Chapter 3

Commentary on the *Vita Marci Antonini Philosophi*

**Introduction: Structural Elements of the Commentary**

This commentary on the *Vita Marci* is focused on the intention that lay behind the inclusion of certain episodes and how they were presented by the biographer. This is to ascertain the bias that occurs throughout this account of Marcus Aurelius. The text has been analysed using two patterns: the examination of thematic sections, and the investigation into key individual sentences. This study has concentrated on the text using thematic divisions that exist in the text, in order to fully understand and delineate the changing and continuing themes that occur in the narrative. However, there are many instances where particular sentences have also been analysed, largely owing to their effect on the development of the account provided by the author. It is hoped that this style of analysis has illustrated the value of the biography and the dilemmas faced when approaching this text, which in turn should allow for a better understanding of both the author and his perspective on Marcus Aurelius. This is important because it demonstrates the worth of a critical understanding of a literary source, and it establishes that in order to understand leading historical figures, such as Marcus Aurelius, it is imperative to be aware of the nature of the evidence.

In addition to this, there has been a fair degree of concentration on the reliability of the account presented by the biographer. This has, in turn, required the constant inclusion of references to the comparable evidence for the life and reign of Marcus Aurelius, which has placed emphasis on the other literary sources that dealt with him, as well as the numismatic evidence from the period. The coin evidence has been particularly useful because of its contemporaneous nature. Nevertheless, the focus has remained primarily on the text and the intention of the biographer to portray Marcus in a particular fashion. In other parts of this study, the analysis of this particular biography has been used to contextualise its place in the *Historia Augusta* overall, as well as its bearing on our understanding of the life and reign of Marcus Aurelius.
Section 1

1.1

Marco Antonino, in omni vita philosophanti viro et qui sanctitate vitae omnibus principibus antecellit: This initial reference to Marcus Aurelius and his natural philosophical tendencies makes the theme of this Life quite clear from the outset. The most apparent theme of the Vita depicts Marcus as an excellent exponent of the ideal ‘philosopher king’ and is clearly emphasised from the very outset of the text. The description of Marcus as being devoted to philosophy for his entire life and ‘unsurpassed among emperors in his purity of life’ is evident in this passage. The pre-eminence of Marcus Aurelius in this fashion was also noted in other ancient texts referring to his reign, as was his passion for philosophical inquiry.

1.2-4

pater Annius Verus......Rupili Boni consularis filia, fuere: This section reiterates the esteemed heritage into which Marcus Aurelius was born, which was a consistent theme with many of the positive biographies in the Historia Augusta. There are several of his most notable ancestors mentioned, which was intended to further the appropriateness of Marcus’ tenure as princeps. Marcus Annius Verus was the father of Marcus, but it appears that he was probably already deceased by AD 128/9 when Marcus became a Salus, considering that Hadrian enrolled him among this priesthood. Marcus Annius Verus was the grandfather of Marcus Aurelius, who held three consulships in AD 97, 121 and 126, despite the text stating that he had been consul only twice. He was the first private citizen to hold three consulships since Licinius Sura, which is a good reflection of his esteem in the eyes of the princeps.

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1 Schwendemann, 1923, op.cit., pp. 1-6.
2 Plato, Republic, Book 6.
4 Dio, 72.35.6; Herodian, 1.2.3.
5 Herodian, 1.2.4.
10 See Marcus, 4.2.
11 PIR² A 695.
He was probably also urban prefect in AD 121, which was a significant honour.\textsuperscript{14} He was probably enrolled as a patrician during the censorship of Vespasian and Titus in AD 73/4.\textsuperscript{15}

Marcus Annius Libo was his uncle, and had been one of the \textit{consules ordinarii} in AD 128.\textsuperscript{16} Birley has argued that his wife was Annia Fundania Faustina,\textsuperscript{17} which appears quite likely. Galeria Faustina Augusta was Marcus’ aunt,\textsuperscript{18} the wife of Antoninus Pius.\textsuperscript{19} She received the title of \textit{Augusta} following from the birth of her daughter Domitia Faustina on 30\textsuperscript{th} November, AD 147,\textsuperscript{20} which coincided with the conferral of tribunician power on Marcus on 1\textsuperscript{st} December, AD 147.\textsuperscript{21} Domitia Lucilla\textsuperscript{22} was the mother of Marcus Aurelius and she was daughter of Publius Calvisius Tullius Ruso, who had been \textit{consul ordinarius} for the first time in AD 109,\textsuperscript{23} and Domitia Lucilla.\textsuperscript{24} She was in all likelihood quite wealthy through her inheritances from both grandfathers,\textsuperscript{25} Curtilius Macer and Cn. Domitius Afer.\textsuperscript{26} The Borghesi manuscript (P) refers to Lucilla as Cavilla, but as illustrated by Schwendemann,\textsuperscript{27} there is no other evidence for the existence of such a name, which highlights that Lucilla is the common form.\textsuperscript{28}

Annius Verus\textsuperscript{29} was his paternal great-grandfather and little else is known of him, except that he was from Succuba in Spain.\textsuperscript{30} It appears that he was made a senator with the rank of an ex-praetor, which may have been because of his actions during the Civil Wars in AD 68/9.\textsuperscript{31} Lucius Catilius Severus Julianus Claudius Reginus\textsuperscript{32} was the great-grandfather of Marcus Aurelius, through Lucius’ marriage to

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{14} Birley, 1987, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 232.
\item \textsuperscript{16} \textit{PIR}\textsuperscript{2} A, n. 667.
\item \textsuperscript{17} Birley, 1987, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 243.
\item \textsuperscript{18} \textit{PIR}\textsuperscript{2} A, n. 715.
\item \textsuperscript{19} Pius, 1.6.
\item \textsuperscript{20} A. Degrassi, \textit{Inscriptiones Italicae} XIII,i, Rome, 1947, n. 207.
\item \textsuperscript{21} Birley, 1987, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 247.
\item \textsuperscript{22} \textit{PIR}\textsuperscript{2} D, n. 183.
\item \textsuperscript{23} \textit{PIR}\textsuperscript{2} C, n. 357.
\item \textsuperscript{24} \textit{PIR}\textsuperscript{2} D, n. 182.
\item \textsuperscript{25} Birley, 1987, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 29.
\item \textsuperscript{26} Plin, \textit{Ep.}, 8.18.
\item \textsuperscript{27} Schwendemann, 1923, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 2.
\item \textsuperscript{29} \textit{PIR}\textsuperscript{2} A, n. 694.
\item \textsuperscript{30} Schwendemann, 1923, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 2.
\item \textsuperscript{31} Birley, 1987, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 28.
\item \textsuperscript{32} \textit{PIR}\textsuperscript{2} C, n. 558.
\end{itemize}
the widow of Domitius Tullus, which meant that he became the stepfather of Domitia Lucilla. He held his second consulship in AD 120 with the first occurring in AD 110. He was placed in charge of Syria by Hadrian, and held the urban prefecture as well. Rupilia Faustina was his paternal grandmother, daughter of Libo Rupilius Frugi, who had been consul suffectus in AD 88. In this instance the text refers to him as Bonus, but modern scholarship has confirmed that he was called Libo Rupilius Frugi.

1.5

natus est Marcus Romae VI. kl. Maias in monte Caelio in hortis avo suo iterum et Augure consulibus: Marcus was born just outside of Rome on 26th April, AD 121, during the second consulship of his grandfather Marcus Annius Verus and the first year of his augurate. He was born in a villa [hortis] on the Caelian Hill. The use of the term hortis in this context by the biographer was intended to highlight the simplistic nature of this residence rather than any palatial qualities that it may have possessed. The Caelian region was often viewed as an élite region to own a property in the hinterland of the capital, and it would appear that the property was owned by Lucilla, Marcus’ mother. However, Schwendemann’s speculation about the context in which the family resided at this property assumes that it was the primary residence for the familia. While this may be plausible, it cannot be taken as a certainty in view of the numerous residences owned by the aristocracy around the capital.

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44 Schwendemann, 1923, op. cit., p. 3.
uncertainty surrounding the precise nature of Marcus’ early days has been previously noted by Birley.46

1.6

cuius familia in originem......qui Lopias condidit: The claims of various élite families for descent from an illustrious historical figure of Rome was quite common. However, the claim that the gens Annia descended from Numa Pompilius,47 and also from Malemnius, the Sallentine king who founded Lupiae, which was thirty-two kilometres south of Brundisium (item a rege Sallentino Malemnio, Dasummi filio, qui Lopias condidit) is entirely unsupportable.48 But it is pertinent to note that this claim was made according to Marius Maximus,49 which makes it a significant feature for an understanding of the sources that surrounded this Life. This is the first reference to Marius Maximus in the Vita Marci and it is quite evident that the biographer possessed some respect for him, and that he must be viewed as a genuine source for the HA.50 For further discussion of his impact on the Historia Augusta, see Syme.51 Eutropius also mentions the descent of the familia from Numa Pompilius (8.9 quippe cum eius origo paterna a Numa Pompilio, materna a Solentino rege penderet), which highlights the scholarly tradition that surrouded the origins of the gens Annii.52

1.7-8

educatus est in eo loco......consobrinam suam: This statement was intended to further highlight not only the basic context in which Marcus was raised, but also the great influence that his esteemed ancestors had on him.53 As previously mentioned, his grandfather Marcus Annius Verus had attained three consulships and the urban prefecture, and clearly possessed the respect of the princeps, Hadrian. The significance of the house of Lateranus (vedes Laterani) is uncertain, but it was typically referred to as the domus Laterana,54 and was later presented to Sextius

48 Syme, 1958, op.cit., p. 792.
52 Schwenk, 1923, op.cit., p. 4.
Lateranus (cos. 197).\textsuperscript{55} This upbringing was probably intended to correlate with the presentation of Marcus as a secluded philosopher, which was emphasised by the use of the initial term \textit{educatus}.

His younger sister, Annia Cornificia Faustina,\textsuperscript{56} was later married to Ummidius Quadratus,\textsuperscript{57} who was consul in AD 146.\textsuperscript{58} Syme has argued that the use of the name \textit{Cornificia} may represent a claim by the \textit{gens Annia} that Lanuvium was their initial place of origin. It is also pertinent to note that there is little mention of Annia Faustina in the \textit{HA},\textsuperscript{59} his cousin and later wife. Throughout the majority of this \textit{Life}, the references to Annia Faustina are rather hesitant to provide clear details of her persona particularly as far as her relationship with Marcus is concerned. However, the overall concentration of the biographer is on Marcus himself, almost to the exclusion of all other figures in the narrative.

\textbf{1.9-10}

\textit{Marcus Antoninus principio......post virilem autem togam Annius Verus}: This section further reiterates the great influence of Marcus Annius Verus upon the young Marcus Aurelius. According to the biographer, he was originally named after Catilius Severus, his maternal grandfather (1.9 \textit{Marcus Antoninus principio a<e>vi sui nomen habuit Catili[s] Severi, materni proavi}). As previously mentioned, Catilius Severus had been an esteemed member of the Roman élite in his own right, having been a consul twice and an urban prefect.\textsuperscript{60} The author then illustrates that this connection to Catilius Severus is superseded by the Emperor Hadrian and his paternal grandfather, Marcus Annius Verus. Initially it is through Hadrian’s play on words, calling him \textit{Annius Verissimus} following on the death of Marcus’ father.\textsuperscript{61}

The association between the young Marcus and his paternal side of the \textit{familia} was further reinforced through his adoption by his paternal grandfather, Marcus Annius Verus, following the death of his father. This closer affiliation is further emphasised by the author through Marcus’ official change of name, being called

\textsuperscript{55} Schwendemann, 1923, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 5.
\textsuperscript{56} PIR\textsuperscript{2} A, n. 708.
\textsuperscript{57} Syme, 1968, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 98.
\textsuperscript{58} Birley, 1987, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 243.
\textsuperscript{59} Pius, 1.7; 10.2; \textit{Aelius}, 6.9; \textit{Verus}, 2.2.
\textsuperscript{61} For other instances where Marcus is referred to as \textit{Annius Verissimus}, see Dio, 69.21.2; J.H. Eckhel, \textit{Doctrina Nominum Veterum}, Vienna: J.V. Degen, 1792-1839, 7.69; A.S.L. Farquharson, “On the Names of Aelius Caesar, adopted son of Hadrian”, \textit{CQ} 2.1, 1908, p. 4.
Annius Verus after he assumed the *toga virilis*. Therefore, the portrayal that the biographer has presented is that Marcus was closely associated with the greatest of his living forebears, Marcus Annius Verus, and also personally affiliated with Hadrian, and so establishes his destiny for greatness from the very outset of the *Vita*.

1.10

*patre mortuo ab avo paterno adoptatus et educatus est*: This statement was intended to further highlight that great influence his grandfather, Marcus Annius Verus, had on the young Marcus Aurelius. The biographer was clearly indicating that his paternal grandfather fulfilled more of a parental role and had a significant degree of influence on his development. This is emphasised by the biographer both through his frequent mention of Marcus Annius Verus and also through his references to the young Marcus’ adoption and his change of name to Marcus Annius Verus. This may have in turn been a reflection of the reality, considering that Marcus Annius Verus was the first person recognised in the *Meditations*: Παρὰ τοῦ πάτρου Οὐήρου, τὸ καλότες καὶ ἀργητόν.  

Section 2

2.1

*Fuit a prima infantia gravis*: This initial statement (‘He was a serious child from the outset’) continues the basic premise of the previous passages: that from the very outset he was determined and almost destined for greatness, which is the most consistent representation given by the biographer.

2.1-4

*at ubi egressus......Latino Frontone Cornelio*: The inclusion of a list of Marcus’ elementary teachers was another example of how the biographer sought to emphasise the studious nature of young Marcus.  

62 Med. 1.1. ‘From my Grandfather Verus, a caring temperament and a kind character.’

63 Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, pp. 7-12.

educated him in performance and drama. The third tutor mentioned, Andron, taught Marcus music and geometry, but it appears likely that he was involved with Marcus’ education at a later date, probably around the age of eleven. According to the biographer, all of these tutors received great honours from him later because he was ‘representative of the disciplines’ (quibus omnibus ut disciplinarum auctoribus plurimum detulit). Birley has argued that there was another unnamed tutor involved with Marcus during his earliest years who was mentioned by Marcus in his Meditations: παρὰ τοῦ τροφέως, τὸ μήτε Προσιανὸς μήτε Βενετιανὸς, μήτε Παλμουλάριος ἢ Σκούταριος γενέσθαι· καὶ τὸ φερέπονον καὶ ὀλιγοδέες, καὶ τὸ οὐτοφυγικὸν καὶ ἀπολύπραγμον· καὶ τὸ δυσπρόσδεκτον διάβολης.

Other teachers mentioned in this section were Alexander of Cotiaeum, Trosius Aper, Tuticius Proculus and Herodes Atticus, for example. Alexander of Cotiaeum was Marcus’ tutor of Greek Grammar and was also mentioned in his Meditations: παρὰ Ἀλεξάνδρου τοῦ γραμματικοῦ, τὸ ἀνεπίπληκτον· καὶ τὸ μὴ ὁνειδιστικῶς ἐπιλαμβάνεσθαι τῶν βάρβαρον ἢ σώλοικὸν τι ὑπηχεῖς προενεχαμένων, ἀλλ’ ἐπιδεξίως αὐτὸ μόνον ἑκεῖνο, ὅ ἐδει εἰρήσθαι, προφέρεσθαι, ἐν πρόποι ἀποκρίσεως ἢ συνεπιμαρτυρήσεως ἢ συνοιαλήψεως περὶ αὐτοῦ τοῦ πράγματος, οὕτω περὶ τοῦ ὀρθοτός, ἢ δι’ ἐτέρας τινὸς τοιαύτης ἐμμελείας παραμυθήσεως. It has been argued that he may have been the unnamed tutor previously mentioned by Marcus (Med. 1.5), which appears to be quite plausible. He lived in the palace while he taught Marcus and was clearly a great influence upon his pupil. Trosius Aper of Pola and Tuticius Proculus of Sicca taught Marcus Latin Grammar, but little detail is known of them.

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69. Med. 1.5. ‘From my Tutor, not to go for the Green Jacket or the Blue at the races, or to back the Light-Shield Victor or the Heavy Shield in the lists, not to shrink from work, and to have few desires, and to do my own labour, to mind my own business, and not to listen to defamations.’
70. Med. 1.10. ‘From Alexander the Grammarian, not to be unreliable; nor in a critical fashion find fault with those who bring into their talk any expression that is barbarous, ungrammatical or mispronounced, but tactfully to bring in the very phrase that ought to have been used as an answer or as it were in support of the statement, or as a joint consideration of the issue itself and not of the language, or by some such relevant reminder.’
except that Tuticius Proculus later received honours from Marcus,\textsuperscript{74} a point that is discussed below.\textsuperscript{75} Aninius Macer and Caninius Celer are mentioned as being his tutors in Greek oratory, but there is little extant information on them either. Celer wrote a work titled \textit{Araspes the Lover of Panthea},\textsuperscript{76} but he is mentioned only once in the \textit{Meditations},\textsuperscript{77} whereas Aninius Macer receives no mention.

Tiberius Claudius Atticus Herodes was another of Marcus’ tutors in Greek oratory who had become a good friend of Marcus.\textsuperscript{78} He was \textit{consul ordinarius} in AD 143\textsuperscript{79} and was the focal character of the \textit{Lives of the Sophists} by Philostratus.\textsuperscript{80} Marcus Cornelius Fronto was another good friend and tutor of Marcus Aurelius, who was also mentioned in the \textit{Meditations}: \textit{παρὰ Φρόντενος, τὸ ἐπιστήμα, οἷα ἡ τυραννικὴ βασιλεία καὶ ποικιλία καὶ ὑπόκρισις, καὶ ὅτι ως ἐπίπαν οἱ καλούμενοι οὕτοι παρ’ ἡμῖν εὐπατρίδια ἕστωργότεροι πως εἰσίν}.\textsuperscript{81} Fronto clearly had a close relationship with Marcus, which is most evident from the nature of their correspondence.\textsuperscript{82}

\textbf{2.5}

\textit{sed multum ex his Frontoni detulit……in se receptis}: The honours awarded to Cornelius Fronto and Tuticius Proculus of Sicca clearly reflect Marcus’ affection and respect for them. The honours conferred on Tuticius Proculus and their associated responsibilities taken on by Marcus (\textit{Proculum vero usque ad proconsulatrum provexit [h]on<e>ribus in se receptis}) referred to the financial cost of presenting games.\textsuperscript{83} The assumption of this responsibility by a princeps was not entirely unheard of previously, for example the costs incurred during the consulship of Cornelius Fronto in AD 143, were paid for by Antoninus Pius.\textsuperscript{84}

\textsuperscript{74} Birley (1968, p. 39-42) has suggested that Eutychius Proculus could have been M. Tuticius Proculus (\textit{CIL} 8.1625), with the Eutychius being a corruption of the text.
\textsuperscript{76} Birley, 1987, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 63.
\textsuperscript{77} \textit{Med.} 8.25.
\textsuperscript{80} \textit{Vit. Soph.} 2.1.
\textsuperscript{81} \textit{Med.} 1.11. ‘From Fronto, to note the jealousy, the refinement, and the dissimulation that are customary for a tyrant; and that as a general rule those amongst us who are classed as patricians are rather deficient in innate affection.’
\textsuperscript{82} Fronto, \textit{Ad. M. Caes.} 3.3-3.5.
\textsuperscript{83} See Dio 60.27.2; Schwendemann, 1923, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 10.
\textsuperscript{84} Fronto, \textit{Epist.}, 33.
2.6

philosophi<ae> operam vehementer dedit et quidem adhuc puer: This statement continues the basic premise of the previous passages: that from the outset he was indomitable and almost fated for prominence within Roman society, which is the most consistent representation given by the biographer. See also Aurelius Victor 16:

damque M. Boionium, qui Aurelius Antoninus habetur; eodem oppido, pari nobilitate, philosophandi vero eloquentiaeque studiis longe praestantem, in familiam atque imperium ascivit. The systematic representation of Marcus’ studiousness in the HA was then in turn shown through the episode involving Diognetus.

nam duodecimum annum ingressus habitum philosophi sumpsit et deinceps tolerantiam, cum studeret in pallio et humi cubaret: According to Marcus himself, the decision to wear a roughly made Greek cloak and to sleep on the ground resulted from the advice of one of his teachers, Diognetus: παρὰ Διογνήτου, τὸ ἀκενόστοιον· καὶ τὸ ἀπιστητικὸν τοῖς ὑπὸ τῶν τερατευομένων καὶ γοήτευν περὶ ἐπιφάνειας καὶ περὶ δαιμόνων ἄποστροφής καὶ τῶν τουούτων λεγομένων· καὶ τὸ μῆ προσευκτομησόντως, μηδὲ περὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα ἀποτοῆθαι· καὶ τὸ ἀνέχεσθαι παραφθῆς· καὶ τὸ οἰκειοθεῖνα χιλιοσφήνα καὶ τὸ ἀκούσαι πρῶτον μὲν Βαχχείου, εἶτα Ταυδοσίιδος καὶ Μαρκιανοῦ· καὶ τὸ γράφαι διαλόγους ἐν παιδί· καὶ τὸ σχίμπωδος καὶ δορὰς ἐπιθυμῆσαι καὶ ὅσα τοιαῦτα τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς ἁγωγῆς ἑξομνεῖν. Diognetus was primarily a painting teacher, but it is quite clear that he had a more wide-ranging impact than this.

86 Aurelius Victor, 16. “He adopted into his family and the Imperial power Marcus Boionius, who is known as Aurelius Antoninus, and was from the same city and of alike nobility, but far greater in the activities of philosophy and eloquence.”
87 Schwindemann, 1923, op. cit., p. 11.
88 Med 1.6. ‘From Diognetus, not to be consumed with frivolities, and not to grant weight to the claims of miracle-workers and wizards about incantations and the exorcizing of demons, and similar phenomena; and not to keep quails, nor to be eager for such things; not to dislike undorned speech; and to become acquainted with philosophy and be a hearer firstly of Bacchecius, then of Tandasis and Marcianus; and to write dialogues as a youth; and to set my heart on a pallet-bed and a pelt and whatever else equated with the Greek routine.’
vix autem matre agente intrato pellibus lectulo accubaret. This reference to Domitia Lucilla, the mother of Marcus Aurelius, highlights some of the underlying criticisms that occur in this Life. Overall, the Vita Marci Antonini is decidedly positive, with the number of criticisms by the biographer being markedly low. This passage provides the first example of one of the few condemnatory themes: that of Marcus’ excessive compliance. This passage in itself does not provide an overt example of such a representation in isolation, but it is important to note the founding of this subtle theme at this early section of the Life. The compliance of Marcus towards Domitia Lucilla represented in the text is discussed further below, particularly in relation to Section 4.8.

2.7

usus est etiam Commodi magistro, cuius ei adfinitas fuerat destinata, Apollonio Chalcedonio Stoico philosopho: Apollonius of Chalcedon was a Stoic and had also been the teacher of Lucius Verus (cum Apollonium, quem e Chalcide accerverat, ad Tiberianam domum, in qua habitabat, vocasset, ut ei Marcum Antoninum traderet, atque ille dixisset ‘non magister ad discipulum debet venire, sed discipulus ad magistrum,’ risit eum, dicens, ‘facilis fuit Apollonio a Chalcide Romam venire quam a domo sua in Palatinum.’ cuius avariitiam etiam in mercedibus notavit. inter argumenta pietatis eius et hoc habetur quod, cum Marcus mortuum educatum suum flet vocareturque ab audicis ministris ab ostentatione pietatis, ipse dixerit: ‘Permittite, inquit, illi, ut homo sit; neque enim vel philosophia vel imperium tollit affectus.’

His origins from Chalcedon were maintained by the biographer, whereas Cassius Dio states that he was from Nicomedia (τὸν μὲν γὰρ τὸν τε Φρόντεων τὸν Κορνήλιον καὶ τὸν Ἡρώδην τὸν Κλαύδιον διδασκάλους εἶχε, τὸν δὲ τὸν τε Ροῦστικον τὸν Ἰούνιον καὶ Ἀπολλώνιον τὸν Νικομηδεῖα, τοὺς

90 Pius, 10.4. ‘But he sent word to Apollonius, whom he had called upon from Chalcis, to come to the House of Tiberius (where he was residing at the time) in order that he might put Marcus Antoninus in his charge, but Apollonius replied ‘The master ought not come to the pupil, but the pupil to the master.’ Upon which the Emperor mocked him, saying ‘Then it was easier for Apollonius to come to Rome from Chalcis than from his house to my palace.’ The avarice of this fellow he had observed even in the question of his wages. It is related of him as well as an instance of his respect for his family, that when Marcus was mourning the death of his tutor and was restrained by the palace servants from this display of affection, the Emperor said: ‘Let him be only a man for once; for neither philosophy nor empire takes away natural feeling.’ See also Hadrian, 24.1; Verus, 2.5. The use of Commodi instead of Commodo (p. 29 above) has followed the emendation recommended by Obrecht.
Zηνωνείους λόγους μελετῶντας), which appears to have been an error. Marcus clearly had a great deal of respect for Apollonius: παρὰ Ἀπολλωνίου, τὸ ἐλεύθερον καὶ ἀναμφίλογος ἀκώβευτον· καὶ πρὸς μηδὲν ἄλλο ἀποβλέπειν μηδὲ ἐπ᾽ ὀμιστόν, ἐν ἀληθῶσιν ὃς εἰσὶ περὶ ἀποβολῆς τέχνου, ἐν μακραίς νόσοις· καὶ τὸ ἐπὶ παραδείγματος ζῶντος ἰδεῖν ἑνάργγος, ὅτι δύναται ὁ ἀυτὸς σφοδρότατος εἶναι καὶ ἀνειμένος· καὶ τὸ ἐν ταῖς ἐξηγήσεωι μὴ δυσχεραντικοῖς· καὶ τὸ ἰδεῖν ἀνθρωπον σιφός ἐλάχιστον τῶν ἑαυτοῦ καλῶν ἄρωμαν τὴν ἐμπειρίαν καὶ τὴν ἔντρεψιαν τὴν περὶ τὸ παραδίδοναι τὰ θεωρήματα· καὶ τὸ μαθεῖν, πῶς δεὶ λαμβάνειν τὰς δοξούσας χάριτας παρὰ φίλων, μήτε ἐξηττάωμεν διὰ ταῦτα μήτε ἀναισθήτως παραπέμπονται.

The most important aspect that is illustrated by this passage is the implied comparison that is drawn by the biographer between the personal virtues of the brothers, Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus. This passage was seemingly intended to highlight the virtues of Marcus over the licentiousness of Verus despite their mutual tuition by Apollonius of Chalcedon. This comparison between the two emperors is relatively subtle at this point in the Life, but it was clearly intended to lay the foundation for further expansion of this theme through the entire work.

Section 3

3.1

Tantum autem studium in eo philosophiae fuit, ut adscitus iam in imperatoriam tamen ad domum Apollonii discendi caus<ae> veniret: This initial sentence in Section Three continues the theme of emphasising Marcus’ enthusiasm for philosophy (‘Such was his love for this branch of philosophy, that even after he became a

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91 Dio, 71.35.1. ‘In the first of these [rhetoric] he had Cornelius Fronto and Claudius Herodes as tutors, and in the latter [philosophy] Junius Rusticus and Apollonius of Nicomedia, both of whom followed the canons of Zeno.’

92 Med. 1.8. ‘From Apollonius, independence and an unambiguous resolve not to leave anything to chance; and not to look towards anything else, even for a second, except only Reason; and to remain always the same, in the agony of pain, on the loss of a child, during a persistent illness; and to see clearly from an active model that one and the same man can be especially vigorous and yet gentle: not to be impetuous when teaching others; and to see in him a man who visibly regarded as the least among his talents his applied experiences and ability to impart philosophic realities; and to learn that when accepting apparent favours from friends not to surrender one’s independence for such matters nor to receive them heartlessly as a matter of course.’

member of the Imperial family, he still went to Apollonius’ house for tutoring’\). Yet this reference towards Marcus travelling to the house of Apollonius contradicts the previously mentioned statement in the *Vita Antonini Pii*, which refers to the teacher actually residing within the Imperial residence.\textsuperscript{95} Nevertheless, this seems to have been a minor inconsistency in the text, which was primarily intended to reiterate Marcus’ devotion for philosophy.

3.1-2

*audivit et Sextum Ch<e>eronensem......stoicos*: The biographer has continued to emphasise the basic premise of the early sections of this *Life*: that Marcus received outstanding tuition as a youth and that he took to his studies fervently. All of the Stoic philosophers mentioned here were also referred to with great thanks in the early sections of the *Meditations*. Sextus of Chaeronea was the nephew of Plutarch,\textsuperscript{96} and also taught Lucius Verus. Marcus praises him for his kindness and tolerance: παρὰ Σέξτου, τὸ εὐμενές· καὶ τὸ παράδειγμα τοῦ οἴκου τοῦ πατρονομουμένου· καὶ τὴν εὖνοιαν τοῦ κατὰ φύσιν ἔξιν· καὶ τὸ σεμνὸν ἀπάλάτως· καὶ τὸ στοιχαστικὸν τῶν φίλων κηδεμονικῶς· καὶ τὸ ἀνεκτικὸν τῶν ἰδιωτῶν καὶ τὸ ἀθεώρητον οἰομένων.\textsuperscript{97} He did not enter into public service, but instead devoted himself to the teaching of philosophy.\textsuperscript{98}

Claudius Maximus was a Stoic senator and, similarly to Sextus of Chaeronea, served as a mentor for Marcus: παρὰ Μαξίμου, τὸ κρατεῖν ἐαυτοῦ· καὶ κατὰ μηδὲν περίφορον εἶναι· καὶ τὸ εὐθυμον ἐν τε ταῖς ἀλλαίς περιστάσει καὶ ἐν ταῖς νόσοις· καὶ τὸ εὐχρυτὸν τοῦ ἔθους· καὶ μειλίχιον καὶ γεραφάν· καὶ τὸ οὐ χειτλίως κατεργαστικῶν τῶν προκειμένων.\textsuperscript{99} He gained the consulship in AD 144 and served as governor of Upper Pannonia from AD 150-154,\textsuperscript{100} and was proconsul of Africa by the end of that decade.\textsuperscript{101} At this time


\textsuperscript{95} *Pius*, 10.4.


\textsuperscript{97} *Med.* 1.9. ‘From Sextus, compassion, and the model of a household administered by a father; and the understanding of life in agreement with Nature; nobility without artifice; and an instinctive thoughtfulness for friends; and of forbearance for the unschooled and the irrational.’

\textsuperscript{98} cf. Dio, 71.1.2; Philostratus, *FS* 2.1.9; Fronto, *Ad A.n.*, 1.3.3.

\textsuperscript{99} *Med.*, 1.15. ‘From Maximus, self-control and constancy of purpose; and optimism in illness as well as on every other occasion; a character rightly balanced between loveliness and seriousness; and to act without being petulant about the duty that lies in one’s hand.’

\textsuperscript{100} Birley, 1987, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

\textsuperscript{101} *PIR²* C, nos. 933, 934.
Maximus presided over the court-case of Apuleius at Oea, who referred to him in this fashion: *an tibi Claudius Maximus idoneus auditor uidetur ad irridendam paupertatem, quod ipse uberem et proxiam rem familiarem sortitus est? erras, Aemilianus, et longe huius animi frustra es, si eum ex fortunae indulgentia, non ex philosophiae censura metiris, si uirum tam austerae sectae tamque diutinae militiae non putas amiciorem esse cohercitaee mediocratat quam delicatae opulentiae, fortunam uelut tunicam magis concinnam quam longam probare; quippe etiam ea si non gestetur et trahatur, nihil minus quam lacinia praependens impedet et praecipitat. etenim in omnibus ad uitae munia uendis quicquid aptam moderationem supergreditur, honeri potius quam usui exuberat.*

It is possible that he had served under Trajan as *tribunus laticlavius,* and was probably born in the early Second Century AD.

Cinna Catulus was another friend and mentor of Marcus, who was also another devotee of Stoic philosophy: *παρὰ Κατούλου, τὸ μὴ ὀλιγόφυος ἐξειν φίλου αἰτιωμένου τι, κἂν τοῦχ ἄλογος αἰτιώμενος, ἀλλὰ πειράσθαι καὶ ἄποκαθιστάναι ἐπὶ τὸ σύνθες· καὶ τὸ περὶ τῶν διδασκάλων ἐκθύμως ἐχθρημον, οὐ τὰ περὶ Δομετίου καὶ Ἀθηνοδότου ἀπομνημονεύμενα· καὶ τὸ περὶ τὰ τέχνα ἀληθινῶς ἀγαπητικῶν.*

3.3-4

*peripateti<et>ca vero studios<s>a> senatu statuas postulavit:* Unlike the previously mentioned characters, Claudius Severus was an advocate of the Peripatetic School, but still clearly had a close relationship with Marcus: *παρὰ τοῦ ἀδέλφου μου Σευρήσιου, τὸ φιλοίχειν καὶ φιλιλήθες καὶ φιλοδίκαιον· καὶ τὸ δι’ αὐτὸν γνώναι Θρασέαν, Ἐλβίδιον, Κάτωνα, Διώνα, Βροῦτον· καὶ*

102 Apul., *Apol.*, 19. ‘But maybe you figure that Claudius Maximus is an appropriate audience for this mocking of poverty, because he himself has been allotted a rich and far-reaching estate? You are wrong, Aemilianus, if you measure him by the kindness of fortune and not by his philosophical criticism, if you don’t think that a man with such a severe manner and with such long military service is friendlier to restrained moderation than to pampered opulence. He looks at fortune as if it were a tunic – better next than long. If it is not worn but dragged, hanging down, fortune hinders and trips up a person just as much as a garment. See, in all things used for the tasks of life, whatever exceeds fitting moderation yields burdens rather than usefulness.’

103 *ILS 1062.*


105 *Med.*, 1.13. ‘From Catulus, not to ignore the exostulation of a friend even when it is irrational, but to attempt to return him to his customary affability; and to talk with unreserved kindness of one’s teachers, as it is documented of how Domitian did o’ Athenodotus; and to be legitimately affectionate to one’s children.’
φαντασίαν λαβείν πολιτείας ἰσονόμου, κατ’ ἰσότητα καὶ ἰσημορίαν
dioikoumenής, καὶ βασιλείας τιμώσης πάντων μάλιστα τήν ἐλευθερίαν
tῶν ἀρχομένων. ¹⁰⁶ He was originally from the city of Pompeiopolis and was
ethnically of Greek origin. He held the consulship in AD 146¹⁰⁷ and at a later stage his
son, Cn. Claudius Severus [cos. II ord. AD 173],¹⁰⁸ married the daughter of Marcus,
Anna Galeria Aurelia Faustina.¹⁰⁹

Quintus Junius Rusticus was clearly one of the most influential figures in the
development of Marcus’ philosophical understanding: παρὰ Ἱουστίκου, τὸ
λαβείν φαντασίαν τοῦ χρήσειν διορθώσεως καὶ θεραπείας τοῦ ἡθους· καὶ
τὸ μὴ ἐκτραπήναι εἰς ἐνζυόν σοφιστικῶν, μηδὲ τὸ συγγράφειν περὶ τῶν
θεωρημάτων, ἢ προτρεπτικὰ λόγια διαλέγεσθαι, ἢ φαντασιοπλήκτως
τῶν ἀσκητικῶν ἢ τῶν εὐρεγετικῶν ἀνδρὰ επαδείκνυσθαι· καὶ τὸ ἀποστῆναι
ἐντολικῆς καὶ ποιητικῆς ἡσσαλογίας· καὶ τὸ μὴ ἐν στολή κατ’ οἶκον
περιπατεῖν, μηδὲ τὰ τοιαῦτα ποιεῖν· καὶ τὸ τὰ ἐπιστόλια ὀψελῶς
gράφειν, οἷον τὸ ὑπ’ αὐτοῦ τοῦτον ἀπὸ Σινούσης τῇ μητρί μου γραφέν.¹¹⁰

The comments in the Meditations parallel those made here by the biographer,
with the greatest degree of emphasis being on his discipline and strength of Stoic
character. A further indication of their strong ties is shown in that Junius Rusticus was
appointed consul on two occasions, in AD 133 and 162,¹¹¹ and he was also appointed
as urban prefect. The allusion to the presentation of a kiss for his philosophical
mentors was in reference to the practice that had developed whereby the princeps
would greet leading members of the Senat and Equites with a ceremonial kiss.¹¹²
Therefore, it would seem that this was intended to refer to the great respect Marcus
possessed for these philosophical mentors and their elevated social standing from his

¹⁰⁶ Med., 1.14. ‘From my Brother Severus, the love of family, truth, justice, and, thanks to him, to know
Thrasea, Helvidius, Cato, Dion, Brutus; and the view of a state with one law for all, founded upon
individual equality and the freedom of speech, and of a sovereignty which prizes above all things the
liberty of the subject.’
¹⁰⁸ ibid., p. 187.
¹¹⁰ Med., 1.7. ‘From Rusticus, to become conscious that I needed improvement and tuition for my
character; and not to be led astray into an confrontational sophistry; nor to write discourses on speculative
subjects, or to present little homilies, or pose pretentiously as the ethical competitor or unselfish man;
and to avoid rhetoric, poetry, and refined language: and not to go about the house in my robes, nor
commit any such violation of good taste; and to write letters without pretentiousness, like his own letter
written to my mother from Sinuessa.’
own perspective. Schwendemann rightly points out that Junius Rusticus must have been an important advisor to Marcus in view of the long dedication to him in the Meditations, particularly when compared to his brief mention of Cornelius Fronto.

3.5
tantum autem honoris...floribus semper honoraret: This statement was intended to further emphasise the great respect that Marcus possessed for his teachers and mentors. The inclusion of golden statues of them that he kept within his household shrine (larario) and the dedication of sacrifices and flowers to them was intended to imply that they were more like family to him than associates. The presentation of such gifts for the deceased was more in keeping with the ancestral worship that frequently occurred within Roman society. However, this form of respect was largely in keeping with the grief that he was supposed to have expressed at the passing of an admired teacher. These men would have acted as important advisors, particularly during his early years.

3.6-7
studuit et iuri...reprehenderetur: The biographer has continued the theme of Marcus' devotion to learning in this reference to his study of legal matters. The Lucius Volusius Maecianus whom he was supposed to have heard (audiens Lucium Volusium M<α>elianum) had become a libellis (secretary for petitions) to Antoninus Pius initially during the reign of Hadrian, but also under Pius around AD 150. He was an eques and at the time of this reference he was serving as praefectus vehicularum (prefect of the public posting-service).

However, it is at this point in the text, that the biographer included his first overt criticism of the young Marcus Aurelius: tantumque operis et laboris studiis

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113 Schwendemann, 1923, op.cit., p. 13; Med. 1.17.
114 Med. 1.11.
118 Pius, 10.4.
This is the only overt criticism that is made by the author in relation to Marcus’ childhood. According to the biographer, Marcus was too diligent in his studies. Nonetheless, this single statement exhibits another aspect of the author’s description: its overall positive partiality. According to the biographer, it is only in working too hard that Marcus can be criticised, which provides a clear example of the categorical fashion in which the young Marcus Aurelius was idealistically represented in the text. Schwendemann passes over this criticism of Marcus, preferring to focus upon the confused structure of this section of the Vita (3.5-7), but this is largely in keeping with his focus upon the annalistic and biographical structures in the Vita Marci. However, the presence of this criticism and its thematic significance should not be ignored.

3.8-9

frequentavit et declamatorum scolas publicas......locupletatos teneret. This passage was intended to further stress the importance of Marcus’ tuition and his aptitude for academic learning. It was also intended to stress the close relationships that the clearly affable young man created in these schools of rhetoric, which is further emphasised through his later benefactions for his fellow pupils. Aside from this reference, nothing is known of either of the equestrian pupils, Baebius Longus and Calenus, but they were probably included to exhibit Marcus’ affability in that he spend time with people other than just the senatorial order. Seius Fuscianus and Aufidius Victorinus were another matter. Seius Fuscianus was from the Senatorial order and held his second consulship in AD 188. He also became urban prefect during the reign of Commodus. Gaius Aufidius Victorinus was also from the Senatorial order and he later served as a general in Germania, became proconsul of Africa and also held his second consulship in AD 183. The close tie between Victorinus and the amici of Marcus is also illustrated by his marriage to the daughter of Cornelius

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122 Schwendemann, 1923, op.cit., p. 15.
124 Pertinax, 4.3.
Fronto, Cornelia Cratia. These two men from the Senatorial class, Fuscianus and Victorinus, remained lifelong friends with Marcus.

Section 4

4.1-2

* Educatus esfsef in Hadriani gremio......in saliorum collegium rettulit: * This passage provides another example where Marcus is referred to by Hadrian as Verissimus, which was clearly intended to provide a reflection of his strength of character and also the closeness of their relationship. This was then further highlighted by the biographer in his reference to the early conferral of honours upon Marcus, in his appointment to the equestrian order at the age of six, and the Salian priesthood at eight years of age. This last honour was entirely within Hadrian’s rights as pontifex maximus. For other instances where Marcus is referred to as Verissimus, see Marcus, 1.10; Dio, 69.21.2; J.H. Eckhel, *Doctrina Numorum Veterum*, Vienna: J.V. Degen, 1792-1839, 7.69. But as Barnes has noted, this nickname could have also been a slight criticism of Marcus’ pretensions at such an early age. Nevertheless, this was not the intended inference of the biographer.

4.3-4

* in saliatu omen......quod ipse carmina cuncta didicisset: * The use of omens as portents of future reigns was a common literary device in the biographical tradition, with there being clear instances in Suetonius for example. Such literary devices were also common in the HA, there being several examples such as in the Vitae of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius. Naturally, whether this episode actually occurred is highly questionable, but it provided the author with an opportunity to further emphasise the greatness and the appropriateness of Marcus’ future destiny at this

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133 Suetonius, *Gaius*, 4, 18-19; *Domitian*, 23.2.
early stage of his life. This was then further accentuated by the reference to his significant role in the Salian priesthood, being leader of the dance (praesul), seer (vates), and an instructor (magister). As Schwendemann has noted, these offices were mentioned in the correct sequence in relation to their importance, but the progression also served to highlight Marcus’ understanding of the rites with magister being the final reference. As a master of the Salii, he was also entrusted with the task of initiating and formally dismissing its members, which is indicative of his prominent role within the priesthood. Marcus’ efficiency in this priesthood was then made apparent by the biographer through the reference to Marcus’ knowledge of the sacred rites (atque exauaguravit nemine praeeunte, quod ipse carmina cuncta didicisset), which would imply that the precise wording of the rituals would have been of great importance.

4.5-6

Virilem togam sumpsit......in conviviis Hadriani principis ostendit. Marcus took on the toga virilis at the age of 14 in AD 136, which was a fairly typical age for such an occasion. This would have occurred at the Festival of the Liberalia, the 17th of March, AD 136. The association between him and the princeps was further stressed by the author at this point, through the emphasis that it was Hadrian’s wish for the betrothal of Marcus to the daughter of Lucius Aelius Caesar (statimque ei Lucii Ceionii Commodi filia despnnnsata est ex Hadriani voluntate). The daughter would have been Ceonia Fabia, who is also mentioned elsewhere in the HA. This engagement was highly significant because of the connection it created between Marcus and the current successor to Hadrian, Lucius Aelius Caesar. This engagement would have taken place in AD 136, as illustrated by Birley.

But it may be significant that as yet there has been no mention in the Vita of Antoninus Pius. This is in keeping with the general theme throughout the biography that, if possible, Hadrian would have chosen Marcus as his

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136 Schwendemann, 1923, op.cit., p. 20.
139 RE 6 A, 1938, pp. 1450ff.
142 Marcus, 29, 10; Verus, 10, 3-4.
direct successor – such was the bond between them, according to the biographer.\footnote{See Section 5.1 for a more direct statement in this regard: \textit{his ita se habentibus cum post obitum Lucii Caesaris Hadrianus successorem imperii quaereret, nec idoneus, ut poterit decem et octo annos agens, Marcus haberetur, amitae Marci virum Antoninum Plum Hadrianus ea lege in adoptationem legit ut sibi Marcus Pius adoptaret, ita tamen ut et Marcus sibi Lucium Commodum adoptaret.}} Although Antoninus Pius was not yet considered for the principate, he would hardly have been an insignificant figure within the Imperial court at this stage. The importance of Marcus to Hadrian is then further emphasised in the text through the reference to his further advancement: Marcus is made urban prefect (\textit{praefectus}) during the \textit{Feriae Latinae}, whereupon of course he exhibits his high degree of responsibility and maturity in this role.

Birley has postulated that his future father-in-law, Aelius Caesar, appointed Marcus to this role,\footnote{Birley, 1987, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 41.} which appears logical because it was a public statement of their intended future connection. However, this passage is most pertinent to note in relation to the interpolation (Section 16.7), which claims that Hadrian wanted Marcus to marry the daughter of Antoninus Pius.\footnote{White, 1967, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 129.} This provides a clear example of the differences in authorship of the two biographies.

4.7

\textit{post hoc patrimonium paternum......ne inferior esset soror marito}: This passage was intended to give another indication of Marcus' generosity and his considerable consideration for others. The emphasis of the biographer is on how Marcus is content with the inheritance he has received from his grandfather (\textit{responditque avi bonis se esse contentum}). The grandfather in question appears to have been Marcus Annianus Verus, his paternal grandfather. This is more likely not only because of his adoption by him, but also in that Domitia Lucilla, his mother, would have inherited a large portion of the wealth of Publius Calvisius Tullus Ruso, her father. The declaration that all of her estate should be given to his sister, Annia Cornificia Faustina,\footnote{Schwendemann, 1923, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 23; O. Hirschfeld, "Der Grundbesitz der römischen Kaiser in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten", \textit{Klio} 2, 1902, p. 300.} would have been a substantial bequest in itself, considering that Domitia Lucilla had inherited the estates of her grandfathers, Curtilius Mancia and Cn. Domitius Afer,\footnote{Plin. \textit{Ep.}, 8.18.} as well.\footnote{Birley, 1987, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 29.} Ummidius Quadratus Annianus Verus was the husband of Marcus' sister,
who was also her first cousin, and had held a consulship in AD 146.\textsuperscript{151} Anния Cornificia’s son, Ummodius Quadratus (see Section 7.4), received part of Marcus’ maternal inheritance following his mother’s death, and was seemingly consul in AD 167.\textsuperscript{152}

4.8-9

\textit{fuit autem vitae indulgentia, ut cogeretur nonnumquam vel in venationes pergere vel in theatrum descendere vel spectaculis interesse. operam praeterea pingendo sub magistro Diogeneto dedit. amavit pugilatum \textit{<et> luctamina et cursum et acquipatus et pila lusit adprime et venatus est:}} The first sentence of this passage clearly indicates the presence of some implied criticism: that of Marcus being too weak-willed in some circumstances. This continues the theme that was first highlighted in Section 2.6, where he was easily coerced by his mother to alter his Stoic lifestyle. While this is only an implied criticism and provides little in isolation, it does further a quite consistent theme (of Marcus’ perceived compliance) that is clearly evident in the later sections of the biography.\textsuperscript{153}

The image presented in these two sentences is quite an anomaly in the text overall (\textit{operam praeterea pingendo sub magistro Diogeneto dedit. amavit pugilatum \textit{<et> luctamina et cursum et acquipatus et pila lusit adprime et venatus est}}). This passage contradicts the overall impression that is given of Marcus as a youth.\textsuperscript{154} The previous representations of Marcus’ activities have almost solely concentrated on his academic work, whereas this image refers to the extra-curricular activities that he participated in. In addition to the presentation of his scholarly pursuits, this was probably somewhat closer to the actuality of Marcus’ upbringing because it is highly unlikely that his education was entirely dedicated to such studies. It seems likely that this passage was included in order to represent Marcus as not being entirely serious and intellectual, which was particularly important within a society that praised physical virtue as well as the intellectual.\textsuperscript{155} For further discussion of the nature of Marcus’ education, see Birley (1997).\textsuperscript{156}

\textsuperscript{153} Such as Marcus, 29.1-3.
\textsuperscript{154} cf. Baynes, 1926, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 81.
\textsuperscript{156} Birley, 1997, \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 69-88.
4.10

*sed ab omnibus his intentioni s studium eum philosophiae abduxit seriumque et gravem reddidit, non tamen prorsus aboli ta in eo comitate, quam praecipue suis, mox amicis atque etiam minus notis exhibebat, cum frugi esset sine contumacia, verecundus sine ignavia, sine tristitia gravis.*: Following from the previous passage, the consistent representation of Marcus’ studious and serious persona is returned to by the biographer. Naturally, in keeping with the overly positive representation of Marcus, according to the author this made him serious (serium) and dignified (gravem), but did not ruin his amiability (comitate), which he expressed to others. The intention of the biographer was to characterise Marcus as being balanced (which was important for the ‘ideal’ princeps), but that he possessed a definite concentration on the intellectual side of his personality, which would have been almost impossible to refute. This ‘balanced’ representation provides a good comparison to the previous section, where Marcus had made himself ill through his studies of jurisprudence in Section 3.7. The lengths to which he is represented as going here is hardly a representation of a ‘balanced’ lifestyle, which is complemented by the fact that his studies are the predominant emphasis of the earlier sections of the biography. The reference to physical and sporting activities in Section 4.9 was clearly intended to institute some degree of balance in the representation.

**Section 5**

5.1

*His ita se habentibus……Lucium Commodum adoptaret:* The representation of the succession issue for Hadrian was implied by the biographer in Section 4.6 (*nec multo post praefectus feriarum Latinarum fuit. in quo honore praeclarissime se pro <ma>gistratibus agentem et in convivii Hadriani principis ostendit*), but in the present passage he makes a statement about Hadrian’s desire to designate Marcus as his successor following the death of Lucius Aelius Caesar on the 1st of January, AD 138. This postulation by the author was clearly intended to emphasise Marcus’ importance within the Imperial household, but it is quite clear that Marcus could not

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157 Marcus, 2.1-3.9.
have been viewed as being suitable because of age, being only eighteen years old,\(^{160}\) which is a view given to Hadrian by the author of the *Vita*. The statement here that Lucius Verus was adopted by Marcus was clearly incorrect; Lucius Verus was adopted by Antoninus Pius.\(^{161}\) The choice of Antoninus Pius as the next *princeps* was not popular in some circles, particularly with the urban prefect, Lucius Catilius Severus, who had been his consular colleague in AD 120.\(^{162}\)

5.2

*sane ea die, qua adoptatus est, Verus in somnis se umeros eburneos habere vidit sciscitatussquae, an apti essent oneri ferundo: solito repperit fortiores*: As mentioned previously in relation to Section 4.3, the use of such literary devices was also quite common in the *HA*, being useful anecdotes to establish the illustrious destiny of the future *princeps*. This episode was also related by Cassius Dio: *καὶ πρὸ τοῦ Καῖσαρ ἀποδείχθηναί ὅνα ἔδεξεν ὥμους τε καὶ χείρας ἐλεφαντίνους ἔχειν καὶ αὐτὰ ὑπάντα ὅσα τοῖς ἄλλοις χρῆσθαι.*\(^{163}\) The use of dreams as portents for the future in the *HA* also occurs in the *Vitae* of Hadrian (26.10), Antoninus Pius (3.5), Septimius Severus (3.5) and Severus Alexander (14.2), for example. Rosen has postulated that this representation was intended to highlight Marcus’ objectivity towards such omens,\(^{164}\) but it appears more appropriate to view this episode in relation to the author’s intentions.

5.3-4

*ubi autem comperit se ab Hadiano adoptatum, magis est deterritus quam laetatus iussusque in Hadriani privatam domum migrare invitus de maternis hortis recessit. cumque ab eo domestici quaerent, cur tristis in adoptionem regiam transiret, disputavit, quae mala in se continetur imperium*: Depite the residence being referred to as *Hadriani privatam domum*, it appears highly unlikely that it would have been any other residence than the Imperial Palace.\(^{165}\) The reference to it as a private

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\(^{161}\) *Hadrian* 24.1; *Ael* 5.1, 6.9; *Pius* 4.5; cf. Fündling, 2006, Vol. 2, *op.cit.*, pp. 1054-76.


\(^{163}\) Dio, 71.36.1. ‘Even prior to his selection as Caesar he had a dream in which he appeared to have shoulders and arms of ivory, and he could use them like his other appendages in every way.’


residence was simply intended to further highlight the connection between Marcus and Hadrian by the biographer.\textsuperscript{166} The main point of interest that arises from this passage is how the *princeps* Hadrian was referred to as adopting Marcus, not Antoninus Pius. This is shown particularly through the first section: *ubi autem comperit se ab Hadriano adoptatum*. At first glance it seems that the biographer has become quite confused in the descriptions of the adoptions that occurred around this time, having confused the adoptions of both Marcus in this section and of Lucius Verus in Section 5.1. It may have also been presented in this fashion because the biographer was continuing to place more emphasis upon the relationship between Marcus and Hadrian, rather than his connection to Antoninus Pius.\textsuperscript{167}

The ensuing representation of Marcus as being wholly unwilling to assume the principate is quite in keeping with the overall depiction of his Stoic, philosophical virtues. The biographer has intended Marcus to appear unwilling for such power, but ultimately entirely deserving of such authority.

5.5-6

tunc primum pro Annio Aurelius.......quaestor est designatus: The assumption of the name Aurelius instead of Annius,\textsuperscript{168} was quite typical when being adopted into another *familia*. It was an important social symbol,\textsuperscript{169} particularly in relation to the Imperial succession, whereby it provided a greater emblematic representation of the continuation of the Imperial line. The adoption of Marcus by Antoninus Pius occurred on the 25\textsuperscript{th} of February, AD 138,\textsuperscript{170} which was actually Marcus’ seventeenth year considering that it occurred after Marcus’ birthday on the 26\textsuperscript{th} of April of the previous year.\textsuperscript{171}

Following from this, Hadrian exempted his age and designated him *quaestor* for AD 139,\textsuperscript{172} which was meant to be twenty-five for such a post. Such an early appointment had become a common practice for the rapid promotion of designated

\textsuperscript{166} cf. Hirschfeld, 1902, *op.cit.*, p. 300.
\textsuperscript{171} Syme, 1964, *op.cit.*, p. 142, n. 3.
\textsuperscript{172} *Hadrian*, 25.6; Pius, 6.9-10.
heirs in the Imperial house,\textsuperscript{173} which was an important method by which the smooth succession of the principate could be secured. The designation seems to have occurred between the 20\textsuperscript{th} of April and the 10\textsuperscript{th} of July, AD 138,\textsuperscript{174} which was conceivably some time after the official adoption itself.

5.7-8

\textit{adoptatus in aulicam domum……agere, dicere, cogitare:} This passage was intended to further emphasise Marcus’ familial devotion, and, in turn, his ultimate worthiness for Imperial power.\textsuperscript{175} The examples of this in the passage, in the minimal amount of change in his prior relationship and his continued dutiful respect for his \textit{familia} were used to further demonstrate this portrayal. It also emphasises his Stoic values in his sparing (\textit{parcus}) and diligent (\textit{diligens}) use of his resources.

The final section is of most interest, in that he was happy to behave, speak and think in accordance with the values of his father: \textit{pro instituto patris volens agere, dicere, cogitare}. The question that arises from this sentence is about which paternal values were being followed. Owing to the context of the section it would appear that he was being portrayed as following the values of his actual father, Annius Verus, who clearly had some effect on his principles: \textit{παρὰ τῆς δόξης καὶ μνήμης τῆς περὶ τοῦ γεννήσαντος, τὸ αἰώδημον καὶ ἀρρενίκον}.\textsuperscript{176} Nevertheless, it could be argued that this may also be in reference to Antoninus Pius, who clearly had a significant amount of influence upon Marcus’ values: \textit{παρὰ τοῦ πατρός, τὸ ἣμερον, καὶ μενετικών ὀσωλεύτως ἐπὶ τῶν ἐξητασμένως κριθέντων· καὶ τὸ ἀκενόδοξον περὶ τὰς δοξούσας τιμᾶς· καὶ τὸ φιλόπονον καὶ ἐνδελεχές· καὶ τὸ ἠκουστικόν τῶν ἐχόντων τι κοινωφελές εἰσφέρειν· καὶ τὸ ἀπαρατρέπτως εἰς τὸ κατ’ ἀξίαν ἀπονεμητικῶν ἐκάστῳ καὶ τὸ ἐμπειρόν, ποῦ μὲν χρεία ἐντάσεως, ποῦ δὲ ἀνέσεως.\textsuperscript{177} It would be more likely to have

\begin{footnotes}
\item[173] \textit{Pius, 6.9-10; Verus, 2.11.}
\item[174] Schwendemann, 1923, \textit{op cit.}, p. 27.
\item[176] \textit{Med.}, 1.2. ‘From what I have gathered about my father and my recollections of him, humility and masculinity.’
\item[177] \textit{Med.}, 1.16.1. ‘From my Father, tenderness, and a resolute adherence to deliberate decisions; and no empty conceit in relation to purported honours; and the devotion to labour and attention to detail; and a preparedness to listen to any proposals for the universal benefit; and an uncompromising resolve to give every man what he is owed; and to realise through practice when is the time to be adamant and when to stop.’ See R.B. Rutherford, \textit{The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius: a study}, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989, pp. 53-4.
\end{footnotes}
been Antoninus Pius, considering that Marcus was now legally his son and would have been expected to behave in accordance with the views of his pater. If this is presupposed it seems more likely that the biographer was attempting to highlight the filiality of Marcus as a dutiful son to Antoninus Pius.

Section 6\textsuperscript{178}

6.1

Hadriano <apud> Baias absumpto cum Pius ad adev hendas eiu reliquias esset profectus, relictus Romae avo iusta implevit et gladiatorium quasi privatus quaestor edidit munus: Marcus’ involvement in the tributes following from the death of Hadrian,\textsuperscript{179} provided the biographer with another opportunity to emphasise the strength of their relationship. It is clear that the emphasis of the text was on how Marcus remained in the capital to discharge Hadrian’s funeral rites, despite only being a designated quaestor,\textsuperscript{180} and that he presented a gladiatorial show as a private citizen in his honour (relictus Romae avo iusta implevit et gladiatorium quasi privatus quaestor edidit munus) rather than Antoninus Pius’ symbolic retrieval of Hadrian’s remains. This is to be expected, considering that Marcus was the prime topic of the biography, but it is pertinent to note that in the Vita Antonini Pii, Marcus is not mentioned at all,\textsuperscript{181} where Pius is the prime focus of the biographer.

6.2

post excessum Hadriani......Lucii Ceionii Commodi: The decision to break the betrothal of Marcus and the daughter of Lucius Aelius Caesar, Ceonia Fabia,\textsuperscript{182} was clearly a move by Antoninus Pius to secure his principate by removing any potential association between Marcus and the familia of Lucius Aelius Caesar.\textsuperscript{183} This move allowed for Marcus to be more closely aligned with Antoninus’ own familia through

\textsuperscript{178} Schwendemann, 1923, \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 118-27.
\textsuperscript{180} Birley, 1987, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 53.
\textsuperscript{181} Pius, 5.1-2.
\textsuperscript{183} \textit{Marcus}, 4.5-6; Barnes, 1967, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 77.
Marcus’ later marriage with Faustina II. As Schwendemann has shown, this engagement was not immediately celebrated in public, it only being commemorated on coins in AD 140/1. But the betrothal would have occurred in AD 138, owing to the political significance of the match, which meant that the engagement would have lasted for either eight or nine years.

*desponderi voluerat......habita deliberatione velle se dixit:* It is generally accepted that a lacuna is positioned after *Commodi* in Section 6.2 (see *Marcus*, 4.5; *Verus*, 2.3). Casaubon in 1603 suggested the insertion of: *filia contrahere illum Hadrianus voluerat, Faustina illi offeretur, quod Verus cui eam Hadrianus.* At a later stage Mommsen suggested: *sorore, fecerat filiam Faustinam cum hortata esset ut duceret, quam Hadrianus eidem Commodo*, which has been discussed by Jaekel. Without knowing the exact nature of the language it is almost impossible to comment upon this passage with any certainty.

6.3

*his ita gestis......iubente senatu receptit:* The affiliation between Marcus and Antoninus Pius was further strengthened through their shared consulship in AD 140 and the conferral of the title of *Caesar* for him, despite him having only held the position of *quaestor*. The representation of their public connection by the biographer was then further highlighted through the reference to Marcus’ appointment as one of the *seviri equitum Romanorum* and their close seating at their official games. Cassius Dio also mentions that he received the title of *princeps iuventutis*, but this is omitted by the author of this *Life*. The objection of Marcus to the fineries of palace-life in the *Domus Tiberiana* was naturally in keeping with the overall portrayal of his dislike for an ostentatious lifestyle, which was also in keeping with his Stoic ideals.

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184 *Marcus*, 6.6.
190 Dio, 71.35.5.
The representation of Marcus' residency in the *Vita Antonini Pii* makes no mention of any such dislike.\(^{192}\) This particular reference contradicts an earlier reference to Marcus' prior residency at the palace.\(^{193}\)

The priesthoods that Marcus was taken into at the request of the Senate were probably the *pontifices, augures, quindecimviri sacris faciendis* ('keepers of the Sibylline Books') and the *septemviri epulonum*. In addition to these priesthoods, it appears quite likely that he would have also joined the *fratres arvales* ('Arval Brethren') and the *sodales* of the deified emperors.\(^{194}\) This appears to have occurred in AD 140,\(^{195}\) despite the earliest evidence of Marcus' membership of the Arval Brethren being dated to AD 145.\(^{196}\)

### 6.4-5

*secundum etiam consulem......studia cupidissime frequentavit:* The connection between Marcus and Antoninus Pius was further emphasised in this passage, through the mention of their second year as consular colleagues in AD 145.\(^{197}\) The additional comment to the public responsibilities that he took on continues the consistent theme of the text, whereby Marcus is represented as being strongly committed to both his duty, as well as his learning. According to letters by Cornelius Fronto,\(^{198}\) this was largely based on the study of rhetoric and literature. Nevertheless, it is also possible that these were the study areas that would have interested Fronto the most as well, so it cannot be taken as an indication that he had neglected his philosophical inquiries.

### 6.6

*post haec Faustinam duxit uxorem et suscepta filia tribunicia potestate donatus est atque imperio extra urbem proconsulari addito iure quintae relationis:* The marriage of Marcus Aurelius to Anna Galeria Faustina II in late spring of AD 145,\(^{199}\)

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\(^{192}\) *Pius*, 10.4.

\(^{193}\) *Marcus*, 5.3.


\(^{195}\) Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, p. 123.


\(^{199}\) For more on Faustina and her *familia*, see W. Scheidel, "Emperors, Aristocrats, and the Grim Reaper: towards a demographic profile of the Roman Elite", *CQ* 49.1, 1999, pp. 267-8.
at the age of 24 was celebrated on the coinage of Antoninus Pius.\textsuperscript{200} The daughter referred to in the text was born on the 30\textsuperscript{th} of November, AD 147, Domitia Faustina, who only lived until AD 151.\textsuperscript{201} Marcus gained tribunicia potestas\textsuperscript{202} and proconsular imperium outside Rome following this,\textsuperscript{203} probably on the 1\textsuperscript{st} of December, AD 147.\textsuperscript{204} The right that he was given to make five proposals to the Senate was customary for a recently appointed princeps,\textsuperscript{205} but the number of potential proposals never exceeded five.\textsuperscript{206} Marcus eventually raised Lucius Verus to the same standing as himself, but when he received the ius relationis from Antoninus Pius it gave him a clear distinction over his adopted brother.\textsuperscript{207}

6.7-10
tantumque apud Pium......modestia: The biographer has continued to emphasise the important place that Marcus held during the reign of Antoninus Pius, particularly through the reference to the advice that he sought from Marcus, such as in him not promoting anyone without his consultation (6.7 tantumque apud Pium valuit ut numquam quemquam sine eo facile promoverit). In turn the author has also emphasised the great respect that Marcus held for Pius, particularly through the reference to rumours that had existed at the time, such as in the mention of Valerius Homullus.\textsuperscript{208} According to Syme,\textsuperscript{209} the Homullus mentioned here was the esteemed M. Valerius Homullus, who had been consul in AD 152.\textsuperscript{210} Naturally, owing to Marcus' honesty and modesty as his heir, Antoninus Pius was not influenced at all, according to the author.\textsuperscript{211}

\textsuperscript{200} Pius, 10.2; BMC, Ant. Pius, 1786.
\textsuperscript{201} Brely, 1987, op.cit., p. 239.
\textsuperscript{204} Brely, 1987, op.cit., p. 44.
\textsuperscript{205} Pert., 5.36.
\textsuperscript{206} Alex., 1.3; Prob., 12.8.
\textsuperscript{207} Stanton, 1975, op.cit., p. 534.
\textsuperscript{208} Pius, 11.8.
\textsuperscript{209} Syme, 1972, op.cit., p. 130.
\textsuperscript{211} cf. Birley, 1987, op.cit., p. 31.
Section 7

7.1-2

*Existimationis autem tantam curam habuit......mansit diversis vicibus*: The initial part of this section clearly continues the desired emphasis of the biographer: to illustrate the close relationship between Marcus and Antoninus Pius. This would have been largely owing to the intended representation of Marcus as being trustworthy, responsible, affable and almost impossible to dislike. This is most poignantly emphasised in the claim that they only spent two nights apart in twenty-three years (*nec praeter duæ noctes per tot annos ab eo mansit diversis vicibus*). White has illustrated that the inclusion of such a description was a consistent occurrence through many of the Vitae in the HA, particularly in relation to the presentation of anti-corruption in the Imperial courts of ‘good’ principes. Béranger has also noted that this passage represents an example of metrical devices that have been used by the biographer in some sections.

7.3

*ob hoc Antoninus Pius......transire iussit* The commendation of Marcus to his amicis (friends) and præfectis (prefects) symbolised the formal declaration of him as his successor. The reference to the watchword (*aequanimitatis*) given by Antoninus Pius may be significant in relation to the theme intended by the author. ‘Equanimity’ was a key element in the portrayal of Marcus in the biography, illustrating his calmness. The inclusion of this episode, which is not mentioned by any other extant source on the succession of Marcus, was intended to exhibit Marcus’ strength of character and that Antoninus Pius recognised this as well. This was further emphasised through the inclusion of the removal of the gold statue of Fortune from Antoninus’ bedroom to that of Marcus, which is also mentioned in Pius’ biography.

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212 Schwendemann, 1923, op. cit., pp. 127-34.
217 Pius, 12.5-6.
7.4

bonorum maternorum......tradidit. Following from the previous section, this passage on Marcus Ummidius Quadratus,\(^{218}\) the son of Annia Galeria Aurelia Faustina,\(^{219}\) presents one of the most disjointed sections in the *Vita Marci*.\(^{220}\) In view of the previous discussion by the biographer, the reference to the inheritance of his nephew seems quite out of place. It is possible that this may represent a minor interpolation in the current text of the *HA*, but it may also be representative of his sister dying around this time,\(^{221}\) which is possible considering that the time of her death is unknown.

7.5-6

post excessum divi Pii a senatu coactus reg<m>en publicum capere fratrem sibi participem in imperio designavit, quem Lucium Aurelium Verum Commodum appellavit Caesaremque atque Augustum dixit. atque ex eo pariter coeperunt rem publicam regere. tuncque primum Romanum imperium duos Augustos habere coepit <cum imperium sibi re>lictum\(^{222}\) cum aliо participasset.\(^{223}\) Initially, it is noteworthy to note that Marcus was forced to take on the position of *princeps*, according to the biographer.\(^{224}\) This was largely in keeping with the overall theme of the representation, with the author going to great lengths to exhibit Marcus' guarded view of *imperium* and its implications. This is emphasised through the representation of the Senate having to compel Marcus to take on the role, regardless of the numerous references to the preparations that he had received for such a responsibility in the *Vita* prior to this comment. Marcus was proclaimed *princeps* on 7 March, AD 161. This is one of the numerous instances in the *HA* where the biographer makes it clear what titles were conferred upon the various *principes*.\(^{225}\) However, Marcus 7.6 has illustrated the use of Festus of Tridentum by the biographer, but with a more negative presentation of Lucius Verus overall.\(^{226}\)

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\(^{218}\) Ummidius Quadratus held a consulship in AD 167 cf. Syme, 1968, *op.cit.*, pp. 97ff.

\(^{219}\) Marcus, 1.8, 4.7.


\(^{221}\) Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, p. 128.

\(^{222}\) On this insertion, see Mommsen, 1890, *op.cit.*, pp. 282-5.

\(^{223}\) See T. Mommsen, "Die Scriptores Historiae Augustae", *Hermes* 25, 1890, pp. 282-5.


The initiation of the joint-rulership was a definite innovation for the Roman principate, but it could be viewed as a reflection of the extent of the responsibilities that existed for an incumbent *princeps*. The joint-rule of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus was celebrated on the numismatic issues of the period. The role had numerous responsibilities and it may have been Marcus’ view that it was impossible for him to undertake such a role single-handedly. But there is a more critical view. If the representation of Marcus’ passion for intellectual study and philosophy can be taken on board, it is also possible that he may have sought some relief from the administrative responsibility of being *princeps* in order that he could continue undertaking his academic work. This may give a more negative interpretation of Marcus as being keen to place his own predilections above the affairs of the State. Unfortunately, this is impossible to ascertain with any certainty, but it is, nevertheless, important to consider in light of the overall optimistic partiality that exists in the depiction of Marcus Aurelius.

7.6-8

*Antoninus* <i>mox ips<e> nomen recepit......adscribi praecipuerunt*: The biographer continues the incorrect inference that Marcus was the adopted father of Lucius Verus at this point in the text following the previous comment in Section 5.1. Syme has noted that when Lucius was mentioned in the *HA*, the use of the name Antoninus was always clarified in order that it was understood who was being referred to. The author may have been getting confused because of the next sentence that discussed how Verus was now married to Annia Lucilla, the daughter of Marcus (*filiamque suam Lucillam fratri despondit*).

The girls and boys of the newly named orders (*ob hanc conjunctioem pueros et puellas novorum nominum frumentariae perceptioni adscribi praecipuerunt*) that were assigned a share in the grain distributions in celebration of this would have been groups such as the *puellae alimentariae Faustinianae*, who had been founded by Antoninus Pius. Stanton has noted the potential propaganda value of such institutions, which would have provided great incentive for Marcus’ continuation of Pius’ policies. Duncan-Jones has suggested that the alimentary scheme of Marcus

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227 *BMC, Marcus*, 7-9.
229 *Pius*, 8.1
Aurelius was largely inefficient, which would indicate that Marcus’ policies simply continued those of his predecessors, and that they were not as successful as the biographer implies.

7.9

_actic igitur, quae agenda......ceteris pro rata_: The bestowal of financial incentives for the loyalty of the military had become a normal practice by this point in the Roman Empire for the accession of a _princeps_. This was particularly important in relation to the Praetorian guard, which is shown through the promise of twenty thousand _sesterces_ for each of the common soldiers, with the amount being proportionally higher for the centurions and other officers. There was also a corresponding largess presented to the general population to celebrate the accession of Marcus and Verus. This was commemorated on several numismatic issues in AD 161, with the inscription _Liberalitas Augustor(um)._ Syme has illustrated that the representation of donatives is typically accentuated for ‘bad’ emperors, such as Domitian, and that Nerva had been praised for not giving the soldiers money on his accession. This was clearly not the intended representation of the biographer, but it is pertinent to note the conflicting perceptions: that such gifts could inspire.

7.10-11

_Hadriani autem sepulchro......Aurelianos creavere_: The funeral procession that occurred following the funeral rites for Antoninus Pius was a significant spectacle, which would have also been an important feature of the accession of a new _princeps_. The placement of Antoninus’ body with Hadrian’s Mausoleum was another significant feature of the symbolic dynastic elements that were imperative for the succession of Marcus and Verus. The _scdales_ mentioned in this passage would

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233 cf. Schwendemann, 1923, _op.cit_. , p. 133.
236 _BMC_, Marcus, 31-2.
have been the Sodales Antoniniani, which would have been an important honour, considering that the priesthood mostly consisted of their relatives and friends (flaminemque ei ex adfinibus et sodales ex amicissimis Aurelianos creavere). It appears that in addition to these honours, Marcus and Lucius also erected a commemorative column to Antoninus Pius in AD 161/2. The institution of Marcus’ reign with Verus also saw a change in his official portraiture, which took on the guise of a mature princeps.

Section 8

8.1

Adepti imperium ita civiliter se ambo egerunt, <u>t lenitatem Pii nemo desideraret, cum eos Marullus, sui temporis mimografus, cavillando inpune perstringeret: In this passage the biographer sought to emphasise the leniency of Marcus and Verus during the earliest days of their reign. This would have been intended to establish the positive representation of Marcus’ degree of understanding when it came to his attitude towards his principate and the smooth progression in policy that had also occurred following from Antoninus Pius’ reign. There is no further extant information about the playwright, Marullus. Schwendemann has argued that this passage does not correspond to the surrounding topics within a chronological format. While this may be so, the thematic continuity from Marcus 8.1 to 8.2-3 explains their connection: to emphasise the leniency that Marcus expressed during his reign and how this was similar to that of Antoninus Pius.

8.2-3

funer<e> munus patri dederunt......amorem civium adfectans: The funeral games presented in honour of Antoninus Pius were typical celebrations of a deceased princeps, but they were also a useful method by which the successor(s) could improve their popularity as well. The biographer then emphasises that such celebrations were not entirely to Marcus’ tastes: dabat se Marcus totum et philosophiae (‘Marcus gave

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240 Hadrian, 27.3; Pius, 13.4.
244 Schwendemann, 1923, op.cit., pp. 134-49.
245 ibid., p. 134.
himself over to philosophy’), which is emphasised through the force of *totum*. This passage in particular may provide a further insight into why the joint-rulership was introduced: the sharing of the responsibility allowed Marcus more time for his intellectual pursuits. In a less positive presentation this could have been represented as a degree of negligence on Marcus’ behalf. However, the biographer then removes the possibility of such criticism through the statement that Marcus continued to foster the affections of the populace (*8.3 amorem civium adfectans*). As White has noted, this reference to popularity among the wide community was a frequent method by which the biographer established the worth of a *princeps*.

### 8.4-5

*sed interpellavit istam felicitatem......et praesentia temperarunt:* This episode was used as an instance whereby the previous sentiment could be further justified. The flooding of the Tiber at this time, in the autumn of AD 161, did destroy a large number of buildings and caused a serious famine. The *curator* in 161 was A. Platorius Nepos, but the author of the *Life* simply emphasised that it ruined the happiness and repose that had come about following the introduction of Marcus’ reign. Naturally, in order to further stress the benefits of this new principate, Marcus and Verus were instrumental and most importantly present for such actions.

### 8.6

*fuit eo tempore etiam Parthicum bellum......tunc administrabat:* The so-called Armenian and Parthian War (*Bellum Armeniacum et Parthicum*) began in AD 161, which is represented by the biographer as having been planned by Vologaesus during the reign of Antoninus Pius. Vologaesus’ active role in the conflict was also emphasised by Cassius Dio: ὁ γὰρ ὘ὐολόγαισος πολέμου ἤρεξε, καὶ στρατόπεδον τε ὁλον Ὄρμαικὸν τὸ ὑπὸ Σεβηριανῷ τεταγμένον ἐν τῇ Ἑλεγείᾳ, χωρίῳ τινὶ τῆς Ἀρμενίας, περισσὸν πάντωθεν αὐτοῖς ἤγεμον κατετόξευσε καὶ διέφθειρε, καὶ τῆς Συρίας ταῖς πόλεσι πολὺς ἐπήμει καὶ

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248 Birley, 1987, *op.cit.*, p. 120.
249 *ILS* 5932.
250 *Pius*, 9.6.
The war began for control over Armenia and was directly initiated following the serious defeat of Attidius Cornelianus, the governor of Syria, in AD 161. Prior to this there had also been the defeat of Sedatius Severianus, the governor of Cappadocia, and the destruction of his legion at Elegeia.252

Severianus’ defeat was followed by the introduction of a Parthian candidate on the Armenian throne and the ensuing defeat of Attidius Cornelianus. Despite this setback, the Roman response was rapid, which resulted in Verus’ deployment with several experienced military men to deal with the problem.253 Armenia was of some importance in Romano-Parthian foreign relations as a buffer between these two powers.254

8.7-8
imminebat etiam Britannicum bellum......Cathos Aufidius Victorinus: The military crisis in Britain and against the Chatti in Germania and Raetia also occurred in late AD 161.255 Raetia was to the east of the Rhine and north-east of the Taunus Mountains. Sextus Calpurnius Agricola was sent against the Britons, having held a consulship in AD 154.256 Epigraphic evidence discovered in Britain refers to him as legatus Augusti pro praetore.257 To deal with the Chatti, Marcus sent Aufidius Victorinus.258 Victorinus held his second consulship in AD 183 and was a good friend of Marcus.259 It is clear that Marcus held a great deal of trust in the abilities of Victorinus, considering that there were a growing number of difficulties in the northern regions at the time.260 The biographer has only included a brief reference to this escalating frontier problem at this point in the text, there being more discussion of

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251 Dio, 71.2.1. ‘Vologaesus, it appears, had started the conflict by confining on all sides the Roman legion under Severianus that was stationed at Elegeia, a location in Armenia, and then shot down and obliterated the entire force, leaders and all men; and he now advanced, dominant and dreadful, against the cities of Syria.’

252 PIR² S 306; Dio, 71.2.


255 Birley, 1987, op.cit., p. 44.


257 Ogilvie and Richmond, 1967, op.cit., p. 4.

258 cf. Marcus, 3.8.


the problems in the north later in the text.\textsuperscript{261} The main priority of this reference was to highlight the challenges that faced Marcus at this early stage of his principate.

That being said, it is important to observe that Marcus had much more difficulty in pacifying northern Britain than Antoninus Pius, which is reflected in the comparative number of troops in the region.\textsuperscript{262} The details are not provided by the biographer, but that was in keeping with his intended presentation of Marcus: that he stood up to all challenges that were given to him without much difficulty.

8.9

*ad Parthicum......praesentiam postularent*: The main premise of this section was intended to highlight why Verus was despatched by Marcus to deal with the Parthian problems, while he remained in Rome because his presence was required (*ipse <apud> Romam remansit, quod res urbanae imperatoris praesentiam postularent*). The inference in this passage is that Marcus was left responsible for the continuing matters of State, particularly the continued restorations that would have been necessary following the flood damage that occurred in AD 161.\textsuperscript{263} It is also possible that he may have had other reasons to remain in the capital, particularly because of his devotion to academic pursuits. However, either explanation remains impossible to prove definitively.

But it is important to observe that the situation was serious enough for Marcus to move troops from the northern frontier eastwards,\textsuperscript{264} which weakened the security of the Rhine and Danubian provinces. In accordance with the overall theme of the *Vita Marci*, this was not mentioned by the biographer. It is also pertinent to note the use of *res urbanae* in relation to Marcus' continued duties in Rome, which clearly contradicts not only *Marcus* 8.13, but also the majority of his principate, when he was far from the capital.

8.10

*et Verum quidem......officiorum omnium principi<bus>*: The progression of Marcus, Verus, their Senatorial *amici* and official chiefs-of-staff to Capua was commemorated on several coin issues of Lucius Verus, which included the inscription

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{261} See *Marcus*, 22 in particular.
\item \textsuperscript{263} See *Marcus*, 8.4.
\item \textsuperscript{264} Stanton, 1969, *op. cit.*, p. 580.
\end{itemize}
of Profectio Aug(usti) and For(tuna) Red(ux),\textsuperscript{265} The retinue would have departed in the early stages of AD 162. Despite the existence of the joint-rule, it is quite clear that the biographer is indicating that Marcus was the dominant partner, hence the use of the term *ornavit*, which implies that Marcus had the right to honour him. It is notable that *Marcus* 8.10 and *Verus* 6.7 provide different facts for the reader about this,\textsuperscript{266} despite dealing with the same events, which indicates some independence between the biographies. But this can also be taken as a further indication of the biographical intentions of the author that emphasised certain details in accordance with their literary context.

8.11-13

*sed cum Romam redisset Marcus cognovissetque Verum......ferret*: This passage was intended to highlight the problems that were inherent in the personality of Lucius Verus: namely his limited degree of self-control and preference for a riotous lifestyle. The initial sentence provides the lead-in to this discussion by the biographer, providing an implied context for the later discussion of his debaucheries. Verus was supposedly taken ill at Canusium, which is in Apulia,\textsuperscript{267} but when he arrives in Syria, particularly Antioch and Daphne, where he gets involved in various forms of wantonness, including gladiatorial bouts and hunting.\textsuperscript{268} The extremity of this representation was then emphasised by the author in the mention of his acclamation as *Imperator* for the victories of his legates, particularly Statius Priscus who had captured Artaxata.\textsuperscript{269} As a further comparison, Marcus is then shown to be working strenuously, while enduring the excesses of Verus, against his will.\textsuperscript{270}

Barnes has argued that Section 8.12-14 was entirely the creation of the biographer,\textsuperscript{271} which seems quite plausible. However, for the purposes of the present study, it is most important to note the difference in the presentations of Marcus and Lucius.\textsuperscript{272} In these comparisons it is evident that the biographer sought to cast each of them in a particular fashion.

\textsuperscript{265} *BMC, Marcus*, 1349-50, 1380.
\textsuperscript{266} Barnes, 1967, *op.cit.*, p. 70.
\textsuperscript{267} *Verus*, 6.7.
\textsuperscript{268} *Verus*, 6.8-8.1.
\textsuperscript{269} *Marcus*, 9.1.
\textsuperscript{271} Barnes, 1967, *op.cit.*, p. 70.
8.14  

*denique omnia, quae ad bellum erant necessaria, Romae positus et dispositum* 

*Marcus et ordinavit:* This statement was used to compliment the previous representation of Lucius Verus, by which the biographer illustrates that Marcus was ultimately responsible for the victories in the Armenian and Parthian War, despite his continued presence in Rome. The entire representation of Lucius Verus was intended to further establish the differentiation between the characters of the two emperors and to subsequently further highlight the merits of Marcus’ reign. As Barnes has mentioned,\(^{273}\) the possibility of Marcus taking control of the Parthian campaign from the capital is farcical and emphasises the intentions that were inherent in the biographer’s presentation of both Marcus and Lucius.

### Section 9\(^{274}\)

#### 9.1  

*Gestae sunt res in Armenia……postea tamen recepit:* The title of *Armeniacus* was conferred on both Marcus and Lucius Verus, following from their victories in AD 163.\(^{275}\) It was accepted by Verus in AD 163\(^{276}\) but Marcus did not use the title until AD 164.\(^{277}\) According to the biographer, the campaign was led by Statius Priscus,\(^{278}\) who ultimately took the city of Artaxata, which meant that the Roman candidate for the Armenian throne, Soaemus, became the Armenian king.\(^{279}\) The installation of Soaemus was commemorated on several coin issues from AD 164, which included the inscription *Rex Armeniis datus.*\(^{280}\) Despite the author’s comment that Marcus initially refused the title because of his modesty (*quod Marcus per verecundiam primo recusavit, postea tamen recepit*), it would appear more likely that he would have

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\(^{276}\) *BMC, Verus*, 236-41.  
\(^{277}\) *BMC, Marcus*, 271-6.  
\(^{278}\) *PIR?* S 880; D. Atkinson, “The Governors of Britain from Claudius to Diocletian”, *JRS* 12, 1922, p. 67.  
\(^{280}\) *Verus*, 7.8; *BMC, Marcus*, 300-2.
delayed the use of *Armeniacus* in order to allow Lucius Verus the respect he had earnt in actually being the person in charge of the campaign. This highlights the definite partiality of the biographer’s account in relation to the previous section, whereby Marcus is given the praise for this victory. Schwendemann has illustrated how the conferral of these titles was not mentioned by the biographer in a chronological manner,\(^{281}\) which further highlights the positive theme that he sought to emphasise.

9.2-3

profile derives....praesentiam distulit: The conferral of the title *Parthicus* was similar to the title *Armeniacus*, in that Verus used the designation (*Parthicus Maximus*) in AD 165,\(^{282}\) whereas Marcus uses it on some of his numismatic issues in AD 166.\(^{283}\) The delay in its use by Marcus also appears to have been a mark of respect on his part to give due recognition to Verus’ ultimate responsibility for the victory, despite its use by the biographer as a sign of his humility. This may be accurate, but it had been a long-standing tradition to initially refuse a title, so the sincerity of this act cannot be taken as indisputably as the author presents it. The conferral of the title of *Pater Patriae* was a similar episode,\(^{284}\) whereby Marcus rightly defers the acceptance of such an official honour until Lucius Verus was present in AD 166, considering that they were officially co-rulers and the taking of such a title was a matter of State rather than a military award.

9.4-6

medio belli tempore et Civicam.....iter facienti occurreret: The engagement of Annia Lucilla to Lucius Verus was an important symbolic connection between Marcus and Verus, despite them already being adopted brothers-in-law. It represented the strengthening of the familial connection between the two rulers, which would have made a definite social statement about the effectiveness of their joint-reigns and of the Antonine dynasty itself. The Civica referred to was the uncle of Lucius Verus, Marcus Vettulenus Civica Barbarus, who had been consul in AD 157,\(^{285}\) and was the

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\(^{281}\) Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, p. 150.
\(^{282}\) BMC, *Verus*, 1271-6.
\(^{283}\) BMC, *Marcus*, 401-11.
\(^{284}\) Marcus, 12.7.
brother of Lucius Aelius Caesar. Verus ultimately met up with Lucilla in Ephesus,\textsuperscript{286} where they married.\textsuperscript{287} As Barnes has noted,\textit{ medio belli tempore} should not be taken literally to mean AD 164, with there being evidence to suggest that this may have occurred in AD 166.\textsuperscript{288}

The statement that Marcus sought to avoid accusations of aspiring to gain the honour of completing the Armenian and Parthian War (9.5 \textit{ad eum misit Romamque statim reedit}, \textit{revocatus eorum sermonibus, qui dicebant Marcum velle finiti belli gloriem sibimet vindicare atque idcirco in Syriam proficisci}) is a curiosity if the biographer’s previous statement that Marcus was actually the one responsible for the victory is considered (8.14 \textit{denique omnia, quae ad bellum erant necessaria, Romae positus et disposit Marcus et ordinavit}). Clearly the representation illustrates Marcus trying to allay the creation of such rumours, but there would have been little need for this at the time.\textsuperscript{289} Lucius Verus had already received the title \textit{Armeniacus} and celebrated the title on his numismatic issues by AD 163,\textsuperscript{290} which Marcus also did by AD 164,\textsuperscript{291} which was the year in which this supposedly occurred. If the spread of such rumours was as bad as this representation given by the biographer and concerned him so much, Marcus would have hardly celebrated the Armenian victory in such a fashion. Also in addition to this, the city of Artaxata had already fallen by this time (probably in late AD 163),\textsuperscript{292} which meant that there was little glory available for Marcus to claim as his own in Syria anyway.

The letter from Marcus to the proconsuls is also intriguing (\textit{ad proconsule<s> scrib<s> it, ne quis filiae suae iter facienti occurreret}). It appears to be a continuation of the protection that Marcus sought for the travels of his daughter to the East, but the previous sentence about his reasons for returning to the capital creates a serious break in the continuity of the narrative. It seems that it was the proconsuls of Asia mentioned as the recipient of the letter, particularly because the \textit{Vita Veri} mentions that Lucius met with Annia Lucilla in Ephesus.\textsuperscript{293} Nevertheless, the continuity from Sections 9.4 to 9.6 appears somewhat convoluted.

\textsuperscript{286} \textit{Verus}, 7.7.
\textsuperscript{287} Birley, 1987, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 45.
\textsuperscript{288} Barnes, 1967, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 72.
\textsuperscript{289} cf. Rosen, 1997, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 78.
\textsuperscript{290} \textit{BMC, Verus}, 236-41.
\textsuperscript{291} \textit{BMC, Marcus}, 271-6.
\textsuperscript{293} \textit{Verus}, 7.7.
9.7-9

_inter haec liberales......au<e>tionibus tulit:_ This passage makes a significant break from the previous part of this section, providing a discussion of the legal reforms created by Marcus for the preservation of _libertas._ In this section the biographer describes how Marcus preserved the personal freedom of the people; legislated that every citizen should give names to their free-born children within thirty days of birth and register them with the _praefecti_ of the Treasury of Saturn; he founded public records in the provinces in order that births were recorded in the same fashion as those in Rome, thus providing evidence from these records if anyone pleaded a case to prove freedom; and he toughened all of the laws that dealt with so-called ‘declarations of freedom’ (_assertionibus_), as well as other legislation controlling money-lenders and civic auctions.

Schwendemann ties in this passage (9.7-9) with the annalistic tradition exhibited in Section 5, but despite these stylistic similarities it is clear that the overall theme was the focus of the biographer. This section had a dual purpose: it returned the narrative to the overall benefits of Marcus’ reign, having had the previous sections (Sections 9.1-6) more directed towards the military actions in the East, although the biographer still attempted to keep Marcus as the prime subject of this action; and it also provided a good lead into the ensuing discussions (Sections 10-12) that focused upon Marcus’ administrative policies. Schwartz has interpreted Marcus 9.7-12.6 as a unified section owing to the thematic continuity, but it would seem that the consistency in Marcus’ presentation is even more homogenous once the interpolation has been removed from the text of the _Vita Marci._

Section 10

10.1-2

_Senatum multis cognitionibus......auctoritas cresceret:_ The initial sentence in this section provides the clearest explanation of the emphasis of Section 10.1-9 (10.1

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296 See _Marcus_, 10.1.
297 Schwendemann, 1923, _op. cit._, pp. 28-30.
Senatum multis cognitionibus et maxime ad se pertinentibus iudicem dedit.\textsuperscript{299} It is at this point that the biographer desired to establish the equanimity that Marcus displayed towards his Senatorial peers throughout his reign. The first specific law mentioned in this passage was in relation to investigations into the status of deceased persons, in order that they were to be finalised within five years of death. This law was already in existence at the time,\textsuperscript{300} but Marcus further limited the investigation process so that if an individual had been declared free-born, this could only be disputed during their life-time. The introduction of this by Marcus was mentioned by Ulpian and was recorded in the \textit{Digest: interdum imperator ita solet iudicem dare, ne liceret ab eo provocare, ut scio saepissime a divo Marco iudices datos. an et alius possit ita iudicem dare, videbimus: et puto non posse.}\textsuperscript{301}

The general view of this law is that \textit{neque qui\textsuperscript{<s>quam principum amplius senatui detulit} ("None of the emperors exhibited more reverence for the Senate than himself").\textsuperscript{302} This was then further emphasised in the statement that Marcus actively sought to improve the prestige of the Senate by entrusting them with the responsibility of settling disputes for former praetors and consuls (in senatus autem honorificentiam multis praetoriis et consularibus privatis decidenda negotia delegavit, quo magis eorum cum exercitio iuris auctoritas cresceret). The intention of this presentation would have largely been to ingratiate the character and policies of Marcus to the anticipated audience of this biography: namely the aristocratic élites in Rome.\textsuperscript{303} Noyen has interpreted Marcus’ involvement in the development of Imperial policies as being solely his responsibility,\textsuperscript{304} but this passage clearly refers to Marcus’ delegation of responsibility to the Senate in this regard.\textsuperscript{305}

10.3-5

\textit{multos ex amicis in senatum......ipse bene scisset}: The positive and supportive attitude of Marcus towards the Senate, as represented by the biographer, was continued in this passage. It portrays Marcus as taking a personal interest in the

\textsuperscript{299} Marcus, 10.1. ‘He made the Senate arbitrator in numerous investigations, even in those that were rightly under his own control.’

\textsuperscript{300} Digest, 40.15.1.

\textsuperscript{301} Digest, 49.2.1.4.


\textsuperscript{303} White, 1967, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 116.

\textsuperscript{304} P. Noyen, “Marcus Aurelius, the greatest practitioner of Stoicism”, \textit{L’Antiquité Classique} 24, 1955, pp. 373-4.

\textsuperscript{305} Stanton, 1969, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 573-4.
welfare of the Senate [or his amici], by enrolling many of his friends in Senate and promoting them to the rank of aedile or praetor (10.3 multos ex amicis in senatum adlegit cum aediliciis aut praetoriis dignitibus), but the condition was that this occurred only if they were of sufficient dignity (10.5 nec quemquam in ordinem legit, nisi quem ipse bene scisset). In addition to this he also assisted current, but destitute, Senators without a criminal record, by promoting them to the rank of tribune or aedile (10.4 multis senatibus vel pauperibus sine cr<->mine dignitatis tribunicias aedilicasque concessit). Importantly it is significant to observe that there are no specific examples provided by the biographer to support these comments, which makes their reliability somewhat less certain to verify.

It is also noteworthy at this point to draw particular attention to the fact that the biographer represents the non-Senatorial amici of Marcus benefiting more than the established, but destitute, Senators. The impoverished Senators only received promotion to the rank of tribune or aedile, whereas his friends received the rank of aedile or praetor. Nevertheless, these promotions should be viewed as being intended to increase the prestige of the Senate in general, despite such differences in this account. In is also important to note the positive partiality of this account: the audience is intended to view this as an encouraging trait on the part of Marcus. The biographer is showing these policies as a representation of his good-will towards the Senate and as an effort to increase its prestige, whereas a similar instance cast in a more negative light could show this as being interfering and controlling on the part of a princeps.

10.6-9

hoc quoque senatoribus detulit ut…..factis iudicem dedit: In keeping with the previous passage that concentrated on the pro-Senatorial attitudes of Marcus Aurelius, the biographer continues to emphasise the privileges bestowed by the princeps on his aristocratic peer-group. The institution that he granted the privilege of a private trial

306 Some of these may have originated from the eastern provinces; see C.S. Walton, “Oriental Senators in the Service of Rome: a study of Imperial policy down to the death of Marcus Aurelius”, JRS 19, 1929, pp. 58-60.
310 Schwendemann, 1923, op.cit., p. 32
to Senators if they were tried on a capital charge (capite) and that equites would be excluded from the process, was largely an extension of the changes made to the constitution by Hadrian (in senatu quoque excusatis quae facta erant iuravit se numquam senatorem nisi ex senatus sententia puniturum).\textsuperscript{311} It had long been questionable as to whether or not a princeps had the authority to execute senators without a formal trial and a conviction from the Senate.\textsuperscript{312} None of the later Julio-Claudian nor Flavian Emperors had acknowledged the right of a Senator to a hearing only by the Senate alone. But Nerva made a promise that he would not execute a Senator,\textsuperscript{313} as did Trajan.\textsuperscript{314} Marcus appears to have been following in their tradition,\textsuperscript{315} but its mention by the biographer was intended to reinforce the respectfulness of Marcus’ character towards the Senatorial aristocracy. This was also emphasised in the reference to the Senate being allowed jurisdiction over consular appeals (10.9 s<e>nat<u>m appellationibus a consule factis iudicem dedit).

This respect was then further narrated by the author in the mention of his consistent attendance at the Senatorial meetings: 10.7 semper autem, cum potuit, interfuit senatu, etiamsi nihil esset referendum, si Romae fuit; si vero aliquid referre voluit, etiam de Campania ipse venit. \textsuperscript{[10.8]} comitibus praeterea etiam usque ad noctem frequenter interfuit neque umquam recessit de curia nisi consul dixisset \textsuperscript{[10.9]} ‘nihil vos moramur patres conscripti’.\textsuperscript{316} This representation was also in keeping with overall portrayal of Marcus’ diligence in relation to the undertaking of his official duties.

\textbf{10.10-12}

\emph{iudiciari<e>rei singularem diligentiam adhibuit......non redditis causis}: The portrayal of Marcus’ interest in jurisprudence has already been mentioned by the

\textsuperscript{311} Hadrian, 7.4. ‘In the Senate he also absolved himself of any recrimination for what had occurred [the execution of four former consuls], and promised never to exact a sentence himself on a Senator until after a vote of the Senate.’ See Benario, 1980, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 72; Fündling, 2006, Vol. 1, \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 479-80.


\textsuperscript{313} Dio. 68.2.

\textsuperscript{314} Dio. 68.5.

\textsuperscript{315} cf. Stanton, 1969, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 574.

\textsuperscript{316} Marcus, 10.7-9. ‘He was always present at the Senatorial assemblies if he was in Rome, even if no proposal was to be presented, and if he desired to propose anything himself, he turned up personally, even from Campania. Moreover, when a vote was held he frequently stayed even until the evening, never departing the chamber until the consul had declared, ‘We delay you no longer, Conspect Fathers.’
biographer,\textsuperscript{317} but the overall presentation of Marcus’ scholastic interests was typically dominated by his philosophical inquiries in the earlier passages. Yet the biographer states at the outset of this passage that: \textit{iudiciari\textless a\textgreater e rei singularem diligentiam adhibuit} (‘To the dispensation of justice he assigned particular attention’), which suggests that he was able to combine both his legal and philosophical interests as \textit{princeps}. There have been numerous comments in other ancient sources that account for Marcus’ significant interests in this regard.\textsuperscript{318}

The first statement is that Marcus increased the number of court-days to 230 per year (\textit{fastis dies iudic\textless i\textgreater arios addidit, ite ut ducentos triginta dies annuos rebus agendis litibusque discpectandis constitueret}), which was probably due to a back-log of cases that may have been accruing at the time.\textsuperscript{319} Following from this the biographer mentions that he was the first emperor to appoint a \textit{praetor} in charge of the inherited property of wards (\textit{praetorem tutelarem}), which had previously been under the control of the consuls (\textbf{10.11 praetorem tutelarem primus fecit, cum ante tutores a consulibus poscerentur, ut diligenti\textless i\textgreater us de tutoribus tractaretur}). The first appointee to hold this office was Arrius Antoninus, who has been recorded holding this position during the years prior to Verus’ death, and was described as: \textit{praetor cui primo iurisdictio pupillaris a sanctissimis imp(eratoribus) mandata est}.\textsuperscript{320} It is significant that there was no mention of Lucius Verus’ involvement in the development of this legislation,\textsuperscript{321} which would either indicate that he was in the eastern provinces at the time, or had little interest in such legislative developments. If the ancient sources are to be thought correct, it was probably the latter.

Finally for this section, Marcus is credited with having made the appointment of guardians more accessible (\textbf{10.12 de curatoribus vero, cum ante non nisi ex lege Laetoria\textsuperscript{322} vel propter lasciviam vel propter dementiam darentur, ita statutit ut omnes adulti curatores acciperent non redditis causis}), so that the appointed guardian did not have to show cause for their appointment and that all youths would have access to such protection. This had previously only been accessible to youths under the

\textsuperscript{317} Marcus, 3.6-7.
\textsuperscript{318} C.J., 7.2.6; Digest, 31.67.10; Victor, \textit{De Caes.}, 16.11. See also J.H. Oliver, \textit{Marcus Aurelius: aspects of civic and cultural policy in the East}, Hesperia Supplement 13, 1970.
\textsuperscript{319} Schwendemann, 1923, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 33.
\textsuperscript{320} C.Il. 5.1874.
\textsuperscript{321} Schwendemann, 1923, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 34.
\textsuperscript{322} The use of \textit{lex Laetoria} has been accepted, but it is quite clear that the author was intending to refer to the Plaetorian law in this instance.
Plaetorrian Law (*lex Plaetoria de circumscriptione minorum annis XXV*), which had been enacted before 191 BC to protect those under twenty-five years of age from fraud. The cases of *lasciviam* (‘prodigality’) or *dementiam* (‘madness’) had been previously dealt with on the Twelve Tables, which declared that the *prodigus* (‘spendthrift’) and *furiosus* (‘madman’) could not control their own estates and that they should be entrusted to a guardian.

The reliability of these representations of Marcus’ legislative interests has been largely confirmed by the various epigraphic and later comments in the extant treatises, which may suggest the reliability of this passage. But owing to the overly positive light in which this is discussed by the biographer, some caution must still be taken when considering its literal or factual representations.

**Section 11**

11.1-2

*Cavit et sumptibus......a senatu dedit*: The overriding theme of Section 11 in general is the responsibility Marcus exhibited in his administrative undertakings. The initial passage states that Marcus made good use of the State finances (*Cavit et sumptibus publicis*) as an indication of the fundamental responsibility of his reign. His responsibility also extended to caring for the disadvantaged (*de alimentis publicis multa prudenter inventit*), in a similar fashion to his predecessor, Hadrian. He was also portrayed by the biographer as again exhibiting fiscal responsibility through the appointment of Senatorial supervisors for many Italian communities (where there had been previous mismanagement) to administer their finances, which in turn were given to the Senate to amplify their dignity. As with previous discussion of Marcus’ administration by the biographer, there was little detail added to these claims, which makes them difficult to substantiate effectively. It remains important to note the consistency in the portrayal of Marcus as the responsible Imperial benefactor who

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323 Plautus, *Ps.*, 303; Schwendemann, 1923, op.cit., p. 35.
324 *Digest*, 27.10.1, Cicero, *de Inv.* 2.50.148.
327 Schwendemann, 1923, op.cit., pp. 35-47.
clearly could do little wrong. The discussion of the importance of either a pro- or
anti-senatorial standpoint for a princeps was a frequent motif for the designation of
positive or negative qualities by the biographer throughout the HA in general.

11.3-4

*Italicis civitatibus famis......aureos egredetur:* The responsibility of Marcus was
further emphasised by the biographer at this point, with the careful provisions for the
grain-supply being used as an example. The grain-supply was a constant issue for the
large population within the capital, requiring particular attention from an attentive
princeps. The responsibility of Marcus extended beyond the capital to the Italian
cities that were enduring famine (*Italicis civitatibus famis tempore frumentum ex urbe
donavit omnique frumentariae rei consuluit*). This statement was intended to establish
that Marcus’ policies were ultimately among the most responsible of all Emperors.
But his public expenditure did not extend to the frivolous: (*gladiatoria spectacula
omnifarium temperavit. temperavit etiam scaenicas donationes iubens, ut quinos
aureos scaenici acciperent, ita tamen ut nullus editor decem aureos egrederetur*),
with limitations being enforced on the presentation of gladiatorial shows, the reduced
expenses used for public theatrical performances and the restrictions placed on the
payment of actors (to no more than 10 aurei). This representation of Marcus’ fiscal
policies is largely in keeping with the other extant sources about his reign, which
emphasise the general principles of his principate: Marcus was not inclined to aim for
shameful popularity through the presentation of such spectacles, but sought to
concentrate more on efficiency and responsibility. Such spectacles were frequently
popular with the local population and it was often imperative for a princeps to at least
appear interested in such performances, which Marcus clearly was not, as shown
through these financial limitations for their presentation. It is also important to
emphasise the similarities between Marcus 11.4 and the *Scholia* on Juvenal (7.243),
which may have been influential upon the biographer.

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330 For similar observations about the representation of Hadrian, see B. Meissner, “Geschichtsbilder in
332 Such as Dio, 72.29.3-4.
333 See Section 15.1 for further discussion of Marcus’ limited interest in popular entertainment and its
results.
11.5-6

vias etiam urbis......iura praecesperat: This passage further emphasises the overall responsibility of Marcus’ reign through the reiteration about the maintenance of the road system and another reference to the grain supply (*vias etiam urbis atque itinerum diligentissime curavit. rei frumentariae graviter providit*). The biographer then draws another connection between Marcus and Hadrian in relation to the judicial system throughout Italy: **11.6 datis iuridicis Italiae consuluit ad id exemplum, quo Hadrianus consulares viros reddere iura praecesperat.** This procedure had been abandoned by Antoninus Pius,336 but Marcus reinstated the practice of the appointment of former praetors to serve as judges throughout Italy.337

It is of interest to note at this point that the biographer draws a closer association between the administrative policies of Marcus and Hadrian, than with his direct predecessor, Antoninus Pius. This is largely in keeping with the overall theme of the biography that asserts that if Marcus had been older, he would have been the direct successor of Hadrian – such was his worth and talent. The biographer does not openly condemn Antoninus Pius in these sections, but instead prefers simply to overlook many of his accomplishments, which is clearly shown through the brief length of the *Vita Antonini Pii* (13 Sections) when compared to both the *Vitae Hadriani* (27 Sections) and *Marci Antonini* (25 Sections).338 This would also help explain the few links made between Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius in the *Vita Marci*.

11.7-9

*Hispanis exhaus<tis>......ab aliquo exegisset: Marcus’ responsibility for administrative and financial policies was the continuing theme of this section, with particular reference to their continuity from his predecessors. This was made explicit in the first sentence (*Hispanis exhaus<tis> Italic a allectione contra......*339 *Tra<ia>nique praeccepta verecunde consuluit*), where there is reference to the

336 Hadrian, 22.13; Pius, 2.11; Appian, *BC.*, 1.38.
337 CIL 5.1874 = *ILS* 1118.
338 Note that the sections included within the interpolation have been removed from the *Vita Marci Antonini*.
reinstitution of Trajan's policies in relation to the Spanish provinces. As Syme has shown, this had nothing to do with the levies of troops, but the overall theme was concerned with financial policy. The phrase \textit{praecpta Traiani} has been interpreted as Trajan's military regulations, but this does not appear to have been likely in view of the literary context. The subsequent reference to Marcus' property legislation was also intended to exhibit the continuity of his policies. The five percent tax on inheritance had been instituted by Augustus, whereas the provision that Senators of foreign birth should invest at least a fourth of their capital in Italy (\textit{senatores peregrini quartam partem in Italia possiderent}) was a reduction from Trajan's policy that required a third of their capital in Italy.

The mention of the legislation concerning property inherited from a mother was in reference to the \textit{Senatus Consultum Orfitianum}, which was passed in AD 178. The final sentence of this passage simply further emphasised Marcus' responsibility for fiscal and administrative policies: \textit{dedit praeterea curatoribus regionum ac viarum potestatem, ut vel punirent vel ad praefectum urbi puniendos remitterent eos, qui ultra vectigalia quicquam ab aliquo exegissent.} The overall theme of this entire passage was continuity, with Marcus concentrating primarily on efficiency and responsible management of the State, which made him a worthy princeps.

11.10
\textit{ius autem magis vetus restituit quam novum fecit. habuit secum praefectos, quorum et auctoritate et periculo semper iura dictavit. usus autem est Scaevola praecipue iuris perito:} This final statement by the biographer clearly establishes the ultimate theme of Section 11: Marcus restored the traditional legal codes rather than create his own, which he did in consultation with others rather than with an autocratic

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340 Hadrian, 12.4. See Benario, 1980, \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 90-2; R. Knox McElderry, "Vespasian's Reconstruction of Spain", \textit{JRS} 8, 1918, p. 82.
344 cf. Schwedemann, 1923, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 44.
347 Digest, 38.17.
disposition. The reference to the prefects that advised Marcus on these policies (habuit secum praefectos, quorum et auctoritate et periculo semper iura dictavit) may indicate that it was from this point that the position of Praetorian Prefect became more of an advisory, rather than simply military, office, considering that under Severus and Severus Alexander the post was held by the foremost jurists (Papinian, Ulpian and Paullus).  

The consultative process was highlighted particularly in relation to the mention of Quintus Cervidius Scaevola, who was a learned man in legal matters, having been constantly referred to in the Digest, and was probably a member of Marcus’ consilium. Scaevola was clearly influential during the reign of Hadrian, and the reference to him by the biographer (isus autem est Scaevola praecepsque iuris perito) may have been intended to imply the continuity between the administrations of their reigns. It is also pertinent to mention that there were no references to the impact of Lucius Verus in the entirety of Section 11, despite him being co-ruler at this stage of the narrative, which was clearly intended by the biographer to highlight the disparity between the two rulers in both their priorities and capacities to govern. Schwendemann has taken this reference as an indicator of the biographer’s dependence upon another historical source, but this seems to disregard the frequent comparisons that are drawn between the two principes throughout this Vita.

Section 12

12.1-3

Cum populo autem......patienter tulit: The main theme from this initial passage of this section is that of the libertas that was given to the populace [particularly the élite classes] during the reign of Marcus. The biographer was intending to illustrate clearly the equanimity that was a clear feature of Marcus’ policies, particularly with the first sentence: cum populo autem non aliter egit, quam est actum sub civitate libera (‘In relation to the populace, he behaved as one does in an open nation’). However, according to the author, Marcus went even beyond this (fuitque per omnia

349 Pescennius Niger, 7.2; Severus Alexander, 26.6.
350 Digest, 1.6.6.pr.5; 2.14.27.2.16; 3.5.18.1.1; 3.5.34.pr.1; 4.3.32.pr.1; 4.4.11.1.2.
354 Schwendemann, 1923, op.cit., p. 47.
moderantissimus in hominibus deterrendis a malo, invitandis ad bona, remunerandis copia, indulgentia liberandis fecitque ex malis bonos, ex bonis optimos, moderate etiam cavillationes nonnullorum ferens), by actively encouraging the citizens to become better people, particularly through his immense capacity for moderation (moderantissimus). As Lessing has discussed, the use of the superlative moderantissimus is quite unusual and the form appears to have been scarcely justified. However, this further epitomises the intentions of the biographer in their presentation of Marcus Aurelius. It is evident that the biographer sought to represent Marcus as the most disciplined princeps, which resulted in the stability of his policies, but also that it was almost infectious, making his subjects become better people. The extremity of this idealism epitomises the partiality of the biographer in relation to both Marcus’ character and its effect on the State.

12.3-4

nam cum quendam Vetrasinum famae detestand<e>ae honorem petentem moneret, ut se ab opinio<ni>bus populi vindicaret, et ille contra respondisset multos, qui secum in harena pugnassent, se praetores videre, patienter tuli. ac ne in quenquam facile vindicaret, praetorem, qui quaedam pessime <e>gerat, non abdicare se praetura iussit, sed collegae <i>uferis dictionem mandavit: The inclusion of these examples was intended to epitomise Marcus’ tolerance, particularly in relation to the episode concerning Vetrasinus. According to the biographer, he avoided taking any vindictive vengeance on any person, which was represented as a positive trait and an indication of his moderation. Nevertheless, these examples could be interpreted as also being a veiled criticism, in that it was another illustration of Marcus’ excessive compliance, as in the previous examples cited. If the biographer had sought to give an overt negative representation it is quite evident that he would have represented the compliant tendencies of Marcus in a much different fashion, but at this stage of the Life the author was only making quite veiled criticisms of Marcus’ disciplinary policies and his character in general. However, this preference for veiled criticism by the biographer was not maintained througho<ti>the entire Vita Marci Antonini.

356 Marcus, 2.6, 4.8-9.
357 See Marcus, 22, 23, 25, 29.
12.5-6

_fisco in causis......erat etiam verecundus_: This passage was intended to reiterate the central themes of the previous two examples: that he was never influenced by personal gain in his decision making, and that he was firm, but even-handed in his decision making processes (_sane, quamvis esset constans, erat etiam verecundus_). The example used in reference to his resistance towards personal gain was in relation to finances (_fisco in causis compendii numquam iudicans favit_), which was typically the hardest to resist by those in power, which makes the statement about the strength of Marcus’ character by the biographer even more effective.

12.7-8

_posteaquam autem e Syria victor......Caesares appellarentur_: The main intention behind this episode was to further stress the emphasis of Section 12: that Marcus reigned as a considerate _princeps_. This is particularly evident in the first sentence: _posteaquam autem e Syria victor rediit frater, patris patri<a>e nomen ambobus decretum est, cum se Marcus absente Ver<o> erga omnes senatores atque homines moderatissime gessisset_ (‘Following the return of his brother as victor from Syria, the title ‘Father of his Country’ was awarded to both, in that Marcus, during the absence of Verus, had behaved with the greatest of consideration towards both the Senators and the commoners’). The title _Pater Patriae_ was awarded to Marcus and Verus on the return of Lucius Verus from the East in AD 166, as mentioned in Section 9.3, where Marcus initially refuses the title before his colleague’s return, which was by late August, AD 166. It is notable that, according to the biographer, Marcus was awarded the title for his moderation [see Section 12.9] rather than his role in the conflict, despite the previous claim that Marcus was actually in control of the war. The use of _moderatissime_ in this context was simply to continue the theme of the previous part of this section of the narrative (Section 12.1-6). The award of the _Corona Civica_ was used as a connection between the discussion of the moderation of Marcus and the military honours that are discussed in the ensuing sections. The sons of Marcus to be given the title of _Caesar_ would have been Marcus Aurelius

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358 Barnes, 1967, _op.cit._, p. 72.
359 _ILS_ 366.
361 See _Marcus_, 8.14.
Commodus, who was born in AD 161, and Marcus Annius Verus, who was born in AD 162/3. The ceremony for the conferral of these titles was held on 12th October, AD 166.

12.9-11

*sed Marcus tanta fuit moderatione, ut.....spectaverunt habitu triumphali*: The discussion of the triumph awarded to Lucius Verus and Marcus Aurelius was also intended to reiterate the moderation of Marcus. This is illustrated in the very first sentence in this passage: *sed Marcus tanta fuit moderatione, ut, cum simul triumphasset, tamen post mortem Luci<em>ı</em> [m] tantum Germanicum se vocaret, quod sibi bello prop<em>r</em>io pepererat*. The title of Germanicus only appeared on the epigraphic evidence from Marcus’ reign after AD 172 on inscriptions, and it was probably conferred on Marcus on 15th October, AD 172. The *moderatio* of Marcus was then further illustrated by the inclusion of his children in the Triumphal carriage that even included his unmarried daughters, which was quite unusual. It is also pertinent to note that this kind of dynastic display appears to contradict the self-controlled and moderate representation provided by the biographer.

12.12

*inter cetera pietatis eius haec quoque moderatio praedicanda est: funambulis post puerorum lapsum calcitas subici iussit. unde hodieque refert praetenditur*: This episode was intended to further establish the extent of Marcus’ *moderatio*: it went beyond the consideration of his friends and family, to as far as a lowly entertainer. The biographer included this final illustration to establish that Marcus was truly *moderatissimus* and worthy of due respect and the most considerate of *princeps*. As White has noted, the inclusion of such unusual episodes within the narrative of the *HA* was a common feature, which indicates the desire of the biographer to entertain his audience while exhibiting his intended presentation of the main character.

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364 *Commodus*, 11.13; Dio, 71.3.5.
12.13-14

dum Parthicum bellum geritur . . . . bello Germanico imperatores: The final passage in this section was simply intended to provide a smooth link between the discussion of Marcus' moderatio and the outbreak of the Marcomannic War. This conflict was officially referred to as the bellum Germanicum, which began before the completion of the Parthian campaign, but according to the biographer it had been stalled through the diplomacy of legates in the region (dum Parthicum bellum geritur, natum est Marcomannicum, quod diu eorum, qui aderant, arte suspensum est, ut finito iam orientali bello Marcomannicum agi posset). Rosen has shown the various methods by which Rome was able to delay potential conflicts, be it through the encouragement of other disputes or through the payment of stipendia.

The final sentence of this passage (et cum famis tempore populo insinuaste de bello, fratre post quinquennium reverso in senatu egit, ambos necessarios dicens bello Germanico imperatores) reiterates the inevitability of this conflict, which appears to have been an attempt to absolve Marcus of any responsibility for the conflict. The declaration that both Lucius and Marcus were needed for the German campaign (ambos necessarios dicens bello Germanico imperatores) could be interpreted in two ways. If the representation of the impending conflict by the biographer was indeed correct, it is quite clear that it would require a great deal of attention, but it is uncertain as to whether this would this really necessitate the presence of both principes. Marcus had received little military training, having much more of an aptitude for administration and academic pursuits, so it is unclear what was the extent of his usefulness at the outset of the campaign.

It may have also been intended to indicate that owing to his excesses, Lucius needed Marcus' supervision. Barta has argued that while the overall contrast between Marcus and Lucius appears justified Lucius suffers for his personal indiscretions too much from the biographer. However, as Stanton has noted, there is no other evidence to support the claim that Lucius neglected his role as princeps.

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367 CIL 6.1549.
368 Barnes, 1967, op. cit., p. 73.
Section 13

13.1-2

*Tantus autem timor belli Marcomannici.....per septem dies*: The discussion of the various religious ceremonies undertaken by Marcus prior to leaving for the war appears to have been an explanation for the delayed departure on the part of Marcus and Lucius Verus. The ‘Feast of the Gods’ *(Romano rito lectorum)* was an ancient purification ceremony, where statues of deities were erected on dining-couches in various public areas and were supplied with a variety of offerings. According to Livy, this tradition was initially observed in 399 BC to stop a plague. The delayed confrontation with the Marcomanni appears to have been owing more to the preparations that were necessary for the campaign, considering that the Germanic tribes had already been quite successful. According to Ammianus Marcellinus, the Marcomanni had already invaded Italy and laid siege to Aquileia.

The earlier response to this involved the deployment of Furius Victorinus, who was Prefect of the Guard at the time, but he was subsequently killed while suffering a large number of casualties in his forces. Clearly the Roman military forces were stretched at the time, but it is almost impossible to justify the disregard that was inherent in the Roman response, if this representation is to be trusted.

13.3-5

*tanta autem pestilentia fuit.....Antoninus statuas conlocavit*: The biographer continues to contextualise the difficulties that faced Marcus and Lucius Verus at the time just prior to the Marcomannic War in this passage. According to the *Vita Veri*, the plague had supposedly been brought back with Verus’ army from the East, but this appears to have been highly unlikely. However, it seems that this pestilence was exceptionally severe, going on to ravage Europe as far as the Rhine, according to

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373 Schwendemann, 1923, *op. cit.*, pp. 54-62.
375 Livy, 5.13.5-6.
376 Ammianus Marcellinus, 29.6.1.
377 *Marcus*, 14.5.
Ammianus Marcellinus, which continued for as long a period as into AD 180. According to other sources, this pestilence returned again during the reign of Commodus.

The response by the *principes* seems quite appropriate for the circumstances: tune autem Antonini leges sepeliendi sepulchrorumque asperrima sanxerunt, quando quidem caverunt, ne quis velle [ab]f<ab> ricaretur sepulchrum; quod hodieque servatur. The severity of the plague was highlighted by the biographer in the final sentence where the number of victims was discussed: *et multa quidem milia pestilentia consumpsit multisque ex proceribus, quorum amplissimis Antoninus status conlocavit*. But the context in which these casualties were mentioned by the biographer appears to have been an excuse for the delay in a military reaction to the problems with the Marcomanni rather than a documentation of the major events of Marcus’ reign.

13.6
tantaque clementia fuit, ut et sumptu publico vulgaria funera iubet [et] e<e>ferri et vano cuidam, qui diripiendae urbis occasionem cum quibusdam consciis requiress de caprifici arbore in campo Martio contionabundus ignem de caelo lapsurum finemque mundi affere diceret, s<i> ipse lapsus ex arbore in ciconiam verteretur, cum statuto tempore decidisset atque ex sinu ciconiam emi sset, perducto ad se atque confessio veniam daret: The inclusion of this episode by the biographer was indicative of the continuing theme of Marcus’ clemency, tolerance and consideration. The kindness of Marcus Aurelius was emphasised by the insertion of the reference to his provision of funerals for lower class victims of the plague at the State’s expense. The tolerance of Marcus was again exhibited through the illustration of his response to the apocalyptic speeches of a man who sought to plunder the city with his friends. The inclusion of the final episode seems rather obscure considering the context of the entire section, which was intended to be a discussion of the lead-up to the Marcomannic War. Instead the intention of the biographer becomes clearly

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381 Marcus, 28.4; CIL 3.5567 [dated to AD 182].
apparent: to emphasise the clemency, tolerance and consideration of Marcus, rather than to give a coherent narrative of the events and their context.\textsuperscript{384}

\section*{Section 14\textsuperscript{385}}

\textit{Profecti tamen sunt paludati ambo imperatorem......nostris placuisset imperatoriibus}: The biographer has made a significant statement about the circumstances in this passage, by illustrating the aggressive movements of the various tribes (\textit{profecti tamen sunt paludati ambo imperatorem et Victualis et Marcomannis cuncta turbantibus, aliis etiam gentibus, quae pulsae a superioribus barbaris faggerant, nisi recipierentur, bellum inferentibus}), but largely in order that the successes of Marcus could be emphasised (\textit{nec parum profuit ista profectio, cum Aquileiam usque venissent. nam plerique reges et cum populis suis se retraxerunt et tumultus auctores interemerunt}).\textsuperscript{386} The representation is almost as if simply the idea of Marcus and Verus’ arrival was enough to create instability among their enemies, having resulted in the retreat of several kings and the execution of the trouble-makers that had caused such difficulties by the time they had reached Aquileia.\textsuperscript{387} This was then further emphasised through the mention of how the Quadi had lost their leader,\textsuperscript{388} and sought the approval of the emperors for the successor. The intention of the biographer was to highlight the effect that Marcus could have, even without having been directly involved in the conflict – such was his greatness. The reality of the situation was that the period prior to Marcus’ reign had been remarkably stable, but that this did not continue, with serious difficulties arising consistently on the frontier into the mid 3\textsuperscript{rd} Century AD, which is also supported by the archaeological evidence from the region.\textsuperscript{389} Schwendemann rightly points out that the reality of such a comprehensive subjugation of the Germanic tribes at this time was highly unlikely,\textsuperscript{390} which further emphasises the partiality of the biographer.

\textsuperscript{385} Schwendemann, 1923, \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 167-77.
\textsuperscript{386} For discussion of this theme within the \textit{HA}, see V. Neri, “L’Imperatore come Miles: tacito, Attalo, e la datazione dell’\textit{Historia Augusta}”, \textit{HAC} 2000, 2002, p. 381.
\textsuperscript{388} See L.F. Pitts, “Relations between Rome and the German ‘Kings’ on the Middle Danube in the First to Fourth Centuries A.D.”, \textit{JRS} 79, 1989, pp. 49-51.
\textsuperscript{390} Schwendemann, 1923, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 172.
14.4-7

*Lucius tamen invitus......Lucius Romam rediret.*\(^{391}\) The ensuing section was included by the author in order to highlight the disparity between the *principes* again, representing Lucius Verus as being utterly disinclined towards the campaign (*Lucius tamen invitus profectus est, cum plerique ad legatos imperatorum mitterent defectionis veniam postulantes*).\(^{392}\) The reference to the failure of Furius Victorinus and the loss of part of his army (*et Lucius quidem, quod amissus esset praefectus praetorio Furius Victorinus, atque pars exercitus interisset, redeundum esse censebat*) was expected to further emphasise the reluctance of Lucius as well. However, as to be expected, the biographer stresses the difference between the two Emperors in the following passage (*Marcus: autem fingere barbaros aestimans et fugam et cetera quae securitatem bellicam ostenderent*), whereby Marcus enthusiastically seeks to push on so that they would not be overwhelmed simply by the burden of their vast preparations. This is in stark contrast to the *invitus* ascribed to Lucius Verus by the author, which was clearly intended to emphasise the responsibility and determination of Marcus.

Following from this, the account then describes how they both passed over the Alps and pushed on further in order to ensure the security of Italy and Illyricum (*denique transscens Alpibus longius processerunt composueruntque omnia, quae ad munimen Italicae atque Illyrici pertinebant*).\(^{393}\) This conflict included a successful campaign in Pannonia,\(^{394}\) where both Marcus and Lucius Verus were proclaimed *Imperatores* for the fifth time, and clearly felt confident because they gave honourable discharges to some of their veterans, which have been dated to 5th May, AD 167.\(^{395}\) All the same, the account of the biographer continued to denigrate Verus' role at this point, claiming that he *placuit autem urgente Lucio, ut pr<\(a\)>emissis ad senatum litteris Lucius Romam rediret.* As expected there were no such comments placed in the mouth of Marcus Aurelius by the author, and the reality would have been that the task of securing the northern frontier was far from achieved by this time.\(^{396}\)

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394 *Verus*, 9.10.
395 *CIL* 3. p. 888.
Nevertheless, the important point for consideration at this point is the difference in the representation of Marcus and Verus and the reason for this: that Marcus was the more responsible of the two and clearly the better princeps. The representation of Lucius Verus frequently suffered because of the inevitable nature of their comparison in the literary sources, which consistently idealised their assessment of Marcus’ personality and his aptitude for governance.

14.8

biisque, postquam inter ingressi sunt, sedens cum fratre in vehiculo Lucius apoplexi arreptus perit: The death of Lucius Verus occurred in AD 169 at Altinum in Veneta,\(^{397}\) supposedly from a ‘stroke of apoplexy’.\(^{398}\) Firstly, it is important that the biographer has noted the actual nature of their relationship, referring to Marcus as his brother rather than his adopted son, which occurred in some of the previous sections.\(^{399}\) There is also little description given to the events surrounding the death of Lucius Verus, but there is little more detail presented even in the Vita Veri either: sed non longe ab Altino subito in vehiculo morbo, quem apoplexin vocant, corruptus Lucius depositus e vehiculo detracto sanguine Altinum perdactus, cum triduo mutus vixisset, apud Altinum perit.\(^{400}\) As a comparison, it is important to note that Marcus was not mentioned at all in this account and that it also mentions how Verus did not die instantly, which seems to be the impression given by the account in the Vita Marci.\(^{401}\)

It is also significant that there is no mention of any remorse on Marcus’ part, which would have been expected if the biographer had sought to continue his representation as being so moderate and considerate. In view of the probable insertion of the interpolation following this account of Lucius Verus’ death,\(^{402}\) it would appear that the descriptions of Marcus’ reaction were included in the ensuing section of the original text [Section 20].

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\(^{397}\) Verus, 9.10-11.


\(^{399}\) Marcus, 5.1.

\(^{400}\) Verus, 9.11. ‘But when Lucius was not far from Altinum, while in his wagon he was unexpectedly attacked with the illness called apoplexy, and after he was taken from his wagon and bled, he was moved to Altinum, and there he expired, after having lived for three more days being unable to speak.’

\(^{401}\) The discussion of the poisoning accusations levelled against Marcus has been examined in relation to Section 15.5.

\(^{402}\) See Chapter Four, pages 143-50, for further discussion.
Section 20

20.1

*Sed Marco Antonino haec sunt gesta post fratrem: primum corpus eius Romam deiectum est et in latum maiorum sepulcris. divini <ei> honores decreti.*\(^{403}\) The initial description of Marcus’ response to the death of Lucius Verus was largely official. This was not intended to provide an indication of any heartfelt remorse on the part of Marcus, but simply related the formal reactions to the passing of the *princeps.* The tomb referred to in this passage would have been the Mausoleum of Hadrian,\(^{404}\) which was indicative of the dynastic continuity that was so important to maintain. This would imply that there was also a sense of political incentive on the part of Marcus for the conferral of such honours on his deceased adopted brother, which may raise a further question about his motivations in this regard. The divine honours voted for Lucius Verus were also mentioned in the interpolation,\(^{405}\) but that representation was much more positive and complimentary for Marcus’ representation.

However, in the portrayal here the biographer gives an image of Marcus as being much more detached from the loss of Lucius Verus, which differs quite dramatically from the references to his remorse at the passing of others, such as his philosophical mentors.\(^{406}\) According to Syme, this passage returns the audience to a factual representation of Marcus Aurelius,\(^{407}\) but this interpretation is coloured by his argument that this portion of the *Vita Marci* (Sections 20-29) belong to a different author.\(^{408}\) While the facts within this passage are more reliable, Syme has not focused upon the presentation of Marcus within this context, which is the main focus of the present study.

20.2

*dein cum gratias ageret senatu<ei>, quod fratrem consecrasset, oc<c>ulte ostendit omnia bellica consilia sua fuisset, quibus superati sunt Parthi:* By making this statement, the biographer has created the first overt negative representation of Marcus’ character. The portrayal of Marcus by the author in this sentence appears to

\(^{403}\) Cf. E. Hohl, “Beiträge zur Textgeschichte der *Historia Augusta*”, *Klio* 13, 1913, p. 422, n. 2.

\(^{404}\) *Verus*, 11.1; *CIL* 6.991.

\(^{405}\) Section 15.3-4.

\(^{406}\) *Pius*, 10.4-5.


\(^{408}\) For further discussion of this, see Chapter Four, pages 143-50.
be almost a complete change of character, with the use occulte in relation to his comment in the Senate clearly emphasising the menacing nature of this representation. This view of Marcus was certainly nothing like the moderate and considerate description of his personality that occurred in the previous fourteen Sections of the biography. Marcus as moderatissimus was certainly not evident in this passage, and raises questions about the intentions of the biographer. It is quite clear that this was intended to further emphasise the limited degree of remorse expressed in the previous sentence, but the darkness of this portrayal is unusual in view of the previous affirmative partiality that was so prevalent in the account.

It may have also been indicative of the biographer attempting to emphasise the wantonness of Lucius Verus, exhibiting that even a man who was as considerate as Marcus Aurelius was affected by his depravity. This would be expected in the representations of the effect of other shameless principes, such as a Gaius Caligula or Domitian, but the licentiousness of Verus hardly seems to have justified such a reaction from the character of Marcus that was so consistently represented by the biographer.

It is noteworthy that the other representations of Marcus’ reaction to Verus’ death did not provide such an account,⁴⁰⁹ which makes it quite clear that this overtly negative section was owing more to the objectives of the biographer. The aim of this portrayal of Marcus appears to have been that the author sought to follow the example of previous biographers, by including criticisms in the accounts of ‘good’ emperors in order to emphasise the positive traits of the character. This form of literary construction has been previously noted in other ancient sources, such as Suetonius,⁴¹⁰ and it seems that the author of this biography was following a similar methodology, except that the change in the focus in this context was much more extreme and noticeable. This creates a somewhat jarring effect when approaching this particular section, but it appears to have been the overall literary reasoning behind the inclusion of this passage.

20.3-4

addidit pr<a>eterea quaedam, quibus ostendit nunc demum se quasi a principio acturum esse rem publicam amoto eo, qui remissior videbatur. nec alter senatus

⁴⁰⁹ Dio. 71.3.1; Verus, 9.11.
acceptit, quam Marcus dixerat, ut videretur gratias agere, quod Verus excessisset vita: This passage continues the basic theme of the previous sentence, whereby Marcus is represented as being relieved to have gained sole control of the State. This appears to have been intended to justify the quite dark statement in the previous sentence in relation to Marcus’ view of Verus’ capacity as princeps, but it, nevertheless, maintains the quite negative theme of Section 20 overall. Judging from the comments and inferences made by the biographer in relation to the administration of the State in the previous sections of the Vita, it would seem that Marcus had been governing the empire essentially single-handedly anyway; but it is the portrayal of Marcus’ motives behind this comment that raise interest for comment. It is another instance where the view of him as being so moderate has been entirely removed from his portrayal, which is particularly emphasised by there not being any references to any remorse on the part of Marcus.

The biographer then further strengthens this representation by mentioning the assumed interpretation of the Senate. This final sentence provides the culmination in the representation of the ‘true’ feelings that Marcus was experiencing. According to the biographer, he was pleased and was giving thanks for the death of his adopted brother.411 Note that the author does not claim that Marcus actually stated this sentiment outright, but that it was interpreted in this fashion by the Senators. This is important because it illustrates that this was not what Marcus actually said, but rather what the biographer sought to emphasise: that Marcus was relieved that Verus had died. The biographer was seemingly trying to emphasise that the death of Lucius Verus was for the good of the State, and that Marcus was aware of this. Nevertheless, the fashion by which this is represented creates another quite jarring representation of Marcus in this Vita, which was largely owing to the confusion of the biographer.

20.5

omnibus deinde sororibus et adfinibus et libertis <iuc>ris et honoris et pecuniae plurimum detulit. erat enim fames suae curiosissimus, requirens ad verum, quid quisque de se diceret, emendans quae bene reprehensa viderentur: The inclusion of this passage marks a break from the previous overtly negative comments, but not a complete halt to critical inferences by the biographer: while expressing relief (if not

pleasure) following the passing of Lucius Verus, Marcus expresses great consideration in relation to the dependants of his former Imperial colleague, which is more in keeping with the earlier representation of him. Nevertheless, the biographer then provides another side to the character of Marcus: erat enim famae suae curiosissimus, requirens ad verum, quid quise de se diceret, emendans quae bene reprehensa viderentur. This concern for his reputation was another change in the representation of him, which received no mention previously. It inspires another implied question about whether Marcus’ moderation and concern for others was truly his personality, or whether the previous negative aspects of his personality were the reality. This concern for his reputation is contradictory to the perspective advocated in the Meditations: παρὰ τοῦ τροφέως, τὸ μήτε Πρασιανὸς μήτε Βενετιανὸς, μήτε Παλμουλάριος ἢ Σκουτάριος γενέσθαι καὶ τὸ φερέπονον καὶ ὀλιγοδέξες, καὶ τὸ αὐτοφηγωμέν καὶ ἀπωλέσαμον καὶ τὸ δυσπρόσδεκτον διαβολῆς. It is also noteworthy that the alimenta were a source of glory, which may have been implied by the biographer as a motivation for Marcus’ actions.

20.6-7
profisciscens ad bellum Germanicum......dabatur, invitate habuerunt. The final passage in this section was seemingly intended to provide a connection between the discussion of Marcus’ reaction to Verus’ death and his departure for the Marcomannic War, by discussing the wedding of Anna Lucilla, who had been married to Lucius Verus, to Claudius Pompeianus. This man was honoured by the people of Pompeiopolis as πάτρῳ να καὶ κτίστην, which has been interpreted as indicating his eastern origins. The biographer was clearly trying to emphasise the haste with which Marcus organised this union, by mentioning that the mourning period for Verus had not yet finished (profisciscens ad bellum Germanicum filiam suam non decurs<o> luctus tempore) and that Pompeianus was not eligible for a marriage to an Augusta. The inference by the author was intended to have been one of

412 See Section 15.3 for discussion of this kindness within the interpolation section.
414 Med. 1.5. ‘From my Tutor, not to go for the Green Jacket or the Blue at the races, or to back the Light-Shield Victor or the Heavy Shield in the lists, not to shrink from work, and to have few desires, and to do my own labour, to mind my own business, and to not listen to defamations.’
416 IGRR 3.135.
diligence: Marcus was well aware of the situation in *Germania*, but needed to settle affairs in the capital prior to leaving for the frontier. This appears to have been the aim of the biographer, but the haphazard nature of this passage makes the purpose for its inclusion a little more obscure.

This reference to this hasty marriage also implied some criticism, in relation to both the unfinished mourning period (which could imply impiety on Marcus’ part), but also because both Faustina and Lucilla opposed the union (*sed has nuptias et Faustina et ipsa, quae dabatur, invitaes habuerunt*). It may also be intended as a supporting statement for the reduced level of moderation and consideration that the character of Marcus had taken on in the previous references to Verus’ death. However, this criticism by the biographer was quite different to the overt statements made in the previous passages of Section 20, simply taking the form of a passing reference rather than a direct assertion. But this may have also been an implied reference to the impending rebellion of Avidius Cassius, who may have sought a union with Lucilla and was of higher status than Claudius Pompeianus.

Section 21

21.1-2

*Cum Mauri Hispanias prope omnes vastarent, res per legatos bene gestae sunt. et cum per Aegyptum Bucolicis militis gravia multa fecissent, per Av<di> dium Cassium retusni sunt, qui postea tyrannidem arripuit:* The account offered here by the biographer concerning the renewal of hostilities on the German frontier establishes the return to the style of representation of Marcus Aurelius prior to Section 15. The account takes the form of providing an unadorned account with little reference to the context other than the military developments of the period. The date of the subjugation of the Mauri in *Spēin* was probably AD 172/3, which was

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419 B. Baldwin, “*The Fita Avidii*”, *Klio* 58, 1976, p. 15.
422 cf. Premerstein, 1913, *op.cit.*., p. 86.
424 Marcus 22.11; Severus, 2.4.
brought about through his legates (res per legatos bene gestae sunt), and reiterates the military difficulties that Marcus faced at this point of his reign.

According to Dio, the Bucoli were a tribe of herdsmen that resided in the region close to Alexandria, and had revolted following Marcus’ assumption of the title of Germanicus in AD 172/3: καὶ οἱ καλοῦμενοι δὲ Βουκόλοι κατὰ τὴν Αἰγύπτιον κινηθέντες καὶ τῶν ἄλλων Αἰγυπτίων προσαποστήσαντες ὑπὸ ἵερεῖ τινὰ Ἰσιόδορον . . . ἐπειτα ἐκ παρατάξεως τούς ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ Ἦρωμάιος νικήσαντες μικροῦ καὶ τὴν Ἀλεξάνδρειαν ἐβλὼν, εἰ μὴ Κάσσιος ἐκ Συρίας πεμφθείς. 425

The incident with the Bucoli is also mentioned in the Vita Avidii Cassii, where it is said to have been taken from the Vita Marci by Marius Maximus: nam cum et Bucolici milites per Aegyptum gravia multa facerent, ab hoc retunsi sunt, 426 ut item Marius Maximus refert in eo libro quem secundum de vita Marci Antonini edidit. 427

The present passage also makes the first reference to the later rebellion of Avidius Cassius in Egypt (qui postea tyrannidem arripuit), 428 which has been discussed in greater detail in relation to Marcus, 24.6-25.12. 429

21.3-5

sub ipsis profectionis . . . nomen eius insereretur: Following the resumption of the introduction to the account of the Germanic conflict, the biographer continues to outline the precursors to Marcus’ departure in this instance through his mention of the death of Marcus Annius Verus, who was seven years of age and died from an operation on a tumour under his ear (exacto sub aure tubere[m] septennem amisit). 430

Little detail was given by the biographer, but it seems quite evident that the intention behind this reference was to illustrate the difficult context in which Marcus undertook the Marcomannic campaign, and also to exhibit the strength of his resolve to do so.

425 Dio, 71.4.1-2. ‘The community called the Bucoli started an uprising in Egypt and under the direction of a certain Isodorus, a priest, incited the rest of the Egyptians to rebel . . . . Next, having defeated the Romans in Egypt in a pitched mêlée, they came close to acquiring Alexandria as well, and would have been successful, had not Cassius been sent against them from Syria.’

426 As mentioned in Marcus, 21.2.

427 Avidius Cassius, 6.7 ‘And when the soldiers of the Bucoli committed numerous heinous acts in Egypt, they were halted by Cassius, as Marius Maximus also mentions in the second book of those that he published on the Life of Marcus.’


429 Marcus, 24.6-25.12; Avidius Cassius, 7ff.

This resolve was intended to exemplify his strength of character and his sense of responsibility as princeps.

But the biographer then follows this reference with a discussion of the mourning that was accorded to his young son: *quem non plus quinque diebus luxit consolatusque etiam medicos <se> actibus publicis reddidit*. While at first glance, the reaction of Marcus to the death of his son appears quite cold and distant,\(^{431}\) it appears that the author was intending to emphasise the importance of another relationship: that of Marcus with the State. Despite the death of his Imperial colleague, the marriage of his daughter and, finally, the death of his son, he remained dedicated to his duty above all else. The insertion of Marcus Annius Verus’ name into the song of the Salii (*saliari carmini*) was similar to what was done following the death of Germanicus.\(^{432}\) The death of Marcus’ younger son occurred in AD 169.\(^{433}\)

21.6-9

*instante sane adhuc pestilentia……cum tabulis magnorum artificum vendidit*: The biographer returns to the issue of the plague again in this passage,\(^{434}\) in order to further reiterate the extremity of the situation that Marcus faced. The initial representation of the *princeps* was of his piety, by ardently reviving the worship of the gods (*deorum cultum diligentissime restituit*).\(^{435}\) Following from this, the dire circumstances were again further emphasised, through the comparison of the Marcomannic and Punic Wars (*quem ad modum bello Punico factum fuerat*), where slaves were trained for military service, which was indicative of an extreme situation for the Roman military. The similarity of the circumstances with the post-Cannae period in the Second Punic War were then further emphasised by the author through the comparison of the names *Voluntariae* for Marcus’ slave legions, with the *Volones* of the Second Century BC.\(^{436}\)

The reference to the arming of gladiators (referred to as the *obsequentes* - ‘compliant’), bandits (*latrones*) from Dalmatia and Dardania,\(^{437}\) as well as German auxiliaries to fight the Germans were also intended to stress the seriousness of the

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\(^{432}\) Tacitus, *An.*, 2.82.
\(^{436}\) Livy, 22.57.11; Schwendemann, 1923, *op. cit.*, pp. 68-9.
situation that Marcus faced in relation to the northern frontier.\textsuperscript{438} The Diogmite were units of military police from several of the Greek cities, who were seemingly also called on to stem the disturbances of brigands in AD 368.\textsuperscript{439} The likelihood of enrolling large numbers of slaves, gladiators, bandits and Germans to defend the German frontier seems quite small. The possibility of ‘some’ of these groups being enlisted is possible,\textsuperscript{440} but they would have been comparatively small numbers in relation to the other recruits of Marcus. The new Legions were called the Legio II Pia and the Legio III Concordia.\textsuperscript{441} At a later stage they were named the Legio II and III Italica.\textsuperscript{442}

The severity of the circumstances were then further emphasised in the comment by the biographer that he tried to avoid enormous public expenditure through the creation of the legions, which would have particularly been incumbent on the provinces, so he decided to auction a large amount of palace furniture in the Forum of Trajan (et, ne provincialibus esset molestus, auctione \textit{\textless}m\textit{\textgreater} rerum aulicarum, \textit{ut} diximus, fecit in foro divi Traiani, in qua praeter vestes et pocusa et vasa aurea etiam signa cum tabulis magno\textit{\textgreater}um artificum vendidit).\textsuperscript{443} While the \textit{ut diximus} could be taken as an indication of the inclusion of the interpolation as a part of the \textit{Vita Marci}, it should not be interpreted in this manner. It appears more likely that it may be a reference to Eutropius 8.13, which provides a similar account.\textsuperscript{444} This seems logical in view of the numerous correlations between the text of the \textit{Vita Marci} (let alone the \textit{HA} in general) and other historical sources. The prime intention of this entire section was to reiterate that Marcus’ circumstances were dire and extreme, but that he took the necessary action in order to confront the situation effectively. White has also noted that Imperial concern for the provincials, or the lack thereof, was a consistent theme that occurred throughout the \textit{HA} biographies.\textsuperscript{445}

\textsuperscript{438} Schwendemann, 1923, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 71.
\textsuperscript{439} Ammianus Marcellinus, 27.9.6.
\textsuperscript{440} Schwendemann, 1923, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 72.
\textsuperscript{441} \textit{CIL} 3.1980.
\textsuperscript{442} Dio. 55.24.4.
\textsuperscript{443} cf. Platner and Ashby, 1926, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 240.
\textsuperscript{444} See Chapter Four for further discussion of this reference in relation to the interpolation, apges 143-50.
\textsuperscript{445} White, 1967, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 116, n. 5.
21.10

*Marcomannos in ipso transitu Danuvii delevit et praedam provincialibus reddidit:*
The final sentence in this section was intended to illustrate the results of the hard work that Marcus had employed in his military preparations. Owing to Marcus’ decisions, the Roman forces overwhelmed the Marcomanni as they crossed the Danube, which was seemingly celebrated on some of his coins, which depict Marcus and his legionaries crossing a bridge.\(^{446}\) There were also other issues that included the legend *Germania Subacta*.\(^ {447}\) Following this victory he assumed the title of *Germanicus*.\(^ {448}\) The consideration of Marcus was also expressed in this final passage, through the reference to how he returned the booty that was taken to the provincials (*et praedam provincialibus reddidit*). Rosen has argued that this was intended to control the actions of the military in the region,\(^ {449}\) not as an act of moderation and consideration as suggested by the *HA* biographer.

**Section 22\(^ {450}\)**

22.1

*Gentes omnes ab Illyrici limite usque in Galliam conspiraverant, ut Marcomanni, Varistae, Hermunduri et Quadi, Suevi, Sarmatiae, Laceringes et Burei Ehi alique cum Victualis, Sosibes, Sicobotes, Roxolani, Basternae, Halani, Peu<e>ini, Costoboci, inminebat et Parthicum bellum et Britannicum.*\(^ {451}\) The list of the nations who sought to band together against Rome was intended to further highlight the severity of the situation that Marcus faced. It was anticipated by the biographer that this would emphasise the overall success that Marcus achieved during this campaign, despite it not being continued after his death. The reference to the imminent conflict in Parthia and Britain was an additional spotlight drawn by the author that was intended to highlight the gravity of the situation: that Marcus was facing difficulties on numerous frontiers (north, east and west), which he overcame because of his tireless and personal efforts (see Section 22.2-3).

\(^{446}\) *BMC, Marcus*, 567.

\(^{447}\) *BMC, Marcus*, 1413-15.

\(^{448}\) *CIL* 3.1450.


As has been mentioned previously, the situation in Britain has shown itself to have been serious, which resulted in an increase in troop numbers on that frontier.\textsuperscript{452} However, this does not appear to have been the main concern of the biographer because otherwise more details would have been provided in this account. Instead it is Marcus’ response and diligence that prompted this reference to Parthian and British foreign policy concerns.

22.2-3

\textit{magno igitur labore etiam suo gentes…..priesquam faceret aliquid, contulit}: The personal efforts of Marcus and their eventual success were the main focus points of this passage.\textsuperscript{453} It was owing to the great exertion of Marcus Aurelius that resulted in the overall success of the campaign, according to the biographer. In turn this was of course imitated by his soldiers, legates and the Praetorian Prefects that resulted in the ultimate defeat of these exceedingly fierce people. Therefore, according to the author it was the hard work and diligence of Marcus that inspired his lieutenants and soldiers to work similarly, which in turn brought about the ultimate success of the war.\textsuperscript{454}

According to the account presented in this biography, this effect resulted in the capitulation of the Marcomanni and the capture of numerous people, who were taken into Italy (\textit{plurimus in Itiam traductis}), which was contradicted later in the \textit{Vita} where the author states that the barbarians actually settled in Italy,\textsuperscript{455} which is the correct version. The accuracy of this statement cannot be ascertained definitively, but this probably occurred in the early stages of the conflict.\textsuperscript{456} Naturally, the author’s presentation of Marcus was not overly autocratic in this success, with Marcus being shown always to confer with his \textit{consilium} in both military and civil affairs.\textsuperscript{457} This was largely in keeping with the considerate and moderate representation provided by the biographer in the earlier sections of the biography.

Schwartz has argued that Sections 22.3-24.4 represent a portion that has been cruelly inserted within the \textit{Vita Marci},\textsuperscript{458} but while the style of the text appears quite

\textsuperscript{452} Stanton, 1975, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 510-11.
\textsuperscript{453} cf. Premerstein, 1912, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 148.
\textsuperscript{454} Garzetti, 1974, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 480-506.
\textsuperscript{456} cf. Schwendemann, 1923, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 96.
\textsuperscript{457} cf. Baynes, 1926, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 80.
\textsuperscript{458} Schwartz, 1964, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 151.
disjointed, the theme of Marcus’ presentation is quite consistent. This seems to have been the prime concern of the biographer. It is also pertinent to note the use of *optimates* in relation to his *consilium principis*, which emphasises the élite make-up of this close group of advisors for the *princeps*.

**22.4**

*denuque sententia illius praecipua semper heec fuit: ‘aequius est, ut ego tot talium amicorum consilium sequar, quam ut tot tales amici meam unius voluntatem sequantur’*.\(^{459}\) This statement represents the first instance of direct speech attributed to Marcus Aurelius in this *Vita*. The intention of the biographer was to emphasise the due consideration that Marcus exhibited in his decision making processes, which was clearly in keeping with the overall representation of his equanimity and consideration.\(^{460}\) The phrasing of this passage as direct speech by the biographer was meant to make this statement more personal, which would in turn increase the dramatic effect of the theme that the author was attempting to convey: he was not an autocrat, but a leader who was evenly balanced and valued the opinions and recommendations of others.\(^{461}\) Whether this was truly the case is difficult to ascertain, but the evidence of the *Meditations* does highlight that Marcus appreciated the opinions of others.\(^{462}\)

**22.5-6**

*sane quia durus videbatur……vel litteris respondebat*: The difficulties presented in the combination of Marcus’ own philosophical viewpoint and the discipline that a lifestyle required are clearly evident in this passage.\(^{463}\) The presentation of Marcus being angrily criticized because of his strict military discipline, which was a result of his personal philosophy and overall lifestyle exhibits how the biographer was attempting to establish that not all of the subordinates under his command appreciated such austerity and discipline. While in another context this may have been intended as a potential criticism by a biographer, in this instance it was supposed to have been an accolade for the *princeps*: that his own personal strength and determination easily

\(^{460}\) Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, p. 97.
\(^{462}\) *Med.*, l.16.
surpassed that of other men. But the biographer did not want even the hint of criticism at this point of the *Vita*, so he further emphasises Marcus’ consideration and equanimity, through the reference to his orations (*sermone*) and brochures (*litteris*) that was intended to dispel any discontent among his subordinates. It appears highly unlikely that such measures would have been effective, and they may have possibly been counter-productive if he had undertaken such public statements.

22.7-8

*et multi nobiles......quam omnia bella finiret*: The reference to the ‘War of Numerous Nations’ (*bello...... plurimarum gentium interierunt*) by the biographer was meant to further emphasise the seriousness of the campaign on the northern frontier. It is quite clear that there were numerous tribes that had to be dealt with during the *bellum Germanicum*, but it appears that the author was giving a little too much weight to the number of nations (*gentium*) in order to emphasise the militaristic aptitude of Marcus Aurelius. The gravity of the circumstances facing Marcus was certainly apparent, but the biographer appears to dwell on the point a little too much. The gravity of the situation was then further stressed through reference to the high level of fatal casualties among the Roman nobles.

This introduces the second theme in this passage: to highlight the limited desire for *gloria* that Marcus possessed. Following the death of the many aristocrats during the campaign, Marcus honoured them through the construction of statues for them, which was intended to establish that he did not want sole recognition for the campaign, but instead duly gave honour and respect to others who had sacrificed for the success of the war. This was intended to further establish the equanimity and consideration that were fundamental features of his character, as well as his overall lack of interest in *gloria*.

The final theme of this passage was the resolute attitude of Marcus, which was exhibited through his refusal to follow the advice of his friends who sought to call off the war and return to Rome (*quare frequenter amici suaserunt, ut a bellis discederet et Romam veniret*). This passage not only contradicts the previous representation of Marcus duly considering the advice of his *consilium*, but instead intends to exhibit

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466 Marcus, 22.4.
his resolute determination for a successful campaign. Nevertheless, there does appear to be an air of stubbornness in the comment that he would not withdraw until he had brought all the wars to an end (sed ille contempsit ac persttit nec prius recessit quam omnia bella finire), which was echoed later in the vita.\textsuperscript{467}

\textbf{22.9}

\textit{provincias ex proconsularibus consulares aut ex consularibus proconsulares aut praetorias pro belli necessitate fecit.}\textsuperscript{468} The initial statement in this passage was intended to highlight that despite being involved in a serious campaign on the northern frontier, Marcus remained fully directed towards the security and administration of all the provinces in the Roman Empire. The transferred control of various provinces meant that he moved them from Senatorial control and placed them under the command of consular-ranked Imperial legates and vice versa. The addition of \textit{ex procuratoriiis} to the text is in accordance with the recommendation of Hirschfeld,\textsuperscript{469} which makes the transferral of procuratory provinces to praetorian administrators seem more appropriate, considering that this actually occurred during Marcus’ reign.\textsuperscript{470}

\textbf{22.10-11}

\textit{res etiam in Sequanis turbatas censura……turbatae errant:}\textsuperscript{471} The inclusion of the stopping of an uprising among the Sequani simply through a reprimand and the power of his personal influence was intended to highlight that Marcus did not need military supremacy in certain circumstances, but that his personal \textit{auctoritas} was enough. The inclusion of the reference to the uprising in Spain was meant to be a further example of the breadth of his authority. According to this representation presented by the biographer, the power of Marcus’ personality went beyond the limitations of the State, which were able to subdue problems with little effort.

\textsuperscript{467} Marcus, 24.5, 25.1.
\textsuperscript{468} Cf. Premerstein, 1912, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 172.
\textsuperscript{469} See H. Hirschfeld, \textit{Kleine Schriften}, Berlin, 1913.
\textsuperscript{470} See Marcus, 21.8. For discussion of Marcus’ use of procurators, see P.A. Brunt, “Princeps and Equites”, \textit{JRS} 73, 1983, pp. 5-12.
\textsuperscript{471} Cf. Premerstein, 1912, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 169.
22.12

filio Commodo accessito ad limitem togam virilem dedit, quare congiarium populo divisit, et eum ante tempus consulem designavit.\(^{472}\) The presentation of the *toga virilis* occurred in AD 175,\(^{473}\) and seems to have been just prior to Marcus’ departure for Syria along the Danube frontier.\(^{474}\) The presentation of largess to the people to celebrate this occasion was commemorated on numismatic issues from AD 175,\(^{475}\) which included the inscription *Liberalitas Aug(usti) VI*.\(^{476}\) The appointment of Commodus as consul was certainly before the legal age, considering that he was meant to have been at least 33 years of age.\(^{477}\) This early promotion of Commodus may have been the result of the threat that had been posed by Avidius Cassius. Commodus at this point would have only been 15 years old and he was made consul on 1\(^{\text{st}}\) January, AD 177, but also co-emperor with his father.\(^{478}\) It is noteworthy that this initial reference to the young Commodus is one of the few in the *HA* that does not refer to his evil nature.

**Section 23**

23.1-3

*Si quis unquam proscriptus est a praefecto arbi......ubi necessitas cogebat, remisit.*

The intention of this passage was to further highlight the equanimity and consideration of Marcus in his role as *princeps*. This is initially revealed through the comment that he was always displeased on hearing that someone had been outlawed by the urban prefect, with the author indicating that such a severe sentence should be avoided. Schwendemann rightly mentions that such an action was typically within the jurisdiction of the Senate,\(^{479}\) which could explain Marcus’ response. Nevertheless, another inference that could be drawn from this passage was that Marcus felt that such decisions came under his jurisdiction alone. However, the previous interpretation appears more likely because it is more in keeping with the overall representation of


\(^{474}\) *Commodus*, 2.2, 12.3; Dio, 71.22.2.


\(^{476}\) *BMC, Marcus*, 1506-12.


\(^{479}\) Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, p. 47.
Marcus by the biographer as ruling in a fashion that preferred consultation and sought to wield power with a fair degree of consideration.

The claim that Marcus did not frequently provide donatives to the population (in largitionibus pecuniae publicae parciissimus fuit) appears to have been quite incorrect, if the numismatic evidence is considered. Judging from the evidence, Marcus provided largess on seven separate occasions,\(^{480}\) which does not seem to equate with this statement by the biographer. It should also be noted that a donative of eight aurei per citizen was given on Marcus’ return to Rome,\(^{481}\) in AD 176,\(^{482}\) which was, according to Dio, the largest donative ever given: διεμείδισε καὶ ἐφη καὶ αὐτὸς ὑπὸ ὑμῶν ἐδιακοσίας δραχμῶν αὐτοῖς κατένευμεν, ὡσον οὖσι πρότερον εἰλήφεσαν.\(^{483}\) Substantial largess was also given to the Praetorian Guard on his accession as well.\(^{484}\) But it should also be noted that, according to Cassius Dio, Marcus did refuse the presentation of a requested donative on one occasion,\(^{485}\) but this can hardly substantiate the claim of the biographer that Marcus rarely gave them. The intention of the biographer in this regard was made quite clear, in that the representation was supposed to highlight his responsibility rather than being a sign of parsimoniousness.

In order to avoid such an accusation, the author then includes several examples by which Marcus’ consideration in relation to finances could be established, in that he assisted the deserving people, and that he gave assistance to communities that were on the brink of financial collapse,\(^{486}\) which is also mentioned by Cassius Dio in relation to his assistance to the city of Smyrna following an earthquake in AD 178.\(^ {487}\)

\section*{23.4-7}

\textit{absens populi Romani voluptas…per \textit{.epistolas suas purgavit}: Following the discussion of Marcus’ fiscal benevolence the biographer then concentrated on the

\(^{481}\) Schwendemann, 1923, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 48.
\(^{482}\) Birley, 1987, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 45.
\(^{483}\) Dio, 71.31.1. ‘He grinned and said ‘eight’ as well; and afterwards he circulated eight hundred sesterces each to them. A higher amount than they had ever obtained previously.’
\(^{484}\) \textit{Marcus}, 7.9.
\(^{485}\) Dio, 71.3.3.
\(^{486}\) \textit{Marcus}, 11.3.
restrictions that he had previously placed upon the Roman community. The forceful 
(vehementer) command that spectacles should be presented by the wealthiest 
presenters appears to exhibit somewhat of a reactionary representation of Marcus, 
because he was responding to the accusation that he wanted the people to take up 
philosophy (quod populum sublatis voluptatibus vellet cogere ad philosophiam). This 
portrayal of Marcus appears a little inconsistent with the overall picture provided by 
the biographer, having the greatest correlation with the statement made in Section 
20.5, where he was absorbed with the idea of what people thought of him (erat enim 
famae suae curiosissimus, requirens ad verum, quid quisque de se diceret, emendans 
quae bene reprehensa viderentur).

Nevertheless, the author follows this statement that he remained so responsible 
that on one occasion he commanded that pantomimes (pantomimos) were to start their 
public shows nine days later than scheduled in order that they did not interfere with 
the running of business.488 The account then turns to the accusations levelled against 
Marcus’ wife, Faustina, claiming that she had previously undertaken sexual affairs 
with pantomimes, but that Marcus had absolved her of guilt through the production of 
several of his letters (de amatis pantomimis ab uxoré fuit sermo, ut superius diximus. 
sed haec omnia per epistolas suas purgavit). The accusation of Faustina’s infidelities 
was also mentioned in the interpolation,489 but in this instance it was in relation to 
gladiators. Her sexual relationships with actors are also gone into in greater detail in 
Section 29 of the Vita (where such accusations have been discussed in greater detail, 
owing to their greater depth).

But for the present examination it remains important to illustrate the varied 
representation of Marcus in this passage. Marcus was initially exhibited as pandering 
to the desires of the people for shows; this was followed by a comment on his 
imposition of restrictions on the performance of these actors in preference for 
commercial activity; finally there is a brief allusion to the infidelities of Faustina with 
such actors and Marcus’ subsequent defence of her honour. The representation of 
Marcus here by the biographer appears quite confused, with the only connection being 
the theme of entertainment, but it may have also been used to join to the ensuing 
comments that described Marcus’ attempts at moralising. As Syme has noted, these

488 Schwendemann, 1923, op. cit., p. 51.
489 Section 19.1-9.
lovers have not been mentioned previously in the *Vita Marci*, which further highlights the selective nature of this representation of Marcus Aurelius.

23.8-9

*idem Marcus sederi in civitatibus......rem publicam vexarent et privatos. quod ille purgavit.* This passage describes several of the moralistic policies that Marcus instituted during his reign, which were also intended by the biographer to exhibit the resolve, piety and morals of his own character. The first reference was to the prohibition of riding and driving (*in equis sive vehiculis*) in any city, which was intended to assist in congested urban regions, but also removed the social status of such transportation as well. The abolition of baths that were intended for both genders (*lavacra mixta summovit*), also reflects the enforcement of laws for the maintaining of public morals, which was a continuation of the policies of Hadrian. This was complimented by the biographer in his reference to the reformation of the morals of matrons (*matronarum*) and of young nobles (*iuvenum nobilium*). Little detail is provided about what this exactly entailed, but it is quite clear that this reference was intended to further the representation of Marcus as introducing legislation for the promotion of public morals, which would have been largely in line with his own personal and philosophical perspectives.

The reference to the separation of the rituals of Serapis and the vulgar rites of Pelusia appears to have been in relation to the separation of the Serapeia, which was celebrated on 25th of April, from the Pelusia – celebrated on the occasion of the annual inundation of the Nile. This was explained by Mommsen as limiting the Pelusia so that the Serapeia was not desecrated, but it could also indicate a separation of the Serapeia from the general celebration of Egyptian cults. This reference was intended not only to exhibit the organisational responsibilities of Marcus, but also his piety in his moves to organise these cults, which were quite

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492 This was also instituted by Claudius. See Schwindemann, 1923, op.cit., p. 51.
494 *CIL* iv, p. 262.
496 *CIL* iv, p. 313.
popular by the Second Century AD, and removed the possibility of offending deities by the coinciding of two religious festivals.

The final sentence in this passage (fema fuit sane, quod sub philosophorum specie quidam rem publicam vexarent et privatos. quod ille purgavit) continues this basic theme of Marcus’ attention to public morals, but in a different guise. In this instance Marcus is forced to defend the general charge against men that were accused of causing disorder in the State by pretending to be philosophers, which was an illustration of Marcus’ own personal preferences and beliefs rather than an example of his attempts to fix a significant moral problem. However, it may have also been a subtle suggestion that Marcus was not entirely subjective: that his own philosophical views affected how he dealt with these trouble-makers. There is a slight indication of such a subtle criticism through the phrasing of the sentence, in that the case against the masquerading men was clearly put forward by the biographer, which was only followed by quod ille purgavit, which may indicate that the author did not necessarily agree with this refutation. Nevertheless, this appears to have only been a slight criticism and a clear exception to the overall portrayal of Marcus Aurelius in the Vita.

Section 24

24.1-3

erat mos iste Antonino, ut omnia crimina......in Romano solo conlocavit: The central theme that was being emphasised by the biographer in this section was the balanced view of Marcus in his judgements. This was particularly emphasised in the initial sentence (erat mos iste Antonino, ut omnia crimina minore supplicio, quam legibus plecti solent, puniret, quamvis nonnumquam contra manifestos et gravium criminum reos inexorabilis permaneret), which placed the theme of the entire section in its context. The balanced view of Marcus was particularly stressed through the use of the comparison of his response to both light and serious crimes. The portrayal of Marcus' attention to such matters (capitales causas hominum honestorum ipse cognovit, et quidem summa aequitate, ita ut praetorem reprehenderet, qui citi

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reorum causas audierat, iuberetque illum iterum cognoscere, dignitatis eorum interesse dicens, ut ab eo audirentur, qui pro populo iudicaret) was stressed by the author in the ensuing sentence, which was meant to emphasise the benefits for the overall population that derived from the equanimity of his reign.

This central feature of his reign was naturally unlimited with Marcus even being even-handed in relation to the justice that was given to foreign captives as well (aequitatem autem etiam circa captos hostes custodivit), who had no legal rights. This passage was very much in keeping with the general representation of Marcus Aurelius as possessing the greatest equanimity of any princeps in his judgements and overall attitudes. Schwendemann has mentioned that the depopulation of the empire may have been the reasoning behind this consideration towards foreign captives,\textsuperscript{503} which is certainly plausible. All the same, in view of the seriousness of the situation on the northern frontier at the time, it may have been more judicious on Marcus' part to show compassion rather than severity. However, this reference to Marcus' consideration by the biographer appears to be more in accordance with the overall presentation of Marcus within the \textit{Vita}.

\textbf{24.4}

\textit{fulmen de caelo precibus suis contra hostium machinamentum extorsit su\textless i\textgreater s pluvia impletata, cum siti laborarent}:\textsuperscript{504} This allusion to the divine powers of Marcus Aurelius was intended to emphasise the almost holy legitimacy of his reign by the biographer.\textsuperscript{505} The inclusion of such examples for 'good' emperors was a common literary device in many of the biographies. Overall, the intention that lay behind this example was to emphasise how Marcus was a brilliant man who clearly possessed the favour of the gods, which in turn unquestionably legitimised his reign.\textsuperscript{506}

This episode was also mentioned by Cassius Dio in relation to the campaign against the Quadi in AD 174,\textsuperscript{507} but in this reference it was a thunder-storm sent by Hermes following a prayer by an Egyptian magician.\textsuperscript{508} This account was also

\textsuperscript{503} Schwendemann, 1923, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 53.
\textsuperscript{504} cf. Geffcken, 1920, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 281.
\textsuperscript{507} Dio, 71.8-10.
recorded within the Christian tradition by Xiphilinus in response to Dio’s account, where the storm actually answered prayers of the Twelfth legion, who were referred to as the Fulminata (‘Thunderers’), who were all Christians. The inclusion of this episode in these texts illustrates that this was a widespread rumour that surrounded the narrative of Marcus’ campaigns, yet the difference in the interpretations epitomises the variation in what they were intended to establish. For the purposes of this study, it is clear that the biographer of Marcus’ Vita was simply attempting to emphasise Marcus’ divine legitimacy and approval to rule as princeps.

24.5-9

Voluit Marcomanniam provinciam......proscripta per aerarium publicum: The focus of the account in this passage is to highlight the positive nature of Marcus’ reign, particularly through his calm response to the threat posed by Avidius Cassius’ rebellion. The biographer initially sought to call attention to the military plans that Marcus wanted to achieve (voluit Marcomanniam provinciam, voluit etiam Sarmatiam facere, et fecisset), but that he was halted by Avidius’ uprising (nisi Avidius Cassius rebellasset sub eodem in oriente). The inclusion of the reference to Marcus’ plans was intended to highlight that in AD 175 he was acclaimed Imperator for the eighth time and took on the title Sarmaticus, which was celebrated on some of his coin issues in that year. The inference is that the limited success of the Bello Germanico was ultimately not a shortcoming on Marcus’ part, but was partly the result of this treasonous act by Avidius Cassius.

Modern views of Marcus’ intentions for the northern frontier are divided. Mócsy argues that Marcus sought to create the new provinces of Marcomannia and Sarmatia in accordance with this version of his intentions, whereas Alföldy has

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512 CIL 8.2276.
513 BMC, Marcus, 1513-15.
514 See Avidius Cassius, 7ff. The ultimate collapse of the Marcomannic campaign was also later blamed upon the short-sightedness of Marcus’ successor, Commodus (see Marcus, 27.10).
followed Dio, by arguing that the diplomatic negotiations of AD 170-175 do not support this. But for the purposes of the present study it is the representation of Marcus that must be the prime focus, which here accentuates Marcus’ potential for military success and his worth as princeps.

The sedition of Avidius was then emphasised by the biographer in the reference to his proclamation of himself as emperor (atque imperatorem se appellavit). It is at this point in the account that the first allusion to a relationship between Avidius Cassius and Marcus’ wife, Faustina, was made, with the claim that it was her request, who despaired over the rumours of her husband’s death (ut quidam dicunt, Faustina volente, quae de mariti valetudine desperaret. alii dicunt, ementita morte Antonini Cassium imperatorem se appellasse, cum divum Marcum appellasse<<t>>). While the presence of a rumour surrounding the death of Marcus could have been used by the biographer to reduce the degree of infamy levelled at Avidius Cassius, the author quickly dismisses the possibility of any positive intent on his part, through the claim that there were also rumours that he proclaimed himself emperor after spreading the rumours of Marcus’ death himself, and having him deified to reduce the possibility of being seen as an opportunist.

The representation of Marcus himself was that of calmness and positivity: et Antoninus quidem non est satis m<<o>>tas afectione Cassii nec <<in>> eius affectus s<<a>>evi<<t>>. This passage was intended to reiterate the central theme of the representation of Marcus at this point of the Vita: he was controlled in his response and the inference is that he had little to be concerned about (such was the strength of his reign). Nevertheless, it is quite clear that the revolt of Avidius Cassius was of some concern to Marcus, which is more likely in view of his rapid movement to the East in response to the threat, and also the possibility that Avidius could have posed a serious threat if he were able to gain the support of the majority of the legions in the eastern provinces.

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517 Dio, 71.20.2.
519 It is notable that in the Vita Avidii Cassii the biographer compares him to Catiline (Avidius Cassius 3.5). See T. Wiedemann, “The Figure of Catiline in the Historia Augusta”, CQ 29.2, 1979, pp. 479-84.
However, the intention of the biographer was not to convey the presence of any concern about the revolt because the presentation was intended to illustrate again Marcus’ status as one of the greatest *principes*, which was not in keeping with one that sustains a revolt against them. The portrayal of Marcus’ magnanimity in this episode was also largely in keeping with the overall representation of his equanimity and consideration, which was further stressed by the reference that it was the Senate (not Marcus) who declared Avidius Cassius a public enemy and appropriated his possessions to the public treasury (*sed per senatum hostis est iudicatus bonaque eius proscripta per aerarium publicum*), which in turn also reiterated their unquestionable support for Marcus as *princeps*.

Section 25

25.1-3

*Rel<e>cto ergo Sarmatico Marcomannicoque bello......Cassii caputque eius humari iussit*: The initial section of this passage continues to replicate the central theme of Section 24, whereby the biographer highlights the calmness and control exhibited by Marcus Aurelius in response to the sedition of Avidius Cassius. It is quite clear that the situation at the time was more precarious for Marcus’ tenure as *princeps* than indicated by the author. Schwartz has analysed the reliability of these accounts on Avidius Cassius in the *HA* and has shown that they were not entirely unreliable, but it remains evident that the danger of the situation was underestimated by the biographer. The initial sentence draws attention to the seriousness of Marcus’ predicament through the reference to his rapid departure for the East in July AD 175, which meant that he had to abandon the Sarmatian and Marcomannic campaign in order to pursue Avidius Cassius (*rel<e>cto ergo Sarmatico Marcomannicoque bello contra Cassium profectus est*). The control exhibited by Marcus at this time was then further stressed through the comparison of his calm demeanour with the panic that had arisen in Rome (*Romae etiam turbae fuerunt, quasi Cassius absentum Antonino adventaret*), although this also implies the seriousness of the threat to Marcus’ principate as well.

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525 *ibid.*, pp. 139-48.
The description of Avidius’ death in this *Vita* was quite brief and was equally concise in the *Vita Avidii Cassii*. Instead of providing numerous details surrounding the actual death the biographer instead simply states that he was quickly killed (*statim interfectus est*) and that his head was brought to Marcus. The reasoning surrounding the brevity of this account is that the author intended to primarily emphasise the lack of enjoyment that Marcus expressed following Avidius’ death and his leniency, rather than concentrating on Avidius himself (*Marcus tamen non exultavit interfectione Cassii caputque eius humi iussit*). This is also shown in the biography of Avidius Cassius by the biographer, which consistently concentrated on the love and respect of the people for Marcus rather than emphasising the motives and direct events surrounding Avidius Cassius’ rebellion.

25.4-7

*Maecianum etiam, filium Cassii, cui Alexandria erat commissa, exercitus occidit; nam et praefectum praetorio sibi fecerat, qui et ipse occisus est. in conscios dejection<s vetuit senatum graviter vindicare, simul petit, ne qui senator tempore principatus sui occideretur, ne eius pollueretur imperium. eos etiam qui deportati fuerant, revocari iussit, cum paucissimi centuriones capite essent puniti*: This passage further emphasises the leniency and respect exhibited by the biographer’s presentation of Marcus, which was the consistent theme throughout the section on the revolt of Avidius Cassius. It represents Marcus only punishing the ring-leaders of the revolt. It has been suggested that the Maecianus referred to in the text may have been the jurist, L. Volusius Maecianus, who had been left in charge of Alexandria. However, in Dio he was referred to as Flavius Calvisius, which creates some difficulties with the designation of Maecianus. In addition to this, it has been established that L. Volusius Maecianus was prefect of Egypt in AD 160/1.

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520 Avidius Cassius, 8.1.
521 Avidius Cassius, 7.5-8.8.
522 For further discussion of this overall theme in the *HA*, see R.F. Newbold, “Pardon and Revenge in Suetonius and the *Historia Augusta*”, *Prudentia* 33.1, 2001, pp. 40-57.
523 See Marcus, 25.8-12 for a variation to the representation of Marcus’ leniency.
524 See *Pius*, 12.1.
Most notably, the biographer makes it quite evident that Marcus continued to be respectful to the Senatorial order, which is further reiterated through his vow that no Senator should be executed, which restates a comment previously made in the *Vita*. If this statement was indeed correct, the implication of this passage is that there appears to have been some supporters of Avidius Cassius within the Senate, which would also suggest that the situation had been more precarious than the biographer was seeking to indicate. Therefore, it would seem that the response of Marcus Aurelius to this predicament, by stating an amnesty for all Senators that had been involved, was more indicative of an attempt to secure his position in the capital, considering that the *bellum Germanicum* was still a pressing issue that urgently required his attention. This reaction of Marcus to the wishes of the Senatorial order could be interpreted as an indication of his compliance, which would have been necessary for the preservation of his position. This was further reiterated by the biographer in the final statement in this passage that he recalled exiled Senators, who were seemingly not involved in the revolt at all (*eos etiam qui deportati fuerant, revocari iussit*).

25.8-12

*ignovit et civitatis, quae Cassio consenserant, ignovit et Ant[h]ioc<\h>ensibus, qui multa in Marcum pro Cassio dixerant......nam nec Cy<\r>rum voluit videre, ex qua erat Cassius*: The final passage in Section 25 was almost entirely devoted to the relationship between Marcus and the city of Antioch. The initial statement continues to accentuate the leniency of Marcus in relation to those who sided with Avidius Cassius (*ignovit et civitatis, quae Cassio consenserant*), but Antioch receives special attention from the biographer (*ignovit et Ant[h]ioc<\h>ensibus, qui multa in Marcum pro Cassio dixerant*). This statement implies that of all the communities, Antioch deserved his forgiveness the least, which in turn leads into the ensuing statements about their punishment. However, as Baynes has suggested, this represented the climax of Marcus’ generosity in the *Vita Marci*, which was the

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534 See Marcus, 10.6.
535 Schwendemann, 1923, op. cit., p. 110.
538 Baynes, 1926, op. cit., p. 142.
culmination of the general theme throughout the biography in this regard: even Antioch was forgiven for their sedition.

But despite having forgiven Antioch, according to the author, Marcus proceeded to enact a series of limitations on their political freedom, which included the abolition of spectacles and public meetings of all types and that he issued a harsh decree against the people themselves.\(^{539}\) The severity of these punishments would indicate that Antioch had played a significant role in the sedition against him, but there is little detail offered by the biographer to further explain these limitations. In addition, the representation of Marcus’ severity provides quite a different image to the general portrayal of the author of the Vita, which further illustrates some of the inconsistencies that occur in the depiction provided by the biographer.

The portrayal of Marcus’ censure of Antioch in particular continues with the reference to a speech that was supposedly included by Marius Maximus (\textit{seditionos autem eos et oratio Marci indicat indita a Mari\(<o>\) Maximo, qua ille usus est apud amicos}), in which Marcus refers to the people of Antioch as rebels (\textit{seditionos}).\(^{540}\) There is some importance in this reference to Marius Maximus in that it illustrates some continuity in the use of sources by the author of the biography, it being the second indication of his use in the \textit{Vita}.\(^ {541}\) The nature of this report needs to be considered. It is plausible that the biographer may have been distancing himself from the reliability of the reference by attributing it to Marius, but this seems somewhat unlikely considering the nature of the context: \textit{(indita a Mari\(<o>\) Maximo)}. Therefore, it would appear that the biographer was intending to use the mention of Marius Maximus as an indication of the statement’s reliability instead, which furthers the suggestion that the biographer viewed Marius with some regard.\(^ {542}\)

The ensuing statement about Marcus’ refusal to visit Antioch while he was in Syria,\(^ {543}\) is intended to further emphasise the account of his disappointment in the city, but also that it was not just limited to Antioch alone, having refused to also visit Cyrrhus, the home of Cassius \textit{(nam nec Cy\(<r>rum voluit videre, ex qua erat Cassius)}.\(^ {544}\) The continuity of the biographer’s representation was restored in the next

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\(^{539}\) cf. Premerstein, 1912, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 171.


\(^{541}\) See \textit{Marcus}, 1.6; \textit{Avidius}, 6.6-7.


\(^{543}\) \textit{Marcus}, 26.4; \textit{Commodus}, 2.3.

Section 26

26.1-3

fuit Alexandriae clementer cum his agens. postea tamen Antonich iam vidit. multa egit cum regibus et pacem confirmavit sibi occurrentibus cunctis regibus et legatis Persarum. omnibus orientalibus provinciis carissimus fuit. apud multas etiam philosophiae vestigia reliquit. The first statement was a return to the main focus of the biographer following the previous section: that despite his initial severity with these seditious communities, ultimately he exercised restraint, leniency and clemency during his principate. The central theme of the ensuing passage clearly follows from the previous discussion of Avidius Cassius’ sedition in this Vita. In this instance the biographer was trying to illustrate that the revolt had not undermined Marcus’ control in the eastern provinces, particularly in the areas that had previously supported Avidius Cassius. The biographer highlighted Marcus’ standing in the region through the reference to his numerous negotians with all of the kings and satraps in Persia and that he was adored by all of the eastern provinces (omnibus orientalibus provinciis carissimus fuit). The author then further emphasised Marcus’ influence in the region through the claim that his philosophical views were also highly inspirational for numerous people in the area (apud multas etiam philosophiae vestigia reliquit).

However, the biographer only included one direct reference to Avidius Cassius in this passage (et cum multa Alexandrini in Cassiun dixissent fausta, tamen omnibus ignovit et filiam suam apud eos reliquit), which was intended to illustrate

his moderation and leniency. The breadth of these sentiments were also emphasised by the author in the claim that he left his daughter with the Alexandrians, following their sedition against him. The representation makes it evident that Marcus did this without any pretention, exhibiting Marcus as a common citizen and a philosopher rather than a princeps, which was very much in keeping with his modesty and self-control.

26.4-9

*Faustinam suam in radicibus......Heliogabalo dedicata est.*\(^{553}\) This passage discussed the events surrounding the death of Marcus’ wife, Faustina.\(^{554}\) According to the biographer she passed away in the village of Halala,\(^{555}\) at the base of Mount Taurus, having succumbed to a sudden illness.\(^{556}\) In contrast, Cassius Dio claimed that some people commented that she had committed suicide, with the inference that it was owing to her relationship with Avidius Cassius: *κατὰ δὲ τὸν αὐτὸν τοῦτον χρόνον μετήλλαξε καὶ ἡ Φαυστίνα, εἶτε ύπό τῆς ποδάγρας ἢν εἶχεν, εἶτε ἄλλος, ἵνα μὴ ἐλεγχθῇ ἐφ’ οἷς πρὸς τὸν Κάσσιον συνετέθειτο.*\(^{557}\) In view of the occasional questions by the biographer about the fidelity of Faustina, it is in fact surprising that this rumour was not mentioned in this *Vita*. But in this context, it is quite clear that the author was intending to highlight the honourable behaviour of Marcus rather than to concentrate primarily on the rumours that had been circulated about her infidelities.

The honours conferred (or requested) by Marcus that were mentioned by the biographer included divine status and a temple (*petit a senatu, ut honores Faustinæ aedemque decernent*),\(^{558}\) which were officially conferred by the Senate.\(^{559}\) At this point of the author’s account, the questionable reputation of Faustina was mentioned (*laudata eadem, cum inpudivitiæ fama graviter laborasset*),\(^{560}\) but this was only in order to highlight the significance of Marcus’


\(^{557}\) Dio, 71.29.1. ‘Around this time Faustina also passed away, either because of gout, from which she suffered, or from something else, in order to evade being condemned for her compact with Cassius.’


\(^{560}\) See Marcus, 19.
eulogy, which was intended to highlight his strength of character. The biographer claimed at this point that Marcus *quaet Antoninus vel nesciit vel dissimulavit* (‘But of this Antoninus was either unaware or put on ignorance’). This statement implied that Marcus’ strength of character, such as his self-control and respect, was greater than any of the infidelities that Faustina may have perpetrated. This presents Marcus as being the epitome of honourability.

The reference to the deification of Faustina has been confirmed through the numismatic evidence, which portrays *Diva Faustina* with the inscription *Consecratio*, but it appears that she also received the name *Pia*. The reference to her being called *Matrem Castrorum* (‘Mother of the Camp’) seemingly resulted from her accompanying Marcus on the Quadi campaign in AD 174, according to Cassius Dio: *καὶ περὶ ὅπως ἦν τῇ βουλήν ψηφίσασθαι, τοιούτων τί προσίσχθαι, ὡμώς ἐδέξιατό τε αὐτῷ ὡς καὶ παρὰ θεοῦ λαμβάνον, καὶ τῇ γεροσοίᾳ ἐπέστειλεν*. The later consecration of Faustina’s temple was to the deity of Heliogabalus, not the *princeps* himself.

26.10-13

*ipsum Cassium pro clementia occisu*<m> passus est, non occidi iussit. deportatus est Heliodorus, filius Cassi, et alii liberum exilium acceperunt cum honorum parte[m]. filii autem Cassii et amplius media parte acceperunt paterni patrimonii, et auro atque argento adiuti, mulieres autem etiam ornamenti: ita ut Alexandria, filia Cassii, et Druncianus gener liberam vagandi potestatem habere<n>t commendati amitae marito. doluit denique Cassium extinctum, dicens voluisse se sine senatorio sanguine imperium transigere*. The clemency of Marcus was the central theme of this section, which was highlighted in the first sentence: *ipsum Cassium pro clementia occisu*<m> passus est, non occidi iussit (‘With typical clemency, he endured rather than commanded the execution of Cassius’). It is notable that the mention of

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562 *BMC*, Marcus, 1570-83.
563 See 6.1019.
565 Dio, 71.10.5. ‘He was now hailed Imperator by the soldiers, for the seventh time; and although he was not inclined to take any such tributes prior to the vote of the Senate, nevertheless on this occasion he accepted it as a gift from Heaven and he sent a despatch to the Senate.’
566 See Caracalla, 11.7.
Faustina’s death was seemingly only a brief interlude in the discussion of Marcus’ clementia towards the associates of Avidius Cassius. The moderation and leniency of Marcus in relation to the revolt was only abandoned by the biographer from 26.4 to 26.9, and in this section it has been restored as the prime focus of the Vita. But it is also noteworthy that the theme of Marcus’ understanding and equanimity were not entirely abandoned throughout the discussion of his response to Faustina’s death either. It is also worth mentioning that there may have been some intended significance in the placement of the death of Faustina (26.4-9) in these sections that dealt with Marcus’ clementia (25.1-26.3; 26.10-13). The mention of Avidius’ relatives by the biographer was intended to provide further examples of Marcus’ clementia.\footnote{569}

The final statement of this section was also a return to an important previous statement in the Vita:\footnote{570} doluit denique Cassium extinctum, dicens voluisse se sine senatorio sanguine imperium transigere (‘And in addition to this, he mourned the death of Cassius, commenting that he had desired to finish his reign without spilling the blood of any Senator’).\footnote{571} As White has noted, this was another instance of pro-Senatorial sentiment, which was a common feature throughout the HA in general.\footnote{572}

Section 27\footnote{573}

27.1

Orientalibus rebus ordinatis Athenis fuit et initi<ialia Ce<ers adit, ut se innocentem probaret, et sacrarium solu<s> ingressus est.\footnote{574} This passage represents an excursus from the central theme of the Vita, having departed from the previous theme of Marcus’ clemency towards the associates and relatives of Avidius Cassius. But it does clearly indicate a degree of defensiveness on the part of the biographer. The key statement in this regard was: ut se innocentem probaret (‘to demonstrate that he was blameless’). Throughout the account of the results of Avidius’ revolt the author has provided no indication that there was even a hint of wrong-doing on the part of Marcus in the suppression of the rebellion, which appears to make this

\footnote{570}{570} Marcus, 25.6.
\footnote{572}{572} White, 1967, op.cit., p. 116, n. 4.
\footnote{573}{573} Schwendemann, 1923, op.cit., pp. 186-96.
statement quite superfluous. However, it also exemplifies the highly positive slant provided by the biographer for the actions of Marcus, which is also epitomised in this statement. Marcus is shown as being truly pious and innocent, but the inconsistency that occurs in this representation cannot be overlooked: if Marcus was innocent, there was no need to establish it by becoming initiated. It appears more likely that Marcus had a personal interest in the Eleusinian Mysteries,\textsuperscript{575} which has been discussed at length by Motschmann.\textsuperscript{576}

27.2-4

revertens ad Italiam navigio tempestatem gravissimam passus est......et inde Lavinium prefectus est: The main theme of this passage was the overall success of Marcus’ principate. Initially the biographer refers to the serious storm that threatened on his voyage back to Italy (27.2 revertens ad Italiam navigio tempestatem gravissimam passus est), which was seemingly intended to illustrate not only that the journey was dangerous for Marcus, but that it was easily overcome by him. The respectfulness of Marcus was emphasised in the account of him dressing in the toga in Brundisium, but his overall success was then highlighted in that he had never worn a military cloak in Italy during his principate\textsuperscript{577} Naturally, the most overt example of his success was emphasised by the biographer in the mention of his triumph in AD 176 (Romam ut venit, triumphavit), which is also mentioned in the interpolation.\textsuperscript{578}

27.5-6

Commodum deinde sibi collegam......gladiatorii muneris sumptus modum fecit: The appointment of Commodus as Marcus’ colleague in tribunician power occurred in AD 177,\textsuperscript{579} which theoretically made Commodus his consors imperii,\textsuperscript{580} or his partner in the principate. This conferral of power was commemorated on several issues by Marcus in AD 177.\textsuperscript{581} The largess to the people was also mentioned in

\textsuperscript{577} Schwendemann, 1923, op.cit., p. 189.
\textsuperscript{580} On this see Hammond, 1959, op.cit., p. 3.
\textsuperscript{581} BMC, Marcus, 1646-52.
Cassius Dio, which explained that each citizen received 8 aurei,\textsuperscript{582} which was one for each year of Marcus’ absence from Rome, and was a greater sum than had ever been given previously.\textsuperscript{583} As mentioned previously, this donative was a clear contradiction to the representation of Marcus in Section 23.1-3, which claims that he rarely presented such gifts to the populace.

The reference to the presentation of games in celebration of the advancement of Commodus is also of some interest considering that in the text, almost directly following this reference, the biographer mentions that Marcus placed a limit on the expense of gladiatorial games (\textit{gladiatorii muneriis sumptus modum fecit}).\textsuperscript{584} This appears somewhat convenient if it indeed occurred so soon after the celebration of Commodus’ advancement. This passage also mentions that Marcus proceeded to correct a series of civil problems, which was intended to highlight his efficiency and the importance of his presence to solve problems that others were unable to answer. All the same, the positive slant in this representation by the author is also made evident, considering that if such a statement was made in the biography of a ‘bad’ emperor, the numerous problems could be construed as having resulted from neglect.

\textbf{27.7}

\textit{sententia[m] Platonis semper in ore illius fuit florere civitates, si aut philosophi imperarent aut imperantes philosopharentur}:\textsuperscript{585} This passage provides another example of a comparison between Marcus Aurelius and Plato,\textsuperscript{586} which was intended to highlight his representation as the ideal ‘Philosopher-King’.\textsuperscript{587} This perception of Marcus Aurelius has affected many of the accounts that have been produced about his reign, which has resulted in a large amount of idealism in both the ancient sources and the modern studies that have been produced. The accuracy of this is difficult to confirm because of the frequent presentation of Marcus as the benevolent Philosopher-King,\textsuperscript{588} which often distorts the interpretation of his reign by the ancient literary sources. Whether this was the reality is a serious topic of debate, which will

\textsuperscript{582} cf. Pöschl, 1941, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 423.
\textsuperscript{583} Dio, 71.32.1. See Schwendemann, 1923, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 191-2.
\textsuperscript{584} Schwartz, 1964, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 151.
\textsuperscript{585} See Hohl, 1913, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 411.
\textsuperscript{587} Stanton, 1969, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 571.
\textsuperscript{588} cf. Schwartz, 1972, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 268.
ultimately be impossible to prove definitively. Nevertheless, for the purpose of the present discussion, it is important to recognise the dilemma inherent in the study of Marcus Aurelius: where is it possible to make a distinction between the ‘idea’ of Marcus the Philosopher-King and the reality.

27.8

filio suo Bruttii Praesentis filiam iunxit nuptiis celebratis exemplo privatorum, quare etiam congiarium dedit populo.\textsuperscript{589} The marriage of Commodus to the daughter of Bruttius Praesens, Bruttia Crispina,\textsuperscript{590} occurred in early-mid AD 178,\textsuperscript{591} and was also mentioned in the account of Cassius Dio.\textsuperscript{592} It was also commemorated on several coin issues,\textsuperscript{593} but, according to Cassius Dio, she was later exiled on the charge of adultery and executed while in exile.\textsuperscript{594} It is significant that at this stage of the Vita the biographer has presented a somewhat positive representation of Marcus’ son, Commodus. In view of the general abhorrence for Commodus in the majority of the ancient sources, this is seemingly worthy of note. But it would appear that the biographer is actually attempting to partially absolve Marcus from the repugnance produced from Commodus’ later reign: this stage of the Vita. The general representation of his son at this point of the biography was one of duplicity: he played the role of the dutiful son, and thereby deceived his father.

27.9-10

dein ad conficiendum bellum......provincias ex his fecisset: The renewal of the campaign on the northern frontier was referred to as the Expeditio Germanica Secunda,\textsuperscript{595} or the Expeditio Sarmatica.\textsuperscript{596} The expedition, including both Marcus and Commodus, left Rome for Pannonia on the 3rd of August, AD 178.\textsuperscript{597} The initial section of this passage highlights that the campaign was only left incomplete because of Marcus’ death (dein ad conficiendum bellum conversus in administratione eius

\textsuperscript{589} Chastagnol, 1972, op.cit., pp. 113, 120.
\textsuperscript{590} CIL 10.408.
\textsuperscript{592} Dio, 71.31.1.
\textsuperscript{593} RIC, Commodus, 276-80.
\textsuperscript{594} Dio, 72.4.6.
\textsuperscript{595} CIL 2.4114, 6.8541.
\textsuperscript{596} CIL 10.408.
\textsuperscript{597} Commodus, 12.6.
belii obi<it>-. It is of no surprise that the biographer then draws a parallel between the decline in the campaign’s success and the deterioration of Commodus’ character (labentibus iam filii moribus ab instituto suo). The comparison between Marcus’ virtue and Commodus’ depravity continues in the account, with Marcus continuing to wage war with the Marcomanni, Hermunduri, Sarmatians and Quadi for the ensuing three years (AD 178-80). This passage finally culminates with one of the most important themes that the biographer sought to convey in relation to the northern campaigns of Marcus Aurelius: si anno uno superfuisset, provincias ex his fecisset (‘had he lived for one more year he would have made these territories provinces’).

This final statement was intended to absolve Marcus for the ultimate failure of the Expeditio Germanica Secunda, thus leaving the responsibility for its demise with his successor, Commodus.

27.11-12

ante biduum quam exspiraret, admissis amicis dicitur ostendisse sententiam de filio eandem quam Philippus de Alexandro, cum de hoc male sentiret, addens minime se aegre ferre <quod moreretur, sed quod moreretur talem> filium superstitem relinquens; nam iam Commodus turpem se et cruentum ostentabant. This passage marks a standard division in the biographer’s representation of Commodus, whereby Marcus acknowledges the corruption and brutality that were fundamental features of Commodus’ general representation. This was most poignantly emphasised in the final sentence: nam iam Commodus turpem se et cruentum ostentabant. The reference to Philip’s negative view of Alexander would seemingly be from the period of their estrangement while Alexander was in Illyricum because otherwise it makes little sense. However, it is an intriguing parallel. Throughout the ancient sources from the Roman period concerning Alexander the Great many refer to him with a degree of idealised reverence, whereas this reference appears quite negative. This is not in

603 See Commodus, 1.7-9.
604 Plutarch, Alexander, 9.
keeping with the general representation of Alexander the Great in the \textit{HA}, particularly in the numerous comparisons that were drawn by the biographer between him and Alexander Severus.\textsuperscript{607} As Baynes has illustrated, this was a recurrent motif in the \textit{HA}, whereby a deserving \textit{princeps} was succeeded by an undeserving son.\textsuperscript{608} 

The inclusion of this comment in relation to Commodus appears to have been intended to be indicative of Marcus’ lack of desire for him to have been his successor, but the use of such an allusion could only be described as obscure at the very least.\textsuperscript{609} All the same, this representation does raise the question about Marcus’ decision to appoint Commodus as his colleague and successor, if indeed he was of the opinion that Commodus was unfit to rule as \textit{princeps}.

\textbf{Section 28\textsuperscript{610}}

\textit{mors autem talis fuit}......\textit{aut simul proficisceretur}: This episode continues the central theme of the previous section, which was intended to illustrate the continuing concerns of Marcus in relation to the succession of Commodus as \textit{princeps} and the progressive deterioration of his son’s character. The concerns of Marcus were clearly represented by the biographer in the statement that \textit{cum aegrotare coepisset, filium advocavit atque ab eo primum petit, ut <h>elli reliquias non contempneret, ne videretur rem p. prodere}.\textsuperscript{611} The actual location where Marcus died has produced some variation between the sources. Tertullian claimed that he died at Sirmium,\textsuperscript{612} whereas Victor stated that he passed away at Vindobona.\textsuperscript{613}

The inference of Marcus’ statement that Commodus could do as he desired, but not to leave for a few days (\textit{ut vellet, permissit, petens tamen, ut expectasset paucos dies, <h>aut simul proficisceretur}) has been interpreted as signifying that he could abandon the campaign if he wished, which is seemingly corroborated in the \textit{Vita Commodi: bellum etiam quod pater paene confecerat legibus hostium addictus remisit}

\textsuperscript{607} Severus Alexander, 11.4; 13.3-4; 25.9; 30.3; 31.5; 35.1; 35.4; 39.1.
\textsuperscript{608} Baynes, 1926, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 82.
\textsuperscript{609} cf. Schwartz, 1972, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 267.
\textsuperscript{610} Schwendemann, 1923, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 114-15.
\textsuperscript{612} Tertullian, \textit{Apologet.}, 25.
\textsuperscript{613} Aurelius Victor, \textit{Caes.} 16.12; \textit{Epit.} 16.12.
ac Romam reversus est.\textsuperscript{614} This depiction of Marcus’ acceptance of the discontinuation of the campaign appears quite at odds to the overall account of his military activities, but it may have been intended to highlight just how close to death he was. It would seem that the aim of the biographer was to illustrate that it was Commodus’ decision to abandon the northern frontier and that on the point of his death, Marcus could do little but to acquiesce.\textsuperscript{615}

28.3-5

deinde abstinuit vi<ctu> potuque mori cupiens auxitque morbum. sexta die vocatis amicis et ridens res humanas, mortem autem contempnens ad amicos dixit: ‘quid<d>e me fletis et non magis de pestilentia et communi morte cogitatis?’ et cum illi vellent recedere, ingemescens ait: ‘si iam me dimitritis, vale vobis dico vos praecedens’. This representation of Marcus by the biographer was clearly intended to portray Marcus as having resigned himself to dying, and essentially seeking death. His lack of desire for life was then further highlighted in the ensuing sentence where he scorns worldly matters (ridens res humanas) and also death itself (mortem autem contempnens). However, this was then explained by the author (sexta die vocatis amicis et ridens res humanas, mortem autem contempnens ad amicos dixit: ‘quid<d>e me fletis et non magis de pestilentia et communi morte cogitatis?’),\textsuperscript{616} which was intended to illustrate that despite being so close to his own death, Marcus continued to consider the plight of others, particularly with the continuing pestilence that was occurring.\textsuperscript{617} This was the first substantial section of direct speech included by the biographer in this \textit{Vita}, which was intended to emphasise the dramatic elements surrounding the final days of Marcus Aurelius. The dramatic element of this passage was then further emphasised by the inclusion of another instance of Marcus’ own words (according to the biographer): \textit{si iam me dimitritis, vale vobis dico vos praecedens}.

\textsuperscript{614} Commodus, 3.5. ‘He deserted the campaign that his father had almost completed and submitted to the conditions of the enemy, and then he returned to Rome.’
\textsuperscript{617} Marcus, 13.3.
28.6-8

*et cum ab eo quaereretur…..ne in eum morbus transiret:* The designation of Commodus as his heir was intended to further exemplify the resignation that Marcus had accepted for worldly matters: *et cum illi vellent recedere, ingemescens ait, 'si iam me dimittitis, vale vobis dico vos praeedens'.*\(^{618}\) There was also some variation in the accounts of as to whom he commended Commodus in the other sources as well. According to Cassius Dio, he apparently commended him to the protection of the soldiers,\(^ {619}\) whereas Herodian agreed with the biographer and stated that it was to Marcus’ friends and advisers.\(^ {620}\) The continued use of direct speech in this section of the *Vita* illustrates the dramatic effect that was intended by the biographer, particularly when its limited use throughout the rest of the *Vita* is considered.

Following this, the biographer then highlights the popularity of Marcus through his mention of the noisy lamentsations of the army and the claim that they loved only him (*quia illum unice amarunt*).\(^ {62}\) Yet the author finishes this section with the emphasis being placed on Marcus’ desire to be finished with worldly matters, which was seemingly intended to imply a degree of reservation for the future reign of Commodus (*septimo die gravatus est et solum filium admisit, quem statim dimisit, ne in eum morbus transiret*).\(^ {622}\) The reference to the desire to preserve Commodus from his illness was intended to further epitomise Marcus’ high degree of consideration for others, and also to illustrate that he was truly resigned to the fact that Commodus would succeed him. This concern for Commodus’ welfare seems to contradict the earlier statement by the biographer that Marcus wished his son would not outlive him (Section 27.11).

28.9

*dinisso filio caput operuit quasi volens dormire, sed nocte animam efflavit:* The context in which Marcus died also caused some disagreement between the ancient literary sources. According to the biographer of the *HA*, Marcus seemingly died in his

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\(^ {619}\) Dio, 71.34.1.


sleep, whereas according to Dio his physicians killed him in order to please Commodus. It is noteworthy that there was no suggestion of foul-play on Commodus’ part by the biographer of the *HA*. In view of the largely hostile representation of Commodus by the ancient sources, such an accusation would have typically been expected. Even the representation of Cassius Dio does not directly represent Commodus as ordering the death of his father. Therefore, it would appear that there was no question about any direct involvement in taking Marcus’ life on Commodus’ part because if there had been even the slightest suspicion, the biographer of the *HA* would have certainly mentioned it. However, it is also possible that the representation of Marcus’ death in this *Vita* was intended to provide a more dignified and austere passing away for Marcus Aurelius, which was more in keeping with the overall portrayal of his character.

28.10

*fertur filium mori voluisse, cum eum tales: videret futurum, quidaliis exstitit post eius mortem, ne, ut ipse dicebat, similis Neroni, Caligulae et Domitianae esset.*

This final statement by the biographer was intended to reiterate the central theme of the entire Section of the *Vita*: Marcus was fully aware of his son’s evil character and lamented the outcome of him possessing the power of a *princeps*. The objective of this closing assertion was to clearly articulate both Marcus’ concerns about Commodus and to emphasise the appropriate comparative *principes*, namely Nero, Caligula and Domitian. These three previous *principes* were traditionally three of the worst, according to the ancient literature, and were frequently used on a comparative basis for establishing the wicked nature of a *princeps*.

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623 Dio, 71.33.4.
627 Baldwin, 1972, *op.cit.*, pp. 113, 121.
Section 29

29.1

*Crimini ei datum est, quod adulteros uxoris promoverit, Tertullum et *<T>*utilium et* Orfitum et Moderatum, ad varios honores, cum Tertullum et prandentem cum uxore depr[a]ehenderit.* There is information elsewhere about only one of these lovers, Tutilius, which comes from the *Vita Commodi: inter haec Commodus senatu semet invidente, cum adulterum matris consulem designasset, appellatus est Pius.* It would appear that he had been appointed suffect consul in AD 183, and that his full name was Lucius Tutilius Pontianus Gentiarus.

This passage was highly critical of Marcus, amongst the most critical sections in the entire *Vita.* The premise of this condemnation was the indictment that Marcus was too compliant in relation to Faustina’s infidelities, which was consistent with the previous critique of his character. The promotion of such inappropriate characters would have been utterly unacceptable in the traditional Roman mindset, particularly if Marcus had been aware of such infidelities (cum Tertullum et prandentem cum uxore depr[a]ehenderit). It is important to note that the condemnation of Marcus’ compliancy is the main feature of the initial portion of Section 29 (comprising 29.1-3), with the text then proceeding to other possible criticisms of his character. The structural placement of this criticism in the overall biography of Marcus Aurelius is quite intriguing. In previous Imperial biographies, such as those by Suetonius, the placement of criticism in a ‘good’ *Vita* was typically in the middle of the text, in order that it could be used to further emphasise the beneficial aspects. However, the *Vita Marci* was quite different, with the majority of the criticism being placed in two sections of the biography: Sections 20 and 29, with most of it being placed at the very end of the account. This biographical structure was quite unusual and is particularly notable in relation to other Lives of so-called ‘good’ *vitae* in the *HA.* Nevertheless, for the present discussion, it suffices to make note of the overt criticism that was inherent in this passage, and continues for the ensuing two sub-sections (29.2, 29.3).

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631 *Commodus,* 8.1. ‘In the meantime, considering that he had designated as consul a former lover of his mother, the Senate jokingly awarded the name Pius to Commodus.’
29.2
de quo minus in scena praesente Antonino dixit; cum stupidus nomen adulteri uxor is a serv o quaer er et ille diceret ter 'Tullus', et adhuc stupidus quaer eret, respondit ille: 'iam tibi dixi ter, Tullus dicitur'.

This passage continues the basic theme of Section 29.1, which concentrated on Marcus’ excessive leniency in relation to the infidelities of his wife, Faustina. This compliancy was clearly a considerable fault in the eyes of the biographer, which was further emphasised by the portrayal of Marcus’ easy acceptance of public ridicule. It is important to note at this point that this tolerance seems to entirely contradict the representation given in Section 20.5, whereby Marcus was shown to have been somewhat consumed by the idea of his perceived standing in the eyes of others (erat enim famae suae curiosissimus, requirens ad verum, quid quisque de se aiceret, emendans quae bene reprehensa viderentur).

That being stated, the negative portrayal of Marcus’ compliance appears more in keeping with the overall description of his character, in view of his leniency, clemency and equanimity.

29.3
et de hoc quidem multa populus, multa etiam alii dixerunt patientiam Antonini incusantes: The critique of Marcus’ excessive compliance was highlighted in this third sub-section, which presents the popular disapproval for this forbearance. These overt statements that clearly disapprove of Marcus’ excessive understanding and tolerance illustrate the other side to the positive traits portrayed by the biographer. The majority of this Vita concentrated on the positive aspects that lay in the character of Marcus Aurelius: equanimity, clemency, leniency and self-discipline. The biographer has continually concentrated on these elements as the positive features of Marcus’ character, which made him such an understanding ruler. Yet in this section, the author has turned these traits and exhibited the negative side of such understanding, which in turn was presented as being seen as a weakness by the general community.

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29.4-5

ante tempus sane mortis......se multis epistulis purgat: In contrast to the previous passages (29.1-3), this passage returned to the predominant theme of the overall *Vita*, by emphasising the positive values, or virtues, of Marcus Aurelius. The initial sentence (ante tempus sane mortis, priusquem ad bellum Marcomannicum rediret, in Capitolio iuravit nullum senatorem se sciente occisum, cum etiam rebelliones dixerit se servaturum fuisse, si scisset) reasserted that he had never knowingly consented to the execution of any Senator, which was the third time that this theme was stated by the biographer (see Sections 25.6 and 26.13). The theme of his clemency was in turn further emphasised, which was another repeated theme by the author in the passage just noted.

The next sentence continues the theme of his value-system, but changes the focus to that of avarice: nihil enim magis et iuruit et depr[a]catus est quam avaritia famam, de qua se multis epistulis purgat. It is noteworthy that this is the first mention of such a charge in this *Vita*, which further indicates the affirmative partiality of the biographer to select themes and topics that were in keeping with his intended representation of Marcus. The charge of avarice may have been indicated through the claim that Marcus rarely gave donatives to the population, but the incorrect nature of this statement has already been affirmed. Consequently, it would appear that there may have been an allegation made against Marcus of *avaritia*, but that it was not mentioned by any of the ancient literary sources in any specific fashion, which was largely in keeping with their highly positive portrayals of him.

29.6

dererunt e<==it> vitio, quod e<==it f>ictus fuisse nec tam simplex quam videretur aut quam vel Pius vel Verus fuisse. In this passage, the biographer returned to the critical discussion of Marcus' character, but instead of his compliance the author highlighted the allegation of insincerity (*nec...simplex*). The context in which this

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639 See also *Marcus*, 10.6 for his legislation about the trial of Senators on capital charges. See Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, p. 116.
641 *Marcus*, 25.5-6, 26.13.
642 See *Marcus*, 23.1-3.
criticism was related by the biographer was intended to illustrate that they did not necessarily agree with the allegation of insincerity against Marcus. Nevertheless, the author still included this comment, so its significance cannot be fully discounted. When the rather aloof representation of Marcus Aurelius is taken into account in connection with his Stoic ideology, it is understandable that such a criticism may be levelled at him, but it is important to note that such a negative assessment of his character appears nowhere else in the entire Vita. The comparison with Verus in this regard is also worth mentioning because it appears to have been one of the few accolades by the biographer towards Lucius Verus.\textsuperscript{645}

29.7

dederunt etiam crimini, quod aulicam adrogantiam confirmaverit summovendo[sl amicos a societate communi et a conviviis].\textsuperscript{646} As with the previous allegation referred to by the biographer this indictment implied that the biographer did not agree with it. The inference was that some people viewed Marcus as being arrogant, by controlling the movements of his closest amici. As with the earlier allegation of avarice, there was no previous mention of such an allegation in the Vita, which makes it even more unlikely that the author agreed with the sentiment, but it is notable that the biographer has included this indictment against Marcus.

29.8-10

parentibus consecrationem decrevit……ne tot liberis superduceret novercam: The final passage in the Vita Marci was directed towards a variety of general comments that do not appear to have been related to one another, but were all positive representations of Marcus Aurelius. The initial statement (parentibus consecrationem decrevit. amicos parentum etiam mortuos statuis ornavit)\textsuperscript{647} was intended to capture his familial respect, through the deification of his parents, but also the erection of statues for their friends (amicos parentum). The second statement (suffragatoribus non cito credidit, sed semper diu quaesivit, quod erat verum) sought to emphasise his diligence and discerning intellect.

\textsuperscript{645} cf. Syme, 1971, \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 130, 132.
\textsuperscript{646} cf. Schulz, 1908, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 264.
The final passage (enisa est Fabia, ut Faustina mortua in eius matrimonium coiret. sed ille concubinam sibi adscivit procuratoris uxoris suae filiam. ne tot liberis superduceret novercam)⁶⁴⁸ is more involved. The Fabia referred to was the daughter of Lucius Aelius Caesar, to whom he had been betrothed prior to Hadrian’s death.⁶⁴⁹ All the same, Marcus is shown as being dutiful to his children by not placing a stepmother over so many children (ne tot liberis superduceret novercam). According to the biographer, instead he took a concubine who was closely connected to his deceased wife that was intended to suggest that he was continuing to respect the memory of Faustina, but also that his choice would never disrupt the existing familial group, which was the behaviour of a diligent paterfamilias.⁶⁵⁰

⁶⁴⁹ Marcus, 6.2.