PART I

THE MAIN SOURCES

CHAPTER 1

Cassius Dio and the *Historia Augusta*

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1. Cassius Dio

To construct a narrative of the reign of Marcus is far from easy. No narrative history survives that remotely resembles Tacitus' *Annals*. The most important source ought to have been the relevant part of the *History of Rome* by the Greek senator Cassius Dio, covering the period from earliest times until his own second consulship in AD 229, in 80 books.[1] Dio was well qualified to write about Marcus, being a younger contemporary and a senator. He must have been born about the year 164, since he mentions that he was designated praetor by the emperor Pertinax, that is, in 193, no doubt to serve in 194 (Dio 73[74].12.2). From this one can infer that he was then aged about 30 (cf. Dio 52.20.1–2 with Morris (1964)). Thus at the time of Marcus' death in 180, while not quite old enough to enter the pre-senatorial career, Dio would certainly have been well informed about the main events and issues of the day, especially as his father, Cassius Apronianus, was also a senator (*PIR*^{2} C 485). Dio was a great admirer of Marcus, as shown by the long final section of Xiphilinus' epitome of Book 71, on Marcus' death, with a summing up of his life, ending with the contrast between Marcus' reign and that of Commodus: 'our history now descends from a kingdom of gold to one of iron and rust, as affairs did for the Romans at that time' (Xiphilinus 267–68; Dio 71[72].33.42–36.4).

But for Marcus' reign, which he covered in his Book 71, Dio's *History* is only available in the 11th-century *Epitome* by Xiphilinus and in some Byzantine

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excerpts. Dio's Book 70, on the reign of Antoninus Pius, was already missing when Xiphilinus was composing his *Epitome*:

> It should be known that the account of Antoninus Pius is not found in the copies of Dio, probably because something happened to the books, and hence the history of his reign is almost completely unknown.

He can only offer the information, repeated from his summary of Book 69, that Antoninus was adopted by Hadrian and became emperor, Hadrian's first choice Lucius Commodus (who had been renamed Lucius Aelius Caesar) having died before Hadrian himself; and that Antoninus insisted, against opposition from the senate, on Hadrian's deification, as a result of which he was given the name Pius. Dio is also cited for an alternative reason for the name, Antoninus' refusal to punish 'many who had been accused' (70.1.1–2.1).

In his summary of Dio's Book 69, Xiphilinus had reported how

> Hadrian caused Antoninus, since the latter had no sons, to adopt both Lucius Commodus' son Commodus [who was renamed Lucius Verus on becoming emperor], and, in addition to him, Marcus Annius Verus, a grandson of Annius Verus, three times consul and city prefect. And while he was ordering Antoninus to adopt both, he preferred Verus on account of his kinship and his age and because he was already showing his very great strength of character, for which reason Hadrian used to call him '*Verissimus*' ['truest'], playing on the meaning of his name in Latin. (Dio 69.21.1–2)

Xiphilinus added that 'the first part of Dio's account of Marcus Verus, Antoninus' successor' was also missing:

> what he did regarding Lucius, Commodus' son, whom Marcus made his son-in-law, and what the latter did in the war against Vologaesus, having been sent there by his father-in-law. Therefore I shall tell briefly what I have read about these matters in other books. (Dio 70.2.2)[2]

Xiphilinus' brief substitute, derived from 'other books', for the missing first part of Dio's Book 71 begins with the following: Antoninus' death after a 24-year reign; Marcus' accession and the appointment of his adoptive brother Lucius as co-emperor; and the latter's marriage to Marcus' daughter Lucilla and dispatch to the Parthian War. Next he reports how the Parthian king Vologaesus had begun the war by attacking and destroying a Roman legion at Elegeia and then invading Syria; how Lucius, based at Antioch, entrusted command to Cassius, who in due course advanced into Parthian territory and destroyed Vologaesus' palace; then that Lucius, who 'took great pride in these exploits', later plotted against Marcus but died from poison

before he could achieve anything. Although none of this came from Dio, it is conventionally labelled Dio 71.1.1[1]–3.1[1]. Modern editors have tacked on to this two genuine passages from Dio, quoted in the Byzantine encyclopedia, the *Suda*: one is on Roman bridge-building, in this case carried out by Cassius; the other relates how Sohaemus, the king of Armenia, first installed by Lucius in 164, was re-installed by Martius Verus, governor of Cappadocia, to which is added a laudatory character-sketch of this general. The first *Suda* excerpt clearly comes from Dio's account of Lucius' Parthian war in the 160s, but the second one must refer to an episode in the 170s. It belongs in the same context as a report taken from Dio in one of the *Excerpta Valesiana* (no. 304; Dio 71[72].14.2), on trouble in Armenia caused by a satrap called Tiridates: he had threatened Martius Verus and was deported to Britain (see *PIR*^{2} M 348, S 761, T 239).

Apart from Cassius' bridge-building, only one other episode from the earlier part of Dio's Book 71, not available to Xiphilinus, is preserved in an excerpt. This relates the invasion of the empire by 6 000 Langobardi and Obii, their rout by cavalry under Vindex and infantry under Candidus, and the barbarians' subsequent negotiations with the governor of (Upper) Pannonia, Iallius Bassus. The episode was transmitted via Petrus Patricius (*Excerpta de legationibus*^{G} 6; Dio 71[72].3.1a), and is datable to about 166 or 167, thanks to independent information about the careers of Vindex and Bassus (*PIR*^{2} M 22, I 4).

At all events, it is clear that Xiphilinus' epitome of Dio on Marcus' reign only covers events after the death of Lucius Verus, which occurred early in 169. The same seems to apply to the collections of excerpts from Dio, principally the *Excerpta Ursiniana* 56–66 and *Valesiana* 302–312b, as well as the other passages in Petrus Patricius, and a few more in the *excerpta Salmasiana* and *Vaticana*. Not all of the events in these excerpts are easy to date and the order in the editions by Boissevain or Cary (Loeb) is not always satisfactory. The parts of Xiphilinus derived from Dio's Book 71 begin with further, introductory comments on Avidius Cassius and on Marcus. Cassius

> was ordered by Marcus to administer the whole of Asia, whereas Marcus himself spent a long time, so to speak his entire life, having Pannonia as his base, making war on the Danube barbarians, Jazyges [i.e. Sarmatians] and Marcomanni, one after the other. (Xiphilinus 259; Dio 71[72].3.1[2])[3]

Cassius' appointment 'to administer the whole of Asia' belongs to the 170s, and the proper context is the paragraph on Cassius' suppression of the Egyptian Bucoli (Xiphilinus 259–60; Dio 71[72].4.1–2).

Sandwiched between these two mentions of Cassius is Xiphilinus' account of the barbarian invasion of Italy and its repulse by Pompeianus and Pertinax (Xiphilinus 259; Dio 71[72].3.2–4). As Xiphilinus has no information from

Dio about the time before Lucius' death, this demonstrates that the invasion was later than this, in 169 or 170. The only apparent difficulty is Xiphilinus' expression referring to the invaders as 'also many of the Celts from beyond the Rhine'. 'Celts', as often in Greek writers, means 'Germans', but Dio or perhaps Xiphilinus probably just added 'from beyond the Rhine' to distinguish them from the Gauls: this did not mean that the invaders actually came from that area (see Zwikker (1941) 156f.). There is no good reason to doubt that the invasion in question was that by the Marcomanni and Quadi, otherwise known only from an episode in Lucian's *Alexander* (48) and a retrospective passage in Ammianus Marcellinus (29.6.1). As to the date, comparison with the *Historia Augusta*'s treatment of Pertinax's role in the latter's *vita* makes the year 170 far likelier, *Pertinax* 2.4–5:

> From there . . . he [Pertinax] was transferred to Dacia . . . and subsequently, through Claudius Pompeianus, Marcus' son-in-law, was appointed, to be, as it were, his assistant, to command detachments; in which post he won approval and was enrolled into the senate.

From the data in *Pertinax's vita*, his post in Dacia, which preceded his service under Pompeianus and was followed by a period without employment, can hardly be dated earlier than 169 (Alföldy (1987) 326ff.; Piso (1993) 117ff.).

As will be seen, virtually the whole of what remains of Dio's Book 71 dealt with warfare, most of it being Marcus' Danubian campaigns, apart from the brief mentions of the intervention in Egypt by Avidius Cassius and that by Martius Verus in Armenia; further, Xiphilinus also gave fairly full treatment to the rebellion of Cassius in 175 and its aftermath. His *Epitome* devotes most space to certain episodes: the death of the Guard prefect Vindex at the hands of the Marcomanni and their eventual defeat, giving Marcus the title Germanicus, and the revolt of the Egyptian Bucoli, suppressed by Avidius Cassius (259–60; Dio 71[72].3.5–4.2); Marcus' industriousness in dealing with court cases and his ill-health, and a battle with the Jazyges on the frozen river, with the concluding remark that 'Marcus thus subdued the Marcomanni and Jazyges after many hard struggles and dangers' (250–51; Dio 71 [72].6.1–8.1); the battle of the 'Rain Miracle' against the Quadi, into which Xiphilinus inserted the Christian interpretation (260–62; Dio 71 [72].8.1–10.5); the rebellion of Cassius and its aftermath, including Faustina's death, then Marcus' return to Rome via Athens and the renewal of the northern wars (262–67; Dio 71[72].22.2–33.4[1]), followed directly by Marcus' death and a long summary of his life and reign (267–68; Dio 71 [72].33.4[2]–36.4). Xiphilinus (or the scribes) misplaced the second of these passages (250–51), as well as a shorter previous one with two anecdotes about

the war (249–50): they precede a string of passages from Dio's Book 69 (252ff.) and Xiphilinus' substitute summary for the missing parts of Dio, Book 70 and the first part of 71.

Some information in parts of these Xiphilinus passages is repeated in the *excerpta*, particularly the *Valesiana*, of which nos. 302–312a deal with Marcus' reign. Only nos. 304, on the treatment of Ariogaesus, king of the Quadi (see below) and the Armenian satrap Tiridates (see above), 305, on Marcus' refusal to look at Cassius' severed head, 306, on his treatment of Cassius' supporters, and 310, on his godfearingness, add anything. No. 117 of the *excerpta Salmasiana* has a brief report of the auction of imperial property in AD 169, given at a little greater length by Zonaras 12.1, both surely taken from Dio's Book 71, and best known from the detailed accounts in Eutropius (8.11) and the *Historia Augusta* (17.4–6, based on Eutropius, and again at 21.9). The most important excerpts are in the *excerpta Ursiniana*^{G}, 57–66, which recount mainly diplomatic activity in the northern wars. The first, no. 57 (Dio 71[72].11.1–5), describes Marcus staying in Pannonia, receiving barbarian embassies. The Quadi sued for peace, which was granted, to prevent them joining the Marcomanni and Jazyges, and they handed back thousands of deserters and prisoners. Other peoples also surrendered; some supplied troops and others were allocated lands in the northern provinces and even in Italy – but those settled in Italy later seized Ravenna and were removed, which meant that Marcus did not settle barbarians in Italy again. In no. 58 (Dio 71[72].12.1–3), it is reported how the governor of Dacia Clemens attempted to manipulate two branches of the Vandals and on the unsuccessful mission to the Cotini of the *ab epistulis* Paternus. The next excerpt, 59 (Dio 71[72].13.1–4), records the Jazyges unsuccessfully suing for peace and Marcus' refusal to recognize king Ariogaesus; one of the *excerpta Valesiana*, 304, reports Ariogaesus' eventual capture and deportation to Alexandria. No. 60 (Dio 71[72].15) has the Marcomanni sending envoys to Marcus: as they had fulfilled previous conditions, he (albeit with reluctance) reduced by half the neutral zone on the Danube left bank. Nos. 61 (Dio 71[72].16.1–2) and 62 (Dio 71[72].17) both refer to Marcus being obliged, because of Cassius' revolt, to make terms with the Jazyges, who had, indeed, sued for peace; they had to return 100 000 captives and supply 8 000 cavalry, of whom 5 500 were sent to Britain. The Jazyges are also the subject of the next excerpt, no. 63 (Dio 71[72].18), which clearly belongs to the period of the renewed war, AD 178–80: it reports that they asked for relaxation of the terms previously imposed, and that both they and the Buri sought assurances that Marcus would 'prosecute the war to the uttermost' and not make peace with the Quadi. Excerpt no. 64 (Dio 71[72].19.1–2) reports how Marcus received envoys from various peoples, who received varying privileges, including in some cases Roman citizenship or exemption from taxation or tribute; he gave favorable treatment to the Jazyges.

By contrast, in no. 65 (Dio 71[72].20.1–2) the situation of the Quadi and Marcomanni was portrayed as desperate: 20 000 Roman soldiers were stationed in well equipped forts in the territory of each people, who were suffering such hardship that the Quadi tried to migrate beyond Rome's reach to the land of the Semnones. 'But Marcus . . . blocked the passes and prevented this. Thus he did not want to acquire their land but to punish the men.' This clearly refers to the last winter of the war, AD 179–80 – it must be noted that the final sentence is Dio's own interpretation. The last excerpt from Book 71, no. 66, describes the contrasting action of 3 000 men from one of the smaller Germanic people in this region, the Naristae, deserting to Rome and 'receiving land in our territory' (Dio 71[72].21).

2. The *Historia Augusta*

As the value of what survives from Dio's history is limited, one must rely heavily on the so-called *Historia Augusta*. First, a bare description must be given of the *HA*'s nature and content. It contains *vitae*, biographies, of emperors, both legitimate and 'usurpers' (*tyranni*), and their heirs, for the years 117–285. There is a lacuna for the years 244–60: hence there are no *vitae* of Philip and Decius and their respective sons, Aemilianus, and Gallus and his son Volusian; and that of Valerian only begins after his capture by the Persians. There are 30 *vitae*: from Hadrian to Elagabalus each minor figure has a separate *vita*; from the two Maximini onwards a single *vita* covers joint rulers, and usurpers are grouped together, 32 in one *vita*, four in another. The quality of these *vitae* is very varied. The early *vitae* of legitimate emperors of the second and early third century, i.e. from Hadrian to Caracalla, seem to be mainly factual and are thought to be based mainly on a good source. This is assumed by most scholars to be the lost *vitae Caesarum* of Marius Maximus, written in the early third century as a successor to Suetonius' *Twelve Caesars*, but evidently much more extensive. But both the later *vitae*, as well as those of the secondary figures, are to a considerable extent fictional.

Apart from two other writers, to be discussed shortly, Maximus and his *vitae* are known only from references in the *HA*, which quotes his *vitae* of Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus Pius, Marcus Aurelius, Commodus, Pertinax, Severus, and Elagabalus. It also has one unspecific citation, 'as Marius Maximus says in the life of many [sc. emperors]' (*Alexander Severus* 21.4), and two comments about him. In the first, Maximus is said to have been one of those biographers who transmitted accurate information although not writing in the historians' high style (*Probus* 2.6–7). But in the second one he is castigated as 'the most long-winded man of all' (*homo omnium verbosissimus*), unlike Suetonius, who loved brevity – and because he 'involved himself in mythological history',

mythistoricis se voluminibus implicavit (*Quadriga tyrannorum* 1.1–2). Maximus' verbosity had already been exemplified: he devoted two books to his *vita Marci* (*Avidius Cassius* 9.5), even more to his *vita Severi* (*Geta* 2.1), and included extensive documents. One was taken over verbatim (*Commodus* 18.1–20.5), others are said to have been omitted as too lengthy (*Pertinax* 2.6–9, 15.8). Because the Scholiast presumably quoted Maximus' *vita Nervae*, Maximus is taken to have started his *vitae Caesarum* where Suetonius' *Twelve Caesars* ended, and to have covered Domitian's successors down to Elagabalus. He should be the *HA*'s source for the many authentic names and other details it offers on this period, their accuracy confirmed by epigraphy and by comparison e.g. with Cassius Dio.

The only other mentions of Marius Maximus occur in two late fourth-century sources. One is the Scholiast on Juvenal, who reports (on Juvenal 4.53) the condemnation of the informer Palfurius Sura after the death of Domitian, and adds three other names, 'as Marius Maximus writes'. The other is Ammianus Marcellinus, in the context of his second diatribe on morality in Rome, commenting sarcastically on the cultural deficiencies of the aristocracy. He had already written of their frivolous interests, singers and actors rather than philosophers and orators, and of their libraries, closed for ever like tombs (14.6.18). Now, he notes,

> some of them, while hating learning like poison, read Juvenal and Marius Maximus with particular eagerness, turning over no volumes but these in their profound leisure – the reason for this is not a matter for my humble judgement. (28.4.14–15)

It is easy to understand Juvenal's appeal in Theodosian Rome and perhaps Marius Maximus satisfied the same taste, for scandal and trivia. Besides this, the Antonines, the essential subject of Maximus' *vitae*, were greatly in vogue. Theodosius was hailed not only as Trajan's fellow-Spaniard, supposed to resemble him physically and (negative aspects excepted) in the character of his rule, but actually as a descendant. Further, the aristocracy vaunted descent not only in a few cases from the republican nobility (Fabii, Valerii, Scipios, and Gracchi), but many more from the Antonine and Severan élite. It may be inferred that the author of the *HA* simply saw a gap in the market. Maximus was very popular, but excessively longwinded. He would produce a compact version, but spiced up by adding *vitae* of figures not treated separately by Maximus – and by 'improving' Maximus with fiction, unobtrusively tucked in, here and there, in the 'primary' *lives* based on Maximus, but wholesale in the 'secondary' *lives*. He then produced a further set of new *vitae*, beginning where Maximus left off. The early *lives*, based on Maximus, were concocted at speed, by dictation, as indeed was the

case with the whole work (see *Tyranni triginta* 33.8: 'I do not seem to have promised eloquence but fact, I who am not writing but dictating these books which I have brought out on the lives of emperors, and dictating with such haste that I ... do not have the chance to breathe'). The need to condense Maximus, a very long source, made the author impatient in places: he cut drastically and substituted convenient summaries from Eutropius (at *Marcus* 16.5ff.) and Aurelius Victor (at *Severus* 17.5ff.). His haste, and the need to excerpt suitable parts of Maximus' *lives* for the new ones that he was adding, which are, in the part relevant to *Marcus*, the *Aelius*, *Verus*, and *Avidius Cassius*, resulted in incoherence, repetition, and muddles. With the *Marcus*, he abbreviated too much, having exploited his source to create separate *lives* of Lucius Verus and Avidius Cassius, and after using the piece of Eutropius, decided he had to add more.

Certain recurring features in the *HA* were early recognized as suspect, particularly the documents, mostly letters and speeches: only a lengthy piece attributed to Marius Maximus (*Commodus* 18.1–20.5) is now accepted as genuine. Further, besides Maximus and two Greek historians, Herodian, whose work has survived, and Dexippus, known only from fragments, the *HA* claims as sources 35 writers otherwise unknown and surely invented. Nonetheless, at 549 pages in Hohl's Teubner edition (Hohl (1927)), the *HA* is the fullest surviving Latin source for a century and a half of Roman history, and has to be used: truth must be sorted out from fiction. Despite deliberately misleading indications to the contrary – six separate authors, writing variously under the first tetrarchy or Constantine – the search has led to the age of Theodosius: the names of the six '*Scriptores*' are pseudonyms for one author, whose identity remains unknown. The indices to the manuscripts (the order is disturbed in places) attribute the *vitae* to 'Aelius Spartianus', 'Julius Capitolinus', 'Vulcacius Gallicanus, *v(ir) c(larissimus)* [i.e. a senator]', 'Aelius Lampridius', 'Trebellius Pollio', and 'Flavius Vopiscus, *Syracusius* [the Syracusan]'.

The *HA* begins abruptly with the words *Origo imperatoris Hadriani vetustior...*, 'the older origin of the emperor Hadrian' (*Hadrianus* 1.1). Hence it seems that a preface has been lost – damage to the manuscript, as with the lacuna, is postulated – perhaps also *vitae* of Nerva and Trajan. (Of course, given the spurious nature of so much in this work it can be argued that the work never had a Preface and that the lacuna was also a fake, the intention being to make the work seem genuinely old.) In compensation, several *lives* after the *Hadrian* have prefaces, some addressed to emperors; and rulers are addressed or referred to as alive in the body of some *vitae*. That of Hadrian's heir Aelius Caesar opens 'His Aelius Spartianus to Diocletian Augustus, greeting' and 'Spartianus' then announces his plan, 'already achieved as far as Hadrian', to compose *lives* not only of all *principes* but also of those who only became Caesar but not Augustus, further, of those 'who in any other fashion

whatsoever have attained to either the fame or the hope of the principate [i.e. usurpers]'. Shortly afterwards (*Aelius* 2.2) he refers to Galerius and Constantius as Caesars, implying a date between 293 and 305. The supposed author, of the *Marcus* (19.12) and *Verus* (11.4), 'Julius Capitolinus', likewise addresses Diocletian. Then comes the first usurper, Avidius Cassius, portrayed very positively, in the only *vita* under the name of 'Vulcacius Gallicanus', who informs Diocletian that he plans *lives* of all who had the title *imperator*, 'whether justly or unjustly, so that you. Augustus, may take cognisance of all wearers of the purple' (*Avidius Cassius* 3.3).

It was then as part of his attempt at originality that the author produced a separate *vita* of Lucius Verus, evidently hived off from Maximus' lengthy *vita* of Marcus, and, even worse, created largely fictional *vitae* of two minor figures, Aelius Caesar and the usurper Avidius Cassius. Chopping up his source got the author into a muddle: the *Marcus* goes to pieces from Verus' death in 169 onwards. The author first tried to cut his losses and finish his account by inserting a long passage of Eutropius, then decided that more was needed after all. Further items on the 170s were added, followed by some fiction. The result is that such major events as the invasions of Italy and Greece were not mentioned at all. In addition to the *Marcus* and *Verus* there is relevant information on Marcus' early life in the *Hadrian* and *Pius*, which are, fortunately, almost free of fiction, even if the former is muddled and repetitive in places. Further, there are useful items relevant to Marcus' reign in the *vitae* of Commodus, Pertinax, Didius Julianus, and Severus.

Structure of the *Marcus*:

1.1–7.4	life up to accession, AD 121–61
7.5–14–8	reign up to death of Lucius, AD 161–69
15.1–2	two anecdotes
15.3–19.5	a section dealing with the reign from AD 169 to 180, derived from different sources, the major part, 16.3–18.3, being adapted from Eutropius, *Breviarium* 8.11–14, while what precedes is based partly on Eutropius, partly on Aurelius Victor
19.6–11	elaborates 19.1–5 on Commodus and Faustina
19.12	an address to Diocletian, which looks as if it marked the original end of the *vita*, followed by the words 'this of course briefly and concisely', which may well be a comment by the author, taken into the manuscript mistakenly by his stenographer: it suggests second thoughts, which led to a further section, repeating the material covered in 15.3ff. with greater accuracy and more detail

20.1–28.10	the reign from AD 169 to 110, and a final chapter dealing with Marcus' death
29.1–10	further anecdotes and comments

Structure of the *Verus*:

1.1–2	comment on other treatments of the joint reign
1.3–3.7	life of Lucius Verus up to his accession, from his birth (AD 131 or 134) to AD 161
3.8–6.6	characterization of Lucius and his conduct (mostly unfavorable)
6.7–7.10	Parthian War
8.1–9.6	further comments of a similar kind to those in 3.8–6.6
9.7–11	the German expedition of AD 168 and Lucius' death (probably in January 169)
10.1–5	anecdotes about his death and relations with his sister Fabia, his wife Lucilla and with his mother-in-law Faustina
10.6–11.1	personalia and burial
11.2–3	another anecdote about his death
11.4	address to Diocletian

Structure of the *Avidius Cassius*:

1.1–3.5	fiction
3.6–7	story about Marcus lecturing on philosophy before leaving for the northern war, similar to that in Aurelius Victor, *De Caesaribus* 16.9
6.5–9.4	on the revolt, presumably based on Maximus, who is cited at 6.6, 7 and 9.5
9.5	readers are referred for more detail to Maximus' 'second book on the Life of Marcus'
9.6–13.5	fiction
13.6–7	treatment of Cassius' family and their fate under Commodus
13.8–14.8	fiction

There are dozens of personal names in both the first part of the *Marcus* and the *Verus* (discussed by Pflaum (1970) and (1976)), but the second part of the former has very few. One can only repeat that the reason is probably that the chopping up of his (no doubt very long) source to compose *vitae* of Lucius Verus and of Avidius Cassius, wore the author out or made him bored or confused. This might also explain why such an important event as the invasion of Italy, with the siege of Aquileia, is not mentioned. It could be argued that the author deliberately suppressed it, as discreditable to his

hero. It is clear that much material in the *lives* covering this period is designed to reflect favorably on Marcus – and unfavorably on Lucius Verus and Commodus. Still, it could well be that the author was muddled. Aquileia is mentioned at *Marcus* 14.1–6 when he reports on the expedition of 168,

> while the Victuali and Marcomanni were throwing everything into confusion and other peoples were ready to invade if not received [sc. into the empire] . . . That *profectio* was not unprofitable, for after they had come to Aquileia, several kings retreated with their peoples and executed the authors of the disturbance.

The author may have thought that what he was describing was the siege and its relief; and indeed some modern commentators have been so persuaded.[4]

After reaching Lucius' death at *Marcus* 14.8, the author may have already turned aside to compose the *Verus*, where at 9.7–11 he reached the *bellum Germanicum* and Lucius' death again. At *Verus* 9.7–8 he reports the emperors' arrival at Aquileia and their crossing the Alps; then at 9.9, he refers to his previous treatment:

> regarding this war – what was accomplished by the envoys, *legatos*, of the barbarians and what was achieved by our generals, *duces* – has already been very fully discussed in the *vita Marci*.

This suggests that he had already written his *Marcus*. In fact, *Marcus* 14.4 merely registers how 'several barbarian (peoples) sent (ambassadors) to the legates, *legatos* [i.e. governors] of the emperors'; and there is no detail later in the *vita* about what was 'achieved by our generals', let alone a very full discussion. Instead, a very abbreviated account of Marcus' life from AD 169 onwards follows, *Marcus* 15–19, beginning with inconsequential sentences, on how Marcus read and wrote during circus spectacles, 15.1, and on the power of the freedmen Geminus and Agaclytus, 15.2 – perhaps that passage was only added because the author remembered that at *Verus* 9.3–4 he had prefaced his remarks about the power of Geminus and Agaclytus with 'as we said in the *Life of Marcus*'. After reporting Lucius' deification at 3–4, he has a passage, 5–6, close to Victor, *De Caesaribus* 16.5–8: the rumor that Marcus poisoned Verus. Immediately after this is the abrupt remark at the end of 15.6: 'Cassius defected from Marcus after Verus' death'. Here is a clue that the author had again laid aside his *Marcus*, this time to compose the *Avidius Cassius*. Cassius played an important part in the Parthian War, so had already received mentions at *Verus* 7.1 and 8.3. Most of the *Avidius Cassius* is fiction, but 7.1–9.4 seems to be

taken from a good source, spoiled by the anachronistic insertion (the words 'about Pertinax and' at 8.5, when reporting comments by Marcus). This long passage is followed by 9.5:

> if anyone wishes to know about all this history, let him read the second book of Marius Maximus on the life of Marcus, in which he tells what Marcus did alone when Verus was already dead.

After this, fiction takes over again for the remainder of the *vita*, 9.6–14.8, except for 13.6–7, the treatment of Cassius' family and their fate under Commodus.

To return to the *Marcus*, 15.6 is followed by a long sentence, 16.1, registering Marcus' generosity to all his family, especially to Commodus; 16.2 is on their joint triumph at the end of AD 176. Most of 16.3–17.6 is very close to Eutropius 8.11.1–2 and 12.2–14.1. All eight sections of 18 look like sententious padding by the author, while 19.1–11, on Faustina and gladiators, is almost entirely fiction elaborated from Victor, *De Caesaribus* 16.2. Chapter 19 ends with an address to Diocletian, 19.12, then the words *et quidem haec breviter et congeste*, 'this of course briefly and concisely'. These words may well be an aside, mistakenly taken into the text by a stenographer. At all events, evidently feeling that he had been too brief, the author started again, at 20.1, to cover Marcus' life from AD 169 to 180. First he reports Marcus' critical statements about Lucius in the senate, his generosity to the latter's family and freedmen and his sensitivity about his own reputation (20.1–5). Then he seems about to resume a narrative, with Marcus' departure for the front, *profectio*, on the eve of which came the marriage of his widowed daughter to Claudius Pompeianus, to which is noted Lucilla's and her mother's unfavorable reaction, 20.6–7. But first there is an interruption: the invasion of 'all the Spains' by the Moors and 'successes achieved though his legates', with no names or further details, 21.1, then the revolt of the Bucoli in Egypt and its suppression by Cassius, 21.2. After reverting to the delayed *profectio*, the death of Marcus' younger son Annius Verus Caesar is reported, with the restricted mourning and posthumous honors, 21.3–5. But instead of going on to report where Marcus went when he finally departed in autumn 169, and what he did next, the author reverts to the preparations for war, presumably undertaken in spring and summer of that year: because the plague was still raging, Marcus renewed the cult of the gods very diligently and recruited slaves for military service, 21.6; he also armed gladiators, and made Dalmatian and Dardanian bandits into soldiers; he armed *diogmitae* (local policemen in the east) too and even purchased German mercenaries to fight against Germans, 21.7. Besides this, he prepared the legions with all diligence for the German or Marcomannic war, 21.8. The auction of imperial treasures in the Forum of Trajan, already

described in some detail at 17.4–7, in part of the passage based on Eutropius (8.13), is briefly reported again, 21.9, with an acknowledgment that he is repeating himself, 'as we have said', *ut diximus*.

At this point one would have expected an account of the next five campaigning seasons, AD 170–74. But the author was either unable or unwilling to tackle this. Instead, he jumps to what must be the aftermath of the invasion of Italy, when the Marcomanni had been chased back north, in AD 171: 'he wiped out the Marcomanni at the very crossing of the Danube and restored the plunder to the provincials', 21.10. The preceding invasion of Italy by the Marcomanni and Quadi is not mentioned, just a 'conspiracy' of all the peoples beyond the northern *limes* (several names are hopelessly corrupt in the MSS) – as well as the threat of a Parthian and a British war, 22.1. J. Burian, perhaps rightly, regards this list as drawn from a geographical source and reflecting the concerns of the author's own time (Burian (1987) 117). Most of the rest of 22, viz. 2–9, deals with the northern wars but with no hint of chronological order. At 22.10–11 there is suddenly brief mention of disturbances among the Sequani, 22.10, and in Lusitania, 22.11. Only at 22.12 is a datable event mentioned, the summoning of Commodus to the *limes* and his assumption of the *toga virilis*, which *Commodus* 2.2 allows one to assign to the Nones of July 175, as well as his designation to the consulship, which was to be held in AD 177.

The passage from 23.1 to 24.3 deals mainly with legal measures from the reign. At 24.3 the author suddenly reverts to the war, citing first Marcus' equitable treatment of enemy prisoners and the settling of 'countless numbers' of them on Roman soil, then, at 24.4, in only 15 words in the Latin, 'by his prayers he summoned a thunderbolt from heaven against a military device of the enemy and obtained rain for his men when they were suffering from thirst', in other words the Lightning and Rain Miracles. These are depicted in scenes 11 and 16 of the Aurelian Column, while the Rain Miracle was the subject of a long passage in Xiphilinus. The remaining narrative covers the period from spring 175 to Marcus' death in March 180, 24.5–28.10. Much of this, up to 27.5, is relatively detailed. It begins with Marcus' wish to make a province of *Marcomannia*, likewise of *Sarmatia*, and the claim that he would have done this had not Cassius rebelled, 24.5. Cassius' coup, its background and end, the journey to the east, the return to Rome via Athens, the triumph and the promotion of Commodus, with *congiarium* and spectacles, are treated fairly fully, 24.6–27.5. The latter section ends with a curt remark, 'he corrected many civilian matters', exemplified by the measure limiting the price of gladiators, 27.6; then come Marcus' supposed regular quotation of Plato's philosopher-king ideal, 27.7, and the marriage of Commodus. The final expedition, from August 178 to March 180, is allotted two sentences only, 27.9–10, the second being the claim that 'if he had survived for one year he would have made provinces out of them [the Marcomanni and their neighbours, and the

Sarmatians]', in other words, that the plan abandoned because of Cassius' revolt had been re-activated.

The rest of the *vita* deals with Marcus' death, 27.11–28.10, followed by stories about his wife's lovers, 29.1–3; his oath before he returned to the war that no senator had been put to death with his knowledge, 29.4; his special fear of getting a reputation for greed, *avaritia*, 29.5; then some mild criticism – 'they said that he was disingenuous (*fictus*) and less straightforward (*simplex*) than he seemed to be or than Pius and Verus were', 29.6, and they also accused him of increasing the *aulica adrogantia*, 'the arrogance of the court', by keeping his friends away from general society and banquets, 29.7. The *vita* ends with three stray remarks: his consecration of his parents and that he even put up statues for their friends after death, 29.8; his skepticism about *suffragatores*, men who canvassed for support, 29.9; and how (Ceionia) Fabia (his original betrothed, Lucius' sister) wanted to marry him after Faustina's death, but that he took a concubine so as not to give so many children a stepmother, 29.10.

To sum up: the second part of this *vita* is well below the standard of the first part. As pointed out by Burian, the *HA* clearly shows in other *vitae*, as well as in this one, that its composition had no fixed principles, and hence that there are not only doublets but doublets that are mutually contradictory. He concludes that the account of these wars in the *HA*, although substantial, provides no firm basis for the reconstruction of events; the biographer did not set out to supply a full and accurate history of the Marcomannic wars, but to use these wars to portray the character and achievements of Marcus and to influence his readers to view the problems of his own time in the same way as himself (Burian (1987) 118).

NOTES

1. Now known from a military diploma issued during his second consulship in AD 229 to have been called Lucius Cassius Dio (*RMD* no. 133). He is also given the additional name 'Cocceianus' in some Byzantine sources, but this is probably the result of confusion with his namesake and fellow-Bithynian, Dio 'Chrysostom' of Prusa (see Gowing (1990)).
2. This is followed by comments on Antoninus' dealings with Christians, his peaceful death, and the report of an earthquake in the Hellespont area and Bithynia, 70.3.1–4.2.
3. Irritatingly enough, although in the Loeb edition in the left-hand margin this passage is labelled LXXI 3,1[2], the book as a whole is numbered LXXII, and from this point onwards, until the end of Dio's work, the Loeb book-numbering is one ahead of that in the edition by Boissevain. To avoid confusion, Dio is therefore cited here with the Loeb numbering in brackets after that of Boissevain.
4. Thus e.g. in the Loeb edition, vol. 9, p. 166 n. 2, where the death of the Guard Prefect Furius Victorinus and part of the army, reported at 14.5, is taken to refer to

a first attempt to repulse the invasion. Zwikker made a convincing case for these deaths being the result of plague (Zwikker (1941) 66).

FURTHER READING

The best text of Cassius Dio's *History* is that by Boissevain (1895–1931), the most convenient edition, with Greek text and English translation, is by Cary (1914–1927). For some problems in citation see above; for Dio's name see Gowing (1990). Millar (1964) remains a valuable introduction, although his view of the date of composition is arbitrary and unconvincing. Further, his assumption, that Dio was born and spent his childhood in the family's home town, Nicaea (Iznik) in Bithynia, is mistaken: as his father was a senator, he would have been obliged to live mostly at Rome, where Dio was probably born. The so-called *Historia Augusta*, best abbreviated *HA*, the 'Augustan History', is the most mysterious and controversial work in surviving Latin literature. Because it was supposedly by six separate authors it was long cited as the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* (*SHA*). But since two pioneering articles by the young scholar Hermann Dessau (Dessau (1889) and (1892)), the starting-point for all subsequent research, showed convincingly that it was by a single author, writing nearly a century after the supposed date, it is preferable to omit the S. The standard text is that edited by Hohl (1927), preferable to the Loeb edition by Magie (1921–1932). Birley (1976) is an English translation of the first half of the *HA*, and the most up-to-date edition, with introduction, translation, and commentary, is by Chastagnol (1994). Research intensified in the 1960s, notably at the Bonn *Historia Augusta Colloquia*, held between 1963 and 1989, generating 13 volumes, edited by J. Straub et al., published between 1964 and 1991 (all at Bonn). They were followed by the *Historiae Augustae Colloquia, nova series*, of which 10 volumes, edited by G. Bonamente et al., have so far appeared (1991–2007, the first published at Macerata, the rest at Bari). The best monographs in English remain those by Syme ((1968), (1971a) and (1971b) [a very readable reply to diehard defenders of the early date and multiple authorship], (1983)). Needless to say, there is still not universal agreement on all the details. For a different view from Syme on Marius Maximus as a source cf. Birley (1997). Reference may also be made to Birley (1967) and (2003). The fullest as well as the most recent introduction to this subject is by Fündling ((2006) I 3–219, with bibliography, XI–CXXVIII), covering not only the *HA Hadrianus* (parts of which are relevant to Marcus), but the *HA* as a whole.

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