iudaicam religionem gravius verberatum audisset, neque patrem suum neque patrem pueri velut auctores verberum diu respexit. 7. Anthiocensibus et Byzantiis interventu suo iura vetusta restituit, quibus iratus fuit Severus, quod Nigrum iuverant. Plautiani odium crudelitatis causa concepit.

INCIPIIT ANTONINUS CARACALLUS P

1.1 reliquit P ; post reliquit *habent* mss. Getam et Bassianum, del. Jordan [teste Hohl]; post unum add. Antoninum *Petscherig*; dilexit *emendavi*, dixit mss.; Bassianus autem optinuit imperium *Peter*, Bassianus aut optinuit se imperium P, Bassianum obtinuisse imperium Σ , Bassianum autem notum optinuisse imperium *Hohl*, Bassianus autem optinuit sibi imperium *Callu*

6 velut *Casaubon* [teste Peter], vel mss.

7 Anthiocensibus P ; Plautiani Σ , Plautini P

8. quod a parentibus gratia Sigillariorum acceperat, id vel clientibus vel magistris sponte donavit. sed haec puer.

2.1. egressus vero pueritiam seu patris monitis seu calliditate ingenii sive quod se Alexandro Magno Macedoniae aequandum putabat, restrictior, gravior, vultu etiam truculentior factus est, prorsus ut eum, quem puerum scierant, multi esse non crederent. 2. Alexandrum Magnum eiusque gesta in ore semper habuit. Tiberium et Syllam in conventu plerumque laudavit. 3. patris superior fuit; fratrem magna eius humilitate despexit.

4. post patris mortem in castra praetoria pergens apud milites conquestus est circumveniri se fratris insidiis, atque ita fratrem in Palatio fecit occidi. eius corpus statim cremari praecepit. 5. dixit praeterea in castris fratrem sibi venenum parasse, matri eum inreverentem fuisse; egitque publice his gratias, qui eum occiderunt. 6. addidit denique his quasi fidelioribus erga se stipendium. 7. pars militum apud Albam Geta occisum egerrime accepit, dicentibus cunctis duobus se fidem promisisse liberis Severi, duobus servare debere, 8. clausis portis diu imperator non admissus nisi delentis animis, non solum querellis de Geta et criminationibus editis, sed inormitate stipendii militibus, ut solet, placatis, atque inde Romam redit.

9. tunc sub veste senatoria lorica habens cum armatis militibus curiam ingressus est. hos in medio inter subsellia duplici ordine conlocavit et sic verba fecit. 10. questus est de fratris insidiis involute et incondite ad illius

8 quod *Jordan* [teste *Peter*] et *Peter*, qui P, quid/quod Σ

2.1 Macedoniae P, Macedone Σ

5 matri eum *mss.*; matri etiam *Petschenig*; inreverentem *Peter* (et *antiquiores?*), inrente P, uirentem/iurentem Σ, inruentem *suggerunt Callu et McCarren*

6 quasi *Peter*, quos *mss.*

7 duobus P¹, ducibus Σ, P³ (?)

10 questus Σ, P³ (?), quaesitus P¹; involute *Peter* (et *antiquiores?*), in uolute σ, P³ (?), in uoluntate P¹, X, Ch; ad illius accusationem et sui excusationem Σ, ad illius accusationem sui P¹, post sui *add.* uero excusationem P³ (?), ad illius accusationem et excusationem sui *Hohl*

accusationem et sui excusationem. 11. quod quidem nec senatus libenter accepit, cum ille dixisset fratri se omnia permisisse, fratrem ab insidiis liberasse, et illum tamen sibi gravissimas insidias fecisse nec vicem amori reddidisse fraterno. 3.1. post hoc relegatis deportatisque reditum in patriam restituit. inde ad praetorianos processit et in castris mansit.

2. altera die Capitolium petit, et eos, quos occidere parabat, adfabiliter est adlocutus innitensque Papiniano et Chiloni ad Palatium redit. 3. cum flentem matrem Getae vidisset aliasque mulieres post necem fratris, mulieres occidere conatus est, sed ob hoc retentus, ne auferetur fratris occisi crudelitas. 4. Laetum ad mortem coegit misso a se veneno: ipse enim inter suasores Getae mortis primus fuerat, qui et primus interemptus est. 5. ipse mortem eius saepissime fleuit. multos, qui caedis eius conscii fuerant, interemit, et eum, qui imaginem eius honoravit. 6. post hoc fratrem patruelem Afrum, cui pridie partes de cena miserat, iussit occidi. 7. qui cum se praecipitasset percussorum timore et ad uxorem crure fracto erepisset, tamen per ludibrium percussoribus deprehensus est et occisus. 8. occidit etiam Pompeianum, Marci nepotem, ex filia natum et ex Pompeiano, cui nupta fuerat Lucilla post mortem Veri imperatoris, quem et consulem bis fecerat et omnibus bellis praeaposuerat, quae gravissima tunc fuerunt, et ita quidem ut videretur a latronibus interemptus.

4.1. dein in conspectu eius Papinianus securi percussus a militibus et occisus est. quo facto percussori dixit: 'gladio te exequi oportuit meum iussum.'
2. occisus est etiam eius iussu Patruinus ante templum divi Pii, tractaque sunt

3.1 relegatis *Peter* (et antiquiores?), religatis *mss.*

2 et eos, quos occidere parabat, adfabiliter est adlocutus *Jordan* [teste *Hohl*], et eos ... locutus Σ , eos ... locutus *P*, eos ... adlocutus *Peter*, ad eos ... locutus *Mommsen* [teste *Hohl*]; *Chiloni emendavi* (cf. *Cc 4.5-6, C 20.1*), *Ciloni mss.*

5 post interemit *virgulam atque et addidi*, interemit eum *P*, interemit; item eum *Petschenig*, interemit sed et eum *Heilm apud Hohl*; honorabit *P*

8 Lucilla Σ , P³ (?), Lucillam P¹; bis Σ , P³ (?), uis P¹

4.2 Patruinus *Borghesi*, Patrous *P*, Petronius Σ

eorum per plateam cadavera sine aliqua humanitatis reverentia. filium etiam Papiniani, qui ante triduum quaestor opulentum munus ediderat, interemit. 3. hisdem diebus occisi sunt innumeri, qui fratris eius partibus faverant. 4. occisi etiam liberti, qui Getae administraverant. caedes deinde in omnibus locis. et in balneis factae caedes, occisique nonnulli etiam cenantes, inter quos etiam Sammonicus Serenus, cuius libri plurimi ad doctrinam extant. 5. in summum discrimen etiam Chilo iterum praefectus et consul venit ob hoc, quod concordiam inter fratres suaserat. 6. et cum idem Chilo sublata veste senatoria nudis pedibus ab urbanicianis raptus esset, Antoninus seditionem compressit. 7. multas praeterea postea caedes in urbe fecit, passim raptis a militibus nonnullis hominibus et occisis, quasi seditionem vindicans. 8. Helvium Pertinacem, suffectum consulem, ob hoc solum, quod filius esset imperatoris, occidit. 9. neque cessavit umquam sub diversis occasionibus eos interficere, qui fratris amici fuissent. 10. saepe in senatum, saepe in populum superbe invectus est aut edictis propositis aut orationibus editis, Syllam se etiam ostendens futurum.

5.1. his gestis Galliam petit atque ut primum in eam venit, Narbonensem proconsulem occidit. 2. cunctis deinde turbatis (qui in Gallia res gerebant), odium tyrannicum meruit quamvis se aliquando fingeret benignum, cum esset natura truculentus. 3. et cum multa contra homines et contra iura civitatum fecisset, morbo implicitus graviter laboravit. circa eos, qui eum curabant, crudelissimus fuit. 4. dein ad orientem profectionem parans omisso itinere in Dacia resedit. circa Retiam non paucos barbaros interemit militesque suos quasi Syllae milites et cohortatus est et donavit. 5. deorum sane se nominibus

4 factae P, facte Σ, facta Peter (et antiquiores?)

5.2 quamvis se aliquando fingeret benignum Klein, quamvis aliquando fingeret et benignum mss.

appellari vetuit, ut Commodus fecerat, cum illi eum, quod leonem aliasque feras occidisset, Herculem dicerent. 6. et cum Germanos subegisset, Germanicum se appellavit, vel ioco vel serio (ut erat stultus et demens) adserens, si Lucanos vicisset, Lucanicum se appellandum. 7. damnati sunt eo tempore qui urinam in eo loco fecerunt in quo statuae aut imagines erant principis, et qui coronas imaginibus eius detraxerunt ut alias ponerent, et qui remedia quartanis tertianisque collo adnexa gestarunt. 8. per Thracias cum praefecto praetorii iter fecit; inde cum in Asiam traiceret, naufragii periculum adiit antenna fracta, ita ut in scafam cum protectoribus descenderet. unde in triremem a praefecto classis receptus evasit. 9. excepit apros frequenter, contra leonem etiam stetit. quando etiam missis ad amicos litteris gloriatus est seque ad Herculis virtutem accessisse iactavit.

6.1. post hoc ad bellum Armeniacum Parthicumque conversus ducem bellicum. qui suis conpetebat moribus, fecit. 2. inde Alexandriam petit, in gymnasium populum convocavit eumque obiurgavit; legi etiam validos ad militiam praecepit. 3. eos autem, quos legerat, occidit exemplo Ptolomei Euergetis, qui octavus hoc nomine appellatus est. dato praeterea signo militibus, ut hospites suos occiderent, magnam caedem Alexandriae fecit. 4. dehinc per Cadusios et Babilonios ingressus tumultuarie cum Parthorum satrapis manum contulit, feris etiam bestiis in hostes inmissis. 5. datis ad senatum quasi post

5 ut Commodus fecerat Σ , Commodus fecerat P¹, quod *add.* P² (?) *post* vetuit; illi eum *ed. Peter* (sed aulici pro illi *suggessit*), illi cu⁻ P, nonnulli eum *Petschenig*, milites eum *Klein*, multi eum *Lenze* (*teste Hohl*), illum *Helm apud Hohl*

6 Germanicum *editio princeps*, Germanu⁻ *mss.*

7 *post* ponerent *habent mss.* damnatis, *delevi*

8 iter fecit X, v, infecit P, interfecit Ch, σ ; adiit antenna Σ , adita⁻ temna P; *post* protectoribus *habent mss.* ita, *del. Jordan* (*teste Hohl*)

9 apros Σ , P³ (?) , afros P¹; quando P, quin Σ ; accessisse iactavit Σ , accessisse se iactavit P

6.1 *post* ducem bellicum *suppl. Shackleton Bailey Theocritum*

3 Euergetis Σ , P³ (?) , Euergetis P¹

victoriam litteris Parthicus appellatus est; nam Germanici nomen patre vivo fuerat consecutus.

6. deinde cum iterum vellet Parthis bellum inferre atque hibernaret Edessae atque inde Carras Luni dei gratia venisset, die natalis sui, octavo idus Apriles, ipsis Megalensibus, cum ad requisita naturae discessisset, insidiis a Macrino praefecto praetorii positis, qui post eum invasit imperium, interemptus est. 7. conscii caedis fuerunt Nemesianus et frater eius Apollinaris Triccianusque, qui praefectus legionis secundae Parthicae militabat et qui equitibus extraordinariis praeerat, non ignorantibus Marcio Agrippa, qui classi praeerat, et praeterea plerisque officialium impulsu Martialis.

7.1. occisus est autem in medio itinere inter Carras et Edessam, cum levandae vessicae gratia ex equo descendisset atque inter protectores suos, coniuratos caedis, ageret. 2. denique cum illum in equum strator eius levaret, pugione latus eius confodit, conclamatumque ab omnibus est id Martialem fecisse.

3. et quoniam dei Luni fecimus mentionem, sciendum doctissimis quibusque id memoriae traditum atque ita nunc quoque a Carrenis praecipue haberi, ut qui Lunam femineo nomine ac sexu putaverit nuncupandam, is addictus mulieribus semper inserviat; 4. qui vero mare deum esse crediderit, is dominetur uxori neque ullas muliebres patiatur insidias. 5. unde, quamvis Graeci vel Aegyptii eo genere quo feminam hominem, etiam Lunam deum dicant, mystice tamen Lunum dicunt.

6 hibernaret Edessae *Hohl*, ibernaret Edissae Σ , hibernare thēdesse P¹, hibernaret Hēdesse P³ (?); Luni Σ , P³ (?), Iuni P¹; octabu P¹

7 Triccianusque *Henzen*, Recianusque P, Vegianusque Σ ; Marcialis P

7.1 Hedessam P

2 Marcialem P

3 inserviat Σ , inseruit at P

5 Lunum *Hirschfeld*, deum *mss.*

8.1. scio de Papiniani nece multos ita in litteras rettulisse, ut caedis non adsciverint causam, aliis alia referentibus; sed ego malui varietatem opinionum edere quam de tanti viri caede reticere. 2. Papinianum amicissimum fuisse imperatori Severo, ut aliqui loquuntur, adfinem etiam per secundam uxorem, memoriae traditur; 3. et huic praecipue utrumque filium a Severo commendatum, atque ob hoc concordiae fratrum Antoninorum favisse; 4. egisse quin etiam, ne occideretur, cum iam de insidiis eius Bassianus quereretur; atque ideo una cum his, qui fautores fuerant Getae, a militibus non solum permittente verum etiam suadente Antonino occisum. 5. multi dicunt Bassianum occiso fratre illi mandasse, ut et in senatu per se et apud populum facinus dilueret, illum autem respondisse non tam facile parricidium excusari posse quam fieri. 6. est etiam haec fabella, quod dictare noluerit orationem, qua invehendum erat in fratrem, ut causa eius melior fieret, qui occideret; illum autem negantem respondisse aliud esse parricidium, aliud accusare innocentem occisum. 7. sed hoc omnino non convenit: nam neque praefectus poterat dictare orationem, et constat eum quasi fautorem Getae occisum. 8. et fertur quidem Papinianus, cum raptus a militibus ad Palatium traheretur occidendus, praedivinasse dicentem stultissimum fore, qui in suum subrogaretur locum, nisi adpetitam crudeliter praefecturam vindicaret. 9. quod factum est: nam Macrinus Antoninum occidit, ut supra exposuimus. 10. qui cum filio factus in castris imperator filium suum,

8.1 adsciverint P, sciuerint Σ; varietatem *Casaubon* [teste *Peter*], veritatem *mss.*

3 post commendatum in P signum additamenti inculcavit P² (?), et in margine eum q: cu Severo pfessu (= professum) sub Sceuola; & Severo in aduocatione fisci successisse scripsit; om. Σ, B; concordiae fratrum Antoninorum favisse *Saumaize* [teste *Peter*], concordia fratrum Antoninorum fuisse *mss.*

6 fauella P¹; noluerit P, uoluerit Σ

7 quisi P¹; occisu P¹

9 Antoninum Σ, om. P

qui Diadumenus vocabatur, Antoninum vocavit, idcirco quod a praetorianis multum Antoninus desideratus est.

9.1. Bassianus vixit annis quadraginta tribus. imperavit annis sex. 2. publico funere elatus est. filium reliquit, qui postea et ipse Marcus Antoninus Heliogabalus dictus est; ita enim nomen Antoninorum inoleverat, ut velli ex animis hominum non posset, quod omnium pectora velut Augusti nomen obsederat.

3. fuit male moratus et patre duro crudelior. avidus cibi, vini etiam adpetens, suis odiosus et praeter milites praetorianos omnibus castris exosus. prorsus nihil inter fratres simile.

4. opera Romae reliquit thermas nominis sui eximias, quarum cellam solearem architecti negant posse ulla imitatione, qualis facta est, fieri. 5. nam et ex aere vel cypro cancelli superpositi esse dicuntur, quibus cameratio tota concrediva est, et tantum est spatii, ut id ipsum fieri negent potuisse docti mechanis. 6. reliquit et porticum patris nomine, quae gesta illius contineret et triumphos et bella. 7. ipse Caracalli nomen accepit a vestimento, quod populo dederat, demisso usque ad talos. quod ante non fuerat. 8. unde hodieque Antoninianae dicuntur caracallae huiusmodi, in usu maxime Romanae plebis frequentatae. 9. idem viam novam munivit, quae est sub eius thermis, Antoninianis scilicet, qua pulchrius inter Romanas plateas non facile quicquam invenias. 10. sacra Isis Romam deportavit et templa ubique magnifice eidem deae fecit; sacra etiam maiore reverentia celebravit, quam antea celebrabantur.

10 uocabatur Σ , uocatur P

9.2 reliquid P

3 ex patre P

4 reliquid P; soliarum *Saumaise* [teste *Peter*]; qualis *Helm apud Hohl*, qua mss.

5 superpositi P, suppositi Σ ; negent potuisse *Peter* (et *antiquiores?*), potuisse om. Σ , negant potuissent P

6 reliquid P

11. in quo quidem mihi mirum videtur, quemadmodum sacra Isidis primum per hunc Romam venisse dicantur, cum Antoninus Commodus ita ea celebraverit, ut et Anubin portaret et pausas ederet; nisi forte iste addidit celebritati, non eam primus innoxit.

12. corpus eius Antoninorum sepulchro inlatum est, ut ea sedes reliquias eius acciperet, quae nomen addiderat.

10.1. interest scire quemadmodum novercam suam Iuliam uxorem duxisse dicatur. 2. quae cum esset pulcherrima et quasi per negligentiam se maxima corporis parte nudasset dixissetque Antoninus 'vellem, si liceret,' respondisse fertur 'si libet, licet. an nescis te imperatorem esse et leges dare, non accipere?' 3. quo audito furor inconditus ad effectum criminis roboratus est nuptiasque eas celebravit quas si sciret se leges dare vere, solus prohibere debuisset. 4. matrem enim (non alio dicenda erat nomine) duxit uxorem et ad parricidium iunxit incestum, si quidem eam matrimonio sociavit, cuius filium nuper occiderat.

5. non est ab re etiam diasyrcticum quiddam in eum dictum addere. 6. nam cum Germanici et Parthici et Arabici et Alamannici nomen adscriberet (nam Alamannorum gentem devicerat), Helvius Pertinax, filius Pertinacis, dicitur ioco dixisse: 'adde, si placet, etiam Geticus Maximus,' quod Getam occiderat fratrem et Gothi Getae dicerentur, quos ille, dum ad orientem transit, tumultuariis proeliis devicerat.

11.1. occidendi Getae multa prodigia extiterunt, ut in vita eius exponemus. 2. nam quamvis prior ille et vita excesserit, nos tamen ordinem secuti sumus, ut qui et prior natus est et qui prior imperare coeperat, prior scriberetur.

11 quemadmodum P
 10.3 quas si *Peter* (et antiquiores?), quasi *ms.*
 6 Germanici Σ, Germani P

3. eo sane tempore, quo ab exercitu appellatus est Augustus vivo patre, quod ille pedibus aeger gubernare non posse videretur imperium, contusis animis militum et tribunorum Severus dicitur animo voluisse, ut et hunc occideret, nisi repugnasset praefectus eius, gravis vir. 4. aliqui contra dicunt praefectum voluisse id fieri, sed Septimium noluisse, ne et severitas illius crudelitatis nomine inquinaretur, et cum auctores criminis milites fuerint, adolescens stultae temeritatis poenas lueret tam gravis supplicii titulo, ut a patre videretur occisus.

5. hic tamen omnium durissimus et, uno complectamur verbo, parricida et incestus, patris, matris, fratris inimicus, a Macrino, qui eum occiderat, timore militum et maxime praetorianum inter deos relatus est. 6. habet templum, habet salios, habet sodales Antoninianos, qui Faustinae templum et divale nomen eripuit, 7. certe templum, quod ei sub Tauri radicibus fundaverat maritus, in quo postea filius huius Heliogabalus Antoninus sibi vel Iovi Syrio vel Soli — incertum id est — templum fecit.

11.3 repugnasset praefectus eius, gravis uir Σ , pugnaasset praef. eius gravis uiri P

5 parricida Σ , parricidia P

7 Iouis P¹

TRANSLATION

ANTONINUS CARACALLUS BEGINS

1.1. Of the two children whom Septimius Severus left behind — one of whom the army loved while their father loved the other — Geta was condemned as an enemy while Bassianus obtained the empire. 2. Concerning his ancestors, I consider it useless to go through the information again as everything was well-enough said in the biography of Severus. 3. In any event during his childhood he was gentle, gifted, pleasing to his parents, friendly to his parents' friends, well-liked by the people, gracious to the senate and he even helped himself by generating this affection. 4. He was neither slow in letters nor lazy in goodwill, neither stingy in charity nor slow to pity — but he seemed like this while under the control of his parents. 5. Indeed, whenever he saw the condemned being thrown to the beasts, he cried and turned his eyes. This behavior was more than pleasing to the people.

6. When, as a seven-year-old, he heard a playmate was seriously beaten on account of the boy's Jewish religion, for a long time he would not look upon either his own father or the father of the boy as if they personally had struck the blows. 7. By his own intervention he restored the former privileges to Antioch and Byzantium, cities with which Severus was angry because they aided Niger. He developed a dislike of Plautianus because of the man's cruelty. 8. What he received from his parents on the Sigillaria he gave of his own free will to his clients or his teachers.

But he did these things when a boy.

2.1. When he emerged from childhood, either through his father's warnings or his own craftiness or because he thought he should rival Alexander the Great of Macedon, he became more stern, more serious, even more grim in appearance, to the point that many did not believe he was the boy they once knew. 2. He always had Alexander the Great and his deeds on his lips. He often praised Tiberius and Sulla in public. 3. He was more proud than his father. He despised his brother because of Geta's great humility.

4. After his father's death he rushed to the praetorian camp and complained he was being encircled by his brother's plotting and so he had his brother killed in the palace. He ordered his body cremated right away. 5. Furthermore, he said in the camp that his brother had prepared poison for him and that he was rude to their mother. And Caracallus publicly thanked those who killed him. 6. Indeed he gave them a payment for being so loyal to him. 7. A portion of the troops stationed at Alba took the killing of Geta rather badly, with the rest saying they had sworn loyalty to the two sons of Severus and that it was two they ought to serve. 8. For a long time the gates to the camp were shut and the emperor was not admitted until the soldiers' mood was softened not only by complaints and accusations made against Geta but by the size of the payment to the troops, who became placated, as is their wont. And finally Caracallus returned to Rome.

9. Wearing a breastplate underneath his senatorial garment, Caracallus entered the curia with armed soldiers. He placed them among the seats in a double line and then began speaking. 10. He complained of his brother's plotting in an involved and confused manner, a speech acting both as a prosecution of Geta and a defense of himself. 11. This the senate did not willingly accept because Caracallus said he had allowed everything to his brother, that he had saved his brother from conspiracies, and yet his brother

organized an extremely dangerous conspiracy of his own and did not return the brotherly love. 3.1. After this Caracallus allowed a return home for those exiled and deported. Then he went to the praetorians and remained in camp.

2. On the next day he went to the Capitolium and he addressed in a friendly manner those whom he was preparing to kill, and with his arms around Papinian and Chilo, he returned to the palace. 3. When, after his brother's killing, he saw the weeping mother of Geta and other women, he tried to kill the women but he was restrained for this reason, namely that the cruelty of killing his brother should not be enhanced. 4. He compelled Laetus to death by poison sent by Caracallus himself. For Laetus had been the first among those advising Geta's death and was also the first killed. 5. Caracallus weeped quite often over Geta's death. He killed many who had been aware of his murder and even those who honored his memory. 6. After this he ordered Afer, a cousin on his father's side, to be killed, to whom the day before he had sent portions of his dinner. 7. Fearing the executioners, Afer made a dangerous leap and escaped to his wife with a broken leg. Nevertheless he was caught by executioners for sport and killed. 8. Caracallus also killed Pompeianus, the grandson of Marcus from his daughter and Pompeianus, to whom Lucilla had been married after the death of the emperor Verus and whom Marcus had both made consul twice and put in command during all the wars which were then very serious. And Pompeianus was even murdered in such a way that it would seem he had been killed by robbers.

4.1. Then before Caracallus' eyes, Papinian was executed by soldiers and killed. When this was done Caracallus said to the executioner, "Instead of giving him the 'axe', you should have carried out my order by giving him the sword." 2. Also by his order Patruinus was killed in front of the temple of the deified Pius, and their bodies were dragged through the street without any

regard for humanity. He killed the son of Papinian who three days earlier had given splendid games as quaestor.

3. On those days numerous people were killed who supported the party of his brother. 4. Moreover, the freedmen who served Geta were killed. The slaughter took place everywhere. Even in the baths were murders carried out, and some were killed while they dined. Among these was Sammonicus Serenus, whose many books on learning survive. 5. Even Chilo, once again prefect and consul, came into the greatest danger because he counseled harmony between the brothers. 6. And when Chilo was taken by soldiers garrisoned in the city, his naked feet showing as his senatorial toga was dragged up, Antoninus suppressed the uprising.

7. Furthermore, Caracallus later instigated a massive slaughter in the city, with some men being taken at random by the soldiers and killed, as though he were avenging an uprising. 8. He killed Helvius Pertinax, the suffect consul, only because he was the son of an emperor. 9. And Caracallus never stopped on various occasions from killing those who had been his brother's friends. 10. Through published edicts or public speeches he often declared war, at times against the senate, at times against the people, even indicating that he would be another Sulla.

5.1. With those deeds completed, Caracallus went to Gaul, and as soon as he arrived, he killed the proconsul of Narbonensis. 2. Then the rest of those who handled imperial business in Gaul were thrown into turmoil. Caracallus deserved the hatred of a tyrant. Although he sometimes pretended to be kind, while he was cruel by nature. 3. And when he committed many acts against mankind and against the laws of cities, he was struck by an illness and suffered greatly. He was especially cruel to those who cured him.

4. Preparing for a campaign in the East, Caracallus' travel plans were put aside and he remained in Dacia. Around Raetia he killed not a few barbarians and he both incited his troops and gave them a donative as though they were the troops of Sulla. 5. Rightly he forbade himself being called by the names of the gods, in contrast to Commodus, whom they called Hercules because he killed a lion and other beasts. 6. And when he subdued the Germans, he called himself Germanicus, adding either in jest or in seriousness (as he was an idiot and a madman) if he had conquered the Lucanians he would call himself Lucanicus. 7. At that time those who urinated where there were statues or images of the emperor were condemned, as well as those who removed the garlands from his images in order to put up different ones and those who wore amulets on the neck as a remedy for quartan or tertian fever.

8. Caracallus travelled through the Thraces with the praetorian prefect. When he crossed to Asia, he underwent the trauma of a shipwreck. The ship's yard broke, forcing him onto a skiff with his bodyguards. He escaped danger when he was taken onto a trireme by the prefect of the fleet. 9. He often hunted wild boar and he even stood against a lion. He also bragged in letters sent to friends and boasted that he had mastered the bravery of Hercules.

6.1. After this, Caracallus turned his attention to the Armenian and Parthian campaign and appointed as commander someone who rivalled his own behavior. 2. Then he went to Alexandria, where he called the population into the gymnasium and rebuked them. He even ordered the healthy to be taken away into the military. 3. But he killed those whom he took away, following the example of Ptolemy Euergetes, who was the eighth called by that name. A signal was given to the soldiers to begin killing their own guests, and so Caracallus started the great massacre of Alexandria. 4. From there he attacked the Cadusii and the Babylonians and he brought a confused attack upon an army

of the Parthians' satrap, even having wild beasts sent against the enemy. Letters were then sent to the senate as if after a victory, and he was given the name Parthicus. He had already acquired the name Germanicus while his father was still alive.

6. Caracallus wanted once again to bring war upon the Parthians and spent the winter at Edessa. He was traveling from there to Carrhae on his birthday, eight days before the Ides of April (during the Megalensian festival), to make an offering to the god Lunus. When he went off to attend to the needs of nature, he was killed in a plot set up by his praetorian prefect Macrinus, who took over the empire after him. 7. Those aware of the assassination included Nemesianus, his brother Apollinaris and Triccianus, who was prefect of the second Parthian legion and commanded the mounted bodyguard. Also among those not ignorant of the conspiracy were Marcus Agrippa, who commanded the fleet, and additionally, by Martialis' instigation, most of the administrative staff.

7.1. Caracallus was killed in the middle of a journey between Carrhae and Edessa. The emperor felt the need to relieve his bladder, and he got down from his horse. He relieved himself while surrounded by his bodyguards, who were conspirators in the assassination. 2. Then when his attendant lifted him onto the horse, the attendant pierced his side with a knife and it was proclaimed by all that Martialis did it.

3. And since we mentioned the god Lunus, it should be noted that it has been related by some very learned men and even now is widely held by those living in Carrhae, that the man who believes Luna should be called using a feminine name and gender will always be a slave led around by women. 4. But the man who believes the god to be male will rule over his wife and never suffer a woman's snares. 5. From this the Greeks and Egyptians, as in the way they say

a woman is part of mankind, so they even call Luna a male god, or mystically, Lunus.

8.1. I know that many have written, concerning the murder of Papinian, that they cannot pinpoint the cause of the killing because some say one thing and others another. But I prefer to give the variety of opinions rather than be silent on the murder of such a man. 2. Some say Papinian was a very close friend to the emperor Severus, and it is mentioned that Papinian was even related to Severus through the emperor's second wife. 3. To Papinian first and foremost were both sons entrusted by Severus, and for this reason he promoted harmony between the Antonine brothers. 4. Papinian even tried to prevent Geta from being killed, when Bassianus was then complaining about his plotting. And for this reason he was killed along with Geta's supporters, by soldiers who not only had Antoninus' permission but even his encouragement.

5. Many say that after his brother was killed, Bassianus ordered Papinian to defend the crime both alone in the senate and before the people, but Papinian responded that it was far easier to commit parricide than to excuse it. 6. In addition, there is also the story that Papinian refused to give a speech attacking Geta so that it might look better for the man who killed him. But Papinian refused to call it anything other than parricide or to accuse an innocent corpse of any crime. 7. But this story cannot be entirely correct, for the prefect could not give a speech in the senate, though it was probably the case that Papinian was killed for being a supporter of Geta.

8. And it is even said that when Papinian was kidnapped and being dragged to the palace to be killed, he predicted that whoever was chosen in his place would be an idiot unless he avenged a prefecture so cruelly attacked.

9. And this came to pass: for Macrinus killed Antoninus, as we said above.

10. Macrinus was made emperor with his son by the army, and he called his own

son, who was named Diadumenus, Antoninus, because Antoninus was greatly missed by the praetorians.

9.1. Bassianus lived forty-three years. He was emperor for six. 2. He was deified with a public funeral. He left behind a son, who afterwards was called Marcus Antoninus Heliogabalus. For the name of the Antonines was so established that it could not be plucked from men's minds because it remained in the hearts of all, just like the name Augustus.

3. Caracallus was ill-mannered and more cruel than his harsh father. He was greedy for food and fond of wine. He was hateful to his own and, except for the pretorian soldiers, hated in all the camps. There was absolutely nothing in common between the brothers.

4. Among the public works Caracallus left in Rome are the enormous baths bearing his name, whose sandal-chamber, architects say, cannot be duplicated. 5. The supports, made of bronze or copper, are said to be hidden and on them rests the entire vault. The vault is of such size that those skilled in construction work said it could not have been built. 6. Caracallus left behind a porticus with his father's name, which shows Severus' deeds, triumphs and wars. 7. Caracallus himself received his name from a garment which he introduced to the people, a garment that went down to the ankles. This had not been around earlier. 8. From then on and even today caracallae of this sort are called Antonine and are very much in use among the Roman plebs. 9. He also built a new road which runs below his baths — the Antonine baths — and you will not easily find anything more beautiful among the streets of Rome.

10. He brought the cult of Isis to Rome and built magnificent temples to that goddess everywhere. He also celebrated the rites with greater reverence than they were celebrated before. 11. It seems strange to me how the rites of Isis are said to have first come to Rome through Caracallus, because Antoninus

Commodus celebrated them to the point of carrying Anubis himself and performing the pausae. Unless perhaps Caracallus added to the worship and was not the first to introduce it. 12. His body was laid to rest in the tomb of the Antonines so that the place, which added its name to his, received his remains.

10.1. It is interesting to note how he is said to have married his step-mother Julia. 2. She was a very beautiful woman and once, seemingly by accident, she uncovered most of her body. Antoninus said, "I'd want it, if it were legal." She is said to have responded, "If you want it, it's legal. Don't you know that you're the emperor. You make laws, you're not bound by them." 3. When he heard this, a confused madness drove him to commit the crime and he celebrated a wedding which he alone really ought to have prohibited (regardless of whether he knew he was the one with the power to make the law). 4. For he made love to his mother (what else would you call her?) and added incest to parricide, since he joined in matrimony the woman whose son he had recently killed.

5. Though not from this episode, one might add a certain satiric comment made against Caracallus. 6. When he took on the names Germanicus, Parthicus, Arabicus and Alamannicus (for he conquered a tribe of the Alamanni), Helvius Pertinax, the son of Pertinax, is said to have joked, "Add, if it pleases you, Geticus Maximus" — both because Caracallus had killed his brother Geta and because the Goths are called Getae. Caracallus conquered the Goths in fierce battles during his trip to the East.

11.1. There were many portents for the killing of Geta, as we will relate in his biography. 2. For although he died earlier, we have nonetheless followed the order in which he who was born first and began to rule first is written up first.

3. Caracallus was proclaimed Augustus by the army back when his father was still alive, at a time when Severus, with his weak feet, seemed unable to govern the empire. After the plot by the troops and tribunes was destroyed, Severus is said even to have been ready to kill Caracallus but that his prefect, a man of strict morals, was offended. 4. Others say, however, that the prefect wanted it done, but that Septimius refused. Severus feared both that his harshness would be polluted with the name of cruelty and that, although soldiers were the ones responsible for the crime, the boy would then be punished for a stupid, rash decision with a sentence so serious that it would be assumed he was killed by his father for other reasons.

5. Caracallus, however, was the harshest of all and, if we describe him with a single word, a parricide and a pervert, an enemy to his father, mother and brother. Caracallus was deified by Macrinus, who killed him, out of fear of the soldiers, especially the praetorians. 6. He has a temple, he has Salii, he has Antonine sodales, this man who took away the temple of Faustina and the divine name, 7. certainly the temple, which her husband founded at the foot of Mount Taurus, on which afterward his son Heliogabalus Antoninus built a temple either to Syrian Jupiter or to the Sun — it's uncertain to which.

COMMENTARY

CARACALLUS

The emperor was born Septimius Bassianus (the praenomen is not known, though Lucius, the praenomen of his father, Severus, is a likely possibility). Sometime in the summer of 195, during Severus' eastern campaigns after the defeat of Niger, the boy's name was changed to M. Aurelius Antoninus, Rubin, *Propaganda*, pp.207-9; Mastino, *Titolature*, pp.44-45. Antoninus is the name primarily used in the *HA* to refer to the emperor, though the author occasionally uses Bassianus and a nickname which is always given as *Caracallus* (*S* 21.11; *Cc* 9.7; *OM* 3.4, 4.7, 7.8, 13.1; *Dd* 2.7-8, 6.8, 6.10, 9.4; *Hel* 2.1, 17.9; *AS* 5.3, 25.6; *Max* 4.4, 30.6-7; *Gd* 4.2).

Dio 78.3.3 also gives the name as Καράκαλλος, though Dio's preferred nickname for the emperor is Ταραύτας, the name of a particularly ugly and violent gladiator of the day, 78.9.3. Lécrivain, *Histoire Auguste*, p.181, believed the form *Caracallus* betrayed a Greek source, as Victor 21.1, Eutropius 8.20.1, *Epit.* 21.1 all give *Caracalla* as the emperor's nickname. Curiously enough, this division also exists in what survives of Diocletian's Price Edict (at 7.44-45), for the garment popularized by the emperor is called a *caracalla* in Latin, but a καράκαλλον in Greek, Lauffer, *Preisedikkt*, pp.122-23; see also below at *Cc* 9.7-8.

Marius Maximus may have written *Caracalla* as well, for that is the name Ausonius gives at *Caesares* 133, a work that may have derived from Marius Maximus (though other sources may well have been used). On the difficulty of

assuming information on Marius Maximus from Ausonius, see R. P. H. Green, "Marius Maximus."

1.1

ex duobus liberis ... unum exercitus, alterum pater dilexit

The manuscripts give "ex duobus liberis, quos Septimius Severus reliquit, Getam et Bassianum, quorum unum exercitus, alterum pater dixit." Editors have had difficulties understanding *dixit*, and following Petschenig, "Beiträge," pp.382-83, they have added *Antoninum* after *unum*, with the justification of the *HA* author's interest in the name *Antoninus* (cf. *S* 20.1, 23.3, *Dd* 1.1-2.4, *Hel* 34.6). The theme of the *nomen Antoninorum* may have been in Marius Maximus, for Ausonius, *Caesares* 139 refers to Elagabalus as *Antoninorum nomina falsa gerens* (though see above note on "CARACALLUS" and R. P. H. Green, "Marius Maximus"). Reusch, *Caracallavita*, p.9, compares Eutropius 8.19.2: *nam filios duos successores reliquit, Bassianum et Getam, sed Bassiano Antonini nomen a senatu voluit imponi*, and sees *Cc* 1.1 as a borrowing.

While this evidence supports Petschenig's supplement, I am proposing instead a minor emendation that eliminates the need for a supplement. *Cc* 1.1 may recall a situation such as described by Dio (Xiph.) 76.14, where Severus, on campaign with his sons in Britain, is aware that Caracalla is both trying to influence the troops as well as plotting against his brother, Geta. Compare also Herodian 3.15.1, where Caracalla on this campaign promotes himself among the soldiers. Certainly at the end of his reign Caracalla was very popular among the troops, *Cc* 8.10. One might, then, see here in *Cc* 1.1 that Severus worried for the safety of his younger son because of Caracalla's popularity among the troops, hence that "the army loved one son, while the father loved the other." The transformation of *dilexit* to *dixit* is easily understood as a scribal error.

The gloss-like *Getam et Bassianum* was deleted by Jordan, for if retained one must equate *unum* with *Getam*, and *alterum* with *Bassianum*, while the sense demands the opposite.

Geta hostis est iudicatus, Bassianus autem optinuit imperium

This is the phrase printed by Peter in his edition, following a suggestion by Jordan. Σ gives "Geta hostis est iudicatus, Bassianum optinuisse imperium"; P gives "...Bassianum aut^m optinuit se imperium". What Peter printed seems the best solution. P's *autem* should be retained as original because the opposition of Geta and Bassianus demands some sort of marker. J. P. Callu has suggested to me the transformation of the nominative *Bassianus* and the conjugated verb *optinuit* into the accusative-infinitive *Bassianum optinuisse* was due to a scribe's misreading of an abbreviated ending for *-us* as the abbreviation for *-um* (both being similar looking long-strokes above a final *u*), though Callu suggests the *se* of P may represent *sibi*. Mommsen believed *se* should be changed to *s(enatus) c(onsulto)*, while Bährens emended the word to *Severi*. One might also imagine a scribe confused by *dixit* believing the text was in *oratio obliqua*, though this would not explain why *Geta* remained in the nominative.

Hohl, following Petschenig, "Beiträge," pp.382-83, gives *Bassianum autem notum optinuisse imperium*, with *notum* <*est*> as a brave attempt to save the accusative-infinitive construction of the manuscripts. A nominative pair *Geta ... Bassianus* seems more likely, especially if one believes the author composed the beginnings of his lives by paying greater attention with regard to style.

Lécrivain, *Histoire Auguste*, p.181 n.2, noted that the name *Bassianus* appears in this life only here, at Cc 8.4-5 and at Cc 9.1. Lécrivain felt the use of the name indicated a source in the so-called *Kaisergeschichte*. If Petschenig's supplement *Antoninum* is accepted after *unum* (see previous note), this would

be additional evidence that the *HA* author was using Eutropius when writing this section.

1.2

de cuius maioribus ... in Severi vita satis dicta sint

Our author refuses to detail the ancestors of the sons of emperors elsewhere, claiming that enough was written in the fathers' *vitae* (*C* 1.1; *Max* 27.1); Reusch, *Caracallavita*, p.9.

1.3-4

pueritia blanda, ingeniosa, parentibus adfabilis...sed sub parentibus visus.

The description of Caracalla's childhood contains similarities to those of earlier, good emperors. Antoninus Pius was kind to his relatives (*AP* 1.9), as was Marcus (*MA* 4.7). In fact, Caracalla's list of virtues parallels a list in Pius (*AP* 2.1), in form and tone rather than particulars. (Pius' list of virtues, however, concern his adult life.)

Whether Caracalla was in truth the perfect child displayed here is hard to say, as neither Dio (*Xiph., Exc. Val.*) 76.7.1-2 nor Herodian 3.10.3-4, 3.13.2-6 has anything positive to say about the character of the young Caracalla.

Perhaps the list's importance is as a contrast to Commodus' childhood vices (*C* 1.7: *nam a prima statim pueritia turpis, improbus, crudelis, libidinosus, ore quoque pollutus et constupratus fuit*). Certainly the reigning Caracalla tried to distance himself from Commodus (see below at *Cc* 5.5), and Severus tried to win favor for his son by giving gifts and privileges in Caracalla's name (see below at *Cc* 1.7, 1.8).

The list, then, may be the result of an effort by Severus to have the young Caracalla viewed with hopeful eyes by Romans who endured two decades of incompetent leadership and civil war. But as the list's wording is similar to

other passages throughout the *HA* (*blanda, affabilis*: cf. *AP* 12.1-2, *AS* 20.1; *accepta*: *Hel* 13.3, *Gall* 15.3; *ad conciliandum*: *DJ* 4.8), perhaps this passage merely represents the standard rhetoric concerning an emperor's good son, Reusch, *Caracallavita*, p.10.

1.5

flevit aut oculos avertit

The same is said of the young Gordian II, *Gd* 18.1: *in scholis, si quis puerorum verberaretur, ille lacrimas non teneret*.

1.6

septennis puer, cum conlusorem suum puerum ob Iudaicam religionem gravius verberatum audisset

This episode seems merely to continue the rhetorical treatment of the story of the gentle child. The interesting twist here is that Caracalla's friend is punished because of the Jewish religion. Exactly how the playmate of a seven-year-old could possibly become seriously involved in Judaism is left unsaid, though the easiest assumption is that the boy adopted something akin to Jewish dietary practice (cf. Seneca, *Epistulae morales* 108.22). On the use in antiquity of the name "Jew" to describe gentiles adopting Jewish practices, see Cohen, "Boundary"; Kraemer, "Inscriptions." But one should not try too hard to rationalize an episode that is in all likelihood fictitious. The author of the *HA* seems to have had little real knowledge of or contact with Jews and Judaism, Golan, "Iudaei" (whose study of Jews in the *HA* curiously fails to note this passage). The author may well have added this sentence to indicate that religious tolerance (a commodity becoming increasingly rare at the end of antiquity) was yet another of the positive character traits shown by the young Caracalla. On religious tolerance as an attribute of the ideal prince, cf. *AS* 29.2 and the *lararium*.

Although talmudic literature contains references to a benign Roman emperor called "Antoninus," there is no justification for assuming the author of the *HA* knew these sources, see Heinen, "Tendenz," arguing persuasively against the views of Domaszewski, *Personennamen*, pp.138-40. Moreover the identification of the talmudic Antoninus with Caracalla is tenuous at best, see Stern, *Authors*, with references, though cf. Levine, "Patriarch," p.657.

1.7

Anthiocensibus et Byzantiis interventu suo iura vetusta restituit

Not long after the assassination of Pertinax on 28 March 193, the governor of Syria, C. Pescennius Niger, was proclaimed emperor in the provincial capital, Antioch. Byzantium quickly became a base of operation for Niger, and from there he made an attack near Perinthus against troops under the command of the Severan supporter L. Fabius Cilo. But Niger's success was short-lived. In late December 193 or early January 194 the usurper was defeated in a battle near Nicaea and fled to the south. Within three months Niger was again defeated (this time near Issus), Antioch was captured, and the usurper killed. Niger's head was sent to Byzantium to persuade the citizens, now under siege, to surrender, but the Byzantines held out for another year. On the suppression of Niger and the siege of Byzantium, see Dio 74.6.3-74.14.6 (primarily Xiph.); Herodian 3.1-3.4. When Byzantium finally surrendered, its walls were destroyed and it was placed under the jurisdiction of Perinthus. Antioch, too, saw its status diminished, falling under the control of its neighbor and rival Laodicea, Herodian 3.6.9; Downey, *Antioch*, p.241 n.29.

As this passage in *Cc* notes, Antioch and Byzantium had their positions restored, probably as part of the inauguration in Antioch of Severus and Caracalla as *consules ordinarii* for 202, A. Birley, *Severus*², p.140; Downey, *Antioch*, pp.242-43. By placing the restoration under the auspices of the then

13-year-old Caracalla, Severus must have hoped to promote loyalty to his son and the dynasty. A similar abolition and restoration of civic privilege occurred in Nicaea, L. Robert, "Nicée et Nicomédie," pp.22-27. Cf. below at Cc 1.8.

Plautiani odium

C. Fulvius Plautianus (*PIR*² F 554; Howe, *Prefect* no.18; Pflaum, *Carrières* no.238; Grosso, "Plauziano") was, like Severus, a native of Lepcis Magna. He seems to have been born ca. 155. Because of the marginal note Φλοῦβιος in the Codex Peirescianus at Excerpta Valesiana 334 (= Dio 73.15.4), the passage is believed to refer to Plautianus and suggests that he served as a procurator on the staff of Pertinax when the future emperor was governor of Africa in 188-89. The passage also suggests Plautianus was convicted to corruption and dismissed (cf. Herodian 3.10.6, who speaks of exile), but he returned to the imperial service under Didius Julianus, who appointed Plautianus in an attempt to win Severus' favor. The appointment was probably as *praefectus vigilum*, for Plautianus' name has been restored in *CIL* 14.4380, an inscription of 195 to a *PRAEF•VIG•* whose name has been chiseled off.

Plautianus, who upon Severus' arrival in Rome was given the task of rounding up Niger's children (*S* 6.10), became one of Severus' most trusted confidants, and by 1 January 197 was appointed praetorian prefect. In June of that year he was already styling himself *C.V.* (*CIL* 6.224 = *ILS* 2185), and his rise to senatorial rank coincided with a growth in influence and power. When, at the end of 199, the prefect of Egypt Q. Aemilius Saturninus was made Plautianus' colleague, it was only a matter of months before Saturninus was executed (Dio [Xiph.] 75.14.2 says Plautianus plotted the death).

As sole praetorian prefect, Plautianus amassed an unprecedented amount of wealth and power. Dio 58.14.1 says Plautianus even surpassed Tiberius' notorious prefect Sejanus. Plautianus was said to have better accommodation

than the emperor in the provinces (Dio [Xiph.] 75.15.3) and even had more statues in his honor than Severus (Dio [Xiph.] 75.14.7).

Upon Severus' and Caracalla's return to Rome in the spring of 202 (as part of the celebration of Severus' *decennalia*), Caracalla was married to Plautianus' daughter Plautilla. It was not a happy union. Caracalla detested his wife (an opinion shared even by the unsympathetic Dio [Xiph.] 75.3.1) and refused to eat or sleep with her (Herodian 3.10.8).

The marriage and Plautianus' influence with Severus (the prefect was consul *ordinarius* of 203 with the emperor's other son, Geta) caused Caracalla to develop his hatred of the prefect. Dio (Xiph.) 76.1-6 describes Caracalla plotting Plautianus' fall, including creating a forged document that purportedly revealed plans by the praetorian prefect to have Severus and Caracalla killed. (Herodian 3.11.4-12.12 accepts the document and plans as real.) Plautianus was executed 22 January 205 (date from *Chronicon Paschale* I, p.496, 15-16 Dindorf; year from epigraphic and literary evidence) and suffered *damnatio memoriae*. Plautilla was banished to the island of Lipara, and she was eventually killed during Caracalla's reign, either shortly after Severus' death (so Dio [Xiph.] 76.1.1 implies) or in the wake of the murder of Geta (Herodian 4.6.3).

1.8

Sigillariorum

At the end of the Saturnalia, children were traditionally given miniature clay masks (*sigilla*), from which these days acquired the name Sigillaria (see Macrobius, *Saturnalia* 1.11.1, 1.11.46-50). This practice may well have continued into late antiquity (R. P. H. Green, *Ausonius*, pp.429-32, on *Ecloga* 16 Green, *De feriis romanis* 31-32), and it is the gift-giving aspect of the holiday which seems foremost in the mind of the author of the *HA*. At *H* 17.3,

Hadrian is said to have regularly sent holiday gifts (*saturnalicia et sigillaricia*) to needy friends and, when he received presents himself, to have given other gifts in return, while Aurelian, too, celebrated the holiday by giving gifts to his wife and daughter, A 50.3.

sponte donavit

It was a regular feature of Severus' reign that gifts and privileges were awarded in Caracalla's name. The restoration of civic privileges to Antioch, Byzantium and Nicaea are but a few examples (see above at Cc 1.7). Fitz, *Titles*, pp.32-34, cites 18 inscriptions (nos.16a-30) from the reign of Severus showing military units with the epithet *Antoniniana*. Fitz believes these epithets were added to the inscriptions after Severus' death, but it is far more likely the granting of the epithet began as early as Caracalla's promotion to Augustus in 198 if not before.

2.1

se Alexandro Magno Macedoniae aequandum putabat

Caracalla's fascination with Alexander the Great is a cause of much derision in Dio (Xiph., Exc. Val.) 77.7-8. The emperor organized an auxiliary unit composed of 16,000 Macedonians which he called "Alexander's phalanx." Caracalla showed hatred toward Aristotelian philosophers because of Aristotle's rumored involvement in Alexander's death. Caracalla also promoted the career of a certain Macedonian tribune, even to the point of adlecting him into the senate *inter praetorianos*, just because the tribune's name was Antigonus, son of Philip. And Caracalla was angered at the prosecution of a criminal named Alexander because the orator provided this "Alexander" with unflattering epithets.

Herodian 4.8 also discusses Caracalla's Alexander-mania, including a painting that showed a single body with two half-faces, one of Caracalla, the

other Alexander. Though Caracalla may have taken this identification too far, it must be kept in mind that the promotion of Alexander was a traditional way for Roman emperors to rally support in the East, Whittaker, *Herodian*, vol.1, p.413 n.2; Syme, *Tacitus*, p.770; Letta, "Leoni."

restrictior, gravior, vultu etiam truculentior

A similar transformation from kindness to cruelty was noted in Caligula, Philo, *Ad Gaium* 66-67.

2.2

Tiberium et Syllam

The pairing is curious. Caracalla's interest in Sulla is confirmed by Dio and Herodian. The emperor often praised Sulla (cf. *Cc* 4.10, 5.4; Herodian 4.8.5), and he repaired Sulla's tomb (Dio 77.13.7), see also *Cc* 4.10, 5.4. The interest in Tiberius is unconfirmed, and the only other mention of Tiberius in the *HA* comes in a more conventional grouping at *Hel* 33.1: *omnis apparatus Tiberii et Caligulae et Neronis norat* (the same list appears in Eutropius 7.23, noted by Reusch, *Caracallavita*, p.12, as the source).

patris superbiior fuit; fratrem magna eius humilitate despexit

Lécrivain, *Histoire Auguste*, p.174, compared Eutropius 8.20.1: <Caracalla> *morum fere paternorum fuit, paulo asperior et minax*; and Victor 20.32: *Geta ... cum eius modestiore ingenio frater angeretur, obsessus interemit*. The Eutropius passage seems, however, closer to *Cc* 9.3: *patre duro crudelior*, a part of the life that certainly has no basis in Marius Maximus.

2.4

post patris mortem

Severus died at Eboracum 4 February 211, Dio (Xiph.) 76.15.12. His body was cremated (so Dio [Xiph.] 76.15.3, Herodian 3.15.7 and *S* 24.2 as opposed to *S* 24.1). The remains were brought back to Rome for placement in the

mausoleum of Hadrian (Castel Sant'Angelo, called the Ἀντωνινεῖον in Dio [emend. from Xiph.] 76.15.4; the βασιλεία ... ἱερὰ μνήματα in Herodian 3.15.7; the *Antoninorum sepulchro* in S 24.2; the *sepulchro Marci Antonini* in S 19.3. There is no other evidence for a mausoleum of Severus mentioned in G 7.2 as being on the south side of the Appian Way in view of the Septizodium.

It is not known when the imperial family returned to Rome with the remains. Some time was spent in Britain, where Caracalla ended the campaign by abandoning fortresses and captured territory, Dio (Xiph.) 77.1.1; Herodian 3.15.6. Relations between Caracalla and Geta were bad throughout the journey home, each fearing a murder attempt by the other, Dio (Xiph.) 77.1.3, Herodian 4.1.1-2). Whittaker, *Herodian*, vol.1, p.373 n.3 gives a May 211 date for the return to Rome, and Alföldy, "Sturz," p.29, believes it was early summer at the latest. Their arrival (and Severus' public funeral) might not, however, have taken place until mid-summer. That the family was not in Rome by either 11 June or 22 July may be implied by Dio (Xiph.) 77.1.4-6, who relates a botched sacrifice on the part of the senate to Ὀμονοία before the family's return. An altar to Concordia was consecrated by Livia on 11 June (Ovid, *Fasti* 6.637), while the temple of Concordia in the Forum had its founding celebration on 22 July, Scullard, *Festivals*, pp.167-68. The funeral, a *consecratio*, is described in detail at Herodian 4.2, see MacCormack, *Ceremony*, pp.93-106.

One might have expected Cc's source here, Marius Maximus, to have mentioned Severus' funeral. The funeral of the immediate predecessor was one of the emperor's most important early public acts. The funeral of Trajan is noted in H 5.9-6.3, Hadrian's burial appears in AP 5.1, and the funeral of Antoninus Pius is mentioned in MA 7.10-11. Suetonius also related funerals of emperors in their successors' lives (Tiberius' funeral in *Caligula* 15.1; Claudius' funeral in *Nero* 9). Similarly, imperial funerals tend to come at the *beginning* of books in

Tacitus' *Annals*: the funeral of Augustus at *Ann.* 1.8, that of Claudius at *Ann.* 13.2-3; cf. the funeral of Germanicus at *Ann.* 3.4 and that the funeral of Tiberius must have been the first episode of the lost seventh book.

But this may not have been the case here. *C* does not mention Marcus' funeral (neither, for that matter, does *MA*) but, after two chapters on Commodus' childhood, begins *in medias res* narrating the events of his sole reign. An emperor's burial was also typically noted at the *end* of that emperor's biography (*H* 25.6-7; *C* 17.4; *P* 14.9; *DJ* 10.10; cf. Suetonius, *Augustus* 100.4; *Tiberius* 75.3; *Caligula* 59; *Claudius* 45; *Nero* 50; *Galba* 20; *Otho* 11). One would have expected Marius Maximus' life of Severus to have discussed Severus' funeral, and there is an account at *S* 24.1-2. If Marius Maximus' life of Severus was to extend down to the summer of 211 to cover the funeral, perhaps the biography also extended a few months longer to describe Geta's murder. The phrase *post patris mortem* — which here in *Cc* begins a section describing the immediate aftermath of Geta's assassination — might then be understood as an alteration of the phrase *post fratris mortem* in the *HA*'s source.

The date of Geta's murder is still a matter of debate. Until roughly a quarter-century ago, most scholars believed the murder took place 27 February 212 or shortly thereafter, see, e.g., Millar, *Dio*, p.150; Hanslik, "Geta," coll.786-87. This date was calculated from the birthday of 27 May given at *G* 3.1, coupled with the notice from Dio (Xiph.) 77.2.5 that Geta lived 22 years and nine months. The murder was believed to have taken place in the first week of March at the latest because a papyrus from Antinoopolis in Egypt (P. Lond. III 164 a) shows Caracalla already as sole emperor by 28 March, and time was needed to allow the news to get from Rome to Egypt, Meckler, "Papyri."

Domaszewski, *Personennamen*, pp.62-64, believed the erroneous dates given in various fictitious documents in the *HA* were not chosen willy-nilly but

rather had been adapted from dates of real events with the months and years sometimes changed. According to Domaszewski, the date of Geta's birth at *G* 3.1, which reads *VI kal. Iunias*, should be understood at *VI kal. Apriles*, and the birthday given Clodius Albinus at *CLA* 4.6 (*VII kl. Decembres*) should be understood as marking Geta's murder on 26 December 211 (or *VII kal. Ianuarias*). Domaszewski noted that Dio (Xiph.) 77.2.1 indicated that Caracalla wanted to kill Geta during the Saturnalia but could not, and that *Cc* 4.2 shows Papinian's son was killed after having given games as quaestor three days earlier. The Saturnalia ran from 17-23 December, and quaestors gave games on 2, 4-6, 8, 19-21, 23-24 December. From this, Domaszewski surmised that Geta was killed 26 December (after the Saturnalia), the purge began after Caracalla's visit to the senate the following day, so that Papinian's son was killed 27 December having given his games 24 December. To date Geta's murder to 26 December would also fit with an easy emendation to the Chronographer of 354, who gives Geta's reign as *Geta imp. menses X dies XII* (text is based on *MGH AA* 9, p.147, l.12). From Severus' death 4 February, the Chronographer would put Geta's murder on 16 December (too early). An emendation in the Chronographer to *menses X dies XXII* would then give the sought-after 26 December date. Domaszewski's argument failed to gain wide acceptance, however, because few scholars in his own day or in ours have had much faith in there being hidden meanings of fictitious dates in the *HA*.

More recently, Barnes, "Acta," pp.521-25, demolished any support for the 27 February 212 date for Geta's murder by showing the birthdate given in *G* 3.1 is false. Barnes noted that the African martyr Perpetua was reported to have been killed on the birthday of Geta Caesar in the *Passio sanctae Perpetuae et Felicitatis*. Perpetua's commemoration day is 7 March, and if one accepts Dio's information on the length of Geta's life and on the unsuccessful Saturnalia

assassination attempt, then Geta's death fits quite well into late December 211, and, following Domaszewski's emendation of the Chronographer of 354, 26 December seems a likely date.

Halfmann, "Verwandte," pp.229-30, has argued for a slightly earlier date, namely 19 December. Halfmann notes Dio's phrase ἐν τοῖς Κρονίοις could well refer only to the first day of the Saturnalia, 17 December, allowing the assassination to have taken place on any of the other days of the holiday. Halfmann would like to see the unprecedented *vice* urban prefecture held by Sex. Varius Marcellus (offices catalogued in *CIL* 10.6569 = *ILS* 478 = *IG* 14.911 = *IGRR* 1.402) to have taken place *before* the appointment and dismissal of C. Julius Asper, cos. II 212, and so Halfmann emends the Chronographer of 354 to *menses X dies XV* to get the date 19 December 211.

Marcellus' *vice* prefecture, however, seems to have been a temporary measure after Asper's dismissal, which came 1 January 212 at the earliest, see below on *Cc* 4.7. This argues for a date for Geta's murder as close as possible to the end of 211, and so there is no reason to move the date farther away because of Marcellus' *vice* prefecture.

There remains, however, a problem with 26 December for Geta's murder. *Cc* 4.2 mentions that Papinian's son was killed three days after having given games as quaestor, and Domaszewski noted that those games could have been given 24 December. This reconstruction of events, however, assumes Papinian's son was killed one day after Geta. This is not possible if one accepts the report in *Cc* 2.7 that Caracalla visited the legio II Parthica in Albinum 40 km from Rome the night immediately following the afternoon of Geta's death and that, as mentioned in *Cc* 3.1, Caracalla spent what must have been the *following* night in the praetorian camp. In *Cc* 3.2, Caracalla is described as making a public display of friendship with Papinian — an event that must have taken

place *before* any purge of Roman notables. The earliest Papinian's son could have been murdered, then, is that following evening, or *two whole days* after Geta's assassination. (On the reconstruction of events, see notes below on the relevant passages.) Since the last day for a quaestor to have given games was 24 December, moving three days forward gives the latest day for the killing of Papinian's son as 27 December. But if two whole days are needed between the murder of Papinian's son and Geta's death, then, the latest date for the murder of Geta must have been 25 December.

As noted above, according to Dio (Xiph.) 77.2.1, Geta was still alive 17 December 211. From Dio (Exc. Val.) 77.5.3, the urban prefect Asper, who was fired in the wake of Geta's murder, was dismissed in January 212. It would be preferable, then, to have the murder take place as close to 1 January as possible. (Compare the murder of Commodus, which took place 31 December 192.) That date, as noted above, is 25 December 211. With regard to the length of Geta's reign in the Chronographer of 354, which is given as *menses X dies XII*, the 25 December death date allows the still relatively innocuous emendation *menses X dies XXI*.

For a step-by-step account of Geta's murder, Dio (Xiph.) 77.2.1-6 gives the story. Geta was lured to come without his bodyguards to a meeting with Caracalla and Julia to discuss a possible reconciliation. When Geta arrived, he was attacked by some centurions. Wounded and bleeding, he ran to his mother and clinging to her, died. The text of Herodian 4.4.2-3 is defective, but present is the detail of Geta bleeding to death on Julia.

The *HA*, both here and elsewhere, mentions Geta's murder in only the barest of terms. At *G* 2.8 the fact of Geta's murder is recorded in a witty but false passage about deification. *S* 21.7, in an aside concerning Julia, provides

the detail that Geta died in his mother's arms. Curiously enough this detail does *not* appear in any of the three works (Victor, Eutropius, *Epit.*) based on the *Kaisergeschichte*. This story, then, may well have been in Marius Maximus, for immediately preceding (S 21.6) are mentioned Caracalla's complaints about Geta's plotting, confirmed in *Cc* here at 2.4-5, 8, 10-11, and also apparently lacking in the *Kaisergeschichte* and its progeny. The difficulty is positing this with any certainty is due to the confused composition of this rather rhetorical section of *S* and the pairing here of the notice of Geta's death in Julia's arms with that of the "marriage" of Julia as step-mother and Caracalla, an episode that must come from the *Kaisergeschichte* (see below on *Cc* 10.1-4).

Perhaps the story of Geta dying in Julia's arms represents an official version of events (though not, of course, Caracalla's official version, details of which follow, see below at *Cc* 2.5). Such a revision of history – a revision that is more sympathetic to Julia than even to Geta – must have been announced during the joint translation into the Mausoleum of Hadrian of Julia's and Geta's remains by Julia Maesa (Dio 78.24.3), which presumably took place shortly after Elagabalus arrived in Rome in 219.

in castra praetoria pergens ... fratris insidiis

Caracalla arrived at the praetorian camp in the late afternoon or early evening (ἑσπέρας οὔσης, Dio [Xiph., Exc. Val.] 77.3.1; περι δείλην, Herodian 4.4.4). He spoke to the soldiers, telling them he had just escaped from danger (κίνδυνον καὶ ἐπιβουλήν, Herodian 4.4.3-7; ἐπιβεβουλευμένος καὶ κινδυνεύων, Dio [Xiph.] 77.3.1). He promised the troops a donative and a pay increase (see below at *Cc* 2.8). Herodian 4.5.1 says Caracalla spent the night inside the shrine of the camp, but the timeframe is difficult, see below at *Cc* 2.7.

2.5

venenum parasse

Herodian 4.5.4 sets in Caracalla's speech before the senate the claim that Geta tried to poison him.

matri eum inreverentem fuisse

Σ gives "dixit...matri eum uirentem/iurentem"; P gives "...inrentem". Editors have corrected to *inreverentem*. I am not entirely satisfied with this correction. The sense seems to demand a word with more violent connotations, perhaps even indicating that Geta tried to rape his mother. Such a version would nicely foreshadow the "marriage" of Caracalla and Julia at Cc 10.1-4 and provide the irony of Caracalla accusing his brother of a crime he would himself later commit.

J. P. Callu has noted to me the possibility of *inruentem* (cf. C 5.11: *inruentium in se iuvenum*), though *inruens* does not appear in Latin as an absolute adjective and while the verb can take the dative, usually its object in the form *in* + accusative. Callu himself prefers *inreverentem*. I wonder whether some form of *violentia* or *iniuria* or some idiom involving *vis* may lurk behind the manuscript readings. As this passage, however, seems an epitome based on Marius Maximus, perhaps *inreverentem*, the easiest emendation, is correct after all.

Petschenig, "Beiträge," p.400, was troubled by the lack of connection between Caracalla's two allegations. For this reason, Petschenig proposed emending *eum* to *etiam*.

egitque publice his gratias, qui eum occiderunt

This detail is not found elsewhere. Reusch, *Caracallavita*, p.18, accepts its validity, especially as this section seems to draw its source from Marius Maximus.

2.7

pars militum apud Albam

This refers to the legio II Parthica, stationed in the Alban Hills roughly 20 km southeast of Rome. The legion was one of three raised by Severus in 197 for his second eastern campaign, and when he returned to Rome in 202 the legion was given its Alban home.

During the first half of the third century, the legion acted as a personal army for the emperor, usually accompanying him on all his campaigns. There also seems to have been a close relationship between the legion and the praetorian guard, with legionary troops often serving in guard duties (Ritterling, "Legio," col.1478; see also below at Cc 6.6-7.2).

The timeframe for this visit is a bit confusing. Neither Herodian nor what we have of Dio mentions a trip to the legionary camp before the visit to the senate, which both Greek historians place on the day after Geta's murder (see below at Cc 2.9), which would be 26 December 211. Excerpta Vaticana 136, in a passage assumed to come from Dio, even says the meeting took place in the morning (πρωὶ εἰς τὸ βουλευτήριον εἰσελθὼν). Putting all the events together gives Caracalla a schedule something like this:

25 December	daytime late afternoon/early evening overnight	assassination of Geta visit to praetorian camp at praetorian camp (Herodian only)
	?	visit to legio II Parthica (Cc only)
26 December	morning (Exc. Vat. 136)	speech before senate

Alföldy, "Sturz," pp.41-43, resolves the scheduling problem by denying Caracalla ever went to Alba, claiming the episode is merely a misplaced borrowing of Herodian 3.15.5, where after Severus' death the soldiers in Britain displayed equal loyalty to both of the dead emperor's sons. Yet despite attempts by Domaszewski and his students, and more recently by Kolb, *Beziehungen*, a solid case has yet to be made for the *HA*'s use of Herodian in lives where Marius Maximus could have been used. In the lives before *AS*, Herodian as a named source appears only in *CLA* and *Dd*, lives for which there would not have been a source in Marius Maximus. Moreover, there has been much doubt on whether the author of the *HA* had Herodian at all but rather a Latin translation of parts of Herodian, Potter, *Prophecy*, pp.363-69. So the visit to Alba cannot be dismissed as a confused literary borrowing.

Whittaker, *Herodian*, vol.1, p.396 n.1, resolves the difficulty of fitting in a 40 km roundtrip visit to a reluctant legion – a visit that must have taken up some time for the emperor even after arriving at the camp if Caracalla was first refused admittance – by suggesting the senate meeting took place late in the day. Aside from ignoring Exc. Vat. 136, this tight scheduling seems further impinged upon by the fact that the days are at their shortest at the end of December.

Perhaps it would be better to disregard Herodian's view that Caracalla spent the night of 25 December at the praetorian camp. Instead, the night spent there was the following one, 26 December, as mentioned in the rather detailed account in *Cc*. The details in *Cc* — some confirmed in Dio and Herodian, others unique but eminently plausible — suggest a reliable source, Marius Maximus. By fitting the series of events given in *Cc* to the timeframe provided by Herodian when confirmed by Dio, the chronology appears to be the following:

25 December	daytime late afternoon/early evening late evening and overnight	assassination of Geta visit to praetorian camp visit to legio II Parthica
26 December	morning	return to Rome and speech before senate

It has been assumed, from this passage, Dio 77.4.1, and the fact that the legion never received the epithet *Antoniniana*, that the legio II Parthica was hostile to Caracalla. And while its officers were involved in Caracalla's assassination six years later (see below at Cc 6.7), the legion very quickly deserted (within about 10 days) to Elagabalus after the boy was declared emperor by the legio III Gallica at Raphanea on 16 May 218, Whittaker, *Herodian*, vol.2, p.27 n.1.

2.8

criminationibus

This is the only appearance of the word *crimatio* in the *HA*. The word shows up in other late-antique authors, like Arnobius, Augustine and Rufinus, perhaps due to its use by Cicero (the Ibycus computer reveals 17 references in Cicero's works, with 2 more in the *Ad Herennium*). Still, it is not inconceivable that the word may have been in Marius Maximus, for *crimatio* shows up occasionally in other historians (Livy, Valerius Maximus, Suetonius) and seems to have been in some favor by Tacitus, who uses the word nine times.

inormitate stipendii militibus

Herodian 4.4.7 says Caracalla increased soldiers' pay by half and gave a donative reckoned at 2500 Attic drachmae. The troops are also given permission to plunder temples and treasuries, a detail also mentioned by Dio (Xiph.) 77.3.2. In what survives of Dio, a pay raise is mentioned only later (at 78.36.3), when Macrinus is said to have problems meeting it, though there is an

earlier, mangled reference to what appears to have been a donative in the course of the Eastern campaigns (Dio [Exc. Val.] 77.24.1). Brunt, "Pay," p.71, gives a plausible reconstruction of the military pay scales under Caracalla, though cf. Develin, "Army," esp. his argument on the origin of providing soldiers with free supplies, the *annona militaris*.

The word *inormitate* represents a variant spelling of *enormitate*, meaning "vastness." The word is post-Augustan and first appears in Seneca, *De constantia sapientis* 18.1. The *in-* spelling, curiously enough, appears in the earliest manuscript of Seneca's *Dialogues* (noted in *TLL* 5, col.607 l.12 but not marked in Reynolds' edition [Oxford, 1977], p.36). The word also occurs in Quintilian, but it is not until late antiquity that the term entered general use, appearing in Lactantius, Symmachus, Orosius, Ennodius and Cassiodorus. There is variation within the manuscripts of several authors' works between the *en-* and *in-* spellings, including those for the *HA*, which has *inormitate* here and at *Hel* 12.2 but *enormitate* at *Gd* 29.1. The word itself is formed from *enormis* (spelled *inormibus* at *G* 6.2, *Car* 16.2, and cf. *inormior* at *Ael* 1.3), which in turn comes from *e* + *norma*, "outside the standard." Yet the confusion on the word's spelling may indicate the term entered written language from speech and that the *in-* spelling may then be as old as the more classicizing *en-* spelling.

2.8-9

atque inde Romam redit. tunc sub veste senatoria lorica[m] habens cum armatis militibus curiam ingressus est

With the support of the troops ensured, Caracalla addressed the senate on the day after Geta's murder (Dio [Xiph., Exc. Val.] 73.3.3). Herodian 4.5.1 confirms the presence of an armed guard though does not mention Caracalla wearing a breastplate.

2.10-3.1**questus est de fratris insidiis ... reditum in patriam restituit**

Herodian 5.2-7 gives an amusing re-creation of the speech, a speech full of the flourish of the rhetorical schools. Caracalla defends his action by claiming Geta tried to poison him and by giving an idiosyncratic version of Roman history, in which even Marcus Aurelius is said to have had to knock off Verus (cf. *MA* 15.5; *V* 11.2).

Excerpta Vaticana 136 contradicts this colorful speech with a statement believed to be based on Dio (who was probably there) that Caracalla spoke little that morning because of a sore throat. The one announcement of note was a general amnesty for exiles (Dio [Xiph., *Exc. Val.*] 77.3.3).

The amnesty allowed only for the return of exiles to their homelands. An edict of the following year (dated 11 July 212) permitted these former exiles to return to posts in government, *P. Giss.* 40 II; *P. Oxy.* XXXVI 2755; *CJ* 10.61.1; *D* 50.2.3.1; see Oliver, *Constitutions*, pp.505-7, 510.

The phrase *reditum in patriam restituit* has been formed from two typical ways of discussing a return home: *reditus in patriam* (e.g., Cicero, *Ad familiares* 13.5.2; Livy 9.5.9; cf. the frequent appearance of forms of *in patriam redire*, including *S* 15.7) and forms of *in patriam restituere* (e.g., Cicero, *Pro Plancio* 101; Livy 2.49.7). This pleonasm is of a common type, Hofmann-Szantyr, pp.793-94 §39 I, though I have not been able to find other occurrences.

3.1-3.2**inde ad praetorianos processit ... altera die Capitolium petit**

After speaking to the senate the morning of 26 December, Caracalla spent the rest of the day and night at the praetorian camp. (Perhaps this is the overnight visit mentioned by Herodian, see above at *Cc* 2.7.) The following day, 27 December, Caracalla went to the temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus on the

Capitoline in the company of the leading men of the state and by this time felt matters were under enough control that he could safely return to the imperial palace. The purge, then, may have begun later that day. Herodian 4.6.1 says after the speech to the senate, the slaughter began εὐθὺς.

adfabiliter est adlocutus

Peter replaced *locutus* (the manuscript reading) with *adlocutus*, and this seems correct. Although I fear Peter may have been improving the text, the idea that Caracalla spoke in a friendly manner *with* those whom he was preparing to kill gives a more chilling account than the version in which Caracalla merely speaks *about* his intended victims. A scribe could have deleted the prefix *ad-* because of the proximity of *adfabiliter*. The addition of the word *ad* before *eos* (proposed by Mommsen and accepted by Hohl) seems a less likely solution.

Papiniano

Little is known of the life of the celebrated jurist Aemilianus Papinianus (Pflaum, *Carrières* no.220, Howe *Prefect* no.22, Kunkel, *Herkunft* no.56). A remark later in this Life suggests Papinian was related to Julia Domna and hence came from Syria, but some scholars have maintained he was African (see below at Cc 8.2). Attempts to identify Papinian's hometown have not been successful, see, e.g., L. Robert, "Tarse," pp.200-1.

A fragment from Papinian's *Quaestiones* (D 22.1.3) seems to indicate Papinian was part of the praetorian prefect's *consilium* during the reign of Marcus. A fragment of Tryphonius (D 20.5.12.pr) shows Papinian as a *libellis*. After the dismissal and execution of Plautianus in 205, Papinian was appointed praetorian prefect in charge of administrative matters, as a colleague of Q. Maecius Laetus, appointed the other praetorian prefect with purview over military affairs (see below 3.4). Dio (Xiph.) 77.1.1 mentions that Papinian was dismissed as praetorian prefect shortly after Severus' death. Our author,

however, expressly states (Cc 8.7, 8.10; cf. S 21.8), and Victor 20.34 implies, that Papinian was still in office at the time of his murder.

It is easy to see why later writers thought Papinian continued in office if we understand that Papinian retained a great deal of influence after his dismissal. Papinian's successor as prefect was probably the Patruinus mentioned in Dio (Exc. Vat.) 77.4.1a (emended) and later here in this Life (Cc 4.2, emended), a man identified with the procurator Valerius Patruinus known from a fragment of Papinian (D 49.14.50). Patruinus may, then, have been a protégé of Papinian, appointed praetorian prefect with the jurist's recommendation. Moreover, the story in this Life (Cc 8.5, cf. Victor 20.33) that Papinian refused to defend the murder of Geta before the senate may indicate that the jurist was adlected when he left the prefecture. Adlection into the senate did take place for Papinian's colleague Laetus, who became consul *ordinarius* for 215. While Papinian, like his predecessor Plautianus (who while prefect was consul *ordinarius* for 203), could have been given the honor of entering the senate while prefect, it is also quite likely that, as was the case with Macrinus, he remained an *eques* while serving as praetorian prefect. On this type of career path, see Leunissen, *Konsuln*, pp.66-68.

Chiloni

L. Fabius Cilo Septiminus Catinius Acilianus Lepidus Fulcinianus (PIR² F 27, the full name appears in ILS 1141) was one of the most prominent individuals during the reign of Severus. He may have come from Spain (so E. Groag in PIR²), and his early career contained a typical mix of military and civilian posts both in Rome and abroad: *Xvir*, tribune of the legio IX Claudia (stationed at Durostorum in Lower Moesia), quaestor in Crete and Cyrenaica, tribune of the plebs, legate in Narbonensis, urban praetor, commander of the legio XVI Flavia (stationed at Samosata in Syria), proconsul in Narbonensis,

prefect of the *aerarium militare* and governor of Galatia. At the time of Commodus' murder on 31 December 192, Cilo was in Rome, where he was next in line to hold the consulship after Erucius Clarus and Sossius Falco, the consuls *ordinarii* for 193. At *C* 20.1, Cilo is said to have made the arrangements for Commodus' burial, perhaps from Cilo's position as a *sodalis Hadrianalis*, A. R. Birley, *Severus*², p.90. After Severus entered Rome as emperor in June, Cilo was sent with an army to Perinthus to prevent Niger from advancing any farther into Europe. Niger claimed victory in the fighting there but returned to Byzantium. By early 214, when Severus' armies had regained control of almost all the East, Cilo was made governor of Bithynia. The following year he was moved to Upper Moesia. Cilo returned to Rome with Severus after Albinus' defeat, then governed Upper Pannonia from 197-201. In 202 Cilo was named urban prefect, and took his second consulship, this time as *ordinarius*, in 204. Groag was suspicious about a second prefecture mentioned at *Cc* 4.5.

Cilo gained immense wealth under Severus (*Epit.* 20.6), and his large house seems to have been marked on a now lost fragment of the *Forma urbis Romae*, Richardson, *Dictionary*, p.124. While here at *Cc* 3.2, P gives "Ciloni," at *Cc* 4.5-6 "Chilo" is given twice, and "Chiloni" also appears at *C* 20.1. For this reason the spelling *Chiloni* is printed here as representing the spelling of the *HA* author. The man himself used *Cilo*, as attested by most of the inscriptions containing his name, though a lead pipe in Rome (*CIL* 15.7447) and a pagan altar later built into a church tower near Colmar in Alsace (*CIL* 13.5330) include the *h*, and Zonaras 2.4.3, 2.7.2 spells the name Χίλων.

3.3

matrem Getae

Julia Domna was the mother of both Caracalla and Geta, a fact known to contemporaries such as Dio, Herodian, and, presumably, Marius Maximus. Yet by

the middle of the fourth century, a tradition had developed that Caracalla was Severus' son by a previous wife, and that Julia Domna, the mother of Geta, was Caracalla's step-mother. This tradition must have appeared in the so-called *Kaisergeschichte* (written shortly after 337, see Barnes, "Kaisergeschichte"), because Victor 21.3, Eutropius 8.20.2 and *Epit.* 21.5 all mention the "marriage" of Caracalla and his step-mother Julia, Lécrivain, *Histoire Auguste*, p.180.

Perhaps this tradition was helped by the contemporary troubles in Constantine's family involving the emperor's eldest son, Crispus, and the emperor's wife (and Crispus' step-mother) Fausta, both of whom were killed within a few months of each other in 326, Gray-Fow, "Stepmother," p.748. Fausta is said to have asked Constantine to have Crispus killed in *Epit.* 41.11; Zosimus 2.29.2 claims Crispus and Fausta were caught having an affair. On the episode, see Seeck, "Crispus," coll.1723-24.

In any event, this identification of Julia as the mother of Geta shows the *HA* author taking information from Victor or Eutropius (or, perhaps, even the *Kaisergeschichte*, see Barnes, *Sources*, pp.96-97) and inserting it into the narrative from his main source in this passage, Marius Maximus. On the *HA* author questioning and judging his sources, see below at *Cc* 8.1, 9.10-11.

mulieres occidere conatus est

Herodian 4.6.3 mentions the murder of a daughter of Marcus Aurelius as part of the post-Geta purge. Dio (*Exc. Vat.*) 77.16.6a describes the death of Marcus' daughter Cornificia immediately after the burying alive of three Vestal Virgins.

3.4

Laetum ad mortem coegit

This is generally assumed to be the Λαίβοι of Dio (*Exc. Val.*) 77.5.4, a man whom Caracalla wanted to kill but was restrained by Laenus' ill health.

Boissevain, *Dio*, vol.3, p.379, thought the name in Dio might originally have been *Laelius*.

3.5

ipse mortem eius saepissime flevit

This sentence is ambiguous because of the pronoun *eius*. There are two possible meanings:

- 1) "Caracalla very frequently wept over the death of Laetus," or
- 2) "Caracalla very frequently wept over the death of Geta."

That *eius* = *Laeti* is supported by the fact that Laetus is the subject of the previous phrase and so is the closest antecedent. But the parallel of *G* 7.5: <Caracalla> *mortem Getae ... fleret*, as well as the assumption that the murders of the *suasores* were based on Caracalla feeling remorse make the second interpretation more likely.

It is doubtful Caracalla ever felt such remorse, despite the fantasies of Dio (Exc. Val., Xiph.) 77.15.3-4, see below at *Cc* 5.3. Geta suffered *damnatio memoriae*, and his remains were refused burial in the Mausoleum of Hadrian (they were later transferred there by Julia Maesa, cf. above at *Cc* 2.4). Although mention of Caracalla's weeping appears here among a list of victims in the post-Geta purge (a list that surely derives from Marius Maximus), it seems unlikely Marius Maximus would have written these words. Perhaps Marius Maximus merely noted the irony that some of those involved in the plot to kill Geta (a plot that must have been worked on for some time) were themselves killed, and the author of the *HA* tried to rationalize the killings with this explanation.

et eum, qui imaginem eius honoravit

P gives 'multos...interemit eum, qui imaginem eius honorabit.' (Hohl gives no record of what the Σ family gives.) This is another example of an

epitomator at work. The *et* was probably dropped by a scribe due to similarity with the *-it* of *interemit* which immediately preceded. Petschenig, "Beiträge," p.383, proposed adding *item* after *interemit* to act as a connector, while Helm (as reported and followed by Hohl) inserted *sed et* to create a contrast. There may also have been a name here, but the name was dropped because of the author's rush to condense. Editors have emended *honorabit* to *honoravit* to provide the necessary past tense, the *b/v* change being more likely than a vowel change of *a* to *i* (were the tense imperfect). The P manuscript shows other instances of *b/v* confusion in this Life: Cc 3.8 (*vis* for *bis*); Cc 6.6 (*octabu* for *octavo*); Cc 8.6 (*favella* for *fabella*).

3.6

post hoc

Lécrivain, *Histoire Auguste*, p.175, felt these words indicate Cc 3.6 should directly follow Cc 3.2, and that Cc 3.3-5 have been misplaced.

fratrem patruelem Afrum

This probably refers to L. Septimius Aper, *cos. ord.* 207. He was perhaps a second or third cousin to Caracalla, a grandson of P. Septimius Aper *cos.* 153 and greatnephew of C. Septimius Severus *cos.* 160 (who are called *patru magni* to Severus in S 1.2). See Barbieri, *Albo* no. 466; A. Birley, *Severus*², p.214 n.14.

partes de cena

The sending of a meal was understood as an act of friendship and seems to have been part of the patron-client bond. Pertinax sent his friends ox tripe and chicken thighs, P 12.6, and a Servianus was put to death by Hadrian for sending meals to members of the imperial household, H 23.8, presumably because the gifts would undermine the emperor's authority, Callu-Gaden-Desbordes, p.131 n.241.

3.8

Pompeianum, Marci nepotem

One cannot know whether this victim is to be identified with Aurelius Commodus Pompeianus, cos. ord. 209 (the three names discovered in a military diploma, Oates, "Discharge"), or Ti. Cl. Pompeianus (*PIR*² C974) who as *tribunus militum legionis I Minerviae* dedicated an altar at Lyon to Severus in 197 (*CIL* 13.1766). Neither the *HA* nor Herodian 4.6.3 mention this victim as having been consul, though one cannot make much of an argument *ex silentio*. If the victim was Ti. Cl. Pompeianus, the family certainly did not suffer additional discrimination, for a praetor *tutelar*is named Claudius Pompeianus (a son?) was the recipient of one of Caracalla's rescripts (*Ulpian Frag. Vat.* 232). Later in the century a Claudius Pompeianus (*PIR*² C972) was *consul ordinarius* for 231 and another Pompeianus received the same honor ten years later. The identity of the Severan military tribune with the consul of 209, as maintained by Seston, "Marius Maximus," can no longer be accepted.

Whatever his name, this victim was Marcus' grandson by his daughter Lucilla, who was married to the Antiochene Ti. Claudius Pompeianus, cos. II 173, after the death of her first husband, the emperor Verus. The elder Pompeianus (*PIR*² C973), who must have been born around the same time as Marcus, maintained his prestige and influence throughout the reign of Marcus' son Commodus, even after a plot against Commodus was discovered involving Lucilla and a kinsman, Claudius Pompeianus Quintianus. The elder Pompeianus seems to have been involved in the successful plot that resulted in Commodus' murder and the elevation of Pertinax to the throne, Kolb, *Beziehungen*, pp.46-54. On the elder Pompeianus, see also Syme, "Antonine Government."

ut videtur a latronibus interemptus

Political upheavals in Rome looked no different from any other sort of lawlessness. It did not matter whether the violence came from dissatisfied soldiers or everyday robbers, to the ordinary Roman the results were the same, and often he could not tell the perpetrators apart, as in the violence in the city in 238: *nam latrones se militibus miscerunt ad vastanda ea quae norant ubi reperirent*, *MB* 10.8.

It might not be all that unusual to find corpses along the streets of a city of more than one million people, a city that lacked what we today would accept as an adequate police force. It was only when the bodies were those of prominent individuals that the ordinary Roman would see the deaths as political, though the similarity to the more common victims of robbery always remained in mind. Dio (*Exc. Val.*) 77.13.7 confirms the sight of unburied dead in this particular rampage. A similar fate a generation earlier befell the father of Claudius Pompeianus Quintianus in Commodus' purge after the plot of Quadratus was revealed, *C* 5.12: *occisus est ... quasi a latronibus*, Heer, *Vita Commodi*, p.62.

In fact, *latrocinium* was part of the political vocabulary, for any attempt at revolution was dubbed robbery, and examples range from Cicero's accusations against Catiline (*In Catilinam* 1.27) to Ammianus (26.9.5), see MacMullen, "Robber."

4.1

Papinianus securi percussus a militibus et occisus est. quo facto percussori dixit: 'gladio te exequi oportuit meum iussum'

The purpose of this joke seems to be to emphasize Caracalla's cruelty. The phrase *securi percutere* is an idiomatic expression used to describe the execution of a criminal, *OLD*, "percutio" def.2.b; Lewis-Short, def.I.B. The origin of the phrase goes back to republican times, when lictors carried axes as

part of the fasces and used those axes to carry out capital punishment when ordered to do so by the consul, e.g., by beheading disloyal troops on campaign (Livy 2.59.11).

Using a sword to stab someone to death or to behead someone would certainly cause a far more messy murder — and, undoubtedly, a more painful death for the victim — than were the executioner to use an axe, but perhaps Caracalla's witticism should not be taken too literally. The shock of Caracalla's statement may be intended to show the *sang froid* of a man who could make *jeux de mots* while ordering people to be killed. A more abbreviated version of the story appears at *G* 6.3, though it is difficult to tell whether the *HA* author understood the pun of the original.

Dio (Xiph.) 77.4.2 relates the same story, but the wordplay is missing from the Greek: καὶ τῷ γε τὸν Παπινιανὸν φονεύσαντι ἐπετίμησεν ὅτι ἀξίνη αὐτὸν καὶ οὐ ξίφει διεχρήσατο. This may be evidence that Dio was translating this story from a written, Latin source, but that the Greek historian did not realize the joke involved a play on words. On the possibility Dio may have read Marius Maximus, see Barnes, "Composition," pp.253-54.

4.2

Patruinus

The name, which P gives as "Patrous" and Σ as "Petronius," was emended to *Patruinus* by Borghesi, who identified this person with the Πατρῳινὸν of Dio (Exc. Vat.) 77.4.1a and the "Valerius Patruinus, procurator imperatoris" in a fragment of Paul (*D* 49.14.50) concerning a case interpreted by Papinian and Messius. The identification must be correct, and the association of Patruinus' death with that of Papinian (Dio says at the instigation of the praetorians) makes it probable that Patruinus was serving as praetorian prefect, Howe, *Prefect* no.23. In a similar way, the troops after the

murder of Caracalla demand the death of an otherwise unknown consular named Aurelianus because they were unhappy with him as commander, Dio 78.12.2-4. Dio himself had to be careful from his own command experience, 80.5.1-2 (Xiph., Exc. Val.).

Patruinus should be seen as Papinian's protégé and successor, gaining the post of prefect after the noted jurist was dismissed shortly after the death of Severus and, it seems, adlected into the senate (see above at Cc 3.2).

templum divi Pii

This temple was originally built to honor Pius' deified wife, Faustina the Elder. After Pius' own death and deification, the temple was rededicated to both Faustina and Pius, *CIL* 6.2001 = *ILS* 348. The temple was located just north of the Regia and east of the Basilica Aemilia, near the Sacred Way and the Roman Forum. Much of the structure survives, as the building was converted into the church of San Lorenzo in Miranda. On the building, see Richardson, *Dictionary*, pp.11-12.

The temple is mentioned once more in the *HA*, at *Gall* 19.4, where it is called *templum Faustinae* (not to be confused with the *Faustinae templum* of Cc 11.6-7, whose honoree was Faustina the Younger and which was supposedly located in the foothills of Mount Taurus).

filium etiam Papiniani

This is the only reference to a child of Papinian.

cum ante triduum quaestor opulentum munus ediderat interemit

Domaszewski, *Personennamen*, pp.63, noted this passage in arguing that the games given by Papinian's son were held 24 December. If this was the case, then Papinian's son must have been killed the afternoon or evening of 27 December, and Geta's assassination must have occurred no later than the afternoon of 25 December; for the complete argument, see above on Cc 2.4, 2.7.

4.3-4

hisdem diebus occisi sunt innumeri

Dio (Xiph., Exc. Val.) 77.4.1 put the number of slain among Geta's soldiers and household staff at 20,000. The historian also gave a list of prominent Romans killed, though Xiphilinus 329 (= Dio 77.6.1), in a famous passage, alludes to the catalogue of ships in Homer's *Iliad* 2.488 in stating that there were too many names to repeat. One ought to be a bit suspicious of exactly how many names Dio gave. In Dio 79.3.4-7.4 are listed the prominent men murdered under Elagabalus' reign. The number of names given is either 14 or 15, but Xiphilinus 347-48 provides but two, adding τί λέγω τοὺς ἄλλους, οὐς οὐδενὶ λόγῳ ἐφόνευε.

Herodian 4.6 says Geta's entire staff was killed, including athletes and artisans. Senators were also executed, as were provincial governors and procurators. Herodian claims Caracalla even ordered troops to attack spectators at the circus because they booed a favored charioteer.

Despite the possible exaggerations of Herodian and the epitomators of Dio, there must have been considerable bloodshed and violence in the city of Rome during the final days of 211. The general lawlessness was a necessary complement to any change in Roman imperial government, since such change had to be enacted by soldiers. Those forming the new government needed the soldiers to eliminate current and potential threats to their power, and these leaders were willing to give soldiers what they wanted. Soldiers' desires seem generally to be three: money, revenge on current and/or former commanders, and a good time — which means an opportunity to terrorize the population without fear of later disciplinary action.

The elimination of Geta involved lawlessness even though the murder must have been planned for months. From Dio (see above at Cc 2.4) we know

Caracalla had wanted rid of Geta from shortly after Severus' death, but was unable to do so, restrained by the troops as well as by some of the advisors left over from his father's reign. Once back in Rome, Caracalla obviously began gathering a new set of advisors, and planning a list of additional victims: Pertinax, being the son of an emperor (see below at Cc 4.8); Pompeianus, the grandson of one (see above at Cc 3.8); and Aper, the cousin of another (see above at Cc 3.6) were all potential rivals.

The troops were able to get a donative and a pay increase. The soldiers also got the chance to settle scores with disliked commanders past and present: the praetorians wanted the heads of Papinian and Patruinus (see above at Cc 3.2, 4.1, 4.2), the urban cohorts wanted Cilo (see below at Cc 4.6). And there was the opportunity to plunder the city, and only after several days of out-of-control violence did Caracalla acquire the will or the ability to restore order.

Sammonicus Serenus

Serenus Sammonicus was an antiquarian writing during the reign of Severus, Macrobius, *Saturnalia* 2.16.6. His works, some of which may have been dedicated to Caracalla, survived in some form into late antiquity and were quoted by Macrobius and Servius, references in Champlin, "Serenus Sammonicus." Champlin deduces from the fictitious statement that a homonymous son of Sammonicus was a teacher of Gordian II (*Gd* 18.2) that the real Sammonicus may have instructed Severus' children (cf. Syme, *Emperors*, pp.10, 184). But Champlin's suggested identity of Sammonicus with not only the Latin translator of Dictys but also the poet Septimius Serenus may be straining the meagre evidence too much, though cf. Alan Cameron, "Poetae Novelli."

Lécrivain, *Histoire Auguste*, p.174, noted the phrase *cuius libri plurimi ad doctrinam extant* must be a later addition and was not in Cc's primary source.

4.6

Cilo sublata veste senatoria nudis pedibus ... raptus

Dio (Xiph.) 77.4.2-5 gives a fuller, though somewhat different account. Soldiers are sent to ransack Cilo's house (one of the nicest in Rome, see above at Cc 3.2), grab the former urban praefect and bring him back to the imperial palace for execution. Cilo had been bathing and was wearing a small tunic and slippers when he was captured. The troops roughed him up, tearing his tunic and beating his face, but when citizens and troops of the urban cohorts saw Cilo being dragged along the street, a confrontation developed. Caracalla then stepped in to save Cilo and ordered the would-be assassins executed, according to Dio due to the mission's partial failure rather than to its partial success.

One suspects the Cc version is closer to the truth in blaming the urban cohorts for the attack. Troops resentful of Cilo when he commanded them could now take their revenge, and in all probability Caracalla willingly allowed such an attack. When the attack got out of hand and led to street-fighting in which the soldiers were outnumbered, Caracalla stepped in to try to restore order and as a result saved Cilo's life.

urbanicianis

These are the soldiers of the urban cohorts. Dietz, "Urbaniciani," has tried to use this passage to fill out the fragmentary inscription *AE* 1965, no.338. There are many objections to his reconstruction, not the least of which is that the word *urbanicianus* does not appear on any other inscription. Dietz wanted *AE* 1965, no.338 to be seen as commemorating a loyalty oath taken by the urban cohorts after the attack on Cilo, but the inscription's fragmentary nature prevents any meaningful reconstruction.

4.7

quasi seditionem vindicans

Certainly the chaos in the streets of Rome at the end of December 211 would give Caracalla the appearance, if not the excuse, of trying to contain a revolt. It may not have mattered to him that the chaos was of the emperor's own making.

Within days the violence seems to have cost the then urban prefect his job, if C. Julius Asper cos. II 212 (*PIR*² I 182) was serving in that office. His dismissal from Rome is mentioned by Dio (Exc. Val.) 77.5.3. Dio remarks on the large number of fasces Asper paraded around with, and these could be understood as privileges of his two positions, as consul and urban prefect. The consular fasces would not have been granted until 1 January, providing a date on which the repercussions of Geta's murder were still being felt.

Asper was replaced, as was the praetorian prefect Laetus, by Sex. Varius Marcellus, the husband of Caracalla's cousin Julia Sohaemis. Marcellus was given the extraordinary temporary command of both the praetorian guard and the urban cohorts with the title *vice praefectorum praetorio et urbi*, *CIL* 10.6569 = *ILS* 478 = *IG* 14.911 = *IGRR* 1.402. Halfmann, "Verwandte," pp.226-34, places Marcellus' command in late December 211 *before* the urban prefecture of Asper, and hence feels required to redate Geta's assassination to 19 December, see above note to *Cc* 2.4. According to Halfmann's reconstruction of events, Marcellus was placed in command of all the troops in Rome immediately after Geta's murder, but he was relieved of that command within two weeks and while rioting was still going on in the city. This would give the impression that Marcellus was a failure, even though his epitaph indicates he was rewarded with senatorial rank and the later offices of director of the military treasury and governor of Numidia.

Moreover, Halfmann's reconstruction would have Asper, who was preparing to join his son as consuls *ordinarii* for 212, plucked to be urban prefect then dismissed within a matter of days. Certainly this interpretation accords well enough with the source for all this information, an excerpt from Dio (Exc. Val.) 77.5.3. But there are difficulties presented by the text, which runs as follows: "Ὅτι τὸν Ἄσπρον τὸν Ἰουλιανὸν οὐδ' ἄλλως εὐκαταφρόνητον καὶ διὰ παιδείαν καὶ διὰ φρόνημα ὄντα ἐξάρας ὁμοίως καὶ τοὺς υἱοὺς αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐν πολλαῖς τοσαύταις ῥάβδοις ὁμοῦ ἐμπομπεύσαντα. προσηπλάκισε παραχρῆμα δεινῶς καὶ ἐς τὴν πατρίδα μεθ' ὕβρεως καὶ μετὰ δέους ἰσχυροῦ ἀπέπεμψε.

Leaving aside the question of the reconciling the name Ἰουλιανὸν with the *Iulius* found elsewhere, one must decide to what, if anything, ἐξάρας specifically refers, and whether the participle is described by the reference to the sons, or should the sons be understood only for their appearance in the procession. The choice of consuls *ordinarii* for 212 must have been made a year in advance, and so the appointment to the consulship should be credited to Severus rather than Caracalla. The honor of being a consul *ordinarius* seems to have been regularly bestowed on Severus' urban prefects while they were in office. C. Domitius Dexter became urban prefect in the summer of 193, and while in office was consul *ordinarius* for 196. Dexter's successor, P. Cornelius Anullinus, again was urban prefect while cos. *II ord.* in 199. L. Fabius Cilo, the close friend of Severus, also was cos. *II ord.* 204 while in charge of the city of Rome, having attained the urban prefecture in 202 or 203, Leunissen, *Konsuln.*, pp.308-9. This makes it quite likely that Asper was chosen by Severus to be consul *ordinarius* for 212 after he had earlier been named urban prefect by Severus (perhaps in 208 during the preparations for the British campaign?).

It is doubtful, therefore, that Caracalla made the initial decision to appoint Asper either as consul *ordinarius* or as urban prefect. Of course, both

decisions would have been issued in Caracalla's name, as he was Augustus along with his father, and therefore Caracalla as the subject of the word ἐξάρας in the Dio fragment is technically correct. But the fragment cannot be used to support a quick appointment of Asper to the urban prefecture in late December 211.

Moreover, the procession mentioned in the Dio fragment must refer to the installation of Asper and his son C. Julius Camilius Galerius Asper as consuls on 1 January 212. What is curious about the fragment is the use of the plural υἱοῦς. Where are Asper's other sons, and what are they doing here? Perhaps in the original of this passage there was only the one son. Perhaps there were more sons, but additional information was removed by the excerptor. Perhaps Dio wanted to tell the story of Asper's dismissal without being too concerned about the details (cf. Dio [Xiph.] 77.1.1 on the Papinian's departure from the praetorian prefecture). In any event, Dio (Exc. Val.) 77.5.3 is not reliable enough to use for dating Asper's urban prefecture beyond noting that he was urban prefect on 1 January 212 was dismissed shortly thereafter.

For these reasons, Marcellus' unparalleled *vice* prefecture is best understood as coming after the incumbent city prefect Asper could no longer control of the urban cohorts and had to be removed, which took place on or shortly after 1 January 212.

4.8

Helvium Pertinacem

P Helvius Pertinax (*PIR*² H 74) was the son of the emperor Pertinax and Flavia Titiana. He was born around 170, when his father was already in his mid-40s. The younger Pertinax grew up with his sister in the home of their maternal grandfather, Ti. Flavius Sulpicius, Dio (Xiph.) 73.7.3. The boy may have been the "Inax iunior" among the *pueri patrimi et matrimi* who in 186 served the Arval Brethren in *CIL* 6.2100; his grandfather was a member of the college and was

promagister at the time. The younger Pertinax is described as ἡδὴ μετράκιον ὄντα in 193 by Herodian 2.4.9. *P* 6.9 claims the elder Pertinax refused to have his son named Caesar, though one provincial coin (Förschner, *Münzen*, p.251 no.790 = Curtis, *Tetradrachms*, p.48 no.X-881, a tetradrachm struck at Alexandria) and at least one inscription (*ILS* 410, found at Metz) show the younger Pertinax with that title. After the death of his father the emperor, the younger Pertinax was made a *flamen* of his father's cult, *P* 15.3. Little is known of Pertinax's career under Severus, though Severus must have been the one to decide that Pertinax should be a suffect consul in 211.

4.10

Syllam se etiam ostendens futurum

See above at *Cc* 2.2.

5.1

his gestis Galliam petit

Neither Dio nor Herodian mention Caracalla's visit to Narbonensian Gaul, though the visit is confirmed by Philostratus, *Vitae sophistorum* 2.32.625. Whittaker, *Herodian*, vol.1, p.408 n.1, claims that Caracalla went to Gaul in early 213, for *CJ* 4.29.1 has him in Carnuntum 5 December 212 while *CJ* 5.60.1 has him back in Rome 29 July 213. Thus Caracalla would have already been visiting Pannonia in 212, a visit for which we lack any definitive evidence, where he would launch an attack against the Germans the following year, and from there traveled during the winter to Gaul. Whittaker overlooks *CJ* 3.37.1 and 7.10.1, which place Caracalla in Rome 1 March 213, and that the location given by *CJ* 4.29.1 is an emendation by Mommsen (not to mention the difficulties of crossing the Alps in the winter). In any event, *CJ* is unreliable for determining Caracalla's location, for on eight dates in 215 and on four in 216

<i>CJ</i> fragment	notice of publication	date	Caracalla's likely whereabouts
8.13.5	<i>pp. Romae</i>	15 May 212	Rome
6.24.2	<i>pp. Romae</i>	17 June 212	Rome
3.28.6	<i>pp. Romae</i>	25 June 212	Rome
5.43.1	<i>pp. Romae</i>	13 August 212	Rome
5.51.1	<i>pp. Romae</i>	27 September 212	Rome
4.29.1	<i>pp. Carviti (Carnunti?)</i>	5 December 212	Rome
3.37.1	<i>pp. Romae</i>	1 March 213	Rome or en route to
7.10.1	<i>pp. Romae</i>	"	Narbonne
6.25.2	<i>pp. Romae</i>	8 March 213	"
5.39.1	<i>pp. Romae</i>	24 June 213	Upper Germany or Raetia
4.65.2	<i>pp. Romae</i>	1 July 213	"
2.55.1	<i>pp. Romae</i>	24 July 213	Raetia
2.3.5	<i>pp. Romae</i>	25 July 213	Raetia
5.4.1	<i>pp. Romae</i>	"	Raetia
8.22.1	<i>pp. Romae</i>	28 July 213	Raetia
5.60.1	<i>pp. Romae</i>	29 July 213	Raetia
7.16.2	<i>d. Romae</i>	5 February 214	Rome
6.37.6	<i>pp. Romae</i>	24 April 215	en route from Nicomedia to Antioch
7.29.1	<i>pp. Romae</i>	25 June 215	Antioch
3.28.7	<i>pp. Romae</i>	26 June 215	Antioch
5.51.3	<i>pp. Romae</i>	29 June 215	Antioch
8.38.1	<i>pp. Romae</i>	1 July 215	Antioch
5.50.1	<i>pp. Romae</i>	10 July 215	Antioch
4.32.7	<i>pp. Romae</i>	2 October 215	Antioch or en route to Alexandria
6.37.8	<i>pp. Romae</i>	8 March 216	Alexandria on en route back to Antioch
2.18.7	<i>pp. Romae</i>	10 March 216	"
9.6.3	<i>pp. Romae</i>	28 September 216	on campaign in Mesopotamia or returning to Edessa
8.18.2	<i>pp. Romae</i>	1 October 216	"

Figure 3. Publication notices of Caracalla's rescripts in *CJ* compared to the emperor's known whereabouts. Chart adapted from Honoré, *Emperors and lawyers*, p.29.

CJ places the emperor in Rome, when we know for certain that Caracalla was away in the East, Honoré, *Emperors and lawyers*, pp.28-29, see Figure 3.

Better is the journey sketched out by Okamura, *Alamannia*, pp.63-67, based on milestones recording road repairs in the Maritime Alps, Narbonensian Gaul and Upper Germany, that Caracalla went to Narbonne from Italy via the Maritime Alps. After completing his business in Narbonne, the emperor proceeded up the east bank of the Rhône to Vienne, then northeast to Avenches and Augst in Upper Germany, then finally to Brigetio and Augsburg in Raetia. This itinerary (which does not match Herodian 4.7.2, who lacks the trip to Gaul) would indicate that Caracalla spent little time in Rome in 213, since he left for Gaul in late winter or early spring and could not have returned until early to mid autumn, his German victory being proclaimed in Rome 6 October as commemorated on the *Acts of the Arval Brethren*, *CIL* 6.2086 = *ILS* 451.

Narbonensem proconsulem occidit

The name of this provincial governor is unknown. As his murder took place more than a year after the assassination of Geta, it seems, *contra* Whittaker, *Herodian*, vol.1, p.405 n.6, the governor's death was not related to the post-Geta purge.

5.2

quamvis se aliquando fingeret benignum

The manuscripts give "fingeret et benignum", and Hohl accepted their reading. In the *editio princeps*, *et* is replaced by *se*, and Klein, "Bemerkungen 1879," p.146, suggested *se* belonged after *quamvis*. Although *et* is certainly the *lectio difficilior*, *se* seems to make better sense. With *et*, *benignum* ought to describe *odium*, but I am not able to fathom what a "gentle hatred" is supposed to mean.

5.3

morbo implicitus graviter laboravit

Dietz, "Feldzug," pp.135-38, uses a recently discovered milestone from Raetia dating to the first half of the year 212 and recording repairs in the area of Faimingen, where there was a shrine of Apollo Grannus that Caracalla visited in 213, to suggest that Caracalla's illness was manifest by the late spring of 212. This date might find support in *Epit.* 21.3, where it says that the Fates punished Caracalla with madness because of the murder of Geta. Dio, however, places the onset of this illness during the German campaign. In Dio (Exc. Val.) 77.15.2-7, the Alamanni claim to have used charms (μαγανείαις) to cast a spell on the emperor, who saw visions of his father, Severus, and his brother, Geta, chasing him with swords. Seeking a cure, Caracalla visited the shrine of Apollo Grannus at Faimingen, and the illness may have caused Caracalla to end the campaign by paying off the Germans, Dio (Xiph.) 77.14.2; Whitaker, *Herodian*, vol.1, pp.408-9 n.1; see also Reusch, *Caracallavita*, p.30.

5.4

dein ad orientem profectionem parans

The situation in the East remained both unsettled and potentially advantageous for the Romans after Severus' departure from the region in 199. Vologaeses V, the Parthian king, died in 207/8 and on his death was succeeded by his son of the same name. But within five years Vologaeses VI faced a power struggle with his brother Artabanus IV. Artabanus already controlled Media and wanted to hold Mesopotamia as well. In Edessa, the longtime king Abgar son of Ma'nu died (in 211?) and was succeeded by the ambitious Abgar Severus. And in Armenia, there was a dispute among members of the royal family. Caracalla saw this unrest as an opportunity, for already in 213 he was plotting the downfalls of Abgar Severus and the king of Armenia. In that year Caracalla invited Abgar

Severus to visit him as his guest. When the Osroene ruler accepted, he was captured. Edessa became a Roman colony, in what was called a "liberation." Caracalla then tried roughly the same trick with the Armenian king, and though the king and much of the royal family were taken, Armenia fought Roman rule, Dio 77.12; Millar, *Near East*, pp.472-81, 559-62; Chaumont, "Arménie," pp.154-56; Maricq, "Chronologie"; Schippmann, *Gründzuge*, pp.70-72; Debevoise, *Parthia*, pp.262-63.

omisso itinere in Dacia resedit

The *HA* is the only source that claims that Caracalla was sidetracked from an eastern campaign. One might infer this was in order to return west to deal with problems on the Raetian frontier, since the next sentence refers to the German war. But Caracalla did not visit Dacia in 213; rather he was there in 214 on his way to the East, Dio (Exc.) 77.16.7; Fitz, "Pannonia," pp.202-5. This sentence should be taken with *Cc* 5.8 and thus would refer solely to 214, when progress to the East may have been delayed due to some fighting with local tribes in Dacia, see below, note to *Cc* 5.8. The *iter* that was abandoned was that spelled out among the lists of routes in the *Itinerarium Antonini*, at 123.8-124.7, which has been understood as the publicized, intended route of Caracalla's trip to the East. Caracalla went from Sirmium to Nicomedia not via the Balkans, but rather down the Danube and along the coast of the Black Sea, van Berchem, "Annone," pp.167-87. Still there may be something to the idea that Caracalla was preparing for an eastern campaign when the problems in the north occurred, since Dio gives notice both of the emperor's plots against the kings of Osroene and Armenia, and of Caracalla's delight at the power struggle in Parthia (in Exc. Val. 369-70, Xiph. 332.7-30) before mentioning the German wars (in Exc. Val. 372-81, Xiph. 332.31-333.28).

circa Retiam non paucos barbaros interemit

The German war began shortly after 11 August 213, since on that date the Arval Brethren offer sacrifices for the emperor who is about to cross the Raetian frontier to attack the enemy (*per limitem Raetiae ad hostes extirpandos barbarorum terram introitus est*, *CIL* 6.2086 = *ILS* 451). The direct cause of the war is unknown. Dio (Xiph.) 77.14 says nothing about it, though the German war is related in a discussion on the emperor's behavior on campaign and one assumes that it was among the campaigns deemed necessary and urgent (ἀναγκαίαις καὶ κατεπειγούσαις στρατείαις, 77.13.1). Herodian 4.7, while noting that Caracalla was conducting military business along the Danube, fails to mention any fighting between Romans and Germans, though he does state that the emperor brought the Germans into alliance with Rome and recruited soldiers among them. Victor 21.2 gives a spare note about Caracalla's victory and the equestrian skills of his adversaries. Okamura, *Alamannia*, pp.127-33, sees the German war as the result of the emperor becoming entangled in a local conflict during a tour of the provinces, and this is quite plausible.

There has been a great deal of scholarship on exactly which Germans Caracalla was fighting. In *Excerpta Valesiana* 144, 373, 377, 381, there are forms of Ἄλβανοί/Ἄλβαννοί or Ἄλαμβανοί/Ἄλαμβαννοί, and these have been understood as referring to the Alamanni, who are identified as Caracalla's enemy by the fourth-century author Victor 21.2 and here in the *HA* at *Cc* 10.6 (though here there seems to be a distinction between the names *Germanici* and *Alamannici*, on which see Alföldy, "Alamannen," pp.196-207). The third-century historian Asinius Quadratus, whose works are now lost, seems to have discussed the Alamanni in his *Χίλιετηρίς*, or *Thousand Years of Roman history* ending in the reign of Alexander (*FGrHist* Nr.97 F 21), though it is unknown whether mention of the Alamanni came in an account of Caracalla's German

war. (Quadratus is cited by Agathias, *Hist.* 1.6, whose use and understanding of sources is always suspect, Averil Cameron, *Agathias*, p.112.) Xiphilinus 332, however, names the enemy as Κέννους, Κελτικὸν ἔθνος. The *Cenni* are definitively attested nowhere else. If the enemy were the Alamanni, this would be their first appearance in history, Okamura, *Alamannia*, pp.84-146. Despite Dio (Xiph.) 77.14.3, who states that even Germans living at the mouth of the Elbe visited Caracalla during the campaign, epigraphic and numismatic evidence confines the fighting to the border areas of northwestern Raetia, Dietz, "Feldzug," p.137; Fischer, "Kastell Dambach," pp.49-57.

There has been doubt as to whether Caracalla returned to Rome after the German campaign, since no historian mentions the emperor being in Rome. The *Itinerarium Antonini* route, however, begins at Rome (and continues via Milan, Aquileia and Sirmium to Nicomedia). In addition, an inscription from Ephesus that details the journey of the town's ambassador with Caracalla may also indicate a return to Rome after the visit to the shrine of Apollo Grannus and before the trip to the East, van Berchem, "Annone," p.172; *id.*, "Itinéraire," pp.123-26; Keil, *Anwalt*; *AE* 1958, no. 422.

quasi Syllae milites

See above at *Cc* 2.2.

5.5

deorum sane se nominibus appellari vetuit, ut Commodus fecerat

Dio (Exc.) 77.5.1 places this episode in the aftermath of the botched public murder of L. Fabius Cilo. Nevertheless, in Dio's account Caracalla also clearly contrasts himself with Commodus, for Caracalla asks not to be called Hercules or any other god ("ἐμὲ μήθ' Ἡρακλέα μήτ' ἄλλον θεόν τινα ἐπικαλεῖτε"). It is not difficult to understand why Caracalla, who came to power on the death of his natural father, would wish to distance himself from the

spectacularly unsuccessful and consequently murdered Commodus, the previous emperor who succeeded his natural father.

cum illi eum

It is not difficult to correct the reading of P, "cum illi cum", to *cum illi eum*. But there is no antecedent for *illi*, and many editors have suggested replacing *illi* with other words containing *i*'s and *l*'s, for example, *aulici* (Peter), *milites* (Klein, "Bemerkungen 1879," pp.146-47), *nonnulli* (Petschenig, "Beiträge," p.383) and *multi* (Lenze, as reported by Hohl).

Helm's suggestion (accepted by Hohl) was to replace "illi cum" with *illum*. But the change of subject (marked by the plural verb *dicerent*) demands an identified subject. Latin does not permit a third-person, plural verb to have an anonymous and generalized subject with the sense of "everyone," cf. Hofmann-Szantyr, pp.411-12 §217. Since *dicerent* is as correct as *illi*, perhaps this passage affords us a glimpse of an epitomator at work. The antecedent of *illi* was in his source (perhaps a digression from Marius Maximus?), but the word did not survive when the source was condensed and transmitted by the HA. Cf. below at Cc 8.4.

5.6

Germanicum se appellavit

Caracalla was already using the name Germanicus by 6 October 213, commemorated in the *Acts of the Arval Brethren*, CIL 6.2096 = ILS 451. The German war probably ended in late September, and as the emperor did not cross the Raetian frontier before 11 August, the campaign lasted about six weeks, Okamura, *Alamannia*, p.13. Magie, *Scriptores*, vol.2, pp.14-15 and nn.2-3, took *vel ioco vel serio* with *se appellavit* and thus missed the joke. Magie also printed the manuscript reading *Germanum*, and A. Birley, *Lives*, p.254 n.11, following him, thought that the joke held an allusion to Geta's murder. But the

manuscript reading fails on two accounts. First, the Roman conqueror of a foreign people formed his additional name from the name of the conquered people + *-icus*; *Germanicus* means “conqueror of the Germans,” while *Germanus* just means “German” (as well as “brother”). Birley wants part of the joke to be that Caracalla was so stupid that he couldn’t form a proper triumphal cognomen, but this is not brought out by the author and is not part of the joke. This half of the sentence is the set-up, not the punch line. (This is not to say that *cum Germanos subegisset, Germanicum se appellavit* could not be a double entendre standing on its own. But its placement here indicates that the author of the HA did not understand it as such.) The second reason the manuscript reading is unacceptable is that the set-up for the punch line comes from the parallelism of *Germanicum ... Lucanicum*. To take away the parallel wording removes the set-up and ruins the joke. Thus there is not an allusion here to Geta’s murder, Shackleton Bailey, “Notes,” pp.121-22. Cf. another onomastic joke at Cc 10.6.

Lucanicum

Lucanica was a highly-flavored pork sausage whose name betrays its origin in southern Italy. Apicius 2.4 provides a recipe. *Lucanicus* was used as a joke name in late Roman school texts, and this is probably the origin of the joke here, Syme, *Ammianus*, pp.34-35. Incidentally, this particular joke translates well into English: “When John Kennedy went to Berlin, he called himself a Berliner, adding either in jest or even in all seriousness ... that had he visited Frankfurt he would call himself a frankfurter.”

5.7

damnati sunt eo tempore...et qui coronas...et qui remedia....

The manuscripts give *damnatis* before *et qui remedia*. In this *difficilior lectio*, *damnatis* is an ablative absolute, *et* stands for *etiam*, and the antecedent

of *qui* is implicit in *damnatis*, Hofmann-Szantyr, p.141 §85.a.ε. But *damnatis* could be an error of dittography by a scribe confused by the repetition of relative pronouns. In the *editio princeps*, the words *damnati sunt* are printed here. Without *damnatis*, this phrase contains an elegant descending tricolon, and one might suppose fictitious passages like this one would be in a clearer style than passages condensed from earlier authors.

None of these rescripts seems genuine, and all deal with the crime of *maiestas* in its *lèse-majesté* form. Antonine jurists limited the scope of *maiestas* with regard to imperial statues, demanding there be malicious intent and that the statues were consecrated before the charge would be allowed, *D* 48.4.4 (Scaevola), 48.4.6 (Venuleius Saturninus). The first rescript here seems a quite obvious violation of *maiestas*; compare, for example, the story about the slave who took a ring with the image of the reigning emperor Tiberius off his drunken master before the man used a chamber pot, Seneca, *De beneficiis* 3.26; Bauman, *Impietas*, pp.82-85. Its inclusion may be to anticipate the circumstances of Caracalla's own death after relieving himself. Still, the first rescript would not be out of place for an emperor under whom a knight was convicted of carrying a coin with Caracalla's image into a brothel, Dio (Exc.) 77.16.5. The second rescript, if it refers to restoration work, is directly contradicted by a fragment from Paul and Ulpian's younger contemporary Marcian, *D* 48.4.5.pr., which states that such work does not incur a *maiestas* charge (*non contrahit crimen maiestatis, qui statuas Caesaris venustate corruptas reficit*). Marcian's fragment continues, showing Severus and Caracalla were concerned about how behavior toward imperial images related to *maiestas*. Together the emperors issued a rescript stating that no treason was involved if someone threw a rock that accidentally struck the statue of an emperor (*D* 48.4.5.1), and either Severus or Caracalla (or, perhaps, both) issued another rescript noting that the sale of not-

yet-consecrated likenesses of the emperor did not bring a *maiestas* charge (D 48.4.5.2).

The third rescript in our text, a prohibition on wearing amulets against quartan or tertian fever, shows up in Ammianus 19.12.14 (with remarkably similar wording, *siqui remedia quartanae vel doloris alterius collo gestaret*) as an offense during the treason trials held at Scythopolis in Palestine in 359 during the reign of Constantius II, where it seems to be novel, Straub, *Geschichtsapologetik*, p.53; Syme, *Ammianus*, pp.32-33.

5.8

per Thracias cum praefecto praetorii iter fecit

The *Itinerarium Antonini* shows Caracalla's journey to the East in 214 beginning at Rome and continuing via Milan, Aquileia and Sirmium, van Berchen, "Annone." The emperor then passed through Dacia and Thrace, crossed the Hellespont to Asia, visited the tomb of Achilles at Ilium and the shrine of Aesculapius at Pergamum — Dio (Exc.) 77.16.7 gives the more natural order of Ilium, then Pergamum; Herodian 4.7.8.1 has the visit to Pergamum first —, and finally wintered in Nicomedia, where he stayed through his birthday (4 April in Dio) in 215. While the emperor was in Dacia, there may have been some fighting with bands of the Carpi, a Scythian people, for a *primipilarus* was decorated by Caracalla in the restored *ILS* 7178 = *CIL* 3 p.14416. A conflict with the Scythians may be lurking somewhere behind the joke that Caracalla should have taken the name Geticus for defeating the Goths (with the pun on killing Geta, his brother), since later Greek writers equated the Goths with Scythians, Reusch, *Caracallavita*, p.35; Wolfram, *Goths*, p.13. In Thrace, Caracalla recruited a phalanx of 16,000 Macedonians and began to identify himself with Alexander the Great, surely an attempt to gain support in

the East for the Parthian war, Herodian 4.7.8, cf. Dio (Xiph.) 77.7-8, Millar, *Dio*, p.214-15. The plural *Thracias* is an anachronism, for the province of Thrace was not divided until the time of Diocletian, Jones, *Later Roman empire*, p.43.

naufragii periculum

Dio (Exc. Val.) 77.16.7 alludes to the shipwreck in stating that Caracalla crossed the Hellespont οὐκ ἀκινδύνας. Whittaker, *Herodian*, vol.1, p.415 n.6, also mentions a restored reading for *CIL* 6.2103a that refers to the incident.

cum protectoribus

Syme, *Ammianus*, p.36, felt that the term *protectores*, which meant staff-officers when it came into greater use in the later third century, is here used inaccurately and anachronistically. The later corps of *protectores* is assumed to have been started from the emperor's bodyguard, Jones, *Later Roman empire*, p.53, and an inscription found on a sarcophagus from Apamea seems to indicate that the term *protector* was already in use in Caracalla's time, Van Rengen, "Inscriptions," pp.100-2. (Pollard, *Castra*, p.313, suspects the inscription is later, which would show that the term may have been in use as early as the reign of Severus Alexander.) If the term *protector* is early, it may well have been that Marius Maximus used *protectores* to refer to the emperor's bodyguard, especially as the term appears in an episode whose validity is confirmed by epigraphic evidence (see above note on the shipwreck).

5.9

exceptit apros frequenter

Dio (Xiph., Exc. Val.) 77.17.4 mentions that the emperor spent time hunting during the winter of 213-14 spent in Nicomedia. There is also a coin

from Pergamum associated with the emperor's visit that winter showing Caracalla hunting a lion, Harl, *Coins*, Pl.17.4 = Von Fritze, *Pergamon*, pl.vii.9.

quando

Petschenig, "Bemerkungen," p.361, noted that *quando* here and elsewhere in the *HA* (*H* 3.3, *Max* 30.3) operates as an adverb with the meaning "at that time." This use of *quando* for *illo tempore* is found only in late authors and jurists, Hofmann-Szantyr, p.607 §328 I a.

seque ad Herculis virtutem accessisse iactavit

This comparison with Hercules is curious after reading *Cc* 5.5, where Caracalla forbade others from calling him by the names of gods — the explicit example being Commodus described as Hercules. Neither Dio, Herodian, Victor or *Epit.* mention any occasion when Caracalla chose to associate himself with Hercules. Nodelman, *Portraiture*, pp.329-33, pl.142-45, identified as Caracalla the statue of a child portrayed as the infant Hercules strangling the serpents. Nodelman believed the statue, now in the Galleria of the Capitoline Museum, was a private portrait made before Caracalla was proclaimed as Severus' chosen successor in 196. On coins issued while Severus was still alive, Hercules appeared crowning Caracalla while Liber crowns Geta, *BMC* 5.329, 402 no.219, 407 no.232, 409 no.240, Pl.59.4, 60.3,9.

Caracalla more actively associated himself with lions. He kept lions with him while in the East, Dio 78.7.3; he called his personal guard of Germans and Scythians "lions," Dio 78.6.1; and he claimed a lion came out of the hills to fight on his side against the Parthians, Dio (*Xiph.*) 78.1.5. The association with lions was part of the symbolic program of identifying Caracalla with Alexander the Great, Letta, "Leoni," pp.289-302, and cf. above at *Cc* 2.1.

6.1

post hoc ad bellum Armeniacum Parthicumque conversus ducem bellicum...fecit

Caracalla left Nicomedia in the spring of 215 for Antioch. Halfmann, *Itinera*, p.224, gives an overland route via Prusias, Tyana and Tarsus. (On another view, see Introduction, p.24 n.117.) Perhaps he traveled through Aegeae and Catabolon with the legio II Parthica, which was *en route* to Apamea to set up camp, Balty, "Apamea," p.99. While in Antioch, Caracalla sought a pretext for war by demanding the Parthian king return two fugitives, Tiridates, probably a son of the deposed Armenian king and perhaps the one restored to Armenia by Macrinus, and a Cilician philosopher named Antiochus. But Vologaeses complied, and the campaign against Parthia was suspended. The emperor, however, send an army into Armenia with the freedman Theocritus as, it seems, *praefectus annonae*. Theocritus is the *ducem bellicum* referred to here, a prefect who started his career as Caracalla's dancing teacher, Dio (Xiph., Exc. Val.) 77.21; Millar, *Dio*, p.156.

6.2

inde Alexandriam petit

Caracalla went to Alexandria in the autumn of 215. He visited the temple of Serapis, where he set up headquarters, Dio (Xiph.) 77.23.2. He put on trial the prefect of Egypt, Septimius Heraclitus, because riots had taken place in which statues were destroyed and temples robbed, Benoît-Schwartz. The slaughter of Alexandrians capable of military service may be connected to these upheavals, though Dio (Xiph.) 77.22.1-23.2 — who has the slightly different version of the story of Caracalla killing his welcoming committee and then conducting a general massacre throughout the city — and Herodian 4.9 claim

that the emperor was angered because the Alexandrians mocked him for killing Geta, Millar, *Dio*, pp.156-58.

6.3

exemplo Ptolomei Euergetis

Ptolemy VII Euergetes Physcon, who was the dominant ruler of Egypt from circa 145-116 BC, had the youth of Alexandria slaughtered in the gymnasium, Valerius Maximus 9.2.ext.5, cf. Strabo 17.12 C 798, Justin, *Epit. Trogi* 38.8.5. The identification of this Ptolemy Euergetes as *octavus* (though he is usually identified in ancient sources as Ptolemy VII) may indicate that the author of the *HA* knew that there had been an earlier Lagid king with the same names, Ptolemy III Euergetes. The author may not necessarily have taken the story from Valerius Maximus, since Valerius Maximus does not identify this Ptolemy by number. Instead the author could have taken the number *octavus* and the story of the massacre from a chronicle of the kings of Egypt with summaries of their reigns, van't Dack, "Lagides."

6.4

Cadusios et Babilonios

Syme, *Ammianus*, pp.35-36, points out that the Cadusii was an obsolete name for the Gaeli or Gelani of northern Iran. The author must have taken the name from an old geographic treatise, and its appearance here, along with that of the Babylonians, bears no relevance whatsoever to Caracalla's movements in the East.

ingressus tumultuarie cum Parthorum satrapis manum contulit

Caracalla left Alexandria in early 216, arriving back in Antioch in late April, Maricq, "Chronologie." The new pretext for the Parthian campaign was the refusal of Artabanus IV, who it seems was now in control of Adiabene, to give his daughter in marriage to Caracalla, Dio (Xiph.) 78.1.1; Herodian 4.10-

11, with a curiously elaborated version. Roman armies easily crossed the Euphrates and the Tigris, Arbela was sacked, the royal tombs of the Parthians opened and their bones scattered, Dio (Xiph.) 78.1.2; Magie, *Asia Minor*, p.686.

It is difficult to understand just what *tumultuarie* is supposed to mean. Magie, *Scriptores*, vol.2, p.19, and A. R. Birley, *Lives*, p.255, following him, translate by stating that Caracalla waged "guerilla warfare." But the preparations for the Parthian campaign were extensive. Planning was already underway in 213. Caracalla brought down troops from the legio III Italica in Raetia (see *CIL* 3.142076 and its interpretation by Ritterling, col.1536) and the legio II Adiutrix in Pannonia (*CIL* 3.3344) for the campaign, as well as training a phalanx of 16,000 Macedonians. Two siege engines were built. The entire legio II Parthica was moved from Italy to Apamea. Rather than referring to tactics, *tumultuarie* probably indicates that the discipline of this large army broke down. Although the *HA* has unspecified conflict taking place, Dio (Xiph.) 88.1.3-4 states that the Parthians retreated to avoid battle, leaving the soldiers nothing to do but pillage and loot and then argue in front of the emperor over who should get what.

6.5

feris etiam bestiis in hostes inmissis

Might this be related to the story told in Dio (Xiph.) 78.1.5, where Caracalla claims a lion fought on his side?

Parthicus appellatus est

Caracalla seems to have received the name Parthicus along with his father, Severus, on 28 January 198 after the battle of Ctesiphon, though the title was only officially used after Severus' death, Mastino, *Titolature*, pp.50-51. Desire for the name Parthicus is the reason for the campaign according to Herodian 4.10.1. An inscription from Tarragona from late 216 or early 217

gives Caracalla the title *Part(hicus) II Max(imus)*, Stylow, “Änderungen,” pp.387-99. Coins were struck by Caracalla to commemorate a Parthian victory, *RIC* 5. nos. 297(a)-299(c), 314(a)-315(b). Of course, Caracalla never had the name Germanicus while Severus was alive, and to state thus contradicts what was written above at *Cc* 5.6.

6.6-7.2

deinde cum iterum...conclamatumque ab omnibus est id Martialem fecisse

The death of Caracalla has attracted a great deal of scholarly attention because the story appears in slightly different forms in several sources: here, Dio 78.5-6, Herodian 4.12-13, Victor 21.5, Eutropius 8.20.2, *Epit.* 21.6. Hohl, “Ende,” gives a quite useful sifting of the information.

In Dio’s version, Caracalla set out from Edessa for Carrhae on 8 April. When the emperor got off his horse ὅπως ἀποπατήσει. he was approached by Julius Martialis, a soldier ἐν τε τοῖς ἀνακλήτοις. Martialis struck the emperor with a small dagger (ξίφιδίῳ μικρῷ) and fled. Martialis would have escaped had he thrown away his sword (ξίφος), but he was recognized by one of Caracalla’s Scythian bodyguards and killed with a javelin (κατηκοντίσθε). Tribunes, presumably the brothers Aurelius Nemesianus and Aurelius Apollinaris mentioned earlier as conspirators, then killed the bodyguard (assuming ἐκεῖνον = τινος τῶν Σκυθῶν) while pretending to help him.

According to Herodian, Caracalla had already been in Carrhae for some time when he decided to visit a temple of the moon goddess (τὸν νεῶν τῆς σελήνης) located some distance from the city. He traveled with only a few cavalymen, intending merely to make a sacrifice and return. In the middle of the journey he had an upset stomach and ordered the troops to stop while he went off with a single attendant. The troops turned and moved away as much as

they could, τὴν καὶ αἰδῶ τῷ γινομένῳ νέμοντες. Martialis, seeing the emperor alone, ran up to him as if called to do so. As Caracalla was removing his pants, Martialis stabbed him in the upper part of the back. Caracalla died from the blow. Martialis then jumped on a horse and fled, but he was struck down by the spears thrown by Caracalla's German bodyguard. Macrinus, who was present on the trip, was the first to arrive at the dead emperor's body and made a display of lamentation.

The brief notices in Victor and Eutropius mention only that Caracalla died at Edessa. The *Epitome de Caesaribus* provides a slightly fuller story, stating that while Caracalla was on a journey to Carrhae, he stopped at Edessa when "nature called" (*ad officia naturalia*) and was killed by a soldier acting as a bodyguard.

The author of the *HA* has his own version, or rather versions. The more detailed account begins at *Cc* 6.6, Caracalla is wintering in Edessa in preparation for another campaign against the Parthians. He traveled to Carrhae to venerate the god Lunus, and on his birthday, eight days before the Ides of April (i.e. 6 April) and during the Megalensian festival, he was killed when he went off to attend to the needs of nature. It was all a plot by Macrinus, and also involved were Nemesianus and his brother Apollinaris as well as Tricillianus, the commander of the legio II Parthica and in charge of the *equites extraordinarii*. Those aware of the plot included Marcus Agrippa, who commanded the fleet. Furthermore, many of the *officiales* knew of the attack of Martialis.

A different retelling of events at *Cc* 7.1. Here Caracalla is killed in between Carrhae and Edessa. The emperor, needing to relieve his bladder, got off his horse and did so surrounded by his bodyguards, who were involved in the conspiracy. When a *strator* helped Caracalla back on the horse, the soldier

stabbed the emperor in the side with a dagger (*pugione*), and it was announced by all that Martialis did it.

Underlying all these various versions is the undoubted fact that a group of soldiers departed headquarters at Edessa with a live emperor and returned with a dead one, as well as (it seems) two other corpses. In going through the various accounts one needs to decide the relative value of each with regard to what must have been the official version of events sent by Macrinus to the senate, a version later supplemented with the conspirators' names courtesy of the court of Elagabalus. Dio 78.16.2 was in the senate to hear the official version, and Marius Maximus, who would be named later in 217 to replace Adventus as urban prefect, Dio 78.14.3, was likely there as well. Therefore these two should be the most reliable sources. Dio is no problem, for here we have the authentic Dio of the Codex Vaticanus Graecus 1288.

Marius Maximus is more difficult, for what we have is filtered through *Cc*, which, as noted earlier, gives a rather schizophrenic account. Hohl, "Ende," pp.286-87, believed *Cc* 6.6-7 was Marius Maximus, while *Cc* 7.1-2 was our late antique author trying to fill out the story. Hohl based his conclusion of the misunderstanding of the idiom *ad requisita naturae* (which refers to defecation), what Hohl felt to be an anachronistic use of *protectores*, and the unique story of Caracalla being killed while getting back on his horse, though Hohl accepted the idea that the *strator* received the blame (see notes below for details on individual passages).

Barnes, *Sources*, pp.88-89, uses *Cc* 6.6-7 in his attempt to prove the existence of an unidentified Latin writer, an *Ignotus*, as a source for the *HA*, with *Cc* 7.1-2 coming from a second source. Lécivain, *Histoire Auguste*, p.178, divided *Cc* precisely at this point, believing *Cc* 7.1 and following to be based on a different source from the first half of the life because of the repetition of

Caracalla's death. Kolb, *Beziehungen*, pp.129-30, sees three versions: *Cc* 6.6-7 (which he claims is based on Dio), *Cc* 7.1 (which he claims is based on Herodian), and *Cc* 7.2 (which he claims is based on both), but the *HA* author never mentions Dio and seems unaware of him, while Herodian does not seem to be a source for this life (see Introduction, pp.50-68, and above at *Cc* 2.7).

Hohl's account of the sources for *Cc* 6.6-7.2 remains primarily correct, though there may be more reliable material in *Cc* 7.1-2 than he admitted. The apparent repetition at *Cc* 7.1 may be due to severe compression of Marius Maximus' account, which would have been introduced with a description of the conspiracy and only then moved on to detail the actual events. If *Cc* 7.1-2 is accepted as primarily representing Marius Maximus, then Maximus' account seems not so much an official version as an attempt to get behind it.

Relying, then, primarily on Dio but taking clues from the *HA*, the official story of the death of Caracalla may have been something like this. Caracalla set out from Edessa in early April 217 on a trip to Carrhae, roughly 40 km away, in order to venerate the moon-god Sin. Perhaps the temple visit came of Caracalla's birthday, 4 April. On 8 April the emperor set out to return to Edessa. He was escorted by bodyguards under the command of Triccianus (prefect of the legio II Parthica), and accompanying them were the praetorian tribunes Nemesianus and Apollinaris. Serving as *strator* was the *evocatus* Martialis.

On the journey Caracalla had to defecate, and for this was left alone with his *strator*, Martialis. Martialis stabbed the emperor and rode off pretending to be on a mission, but his sword was spotted by the emperor's bodyguard. The guards threw their spears in pursuit, and Martialis was killed. One of the guards was also killed. (Later reports would claim the bodyguard was killed by the

tribunes in an attempt to hinder the pursuit of Martialis, and that the guard killed was the one whose own spear felled Martialis.)

Several issues in this composite account remain puzzling. First of all, why would Caracalla's need to defecate present an opportunity for assassination? This is mentioned as the opportunity by Dio, Herodian, and *Cc* 6.6-7 and *Epit.* Surely an emperor who styled himself a soldier of the camps should have no problem defecating while others were watching.

Perhaps this was troubling to Herodian and may explain why in his version Caracalla seems to have diarrhoea. Herodian is quite explicit that the emperor's sickness was embarrassing to watch, (οἱ στρατιῶται) τιμὴν καὶ αἰδῶ τῷ γινομένῳ νέμοντες. Herodian also implies this opportunity to catch Caracalla alone was unexpected, for Martialis was looking out for the right moment. And above and beyond having Caracalla suffer diarrhoea and be left alone, Herodian has Martialis stab the emperor in the back, eliminating any reasonable chance for Caracalla to have thwarted his assassination.

Herodian's untrustworthiness has already been discussed, though his version may well represent the official story promoted by Macrinus. Herodian described events as they appeared in paintings hung up to act as official newsreels (the prime example are those of the battles of Maximin Thrax, at 7.2.8). In describing the death of Caracalla, perhaps Herodian was looking at a poster displaying such an "official" version of events.

6.6

hibernaret Edessae

Caracalla came back from the Parthian campaign of 216 to Edessa. The winter was spent in luxurious fashion, Dio 78.3.4, Herodian 4.11.9. During the early spring of 217, a large army of Parthians under Artabanus IV crossed over the Tigris and attacked cities in Roman Mesopotamia, Debevoise, *Parthia*,

p.266. Dio 78.3.1 says that Caracalla feared meeting this Parthian army, but Herodian 4.14.1 says that news of the Parthian advance came just after Caracalla's murder.

inde Carras Luni dei gratia venisset

Carrhae, the Greek and Roman name for Harran, was located 40 km southeast of Edessa. Harran was an ancient city even in Caracalla's day, having been founded as a trading post for the Babylonian city of Ur sometime around 2000 BC. The city is best known in Roman history for a nearby battle in which Crassus and his army were destroyed by the Parthians in 53 BC. Plutarch, *Crassus* 29.2, says Crassus took refuge in Carrhae after the battle but was later led into an ambush where he was killed.

In the East, Harran was famous for its cult of the Mesopotamian moon-god Sin, the city's patron deity. In Babylonian times, construction work at the god's temple, called Ehulhul, took place on several occasions, and the last Babylonian king, Nabonidus (555-539 BC), actively promoted Sin as part of his political program, Sack, "Nabonidus." Coins minted at Harran even after the city came under Roman rule (the first time during Trajan's short-lived annexation of Mesopotamia 114-17, a second time during Lucius Verus' campaigns in the East in 163-64) show moon symbolism, especially upturned crescents, Hill, *Greek coins*, pp.lxxxvii-xciv, 82-90, PLXII-XIII. Several of the surviving coins were minted during Caracalla's reign (e.g. Hill, *Greek coins*, pp.83-87, nos.8-48, PLXII.8-22). The cult continued even into Islamic times, for Muslim authorities classified the Harranians as "Sabians," one of the four "Peoples of the Book" (along with Jews, Christians and Zoroastrians) allowed religious freedom. On Harran and its ancient religion, see T. M. Green, *Moon god*.

Two Muslim compendia (the 10th-century *Fihrist* of al-Nadim and the 11th-century *Chronology* of Biruni) contain lists of Harranian festivals and their dates, including a festival of the moon-god that took place on the sixth day of the Harranian month of Nisan. Biruni described the Harranian calendar as lunisolar and similar to the Hebrew calendar, with the notable exceptions that the Harranian day began at sunrise and that the month began on the second day after the new moon, Sachau, *Chronology*, pp.314-20, 442-45. By calculating backwards from the Hebrew calendar, one can determine that the appearance of the new moon in Palestine occurred before sunrise in the early morning of 24 March 217. (For the necessary calculations, see Spier, *Calendar*, pp.13-20, and the table in Mahler, *Handbuch*, pp.526-605.) Following Biruni, the first day of Harranian Nisan should probably have begun at sunrise on 25 March. The festival of the moon would then have taken place on 30 March, which would have been too early for Caracalla's attendance.

The dates provided by al-Nadim and Biruni, however, should not be too heavily relied upon for determining Harranian festivals in Roman times, M. Green, *Moon god*, pp.150-51. Nonetheless, there may well have been a festival to Sin during the early spring, and the purpose of Caracalla's visit to Carrhae may have been to participate in that festival.

die natalis sui, octavo idus Apriles, ipsis Megalensibus

6 April 217. Dio 78.6.5 gives Caracalla's birthday as 4 April and the date of his murder as 8 April. The Megalensian festival lasted from 4-10 April, though Domaszewski, *Personennamen*, p.61, has shown the phrase *ipsis Megalensibus* should normally refer to the first day, that is, 4 April, which was Caracalla's birthday. There are rather elaborate theories as to why the *HA* gives this date (for example, Kolb, *Beziehungen*, pp.127-28), but it should be kept in mind that the discrepancy is two days, and there is a similar discrepancy for the

birthday of Severus, which was 11 April (*III id. Apr.*), though S 1.3 gives it as 8 April (*VI id. Apr.*).

It is interesting to note that Caracalla's murder took place during the ruling family's most important week of the year. Not only are there the birthdays of Caracalla and Severus, but Severus' accession day was 9 April. Macrinus himself would be proclaimed emperor on Severus' birthday, Dio 78.11.6.

ad requisita naturae

Hohl, "Ende," p.291, noted this phrase — a euphemism for defecation — appears in a fragment of Sallust (found in Quintilian, *Inst.* 8.6.59). A variant appears in *Epit.* 21.6 (*ad officia naturalia*), indicating the phrase probably was in Marius Maximus. But the *HA* author obviously did not understand the idiom, transforming a mention of defecation into one of urination (*levandae vessicae gratia*). While this indicates some of the information in *Cc* 7.1 cannot be trusted, the misinterpreted phrase might not invalidate the rest of the account (see above note on "deinde cum iterum").

Ammianus 23.6.79 also uses the phrase in his discussion of the customs of the Persians, and he, at least, demonstrates he knows what it means: *nec stando mingens nec ad requisita naturae secedens facile videtur Persa*. Interestingly enough, if the phrase appeared in Marius Maximus, Ammianus' work may have shown more similarities to that author than Ammianus would have been willing to admit (cf. Ammianus 28.4.14).

Macrino

M. Opellius Macrinus (Pflaum, *Carrières* no.248) was named praetorian prefect in the aftermath of the purge at the assassination of Geta. In his mid 40s at the time of his appointment in 212 (born in 164 according to Dio 78.40.3),

Macrinus had a prominent career in the imperial service. The native of Mauretania Caesarea entered under the patronage of a fellow African, Severus' praetorian prefect Plautianus (Dio 78.11.2), probably as an *advocatus fisci* (if we can trust *OM* 4.6). After Plautianus' fall, Macrinus was saved by the intervention of the urban prefect Cilo, who convinced Severus to appoint him *curator viae Flaminiae* (Dio 78.11.2-3). Macrinus then had a variety of responsibilities as a *procurator rei privatae* (e.g. he was *procurator aerarii maioris* according to *Dd* 4.1, a position not otherwise attested but accepted by Pflaum; cf. Dio 78.11.3) before Caracalla named him praetorian prefect; see Herodian 4.12.1, *OM* 13.1.

Both Dio 78.4 and Herodian 4.12 portray Macrinus as having been compelled to plot Caracalla's murder out of fear of imminent dismissal and punishment for treason, since seers were predicting Macrinus' rise to the throne. Rumors were flying both in Rome and in the East that Macrinus was getting mantic endorsements. Such endorsements were part of the "public relations" operations of Roman political figures during this period, and the publicity was designed to prepare support for future moves. Immediately upon Julianus' accession, Niger's name was heard on the streets of Rome as an imperial alternative, Dio (Xiph.) 73.13.5. During the reign of Elagabalus, a constant "p. r." campaign not only forced Elagabalus to promote his cousin (newly given the politically-charged name "Alexander") as Caesar but eventually brought about Elagabalus' demise, Dio (Xiph.) 79.19-20; Herodian 5.7-8; cf. Whittaker, *Herodian*, vol.2, p.61 n.3.

Caracalla must have been aware of the rumors concerning Macrinus, for Dio 78.5.1 notes the emperor was already reassigning members of Macrinus' staff. Such personnel moves may have accelerated Macrinus' plot.

6.7

Nemesianus et frater eius Apollinaris

Aurelius Nemesianus and his brother Aurelius Apollinaris are both tribunes (χιλιάρχοι) of the praetorian guard (δορυφορικόν) in Dio 78.5.2.

Triccianusque

Recianusque is the reading of P, while the Σ family give *Vegianusque*. But there is no Raecianus, Vegianus or Regianus to be found in the sources dealing with the murder of Caracalla, while Dio 78.13.3-4 explicitly states that the commander of the legio II Parthica — here called the Albanian legion because it was stationed at Albanum in Italy — was Deccius Triccianus (Τρικκιανόν...τοῦ Ἀλβανίου στρατοπέδου ἄρχοντα). While Dio was incorrect about the nomen (which from epigraphical evidence we know to have been Aelius, see Barbieri, *Albo* no. 926), nonetheless it seems more probable that through extreme corruption *Triccianus* became *Recianus* rather than that the author of the *HA* is here employing one of his usual tricks of appending false names to true ones, a technique Syme details, *Ammianus*, pp.165-75. On the legio II Parthica during Caracalla's campaign in the East, see Balty, "Apamea," p.99.

Triccianus was rewarded by Macrinus by being sent as governor of Pannonia Inferior, Dio 78.13.3. Soon after Elagabalus came to power, however, Triccianus was put to death, Dio 79.4.3.

equitibus extraordinariis

This term refers to the *equites singulares Augusti*, the select imperial mounted bodyguard, see Spiedel. Hohl, "Ende," p.283, saw the phrase as an erudite allusion to Livy (e.g., 10.41.5, 40.31.3, 42.58.13), and that it indicates Triccianus was in command of the bodyguard for this journey. The *equites singulares Augusti* at this time were normally commanded by two tribunes, Spiedel, pp.26-31.

Marcio Agrippa

Marcus Agrippa (Pflaum, *Carrières* no.287) must have been one of the most fascinating officials of the age. Dio 78.13.2 describes his career. Born a slave, Agrippa began as a hairdresser who entered the imperial service as an *advocatus fisci*. He was exiled under Severus for dereliction of duty but returned in the general amnesty given by Caracalla after Geta's murder (see above at Cc 3.1). Agrippa returned to the imperial service, first as a *cognitionibus* then as *ab epistulis*, before being "kicked upstairs" into the senate.

That a senator would be serving as *praefectus classis* on Caracalla's campaign in the East troubled Pflaum, and Dio does not mention the position. It is quite possible Agrippa was attending Caracalla in the East and was aware of the conspiracy (his name is linked with Triccianus in Dio), but that the author misinterpreted what he was reading in his source.

Agrippa is given consular rank by Macrinus and sent as governor first to Pannonia Inferior (where he is succeeded by Triccianus), then to Dacia and Moesia Inferior, where some coins commemorate him as *Claudius Agrippa* while others give the nomen as *Marcus*.

Martialis

Herodian 4.13.1-2 calls Martialis is called a centurion (ἑκατοντάρχη) whose brother was recently put to death and who had been insulted by the emperor in Herodian 4.13.1. He is an *evocatus* (ἀνακλήτος) who was upset at not having been made centurion in Dio 78.5.3.

It is puzzling that a soldier believed to have a personal grudge against the emperor would accompany Caracalla as his *strator* on a journey. though the two sources give different reasons: Dio 78.5.3 says Martialis had been denied promotion by the emperor. Herodian 4.13.1-2 says Martialis' brother had recently been executed and that Caracalla had taunted him for cowardice, lowly

origins and friendship with Macrinus. In other words, Martialis might have been the perfect scapegoat. Certainly Martialis was named as the assassin in the very first reports of Caracalla's death. When the news reached Rome it was immediately recalled that at the games held on 9 April, Severus' *dies imperii*, Martialis' name had come up in a chant (Dio 78.8.1-2). That Martialis was meant to take the blame might explain the curious phrasing of *Cc* 7.2.

7.3

et quoniam dei Luni fecimus mentionem

While the Lunus worshipped at Carrhae was the Babylonian-Assyrian Sin (see above at *Cc* 6.6), Lunus was also the name given to the god worshipped in various sites in Asia Minor under the Greek name Μήν. Though the god's name was not originally Greek, it came to be assimilated to the Greek word μείς, "month," and felt to be a masculine form of μήνη, a poetic word for the moon. Μήν then was understood as a moon-god. The standard word for the moon in Greek is σελήνη, a feminine word that spawned an eponymous feminine deity (Herodian 4.13.3 identifies the temple at Carrhae as τὸν νεῶν τῆς σελήνης), and the word for moon in Latin, *luna*, is also feminine. Μήν then could be understood as the worship of a feminine deity in masculine form. Tertullian, *Apologeticus* 15.1, mocks this concept by mentioning that the pagan gods were the subject of pantomimes, like those of Lentulus and Hostilius such as *moechum Anubim et masculum Lunam et Diana flagellatam*.

7.5

feminam hominem

Hirschfeld, "Bemerkungen," p.231, remarked that this phrase may refer to the Greek word ἄνθρωπος, "human being," which though belonging to the masculine/neuter second declension and normally masculine (ὁ ἄνθρωπος, "the man") can be feminine (ἡ ἄνθρωπος, "the woman"), *LSJ* def. II. Latin regularly

equated ἄνθρωπος with *homo*, a word which could be used to describe a woman (e.g. Cic., *Pro Clu.* 70.199; Aug., *De civ.* 3.3), but such uses are very rare. To a limited extent the same sexlessness is true of the Greek word for a deity, θεός. The word, which belongs to the second declension, is usually masculine (ὁ θεός, “the god”), but ἡ θεός, “the goddess,” does appear, *LSJ* def. II, although Greek has a feminine, first-declension word θεά, “goddess.”

8.2

adfinem etiam per secundam uxorem

This notice is usually interpreted as meaning Papinian was related to Julia Domna, Severus' second wife, and hence that Papinian was Syrian. But scholars who have perceived “Africanisms” in the language of Papinian's fragments assert the phrase here could be understood as indicating that Papinian's second wife was related to Severus. The arguments are detailed by Kunkel, *Herkunft*, pp.224-29.

8.3

huic praecipue utrumque filium a Severo commendatum

This detail, which also shows up in Zosimus 1.9, fits well with the notion that Papinian shortly thereafter was adlected into the senate (see above at Cc 3.2). It may have been Severus' plan to install the jurist as a sort of *éminence grise*, hoping Papinian would be in secure enough a position to ensure a successful opening for the rule of Severus' sons.

8.4

egiisse quin etiam, ne occideretur....

This is an excellent example of an epitomator at work. The sense of the passage must be that Papinian tried to protect Geta, and the structure of this sentence demands a stated subject, namely *Geta*. Perhaps a careful writer would

have furnished the name, but the epitomator merely condensed his original text, forcing us to figure out the meaning.

8.5

non tam facile parricidium excusari posse quam fieri

The line also appears (concerning the same episode) in *S* 21.8. Victor 20.33-34 knows the same story. Reusch, *Caracallavita*, pp.53-54, proposed Victor as the source of the *Cc* version, but significant differences in language seem to put in question a direct link and may indicate the *HA*'s source was the *Kaisergeschichte*.

8.7

neque praefectus poterat dictare orationem

The *HA* author shows rare insight in noting that the praetorian prefect, being an *eques*, could not, of course, make a speech before the senate. (Lack of senatorial rank was one criticism Dio leveled concerning the accession of Macrinus, 78.14.4.) Plautianus, however, was given senatorial rank while prefect, and it seems likely Papinian was no longer prefect but had been adlected to the senate shortly after Severus' death (see above at *Cc* 3.2).

8.10

qui cum filio factus in castris imperator filium suum, qui Diadumenus vocabatur, Antoninum vocavit

Macrinus' son Diadumenianus (*PIR*² O 107) was born 14 September 208 (day from Dio 78.20.1, year from Dio 78.34.2). The boy's name was changed to Antoninus when he was named Caesar by his father in the early days of the reign — the announcement reached Rome at the same time as news of the death of Aurelianus, the only consular who had been accompanying Caracalla and Macrinus at the time, Dio 78.19.1. Diadumenianus was not, however, made

emperor with his father at that time. The boy's promotion to Augustus came in a last-ditch effort by Macrinus to save his authority after the revolt of the legio III Gallica in support of Elagabalus in May 218. Macrinus took his son to the camp of the legio II Parthica in Apamea and proclaimed Diadumenianus emperor there, Dio 78.34.2. On the *nomen Antoninorum*, see below on Cc 9.2; on the sources for Diadumenianus, see Syme, "Son of Macrinus."

9.1

Bassianus vixit annis quadraginta tribus

Caracalla was actually 29 when he was killed (born 4 April 188, died 8 April 217). The *HA* would give following dates: birth 6 April 174, death 6 April 217.

publico funere elatus est

Caracalla's body was cremated in Syria, in a ceremony supervised by Macrinus. Herodian 4.13.8 says the remains were initially sent to the emperor's mother Julia in Antioch, while in *OM* 5.2-3 the author says the praetorian prefect Adventus accompanied the remains to Rome. Dio 78.9.1 says the remains entered Rome at night because Caracalla was so hated. But Dio adds that no *official* disrespect was shown to the dead emperor (δόγματι ... οὐκ ἠτιμώθη). Burial took place in the Mausoleum of Hadrian (ἐν τῷ Ἀυτοκινεῖῳ, Dio 78.9.1; *inter Antoninos <reliqua> funerata sunt*, Victor 21.6; cf. above at 2.4; below at 9.12). Both Victor 21.6 and Eutropius 8.20.2 (with the identical words found here) confirm a state funeral was held, undoubtedly a *consecratio* in the manner held for Pertinax (Dio [Xiph.] 74.4.1-5.5) and Severus (Herodian 4.2) in which a wax effigy lay in state for a week. The effigy would then be burnt on a multi-tiered pyre, and an eagle released from the pyre to symbolize the emperor's deification, MacCormack, *Ceremony*, pp.93-106.

9.2

filium reliquit, qui postea et ipse Marcus Antoninus Heliogabalus dictus est

The author is less certain of Elagabalus' paternity in other parts of the *HA OM* 8.4-9.6 skeptically views Julia Maesa's publicity campaign promoting Elagabalus as Caracalla's son. *Hel* 1-2 is also hesitant to accept the paternity. Barnes, *Sources*, pp.106-7, cites this passage as support for his Ignotus, noting that neither Dio, Herodian nor, it seems, Marius Maximus accepted the claim. Barnes, however, admits, p.107 n.42, that as Eutropius 8.20.2 accepts the paternity, the origin of the *Cc* passage should perhaps be found there or in the the *Kaisergeschichte*.

nomen Antoninorum

The *nomen Antoninorum* is an important theme in the early books of the *HA*, Scheithauer, *Kaiserbild*, pp.65-68. In the life of Caracalla, for example, the theme has already appeared at *Cc* 8.10 and has been supplied by some editors — though not by this editor — through an emendation at *Cc* 1.1. The theme becomes an obsession in *OM*, which gives the story (at *OM* 3.1-5) of a prophecy of the Carthaginian priestess of Juno Caelestis (Tanit) that there would be eight Antonine emperors. These eight were interpreted as Pius, Marcus, Verus, Commodus, Caracalla, Geta, Diadumenianus and Elagabalus.

That Pius was the first Antonine emperor goes without saying, for Antoninus was one of his names before he became emperor. Pius, who also held the names of his father, Ti. Aurelius Fulvus, seems at one time to have been generally referred to as Arrius Antoninus, from the names of his maternal grandfather, *AP* 1.1-4. Arrius Antoninus is, for example, used at *H* 24.1 when mentioning the future emperor's adoption by Hadrian.

On the death of Pius, Pius' adopted son Marcus began using the name Antoninus, *MA* 7.6, and, the *HA* claims (at *MA* 7.7, cf. *Ael* 5.12, *V* 1.3), bestowed the name on Verus as well. Epigraphic and numismatic evidence does not support the idea that Verus was ever called Antoninus, though the claim is also made by Eutropius 8.9 and Orosius 7.15.2-3, indicating a source for this story in the *Kaisergeschichte*, Turcan, *Histoire Auguste*, p.121.

Commodus was given the name Antoninus at birth, though other sources note it was a name Commodus would later discard (see Dio [Xiph., Exc. Val.] 72.15.5 and compare *ILS* 400 with *ILS* 391-99). Severus changed Caracalla's name to M. Aurelius Antoninus to connect Severus' family with that of Marcus, *S* 10.3-6 (see Commentary above on the title "CARACALLUS" and on *Cc* 1.1). The *HA* claims Geta was also given the name Antoninus (*S* 10.5, 16.4, 19.2; *G* 1.1-2.5, 5.3; cf. *Dd* 6.9), though there is little corroborating evidence, Mastino, *Titolature*, p.37. *S* 19.3 relates that Severus had such admiration for Marcus that he wanted all future emperors to be named Antoninus, in a somewhat similar way that Queen Victoria wished all successive British kings be called Albert.

The theme of the *nomen Antoninorum* may have gone back to Marius Maximus, who was a source for the *HA* both directly and in the elaborations of the *Kaisergeschichte*. The theme's origins could well date to the reign of Alexander, who conspicuously chose *not* to take the name Antoninus. Elagabalus, then, became the "last of the Antonines" (identified as such at *Hel* 18.1; cf. Ausonius, *Caesares* 139).

Scholtemeijer, *Nomen Antoninorum*, attempts a structuralist approach to the theme's appearance in the *HA*, but his failure to engage in the necessary source-criticism detracts from the usefulness of his study.

9.3

patre duro crudelior

This remark seems close to Eutropius 8.20.1: <Caracalla> *morum fere paternorum fuit, paulo asperior et minax.*

avidus cibi, vini etiam adpetens

Gluttony and intemperance are regular attributes used by the author throughout the *HA*. Geta (who preferred mixed drinks, *cupidus ciborum et vini varie conditi*, *G* 4.1) and Macrinus (*OM* 13.4) were like Caracalla in that demonstrated both qualities, but it was more common for the author to show variation between the two in a subject's character. Niger (*PN* 6.6) drank a lot but ate little, as did Severus (*S* 19.8), whose overeating involved African beans (*leguminis patrii avidus*). The son of Maximin Thrax, however, is said to have been a glutton who drank sparingly (*Max* 28.2), and the drinking carried on by Gordian II, who was notorious in his appetite for fruits and vegetables, involved cold water (*Gd* 21.1). Maximus (Puppienus) also loved food but not wine (*MB* 6.2).

Sometimes the *HA* author coupled a discussion of food and drink with mention of his subject's sex life. Both Niger and Maximus seemed to have had little interest in sex, while Maximus' colleague Balbinus had a healthy appetite for not only sex but food and drink as well (*MB* 7.6). It is interesting to note that the only story the author gives concerning Caracalla's sex life involves the alleged "marriage" of Caracalla and Julia (see below at *Cc* 10.1).

On other drinkers in the *HA*, see Lippold, *Maximini duo*, pp.324-26; Paschoud, "Ebria sobrietas"; and cf. Syme, *Ammianus* 66-68.

9.4-5

thermas nominis sui ... docti mechanis

This passage has received a great deal of attention from archaeologists and architectural historians attempting to reconstruct the appearance of Caracalla's Baths. Many of the difficulties concern the seemingly technical terminology of the passage (*cellam solearem, cameratio, docti mechanis*) and the lack of correspondence either to terminology in Vitruvius or (and more importantly) to the Baths' extensive remains. DeLaine, "Cella solearis," gives a full and recent discussion of the problems.

The phrase *cellam solearem* must certainly be understood, as Claude de Saumaise surmised nearly four centuries ago, as *cellam soliaream, soliaris* being derived from *solium* in its sense of "bathtub." Epigraphic evidence from Africa, however, has shown the term *cella soliaris* means a room with hot pools, hence a *caldarium*, de Pachtere. Whether the half-dozen or so inscriptions, all African and all probably from the fourth or fifth centuries, indicate the term is peculiarly African is hard to say, given the greater proportion of surviving inscriptions from the region. But if it was an African term, this might point to the author of the *HA* being either African in origin or writing the work in Africa, E. Birley, "Africana."

DeLaine has suggested metal lattice-work may not have been that unusual in the ceilings of large, imperial structures. She has identified the Domus Aurea, the Baths of Trajan, the Baths of Diocletian, and baths at Hadrian's Villa at Tivoli as structures that may have had metal bars in their ceilings along with Caracalla's Baths. De Pachtere, "Cella solearis," felt such lattice-work would be hidden from view and used to support a tile ceiling, similar to a technique used in wooden-roofed structures, a technique mentioned by Vitruvius 5.10.3. DeLaine would like to suppose the lattice-work was visible,

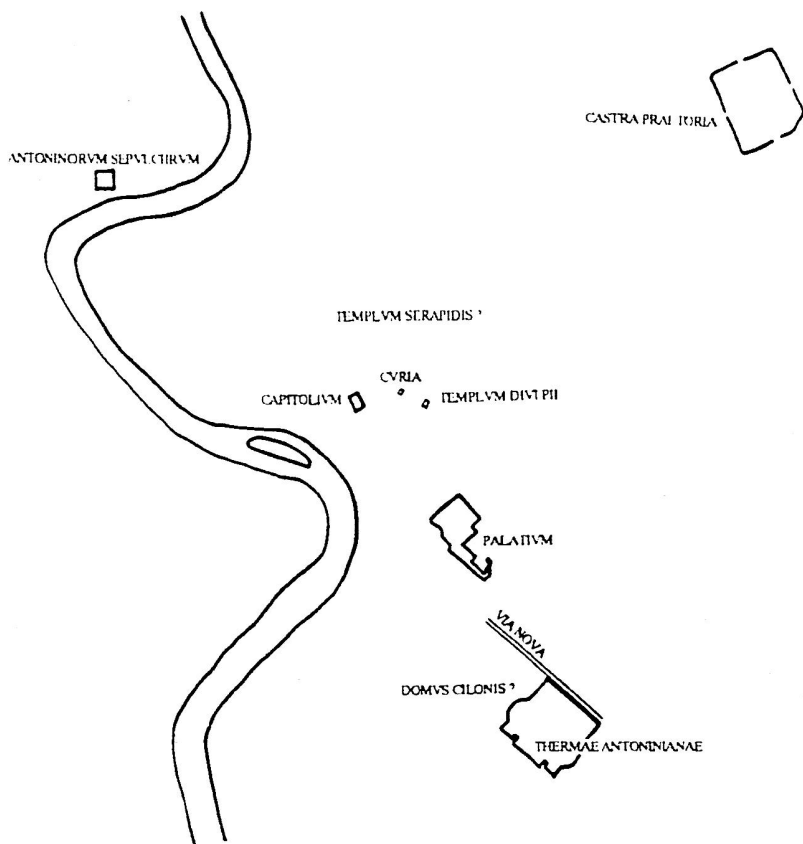


Figure 4. Map of Rome showing places discussed in the Commentary.

though it must be kept in mind that it is not the metal itself which the author says engineers found amazing so much as the span covered by it.

P's reading of *superpositi* makes more sense than the Σ reading *suppositi*, for with *superpositi* the entire passage here concerns the ceiling of the room. The Σ reading implies the lattice-work was placed underneath the floor, and the passage becomes even more difficult to comprehend. The term *cameratio*, otherwise unattested, must be a variation of *camera* or *concameratio* and should refer to a vault or ceiling. The *docti mechanis* must mean engineers, with *mechana* (from μηχανή) used for *machina*, a word which does not appear in the *HA*.

Domaszewski, *Topographie*, p.7, believed the passage was fictitious and provided no information on the appearance of Caracalla's Baths. Certainly the passage is worded such that it is not clear whether the author ever saw the Baths, since *architecti* or *docti mechanis* do all the talking, and sometimes the talking is by no one at all (*dicuntur*). It must, however, always be kept in mind that the author wrote under various *personae*, so even explicitly eye-witness accounts by the author cannot be trusted to provide information on whether he ever saw the buildings he discussed.

The *HA* contends that Elagabalus started construction on the porticus surrounding the Baths, and that construction was completed under Severus Alexander (*Hel* 17.8-9, *AS* 25.6). Brick-stamps from the surrounding precinct support the account, Bloch, *Bolli*, pp.283-303. Epigraphic evidence (*CIL* 6.794, 6.1170-73, 15.1665.3-4, 15.1669.7) indicates the Baths were maintained into the sixth century, and probably continued to function at least until Rome's aqueducts were cut by the Ostrogoths in 637, Richardson, *Dictionary*, p.388. On what the sculptural scheme of the Baths may have been in late antiquity, see Marvin, "Sculpture," pp.347-84.

9.8

porticum patris nomine, quae gesta illius contineret et triumphos et bella

A Porticus of Severus is mentioned only here and in *S* 21.12. This structure seems a creation of the *HA* author, who probably thought it likely such a monument would have been built. Richardson, *Dictionary*, p.319, imagines this structure as part of Caracalla's Baths, but Domaszewski, *Topographie*, p.46, denies the structure ever existed.

9.7-8

Caracalli nomini accepit a vestimento...in usu maxime Romanae plebis frequentatae

Victor 21.1 describes the garment with very similar wording: *ceterum Antoninus incognita munerum specie plebem Romanam adficiens, quod indumenta in talos demissa largiretur, Caracalla dictus, cum pari modo vesti Antoninianos nomen e suo daret*. This is elaborated a bit in *Epit.* 21.2, with the details that the garment was Gaulish in origin and that Caracalla forced people to wear it when greeting him.

The garment seems to have been a type of overcoat, Mau, "Caracalla." *Dio* 78.3.3 gives a vague description, telling us it was tailored (καὶ τινα ἰδίαν ἔνδυσιν βαρβαρικῶς πως κατακόπτων καὶ συρράπτων ἐς μανδύης τρόπον προσεπεξέειπεν, μανδύη being as obscure a term as *caracalla*). Jerome, *Ep.* 64, and the mid-fifth-century bishop Eucherius of Lyon, *Instructiones* p.156 Wotke, indicate the garment was hooded. A gloss says the *caracalla* was sleeveless (*CGL* 5, p.275 l.26), while another gloss (*CGL* 2, p.xii) joins Victor and *Epit.* in confirming the garment extended to the ankles. An amusing anecdote in *Dd* 2.8 that Macrinus, in giving *penulas* to the people, said he would rather his son be called *Paenuleum vel Penularium* than Bassianus be called Caracalla, draws a

parallel between the garment and the paenula, which was a heavy overcoat (mentioned in several authors, see, for example, Horace, *Epist.* 1.11.18).

The caracalla appears in the Price Edict of Diocletian (7.44-45, 26.120-37), where it comes in two sizes, a greater and a lesser, Lauffer, *Preisedikt*, p.238. For the *caracalla maior* a tailor was to be paid 25 denarii, while the *caracalla minor* would bring a tailor 20 denarii, the same pay he would get for a pair of breeches and far less than the wages that could be demanded to make a *birrus*, which must have been a more substantial overcoat. Prices for linen to make the garment began at 3500 denarii a web, slightly more than the cost of linen for towels. So in this regard the garment could be said to be "plebeian."

See also the note above on this life's title, "CARACALLUS."

9.9

viam novam, quae est sub eius thermis, Antoninianis scilicet, qua pulchrius inter Romanas plateas non facile quicquam invenias

Victor 21.4 also mentions the Via Nova: *aucta urbs magno accessu viae novae*. The road, which ran in front of the baths, parallel to the Via Appia, was the widest road in that part of the city, and the tombstone of one woman indicates there were shops along its route (*CIL* 6.9684: *POLLECLA QVE ORDEV BENDET DE BIA NOBA* [= "Pollecla, quae hordeum vendit de Via Nova"]), see Richardson, *Dictionary*, p.417.

9.10-11

sacra Isidis Romam deportavit...non eam primus invexit

The worship of Egyptian deities was already present in Rome in late republican times, Malaise, *Cultes*, pp.362-84. The *sacra Isidis* that Caracalla brought to Rome may refer, then, not to the worship of Isis but rather to statues and monuments sent to the city from Egypt, Cumont, *Religions*, p.237 n.42. While there is no confirmation of a connection between Caracalla and

construction of an Isis temple, the emperor had a temple to Serapis built on the Quirinal, Richardson, *Dictionary*, p.361.

In the worship of the Alexandrian deities, the faithful would carry images of the gods in a procession throughout the city, stopping at various *mansiones* that must have acted as chapels. (One such *mansio* is commemorated in *CIL* 6.348 = *CIL* 6.30745 = *ILS* 4353 = Malaise, *Inventaire, Roma* 9.) These stops were also known as *pausae*, and those taking part in the procession as *pausarii*. The *pausarii* also seem to have been organized in the same manner as a guild or priestly college. On *pausae* and *pausarii*, see Malaise, *Cultes*, pp.105-6.

The source for this passage is Victor 21.4 or perhaps Victor's source in the *Kaisergeschichte*. What is interesting here is seeing the author of the *HA* grapple with his sources. At *C* 9.4-6 (repeated in *PN* 6.9), Commodus is said to have taken part in Isis-worship in Rome, a story whose source may have been Marius Maximus. The author of the *HA*, in taking this passage from Victor or the *Kaisergeschichte*, realized there was an inconsistency and tried to deal with it. Interestingly enough, the *nom de plume* for *Cc* is Aelius Spartianus, but another name, Aelius Lampridius, was used for the author of *C*. On this passage, see White, "Authorship," p.128. A catalogue of ancient sources on Anubis may be found in Grenier, *Anubis*.

9.12

corpus eius Antoninorum sepulchro inlatum est

See above at *Cc* 9.1.

10.1-4

novercam suam Iuliam uxorem duxisse dicatur...cuius filium nuper occiderat

This passage is closely modeled on Victor 21.3, even down to the punchline *si libet, licet* (= *libet? plane licet* in Victor). While rumors of incest

between Julia and Caracalla seem to have been around during Caracalla's reign (the Alexandrians mocked Caracalla by referring to his mother as *Jocasta*, Herodian 4.9.3; Whittaker, *Herodian*, vol.1, p.423 n.3), the story here in *Cc* and a brief reference at *S* 21.7 are creations of the *Kaisergeschichte* because Julia is described as Caracalla's *step*-mother, see above note on *Cc* 3.3. The *Kaisergeschichte* legend may also have been enhanced by rumors of a liaison between Constantine's son Crispus and Crispus' step-mother, Fausta, Zosimus 2.29.2; Gray-Fow, "Stepmother," p.748. A similar story was told about Nero and Agrippina, Tacitus, *Annals* 14.2; see Hohl, "Witz," pp.15-16 n.11.

10.5

diasyrcticum

This word, a borrowing from Greek, appears only in late antique authors and primarily in grammarians and scholiasts (Donatus, Servius, and scholia to Horace, Terence and Juvenal). Not surprisingly, the word also appears in Jerome, *Adversus Rufinum* 1.1.

The use of *diasyrcticus* reveals the *HA* author's background in the grammarian's schools of his day and confirms the following joke is probably of his own creation. This is the word's only appearance in the *HA*.

10.6

Geticus Maximus

This is, of course, an onomastic joke concerning the murder of Geta. The author of the *HA*, though, did not realize that he killed Pertinax off (at *Cc* 4.8 in the year 212) before this joke could have been made, see Hohl, "Witz." It is also worth noting that Caracalla never had the names *Arabicus* or *Alamannicus*. *Arabicus* was one of his father's titles, and the Alamanni do not seem to have been known until the middle of the third century, see above at *Cc* 5.6.

11.2

qui et prior natus est et qui prior imperare coeperat, prior scriberetur

A similar statement is made by the author (as Julius Capitolinus) in *V* 1.1-2: *ego vero, quod prior Marcus imperare coepit, dein Verus, qui superstite periiit Marco, priorem Marcum dehinc Verum credidi celebrandum*, though the author there believes Verus was older than Marcus, and therefore uses the explanation that Marcus came to power before Verus and that Verus preceded him in death, White, "Authorship," p.120. It is difficult to test this statement for Aelius Spartianus (the *nom de plume* for *Cc*) because the order of the lives in the *P* manuscript is mixed up (e.g. *DJ* follows *V*, *AC* follows *P*, *Hel* follows *G* and is in turn followed by *OM* and *CLA*). In the pose, however, of Flavius Vopiscus, the author violates this rule in *Car*, for Numerian's life is described before that of Carinus.

11.3

appellatus Augustus vivo patre

As noted in *S* 16.2-3, Caracalla was named Augustus in the victory proclamation after the battle of Ctesiphon. The proclamation took place on 28 January 198, a date preserved in the *Feriale Duranum*, Welles-Fink-Gilliam, pp.198-99, 206; see also Guey, "28 janvici?"; and more recently, Meckler, "Papyri." Caracalla also received an acclamation as Parthicus Maximus at this time, see above at *Cc* 6.5.

nisi repugnasset praefectus eius, gravis vir.

This is the text of Σ . *P* has both the subject and the verb in the plural, "nisi pugnasset praefecti eius, gravis vir." The absolute use of *repugnare* seems more likely here than a figurative use of *pugnare*. One should not try to find a historical date for this passage. While under Severus there were periods both of

a single praetorian prefect (Plautianus) as well as when there were two prefects, this passage seems merely a legend.

11.5

inter deos relatus est

Dio 78.9.2 also notes Caracalla's deification, which was performed with Macrinus' approval. Bauman, "Resumé," pp.71-74, cites *OM* 13.1 and Dio 78.12.2, 18.5 to claim the deification of Caracalla was somehow lacking because Macrinus abolished his predecessor's rescripts. There is insufficient evidence for Bauman's argument. The Dio passages concern tax rates and expenditures — matters not handled through rescripts — and thus provide no support for the *HA*'s story. The authenticity, moreover, of *OM* 13.1 has been questioned by Straub, "Notizen," pp.390-93, and the passage probably reflects late-antique concerns over the relative authorities of *ius* versus *rescripta*, Turcan, *Histoire Auguste*, pp.139-40 n.74. On Caracalla's funeral, see above at *Cc* 9.1.

11.6-7

Faustinae templum et divale nomen eripuit, certe templum, quod ei sub Tauri radicibus fundaverat maritus

Faustina the Younger, the daughter of Antoninus Pius and the wife of Marcus Aurelius, died in the village of Halala in western Cappadocia during a journey from Syria in 176. Marcus renamed the village Faustiniopolis in her memory and made it a *colonia*, as well as building a temple there to her (*MA* 26.4-9). The ancient town is located near the modern village of Basmakçı, roughly 30 km southeast of Tyana along the road to the Cilician Gates. In early Byzantine times Faustiniopolis was listed among the πόλεις of Cappadocia Secunda by Hierocles (*Synecdemus* 700.3, written under Justinian but before 535) and had a bishop (mentioned six times in the *Notitiae episcoporum*: 1.252,

3.181, 8.303, 9.212, 10.313, 13.172). See Price, *Rituals*, p.269 no.118; Ballance, “Derbe”; Drew-Bear, “Cappadoce,” pp.138-39.

The word *divale* first appears in the language in a rescript of 357 (*CTh* 8.1.5) where it describes statues of the emperor. The word refers to the exalted nature of those wearing the purple, and both the word and the concept seem to have been derived from the deification of earlier emperors. Here the *divale nomen* refers to Faustina’s cult, which the author claims was transformed into one for Caracalla. The claim may not be valid. Certainly Faustina the Younger was still reckoned among the *divae* under both Macrinus (*CIL* 6.2104 l.4) and Severus Alexander (*CIL* 6.2017 l.13 = *ILS* 5048 n.17), a status confirmed by the *Feriale Duranum* (Fink-Hoey-Snyder, pp.182-83; Welles-Fink-Gilliam, pp.211-12).

The use of the anachronistic term *divale*, may indicate that the *HA* author has elaborated a detail from *MA* 26.9 without regard to any justifiable source.

**filii huius Heliogabalus Antoninus sibi vel Iovi Syrio vel Soli —
incertum id est — templum fecit**

“Syrian Jupiter or the Sun” is a reference to Elagabal, the god to whom Elagabalus was a priest. The identification is explicit in *Hel* 1.5, *fuit autem Heliogabali vel Iovis vel Solis sacerdos*. The origin of the name Elagabal still vexes scholars, though the traditional view gives a derivation from Aramaic *elaha* (god) and *gabai* (mountain) which must have initially referred to the black stone revered in Emesa from the time of its Arab founders, the veneration of non-representational stone figures being a common feature of pre-Islamic Arab religions, Millar, *Near East*, pp.300-1. While the Emesenes were of Arab origin, in Roman imperial times they considered themselves “Phoenicians” (e.g. Heliodorus’ self-description in *Aethiopica* 10.41.4), which to them meant they

spoke Greek, Millar, "Near East." The association of the Emesene godstone with the sun is usually said to have been caused by an assimilation of the Aramaic *elaha* with the Greek ἥλιος (so A. Birley, *Severus*², p.71). Interestingly enough, Elagabal's name appears in Dio as Ἐλεγάβαλος (78.31.1; [Xiph.] 79.11.1, 79.12.1, 79.17.3, 79.21.2) or Ἐλεαγάβαλος ([Exc. Val.] 79.11.1) and in Herodian as Ἐλεαγάβαλος (5.3.4, 5.5.7). Dio does not explain the name, while Herodian 5.3.4 believes the name means "sun-god" in the language of the Phoenicians. Still, no explicit connection is made by either author between *elaha* and ἥλιος. It is among *Latin* authors (the *HA*, Victor 23.1, Eutropius 8.22, *Epit.* 23.2) we find the name *Heliogabalus*, cf. Millar, *Near East*, p.304, correcting his earlier view in "Near East," p.158.

Perhaps the godstone's association with the sun is quite ancient, especially if the stone is assumed to be (or represent) a meteorite which came down from the sky, where, of course, the sun plays a prominent role, Starcky, "Stele." Certainly Emesenes themselves associated their godstone with the sun, for the association appears in dedications both in their own city and abroad, Mousli, (Emesa); Fitz, *Syriens*, pp.26-27 (Pannonia); *AE* 1962 no.229 (Raetia). The sun would also be associated with the uprising of the Emesene Uranius Antoninus in 253 as commemorated in the *Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle*, Potter, *Prophecy*, pp.323-28. The association with the sky is also indicated by the regular appearance of an eagle in depictions of the godstone both in Emesene coins as well as on a relief sculpture with characters written in Palmyrene script found between Emesa and Palmyra; Millar, *Near East*, pp.304-6.

The eagle may be one factor involved in the identification of Elagabal as a Syrian Jupiter. This identification may also involve a connection of the godstone with the worship of the West Semitic storm god Baal. Other Baal gods were linked by Greek authors with Zeus. Dio 78.8.5, 78.40.4 names the oracular

god of Apamea as ὁ Ζεὺς ὁ Βῆλος. Eusebius, in the *Praeparatio evangelica* 1.10.7-8, reports Philo of Byblos (whose work on the ancient Phoenician religion is purportedly based on a writings by the allegedly ancient person of Sanchuniathon) says during a drought, the Phoenicians would lift their hands to the sun and pray to the lord of the sky, whom Βεελάμην καλοῦντες, ὅ ἐστι παρὰ Φοίνιξι κύριος οὐρανοῦ, Ζεὺς δὲ παρ' Ἑλλησιν.

It is quite possible a temple of Faustina in Faustinopolis could have been converted into one for Elgabal during Elagabalus' reign, though this notice and *MA* 26.10 are hardly sufficient evidence and the site has never been excavated. Attention, nonetheless, was paid to Faustinopolis during Elagabalus' reign. A mile marker (*CIL* 3.12214), which may be a sign of road repair, was set up on the nearby route to the Cilician Gates, Drew-Bear, "Cappadoce," pp.130-39.

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