Style and structure of the Historia Augusta

Burgersdijk, D.W.P.

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Chapter 2   Introduction to the *HA*

The aim of this chapter is to provide some general information about the *HA*, as a practical *vademecum* in the discussion of an elusive work. At the same time it will be sketched what *communis opinio* holds about the structure and contents of the work. Where needed in the course of this overview extra information has been added.

2.1   Contents

The following table shows the books of the *HA* in their received order, their abbreviations according to the Lessing-Hohl system, the years of the reigns of the respective (co-) emperors and usurpers, the authors' names that grace the books and the emperors to whom the books are dedicated:

Books	Reign	Attributed to	Dedicated to
1 Hadrianus (*H*)	117 – 138 AD	Aelius Spartianus	
2 Aelius (*Ael.*)			Diocletian
3 Antoninus Pius (*AP*)	138 – 161		
4 Marcus Aurelius (*MA*)	161 – 180	Julius Capitolinus	
5 Verus (*V*)	161 – 169		Diocletian
6 Avidius Cassius (*AC*)	175	Vulcacius Gallicanus	
7 Commodus (*C*)	180 – 192	Aelius Lampridius	
8 Pertinax (*P*)	193	Julius Capitolinus	
9 Didius Julianus (*DI*)	193		
10 Septimius Severus (*S*)	193 – 211	Aelius Spartianus	Diocletian
11 Pescennius Niger (*PN*)	193 – 194		
12 Clodius Albinus (*ClA*)	196 – 197	Julius Capitolinus	Constantine
13 Caracalla (*Cc.*)	198 – 217	Aelius Spartianus	
14 Geta (*G*)	209 – 212		Constantine
15 Opilius Macrinus (*OM*)	217 – 218	Julius Capitolinus	Diocletian
16 Diadumenianus (*Dd.*)	218		
17 Heliogabalus (*Hel.*)	218 – 222	Aelius Lampridius	
18 Alexander Severus (*AS*)	222 – 235		
19 Maximini duo (*Max.*)	235 – 238		Constantine
20 Gordiani tres (*Gd.*)	238 – 244	Julius Capitolinus	
21 Maximus et Balbinus (*MB*)	238		
Lacuna	244 – 253		

22 Valeriani duo (*Val.*)	253 – 260		
23 Gallieni duo (*Gall.*)	253 – 268	Trebellius Pollio	
24 Triginta Tyranni (*T*)			
25 Claudius (*Cl.*)	268 – 270		
26 Aurelian (*A*)	270 – 275		Tiberianus[44]
27 Tacitus (*Tac.*)	275 – 276		
28 Probus (*Pr.*)	276 – 282	Flavius Vopiscus	Celsinus
29 Quadriga Tyrannorum (*Q*)			Bassus
30 Carus, Carinus, Numerian (*Car.*)	282 – 284		

Figure 2.1*: (1) The books of the HA in their received order and abbreviations (following the* notae vitarum *in Hohl 1965, XV and Lessing 1901-6), (2) the reigning years of the emperors, (3) authors and (4) dedicatees.*

The overview is based on an assessment of paratextual elements in the *HA*: book titles (in the form of their modern abbreviations) and subjects of the books, authors' names and dedicatees. The numbering of the books,[45] as well as the reigning years and abbreviations are part of editorial activity and literary analysis from later times (see on this § 1.3.6). All the items mentioned will be assessed in the next chapters: the tripartite struture of the *HA* and the models and sources used within the narrative.

2.2   Structure

Ever since the contributions by Dessau and Mommsen to the debate about the *HA* in 1889-90, the books mentioned in figure 2.1 are traditionally divided into three parts: the first part containing the Primary and Secondary lives (abbreviated, when taken as a group, as PL and SL), the second the Intermediary Lives (IL) and the third the Later Lives (LL). The Earlier Lives (EL) are the sum of PL and SL. There are good reasons to divide the heterogenous collection of lives in this fashion, and the division is widely accepted. Before turning our attention to the consequences that this division has for our investigation of the *HA*, the reasons for the division will be mapped, as they are important arguments undershoring our conclusions about the structure of the *HA*.[46]

    To begin with, let us have a look at the distribution of the different books over its three sections, taking as our point of departure Chastagnol's lists (1994, XXVI-XLVI):

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[44] The addressee in Hohl 1965, 150 ad *Aur.* 1.9: *Mi Pi*<ni>*ane*, though, as postulated in my 2007 paper (Burgersdijk 2007, 104), *Tiberiane* is the better option, cf. Peter 1884 ad loc.: *parui Tiberiani* and Syme 1968, 92-3, who expected the vita to be dedicated to Tiberianus, but 'the author dispels that notion, or abruptly changes his mind. Somebody else is addressed'. Cf. Pausch 2009, 5n22.

[45] In studies on the *HA*, it is not usual to refer to the books by their numbers, though in some listings, such as Lécrivain 1904, 16-7 and Paschoud 1996, XXIX such numbering appears.

[46] Research with regard to structure is summarized by Chastagnol (1994, XXXVI-XLVI) and Fündling (2007, 9-11).

First part		Second part		Third part
PL	**SL**	**IL**		**LL**
H	Ael.			
AP		OM		Val.
MA		Dd.		Gall.
V	AC	Hel.		T
C		AS	*lacuna*	Cl.
P		Max.		Aur.
DI		Gd.		Tac.
S	PN	MB		Pr.
	ClA			Q
Cc.	G			Car.

Figure 2.2: *The division of the books of the* HA *in three parts:* (1) *PL and SL,* (2) *IL* (3) *and LL.*

In the first fourteen lives of *HA* (the series running from *H* to *G*) there is a clear division between lives of *Augusti* (Hadrian, Antoninus Pius, Marcus Aurelius, Verus, Commodus, Pertinax, Didius Iulianus, Septimius Severus, Caracalla) on one hand and co-regents or *Caesares* (Aelius and Geta) and pretenders (Avidius Cassius, Pescennius Niger, Clodius Albinus) on the other. It is the explicit intention of its author to describe *non solum eos, qui principum locum (…) retentarunt (…), sed illos etiam, qui vel Caesarum nomine appellati sunt nec principes aut Augusti fuerunt vel quolibet alio genere in spem principatus venerunt* (*Ael.* 1.1), showing that he already makes a division between Augusti and co-regents as well as pretenders. The division is also clear in the literary quality of the lives and the historical reliability of their contents. The lives of the first nine Augusti are considered to be the best part of the *HA* in both respects. *OM* and *Dd.*, the fifteenth and sixteenth biographies, occupy a special place in the discussion of how the two groups relate to each other. In the next paragraphs I will discuss in chronological order the different points of view that have been brought forward to bear on this matter.

2.2.1 The Part of the Primary and Secondary Lives

Some of the lives in EL are dedicated to Diocletian, with the exception of the Secondary Lives *ClA* and *G*, and with the addition of *OM*. This is why Mommsen (1890, 246) styled the lives up to *Dd.* the 'diocletianische Reihe'[47] on the understanding that they were written during his reign.[48] In the same article he speaks about 'primäre' and 'secundäre' biographies. It had at that time been recognized that the information in the so-called Nebenviten (or 'secundäre Biographien') was derived from the Hauptviten (or 'primäre

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[47] Dedications are wanting in *H*, *AP*, *C*, *P*, *DJ*, *Cc*. The exceptions within this series are *ClA* and *G*, which are dedicated to Constantine.

[48] Mommsen (1890, 246) divided the secondary lives into three groups: co-regents (*V*, *G*), *Caesares* (*Ael., Dd*) and pretenders (*AC*, *PN*, *ClA*). Note that Mommsen includes *OM* and *Dd.* in the earlier lives and excludes *V* from the primary lives, both categorizations later corrected by Barnes 1967, 65 and Syme 1971, 57.

Biographien') and supplemented by falsifications.[49] Dessau's hypothesis that the entire *HA* was composed by a single author stood on its head the orthodox view that the lives had been written in a collaborative effort by different authors (as the manuscripts themselves indicated, after all). For Mommsen the book of *OM*, however, is already a foreign body in his 'diocletianische Reihe', as it is full of fictitious elements. An example that he mentions is Macrinus's letter to the senate (see § 6.3). The distinct character of *OM* in the part of primary biographies leads him to remark that the biography could also be ranked with the 'maximinisch-gordianische Gruppe', which, like *OM*, also uses a Greek source. In spite of Dessau's appraisal of the elusive character of the dedications, Mommsen still hung onto their authenticity and used them as an argument to order the biographies: 'Die Widmung an Diocletian indess steht entgegen; und viel kommt überhaupt nicht darauf an.'[50]

In the following decades, Mommsen's grouping became the standard, as seen, for instance, in a monograph by Lécrivain (1904), who modelled the chapters in his work on Mommsen's categories.[51] The dividing line between the first and second parts, which Mommsen posited after *OM* and *Dd.*, was shifted by Syme to the the beginning of *OM*. As pointed out in § 1.1, Syme characterises the author not as a *Fälscher*, but a 'rogue scholar', 'impostor' and 'farceur',[52] whose chief aim was to delude his public. 'The miserable *Macrinus* is in fact to be estimated one of the prime documents for the understanding of the *HA*, structure as well as authorship', Syme declared (1971, 58). What then does *OM* reveal? The change in literary quality after *Cc.*, noticed by many scholars, including Mommsen and Klebs, seems to indicate that the author could no longer rely on the sources that he had been using up to this point, whereafter he availed himself of a Greek source (Herodian), used some historical information from *Cc.* and, for the rest, mainly gave free rein to his imagination. In this view, the turning-point is marked by the appearance of a long programmatic preface (*OM* 1.1-5) and various kinds of fabrication (such as speeches, letters and poems). Prefaces are a regular feature in the

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[49] Klebs 1890, 437n4. Klebs himself showed the dependance of *AC* from *MA*, in 1888, just one year before Dessau's contribution in *Hermes* 24, for *AC*, after which he firmly rejected Dessau's theory on a single authorship. Mommsen also demonstrated *AC*'s dependence on *MA* (1890, 246-7) and *PN*'s dependence on *S* (1890, 248-9), and conjectured *Dd*'s dependence on *OM*.

[50] 'Darauf', viz. to which group the *OM* should be reckoned; Mommsen 1890, 251n1. In the same year, Klebs (1890, 436-64) protested against the concessions that Mommsen had made to Dessau's hypothesis concerning the authorship and related themes of the *HA*. Klebs denies the exceptional character of *OM* in the first series of biographies: in his view, it is true that the *OM* lacks the sort of information that earlier lives in the series provide (such as Macrinus' background, 1890, 457n2). However, he allows that for the standard information which *OM* contains (documents from the senate, verses, anecdotes) two sources could be indicated: Herodian and the *KG*. If the secondary vita *Dd.* were more indebted to these sources than *OM*, this would show up Mommsen's theory that the secondary vitae (*i.c. Dd*) derive their information from the primary ones (*i.c. OM*). Klebs argues that Mommsen's notion that *OM* differs from the first series of biographies does not so much indicate any exceptional status of *OM* as prove him, Mommsen, to be wrong.

[51] Lécrivain, 1904, 1-5: 'préface' and 447-52: 'table des matières'. Lécrivain questions the existence of the four authors for the primary lives, and proposes that there were no more than two. The unreliable Secondary Lives are held to have been written by the same author who wrote the lives *Hel.-MB* and felt it necessary to supplement them with the lives of *tyranni* (*ClA* and *G* are, like the lives in *Hel.*, dedicated to Diocletian). Another indication of less than four authors is the use of Herodian as a source, which already occurred in the secondary life of *ClA* (1.2, 12.14) but was extensively applied in *OM*, which at the time was still regarded as one of the early lives (1904, 182-90).

[52] Syme 1971,13; 1971, 14; 1971, 10 respectively.

Secondary Lives, and so are fabrications, but not in the quantity in which they appear in *OM*. This was the starting-point for theories about the construction of the *HA*. In Syme's work the discussion about the structure of the *HA* became inextricably bound up with the question of sources. On the basis of the literary devices encountered in *OM* especially, Syme proposed the existence of an unknown source for the Primary *vitae*, whom he styled 'Ignotus'.[53] This unknown author supposedly compiled the 'Nine Vitae' (*H*, *AP*, *MA*, *V*[54], *C*, *P*, *DJ*, *S*, *Cc*), while staying close to his source for the factual information and supplementing them with his own fabrications. The chief aim of the author of the *HA* was to compose the Secondary Lives to complement the Primary Lives, a venture through which he sought to establish the originality of the work. This resulted in biographies of a Caesar (*Ael.*), a prince (*G*[55]) and three pretenders (*AC*, *PN*, *ClA*), all linked to compilations on the real Augusti.[56]

The author exercised his imaginative faculties fully when he came to write *OM*. The devices on whose basis Syme (1971, 49) stated that 'a line can be drawn between the *Caracalla* and the *Macrinus*[57] are the programmatic preface,[58] the brief remarks about the accession of the new ruler,[59] the interpolated disquisition on the name of 'Antoninus' for Macrinus's son Diadumenian (2.5-3.9, see § 5.4 of this study), the passage (4.2) in which the words of an '*Aurelius Victor cui Pinio cognomen erat*' are quoted,[60] the employment of a Greek source for the first time,[61] the bad structure of *OM* in general, and new types of fabrication.[62] On these grounds, Syme (1971, 58) argues that *OM* is in line with the Secondary Lives, which also seems correct when its content is taken into consideration, as Macrinus is in many respects treated as a tyrant.[63] The long-established insight that the Secondary Lives are inferior in terms of historical and literary quality, was confirmed by Syme (1971, 67): 'the 'Nebenviten' disclose a literary personality – and a progression in the art of fraudulence. On sundry signs and symptoms they also look forward to the later *vitae*'.[64]

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[53] In Syme's own view (1971, 49), the idea of a sort of 'Ignotus' was already postulated by Lécrivain (1904, 191-2), but in too brief a fashion as to be noticed by scholars of his time. Lécrivain proposed as a source an unknown biographer who went so far as to include Macrinus.

[54] In *V* fabrications are absent and there is no reason why it should be excluded from the series of nine lives. As Verus was an Augustus reigning for eight years, it is highly probable that his biography was part of Ignotus' work: Barnes 1967, 65 and Syme 1971, 32-3.

[55] The author denies the fact that Geta was an actual Augustus (see Kienast 1996, 166).

[56] 'The primary lives were the secondary concern of the author', so Syme states (1971, 70n1), and: 'To supply their biographies {viz. of the pretenders} was one of the impostor's avowed claim to originality' (1971, 33).

[57] Or (1971, 57): 'The *Macrinus* proclaims a break with what went before: composition as well as accuracy. It is diffuse as well as careless and cynical. In fact, longer for a brief reign than the *Vita Caracallae*, where the author, tired with the task of compiling, compresses six years ruthlessly.'

[58] 'Variously instructive and permitting sundry suspicions' (1971, 51)

[59] *OM* 2.1: *Opilius Macrinus...imperium arripuit*, whereas the early lives provide precise information about the background of the emperors. This was noted earlier by Mommsen and Klebs (see above).

[60] This man may well be a 'bogus character', whose name is derived from the historian who was *praefectus urbi* in 389 (Syme 1971, 50); see also § 6.4.4. Another bogus authority is found in the preface: Iunius Cordus (1971, 51 and § 3.2.1-2).

[61] Herodian (for *OM* 8.3-10.3), whereas the early lives have 'Ignotus' as a source.

[62] The letter to the senate (*OM* 6.2-9), verses (*OM* 11.4, 14.2), a quotation from Vergil (*OM* 12.9).

[63] Den Hengst 1981, 51 and 57n24.

[64] Hohl, E. *Klio* 11 (1911) 318 sqq.

2.2.2 The Parts of the Intermediary and Later Lives

Having established the location of the most conspicuous break in the structure of the books between the EL and the following sections, we can now take the second part into consideration, briefly: the lives from *OM* to *MB*. Compared to the EL and LL, this section stands out by its heterogenous character. As was noted above, the structure of *OM* and *Dd*. should be linked with PL and SL in the first part of *HA*, while with regard to sources and content they are similar to the lives that follow. The next two lives, *Hel.* and *AS* are each other's counterparts: while Elagabalus was allegedly the worst ruler who ever reigned (see § 5.5.1), Alexander is presented as an ideal ruler. After these inextricably interwoven biographies, the author changes over to a new plan (see § 4.3): he begins to combine sets of rulers in one book (*Gd.*, *Max.*, *MB*). This makes the books of the Intermediary Lives very unequal in stucture, as a result of their varying length and internal division, not to mention the different relationships between the biographies.

It is in the seven Intermediary Lives that we encounter the transition from the earlier individual lives to combined lives. Between IL and the series bearing the names of Trebellius Pollio and Vopiscus there is a lacuna. Here the lives of the emperors Philippus Arabs and his son (244-9), Decius and his son Hostilian (249-51), Trebonianus Gallus and Volusienus (251-3) and Aemilian (253) and the beginning of the life of Valerian (253-260) are lacking. If these lives ever existed (a question which will be addressed below, § 3.7), it would seem logical that these, too, constituted books in which the lives of more than one emperors were combined, as those both before (*MB*) and after (*Gall.*) each include two.

IL is separated from LL by a *lacuna*. The lives from *Val.* to *Car.* (LL) are more homogeneous in terms of style and structure than the earlier parts. The combining of lives continues, except those of *Cl.*, *Aur.*, *Tac.* and *Pr.*, although in two cases these also contain more than a single person as subject of their narration.[65] The tendency to combine lives is intensified: there is even a joint biography of thirty pretenders (*T*), while we further encounter one that deals with four rivals (*Q*)[66] and another that combines father Carus and his sons Carinus and Numerian (*Car.*), which concludes the *HA*. The nine books in this section are attributed, in two blocks, to Trebellius Pollio (*Val.* – *Cl.*) and Flavius Vopiscus (*A* – *Car.*).

In conclusion, the internal division of the three sections involved is very uneven: the first part consists of fourteen books, divided into nine Primary Lives and five Secondary Lives, whereas the other two are divided into seven and nine books respectively. In the final section the author tends to assemble several emperors in one

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[65] The author states that he will treat the greater emperors in separate lives, and the book titles similarly indicate single lives (*Max.* 1.3: *Quod quidem non in uno tantum libro sed etiam in plurimis deinceps reservabo, exceptis magnis imperatoribus, quorum res gestae plures atque clariores longiorem desiderant textum*). Yet, in *T* 31.7 he admits to more lives in the book of Cl.: *de quo speciale mihi volumen quamvis breve merito vitae illius videtur edendum addito fratre singulari viro* (sc. Quintillus, *Cl.* 12.3-6), and to the life of Tacitus he added his brother Florian (*Tac.*14.1-5). These statements are hardly in line with his actual practice , though admittedly the two brothers to the emperor are treated very superficially only.

[66] The first of whom, Firmus, is possibly fictitious, see Chastagnol 1970, 90 and 1994, 1107; Paschoud 2001, 204-7. Chastagnol reveals that this character shares some traits with the usurper Firmus under Valentinian I, about whom see Drijvers 2007, 129-55. For the literary aspects of the *vita*: Poignault 2001, 251-68. Fictitous tyrants: Paschoud 1997b, 87-98.

book, whereas in the first part emperors and co-emperors or rivals are dealt with separately. In § 4.3, I will define this phenomenon as a development from an analytical to a synthetical structure, and explain the reasons for this. The break between these two phases is found between *AS* and *Max.*, immediately after the first half of the narration.[67]

2.3   Models

In the dramatic setting of the preface to *A*, the author (under his *nom de plume* Flavius Vopiscus Syracusius) states that some famous historiographers of the past, Livy, Sallust, Cornelius Tacitus and Pompeius Trogus[68], trifled with history, whereupon the person he is speaking to, Tiberian, states that the author can write the way he likes, *habiturus mendaciorum comites, quos historicae eloquentiae miramur auctores*. The author at least borrowed phrases from two of these *mendaciorum comites* in some passages as models for his work, Sallust and Livy (below, § 2.3.2). In the next paragraphs, the intertextual relationships with the authors that the author of the *HA* took as his models and sources will be investigated.

The main model of the *HA* was Suetonius, who introduced the concept of writing the lives of the successive emperors in Latin literature. His successor Marius Maximus, whose work is known only through quotations in the *HA*, is used not only as model, but also as a source for the lives of the emperors from at least Hadrian to Alexander Severus.[69] When we look at the sum of this small pool of models on a stylistic as well as a structural level and going by the era described in their works, we have two historiographers from republican times, one biographer for the first twelve emperors and his successor for those of the second and early third centuries. These biographers and historiographers, however, are certainly not the only ones whom the author took as his models: they all have their counterparts for the eras described. The republican biographer and initiator of Latin biography was Cornelius Nepos, whom the author never mentions.[70] Suetonius' historiographical counterpart was Cornelius Tacitus, mentioned three times (*A* 1.9, *Tac*.10.3, *Pr*. 2.7).[71] Marius Maximus had numerous colleagues in historiography,

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[67] The part *H-AS* contains 55 percent of the narration, the part *Max.-Car*. 45 percent

[68] For Trogus (rediscovered in the late fourth century) as the author's 'equipollent', see Syme 1968, 109-10.

[69] Barnes (1967, 66n11) denies that the author used Marius Maximus as a source for *AS*.

[70] Which in itself does not give cause to single out Nepos as a model, as it is not unusual in classical literature to conceal sources, see e.g. the absence of explicit references to Livy, Tacitus and Gellius in Ammianus (Kelly 2008, 183). Kelly (2008, 184n78) rightly notes that 'the *Historia Augusta* might be a good place to look for deliberate concealment of allusions.' Examples of authors used but not mentioned are Apicius (Chastagnol 1994, LXXXVI) and Juvenal (*ibid*.), and, naturally, contemporary authors such as Ausonius, Jerome and Claudian (Chastagnol 1994, LXXXVI) and others, see § 2.3.2.

[71] Tacitus was known as an author of imperial history from the later fourth century onwards, as attested by Sulpicius Severus, Jerome (*Ad Zachar*. 3.14, see below), and later Orosius and others: the partly outdated article by Haverfield 1916, 196-201 (placing the time of writing of the *HA*, after Mommsen, in 306 AD) gives an overview of authors who may have known Tacitus: especially in the fifth century AD Tacitus is increasingly referred to. Numerous echoes of Tacitus in Ammianus have been indicated, though Kelly 2008, 177-8 shows the difficulty of unambiguous allusions in Ammianus (2008, 177-9. To Kelly's list (178n56) Fletcher, *RPh* 63 (1937) 389-92 could be added). Hohl 1911, 290 ff. and Hartke 1951, 401 attempted to trace Tacitus in the *HA*, which met with scepsis on Syme's part (1968, 9 and 189). Baldwin (1980) states that Tacitus was not unknown to the centuries preceding the *HA* by indicating a parallel with the anonymous Panegyricus of 310 AD (*Pan. Lat.* 7.3.9 ~ Tac. *Agr.* 12.3-4).

Greek as well as Latin, among whom are Cassius Dio and Herodian, the former never mentioned, the latter at least ten times.

With the exception of Maximus, large tracts of these authors' works have been transmitted to modern times, which makes a comparison possible. Two authors, completing our picture of possible models, but neglected in the investigation of intertextual relationships, are Nepos and Tacitus. The case for either of these authors is different: Nepos may have served as an example, as he introduced biography in Latin literature, with its peculiar idiom and use of *topoi*. The transmitted works are mainly about Greek generals, two short biographies of Atticus and Cato and a fragment of a letter by Cornelia, mother of the Gracchi, which makes that the contents of these works hardly invite comparison with the *HA*. For Tacitus, things are different: the author of the *HA* is certainly interested in imperial history and mentions him explicitly. Two factors complicate the comparison: attempts to identify Tacitus in the *HA* have been made, but never with full success.[72] Tacitus appears to be hard to detect in late classical literature, apart from Ammianus, who states that he started where Tacitus left off (*a principatu Caesaris Nervae exorsus*, *RG* 31.16.9).[73] Jerome knew of Tacitus' works, but, according to Syme (1968, 9), never read him.[74] Still, the story of the emperor Tacitus, who ordered the works of his namesake to be placed in all libraries and ten manuscripts of his works to be copied for all libraries and archives every year, is tantalising.[75] It looks as if the author was concerned about the survival of Tacitus' works and projected his worries onto the similarly named emperor, *ne incuria lectorum deperiret*.[76]

This study will pay special attention to the imitation of the works of Nepos and Tacitus, however odd it may seem for these stylistically opposed authors to be mentioned in one breath. Still, both may have left their marks in the text of the *HA*. The author of the *HA* must have been an antiquarian and a collector, 'maybe a librarian', and does not seem to worry about the reputations of these literary antipodes. To degrade Livy, Tacitus and Sallust to a status of historiographical rabble is typical of the author's lack of respect, just as is his complete silence about Cornelius Nepos, in contrast to Suetonius,[77] who is repeatedly praised for his work. The author of the *HA* differs from Suetonius through his extensive use of paratextual devices. Therefore, an inventory of this part of the transmitted text will be made, to be used in the analysis of Nepos as a literary model.

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[72] Chastagnol 1994, LXXXII about Tacitus : 'très peu utilisé, sinon jamais'.

[73] The indices in the commentaries by Den Boeft et al. (in the bibliography the commentary on book 26 is quoted) each show several parallels with and direct derivations from Tacitus.

[74] Jerome, *Comm. Ad Zach.* 3.14: *qui post Augustum usque ad mortem Domitiani vitas Caesarum triginta volumina exaravit*. In the monumental work by Hagendahl, *Latin fathers and the Classics* (1958), Tacitus is not named under the entry of Jerome.

[75] *Tac.* 10.3: *Cornelium Tacitum, scriptorem historiae Augustae, quod parentem suum eundem diceret, in omnibus bibliothecis conlocari iussit. ne lectorum incuria deperiret, librum per annos singulos decies scribi publicitus in evicos archiis iussit et in bybliothecis poni*. Chastagnol (1994, LXXXII) apparently understands an elliptic *statuas* or *imagines* (bustes) with *conlocari iussit*, though on p.1047 he translates: 'il fit placer…les ouvrages de Cornélius Tacitus'.

[76] Zecchini 1991, 337-50; Velaza 1994, 241-53 in an evaluation of all the discovered parallels (e.g. Schwartz 1992, 251-3) about the use of Tacitus by the author of the *HA* ('les traces de Tacite sont trop faibles pour en extraire une conclusion définitive').

[77] Suetonius is mentioned five times in the *HA*: *H* 11.3 (as a historical person), *C* 10.2; *MB* 4.5; *Pr*. 2.7; *Q* 1.1-2.

2.3.1 Cornelius Nepos

The collection of books which constitute the *HA* seems at first glance a unique construction in the history of Latin literature.[78] Nevertheless, parts of the irregular structure are not without their antecedents in other works of a similar kind. The problem is that only a limited corpus of Latin biographical literature has come down from antiquity.[79] Nepos was the first Latin author to write individual biographies in their own right,[80] but references to the work of this biographer have so far been absent in publications on the *HA*. By its contents the *HA* is evidently linked more closely to Suetonius's *De Vita Caesarum* (*DVC*) than to Nepos's *De Viris Illustribus* (*DVI*) about great men from Greek and republican times. Apart from the question whether the author of the *HA* knew or imitated the work of Nepos, the position of the *HA* in the tradition of biographical literature needs some attention in order to identify *topoi*, vocabulary, language and structure that may be typical of biography. Leo (1901) was the first scholar to study the structure of biographies by Nepos, Suetonius and the *HA* in one book, dealing with the history of Greek and Roman biography, in which he stressed the dependence of some of the lives of the *HA* on Suetonius. That the author of the *HA* knew Suetonius's biographies is evident through the numerous borrowings from his *vitae*.[81] In the next chapter, I will give evidence of Nepos' presence in the *HA*, namely in the programmatic remarks that accompany the comments on the structure of the books. For this, a brief introduction, focussing on the paratextual elements, to this uncited author in *HA* studies may be helpful,.[82]

Nepos' *De excellentibus ducibus exterarum gentium*, written in the second half of the first century BC, is the only surviving complete book of the larger work *De Viris Illustribus*, in which the lives and characters of probably eight groups of famous men (such as kings, politicians, philosophers, grammarians, *etc*.) were described.[83] *De excellentibus ducibus*, preceded by a preface, contains the lives of nineteen Greek generals and one Carian, followed by twenty-two kings who were also generals and are found combined in one book (*Reges*). Then follow a twenty-second and twenty-third

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[78] As confirmed by Syme 1971, 54: 'Nature in all her freaks and sports never brought forth anything like the *HA*. It is a monster' and 1971b, 9: 'From an inspection of the *HA*, the first reaction can only be bewilderment or alarm. The thing is portentuous, unexampled, unexplained: a *monstrum horrendum informe ingens, cui lumen ademptum*'. The words are reminiscent of Mommsen's disapproving remark (1890, 229) that 'diese Biographien eine der elendesten Sudeleien sind, die wir aus dem Alterthum haben.'
[79] Greek biographies are better represented in the corpus of classical literature, with authors such as Diogenes Laërtius and Plutarchus. Their works are hardly taken into consideration in the present investigation of the Latin models of the *HA*, but connections with Greek literature are certainly worth investigating, for example with regard to the use of *topoi* – though its author seems not to be familiar with the Greek classics (Syme 1968, 191). Nepos based his *De excellentibus ducibus exterarum gentium* on Greek sources and thereby followed the conventions of Greek historiographical or biographical texts, which may have been the author's source for his biographical material and Greek history. For a survey of classical biographical literature, see Sonnabend 2002.
[80] Not counting the illustrated lexicon of persons by Varro: *Imagines* (Sonnabend 2002, 103-6).
[81] Borrowings in the *HA* are discussed by Klebs 1892, 26-9; Leo 1901, 273-5; Hönn 1911, 185-92; Bird 1971, 129-34; Chastagnol 1970, 109-23; 1994, lxxxiv; Den Hengst 1981, *passim*; Fündling 2007, 158-63.
[82] A recent monograph on Nepos is Anselm 2004, who explains the artful structure of the books.
[83] As reconstructed by several scholars. For an overview and problems in research see: Toher 2002. The textual transmission of Nepos' works is treated in Malcovati 1934; Marshall 1977; Burgersdijk 2007, 65-78.

book about the Carthaginian generals Hamilcar and Hannibal. The irregular elements in the series of nineteen Greek generals (the three foreigners Datames, Hasdrubal and Hannibal, and the collective book of *Reges*) are all explained in programmatic statements. First of all, Datames is introduced at the end of *Timoth.* (3.4-4.6): *Venio nunc ad fortissimum virum maximique consilii omnium barbarorum, exceptis duobus Karthaginiensibus, Hamilcare et Hannibale. De quo hoc plura referemus, quod et obscuriora sunt eius gesta pleraque et ea, quae prospere ei cesserunt, non magnitudine copiarum, sed consilii, quo tum omnes superabat, acciderunt: quorum nisi ratio explicata fuerit, res apparere non poterunt.* The 'Carian exception' is made because his deeds are less known (*obscuriora*) but his qualities excellent. In the introduction to the first exception in the series of Greek generals, made at the end of the preceeding biography, the 'Carthaginian' exceptions at the end of the whole series are already announced.[84] *Reges* ends with a justification for the addition of *Ham.* and *Han.* (3.5): *De quibus quoniam satis dictum putamus, non incommodum videtur non praeterire Hamilcarem et Hannibalem, quos et animi magnitudine et calliditate omnes in Africa natos praestitisse constat.* The series of twenty-three biographies is closed by the following formula (*Hann.*13.4): *Sed nos tempus est huius libri facere finem et Romanorum explicare imperatores, quo facilius collatis utrorumque factis, qui viri praeferendi sint, possit iudicari.* Thus, *De ducibus exterarum gentium* has become a work of irregular structure: nineteen books about Greek generals, supplemented by one about a Carian, followed by a collection of kings who were also generals in one book, and rounded off with two Carthaginian generals. It should be kept in mind that the irregular collection of short biographies described here is itself part of a much larger collection of other *viri illustres*, now lost.

Apart from the programmatic statements that serve to add coherence to the series, Nepos also comments on the nature of his work. First, in his preface, in which the central theme in the work is mentioned, namely the cultural differences between Greeks and Romans. Second, in the preface to Epaminondas, in which the theme of cultural differences is repeated and the *dispositio* of the material is explained[85]. Third, in this same biography the narration is interrupted by a programmatic remark about the whole work: *Epam.* 4.6: *Plurima quidem proferre possimus, sed modus adhibendus est, quoniam uno hoc volumine vitam excellentium virorum complurium concludere constituimus, quorum res separatim multis milibus versuum complures scriptores ante nos explicarunt.* Nepos speaks of the description of more excellent men *in one volume* (by which *De excellentibus ducibus* is meant), while other authors describe their deeds

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[84] The addition of three non-Greeks to a collection of Greek generals, probably paired with a collection of Roman generals, has raised questions about the nature, design and genesis of Nepos' total series of *DVI*. Some scholars have supposed that Nepos' works were edited in several redactions (e.g. Leo 1901, 195), but nowadays a second redaction is widely rejected (see Toher 2002, 147, who enters deeply into the various aspects of the question about one or more editions. One of his arguments is that *edita* in *Att.* 19.1 has to be interpreted as 'read', not 'published').

[85] *Epam.* 1.3-4: *cum autem exprimere imaginem consuetudinis atque vitae velimus Epaminondae, nihil videmur debere praetermittere, quod pertineat ad eam declarandam. Quare dicemus primum de genere eius, deinde quibus diciplinis et a quibus sit eruditus, tum de moribus ingeniique facultatibus et si qua alia memoria digna erunt, postremo de rebus gestis, quae a plurimis animi anteponuntur virtutibus.*

separatim, individually.[86] Fourth, in the frequently cited first sentences of *Pel.* about the differences between historiography and biography[87]. Apart from a general preface (*praefatio* 1-8), Nepos adds intermediary prefaces, characterised by programmatic statements about the purpose and contents of the book and the organization of its material and other (topical) matters: *Epaminondas* (15.1.1-4), *Pelopidas* (16.1.1) and *Reges* (21.1.1). There is also a programmatic digression within the texts of *Epaminondas* (15.4.6). *Timoleon* (13.4.4-5) and *Hannibal* (12.4) have postscripts.

Our brief overview of paratextual elements in Nepos will help to better assess the paratextual devices in the *HA*. Many issues relating to the problematic nature of Nepos' works have not been treated, such as their significance for the introduction of Greek biography in Roman letters, the distinction made between Roman and foreign *viri illustres*, not to mention the distinction between historiography and biography. Due to scanty evidence in the biographical text genre, the questions are often too complex to be treated in a nutshell. The main thing to keep in mind from our summary are Nepos' ways of justifying the overall design of his irregular work, by explaining its *dispositio*, the combination of more than one persons in a book, the differences between historiography and biography, and the introduction of a leitmotiv.

2.3.2 Other Models

In the history of *HA* studies, imitations and echoes of many authors, from the republican and imperial periods, have been detected. Inventories have been made of the authors underlying the text of the *HA*, most recently by Fündling 2006. The resulting picture is one of an author who was an avid reader of every kind of literature that he got hold of, though not everyone shares the idea that he was an erudite scholar.[88] Hohl described him as a not very gifted grammarian, belonging to a *plebeia grammaticorum cohors*.[89] Syme portrays the author, in an assessment of his literary milieu, as a 'scholiast', a 'scholar', a

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[86] For *separatim* also see Nepos *Cato* 3.5. Moles (1989, 231) rightly analyses *separatim* as 'the implication that Nepos is contrasting his own practice of including *many* biographies within a *single* volume with his predecessors' practice of producing *single* biographies of *great length*'. See Anselm 2004, 47 and 53 for Nepos' historiographical method.

[87] *Pel.* 1.1: *cuius de virtutibus dubito quem ad modum exponam, quod vereor, si res explicare incipiam, ne non <u>vitam</u> eius enarrare, sed <u>historiam</u> videar scribere: si tantummmodo summas attigero, ne rudibus Graecarum litterarum minus dilucide appareat, quantus fuerit ille vir. Itaque utrique rei occurram, quantum potuero, et medebor cum satietati tum ignorantiae lectorum.* The key-words are *vitam* and *historiam*: by using these two terms, Nepos seems to make a distinction between the two types of text (Anselm 2004, 54-5). On this point Momigliano 1971, 98-9 (Nepos) and 1968/69, 423-36 and 1969, 286 (*HA*) only hesitatingly accepts a Roman awareness of the distinction, while Syme 1971b, 25-33 shows that there cannot be any doubt that the author of the *HA* clearly distinguishes between the two (which is indeed evident, see § 3.2). Cf. Plut. *Alex.* 1.1-2: οὔτε γὰρ <u>ἱστορίας</u> γράφομεν, ἀλλὰ <u>βίους</u>.

[88] Den Hengst 1991 considers the author's knowledge of the *quadriga* of canonical authors in classical education: Cicero, Vergil, Sallust, Terence. The outcome is that the author was not particularly versed in these authors.

[89] Hohl (1920, 302 sqq. and 308), who is not very enthousiastic about the literary quality of the *HA* or impressed by the learning of its author: 'Der Mann, der sich für Grammatiker und Rhetoren und deren Schriften (…) besonders interessiert, muss selbst mit seinem Wissen und Scheinwissen der *cohors grammaticorum* zugerechnet werden.'

'librarian', a 'grammarian', a 'literary personality', and more,[90] and has expressed the desirability of reconstructing his library at several occasions. That virtual library has grown in the past few decades. The presence of many authors from classical times has been detected; the following are the most important:

- Cicero:[91] mentioned twenty times, though imitated and followed much more (Fündling 2006, 153: 'etwa vierzig leicht veränderte Zitate'), especially his speeches.
- Sallust:[92] one of the four *mendaciorum comites* (*A* 2.7), mentioned or followed at least seven times.
- Livy:[93] after Fündling's commentary, the number of references has grown to about twelve echoes from Livy, who, in late antiquity, was mainly available in excerpts. The revision of Livy's complete works was done by Symmachus and continued by Nicomachus Flavian's son and grandson (Syme 1968, 109) in the early fifth century.[94]
- Vergil:[95] the author's (and his comtemporaries') favourite source text for quotation among the poets of classical times, as Vergil has always been. The quotations are largely taken from Aeneis 6.808-886 (six times), and occur especially in SL (five times) and IL (six times); and another three times in LL.
- Suetonius:[96] the main model of the *HA*. Mentioned six times,[97] twice as an example of brevity of style and reliability of content, in contrast with the historiographers Livy, Sallust, Tacitus and Trogus (*Pr.* 2.7, *A* 2.1) and other biographers such as Iunius Cordus (*MB* 4.5). The moments when he occurs in the *HA* are 'quasiment innombrables' (Chastagnol 1994, LXXXIV). Comparisons have been made between the internal division of Suetonius' biography and that of the *HA*, mostly ending in the conclusion that the latter is often too irregular in structure as to indicate Suetonius as its normative model (especially Leo 1901, 273-5; Townend 1967, 84-6).

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[90] Syme 1968, 176-91. Syme (1968, 127): 'The *HA*, along with familiar items, exhibits pieces of rare and recondite erudition that betray the tastes and habits of a scholiast'; (1968, 183): 'the author is a scholar, devoted to the techniques of research. He likes libraries'; 'he frankly avows the professional interest of a grammarian'; (1968, 186): 'he has the tastes of a scholiast, and a librarian', *unus ex curiosis* (*Pr.* 2.8), (1968, 207): 'a literary personality, therefore, with habits and procedures that can be grasped and analysed', *etc.* .Chastagnol 1994, XCIX: 'Il nous apparaît comme un homme cultivé, proche du milieu des grammairiens et scoliastes (…). Mais, s'il connaissait bien les auteurs classiques, il était aussi tout à fait au courant des auteurs anciens revenus à la mode, révisés et recommentés par les lettrés très liés également au milieu sénatorial.' Brugisser (1998, 67) treats the author's attitude towards grammarians at the hand of the use of the word *clipeus* (*ClA* 3.3), and interprets this as mocking the grammarians' methods.

[91] Syme 1968, 127; Chastagnol 1994, LXXVII; Paschoud 1996, 329 and 2001, 417; Fündling 2006, 153.

[92] *H* 16.6; *S* 21.2, 21.10, 23.3 ; *MB* 7.7; *Q* 6.3. Syme 1968, 127-8 (adding *Cl*.5.4 ~ Sall. *Hist.* 1.55.2 to the list); Chastagnol 1994, LXXXI; Fündling 2006, 153.

[93] *H* 17.6; 25.1; *AP* 3.5; *P* 1.2; *ClA* 5.3; *OM* 7.2; *AS* 9.4, 50.5; 56.3-5; *Max.* 2.1; *A* 28.3; *Tac.* 1.5; Chastagnol 1994, LXXXII; Fündling 2006, 154

[94] On the revision of Livy, Sallust and other editing activities, see: Callu 1997, 83 and Velaza 1999, 291-300.

[95] *Ael.*4.1-3; *ClA* 5.2; 5.4; *PN* 8.3; 8.6; *OM* 12.9; *Dd.* 8.7; *AS* 4.6; 14.5; *Max.* 27.4; *Gd.* 20.5; *Cl.* 10.4; 10.6; *Car.* 13.3; Chastagnol 1994, LXXIX; Velaza 1996, 297-305; Fündling 2006, 153-4; Den Hengst 2004, 172-88.

[96] Klebs 1892, 26-9; Bird 1971, 129; Chastagnol 1972, 109-23; 1994, LXXXIV; Fündling 2006, 158-62.

[97] *H* 11.3; *C* 10.2; *MB* 4.5; *Pr.* 2.7; *Q* 1.1-2 (*Q* 1.1: *emendatissimus et candidissimus scriptor*).

- Juvenal:[98] never named in the *HA*, but imitated several times. Cameron (1964, 363) found seven allusions. In due course, more have been added to the list, also in order to explain the names of the fictitious biographer Iunius Cordus[99] and of (Iulius) Capitolinus and (Trebellius) Pollio.[100] Juvenal is also important because Ammianus Marcellinus names him in one breath with Marius Maximus (28.4.14) as light entertainment for the aristocracy; the passage bears witness to the revival of Juvenal in the second half of the fourth century.[101] It is a notable fact that Juvenal occurs in all parts of the *HA*, from EL to IL and LL and even in the names of authors: he proves to be an important model.

These were the authors of classical times followed most by the author of the *HA*. The focus in this study is on the classical legacy, though it must be kept in mind that early christian authors (Lactantius, Jerome), and contemporary pagan ones (Ausonius, Claudian, Ammianus Marcellinus)[102] are also echoed in the work. Greek authors have been detected to a far lesser extent, apart from their use as sources.

2.4　Sources

Considerable progress has been made in the past few decades in the discussion about the sources the author used for the construction of his work.[103] We will not venture to pursue this matter further, not even by providing a *status quaestionis*, though an inventory of the sources named in this study will be expedient.

2.4.1 Sources from the Third Century

The basic source of the Primary Lives,[104] as well as large tracts of the first part of the life of *Hel.* (1-18), is Marius Maximus, so *communis opinio* still holds.[105] Marius Maximus

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[98] *H* 16.3; 16.10; 17.1-3; 18.4; 21.3; *T* 29.1; *A* 50.4; *Tac.* 12.1; *Q* 8.3; Cameron 1964, 363-77; Syme 1971, 7; Schwartz 1966, 454-63; 1982, 634-44; Callu 1992, 10; Chastagnol 1994, LXXXVII-VIII; Fündling 2006, 158; See further Paschoud 1996, 332 and 2001, 424; Burgersdijk 2005, 150 on Juvenalian echoes in Zenobia's biography.

[99] Juvenal was also called Iunius, combined with *Sat.* 1.2: *rauci Theseide Cordi*: Syme (1968, 97n1). (Iulius) Capitolinus and (Trebellius) Pollio: Den Hengst 1981, 48-9, see further note 130.

[100] Den Hengst 1981, 48-9. Birley 2002, 33-47.

[101] Highet 1954, 184-6. Dessau (1918, 389-91) already pointed out a reference to Juvenal in *PN* 1.3: Aquinum, the origin of Pescennius' family, was Juvenal's residence (with the telling remark: *quod quidem dubium etiam nunc habetur*), to which fact Syme (1971, 7n5) drew attention.

[102] Lactantius: Chastagnol 1994, LXXXV; Hieronymus: XCIII-VII; Ausonius: LXXXVII-VIII; Claudianus: XCVII-IX (and 1970b, 444-63); Ammianus: LXXXIX-XC; Fündling 2006, 158-66.

[103] Barnes 1978 gives an analysis of the use of sources in the entire *HA*, supplemented by a contribution at the *Colloquium Maceratense* (Barnes 1995).

[104] Additional sources from the second century that were used to supplement the basic third century source may have been incidentally used, such as Hadrian's autobiography (Fündling 2006, 91-6) or Septimius Severus' autobiography (Chausson 1995, 183-9); for both: Chastagnol 1994, 10 and 306.

[105] As described by Schlumberger 1974, 124-33 and 1976, 210; *contra*: Barnes 1978, 98-102. Chastagnol 1994, LII-LIX (who gives the places of thirty-one quotations with reference to the life Marius Maximus is supposed to have written), Birley 1971, 308-26; 1995, 57-74; 1997 (in which all the relevant texts are quoted), Cameron 1971, 262-7; Bird 1999, 850-60; Fündling 2006, 97-111. Syme postulated as the main source for the primary lives (for which he used the term 'Nine Lives', 1971, 33) a 'good biographer' now lost, called *Ignotus* (cf. Benario 1997). This biographer provided the base for the compilations in the *HA*: *H*,

was *praefectus urbi* under Macrinus and consul under Alexander Severus.[106] He wrote a series of biographies of the emperos from Nerva to Elagabalus, which are postulated as Ausonius' source for the tetrasticha on the *Caesares* (see § 5.6). Ammianus bears witness to his popularity in the later fourth century (28.4.14). The main source for the content of his works is the *HA* itself, as thirty-two passages are referred to.

- From *OM*, the author of the *HA* starts to use the historiographer Herodian, Marius Maximus' contemporary, writing in the first half of the third century.[107] His works, in Greek and entirely transmitted, comprise the period from the death of Marcus Aurelius to the accession of Gordian III.[108] Herodian's report of Macrinus's fall and Elagabalus' rise is followed very closely (translated into Latin) in *OM* 8.1-10.2 (see § 5.3.1). His name occurs 10 times in the *HA*, and three times under the guise of Arrian.[109] Cassius Dio, just like Herodian a contemporary of Marius Maximus, wrote an extensive history of the Roman empire, which was transmitted in epitomes by Zonaras (up to AD 96) and Xiphilinus (96 AD to the reign of Alexander Severus). Only the period 69 BC-46 AD and parts of the reign of Macrinus (217-218) have been preserved.[110] The relations between Herodian, Cassius Dio and the *HA* were subject of a study by Kolb,[111] who detects several echoes in the *HA*. Chastagnol (1994, LXI) perceives an echo of Dio's work in *Dd*. 1.7 (~ Dio 78.20.2), which is interesting for our research in § 5.3.2.[112] In general, the use of Dio is contested (Barnes 1978, 109).

Dexippus, the Athenian aristocrat in the second half of the third century and author of historiographical works about the Scythian wars in the crisis of the empire and of a world history up to 270 AD. Dexippus serves as a source for the middle decades of the third century, from the reign of the Gordiani (238, the year where Herodian ended) to the accession of Aurelian. Dexippus is quoted 18 times under his own name.[113]

AP, *MA*, *V*, *C*, *P*, *DI*, *S*, *Cc*., which were added with aid of other sources, such as Marius Maximus, and supplemented with literary elements such as dedications and names of authors. Paschoud (1998, 241-54) called the existence of Marius Maximus into question. Studies about Marius Maximus that have reached a classic status are Müller 1870 and Barbieri 1954 (who preceded Syme and Barnes in denying that Marius Maximus was the main source).

[106] Fündling 2006, 98.

[107] Chastagnol 1994, LXI-LXIII

[108] G. Alföldy 1989, 240-69 on Herodian; Kolb 1972; more recent literature about Herodian in De Blois 2003, 148n1 and Hidber 2006 and 2007.

[109] Chastagnol 1994, LXII inventories the quotations (*ClA* 1.2; 12.14; *Dd*. 2.5; *AS* 52.2; 57.3; *Max*. 13.4; *MB* 15.3; 15.5; 16.5; *T* 32.1). Herodian is called Arrian three times (*Max*. 33.3; *Gd*. 2.1; *MB* 1.2), see for this question: Paschoud 1991, 220n10.

[110] Millar 1964, 1-4 and 160.

[111] Kolb 1972, further discussed in 1995, 179-91.

[112] In this study, I refer to the numbers of the books as given by the Loeb Classical Library, edited by Cary, which I especially employed for reason of his accurate notes. The standard edition by Boissevain deviates from these numbers by one digit.

[113] AS 49.3/5, Max. 32.3/5; 33.3; *Gd*. 2.1;9.6;19.9; 32.1; MB 1.2; 15.5; 16.3-6 (*quater*); *Gall*. 13.8; T 32.1; *Cl*.12.6. Millar 1969, 12-29; Syme 1971, 235-6; Barnes 1978, 60-4; 109-11; Paschoud 1991, 217-69; Chastagnol 1994, LXIV-VI; Brandt 1999, 169-81.

2.4.2 Sources from the Fourth Century

Apart from the three sources for the period before Alexander Severus' reign that were mentioned above, there are some sources from the fourth century, which will be mapped out insofar as they are relevant for the present research.

- Aurelius Victor finished his work in 360, entitled 'Caesares', in which the period from Augustus to Constantius II is treated.[114] Borrowings from Victor were detected by Dessau (1889, 363-7): *S* 17.5-19.4 ~ 20.1 and 20.10-30.[115] This provides a *terminus post quem* for the dating of the *HA*. Victor is used frequently, and in every part of the *HA*.[116] A namesake of this abbreviator occurs, surprisingly, in *OM* 4.2, as a senator uttering taunts against Macrinus, see chapter 6.4.4.

- Eutropius: Valens' *magister memoriae* who wrote a *Breviarium* about the beginning of the Roman empire up to the year 364, finished in 369-70.[117] Dessau (1889, 368-70) detected a tract of his work in the *MA* 16.3-18.2, which is an important base for our investigations about the *NA theme* in chapter 5.2.1. Just as is the case with Aurelius Victor, some of his reports are rendered as anonymous sources such as *multi* and *alii...alii...*[118]

- A common source for Victor's and Eutropius' *breviaria* and the *HA* was postulated by Enmann in 1884, hence the (*Enmannsche*) *Kaisergeschichte*, abbreviated as (*E*)*KG*, on the basis of the many parallel texts in the three works.[119] The *terminus ante quem* was 306 AD, the supposed date of origin of the *HA*. Dessau's thesis followed soon after in 1889, but the *EKG*-hypothesis survives until the present day, notwithstanding the fact that the questions have changed: on the basis of present knowledge, the *HA* could have used the *EKG*, Eutropius and Aurelius Victor, instead of the latter two using the *HA* as a source. This led to a shift of the postulated time of writing to 340 AD or even 350 AD.[120]

- Festus:[121] like Eutropius, he was Valens' *magister memoriae* and made a *Breviarium* published about 369 (again, like Eutropius). The use of this abbreviator by the author of the *HA*[122] is perceived only sparingly, but his work remains an important source for comparison in studies of the *HA*. Festus is supposed to have used the *KG*, just as Victor, Eutropius and the author of the *HA*. Furthermore, a namesake occurs in the speech mentioned above in *OM* 4 by a certain Aurelius Victor Pinius.

- Dating from a few decades after Victor, Eutropius and Festus, at the end of the fourth century, is the anonymous *Epitome de Caesaribus*,[123] which uses at least Victor's

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[114] I have used the edition by Dufraigne 1975; see for further echoes of Victor in the *HA*: Chastagnol 1994, LXVI-VIII, Fündling 2006, 135.

[115] For a bibliography: Chausson 1994, 97-113 (esp.98n2), to which Leo 1901 286-8n1 can be added.

[116] Chastagnol 1994, LXVIII; Fündling 2006, 135-6.

[117] Ed. J. Hellegouarc'h 1999.

[118] See Chastagnol 1994, LXIX and § 8.4 of this study; for a survey : Fündling 2006, 136-7 and a similar opinion about the use of *alii...alii...*: 148. Articles that treat the history of the discussion about the autor's use of Eutropius are Chastagnol (1968, 53-65) and Festy (1999, 121-33).

[119] Fündling 2006, 130-4.

[120] Barnes 1970, 16-20: after 337 AD; Burgess 1996, 90: 357 AD and Bleckmann 1994, 36: 350 AD

[121] Ed. J.W. Eadie 1967

[122] Chastagnol 1994, LXXI.

[123] Ed. Festy 1999. An important study is Schlumberger 1974.

Caesares as a source.[124] There are also many correspondences with the *HA*, which, however, can be explained by the use of a common source like Marius Maximus or other abbreviators, as Schlumberger argues.

In the present study, the above-mentioned sources will be referred to from time to time, whenever it is necessary to reconstruct the historical events or facts that the author needed for his narrative. The following principle should be kept in mind: as the *HA* is presented as the work of a group of six authors (guided by the authors' names with which the individual books are fitted out), written in the first half of the fourth century (to judge by the dedications to Diocletian, Constantine and others), the author never explicitly mentions sources dating from the period after 337, or otherwise his pretence would be impossible to keep up.[125] The earlier group of sources from the third century are sometimes referred to, whenever the author feels like it.

2.4.3 Alleged Sources

Whereas models serve as examples for the literary design of the *HA*, sources are there to provide historical information. The use of sources by the author of the *HA* is a vexed question, which belongs to the field of historical investigation. He comes up with several kind of sources, some of which are fictitious, while others do exist but are used as a cover for false information. In other cases again, reliable information is given, though the source is not mentioned or incorrect. All of this has been a major stumbling block for the exercise of source criticism. The problem of the existence of the works by Marius Maximus is an example of recent debate,[126] which illustrates the difficulty of applying source criticism to data provided by the author of the *HA* himself. Often, the fiction of an author's name is so obvious that the fictitious status of the source is beyond doubt. These 'bogus' sources belong to the field of literary research, though there is always the possibility that there is a real author or person hidden behind a fictitious name. Reference to 'bogus authors', as Syme styled the non-existing sources that the author of the *HA* mentions (1983, 98), is one of the most remarkable and characteristic phenomena in the *HA*. The bogus authors have been listed several times and there are various studies on their names.[127] They deal with such questions as the reason for a certain name, or the reliability of the source mentioned.

One can discern the following categories in the use of author's names and sources:
1) Historical names of historical authors, such as Livy, Sallust, Pompeius Trogus, Suetonius, Tacitus, Herodian, Dexippus, etc.
2) Historical names of historical authors, whose works mentioned by the *HA* may never have existed, like Gargilius Martialis' biography of Alexander Severus.

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[124] *Epit*. 1.11 follows Victor's *Caesares* closely: Fündling 2006, 146-8.
[125] As Chastagnol noted (1994, XCIX): 'il avait à sa disposition d' une façon ou de l'autre les oeuvres qui venaient de paraître, essentiellement en latin, et, s'il les utilisait, il ne donnait pas le nom des auteurs puisqu'il était censé écrire un siècle plus tôt.'
[126] Paschoud 1998, see above sub § 2.4.1.
[127] Peter 1906, clxxxviiii ff., Schanz-Hosius III 1922, 87-8; Syme 1971, 1-16 ('Bogus Names'); 1983, 98-108 ('Bogus Authors'); Burgersdijk 2007, 95-6n1.

3) Historical names of historical authors with a *cognomen* added, like Suetonius Optatianus (*Tac.* 11.7) or Aurelius Victor Pinius (*OM* 4.1) – though both authors are said to have lived in another era than the original possessors of the names.
4) Fictitious names, behind which an historical person or author hides, like Aurelius Verus (*AS* 48.6), Eusthenius (*Car.* 18.5), Lollius Urbicus (*Dd.* 9.2).[128]
5) Fictitious names of fictitious authors, like Iunius (or Aelius) Cordus,[129] Aurelius Festivus (*Max.*1.1), Tatius Cyrillus, Valerius Marcellinus, Curius Fortunatianus (*MB* 4.5) or Fabius Cyrillianus (Paschoud 2001, 340).
6) The *scriptores Historiae Augustae*, who are heteronyms of the redactor of the series: Aelius Spartianus, Julius Capitolinus, Aelius Lampridius, Vulcacius Gallicanus, Trebellius Pollio, Flavius Vopiscus.[130]
7) Unidentified non-historical sources or informants, referred to as *alii, nonnulli, quidam* ('some' or 'other' authors) and *multi, plerique, plures, plurimi* ('many' or 'most' authors).

This last category is by far the most numerous, yet surprisingly no study has ever been devoted to this group. Presumably, the names of the numerous fictitious sources have caused so much debate that the unnamed majority has hardly been taken into account. The first question to be asked is why the author introduces so many fictitious authors, anonymous or otherwise. In view of the great many sources cited, it is even doubtful whether he merely sought to use his fake sources in order to enhance the historical credibility of his narrative. The fraud is sometimes so obvious that one may ask if the names and sources are perhaps rather a matter of literary play. As a result, historical credibility comes to look like mockery on the part of the author, which may have been meant to be detected by the reader.[131] On the other hand, his mixture of real and fictitious sources may well be intended to mislead his reader. One could, for example, take the dialogue between Tiberian and Flavius Vopiscus (in the preface to *A*) as an example of parody of the most serious and respected historiography in Roman literature (cf. *Pr.* 2.7), in which Livy, Sallust and Tacitus are dismissed as a 'bunch of liars'.[132] This passage can

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[128] Aurelius Verus (~Aurelius Victor): Schlumberger 1976, 219; Eusthenius (~ the author of *EKG*): Paschoud 1995, 502-4; Lollius Urbicus (*Dd.* 9.2, in reality a senator under Antoninus Pius): Chastagnol 1994, CIX-CX; Syme 1971, 35.

[129] See § 3.2 on Nepos, and Lippold 1991, 84-93; Brandt 1996, 52-4; Fündling 2006, 130.

[130] Since Mommsen's amazed reaction '*cui bono?*' (1890, 229: 'und die Hypothese dass hier im mühsamen Fälscherconsequenz der Preis einer zur zeit der Abfassung ausgestorbenen Dynastie verkündet werde, wird einfach widerlegt für jeden Unbefangenen durch das *cui bono*, das bei litterarischen Producten dieser Art nicht trügen kann') several answers have been given to the question why the author sought to conceal his identity behind so many aliases. Syme (1984, 5) draws attention to the fact that Hadrian also assigned the writing of books about his own life to freedmen and permitted them to publish these under their own names (*H* 16.1), which may have provided the idea of pseudonimity ('multiple impersonation') to our author. Den Hengst (2002, 193) suggests that the author, under the name of Vopiscus, may have intended to remind the reader that he had copied the preceding lives from earlier biographers and historians. The different names under which he writes are reminiscent of the different characters in Cicero's dialogues. Fur further analysis of the authors' names: Chastagnol 1994, XLVII-VIII; Paschoud 1996, XXV-VI (Capitolinus); Hohl 1912, 482 (Pollio and Vopiscus); Birley 2005, 33-47; Burgersdijk 2007, 101 (on the *cognomen* Syracusius). See also note 99 and 253).

[131] Burian 1977 treats the claims of historical reliability as part of the author's method.

[132] Den Hengst 1981, 47.

be seen as characteristic of at least the last two parts of the *HA*, in which serious history is laid low with the aid of parody and forgery.

There is, however, however, a difference in the author's use of sources in the various parts of the *HA*. In the first part, from *H* to *G*, there are far fewer 'bogus authors', to use Syme's term, than in the second and third parts. The Primary Lives are at least partly based on Marius Maximus, which is reflected in the quotations from this author in EL. At the new beginning in *OM* a novel source is produced (the identity of the author behind it will be discussed § 3.1). The following diagram gives a brief idea of the distribution of the authors Marius Maximus and Iunius (sometimes called: Aelius) Cordus:
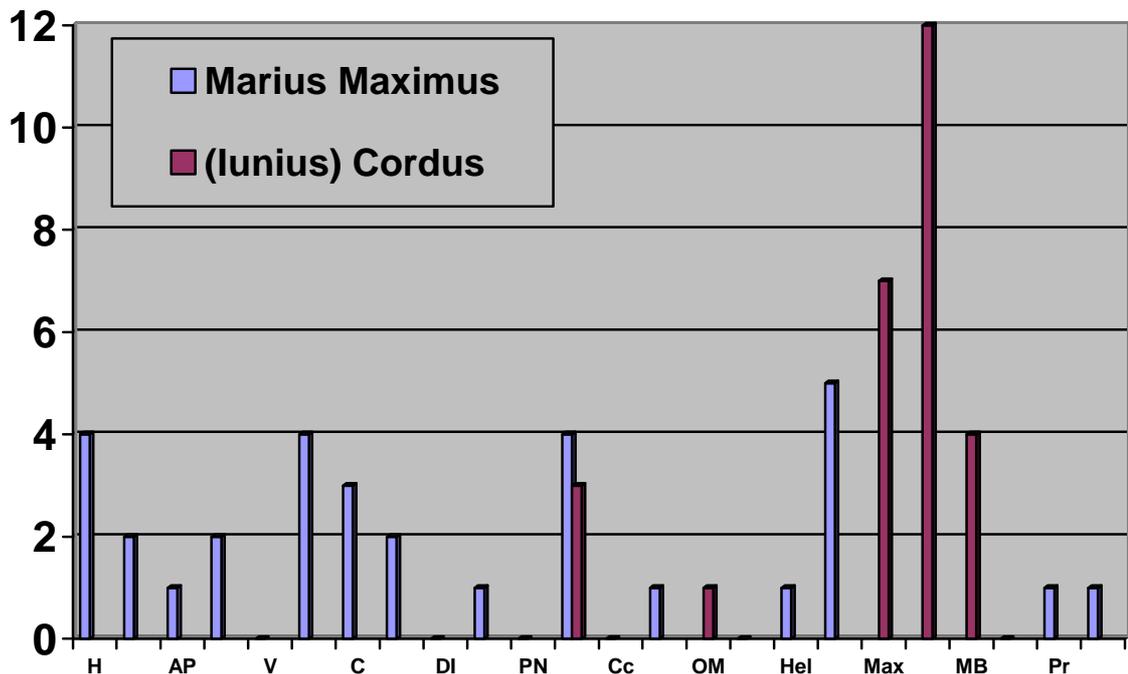

Figure 2.3: *Number of entries mentioning Marius Maximus and Iunius Cordus in the books of the* HA*; based on: Chastagnol 1994, LIII, CIX.*

The main conclusion that may be drawn from the diagram is that Iunius or Aelius Cordus takes over the role of Marius Maximus as either chief or supporting source, be it fictitious, for the author of the *HA*. Marius Maximus' life, as a historical person, ended during Alexander Severus' reign, which is why a new source had to be invented. Meanwhile, as a source 'Cordus' is responsible for the most gossipy parts of the *HA*[133] and in this respect an exaggerated version of his predecessor Marius Maximus. Already in *ClA* (the only life in which the two sources occur together) he is staged as the source for the *omina imperii* and invented *litterae* of the ruler Clodius Albinus. Just as Marius

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[133] The themes which Cordus allegedly treats are summed up by Den Hengst (1981, 48): the emperor's attitude towards slaves and friends, his sexual behaviour, clothing, food and drink: all themes typical of biographical descriptions (see § 3.2).

Maximus is presented as the successor of Suetonius (and, according to *AS* 48.6, at least wrote a *vita Traiani*), so Cordus succeeds Maximus. The two occasions when the latter biographer is mentioned in the *HA*, *Pr* 2.7 and *Q* 1.1-2 are only backward references. Syme (1968, 98): 'The author has created 'Junius Cordus' as a scapegoat. Also a successor to Marius Maximus, who likewise wrote *mythistorica volumina*'. Stuffing his volumes with fables and fake documents is what the author does himself, and is why he stages Cordus as a negative example, presumably in order to anticipate his critics.