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Style and structure of the Historia Augusta

Burgersdijk, D.W.P.

Publication date
2010

[Link to publication](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Burgersdijk, D. W. P. (2010). *Style and structure of the Historia Augusta*. Eigen Beheer.

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Chapter 4 Structures in Individual Books

4.1 Introduction

In chapters 2 and 3, we studied the structure, content, scope, style and time of the *HA* as a whole. In the present chapter, we will examine some elements that determine the structure of the series on the level of the three parts generally distinguished (*H-G*, *OM-MB*, *Val.-Car.*) as well as on the level of the individual books. We will focus on the temporal relationships between TN and TS, and the distribution of the *materia* over the books. In order to achieve a description of temporal relationships within (groups of) individual biographies, the following issues will be treated:

- the transitions from preface to narration, the former containing the author's reflections on his own work (Genette's 'fifth movement', see § 1.3.4-5), the latter containing the historiographical narration proper (§ 4.2).
- the changing structure from *Maximini duo* onwards, determined by the transition from separate to combined emperors and tyrants (§ 4.3), which does not run parallel with the tripartite structure.
- a temporal analysis of structure in serial biography, illustrated at the hand of the Primary Lives (§ 4.3).
- a conclusion to chapter 4.

4.2 Transitions from Preface to Narration

With regard to the individual books, the prefaces figure among the most conspicuous features of the structure of the *HA*, especially in the second and third parts. In this respect, the *HA* is far from unique, as presenting the content of a book to the reader is an art that was practiced in numerous works in Greek as well as Latin literature, and in every type of text. Latin historiographical literature provides numerous examples of prefaces.³⁰⁵ Yet this is not the case for biographical works, as only Suetonius (whose preface is lost) and Nepos can, in this respect, serve as material for comparison with the *HA*. When it comes to paratext, it is especially Nepos who serves as a model, as was shown in the previous chapter, for the simple reason that there is a larger amount of paratext in the works of the latter. Like the author of the *HA*, Nepos frequently comments on the nature of his own work. Yet not the presence of the prefaces in the *HA* themselves is remarkable, but their number and distribution throughout the work: prefaces occur all

³⁰⁵ Sallust, Livy, Tacitus in historiography and Valerius Maximus in his description of famous men, to name just a few examples. See Avenarius 1956, Herkommer 1968, Janson 1974, Den Hengst 1981. According to Syme (1968, 207 and 1971, 95); Paschoud (1996, XXVII-VIII) and Stubenrauch (1981, 59-104), the *HA* once had a preface, now lost. The question should be separated from the question whether there were lives of Nerva and Trajan, treated above, § 3.4.1.

over in various lengths and content. The following passages can be considered prefaces to the books to which they belong:³⁰⁶

<i>PL</i>		<i>SL</i>	<i>IL</i>		<i>LL</i>	
<i>Book</i>	<i>wds</i>	<i>wds</i>	<i>Book</i>	<i>Words</i>	<i>Book</i>	<i>words</i>
<i>H</i>	0		<i>OM 1.1-5</i>	177	<i>Val.</i>	Ø ³⁰⁷
<i>Ael.</i>		92	<i>Dd.1.1</i>	36	<i>Gall.</i>	0
<i>AP</i>	0		<i>Hel. 1.1- 3</i>	89	<i>T 1.1- 2</i>	131
<i>MA</i>	0		<i>AS</i>	0	<i>Cl.1.1- 3</i>	125
<i>V</i>	42		<i>Max.1.1- 3</i>	73	<i>A 1.1- 2.2</i>	352
<i>AC</i>		0	<i>Gd. 1.1- 5</i>	87	<i>Tac.1.1-6</i>	204
<i>C-S</i>	0		<i>MB</i>	0	<i>Pr. 1.1- 2.9</i>	401
<i>PN</i>		64			<i>Q 1.1- 2.4</i>	311
<i>CIA</i>		0			<i>Car1.1-3.8</i>	442
<i>Cc.</i>	0					
<i>G</i>		56				
Total	42	212				
	0.1 %	2.1%				
Total	254 (0.6%)		462 (1.3%)		1966 (5.7%)	

Figure 4.1: NS of the prefaces (measured in words) in EL (*PL* and *SL*), *IL* and *LL*, and their relative NS in percentages (in proportion with the entire NS of the HA).

The table makes it clear that the prefaces increase in number and length in the course of the HA (0.6, 1.3 and 5.7 per cent of the total narrative in the three parts respectively). In *PL*, only *V* is introduced by prefatory remarks, while three out of five in *SL* begin with a preface. In *IL*, five out of seven lives contain a preface, and in *LL*, seven out of nine. Like their number, the prefaces also steadily increase in length: in *EL*, only four lives have a preface (containing less than one hundred words), in *IL*, the lives begin with lengthier prefaces (*OM*: 177), while only two out of seven biographies lack a preface. In *LL* seven out of nine books have a preface, ranging from 131 (*T*) to 442 (*Car.*) words.

It is interesting to inspect how the prefaces are attached to the *vita* to which they belong, in order to discover where the author decided to pad out his biographies. For this, it should first be asked what is meant by a preface in terms of the HA. A preface is the introductory paragraph of a book, in which the author reflects on his own work, before the narration of the subject's *vita* actually begins.³⁰⁸ Prefaces can, among other characteristics, be recognized by the programmatic remarks which they contain. Not only that: there are certain themes that recur at the beginning of some biographies (and

³⁰⁶ I take as my point of departure the prefaces indicated by Den Hengst in his *Prefaces*, 1981 (see table of contents, p. i-iii.). Note that both Den Hengst and Paschoud (2001, XXIX) do not consider the introductory remark in *Dd.* a preface (*pace* Stubenrauch 1981, 52n16 does), while they do so in the case of a comparable introduction in *G* (see § 5.4) – both remarks are derived from the first remark of this kind in *Ael.* 2.1.

³⁰⁷ As the narration begins in the middle of the emperor Valerian's *vita* (as a result of the *lacuna*), it can, strictly speaking, not be determined whether the *vita* had a preface.

³⁰⁸ Den Hengst (1981, 2): 'Those opening passages which contain programmatic statements and reflections of a general nature in which the author speaks in the first person.' This definition rules out the introductory remark of *Dd.*

elsewhere, both in intermediary programmatic remarks and in epilogues) and share the reflective character of the programmatic remarks. It is necessary to stay with this subject for a while, as in some cases it is far from easy to determine where the line between preface and biographical narration should be drawn.

In Latin literature, explicit reflection on the transition from preface to *vita* is a topos in itself.³⁰⁹ The author of a historiographical or biographical work often tells the reader what he is going to treat in his work, what selection he will make, and in what order or style he will do so. In biography, there are in principle two main topics to be treated: the life (birth, origins, ancestors, *pueritia*, character, sayings, physical appearance, death) and activities (*res gestae*) of the subject. The first biographer in Latin literature, Nepos, takes Epaminondas as an example of his treatment of Greek generals in his preface, and at the end of his programmatic preface, he states: *Sed hic plura persequi cum magnitudo voluminis prohibet tum festinatio, ut ea explicem, quae exorsus sum. Quare ad propositum veniemus et in hoc exponemus libro de vita excellentium imperatorum,*³¹⁰ after which the series actually begins. The transition from preface to narration is clearly marked by an authorial statement.

Before treating the ways in which the author moves from preface to narration, it is worth quoting two examples from the *HA*, which show that he follows the usage of marking the transition. In *Ael.* 1.3 the author states at the end of the preface: *Et quoniam nimis pauca dicenda sunt, nec debet prologus inormior esse quam fabula, de ipso iam loquor* and in *A* 3.1 *Ac ne multa et frivola prooemiis odiosus intexam, divus Aurelianus...* In both of these instances the transition from preface (*prologus, prooemium*) to narration (*fabula*) is explicitly indicated, since the subject immediately follows (*de ipso, divus Aurelianus*). And yet, while he seems to keep his promise, in the case of the *HA* something unexpected often occurs, as will be shown below. In the next paragraphs, the way in which he turns from preface to narration will be investigated, in *PL* and *SL*, *IL* and finally *LL*.

³⁰⁹ I use the term ‘transition’ in the sense in the sense used by Paschoud (2001, 44) ad *Pr.* 2.9: ‘transition vers le début du récit’. In the case of *Pr.*, this means the passage from preface to narration, whether or not explicitly indicated by the author. The term is explained by Genette (1980, 98-9) as a ‘change of movement’, which is the change from one temporal relationship between *TN* and *TS* division in a certain passage to another. In the case of the *HA*, *TS* in the prefaces is (in general) non-existent, as it concerns a description consisting of self-comment, while *TN* can be measured in words. At the beginning of the biographical narrative *TS* is determined by the lifetime of the subject. There are, however, exceptions to the rule: the preface of *A* has a dramatic setting in which a visit is paid to the *Templum Solis*, which means that *TS* can be measured. The preface to *Car.* does, strictly speaking, not contain *TS*, but the description of the history of the Roman empire still denotes historical time.

³¹⁰ There are several topical themes in this sentence, for example the ‘plan’ (*propositum*), cf. Val. Max. *Praef.*: *Et quoniam initium a cultu deorum petere in animo est, de condicione eius summatim disseram.* and Tac. *Ann.* 1.1 *Inde consilium mihi pauca de Augusto et extrema tradere, ... Cf. HA Ael.* 1.1 (*in animo mihi est*) and 7.5 (*quia mihi propositum fuit*) and *Gd.*1.1 (*propositum fuerat*). For the theme of *festinatio*, cf. *HA*, *T* 33.8 and note 260. Words such as *incipio, exordior* (‘to begin to speak (write)’): *OLD* 2b) are typical of prefaces. The urge to begin is also encountered in Plut. *Alex.* 1.1-2: διὰ τὸ πλῆθος τῶν ὑποκειμένων πράξεων οὐδὲν ἄλλο προερούμεν ἢ παραιτησόμεθα τοὺς ἀναγινώσκοντας.

4.2.1 Transitions from Preface to Narration in the Earlier Lives

One of the ways to distinguish between preface and biographical narration is to determine at what point the author's narration about the emperor in question begins. He uses certain techniques to set the biographical part into motion (sometimes referred to as *res*, in contrast with the preface).³¹¹ The Primary Lives provide a very clear picture of his procedure. Where there is no preface (which applies to all the Primary Lives with the exception of *V*), he immediately begins by treating the origins of the emperor, who is consistently referred to in either the genitive or the dative case, mostly the latter.³¹² Only in the case of *S* 1.2 and *Cc.*1.2 does the second sentence discuss the ancestors, which is not very surprising. To begin with *Cc.*: this biography resembles *C* with its reference to an earlier biography for information about ancestors. This is perfectly understandable, as in both cases they share ancestors with imperial fathers who have already been described in the *HA*. Compare *Cc.*1.2 *De cuius maioribus frustra putamus iterandum, cum omnia in Severi vita satis dicta sint*³¹³ with *C* 1.2: *De Commodi Antonini parentibus in vita Marci Antonini satis est disputatum*. Severus' biography, it may be noted, shows a procedure that appears to have provided a model for many of the subsequent biographies. This resides in its method of summarizing the preceding biography in the shape of a brief ablativus absolutus, *S* 1.1: *interfecto Didio Iuliano Severus Africa oriundus imperium obtinuit*, which is comparable to the formula in *DI* 1.1: *Didio Iuliano, qui post Pertinacem imperium adeptus est, ...* Returning to our question of how and where the author begins the narration of his *vitae*, so as to enable us to distinguish between preface and biographical narration, it may be said that a listing of ancestors is a normal beginning, at least in the Primary Lives.

The only exception in the Primary Lives is the life of *V*. Though equipped with a preface, it poses a problem. Here, the distinction between preface and actual beginning of the *vita* is unclear. Not until *V* 1.6 are the *maiores* introduced in line with the procedure followed in the other Primary Lives: *Huic naturalis pater fuit Lucius Aelius Verus...*, while the preface seems to be finished after 1.2 (in which the author seeks to justify the order in which the emperors are dealt with). The passage 1.3-6 contains much material that is also found in the lives in the second part of the *HA*, such as the theme of the *boni malique principes* (in *V* 1.3, cf. chapter 6 on *AS*). It is true that the narration about Verus begins in *V* 1.3, so that *V* 1-2 should be considered the preface, but before the author starts recounting his *vita*, a theme is introduced that concerns the entire series of the *HA*: their order. This theme recurs in *Cc.*11.1-2 (about the order in which Caracalla and Geta are treated) and *Q* 10.1 (about Carinus and Numerian).³¹⁴ The presence of a preface in the Primary Life of *V* may indicate that the author's source treated the two adoptive brothers,

³¹¹ *T* 33.8, *Pr.*1.6.

³¹² *H* 1.1: *origo imperatoris Hadriani*, *AP* 1.1: *Tito Aurelio Fulvo Boionio Antonino Pio paternum genus e Gallia Transalpina...*; *MA* 1.1: *Marco Antonino... pater Annus Verus...*; *C* 1.1: *De Commodi Antonini parentibus...*, *P* 1.1: *Publio Helvio Pertinaci pater libertinus Helvius Successus fuit...*, *DI* 1.1: *Didio Iuliano...proavus fuit Salvius Iulianus...*, *S* 1.2: *Cui civitas Lepti, pater Geta, maiores equites Romani...*; *Cc.*1.2: *De cuius maioribus...*). This is also the way in which Nepos normally begins his biographies, though he does so only with a very short indication of names, ancestry and origins.

³¹³ See for the beginning of *Cc.* § 5.4.1.

³¹⁴ See for this topic Den Hengst 1981, 17-8 and White (1967, 120), the latter of whom accepts the related passages as a sign of single authorship.

Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus, in one book, which made it necessary to add a preface to the second ‘split-off’.³¹⁵

The Secondary Lives differ from the regular pattern that characterises the Primary Lives. Only *AC* and *CIA* do not have a preface; the former begins with a listing of the subject’s ancestors, though his name is rendered in the nominative, *AC* 1.1: *Avidius Cassius... ex familia Cassiorum fuisse dicitur per matrem, homine tamen novo genitus Avidio Severo....* The nominative is also used in the vita of *PN*, immediately after the preface, *PN* 1.3: *Pescennius ergo Niger, ... patre Annio Fusco, matre Lampridia....* In *PN*, there is also a reference to the preceding biography (like in *DI* 1.1 and *S* 1.1, see above) but only after a short description of the subject’s character, namely in *PN* 2.1: *is postquam comperit occisum Commodum...* If we consider the listing of ancestors as the beginning of the biographical narration, then *CIA* differs, as this part is replaced by some introductory remarks and the required information does not occur until *CIA* 1.3: *Fuit autem Clodius Albinus familia nobili, Hadrumetinus tamen ex Africa.* After some considerations about his *nobilitas*, supported by a letter, a *contio* and Marius Maximus’ judgement, this item is continued in *CIA* 4.1. The beginning of the book contains a sketch of the situation after Pertinax’ death, *CIA* 1.1: *Uno eodemque prope tempore post Pertinacem, qui auctore Albino interemptus est, Iulianus a senatu Romae, Septimius Severus ab exercitu in Syria, Pescennius Niger in oriente, Clodius Albinus in Gallia imperatores appellati.* While it is not remarkable at all that the first biography of a rival emperor in the *HA* contains a description of the chaotic situation in the empire,³¹⁶ it must be remarked that this is a deviation from normal procedure: information about his ancestors is scattered over *CIA* 1.3 and 4.1. Another difference from the lives up to *CIA* is that Herodian is for the first time mentioned as a source in the *HA*, namely in *CIA* 1.2. This biography is markedly different from the Primary Lives and no longer follows the usual lines of biographical writing up to *S*, or even *PN*.

While this concludes our discussion of the biographical opening of the Secondary Lives *AC*, *PN* and *CIA*, there is also *Ael.* 1-2, where it is not clear at what point the preface actually stops, as the author states in 1.3 *et quoniam nimis pauca dicenda sunt, nec debet prologus inormior esse quam fabula, de ipso iam loquar.* After this, he continues with remarks of the kind that he uses in other prefaces to introduce his subject - which sheds a different light on the firm statement just encountered, in which he uses terms that other authors do in fact use to mark a transition. The author seems to play with prefatory conventions, since he simply continues to produce prefatory matter while stating that he will begin narrating the subject’s *vita*. Only in 2.7 are the *maiores* brought up: *huic pater Ceionius Commodus fuit,....* In the last of the Secondary Lives, *G*, the author did not need

³¹⁵ Den Hengst (1981, 17) suggests the same when writing ‘When the author had planned to separate Verus from Marcus and Geta from Caracalla, ...’: he evidently followed a source, but changed his plan by describing two emperors in two separate books. This explains the presence of introductory remarks in *V* as well as *G*, see § 5.4.

³¹⁶ When identifying the prefaces, *CIA* provides a problem: as the description of his origin begins in 1.3, one could consider *CIA* 1.1-2 as prefatory matter with a summarising account of the situation in the empire after Pertinax’s reign. These remarks, however, do not reflect on the *HA* as a literary work, as is required in our definition, nor does the author speak in first person. The theme of the four emperors is taken up in *PN* 2.1: *Is postquam comperit occisum Commodum, Iulianum imperatorem appellatum eundemque iussu Severi et senatus occisum, Albinum etiam in Gallia sumpsisse nomen imperatoris, ab exercitibus Syriacis, quos regebat, appellatus est imperator,....*

to elaborate on ancestors, as these were identical to those of Septimius Severus and Caracalla. Still, in *G* 2.1, there is an appropriate beginning of the biographical part with the listing of the ancestors after whom Geta was named (*G* 2.1: *Geta autem dictus est vel a patris nomine vel avi paterni, ...*). Surprisingly, this time the author does not refer to the life of Septimius, as he did in the case of Caracalla in *Cc.*1.2, but to Marius Maximus: *cuius vita et moribus in vita Severi Marius Maximus primo septenario satis copiose rettulit*. The author plays havoc with biographical conventions by needlessly referring to another source, while in earlier cases (*C* 1.1 and *Cc.* 1.2) his own works sufficed. The formula *primo septenario satis copiose* in particular smacks of *hyperbole*.

So far, it can be concluded that the biographical parts of the books of the *HA* set out with an account of ancestry, either at the start of the book (the Primary Lives except *V*, and the Secondary Life of *AC*) or immediately after the preface (the Secondary Life of *PN*).³¹⁷ The lives of *Ael.* and *G* contain variations on this convention, while the lives of *V* and *CIA* differ from the pattern through the intrusion of other themes before the biographical part actually begins. While it could be expected that the biographical part should begin immediately after the preface, one is deceived in the cases of *Ael.*, *V*, *CIA* and *G*. The author plays with the reader's expectations in the Secondary Lives of *Ael.* and *CIA* by repeatedly postponing the beginning of his biographical narration, while he strongly exaggerates the motif in *G*. Essentially, the technique is a much exaggerated application of the figure of *variatio*.

4.2.2 Transitions from Preface to Narration in the Intermediary Lives

As we have seen, most of the biographical narrations begin with the subject's origins and ancestry. In *DI* and *S*, there is also reference to the preceding lives, in *S* 1.1 by way of an *ablativus absolutus*. In this paragraph, the procedure in *IL* and *LL* will be mapped out, beginning with *OM*. After the preface, the subject's life is introduced by an *ablativus absolutus*:

³¹⁷ This procedure is in accordance with Suetonius' manner of beginning his narrative; cf. Leo 1901, 272-5.

	Reference to preceding <i>vita</i> (abl. absolutus)	Subject	Origin / ancestors	Continuation of the sentence
OM 2.1	<i>occiso ergo Antonino Bassiano</i>	<i>Opilius Macrinus</i>	<i>...humili natus loco...</i>	<i>imperium arripuit...</i>
Dd. 1.1	<i>occiso Bassiano factione Macriniana</i>	<i>Antonini Diadumeni pueri...</i>	<i>quem cum <u>patre</u> Opilio Macrino teneret imperium</i>	<i>nihil habet in vita memorabile, nisi quod...</i>
Hel. 1.4	<i>Igitur occiso Macrino eiusque filio</i>	<i>in Varium Heliogabalum</i>	<i>Idcirco quod Bassiani <u>filius</u> diceretur</i>	<i>imperium conlatum est</i>
AS 1.1	<i>Interfecto Vario Heliogabalo</i>	<i>Aurelius Alexander</i>	<i>urbe Arcena genitus</i>	<i>accepit imperium</i>
Max. 1.4	<i>...sub Alexandro imperatore enituit.</i>	<i>Maximinus senior</i>	<i>1.5: hic de vico Threiciae vicino barbaris, barbaro etiam <u>patre</u> et <u>matre</u> genitus...</i>	(Max. Iunior, 27.1: <i>De huius genere superius dictum est</i>)
Gd. 2.2	<i>2.4: post consulatum, quem egerat cum Alexandro... (cf. 5.1)</i>	<i>... Gordianus senior</i>	<i>natus est <u>patre</u> Maecio Marullo, <u>matre</u> Ulpia Gordiana...</i>	
MB 1.1	<i>Interemptis in Africa Gordiano seniore cum filio....</i>	<i>1.2: Maximus et Balbinus</i>	<i>5.1: <u>Maximo pater</u> fuit Maximus, unus e plebe...; 7.1: Balbinus nobilissimus...</i>	

Figure 4.2: The passages in the Intermediary Lives in which the biographical narration about the subjects of the book is introduced by an account of their ancestors and/or origins (lives with a preface are in bold face).

The table draws a clear picture: in five out of seven Intermediary biographies (*OM*, *Dd.*, *Hel.*, *AS* and *MB*) the narration is linked to the preceding biography by an ablativus absolutus, after the example of *S* 1.1. The other two (*Max.*, *Gd.*) mention the main activities of the subject under the preceding emperor, which produces a link of a more implicit kind. Secondly, the practice of referring to the subject in a case other than the nominative has been replaced by nominatives in five of the seven biographies (*OM*, *AS*, *Max.*, *Gd.*, *MB*), a practice which corresponds with that of the Secondary Lives (*AC*, *CIA*, *PN*, *G*). This may have been prompted by the source the author used (probably the *Kaisergeschichte*), as all the Primary Lives, along with *Hel.* (but *S* excluded), deal with the emperors in either the genitive or dative. In the third place, in the historical context of the third century, it becomes increasingly important to indicate whether an emperor is

low-born or of noble stock. While there was no need to mention the nobility of the Antonine emperors,³¹⁸ there was no guarantee that either the emperors of the third century or their rivals were of noble birth (after Pertinax, Macrinus was the first emperor decried in the *HA* as being of low birth (*humili natus loco*, *OM* 2.1) and the very first plebeian to become emperor, *OM* 7.1)³¹⁹. This again corresponds with the practice of the three pretenders in the Secondary Lives (*AC* 1.1: *homine tamen novo genitus*, *CLA* 1.3: *familia nobili*, *PN* 1.3: *ut alii, modicis parentibus, ut alii, nobilibus fuisse tradunt*).

Unlike *SL*, the transitional procedure from preface to narration in *IL* is too diffuse to allow a clear conclusion: while in case of *Gd.* and *Max.*, like *PN*, the narration immediately follows the preface, in *Hel.* the narration starts as erratically as in *Ael.* and *G.* The use of the ablativus absolutus, however, in *S* 1.1 and in the Intermediary Lives is striking and novel. This particular use of the ablativus absolutus occurs when there is a sequence from one emperor to the other, which explains why in the *vitae* of the rivals and pretenders, who do not operate along lines of successive dynasts, this use of the ablativus absolutus is absent.

4.2.3 Transitions from Preface to Narration in the Later Lives

When we take the three characteristic elements in the Intermediary Lives into account (the use of the ablativus absolutus, the emperor in question in the nominative case and the mention of his background), there are some changes to be discerned in the Later Lives. The use of the ablativus absolutus as a marker of the transition to the next emperor only occurs in *Gall.* 1.1, and is commented on by the author: *Capto Valeriano (enimvero unde incipienda est Gallieni vita, nisi ab eo praecipue malo, quo eius vita depressa est?) nutante re p. (...), Gallienus comperta patris captivitate gauderet...* In this final occurrence of the ‘imperial ablativus absolutus’ in the *HA*, the author asks where he could better begin the life of Gallienus than with the capture of Valerian, which was the moment that his son Gallienus became sole ruler.³²⁰ A second reference to the preceding life (*comperta patris captivitate*), and the emperor’s name in the nominative (*Gallienus*), are also present.

For the rest, the Later Lives are especially atypical when compared to the structural characteristics of the Intermediary Lives. Apart from *A* 3.1 (...*divus Aurelianus*,

³¹⁸ This practice is already present in the primary lives, cf. *H* 1.2: *atavus Maryllinus, qui primus in sua familia senator populi Romani fit* and for Didius Iulianus, *DI* 1.1: *proavus fuit Salvius Iulianus, ..., quod magis eum nobile fecit*.

³¹⁹ It is logical that the ancestors of Diadumenian and Heliogabalus were only mentioned in a reference to Macrinus (*pater*) and Caracalla (*Bassiani filius*). Note that in the cases of Maximinus senior and Gordian senior both *pater* and *mater* are named in the ablative. In the case of their sons fresh mention of their origins was unnecessary. The absence of any need to trace their ancestry, as family members, partly explains why these emperors are dealt with together in a single book in the intermediary lives. Only *OM* and *Dd.* are exceptions to this practice. In the cases of Maximus and Balbinus, the former (*MB* 5.1) is of low birth and the latter (*MB* 7.1) a noble.

³²⁰ The author stresses this point in Gallienus’ life again in *Gall.* 27.1 and expands it with a variation on a philosophical statement (by Anaxagoras, according to Cicero (*Tusc.* 3.30 and 58: Chastagnol 1994, 828n1): *ubi de Valeriano patre comperit quod captus esset, id quod philosophorum optimus de filio amisso, dixisse fertur: ‘sciebam me genuisse mortalem’*.

ortus, ut plures loquuntur, Sirmii familia obscuriore, ut nonnulli Dacia ripensi)³²¹ and 4.1 (*modicis parentibus ortus*) and *Pr.* 3.1 (*Probus, oriundus e Pannonia, civitate Sirmiensi, nobiliore matre quam patre*) with the emperors in the nominative, the places of birth and their nobility, the usual elements crop up only sparingly. The reasons for this change differ from case to case. In *T*, there is a collection of thirty tyrants, rivals and pretenders, most of them historical, some fictitious. Another collection of rivals is *Q*, in which the various lives are properly introduced by exemplary beginnings (*Q* 3.1 *Firmo patria Seleucia fuit*;³²² *Q* 7.1 *Saturninus oriundo fuit Gallus...*; *Q* 12.1 *Proculo patria Albingauni fuere...*; *Q* 14.1 *Bonosus domo Hispaniensi fuit, origine Britannus...*).³²³ In the biography of *Tac.*, no information at all is given about the emperor's origins. In *Cl.*, the emperor's origins are given only in chapter 11.9: it is uncertain whether the emperor's ancestors are from Dalmatia or Asia Minor.³²⁴ The author parodies uncertainty regarding the place of birth, which parallels Suetonius' biography of Caligula (*Suet. Cal.* 8, in which it is said that some authors favour a more prestigious place of birth out of flattery).³²⁵ This variation on the normal practice of providing sources also occurs in *A* 3.2-5 and *Car.* 4.1 (*Cari patria sic ambigue a plerique proditur, ut...*).

In conclusion, it may be said that the biographies in LL contain a variety of ways in which the biographical narration is introduced. In general, there is a clear distinction between preface and narration, but the narration itself is not always introduced by the usual biographical elements. Sometimes, especially in *Cl.* and *Tac.*, origins are not mentioned until late in the biography, presumably because the author had other preoccupations while writing the life. The place of origin is discussed in *A* and *Car.*, which is not meant as a serious source study but as an attempt to polish up the emperors' origins. This is in contradiction with the author's statement in *T* 33.8: *neque ego eloquentiam mihi videor pollicitus esse, sed rem...* Not only does he sometimes begin hesitantly, but he also seems to end his preface twice in *Pr.* 1.6 (*neque ego nunc facultatem eloquentiamque polliceor sed res gestas, quas perire non patior*) and *Pr.* 2.9 (*et ne diutius ea, quae ad meum consilium pertinent, loquar, magnum et praeclarum principem et qualem historia nostra non novit, arripiam*). While he promises *res*, not *eloquentia* (as in *T* 33.8), he continues with other themes about historiography in general, after which he again promises to get on with his subject, as something that he wishes describe in terms of praise (*Pr.* 2.9: *magnum ...non novit*). The *HA* is full of contradictions, and the author, clearly intending to show up some of his own distortions, leaves it to the reader to make the best of this.

³²¹ Both fictitious, according to Paschoud 2001, 71.

³²² The description continues with: *tametsi plerique Graecorum alteram tradunt*. It is, however, not clear at all which Firmus is meant exactly (see § 2.2.2).

³²³ The last collection of *Car.* does not follow the same procedure, as here a father and two sons come into play. After the introduction of father Carus, Numerian is indicated in *Car.* 11.1 as *Numerianus, Cari filius ...*, and Carinus in *Car.* 16.1 simply as *Carinus, homo omnium contaminatissimus...*

³²⁴ *In quo bello, quod a Claudio gestum est, equitum Dalmatarum ingens extitit virtus, quod originem ex ea provincia Claudius videbatur ostendere, quamvis alii Dardanum et ab Ilo Troianorum auctore atque ab ipso Dardano sanguinem dicerent trahere*. Note that this remark only occurs in the thirteenth chapter. It is important for the contents of the *HA*, as it is this emperor to whom Constantine traces his origins. The biography of Claudius is not a normal one, as it is in a panegyric style and does not follow the usual lines of biography. Yet, interestingly and as if to return to the standard biographical style, the author continues with: *ne ea, quae scienda sunt, praeterisse videamur*.

³²⁵ Bird 1971, 131; Den Hengst 2005, 437.

4.3 The Changing Structure

When we review the thirty books that constitute the *HA* in their received order, we are faced with some striking structural features. Still, there is some regularity in its evolving composition: the first half of the series of biographies, as we have seen in § 2.2, consists of descriptions of *Augusti* (in the Primary Lives *H, AP, MA, V, C, P, DJ, S, Cc.*) as well as their heirs, co-emperors and rivals (in the Secondary Lives *Ael., AC, PN, CIA* and *G* respectively). *OM* and *Dd.*, which have two co-emperors (father and son) for their subject, have the outward appearance of Primary and Secondary Lives but are typical of the Secondary Lives in many respects.³²⁶ After two lives with an Augustus as their subject (*Hel., AS*, which seem to continue the regular scheme), the programme changes: the books from *Max.* down to the end of the *HA* alternately contain separate books about single emperors (*Cl., A., Tac.*³²⁷ and *Pr.*) and books combining two (*Max., MB, Val., Gall.*) or even three (*Gd., Car.*) related emperors, not to mention combinations of four (*Q*)³²⁸ and even thirty-two (*T*)³²⁹ pretenders in one book. In summary, the first half of the work (*H – AS.*) discusses the lives of the emperors and their heirs, co-emperors and even rivals separately, while in the second part (beginning with *Max.*) the author combines sets of rulers of the same type (the reigning emperors, or their pretenders) in single books.

This change takes place in the section of the Intermediary Lives. In view of the irregularities that occur within the evolving structure, every attempt to draw an exact line between the first half of separate lives and the second half of combined lives, will be open to dispute but, as there certainly is a difference between the parts, an attempt should at least be made:

³²⁶ A new beginning in the series is made at the start of *OM*, as was pointed out above, §2.2. Macrinus holds the middle between emperor and usurper.

³²⁷ *Tac.* combines the reign of Tacitus and his brother Florian, though the latter is treated as a usurper (*Tac.* 14.1: *Hic frater Taciti germanus fuit, qui post fratrem arripuit imperium, non senatus auctoritate sed suo motu, quasi hereditarium esset imperium.* The author himself seems to consider *Tac.* as a combined life, as witness his wording in *Q* 1.4: *...Aureliano, Tacito et Floriano, Probo etiam...*, while in the preface of *Tac.* he only speaks of one emperor. A denial of the fact that a combined life is involved in the case of *Cl.* (about the brothers Claudius and Quintillus) is found in *T* 31.6: *de quo speciale mihi volumen quamvis breve merito vitae illius videtur edendum addito fratre singulari viro...*. All the same, the series of four (placed between two books about tyrants) seems to constitute a relative unity, as the rulers are all eulogized by the author (see below sub 3.1).

³²⁸ On the number of four: Chastagnol 1994, 1105-6 (*quadriga*) and Bird 1971, 130-1.

³²⁹ Zecchini 1997, see §§ 3.4.2 and 3.10.2.

4.3.1 Combined Emperors

A conspicuous break in the construction of the *HA*, the transition from single lives to combined ones in the middle of the series, starting with *Max.*, is introduced by an explanatory preface (*Max.* 1.1-3). Whereas from the start all the emperors, *Caesares* and pretenders were discussed separately, as the author stresses repeatedly, henceforward the emperors and pretenders are to be dealt with together (with the exception of *Cl.*, *A*, *Tac.*, *Pr.*). The programme of *singulos quosque principes vel principum liberos per libros singulos legere* (*Max.* 1.1) will be abandoned. The justification for the change is a desire not to bore the addressee, in this case Constantine. He starts by discussing two emperors, father and son Maximinus, in one *volumen*. Both the wording and the changing structure have precedents in the biographical tradition. Compare the following sentences from *Max.* 1.1 and Nepos' *Epam.* 4.6:

Max. 1.1:

*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;*

Nepos *Epam.* 4.6

*plurima quidem proferre possumus, sed
modus adhibendus est, quoniam uno hoc
volumine vitam excellentium virorum
complurium concludere constituimus, ...*

The formula *adhibui moderationem* in *Max.* parallels *modus adhibendus est* in *Epam.* 4.6, while *in unum volumen...congererem* corresponds with *in uno hoc volumine ...concludere*. The verb *concludere* was changed to *congererem* but returns elsewhere in *HA* in a comparable context, *Q* 1.3: *ea fuit diligentia*³³⁰ ... *ut etiam triginta tyrannos uno breviter libro concluderet*. Two elements from one sentence in Nepos were re-used, while a third element occurs elsewhere, conforming to a technique that the author uses more often.³³¹

Parallels with Nepos especially occur in programmatic statements, in which the author, as in the preceding example, reflects on his own method. The sequel to the words quoted above (*Max.* 1.1: *adhibui...congererem*), in which he makes an exception to his proposal to combine more rulers in one book, also contains variations on Nepos. Compare *Max.* 1.3 to Nepos *Reges* 1.1:

³³⁰ The word *diligentia* appears in the paragraph from Nepos about Cato's work, on which the Iunius Cordus paragraph *OM* 1.3 is based: *In omnibus rebus singulari fuit industria* (3.1) and *in quibus multa industria et diligentia comparet, nulla doctrina* (3.4).

³³¹ See § 9.2. This is normal procedure in the *HA* in cases when the author repeats himself, e.g. *AS* 16.1: *iuris peritis et doctissimis viris isdemque disertissimis*, two elements of which are repeated in *doctos et disertos*, while a third element recurs in *senes (...)* *locorum peritos* (16.3).

Max. 1.3

Quod quidem non in uno tantum libro sed etiam in plurimis deinceps reservabo, exceptis magnis imperatoribus, quorum res gestae plures atque clariores longiorem desiderant textum.

Nepos Reg. 1.1

Hi fere fuerunt Graecae gentis duces, qui memoria digni videantur, praeter reges: namque eos attingere noluimus, quod omnium res gestae separatim sunt relatae.

The same pattern is seen: *exceptis magnis imperatoribus* parallels *praeter reges* and *quorum res gestae* parallels *omnium res gestae*. *Praeter reges* is replaced by the ablativus absolutus *exceptis magnis imperatoribus*, which as a grammatical form is borrowed from the programmatic remark at the end of Nepos *Timoth.* 4.5: *venio nunc...exceptis duobus Carthaginiensibus*,³³² while *magnus imperator* appears in *Cato* 3.1 (the passage on which the Iunius Cordus of *OM* 1.3 is based, § 3.2). *In uno...libro* echoes *Epam.* 4.6 *in uno hoc volumine*.³³³ This is the same wording, except for the change from *volumine* to *libro*, which, as was demonstrated in *Max.* 1.1, occurred before: *in unum volumen*. In these last instances the contents of Nepos' words are restated with grammatical structures and words taken from other places in Nepos.³³⁴ The author states that he will continue to combine emperors' lives, according to the instruction given to the otherwise unknown Tattius Cyrillus, *Max.* 1.2: *servavi deinceps hunc ordinem, quem pietas tua etiam ab Tattio Cyrillo, clarissimi viro, qui Graeca in Latinum vertit, servari voluit*. Tattius Cyrillus is not known from other sources and undoubtedly invented by the author. He is a translator (*qui Graeca in Latinum vertit*) from senatorial stock (*clarissimi viro*) and uses a certain 'ordo' (*hunc ordinem*) in his works.

Meanwhile, the comparison with Nepos makes clear another important and meaningful aspect of the structure of the *HA*. The author's formula *exceptis magnis imperatoribus* (in *Max.* 1.3) appears to be based on Nepos' *Timoth.* (3.4-4.6): *Venio nunc ad fortissimum virum maximique consilii omnium barbarorum* (sc. Datames), *exceptis duobus Karthaginiensibus, Hamilcare et Hannibale*. From several statements by Nepos it appears that he greatly admires these two Carthaginians, even though they led Rome to the brink of collapse. The same goes for the author's appreciation of the emperors Claudius, Aurelian, Tacitus and Probus (see numbers 25 to 28 in figure 4.2 above), who are described in encomiastic terms. The idea of devoting separate books to these four emperors is a way to extol them even higher. In other words, the separate books are a tribute to their greatness. On the other hand, the combination of several lives in one book is also used to bring down the reputation of others, as in *T* 1.1, in which the number of tyrants – no less than thirty in a single book – that appeared during the reign of Valerian and Gallienus serves to slate their reputation.³³⁵ In *Pr.* 24.8 a variation on the same

³³² Leo 1901, 196 supposes that these words

³³³ *Volumen* and *liber* are clearly used as synonyms (see *ThLL* VII.2, 1272.82-73.17, where the examples of Nepos *Att.* 16.2 and *Gell.* 14.16.1 are given).

³³⁴ The theme of *memoria digna* in *Max.* 1.3 occurs in many places in the *HA*, though never in these terms (*memoratu digna* is found instead). The slightly different wording fits the patterns sketched here, but the theme is too common in historiographical literature to base any conclusions on.

³³⁵ The real figure is in fact thirty-two *T* 1.1: *ad eam temporum venimus seriem, in qua per annos, quibus Gallienus et Valerianus rem p. tenuerunt, triginta tyranni ... extiterunt, cum Gallienum non solum viri sed etiam mulieres contemptui haberent*. and *Gall.* 21.1: *Nunc transeamus ad viginti tyrannos, qui Gallieni*

principle is encountered with regard to the *Quadriga Tyrannorum*, the combination of four pretenders in one book: *non enim dignum fuit, ut quadrigae tyrannorum bono principi miscerentur*. Here, the combination of four pretenders in one book is traceable to the eulogy on Probus. The change of the *HA* from an analytical composition (PL and SL) to a synthetical one (combined lives) seems to serve a purpose in the last part: amidst all the combinations of emperors (*Gall.* and *Car.*) and tyrants (*T* and *Q*), four emperors, honoured by separate books, stand out by their greatness (*Cl.*, *A*, *Tac.* and *Pr.*). It may be surmised that the author uses Nepos' vocabulary to back up this choice.³³⁶ The laudatory intention of the separate lives may help to explain the irregular structure of the books of the *HA*.³³⁷

4.3.2 Combined Tyrants

The author wished not only to combine several emperors in one book, but also tyrants. Whereas in *EL* three tyrants were treated separately (*AC*, *ClA*, *PN*), after *Gall.* the author decided to combine thirty (or, in fact, thirty-two) tyrants. Now that the change from separate to combined lives has been shown to be inspired by Nepos, the next problem is the one posed by the exceptional book about the thirty tyrants. In much the same way that the Secondary Lives of *Caesares* and pretenders were linked to the Primary Lives of the emperors, the book of the assorted tyrants is related to the combined emperors (*Val.* and *Gall.*). The book is announced in four places in *Gall.*: 16.1,³³⁸ 19.6-7³³⁹ (twice) and 21.1-2,³⁴⁰ in which passages a figure of twenty is mentioned. In *T* itself, the number

temporibus contemptu mali principis extiterunt. de quibus breviter et pauca dicenda sunt; neque enim digni sunt eorum plerique, ut volumen talium hominum saltim nominibus occupetur, quamvis aliqui non parum in se virtutis habuisse videantur, multum etiam rei p. profuisse. It is well known that the author sometimes mentions the number of twenty (*viginti*), sometimes of thirty (*triginta*). *Viginti*: *Gall.* 16.1; 19.6; 21.1-2; *triginta*: *Gall.* 19.7; *T* 31.5; *Cl.* 1.1; *Q* 1.3; *T* 33.7. Zecchini (1997, 266n5) conjectured that the figure of thirty could have been inspired by the thirty tyrants who governed Athens. This topic occurs in Nepos' biography of Thrasybulus, *Thr.* 1.2: *huic contigit ut a triginta oppressam tyrannis e servitute in libertatem vindicaret; 1.5: nam cum triginta tyranni praepositi a Lacedaemoniis servitute oppressas tenerent Athenas...* and 3.1: *ne qui praeter triginta tyrannos...*

³³⁶ This does not necessarily work the other way round: Valerian, for example, is a good emperor, though he appears together with his son in a combined book. Still, the combination of the lives of *duo Valeriani* and the *duo Gallieni* are in fact rather forced. The author took Gallienus' son, Valerian junior, to supplement both his life of Valerian and his life of Gallienus in order to create two double lives. In both of these lives, the author commits a historical error: in *Val.*, it is not the son but the grandson of the emperor at hand who is described (*Val.* 8.1-5), while in *Gall.* (19.1-20.4) Gallienus' son Saloninus (apparently the same person who in *Val.* did not bear the name of Gallienus) is produced in order to come up with *duo Gallieni* (*Gall.*). Chastagnol's analysis (1994, 781), who states that 'Les confusions de l' H.A. sont difficiles à expliquer', shows that the situation is even more complicated, but for our present analysis it suffices to establish that the author needed two Gallieni and two Valeriani for his literary purposes. It is ironical that the lives of *Cl.* and *Tac.* are in fact better suited to serve as double lives than *Val.* and *Gall.*

³³⁷ Bugersdijk about panegyric in the *HA* (forthcoming).

³³⁸ *Gall.* 16.1: *orbem terrarum viginti prope per tyrannos vastari fecit...*

³³⁹ *Gall.* 19.6-7: *Fuisse autem et alios rebelliones sub eodem proprio dicemus loco, si quidem placuit viginti tyrannos uno volumine includere,(...). Nam et multa iam in Valeriani vita dicta sunt, multa in libro, qui de triginta tyrannis inscribendus est, iam loquemur, quae iterari ac saepius dici minus utile videbatur.*

³⁴⁰ *Gall.* 21.1-2: *Nunc transeamus ad viginti tyrannos, qui Gallieni temporibus contemptu mali principis extiterunt.*

encountered is thirty, in 1.1, 31.5³⁴¹ and 31.7, 31.11 and 33.7. In *Cl.* 1.1³⁴² and *Q* 1.3³⁴³ this figure is repeated. In all, a figure of twenty is mentioned thrice, that of thirty seven times. In two passages in the final chapters of *T* (31.11³⁴⁴ and 33.7³⁴⁵) the author speaks of an *integer numerus*.

The combination of two or more pretenders in a single book is an important novelty, expressed in words that call to mind the formula in *Max.* (see above): *Gall.* 19.6 (*uno volumine includere*), *T* 1.2 (*in unum eos libellum contuli*), *T* 31.5 (*Quos ego in unum volumen idcirco contuli, ne...*) and *Q* 1.3 (*...uno breviter libro concluderet*). It was suggested long ago that the figure of thirty was prompted by the well-known fact that Athens was dominated by a group of thirty Spartan tyrants at the end of the fifth century BC³⁴⁶. The question whether the author of the *HA* was familiar with this episode in Greek history³⁴⁷ can be answered positively if he did actually follow Nepos. In the latter's *Thrasymbulus* the thirty are mentioned.³⁴⁸ Though the number may be explained as an imitation, the existence of a book with so many lives remains exceptional. Again, the solution can be found in the work of Nepos. After twenty lives of Greek generals, there follows a book about kings who were also good generals: It has already been shown that the author of the *HA* followed certain words in the preface to *Max.*; in *T* he also followed Nepos' example of adding a book treating a great many rulers who differ from the others (in the *HA* tyrants amidst emperors, in *De Duc.* kings amidst generals). The remarks by which this procedure is announced are surprisingly similar in *De duc.* and the *HA*. In these statements there is also a claim to originality implied. For example, Nepos' *Epam.* 15.4.6: *Plurima quidem proferre possumus, sed modus adhibendus est*³⁴⁹, *quoniam uno hoc volumine vitam excellentium virorum complurium concludere constituimus, quorum res separatim multis milibus versuum complures scriptores ante nos explicarunt*. Emphasis is laid on the description of several excellent men in one volume (i.e. *De duc.*), while other writers or poets describe them *separatim*, in more volumes. This last theme recurs in Nepos *Reges* 21.1.1-2: *Hi fere sunt Graecae gentis duces qui memoria digni videantur, praeter reges; namque eos attingere nolimus, quod omnium res gestae separatim sunt relatae. Neque tamen ii admodum sunt multi*. The exact content of Nepos' *DVI* is no longer known. The quotation in 21.1.1-2 may indicate that he wrote a book *De regibus exterarum gentium* (on a par with *De ducibus exterarum gentium*) in which the *res gestae* of kings are described.³⁵⁰ In the present book, however, *duces* are the subject, which he supplements with an enumeration of foreign kings. The idea of the author of the *HA* to

³⁴¹ *T* 31.5: *Haec sunt quae de triginta tyrannis dicenda videbantur*.

³⁴² *Cl.* 1.1: *...scripseram eo libro, quem de triginta tyrannis edidi*.

³⁴³ *Q* 1.3: *ea fuit diligentia ... ut etiam triginta tyrannos uno breviter libro concluderet*.

³⁴⁴ *T* 31.11 *Habent integrum numerum ex arcanis historiae in meas litteras datum*.

³⁴⁵ *T* 33.7: *Habes integrum triginta numerum tyrannorum, qui cum malevolis quidem sed bono animo causabaris*.

³⁴⁶ Chastagnol 1994, XLII-III suggests Xenophon and Thucydides as examples, though the use of Nepos makes this less plausible.

³⁴⁷ Zecchini 1997, 266n5

³⁴⁸ *Thr.* 1.2: *huic contigit ut a triginta oppressam tyrannis e servitute in libertatem vindicaret*; 1.5: *nam cum triginta tyranni praepositi a Lacedaemoniis servitute oppressas tenerent Athenas...* and 3.1: *ne qui praeter triginta tyrannos...*

³⁴⁹ Also the words *modus adhibendus est* were followed in the *HA*, see § 4.3.1.

³⁵⁰ In both cases *separatim* means 'apart from each other or the rest, separately, individually' (*OLD*). Rolfe (1994, 249) translates in 15.4.6: 'individual deeds', in 21.1.1 *separatim* means 'apart from this book'.

combine rulers of a different kind in his *Triginta tyranni* (and *Quadrigae tyrannorum*) amidst the lives of emperors is comparable. In *T* he boasts of combining thirty tyrants in one book: *T* 1.2: *in unum eos libellum contuli*. Compare this clause with *T* 31.5 (*de triginta tyrannis...*) *quos ego in unum volumen idcirco contuli, ne, de singulis singula quaeque narrarem*. Nepos' *uno hoc volumine* recurs here as *in unum volumen*, while *separatim* recurs periphrastically as *de singulis singula quaeque*. Only Nepos' verb *concludere* is not imitated, but that word occurs in *Q* 1.3, where the author states of his fictitious colleague Trebellius Pollio, author of *T*: *ea fuit diligentia ... ut etiam triginta tyrannos uno breviter libro concluderet*. Nepos had the idea of combining lives of kings in his book on *duces*; the author of the *HA* follows this by combining thirty tyrants in his series of books about emperors and borrows the terminology from his predecessor with slight variations:

	<i>Epam.</i> 4.6	<i>HA</i>
I	<i>Plurima quidem proferre possimus, sed modus adhibendus est</i>	(<i>Max.</i> 1.1 <i>adhibui moderationem</i>)
II	<i>quoniam uno hoc volumine vitam excellentium virorum complurium concludere constituimus</i>	(<i>Max.</i> 1.1 <i>qua in unum volumen duos Maximinos... congererem;</i>)
		<i>Gall.</i> 19.6 <i>si quidem placuit viginti tyrannos uno volumine includere</i>
		<i>T</i> 1.2: <i>in unum eos libellum contuli</i>
		<i>T</i> 31.5 <i>quos ego in unum volumen idcirco contuli</i>
III	<i>quorum res separatim multis milibus versuum complures scriptores ante nos explicarunt.</i>	<i>Q</i> 1.3: <i>ut etiam triginta tyrannos uno breviter libro concluderet.</i>
		<i>T</i> 31.5 <i>de singulis singula quaeque</i>

Figure 4.4: Comparison of Nepos *Epam.* 4.6 and passages from the *HA* (*Max.* 1.1, *Gall.* 19.6, *T* 1.2 and 31.5, *Q* 1.3).

Nepos' phrase in *Ep.* 4.6 is followed by the author of the *HA* in at least 7 different places, the middle part of which is of special importance for the explication of the *divisio* in books. Mind the sequence *uno volumine* – *in unum libellum* – *in unum volumen* – *uno libro*, combined respectively with the verbs *includere* – *contuli* – *contuli* – *concluderet*, all based on Nepos' *uno hoc volumine ... concludere*. The *variatio* cannot be but deliberate.

4.3.3 Book Division

So far in our investigation of the sources followed by the author of the *HA*, only the works of Nepos have been taken into consideration. The more obvious models, however, as already pointed out in § 2.3, are certainly Suetonius, and Marius Maximus, who

continued the Suetonian series.³⁵¹ For that reason, the former has been postulated as the main source for the author of the *HA* for the Primary Lives and *Hel.*. Hence, a brief survey of the structure of Suetonius' works in comparison with the *HA* seems in order. It is no great problem to consider Suetonius' *De Vita Caesarum* (*DVI*) as a biographical series of Caesares, Augusti and pretenders, in which a development from separate to combined lives may also be discerned. The author of the *HA* praises Suetonius as an eminent *scriptor* of biographies, but berates him for not having written separate lives of tyrants (*Q* 1).³⁵² He refrains, however, from mentioning that Suetonius did actually combine more than one ruler in just one book: the first six books of *De vita Caesarum* (*Jul.*, *Aug.*, *Tib.*, *Cal.*, *Cl.*, *Nero*) are all devoted to single rulers of the Julio-Claudian dynasty, while the seventh (*Gall.*, *Otho*, *Vit.*) and eighth (*Ves.*, *Tit.*, *Dom.*) books include three emperors each. Suetonius even explicitly comments on the similarity of the three emperors in Book Seven and treats them as a group: *Rebellionem trium principum et caede incertum diu et quasi vagum imperium suscepit firmavitque tandem gens Flavia, obscura illa quidem ac sine ullis maiorum imaginibus, sed tamen rei publicae nequaquam paenitenda* (*Ves.* 1.1). By the words on which the eighth book opens *rebellionem trium principum*, the three emperors of Book Seven are combined and characterized as *rebeldes*.³⁵³ Furthermore, the three emperors of the *gens Flavia* are also presented as a unit in the passage quoted. Two further elements characteristic of the *HA* have precedents in its famous model: the joint treatment of more than one emperor in one book and the characterization of the beginning of their reign as a *rebellio*. These observations are not intended to prove that the author of the *HA* knew Suetonius (on which point there can be no doubt) or imitated him, which seems likely, but to show that the irregular structure of the *HA* is not without precedent.

4.4 Time in the *HA* II

4.4.1 Time of the Series

In § 3.7, we studied the relations between TS and TN in three parts of the *HA*. There we took the entire *HA* as point of departure, without considering the time distribution in individual books. One example suffices to make the point clear: the *HA* treats the emperors from Hadrian to Diocletian, and thus we can say that the time span of the narrative of the *HA* is the period from 117 to 284 AD. The individual biography of Hadrian, however, treats his birth (and provides information from before that point in time: *H* 1.1: *Origo imperatoris Hadriani vetustior...*, and 2.1: *Natus est Romae...*), his reign and death, so the span of time of *H* is the period of 76-138. It would be wrong to say that the *HA* treats the period of 76 to 284 AD, as the organising principle of the series

³⁵¹ Syme (1968, 90 and note 1), who invoked Ausonius' *XII Caesares* as the clue for the scope of Maximus's works.

³⁵² *Q* 1.1: ...*Suetonius Tranquillus, emendatissimus et candidissimus scriptor, Antonium, Vindicem tacuit, contentus eo quod eos cursim perstrinxerat, ...* Other passages in which Suetonius is mentioned or praised are: *H* 11.3, *C* 10.2, *MB* 4.5, *Pr.* 2.7.

³⁵³ The word *rebellio* (*AP* 5.5; *MA* 29.4; *AC* 7.5, 9.11; *PN* 6.2; *Gall.* 13.10, 19.6; *T* 5.1-2, 26.7; *A* 33.5, *Pr.* 9.1) as well as *rebellis* (*H* 5.2; *AC* 8.6; *CIA* 5.4; *T* 26.1; *Cl.* 11.8, *A* 38.3, *Pr.* 18.4) occurs frequently in the *HA*.

is determined by the reigns of the emperors.³⁵⁴ Herodian's history from the death of Marcus death to the accession of Gordian III can serve as material for comparison. This historian takes the reigning emperors as his point of departure for the line of his narrative, thereby providing information about the origins of all the main actors in his book.³⁵⁵ The difference with biography is that the inception of the reign of an emperor is the point of departure, while in TS there is a constant return to its subject's origins at each beginning of a biography.

4.4.2 Time of the Story in the Primary Lives

One problem deserves special attention, which concerns the way in which the series is constructed. The biographies in the *HA* describe full lives of emperors, so that each new life results in a shift back in time. For instance, after the death of Antoninus Pius in *AP*, the narrative goes back to the birth of Marcus Aurelius.³⁵⁶ While the successive reigns of the emperors provide a regular structure for the series, the recounting of their lives results in a constant overlap of historical time. This overlap is also part of the author's literary game: he often links facts from the early years and career of his subject emperors to the reigns of earlier emperors, as for instance Gordian's declamation in the Athenaeum, which Pertinax is claimed to have attended (*Gd.* 3.4 ~ *P* 11.3). Another example is the duplication of narration of certain events, e.g. Aurelian's triumph in *T* 30.24-6 and, more elaborately, *A* 33-34.³⁵⁷ This kind of repetition is typical of the series. The result of this structure is a persistent overlap of historical time: periods of historical time are treated over and again. TS can be visualized in a diagram, to illustrate our observations. As an example, we select a relatively coherent group of books from the series, that of *PL*, from which an interesting picture evolves. A distinction is made between the lives up to the accession (dotted lines) and the reign of the emperor (continuous lines):³⁵⁸

³⁵⁴ By the notion of 'series' I mean: a collection of linked chapters or books that are held together by a similar structure or content.

³⁵⁵ Hidber (2007, 197-211) treats the temporal aspects in Herodian's works, see note 333.

³⁵⁶ On the whole, most of the narrative time in the *vitae* is concerned with ruling years, the early years of childhood getting much less attention. As the majority of material comes from historiographical sources, the biographer is largely dependent on these for what there is to found about this period in the life of any of his subjects. Not surprisingly, this sometimes fails to work. For instance, Macrinus's biography consists of almost nothing but his reigning period, not counting a few flashbacks to an earlier career (*OM* 4, Aurelius Victor's speech), and the events that led to his reign, as well as his death. In this biography, the time of the narration roughly coincides with his reigning time.

³⁵⁷ As noted by Pausch 2009, 13-4. This is what Genette (1980, 121-2) calls the 'pseudo-iterative': the narrative tells several times something that happened only once (in this case, there is an amplification in *A* 33-4 of the story told in *T* 30.24-6).

³⁵⁸ The years of birth, accession and death of Hadrian are: 76, 117, 138 AD; Antoninus Pius: 86, 138, 161; Marcus Aurelius: 121, 161, 180; Lucius Verus: 130, 160, 169; Commodus: 161, 180, 192; Pertinax: 126, 193, 193; Didius Iulianus: 137, 193, 193; Septimius Severus: 145, 193, 211; Caracalla: 188, 211, 217 (all data according to Kienast 1996).

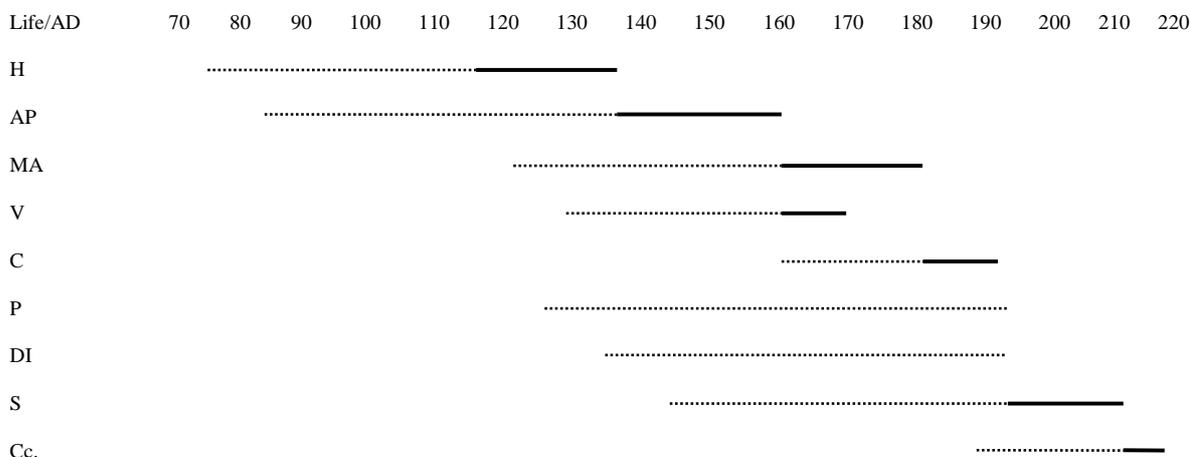


Figure 4.5: *TS in PL, as found in the earlier careers and reigns.*

In historical time, and consequently TS, the earlier lives of the emperors consist of many more years than their reigns. This aspect will prove to be important for our temporal analysis when TN is taken into account as well.

4.4.3 Time of the Narrative in the Primary Lives

It is an inherent characteristic of imperial biography, as written by Suetonius and the *HA* - and, we may safely add, Marius Maximus - that the lives of the emperors are taken as point of departure, which leads to an interesting use of time in the series. Whenever the author ends the description of an emperor's reign, he is forced to go back in time to describe the origin and youth of the next emperor. Meanwhile, TN is not in accordance with TS. Just as it would be against one's expectation if someone wishing to describe the lives of the ten last American presidents in one series was to pay as much attention to George W. Bush's early career as to his presidential years, the author of the *HA* treats the reigns of the emperors in greater detail than their early careers, even if the totality of their *vitae* remain the ostensible subject of his narration. Though TS of the earlier careers of the emperors is generally much longer than the time of their reign, much more space in the narrative is dedicated to the latter, as can be seen in the bracketed relative numbers that denote NS devoted to the two parts of each individual life:

Life	capita	TN (words)	capita	TN (words)	total TN (words)
<i>H</i>	1-4	773 (15 %)	5-27	4 351 (85 %)	5 124
<i>AP</i>	1-5.2	737 (33 %)	5.3-13	1 508 (67 %)	2 245
<i>MA</i>	1-6	1 138 (21 %)	7-29	4 362 (79 %)	5 500
<i>V</i>	1-2	385 (19 %)	3-11	1 672 (81 %)	2 057
<i>C</i>	1-2	392 (11 %)	3-20	3 074 (89 %)	3 466
<i>P</i>	1-3	502 (19 %)	4-15	2 092 (81 %)	2 596
<i>DI</i>	1-2	356 (22 %)	3-9	1 238 (78 %)	1 594
<i>S</i>	1-4	656 (16 %)	5-24	3 559 (84 %)	4 215
<i>Cc.</i>	1	16 (8 %)	2-11	1 873 (92 %)	2 033
Total:		5 099 (18 %)		23 729 (82 %)	28 828

Figure 4.6: TN in PL, divided into early lives and reigns in absolute and relative numbers.

This means that the narrative is primarily meant to describe the reigns of the emperors and their *mores*, their earlier careers having second place only. Meanwhile, the descriptions of the earlier careers of emperors are essentially what separates biography from historiography. This is taxing for the biographer, who has to come up with information about origins and earlier career. We will return to this subject at the end of the chapter.

4.4.4 Time of the Narrative and Time of the Story in the Primary Lives

When we compare TS and TN, it turns out that there are differences between the recounting of the earlier careers and the reigns of the emperors:

Life	I Earlier Career		Wds/year	II Reign		Wds/year
	TS1	TN1	TN1/TS1	TS2	TN2	TN2/TS2
Hadrian	41	773	19	21	4 351	207
Antoninus P.	52	737	14	23	1 508	65
M. Aurelius	40	1 138	28	19	4 362	229
Lucius Verus	31	385	12	6	1 672	279
Commodus	19	392	21	16	3 074	192
Pertinax	66	502	8	0.25	2 092	8 368
D. Iulianus	56	356	6	0.16	1 238	7 725
S. Severus	48	656	13	18	3 559	198
Caracalla	23	160	7	6	1 873	312
Total	376	5 099	(av.) 14	109	23 729	(av.) 218

Figure 4.7: Distribution of TS (in years) in relation to TN (in years) in PL, distinguishing between early career (I) and reign (II) in absolute Numbers.

It appears that disproportionately little attention is paid in the narrative to the earlier careers of the emperors when compared to the duration in historical time: 376 years of historical time (78 per cent of the total of TS) is recounted in 5099 words (18 percent of

the total of TN), while 109 years of historical time (22 per cent of TS) is recounted in 23729 words (82 per cent of TN). In other words, TN is inversely proportional to TS when the two periods of TS (earlier careers and reigns) are compared ($TS1 : TS2 = 78 : 22$ and $TN1 : TN2 = 18 : 82$), as appears from the following summary:

	TS	TN	TN / TS
Earlier careers	376 years (78 %)	5 099 words (18 %)	14 wds / year
Reigns	109 years (22 %)	23 729 words (82 %)	218 wds / year
Total	485 years (100%)	28 828 words (100%)	58 wds / year

Figure 4.8: Distribution of TS (in years) in relation to the TN (in years) in the Primary Lives, distinguishing between early careers and reigns in absolute and relative numbers.

Looking at the individual lives, we can say that some biographies are more balanced than others. Let us take as an example Marcus Aurelius' biography: 229 words a year are devoted to his reign against 28 words a year for his earlier career, a proportion of $229 : 28$, which we might call the 'biographical factor'. This factor, which can be considered a fraction ($229 / 28 = 8.2$), denotes the proportion between the attention paid to the emperor's reign ($TN2 / TS 2$) and his earlier career ($TN 1 / TS 1$) and indicates the balance between the parts. For the Primary Lives, the computation of the fractions provides the following results:

Life	TN/TS1	TN/TS2	Factor
<i>H</i>	19	207	10.9
<i>AP</i>	14	65	4.6
<i>MA</i>	28	229	8.2
<i>LV</i>	12	279	23.3
<i>C</i>	21	192	9.1
<i>P</i>	8	8 368	1046.0
<i>DI</i>	6	7 725	1287.5
<i>S</i>	13	198	15.2
<i>Cc.</i>	7	312	44.6
Average	14	218	15.6

Figure 4.9: Biographical factors (or the proportion between the attention paid to early career and reign) in the Primary Lives

This overview shows its worth when the factors of the individual biographies are compared to one another. Some biographies are more balanced when it comes to the description of the two aspects distinguished here than others (the factors between brackets are rounded off): *AP* (5) – *MA* (8) – *C* (9) – *H* (10) – *S* (15) – *LV* (23) – *Cc.* (45) – *P* (1046) – *DI* (1288), while the average factor is 16.

The observation that, on average, 16 times as much attention is paid to reigns than to earlier careers shows that the narrative in PL mainly follows lines of succeeding emperors. It must be noted, of course, that sometimes the emperor's character is also subject of the narration, but also this theme in biography is connected with the reign of the subject. The main line becomes clear when the results of the counting of TN

compared with TS (see figure 4.5 and 4.6) is shown schematically, just as we did with TN in the books of *De Bello Gallico* (§ 1.3.4):

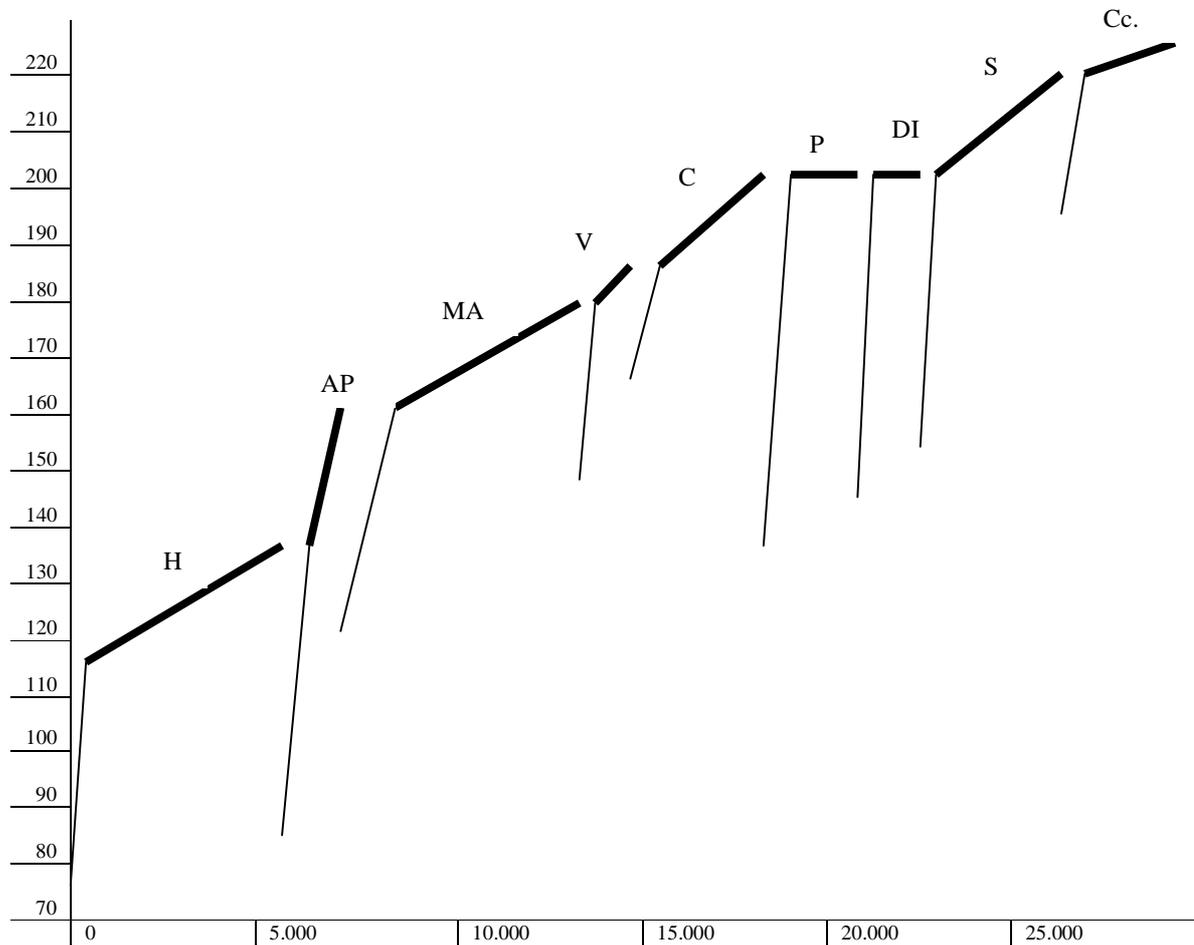


Figure 4.10: TN in relation with TS in the Primary Lives (TN in words on the X-axis, TS in years on the Y-axis).

What this shows is that, when analysing the relation of TS and TN in the HA, a distinction must always be made between earlier lives and reigns when it comes to NS. We can safely assume that this must also hold good for the main source of these lives. The organising principle of the series is the succession of reigns. The distinctive art of biography is to describe the lives of the emperors before their accession, though this item remains subordinate to the reigns. There is an acceleration at each beginning of a new book, and a slowing-down at the time of the accession.³⁵⁹

³⁵⁹ Hidber (2007, 209-10) draws interesting conclusions with regard to Herodian's narration about the emperors (note, however, that Herodian does not distinguish between early lives and reigns in his narrative: he presents the early careers as analepseis in the narration): 'Rhythm undergoes dramatic changes. The slowest pace is always found in the passages that recount changes - the death of an emperor and the accession to the throne of his successor.', 210: 'Scenes are normally linked by short summaries which often cover several years of *fabula*-time [= TS, DB]. Administrative and juridical actions, everything related to 'normal' home affairs, and, in short, all the quiet years of easy reign are dealt with in such 'summaries'.

In his treatment of nature and purpose of historiography (defined by type of narrative, focalisation, chronological limits and arrangement, and subject matter) Marincola (1999, 304-5) distinguishes an annalistic pattern (κατ' ἔτος, *suum quaeque in annum referre*), a structuring according to reigns (κατ' ἄρχοντας καὶ βασιλέας) and an arrangement according to area or category (κατὰ γένος).³⁶⁰ Biography (not treated as a separate category by Marincola) of the type of the *HA*, results from the second category mentioned: the arrangement according to years, which in Roman historiography is a further development of the first category of annalistic structure. In imperial times, the consular years as an indication of historical time became subordinate to those marking the reigns of emperors. Thus, whereas Tacitus still uses consular years to indicate at what time certain events happened (just as Livy and Sallust did before him), these indications are virtually absent from Suetonius and the *HA* as a structuring indication of the time of events described.³⁶¹ This makes that both series of *vitae*, Suetonius and the *HA*, constitute a class of their own in the corpus of biographical literature in antiquity. In both works, the emperors' reigns are the guiding line of the series, while the lives of rulers (consisting of elements such as origins, birth, education, youth, character), which determine the division of the material over the books, are a further elaboration of the central theme, which is the successive reigns.³⁶² Imperial biographies mainly follow the structure κατὰ χρόνους καὶ δυναστείας, which makes the type a blend of historiography and biography in its proper sense.

Finally, we should pose the question whether the structure of the Primary Lives is also applicable to other biographies. Some remarks are in order. Of course we are speaking about imperial biography in the manner of Suetonius, whose work *De Vita Caesarum* lends itself for an analysis comparable to the one above. We may suppose that the structure as encountered in the Primary Lives strongly reflects the one in the sources of these lives, *Ignotus* or Marius Maximus. With regard to the other lives in the *HA*, not based on biographical sources, the observed structure seems to be present even more clearly, for the point of departure from *OM* onwards is mostly the death of the preceding emperor, rendered in the ablativus absolutus (see above, § 4.2.2). In these books, the similarities with historiographical sources seems to be stronger than in the case of the Primary Lives. Imperial biographies, linked in series, have not been transmitted in any great number, so that the evidence as provided by the Primary Lives is precious. It can

Thus, hardly anything is said about the administrative actions taken by Macrinus during the year of his reign, but both his accession and his sad ending are depicted in scenes.'

³⁶⁰ I have not been able to trace the origin of the Greek terms, neither in Marincola's book nor in Greek historiographical texts.

³⁶¹ Suetonius sometimes mentions consuls, but seldomly as an indicator of time; in the *HA*, an exception has to be made for the consular years which are mentioned in the passages taken from Dexippus (see Paschoud 1990 and § 2.4.2 *ad* Dexippus).

³⁶² The other side of the medal is that historiography also shows biographical tendencies. Cassius Dio, for one, shows a remarkable blend of annalistic and biographical structure when he reaches the early principate, as Pelling (1997, 117 *sqq.*) points out. Characters dominate the descriptions of historical time, also within the descriptions of the reigns of the successive emperors, which procedure Pelling terms 'biostructure' (1997, 118). See also Hidber 2006, 146 ('Der Einfluss des Biographischen. Die Gliederung κατὰ δυναστείας').

serve as a basis for further research of temporal analysis in biography, which, in its turn, provides material for comparison with historiographical texts.