

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 1¹

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’² and is clearly emphasised from the very outset of the text.³ 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,⁴ as was his passion for philosophical inquiry.⁵

1.2-4

pater Annii Verus.....Rupili Boni consularis filia, fuere: This section reiterates the esteemed heritage into which Marcus Aurelius was born,⁶ which was a consistent theme with many of the positive biographies in the *Historia Augusta*.⁷ There are several of his most notable ancestors mentioned, which was intended to further the appropriateness of Marcus’ tenure as *princeps*. Marcus Annii Verus⁸ was the father of Marcus, but it appears that he was probably already deceased by AD 128/9 when Marcus became a *Salii*,⁹ considering that Hadrian enrolled him among this priesthood.¹⁰ Marcus Annii Verus¹¹ was the grandfather of Marcus Aurelius, who held three consulships in AD 97, 121 and 126,¹² despite the text stating that he had been consul only twice. He was the first private citizen to hold three consulships since Licinius Sura,¹³ which is a good reflection of his esteem in the eyes of the *princeps*.

¹ Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, pp. 1-6.

² Plato, *Republic*, Book 6.

³ cf. C. Bertrand-Dagenbach, “La Carrière du Prince dans l’*Histoire Auguste*”, *HAC* 1996, 1998, p. 27.

⁴ Dio, 72.35.6; Herodian, 1.2.3.

⁵ Herodian, 1.2.4.

⁶ cf. J.P. Callu, “Verus avant Verus”, *HAC* 1990, 1991, p. 102.

⁷ D. den Hengst, *The Prefaces in the Historia Augusta*, Amsterdam: B.R. Grüner, 1981, p. 3.

⁸ *PIR*² A, n. 696; cf. J. VanderLeest, “Hadrian, Lucius Verus and the Arco di Portogallo”, *Phoenix* 49.4, 1995, p. 328..

⁹ A.R. Birley, *Marcus Aurelius: a biography*, London: Routledge, 1987, p. 244.

¹⁰ See *Marcus*, 4.2.

¹¹ *PIR*² A 695.

¹² Birley, 1987, *op.cit.*, p. 243.

¹³ In AD 97, 102 and 107. For further discussion of Sura’s career see G.W. Adams, “Licinius Sura, Dio and the Not So Acephalous *ILS* 1022”, *Journal of Ancient Civilisations* 16, 2001, pp. 5-8.

He was probably also urban prefect in AD 121, which was a significant honour.¹⁴ He was probably enrolled as a patrician during the censorship of Vespasian and Titus in AD 73/4.¹⁵

Marcus Annius Libo was his uncle, and had been one of the *consules ordinarii* in AD 128.¹⁶ Birley has argued that his wife was Annia Fundania Faustina,¹⁷ which appears quite likely. Galeria Faustina Augusta was Marcus' aunt,¹⁸ the wife of Antoninus Pius.¹⁹ She received the title of *Augusta* following from the birth of her daughter Domitia Faustina on 30th November, AD 147,²⁰ which coincided with the conferral of tribunician power on Marcus on 1st December, AD 147.²¹ Domitia Lucilla²² was the mother of Marcus Aurelius and she was daughter of Publius Calvisius Tullus Ruso, who had been *consul ordinarius* for the first time in AD 109,²³ and Domitia Lucilla.²⁴ She was in all likelihood quite wealthy through her inheritances from both grandfathers,²⁵ Curtilius Macer and Cn. Domitius Afer.²⁶ The Borghesi manuscript (P) refers to Lucilla as Cavilla, but as illustrated by Schwendemann,²⁷ there is no other evidence for the existence of such a name, which highlights that Lucilla is the common form.²⁸

Annius Verus²⁹ was his paternal great-grandfather and little else is known of him, except that he was from Succuba in Spain.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 68/9.³¹ Lucius Catilius Severus Julianus Claudius Reginus³² was the great-grandfather of Marcus Aurelius, through Lucius' marriage to

¹⁴ Birley, 1987, *op.cit.*, p. 232.

¹⁵ See Syme, *Tacitus*, Vol. II, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958, pp. 585ff.

¹⁶ *PIR*² A, n. 667.

¹⁷ Birley, 1987, *op.cit.*, p. 243.

¹⁸ *PIR*² A, n. 715.

¹⁹ *Pius*, 1.6.

²⁰ A. Degrassi, *Inscriptiones Italiae* XIII.i, Rome, 1947, n. 207.

²¹ Birley, 1987, *op.cit.*, p. 247.

²² *PIR*² D, n. 183.

²³ *PIR*² C, n. 357.

²⁴ *PIR*² D, n. 182.

²⁵ Birley, 1987, *op.cit.*, p. 29.

²⁶ Plin. *Ep.*, 8.18.

²⁷ Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, p. 2.

²⁸ cf. K. Rosen, *Marc Aurel*, Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1997, pp. 14-15.

²⁹ *PIR*² A, n. 694.

³⁰ Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, p. 2.

³¹ Birley, 1987, *op.cit.*, p. 28.

³² *PIR*² C, n. 558.

the widow of Domitius Tullus,³³ which meant that he became the stepfather of Domitia Lucilla. He held his second consulship in AD 120 with the first occurring in AD 110.³⁴ He was placed in charge of Syria by Hadrian,³⁵ and held the urban prefecture as well.³⁶ Rupilia Faustina was his paternal grandmother, daughter of Libo Rupilius Frugi,³⁷ who had been *consul suffectus* in AD 88.³⁸ In this instance the text refers to him as *Bonus*, but modern scholarship has confirmed that he was called Libo Rupilius Frugi.³⁹

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 Annii Verus and the first year of his *augurate*.⁴⁰ He was born in a villa [*hortis*] on the Caelian Hill.⁴¹ 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.⁴² The Caelian region was often viewed as an élite region to own a property in the hinterland of the capital,⁴³ and it would appear that the property was owned by Lucilla, Marcus' mother.⁴⁴ 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.⁴⁵ The

³³ R. Syme, "The Ummidii", *Historia* 17, 1968, pp. 95 ff.

³⁴ Birley, 1987, *op.cit.*, p. 232.

³⁵ *Hadrian*, 5.10; cf. H.W. Benario, *A Commentary on the Vita Hadriani in the Historia Augusta*, Ann Arbor: Scholars Press, 1980, pp. 66-7.

³⁶ cf. Syme, 1958, *op.cit.*, p. 793.

³⁷ Barnes, 1978, *op.cit.*, pp. 34-5; A.R. Birley, "Two Names in the *Historia Augusta*", *Historia* 15, 1966, p. 249.

³⁸ F. Zevi, "I consoli del 97 c.Cr. in due frammenti già editi dei Fasti Ostienses", *LF* 96, 1973, p. 133, n. 38; P.A. Gallivan, "The Fasti for AD 70-96", *CQ* 31.1, 1981, pp. 191, 217.

³⁹ Barnes, 1978, *op.cit.*, pp. 34-5.

⁴⁰ cf. W. Eck, "Zum Konsulat in der *Historia Augusta*", *HAC* 1991, 1994, p. 110.

⁴¹ cf. Birley, 1987, *op.cit.*, p. 28.

⁴² For discussion of the implications of various terms in relation to the suburbium of a city, see G.W. Adams, *The Suburban Villas of Campania and their Social Function*, Oxford: Archaeopress, 2006, pp. 9-24.

⁴³ See J.W. Mayer, *Imus ad villam: Studien zur Villeggiatur im stadtrömischen Suburbium in der späten Republik und frühen Kaiserzeit*, *Geographica Historica* 20, Stuttgart: F. Steiner, 2005.

⁴⁴ Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, p. 3.

⁴⁵ G.W. Adams, *The Suburban Villas of Rome and their Social Function*, 2007, *forthcoming*.

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 Malemnus, 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 unsupported.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 surrounded 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 Annii 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 (*aedes Laterani*) is uncertain, but it was typically referred to as the *domus Laterana*,⁵⁴ and was later presented to Sextius

⁴⁶ Birley, 1987, *op.cit.*, pp. 31-2.

⁴⁷ cf. F. Chausson, "Variétés Généalogiques", *HAC* 2000, 2002, pp. 109-47.

⁴⁸ Syme, 1958, *op.cit.*, p. 792.

⁴⁹ cf. Birley, 2006, *op.cit.*, p. 26.

⁵⁰ B. Baldwin, "Acclamations in the *Historia Augusta*", *Athenaeum* 59, 1981, p. 140.

⁵¹ Syme, 1972, *op.cit.*, pp. 287-302.

⁵² Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, p. 4.

⁵³ Birley, 1987, *op.cit.*, p. 33.

⁵⁴ S.B. Platner and T. Ashby, *A Topographical Dictionary of Rome*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1926, p. 183.

Lateranus (*cos.* 197).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 *educatus*.

His younger sister, Annia Cornificia Faustina,⁵⁶ was later married to Ummidius Quadratus,⁵⁷ who was consul in AD 146.⁵⁸ Syme has argued that the use of the name *Cornificia* may represent a claim by the *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 *HA*,⁵⁹ his cousin and later wife. Throughout the majority of this *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.

1.9-10

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 *Marcus Antoninus principio a<e>vi sui nomen habuit Catilii[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.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 *Annius Verissimus* following on the death of Marcus' father.⁶¹

The association between the young Marcus and his paternal side of the *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

⁵⁵ Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, p. 5.

⁵⁶ *PIR*² A, n. 708.

⁵⁷ Syme, 1968, *op.cit.*, p. 98.

⁵⁸ Birley, 1987, *op.cit.*, p. 243.

⁵⁹ *Pius*, 1.7; 10.2; *Aelius*, 6.9; *Verus*, 2.2.

⁶⁰ *Hadrian*, 5.10; cf. Benario, 1980, *op.cit.*, pp. 66-7.

⁶¹ For other instances where Marcus is referred to as *Annius Verissimus*, see Dio, 69.21.2; J.H. Eckhel, *Doctrina Numorum Veterum*, Vienna: J.V. Degen, 1792-1839, 7.69; A.S.L. Farquharson, "On the Names of Aelius Caesar, adopted son of Hadrian", *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 Annus 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 Annus 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 Annus Verus and also through his references to the young Marcus' adoption and his change of name to Marcus Annus Verus. This may have in turn been a reflection of the reality, considering that Marcus Annus Verus was the first person recognised in the *Meditations*: Παρὰ τοῦ πάππου Οὐήρου, τὸ καλόηθες καὶ ἀόργητον.⁶²

Section 2⁶³

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.⁶⁴ Little is known of either Euphorion or Geminus, but as argued by Birley, it seems most likely that Euphorion would have taught Marcus Greek literature, whereas Geminus appears to have been an actor, and

⁶² *Med.* 1.1. 'From my Grandfather Verus, a caring temperament and a kind character.'

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

⁶⁴ cf. A.R. Birley, "Some Teachers of Marcus Aurelius", *HAC* 1966/7, 1968, pp. 39-42.

educated him in performance and drama.⁶⁵ The third tutor mentioned, Andron, taught Marcus music and geometry,⁶⁶ but it appears likely that he was involved with Marcus' education at a later date,⁶⁷ probably around the age of eleven.⁶⁸ 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 Πρασιανὸς μήτε Βενετιανός, μήτε Παλμουλάριος ἢ Σκουτάριος γενέσθαι· καὶ τὸ φερέπονον καὶ ὀλιγοδεές, καὶ τὸ αὐτουργικὸν καὶ ἀπολύπραγμον· καὶ τὸ δυσπρόσδεκτον διαβολῆς.**⁶⁹

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 ὀνειδιστικῶς ἐπιλαμβάνεσθαι τῶν βάρβαρον ἢ σόλοικόν τι ἢ ἀπηχῆς προενεγαμένων, ἀλλ' ἐπιδεξίως αὐτὸ μόνον ἐκεῖνο, ὃ ἔδει εἰρησθαι, προφέρεσθαι, ἐν πρόπῳ ἀποκρίσεως ἢ συνεπιμαρτυρήσεως ἢ συνδιαλήψεως περὶ αὐτοῦ τοῦ πράγματος, οὐχὶ περὶ τοῦ ῥήματος, ἢ δι' ἑτέρας τινὸς τοιαύτης ἐμμελοῦς παρυστομνήσεως.**⁷⁰ It has been argued that he may have been the unnamed tutor previously mentioned by Marcus (*Med.* 1.5),⁷¹ which appears to be quite plausible. He lived in the palace while he taught Marcus and was clearly a great influence upon his pupil.⁷² Trosius Aper of Pola and Tuticius Proculus of Sicca taught Marcus Latin Grammar, but little detail is known of them,⁷³

⁶⁵ Birley, 1987, *op.cit.*, p. 36.

⁶⁶ cf. A. Scheithauer, "Kaiser und Musik in der *Historia Augusta*", *HAC* 1996, 1998, p. 297.

⁶⁷ Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, p. 7.

⁶⁸ Birley, 1987, *op.cit.*, p. 37.

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.'

⁷¹ C.R. Haines (ed.), *Marcus Aurelius*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1930, p. 8, n. 1.

⁷² Aristides, *Orat.* 12.142-154; cf. C.P. Jones, "Aelius Aristides, ΕΙΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΑ", *JRS* 62, 1972, p. 145.

⁷³ cf. E. Birley, "Military Intelligence and the *Historia Augusta*", *HAC* 1964/5, 1966, pp. 36-7.

except that Tuticius Proculus later received honours from Marcus,⁷⁴ a point that is discussed below.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 *Araspes the Lover of Panthea*,⁷⁶ but he is mentioned only once in the *Meditations*,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.⁷⁸ He was *consul ordinarius* in AD 143⁷⁹ and was the focal character of the *Lives of the Sophists* by Philostratus.⁸⁰ Marcus Cornelius Fronto was another good friend and tutor of Marcus Aurelius, who was also mentioned in the *Meditations*: *παρὰ Φρόντωνος, τὸ ἐπιστῆσαι, οἷα ἡ τυραννικὴ βασκανία καὶ ποικιλία καὶ ὑπόκρισις, καὶ ὅτι ὡς ἐπίπαν οἱ καλούμενοι οὗτοι παρ' ἡμῶν εὐπατρίδαι ἀστοργότεροί πως εἰσιν.*⁸¹ Fronto clearly had a close relationship with Marcus, which is most evident from the nature of their correspondence.⁸²

2.5

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 (*Proculum vero usque ad proconsulatum provexit [h]on<e>ribus in se receptis*) referred to the financial cost of presenting games.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.⁸⁴

⁷⁴ Birley (1968, p. 39-42) has suggested that Euty chius Proculus could have been M. Tuticius Proculus (*CIL* 8.1625), with the Euty chius being a corruption of the text.

⁷⁵ A.R. Birley, "Some Teachers of Marcus Aurelius". *HAC* 1966/67, 1968, p. 39.

⁷⁶ Birley, 1987, *op.cit.*, p. 63.

⁷⁷ *Med.* 8.25.

⁷⁸ For the sculptural representations of Herodes Atticus, see R.R.R. Smith, "Cultural Choice and Political Identity in the Greek East in the Second Century AD", *JRS* 88, 1998, pp. 78-9.

⁷⁹ G. Alföldy, *Konsulat und Senatorenstand unter den Antoninen: Prosopographische Untersuchungen zur Senatorischen Führungsschicht*, *Antiquitas* 1.27: Bonn, 1977, p. 144.

⁸⁰ *Vit. Soph.* 2.1.

⁸¹ *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.'

⁸² Fronto, *Ad. M. Caes.* 3.3-3.5.

⁸³ See Dio 60.27.2; Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, p. 10.

⁸⁴ Fronto, *Epist.*, 33.

2.6

philosophi<a>e 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.⁸⁵ See also Aurelius Victor 16: *namque M. Boionium, qui Aurelius Antoninus habetur; eodem oppido, pari nobilitate, philosophandi vero eloquentiaeque studiis longe praestantem, in familiam atque imperium ascivit*.⁸⁶ The systematic representation of Marcus' studiousness in the *HA*⁸⁷ 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 ἀκενόσπουδον· καὶ τὸ ἀπιστητικὸν τοῖς ὑπὸ τῶν τερατευομένων καὶ γοήτων περὶ ἐπωδῶν καὶ περὶ δαιμόνων ἀποπομπῆς καὶ τῶν τοιούτων λεγομένοις· καὶ τὸ μὴ ὀρτυγοτροφεῖν, μηδὲ περὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα ἀπτοῆσθαι· καὶ τὸ ἀνέχεσθαι παρρησίας· καὶ τὸ οἰκειωθῆναι φιλοσοφία καὶ τὸ ἀκοῦσαι πρῶτον μὲν Βακχείου, εἶτα Τανδάσιδος καὶ Μαρκιανοῦ· καὶ τὸ γράφαι διαλόγους ἐν παιδί· καὶ τὸ σκίμποδος καὶ δορᾶς ἐπιθυμῆσαι καὶ ὅσα τοιαῦτα τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς ἀγωγῆς ἐχόμενα*.⁸⁸ Diognetus was primarily a painting teacher,⁸⁹ but it is quite clear that he had a more wide-ranging impact than this.

⁸⁵ K. Rosen, "Marc Aurels Selbstbetrachtungen und die *Historia Augusta*", *HAC* 2000, 2002, p. 421.

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 Schwendemann, 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 unadorned speech; and to become acquainted with philosophy and be a hearer firstly of Baccheius, 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.'

⁸⁹ Birley, 1987, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

vix autem matre agente instrato 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 acciverat, 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, 'facilius fuit Apollonio a Chalcide Romam venire quam a domo sua in Palatium.'* cuius avaritiam etiam in mercedibus notavit. inter argumenta pietatis eius et hoc habetur quod, cum Marcus mortuum educatorem suum fleret vocareturque ab aulicis ministris ab ostentatione pietatis, ipse dixerit: 'Permittite, inquit, illi, ut homo sit; neque enim vel philosophia vel imperium tollit adfectus.').⁹⁰

His origins from Chalcedon were maintained by the biographer, whereas Cassius Dio states that he was from Nicomedia (τῶν μὲν γὰρ τὸν τε Φρόντωνα τὸν Κορνήλιον καὶ τὸν Ἡρώδη τὸν Κλαύδιον διδασκάλους εἶχε, τῶν δὲ τὸν τε Ῥούστικον τὸν Ἰούνιον καὶ Ἀπολλώνιον τὸν Νικομηδέα, 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.

Ζηνωνείους λόγους μελετῶντας),⁹¹ which appears to have been an error. Marcus clearly had a great deal of respect for Apollonius: *παρὰ Ἀπολλωνίου, τὸ ἐλεύθερον καὶ ἀναμφιλόγως ἀκύβευτον· καὶ πρὸς μηδὲν ἄλλο ἀποβλέπειν μηδὲ ἐπ’ ὅμοιον, ἐν ἀλγηδόσιν ὀξείαις, ἐν ἀποβολῇ τέκνου, ἐν μακροῖς νόσοις· καὶ τὸ ἐπὶ παραδείγματος ζῶντος ἰδεῖν ἐναργῶς, ὅτι δύναται ὁ αὐτὸς σφοδρότατος εἶναι καὶ ἀνειμένος· καὶ τὸ ἐν ταῖς ἐξηγήσεσι μὴ δυσχεραντικόν· καὶ τὸ ἰδεῖν ἄνθρωπον σαφῶς ἐλάχιστον τῶν ἑαυτοῦ καλῶν ἡγούμενον τὴν ἐμπειρίαν καὶ τὴν ἐντρέχειαν τὴν περὶ τὸ παραδιδόναι τὰ θεωρήματα· καὶ τὸ μαθεῖν, πῶς δεῖ λαμβάνειν τὰς δοκούσας χάριτας παρὰ φίλων, μήτε ἐξηττώμενον διὰ ταῦτα μήτε ἀναισθήτως παραπέμποντα.*⁹²

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 3⁹³

3.1

Tantum autem studium in eo philosophiae fuit, ut adscitus iam in imperatoriam tamen ad domum Apollonii discendi caus<a> 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

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.’

⁹³ Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, pp. 12-17.

member of the Imperial family, he still went to Apollonius' house for tutoring').⁹⁴ 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.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 Chaeronensem.....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,⁹⁶ and also taught Lucius Verus. Marcus praises him for his kindness and tolerance: **παρὰ Σέξτου, τὸ εὐμενές· καὶ τὸ παρὰδειγμα τοῦ οἴκου τοῦ πατρονομουμένου· καὶ τὴν ἔννοιαν τοῦ κατὰ φύσιν ζῆν· καὶ τὸ σεμνὸν ἀπλάστως· καὶ τὸ στοχαστικὸν τῶν φίλων κηδεμονικῶς· καὶ τὸ ἀνεκτικὸν τῶν ἰδιωτῶν καὶ τὸ ἀθεώρητον οἰομένων.**⁹⁷ He did not enter into public service, but instead devoted himself to the teaching of philosophy.⁹⁸

Claudius Maximus was a Stoic senator and, similarly to Sextus of Chaeronea, served as a mentor for Marcus: **παρὰ Μαξίμου, τὸ κρατεῖν ἑαυτοῦ καὶ κατὰ μηδὲν περίφορον εἶναι· καὶ τὸ εὐθυμον ἔν τε ταῖς ἄλλαις περιστάσεσι καὶ ἐν ταῖς νόσοις· καὶ τὸ εὐκρατον τοῦ ἤθους καὶ μελίχιον καὶ γεραρόν· καὶ τὸ οὐ σχετλίως κατεργαστικὸν τῶν προκειμένων.**⁹⁹ He gained the consulship in AD 144 and served as governor of Upper Pannonia from AD 150-154,¹⁰⁰ and was proconsul of Africa by the end of that decade.¹⁰¹ At this time

⁹⁴ cf. T. Mommsen, "Die Chronologie der Briefe Frontos", *Hermes* 8, 1874, p. 209.

⁹⁵ *Pius*, 10.4.

⁹⁶ Birley, 1987, *op.cit.*, p. 97.

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.'

⁹⁸ cf. Dio, 71.1.2; Philostratus, *VS* 2.1.9; Fronto, *Ad An.*, 1.3.3.

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 lovability and seriousness; and to act without being petulant about the duty that lies in one's hand.'

¹⁰⁰ Birley, 1987, *op.cit.*, p. 96.

¹⁰¹ *PIR*² 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 prolixam rem familiarem sortitus est? erras, Aemiliane, 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 amiciores esse cohercitate mediocritati quam delicatae opulentiae, fortunam uelut tunicam magis concinnam quam longam probare; quippe etiam ea si non gestetur et trahatur, nihil minus quam lacinia praependens impedit et praecipitat. etenim in omnibus ad uitae munia utendis quicquid aptam moderationem supergreditur, honeri potius quam usui exuberat.*¹⁰² It is possible that he had served under Trajan as *tribunus laticlavius*,¹⁰³ and was probably born in the early Second Century AD.¹⁰⁴

Cinna Catulus was another friend and mentor of Marcus, who was also another devotee of Stoic philosophy: **παρὰ Κατούλου, τὸ μὴ ὀλιγώρως ἔχειν φίλου αἰτιωμένου τι, κἂν τύχη ἀλόγως αἰτιώμενος, ἀλλὰ πειρᾶσθαι καὶ ἀποκαθιστάναί ἐπὶ τὸ σύνηθες· καὶ τὸ περὶ τῶν διδασκάλων ἐκθύμως εὐφημον, οἷα τὰ περὶ Δομετίου καὶ Ἀθηνοδότου ἀπομνημονευόμενα· καὶ τὸ περὶ τὰ τέκνα ἀληθινῶς ἀγαπητικόν.**¹⁰⁵

3.3-4

peripat[heth]eticae vero studioss.....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 ἀδελφοῦ μου Σεουήρου, τὸ φιλοίκειον καὶ φιλίλληθες καὶ φιλοδίκαιον· καὶ τὸ δι' αὐτὸν γινῶναι Θρασέα, Ἐλβίδιον, Κάτωνα, Δίωνα, 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 neat 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.

¹⁰⁴ Birley, 1987, *op.cit.*, p. 275, n. 20.

¹⁰⁵ *Med.*, 1.13. 'From Catulus, not to ignore the expostulation 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 Domitius did of Athenodotus; and to be legitimately affectionate to one's children.'

φαντασίαν λαβεῖν πολιτείας ἰσονόμου, κατ' ἰσότητα καὶ ἰσηγορίαν διοικουμένης, καὶ βασιλείας τιμώσης πάντων μάλιστα τὴν ἐλευθερίαν τῶν 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, Annia Galeria Aurelia Faustina.¹⁰⁹

Quintus Junius Rusticus was clearly one of the most influential figures in the development of Marcus' philosophical understanding: *παρὰ Ῥουστίκου, τὸ λαβεῖν φαντασίαν τοῦ χρῆζειν διορθώσεως καὶ θεραπείας τοῦ ἤθους· καὶ τὸ μὴ ἐκτραπήναι εἰς ζῆλον σοφιστικόν, μηδὲ τὸ συγγράφειν περὶ τῶν θεωρημάτων, ἢ προτρεπτικὰ λογάρια διαλέγεσθαι, ἢ φαντασιοπλήκτως τὸν ἀσκητικὸν ἢ τὸν εὐεργετικὸν ἄνδρα ἐπιδείκνυσθαι· καὶ τὸ ἀποστῆναι ῥητορικῆς καὶ ποιητικῆς καὶ ἀστειολογίας· καὶ τὸ μὴ ἐν στολῇ κατ' οἶκον περιπατεῖν, μηδὲ τὰ τοιαῦτα ποιεῖν· καὶ τὸ τὰ ἐπιστόλια ἀφελῶς γράφειν, οἷον τὸ ὑπ' αὐτοῦ τούτου ἀπὸ Σινοέσσης τῇ μητρὶ 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 Senate 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 Thræsea, 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.'

¹⁰⁷ Alföldy, 1977, *op.cit.*, p. 151.

¹⁰⁸ *ibid.*, p. 187.

¹⁰⁹ cf. O. Murray, "Enemies of the Roman Order (Review)", *JRS* 59, 1969, p. 265

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.'

¹¹¹ Alföldy, 1977, *op.cit.*, pp. 176-7.

¹¹² cf. Tac., *Agr.*, 40; Plin., *Pan.*, 23; Suet., *Otho*, 6.

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*,¹¹³ particularly when compared to his brief mention of Cornelius Fronto.¹¹⁴

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.¹¹⁵ 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.¹¹⁶ The presentation of such gifts for the deceased was more in keeping with the ancestral worship that frequently occurred within Roman society.¹¹⁷ 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.¹¹⁸ These men would have acted as important advisors, particularly during his early years.¹¹⁹

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<a>ecianum*) 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 vehiculorum* (prefect of the public posting-service).¹²⁰

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*

¹¹³ Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, p. 13; *Med.* 1.17.

¹¹⁴ *Med.* 1.11.

¹¹⁵ cf. S.A. Stertz, "Christianity in the *Historia Augusta*", *Latomus* 36, 1977, p. 702.

¹¹⁶ Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, p. 14.

¹¹⁷ D.G. Orr, "Roman Domestic Religion: the evidence of the household shrines", *ANRW* 2.16.2, 1978, pp. 1557-91.

¹¹⁸ *Pius*, 10.4.

¹¹⁹ Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, p. 13.

¹²⁰ Birley, 1987, *op.cit.*, p. 62.

*inpendit, ut corpus adficeret, atque in hoc solo pueritia eius reprehenderetur.*¹²¹ 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),¹²² 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 scholas publicas.....locupletatos teneret.*¹²³ 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.¹²⁴ 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 183.¹²⁵ The close tie between Victorinus and the *amici* of Marcus is also illustrated by his marriage to the daughter of Cornelius

¹²¹ cf. J.E.G. Whitehorne, "Was Marcus Aurelius a Hypochondriac?", *Latomus* 36, 1977, p. 413.

¹²² Schwendemann, 1923, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

¹²³ cf. W. Hüttl, *Antoninus Pius*, Vol. 2, New York: Arno Press, 1975, p. 32.

¹²⁴ *Pertinax*, 4.3.

¹²⁵ G. Alföldy, *Fasti Hispanienses. Senatorische Reichesbeamte und Offiziere in den Spanischen Provinzen des Römischen Reiches von Augustus bis Diokletian*, Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1969, pp. 38ff.

Fronto, Cornelia Cratia.¹²⁶ These two men from the Senatorial class, Fuscianus and Victorinus, remained lifelong friends with Marcus.¹²⁷

Section 4¹²⁸

4.1-2

Educatus es[se]t 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.¹²⁹ 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*.¹³⁰ 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,¹³¹ 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.¹³²

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.¹³³ Such literary devices were also common in the *HA*,¹³⁴ there being several examples such as in the *Vitae* of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius.¹³⁵ 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

¹²⁶ Fronto, *Ad Am.*, 2.11; E. Champlin, *Fronto and Antonine Rome*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1980, pp. 27ff.

¹²⁷ Birley, 1987, *op.cit.*, p. 77.

¹²⁸ Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, pp. 17-25.

¹²⁹ W. Weber, "The Antonines", *CAH* 11, 1954, p. 341.

¹³⁰ Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, p. 18.

¹³¹ Barnes, 1967, *op.cit.*, p. 79.

¹³² Pflaum, 1964, *op.cit.*, p. 97.

¹³³ Suetonius, *Galba*, 4, 18-19; *Domitian*, 23.2.

¹³⁴ M.L. Trowbridge, "Folklore in the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*", *CPh* 33.1, 1938, pp. 69-71, 73-4.

¹³⁵ *Hadrian*, 2.4, 2.8-9; *Pius*, 3.1-5; cf. J. Fündling, *Kommentar zur Vita Hadriani der Historia Augusta*, *Antiquitas* Band 4, 2006, pp. 282-5, 304-15.

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,¹³⁶ 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,¹³⁷ 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 exauguravit nemine praeunte, 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 136,¹³⁸ which was a fairly typical age for such an occasion.¹³⁹ This would have occurred at the Festival of the *Liberalia*, the 17th of March, AD 136.¹⁴⁰ 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 desponsata est ex Hadriani voluntate*).¹⁴¹ The daughter would have been Ceionia Fabia, who is also mentioned elsewhere in the *HA*.¹⁴² This engagement was highly significant because of the connection it created between Marcus and the current successor to Hadrian, Lucius Aelius Caesar.¹⁴³ This engagement would have taken place in AD 136, as illustrated by Birley.¹⁴⁴

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

¹³⁶ Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, p. 20.

¹³⁷ Birley, 1987, *op.cit.*, p. 37.

¹³⁸ cf. Syme, 1964, *op.cit.*, p. 142, n. 3.

¹³⁹ *RE* 6 A, 1938, pp. 1450ff.

¹⁴⁰ Birley, 1987, *op.cit.*, p. 40.

¹⁴¹ cf. J. Keil, "Kaiser Marcus und die Thronfolge", *Klio* 31, 1938, p. 297.

¹⁴² *Marcus*, 29.10; *Verus*, 10.3-4.

¹⁴³ Barnes, 1967, *op.cit.*, p. 75; Stanton, 1969, *op.cit.*, p. 583.

¹⁴⁴ Birley, 1987, *op.cit.*, pp. 40-1.

direct successor – such was the bond between them, according to the biographer.¹⁴⁵ 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 (*praefectus*) during the *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,¹⁴⁶ 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.¹⁴⁷ This provides a clear example of the differences in authorship of the two biographies.

4.7

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 (*responditque avi bonis se esse contentum*). The grandfather in question appears to have been Marcus Annus 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,¹⁴⁸ would have been a substantial bequest in itself, considering that Domitia Lucilla had inherited the estates of her grandfathers, Curtilius Mancina and Cn. Domitius Afer,¹⁴⁹ as well.¹⁵⁰ Ummidius Quadratus Annianus Verus was the husband of Marcus' sister,

¹⁴⁵ See Section 5.1 for a more direct statement in this regard: *his ita se habentibus cum post obitum Lucii Caesaris Hadrianus successorem imperii quaereret, nec idoneus, utpote decem et octo annos agens, Marcus haberetur, amitae Marci virum Antoninum Pium Hadrianus ea lege in adoptionem legit ut sibi Marcum Pium adoptaret, ita tamen ut et Marcus sibi Lucium Commodum adoptaret.*

¹⁴⁶ Birley, 1987, *op.cit.*, p. 41.

¹⁴⁷ White, 1967, *op.cit.*, p. 129.

¹⁴⁸ Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, p. 23; O. Hirschfeld, "Der Grundbesitz der römischen Kaiser in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten", *Klio* 2, 1902, p. 300.

¹⁴⁹ Plin. *Ep.*, 8.18.

¹⁵⁰ Birley, 1987, *op.cit.*, p. 29.

who was also her first cousin, and had held a consulship in AD 146.¹⁵¹ Annia Cornificia's son, Ummidius Quadratus (see Section 7.4), received part of Marcus' maternal inheritance following his mother's death, and was seemingly consul in AD 167.¹⁵²

4.8-9

fuit autem vitae indulgentia, ut cogeret nonnumquam vel in venationes pergere vel in theatrum descendere vel spectaculis interesse. operam praeterea pingendo sub magistro Diogeneto dedit. amavit pugilatum <et> luctamina et cursum et aucupatus 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.¹⁵³

The image presented in these two sentences is quite an anomaly in the text overall (*operam praeterea pingendo sub magistro Diogeneto dedit. amavit pugilatum <et> luctamina et cursum et aucupatus et pila lusit adprime et venatus est*). This passage contradicts the overall impression that is given of Marcus as a youth.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.¹⁵⁵ For further discussion of the nature of Marcus' education, see Birley (1997).¹⁵⁶

¹⁵¹ Alföldy, 1977, *op.cit.*, p. 151; Syme, 1968, *op.cit.*, p. 98ff.

¹⁵² R. Syme, "Ummidius Quadratus, Capax Imperii", *HSCP* 83, 1979, pp. 307-8.

¹⁵³ Such as *Marcus*, 29.1-3.

¹⁵⁴ cf. Baynes, 1926, *op.cit.*, p. 81.

¹⁵⁵ cf. Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, p. 24.

¹⁵⁶ Birley, 1997, *op.cit.*, pp. 69-88.

4.10

sed ab omnibus his intentioni<bu>s studium eum philosophiae abduxit seriumque et gravem reddidit, non tamen prorsus abolita 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.¹⁵⁷ The reference to physical and sporting activities in Section 4.9 was clearly intended to institute some degree of balance in the representation.

Section 5¹⁵⁸

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 conviviis 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 138.¹⁵⁹ 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

¹⁵⁷ *Marcus*, 2.1-3.9.

¹⁵⁸ Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, pp. 25-35.

¹⁵⁹ cf. Bertrand-Dagenbach, 1998, *op.cit.*, p. 27.

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 sciscitatusque, 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 Καῖσαρος ἀποδειχθῆναι ὄναρ ἔδοξεν ὄμους τε καὶ χεῖρας ἐλεφαντίνους ἔχειν καὶ αὐταῖς πάντα 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 Hadriano 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 contineret 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

¹⁶⁰ cf. H. Last and N.H. Baynes, "Römische Kinderkaiser: eine Strukturanalyse Römischen Denkens und Daseins", *JRS* 43, 1953, p. 138.

¹⁶¹ *Hadrian* 24.1; *Ael* 5.1, 6.9; *Pius* 4.5; cf. Fündling, 2006, Vol. 2, *op.cit.*, pp. 1054-76.

¹⁶² Birley, 1987, *op.cit.*, p. 48.

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.'

¹⁶⁴ Rosen, 1997, *op.cit.*, p. 32.

¹⁶⁵ cf. Platner and Ashby, 1926, *op.cit.*, p. 433.

residence was simply intended to further highlight the connection between Marcus and Hadrian by the biographer.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.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,¹⁶⁸ was quite typical when being adopted into another *familia*. It was an important social symbol,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 25th of February, AD 138,¹⁷⁰ which was actually Marcus' seventeenth year considering that it occurred after Marcus' birthday on the 26th of April of the previous year.¹⁷¹

Following from this, Hadrian exempted his age and designated him *quaestor* for AD 139,¹⁷² 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

¹⁶⁶ cf. Hirschfeld, 1902, *op.cit.*, p. 300.

¹⁶⁷ cf. S. Walentowski, *Kommentar zur Vita Antoninus Pius der Historia Augusta*, Bonn: *Antiquitas* Reihe 4, 1998, p. 28.

¹⁶⁸ *Hadrian* 24.2; cf. Fündling, 2006, Vol. 2, *op.cit.*, pp. 1077-8.

¹⁶⁹ cf. Barnes, 1967, *op.cit.*, p. 68.

¹⁷⁰ Birley, 1987, *op.cit.*, p. 4; cf. H.G. Pflaum, "Le Reglement Successoral d'Hadrian", *HAC* 1963, 1964, p. 112.

¹⁷¹ Syme, 1964, *op.cit.*, p. 142, n. 3.

¹⁷² *Hadrian*, 25.6; *Pius*, 6.9-10.

heirs in the Imperial house,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 26th of April and the 10th of July, AD 138,¹⁷⁴ which was conceivably some time after the official adoption itself.

5.7-8

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.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 *familia* were used to further demonstrate this portrayal. It also emphasises his Stoic values in his sparing (*parcus*) and diligent (*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: *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: *παρὰ τῆς δόξης καὶ μνήμης τῆς περὶ τοῦ γεννήσαντος, τὸ αἰδῆμον καὶ ἄρρενικόν*.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: *παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς, τὸ ἡμερον, καὶ μενετικὸν ἀσαλεύτως ἐπὶ τῶν ἐξητασμένως κριθέντων· καὶ τὸ ἀκενόδοξον περὶ τὰς δοκούσας τιμάς· καὶ τὸ φιλόπονον καὶ ἐνδελεχές· καὶ τὸ ἀκουστικὸν τῶν ἐχόντων τι κοινωφελές εἰσφέρειν· καὶ τὸ ἀπαρτρέπτως εἰς τό κατ' ἀξίαν ἀπονεμητικὸν ἐκάστω· καὶ τὸ ἔμπειρον, ποῦ μὲν χρεῖα ἐντάσεως, ποῦ δὲ ἀνέσεως*.¹⁷⁷ It would be more likely to have

¹⁷³ *Pius*, 6.9-10; *Verus*, 2.11.

¹⁷⁴ Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, p. 27.

¹⁷⁵ cf. J Béranger, "Le Privatus dans l'*Histoire Auguste* et dans la tradition historique", *HAC* 1982/3, 1985, p. 27.

¹⁷⁶ *Med.*, 1.2. 'From what I have gathered about my Father and my recollections of him, humility and masculinity.'

¹⁷⁷ *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, *The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius: a study*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989, pp. 53-4.

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 6¹⁷⁸

6.1

Hadriano <apud> Baias absumpto cum Pius ad advehendas eius 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,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*,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,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, Ceionia Fabia,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.¹⁸³ This move allowed for Marcus to be more closely aligned with Antoninus' own *familia* through

¹⁷⁸ Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, pp. 118-27.

¹⁷⁹ *Hadrian*, 25.6; *Pius*, 5.1; cf. T.D. Barnes, "Hadrian's Farewell to Life", *CQ* 18.2, 1968, pp. 384-6; B. Baldwin, "Hadrian's Farewell to Life: some arguments for authenticity", *CQ* 20.2, 1970, pp. 372-4; "Hadrian's Death in the *Historia Augusta*", *Gymnasium* 90, 1983, p. 546; P.J. Alexander, "Letters and Speeches of the Emperor Hadrian", *HSCP* 49, 1938, pp. 170-2.

¹⁸⁰ Birley, 1987, *op.cit.*, p. 53.

¹⁸¹ *Pius*, 5.1-2.

¹⁸² *Marcus*, 29.10, *Verus*, 10.3-4; cf. A. Saekel, 'Zwei kritische Bemerkungen zu den Scriptoribus *Historiae Augustae*', *Klio* 12, 1912, p. 124.

¹⁸³ *Marcus*, 4.5-6; Barnes, 1967, *op.cit.*, p. 77.

Marcus' later marriage with Faustina II.¹⁸⁴ As Schwendemann has shown, this engagement was not immediately celebrated in public, it only being commemorated on coins in AD 140/1.¹⁸⁵ 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.¹⁸⁶

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 uoluerat, Faustina illi offeretur, quod Verus cui eam Hadrianus*.¹⁸⁷ 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.¹⁸⁸ 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 recepit: 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.¹⁸⁹ Cassius Dio also mentions that he received the title of *princeps iuventutis*,¹⁹⁰ 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,¹⁹¹ which was also in keeping with his Stoic ideals.

¹⁸⁴ *Marcus*, 6.6.

¹⁸⁵ Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, p. 119.

¹⁸⁶ Birley, 1987, *op.cit.*, p. 53.

¹⁸⁷ D. Magie, *The Scriptores Historiae Augustae*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1921, p. 144.

¹⁸⁸ A. Jaekel, "Zwei kritische Bemerkungen zu den Scriptores Historiae Augustae", *Klio* 12, 1912, pp. 121-5.

¹⁸⁹ cf. R.F. Newbold, "Non-Verbal Communication. in Suetonius and the *Historia Augusta*: power, posture and proxemics", *Acta Classica* 43, 2000, p. 108; L.R. Taylor, "Seviri Equitum Romanorum and Municipal Seviri: a study in the pre-military training among the Romans", *JRS* 14, 1924, p. 161.

¹⁹⁰ Dio, 71.35.5.

¹⁹¹ cf. Platner and Ashby, 1926, *op.cit.*, p. 193.

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 aruales* ('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 Faustina duxit uxorem et suscepta filia tribunicia potestate donatus est atque imperio extra urbem proconsulari addito iure quintae relationis: The marriage of Marcus Aurelius to Annia Galeria Faustina II in late spring of AD 145,¹⁹⁹

¹⁹² *Pius*, 10.4.

¹⁹³ *Marcus*, 5.3.

¹⁹⁴ cf. *Hadrian*, 27.3; cf. Benario, 1980, *op.cit.*, pp. 129-40.

¹⁹⁵ Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, p. 123.

¹⁹⁶ T. Mommsen, *Römisches Staatsrecht*, Graz: Akademische Druck, 1952, pp. 1102-3.

¹⁹⁷ cf. B.K. Harvey, "Two bases of Marcus Aurelius Caesar and the Roman Imperial Succession", *Historia* 53.1, 2004, pp. 47-8.

¹⁹⁸ cf. Champlin, 1980, *op.cit.*, pp. 118-30.

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.²⁰⁰ The daughter referred to in the text was born on the 30th of November, AD 147, Domitia Faustina, who only lived until AD 151.²⁰¹ Marcus gained *tribunicia potestas*²⁰² and proconsular *imperium* outside Rome following this,²⁰³ probably on the 1st of December, AD 147.²⁰⁴ The right that he was given to make five proposals to the Senate was customary for a recently appointed *princeps*,²⁰⁵ but the number of potential proposals never exceeded five.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.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.²⁰⁸ According to Syme,²⁰⁹ the Homullus mentioned here was the esteemed M. Valerius Homullus, who had been consul in AD 152.²¹⁰ Naturally, owing to Marcus' honesty and modesty as his heir, Antoninus Pius was not influenced at all, according to the author.²¹¹

²⁰⁰ *Pius*, 10.2; *BMC, Ant. Pius*, 1786.

²⁰¹ Birely, 1987, *op.cit.*, p. 239.

²⁰² cf. J. Gaudemet, *Le Concept d'Imperialism dans l'Histoire Auguste*, *HAC* 1968/9, 1970, p. 92.

²⁰³ *Pius*, 4.7; See M. Hammond, *The Antonine Monarchy*, *Papers and Monographs of the American Academy in Rome* 19, Rome, 1959, pp. 74-6; cf. P.L. Strack, "Zur 'tribunicia potestas' des Augustus", *Klio* 32, 1939, p. 361, n. 1.

²⁰⁴ Birely, 1987, *op.cit.*, p. 44.

²⁰⁵ *Pert.*, 5.36.

²⁰⁶ *Alex.*, 1.3; *Prob.*, 12.8.

²⁰⁷ Stanton, 1975, *op.cit.*, p. 534.

²⁰⁸ *Pius*, 11.8.

²⁰⁹ Syme, 1972, *op.cit.*, p. 130.

²¹⁰ cf. W. McDermott, "Homullus and Trajan", *Historia* 29, 1980, p. 116.

²¹¹ cf. Birley, 1987, *op.cit.*, p. 31.

Section 7²¹²

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 duas noctes per tot annos ab eo mansit diversis vicibus*).²¹³ 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*.²¹⁴ Béranger has also noted that this passage represents an example of metrical devices that have been used by the biographer in some sections.²¹⁵

7.3

ob hoc Antoninus Pius.....transire iussit The commendation of Marcus to his *amicis* (friends) and *praefectis* (prefects) symbolised the formal declaration of him as his successor.²¹⁶ 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.²¹⁷

²¹² Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, pp. 127-34.

²¹³ Syme, 1968, *op.cit.*, p. 160, n. 4.

²¹⁴ White, 1967, *op.cit.*, p. 116.

²¹⁵ cf. J. Béranger, “Observations sur les clausules dans l’Histoire Auguste”, *HAC* 1979/81, 1983, p. 50.

²¹⁶ cf. Mommsen, 1890, *op.cit.*, p. 235.

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<i>men 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>lictum²²² cum alio 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*

²¹⁸ Ummidius Quadratus held a consulship in AD 167 cf. Syme, 1968, *op.cit.*, pp. 97ff.

²¹⁹ *Marcus*, 1.8, 4.7.

²²⁰ cf. Hirschfeld, 1902, *op.cit.*, p. 315.

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.

²²⁴ cf. J. Béranger, "L'Hérédité Dynastique dans l'*Histoire Auguste*: procédé et tradition", *HAC* 1971, 1974, p. 2.

²²⁵ J. Béranger, "L'Expression du pouvoir supreme dans l'*Histoire Auguste*", *HAC* 1971, 1974, p. 47.

²²⁶ B. Baldwin, "Festus the Historian", *Historia* 27, 1978, p. 208.

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.²²⁷ 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

Antonin<i> mox ips<e> nomen recepit.....adscribi praeceperunt: 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.²²⁸ 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 coniunctionem pueros et puellas novorum nominum frumentariae perceptioni adscribi praeceperunt*) that were assigned a share in the grain distributions in celebration of this would have been groups such as the *puellae alimentariae Faustinae*, who had been founded by Antoninus Pius.²²⁹ Stanton has noted the potential propaganda value of such institutions,²³⁰ which would have provided great incentive for Marcus' continuation of Pius' policies. Duncan-Jones has suggested that the alimentary scheme of Marcus

²²⁷ *BMC, Marcus*, 7-9.

²²⁸ Syme, 1971, *op.cit.*, p. 87.

²²⁹ *Pius*, 8.1.

²³⁰ Stanton, 1969, *op.cit.*, p. 587.

Aurelius was largely inefficient,²³¹ which would indicate that Marcus' policies simply continued those of his predecessors,²³² and that they were not as successful as the biographer implies.

7.9

actis 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*.²³³ This was particularly important in relation to the Praetorian guard, which is shown through the promise of twenty thousand *sestercii* for each of the common soldiers,²³⁴ 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.²³⁵ This was commemorated on several numismatic issues in AD 161, with the inscription *Lib(eralitas) Augustor(um)*.²³⁶ 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.²³⁷ 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:*²³⁸ 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.²³⁹ The *sociales* mentioned in this passage would

²³¹ R.P. Duncan-Jones, "The Purpose and Organisation of the *Alimenta*", *PBSR* 32, 1964, pp. 142-3.

²³² cf. Stanton, 1969, *op.cit.*, pp. 574-5.

²³³ cf. Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, p. 133.

²³⁴ cf. R. Delmaire, "Les Donations Imperiales dans l'*Histoire Auguste*", *HAC* 1990, 1991, pp. 147-50.

²³⁵ G.R. Stanton, "Marcus Aurelius, Lucius Verus, and Commodus: 1962-1972", *ANRW* 2.2, 1975, pp. 526-8. Also see Hammond, 1959, *op.cit.*, p. 171.

²³⁶ *BMC, Marcus*, 31-2.

²³⁷ R. Syme, "The Imperial Finances under Domitian, Nerva and Trajan", *JRS* 20, 1930, pp. 64-5.

²³⁸ cf. J.-Cl. Richard, "Incinération et inhumation aux funérailles imperiales: Histoire du rituel de l'apothéose pendant le Haut-Empire", *Latomus* 25, 1956, p. 789.

²³⁹ Hammond, 1959, *op.cit.*, pp. 58-91; E. Hohl, "Die angebliche 'Doppelbestattung des Antoninus Pius'", *Klio* 31, 1938, p. 169.

have been the *Sodales Antoniniani*,²⁴⁰ 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*).²⁴¹ It appears that in addition to these honours, Marcus and Lucius also erected a commemorative column to Antoninus Pius in AD 161/2.²⁴² The institution of Marcus' reign with Verus also saw a change in his official portraiture, which took on the guise of a mature *princeps*.²⁴³

Section 8²⁴⁴

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.²⁴⁵ 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

²⁴⁰ *Hadrian*, 27.3; *Pius*, 13.4.

²⁴¹ See Hammond, 1959, *op.cit.*, p. 207.

²⁴² L. Vogel, *The Column of Antoninus Pius*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973, p. 1.

²⁴³ M. Wegner, *Die Herrscherbildnisse in Antoninischer Zeit*, Berlin: Mann, 1939, p. 40.

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*).²⁴⁶ As White has noted,²⁴⁷ 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.²⁴⁸ The *curator* in 161 was A. Platorius Nepos,²⁴⁹ 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 Vologaesius during the reign of Antoninus Pius.²⁵⁰ Vologaesius’ active role in the conflict was also emphasised by Cassius Dio: ὁ γὰρ Οὐολόγαισος πολέμου ἤρξε, καὶ στρατόπεδόν τε ὅλον Ῥωμαϊκὸν τὸ ὑπὸ Σεβηριανῶ τεταγμένον ἐν τῇ Ἐλεγγείᾳ, χωρίῳ τινὶ τῆς Ἀρμενίας, περισχὼν πάντοθεν αὐτοῖς ἡγεμόσι κατετόξευσε καὶ διέφθειρε, καὶ τῆς Συρίας ταῖς πόλεσι πολὺς ἐπήει καὶ

²⁴⁶ cf. D.R. Shackleton-Bailey, “Notes on the *Historia Augusta*”, *Eranos* 81, 1983, pp. 118.

²⁴⁷ White, 1967, *op.cit.*, p. 116.

²⁴⁸ Birley, 1987, *op.cit.*, p. 120.

²⁴⁹ *ILS* 5932.

²⁵⁰ *Pius*, 9.6.

φοβερός.²⁵¹ 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.....Catthos 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

²⁵¹ Dio, 71.2.1. 'Vologaesius, 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 *PIR*² S 306; Dio, 71.2.

²⁵³ A. Garzetti, *From Tiberius to the Antonines*, London: Methuen, 1974, pp. 476-7.

²⁵⁴ E.N. Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire*, Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1976, p. 116.

²⁵⁵ Birley, 1987, *op.cit.*, p. 44.

²⁵⁶ cf. E. Birley, "Some Names in the *Historia Augusta*", *HAC* 1979/81, 1983, p. 69.

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

²⁵⁸ cf. *Marcus*, 3.8.

²⁵⁹ Birley, 1987, *op.cit.*, p. 45.

²⁶⁰ cf. H. Nesselhauf, "Westgermanische Bodenfunde des ersten bis dritten Jahrhunderts nach Christus aus Mittel- und Westdeutschland (Review)", *Klio* 32, 1939, p. 444.

the problems in the north later in the text.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.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 161.²⁶³ 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,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

²⁶¹ See *Marcus*, 22 in particular.

²⁶² S.S. Frere, *Britannia*, London: Pimlico, 1967, pp. 155-6.

²⁶³ See *Marcus*, 8.4.

²⁶⁴ Stanton, 1969, *op.cit.*, p. 580.

of *Profectio Aug(usti)* and *For(tuna) Red(ux)*.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,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,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.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.²⁶⁹ As a further comparison, Marcus is then shown to be working strenuously, while enduring the excesses of Verus, against his will.²⁷⁰

Barnes has argued that Section 8.12-14 was entirely the creation of the biographer,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.²⁷² In these comparisons it is evident that the biographer sought to cast each of them in a particular fashion.

²⁶⁵ *BMC, Marcus*, 1349-50, 1380.

²⁶⁶ Barnes, 1967, *op.cit.*, p. 70.

²⁶⁷ *Verus*, 6.7.

²⁶⁸ *Verus*, 6.8-8.1.

²⁶⁹ *Marcus*, 9.1.

²⁷⁰ cf. P. Soverini, *Problemi di Critica Testuale nella Historia Augusta*, Bologna: Patron Editore, 1981, p. 153.

²⁷¹ Barnes, 1967, *op.cit.*, p. 70.

²⁷² cf. Stanton, 1969, *op.cit.*, p. 586.

8.14

denique omnia, quae ad bellum erant necessaria, Romae positus et disposuit 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 9²⁷⁴

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

²⁷³ Barnes, 1967, *op.cit.*, p. 70.

²⁷⁴ Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, pp. 150-65.

²⁷⁵ cf. K.-P. Johne, "Zu den Siegernamen der Kaiser Marc Aurel und Commodus", *Klio* 48, 1967, p. 177.

²⁷⁶ *BMC, Verus*, 236-41.

²⁷⁷ *BMC, Marcus*, 271-6.

²⁷⁸ *PIR*² S 880; D. Atkinson, "The Governors of Britain from Claudius to Diocletian", *JRS* 12, 1922, p. 67.

²⁷⁹ Garzetti, 1974, *op.cit.*, pp. 271-6.

²⁸⁰ *Verus*, 7.8; *BMC, Marcus*, 300-2.

delayed the use of *Armeniacus* in order to allow Lucius Verus the respect he had earned 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

profli<g>ato autem bello.....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

²⁸¹ Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, p. 150.

²⁸² *BMC, Verus*, 1271-6.

²⁸³ *BMC, Marcus*, 401-11.

²⁸⁴ *Marcus*, 12.7.

²⁸⁵ Syme, 1979, *op.cit.*, pp. 325ff; Alföldy, 1977, *op.cit.*, p. 169.

brother of Lucius Aelius Caesar. Verus ultimately met up with Lucilla in Ephesus,²⁸⁶ where they married.²⁸⁷ As Barnes has noted, *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 166.²⁸⁸

The statement that Marcus sought to avoid accusations of aspiring to gain the honour of completing the Armenian and Parthian War (9.5 *ad eum misit Romamque statim rediit, revocatus eorum sermonibus, qui dicebant Marcum velle finiti belli gloriam 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 *denique omnia, quae ad bellum erant necessaria, Romae positus et disposuit 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.²⁸⁹ Lucius Verus had already received the title *Armeniacus* and celebrated the title on his numismatic issues by AD 163,²⁹⁰ which Marcus also did by AD 164,²⁹¹ 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),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 (*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 *Vita Veri* mentions that Lucius met with Annia Lucilla in Ephesus.²⁹³ Nevertheless, the continuity from Sections 9.4 to 9.6 appears somewhat convoluted.

²⁸⁶ *Verus*, 7.7.

²⁸⁷ Birley, 1987, *op.cit.*, p. 45.

²⁸⁸ Barnes, 1967, *op.cit.*, p. 72.

²⁸⁹ cf. Rosen, 1997, *op.cit.*, p. 78.

²⁹⁰ *BMC, Verus*, 236-41.

²⁹¹ *BMC, Marcus*, 271-6.

²⁹² Birley, 1987, *op.cit.*, pp. 128-9.

²⁹³ *Verus*, 7.7.

9.7-9

inter haec liberales.....auctonibus 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*.²⁹⁴ 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;²⁹⁵ 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’ (*adsertionibus*),²⁹⁶ 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 5,²⁹⁷ 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,²⁹⁸ 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

²⁹⁴ cf. T. Reekmans, “Prosperity and Security in the *Historia Augusta*”, *Ancient Society* 10, 1979, pp. 245-6.

²⁹⁵ cf. F. Millar, “The *Aerarium* and Its Officials under the Empire”, *JRS* 54, 1964, p. 35.

²⁹⁶ See *Marcus*, 10.1.

²⁹⁷ Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, pp. 28-30.

²⁹⁸ Schwartz, 1964, *op.cit.*, pp. 139-48, 160-3.

Senatum multis cognitionibus et maxime ad se pertinentibus iudicem dedit).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,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 *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*.³⁰¹

The general view of this law is that *neque qui<s>quam principum amplius senatui detulit* ('None of the emperors exhibited more reverence for the Senate than himself').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.³⁰³ Noyen has interpreted Marcus' involvement in the development of Imperial policies as being solely his responsibility,³⁰⁴ but this passage clearly refers to Marcus' delegation of responsibility to the Senate in this regard.³⁰⁵

10.3-5

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

²⁹⁹ *Marcus*, 10.1. 'He made the Senate arbitrator in numerous investigations, even in those that were rightly under his own control.'

³⁰⁰ *Digest*, 40.15.1.

³⁰¹ *Digest*, 49.2.1.4.

³⁰² cf. Hammond, 1959, *op.cit.*, p. 423; Baynes, 1926, *op.cit.*, p. 80.

³⁰³ White, 1967, *op.cit.*, p. 116.

³⁰⁴ P. Noyen, "Marcus Aurelius, the greatest practician of Stoicism", *L'Antiquité Classique* 24, 1955, pp. 373-4.

³⁰⁵ Stanton, 1969, *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 dignitatibus*),³⁰⁶ 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 crimine dignitates tribunicias aediliciasque concessit*).³⁰⁷ 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.³⁰⁸ 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,³⁰⁹ despite such differences in this account. It 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.³¹⁰ 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.

³⁰⁷ See A. Chastagnol, "Latus Clavus et Adlectio dans l'*Histoire Auguste*", *HAC* 1975/6, 1978, pp. 118-250; Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, pp. 31-2.

³⁰⁸ See J. Scholtemeijer, "*Historia Augusta: Nomen Antoninorum*", *Acta Classica* 19, 1976, p. 107.

³⁰⁹ Stanton, 1969, *op.cit.*, p. 586.

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*).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.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,³¹³ as did Trajan.³¹⁴ Marcus appears to have been following in their tradition,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 senatui, etiamsi nihil esset referendum, si Romae fuit; si vero aliquid referre voluit, etiam de Campania ipse venit. [10.8] comitiis praeterea etiam usque ad noctem frequenter interfuit neque umquam recessit de curia nisi consul dixisset [10.9] 'nihil vos moramur patres conscripti'*.³¹⁶ This representation was also in keeping with overall portrayal of Marcus' diligence in relation to the undertaking of his official duties.

10.10-12

iudiciari<a>e rei singularem diligentiam adhibuit.....non redditis causis: The portrayal of Marcus' interest in jurisprudence has already been mentioned by the

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, *op.cit.*, p. 72; Fündling, 2006, Vol. 1, *op.cit.*, pp. 479-80.

³¹² cf. P. Garnsey, "Adultery Trials and the Survival of the *Quaestiones* in the Severan Age", *JRS* 57, 1967, pp. 57-8.

³¹³ *Dio*, 68.2.

³¹⁴ *Dio*, 68.5.

³¹⁵ cf. Stanton, 1969, *op.cit.*, p. 574.

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, Conscript Fathers.'

biographer,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: *iudiciari<a>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 *princeps*. There have been numerous comments in other ancient sources that account for Marcus' significant interests in this regard.³¹⁸

The first statement is that Marcus increased the number of court-days to 230 per year (*fastis dies iudic<i>arios addidit, ita ut ducentos triginta dies annuos rebus agendis litibusque disceptandis constitueret*), which was probably due to a back-log of cases that may have been accruing at the time.³¹⁹ Following from this the biographer mentions that he was the first emperor to appoint a *praetor* in charge of the inherited property of wards (*praetorem tutelarem*), which had previously been under the control of the consuls (**10.11** *praetorem tutelarem primus fecit, cum ante tutores a consulibus poscerentur, ut diligentius 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: *praetor cui primo iurisdictio pupillaris a sanctissimis imp(eratoribus) mandata est*.³²⁰ It is significant that there was no mention of Lucius Verus' involvement in the development of this legislation,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 (**10.12** *de curatoribus vero, cum ante non nisi ex lege Laetoria*³²² *vel propter lasciviam vel propter dementiam darentur, ita statuit 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

³¹⁷ *Marcus*, 3.6-7.

³¹⁸ *CJ.*, 7.2.6; *Digest*, 31.67.10; Victor, *De Caes.*, 16.11. See also J.H. Oliver, *Marcus Aurelius: aspects of civic and cultural policy in the East*, Hesperia Supplement 13, 1970.

³¹⁹ Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, p. 33.

³²⁰ *CIL* 5.1874.

³²¹ Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, p. 34.

³²² The use of *lex Laetoria* has been accepted, but it is quite clear that the author was intending to refer to the Plaetorian law in this instance.

Plautorian Law (*lex Plaetoria de circumscriptione minorum annis XXV*),³²³ 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.³²⁴

The reliability of these representations of Marcus' legislative interests has been largely confirmed by the various epigraphic and later comments in the extant treatises,³²⁵ which may suggest the reliability of this passage.³²⁶ 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 11³²⁷

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.³²⁸ 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 invenit*), in a similar fashion to his predecessor, Hadrian.³²⁹ 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

³²³ Plautus, *Ps.*, 303; Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, p. 35.

³²⁴ *Digest*, 27.10.1; Cicero, *de Inv.* 2.50.148.

³²⁵ See Birley, 1987, *op.cit.*, p. 133; Rosen, 1997, *op.cit.*, pp. 78, 80.

³²⁶ cf. W. Williams, "Individuality in the Imperial Constitutions: Hadrian and the Antonines", *JRS* 66, 1976, pp. 78-82.

³²⁷ Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, pp. 35-47.

³²⁸ See J. Béranger, "Les Procès politiques évoqués par l'*Histoire Auguste*", *HAC* 1975/6, 1978, pp. 64-5.

³²⁹ *Hadrian*, 7.8. See Benario, 1980, *op.cit.*, p. 74; Fündling, 2006, *op.cit.*, pp. 488-9.

clearly could do little wrong.³³⁰ 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.³³¹

11.3-4

Italicis civitatibus famis.....aureos egrederetur: 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 omnifariam 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,³³² 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,³³³ as shown through these financial limitations for their presentation.³³⁴ 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.³³⁵

³³⁰ For similar observations about the representation of Hadrian, see B. Meissner, "Geschichtsbilder in der *Historia Augusta*", *Philologus* 137, 1993, pp. 274-8.

³³¹ White, 1967, *op.cit.*, p. 116.

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.

³³⁴ Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, pp. 39-40.

³³⁵ cf. Birley, 2006, *op.cit.*, p. 21.

11.5-6

vias etiam urbis.....iura praeceperat: 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 praeceperat*. 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 exegissent: 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> Italica allectione contra.....*³³⁹ *Tra<ia>nique praecepta 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*.

³³⁹ Peter has identified a lacuna at this point (H. Peter, *Scriptores historiae Augustae: iterum recensuit apparatusque criticum addidit*, Leipzig: Teubner, 1884). See R. Syme, "Hadrian and Italica", *JRS* 54, 1964, pp. 147-9; Barnes, 1978, *op.cit.*, p. 32.

reinstitution of Trajan's policies in relation to the Spanish provinces.³⁴⁰ As Syme has shown,³⁴¹ this had nothing to do with the levies of troops, but the overall theme was concerned with financial policy. The phrase *praecepta Traiani* has been interpreted as Trajan's military regulations,³⁴² 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.³⁴³ The five percent tax on inheritance had been instituted by Augustus,³⁴⁴ whereas the provision that Senators of foreign birth should invest at least a fourth of their capital in Italy (*senatores peregrini quartam partem in Italia possiderent*) was a reduction from Trajan's policy that required a third of their capital in Italy.³⁴⁵

The mention of the legislation concerning property inherited from a mother was in reference to the *Senatus Consultum Orfitianum*,³⁴⁶ which was passed in AD 178.³⁴⁷ The final sentence of this passage simply further emphasised Marcus' responsibility for fiscal and administrative policies: *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

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

³⁴⁰ *Hadrian*, 12.4. See Benario, 1980, *op.cit.*, pp. 90-2; R. Knox McElderry, "Vespasian's Reconstruction of Spain", *JRS* 8, 1918, p. 82.

³⁴¹ Syme, 1964, *op.cit.*, pp. 147-9.

³⁴² cf. A.N. Sherwin-White, *The Letters of Pliny*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966, p. 600.

³⁴³ cf. R.E.A. Palmer, "The *Excusatio Magisteri* and the Administration of Rome under Commodus", *Athenaeum* 52, 1974, p. 276; H. Galsterer, "Spiele und Spiele: die Organisation der *ludi Juvenales* in der Kaiserzeit", *Athenaeum* 59, 1981, p. 413.

³⁴⁴ cf. Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, p. 44.

³⁴⁵ *Plin., Ep.*, 6.19.

³⁴⁶ M. Meinhardt, *Die Senatusconsulta Tertullianum und Orfitianum in ihrer Bedeutung für das klassische römische Erbrecht*, Graz, Wien, Köln: Bohlau, 1967.

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,³⁴⁸ rather than simply military, office, considering that under Severus and Severus Alexander the post was held by the foremost jurists (Papinian, Ulpian and Paullus).³⁴⁹

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*,³⁵⁰ and was probably a member of Marcus' *consilium*. Scaevola was clearly influential during the reign of Hadrian,³⁵¹ and the reference to him by the biographer (*usus autem est Scaevola praecipue 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,³⁵² but this seems to disregard the frequent comparisons that are drawn between the two *principes* throughout this *Vita*.³⁵³

Section 12³⁵⁴

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*

³⁴⁸ See Hammond, 1959, *op.cit.*, p. 378.

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.

³⁵¹ *Hadrian*, 8.9; cf. Fündling, 2006, Vol. 1, *op.cit.*, pp. 512-14.

³⁵² Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, pp. 46-7.

³⁵³ cf. Stanton, 1969, *op.cit.*, p. 586.

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,³⁵⁵ 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 detestandae honorem petentem moneret, ut se ab opinionibus populi vindicaret, et ille contra respondisset multos, qui secum in harena pugnassent, se praetores videre, patienter tulit. ac ne in quenquam facile vindicaret, praetorem, qui quaedam pessime egerat, non abdicare se praetura iussit, sed collegae iure dictionem mandavit. The inclusion of these examples was intended to epitomise Marcus' tolerance, particularly in relation to the episode concerning Veterasinus. 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.³⁵⁶ 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 throughout the entire *Vita Marci Antonini*.³⁵⁷

³⁵⁵ C. Lessing, *Scriptorum Historiae Augustae Lexicon*, Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1964, p. 355.

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 Verō 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 166,³⁵⁸ as mentioned in Section 9.3, where Marcus initially refuses the title before his colleague's return, which was by late August, AD 166.³⁵⁹ 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,³⁶⁰ despite the previous claim that Marcus was actually in control of the war.³⁶¹ 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

³⁵⁸ Barnes, 1967, *op.cit.*, p. 72.

³⁵⁹ *ILS* 366.

³⁶⁰ cf. Birley, 1987, *op.cit.*, p. 31.

³⁶¹ See *Marcus*, 8.14.

Commodus, who was born in AD 161,³⁶² and Marcus Annus Verus, who was born in AD 162/3. The ceremony for the conferral of these titles was held on 12th October, AD 166.³⁶³

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<i>[m] tantum Germanicum se vocaret, quod sibi bello prop<r>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 172.³⁶⁴ 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 culcitas subici iussit. unde hodieque re[c]te 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,³⁶⁵ which indicates the desire of the biographer to entertain his audience while exhibiting his intended presentation of the main character.

³⁶² O. Hekster, *Commodus: an emperor at the crossroads*, Amsterdam: Gieben, 2002, p. 30.

³⁶³ *Commodus*, 1.10, 11.13; cf. A.R. Birley, "Victoria Romana (Review)", *JRS* 62, 1972, p. 196.

³⁶⁴ *Commodus*, 11.13; Dio, 71.3.5.

³⁶⁵ White, 1967, *op.cit.*, p. 117.

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.³⁶⁶ This conflict was officially referred to as the *bellum Germanicum*,³⁶⁷ which began before the completion of the Parthian campaign,³⁶⁸ 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*).³⁶⁹ 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*.³⁷⁰

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 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.³⁷¹ However, as Stanton has noted,³⁷² there is no other evidence to support the claim that Lucius neglected his role as *princeps*.

³⁶⁶ See K.P. Johne, "Zur Widerspiegelung der Krise des römischen Reiches in der *Historia Augusta*", *Klio* 63, 1981, p. 620; Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, pp. 165-7.

³⁶⁷ *CIL* 6.1549.

³⁶⁸ Barnes, 1967, *op.cit.*, p. 73.

³⁶⁹ See Garzetti, 1974, *op.cit.*, pp. 480-4.

³⁷⁰ Rosen, 1997, *op.cit.*, p. 86.

³⁷¹ G. Barta, "Lucius Verus and the Marcomannic Wars", *Acta Classica* 7, 1971, pp. 61-71.

³⁷² Stanton, 1969, *op.cit.*, p. 540.

Section 13³⁷³

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 ritu lectisternia*) was an ancient purification ceremony,³⁷⁴ 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.³⁷⁵ 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.³⁷⁶

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.³⁷⁷ 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,³⁷⁸ but this appears to have been highly unlikely. However, it seems that this pestilence was exceptionally severe,³⁷⁹ going on to ravage Europe as far as the Rhine, according to

³⁷³ Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, pp. 54-62.

³⁷⁴ cf. J. Geffcken, “Religionsgeschichtliches in der Historia Augusta”, *Hermes* 55, 1920, p. 281.

³⁷⁵ Livy, 5.13.5-6.

³⁷⁶ Ammianus Marcellinus, 29.6.1.

³⁷⁷ *Marcus*, 14.5.

³⁷⁸ *Verus*, 8.1-2.

³⁷⁹ J.F. Gilliam, “The Plague under Marcus Aurelius”, *AJPh* 82.3, 1961, pp. 228-51; “Die Pest unter Marc Aurel”, in R. Klein (ed.), *Marc Aurel*, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1979, p. 144; R.J. and M.L. Littman, “Galen and the Antonine Plague”, *AJPh* 94.3, 1973, pp. 243-4; A. Premerstein, “Untersuchungen zur Geschichte des Kaisers Marcus”, *Klio* 11, 1911, p. 356.

Ammianus Marcellinus,³⁸⁰ which continued for as long a period as into AD 180.³⁸¹ According to other sources, this pestilence returned again during the reign of Commodus.³⁸²

The response by the *principes* seems quite appropriate for the circumstances:³⁸³ *tunc autem Antonini leges sepeliendi sepulchrorumque asperrima<s> sanxerunt, quando quidem caverunt, ne quis <ut> velle<t> [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 multosque ex proceribus, quorum amplissimis Antoninus statuas 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 iuberet [et] e<c>ferri et vano cuidam, qui diripiendae urbis occasionem cum quibusdam consciis requirens de caprifici arbore in campo Martio contionabundus ignem de caelo lapsurum finemque mundi affore diceret, s<i> ipse lapsus ex arbore in ciconiam verteretur, cum statuto tempore decidisset atque ex sinu ciconiam emi<si>isset, perducto ad se atque confesso 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

³⁸⁰ Ammianus Marcellinus, 23.6.24. See J.F. Gilliam, "Ammianus and the *Historia Augusta*: the lost books and the period 117-285", *HAC* 1970, 1972, pp. 131-4.

³⁸¹ *Marcus*, 28.4; *CIL* 3.5567 [dated to AD 182].

³⁸² Dio, 72.14.3; Herodian, 1.12.1-2.

³⁸³ P. Oliva, "Zur Bedeutung der Markomannenkriege", in Klein, R. (ed.), *Marc Aurel*, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1979, p. 123.

apparent: to emphasise the clemency, tolerance and consideration of Marcus, rather than to give a coherent narrative of the events and their context.³⁸⁴

Section 14³⁸⁵

14.1-3

Profecti tamen sunt paludati ambo imperatores.....nostris placuisset imperatoribus: The biographer has made a significant statement about the circumstances in this passage, by illustrating the aggressive movements of the various tribes (*profecti tamen sunt paludati ambo imperatores et Victualis et Marcomannis cuncta turbantibus, aliis etiam gentibus, quae pulsae a superioribus barbaris fugerant, nisi reciperentur, bellum inferentibus*), but largely in order that the successes of Marcus could be emphasised (*nec parum profuit ista profectio, cum Aquileiam usque venissent. nam plerique reges et cum populis suis se retraxerunt et tumultus auctores interemerunt*).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.³⁸⁷ This was then further emphasised through the mention of how the Quadi had lost their leader,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 3rd Century AD, which is also supported by the archaeological evidence from the region.³⁸⁹ Schwendemann rightly points out that the reality of such a comprehensive subjugation of the Germanic tribes at this time was highly unlikely,³⁹⁰ which further emphasises the partiality of the biographer.

³⁸⁴ cf. Rosen, 1997, *op.cit.*, pp. 89-90.

³⁸⁵ Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, pp. 167-77.

³⁸⁶ For discussion of this theme within the *HA*, see V Neri, "L'Imperatore come Miles: tacito, Attalo, e la datazione dell'*Historia Augusta*", *HAC* 2000, 2002, p. 381.

³⁸⁷ cf. Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, pp. 169-70; Rosen, 1997, *op.cit.*, pp. 86-7.

³⁸⁸ See L.F. Pitts, "Relations between Rome and the German 'Kings' on the Middle Danube in the First to Fourth Centuries A.D.", *JRS* 79, 1989, pp. 49-51.

³⁸⁹ H. Schonberger, "The Roman Frontier in Germany: an archaeological survey", *JRS* 59, 1969, pp. 171-7.

³⁹⁰ Schwendemann, 1923, *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 transcensis Alpibus longius processerunt composueruntque omnia, quae ad munimen Italiae 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

³⁹¹ cf. Schwartz, 1964, *op.cit.*, p. 159, n. 75.

³⁹² cf. A. Premerstein, "Untersuchungen zur Geschichte des Kaisers Marcus", *Klio* 13, 1913, p. 79.

³⁹³ cf. Syme, 1968, *op.cit.*, p. 130, n. 1.

³⁹⁴ *Verus*, 9.10.

³⁹⁵ *CIL* 3. p. 888.

³⁹⁶ Garzetti, 1974, *op.cit.*, pp. 480-506.

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

bi<d>[q]uoque, postquam i[n]ter ingressi sunt, sedens cum fratre in vehiculo Lucius apoplexi arreptus perit: The death of Lucius Verus occurred in AD 169 at Altinum in Venetia,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, correptus Lucius depositus e vehiculo detracto sanguine Altinum perductus, cum triduo mutus vixisset, apud Altinum periit.*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].

³⁹⁷ *Verus*, 9.10-11.

³⁹⁸ cf. Schwartz, 1964, *op.cit.*, p. 159, n. 75.

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 devectum est et inlatum maiorum sepulchris. 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<i>, quod fratrem consecrasset, oc<c>ulte ostendit omnia bellica consilia sua fuisse, 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.

⁴⁰⁷ Syme, 1972, *op.cit.*, p. 292.

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 aliter senatus

⁴⁰⁹ Dio, 71.3.1; *Verus*, 9.11.

⁴¹⁰ See Bradley, 1978, *op.cit.*, p. 14; Adams, 2005, *op.cit.*

accepit, 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 <iu>ris et honoris et pecuniae plurimum detulit. erat enim famae 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

⁴¹¹ cf. Schwartz, 1972, *op.cit.*, pp. 253-4.

pleasure) following the passing of Lucius Verus, Marcus expresses great consideration in relation to the dependants of his former Imperial colleague,⁴¹² 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 quisque de se diceret, emendans quae bene reprehensa viderentur.*⁴¹³ 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 τροφῆως, τὸ μήτε Πρασιανὸς μήτε Βενετιανός, μήτε Παλμουλάριος ἢ Σκουτάριος γενέσθαι· καὶ τὸ φερέπονον καὶ ὀλιγοδεές, καὶ τὸ αὐτουργικὸν καὶ ἀπολύπραγμον· καὶ τὸ δυσπρόσδεκτον διαβολῆς.**⁴¹⁴ 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

proficiscens ad bellum Germanicum.....dabatur, invitae 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 Annia Lucilla, who had been married to Lucius Verus, to Claudius Pompeianus.⁴¹⁵ This man was honoured by the people of Pompeiopolis as **πάτρ[ω]να καὶ κτίστην,**⁴¹⁶ which has been interpreted as indicating his eastern origins.⁴¹⁷ 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 (*proficiscens 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.

⁴¹³ cf. Baynes, 1926, *op.cit.*, p. 80.

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.'

⁴¹⁵ Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, pp. 177-8.

⁴¹⁶ *IGRR* 3.135.

⁴¹⁷ Walton, 1929, *op.cit.*, p. 59.

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),⁴¹⁸ but also because both Faustina and Lucilla opposed the union (*sed has nuptias et Faustina et ipsa, quae dabatur, invitae habuerunt*).⁴¹⁹ 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.⁴²⁰

Section 21⁴²¹

21.1-2

Cum Mauri Hispanias prope omnes vastarent, res per legatos bene gestae sunt. et cum per Aegyptum Bucolici[s] milites gravia multa fecissent, per Av<i>dium Cassium retunsi 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 15.⁴²² The account takes the form of providing an unadorned account with little reference to the context other than the military developments of the period.⁴²³ The date of the subjugation of the Mauri in Spain was probably AD 172/3,⁴²⁴ which was

⁴¹⁸ This consideration could be quite significant owing to the overtly pagan (and anti-Christian) views of the biographer overall. See R. Moes, *Les Héliénismes de L'Époque Théodosienne*, Strasbourg: Association des Publications près les Universités de Strasbourg, 1980, pp. iii-iv; J. Straub, *Heidnische Geschichtsapologetik in der christlichen Spätantike*, Bonn: *Antiquitas* 4.1, 1963, p. 1-9.

⁴¹⁹ B. Baldwin, "The *Vita Avidii*", *Klio* 58, 1976, p. 15.

⁴²⁰ T.W. Africa, *Rome of the Caesars*, New York: Wiley, 1965, p. 198; cf. Stanton, 1969, *op.cit.*, p. 582.

⁴²¹ Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, pp. 67-92.

⁴²² cf. Premerstein, 1913, *op.cit.*, p. 86.

⁴²³ See A. Premerstein, "Untersuchungen zur Geschichte des Kaisers Marcus", *Klio* 12, 1912, pp. 167-8.

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 καλούμενοι δὲ Βουκόλοι κατὰ τὴν Αἴγυπτον κινήθεις καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους Αἰγυπτίους προσαποστήσαντες ὑπὸ ἱερεῖ τινὶ Ἰσιδώρῳ.....ἔπειτα ἐκ παρατάξεως τοὺς ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ Ῥωμαίους νικήσαντες μικροῦ καὶ τὴν Ἀλεξάνδρειαν εἶλον, 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 (*execto 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.'

⁴²⁸ L. Flam-Zuckermann, "À propos d'une inscription de Suisse (*CIL*, XIII, 5010): étude du phénomène du brigandage dans l'Empire romain", *Latomus* 29, 1970, p. 466.

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

⁴³⁰ *Marcus*, 12.8. See Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, pp. 178-80.

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

⁴³¹ Rosen, 1997, *op.cit.*, p. 55.

⁴³² Tacitus, *An.*, 2.82.

⁴³³ Stanton, 1969, *op.cit.*, p. 585.

⁴³⁴ cf. Premerstein, 1912, *op.cit.*, p. 166.

⁴³⁵ See J. Burian, "Sanctus als Wertbegriff in der *Historia Augusta*", *Klio* 63, 1981, pp. 623-38.

⁴³⁶ Livy, 22.57.11; Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, pp. 68-9.

⁴³⁷ E. Birley, "Local Militias in the Roman Empire", *HAC* 1972/4, 1976, pp. 67-8.

situation that Marcus faced in relation to the northern frontier.⁴³⁸ The *Diogmitae* 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 368.⁴³⁹ 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,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*.⁴⁴¹ At a later stage they were named the *Legio II* and *III Italica*.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 rerum aulicarum, ut diximus, fecit in foro divi Traiani, in qua praeter vestes et pocula et vasa aurea etiam signa cum tabulis magnorum artificum vendidit*).⁴⁴³ While the *ut diximus* could be taken as an indication of the inclusion of the interpolation as a part of the *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.⁴⁴⁴ This seems logical in view of the numerous correlations between the text of the *Vita Marci* (let alone the *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 *HA* biographies.⁴⁴⁵

⁴³⁸ Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, p. 71.

⁴³⁹ Ammianus Marcellinus, 27.9.6.

⁴⁴⁰ Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, p. 72.

⁴⁴¹ *CIL* 3.1980.

⁴⁴² Dio. 55.24.4.

⁴⁴³ cf. Platner and Ashby, 1926, *op.cit.*, p. 240.

⁴⁴⁴ See Chapter Four for further discussion of this reference in relation to the interpolation, pages 143-50.

⁴⁴⁵ White, 1967, *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 22⁴⁵⁰**22.1**

Gentes omnes ab Illyrici limite usque in Galliam conspiraverant, ut Marcomanni, Varistae, Hermunduri et Quadi, Suevi, Sarmat<a>e, Lacringes et Burei €hi aliique cum Victualis, Sosibes, Sicobotes, Roxolani, Basternae, Halani, Peu<c>ini, Costoboci. iminebat 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.

⁴⁴⁹ Rosen, 1997, *op.cit.*, p. 103.

⁴⁵⁰ Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, pp. 92-101.

⁴⁵¹ cf. T. Mommsen, "Zu den Scriptoribus Hist. Aug.", *Hermes* 13, 1878, p. 298; K. Müllenhoff, "Zu Cassius Dio", *Hermes* 2, 1867, p. 318.

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.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

magno igitur labore etiam suo gentes.....priusquam faceret aliquid, contulit: The personal efforts of Marcus and their eventual success were the main focus points of this passage.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.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 (*plurimis in Italiam traductis*), which was contradicted later in the *Vita* where the author states that the barbarians actually settled in Italy,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.⁴⁵⁶ Naturally, the author's presentation of Marcus was not overly autocratic in this success, with Marcus being shown always to confer with his *consilium* in both military and civil affairs.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 crudely inserted within the *Vita Marci*,⁴⁵⁸ but while the style of the text appears quite

⁴⁵² Stanton, 1975, *op.cit.*, pp. 510-11.

⁴⁵³ cf. Premerstein, 1912, *op.cit.*, p. 148.

⁴⁵⁴ Garzetti, 1974, *op.cit.*, pp. 480-506.

⁴⁵⁵ *Marcus*, 24.3; cf. G. Wirth, "Zur Frage föderierte Staaten in der späteren römischen Kaiserzeit", *Historia* 16, 1967, p. 234.

⁴⁵⁶ cf. Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, p. 96.

⁴⁵⁷ cf. Baynes, 1926, *op.cit.*, p. 80.

⁴⁵⁸ Schwartz, 1964, *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

*denique sententia illius praecipua semper haec 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

⁴⁵⁹ cf. Hohl, 1913, *op.cit.*, p. 411.

⁴⁶⁰ Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, p. 97.

⁴⁶¹ cf. Rosen, 1997, *op.cit.*, p. 96.

⁴⁶² *Med.*, 1.16.

⁴⁶³ cf. Baynes, 1926, *op.cit.*, p. 80.

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.⁴⁶⁴ 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,⁴⁶⁵ 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*,⁴⁶⁶ but instead intends to exhibit

⁴⁶⁴ cf. Premerstein, 1911, *op.cit.*, p. 356.

⁴⁶⁵ cf. *Hadrian*, 7.6; Platner and Ashby, 1926, *op.cit.*, p. 237.

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 perstitit nec prius recessit quam omnia bella finiret*), which was echoed later in the *vita*.⁴⁶⁷

22.9

provincias ex proconsularibus consulares aut ex consularibus proconsulares aut praetorias pro belli necessitate fecit.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 *ex procuratoriis* to the text is in accordance with the recommendation of Hirschfeld,⁴⁶⁹ which makes the transferral of procuratory provinces to praetorian administrators seem more appropriate, considering that this actually occurred during Marcus' reign.⁴⁷⁰

22.10-11

res etiam in Sequanis turbatas censura.....turbatae errant.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 *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.

⁴⁶⁷ *Marcus*, 24.5, 25.1.

⁴⁶⁸ cf. Premerstein, 1912, *op.cit.*, p. 172.

⁴⁶⁹ See H. Hirschfeld, *Kleine Schriften*, Berlin, 1913.

⁴⁷⁰ See *Marcus*, 21.8. For discussion of Marcus' use of procurators, see P.A. Brunt, "Princes and Equites", *JRS* 73, 1983, pp. 5-12.

⁴⁷¹ Cf. Premerstein, 1912, *op.cit.*, p. 169.

22.12

*filio Commodo accersito 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 1st 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 umquam proscriptus est a praefecto urbi.....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

⁴⁷² Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, pp. 180-1.

⁴⁷³ Birley, 1987, *op.cit.*, p. 45; cf. F. Poschl, "Die Congiarien (Liberalitates) des Kaisers Antonius Pius", *Hermes* 76, 1941, p. 423.

⁴⁷⁴ *Commodus*, 2.2, 12.3; Dio, 71.22.2.

⁴⁷⁵ cf. Stanton, 1969, *op.cit.*, p. 585.

⁴⁷⁶ *BMC, Marcus*, 1506-12.

⁴⁷⁷ cf. *Pius*, 6.10.

⁴⁷⁸ Birley, 1987, *op.cit.*, p. 45.

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 parcissimus 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 was 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: **διεμειδίασε καὶ ἔφη καὶ αὐτὸς 'ὀκτώ,' καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα ἀνὰ διακοσίας δραχμὰς αὐτοῖς κατένειμεν, ὅσον οὐπω 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

23.4-7

absens populi Romani voluptates.....per [a]pistolas suas purgavit: Following the discussion of Marcus' fiscal benevolence the biographer then concentrated on the

⁴⁸⁰ *RIC*, vol. 3, pp. 195-209.

⁴⁸¹ Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, p. 48.

⁴⁸² Birley, 1987, *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 *Marcus*, 7.9.

⁴⁸⁵ Dio, 71.3.3.

⁴⁸⁶ *Marcus*, 11.3.

⁴⁸⁷ Dio, 71.32.2. Marcus had already visited Smyrna in AD 176. See R. Pack, "Two Sophists and Two Emperors", *CPh* 42.1, 1947, p. 17; F. Gasco, "The Meeting between Aelius Aristides and Marcus Aurelius in Smyrna", *AJPh* 110.3, 1989, pp. 471-8.

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 uxore 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*,⁴⁹⁰ 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.⁴⁹¹ 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.⁴⁹² 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.⁴⁹³ 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,⁴⁹⁴ from the Pelusia – celebrated on the occasion of the annual inundation of the Nile.⁴⁹⁵ This was explained by Mommsen as limiting the Pelusia so that the Serapeia was not desecrated,⁴⁹⁶ but it could also indicate a separation of the Serapeia from the general celebration of Egyptian cults.⁴⁹⁷ 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

⁴⁹⁰ Syme, 1972, *op.cit.*, p. 294.

⁴⁹¹ cf. O.T. Schulz, "Vulgaritas Pelusii", *Klio* 8, 1908, pp. 263-5.

⁴⁹² This was also instituted by Claudius. See Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, p. 51.

⁴⁹³ cf. *Hadrian*, 18.10; Fündling, 2006, Vol. 2, *op.cit.*, pp. 866-8.

⁴⁹⁴ *CIL* i², p. 262.

⁴⁹⁵ cf. O.T. Schulz, "Nochmals Vulgaritas Pelusii", *Klio* 9, 1909, pp. 261-2.

⁴⁹⁶ *CIL* i², p. 313.

⁴⁹⁷ U. Wilcken, "Zur Geschichte Pelusiums", *Klio* 9, 1909, pp. 131-4.

popular by the Second Century AD,⁴⁹⁸ and removed the possibility of offending deities by the coinciding of two religious festivals.

The final sentence in this passage (*fama 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 24⁴⁹⁹

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.⁵⁰⁰ 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*),⁵⁰¹ 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.⁵⁰² The portrayal of Marcus' attention to such matters (*capitales causas hominum honestorum ipse cognovit, et quidem summa aequitate, ita ut praetorem reprehenderet, qui cito*

⁴⁹⁸ R.E. Witt, *Isis in the Graeco-Roman World*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1971, pp. 222-42; A. Roullet, *The Egyptian and Egyptianizing Monuments of Imperial Rome*, Leiden: Brill, 1972.

⁴⁹⁹ Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, pp. 52-4, 101-7.

⁵⁰⁰ cf. Birley, 1987, *op.cit.*, pp. 182-3.

⁵⁰¹ cf. T. Mommsen, "Das Regenwunder der Marcus-Säule", *Hermes* 30, 1895, p. 102.

⁵⁰² See R.F. Newbold, "Hostility and Goodwill in Suetonius and the *Historia Augusta*", *Ancient Society* 28, 1997, p. 165.

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,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 *Vita*.

24.4

fulmen de caelo precibus suis contra hostium machinamentum extorsit su<i>s pluvia impetrata, cum siti laborarent.⁵⁰⁴ This allusion to the divine powers of Marcus Aurelius was intended to emphasise the almost holy legitimacy of his reign by the biographer.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.⁵⁰⁶

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

⁵⁰³ Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, p. 53.

⁵⁰⁴ cf. Geffcken, 1920, *op.cit.*, p. 281.

⁵⁰⁵ For discussion of the religious views of the *HA* biographer, see C. Motschmann, *Die Religionspolitik Marc Aurels*, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2002, pp. 25-8; R. Syme, "Ipse Ille Patriarcha", *HAC* 1966/7, 1968, p. 129.

⁵⁰⁶ Birley, 1987, *op.cit.*, pp. 171-2.

⁵⁰⁷ Dio, 71.8-10.

⁵⁰⁸ cf. Rosen, 1997, *op.cit.*, p. 109.

recorded within the Christian tradition by Xiphilinus in response to Dio's account,⁵⁰⁹ where the storm actually answered prayers of the Twelfth legion, who were referred to as the *Fulminata* ('Thunderers'), who were all Christians.⁵¹⁰ 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.⁵¹¹ 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*,⁵¹² which was celebrated on some of his coin issues in that year.⁵¹³ 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.⁵¹⁴

Modern views of Marcus' intentions for the northern frontier are divided.⁵¹⁵ Mócsy argues that Marcus sought to create the new provinces of Marcomannia and Sarmatia in accordance with this version of his intentions,⁵¹⁶ whereas Alföldy has

⁵⁰⁹ See R. Klein, "Das Regenwunder im Quadenland", *HAC* 1986/7, 1991, pp. 117-38.

⁵¹⁰ Dio, 71.9; cf. R. Freudenberger, "Ein Angeblicher Christenbrief Mark Aurels", *Historia* 17, 1968, p. 253.

⁵¹¹ See R. Syme, "Avidius Cassius: his rank, age and quality", *HAC* 1984/5, 1987, pp. 207-22; Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, pp. 181-2.

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).

⁵¹⁵ cf. Stanton, 1975, *op.cit.*, p. 489.

⁵¹⁶ A. Mócsy, "Das Gerücht von neuen Donaprovinzen unter Marcus Aurelius", *Acta Classica* 7, 1971, pp. 63-6.

followed Dio,⁵¹⁷ by arguing that the diplomatic negotiations of AD 170-175 do not support this.⁵¹⁸ 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*).⁵¹⁹ 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>).⁵²⁰ 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.⁵²¹

The representation of Marcus himself was that of calmness and positivity: *et Antoninus quidem non est satis m<o>tus defectione 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.⁵²²

⁵¹⁷ Dio, 71.20.2.

⁵¹⁸ G. Alföldy, "Der Friedensschluß des Kaisers Commodus mit den Germanen", *Historia* 20, 1971, pp. 93-102.

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.

⁵²⁰ cf. E. Frézouls, "Le Rôle politique des femmes dans l'*Histoire Auguste*", *HAC* 1991, 1994, pp. 125-6; Scwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, p. 102; Rosen, 1997, *op.cit.*, p. 117.

⁵²¹ cf. Birley, 1987, *op.cit.*, pp. 184-5.

⁵²² Garzetti, 1974, *op.cit.*, pp. 499-503.

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 25⁵²³

25.1-3

Rel<i>cto ergo Sarmatico Marcommannicoque 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.⁵²⁴ 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,⁵²⁵ 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<i>cto ergo Sarmatico Marcommannicoque 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 absente Antonino adventaret*), although this also implies the seriousness of the threat to Marcus' principate as well.

⁵²³ Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, pp. 109-14.

⁵²⁴ See J. Schwartz, "Avidius Cassius et les sources de l'*Histoire Auguste*", *HAC* 1963, 1964, p. 143.

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*.⁵²⁶ 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 humari 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.⁵²⁷

25.4-7

Maecianum etiam, filium Cassii, cui Alexandria erat commissa, exercitus occidit; nam et praef(ectum) praet(orio) sibi fecerat, qui et ipse occisus est. in conscios defection<i>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,⁵²⁸ which was the consistent theme throughout the section on the revolt of Avidius Cassius.⁵²⁹ 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,⁵³⁰ who had been left in charge of Alexandria. However, in Dio he was referred to as Flavius Calvisius,⁵³¹ which creates some difficulties with the designation of Maecianus.⁵³² In addition to this, it has been established that L. Volusius Maecianus was prefect of Egypt in AD 160/1.⁵³³

⁵²⁶ *Avidius Cassius*, 8.1.

⁵²⁷ *Avidius Cassius*, 7.5-8.8.

⁵²⁸ 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.

⁵²⁹ See *Marcus*, 25.8-12 for a variation to the representation of Marcus' leniency.

⁵³⁰ See *Pius*, 12.1.

⁵³¹ Dio, 71.28.3; cf. P. Meyer, "Zur Chronologie der praefecti Aegypti im zweiten Jahrhundert", *Hermes* 32, 1897, p. 226, n. 3.

⁵³² A.K. Bowman, "A Letter of Avidius Cassius?", *JRS* 60, 1970, p. 24.

⁵³³ C. Bruun, "'Adlectus Amicus Consiliarius' and a Freedman 'Proc. Metallorum et Praediorum': News on Roman Imperial Administration", *Phoenix* 55, 2001, p. 364, no. 35; P.A. Brunt, "The

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*.⁵³⁴ 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 civitatibus, 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.⁵³⁵ The initial statement continues to accentuate the leniency of Marcus in relation to those who sided with Avidius Cassius (*ignovit et civitatibus, 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*).⁵³⁶ 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.⁵³⁷ However, as Baynes has suggested,⁵³⁸ this represented the climax of Marcus' generosity in the *Vita Marci*, which was the

Administrators of Roman Egypt", *JRS* 65, 1975, p. 145, no. 54; A. Stein, *Die Praefekten von Aegypten*, 1950, pp. 88-90.

⁵³⁴ See *Marcus*, 10.6.

⁵³⁵ Schwendemann, 1923, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

⁵³⁶ cf. Premerstein, 1912, *op. cit.*, p. 171.

⁵³⁷ See R. Syme, "Hadrian and Antioch", *HAC* 1979/81, 1983, pp. 321-31.

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 (*seditiones 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 (*seditiones*).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 *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 (*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 (*nam nec Cy<r>rum voluit videre, ex qua erat Cassius*).⁵⁴⁴ The continuity of the biographer's representation was restored in the next

⁵³⁹ cf. Premerstein, 1912, *op.cit.*, p. 171.

⁵⁴⁰ See R. Syme, "Propaganda in the *Historia Augusta*", *Latomus* 37, 1978, p. 185.

⁵⁴¹ See *Marcus*, 1.6; *Avidius*, 6.6-7.

⁵⁴² A.R. Birley, "Marius Maximus: the consular biographer", *ANRW* 34.3, 1997, pp. 2678-757; See also R.P.H. Green, "Marius Maximus and Ausonius' Caesars", *CQ* 31.1, 1981, pp. 226-36.

⁵⁴³ *Marcus*, 26.4; *Commodus*, 2.3.

⁵⁴⁴ cf. Syme, 1968, *op.cit.*, p. 148.

section (Section 26.1) with the mention of Marcus' eventual clemency and consideration for those cities (Antioch and Alexandria) that had conspired with Avidius Cassius (*fuit Alexandr<i>ae clementer cum his agens. postea tamen Antioc<h>iam vidit*).⁵⁴⁵

Section 26⁵⁴⁶

26.1-3

*fuit Alexandr<i>ae clementer cum his agens. postea tamen Antioc<h>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.*⁵⁴⁷ 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*.⁵⁴⁸ 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.⁵⁴⁹ The biographer highlighted Marcus' standing in the region through the reference to his numerous negotiations 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*).⁵⁵⁰ 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*).⁵⁵¹

However, the biographer only included one direct reference to Avidius Cassius in this passage (*et cum multa Alexandrini in Cassium dixissent fausta, tamen omnibus ignovit et filiam suam apud eos reliquit*),⁵⁵² which was intended to illustrate

⁵⁴⁵ Baldwin, 1976, *op.cit.*, p. 107.

⁵⁴⁶ Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, pp. 107-9.

⁵⁴⁷ Birley, 1987, *op.cit.*, p. 193.

⁵⁴⁸ cf. Mommsen, 1895, *op.cit.*, p. 96.

⁵⁴⁹ cf. Meyer, 1897, *op.cit.*, p. 227.

⁵⁵⁰ J. Schwartz, "La place de l'Égypte dans l'Histoire Auguste", *HAC* 1975/6, 1978, p. 176.

⁵⁵¹ G. Alföldy, "Die Ortsnamen in der Historia Augusta", *HAC* 1979/81, 1983, p. 9.

⁵⁵² Schwartz, 1978, *op.cit.*, pp. 176-7.

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, εἴτε ὑπὸ τῆς ποδάγρας ἦν εἶχεν, εἴτε ἄλλως, ἵνα μὴ ἐλεγχθῆ 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 Faustinae aedemque decernerent*),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 inpudicitiae fama graviter laborasset*),⁵⁶⁰ but this was only in order to highlight the significance of Marcus'

⁵⁵³ cf. Birley, 1987, *op.cit.*, p. 191.

⁵⁵⁴ See H.G. Pflaum, "Les Impératrices de l'époque des Antonins dans l'*Histoire Auguste*", *HAC* 1979/81, 1983, pp. 250-1; Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, pp. 182-6.

⁵⁵⁵ Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, p. 184.

⁵⁵⁶ cf. Syme, 1971, *op.cit.*, pp. 128, 130.

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.'

⁵⁵⁸ Schwartz, 1964, *op.cit.*, p. 141.

⁵⁵⁹ cf. Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, pp. 182-3.

⁵⁶⁰ See *Marcus*, 19.

eulogy, which was intended to highlight his strength of character. The biographer claimed at this point that Marcus *quae Antoninus vel nesciit vel dissimulavit* ('But of this Antoninus was either unaware or put on ignorance').⁵⁶¹ 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*,⁵⁶² but it appears that she also received the name *Pia*.⁵⁶³ The reference to her being called *Matrem Castrorum* ('Mother of the Camp') seemingly resulted from her accompanying Marcus on the Quadi campaign in AD 174,⁵⁶⁴ according to Cassius Dio: *καίπερ δὲ οὐκ εἰωθῶς, πρὶν τὴν βουλὴν ψηφίσασθαι, τοιοῦτόν τι προσίεσθαι, ὅμως ἐδέξατό τε αὐτὸ ὡς καὶ παρὰ θεοῦ λαμβάνων, καὶ τῇ γερούσιᾳ ἐπέστειλεν*.⁵⁶⁵ The later consecration of Faustina's temple was to the deity of Heliogabalus, not the *princeps* himself.⁵⁶⁶

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 bonorum parte[m]. filii autem Cassii et amplius media parte acceperunt paterni patrimonii, et auro atque argento adiuti, mulieres autem etiam ornamentis: 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.⁵⁶⁷ 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').⁵⁶⁸ It is notable that the mention of

⁵⁶¹ Syme, 1972, *op.cit.*, pp. 294, 297.

⁵⁶² *BMC, Marcus*, 1570-83.

⁵⁶³ *CIL* 6.1019.

⁵⁶⁴ cf. Schwartz, 1964, *op.cit.*, p. 142.

⁵⁶⁵ Dio, 71.10.5. 'He was now hailed Emperor 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.

⁵⁶⁷ cf. Baldwin, 1976, *op.cit.*, p. 105; Birley, 1987, *op.cit.*, p. 192.

⁵⁶⁸ See Baldwin, 1981, *op.cit.*, p. 139.

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*.⁵⁶⁹ The final statement of this section was also a return to an important previous statement in the *Vita*:⁵⁷⁰ *dohuit 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').⁵⁷¹ As White has noted, this was another instance of pro-Senatorial sentiment, which was a common feature throughout the *HA* in general.⁵⁷²

Section 27⁵⁷³

27.1

*Orientalibus rebus ordinatis Athenis fuit et init<i>alia Ce<r>eris adit, ut se innocentem probaret, et sacrarium solu<s> ingressus est.*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

⁵⁶⁹ cf. Pflaum, 1970, *op.cit.*, pp. 220-1.

⁵⁷⁰ *Marcus*, 25.6.

⁵⁷¹ cf. K.P. Johne, *Kaiserbiographie und Senatsaristokratie: Untersuchungen zur Datierung und sozialen Herkunft der Historia Augusta*, Berlin: Akademie, 1976, p. 72.

⁵⁷² White, 1967, *op.cit.*, p. 116, n. 4.

⁵⁷³ Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, pp. 186-96.

⁵⁷⁴ See T. Optendrenk, *Die Religionspolitik des Kaisers Elagabal im Spiegel der Historia Augusta*, Bonn: Rudolf Habelt, 1969, p. 116. For discussion of Marcus' attitude towards Athens, see A.N. Sherwin-White, "The Tabula of Banasa and the Constitutio Antoniniana", *JRS* 63, 1973, p. 95.

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,⁵⁷⁵ which has been discussed at length by Mutschmann.⁵⁷⁶

27.2-4

revertens ad Italiam navigio tempestatem gravissimam passus est.....et inde Lavinium profectus 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.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.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 177,⁵⁷⁹ which theoretically made Commodus his *consors imperii*,⁵⁸⁰ or his partner in the principate. This conferral of power was commemorated on several issues by Marcus in AD 177.⁵⁸¹ The largess to the people was also mentioned in

⁵⁷⁵ R. Turcan, "Les Mystères d'Eleusis dans l'*Histoire Auguste*", *HAC* 1996, 1998, pp. 326-8.

⁵⁷⁶ Mutschmann, 2002, *op.cit.*, pp. 169-93.

⁵⁷⁷ Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, p. 189.

⁵⁷⁸ Section 17.3. See M. Wolloch, "A Note on the Equestrian Statue of Marcus Aurelius", *American Journal of Archaeology*, 73.4, 1969, p. 469; I. Levin, "A Reconsideration of the Date of the Esquiline Calendar and of its Political Festivals", *American Journal of Archaeology* 86.3, 1982, pp. 429-35.

⁵⁷⁹ Strack, 1939, *op.cit.*, p. 361; Birley, 1987, *op.cit.*, p. 196.

⁵⁸⁰ On this see Hammond, 1959, *op.cit.*, p. 3.

⁵⁸¹ *BMC, Marcus*, 1646-52.

Cassius Dio, which explained that each citizen received 8 *aurei*,⁵⁸² which was one for each year of Marcus' absence from Rome, and was a greater sum than had ever been given previously.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 (*gladiatorii muneris sumptus modum fecit*).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.

27.7

sententia[m] Platonis semper in ore illius fuit florere civitates, si aut philosophi imperarent aut imperantes philosopharentur.⁵⁸⁵ This passage provides another example of a comparison between Marcus Aurelius and Plato,⁵⁸⁶ which was intended to highlight his representation as the ideal 'Philosopher-King'.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,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

⁵⁸² cf. Pöschl, 1941, *op.cit.*, p. 423.

⁵⁸³ Dio, 71.32.1. See Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, pp. 191-2.

⁵⁸⁴ Schwartz, 1964, *op.cit.*, p. 151.

⁵⁸⁵ See Hohl, 1913, *op.cit.*, p. 411.

⁵⁸⁶ cf. J.P. Callu, "Platon dans l'*Histoire Auguste*: les ambiguïtés de la Référence", *HAC* 2000, 2002, p. 102.

⁵⁸⁷ Stanton, 1969, *op.cit.*, p. 571.

⁵⁸⁸ cf. Schwartz, 1972, *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.*⁵⁸⁹ The marriage of Commodus to the daughter of Bruttius Praesens, Bruttia Crispina,⁵⁹⁰ occurred in early-mid AD 178,⁵⁹¹ and was also mentioned in the account of Cassius Dio.⁵⁹² It was also commemorated on several coin issues,⁵⁹³ but, according to Cassius Dio, she was later exiled on the charge of adultery and executed while in exile.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 at 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*,⁵⁹⁵ or the *Expeditio Sarmatica*.⁵⁹⁶ The expedition, including both Marcus and Commodus, left Rome for Pannonia on the 3rd of August, AD 178.⁵⁹⁷ 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*

⁵⁸⁹ Chastagnol, 1972, *op.cit.*, pp. 113, 120.

⁵⁹⁰ *CIL* 10.408.

⁵⁹¹ Birley, 1987, *op.cit.*, pp. 45, 206.

⁵⁹² Dio, 71.31.1.

⁵⁹³ *RIC, Commodus*, 276-80.

⁵⁹⁴ Dio, 72.4.6.

⁵⁹⁵ *CIL* 2.4114, 6.8541.

⁵⁹⁶ *CIL* 10.408.

⁵⁹⁷ *Commodus*, 12.6.

belli obi<t>).⁵⁹⁸ 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,⁵⁹⁹ 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').⁶⁰⁰ 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.⁶⁰¹

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 ostentabat.*⁶⁰² 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.⁶⁰³ This was most poignantly emphasised in the final sentence: *nam iam Commodus turpem se et cruentum ostentabat*. The reference to Philip's negative view of Alexander would seemingly be from the period of their estrangement while Alexander was in Illyricum⁶⁰⁴ because otherwise it makes little sense.⁶⁰⁵ 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,⁶⁰⁶ whereas this reference appears quite negative. This is not in

⁵⁹⁸ cf. Rosen, 1997, *op.cit.*, p. 114.

⁵⁹⁹ See Stanton, 1969, *op.cit.*, p. 584.

⁶⁰⁰ J. Schwartz, "Le limes selon l'Histoire Auguste", *HAC* 1968/9, 1970, p. 233.

⁶⁰¹ cf. Stanton, 1975, *op.cit.*, pp. 489, 509.

⁶⁰² Baynes, 1926, *op.cit.*, p. 138.

⁶⁰³ See *Commodus*, 1.7-9.

⁶⁰⁴ Plutarch, *Alexander*, 9.

⁶⁰⁵ J. Béranger, "L'Idéologie impériale dans l'*Histoire Auguste*", *HAC* 1972/4, 1976, pp. 45-6.

⁶⁰⁶ G.W. Adams, *Caligula: the Hellenistic Views of a Roman Emperor*, Boca Raton: BrownWalker, 2007, pp. 40-53

keeping with the general representation of Alexander the Great in the *HA*, particularly in the numerous comparisons that were drawn by the biographer between him and Alexander Severus.⁶⁰⁷ As Baynes has illustrated, this was a recurrent motif in the *HA*, whereby a deserving *princeps* was succeeded by an undeserving son.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.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 *princeps*.

Section 28⁶¹⁰

28.1-2

mors autem talis fuit.....<h>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 *princeps* and the progressive deterioration of his son's character. The concerns of Marcus were clearly represented by the biographer in the statement that *cum aegrotare coepisset, filium advocavit atque ab eo primum petit, ut elli reliquias non contempneret, ne videretur rem p. prodere.*⁶¹¹ The actual location where Marcus died has produced some variation between the sources. Tertullian claimed that he died at Sirmium,⁶¹² whereas Victor stated that he passed away at Vindobona.⁶¹³

The inference of Marcus' statement that Commodus could do as he desired, but not to leave for a few days (*ut vellet, permisit, 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 *Vita Commodi: bellum etiam quod pater paene confecerat legibus hostium addictus remisit*

⁶⁰⁷ *Severus Alexander*, 11.4; 13.3-4; 25.9; 30.3; 31.5; 35.1; 35.4; 39.1.

⁶⁰⁸ Baynes, 1926, *op.cit.*, p. 82.

⁶⁰⁹ cf. Schwartz, 1972, *op.cit.*, p. 267.

⁶¹⁰ Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, pp. 114-15.

⁶¹¹ cf. Schlumberger, 1976, *op.cit.*, p. 210.

⁶¹² Tertullian, *Apologet.*, 25.

⁶¹³ Aurelius Victor, *Caes.* 16.12; *Epit.* 16.12.

*ac Romam reversus est.*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.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 dimittitis, 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?'*),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.⁶¹⁷ This was the first substantial section of direct speech included by the biographer in this *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): *si iam me dimittitis, vale vobis dico vos praecedens*.

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.'

⁶¹⁵ See Shackleton Bailey, 1983, *op.cit.*, p. 118.

⁶¹⁶ A. Chastagnol, "Le septième jour dans l'*Histoire Auguste*", *HAC* 1975/6, 1978, p. 133.

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 praecedens'*.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 lamentations 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

dimisso 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

⁶¹⁸ See M.P. Charlesworth, "Pietas and Victoria: the Emperor and the Citizen", *JRS* 33, 1943, p. 2; A.R. Birley, "Religion in the *Historia Augusta*", *HAC* 1990, 1991, p. 32.

⁶¹⁹ Dio, 71.34.1.

⁶²⁰ Herodian, 1.4. For discussion of the presence of such people on campaign, see F. Millar, "Emperors, Frontiers and Foreign Relations, 31 B.C. to A.D. 378", *Britannia* 13, 1982, pp. 6-7; J.H. Oliver, "The Sacred Gerusia and the Emperor's Consilium", *Hesperia* 36.3, 1967, p. 331.

⁶²¹ White, 1967, *op.cit.*, p. 116, n. 7.

⁶²² See Chastagnol, 1978, *op.cit.*, p. 133.

sleep, whereas according to Dio his physicians killed him in order to please Commodus.⁶²³ 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.⁶²⁴ 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 talem videret futurum, qu[is]alis exstitit post eius mortem, ne, ut ipse dicebat, similis Neroni, Caligulae et Domitiano esset.*⁶²⁵

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*.⁶²⁶ 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.⁶²⁷ 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*.⁶²⁸

⁶²³ Dio, 71.33.4.

⁶²⁴ For other discussions on the death of Emperors in the *HA* see B. Baldwin, "Gregory Nazianzenus, Ammianus, *scurrae*, and the *Historia Augusta*", *Gymnasium* 93, 1986, pp. 178-80.

⁶²⁵ cf. Baynes, 1926, *op.cit.*, pp. 82, 92, 113.

⁶²⁶ cf. Stanton, 1969, *op.cit.*, p. 583.

⁶²⁷ Baldwin, 1972, *op.cit.*, pp. 113, 121.

⁶²⁸ For other examples just from the *HA*, see **Nero**: *Verus*, 1.8, 4.6, 8.8, *Commodus*, 17.9-10, 19.2, *Clodius Albinus*, 13.5, *Elagabalus*, 1.1, 33.1, *Aurelian*, 42.6, *Severus Alexander*, 9.4; **Caligula**: *Verus*, 4.6, *Elagabalus*, 1.1, 33.1, *Aurelian*, 42.6; **Domitian**: *Commodus*, 19.2, *Clodius Albinus*, 13.5, *Carus*, 1.3, 3.3.

Section 29⁶²⁹

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.*⁶³⁰ There is information elsewhere about only one of these lovers, Tutilius, which comes from the *Vita Commodi: inter haec Commodus senatu semet inridente, cum adulterum matris consulem designasset, appellatus est Pius.*⁶³¹ It would appear that he had been appointed suffect consul in AD 183, and that his full name was Lucius Tutilius Pontianus Gentianus.⁶³²

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*).⁶³³ 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.⁶³⁴ 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).

⁶²⁹ Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, pp. 115-17.

⁶³⁰ cf. Hirschfeld, 1902, *op.cit.*, p. 54.

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.'

⁶³² Syme, 1971, *op.cit.*, p. 72; Birley, 1983, *op.cit.*, pp. 82-3.

⁶³³ Syme, 1972, *op.cit.*, p. 294, n. 4.

⁶³⁴ Bradley, 1978, *op.cit.*, p. 14.

29.2

*de quo mimus in sc<a>ena praesente Antonino dixit; cum stupidus nomen adulteri uxoris a servo quaereret et ille diceret ter 'Tullus', et adhuc stupidus quaereret, respondit ille: 'iam tibi dixi ter, Tullus dicitur':*⁶³⁵ 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.⁶³⁶ 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 diceret, emendans quae bene reprehensa viderentur*).⁶³⁷ 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.

⁶³⁵ See A. Cascón, "El Humor en la *Historia Augusta*: características literarias y función crítica", *HAC* 1993, 1996, p. 149.

⁶³⁶ Hüttl, 1936, Vol. 1, *op.cit.*, p. 40.

⁶³⁷ Syme, 1972, *op.cit.*, p. 294.

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, priusquam ad bellum Marcomannicum rediret, in Capitolio iuravit nullum senatorem se sciente occisum, cum etiam rebelliones dixerit se servaturum fuisse, si scisset*)⁶³⁸ 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).⁶³⁹ The theme of his clemency was in turn further emphasised,⁶⁴⁰ which was another repeated theme by the author in the passage just noted.⁶⁴¹

The next sentence continues the theme of his value-system, but changes the focus to that of avarice: *nihil enim magis et timuit et depr[a]ecatus est quam avaritiae 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,⁶⁴² 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

dederunt e<i> vitio, quod e<t f>ictus fuisset nec tam simplex quam videretur aut quam vel Pius vel Verus fuisset:⁶⁴³ 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*).⁶⁴⁴ The context in which this

⁶³⁸ cf. Schwartz, 1964, *op.cit.*, pp. 150, 153.

⁶³⁹ See also *Marcus*, 10.6 for his legislation about the trial of Senators on capital charges. See Schwendemann, 1923, *op.cit.*, p. 116.

⁶⁴⁰ cf. Baldwin, 1976, *op.cit.*, p. 109.

⁶⁴¹ *Marcus*, 25.5-6, 26.13.

⁶⁴² See *Marcus*, 23.1-3.

⁶⁴³ Barnes, 1967, *op.cit.*, p. 67.

⁶⁴⁴ cf. Syme, 1968, *op.cit.*, p. 91.

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.⁶⁴⁵

29.7

*dederunt etiam crimini, quod aulicam adrogantiam confirmaverit summovendo[s] amicos a societate communi et a conviviis:*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*)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 creditit, sed semper diu quaesivit, quod erat verum*) sought to emphasise his diligence and discerning intellect.

⁶⁴⁵ cf. Syme, 1971, *op.cit.*, pp. 130, 132.

⁶⁴⁶ cf. Schulz, 1908, *op.cit.*, p. 264.

⁶⁴⁷ cf. Hüttl, 1936, Vol. 1, *op.cit.*, p. 348.

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

⁶⁴⁸ cf. Kiel, 1938, *op.cit.*, p. 298.

⁶⁴⁹ *Marcus*, 6.2.

⁶⁵⁰ See Stanton, 1969, *op.cit.*, p. 580, n. 68.