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Style and structure of the Historia Augusta

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Chapter 3   The Literary Design

3.1   Introduction

The paratextual elements of the *HA* constitute an important means to direct (and, in the special case of the *HA*, to delude) the interpretation of the reader. This makes the *HA* especially interesting for an approach from a literary angle, as the paratextual elements of the work are, more than in any other work of classical literature, utterly confusing. Investigations of paratextual devices (though the term paratext is never used as such) have been numerous in *HA* studies, and surveys were given in several publications.[134] In the following paragraphs, we will study paratextual and formal aspects of the work:
- the author's attitude towards his own activity of writing biography (§ 3.2)
- the contents of the *HA* with the author's own remarks as our point of departure, as well as its internal development (§ 3.3)
- the scope of the *HA*: where the author begins his narrative and where he ends it (§ 3.4)
- style and its relation with content and beginning and end of the narrative (§ 3.5)
- the dedications to several persons, and the authors who are claimed to have produced them (§ 3.6)
- temporal aspects of the narrative (§ 3.7)
- the much-debated problem of the *lacuna*, with the aid of the notion of time in narrative (§ 3.8).
- the author's concept of Roman history as reflected in the preface to *Car.* (§ 3.9)

Besides being a study in the design and the internal coherence of the work, our investigation is an attempt to expand the domain of intertextual relationships with works from Latin literature, especially Nepos and Tacitus, which means an affirmation of the author's character as an antiquarian and a collector. Syme announced as one of the tasks of scholarship to 'round off the picture of the literary world, placing the *HA* in relation with other writings, notably history and panegyrics (in their various types), with antiquarian studies, and with the revival of the Latin classics'. By studying language, anachronisms, historical or contemporary allusions (however complex the notion of 'contemporaneity' is in the case of the *HA*), the use of other authors and influences from other writers, the literary *Umwelt* of the *HA* may be determined.[135] The 'revival of the Latin classics' must have been one of the author's motives in writing the *HA*, to which the number of authors imitated bears witness.

In this search for literary models, a warning has to be kept in mind: *topoi* and conventional ways of expression, developed in the long history of imperial prose, can impede the identification of valid models. There is an essential difference between a parallel and a direct borrowing, and one superficial similarity between passages does not suffice to indicate a derivation. In his study about the author's literary culture, Den

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[134] A recent overview is A. Birley 2003. Birley 1967, 113-38 is still valuable for general matters. See also Birley 2006.
[135] Syme 1968, 214-6.

Hengst dissuades us from accepting as conscious imitations verbal similaries consisting of single words, set phrases and parallelisms without corresponding verbal similarities.[136] On the other hand, Den Hengst continues, 'we may be assured of literary derivation if a number of verbal correspondences is clustered in one passage'. With these warnings in mind, an attempt will be made to evaluate the author's paratextual expressions in the light of classical tradition. The evaluation and ultimately, acceptance of a verbal parallel, will differ from case to case. The probability of a borrowing also partly depends from the similarity of textual genre in which the parallels occur. Parallels tend to indicate borrowing when they occur within the same type of text. It is easier to imagine one biographer taking another biographer as his model, for imitation or parody (or simply because he has read him), than his skipping to a different type of text, although this, too, is not beyond credence.

3.2   The Art of Biography

Broadly speaking, biography distinguishes itself from historiography in that it not only contains facts and deeds (πράξεις) of famous men, but also pays attention to their character (ἦθος). In the case of the *HA*, there is a mixture of chronological account and structuring in terms of categories, *per tempora* and *per species*, as Suetonius called the two main facets of biography.[137] Exemplary biographies such as *H* and *AP* mainly follow the Suetonian scheme, and the similarly structured Secondary Lives of tyrants, as witness *AC* 3.1-3 *Sed nos hominis naturam et mores breviter explicabimus; neque enim plura de his sciri possunt, quorum vitam et inlustrare nullus audet eorum causa, a quibus oppressi fuerint. addemus autem, quemadmodum ad imperium venerit et quemadmodum sit occisus et ubi victus.*[138] The *natura et mores* are part of the biographical narration, while the other three elements are both biographical and historiographical. In *PN* 1.1-2 the author complains about the lack of data about short-lived rulers: *... postremo non magna diligentia in eorum genere ac vita requiretur, cum satis sit audaciam eorum et bellum, in quo victi fuerint, ac poenam proferre*, in which the same division of biographical (*genus ac vita*) and historiographical (*audacia*, *bellum*, *poena*) material is made. It is important, in the author's view, to investigate their lives thoroughly, and only to select those elements for the narration, that are worth recording.

3.2.1 Biography Criticized

The author of the *HA* explicitly comments on the type of his writings, which, in later times, is styled as biography. The author himself speaks about writing biography as *vitas*

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[136] 'Although we must be careful here, given the practice of most authors, when imitating, to substitute synonyms or near synonyms for terms found in the source', so Den Hengst (1991, 168) adds.

[137] Suet. Aug. 9.1: *Proposita uitae eius uelut summa partes singillatim neque per tempora sed per species exequar, quo distinctius demonstrari cognosceique possint*, with which statement Suetonius marks the transition from the chronological part to the thematic part. See Wallace Hadrill 1983, 13-5 ('Structure'); Pausch 2004, 268.

[138] The author echoes himself in *PN* 9.3, about Pescennius Niger and Clodius Albinus: *et ab eodem victi atque occisi sunt.*

edere (*OM* 1.3), in which *vita* denotes as much the life of an emperor[139] as the book written about that life.[140] The prefaces of the *HA* are full of *topoi* typical of biographical and historiographical texts, such as the mention of *memoratu digna*,[141] criticism of biographical details, selection of sources, and references to predecessors. In the preface to *OM* (1.3-5), the author disapproves of trivial details in the biographical writing that his predecessor Iunius Cordus provided. The author mentions three examples of *indigna memoratu*, or *minima quaeque* (the opposite of *digna sunt, quae dicantur* and *digna cognitione*) as Ammianus Marcellinus (*RG* 26.1) does as a defence against his *examinatores intempestivi*. Nepos in his preface to *De Duc.* does the same.[142] The topical character of the theme of *digna memoratu* (a term that also occurs in Livy[143], Valerius Maximus[144], Pliny the Elder[145], Tacitus[146], Aulus Gellius[147] and a few others[148]), makes it hard to indicate a direct model.[149]

In the preface to *OM*, the author expresses his views on biographical writing in a complex piece of reasoning, which can be paraphrased in this way: there is not much information about the rulers who did not reign for a long time, because there are not many things of interest to say about their daily lives.[150] They would not have been known at all, if they had not aspired to the throne. About their reigns, which they exercised only briefly, there is not much to say. Despite all this, we will produce some information from

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[139] The term biography does not appear until the sixth century *AD* in Damascius's biography of Isidorus as βιογραφία (Bowersock 1998, 208). See for examples of *vita* as 'biography': Syme 1971b (*Comm.* 10.2; *AS* 5.4, 21.4, 30.6, 48.6, *Tac.* 11.7 (about Suetonius). Cf. *OLD vita* 6: 'a person's life together with its acts, circumstances, etc., the course of a life', e.g. *Hel.* (1.1): *Vitam Heliogabali Antonini (…) numquam in litteras misissem, …*, in which the life denotes the material for biography.

[140] *OLD* 6b: 'a written or spoken account of a person's life', e.g. *H*7.2 *…ut ipse (sc. Hadrianus) in vita sua dicit*.

[141] Mouchova 1975, 12; Den Hengst 1981, 46. *OM* 1.1: *digna, quae dicantur…*; *memoratu digna…*; 1.2: *digna cognitione…*; 1.4: *indigna memoratu…*; *rerum vilium aut nulla scribenda sint aut nimis pauca*; cf. for *memoratu digna*: *HA Hel.* 18.4, *T* 2.4; 4.2; *A* 1.9; *Tac.* 16.5; *Q* 6.1; 13.6. The topos is fully explored by Den Hengst 1981, 44-6, who traces it back to its first manifestations in Latin literature (Cato *Or.*4.1, Cic. *De Orat.*2.63, Sall.*Cat.*4.2, as well as the approximately contemporary Amm. Marc.28.1.2). The Greek origin of the topos, with expressions as τὸ ἀξιόλογον (e.g. Hdt. 2.148 or Thuc. 1.1) and τὸ μνημόνευτον (e.g. Arist. *Rhet.* 1367ᵃ 24) were studied by Avenarius 1956 and Herkommer 1968.

[142] *Non dubito fore plerosque, Attice, qui hoc genus scripturae leue et non satis dignum summorum uirorum personis iudicent, cum relatum legent, quis musicam docuerit Epaminondam, aut in eius uirtutibus commemorari, saltasse eum commode scienter que tibiis cantasse.*

[143] Liv. *AUC* 4.43.1: *nihil dignum memoratu actum*; 25.1.5*: haud ullum dignum memoratu fecit*.

[144] Val. Max. 1.1.1: *dicta memoratu digna*; 8.11: *memoratu dignae res*; both in programmatical remarks.

[145] Plin. Maior *NH* 2.247, 3.7, 6.97; 15.136; 31.6 (*digna memoratu*) and 3.95 (*memoratu digna*)

[146] Tac. *Ann.* 4.32.1: *parva forsitan et levia memoratu*; *Agr.* 1.2.1: *digna memoratu …*; *H* 2.24.1: *crebra magis quam digna memoratu proelia*. Only *Ann.* 4.32.1 is a programmatic remark.

[147] Aul. Gell. *NA* Pref. 2.1; 2.9; 6.17; 7.19; 12.27 (in introductions); variations in 2.11 (*memoratu non inutilis*), 3.12 (*auditu atque memoratu digna*), 4.15 (*memoratu dignissima*), 16.34 (*lepida quaedam et memoratu et cognitu*) – in capitula, 19.11 (*non memoratu indigni*).

[148] Noteworthy are the *Epitome de Caesaribus* 20.6 (*aedibus memoratu dignis*) and Amm. Marc. *RG* 22.8.25 (*nihil memoratu dignum traditur*).

[149] Though Suetonius may be excepted in this respect: in his transmitted works, he does not use the theme, at least not in this wording. The opposite is found in Suet. *Cal.* 26 *leve ac frigidum sit his addere…*

[150] Cf. *PN* 9.1-2: authors normally do not report much about daily lives, (*cum satis sit audaciam eorum et bellum, in quo victi fuerint, ac poenam proferre*). The author of the *HA* does not deviate from this programme, as he makes clear in *AC* 3.3: *addemus autem, quemadmodum ad imperium venerit et quemadmodum sit occisus et ubi victus*.

several sources, but only the important things. Everybody, it is true, does something every day, but biographers have to produce worthwhile information about lives of others. Iunius Cordus wanted to write biographies of lesser known emperors, but did so without success. He discovered few things worth mentioning, and promised to describe the tiniest details, as if it were important to know trivial details about even Trajan, Pius or Marcus. By collecting all this, he filled his books with gossip, while nothing or at least very little should be written about trivial things, unless they provide an insight into the character of the subject, which is indeed important to know.[151] Still, we can gather some information from these trifles that is really worth knowing, but only partly, in order to obtain more information from these trifles.[152] The author states that Iunius Cordus filled his volumes about lesser known emperors with fables but he himself has succeeded where Cordus failed, and in doing so he has produced an acceptable description on the basis of several sources, Thus, the author is superior to Cordus in that he uses more sources, and is more critical in the selection of his material.[153]

In the paraphrase above, the *minor things* are specified as follows, OM 1.4: *quasi vel de Traiano aut Pio aut Marco sciendum sit,* (1) *quotiens processerit,* (2) *quando cibos variaverit et* (3) *quando vestem mutaverit et* (4) *quos quando promoverit*. It is remarkable that the three emperors Trajan, Pius and Marcus are mentioned in an example that concerns the works of Cordus, who is said to have been specialized in lesser known emperors.[154] This is why *vel...* cannot be but interpreted as 'even', and does not correlate with the following *aut...aut...*.[155] The line of thought, then, is that, while *even about the*

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[151] The reasoning calls to mind Plutarch's remarks in the preface to his vita Alexandri that we encountered in § 2.3.1n (οὔτε ταῖς ἐπιφανεστάταις πράξεσι πάντως ἔνεστι δήλωσις ἀρετῆς ἢ κακίας, ἀλλὰ πρᾶγμα βραχὺ πολλάκις καὶ ῥῆμα καὶ παιδιά τις ἔμφασιν ἤθους ἐποίησε μᾶλλον ἢ μάχαι μυριόνεκροι), where it is stated that a small word or joke can elucidate a person's character more than the greatest historical events.

[152] The last phrase is reminiscent of Plut. *Alex.* 1.1-2 ἐὰν μὴ πάντα μηδὲ καθ' ἕκαστον ἐξειργασμένως τι τῶν περιβοήτων ἀπαγγέλλωμεν, ἀλλ' ἐπιτέμνοντες τὰ πλεῖστα, μὴ συκοφαντεῖν.

[153] Cf. Dio 1.1.2 in his programmatic remark about his use of sources about distant history: …συνέγραψα δὲ οὐ πάντα ἀλλ' ὅσα ἐξέκρινα; Diodorus Siculus 1.3.5-8: ἐξετάσαντες οὖν τὰς ἑκάστου τούτων διαθέσεις ἐκρίναμεν ὑπόθεσιν ἱστορικὴν πραγματεύσασθαι τὴν πλεῖστα μὲν ὠφελῆσαι δυναμένην, ἐλάχιστα δὲ τοὺς ἀναγινώσκοντας ἐνοχλήσουσαν. Marincola (1997, 105) remarks that 'the methodology of non-contemporary history was to consult the tradition, what previous writers had handed down'. In this respect, the author adheres to the tradition, as he repeatedly states that he has gathered the material *ex pluribus libris*. In *PN* 1.1-2 and intermediary and later lives, he suggests that he also uses epigraphical and other kinds of (material and written) evidence (confirmed by Chastagnol 1994, CXXIII-XXXI). Only with regard to information from the recent past, the Herodotean principle of ἀκοή plays a role, presented in an imitation of Suetonius (*Cal*.19.4, *Otho* 1-3): the author in his guise of Vopiscus says to have heard things from his grandfather (*A* 43.2, *Q* 9.4-5, *Car*. 13.3, 14). This is all to suggest that the time of writing is in the beginning of the fourth century, during the reign of Constantine.

[154] Turcan's remark (1993, 117): 'L'expression cadres mal avec les exemples de Trajan, d'Antonin le Pieux, de Marc Aurèle' is right, but the passage can be understood when *vel* is interpreted rightly.

[155] Chastagnol 1994, 451 gives the right interpretation of the *quasi*-clause when he translates: 'même pour un Trajan…'. The word *vel* is crucial and is not always expressed in translations: Magie 1924, 49-51 translates: 'He openly declared that he would search out the most trivial details, as though, *in dealing with a Trajan, a Pius, or a Marcus*, it should be known how often he went out walking; Pasoli 1968, 47: '…egli, che asseriva essere sua intenzione di andare in cerca dei minimi particolari, *come se riguardo a Traiano o a Pio o a Marco* fosse indispensabile sapere quante volte sia uscito di casa…'; Birley 1976, 268: '…while he

great emperors minor things are not worth knowing, they are *a fortiori* unimportant for the lesser known rulers. The examples that the author mentions are elements typical of biographical writing. Cordus is quoted throughout the Intermediary Lives for his description of the emperor's attitude towards slaves and friends, clothing and food and drink, and other items.[156] These items are also to be found in the earlier biographies of the *HA*, such as *MA* 6.7 and 29.1 (Marcus' ways of promoting people are described, example 4),[157] and in *AP* 6.12 (the Antonine dress is commented on, example 3).[158] Two items are found in combination in *H* 22.2-4 (in which Hadrian *togatus processit*, example 1 and 3).[159] Finally, Hadrian's eating habits occur just before the latter passage, *H* 21.4.[160] What it looks like is that, as the author himself describes trivial biographical details, he attacks Cordus' writings in order to avert criticism of his own work.[161]

The example of *H* 21.4 (*inter cibos unice amavit tetrafarmacum, quod erat de fasiano, sumine, perna et crustulo*)[162] needs further analysis, as it is repeated and amplified in the Secondary Life of *Ael.*, 5.4: *huius voluptates ab his, qui vitam eius scripserunt, multae feruntur, et quidem non infames sed aliquatenus diffluentes. nam tetrafarmacum, seu potius pentefarmacum, quo postea semper Hadrianus est usus, ipse dicitur repperisse, hoc est sumen, fasianum, pavonem, pernam crustulatam et aprunam. De quo genere cibi aliter refert Marius Maximus, non pentefarmacum sed tetrafarmacum appellans, ut et nos ipsi in eius vita persecuti sumus.* The *pavo* is added to the recipe, which is apparently based on the author's own research. The author thus shows that he

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declared that he would pursue all the smallest details, *as though, in the case of Trajan or Pius or Marcus*, one had to know how often he went out…'; Turcan 1993, 19: 'Il se fait fort d'exposer à fond certaines minuties: *comme si, à propos de Trajan, d'Antonin le Pieux ou de Marc Aurèle*, il importait de savoir combienne de fois ils ont paru en public…'; Chastagnol 1994, 451: 'Il soutenait qu'il devait exposer les détails les plus infimes, *comme si, même pour un Trajan, un Antonin le Pieux ou un Marc*, il nous importait de savoir combien de fois ils se sont montrés en public…'.

[156] Den Hengst 1981, 48: attitude: *ClA* 11.6, *Gd.* 21.4; clothing: *ClA* 11.7, *OM* 1.4, *Gd.* 21.4; food and drink: *ClA* 11.2, *OM* 1.4, *Max.* 4.1.

[157] *MA* 7.6: *tantumque apud Pium valuit, ut numquam quemquam sine eo facile promoverit*; *MA* 29.1: *Crimini ei datum est, quod adulteros uxoris promoverit, Tertullum et Tutilium et Orfitum et Moderatum, ad varios honores, cum Tertullum et prandentem cum uxore deprehenderit.* Cf. Suet. *Vesp.* 16.2 *creditur etiam procuratorum rapacissimum quemque ad ampliora officia ex industria solitus promovere.* The formula in *OM* 4.6: *ex quo officio ad amplissima quaeque pervenit* may be derived from this phrase in Suetonius (see § 9.2). The formula *vestem mutare* is used in Nepos' *Pausanias* 4.3.1: *non enim mores patrios solum, sed etiam cultum vestitumque mutavit.*

[158] *AP* 6.12 : *visus est sane ab amicis et cum privatis vestibus et domestica quaedam gerens.* An example from Suetonius, *Cal.* 52.1: *saepe depictas gemmatas que indutus paenulas, manuleatus et armillatus in publicum processit; aliquando sericatus et cycladatus; ac modo in crepidis uel coturnis, modo in speculatoria caliga, nonnumquam socco muliebri; plerumque uero aurea barba, fulmen tenens aut fuscinam aut caduceum deorum insignia, atque etiam Veneris cultu conspectus est.*

[159] *H* 22.2-4: *senatores et equites Romanos semper in publico togatos esse iussit, nisi si a cena reverterentur. ipse, cum in Italia esset, semper togatus processit. ad convivium venientes senatores stans excepit semperque aut pallio tectus discubuit aut toga summissa.*

[160] *H* 21.4: *inter cibos unice amavit tetrafarmacum, quod erat de fasiano, sumine, perna et crustulo.* An example from Suetonius: *Aug.* 76.1 *cibi - nam ne haec quidem omiserim - minimi erat atque vulgaris fere.*

[161] Chastagnol 1994, CVIII points out that many of the cases in which Cordus is cited, the text of another author is at stake: *Gd.* 14.7-8 ~ Cic. *Cat.* 3.12; *Gd.* 12.1 ~ Herod. 7.2.1-8; *Gd.* 23.4 ~ Suet. *Caes.* 89; Gd. 4.6 ~ Suet. Nero 11.1.

[162] Which is in accordance with the recipe in *AS* 30.6; based on Apicius, see Chastagnol 1994, XLVIII. Syme 1971, 71 draws the conclusion that the life of *Ael.* was written after the life of *AS*. See also Den Hengst 1995, 160-1.

has a basic source (as followed in *H* 21.4) which he supplements with information from other sources (*Ael.* 5.4). When we combine this notion with the description in the preface to *OM* we can hardly fail to conclude that the author also launches a veiled attack on Marius Maximus, as Cordus is more or less Marius Maximus' successor as his source (§ 2.4.2).[163] We might carry this conclusion one step further: Cordus is the dark side of Marius Maximus, allegedly continuing Maximus' work on the topic of the lesser known rulers. The author states in the preface to his combined biography of usurpers *Q* 1.1: *Quid Marius Maximus, homo omnium verbosissimus, qui et mythistoricis se voluminibus inplicavit, num ad istam descriptionem curamque descendit?* The clause *qui et mythistoricis se voluminibus inplicavit* is important: this is exactly what Cordus is said to have done in *OM* 1.4. Meanwhile, it can be understood why the author refers to a biography of Trajan when summing up his examples: this is a reference to Maximus' biography of this emperor.[164] In attacking Cordus, he mocks Maximus, while at the same time explaining his own methods.[165]

3.2.2 The Description of Cordus

Cordus' method is described rather elaborately in the preface to *OM*.[166] This fictitious source may well have been based on a famous Roman from republican times, namely *Cato maior*. Parallels in decriptions, supported by lexical similarities, show that the author of the *HA* knew Nepos and based his description of Cordus on Nepos' description of Cato, though reversing everything in the process. Compare *OM* 1.3-4 to Nepos, *Cato* 3.1-2, 4:

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[163] Den Hengst (1981, 47) remarks that Cordus 'stands for the gossipy parts of imperial biography as found in Suetonius, and, as we may safely add, in Marius Maximus'.

[164] Maximus wrote Trajan's biography according to *AS* 48.6.

[165] Doubts about Cordus' authenticity were already raised in the nineteenth century. Klebs (1892, 22n1) acknowledged his unreliability, but did not doubt his existence: 'So wenig Cordus eine Zierde der römischen Litteratur ist: wir haben kein Recht sein Dasein zu bestreiten'. Mommsen (1890, 272) saw it better: 'Der Biograph hat für die anekdotischen Erfindungen (…) in diesem Pseudo-Cordus sich zugleich einen Gewährsmann und einen Prügelknaben geschaffen', which became the majority view (though not unanimously so). Syme 1968, 98: 'the author has created 'Junius Cordus' as a scapegoat (§ 2.4.3). For the treatment of Cordus in recent literature, see Den Hengst 1981, 46-50; Lippold 1991, 84-93; Chastagnol 1994, CVIII-CIX; Brandt 1996, 52-4; Fündling 2006, 130). The fictional character of Cordus becomes clear on finding that his reports appear to be distortions from other sources: *Gd.*14.7-8: Cic. *Cat.*3.12, *Gd.*12.1: Herod.7.2.1-8; *Gd.*33.4: Suet. *Caes.*89, *Gd.*4.6: Suet. *Nero* 11.1; *Max.*4.4: Suet. *Tib.*42.5, see Chastagnol 1994, cix. *OM* 1.3: Nepos *Cato* 3.2-4, as well as *MB* 12.4 can be added. See also Burgersdijk 2007, 97-9.

[166] Syme 1968, 97n1 suggests that the name of Iunius Cordus is based on the first *Satire* by Iunius Iuvenalis (*Sat.* 1.2).

Nepos, *Cato* 3.1-2, 4
...cupidissimus litterarum fuit (*sc*.Cato).
Quarum studium etsi senior arripuerat,
tamen tantum progressum fecit,
ut non facile reperiri possit neque de Graecis
neque de Italicis rebus, quod ei fuerit
incognitum. (...) reliquaque bella pari modo
persecutus est....

OM 1.3-4
Et Iunio Cordo studium fuit
eorum imperatorum vitas edere,
 quos obscuriores videbat;
qui non multum profecit.
Nam et pauca repperit et indigna
memoratu adserens se minima quaeque
persequuturum, ...

Both passages deal with the writing of books: Iunius Cordus, who writes biography, appears to be the opposite of Cato, who writes history. Four of Nepos's words are followed by the author of the *HA* (*studium → studium*, *progressum fecit → profecit*, *reperiri possit → repperit*, *persecutus est → persequuturum*). Furthermore, grammatical structures occur in associative ways: *cupidissimus litterarum fuit*, followed by the relative *Quarum studium* is parallelled by *studium fuit* with the genitive *eorum imperatorum...*; Nepos's *tantum progressum fecit* becomes *non multum profecit* in the *HA*; *non facile reperire possit* becomes *pauca repperit* and *reliquaque bella...persecutus est* becomes *minima quaeque persequuturum*.[167] The similarities between Cato and Cordus (the 'anti-Cato') suggest that those linking the *HA* and Nepos are directly related, especially since more remarks of a programmatic nature show similar parallels (see below, § 3.6 and § 4.3). Examples of biographical *trivia* as summed up in the preface to *OM* are also found in the preface to Nepos' *De duc.*, when he mentions things that the reader may consider *leve*. These *res viles* can be compared to Nepos' examples of *levia*: *Non dubito fore plerosque, Attice, qui hoc genus scripturae leve et non satis dignum summorum uirorum personis iudicent, cum relatum legent quis musicam docuerit Epaminondam, aut in eius virtutibus commemorari, saltasse eum commode scienterque tibiis cantasse*. Some words from Nepos' preface are parallelled in *OM*: *persequi* (8) is echoed in *persequuturum* (1.4)[168], *exorsus sum*[169] (8) in *orditur* (1.2), *moribus* (3, 4) in *mores* (1.5). The most important aspect is the similar defence against criticism that biography is *leve et non satis dignum summorum virorum personis* and that the biographer must limit himself to *memoratu digna*.

Cordus is not only invoked as an 'authority' for certain biographical data and historiographical information but also serves, in *MB* 4.5, as the purported model for *divisio* of the material. The verb *persequi* (cf. *persequuturum* in *OM* 1.4) is significant: Cordus appears six times in combination with a form of this verb[170]. The only time that the author (like Nepos in *Cato* 3.4) uses the form *persecutus est* is in one of the last

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[167] For an analysis of this type of rewriting, see § 8.7.

[168] Also in *ClA* 11.2, again with Cordus: *...Cordus, qui talia persequitur in suis voluminibus, ...*

[169] Again in Nepos *Pelopidas* 16.1.4: *In quibus Pelopidas hic, de quo scribere exorsi sumus, pulsus patria carebat.*

[170] *OM* 1.4 *se minima quaeque persequuturum* ; *ClA* 5.10: *...Aelium Cordum legat, qui frivola ... cuncta persequitur*; 11.2: *...Cordus, qui talia persequitur...*; *Max*.27.7: *...ut Iunius Cordus loquitur (harum rerum persecutor est)...*; *Max*.31.4: *longum est omnia persequi, quae qui scire desiderat, is velim, ut saepi dixi, legat Cordum...* and here, *MB* 4.5: *eo modo quo Iunius Cordus est persecutus omnia*. Note the use of participium futuri activi, verbum finitum (in present and perfect), noun and infinitive. The *variatio* makes the impression of a deliberate literary figure.

instances of Cordus' name in *MB* 4.5: *Sed priusquam de actibus eorum loquar, placet aliqua dici de moribus atque genere, non eo modo quo Iunius Cordus est persecutus omnia, sed illo quo Suetonius Tranquillus et Valerius Marcellinus, quamvis Curius Fortunatianus, qui omnem hanc historiam perscripsit, pauca contigerit, Cordus vera tam multa, ut etiam pleraque vilia et minus honesta perscripserit.* This passage, which serves to explain the order and the way in which topics will be discussed, has been linked (along with other passages)[171] to Suetonius *Jul.*44.4:[172] *de qua priusquam dicam, ea quae ad formam et habitum et cultus et mores, nec minus quae ad civilia et bellica eius studia pertineant, non alienum erit summatim exponere.* The programmatic statements in the *HA* could as well be linked to Nepos's words in *Epam.* 1.1: *De hoc priusquam scribimus, haec praecipienda videntur lectoribus, ne alienos mores ad suos referant (…)* and 1.3-4: *Cum autem exprimere imaginem consuetudinis atque vitae*[173] *velimus Epaminondae, nihil videmur debere praetermittere, quod pertineat ad eam declarandam. Quare dicemus primum de genere eius, deinde quibus disciplinis et a quibus sit eruditus, tum de moribus ingeniique facultatibus et si qua alia memoria digna erunt, postremo de rebus gestis (…).* The correspondence between *MB* 3.1 *de moribus atque genere* and *Epam.* 1.4 *primum de genere eius (…) tum de moribus* in particular seems to indicate a link with Nepos. In *MB* 8.1 the announced topic is closed with the words: *Haec de moribus atque genere*, whereafter the *acta* are discussed. Note again that, after Iunius Cordus in *OM* and Tatius Cyrillus in *Max.*, imitations of Nepos are accompanied by two fictitious biographers: Valerius Marcellinus and Curius Fortunatianus. For whatever reason, the author of the *HA* appears to try and hide his real model by quoting invented authors.

3.3   The Contents of the *HA*

3.3.1   The Contents of the Primary and Secondary Lives

3.3.1.1   Categories of *Principes*

The author repeatedly comments on the material that he has chosen in order to produce a series of imperial biographies. [174] The elements out of which the narrative is created (which belong to the field of historical *inventio*) are taken from the imperial history of the second and third centuries. Not satisfied with this, he also seeks to make his narration

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[171] There are other passages in which the author of the *HA* uses similar formulas: *ClA* 1.5: *sed priusquam vel de vita vel de morte dissero, etiam hoc dicendum est, quod (…)*; *G* 1.1: *de cuius priusquam vel vita vel nece dicam, disseram, cur (…)*; *AS* 29.1: *antequam de bellis eius et expeditionibus et victoriis loquar, de vita cottidiana et domestica pauca disseram*; *Gd.*3.1: *sed priusquam de imperio eius loquar, dicam pauca de moribus (…)*. Cf. also *AC* 3.1: *naturam et mores breviter explicabimus*. For other cases of *dispositio*: *Dd.* 7.2; *AS* 6.1, 45.1; *Gd.*3.1; and for *dispositio* as a literary term: Leo 1901, 274; Carlozzo 1978, 43-78.
[172] Wölfflin 1891, 470; Klebs 1892, 19, 26-8; White 1967, 118; Den Hengst 1981, 35; Brandt, H. 1996, 55 and 145 indicate Suetonius as the model.
[173] Cf. for Nepos' expression *imaginem consuetudinis atque vitae* in the formula, in which the core of biographical writing is expressed, *AS* 45.1: *prius tamen eius consuetudinem dicam*.
[174] The idea for this may have been taken from Suetonius. Syme (1980, 104) ascribes the invention of imperial biography, viz. the lives of succeeding emperors linked in a series, to Plutarch, who described the emperors from Augustus to Otho; only the *Galba* and the *Otho* have been transmitted.

look more sophisticated. After the first biography about Hadrian, he announces that he will change his plan (as opposed to his model Suetonius, cf. *Q* 1.1).[175] This plan is announced in the first paragraphs of *Ael.* (1.1-3) and has been assessed frequently in studies on the *HA*.[176] As the programmatic remarks with regard to content are often ambiguous, it is expedient to study the paratext by itself: idiom, motifs and style. Only after a proper assessment of the author's writings (in order to elucidate the contradictions that the passages contain in relation to one another) the relation with the actual content of the *HA* can be taken into consideration.

One of the difficulties in the description of the material and the terminology used, is that the author is not consistent in the way he distinguishes between rulers in different parts of the *HA*. Rösger has shown that *principes* is the general term for different kinds of rulers, such as *Augusti*, *Caesares* and *tyranni*.[177] This is concluded from the evidence provided by, e.g. *Ael.* 1.1 and *OM* 1.1. It is true that *principes* can denote all kinds of rulers, but this does not mean that whenever *principes* are mentioned all these classes are referred to. In the preface to *Ael.*, the author speaks about three groups of rulers (the groups are marked by numbers): *In animo mihi est, Diocletiane Auguste, tot principum maxime, non solum* (1) *eos, qui principum locum in hac statione, quam temperas, retentarunt, ut usque ad divum Hadrianum feci, sed illos etiam, qui* (2) *vel Caesarum nomine appellati sunt nec principes aut Augusti fuerunt* (3) *vel quolibet alio genere aut in famam aut in spem principatus venerunt cognitioni numinis tui sternere.*[178] According to Rösger, the first group contains the *Augusti*, the second the *Caesares* that were not *Augusti* (here *principes* is specified to *Augusti* by *aut*[179]), and the third, *per*

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[175] *Q* 1.1 *Minusculos tyrannos scio plerosque tacuisse aut breviter praeterisse. nam et Suetonius Tranquillus, emendatissimus et candidissimus scriptor, Antonium, Vindicem tacuit, contentus eo quod eos cursim perstrinxerat, et Marius Maximus, qui Avidium Marci temporibus, Albinum et Nigrum Severi non suis propriis libris sed alienis innexuit.* This sentence can be compared with *PN* 9.2: *Inde quod latet Vindex, quod Piso nescitur quod omnes illi, qui aut tantum adoptati sunt aut a militibus imperatores appellati, ut sub Domitiano Antonius, aut cito interempti vitam cum imperii usurpatione posuerunt,* in which the two examples of Vindex (pretender under Nero in 68) and Antonius, together with Galba's Caesar Piso, are mentioned. Interesting is *AS* 1.7: *nam et Pescennium Nigrum et Clodium Albinum et Avidium Cassium et antea Lucium Vindicem et L. Antonium et ipsum Severum, cum senatus iam Iulianum dixisset principem, imperatores fecerant,* in which the three usurpers from the second century in the *HA* are mentioned in one breath, and Vindex and Antonius also appear. Severus joins the team, as he was called imperator at the moment that the senate had already appointed Didius Iulianus.

[176] White (1967, 121); Rösger (1977, 363 and 1980, 179); Den Hengst (1981, 10-11); Stubenrauch 1981, 55; Paschoud 2001, 196.

[177] In contrast to most other writers of his time, the author uses the term *tyrannus* in a strictly neutral sense, without moral overtones, as 'rulers that aspired to the throne', as can be concluded from the analysis by Barnes 1996, 64-5. He is 'consciously and deliberately subversive' (cf. Rösger 1977, 376n71, 380n80 and 392-3). In classical times, the word was used for a 'monarch, sovereign' (often applied to rulers of the Greek city states), or a ruler 'who exercises authority in a cruel or oppressive way, a tyrant' (Barnes 1996, 56), while from the battle of the Milvian Bridge onwards, the word was used for political ends, to denote a defeated ruler, such as Maxentius or Licinius (1996, 60-4). Barnes does not treat the instances in the *HA* when the word is used in a pejorative sense, such as *OM* 7.4: *senatus in eum* (sc. *Caracallam*) *velut tyrannus invectus est* or *Hel.* 1.2 (about rulers such as Caligula, Nero, Vitellius and Heliogabalus): here, the word is used in the latter meaning.

[178] See Mouchova 1975, 50 for the interpretation of *vel…vel…* and the division in groups.

[179] *OLD* ad *aut*, 6a: 'introducing a modification of a statement or expression' / 'introducing a more accurate of corrected statement.'

eliminationem, the *tyranni*, for these are the groups that are treated in the *HA*.[180] In the second group, we see that *principes* is used as the general term for different kind of rulers, since a person who is called Caesar, is not yet *princeps* on the level of an *Augustus* (*qui vel Caesarum nomine appellati sunt nec principes aut Augusti fuerunt*). This means that *princeps* in the dedication *Diocletiane tot principum maxime* (and also *in principum locum*) includes the *Caesares*, but subsequently requires a new definition, when y *principes* is used solely to mean the *Augusti* . The text continues with *Quorum* (in this case: the *principes* of the second category) *praecipue de Aelio Vero dicendum est, qui primus tantum Caesaris nomen accepit, adoptatione Hadriani familiae principum adscitus*. This means that Aelius acquired the name of Caesar through his adoption into Hadrian's family, but never obtained the title of Augustus.

According to Rösger, whose first concern was the interpretation of *principes* in *tot principum maxime*, Diocletian as *maximus principum* ranks higher than the *Caesares*, others (vaguely defined as [*illos qui*] *quolibet alio genere aut in famam aut in spem principatus venerunt*) merely being pretenders. For the cited passages the reasoning that Diocletian ranks highest among all sorts of *principes* seems to hold up well.[181] But the idea runs into trouble when other undiscussed passages, are taken into account. The problem is that the author changes his formulas in almost every single biography, or even within a biography. Compare for example: *Ael.* 7.5: *...quia mihi propositum fuit omnes, qui post Caesarem dictatorem, hoc est divum Iulium,* (1) *vel Caesares vel Augusti vel principes appellati sunt,* (2) *quique in adoptionem venerunt vel imperatorum filii aut parentes Caesarum nomine consecrati sunt, singulis libris exponere, ...* The author mixes the groups together:

Ael. 1.1	*Ael.* 7.5
Non solum (1) *eos, qui principum locum in hac statione, quam temperas, retentarunt, (...), sed illos etiam, qui* (2) <u>*vel*</u> *Caesarum nomine appellati sunt nec principes aut Augusti fuerunt,* (3) <u>*vel*</u> *quolibet alio genere aut in famam aut in spem principatus venerunt,...*	*Omnes, qui (...)* (1) <u>*vel*</u> *Caesares* <u>*vel*</u> *Augusti*[182] <u>*vel*</u> *principes appellati sunt,* (2) *quique in adoptationem venerunt* <u>*vel*</u> *imperatorum filii aut parentes Caesarum nomine consecrati sunt.*

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[180] Confirmed by Den Hengst 1981, 10, *pace* White 1967, 121, who points out that in *Ael.* 7.5 the *tyranni* are not mentioned. I think that the tyranni are actually mentioned, but that the author is, at this point of his narration, deliberately vague about this category, as it does not really fit into a series of *Augusti* and *Caesares*.

[181] Rösger's idea of *principes* in *tot principum maxime* runs into trouble when the formula is compared with that in *PN* 9.1: *Diocletiane, maxime Augustorum*: the author seems to have forgotten about his carefully constructed pyramid of different *principes*. The designation of the highest position *principum locum* recurs in *Hel*. 34.1 in an address to Diocletian*: Mirum fortasse cuipiam videatur, Constantine venerabilis, quod haec clades, quam rettuli,* <u>*loco principum*</u> *fuerit, ...*. There, *principes* refers to the reigning *Augusti*, without specification or explanation of who are meant.

[182] The inversion of hierarchy in *vel Caesares vel Augusti* is a case of insubordination that is also encountered in a formula such as *Pr*.1.5 (*usque ad Maximianum Diocletianumque*). The author, for whom stylistic features as *variatio* and *inversio* are more important than historical exactness, does not seem to bother about seniority or imperial authority. Paschoud 2005, 104 explains this as a 'beabsichtigte Skurrrilität' that reveals that *Pr.* was not written during the tetrarchy.

In the first instance, the categories are (1) the *Augusti*, (2) the *Caesares* and (3) the other *principes*, while in the second case they consist of (1) *Caesares*, *Augusti* and *principes*, (2) the adopted heirs, or rather (*vel*),[183] the *Caesares* who were *imperatorum filii aut parentes* honoured with the name of Caesar.[184] The first category in *Ael.* 7.5 combines the first two categories in *Ael.* 1.1 (namely *Augusti* and *Caesares*) with a slight change of terminology, while a third group (*vel principes*) may summarize the third category of *Ael.* 1.1.[185] The second category of *Ael.* 7.5 supplies a new group: the adopted heirs and fathers and sons of emperors.

The supplementary grouping can only be explained by the description in *Ael.* 2.1-2.[186]: *Ceionius Commodus, qui et Aelius Verus appellatus est, quem sibi Hadrianus (…) adoptavit, nihil habet in sua vita memorabile, nisi quod primus tantum Caesar est appellatus* (cat. 2 of *Ael.1.1*), *non testamento, ut antea solebat, neque eo modo quo Traianus est adoptatus, sed eo prope genere, quo nostris temporibus a vestra clementia Maximianus atque Constantius Caesares dicti sunt, quasi quidam* <u>*principum fili*</u>, *virtute designati augustae maiestatis heredes*. Since category (1) in *Ael.* 7.5 summarizes the first three categories of *Ael.* 1.1, category (2) sums up the following text *Ael.* 2.1-2, which concerns the adoptions from Diocletian's times onward. One becomes a Caesar in one of three ways: *testamento* (in line with the old tradition, probably referring to Caesar's adoption of Augustus), by adoption (along lines of Trajan's adoption by Nerva)[187] and the 'modern way' of inheritance, as found with Maximian and Constantius who acquired the name as sons of the emperors and heirs of the *augusta maiestas*). The author evidently has in mind Diocletian's tetrarchic system, under which the sons of the emperors were called *Caesares* as long as the *Augusti* were on the throne, and after their abdication or death became *Augusti* themselves.[188] An aspect that has not been noted before is that the formula *imperatorum filii* in the second category of *Ael.* 7.5 (thus corresponding with *Ael.*

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[183] The author plays with the different meanings of the word 'vel', as we have seen before, in OM 1.4: in '*quasi vel de Traiano aut Pio aut Marco...* ' *vel* does not correspond with the following *aut...aut...*, but stresses the clause as a whole: 'even about Trajan or Pius or Marcus'. Here, the first three cases of *vel* are disjunctives introducing three alternatives, while in the second case it introduces 'a more correct or precise expression' (OLD ad *vel* 3: 'or rather') - which is used in the same way as *principes* <u>*aut*</u> *Augusti* in *Ael.* 1.1.

[184] Pace Chastagnol 1994, 79, who translates *consecrati* with 'divinisés' (while the more neutral 'hallowed' is enough) and correspondingly concludes that the extension of the programme with this third category is not reflected in the content of the *HA*. I believe, however, that only one category is formulated in *quique in adoptionem venerunt … consecrati sunt*.

[185] Pace White (1967, 121, supported by Callu 1992, 138-9), who supposes that the *tyranni* are absent from both passages, *Ael.* 1.1 and 7.5: 'Spartianus here provides for a complete series of imperial biographies to Diocletian, with separate libri devoted to legitimate heirs, but not yet for accounts of the tyranni.'.

[186] Den Hengst (1981, 10) denies that there is a correspondance between *Ael.* 1.1 (third category) and 2.1-2.

[187] According to Den Hengst, the difference between the adoption of Trajan and that of Aelius is, that Trajan was appointed co-emperor shortly after his adoption, cf. Plin. *Paneg.* 8.6: *simul filius, simul Caesar, mox imperator*. In *A* 14.6 the adoption of Hadrian by Nerva is mentioned, together with the succeeding emperors: *hoc igitur, quod Cocceius Nerva in Traiano adoptando, quod Ulpius Traianus in Hadriano, quod Hadrianus in Antonino et ceteri deinceps proposita suggestione fecerunt, in adrogando Aureliano, (…), censui esse referendum* (see for these adoptions Paschoud (1996, 101-3: 'selon le méthode établi') and Den Hengst's deviating view (1998b, 417: 'after a proposal had been presented', viz. by the priest).

[188] Chastagnol 1994, 64-5: 'une mise en parallèle habile, mais artificielle'.

2.2: *quasi … principum fili*[189]) may correspond with *fili Augustorum* as a title borne by Constantine and Maximinus in the period 308-9 AD, as the *heredes augustae maiestatis* of Licinius and Galerius respectively.[190] The author presents Aelius as the first to have been appointed Caesar on these conditions, not only as an heir, but as a real son.[191]

It must be concluded that the author of the *HA* is not consistent in his programmatic remarks with regard to the contents of his work: he changes his categories of rulers according to the context of the book, while the categories of rulers covered by the term *principes* change every single instance. Let us examine now how these programmatic statements relate to the actual contents of the books.

3.3.1.2 The Actual Contents of the Books

Let us consider how the different categories in *Ael.* 1.1 correspond with the contents of the *HA*. The first category is that of the reigning *Augusti* in an equal position to Diocletian, the addressee. These are evidently the reigning *Augusti* up to and including Macrinus, Mommsen's 'Diocletianische Reihe', supplemented with the biographies of *Hel.* and *AS*, despite the fact that these are dedicated to Constantine. The following books are ordered along other lines: the author will no longer treat his categories *singulis libris* (*Ael.* 7.5), but combined in one book, for which a new program will be outlined in the preface to *Max.* (see § 4.3). The second category (*illos etiam, qui vel Caesarum nomine appellati sunt nec principes aut Augusti fuerunt*), elaborated in *Ael.* 2.2 (*non testamento…maiestatis heredes*) and repeated in *Ael.* 7.5 (*quique in adoptionem venerunt vel imperatorum filii aut parentes Caesarum nomen consecrati sunt*), is based on the figure of Aelius Verus in the first place.[192] There are, however, others, viz. *G* and *Dd.*,

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[189] *Quasi…visi* is here 'in ihrer Eigenschaft als gewissermaβen echte Söhne der Principes und designierte Erben der Kaiserwürde', so Kolb 1987, 12. Kolb 1987, 69-87 also treats the designation '*parens principum*' as an official title, as it occurs in e.g. *Gd.* 27.10 for Timisitheus.

[190] The title of *fili Augusti* had been granted to the Caesares Constantine and Maximinus in the period after Diocletian and Maximian's retirement in 306 and the conference at Carnuntum. With four candidates for the title of Augustus (Severus, Constantine, Maxentius and Maximian), a settlement was made that Licinius and Galerius were to act as Augusti, with Constantine and Maximian as their *Caesares* with the title *fili Augusti*. Maxentius was denounced as a usurper, when he took over power in Italy. By 309 AD the four rulers all aspired to the title of Augustus, with the final result that after the battle of the Milvian bridge only Licinius in the East and Constantine in the West remained *Augusti* (Barnes 1982, 6). In all probability, the author also regarded the title as suitable to Galerius and Constantius as Caesares (293-305) and Diocletian and Maximian (co-rulers from 286-305), who called themselves 'brothers'. Cf. *Cl.* 10.7: *…ut sit omnibus clarum <u>Constantium</u> sanctissimum Caesarem et Augustae ipsum familiae esse et Augustos multos de se daturum, salvis <u>Diocletiano</u> et <u>Maximimiano</u> Augustis et eius fratre <u>Galerio</u>* and *Car.* 18.3: *post quos <u>Diocletianum</u> et <u>Maximianum</u> principes dii dederunt, iungentes talibus viris <u>Galerium</u> atque <u>Constantium</u> (…). quattuor sane principes mundi fortes, sapientes, benigni et admodum liberales, unum in rem p. sentientes, semper reverentes Romani senatus, moderati, populi amici, persancti, graves, religiosi et quales principes semper oravimus* (Straub 1972, 36 comments on the author's knowledge of the tetrarchy; see also Kolb 1987, 10-11).

[191] The author promises to include all the sons of emperors with the name of Caesar, but he breaks his promise in the case of the son of Pertinax: *filium eius senatus Caesarem appellavit. sed Pertinax nec uxoris Augustae appellationem recepit et de filio dixit: 'cum meruerit'.* No separate biography is devoted to this youth.

[192] Note that *Ael.* 2.2: *qui* (sc. *Aelius Verus*) *primus tantum <u>Caesaris nomen</u> accepit, <u>adoptione</u> Hadriani familiae principum adscitus* contains the same elements as *Ael.* 7.5 (underlined): *quique in <u>adoptionem</u>*

that fit in the category mentioned. The three *imperatorum filii aut parentes*[193] (*Ael.*, *G*, *Dd.*) should be distinguished from the *tyranni* (*AC*, *PN* and *ClA*) mentioned in the third category in *Ael.* 1.1 in several respects. Not only do they constitute different categories (the *tyranni* are mentioned in the third one in *Ael.* 1.1 as {*eos*} *qui quolibet alio genere aut in famam aut in spem principatus venerunt*), but they also differ in length: *Ael.* (1431 words), *G* (1233 words) and *Dd.* (1677 words) belong to the shortest books of the entire *HA*,[194] while the tyrants' lives *AC* (2622 words), *PN* (2274 words) and *ClA* (2706 words) are considerably longer. In conclusion, the first category contains the lives of *H*, *AP*, *MA*, *V*, *C*, *P*, *DI*, *S*, *Cc.*, *OM*, *Hel.* and *AS*, the second contains the lives of *Ael.*, *G* and *Dd.*, and the third *AC*, *PN* and *ClA*.

Programmatic remarks occur in both the lives of the *tyranni* and of the *imperatorum filii aut parentes*. In *AC* 3.3 both series are found: *proposui enim, Diocletiane Auguste, omnes, qui imperatorium nomen sive iusta causa* (1) *sive iniusta* (2) *habuerunt in litteras mittere, ut omnes purpuratos, Auguste, cognosceres.*[195] The *imperatorium nomen* ('the title of imperator')[196] can either be acquired *iusta causa* (viz. by nomination by the senate, by testament or adoption) or *iniusta causa* (viz. by usurpation). A new division of rulers' classes is made, well-suited to the present circumstances (namely in the biography of a usurper): the new umbrella term is *purpuratus*.[197] In the biography of the next usurper, *PN* 9.2, the author states: *non enim facile, <u>ut in principio libri diximus</u>, quisquam vitas eorum mittit in libros, qui* (1) *aut principes in re p. non fuerunt* (2) *aut a senatu appellati non sunt imperatores* (3) *aut occisi citius ad famam venire nequiverunt.* First, it should be remarked that the classes of rulers occur in a different context, namely when the difficulty of finding information about the lesser known rulers is discussed (earlier occurring in *AC* 3.3 and *PN* 1.1, see sub § 3.5). The categories are, supposedly, explained in the following sentence: *...omnes illi, qui* (1) *aut tantum adoptati sunt* (2) *aut a militibus imperatores appellati (...)* (3) *aut cito interempti vitam cum imperii usurpatione posuerunt.*[198]

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venerunt vel imperatorum filii aut parentes <u>Caesarum nomine</u> consecrati sunt, while the adoption into Hadrian's family in the former quote corresponds with *imperatorum filii aut parentes.*

[193] In fact, *parentes* ('family members') is an unnecessary addition to *imperatorum filii*, because Geta and Diadumenus were the sons of Septimius Severus and Macrinus respectively, while Aelius Verus was adopted as a son. The author may have thought of his own formula in *Ael.* 1.1: *adoptione Hadriani familiae adscitus*: Aelius becomes a member of Hadrian's family. Even more important may be the fact that Aelius is Lucius Verus' father, who shared the emperorship with Marcus Aurelius. The biographies *Ael.* and *V* are the first two to be dedicated to Diocletian.

[194] Only *DI* (1595 words) and *Val.* (1006 words) are of comparable length; for the computational scheme, see below, § 3.7.

[195] With *proposui enim, Diocletiane Auguste,...* the author combines his earlier formulas *quia mihi propositum fuit* (*Ael.*7.5) and *In animo mihi est, Diocletiane Auguste* (*Ael.*1.1), after which there is again a different classification.

[196] Note that *imperator* is used as a synonym to *princeps* in *OM* 15.4: *Quae de plurimis collecta serenitati tuae, Diocletiane Auguste, detulimus, quia te cupidum veterum imperatorum esse perspeximus.*

[197] Compare the different classes of *principes* in the dedication of *Ael.* 1.1 with *ut <u>omnes purpuratos</u>... cognosceres* (*AC* 3.3) with *quia te cupidum <u>veterum imperatorum</u> esse perspeximus* (*OM* 15): the terms are used as synonyms; the author does not care about the exact designations. (Rösger 1980, 200).

[198] The examples which the author gives are Vindex (usurper under Nero and defeated under Galba), Piso (adopted *Caesar* under Galba for a very brief period, in January 69) and, in the second category, Antonius (usurper under Domitian).

PN 9.1	PN 9.2
Eorum..., qui	*...omnes illi, qui*
(1) *aut principes in re p. non fuerunt*	(1) *aut tantum adoptati sunt*
(2) *aut a senatu <u>appellati non sunt imperatores</u>*	(2) *aut a militibus <u>imperatores</u> <u>appellati</u> (...)*
(3) *aut <u>occisi citius</u>*	(3) *aut <u>cito interempti</u>*
Ad famam venire nequiverunt.	*vitam cum imperii usurpatione posuerunt.*

Principes in *PN* 9.1 has the meaning of *Augusti*: it is hard to find information about adopted *Caesares* like Aelius (explained by *qui...tantum adoptati sunt* in 9.2), in contrast with information about the *principes*. The second category is defined by the usurpers, appointed imperator by the soldiers, not the senate. The third category is an afterthought about the same group, formulated in PN 9.1 with an echo of the third category in *Ael*. 1.1: (*illos, qui) quolibet alio genere aut in <u>famam</u> aut in spem <u>principatus</u> <u>venerunt</u>,....* The clause *in famam ...venerunt* becomes *ad famam venire nequiverunt*, which causes a contradiction: whereas the author intends to describe *illos, qui ... in famam ...principatus venerunt*, information about tyrants like Pescennius Niger is difficult to find because *ad famam venire nequiverunt*. Immediately after this, the author announces the biography of Clodius Albinus '*qui quasi socius huius habetur*'. This links the two biographies strongly together.

Avidius Cassius, Clodius Albinus and Pescennius Niger may safely be regarded as a threesome, as they are mentioned together twice (*AS* 1.7, *Q* 1.1). The three *imperatorum filii aut parentes* are also strongly linked.[199] They do have some elements in common with *Ael.*, compare *Ael*. 2.1: *Ceionius Commodus, ... <u>nihil habet in sua vita memorabile, nisi quod primus tantum Caesar est appellatus</u>*, with *Dd*. 1.1 *Antonini Diadumeni pueri ... <u>nihil habet vita memorabile, nisi quod.</u>... G* 1.1 has the excuse: *<u>neque enim multa in eius vita dici possunt</u>, qui prius rebus humanis exemptus est, quam cum fratre teneret imperium*. Thus, the second category of *Ael*. 1.1, as explained in *Ael*. 2.1, announces the lives of *G* an *Dd.*. In the third category in *Ael*. 7.5, the group is specified as *qui...vel imperatorum filii aut parentes Caesarum nomine consecrati sunt*.

Although his emperorship is confirmed by the senate, which is also reported by the author of the *HA* (cf. *OM* 6-7), Macrinus is in many respects described as a tyrant.[200] To begin with the opening words of his vita: in *Vitae illorum principum seu tyrannorum sive Caesarum*, the term *principes* refers to rulers in general, subdivided in two classes as *tyranni* and *Caesares*,[201] which makes Macrinus a *tyrannus*. Diadumenian is as a *Caesar*, according to Herodian: *OM* 10.5: *sciendum praeterea, quod Caesar fuisse dicitur, non Augustus Diadumenus puer, quem plerique pari fuisse cum patris imperio tradiderunt* and *Dd*. 2.5: *Herodianus Graecus scriptor haec praeteriens Diadumenum tantum Caesarem dicit puerum a militibus nuncupatum*.[202] In the two biographies, the title of

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[199] The coherence of the lives of the usurpers and the lives of the Caesares led Callu (1992, XXIV-XXVII) to suppose that the addition of the two groups occurred in two different stages of redaction. Paschoud (1996, XXXIV) rejects Callu's claim, but it is to be regretted that he equally denies the differences between the two groups (like Syme 1971, 68; Barnes 1970, 30 and Den Hengst 1992, 158). In what stage the groups entered the *HA* is hard to say, but the differences can hardly be denied.

[200] See above, § 2.2.1 (Den Hengst 1981, 51 and 57n24: *imperium arripuit*).

[201] Den Hengst 1981, 51, following Rösger 1980, 179-84.

[202] Which is indeed true: Herodian 5.4.12, see for a further discussion of the passage § 5.3.2.

Augustus in relation to Macrinus and Diadumenian is exclusively used in *Dd*.8.5 and 9.1 in two fictitious letters. A further indication that the author treats Macrinus as a usurper, is that he is dealt with as a ruler about whom not much is known. This was a problem, according to *PN* 1.1-2[203] and *PN* 9.2,[204] in writing up tyrants. As we have seen, in his programmatic remarks the author hints at the contents of the book and the immediate context in which they occur, such as *Ael*. 1.1 and *PN* 1.1. Schwartz (1972, 265) notes that the emperor Macrinus fits none of the categories mentioned in *PN* 9.1-2,[205] but his conclusion that the author was therefore badly informed about Macrinus's life cannot be drawn from this datum: rather, the author changes his categories depending on the subject at hand. It is important to note that the preface to *OM* does not cover the programme of the entire *HA*, but that the two following biographies only are introduced by this particular preface.[206]

3.3.2 The Contents of the Intermediary and Later Lives

OM and *Dd*., both belonging to IL, are structured along the lines of PL and SL, and fit the announcement of the books in *Ael*. 1.1 and 7.4 (and thus treated under § 3.3.1). Some more remarks about IL and LL should be made. As we have seen, the tyrants' lives *AC*, *PN* and *ClA* are mentioned 'en groupe' in *AS* 1.7 and *Q* 1.1, while *Ael*., *G* and *Dd*. are not referred to. The author's promise in *Ael*. 7.5 to treat rulers from several categories in separate books (*singulis libris exponere*) is abandoned from *Max*. onward, where rulers are combined: *Ne fastidiosum esset clementiae tuae, Constantine maxime, singulos quosque principes vel principum liberos per libros singulos legere, adhibui moderationem, qua in unum volumen duos Maximinos, patrem filiumque, congererem.* The perspective has shifted from the author (*exponere*) to the reader (*legere*), while the formula *singulis libris* remains unchanged. The content is changed into *principes vel principum liberos*, while *Ael*. 7.5 has *imperatorum filii aut parentes* (so: *imperatorum filii* becomes *principum liberos*). The tyrants, who are not named as a category any longer, are merged into a group containing all *principes*. In the sequel, separate categories are applied: thirty tyrants during the reign of Gallienus are collected in one book, while later in *Q* four tyrants are treated. Moreover, the author emphasizes a different description of

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[203] *Rarum atque difficile est, ut, quos tyrannos aliorum victoria fecerit, bene mittantur in litteras, atque ideo vix omnia de his plene in monumentis atque annalibus habentur. primum enim, quae magna sunt in eorum honorem, ab scriptoribus depravantur, deinde alia supprimuntur, postremo non magna diligentia in eorum genere ac vita requiretur… .* This last item is what the author of the *HA* reproaches Cordus for: he did not search hard enough or find much.

[204] *non enim facile, ut in principio libri diximus, quisquam vitas eorum mittit in libros, qui aut principes in re p. non fuerunt aut a senatu appellati non sunt imperatores aut occisi citius ad famam venire nequiverunt.* Macrinus seems to fit in the last category (described in *OM* 1.1 as *qui non diu imperarunt*; cf. *de imperio, quod non diu tenuerunt*).

[205] Still, the formula *quos tyrannos aliorum victoria fecerit* does apply to Macrinus, who is killed only after one year of reign by the troops of Heliogabalus. The author's point is that there is only a slight difference between short-reigning emperors and tyrants who aspired to the throne.

[206] Turcan (1993, 115) suggests that the preface was added in the final stage of writing, when the secondary lives were also written. Den Hengst 1981, 51 thinks that the preface serves as a program for a series of minor rulers, including Macrinus and Diadumenian (repeated in 1992, 166n55). Callu 1992, XXVII sees the preface to *Ael*. as the beginning of 'la vrai préface', continued in *PN* and *OM*.

his material, developed from the observation that *tyranni* do not hold power for long (*PN* 9.1: *occisi citius* and *PN* 9.2: *cito interempti*).

In the first of the Intermediary Lives, the author's changes in his programme go almost unnoticed: *OM* 1.1: *Vitae illorum principum seu tyrannorum sive Caesarum, qui non diu imperarunt, in obscuro latent,…*. As we have seen in the preceding paragraph, the *tyranni* and *Caesares* primarily refer to Macrinus and Diadumenian respectively. He continues his narration with tyrants who became emperors, but not for long. This last notion is important, because it will return in many later books. The phrase reappears already in the continuation of the same sentence: (*…de imperio, quod non diu tenuerunt*). While in the lives of *AC* and *PN*, the lack of information about the tyrants was caused by the fact that they were defeated and consequently passed into oblivion,[207] in *OM* the author is troubled by a lack of information because the subject of the book did not reign long. Macrinus's reign is a break in the Severan dynasty, but after Alexander Severus, the age of the short-lived emperors begins. At least eight instances of the theme in IL, and eight in LL can be counted.[208] It looks as if the plan to treat the emperors and tyrants in separate books has made place for another design: the distinction between emperors and tyrants becomes ever more vague; the duration of the reign becomes a criterium to distinguish the emperor from the tyrant. Also striking is the use of the theme in connection with oracles and *omina* in IL: *Dd*. 1.1, 5.4, *AS* 13.3, *Max*. 30.2, *Gd*. 23.2.[209]

The most elaborate passage in which the theme of the duration of a reign occurs is *AS* 64.1-2: *Hactenus imperium populi Romani eum principem* (*i.e.* Alexander) *habuit, qui diutius imperaret, post eum certatim inruentibus et aliis semenstribus, aliis annuis, plerisque per biennium, ad summum per triennium imperantibus usque ad eos principes, qui latius imperium tetenderunt, Aurelianum dico, et deinceps*. The author distinguishes between short-lived emperors and longer-lasting rulers and uses this notion in a

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[207] *AC* 3.1: *neque enim plura de his sciri possunt, quorum vitam et inlustrare nullus audet eorum causa, a quibus oppressi fuerint* or *PN* 1.1: *Rarum atque difficile est, ut, quos tyrannos aliorum victoria fecerit, bene mittantur in litteras…* : the rules of these tyrants could not be described adequately for fear of those who conquered them.

[208] *Dd*. **1.1**: *ei stupenda omina sunt facta imperii non diutini*; **5.4**: *quare dixerunt mathematici et imperatoris illum filium futurum et imperatorem, sed non diu*; *Hel*.1.2: *simul intelleget Romanorum iudicia, quod illi* (i.e. Augustus and his successors) *et diu imperarunt et exitu naturali functi sunt, hi* (i.e. tyranni) *vero interfecti, tracti, tyranni etiam appellati, quorum nec nomina libet dicere*; *AS* **13.2**: *ex quo quidem haruspices dixerunt imperatorem quidem illum, sed non diu futurum et cito ad imperium perventurum*; 20.3: *'molliorem tibi potestatem et contemptabiliorem imperii fecisti', ille respondit: 'sed securiorem atque diuturniorem'*; *AS* 64.1, see below; *Max*. **30.2**: *quando dixerunt haruspices duos imperatores non diuturnos ex una domo isdem nominibus futuros*; *Gd*. **23.2**: *sed indicium non diu imperaturi Gordiani hoc fuit, quod eclipsis solis facta est*; *Gall*. 13.2 (about Zenobia): *ipsa suscepit imperium diuque rexit, non muliebriter neque more femineo*; 21.1 (about Macrinus): *Capto Valeriano, diu clarissimo principe civitatis*; 24.2: *et cum multa Tetricus feliciterque gessisset et diuque imperasset, ab Aureliano victus*; 26.3: (about Trebellianus): *aliquamdiu apud Cilicas*; *imperavit*; 27.1: *Zenobia usurpato sibi imperio diutius quam feminam decuit rem p. obtinuit*; 30.2: *nomine filiorum Herenniani et Timolai diutius, quam femineus sexus patiebatur, imperavit*; 31.4 (about Victoria): *quae quidem non diutius vixit*; *Cl*. 1.3: *…qui si diutius in hac esset commoratus re p., Scipiones nobis et Camillos omnesque illos veteres suis viribus, suis consiliis, sua providentia reddidisset. breve illius, negare non possum, in imperio fuit tempus, sed breve fuisset, etiamsi quantum hominum vita suppetit, tantum vir talis imperare potuisset.*

[209] Two more oracles should be mentioned: *PN* 8.6 (*item cum quaereretur, quamdiu imperaturus esset, respondisse Graece dicitur: (…) ex quo intellectum Severum viginti annos expleturum*) and *OM* 3.2 (*sed credentibus cunctis, quod octo annis Antoninus Pius imperaturus esset, …*). Oracles do appear to know a lot about the duration of reigns.

programmatic statement, like in *Hel.* 35.2: *scribere autem ordiar, qui post sequentur. quorum Alexander optimus et cum cura dicendus est* <u>annorum tredecim</u> *princeps, semestres alii et* <u>vix annui et</u> <u>bimi</u>, *Aurelianus praecipuus et horum omnium decus auctor tui generis Claudius semestres alii et vix annui et bimi*. The climax in the sequence *semenstribus – annuis – biennium – triennium – latius* in *AS* 64.1-2 is an amplification of *Hel.*35.8 *semestres – annui – bimi* (apart from the *annorum tredecim* for Alexander). The character of a repetitive theme becomes clear in *MB* 15.7, where historiographical discussions about the duration of a reign are reported: *Imperarunt autem Maximus et Balbinus* <u>anno uno</u>, *cum Maximinus imperasset cum filio, ut quidam dicunt, per* <u>triennium</u>, *ut alii per* <u>biennium</u>.[210]

The theme occurs most frequently in *T*. The contents of this book, thirty tyrants, require it: the brevity of their reigns is the reason why they are little-known. The imperial crisis of the third century[211] manifests itself in a rapid succession of rulers; which leaves its marks on the structure of the books. In the preface of *Cl.* (1.1), the author calls the shorter reigning rulers *tumultuarios ... imperatores ac regulos*.[212] It is interesting to compare the description of the rapid change with Herodian's account of the rulers after Marcus Aurelius' death (1.1.5): ὧν (sc. τυράννων τε καὶ βασιλέων) οἱ μὲν ἐπιμηκεστέραν ἔσχον τὴν ἀρχήν, οἱ δὲ πρόσκαιρον τὴν δυναστείαν· εἰσὶ δ' οἱ μέχρι προσηγορίας καὶ τιμῆς ἐφημέρου μόνης ἐλθόντες εὐθέως κατελύθησαν. What Herodian also seems to recognize is that there is only a minute difference between the official rulers who did not reign long and the 'tyrants' who almost made it.[213]

3.4   The Scope of the *HA*

In the preceding paragraphs the author's material for his narration and his programmatic remarks have been outlined, so that now the time has come to consider the period from which the author took the elements of his narration. As we have seen, the material used in *Ael.* 1.1 and 7.5 exhibit considerable differences, while at the same time the narrative spectrum appears to have undergone significant alterations:

Ael. 1.1	*Ael.* 7.5
in animo mihi est [1]	*Quia mihi propositum fuit…*

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[210] In *Hel.* 34.1, Heliogabalus' reign is measured in years: *Mirum fortasse cuipiam videatur, Constantine venerabilis, quod haec clades, quam rettuli, loco principum fuerit, et quidem prope* <u>triennio</u>.

[211] The notion of crisis in the third century is a hotly debated topic, about which a huge amount of literature has appeared in the past decade. A recent overview in two volumes is Johne 2008, in which several scholars elucidate various aspects of the history of the era 235-84 (from the death of Alexander Severus to the accession of Diocletian), which is generally held to be a period of crisis in economic, governmental, military, moral and cultural respect. For an overview of the historical problems and many references to (recent) literature see De Blois 2006, 25-36.

[212] Cf. the formula *minusculos tyrannos* in *Q* 1.1 and the discussion if the first tyrant, Firmus, should only be called a *latrunculus* (Paschoud 2001, 207-11).

[213] The same goes for Herodian, as expressed by Hidber 2007, 203: '…quick succession of reigns, bound up with the phenomenon of many adolescents succeeding to the throne, that is announced as the most noticeable feature of the period, deserving the narratees' special attention' (cf. Hidber 2006, 273-8).

Diocletiane Auguste, tot principum maxime, (*) cognitioni numinis tui sternere. [2]	*...singulis libris exponere, meae satisfaciens conscientiae, etiamsi multis nulla sit necessitas talia requirendi.*
** non solum eos, qui principum locum in hac statione, quam temperas, retentarunt, (**), sed illos etiam, qui vel **Caesarum nomine appellati sunt** nec <u>principes</u> aut <u>Augusti</u> fuerunt, vel quolibet alio genere aut in famam aut in spem principatus venerunt,* [3]	*...omnes, qui (...) vel Caesares vel <u>Augusti</u> vel <u>principes</u> **appellati sunt**, quique in adoptionem venerunt, vel imperatorum filii aut parentes **Caesarum nomine** consecrati sunt...*
** ut usque ad Hadrianum feci [4]	*Post **Caesarem** dictatorem, hoc est divum Iulium*
*Quorum praecipue de **Aelio Vero** dicendum est, ...* [5]	*Haec sunt, quae de **Vero Caesare** mandanda litteris fuerunt.*

Figure 3.1*: A comparison of the programmatic statements with regard to the* HA*'s content in* Ael.*1.1 and 7.5*

Many elements from the preface recur in one way or another in the epilogue, such as the intentions of the author [1], the various reasons for writing the *vitae* [2], the contents of the book [3], the *principes* described [4], the writing of a *vita Aelii* [5]. The words in bold type show the lexical similarities between the two texts and the way in which the author uses the same terms in different contexts, with more attention to style than to logic (*principes aut Augusti*, for example, recurs as *Augusti vel principes*, and *Caesarum nomine appellati sunt* is split into *appellati sunt* and *Caesarum nomine*). These interventions make it difficult to extract an underlying logic, though it is important to remember that in the *HA* style is often more important than content.

Meanwile, there is another problem with the time spanned by the *HA*, as there are two different statements about the beginning of the series. The question at what point the *HA* originally began has been posed many times.[214] There are several reasons to suppose that the present beginning of the *HA*, the biography of Hadrian, was not the original one, especially as this book lacks a preface. Also, it would have been more logical for the author to have linked his series to the end of Suetonius' *De vita Caesarum*, which ended with Domitian's reign in the year 96. He could well have continued this series with Domitian's successor Nerva, who, moreover, was the founder of the system of adoptive emperors. The idea of linking a work to a famous predecessor has other precedents in historiography, such as Ammianus did, who began where Tacitus had left off.[215] In his survey (2006-I, 11-5) of diverging opinions about the two major questions (preface and

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[214] Den Hengst 1981, 14-6 (followed by Chastagnol 1994, XXXV) considers the question useless, as the answer cannot be given on the basis of the data, opposed by Paschoud 1996, XXVIII, 40n1 ('Je ne partage pas le point de vue de Chastagnol, qui pense que, puisque la question ne peut être tranchée avec certitude, il est inutile de la poser'). Hohl (1920, 297), Syme (1968, 207), Stubenrauch (1981, 59) Paschoud (*l.c.*) and Fündling (2006, 11-5) all suppose that the beginning is lost accidentally, not so: Johne 1976, 11n2; Callu 1992, XXIV; Meckler 1996, 364-75. Hartke (1951, 324-7) concludes from a statistical analysis of references to Augusti that there never was a *vita Traiani*. Dessau (1892, 587) says about the question: 'Dass der Anfang der Sammlung fehlt ist ohne dies sicher. Sie hat unmöglich mit Hadrian begonnen'.

[215] *A principatu Caesaris Nervae exorsus*, *RG* 31.16.9, see above, § 2.3. Marincola (1997, app. 6-7) treats the instances in which historiographers starting from Thucydides, link their narration to a predecessor.

beginning) Fündling concludes that in the present state of affairs no definite conclusion about the beginning can be drawn.[216] One obvious method of ascertaining whether any *vitae Nervae* and *Traiani* ever existed and were subsequently lost is by assessing internal references to earlier (lost) works. The problem is that many of the references identified can be interpreted in more than one way, as he (2006, 14-5) makes clear. In the next few paragraphs the author's programmatic statements about the beginning and the end of his work will be investigated in order to try and establish a system in his contradictory remarks.

3.4.1 The Beginning of the *HA*

The first preface in the *HA* is that of *Ael.*, which is closely linked to its epilogue. The author comments on the projected scope of his biographies, both with regard to its contents and the starting point of his series. Attempts to harmonize the contradictory remarks in the *HA* risk ignoring the nature of the work: the author consciously and frivolously changes details in his programmatic remarks by way of a literary game, but also as part of an apparent effort to impose order on a heterogenous collection of biographies. Starting point and end shift continually throughout the series. The remarks on the work's beginning are gradually substituted by remarks on its projected end, just as Diocletian as a dedicatee is replaced by Constantine and others. Although there are many contradictions in the author's comments, there is some method to his farrago. He is much given to using the factor of time (TN in particular), whereby he seeks to delude the reader with seemingly consistent yet contradictory comments.

It has been remarked before that there is a difference between the claims made in *Ael.*1.1 and 7.4.[217] The author pretends to come up with a consistent program, while what we find is that it has been changed subtly at the end of his narration about *Ael.*. In the next biographies, up to *OM*, no remarks are found about the beginning of the *HA* (unless *AC* 3.3 *omnes purpuratos* is read as an indication of the scope of the *HA*).[218] In the preface to *OM* a new literary technique crops up. In his defence against his imaginary opponent the author uses the formula *...quasi vel de Traiano aut Pio aut Marco sciendum sit, ...*(*OM* 1.4). This has the double effect of distancing himself from what has been said before, to the point of suggesting that he was not responsible for having written the preceding biographies, and associating Trajan with those of Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius. This is suggestive: it hints at a biography of Trajan. A similar mystification occurs in *Hel.*1.2: *...conpensationem sibi lector diligens faciat, cum legerit Augustum, Traianum, Vespasianum, Hadrianum, Pium, Titum, Marcum...*Whereas the biographies of Augustus, Titus, Trajan and Vespasian are not part of the actual *HA*, those of Hadrian, Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius are – even if they are all mentioned in

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[216] 'Als Fiktion ist die *HA* so einmalig, dass man sich damit schwertut, ihr Regeln und Grenzen des Möglichen vor zu schreiben'. All the same, Fündling tends to assume 'ohne weiteres' that the beginning has been lost in the textual tradition: 'Gleichwohl bleibt der offensichtliche Vorteil eines Prooemiums für den Rest des Werks das stärkste Argument zugunsten eines Anfangsverlustes.'

[217] Hartke 1951, 328; White 1967, 121; Den Hengst 1981, 15; Chastagnol 1994, XXXV. Stubenrauch's complex attempt to emend the passage *Ael.* 7.5 (1981, 64-81) in order to harmonize the disperse remarks in *Ael.* 1.1-2, 7.5 and *Q* 1 ignores the irregular nature of the *HA*.

[218] Den Hengst 1981, 15-6.

one breath (with Vespasian and Titus breaking up the chronological order). The author tries to veil the beginning of the *HA* in ambiguity and attempts to make the reader forget that he once began with Hadrian. We find much the same in *AS* 1.7, this time with respect to the rival emperors: *nam et Pescennium Nigrum et Clodium Albinum et Avidium Cassium et ante Lucium Vindicem et L. Antonium et ipsum Severum, ...* With the words *et ante* the author suggests that Lucius Vindex and L. Antonius have been treated in the same way as Pescennius Niger, Clodius Albinus and Avidius Cassius. In this way, he separates the threesome of tyrants treated in the *HA* from the earlier ones, but passes over the fact that they belong to the historical times described by Suetonius. In *Q* 1.1[219] he describes matters the other way round: Antonius and Vindex are mentioned as Suetonius' responsibility, and Avidius and Albinus and Niger are Marius Maximus' interest. Subsequently, under the guise of Vopiscus, he refers to his predecessor Trebellius Pollio (author of *T*), as if he is one of a kind with Suetonius and Marius Maximus. The actual beginning of the *HA* is not referred to even once, but constantly passed over.

The author's attempt to obscure the starting point for *Ael.* to *Hel.* may indicate that *H* was always his starting point. He tries to suggest that the starting point was *post Caesarem*, and does so by referring to the lives of Augustus, Titus, Vespasian, Domitian and Trajan. Given the fact that he seeks to shore up his authority by taking recourse to a group of fictitious fellow authors, he does not so much claim to have written these lives himself, as present these lives as part of a collaborative effort. On one hand, the author distances himself from the previous biographies by criticizing his alter ego Cordus, and, implicitly, Marius Maximus, on the other he tries to incorporate all history from Augustus to the time when the *HA* was allegedly written. A general preface, if it ever existed, would have nullified this effect of incorporation of the first century AD in the series. The same can be said about the conjecture that there ever was such a thing as a *vita Nervae* (**N*) or *Traiani* (**Tr.*). There is no sign that they ever existed. Without further evidence we have no choice but to accept the beginning of our familiar *HA* as its original one, though a definite answer cannot be given. We will return to this issue below, § 3.8.

3.4.2 The End of the *HA*

Something similar to the problems with the beginning of the *HA* is the case with its projected end. In *Hel*.35.2, the author for the first time reveals something about its intended conclusion:

Hel. 35.2-6:	*AS* 64.1-2:
*scribere autem ordiar, **qui post sequentur**.*	*Hactenus imperium populi Romani*
*Quorum **Alexander** optimus et cum cura*	*eum principem* (*i.e.* Alexander)
dicendus est <u>annorum tredecim princeps,</u>	*habuit, <u>qui diutius imperaret</u>, <u>post</u>*
*<u>semestres alii et vix annui et bimi</u>, **Aurelianus***	*<u>eum certatim inruentibus et aliis</u>*

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[219] *Minusculos tyrannos scio plerosque tacuisse aut breviter praeterisse. nam et Suetonius Tran-quillus, emendatissimus et candidissimus scriptor, <u>Antonium</u>, <u>Vindicem</u> tacuit, contentus eo quod eos cursim perstrinxerat, et Marius Maximus, qui <u>Avidium</u> Marci temporibus, <u>Albinum</u> et <u>Nigrum</u> Severi non suis propriis libris sed alienis innexuit. et de Suetonio non miramur, cui familiare fuit amare brevitatem.*

*praecipuus et horum omnium decus auctor tui generis, **Claudius**. (…) His iungendi sunt **Diocletianus**, aurei parens saeculi, et **Maximianus**, ut vulgo dicitur, ferrei, ceterique ad pietatem tuam. Te vero, **Auguste venerabilis**, multis paginis isdemque disertioribus illi prosequentur, quibus id felicior natura detulerit.*[220] *His addendi sunt **Licinius**, **Severus**, **Alexander** atque **Maxentius**, quorum omnium ius in dicionem tuam venit, sed ita ut nihil eorum virtuti derogetur.*

*semenstribus, aliis annuis, plerisque per biennium, ad summum per triennium imperantibus **usque ad eos principes**, qui latius imperium tetenderunt, **Aurelianum** dico, **et deinceps**.*
De quibus, si vita subpeditaverit, ea, quae conperta fuerint, publicabimus.

In *Hel*. 35.2-6 Alexander, Aurelian and Claudius are mentioned among the emperors whose lives are included in the *HA* as we know it, while Diocletian, Maximian, Constantine, Licinius, Severus, Alexander[221] and Maxentius are beyond the scope of the actual *HA*. The reader at this point expects that the author will carry on at least to the point of Licinius' defeat in 324 AD. In *AS* 64.1-2, only Aurelian '*et deinceps*' are mentioned, with an unspecified ending. To restore the equilibrium, another motif from *Hel*. 35.2 is repeated and drastically amplified: the duration of the reigns succeeding Alexander's term is altered (*annorum tredecim princeps → qui diutius imperaret*; *semestres alii → et aliis semenstribus*; *et vix annui → aliis annuis*; *et bimi → plerisque per biennium*) and extended (*ad summum per triennium imperantibus usque ad eos principes, qui latius imperium tetenderunt*). The author has not only become wordier in his style, but also vaguer in his statements.Meanwhile, at the end of this last programmatic remark about the ending of the *HA*, a new motif is introduced: if he is granted the time to do so, he will add the lives of the tetrachs. The author thus lets us know that the *HA* is a work in progress.[222] In *Pr*.1.5, he states: *...si vita suppetet, omnes, qui supersunt usque ad Maximianum Diocletianumque dicturus* (the projected end is placed at an earlier moment in time: *usque ad*, that is: 294 AD).[223] At the end of the same vita, in *Pr*. 24.8, the motif is repeated: *post deinde si vita suppetit, Carum incipiemus propagare cum liberis*, which has the same result (294 AD), though Diocletian is not mentioned any longer. From this point onward the work's limits are not

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[220] *quibus id felicior natura detulerit*: others, better equipped to describe the times of the reigning emperor, should continue the work; Cf. Amm. Marc. *RG* 31.16.9 *scribant reliqua potiores aetate, doctrinis florentes, ...* (see Kelly 2007, 222 for text and explanation as a formula of humility). A further discussion of the meaning of the phrase is found in § 3.5.

[221] I.e. Domitius, the usurper of 308-10 in Africa, defeated by Maxentius: Chastagnol 1994, 545n1.

[222] Cf. also the author's elaborate remark in *Tac*. 16.7: *haec ego in aliorum vita de Probo credidi praelibanda, ne dies, hora, momentum aliquid sibi vindicaret in me necessitate fatali ac Probo indicto deperirem.* It is interesting that the 'motif of long life' is shifted to the subject of his narration in *Tac*. 16.6: *qui si diutius vixisset...*cf. Livy's remark about Hamilcar (*AUC* 21.2.1: *si diutius vixisset*) and Philippus (39.23.5 and 41.24.4-5: *si vixisset*). Cf. *Aur*. 24.8: *quae qui velit nosse, Graecos legat libros, qui de eius vita conscripti sunt. ipse autem, si vita suppetit atque ipsius viri favor viguerit, breviter saltem tanti viri facta in litteras mittam, non quo illius viri gesta munere mei sermonis indigeant, sed ut ea, quae miranda sunt, omnium voce praedicentur.*

[223] Stubenrauch (1981, 90-3) interpretes *usque ad* as including the tetrarchy, an interpretation which is rejected by Paschoud 2001, 51n35 and 2005, 105. For a similar instance, though another signification (namely: inclusive) of *usque ad*: Amm. Marc. *RG* 31.16.9: *ad usque Valentis interitum*.

shifted any further, while references about the end become ever more explicit. In *Q* 1.4 the author states: *cum dicendi essent Carus, Carinus et Numerianus* and *Q* 9.4: *superest nobis Carinus*, …. From *incipiemus propagare* to *dicendi essent* and *superest nobis*, the author increasingly goes back on his promise. The following table shows the shifting boundaries of the *HA*, based on the author's own programmatic remarks:

Subject Matter	Period Covered	Actual Work	Projected Narrative Range
Caesar | Domitian	44 BC -117 AD	(Suetonius)	*Ael*. 7.5 (*post Caesarem dictatorem*)
Nerva | Trajan	96-117 AD	Ø	*Ael*. 1.1 (*usque ad Hadrianum*)
Hadrian | **Carinus**	**117-284 AD**	*HA*	***H-Car.*** *Pr*.1.5 (*usque ad Maximianum Diocletianumque*) [224]
Diocletian | Constantine	284-324 AD	Ø	*AS* 64.1-2 (*Aurelianus et deinceps*) *Hel*. 35.2-6 (*his addendi sunt Licinius… Maxentius*)

Figure 3.2: *The actual (in bold type) and projected scope of the* HA

For the shift at the end of the *HA* there are some famous models in Latin literature. Authors sometimes wish to let the reader know that their writing is a work in progress, as for instance Livy (*AUC* 31.1). The prime example from Latin literature for the author of the *HA*, however, would have been Tacitus' *Annales* and *Historiae*, which largely overlap the era of Suetonius' *De vita Caesarum*. Just like the author of the *HA* (and unlike Suetonius), Tacitus comments on the beginning and the end of his works. If we assess Tacitus' works as a unity, covering the period *ab excessu divi Augusti* to the death of Domitian, and study his own remarks the projected end of his works, the following picture appears:

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[224] Apart from *Pr*.1.5, *Pr*. 24.8, *Q* 1.4 and *Q* 9.4 indicate the actual ending.

Subject Matter	Period Covered	Work	Time of Publishing
Augustus	Up to 14 AD	Ø	(1)
Tiberius | Nero	14-69 AD	*Annales*	ca. 120 AD
Galba | Domitian	69-96 AD	*Historiae*	ca. 109-10 AD
Nerva Trajan	from 96 AD	Ø	(2)

Figure 3.3: *The actual and projected scope of Tacitus' works* (Annales *and* Historiae)[225]

The figure shows that Tacitus described the historical period from Tiberius to Domitian in two works, *Annales* and *Historiae*, which cover a continuous historical period.[226] The scope of the narration is fluid. For example, in *Annales* 3.24, Tacitus plans to write about the times of Augustus, whereas his *Annales* only cover the period *ab excessu divi Augusti*: (1) *Sed aliorum exitus, simul cetera illius aetatis* (*sc.* Augusti) *memorabo, si effectis in quae tetendi plures ad curas vitam produxero*. With *cetera illius aetatis memorabo* Tacitus means a description of Augustus' reign, which comes down to transcending the boundaries of his own narration, while *effectis in quae tetendi* refers to the realization of his current project of the *Annales*. This plan was, as far as we know and for whatever reason, never realized (*si …vitam produxero* is the unfulfilled condition which might have prevented Tacitus). The remark reveals something about the scheme the author had in mind: he intended to shift the beginning of his subject matter back to an earlier date in history. The end of the project is presented in the same way: in *H* 1.1.4 Tacitus states that, life permitting, he intends to continue his narration up to his own times, which is under Trajan's reign: (2) *quod si vita suppeditet, principatum divi Nervae et imperium Traiani, uberiorem securioremque materiam, senectuti seposui.*[227] The formulas *quod si vita suppeditet* and *senectuti seposui* are other ways of saying *si vitam produxero* in (1). Tacitus never got so far as to describe Nerva's or Trajan's reign (96-8 and 98-117 respectively), possibly prevented by his death around 120 AD. Note that when Tacitus looked ahead to the promised end of his *Historiae* the *Annales* had not yet been written – he chose to go back in time to describe the early decades of the first century AD.

What exactly does the similarity in writing procedure and programmatic remarks prove? It would be risky to conclude that the formulas in *Pr.*1.5 (he states: *…si vita*

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[225] As is well known, Jerome considered Tacitus' *Annales* and *Historiae* to be a unity, comprising thirty books (*Comm. ad Zachapter* 3.14).

[226] The beginnings and endings of Tacitus' works and the authorial comments are comprehensively treated in Kraus/Woodman 1997, 88-97; cf. Leeman 1973, 169-208.

[227] The promise to describe the reigns of Nerva (and eventually Trajan) is also made in *Agr.* 3.3 (*testimonium praesentium bonorum*): Chilver 1979, 37.

suppetet) and *Pr.* 24.8 (*post deinde si vita suppetit*) in *HA* are directly derived from the *Annales* 3.24 (*si ...vitam produxero*) and *H* 1.1.4 (*quod si vita suppeditet*), when this kind of formula is also encountered in other works.[228] Still, the composition of a historical work on a period in imperial history, in which the author transcends the borders of his own narration in order to sketch his (alleged) further plans, makes the comparison with Tacitus interesting. Suetonius does not have programmatic remarks of this kind, and Nepos does not organize his biographies along any specific chronological order, nor is his material related to his own lifetime. The system of Roman emperorship made it possible for historiographers to take imperial rule as a point of departure for their descriptions of historical time. Both Tacitus and the narrator of the *HA* took the termination of a reign and the beginning of another (the adoptive emperorship and the tetrarchy respectively) in which they lived, as the end of their narration. Such a program leads to promises and speculations about further writing that is presented in much the same form.

3.5   Style

With the formula *uberiorem securioremque materiam* Tacitus (*H* 1.1.4) promises a favourable description of the era of Nerva and Trajan, under whose reigns he writes.[229] The promise to describe contemporary events can be compared to what the author of the *HA* writes in *Hel.* 35.5, although he pretends there that he will leave the description of the current reign to more talented successors (*quibus id felicior natura detulerit*). These more talented authors will describe Constantine *multis paginis isdemque disertioribus. Disertus* normally denotes 'dexterous or skilled in speaking (or writing)' – the question being here what the author exactly means with this indication of style. A clue is possibly found in *Q* 15.10: *Diocletianus et qui secuntur stilo maiore dicendi sunt*. This leads us to the question who are supposed to continue the narration *stilo maiore* and, in the second place, what type of text the author has in mind. First, the authors. Wölfflin (1891, 511) interpreted the remark as a promise to continue the narration *stilo maiore*, while on the other hand Den Hengst (1981, 74; 1992, 160) feels that the author did not intend to do so himself, as others were better equipped for this (as he stated in *Hel.* 35.5).[230] The latter

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[228] E.g. Cic. *De Fin.* 1.4.11: *et scribentur fortasse plura, si vita suppetet...*; *Brut.* 245 (*si vita suppeditavisset*); *Phil.* 3.15 ; Livy 35.15.3 ; 40.56.7 ; Pliny the Younger *Ep.* 5.5.8 (Paschoud 1996, 142); contemporary parallels in Ausonius *ep.* 10: *fors fuat, ut si mihi vita suppetet, aliquid rerum tuarum quamvis incultus expoliam...* and *ep.* 16: *si vita suppetet* (Chastagnol 1994, LXXXVIII). Hieronymus *Ep.* 47.3: *si vita suppetit* (Velaza 1997, 251, taken from Schwartz 1966, 463-5). According to Velaza (*ibid.*) Tac. *H* 1.1.4 comes close to cases in the *HA* ('le *locus similis* le plus proche'). Paschoud 2005, 109, quoting Syme 1958, 221, states that Tacitus did not intend to write the times of Trajan at all, but left the materia 'to the crowd, to panegyrists or to poets'.

[229] The reign of Nerva is praised in Agr.3.1: *augeatque cotidie felicitatem temporum Nerva Traianus*, …, those of Nerva and Trajan in *H* 1.1.4: *rara felicitate temporum, ubi sentire quae velis et quae sentias dicere licet. uberioremque... materiam* denotes the 'richer' material for the historical narration, which particularly consists of Trajan's expeditions in the east. *Uberius* often concerns style of writing, as in Cicero (*Orat.* 39, about Herodotus and Thucydides) and Ammianus Marcellinus (in the preface to *RG* 26.1.2: *cognitiones actuum variorum stilis uberibus explicatas*). *Securioremque* concerns the *libertas dicendi* in Trajan's times (as can be inferred from Chilver 1979, 38 ad *rara ...licet*; *OLD* ad *securus* 2b: '(of conditions, places) free from anxieties, undisturbed, peaceful'.

[230] Dessau (1889, 33) stressed the political impossibility of dedicating a series of biographies, including usurpers (and the emperor's fiercest enemies), to the reigning emperor Constantine.

interpretation is certainly right for *Hel*. 35.5, but overlooks the fact that the author continues with *non ego id faciam...vera praedicaro* (*Hel*. 35.7), in which he promises to describe the rivals of Constantine.[231] Moreover, the *HA* pretends to have a multiple authorship. The author constantly hides behind different personalities, and does not really distinguish between his own writings and those of (alleged) others – he just leaves matters undecided.

Next, style. The emperors succeeding Diocletian will be described *paginis... disertioribus*, a style which the author disapproves of himself, according to the preface to the *vita Probi* (*Pr*. 2.6-7): *illud tantum contestatum volo me et rem scripsisse, quam, si quis voluerit, honestius[232] eloquio celsiore demonstret, et mihi quidem id animi fuit, ut non Sallustios, Livios, Tacitos, Trogos atque omnes disertissimos imitarer viros in vita principum et temporibus disserendis, sed Marium Maximum, Suetonium Tranquillum, Fabium Marcellinum, Gargilium Martialem, Iulium Capitolinum, Aelium Lampridium ceterosque, qui haec et talia non tam diserte quam vere memoriae tradiderunt.* The author does not intend to adopt the style of grand historiography, but of the biographers from Suetonius to the *Scriptores historiae Augustae*, because a truthful account is preferable to a grand style (*qui haec et talia non tam diserte quam vere memoriae tradiderunt*).[233] Just before the transition to the historical narration, he contradicts himself with (*Pr*.2.9) *et ne diutius ea, quae ad meum consilium pertinent, loquar, magnum et praeclarum principem et qualem historia nostra non novit, arripiam*, which seems to announce a eulogy.

The remarks about continuation of the narration by others are reminiscent of the last programmatic remark (or 'sphragis') in Ammianus Marcellinus, *RG* 31.16.9: *scribant reliqua potiores aetate, doctrinis florentes, quos id – si libuerit – adgressuros procudere linguas ad maiores moneo stilos.* The author of the *HA* seems to combine a classic commonplace (he provides the material that others may use for historiography, here indicated as descriptions *eloquio celsiore*[234]) and the admonition to others to describe the

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[231] In *Hel*. 35.6, the author promises to describe the emperors from Alexander to Claudius, whereafter he states: *His iungendi sunt Diocletianus (…) et Maximianus ...* . Others will have to describe Constantine, whereafter the author states (*Hel*. 35.6): *His addendi sunt Licinius, Severus, Alexander atque Maxentius....* Then the author continues with saying (*Hel*. 35.7): *non ego id faciam, quod plerique scriptores solent,....* So, if we follow the author's line of thought, he will add the defeated rulers to the description of Constantine. It is interesting that in *Car*. 18.5, after he has apparently given up his plan to continue up to Diocletian's times, he does mention one of those authors who will describe Diocletian's reign: *quorum vitam* (i.e. the tetrarchs) *singulis libris Claudius Eusthenius, qui Diocletiano ab epistulis fuit, scripsit, quod idcirco dixi, ne quis a me rem tantam requireret, maxime cum vel vivorum principum vita non sine reprehensione dicatur.* Writing about recent emperors is hazardous, as tradition has it (Paschoud 2005, 107). Cf. *HA Car*. 18.5 *cum vel vivorum principum vita non sine reprehensione dicatur* and Amm. Marc. 26.1.1 (and Den Boeft et al. 2008, 8-9). Leeman 1963, 170 defines *securitas* in a political sense as 'freedom from *cura* in the meaning of moral pressure'.

[232] *Honestius* is a manifestation of the much debated *veritas* topos in historiography. Cicero was the first to formulate the *prima lex historiae*: *Orat*. 2.62: *Nam quis nescit primam esse historiae legem, ne quid falsi dicere audeat? Deinde ne quid veri non audeat?*; for a recent overview see Blockley 2001, 14-24; for Ammianus: Den Boeft *et al*. 2008, 9 and for Cicero: Leeman 1963, 171; Den Hengst 2009, 1-11, for Tacitus: Goodyear 1970, 29.

[233] Cf. *T* 33.8 *da nunc cuivis libellum non tam diserte quam fideliter scriptum.*

[234] Cf. Cic. *Brut*. 262 about Caesar (*sed dum voluit alios habere parata unde sumerent, qui vellent historiam scribere*, interpunction by Kovacs 1989, 233 and a similar expression in Suet. *Div.Iul*. 56.2 (the most original turn of the topos can be found in poor Aulus Hirtius, *BG* 8.1). The expression *qui vellent*

reigning *princeps* in an elevated style. The parallel between *si quis voluerit* in *Pr.* 2.6 and and *si libuerit* (*RG* 31.16.9) is striking: it is about the question whether there will be others prepared to undertake the task at all.[235] Ammianus makes his remark because his narration deals with the dynasty of the reigning emperors, which demands a different style, as tradition prescribes.[236] In fact, the author of the *HA* does himself what he suggests others should do, thereby breaking his promise to abstain from high style (*eloquium celsius*) and to provide facts (*rem*) only. About his own style, the author leaves no room for doubt. On several occasions, he states his intention to report reliable facts in a plain style (not *eloquenter*). *Eloquentia* is opposed to *fidelitas historica* in *T* 11.6-7 (equalled equated with the opposition *verba – res*)[237], and to *res gestae* in *Pr.* 1.6.[238] In *A* 2.2 *historica eloquentia* is attributed to the classical historiographers Livy, Sallust, Tacitus and Trogus as *mendaciorum comites*.[239] At the very end of his work, he uses the notion of *eloquentia* in a different way: in *Car.* 21.2, he presents his work (*meum munus*) to the addressee (*mi amice*) and states that not *eloquentia*, but *curiositas* is what caused him to write the biographies (cf. *Pr.* 2.8: *sum enim unus e curiosis…*).[240] It is not that he did not want to write *eloquenter*, but that he was not able to.[241] Others may use his inquiries in order to write more eloquently, about the same subject matter: *Habe, mi amice, meum munus, quod ego, ut saepe dixi, non <u>eloquentiae</u> causa sed <u>curiositatis</u> in*

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[235] *historiam scribere* hints at the same as *si libuerit* and *si quis voluerit*, cf. also *OM* 1.2 *qui vitas aliorum scribere orditur*) and Plin. *Ep.* 6.16.1 (ad Cornelium Tacitum): *Petis ut tibi avunculi mei exitum scribam, quo verius tradere posteris possis. Gratias ago; nam video morti eius, si celebretur a te, immortalem gloriam esse propositam….* . The idea expressed here is that Pliny provides the plain facts, from which Tacitus can take information for historiography (cf. also Pliny *Ep.* 7.33.10 and comments by Kraus 1997, 102). Often, this topos is used as a formula of modesty: the author pretends to leave it up to others to report the facts better, while in fact it is he who comes up with the end product. Paschoud 2001, 411 gives the contemporary example of Photios' message to Olympiodorus.

[235] See the enlightening commentary by Kelly on this point: 2007, 240-1. The thought of later authors (*novi semper scriptores (rerum)* is not unfamiliar to Livy, *praef.* 3: *si in tanta scriptorum turba fama in obscura sit, nobilitate ac magnitudine eorum me qui nomini officient meo consoler.*

[236] See for example Jerome's *Chronicon, praef.* : *quo fine contentus reliquum temporis Gratiani et Theodosii latioris historiae stilo reservavi…*, Eutropius 10.18.3; Festus 30.1; in the *HA* itself: *PN* 11.5-6 (*denique cum imperatori facto quidam panegyricum recitare vellet, dixit ei: 'scribe laudes Marii vel Annibalis vel cuius vis ducis optimi vita functi et dic, quid ille fecerit, ut eum nos imitemur. nam viventes laudare inrisio est, maxime imperatores, a quibus speratur, qui timentur, qui praestare publice possunt, qui possunt necare, qui proscribere*, see Paschoud 2005, 107.

[237] Paschoud (2001, 411) quotes from Cicero *De Or.* 2.63 *ipsa autem aedificatio* (sc. *historia*) *posita est in rebus et verbis.*

[238] See Janson (1964, 134) about this passage as topos in prefatory remarks.

[239] Den Hengst (1981, 72-3 and 1987, 157-74) comments on the opposition. *Eloquentia* has the property that it beautifies and amplifies plain facts, according to Cicero, *De Or.* 3. 104: *summa autem laus eloquentiae est amplificare rem ornando* (Leeman 1963, 173).

[240] *Curiositas* is an *anticipatio* against critics: *A* 10.1: *Frivola haec fortassis cuipiam et nimis levia esse videantur, sed curiositas nil recusat* (Paschoud 1996, 85-6; 2001, 376-7 and 411 remarks that the word only occurs once in classical literature, in Cicero (namely *Ep. ad Att.* 2.12.2).

[241] A comparable formula of modesty is expressed by Tacitus: *Agr.* 3.3 : *non tamen pigebit vel incondite ac rudi voce memoriam prioris servitutis ac testimonium praesentium bonorum composuisse.* The author of the *HA* excuses himself for having a *pedestre adloquium*, for which see Den Hengst 1981, 72-3 and Paschoud 2001, 150-1. Note the difference he makes between writing *stilo historico et diserto* and *pedestri adloquio*, *T* 1.1: *Scriptis iam pluribus libris non historico nec diserto sed pedestri adloquio.* In *Pr.* 21.1 he apologizes for not keeping his promise to stick to the facts: *longius amore imperatoris optimi progredior quam pedestris sermo desiderat.*

lumen edidi, id praecipue agens, ut, si quis <u>eloquens</u> vellet facta principum reserare, materiam non requireret, habiturus meos libellos ministros <u>eloquii</u>.[242] *te quaeso, sis contentus nosque sic voluisse scribere melius quam potuisse contendas.* The distinction between writing about *tempora acta* and the present times is no longer made. As the series comes to an end, there is no prospect of any further continuation. The program now emphasises plain style (in the narration) as against eloquence (in praise of later emperors).

To conclude: the author invites others to continue his narration in high style (*Hel.* 35.6, *Q* 15.10) and, at the same time, to use the works that he has written himself as a source for works in high style (*Pr.*2.6, *Car.* 21.2).[243] The question that remains is what the author means with *stilus maior* or *eloquium celsius*. These commonplaces point in two directions: the two instances seem to indicate that panegyrical writing is meant, as the era to be described is the alleged time of writing, which demands a favourable attitude to the reiging emperor (Constantine, in casu), in much the same way that Pliny addressed his *Panegyricus* to Trajan (100 AD), or Nazarius his eulogy to Constantine (321 AD).[244] On the other hand, the author states his intention to provide facts for histories, in contrast with the *mendaciorum comites* Sallust, Livy and Tacitus.[245] It looks as if the author does not really distinguish between the two:[246] he is inexact in his expressions and ignores differences between the types of text, even in his own work, as the vita Claudii and Taciti are panegyrics in the guise of biographies.[247]

3.6   Dedications

If we are prepared to suspend our disbelief temporarily and accept the names of suspect *scriptores* and their dedications as genuine, we can say that Aelius Spartianus dedicates his *Ael.* and *Dd.* to Diocletian, that Julius Capitolinus dedicates his *MA*, *V* and *OM* to Diocletian, but his *ClA*, *Max.*, *Gd.* and *MB* to Constantine; that Vulcacius Gallicanus dedicates his *AC* to Diocletian and Aelius Lampridius his *Hel.* and *AS* to Constantine.

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[242] Apart from the elements of *eloquentia* and *curiositas* that were mentioned before, the passage contains other idiomatic elements: *si quis eloquens vellet facta principum reserare* (cf. *Pr.* 2.6 *si quis voluerit*, and comm. above) and *eloquens* / *ministros eloquii* (cf. *Pr.* 2.6 *eloquio celsiore*).

[243] One of the first instances of claiming to provide material for a higher style is in Cicero's much debated letter to Lucceius (*Fam.* 5.12, comm. Kraus / Woodman 1997, 18 and Leeman 1963, 173-4). It is interesting that Cicero says that a monography on a single subject (*i.c.* his consulship) demands a higher level of style.

[244] The author excuses himself for the eulogizing vita of Claudius, the alleged ancestor of tetrarch Constantius Chlorus, father of Constantine (Chastagnol 1994, 920): *Cl.* 3.1: *In gratiam me quispiam putet Constantii Caesaris loqui, sed testis est et tua conscientia et vita mea me nihil umquam cogitasse, dixisse, fecisse gratiosum.*

[245] This is what Jerome meant in his statement that the reigns of Gratianus and Theodosius must be described *latioris historiae stilo* (*Chron. Praef*, see Paschoud 2005, 111 ('ausführlichere Erzählweise') and Kelly 2007, 228-9). Eutropius (10.18.3: *reliqua stilo maiore*, on which Amm. Marc. 31.16.9 *ad maiores stilos* is based), on the other hand, aims at panegyric (Kelly 2007, 227); contra: Liebeschuetz 2003, 182n29. Leeman 1963, 180 describes historiography as a *munus oratoris*, closely akin to the epideictic genre in its ornate and fluent 'medium' style (Cic. *Or.* 66).

[246] *Pace* Paschoud 2001, 289; 412; 2005, 111; Den Hengst 1981, 74 and 79n15. Kelly 2007, 228 argues in the case of Ammianus' *RG* 31.16.9 *ad maiores stilos* for an interpretation combining panegyric and historiography, which corresponds with the confusing use of our author.

[247] Paschoud 2005, 104.

Trebellius Pollio does not dedicate any of his four books to an emperor, nor does Flavius Vopiscus, though in *A*, the latter addresses a certain Tiberian, while *Pr.* is dedicated to Celsinus and *Q* to Bassus.[248] In narratological terms, the narrators are identified as authors from the first three decades of the fourth century, and their dedicatees the emperors of that era.[249] In a few instances, allusions are made to the reader in general of the *HA*, though he is never adressed as such.[250] The dedications are essential for the interpretation of the *HA* as a work of literary art, as these are the only explicit devices by which the reader is enabled to locate the *HA* in time, the early fourth century. The fact that this fictitious time is not in accordance with the historical time of writing is a different matter.[251]

As the *HA* is a work of historical content, the reader is seduced into accepting its listing of the authors as equally historical, being persuaded to confuse narratological devices with historiographical data. What then is the literary virtue of the game the author plays? Clearly, he wants to give the impression that the *HA* is the result of a collaborative effort, produced at some time between the reign of Diocletian and the later years of Constantine or even after: the failure of the lives by Trebellius Pollio and Flavius Vopiscus to mention any emperors is remarkable. The inconsistencies in the dedications and the political impossibility of dedicating the collected works to the two emperors conjointly were important arguments for Dessau to postulate that the work was written by a single author, long after the reigns of the dedicatees. Nowadays, such a single authorship is still the basis for modern scholarship in studying the *HA*. The only aspect of the authors' names that are worth studying is the sources from which the author drew his imaginary fellow-writers, about which there has been much speculation.[252]

In the next few paragraphs, a special attempt is made to map out the dedications and their literary models. Dedications are found in all types of Latin literature, from *carmina* to letters and from historical prose to fiction.[253] There is, however, an interesting

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[248] As we have seen before when discussing content and scope, a change of addressee has taken place between the beginning and the end of the book of *Ael.*: whereas in *Ael.* 1.1 (*cognitioni numinis tui sternere*) the books is purported to be written for the emperor's sake, at the end in *Ael.* 7.4 (*etiamsi multis nulla sit necessitas talia requirendi*) the author does not see any other purpose in his undertakings than his own pleasure (*meae satisfaciens conscientiae*). This same sentiment recurs in *Tac.* 16.8: *nunc quoniam interim meo studio satis factum arbitrans studio et cupiditati meae*: this sentence occurs in the later lives, which are not dedicated to the emperors..

[249] Syme 1983, 28: 'The author now decided to take on several identities, but the labels were attached without care or discrimination'. Genette 1997, 46-54 heads this practice under the seventh category of 'pseudonimity': 'a real author attributes a work to an imaginary author, but does not produce any information about the latter except the name – he does not, in other words, supply the whole paratextual apparatus that ordinarily serves to substantiate (seriously or not) the existence of the imagined author'.

[250] *Hel.* 1.2: *conpensationem sibi lector diligens faciet* and *T* 31.5: the author combines thirty tyrants in one volume, in order to avoid boredom and things the reader (*lector*) cannot bear.

[251] The dedications to Diocletian can be found in *Ael.* 1.1, *MA* 19.12; *V* 11.4; *AC* 3.3; *S* 20.4; *PN* 9.1; *OM* 15.4; and to Constantine: *ClA* 4.2; *G* 1.1; *Hel.* 2.4; 34.1; 35.5; *AS* 65.1; *Max.* 1.1; *Gd.* 1.1; 34, 6. Dedications to emperors in prefaces are treated by Janson (1971, 100-6), who concludes that this kind of dedication doesn not differ in principle from other forms of dedication.

[252] Hohl (1912, 474-82) about Vopiscus and Pollio; Chastagnol 1994, XLVII-VIII (see note 130); Birley (2003, 145-6 and 2005, 33-47) gives an overview of research on the six names.

[253] Genette (1997, 117 and 129) is not sure about the origin of the dedication in western literature, and places it in Latin antiquity. However, Van Dam (2008, 18 and 33) shows that Greek dedications preceded the Latin practice, with Isocrates as the first author to dedicate a work. Roman authors transformed it into a

difference between biography and historiography with respect to the meaning of a dedication. Wölfflin remarks that Sallust, Livy and Tacitus do not dedicate their works for reasons of preserving their independence.[254] The three specimens of Latin biography below, on the other hand, all have their dedicatees: Nepos dedicated his *De ducibus* to Atticus (and also an extensive life of Cato, as appears from *Cato* 3.5), and Suetonius his *De Vita Caesarum* to Septicius Clarus, in a preface now lost. Where lives are described, there is sometimes a relation between the dedicatee and the contents of the work. A biographical work could be commissioned by a high-placed person or close friend in order to lay out the origins of a family. The author of the *HA* stresses that the life of Claudius is important, because Constantine wished to trace back his ancestry to this respected general and emperor.[255] The aforementioned Atticus, a fervent *antiquitatis amator* (Nepos *Att.* 18.3), wrote a work about the family of the Iunii at the request of his friend Brutus.[256]

This is how the two dedications compare:

Nepos *Att.* 18.1	HA *Claud.*1.1
fecit hoc idem (i.e. familiarum originem subtexuit*) separatim in aliis libris, ut M. Bruti rogatu Iuniam familiam a stirpe ad hanc aetatem ordine enumeravit.*	*Ventum est ad principem Claudium, qui nobis intuitu Constanti Caesaris cum cura in litteras digerendus est.*

The persons mentioned here (*M. Bruti rogatu*, *intuitu Constanti Caesaris*) have like motives for their request, namely a study into the origins of their families,[257] and the authors. Nepos and the author of the *HA* dedicate the biographies to the persons who commissioned them. Atticus similarly researched the family trees of the Marcelli, Fabii and Aemilii, in their turn commented on by Nepos – which again may have been the model for the author of the *HA*, this time in his dedication to Diocletian:

Nepos *Att.* 18.4	HA *OM*.15.4
Quibus libris nihil potuit esse dulcius iis, qui aliquam cupiditatem habent notitiae clarorum virorum.	*quae de plurimis collecta serenitati tuae, Diocletiane Auguste, detulimus, quia te cupidum veterum imperatorum esse perspeximus.*

The author of the *HA* adapted the words *cupiditatem ... notitiae clarorum virorum* into *cupidum veterum imperatorum* for his own purposes, thus creating his own dedication. Knowledge about famous men was treated before by Nepos in *Att*.18.2:

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literary art, with many variations on the phenomenon: Seneca maior, for one, repeats his dedications in every preface of his books on orators, and Columella has a similar practice.

[254] Wölfflin 1892, 466.

[255] Many studies have been devoted to this subject: Syme 1983, 64; Chastagnol 1994, 920-4; Bird 1997; Festy 2005, 181-93; De Beer 2005, esp. 297-9; *et alii*.

[256] A tribute to their friendship is Cicero's *Brutus*, which is cast in the shape of a conversation between Cicero, Brutus and Atticus.

[257] Cf. *HA Gall*. 14.3: *is enim est Claudius, a quo Constantius, vigilissimus Caesar, originem ducit.*

Nepos *Att*. 18.2	*HA AC* 3.3
Sic familiarum originem subtexuit, <u>ut ex eo clarorum virorum propagines possimus cognoscere.</u>	*Proposui enim, Diocletiane Auguste, omnes, qui imperatorium nomen sive iusta causa sive iniusta habuerunt, in litteras mittere, <u>ut omnes purpuratos, Auguste, cognosceres.</u>*

Nepos' *ut… possimus cognoscere* is changed to *ut… cognosceres* in the same way that the author of the *HA* changed *reperire possit* in Cato 3.2 to *pauca repperit* in *OM* 1.4 (see above). Thus, we may conclude that elements from the brief passage in Nepos' *Att*. 18.1-4 recur in three different places in the *HA*, all of them dedications.

3.7   Time in the *HA* I

The dedications pin down the time of writing during the reigns of Diocletian and Constantine, the narrator being a contemporary historian or rather a group of biographers. The real time, however, has been difficult to pinpoint exactly and escapes us even now. After Dessau, who dated it to the later years of Theodosius in approximately 395 AD, Seeck (1890), inspired by Dessau's findings, shifted the date to the first decade of the fifth century. After three decades of vehement discussion, Baynes acquired much support for his view of the *HA* as a work of propaganda for the emperor Julian (361-3). Ever since the beginning of the *Historia Augusta Colloquia*, a majority has returned to Dessau's proposal of approximately 395 AD, though in recent times later dates have again been proposed.[258] As long as time of origin and authorship remain unknown, references to the author's contemporaneous world elude definition, while their meaning remains obscure. Anachronisms and the use of certain sources may provide clues about the time of writing (by way of a *terminus post quem*), and a study of the author's historical and literary *Umwelt* may contribute to determining of the era when the *HA* was written. Historical time, in the sense of defining the time when it was composed, lies beyond the scope of this study, whose chief concern is with the *HA* as a literary work of fiction, for all that the material is historical, genuine or not.

This brings us to an analysis of time as it is presented in the *HA*. The elements treated in the preceding paragraphs, on biographical writing, material, scope and dedications, were entirely controlled by the author. This does not hold good for the notion of time, as the distribution of temporal aspects is partly the result of coincidence in every work of art. We will evaluate these aspects in the work as it has been transmitted, in order to use our conclusions for further observations in the subsequent chapters. Often, the question will arise whether the author intended to create the work as we know it, or whether coincidence played a role in the process. The dividing lines between deliberate design and accidental outcome are sometimes very hard to draw, but the questions will be faced and, where possible, answers will be proposed. Time will be the subject of the next paragraphs, as a factor that determines a good deal of the literary design of the series,

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[258] Festy (2007, 183-96) ascribes the *HA* to Nicomachus Flavius junior in the thirties of the fifth century on the base of the dedication in *Hel*. 35.3.

since the author constructed a complex work in which time works on several levels. The contents (or *materia*) of the *HA* are taken from a limited period in time (second and third centuries), while there is also the era in which the author pretends to write (first quarter of the fourth century) in his *persona* of narrator.

3.7.1 Time of the Story

The Time of the Story of the *HA* as it has come down to us, is the period from the reign of Hadrian up to the death of Carinus and the beginning of the reign of Diocletian, which is a period of 167 years (*AD* 117 – 284). There is a sixteen-year *lacuna* covering the emperors in the years 244 – 260 and the first half of Valerian's reign. When the scope of the *HA*, as dealt with above, is considered in terms of TS, it can be concluded that there is a considerable discrepancy between the projected TS and the actual TS: the author suggests in his programmatic remarks that TS will be from the death of Julius Caesar (*Ael*. 7.5) to the sole reign of Constantine (*Hel*. 35.8). This would mean that the TS of the series spans almost four centuries, whereas in actual fact the books of the *HA* occupy approximately 170 years only. The maximum of TS is presented to us in the middle books of the series: if we could only dispose of *Hel*., in the knowledge that it once had been part of a vast series, we would have believed that the *HA* consisted of biographies from Augustus to Constantine. The author goes back on his promise to describe the reigns of Diocletian in the course of his narration, either counting on the forgetfulness of his readers, and thus playing a literary game, or because he realised that he would never achieve his aim (with the excuse of *si vita suppetit...*). The former option is the most probable, and can be explained as literary imitation of Tacitus.

3.7.2 Time of the Narrative

With regard to the relation between TN and TS in the *HA*, two different points of view can be taken: either the time of the individual books (related to the life or the reign of an emperor, co-emperor or rival) can be studied, or the collection (or parts of this) as a whole can be taken into account. In the author's comments TN plays an important part: he shows his awareness of what we now call narrative time, as for instance in *T* 1.1: *scriptis iam pluribus libris (…) ad eam temporum venimus seriem...* ('after having written many books already, we have now come to that period in history…'). The author first summarises his preceding account in a formula that actually refers to TN, namely *scriptis iam pluribus libris*, in which *iam* is the particle that marks the progress of the series. Next, the formula *ad eam temporum …seriem* contains a reference to TN in the current book, which treats the thirty tyrants during the reigns of Valerian and Gallienus (*seriem, in qua per annos, quibus Gallienus et Valerianus rem p. tenuerunt, triginta tyranni…extiterunt*). Also, such remarks as *longum est innectere* (*A* 20.1), which are

found in many varieties, testify to the author's awareness of time as an important narrative aspect.[259]

The advantage of the concept of TN is that it can be measured by way of counting the words devoted to a certain topic. The time which the narrator took for books devoted to the lives of emperors (some of which including more than one, cf. chapter 4), as represented in the three different sections of the *HA*, is laid out in the following table:[260]

	PL	SL		IL			LL	
Book	*Words*	*words*	*Book*	*words*		*Book*	*words*	
H	5 124		OM	2 495		Val.	1 003	
Ael.		1 433	Dd.	1 679		Gall.	3 647	
AP	2 245		Hel.	5 782		T	6 637	
MA	5 500		AS	10 701		Cl.	2 979	
V	2 057		Max.	5 431		A	7 803	
AC		2 620	Gd.	5 563		Tac.	3 094	
C	3 466		MB	3 153		Pr.	4 136	
P	2 596					Q	2 333	
DI	1 594					Car.	2 751	
S	4 215							
PN		2 274						
ClA		2 706						
Cc.	2 033							
G		1 231						
Total	28 830	10 264						
Total	39 094			34 804			34 383	

Figure 3.4: *NS of the thirty books of the* HA *and of the parts of PL, SL, IL and LL in absolute numbers (representing the number of words).*

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[259] An interesting aspect is that the author also comments on the time needed to produce his work, in *T* 33.8 – a passage which does not refer to the time when he wrote his work so much, as to the time which it took him to come up with it. The quote falls outside the distinguished categories, but adds an interesting item to the mentioned aspects of time. The author states: *…hos libellos, quos de vita principum edidi, non scribo sed dicto, et dicto ea festinatione, quam…sic perurgeo, ut respirandi non habeam facultatem* ('these books, which I published about the lives of the leaders, I did not write by hand but dictate, and I dictate them at such a speed … that I am so pressed that I cannot take a breath'. This remark may reveal something about the author's practice in composing his books. The switch from the perfect (*edidi*) to the present tense (*scribo*, *dicto*) is interesting, and indicate that *edo* has to be interpreted as meant in *ThLL* V.2 89.45 *sqq.* (*indicatione , quae fit sive scribendo sive dicendo notum reddere, fere i.q. indicate, exponere, pronuntiare, enarrare sim.; saepius i.q. dicere (…) , i.q. tradere*) rather than *publicatio* or *divulgatio* (under which head *Cc.* 8.1, *OM* 1.3 (*imperatorum vitas*) and *Q* 1.3 are placed, *ThLL* V.2.89.4-8). Cf. Toher 2002, 147 (see note 84) for edita in Nepos *Att*. 19.1. Magie's *perurges* (instead of *perurgeo*) does not make much sense (see ThLL X.1.1889.13-4: *c. acc. actionis perseverandae*, III *perseverando, insistendo qualibet actione*, cf. Symm.*Ep*.9.70). The passage is an exaggeration of the *festinatio* that authors sometimes claim to have (Nepos *Praef*. 8: *festinatio ut ea explicem quae exorsus sum*). Comparable is the quote in *Max.* 29.10, where the author refers to Cordus for further information (*nos enim hoc loco finem libri faciemus, ad alia, ut iubetur velut publico iure, properantes*).

[260] The results in figure 3.4 were reached by analyzing the individual books of the *HA* (Teubner text) in the system 'Microsoft Office Word 2003' (option 'wordcount'). See the introduction about TN (§ 1.3.4).

When we compare TN to TS, the following picture occurs:

	PL (*SL*)	*IL*	*LL*	*HA*
TN	39 094 (10 264)	34 804	34 383	108 281
TS	101 years[261]	28 years	25 years	154 years
TN / TS	387 wds / year	1243 wds / year	1375 wds / year	703 wds / year

Figure 3.5: *TS and TN in the PL, SL, IL and LL and their relationship.*

The correspondence between TN in IL and LL is remarkable: approximately a quarter of a century, narrated in little over 34 000 words altogether. The new beginning, which Syme discerned in the preface to *OM* (chapter 2), turns out to be fully confirmed by the literary design of the *HA*. The relation between EL, IL and LL when it comes to TN is 36 - 32 - 32 per cent, while TS shows a distribution of 66 - 18 - 16 per cent respectively. So, 66 per cent of TS is told in the first 36 per cent of TN. There is a clear break in the relation TN-TS between the EL and IL, while the two parts at both sides of the lacuna, which determines the borderline between the IL and LL, are strikingly similar in design. The transition from EL to IL is marked by a slowing-down of the narrative. This phenomenon might be explained by the sources the author had at his disposal: whereas the information in the EL is at least partly based on Marius Maximus, the IL and LL are subject to the author's expanding fictions, characterised by *amplificatio* and the progressive use of documents.[262] The measuring of TN may be helpful in resolving some other problems, such as that of the lacuna.

3.8 The Problem of the Lacuna

As we have seen, the lacuna separates IL and LL in such a fashion that the two parts occupy almost the same volume in books and number of years treated in them. The inference that the lacuna is deliberate and part of the literary design of the *HA* corresponds with what a majority of scholars conclude nowadays.[263] Casaubon suggested (1671, II 166) that Philippus, impiously treated by the author, and Decius' persecutions of the Christians, led a later editor of the *HA* to delete these books.[264] Birley's proposition that the author himself was responsible for the omission has found much support in recent

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[261] Actually, TS should be measured from Hadrian's birth in january 76 onwards, not from the beginning of his reign in 117 – we will treat this problem in § 4.4.

[262] In the introduction, it has been remarked that the works of Ammianus Marcellinus also show an abrupt slowdown after the thirteenth books: in that case, 91 per cent of TS (258 years) is told in 42 per cent of TN (13 books), while in the second part 9 per cent of TS (25 years) is told in 58 per cent of TN (18 books). It is normal practice that contemporary history is described more elaborately than the earlier history.

[263] The main views that have been put forward are the following (favoured by the scholars between brackets): the preface and the vitae *N and *Tr and the books in the lacuna were lost in the textual transmission (Hohl); the loss of the preface and the lives of *N and Tr* are accidental, the lacuna is deliberate (Paschoud 1996, XXIX; Stubenrauch 1982, 100-104; Birley 1967, 125-6; 2003, 133; Fündling 2007, 15); the lack of a preface is deliberate, the loss *N and *Tr are accidental, the lacuna is accidental (Syme 1971, 284; 1971, 199-203); there is a *non liquet* about a lost beginning, the lacuna is deliberate (Den Hengst, 1981, 14; Chastagnol 1994, XXXV); the lack of a preface and the lives of *N and *Tr are deliberate, as well as the lacuna (Hartke 1958, 324 *sqq.*).

[264] Followed by Peter 1907, 36 and Mattingly 1946, 213 (Den Hengst 1981, 70).

decades, in the face of Syme's assertion that Christianity was not one of the author's main concerns.

The author himself, meanwhile, seems to give no apparent clues as to the existence of the lacuna. References to the emperors supposedly treated in the lacuna are few (*Gd.* 29-34, 30.9, *A* 42.6), and the fact that he is silent on most of them suggests that he may have wanted the lacuna to look like an accidental loss in the manuscript's transmission (which leads one to suppose that, as an avid collector and imitator of texts, the author himself had suffered from such partial loss of texts in his own collection or was, at least, familiar with the phenomenon). Still, there is one clue that cannot be left aside: the story is picked up again in *Val.* 1.1 with the capture of the egregious emperor Valerian by the Persian emperor Sapor. This was a tremendously dramatic moment in the imperial history of the third century. This same moment is stressed at the immediate beginning of the biography of *Gall.* (1.1): *Capto Valeriano - enimvero unde incipienda est Gallieni vita, nisi ab eo praecipue malo, quo eius vita depressa est...* [265] Just as Elagabalus and Alexander Severus produce a sequence of a bad emperor followed by a good one, so the good emperor Valerian was succeeded by his bad son Gallienus, who should have avenged his father's capture. Gallienus, however, did not manage to hold the empire together, which provokes the scorn of the author of the *HA*. This implies that the tale of Valerian's capture was also meant to serve as part of an ideological message that the *HA* seeks to propound (see § 4.3). When after the lacuna the narration is picked up again with the letter of the fictitious king Velsolus, in which the defeat of the Romans is celebrated, this is a further argument in favour of supposing the lacuna to be deliberate, as it perfectly fits the author's program.[266]

The evidence suggests that the lacuna is deliberate, an observation implying that the *HA* as it has come down to us is a complete version.[267] Though the problem of the lost beginning is of a different nature, the deliberateness of the lacuna may reveal something about the enigmatic beginning of the *HA* with *H*, which may once have been preceded by the lives of Nerva (**N*) and Trajan (**Tr.*) as links to Suetonius' biographies.[268] It may be true that Marius Maximus' works were a sequel to Suetonius' *De vita Caesarum*, as can be inferred from Ausonius' *Caesares* e.g., but this does not automatically mean that the author of the *HA* also took this as his starting point. The *HA* is a work of irregular structure, though not without some system. The author may have started his narration with *H*, deliberately ignoring the convention of linking the series to his famous predecessor. Even so, a preface may have been deliberately omitted. Syme (1971, 284) advanced that 'the missing preface of the whole work might have been just such another piece of elegant play, leaving no doubt even in the minds of the obtuse'. Many scholars attempting to impose order on the *HA* have gone along with the idea that it once included

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[265] Note that this same formula is found in the biography of Macrianus, *T* 12.1 *Capto Valeriano, diu clarissimo principe civitatis, fortissimo deinde imperatore, ad postremum omnium infelicissimo...*

[266] *Val.* 1.1: *Sapori rex regum Velsolus: 'si scirem posse aliquando Romanos penitus vinci, gauderem tibi de victoria, quam praefers'*. Den Hengst 1981, 71 came up with the argument that lacunas in general are unlike those encountered in the HA: there are no frayed edges (as, for instance, in the lacuna in Tacitus' *Annales*) and the 'fresh start' is indeed remarkable.

[267] As Hartke 1958, 324 *sqq.* supposes.

[268] The two problems have been linked before, witness Hohl (1937, 131), who thinks that both the vitae before *H* as the vitae in the lacuna were lost in the textual transmission.

a general preface, as well as the lost lives of *N and *Tr.[269] Birley (1976) even 'reconstructed' these two lost lives, while Paschoud has recently come up with a reconstruction of its preface. Whatever the merits of such efforts, the real question is whether the author needed a general preface for his literary design or, in the final consequence, what the preface could have contained that is not written in the prefaces of, e.g., *Ael.*, *OM* or *A*.

A deliberate omission of books (viz. the lives from *Phil. to *Val.*) seems a likely scenario. It could well have been meant to pretend that the *HA* is an incompletely transmitted work. This provides us with an argument to suppose that the lost beginning may also be a mystification, whereby the lacuna is a complementary trick to mislead the reader into accepting the loss of the beginning. Problems in reconstructing and editing texts are matters that are hardly new, and the irregular composition of the *HA* may well reflect this, one of the reasons why it is far from easy to model the *HA* along lines that a modern reader would appreciate.

3.9   Concepts of History (*Car*.1-2)

In the preface to *Car.*, the author treats a well-known theme in Latin historiography: the *aetates Romae*. The theme was extensively elaborated by such earlier authors as (in chronological order) Seneca, Florus (*praef*. 1.4), Lactantius (*Div. Inst*. 7.15.4) and Ammianus (14.6.4).[270] Haüssler (1964, 317-9) concluded after a thorough investigation that the description in *HA*, just like that of Lactantius (*Inst*. 7.5.14-5), was based on the lost description of the Seneca Maior, whereas Ammianus modelled his *aetates* after Florus, who did not have the same source as Seneca.[271] Much research has been done on the subject, also regarding the preface to *Car*. (see the elaborate commentary by Paschoud 2001, 324-37), to which we shall add a few new observations about the comparison of the stages of the Roman empire with human life within the biographical type of text. The investigation of the literary presentation of the stages *(aetates)* also prepares for the treatment of *fatum*, *fortuna* and *fors* in the subsequent paragraphs.

One thing that seems particularly interesting in the case of the *HA* is that the preface to *Car*. is the only instance in which the theme of the *aetates Romae* occurs in a biography. The author chose to take the lives of his characters, the rulers of Rome, as a point of departure for his description of Roman history, which makes a treatment of the *aetates Romae* in the final preface appropriate. The method and corresponding vocabulary that are used for descriptions of lives are now used for a compartmentalization of ten centuries of Roman history. This method is a characteristic common to all authors who describe the *aetates Romae* (even a *conditio sine qua non*, an

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[269] If these lives ever existed, they would have contained approximately 7660 words (20 years x 383 words, the average TS for PL). Hohl 1920, 297; 1914, 702-3; 1937, 131 supposes that the *HA* once had the lives, just as the lives in the lacuna, which was the *communis opinio* up to the early twentieth century (Fündling 2007, 12).

[270] Béranger (1976, 42n141) provides an overview of passages (in addition to the list above: Polybius 6.51; Cic. Rep. 1.5; 2.3.21; Liv. Praef. 4.9) and relevant literature.

[271] After the study by Haüssler, more studies appeared about the theme of the aetates Romae (or 'Lebensaltervergleichnis'), most recently by Paschoud 2001, 323-37; Den Hengst 2000; Brodska 1998, 56-64; Barnes 1998, 173-5. For the reception of the idea in later times: Demandt 1978, 37-45.

indispensable part of the theme). The author of the *HA* may well have included the theme, in which the Roman empire is personified, in this last preface so as to provide as a fitting complement to his conclusion of the lives. It is worth investigating the exact vocabulary used in the descriptions of the separate stages of Roman history and compare this to that of biography. Finally, a comparison is made with Tacitus' preface to his *Annales*, which we encountered before in this study (§ 3.3)

3.9.1 The Vocabulary of Human Life

In order to get a clear picture of the vocabulary of biography, Nepos as the first Roman biographer should be taken into account. Though his works are certainly not the only or even a prime source for every author who describes the life of a person, his descriptions may serve as an example of how a Roman author proceeds in describing a person's life. In general, a biographer may remark something about the *origo* of his subject, either his parentage or his *patria*. Second, the education of the subject is treated, after which, third, the differents stages of *pueritia*, *adulescentia* or *iuventus* are taken into account.[272] *Senectus* is generally treated after a much longer description of *mores*, closely linked to the *res gestae*, which are often expanded by a description of the physical appearance of the subject.

This very broad outline of Roman biography may be illustrated at the hand of some biographies by Nepos. His most consistently designed *vita* is that of Epaminondas, in the preface to which he gives a *divisio* of his book: *quare primum dicemus <u>de genere eius</u>, deinde quibus disciplinis et a quibus <u>sit eruditus</u>, tum <u>de moribus ingeniique facultatibus</u> (...) postremo <u>de rebus gestis</u>, quae a plurimis animi anteponuntur virtutibus*. In short, the reader can expect remarks about (1) *genus*, (2) education, (3) *mores* and (4) *res gestae*. In *Epaminondas* 2.1 Nepos elaborates on the first two aspects, using words like *natus...genere honesto*; *eruditus* and *doctus est*, and describes the various stages of his youth with *adulescens* and *postquam ephebus est factus*. A comparable method is used in *Alcibiades* 1.2-2.3: *Natus... summo genere*; *educatus est* and *eruditus*; *ineunte adulescentia*; *posteaquam robustior est factus*. Finally, his *Atticus* is worth noting: in 1.1 the genus is mentioned: *ab origine ultima stirpis Romanae generatus...*; in 1.2: *omnibus doctrinis quibus puerilis aetas impertiri debet filium erudivit* (*sc.* his father), in 1.3: *in pueritia*; in 2.1: *adulescentulus* and 3.4: *in adulescentulo* and, finally 21.1: *extremam senectutem*. Thus, Nepos separates several remarks about the growing up of the described person at the hand of a fixed scheme of stages and corresponding vocabulary. As pointed out before, *senectus* is generally (and logically) only treated after the *res gestae*, in the later parts of the book (see *Att*.21.1). The three aforementioned examples from *Epaminondas*, *Alcibiades* and *Atticus* are the most exemplary ones; in other biographies one finds only elements of the various possibilities of categorizing lives (youth in particular).

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[272] The division of human life in several stages (ranging from three to seven) and its vocabulary in classical as well as later Latin literature is elaborately described by Eyben (1973, 150-90).

3.9.1.1 The Theme of the *Aetates Romae*

The theme of *aetates Romae* is essentially a personification of Roman history, divided along the various stages of human life. Not surprisingly, these stages and the words used to describe them show clear correspondences with a biographer's vocabulary. Florus divides Roman history in *infantia, adulescentia, iuventus, senectus, quasi reddita iuventute.* Lactantius (writing in Diocletian's times) has *infantia, pueritia, adulescentia* (divided in two parts: *quasi adulta* and *adulescentia eius terminata* respectively), *iuventus, senectus* (*prima eius senectus, quasi ad alteram infantiam, consenuit*) and Ammianus Marcellinus, in *RG* 14.4.6, has the following division: *ab incunabilis primis ad usque pueritiae tempus extremum - deinde aetatem ingressus adultam - in iuvenem erectus et virum - vergens in senium - ad tranquilliora vitae discessit*. The problem for any author who describes Roman history in terms of human life, is that human life has a natural end, whereas history is a never-ending process. To deal with this problem, both Florus and Lactantius make use of a formula concerning Rome's old age, which does however not fully make clear how the metaphor is meant to be applied to the times to come: *quasi reddita iuventute* and *quasi ad alteram infantiam* respectively. The formulas can be explained twofold: in old age, Rome is to regain the strength of her youth, or, alternatively, a new stage of history is about to begin. While showing an awareness of the problem which their metaphor provides, the authors are not clear about its solution.

3.9.1.2 Roman History as Surveyed in *HA* (*Car.*)

The author of the *HA* uses the same *aetates* metaphor as his predecessors, but solves the problem differently: he simply abandons the metaphor halfway through his survey of Roman history, while replacing it by considerations about the mutability of Fortune. This replacement is obscured by a literary tactic that we have come across before: he tries to evade the issue that Lactantius and Florus were confronted with: that history continues where life ends sooner or later. He does so, by introducing a second metaphor, which is all about shipwrecks and storms when bad times afflict the state. In chapter 1.1-4, the three elements (fate, shipwreck and human life) are introduced and applied to the times from Valerian to the death of Probus (which is 253 to 282 AD). In passage 2.1-3.1 the theme of the *aetates Romae* prevails, as applied to the times from Romulus to Augustus (753 BC-14 AD). Passage 3.2-8 is chiefly concerned with the theme of the vagaries of fate in the imperial period, from Augustus to Probus (14-282 AD). The aim of this part of my study is to unravel the three themes in order to get a clear idea of the author's literary technique. These three aspects will be dealt with below, after which a comparison will be made with the historian whom the author probably followed: Tacitus.

3.9.1.3 The Valerian–Probus Era (253-282)

The preface of the *HA's* last book, *Car.*, comes after the eulogy on Probus in *Pr.* and its counterpart on the four tyrants *Q*. In the author's conception of history, Probus' death initiates a new period of insecurity after the reign of the good emperors Claudius, Aurelian and Probus. The preface ends with the question whether the next emperor

should be considered 'bad' or 'good' (*Car*. 3.8). The vicissitudes and uncertainties of history give rise to a diachronic survey of the most important upheavals in Roman history. The presence and place of precisely this theme in the last preface of the *HA* suggest that the author is seeking to bring his series of biographies to an appropriate conclusion.

The preface begins with the statement that the Roman state is governed by fate (*Car*. 1.1): *Fato rem p. regi...Probi mors satis prodidit*. This notion is elaborated in a series of antitheses in passage 1.2 (the underlined words representing the negative side):

(1) *nunc ad summum evehi*	*nunc ad minima retrahi*
(2) *(variis... motibus) vel erecta*	*vel adflicta*
(3) *nunc tempestate aliqua*	*nunc felicitate variata*
(4) *post diversitatem malorum*	*iam secura continuata felicitate Mansura*

The fourth element in the figure refers to the period of Valerian and Gallienus and their thirty rival tyrants (*diversitas malorum*), which, after a tumultuous period under Aurelian, was brought to an end by the reign of Probus (*iam secura continuata felicitate mansura*).[273] Meanwhile, the metaphor of history depicted in terms of human life is introduced in 1.2: *omnia prope passa est, quae patitur in homine uno mortalitas*, which is: good times and bad. In 1.3 the workings of fate after Probus's death is, among other things, compared to a shipwreck, an image strongly linked with the fate theme: *sed ruina ingens vel naufragii modo vel incendii accensis fataliter militibus....* In 1.4 the Roman state is again personified by the attribution of human feelings to it: *...in ea re publica, quae recentibus confossa vulneribus ...maeruerit*, whereas the thirty tyrants try to avenge the state's *caesa...membra*.

3.9.1.4 The Era from Romulus to Augustus (753 BC – 14 AD)

Such personification allows for a description of the Roman state in terms of the development of a human being, which is what the *aetates Romae* come down to. Though not excluding the other two elements of fate and shipwreck, it is this metaphor that predominates in the description of the times from Romulus to Augustus:

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[273] The notion of the empire's *felicitas* is often, but certainly not exclusively (as the earlier lives attest), linked to fate, as in *T* 10.15 (*mirabile autem hoc fuit in Valeriano principe, quod omnes, quoscumque duces fecit, postea militum testimonio ad imperium pervenerunt, ut appareat senem imperatorem in diligendis rei p. ducibus talem fuisse, qualem Romana felicitas, si continuari fataliter potuisset sub bono principe, requirebat*) or gods, as in *MB* 17.8 (*di praestent praestabuntque hanc orbi Romano felicitatem*) and *Cl*.10.1 (*exprimenda est sors, quae Claudio data esse perhibetur Commagenis, ut intellegant omnes genus Claudii ad felicitatem rei p. divinitus constitutum*). In *Tac*. 41.7, the notion is presented in a passage in which the empire is personified in a speech by the emperor Tacitus: *respirare certe post infelicitatem Valeriani, post Gallieni mala imperante Claudio coeperat nostra res p..*

Era (aetas)	Metaphor 1 (human life)	Metaphor 2 (shipwreck / storm)
a Romulo inicipiam	*Vero <u>patre ac parente</u> rei p. fundavit, constituit <u>roboravitque</u> rem p.*	
quid deinde Numam loquar…?	*frementem bellis et <u>gravidam</u> triumphis civitatem munivit*	
usque ad Tarquinii Superbi tempora	*<u>viguit</u>…nostra res p.*	*passa <u>tempestatem</u> de moribus regiis <u>non sine gravi exitio</u>*
usque ad tempora Gallicani belli	*<u>adolevit</u> deinde… plus prope mali <u>sensit</u> quam tum habebat boni*	*Sed <u>quasi quodam mersa naufragio</u> capta praeter arcem urbe*
Punicis bellis ac terrore Pyrrhi	*…ut <u>mortalitatis mala praecordiorum timore sentiret</u>.*	
victa Carthagine trans maria missis imperiis	*<u>crevit</u> deinde…*	
usque ad Augustum	*sed socialibus <u>adfecta</u> discordiis, extenuato <u>felicitatis sensu</u>…bellis civilibus <u>adfecta</u> <u>consenuit</u>.*	

Figure 3.6: Metaphors of Roman history in the passage Car. 2.1-3.1: as human life (metaphor 1) and as shipwreck/storm (metaphor 2)

In *Car.*2.1, Romulus is described as the father of the Roman state, which derives from Lactantius (by whom *infantia* is placed *sub rege Romulo*), Florus (*sub regibus*) and Ammianus (who skips *infantia* and places *pueritia* in the first three hundred years). Romulus as the father and educator of the state seems to be an original conception, unless it was derived from Seneca's lost description. Still, the notion is perfectly suited to biography, which, as we have seen in the examples taken from Nepos, further also pays attention to the education of his subjects. For Alcibiades' youth and education Nepos uses *educatus est* and *eruditus* and later *posteaquam robustior est factus.…* The author of the *HA* also treats 'the education of Rome': *…qui (i.e. Romulus) fundavit, constituit roboravitque rem p.* At this point, it is said that Romulus acted not only as founder, but also as father of Rome (*pater patriae*), by way of substitute for the natural children that he did not have. This notion, too, has a counterpart in Nepos's works, namely in Epaminondas' biography (10.1), in which the latter says that he leaves as his offspring the battle of Leuctra (*neque vero stirps potest mihi deesse; namque ex me natam relinquo pugnam Leuctricam, quae non modo mihi superstes, sed etiam immortalis sit necesse est*). The theme of infamous sons of great men is well represented in the *HA*, and also occurs in this passage in Nepos: Pelopidas, who himself had a son with a bad reputation, criticized Epaminondas for his lack of offspring, to which he was given the cunning answer which was cited above. The conception of Rome as Romulus' real son looks

original (unless it derives from Seneca), but does have its equivalents in biographical literature.

The rest of Rome's growing-up is described, though the stages of its life are not mentioned explicitly. Even so, the author seems to divide Rome's history along the usual lines of biography within the *aetates* theme: the clause *ab ortu* suggests *infantia* (*cf.* Livius' *ab urbe condita* and Ammianus' *ab incunabilis primis*), the words *patre ac parente rei p.* and *fundavit, constituit roboravitque rem p.* belong to the stage of *pueritia*, *viguit* and *adolevit* revoke *adulescentia*, *reddidit se in integrum* and *crevit* may belong to the stage of *iuventus*, and, finally, *consenuit* corresponds with *senectus*. The stages of Roman history are thus subdivided in this table:

Stage of human life	*Era in Roman history*	*Corresponding period*
Pueritia	Time of the kings (Romulus, Numa e.a.)	From 753 BC onwards
Infantia	Time of the kings up to Tarquinius Superbus	Up to the Republic (509 BC)
Adolescentia	Up to the Gallic invasion	Early Republic, 509 – 395 BC
Iuventus	Recovery Punic wars and war with Pyrrhus Victory over Carthage and expansion of the empire	Middle Republic, 395 onwards
Senectus	Civil wars up to Augustus	First century BC

Figure 3.7: *Division of Roman history in terms of stages of human life in the passage* Car. *2.1-3.1 (*aetates Romae*)*

It is my impression that the author is deliberately vague about the exact division, in order to delude the reader when he quits the theme in *Car*. 3.2, intending that it will pass unnoticed that he does not solve the problem inherent in the metaphor of the mortality of a human's life when ranged against the eternity of history.

3.9.1.5 The Imperial Era from Augustus to Alexander Severus (27 BC-235 AD)

The theme of the *aetates Romae* comes to an end in *Car.*3.1, even if the comparison with human life is still present.

Emperors	Metaphor 1: humanized res publica	Corresponding Period
Augustus (Tiberius-Claudius)	*reparata, libertate deposita domi tristis fuit, apud exteras gentes effloruit*	The Julio-Claudian house 27 BC – 68 AD
Nero and Predecessors Vespasian	*Passa* *extulit caput*	The Julian-Claudian and Flavian houses, 14 – 79 AD
Titus Domitian	*felicitate laetata* *vulnerata immanitate*	The Flavian house, 79 – 96
Nerva, Trajan to Marcus Aurelius, Commodus	*solito melior* *vecordia et crudelitate lacerata est*	The adoptive emperors, 96 – 196
After Commodus	*nihil …sensit bonum*	Approximate era of the Severan dynasty, 198 – 235

Figure 3.8*: The stages of Roman history from Augustus to Alexander Severus and the personification of the* res publica*, Car. 3.1-4*

It is clear that the underlined texts belong to the field of personification (such emotions as for example *felicitate laetata* and *sensit* being typical only of living beings). The texts that are not underlined are not necessarily personifications of the *res publica*, but in the light of the other texts, they can certainly be interpreted as such. Especially interesting is the phrase *extulit caput*, with respect to Trajan's reign – after all, in the Roman conception, the best emperor ever.[274] The first three stages of the era described above, belong to the period in Roman history as described by Tacitus. Especially the formula *reparata, libertate deposita domi tristis fuit, apud exteras gentes effloruit* has often been related to Tacitus.[275]

3.9.1.6 The Imperial Era from Valerian to Probus (253-282 AD)

Note that the author skips the era from 235 (the end of Alexander Severus's reign) to 253 (the start of Valerian's reign) in his survey. It is telling that in the epilogue of *Hel*. (35.2)

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[274] See Syme 1971, 89-112. According to Paschoud the formula *extulit caput* is taken from Verg. *Ecl*. 1.24, *G* 2.341, 3.553, 4.352, *A* 1.127.

[275] See also Kelly 2008, 169n26. Tacitus in *HA*: Hartke (1951, 401) suggests that *Car*. 2 *sqq*. is based on a Tacitean idea of history, an idea which was earlier ventilated by Hohl 1911, 290 ff.; Syme (1968, 9 and 189) rejects it. Velaza 1997, 246 follows Hartke regarding *Car*. 3.2, but accepts it for *Car*. 3.1.

the author also eschews this period, and even bypasses the emperors Valerian and Gallienus: *scribere autem ordiar, qui post sequentur. Quorum Alexander optimus et cum cura dicendus est annorum tredecim princeps, semestres alii et vix annui et bimi, Aurelianus praecipuus et ...Claudius.* Just before this passage (in 34.6) the author mentions the Gordiani, whom he includes in the description because they allegedly bear the Antonine name. Apart from this, the whole era is summarized as *semestres alii et vix annui et bimi* – which might again indicate that the lacuna between *MB* and *Val.* is deliberate.

Emperors	Metaphor 1 (human life)	Metaphor 3 (fortuna)	Corresponding time
Valerian Gallienus	*uti ...non potuit per annos quindecim passa est*		253 – 268 AD
Claudius		*invidit...longinquitatem imperii amans varietatum {et} prope semper inimica iustitiae <u>fortuna.</u>*	268 – 282 AD
Aurelian Tacitus Probus		*...ut appareat nihil tam gratum esse <u>fortunae</u>, quam ut ea quae sunt in publicis actibus, eventuum varietate mutentur.*	

Figure 3.9: *The stages of Roman history from Valerian to Probus and the personification of the* res publica, Car. *3.1-4*

3.10   The Theme of *boni malique imperatores*

3.10.1 Good Emperors and Bad

Throughout the series, the theme of *boni malique imperatores* is frequently called upon: the good emperor Marcus Aurelius is succeeded by the bad emperor Commodus, if only because good men never produce good sons (as stated in *S* 21.5 in Marcus' case). The bad emperor Elagabalus is succeeded by the good emperor Alexander Severus. The usurper Maximinus, who had a good son, was succeeded by the good senatorial emperor Gordian. The two senatorial emperors Maximus and Balbinus succeeded him, bot did not reign long. The ideal emperor Valerian was succeeded by his bad son Gallienus, who was not able to avenge his father and during whose reign there appeared more than thirty rival rulers. Thereafter, some perfect rulers followed: Claudius, Tacitus and Probus. After a brief interlude of Carus and his good son Numerian and his bad son Carinus, the *Maximus Augustorum* Diocletian, to whom the *HA* is dedicated, gets holds of the throne. This leads to the following list of good and bad emperors in the vicissitudes of fortune in the Roman empire:

AD	Good, **bad** and neutral emperors		
117-138	Hadrian		
138-161	Antoninus Pius	235-238	**Maximinus** and son
161-180	Marcus Aurelius	238	Gordian and sons
161-169	Verus	238	Maximus et Balbinus
176-192	**Commodus**	(*lacuna*)	Valerian and son
193	Pertinax	253-260	**Gallienus** and son
193	Didius Iulianus	253-268	Claudius and Quintillus
193-211	Septimius Severus	268-270	Aurelian
198-217	**Caracalla**	270-275	Tacitus and Florianus
217-218	**Macrinus**	275-276	Probus
217-218	Diadumenian	276-282	Carus, Numerian
218-222	**Elagabalus**	282-283/4	**Carinus**
222-235	Alexander Severus	283-285	

Figure 3.10: *Good,* neutral *and **bad** emperors and bad in the* HA.

It is not difficult to make up the balance, as the author repeatedly comments upon the qualities of the emperors. The good emperors are Hadrian, Antoninus Pius, Marcus Aurelius, Pertinax, Septimius Severus, Alexander Severus, Gordian and his two sons, the co-emperors Maximus et Balbinus, Valerian, the senior emperors Claudius, Tacitus and Probus, and finally Carus and his son Numerian.[276] In the end, they will be succeeded by the *Maximus Augustorum* Diocletian. Marcus Aurelius is the first one to be styled *bonus princeps*, and many successors will follow, sometimes with variations (e.g., *optimus* for Alexander and *omnibus melior* for Valerian).

The bad emperors are Commodus, Caracalla, Macrinus, Elagabalus, Maximinus, Gallienus and Carus' son Carinus. There is no such designation as *bonus princeps* for their negative counterparts: the expression of *malus princeps* occurs not as frequently as *bonus princeps*, and moreover, it is only used as a designation of a bad ruler in general (e.g. *AS* 65.4), except for the case of Gallienus.[277] It must be made up from the description of their lives that the rulers are very bad. For Commodus and Caracalla, there is an obvious explanation of their baseness: they are the natural born sons of the

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[276] *AP* 2.2 (*in cunctis postremo laudabilis et qui merito Numae Pompilio ex bonorum sententia conparatur*); 13.2 (*decreti etiam sunt omnes honores, qui optimis principibus ante delati sunt*); *MA* 19.10 (*boni principis vita*), *P* 15.2 (*amore boni principis*), *S* 19.6 (*iudicium de eo post mortem magnum omnium fuit*), *AS* 64. .. (*Alexander quidem et ipse optimus fuit*); *AS* 68.4 (*Hi sunt, qui bonum principem Surum fecerunt*); *Gd.* 5.3-4 ('*...virum nobilem, ...bonum' et reliqua. Ex quo apparet, quantus vir eo tempore Gordianus fuerit*); 13.1, about Gordianus iunior (*bonitatis insignis*); 31.5, about Gordianus tertius (*fuit iuvenis laetus, ... nobilis, prorsus ut nihil praeter aetatem deesset imperio*); *MB* 15.1 (*boni imperatores*); *Val.* 5.4 (*qui est omnibus melior*); *T* 10.15, about Valerian: *sub bono principe*; *Car.* 3.8 (*virum et inter bonos magis quam inter malos principes conlocandum et longe meliorem, si Carinum non reliquisset heredem*); *Car.* 9.4 (*bonum principem Carum fuisse*). The egregious emperors Claudius, Probus and Tacitus are treated in the higher style, see Paschoud 2002 and 2005.

[277] *Gall.* 5.1: *vel malus ... vel dissolutus... imperator*; *Gall.* 21.1: *Nunc transeamus ad viginti tyrannos, qui Gallieni temporibus contemptu mali principis extiterunt.*

preceding emperors, Marcus Aurelius and Severus respectively.[278] In the *vita Severi* (21.1-7), a long disquisition about this problem is included. The same holds for Elagabalus (Caracalla's alleged son), Valerian's son Gallienus and Carus' son Carinus (his 'good' son, Numerian, just like Caracalla's brother Geta, was killed before he was able to reign with his brother). For tyrant-murderer Macrinus, things are different: he is *crudelis*, *sanguinarius* and *luxuriosus*,[279] and the only good measure he took is to grant his son the imperial name of *Antoninus*. Maximinus had the characteristic of *crudelitas* too, as opposed to his son's *bonitas*.[280] A variation on the designation of *malus princeps*, again about emperors in general, is found in *Hel*. 34.4: *deinde illud, quod clementia tua* (sc. Constantini) *solet dicere, credidi, esse respiciendum: 'imperatorem esse fortunae est.' nam et minus boni reges fuerunt et pessimi.*[281]

The first emperor to escape the dichotomy is Lucius Verus, *V* 1.3: *...Verus Antoninus... neque inter bonos neque inter malos principes* ponitur. Didius Iulianus does not receive a final verdict, but his biography ends with a balance of his *vitia* and *virtutes* (*DI* 9.1-3), with emphasis on the former category. Macrinus' son Diadumenian, who was cherished by the soldiers because of his Antonine name, is excused by Alexander Severus himself.[282] Finally, the important emperor Aurelian, whose reign took place in between three extraordinary rulers, does not belong to the best.[283] The brothers and destined successors of Claudius (viz. Quintillus, *Cl*. 12.3), Probus (viz. Florianus, *Pr*. 14.1-2) receive a positive assessment, but their reigns are not treated in separate books.

The author of the *HA* likes to embellish his narration with lists of good and bad emperors. The first of these lists is in *MA* 28.10, in which Marcus Aurelius on his deathbed wishes his son Commodus to die as well, as he was worried about the state of the empire when the latter would become emperor.[284] These emperors represent the nadir of Roman morality in government. Commodus would soon join their ranks, which results in the debasement of his name in the rest of the *HA*.[285] Commodus became the first *exemplum pravitatis* in the *HA* (followed by Elagabalus) and is named for the last time in *Tac*.6.4, in which the senior emperor Tacitus in eulogized.[286] The author varies in his

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[278] *S* 20.4: *et reputanti mihi (...) neminem facile magnorum virorum optimum et utilem filium reliquisse satis claret, denique aut sine liberis viri interierunt aut tales habuerunt plerique, ut melius fuerit de rebus humanis sine posteritate discedere* eqs.

[279] See for a portrait of Macrinus and the negative depiction of his person: Mouchová 1983.

[280] *Max*. 24.1 : *Hic finis Maximinorum fuit, dignus crudelitate patris, indignus bonitate filii.*

[281] Compare the words with a quote concerning Diocletian in *A* 43.6: *quid multa? ut Diocletianus ipse dicebat, bonus, cautus, optimus venditur imperator. haec Diocletiani verba sunt, quae idcirco inserui, ut prudentia tua sciret nihil esse difficilius bono principe.*

[282] *AS* 9.3: *Diadumenus autem nec tempus habuit nec aetatem et arte patris hoc nomen incurrit.* Cf. *OM* 10.5: *occisus est etiam filius, cui hoc solum attulit imperium, ut interficeretur a milite*; *Val*. 8.2 about Valerianus' son of the same name: *nihil habet praedicabile in vita, nisi quod est nobiliter natus, educatus optime et miserabiliter interemptus.* Cf. *Gall*. 19.1, about Gallienus' son Saloninus: *occisus deinde non sua sed patris causa.*

[283] *A* 37.1: *Hic finis Aureliano fuit, principi necessario magis quam bono.*

[284] *fertur filium mori voluisse, cum eum talem videret futurum, qualis exstitit post eius mortem, ne, ut ipse dicebat, similis Neroni, Caligulae et Domitiano esset.*

[285] For example in *AS* 7.3: *...peior Commodo solus Heliogabalus...* or 9.4 *...luxurie Nerones, Vitellios, Commodos vinceret....*

[286] *enimvero si recolere velitis vetusta illa prodigia, Nerones dico et Heliogabalos et Commodos seu potius semper Incommodos, certe non hominum magis vitia illa quam aetatum fuerunt.*

enumerations and creates canonical lists of bad emperors.[287] The same holds for the good emperors. Highest praise goes to Augustus, the *Antonini*, Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius[288], but above all Trajan.[289] Trajan occurs for the first time, in *AC* 8.6, in a list of emperors that have not been killed by their enemies: *denique non Augustum, non Traianum, non Hadrianum, non patrem suum a rebellibus potuisse superari,...* After this first occurrence, the name of Trajan will be celebrated seventeen times in *HA*. The total number of occurrences of emperors in enumerations comes to 180, 150 of which are in IL and LL. The most mentioned emperors are Antoninus Pius, Marcus Aurelius and Commodus.

In *Hel*. 1.1, an enumeration of bad emperors is followed by a series of good emperors: bad emperors such as *Caligulas et Nerones et Vitellios* and the good emperors *Augustum, Traianum, Vespasianum, Hadrianum, Pium, Titum, Marcum*. The author formulates the lesson that same earth produces *venena* and *frumentum atque alia salutaria, eadem serpentes et cicures*. In *Aur*. 42.4 the best emperors from an *index publicus* are mentioned: Augustus, Vespasian, Titus, Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus Pius, Marcus Aurelius, Septimius Severus, Alexander Severus, Valerian, Claudius and Aurelian. The good emperors can be inscribed and depicted in one ring, as a *scurra* from Claudian's times wittily remarked.[290] The bad emperors (*series malorum*), on the other hand, are the *Vitellios, Caligulas et Nerones* and *Maximinos et Filippos* (*Aur*. 42.6). In these two examples, the good emperors are called by their own names,[291] while the bad emperors are mentioned in a generic plural.[292] The habit of mentioning examplary persons is found frequently in the *Panegyrici Latini* in case of republican heroes.[293]

Apart from the instances in which the good and bad emperors are called by their own names, there are frequent passages in which the alternation between good and the bad are only mentioned in general. The last words of Septimius Severus, who tried to raise both of his sons to the throne, are (*S* 23.3): *'turbatam rem p. ubique accepi, pacatam etiam Brittanis relinquo, senex ac pedibus aeger firmum imperium Antoninis meis relinquens, si boni erunt, inbecillum si mali'*, thus making a difference between the good and the bad emperors, who reign over a strong and a weak empire respectively.[294] In *Hel*.

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[287] Nero, Caligula, Domitianus in *MA* 28.10; Nero, Vitellius, Commodus in *AS* 9.4 and Nero, Heliogabalus and Commodus in *Tac*. 6.4, etc.

[288] Often, the Antonini are mentioned as a group, as in *Cl*. 18.4, *Tac*. 16.6, *Pr* 12.2 and 22.4. The plural refers to different emperors unlike the generic plural in e.g.*Nerones* etc. These *Antonini* concern more emperors (Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius are meant), which is a different use of the plural as *e.g. Nerones* or *Heliogabalos*, which means 'emperors like Nero or Heliogabalus'.

[289] In Roman literature, Traianus is praised ever since his reign, see Syme 1971, 89-112 ('The fame of Trajan'). Cf. for a comparible jingle in Symmachus *Epp*. 1.13.1, Syme 1971, 91): *bonus Nerva, Traianus strenuus, Pius innocens, Marcus plenus offici temporibus adiuti sunt, quae tunc mores alios nesciebant.* Another catalogue of exemplary rulers in Pacatus' *Pan*. 11.6.

[290] *Augustus, Vespasianus, Titus, Nerva, Traianus, Hadrianus, Pius, Marcus Antonini, Severus Afer, Alexander Mammaeae, divus Claudius et divus Aurelianus. Valerianum, enim, cum optimus fuerit, ab omnibus infelicitas separavit. vides, quaeso, quam pauci sint principes boni...*

[291] The only two exceptions are *Hel*. 2.4 and *Tac*. 6.9 (Den Hengst 1981, 59).

[292] This use is also found in Cic. *Ver*. 2.15.4: *praeclarum imperatorem nec iam cum M. Aquilio..., sed vero cum Paulis, Scipionibus, Mariis conferendum* (the example is given in Leumann-Hoffmann-Szantyr II 19 (28).

[293] In *HA* only once, *Cl*.1.3: *Camilli, Scipiones*. Den Hengst 1981, 61n3 mentiones some examples: *Pan. Lat*. 1.3.14; 2.7.4; 2.9.5; 2.20.3; 2.46.2; 3.19.2; 3.20.1.

[294] See Straub 1964, 171-2 for a treatment of Septimius Severus' *ultima verba*.

10.4, Elagabalus' represantative Zoticus is characterized as a man who abuses the emperor's trust in him, whereafter a general observation about amici principis follows: *ut sunt homines huius modi, qui, si admissi fuerint ad nimiam familiaritatem principum, famam non solum malorum sed et bonorum principum vendunt et qui stultitia vel innocentia imperatorum, qui hoc non perspiciunt, infami rumigeratione pascuntur.*

3.10.2 Tyrants and *Fortuna* in the *HA*

Besides the emperors, the tyrants are also measured along lines of good and bad in the *HA*. The first of the three tyrants to whom individual lives are devoted, Avidius Cassius, is assessed positively in *AC* 13.9-10.[295] There is only a slight difference between the emperor and the tyrant: Avidius Cassius would have been a *bonus imperator*, if he had not been defeated by Marcus Aurelius. Even so, Pescennius Niger is portayed in a favourable light in his biography (*PN* 6.10 in particular[296]) and Clodius Albinus is only hated by his enemies Septimius Severus (10.1), Commodus (14.4) and Pertinax (14.6), but not by Marcus (10.4-12) or the senate.[297]

The combining of thirty tyrants in *T* and and four in *Q* is a consequence of the author's plan to include more lives in one book, and not to treat *singulos quosque principes... per libros singulos* any more. The perfect emperors Claudius, Aurelian, Tacitus and Probus are flanked by two collections of tyrants and usurpers, *T* and *Q*. The inclusion of the former is justified by the necessity to show the host of usurpers during the reign of the bad emperor Gallienus,[298] while the latter is composed in order not to spoil the biography of the good emperor Probus.[299] In the case of this biography, the author comments on the small difference between a *latro* or *latrunculus* ('brigand') and a tyrant who calls himself *Augustus*. Often, a usurper merely gets the status of brigand just because he is conquered by the reigning emperor, while he did present himself as an Augustus. This matter, first introduced in *PN* 1.1-2, is elaborated in *Q* 2 and 13.

In the preface to *Q*, the author praises his alleged colleague in biography Trebellus Pollio: *Q* 1.3: *Atque contra Trebellius Pollio ea fuit diligentia, ea cura in edendis bonis malisque principibus, ut etiam triginta tyrannos uno breviter libro concluderet...*). The theme of *boni malique principes* is explicitly mentioned, and is indeed especially important for the construction of *Val.*, *Gall.* and *T*. The designation of *malus princeps* is reserved for Gallienus in the *HA*, other than as a general term for a bad ruler. Gallienus' father is depicted as a *bonus princeps* (*Val.* 5.4 *omnibus melior*) in *T*, for whom a

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[295] *qui si optinuisset imperium, fuisset non modo clemens sed bonus, sed utilis et optimus imperator.*

[296] PN 6.10: *fuit ergo miles optimus, tribunus singularis, dux praecipuus, legatus severissimus, consul insignis, vir domi forisque conspicuus, imperator infelix;....*

[297] 12.1: *a senatu tantum amatus est, quantum nemo principum...*; 13.3. Clodius Albinus pleas for the restauration of the senate's authority in appointing the emperors in *ClA* 13.5-10: *'si senatus p. R. suum illud vetus haberet imperium nec in unius potestate res tanta consisteret, non ad Vitellios neque ad Nerones neque ad Domitianos publica fata venissent. essent in imperio consulari nostrae illae gentes Ceioniorum, Albinorum, Postumiorum, de quibus patres vestri, qui et ipsi ab avis suis audierant, multa didicerunt.* Here, the bad emperors are opposed to the senatorial families (!).

[298] *Gall.* 21.1: *Nunc transeamus ad viginti tyrannos, qui Gallieni temporibus contemptu mali principis extiterunt*

[299] *Pr.* 24.8: *non enim dignum fuit, ut quadrigae tyrannorum bono principi miscerentur*

successor has to be found. The book of *T* is written in scorn of Gallienus (*Gall*.21.1)[300] and contains many passages in which a new *bonus princeps* is sought. One of the qualities of a good prince is that he is able to choose the right successor. Valerian, too, possessed this quality.[301] Fortune, however, prevented the generals from attaining supreme power.[302] Ballista, one of Valerian's generals, tried to find a good successor.[303] Another general, Saturninus[304] spoke to his soldiers after his acclamation as imperator, *T* 23.3: *'commilitones, <u>bonum ducem</u> perdidistis et <u>malum principem</u> fecistis'*. It may be concluded from these passages, that the *malus princeps* Gallienus, who was the *bonus princeps* Valerian's bad son, was not good for the empire and that a better successor had to be selected amongthe men that Valerian had appointed general, but *Fortuna* decided otherwise. The search for a better emperor is thus reflected in the structure of the books: during Gallienus' reign, the search for an optimal successor continued.

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[300] See § 4.3.2.

[301] *T* 10.15: *mirabile autem hoc fuit in Valeriano principe, quod omnes, quoscumque duces fecit, postea militum testimonio ad imperium pervenerunt, ut appareat senem imperatorem in diligendis rei p. ducibus talem fuisse, qualem Romana felicitas, si continuari fataliter potuisset sub <u>bono principe</u>, requirebat.*

[302] *T* 10.16: *sed nimis sibi Fortuna indulgendum putavit, quae et cum Valeriano <u>bonos principes</u> tulit et Gallienum diutius quam oportebat rei p. reservavit.*

[303] *T* 12.4-5: *...et ego, quod negare non possum, <u>bonum principem</u> quaero sed quis tandem est, qui Valeriani locum possit implere,....*

[304] *T* 23.1: *Optimus ducum Gallieni temporis, sed Valeriano dilectus Saturninus fuit...*