A STUDY OF A LATE ANTIQUE CORPUS OF BIOGRAPHIES

[HISTORIA AUGUSTA]

RENAN BAKER
WOLFSON COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

Submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, Trinity Term 2014.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis provides a fresh investigation of a collection of Roman imperial biographies conventionally known as the 'Historia Augusta'. The thesis supports the authenticity of the texts included in this corpus, in particular the claims they make about their dates, authorship, and scope, through philological, literary, prosopographical, and historical arguments. It shows that this corpus of texts, if the main conclusions are accepted, potentially improves our understanding of the tetrarchic-Constantinian era. It also explores the wider implications for the historiography of the fourth century; the transmission and formation of multi-author corpora in antiquity and the middle ages. It also suggests that the canon of Latin imperial biographies be widened.

The thesis has two parts. Part I explores the actual state of the corpus, its textual transmission, and relation to other texts. It shows that the ancient and medieval paratexts presented the corpus as a collection of imperial biographies. The paratexts are compatible with the authorial statements in the main text. It then explores the corpus' medieval transmission, and the interest medieval scholars had in such texts. This part suggests that the corpus's current state explains well the inconsistencies found in it. Finally, it shows that words and phrases, once thought peculiar to the corpus and the holy grail of the forgery argument, are intertextual links to earlier texts.

Part II explores chronological statements and historical episodes relevant to the Diocletianic-Constantinan period. It establishes the actual dates of each author, and suggests that the confusion found in these biographies is similar to that of other contemporaries. The few apostrophes are shown to be authentic, and the historical and prosopographical passages are shown to represent, and improve our understanding of, the zeitgeist and history of the period.

The final conclusion weaves the various arguments together, and emphasises the authenticity and significance of the corpus' texts. It suggests separating the composition of the texts from the disinterested formation of the corpus as a whole, as part of a new hypothesis and further lines of enquiry.

WORD COUNT: 99,987

IN MEMORIAM

My father, David E. Baker Z"L (1936–2013)

My mentor, Ze'ev (Zevik) Rubin Z"L (1942–2009)

Major Tsafrir Baron HY"D (1982–2014)

Captain Liran Adir HY"D (1983–2014)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I first heard the phrase 'Historia Augusta' as an undergraduate in a 2006 paper on Emperor Hadrian's literary representation. What I knew about this corpus of imperial biographies until I started investigating late antiquity systematically was the current preconception amongst most young scholars of my generation: the whole thing is a product of a single forger from around 400. In 2010, when I begun a DPhil thesis on Late Roman history by looking into Roman imperial administration of the early fourth century and adoption into the Imperial family, rather than by pursuing my usual philological and literary approach to classical texts, I started to suspect that the current consensus rests upon uncritical acceptance of a problematic nineteenth-century argument. My familiarity with textual criticism, literary and philological approaches to classical texts, together with my growing knowledge of late antiquity and some very recent publications on the topic, have further supported my scepticism. It has become clear to me that a fresh study needs to be undertaken on this corpus, and a thesis completely different from the one I originally embarked upon has emerged.

The process of readjusting to a new academic setting and developing trust and confidence both in general and in my own positive arguments may have been rather difficult. On all accounts, Neil Mclynn has been the most patient, objective, critical, selfless, encouraging and supportive of supervisors. He never gave up on me or the project and remained supportive, despite, or in light of, unexpected and less than ordinary eventualities. For this, I am and shall remain grateful, whichever path I choose.

I am grateful to the Clarendon Fund and Overseas Research Student scholarship, sponsored by Oxford University Press and the British government respectively, for having provided full funding of tuition fees and living expenses. This was the first serious acknowledgement of my hard-won academic achievements. This scholarship not only enabled my doctoral studies, but also made my high-school-age dream of studying at Oxford a reality.

I thank Wolfson College for creating a comfortable, supporting and stimulating environment for both my studies and my only family. I am also grateful to the Classics Faculty's Craven Committee, the Derby Fund and Wolfson College's Lorne Thyssen

Research Fund for providing me with grants which enabled me to inspect manuscripts or their digital reproductions.

Whilst at Oxford, I benefited from academic encounters with, and expert advice of, Tobias Reinhardt, Philomen Probert, Chris Pelling, Fergus Millar, Richard Flower, Michael Williams, Alan Ross, Marek Jankowiak, Katherine Clarke, Alan Bowman, Bryan Ward-Perkins, Martin Goodman, Vered Shalev, and Peter Bell. I commend Alan (Ross) and Peter for having read and commented on chunks of the thesis. My college advisor, Andrew Neil, was extremely supportive in many unexpected aspects. And so was my Senior Tutor, Gillian Hamnett, especially when life (and deaths) happened.

To these may be added friends and acquaintances, for their spiritual and human support in difficult times. Rabbi Eli and Freidy Brackman, Guy Sela, Rafi Goodwin, David Price, Fiona Wilkes, Oded Steinberg, and James Patrick.

I dedicate this work to the memory of my father, David E. Baker (1936–2013), an honest and just man, who sincerely pursued justice throughout his life, taught others to do likewise, following *Deuteronomy* 16.20. It is my deepest sorrow and regret that he wasn't able to witness his first granddaughter (Yael), my years in his ancestral country, and this work, the longest text I have written in his native tongue. May his memory be a blessing.

Coll.Wolf.Oxon.

5 Tishrei 5775

*

The rather long gap between the date of the preface and the final submission requires, in my view, some explanations, especially because the thesis was passed with minor corrections and comments. The situations I had to face in the last stages of the project were less than optimal. I have encountered both evil, but also true and pure love, friendship, and companionship of old and new friends.

The recent conflict in Palestine had its horrible death toll, and several of my friends were killed in action. I also had to go through a breakdown of an unsupportive relationship with a person who turned out to be self-serving after my failure to obtain an academic position in Tel Aviv University. A request to vacate my college accommodation within two days after my viva made me homeless for two days in December, when I found out that my joint account was emptied. Yael, who is a living proof of the wisdom and origin of my Scottish grandfather, was deprived of access to her father.

In all this evil, there were also friendships, pure love, the Land of Hope and Glory, and the University of Oxford. Job Seeker's Allowance, granted to me after an interview, which took place 30 minutes after my viva, saved me from starvation. My university's

counselling service and the NHS put me back on my feet. In particular, I'd like to mention my counsellor, Elizabeth (Liz) Treasure, and my GP, Professor Robert T. Walton. Had it not been for their combined help and attendance, I would never have stayed alive until my viva. I shall be grateful to them, as well as to our wonderful National Health Service, for the rest of my life.

OUSU's Advice Service, and especially Lisa Stokes-King, were extremely helpful with my application to Job Seeker's Allowance and finding a job through Oxford University's Temporary Staffing Service. The latter found me the current splendid job in one of the most beautiful buildings in Oxford, the Andrew Wiles Building of the Mathematical Institute. I've had the pleasure of using this institute's superb IT and pleasant back-office facilities to finish my DPhil.

Old and new friendships have been reinforced in these difficult times. First and foremost, my childhood friend and love of my life, Adi Koifman, came back to my life when we needed each other most. Her long conversations with me, optimism, uncompromising love, and attempts to buy back my book collection which I had sold to Blackwell's—all tipped the balance back in favour of life and scholarship. I'd also mention friends who helped me in similar and different levels in the past few months: Guy Sela, Yechezkel Mandelbaum (Thomas Ambühl), Avi Laniado, Zohar Ringel, Nir Shalev, Daniel Herskowitz, James Patrick, Barak Blum, Ruth Preston, Nims Damney, and (again indeed) Neil Mclynn. The death of Major Tsafrir Baror of Holon (1982–2014) in Gaza, whose daughter of the same age of Yael and son born after his death were deprived of their father, still shocks me. May his memory be a blessing. I must confess that without such friendship and companionship, I wouldn't have been able to climb up from the bottommost rung of the ladder of life.

*Because friendship (*רעות*) like this will never*
Permit our heart to forget
Love sacred with blood
You will once more bloom among us

Friendship, we bear you with no words
Gray, stubborn and silent
From the nights of terrible terror
You remained clear and lighten.
Friendship, as all of your youths
Again in your name we will smile and go foreword
Because friends that have fallen on their sword
Left your life as a monument...
(Haim Gouri, *Hareut* 'friendship')

Thank you all.

Mathematical Institute, Oxford
20 Nisan 5775 (9 April 2015)

Today is five days of the Omer (*Hod ShebeChesed*)

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ABBREVIATIONS AND SIGLA

Works are referred to using the abbreviations listed in L'Année philologique, Oxford Classical Dictionary[4], Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium, Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church[3] and Oxford Latin Dictionary[2]. For further details of late antique texts, see A.H.M Jones, The Later Roman Empire (Oxford, 1973), 1464–1476; and A. Souter, A Glossary of Later Latin to 600 A.D. (Oxford, 1949), vii–xxix.

The edition generally followed for quotations from the corpus is Ernst Hohl's Teubner, revised by Ch. Samberger and W. Seyfarth (Leipzig, 1965). Individual editions of certain vitae, especially in the Budé series, were also consulted. These are listed in the bibliography, and are referred to in the author-date system. I produced apparatus critici from relevant manuscript reproductions, early modern, and modern editions, where necessary, since an authoritative text is still a desideratum (Texts and Transmission, 354).

The imperial Lives included in the corpus are referred to using the abbreviations of Karl Lessing, scriptorum historiae augustae lexicon (Leipzig, 1901–1906), ii.

A. = Aurelianus
AC. = Avidius Cassius
Ael. = Aelius (Helius)
AP. = Antoninus Pius
AS. = Alexander Severus
C. = Commodus
Car. = Carus et Carinus et Numerianus
Cc. = Caracallus
Cl. = Claudius
CIA. = Clodius Albinus
Dd. = Diadumenus
DJ. = Didius Julianus
G. = Geta
Gall. = Gallieni duo
Gd. = Gordiani tres
H. = Hadrianus
Hel. = Heliogabalus
MA. = Marcus Antoninus
Max. = Maximini II.
MB. = Maximus et Balbinus
OM. = Opilius Macrinus
P. = Pertinax
PN. = Pescennius Niger
Pr. = Probus
Q. = Quadrigae tyrannorum, i.e. Firmus Saturninus Proculus et Bonosus
S. = Severus
T./TT. = Tyranni triginta
Tac. = Tacitus
V. = Verus
Val. = Valeriani duo

I. Editions and translations of the corpus consulted and used

Chastagnol-HA — A. Chastagnol, *Histoire Auguste: les empereurs romains des II^e^ et III^e^ siècles* (Paris, 1994).

HAS-1671 — *Historiae Augustae Scriptores VI cum integris notis Isaaci Casauboni, Cl. Salmasii et Jani Gruteri*. 2 vols. (Leiden, 1671).

Hohl-SHA	E. Hohl, *Scriptores Historiae Augustae.* Editio stereotypa correctior. Addenda et corrigenda adiecerunt Ch. Samberger et W. Seyfarth. 2 vols. (Leipzig, 1965).
Hohl-Merten-Rösger-Straub	E. Hohl, E. W. Merten, A. Rösger, and J. Straub. *Historia Augusta: Römische Herrschergestalten*. 2 vols. (Zurich 1976-1985).
Magie-SHA	D. Magie, *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*. 3 vols. (Cambridge, Mass., 1921–1932).
Peter-SHA	H. Peter, *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*. 2nd edition. 2 vols. (Leipzig, 1884).

II. Other works and texts

For convenience, a list of special abbreviations used in this study, and of frequently-cited late antique texts is hereby given.

Cassius Dio	*Cassii Dionis Cocceiani Historiarum Romanarum Quae Supersunt*, ed. U. P. Boissevain, vols. 1-3 (text), 4 (*index historicus*, ed. Smilda), 5 (*index Graecitatis*, ed. Nawijn). (Berlin, 1898-1931). Where necessary for clarity, references are given with the page number of the relevant volume with line number in superscript. Where the context demands, the origin of the fragment (Xiphilinus, Zonaras, or Constantine VII's excerpta historica) is given. E.g. 'Dio 78(77).6.1^{a} (Boissevain 379^{17}–380^{3} = *excerpta de virtutibus* 361); Dio 78(77).10.2 (Boissevain 389$^{13–15}$ = Xiphilinus 331.5–10).' See Xiphilinus.
Clinton, *Fasti*	H. F. Clinton, *Fasti Romani: The Civil and Literary Chronology of Rome and Constantinople from the Death of Augustus to the Death of Justin II*. 2 vols. (Oxford, 1845–1850).
CLRE	R. S. Bagnall, Al. Cameron, S. R. Schwartz, and K. A. Worp, *Consuls of the Later Roman Empire* (Atlanta, 1987).
Corpus Aurelianum	*Sexti Aurelii Victoris Liber de Caesaribus Praecedunt Origo Gentis Romanae et Liber de Viris Illustribus Urbis*

	Romae Subsequitur Epitome de Caesaribus, ed. Fr. Pichlmayer and R. Gruendel (Leipzig, 1970).
DVI	*Liber de Viris Illustribus*, see *Corpus Aurelianum*.
EAH	*The Encyclopedia of Ancient History*. 13 vols. (Oxford, 2013).
EDC	*Epitome de Caesaribus* (in *Corpus Aurelianum*, ed. F. Pichlmayer and R. Gruendel (1970), 133–176)
EKG	Enmann's postulated '*Kaisergeschichte*' (*UrEKG* refers to postulated recensions from c.284–305 suggested by Enmann 1884; see Burgess 2011)
Euseb. *HE*	Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, ed. Ed. Schwartz and Th. Mommsen, *Eusebius Werke*, ii. *Die Kirchengeschichte*. GCS 9. 3 vols. (Leipzig, 1903–1908). English translation and notes by K. Lake and J. E. L. Oulton, *Eusebius. The Ecclesiastical History*. 2 vols. (Cambridge, Mass., 1926–1932).
Euseb. *VC*	Eusebius, *Vita Constantini*, ed. F. Winkelmann, *Eusebius Werke* i.1. *Über das Leben des Kaisers Konstantin*, (Berlin, 1975 rev. 1992). English translation and commentary by Av. Cameron and S. G. Hall, *Eusebius. Life of Constantine* (Oxford, 1999).
Eutr.	Eutropius, *Breviarium Ab Urbe Condita*, ed. F.L. Müller, *Einleitung, Text, Übersetzung und Anmerkungen* (Stuttgart, 1995).
FRHist	T. J. Cornell, ed. *Fragments of the Roman Historians*. 3 vols. (Oxford, 2013).
Gibbon, *Decline*	E. Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. 1, ed. J. B. Bury (London, 1896; repr. Cambridge, 2013)
HAC	*Historiae Augustae Colloquia*. BHAC (Bonner HA Coll.), 13 vols. (Bonn 1964–1991). HAC NS published in various places (1990–).
Herodian	Herodianus, *Regnum Post Marcum*, ed. C. M. Lucarini (Munich, 2005). English translation and notes by C. R. Whittaker, *Herodian*. 2 vols. (Cambridge, Mass., 1969–1970).

Jerome, *Chronicle*	*Die Chronik des Hieronymus: Hieronymi Chronicon*, ed. R. W. O. Helm, (Berlin, 1956). References are to page number and paragraph letter (e.g. Helm 230[d]), according to the explantion in Burgess 2011.
Lactant. *DMP*	Lactantius, *De Mortibus Persecutorum*, ed. and trans. J. L. Creed (Oxford, 1984). German translation, introduction, critical edition, and commentary by A. Städele, *Laktanz - Die Todesarten der Verfolger* (Turnhout, 2003).
LSA	*Last Statues of Antiquity* (http://laststatues.classics.ox.ac.uk/)
NHLL, 5	R. Herzog, P. L. Schmidt, and G. Nauroy, eds. *Nouvelle histoire de la litterature latine*, Vol. 5: *Retauration et renouveau 284–374* (Turnhout, 1993).
OGR	*Origo Gentis Romanae*. See *Corpus Aurelianum*.
Origo Constantini	*Origo Constantini: Anonymus Valesianus*, ed. I. König, i. Text und Kommentar (Trier, 1987).
Pan. Lat.	*XII Panegyrici Latini*, ed. D. Lassandro (Turin, 1992). English translation, edition, and commentary by C. E. V. Nixon and B. S. Rodgers, *In Praise of Later Roman Emperors: The Panegyrici Latini* (Berkeley, 1994). Reference to speeches by number, according to the system of Rees 2012 (p.24). Latin number for manuscript order, and arabic number for chronological order.
Stellenbibliographie	E.W. Merten, *Stellenbibliographie zur Historia Augusta*. 4 vols. (Bonn, 1985-1987).
TCT	A. Grafton, G. W. Most, and S. Settis, eds. *The Classical Tradition* (Cambridge, Mass., 2010).
T&T	L. Reynolds, ed. *Texts and Transmission: A Survey of the Latin Classics* (Oxford, 1983)
Victor, *Caesares*	Aurelius Victor, *Liber de Caesaribus*, ed. F. Pichlmayer and R. Gruendel (1970). English translation and commentary by H. W. Bird, *Aurelius Victor. De Caesaribus* (Liverpool, 1994). German translation, text, and commentary by K. Groß-Albenhausen and M.

	Fuhrmann, *S. Aurelius Victor. Die römischen Kaiser*. 3rd edition. (Düsseldorf, 2009). See *Corpus Aurelianum*.
Xiphilinus	*The epitome of Cassius Dio* (based on books 36–80), ed. U. P. Boissevain, vol. 3 (1931), 479–730. See Cassius Dio.

III. Sigla codicum

The sigla of the Teubner editions of Hohl and Peter and the various Budé editions are generally followed. Manuscripts consulted for the purpose of this study are given here for quick reference.

Π vel Π classis	Consensus codicum **BP** et apographi eorum
B	Bambergensis class. 54 (E III 19) saec. IX
P	Vaticanus Palatinus Latinus 899 saec. IX
Σ vel Σ classis	Consensus codicum **DXCHv** aut plurium huius classis
D	Laurentianus Sanctae Crucis 20 sin. 6 saec. XIV
X	Ambrosianus C 110 inf. saec. XIV/XV
Ch	Chigianus H VII 239 saec. XV
v	Vaticanus Latinus 1898 saec. XV med.

General Introduction

The subject of this study is a corpus of imperial biographies ascribed to six different authors, who seemingly composed around the time of Diocletian (r.284–305), Constantine (r.306–337) and slightly later. This period seems to have been notable for the re-emergence of literary activity as a result of the relative stability after the third-century crisis, but only little of this activity has survived in full but more in fragments.[1] The corpus in its current form contains biographies of emperors between Hadrian and Carinus, but some of the 'authors' claim to cover the period from Julius Caesar to Constantine the Great. The modern title of this corpus, Historia Augusta, is the result of an early-modern naming convention, whereby scholars referred to all authors of Roman Imperial accounts as 'Historiae Augustae Scriptores', irrespective of these ancient authors' generic aspirations. The transmitted title of the entire corpus, in an overlooked manuscript, presents it as '*excerpta de principibus*' from the various stated authors. Some biographies contain apostrophes to Diocletian and Constantine, while various statements in other biographies imply stated dates of composition *c.*293–340.

This study deals with the authenticity of the claims made in the corpus about the number of authors and their dates of activity. Its purpose is also to examine the potential contribution this corpus might have for our understanding of this stated era. The authenticity of the corpus was called into question in 1889 by Hermann Dessau, who suggested the corpus was a forgery from the time of Theodosius (*c.*395) by a single author. This forgery hypothesis was opposed by Dessau's eminent contemporaries, until the first half of the twentieth century. Dessau's article was rediscovered in the 1960s (its critics having been overlooked), and was used as the basis for further hypothetical speculations about the possible date and motives of the forgery. Increasingly, a specific group of scholars in a particular academic setting

[1] *NHLL*, 5: 49–58 and *passim* (starting with the year 284); Bleckmann 1997, suggesting much historiographical activity; cf. Schanz-Hosius §§511, 779.

came out in favour of the forgery view, the opponents being reduced to a small (but prominent) 'minority' outside that setting, as we shall see. It would appear that the balance had been gradually tilted. At the same time, despite the multitude of contributions to the subject, several scholars have recently expressed the feeling that research on the question has not produced a definitive solution and is actually at a stalemate, and now requires a new breakthrough.[2] Indeed, the signs towards a possible breakthrough are currently emerging on two *separate* fronts, indicating the need to assess the entire question afresh.

Recent scholarship: stalemate and progress

In the past three decades some scholars have noted the peculiar hold that Dessau's 1889 publication has over modern scholarship, and have pointed out problems with twentieth-century studies accepting its hypothesis. Some of these critics have argued in favour of plural authorship, or a Diocletianic/Constantinian date (or dates). Any such suggestions, however, have been either countered by a reaffirmation of Dessau's authority or ignored.

The position of Dessau's study is clearly stated by supporters of his thesis. Alan Cameron recently stated about Dessau's article: 'little or nothing written since has added anything of importance to the sum of knowledge.' Regarding the authorship question, Den Hengst notes: 'in the subsequent literature, especially in the volumes of the Colloquia, one finds a large number of lapidary statements, all in favour of single authorship, but hardly any substantiation'. Concerning subsequent attempts to date the alleged forgery, Cornell now notes: 'while a late fourth-century date is easy to assert… it is actually extremely difficult to prove.'[3]

In short, after more than half a century of intensive research activity, scholars working *within* Dessau's tradition admit that *HA-Forschung* has not progressed

[2] Mehl 2011:171–178 (a reference work); Alan Cameron 2011a; Rohrbacher 2011; Cornell 2013; Paschoud 2013.
[3] Alan Cameron 2011b:743n.2; den Hengst 2010:177; Cornell 2013:76; cf. Crook 1972:247. On the 'colloquia', see below.

beyond Dessau and has stagnated. In recent years, Dessau's homeland has produced different scholarly traditions which provide a basis for defending the original claims of the text, and pointedly note the problematic nature of *HA-Forschung*. Andreas Mehl recently noted the problem with scholars endorsing Dessau's forgery view:

> Doubt about the six authors mentioned in the work and doubt about the dating references given in it are interdependent. To be sure, sceptics are united only in dating the work later than Constantine I… They suppose there was a single author… and attempt to establish it as the composition of one author writing at one time with one point of view. It is precisely this point of view or 'bias' that scholars locate in the text, and then employ as evidence in a circular argument to establish a date, that remains, in fact, not at all clear.[4]

Indeed, forgery arguments in *HA-Forschung* tend either to hypothesize a date later than the stated dates of composition to support the single-forger argument;[5] or start from the latter in order to reject the authorial claims of the corpus about dates and authorship. They then suggest a later date using the above-mentioned methods.[6]

As far as the estimated era of composition is concerned, Adolf Lippold, a scholar well versed in prosopography and history of all periods of late antiquity,[7] has defended a composition date *c.*330 without going into details of authorial attribution or the exact dates of composition of each biography or biographer. In his commentary on the *Two Maximini* he provided a lengthy introduction to the issue in general and persuasively questioned or refuted all the alleged allusions to events, persons, and literary texts from the second half of the fourth century onwards (including some of Dessau's). Lippold showed that the apostrophes to Diocletian and Constantine are formally correct in comparison with other contemporary texts and inscriptions, and that 'there is nothing that could indicate a post-Constantinian invention or interpolation.' He also noted that Dessau brought nothing against the apostrophes and dating

[4] Mehl 2001:149–150 corrected translation of Mehl 2011:174–175.
[5] Dessau 1889; Straub 1963; White 1967; Syme 1968; Johne 1976; Barnes 1978; Paschoud 2004; Ratti 2010.
[6] Alan Cameron 2011b:743–782 (esp.745); Thomson 2012; Rohrbacher 2013; Cornell 2013. Some (e.g. White and Syme) even make both circular statements in the same publication (see below, and Chapters 2 and 3).
[7] See his bibliography in Dietz, Hennig, and Kaletsch 1993.

references other than the arguments we shall explore below.[8] In his collected articles, classifying the corpus as a 'collection of Roman Imperial biographies from the time of Constantine the Great', and in subsequent publications, he further supported his case of a redaction of the corpus *c.*330 from the biographies of various authors. He even managed to show that the supposed tension between hereditary and elective monarchy, references to young emperors and eunuchs, and the few relevant remarks to Christianity and the power of the senate were in fact relevant either to the period covered by the text or to the stated time of composition.[9] Since the period of Diocletian and Constantine can in many aspects be treated as continuity (rather than a break or contradiction) and Constantine is said to have held Diocletian in high esteem,[10] Lippold thus provided a reasonable defence of the general stated era of composition without dealing in detail with the authorship question.

Plurality of authorship has been defended relatively recently by Burkhard Meißner without any reference to the problem of the era of composition. Meißner made a statistical/distribution analysis of small structural words, such as *et*, *cum*, and *in*, and concluded that the biographies of the corpus derive from a plurality of authors (single or several biographies could individually be attributed to a specific author). He came to a similar conclusion after examining the attested authors' approaches to past, present, and future events and to the personal qualities of the emperors. On these stylistic grounds Meißner also suggested that the traditional authorial attribution of some biographies should be reconsidered:[11] thus he innocently touched upon a major crux in *HA-Forschung*, as we shall see.

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[8] Lippold 1991:3–147 (35 quoted)

[9] Lippold 1991:257–278; 1998; 1999; 2002; 2006.

[10] Wickert 1954:2209–2215; Corcoran 2008:232; Barnes 2011:50. Diocletian in Constantinian historiography: Schlange-Schöningen 2004; and in detail in Part II below (all against Dessau 1889:337–338). This, *inter alia*, also explains why a defence of dates and zeitgeist in *c.*300–330 for all the texts is better than any other date offered so far (*pace* Potter 1999a following Barnes 1978:17, which is restated in Barnes 2012a).

[11] Meißner 1992; Meißner 1993; Meißner 1997. Cf. also Arand 2003 who hesitantly suggests a plurality of authorship based on social concepts, which can also be augmented by reconsidering the manuscript tradition.

It is now acknowledged that 'the result of all this may not have won the approval or recognition of the established scholarly consensus on the HA, but it will be difficult to refute;'[12] indeed in some circles these arguments remain neglected.[13]

We must explore, therefore, how far such a consensus in fact extends and how and in what circles this consensus was achieved. We shall also consider the wider context in terms of both the complexity of the manuscript tradition and the debate over the validity of Dessau's thesis at the turn of the twentieth century.

In sum, the current 'consensus', or rather 'orthodox' view, has been challenged on general grounds and shown to rely overwhelmingly on the authority of Dessau 1889. Alan Cameron, now working within the tradition of Dessau and overlooking these contributions,[14] stated about recent Dessauist speculations: 'in view of the fantasy and gullibility that threatens to overwhelm the field, it is time to hold this sort of speculation to the same standard of proofs as other areas of scholarship.' He also rightly argued that an attempt to identify the forger of the 'HA' on the basis of 'three commonplace expressions… is frivolous.'[15] The most notable of these is an ordinary phrase *pudet dicere*, found in Cicero and misrepresented as belonging to Jerome.[16]

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It is time to ask basic questions: how solid is the foundation upon which the imposing superstructure of such speculations has been reared? And can this foundation stand

[12] Mehl 2011:174; cf. Christ 2000; Rosen 2001.

[13] The following publications of scholars committed to Dessau's hypothesis simply ignore, or take no careful consideration of, those arguments: Kulikowski 2007; Ratti 2010; Alan Cameron 2011b; G. W. Adams 2012; Thomson 2012; Paschoud 2012a; Cornell 2013; Rees 2014. Brandt 1996, Birley 2003 and Fündling 2006 roundly dismiss them in a few lines mostly through restatements of Dessau.

[14] Notice his conservative contributions, defending the stated dates of composition: Alan Cameron 1965a; 1965b; 1968; 1971.

[15] Alan Cameron 2011a:836, 839; mostly against Ratti (2010) who restates the arguments of Chastagnol (1994) and Honoré (1987) in order to identify the author with Nicomachus Flavianus, d.394 (*PLRE,* 'Flavianus 15').

[16] Jerome: Alan Cameron 2011a:838. Common: Purser 1909:51 (overlooked by Ratti and Cameron). Purser's methodological remarks and caveats about how allusions and Latin expressions should be used to draw conclusions about literary priority, especially in *HA-Forschung*, are still relevant and can prevent restatements of invalid arguments (38–55).

'the same standard of proofs as other areas of scholarship'? This study, therefore, aims to provide a fresh investigation of the corpus's claims and an invitation to reconsider it as a literary source.

From antiquity to the twenty-first century

The names of the authors of the corpus transmitted in the manuscripts are Aelius Spartianus, Iulius Capitolinus, Vulcacius Gallicanus, Aelius Lampridius, Trebellius Pollio, and Flavius Vopiscus. These names are also transmitted in the 'excerpta' title alongside Marius Maximus. Spartianus is almost certainly a corruption of the cognomen Speratianus, attested for the prefect of Numidia between 293 and 305 and even earlier.[17] These names are 'otherwise attested' and fit their stated era of *c.*293–340.[18]

The various manuscripts, divided into two classes, Π and Σ, ascribe each biography to one of these authors, and in some cases different manuscripts offer different authorial ascriptions in their titles, especially in the biographies down to *Severus Alexander*. Moreover, in some cases the authorial statements in the main text of the biographies are inconsistent with the ascriptions in the manuscript titles (incipits and explicits). As different scribes copied the titles and the main text, discrepancies inevitably followed in direct proportion to the complexity of the titulature. Indeed, such inconsistencies are common in multi-authored works or complex manuscripts of classical works, such as *Corpus Caesarianum* and the Theodosian Code.[19]

This evident inconsistency in the corpus was such that the authorial ascriptions within it were a bone of contention for many generations of scholars. From the humanist period, scholars have tried to reattribute the biographies according to the

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[17] *PIR*[2] S797.

[18] Lippold 1999:155 on the other five, with further references. Thus their testimonia are just as good as that of most mid-third-century authors, such as Herodian (first mentioned in 'SHA') and Diogenes Laertius (first mentioned in the sixth century), whose biographical details are only known from their own work, and whose identity is only supported by similarities to the nomenclature of their time. Thomson 2012 restates Honoré 1987 ('fanciful article', so Alan Cameron 2011a:839n.21), and ignores these facts and Lippold's publications.

[19] See Chapter 2.

statements in the main text and on various stylistic grounds, rather than to follow the manuscript titles.[20] Hermann Peter, in a *Litteraturbericht* of works published on the corpus in 1883–1892, stated that Gemoll 1886's examination of the manuscripts' ascriptions and authorial statements had solved most, if not all, of the 'authorial contradictions' in the corpus as we have it.[21]

Dessau 1889 and its aftermath

In 1889, however, Hermann Dessau claimed to have found a 'web of riddles and contradictions' in the corpus. These contradictions were, on the one hand, the inconsistencies between the manuscript titles and the authorial claims in the main text, and, on the other hand, apparent inconsistencies concerning the specific dates of composition. For instance, he claimed that it was improbable for an author or authors to be active both under Diocletian and Constantine; he 'dated' some biographies (those ascribed to Vopiscus) exactly to 305.[22] Earlier scholars, however, had already shown that these were written under Constantine (*c.*306–330).[23] Dessau then found anachronistic Constantinian themes and persons in them, such as the allusion to the prominence of the family of the Probi and the relationship between the Second Flavian dynasty and Claudius II 'Gothicus' (seemingly relevant between 306/310 and *c.*330).[24]

[20] See the comments of Casaubon, Salmasius and Gruter in HAS-1671; Richter 1850; Brocks 1869. Accessible summary in Clinton, *Fasti* 2.569g, 600e, 606. Thomson 2012 overlooks the relevance of this important point to the validity of Dessau's thesis.
[21] Gemoll 1886; Peter 1894:122. Bury 1900:445–447 followed them.
[22] Dessau 1889:337–348, 375, 378–379.
[23] Richter 1850; Rühl 1888 which showed that Vopiscus' biographies (Aurelian to Carinus) had very few relevant and clear dating references, and were most probably published *c.*325. Dessau (ibid.) referred to the latter only in order to 'pick' the Constantinian anachronisms, rather than use them as indications of the actual time of composition. Dessau took the incorrect stated dates of composition from Peter 1860; Brunner 1868.
[24] Dessau 1889:339–344, 349–359. The prominence of the Ceionii Albini, who flourished in the early fourth century according to Dessau (1889:355) and later in that century, is not an indication of a later forgery, but further support of a Constantinian dating of one biography (Chapter 5 below). This discussion, therefore, excludes minor points which were effectively refuted by Dessau's contemporaries, modern conservatives (e.g. Lippold 1991:10, 607–609 on Toxotius) and/or discussed in detail in this study.

This led him to conclude that the biographies could not be pre-Constantinian, and therefore had to be post-Constantinian (much later, in his view).[25] After rejecting the stated dates of composition, which he imputed to the biographies, Dessau produced several arguments, based on his *assumption* that the corpus was composed significantly later than the death of Constantine, to support the dating of the corpus to the second half of the fourth century.[26] The most notable and oft-quoted is the alleged correspondence between a passage in the *Life of Severus* and Aurelius Victor (*fl. c.*360): Dessau *hesitantly* suggested that it was *Severus* was copying Victor, but Alexander Enmann, the founding father of the postulated and widely accepted *Kaisergeschichte,* had shown a few years earlier that the correspondence derives from a common source.[27] Moreover, Dessau was far from denying the common-source theory as a possible explanation for such parallels.[28] This common-source theory was endorsed by several scholars, even those who claimed to follow Dessau elsewhere,[29] about this celebrated correspondence.[30] The possibility that Victor used the so-called Scriptores has recently been suggested, so he could in fact provide a *terminus ante*, rather than *post*, of *c.*360 to our biographical corpus.[31] This study will reconsider this possibility.

On these foundations Dessau brought up his single-author hypothesis by asking: 'is the plurality of its authors, like the date of composition (*Entstehungzeit*) of the biographies, also fake (*fingirt*)?' He tried answering this question with the affirmative by registering words and expressions, such as *forma conspicuus* and the verb

[25] Dessau 1889:344, 347, 349.
[26] Dessau 1889:361.
[27] Enmann 1884:363–370; Dessau 1889:363–367.
[28] Dessau 1889:366, 372–373—as Lippold had already noted (1991:11n.9, 110–112).
[29] Barnes 1978; Paschoud 1996; 2001; Lippold 1998; 1999; Burgess 2011.
[30] Stern 1953:17–27; Chausson 1997; Lippold 1998: *passim*; Rohrbacher 2013. The exact date of the lost source, whether the postulated *EKG*/*Ur-EKG* (*c.*305–315 or earlier, according to Lippold and Burgess) or Marius Maximus is less salient at this point.
[31] Groß-Albenhausen and Fuhrmann 2009:159; see already Opitz 1872:229–254; Vermaat 1893:30 for earlier literature. Much the same could be said about the other correspondences with the corpus, Victor and Eutropius (Lippold 1991:110–121). *Pace* Birley 2003; Barnes 2011; Alan Cameron 2011b; Cornell 2013, who overlook these recent developments and still take the *Severus*-Victor correspondence, as 'proven' by Dessau, for a terminus post for the whole corpus.

contundere, which he considered rare and undocumented.[32] The purpose of the forgery, Dessau claimed, was to sell this corpus successfully in the book markets of Rome, which were packed with Marius Maximus, the *Breviaria* of Victor and Eutropius, and Ammianus' *Res Gestae*. Dessau concluded the article with an honest statement that he was aware of the further difficulties that his thesis caused, and this study will therefore also draw attention to his overlooked afterthoughts.[33] In recent years, as we have seen, the single-author assumption and restatements of Dessau are used to reject the stated dates and presuppose a forgery in a later period.

In the immediate aftermath of Dessau's publication scholars defended the original claims of the corpus and refuted some of Dessau arguments. Theodor Mommsen was the first to reply, in 1890. He first showed that the administrative anachronisms and geographical designations fit the time of Diocletian of Constantine exactly. He also held that the authors mentioned in the manuscript existed, but that their authorial attributions were confused almost beyond repair by medieval copyists, who introduced the inconsistencies between the authorial claims in the main text and those in the manuscripts' title. Mommsen therefore tried to work with the imperial apostrophes and the statements in the main text rather than the manuscript titles, in order to group and classify the biographies and even to venture guesses about reattributing biographies to their possible authors.[34] He was also able to refute nearly all of Dessau's historical and prosopographical arguments, including that of Claudius II's relation to the Second Flavian dynasty, which he claimed could not withstand the basic critical principle of *cui bono?* if we were dealing with a forgery from *c.*395 (Dessau's proposed date for the forgery). Mommsen also shows that this dynastic

[32] Dessau 1889:378, 386–390.
[33] Dessau 1889:375–376, 391.
[34] Mommsen 1890:229–243 (administration), 243–246, 253, 260–261 (manuscripts and authorial attribution); rather than claiming that the discussion of the manuscript titles was 'pointless and profitless' as Syme misrepresents Mommsen (1968:180n.2). On Syme and the corpus, see below.

claim was relevant and propagated even before *c.*310, and in fact supported a tetrarchic/Constantinian dating of the relevant biographies.[35]

Mommsen's main thesis was that the corpus was redacted in the time of Constantine from a different and longer series of biographies of Speratianus, Lampridius, Capitolinus, Pollio, and Vopiscus, who were active at various times between the first tetrarchy and Constantine's reign (he took Gallicanus to be a scribal misnomer). He argued that, irrespective of the authorial-attribution difficulties, the corpus could be divided into three blocks: (1) *Hadrian to Gordian III*, dedicated to Diocletian and Constantine and attributed to the first four authors. The manuscript attribution, however, cannot be accepted, and should be rectified; (2) the *Philippi* (lost) up to *Claudius II* attributed to Trebellius Pollio; (3) *Aurelian–Carinus* attributed to Vopiscus. The redaction process, he claimed, was also responsible for the linguistic unity, which Dessau had suggested; but beyond this period the corpus did not go through any phases of *composition*.[36] Nevertheless, Mommsen also postulated superficial intervention after 360 for two main reasons: (1) to explain the *Severus*-Victor correspondence as an interpolation, showing that it had no bearing on the date of the corpus, in case Dessau had proved his point here; (2) to account for the notable prosopographical argument about the prominence of the Probi, which he was unable to refute, because he had committed himself to a composition date earlier than *c.*305 (the first tetrarchy) for some biographies—a date which had already been shown to be incorrect, especially for the *Life of Probus*, which was ostensibly composed *c.*330.[37] Whereas the first hypothesis could stand in its own right—especially if we consider

[35] Mommsen 1890:229, 252–261, 270–273. He did not apply *cui bono?* to the entire forgery question, as subsequent scholars claim (Momigliano 1954:40; Rohrbacher 2013:146); nevertheless, Dessau (and as we later saw, Dessauists) even failed to answer this general question (Hohl 1958, and below Chapter 3). The question of whether Claudius II's ancestry of the second Flavian dynasty was real or not is less salient. For the former position, see Chausson 2007, cf. also Lippold 2002.

[36] Mommsen 1890:243–250, 270–273, 278–281 (esp. 243, 273); contra the attempt to impute Mommsen with the suggestion of six stages of composition (Syme 1971a; Birley 2003), and *pace* the attempt to make three authors out of these stages (Momigliano 1969). At most these are four stages, if we include the Constantinian redactor (cf. Peter 1892:244–245).

[37] Mommsen 1890:273–280, 258–259. *Probus* written *c.*320–330: Rühl 1888; Tropea 1900:2.23. An error not rectified in Mommsen's *Ges. Schr.*, vol.7 (pub.1909).

other interpolations in ancient texts, which are never used to establish a composition date or a forgery of an entire work (e.g. interpolations from Orosius in *Origo Constantini* or those in *Corpus Aurelianum*)—the second hypothesis was easily nullified. For both Dessau and Mommsen acknowledge that the Probi were also prominent *c.*310–340.[38]

It was Mommsen's compromise attempt, deriving from his inability to challenge three of Dessau's arguments (*Severus*-Victor, Probi, and the linguistic unity), that Dessau's followers later proclaimed as a 'conservative acceptance' and then 'proof' of the validity of some of Dessau's arguments.[39] It seems more accurate to call it 'Mommsen's compromise',[40] rather than 'massive defense of the traditional date'.[41]

A more thorough defence of the corpus' multi-author nature, date(s), and authenticity was provided in a series of articles by Elimar Klebs, a Latinist, prominent scholar of other late antique texts (including this corpus), and a co-author of *PIR*[1] (with Dessau).[42] In the first contribution Klebs demolished Dessau's remaining arguments, which Mommsen had accepted and explained through his 'redactor' theory. Klebs demonstrated in greater detail than Enmann, that the *Severus*-Victor correspondence was a result of a common source,[43] and provided counter arguments to Dessau's prosopographical argument, which Mommsen had not already refuted, namely the Probi argument.[44] Klebs also noted the problematic nature of Dessau's philological 'proof' of a single author, on which Mommsen's redactor-theory was founded, and

[38] Mommsen 1890:274–275; see above.
[39] Syme 1968:217; 1971b:250 (and *passim* throughout his publications); Johne 1998; Barnes 2000; Rohrbacher 2013.
[40] Rostovtzeff, *Roman Empire*[2], 437; Crees 1911:29–30.
[41] Potter 1991; cf. Potter 1999b:199; Rohrbacher 2013; *OCD*[4] s.v. 'HA'.
[42] Klebs 1890; 1892. Dessau, therefore, did not have exclusive knowledge of that subject (*pace* Syme 1971b:1–3). Yet, Dessau 1889 has contaminated recent volumes of *PIR*[2] (e.g. S and P). Most of his observations on other texts, such as the *Origo Constantini* and Velleius and Sulpicius Severus are acknowledged for their good judgements (e.g. Woodman 1975; Barnes 1989; Lieu 1996). As his other publications show, he was well aware of the deficiencies of the corpus as a historical source for the periods it covers (Klebs 1888; 1889a).
[43] Klebs 1890:440–446, and the same point about the *Marcus*-Eutropius correspondence (446–448), conclusion at 459–460.
[44] Klebs 1890:448–453.

provided linguistic, literary, and historical arguments in support of the original multi-author state of the corpus.[45]

Klebs concluded that the corpus was an entirely eclectic collection of various biographical series written under Diocletian and Constantine, after he had challenged the hypotheses of Dessau, Mommsen, and their followers (viz. Seeck and Wölfflin respectively).[46] Klebs's other arguments focused on attempts to reattribute biographies to their respective authors according to the main text and/or manuscript titles (whose problematic nature he acknowledged), analysis of the corpus's sources, and linguistic characteristics. He even made an interesting methodological comparison with the Gallic Panegyrics regarding those issues. His analysis of the postulated *EKG*, the existence of several historical accounts of the empire from the time of the tetrarchies, methodological remarks about *Quellenforschung* in general, and precursory 'intertextual' approach are relevant to this day.[47] Like Mommsen, however, he avoided questioning the stated dates of the authors which Dessau had ascribed to the biographies. Klebs therefore had recourse to 'unsatisfactory' solutions to some 'inconsistencies' in the corpus, such as postulating minor interpolations by scribes to counter some of Dessau's forgery arguments, for example where Vopiscus, whom he thought was active *c.*305, refers to Capitolinus and Lampridius (seemingly active *c.*304–325).[48] As we shall see, reconsidering the actual stated dates could provide more satisfactory solutions.

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[45] Klebs 1890:453–457; 1892:15–52, 515–587.

[46] Klebs 1890:453–454, 464; 1892:2–9, 540–549 and *passim*; Wölfflin 1892 (expanding Mommsen's redactor-theory); Seeck 1890 (expanding Dessau's forgery view, and placing it in *c.*410—rejected by Dessau 1892:585). On Seeck's factual errors see De Sanctis 1896:*passim*; Peter 1892:242–259, and below, Part II (*passim*).

[47] Klebs 1890:461–463; Klebs 1892:18–19. Bleckmann 1997 endorses multiple '*EKG*'-like accounts of the empire from that period. Klebs warned against attempts to use the same methods of textual criticism for the production of stemmas of sources that, as literary products, have no pretence to reproduce their predecessors verbatim. Glen Most has independently made the last point in a public lecture (Most 2013; contra Barnes 1978; Burgess 2011).

[48] Klebs 1892:518, 529; unsatisfactory according to White 1967:132; Syme 1968:180 (following Dessau).

Further defences of multiple-authorship followed. The renowned Latinist Eduard Wölfflin provided both philological and literary analysis, which supported a plurality of authors. As far as the date(s) and genesis of the corpus are concerned, he followed Mommsen's Constantinian-redactor theory, suggested that Flavius Vopiscus redacted the corpus and considered reattributing some biographies to different authors on stylistic grounds. Wölfflin postulated the redactor to explain the creation of the corpus, rather than to explain away Dessau's philological 'proof'.[49]

S. Frankfurter produced a literary and philological discussion of the corpus, and concluded that the corpus was more eclectic than Mommsen and Wölfflin had thought. He also found differences in the prefatory remarks, apostrophes, and epilogues of the various authors, which indicated that they were *heterogeneous* and not composed by the same author. On these grounds he too suggested the need to reattribute the named authors to various biographies in some cases. One of Frankfurter's important insights, which Crees later explored in greater detail, was that Dessau's hypothesis had caused more problems than it claimed to have solved.[50]

The last attempts to defend and interpret the corpus's claims about its specific dates were made in two articles by Gaetano De Sanctis.[51] In 1896 De Sanctis examined and defended the authorial claims of the biographies' dates, while setting aside the complexity of the manuscript titulature and philological considerations. His important contribution showed how establishing the actual stated dates of composition through close reading of the authorial statements, and then considering the authorial views and anachronisms against the tetrarchic-Constantinian context could support the authenticity of the corpus, and nullify most of Dessau's forgery arguments and Mommsen's attempted compromise. De Sanctis also demonstrated that the terminus ante of 305 ascribed to some biographies was groundless, and that

[49] Wölfflin 1892. He is best known as founder of and contributor to *TLL* and *Archiv für lateinische Lexikographie und Grammatik*.
[50] Frankfurter 1893 (esp.221–222; overlooked by Alan Cameron 2011b:743); Crees 1911:23–58.
[51] Known for his monumental *Storia dei Romani*. Another powerful attempt is an overlooked Dutch dissertation, Vermaat 1893.

neither later editing/interpolation (Mommsen, Klebs) nor wholesale forgery (Dessau, Seeck) were needed to explain the anachronisms or allusion to events and persons of *c.*306–340. These observations, he argued, supported further the authenticity and truthfulness of the corpus's claims. In 1927 he showed that the inconsistencies in the corpus, for example about hereditary versus elective succession, in fact supported an era of composition around the time of Diocletian and Constantine.[52] De Sanctis's approach and arguments, even though some scholars have acknowledged his articles' importance and strength,[53] have been overlooked, even by 'conservatives' such as Momigliano, De Sanctis's disciple.[54]

The most thorough defence of the corpus's authorial claims was propounded in two full-scale monographs. Hermann Peter, who was also the editor of the corpus's Teubner text and an eminent scholar of Roman historiography, argued that this multi-author corpus was finalised about *c.*330 (before the foundation of Constantinople) and identified the redactor of the corpus with one of the authors, Iulius Capitolinus, whom Peter thought was active both under Diocletian and Constantine. He also countered at length some of Dessau's and Seeck's arguments.[55] The climax of this defence was Charles Lécrivain's 1904 monograph.

These two studies were mostly concerned with *Quellenforschung* and with providing various explanations for the genesis of the corpus, rather than looking at the potential contribution of the corpus to the period when it claims to have been written. Moreover, they both demonstrated that the authenticity of the documents (speeches and letters) cited in some biographies should be kept completely separate from the question of authenticity and truthfulness of the authorial claims; they bound together the speeches and letters, argued that they were not authentic, and were

[52] De Sanctis 1896; 1927 (contra Baynes 1926).
[53] Baynes 1926:14; Momigliano 1966:176n.13.
[54] Momigliano 1966:150; 1969; 1973 (with only sporadic references to De Sanctis); Jones 1964:1071n.1. De Sanctis's arguments are ignored by White 1967; Barnes 1978; Paschoud 1996; Lippold 1998; Thomson 2012; and many others.
[55] Peter 1892 summarized in Peter 1894:133–137.

composed by the stated authors and/or the corpus's editor at their stated dates. León Homo, who thought the corpus as a whole was authentic, followed their approach, but concluded that the 'documents' provide an important contribution to our understanding of the stated dates of composition in *c.*293–337.[56] These scholars, however, made a double generalization. Speeches, as is well known, were never considered verbatim reproductions of the actual speeches in literary works; moreover, there were powerful objections to this generalization, and *some* letters were shown to be most probably authentic, paraphrases of authentic originals, or not forged by the author(s).[57] Thus, the question of the 'documents' is unrelated to the question of the corpus being a forgery, that is the number of authors or their dates, and should therefore be considered elsewhere within the broader context of documents in ancient authors.[58]

These are the notable developments before and after Dessau and Mommsen at the turn of the twentieth century. There were also further studies on specific points, which will be considered throughout this discussion.[59]

At this point, it suffices to note J.B. Bury's remark in plain English:

> The fullest and most satisfactory study is that of Ch. Lécrivain… He has finally disposed of the theories of Dessau (who proposed to ascribe the whole work to a single author writing in the time of Theodosius the Great), Seeck (who adopting Dessau's main hypothesis, would place the composition after 410 AD), and Mommsen (who, rejecting Dessau's view and admitting the origin of the collection in the time of Diocletian-Constantine, regards the work as rehandled and interpolated in the time of Theodosius the Great.)[60]

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[56] Peter 1892:153–231; Lécrivain 1904:45–51; Homo 1926a; Homo 1926b; Dessauists later used them against the authenticity of the authorial claims.

[57] Wölfflin 1892:*passim*; Purser 1909; Dornseiff 1957; Galimberti 2010 (overlooking these publications).

[58] This complex question, therefore, requires an independent study, which will reconsider the letters case by case, without any prejudice. Documents in general: Potter 1999b:81–90.

[59] Extremely useful are the literature reviews of Peter (1884a; 1894; 1907). According to my familiarity with continental scholarship, it seems to me that Bury (1900; 1926), Crees (1911:23–58), and Magie-SHA (2.vii–xvii, xxiv–xxx) remain the best and most accurate surveys of the debate around that time.

[60] Bury 1926:479 (his views were ignored in the long debate, as far as I can tell). I fail to understand what Paschoud, a Dessauist, means when he says that *HA-Forschung* needs 'un nouveau Lécrivain'

Schanz-Hosius in 1914 independently provided a similar discussion and conclusion,[61] and so did David Magie, who edited, commentated upon, and translated the corpus. He concluded that 'the radical theory that the *vitae* are all the work of a "forger" who lived at the end of the fourth century or the beginning of the fifth is untenable. Dessau and Seeck failed to prove their contention, and the recent articles… contain no real proof that the *vitae*… were composed at this date.' Magie then dismissed 'the arguments for the preposterous theories that the whole work is a forgery of the fourth or fifth century'.[62] Susan Ballou, a student of the literary context and textual transmission of the corpus, approved of his contribution and thought 'it will lead to the true solution'.[63]

The twentieth century

Despite all of these powerful criticisms, in the second half of the twentieth century scholars increasingly relied on Dessau's single-forger view, while paying lip service to the 'conservative' cause by stating en passant Mommsen's compromise attempt. The more thorough defences of authenticity of both authorship and dates were ignored.[64] This seems to be a result of the work of two influential scholars. Norman Baynes, the first to formulate a unitarist attempt to explain the motive of Dessau's forgery, evaded the philological defences because he did 'not feel qualified to express a judgement' and preferred to 'write as a student of history'—an approach which Susan Ballou rightly castigated.[65] Arnaldo Momigliano, who was sceptical about the corpus being a forgery, did not lock horns with Baynes,[66] and presented Mommsen as the

(Paschoud 2013:12); nor do I understand the ad hoc use Dessauists make of Lécrivain without acknowledging his main conclusions (e.g. Syme 1968; Barnes 1978).

[61] §§794–795 (especially at p.58); cf. §§545–548.

[62] Magie-SHA, 2.xxx-xxxi (pub.1924).

[63] Ballou 1928a:406.

[64] Potter 1999b:199; Barnes 2000; Birley 2003; Paschoud 2012b; Rohrbacher 2013 (and many others, following *OCD*[3=4] s.v. 'HA'). Only Syme went as far as making Klebs, Peter, and De Sanctis followers of Mommsen without considering their views and disagreements with Mommsen (1968:217 and *passim*).

[65] Baynes 1926:75, 100; Ballou 1928b. Despite Ballou's important contributions to the corpus's manuscripts and language, her views on the corpus are generally ignored. Baynes ignored her criticisms in his reply to critics (Baynes 1955:209–217).

[66] Momigliano 1954. As Michelotto 1992 notes, Momigliano overlooked the negative reviews of Baynes, and produced very cryptic and contradictory statements whenever he dealt with Baynes's suggested dating of the forgery to *c.*360 (e.g. Momigliano 1966:151, 153, 155–156, 162, 166, 174;

major representative of the 'conservative' alternative to Dessau, even though there were more detailed, accurate and better defences of the corpus's authenticity and criticisms of Dessau.

Momigliano has substantially influenced the reception of *HA-Forschung* in the second half of the twentieth century, even among Dessau followers who ignored his conservative approach, scepticism, and methodological caveats. In a 1953 lecture, one of a series on forgeries in the Warburg Institute, Momigliano tried to test the main arguments and speculations brought against what he took as the *general* date of composition of the corpus (*c.*330), such as the *Severus*-Victor correspondence, the oracle about Claudius II and the Constantinian dynasty, a reference to a possible victory of the Romans over the Parthians, the allusion to the prominence of the family of the Probi, the alleged emphasis on the *nomen Antoninorum*, and various administrative anachronisms. Both in this article and its various reprints—which included extensive appendices—and elsewhere, Momigliano was able to show that none of the alleged 'later' anachronisms (including allusions to persons) pass the basic standards of proof or could support a dating beyond the death of Constantine (337). Momigliano never claimed to have any theory about this corpus, and asked that judgement about its forgery be suspended.[67]

In short, Momigliano showed that no argument or hypothesis was compelling enough to go beyond the terminus ante of *c.*337. His approach is indeed an important contribution to the conservative cause, and its influence is acknowledged and still resonates today.[68] His significant insight that none of the administrative anachronisms go beyond the death of Constantine was proved accurate by two

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Momigliano 1977:121), and Dessauists later used it as proof for a post-360 dating (Syme 1968; Alan Cameron 2011b).

[67] First published as Momigliano 1954 (=*Secondo contributo*, 105–143). This article will be cited throughout according to its last and fullest edition in Momigliano 1966. See also Momigliano 1969; 1973; 1975. And his *en passant* remarks in Momigliano 1958:155, 165–170; 1977:108, 119–124, 145–148. For a summary of his views and influence: Michelotto 1992.

[68] Barnes 2012a:24; Cornell 2013:76; Rohrbacher 2013. Notice Graham 1973; Timpanaro 1978:424.

eminent scholars in this field: A.H.M. Jones and John Crook.[69] Even his observation, that a reference *alluding vaguely and only possibly* to regional prefectures is a Constantinian anachronism,[70] has recently turned out to be correct in light of new evidence and an overlooked fragment of Constantine's own work. In it Constantine referred to regional prefectures as already established. The terminus ante for this institution is *c.*325, and thus a reference to it could be pre-Constantinian or Constantinian (*c.*305–337), rather than a post-Constantinian anachronism.[71]

Nevertheless, Momigliano's approach contained mistaken assumptions, which weakened his arguments. His critical analysis starts by claiming: 'Dessau's article is a recognized masterpiece'. After skimming through the immediate reactions to Dessau and later to Baynes, Momigliano stated: 'the basic question is still whether the HA was written before or after the death of Constantine' and 'we shall discuss the question of the date, not the questions of the number and truthfulness of the authors'.[72] The *first* statement, despite being restated afterwards by many, had already been questioned. The *second* is a badly formulated simplification and therefore methodologically misleading (the corpus does not report Constantine's death). Moreover, it seems to be a reaction to Dessau's claim that the corpus has to be post-Constantinian, because (parts of) it cannot have been pre-Constantinian. When there is only a terminus post of 336 in one biography, why would a prima facie eclectic corpus count as a forgery if several biographies, which do not have clear temporal references, were published in 338, or 340 for that matter?[73] The *third*

[69] Crook 1955:137–138; Jones 1964:1071n.1, 1143–1144n.3; 1969:321; Momigliano 1966:160–162, 171 and idem, *Quarto contributo*, 535–541. Thomson 2012:39–49 ignores these publications, and restates arguments for post-Constantinian dating that were already refuted in those publications.
[70] *TT*.18.5 (*praefectus Illyrici et Galliarum*); Momigliano 1966:161; Alan Cameron 1968:18; and notice De Sanctis 1896:61–62. This applies only if *praefectus* here is used elliptically for *praefectus praetorio* and not in the simple sense of a person responsible for a geographic unit (*OLD*, s.v.).
[71] Constantine *fr.*2 (*HRRel.*2.155; ap. Lyd.*Mag.*3.33), analysed, alongside epigraphic evidence, in Porena 2003:515–554. Barnes 2011:158–163 and Alan Cameron 2011b:747 overlook this information, and still claim this is an anachronism from *c.*340.
[72] Momigliano 1966:150–152.
[73] Barnes has castigated this disregard for 'precise dates' on different grounds. In Momigliano's defence, one should point out that he was aware of the issue: 'we have been asked to decide whether the six individuals… wrote the HA under Diocletian or Constantine' (1966:148; further in 149, 160, 169–170, and 173). Barnes (1978; Barnes 1995a; Barnes 2012a) ignores these comments, and gives

simply avoids Dessau's single-author argument, which is crucial for the rejection or acceptance of the authorial claims of the corpus.

Moreover Momigliano, following Dessau and Mommsen, ascribed to some biographies a terminus ante of *c.*305—a terminus restated by many even though it is demonstrably false—and then postulated a wholesale Constantinian editing of the corpus to explain the 'anachronisms' from *c.*310–330 in those biographies.[74] This type of 'editing' should not be confused with the possibility of authorial revision of some biographies, which Momigliano also suggested. Authorial revision and incompleteness of ancient texts or publication of second editions of works in antiquity are well-documented and well-researched topics.[75] Elsewhere, Momigliano misrepresented the corpus as incorporating claims of 'team work' when, in fact, the 'authors' show no signs of cooperation; he claimed to have 'arguments to reinforce the theory of several authors', rather than support the original claims of the corpus. He also maintained that multi-author corpora did not exist in antiquity, when we have quite a few examples, each of which, like this corpus, lacks an 'exact' parallel in antiquity but raises similar (but not identical) philological and methodological issues.[76]

In sum, Momigliano's approach overlooked the debate over Dessau's validity, disregarded details (e.g. specific dates, basic facts), avoided the philological perspective of the corpus (textual transmission, language, and literature), and included one notable methodological flaw. His views, therefore, require careful revision and reconsideration.

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the impression that the invalidity of Momigliano's simplification is an indication of the validity of the opposing views, to which Barnes adheres, irrespective of the precise translation of *Fälschung*, which Barnes examines in the context of *HA-Forschung* alone.

[74] Momigliano 1966:155, 170. Dessauists took the incorrect stated dates from Momigliano 1966:169–170, in order to support their forgery view, as we show in Part II.

[75] Momigliano 1966:160; Gurd 2012 (in general); cf. Part II *passim*, esp. Chapter 8.

[76] Respectively in Momigliano 1977:121; 1975:103; 1958:154–155. Part I will draw comparisons with *Corpus Caesarianum*, *Corpus Aurelianum*, *Corpus Agrimensorum*, the various corpora within the *Panegyrici Latini* (cf. De Nonno 2010:34–41). Most of these misconceptions are now restated in Cornell 2013.

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In short, a defence of the corpus's authenticity requires further evidence, elucidation, and refinement. The question of the forgery should be broken down into two manageable subjects: (1) philological: the authorship attribution and the single-forger argument; (2) historical: the specific dates of the corpus and its author or authors.

As we saw earlier most, if not all, the arguments used to support Dessau's single-forger hypothesis were based on circular attempts to establish the date and purpose of the forger, or vice versa. All these attempts accept without question Dessau's 'proof that the biographies cannot have been written at the time when they purport to have been composed.'[77] The twentieth century saw various attempts to date the alleged single-minded forgery between *c.*360 (as propaganda under Julian the Apostate) and the sixth century (in Merovingian Gaul by a contemporary of Gregory of Tours, or in Ostrogothic Italy). There were also various sideshows, dating the forgery to the 340s, 380s, and *c.*395–420.[78] All these attempts are based on prosopographical arguments, and/or alleged allusions to literary works, and/or events from the second half of the fourth century onwards. Thus they illustrate how this type of evidence can be freely manipulated, and that 'too much depends on subjective valuation'.[79]

A.H.M. Jones had already noted in 1969 the difficulty with such attempts:

> The proofs are, as usual, a number of alleged references to persons and events of the late fourth century, or alleged reminiscences of authors of that period. Some are more far-fetched than the others, but none is probative. Professor Syme appeals to their cumulative force; but zero multiplied by ten thousand is still zero.[80]

[77] Baynes 1926:21, restated with variants by many, e.g. Syme 1968; Barnes 1978; Alan Cameron 2011b; Rohrbacher 2013; Cornell 2013.
[78] Summary in Baldwin 2010:446–447; 380s: Alan Cameron 2011b (similar to Hirschfeld 1913); Ostrogothic Italy: Paschoud 2012a.
[79] *CHCL*, 2.725.
[80] Jones 1969.

This scepticism was directed at Syme's attempt to restate the claim that Dessau's forger, whose existence and activity *c.*400 Syme *assumed* as a given, knew the work of Ammianus and alluded to events of *c.*400. Syme's work was shown to be problematic, repetitive, erroneous, and to have overgeneralized from the biographies ascribed to Vopiscus.[81] A close inspection of the alleged parallels between the corpus and Ammianus, his central thesis, has demonstrated that the text of Ammianus was not available to the HA.[82] Syme himself was well aware of the weakness, ad hoc nature, and even sheer invalidity of his arguments.[83] Nevertheless, they were later uncritically restated or taken for granted in some circles, thus ignoring Syme's critics.[84]

The other side of the coin appears to be revealed in recent studies on Velleius Paterculus: 'Syme had a chilling effect on his reception'.[85] Regarding this corpus and Syme, it has recently been acknowledged that 'the date ends up more of an open question than one gets from a dose of Syme'; and that 'the project was perhaps misconceived'. [86]

Syme's project and contributions, moreover, belonged to a wider context of scholarly activity starting in 1963, whereby the proceedings of the *Historiae Augustae Colloquia*

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[81] Reviewers have illustrated these points. Overgeneralization: Crook 1972 (also noting 'repetitious assertion and obliqueness of presentation'); Alan Cameron 1971. Circular arguments, internal contradictions, and factual errors: Graham 1968 (noting 'constant repetition' and 'the hypothesis rests on arguments without probative force'); Graham 1973 ('lack of clarity in exposition and lack of quality in argumentation'; 'modern scholars are sometimes badly misrepresented'). These scholars were willing to accept Dessau 1889 as the basis of further discussion. See also Momigliano 1969; Momigliano 1973.

[82] Momigliano 1975. Even if the existence of an intertextual link had been proved, this would have been explained through Ammianus' access to either the SHA or earlier texts (e.g. Marius Maximus), as Graham 1968; Alan Cameron 1971; Alan Cameron 2011b had noted. Ammianus was an avid user of Latin works, including obscure ones, and those which are now lost (Kulikowski 2007; Kulikowski 2008; Kelly 2008).

[83] For instance (from Syme 1968): 'confrontation of the two passages fails to convince' (26); 'the case is not quite proved.' (29); 'it is sheer assumption that the HA was composed under the fresh impact of Ammianus' (74); 'a single author has been assumed' (176); 'brief and provisional, offered for inspection and subject to refutation' (183).

[84] E.g. Birley 2003; Mader 2005; Kelly 2008; Paschoud 2011; Thomson 2012.

[85] Yardley and Barrett 2011:xxxvi; note Cowan 2011.

[86] Baldwin 2010:461–462; *Dictionary of British Classicists*, s.v. (respectively).

(HAC) 'reinforced' Dessau's views through constant repetitions of Dessau's thesis.[87] They were originally published as volumes of *Antiquitas Reihe* 4: *Beiträge zur Historia-Augusta-Forschung* (AR4). Those proceedings and series were organized and edited by scholars committed to Dessau's dogma, whom Syme called 'the Bonn Gang'.[88] A given volume of these proceedings usually contains two or even three contributions by the same organizers in the same volume.[89]

This is a special phenomenon, and it created 'a scholarly literature in an abundance that has rarely been granted to any other ancient literary work'.[90] In many cases, the same unsubstantiated arguments are simply restated, despite forceful criticisms outside this circle.[91] The right word for this appears to be Dessauism:[92] the dogma, according to which all the inherent problems of this ancient text can be solved through a salute to Dessau, 'a young and brilliant Jewish scholar' or with similar epithets, claiming that he demonstrated that the corpus was a forgery.[93] The culmination of this stance appears to be the publication of photographs of Dessau's gravestone with the transcription inscribed text, and the celebration of his birthday.[94]

There might appear to be nothing wrong with that, especially if Dessau did indeed prove his case. But in light of overlooked and recent scholarship from outside this circle, we might rightly ask whether one can actually claim the 'total victory of Dessau's theses' and might also ask how this alleged 'general consensus' was

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[87] Cf. above p.2. Syme 1971b; Syme 1983 are mostly reprints of his HAC-contributions with restatements of Syme 1968 and without any reply to critics (e.g. Syme 1983:63–80 is a reprint of a 1971/1974 HAC-contribution and disregards criticisms of Lippold 1981, reprinted in Lippold 1998:160–182). Syme 1971a was published in AR4, contained ad hominem attacks on Italian scholars, and is acknowledged as a 'pamphlet against Momigliano' (Michelotto 1992:337–338).

[88] Barnes 2012b:188 (citing Syme), namely Andreas Alföldi, Joannes Straub, André Chastagnol, and Syme himself. The problematic nature of their arguments was noted by Hohl 1954; Alan Cameron 1965b.

[89] Alan Cameron 1965b noted this issue.

[90] Mehl 2011:171.

[91] For instance, Adkin 1997 on Barnes 1991; Alan Cameron 2011b: *passim* (cf. Adkin 2003 on Paschoud's repetitions); and n.87 above.

[92] Cf. the terms 'Mommsenism' and 'anti-Mommsenism' depoloyed in other fields of classical studies (Carter 1907:326; Duff 1938:102; Sewter 1970:113; Ziolkowski 1987:322).

[93] Syme 1971b; Kolb 1987; Barnes 2000 (cited).

[94] M. G. Schmidt 2009; Glock 2011.

achieved.[95] John Matthews noted about one of the HAC collections and the stated date of the corpus (*c.*330): 'none of the contributors to the present collection supports it.' Alan Cameron then warned about the problematic nature of that enterprise and its future.[96] But it seems that the glasnost recently prevailing among Dessauists and HAC-participants has shed important light on the nature of AR4 and HAC. They acknowledge the unquestionable restatement of Dessau's single-forger hypothesis, their arguments' superficial and ingenious nature, and the need to get in line with the views of the conveners, in order to be invited to the colloquia.[97] Indeed the more thorough defences of the corpus's authenticity and the criticisms of Dessau by prominent scholars were not included in the *Stellenbibliographie*, published in AR4;[98] and scholars, such as Arnaldo Momigliano, A.H.M. Jones, Alan Cameron, F. Walbank, A. Graham, Domenico Romano, Neil Adkin, and others, who objected and criticised Dessau or Dessauists, never took part in those colloquia.

Most importantly, David Rohrbacher, in a rather sympathetic review of a recent HAC-volume, noted that 'it contained little that is fresh or innovative' and that 'little work has been done in recent years on the HA outside of the colloquium. In addition to the colloquium regulars, we need scholars with new perspectives and new methodologies'.[99]

Recent scepticism

This situation provides a context that explains why scholars who work within Dessau's assumptions reject a dating of *c.*395–410, accept a terminus ante of *c.*380,

[95] Paschoud 2009:204; Cornell 2013:76 (respectively); cf. Birley 1976a:13, and his disturbing reference to 'remaining dissenters from Dessau' (2003:138n.45).
[96] Matthews 1966 (while accepting Dessau 1889); Cameron: 'if the present volumes are a fair sample of what is to come, their gratitude may be tempered with foreboding' (1965b:248).
[97] den Hengst 2010:127–128, 177; according to Barnes, a participant 'did not actually believe what he had said, but felt that politeness obliged him to say what Straub wanted to hear because Straub regularly invited him to the colloquia.' (2012b:190).
[98] De Sanctis, Hermann Peter, Tropea, E. Diehl, Leon Homo, Domenico Romano, Susan Ballou, and Fr. Dornseiff. This *Stellenbibliographie* (last volume from 1987), Chastagnol-HA (pub.1994), and the various Budé texts are the representatives of the fossilized Dessauist dogma. On Chastagnol-HA and its almost deliberate omission of conservative approaches, see Alan Cameron 2011b:746 with n.17, 747–748.
[99] Rohrbacher 2011.

and admit that 'much depends on supposed intertextual references to other works produced around then, such as Ammianus Marcellinus, Ausonius, Claudian, St Jerome, and even Vegetius, but most of these are patently unconvincing and none compelling'; and that 'in virtually none of these cases has any qualified philologist attempted to produce a serious philological argument.'[100] Indeed in some cases, simply using the *Oxford Latin Dictionary* has refuted the existence of intertextual links between the corpus and Jerome,[101] and alleged allusions to other authors were shown to be no more 'valid'.[102]

Moreover, Paschoud, a Dessauist, dismissed some intertextual links between the corpus and Aurelius Victor, once detected by Chastagnol, and ascribed them to a common source; the celebrated *Severus*-Victor passage was again explained with a common source hypothesis; and Victor's possible use of the corpus was recently considered, thus suggesting a terminus ante of *c.*360 for the corpus.[103] Yet, even though Dessauists promote these arguments, there has been no appetite to reconsider the Dessauist-forgery dogma, as Lippold noted.[104]

What remains of the forgery view in 2014?

It seems that there is, in fact, an emerging consensus, even among Dessauists, that the arguments for dating the biographical corpus beyond its stated dates have no independent value to support Dessau's alleged forgery. These arguments are

[100] Cornell 2013:76; Alan Cameron 2011b:748 (respectively; cf. Barnes 2012b). Lippold (1991) demonstrated the point in detail. The same could be said about *Quellenforschung*, which has not achieved a single valid argument to support Dessau's alleged forgery and dating, see Lippold 1999:160–164; cf. Barnes's flexibility: 'the identification of Eunapius as the Greek source after 270 was over confident' (1995b:17) contra Barnes 1978. Conservative approaches to the sources: Tropea 1900; Gräbner 1905. Cornell and Cameron seem to confuse a terminus ante with a terminus circa: Diogenes Laertius is not a sixth-century author, because Stephanus of Byzantium provides the earliest testimonia. Dating the corpus to *c.*370/380 suffers from the same problems of *c.*360 (see De Sanctis 1927).

[101] Adkin 2003 against what he presents as Paschoud's repetitive attempts (1996; 2001).

[102] Alan Cameron 2011a:838–842 on Ratti 2010 (various reprints of this author's contribution to the *colloquia*).

[103] Respectively, Paschoud 1996: *passim*, and in *Cassiodorus* 3 (1997), 128 (contra Barnes and Chastagnol); Chausson 1997; Groß-Albenhausen and Fuhrmann 2009 (the latter accept Lippold's approach to the corpus). Cornell, Cameron (ibid.), and Thomson 2012 overlook these developments.

[104] Lippold 1999:161.

admitted to be ad hoc in nature, mostly invalid, and to depend, in any case, upon prior acceptance of Dessau's argument as valid.

Moreover, recent scholarship and the overlooked debate over Dessau's thesis at the turn of the twentieth century invite us to examine whether this corpus is indeed a single-author forgery of the second half of the fourth century, or is in fact an authentic multi-author and eclectic corpus of imperial biographies which were written in *c.*293–340. After the research activity of the twentieth century and recent publications, the remaining main points against the authenticity of the corpus and in favour of a forgery are as follows.[105]

1. The texts in the corpus could not have been written in the dates in which Dessau believed its authors claim to have been active in, because of alleged internal and external chronological inconsistencies and alleged contradictions.
2. The texts in the corpus were written by a single author, rather than the named authors at their stated dates for the following reasons: (1) internal inconsistencies between the manuscript titles and the main text; (2) Dessau's philological 'proof', based on 'rare' or undocumented words and expressions.
3. The 'Historia Augusta' passes itself off as serious political history, but its performance contradicts this.
4. Some passages, especially in the biographies attributed to Vopiscus, contain allusions to events and persons after *c.*306, in biographies that are conventionally ascribed to the composition date *c.*305.

Aims and methods

This study will examine the entire question of the corpus's dates and authorship afresh, starting with relevant issues of the manuscript tradition and an examination of the philological foundation of the single-forger hypothesis. It will investigate new

[105] Points are based on the preliminary remarks in the following studies: Dessau 1889; Syme 1968; Syme 1983; Barnes 1978; Paschoud 1996; 2001; Thomson 2012. Specific references will be given throughout the discussion.

and old questions using new and traditional methodologies. The two main lines of investigation are those of authorship and era of composition. This study, therefore, has two parts. The first part is mostly a philological investigation of the work's title, generic expectations, manuscript tradition, and authorial attribution (points 2 and 3). The second part is mainly historical, but with philological and literary considerations in place: it establishes and explores the actual stated dates of composition of each of the stated authors in the corpus, and their potential contribution to our understanding of the period (points 1 and 4).

For lucidity and convenience each part begins with its own introduction. These introductions present the relevant methodological, philological, and historical background and the issues at hand. I hope that this method will make the philological and literary first part accessible to scholars whose interests in the text are primarily historical, and the historical second part accessible to scholars with primarily philological and literary interests.

Part I surveys the original state of the text, its textual transmission, and the arguments that have been built upon this. It sets out to answer several fundamental questions, which have been overlooked in the long debate: (1) did the authors or author of the corpus ever present it as aiming to provide a serious political history of the Roman empire? We shall make a comparison between the corpus's authorial claims, transmitted titles, the modern title, and the false generic expectations that this has created among modern critics; (2) does the medieval transmission present difficulties and/or complications that have no parallels in other ancient works? The question will be discussed by comparing the transmission of other classical works, especially multi-author corpora or composite manuscripts, such as *Corpus Caesarianum*, the Theodosian Code, and the Gallic Panegyrics; (3) can the original state of the corpus as a whole explain the various inconsistencies, which Dessauists claim to have detected in the text? The historical, literary, and textual inconsistencies in the corpus will be surveyed briefly and considered against the prima facie state of

the corpus. The discussion will touch upon the question whether these problems are an indication of a highly competent forger or careless ancient and medieval scribes. This will lead to the last question: (4) did Dessau and his disciples ever provide a valid argument to support their single-forger theory beyond several 'commonplace expressions'? As we have seen, Dessauists themselves have admitted that no such argument has been made beyond reliance on, and restatements of, Dessau, which have been used to reject the complex manuscript tradition.

Part II explores the corpus's stated era of composition from a fresh perspective. The detailed discussion focuses mainly on authorial statements and biographies where we have clear chronological indications, similar to the ones found in most classical texts. It is worth noting that neither the Mommsen-Momigliano nor the Dessau-Syme school has maintained the necessary level of accuracy in dealing with these dates and statements. They both share a basic assumption that the dates Dessau ascribed to the biographies, which are demonstrably false and easily refuted, are their actual stated dates, and then try to argue that they are contradictory and therefore either indicate a much later forgery, or a later Constantinian editing of the corpus. Both these views, and the various opinions that followed, require re-examination. To underscore the need for such revision and close reading of the passages, several examples will be explored in detail in the introduction to this second part.

A rigorous examination needs to be made of each author and biography in the corpus. Therefore, each of this part's chapters is dedicated to a possible author or a group of biographies. In discussing the various passages, the following considerations will be examined *in each chapter*: (1) what is an author's or the biographies' actual stated dates or era of composition? (2) are the statements of the author(s) compatible with these dates? (3) are the imprecision and/or confusion found in some authors regarding the imperial court and the politics of the time of Diocletian and Constantine a result of the volatile military and political situation in those years, or an indication of a later forgery? (4) how do the confusion and dichotomies found in the author(s) of

this corpus compare with that of other contemporary texts, such as Eusebius, Lactantius, and the Gallic Panegyrics? (5) are the passages, containing references and allusions to events and persons, in fact compatible with the actual stated dates of their biographies? and finally, (6) if these biographies are not a forgery and could have been written at the dates their author(s) claim(s), do they contain statements that are compatible with recent conclusions about the era of the tetrarchies and that improve our understanding of that rather obscure period?

I hope that this fundamental application of philological, historical, and literary methods will enable us to restart the debate over the corpus's authenticity, and to place the debate over the corpus and its usage as a historical source on different grounds. These, if the main conclusions are accepted, should be solid enough for the production of accounts of this corpus based on facts rather than on speculations.

Potential contribution and implications

If authenticity is established, the corpus is invaluable for reconstructing the history of the Roman Empire in the second, third, and fourth centuries: it is potentially a major source of Roman history from Hadrian to Constantine. The available sources on these periods are extremely meagre or later than the fifth century, and for some decades are simply non-existent. The third-century crisis, for instance, is among the most obscure periods of ancient history, and the period of the tetrarchies and Constantine suffers from a similar problem.[106] Even for the second century the sources are not as straightforward: we would appear to have Cassius Dio's *Roman History*, but modern historians of the empire often forget that what we actually have are extremely unreliable Byzantine excerpts and epitomes.[107] The only exception is the period covered by Herodian, who wrote a highly rhetorical account of the emperors 'after Marcus' up to Gordian III. Interestingly, Herodian's work and testimonia suffer from

[106] Part II, Introduction.
[107] See Wilson 1996:179. Thus, if the corpus contains statements which cannot be corroborated in 'Dio' or are inconsistent with it, this proves nothing (*pace* Millar 1964: *passim*; on other problems in this work: Bowersock 1965).

problems similar to those of our corpus: his life and date of activity are only known from his own work, and no other text—except for his own work and Capitolinus (one of the 'Scriptores')—refers to him by name. Herodian also includes imperial letters in his narrative, refers to persons who are otherwise unknown, and reflects a 'tension' between hereditary, elective, and immature emperors.[108] These seem to illustrate our fragmentary knowledge of these periods, and indicate why it is not at all surprising to find phenomena, whether prosopographical or literary-historiographical, which are only *apparently* otherwise 'unattested' before these texts or only in much later texts.[109]

Because of these limitations, if the authenticity of the corpus's authorial claims is verified, we will have an important literary document for the religious, social, and political thought of the last decades of the third century and the first decades of the fourth. Such implications are far beyond the limits of this study. The question of authenticity, however, should obviously be considered irrespective of the question of the reliability of the biographies' narratives and documents within them. Nevertheless, if the corpus is authentic, modern research will finally be able to abandon the Pavlovian assumption and generalization that anything stated in this corpus should be dismissed as 'untrustworthy' and that every document cited in it is forged. In recent years several scholars, using new evidence and methodologies, have demonstrated that certain episodes and documents in this corpus can be taken as reliable, but had to pre-empt, or were dismissed by, this type of prejudice. According to Inge Mennen, who attempts to rehabilitate the reliability of references to Praetorian Prefects in the corpus:

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[108] Whittaker 1969:1.ix–xxii, xxxvii, l, liv–lv, lxxiii–lxxvi; index. On Herodian, eunuchs, and imperial succession (and the corpus): Lippold 1998:145–159. Obviously, these facts and the fact that he is only known from the 'HA' does not make him a (late) fourth-century forgery.

[109] On the irrelevance of *ex silentio* arguments based on prosopography and *HA-Forschung* to support later dating, see Alan Cameron 1999:480. Cf. on a different footing, the similarities between Paterculus, Sulpicius Severus, and Orosius (Woodman 1975)—this does not make them contemporaries.

> Until recently, scholars have obviously had a profound distrust of any statement of the HA…. Yet, recent discoveries show that scholars are occasionally too cautious, rejecting statements which turn out to be true.[110]

I shall show that a reconsideration of the corpus as a literary and historical source can either change or augment modern perceptions of historical events in the stated era of composition. In no way do I suggest, however, that we should have recourse to the other extreme taking everything written in this corpus about the second and third centuries is accurate history that should be taken at face value. The authors, as I shall demonstrate, wrote imperial biographies with varying degrees of fictionality and were in fact honest about what they wrote.[111] This study will, it is hoped, enable further sober research of this corpus and its narrative within its proper literary, political, and historical milieu.

[110] Mennen 2012:658 (against Chastagnol 1970; Syme 1971b).
[111] Cf. the lead of Leigh 2013:184.

PART I: PARATEXT, TEXT, AND INTERTEXT

Introduction

Our classical texts are products of ancient, medieval, early modern, and modern traditions. Every 'text' consists of its titles and authorial attribution (paratext), its authorial claims and statements (text), and communication with other texts (intertext). In the first two instances classical texts differ drastically from modern texts: ancient authors, even in antiquity, would not have had control over the title of their works and even their authorial attribution, after they were published. As we shall see, the titles of classical texts, and to a lesser extent authorial attributions, are in many cases a result of medieval and early modern conventions and are not always consistent with the intentions of ancient authors.

The purpose of this part is to survey the original state of the corpus, its transmitted title, paratexts, and texts. It will compare them with some of the authorial claims made within the text about genre and plural authorship. It will also evaluate the arguments brought against this tradition in terms of alleged 'contradictions' between the text and its paratexts, when the broader context of the transmission of other classical texts is considered. It will then evaluate the philological argument brought against the tradition, Dessau's single-author argument from 1889, which replaced 'the prima facie state' of the corpus from the time of the emergence of Dessauism in the second half of the twentieth century.

'Paratext' is a term coined by the literary critic Gérard Genette to describe texts that are not part of a literary work's main text, such as the cover, title, authorial attribution, and dedications. Genette defined them as 'thresholds of interpretations', as they are responsible for the reception of books and the public's expectations of them (including genre), before their content is read. Moreover, he was well aware of the difference between paratexts of ancient works and those of modern works: in the

former case they are not always *authorial* paratexts.[112] Since we are about to discuss the question of the corpus's title and authorial claims, a short explanation of the transmission of paratexts in general is advantageous.

The study of the titles of ancient works is a field of its own,[113] and 'to consider the evidence for the titles of works of Latin literature is… depressing in that Latinists are revealed repeatedly as the slaves of erroneous convention, rewarding on account of the fresh light shed upon the world of books at Rome and upon literary terminology.'[114] Disputes over the title of Horace's works are legitimate inquiries[115] and moreover, there are cases where an 'erroneous convention' has ascribed to ancient works reader expectations that they never intended.[116] Velleius Paterculus wrote a universal work (*opus* as he called it) until 30 CE in two parts starting with Greek mythology, and never referred to his work as *Historia*; yet in modern times this work is titled *Historia Romana*, following the incorrect title Beatus Rhenanus bestowed on it in his *editio princeps* of 1520/1521. This author's worth and content are currently being reassessed, and this conventional title is nowadays acknowledged as doing an injustice to the content.[117] The so-called *Corpus Aurelianum*, a tripartite account containing '*Origo Gentis Romanae*' (OGR), *De viris illustribus* (DVI), and Aurelius Victor's *Caesares*, was in fact called *Origo Gentis Romanae* ('History of the Roman People'), but 'scholars have mistakenly attributed the title of the whole "corpus"' to the first pamphlet only.[118] There is a similar problem with the so-called *Chronica urbis Romae*, a modern title given to an epitomized account of the rulers of

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[112] For an introduction: Genette 1991:esp. 262–265; Genette 1997:1–16, 55–104 (esp. 94–103); note Schröder 1999:3–7. Jansen 2014, dealing with aspect of paratexts in Latin authors, has appeared to recently for me to take full account of.

[113] Fredouille and Deléani 1997; Schröder 1999 is the most comprehensive; Horsfall 1981; Ballester 1990; Whitmarsh 2005.

[114] Horsfall 1981:103.

[115] Horsfall 1981:107–108.

[116] On awareness of works' titles in antiquity and possible distortions (even then): Schröder 1999:2–3, 10–91, 321–323.

[117] Yardley and Barrett 2011:vii, xxi–xxviii, xlv; *BNP*, s.v. 'Velleius 4'; his rhetorical style and panegyrical mode did not 'fit' an author of *Historia*, and 'on such grounds Sir Ronald Syme and most other 20th-century scholars have dismissed with contempt his work as a whole.' (*OCD*[3=4], s.v.).

[118] Momigliano 1958:158; *Origo*≈historical account: Momigliano 1958:149; Richard 1983:9; Sehlmeyer 2004:16.

Rome and its neighbours from Picus to the emperor Licinius (d.325). This work, written a little after 325, is transmitted in the corpus of the so-called Chronograph of 354 and 'is not a chronicle and this name should not be perpetuated'.[119] Yet Momigliano had already noted that 'its real title, for which "Chronica urbis Romae" is a poor and misleading substitute, is "Origo gentis Romanorum"', and later standard reference works use the latter title.[120]

These three cases demonstrate how an 'editorial paratext' can produce misleading and inaccurate titles, which do not reflect the possible 'authorial paratext'.[121] Whenever they do not fit, a modern scholar can either change them or keep them, according to the main text: 'provided we know what we are doing there is no harm in continuing to use the traditional name'.[122] Nevertheless, in *HA-Forschung* the early modern title 'Historia Augusta' is used to presuppose unitary authorship of the corpus and further 'support' for the forgery view by claiming that the corpus misleadingly passes itself off as serious political history with contradictions about its dates. Moreover, Dessauists claim that the use of 'HA' over 'SHA' signals the 'total victory of Dessau's theses',[123] even though Dessau himself always used the neutral 'SHA'; they also suggest far-reaching interpretations on the basis of the unitarist title alone.[124]

In Chapter 1, I hope to demonstrate that the current title is a combination of misunderstandings of early modern paratext conventions, ignorance of publications prior to 1889 about the corpus's title, and single-author presuppositions. The transmitted titles of the corpus—including overlooked evidence—will reveal new insights into our understanding of the corpus.

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[119] Burgess 2012:351.
[120] Momigliano 1958:156; Richard 1983:9–10; Salzman 1990:50–51; *NHLL*, 5: §531.5. 'Mommsen's appellation' was never perpetuated (*pace* Burgess 2012:351).
[121] Definition in Genette 1991:266; I should add that in modern editions of classical texts the modern editorial paratext can be more remote than the authorial paratext (even when we exclude the apparatus and *praefatio editoris*).
[122] Momigliano 1958:158 (on 'Origo' and *Corpus Aurelianum*).
[123] Paschoud 2009:204 (reacting to Thomson 2007); Syme 1983:26–29.
[124] Even his last contribution (1921): 'Die Samaritaner bei den S.H.A.'; Dessauists: pp.47ff. below.

Authorial attribution, the author's name affixed to a work, is also a paratext and there might be a difference between classical and modern works, because ancient works' paratexts could have disappeared or become corrupt as a result of wear and tear.[125] An ancient work could be misattributed as a result of errors in the transmission, and the corruption process is not always clear. Cornelius Nepos' *Lives* are attributed to Aemilius Probus 'for some unexplained accident of the manuscript tradition'[126]— Nepos' authorship is only vindicated by the apostrophe to Atticus and external *testimonia*. There are also works that were accidently transmitted with works of other authors in the same manuscript tradition: the *Constitution of the Athenians* (Old Oligarch) was transmitted with the works of Xenophon and attributed to him, and the *Octavius* of Minucius Felix was transmitted as the eighth book of Arnobius' *Adversus Nationes*.[127]

These cases of authorship attribution, as well as conventional ancient works' titles, can be considered as posthumous paratexts as they are not the original paratexts, which have the same date as that of their text's appeareance.[128] Genette's definition, however, should be slightly modified for ancient texts: their authorship attributions (and titles) were susceptible to posthumous changes by ancient and medieval 'editors' or rather, copyists.[129] The latter, we should remember, read and copied the texts centuries after their original publication and in a completely different context. Moreover, the parts signifying the beginning and end of a work within a manuscript, which transmitted the work's titles and authorial attribution (incipits, explicits, and dedications) were the most fragile part of the transmission as a second scribe copied, or omitted, these after the principal scribe had completed the main text.[130]

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[125] Genette 1991:263–264.
[126] Momigliano 1993:99.
[127] Nepos/Probus: *T&T*, 247–248; Marshall 1977:1, 101–102, 108; Momigliano 1993:99. Arnobius/Minucius Felix: Marchesi 1953:v, 412.
[128] Definitions in Genette 1991:264.
[129] Cf. Schröder 1999:7; *Corpus Aurelianum* is a classic example, see *passim* below.
[130] Pp.52–54 below.

Chapter 2 will show that such inaccuracies become even more complicated in multi-author corpora and miscellaneous manuscripts, such as the Latin Panegyrics, *Corpus Caesarianum*, and *Corpus Aurelianum*, where scribes confused the authorial attributions of these works' stated authors within these corpora. The works mentioned so far are obviously accepted as genuine works, erroneously misattributed to incorrect authors, and are far from being 'forgeries'.[131]

Accordingly, this chapter will consider the original state of our corpus in light of our knowledge of the transmission and qualities of ancient works' paratexts. It will ask whether the state of the corpus's *posthumous* paratexts—which are differently reported in its various manuscripts—is indeed a sign of forgery, or simply of errors introduced by copyists, especially because in *HA-Forschung* texts and paratexts are taken as an undivided whole, and inconsistencies between the authorial claims of the main text and its paratexts are considered as signs of competent forgery.[132] We shall then survey the *status quo ante* Dessauism, and ask whether the alleged 'contradictions' and difficulties, allegedly detected by Dessau, could be better understood in relation to the prima facie state, and through comparison with such 'inconsistencies' in other classical texts. The difficulties caused by scribal interpolations and medieval recensions will also be touched upon.

Chapter 3 will then evaluate the single-author argument brought against the multi-author claims of the text and paratext, using an intertextual approach. Dessau (1889) has replaced the claims of the corpus, and Dessauists dismiss any differences among the various biographers and biographies with a restatement of Dessau's claim that he has 'demonstrated' single authorship beyond doubt and that the differences are a result of the alleged forger reproducing verbatim lost and non-extant works, such as Marius Maximus, Syme's postulated *Ignotus*, a postulated unknown Greek source, and

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[131] Momigliano 1966:143–144; Ehrman 2013:50–51.
[132] Dessau 1889:337–339, 390–392≅Syme 1968:176, 180–183=1971b:74–75, 289; 1983:16, 215 and repeatedly *passim*; restatements of Syme: Barnes 1978:14–15 (≅Alan Cameron 2011b:743); Birley 2003:133–137; G. W. Adams 2012:21; Thomson 2012:16, 20–21, 93; but Paschoud 2013:5–10.

the postulated *EKG*.[133] Clearly, establishing the *existence* and later directionality of an intertextual link between existing works is difficult enough[134]—doing so with non-existent works, based on a preconception that a multi-author text is supposedly a forgery by a single author, is a practical impossibility and a *petitio principii* which are bound to create circular arguments.[135]

I hope to demonstrate that Dessau's single-author 'proof', or rather 'irrefragable disproof',[136] is not only invalid, but in some cases can also be realigned and placed in its proper intertextual context. A 'negative' conclusion regarding Dessau's disproof in this case is in fact a positive one, as it enables us to respect and investigate the text and paratexts of the corpus in their own right; as a consequence it unearths several biographers and *potentially* what they had to say about their time of composition.

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[133] For instance: Dessau 1892:601–602; Syme 1968:182; Syme 1971b:30–53; Burgess 2010; Alan Cameron 2011b:744; Paschoud 1996:xxxvii–xliii, 12, 230; 2001:9–10, 300; 2011:xliii–xliv, lii; Thomson 2012:19, 94–96 (the last two tabulate the dogma); Rohrbacher 2013. In detail see pp.137ff. below.

[134] Adkin 1997; 2003; 2011; Kelly 2008:165–198; Alan Cameron 2011a:838–842; 2011b:511–514, 748–749, 756. In the context of *HA-Forschung*, note already Klebs 1890:459–464; Klebs 1892:9–21; Hohl 1937:151–155; Momigliano 1975; Lippold 1991:108–135

[135] Note the polite caveat in Dornseiff 1954:139 about 'lost' sources and 'SHA'.

[136] Barnes (1995b:4): 'Dessau's disproof of what the HA says about its date and authorship is irrefragable;'. On the date(s): *Introduction* and Part II.

Chapter 1: [Historia Augusta] from antiquity to modern scholarship

The title currently used for the collection of biographies discussed here—'Historia Augusta'—would suggest that we are dealing with one unified work, and an inconsistency therefore exists between the title that has been attached to this work and its actual claims. As we have seen, titles given to ancient works are usually arbitrary or a result of scholarly tradition and do not necessarily reflect the name of the work given in the manuscripts or in antiquity; but few are the ancient works in which the modern conventional title (or titles) contradicts the literary genre and intentions of the writer or writers as decisively as in the case of this corpus of biographies.

Thomas Hägg, in his magisterial work on biographies in antiquity, notes the importance of a *biographical* work's title:

> Book titles are important generic markers. With regard to biography, the matter is, or should be, rather straightforward… The historical name of the biographee is normally used as the title of the biography… What we cannot know, on the other hand, is the actual degree of historicity: it may be a research biography or a biographical novel, or something between these extremes.[137]

When it comes to the so-called 'HA' the problem is more complicated, as this title not only imputes to this corpus of imperial biographies the modern label of chronological narrative *history*, but also deprives it of its stated authors and their intentions. The following sections will therefore investigate the prima facie state of the text, its possible titles, and the generic intentions of its named authors. It will then explore the title and intentions imputed to this corpus during the modern period, and see whether these conceptions are justified.

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[137] Hägg 2012:7; cf. Whitmarsh 2005. I shall use the terms 'biography', 'biographical' and 'biographer(s)' as 'useful shorthand(s)' (Pelling 1999:329n.14), when referring to the *Lives* in this corpus. On Latin imperial biography and the Suetonian tradition, which was more remote from historiography than Plutarch's *Lives*, and therefore quite a different product, see: Power 2014; Tatum 2014:164.

The ancient and medieval perspective: *excerpta scriptorum vitarum*?

As with most ancient works, our only evidence for the possible titles of the corpus—if it had existed and had a title in antiquity—are the various titles given in medieval manuscripts, the statements given in the various *Lives* about their nature, and later references to the corpus, such as the ninth-century Carolingian Irish scholar, Sedulius Scottus.

The transmitted titles

The title given to the corpus in the two earliest surviving manuscripts of the ninth century—Palatine (P) and Bamberg (B)— and reported in modern critical editions is VITAE DIVERSORUM PRINCIPUM ET TYRANNORUM A DIVO HADRIANO USQUE AD NUMERIANUM A DIVERSIS CONPOSITI (*sic*). ('Lives of various emperor and usurpers from deified Hadrian to Numerian composed by various authors').[138] In the ninth century Sedulius Scottus used this corpus in two of his works: the so-called *Collectaneum* and *De Rectoribus Christianis* and referred to this corpus as *vitae Caesarum*, as Mommsen noted long before 1889.[139] Scottus' accounts and use of Latin texts should be just as good as that of Photius, the Suda, and Zonaras for ancient Greek (and Latin) texts.

The fact that we are dealing with *Lives*, rather than *Histories*, is also implied by the various inscriptions and subscriptions of the biographies and by the statements of the authors, as we shall see. But one overlooked title of the corpus deserves consideration, before we move to a closer discussion of the generic expectations.

<u>Selections from longer biographical works (?)</u>

The Bamberg manuscript (B) is a complete manuscript of the 'HA' as we currently know it, and bears the title EXCERPTA SPARTIANI DE PRINCIPIBUS in its first written

[138] Peter-SHA, xi; Hohl-SHA, xiii; Callu 1992:18; Klebs compared it with the inscription of the seven panegyrics in the Latin Panegyrics: 'incipiunt panegyrici diversorum VII' (1892:19; see Chapter 2).
[139] *T&T*, 356; Mommsen 1878; Callu 1992:xcviii. The so-called 'Excerpta Cusana' has been published as part of Scottus' works in CCCM (Simpson 1988:305–313). Scottus, *de rectoribus christianis* certainly incorporated passages from *AP*, *AC*, *AS*, *Max.*, *Gd.*, *MB*, *Val.*, *T*, and *A* (listed in Hellmann 1906:198 with Dyson 2010 ad loc.).

leaf (1v), which is in fact half a leaf[140] and is then followed in 2r by a title and index similar to those in P. The hand is either of the copyist of the manuscript's main text or that of a close contemporary.[141]

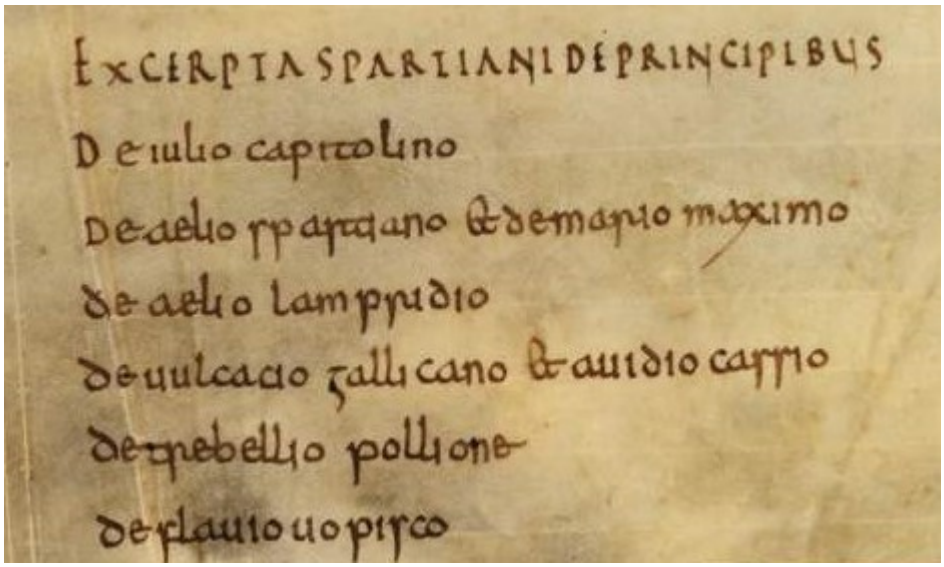


Figure 1. The first written leaf of Staatsbibliothek Bamberg Msc.Class.54 (B), 1v.

In transliteration and translation:

EXCERPTA SPARTIANI DE PRINCIPIBUS De iulio capitolino De aelio spartiano et de mario maximo de aelio Lampridio de uulcacio gallicano et auidio cassio de trebellio pollione de flauio uopisco	Excerpts (selections) of Spartianus regarding emperors From Iulius Capitolinus From Aelius Spartianus and Marius Maximus From Aelius Lampridius From Vulcacius Gallicanus and Avidius Cassius From Trebellius Pollio From Flavius Vopiscus

This title and references to the stated authors of the corpus is of paramount importance regardless of the disagreement about the relation between B and P. In short, some would hold (with good reasons) that B and P copied the same archetype, whereas others contend that B copied P towards the end of the ninth century

[140] I am following the pagination and numbering given in libraries' websites for all reproductions, where they are available. (http://bsbsbb.bsb.lrz-muenchen.de/~db/0000/sbb00000112/images/index.html, accessed 26.03.2011). For the physical state of the leaf, ibid.

[141] Peter-SHA, xi n.3; Peter 1884b:181–182 (with earlier literature). This title was not discussed after 1889, not even in recent discussions (Thomson 2007; Paschoud 2009; the various Budé texts; Ratti 2010 and Alan Cameron 2011a).

(following Dessau).[142] P is a problematic manuscript as a result of the various hands that tried to correct it between the ninth and fourteenth centuries and of its transfer to the Vatican Library in the seventeenth century. This transfer involved stripping off its binding and the apparent loss of the first 'page', which is now substituted by a table of contents written on paper.[143] Accordingly, even if B was copied directly from P, it is 'a useful aid, therefore, wherever the original reading of P is in doubt.'[144] In conclusion, the title reported in this manuscript is another indication of the nature of this corpus of texts.

This overlooked evidence is the closest text we have to a 'preface' of the corpus as a whole, and it could explain most of the peculiarities of the corpus, as Momigliano noted on the potential importance of the then missing preface.[145] Most important is the reference to the corpus as *excerpta* from various authors. *Excerpta* here can mean two things: (1) the corpus holds selections from various works of the named authors; (2) the works themselves might also be abbreviations of these works—but this cannot be determined with certainty. These two problems are very similar to those of Calpurnius Flaccus (otherwise unknown)[146] and the *excerpta decem rhetorum minorum*, 'which somehow became jumbled in the transmission process' as *ex Calpurnio Flacco excerptae, excerpta X rhetorum minorum*.[147] But Flaccus is one of the rhetors and not the 'excerptor': his name might have found its way into the title

[142] 'B has, however, some readings which prove to be independent. Could not B and P be copies of an almost contemporary *x*, as is the case with MSS V (Fulda) and M (Hersfeld) of Ammianus?' (Clark 1916:358 against Ballou). Likewise, Jordan and Eyssenhardt 1864:iv–vi, xi; Peter 1894:148–152 (against Mommsen). B subordinate to P: Ballou 1914:79–82 (cautiously following Dessau 1894 with earlier literature). It seems that the absolute dating of the MSS confirms the former view: P is apparently from the ninth or tenth century (respectively: *T&T*, 354 and Bischoff 1989:66, 77, 81; Jordan and Eyssenhardt 1864:v), while B is from the second quarter of the ninth century originating in Fulda (according to the catalogue of Staatsbibliothek Bamberg, accessed 26.03.2011; Suckale-Redlefsen 2004:50; Bischoff 1966:III, 61).
[143] Ballou 1914:40–41; Pellegrin et al. 1975:75.
[144] *T&T*, 354 (Marshall), following Hohl-SHA, viii.
[145] 'We have not the proemium of the HA which might explain much.' (1966:175); *Introduction*.
[146] *PIR*^{2} C267.
[147] Sussman 1994:19–20 (20 cited).

because he headed the list. The tradition includes the elder Seneca and the so-called *Declamationes minores*—the 'exact character' of this corpus remains unclear.[148]

The Bamberg title does suggest, however, that our corpus is a random selection from their works, but not necessarily a précis. Therefore, this corpus might need to be considered under all the limitations and reservations applied to ancient excerpts and epitomes.[149] The broader implications, relevant for this study, are as follows:

(1) The works transmitted in this corpus are only selections from longer works of various authors, whether abridged or not. This might explain why some authors claim to have written more biographies than those transmitted in the corpus as we have it.[150]

(2) The possible identity of the excerptor, who made the selections out of the various authors, is mooted. The first line names a certain Spartianus, which is a scribal error for the cognomen Speratianus, documented even in the tetrarchic era.[151] Whether this is the case, or the author of the first biography in the corpus has simply been mistakenly promoted (as Peter suggested), remains a difficult question, as we learn from comparison with Flaccus and the declamations.[152]

(3) The extent to which the excerptor intervened in the various works is mooted; especially whether he improved the various cross-references, internal links, and authorial claims of the authors.[153]

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[148] Sussman 1994:ibid.

[149] These are discussed in Brunt 1980; Linsenbarth 1876 used the Bamberg title to support his claim that the biographies transmitted in the corpus are only excerpts of longer originals (non vidi; summary in Peter 1884b:181–182).

[150] Pp.107ff. below.

[151] 'Aureluis Sperat(i)anus' and 'Q. Caecilius Speratianus' in the second and third centuries (*PIR*^{2} S797, S798). The epigraphic evidence for the name 'Speratianus' is quite extensive, for instance: AE.1978.609;*CIL*.VI.1057(pp.3071,3777,4320,4340)=*CIL*.VI.1058=*CIL*.VI.31234=*ILS*.2157=AE.1977.154;*CIL*.VIII.2403=*CIL*.VIII.17824=*CIL*VIII.17903=*ILS*.6122=AE.1941.45=AE.1948.118=AE.1949.133=AE.1956.133=AE.1978.891; *CIL*.VIII.27454; *CIL*.XIII.6458=AE.1994.1305. *Introduction.*

[152] Peter 1860:17–18; 1884b:181–182 (he was the last scholar to discuss this evidence).

[153] For instance, Xiphilinus' epitome of Dio's *History* contains statements in the first person: some are Dio's, some Xiphilinus'.

(4) The presence of the excerptor could explain, prima facie, the several alleged similarities, which coincide with dissimilarities, in language among the various authors. This should be considered within the broader question of the validity of the unitarist approach to the corpus.[154]

(5) The list claims the corpus is not just a set of selections from the 'traditional' six authors, but also names Marius Maximus. Maximus is a Severan imperial biographer and is cited by name twenty-six times in some of the biographies of the corpus, although other biographies of emperors prior to the *Life of Severus Alexander* do not refer to him by name at all. This might suggest that these biographies are direct excerpts or selections from Marius Maximus, and potentially places this question in a new light.[155] Moreover, it might indicate that a source can be listed as an author and vice versa.[156]

Before we discuss these implications, the claim that the work is a forgery that passes itself off as serious political history should be evaluated.

Titles and generic markers: paratext and text

In antiquity the generic marker of a biography was signalled by a person's proper name in the title, the word 'life' (*bios, vita*) with the name in the genitive, or 'on'/'about' + (life) + a name.[157] Medieval manuscripts do not always preserve the original title, and the compatibility and possible authenticity of a work's transmitted title could be confirmed if it is found in the statements within the main text.[158]

The paratext and text of the corpus are compatible with these conventions. The general title for the whole corpus reported in the manuscripts is *vitae principum*, *de principibus*, or *de vita* [*sic*] *Caesarum*. The individual titles of each biography state

[154] See Chapter 3.
[155] *PIR*[2] M308. The biographies can be divided into two, those without imperial dedications: *DJ*, *Cc.*, and those with imperial dedications: *V*, *PN*, *OM*. *Pace* Peter 1860:18. *Dd.* has neither dedication nor reference to Marius Maximus, but it refers to the Gordians and therefore cannot be considered as stemming from Maximus.
[156] Pp.112 below.
[157] Hägg 2012:7–8; Whitmarsh 2005.
[158] Schröder 1999:*passim*.

either the emperor's name or *vita*/*de* followed by his name.[159] The main text contains reference to the works as *vitae* of emperors, or to emperors' names as biographical works.[160] Some biographies use the phrase *vitae principum* to describe themselves.[161]

We can therefore be satisfied that the generic markers of the medieval paratext are compatible with the text itself and there is no reason to reject them. Moreover, none of the stated authors refers to his works as '*historia*', and two claim to imitate Suetonius and other narrators of curiosities as against historians.[162] The classic passage is found in the *Life of Probus*: its stated author, Flavius Vopiscus, draws a sharp contrast between writers of *vitae* and curiosities of emperors such as himself, Suetonius, Capitolinus, and Lampridius and writers of history, such as Cornelius Tacitus, whom he earlier called 'scriptor historiae augustae'.[163]

> It has been my purpose, in relating the lives and times of emperors, to imitate, not Sallust, Livy, Tacitus, Trogus and other most eloquent writers, but rather Marius Maximus, Suetonius Tranquillus, Fabius Marcellinus, Gargilius Martialis, Julius Capitolinus, Aelius Lampridius and others. For I am one of the *Curiosi*… and am incited by you, who desire to know much more, when you know much already. (*Pr.*2.7–8; cf. *Q.*6.3; *A.*10.1 on *curiositas*)[164]

Leigh, in his recent book on curious and meddlesome behaviour in antiquity, notes: 'the *writers* of the HA are quite *frank* about the sort of material that they and their readers enjoy.'[165] Thus it seems difficult to believe that Vopiscus (or any of the biographers in this corpus) would have applied the term 'scriptor historiae' to himself. They did not have Livy or Tacitus as their models, but Marius Maximus and

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[159] See pp.66ff. The misuse of *Gesta* with an emperor's name in manuscripts after the fourteenth century is medieval (Hohl 1913:399).
[160] For instance: *Ael.*2.3, 2.9, 5.5; *V.*2.4, 9.3, 9.9; *C.*1.1; *ClA*.12.14; *Cc.*1.3, 11.1; *Hel.*1.1; *Gd.*34.1; *Gall*.16.1, 19.6; *A.*44.5; *Tac.*41.15; *Pr.*1.5. Emperors' names (mostly in Vopiscus): *A.*1.8; *Pr.*1.5.
[161] *OM*.1.1; *T.*33.8; *A*.1.2; *Pr.*2.7; *Car.*18.5.
[162] Capitolinus, *MB*.4.5; Vopiscus *Pr.*2.7.
[163] *Tac.*10.3.
[164] Gargilius: *PIR*² G82, *AS*.37.9; Fabius: *PIR*² F44 (A. Stein, with agreement), Marcellinus might be a misspelling for Fabius Marcellus in *ILS* 1145 (Schanz-Hosius §548, p.87). Indeed it seems that not all thirty-five authorities named in the corpus are fictitious, because we have reasonable evidence for their possible existence. See Schanz-Hosius §548; Alan Cameron 1965b:250; Janiszewski 2006:332–352, 423–430). See further in Part II.
[165] Leigh 2013:184 (my emphases). He also compares their concepts with *Itin.Alex.*2 (written around the stated dates of the corpus: *NHLL*, 5: 247–248; Part II below). Similar view on 'SHA' in Peter 1911:411–413.

Suetonius—their genre was imperial biographies with varying degrees of fiction and curiosities.[166]

These generic markers lend further support to McGing and Mossman's notion that 'some ancient biographers, after all, were very clear indeed that they were writing not history but lives' and that 'ancient biographers frequently did define themselves against history', as in the cases of Nepos and Plutarch.[167] Pelling notes the potential proximity between history and biography in accounts of rulers and emperors: 'the generic proximity made it even more important for authors to stake out biography's distinctive territory' especially in cases of monarchistic rulers.[168] The same seems to apply to the authors of this corpus.

To recapitulate, the generic markers of the corpus—both paratext and text—present it as a collection of imperial *biographies* collected from different sets of various biographers. The corpus has no claim to being an accurate historical narrative, as its modern name suggests, and it therefore has never tried to pass itself off as serious political history.

The question remains: how did this corpus of biographies, the narratives of which may have widely varying degrees of historicity and fictionality,[169] end up with the incompatible and 'misleading' title of 'Historia Augusta' and the alleged claim that it passed itself off as serious political history?

Cornelius Tacitus' *Historia Augusta*: early modern and modern misconceptions

The 'orthodox' conception is that Isaac Casaubon named the corpus on the basis of a statement in the *Life of Tacitus* (the emperor). In that statement, Vopiscus describes Cornelius Tacitus as *Scriptor Historiae Augustae*.[170] The title 'Historia Augusta' also

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[166] Cf. Tatum (2014:164): 'Suetonius is *Not-Tacitus* and he is writing *Not-History*.'
[167] McGing and Mossman 2006:x–xi, also against the view that 'there is no real genre of ancient biography' (ibid. and xii–xiii); Plutarch *Alex*.1.1; Nepos *Pel*.1.1.
[168] Pelling 2011:15.
[169] Hägg 2012:*passim* and above.
[170] Hohl-SHA, vii; *OCD*[3=4], s.v.; *T.*10.3.

appears in some manuscripts of Tacitus' later books of the *Annales* and Alciatus' and Rhenanus' edition of the extant works of Tacitus (1519) following Vopiscus' statement.[171]

When we look at early printed editions of literary texts of the imperial age, however, it becomes obvious that the title 'Historiae Augustae Scriptores' (in this order) was a collective and general name given by early modern editors and printers to collections of works, usually printed together, of various Latin writers of the imperial age, such as Tacitus, Suetonius, the now so-called 'Historia Augusta', Eutropius, Ammianus, and others. This convention seems to have started after 1518, because the *editio princeps* of 1475 and Erasmus' edition of 1517 of the biographical corpus did not have a name for it.[172] In the early modern period, therefore, 'Historia Augusta' was used regardless of an ancient author's literary 'genre' (as it is perceived in the modern era) or aims.[173]

The reason for the practice is clear: between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries 'the Hellenistic distinction between history and biography had been replaced by a rather uncontroversial recognition of biography as a type of history.'[174] Isaac Casaubon had a slightly more refined definition of these terms, when he referred to the authors of this corpus in the preface to his famous 1603 edition. Casaubon restated the ancient definition that '*historia* is nothing more than a philosophy that uses *exempla*'.[175] He then distinguished between *Annales* and *Historiae*, which are written about public affairs and relate to politics on the one hand, and *vitae* of individuals that relate to morals on the other. Nonetheless, he argued that imperial *vitae* composed by authors such as Suetonius are a combination of both:

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[171] Tacitus' manuscripts: R. P. Oliver 1951:259–260; Alciatus and Rhenanus (1519, *praefatio*) followed Vopiscus' statement. Rhenanus in his later publications of the 'Annales' (Rhenanus 1533; Rhenanus 1544 in the preface) gave the name of *Annales* (used today) to what was until then the 'Historia Augusta' of Tacitus.
[172] Bellezza 1959.
[173] Richter 1850:16 (last to note this).
[174] Momigliano 1993:2.
[175] All Casaubon's paraphrases and citations are from his edition's *Prolegomena* (1603, without page numbers).

> And those who composed Lives of manly princes, published a mixed work by inevitably killing two birds with one stone… for you cannot narrate the *vita* of a certain emperor or king in full without referring simultaneously to the state, whose soul and body he is. Wherefore there are two integral parts to all works of this *genus*: public and private actions…

And after noting two ways of writing accounts of emperors—the *first* with emphasis on public affairs with the emperor's in the background, the *second* with emphasis on the birth, education, customs, deeds, and death of the emperor—he concluded:

> Cornelius Tacitus, Dio Cassius (for Xiphilinus exhibits the mere shadow of Dio, not Dio), Herodian, Ammianus Marcellinus and their like followed the *first way*—Suetonius Tranquillus and many others at the time followed the *second way*. Those mentioned last titled their books *vitae Caesarum* or *De Caesaribus*: for those mentioned first rightly called their literary work *Historiae* or *Annales.* You could, not incorrectly, call *Historiae Augustae Scriptores* to authors of each *genus*, as Vopiscus refers to Cornelius Tacitus… You can also call them *Caesareorum temporum scriptores*—a title found in the *Aurelian* of the same Vopiscus. He also writes in the *Probus* that he imitated Suetonius in discussing the *Life and times* of princes… these six biographers of Caesares must be attributed to the second *genus*.

To conclude, Casaubon never meant or said anywhere that this corpus should be named 'Historia Augusta'. In fact, he argued that this title could fit both *genera*, when it comes to historical accounts of a monarchic state, as each *genus* must refer to both private and public deeds but with different emphases. Casaubon tried to differentiate between the two literary *genera*, which were considered as *Historiae* in his time; and to suggest a suitable title for the *genus* of the works of this corpus: *Lives of Caesares* or *Life and Times of Emperors*.

Casaubon's comments on the title that Vopiscus bestowed on Tacitus seem to provide the explanation for the discrepancy between ancient, early modern, and modern conceptions of literary accounts of the imperial period. In Casaubon's time 'Historiae Augustae (Scriptores)' was perceived as a general title, embracing both imperial biographies and histories. This perception does not accord with the ancient (and

modern) concepts of biography and history in general,[176] and the generic markers, paratexts, and statements found in the corpus in particular.

Modern use and abuse

Ever since the debate about the nature of the corpus began in the nineteenth century, some scholars have used the term 'Historia Augusta' as the conventional name for this corpus, as a contrast to the plurality implied by the title 'SHA', which was then already deemed inadequate. The misleading impression was thus created that the corpus claimed to be an accurate history written by a single author, despite the explicit generic markers and claims by its authors of writing imperial *Lives*, and narrating fiction and curiosities on the basis of a few facts. As late as 1850, a scholar still noted that some of the biographers 'repeatedly distinguish authors of history from biographers and only claim for themselves the second, more modest (in their view) designation.'[177]

Dessau himself kept the pluralist title of 'SHA' in all his publications up to 1921—he even noted the problematic nature of his hypothesis[178]—but Seeck, the first arbitrarily to adopt Dessau's hypothesis, was the first to use the unitarist appellation 'HA'.[179] Until the emergence of Dessauism in the 1960s, HA and SHA were used concurrently: the former for the corpus as a whole (especially in encyclopaedic entries), even by scholars who emphasized the plurality of authorship, the latter for its individual authors.[180]

Since the 1960s, Dessauists use the title 'Historia Augusta' to 'support' their a priori unitarist and 'forgery' assumptions, especially in the *Beiträge zur HA-Forschung* and

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[176] Or at least what we currently think these ancient concepts were; see above and Pelling 2011:13–25 (noting similar difficulties), and cf. Momigliano 1993:41, 55–57.
[177] Richter 1850:16.
[178] Dessau's publications in *Bibliography*; 'the term "SHA" is tenacious of survival. It offers manifest convenience or refuge to the sceptical, the cautious, the crafty.' (Syme 1983:27).
[179] Seeck 1890.
[180] HA: Diehl 1913 (*RE*); *OCD*[1-4] (s.v.), irrespective of the position of the author of the entry, and maintain SHA in the list of abbreviations. SHA: Mehl 2001:147; Demandt 2007:38; 2008:571, 594 (all are handbooks); Arand 2003:122. Gibbon used the names of the stated authors (e.g. *Decline*, 97, 101, 106, 110, 142 295–300); *pace* Birley 1976a:7.

HA Colloquia, the stated purpose of which was to examine the corpus only within the Dessauist preconceptions of its participants.[181] Syme states: 'The HA is dishonest. It proposes to furnish sober and accurate history. The performance contradicts… Therefore the HA is a fraud.'[182] Accusations of forgery and mendacity on the basis of historical 'inaccuracies', fictions, and 'inconsistencies' found in the corpus followed.[183] Straub even took the accusations of forgery further and attempted to find the purpose of the alleged forgery in the 'HA' title.[184] In recent years less attention has been given to the claims of the corpus's paratexts and texts or to the incorrect title bestowed on it. Scholars, used to Dessauist assumptions, use the term HA or HA-author freely.[185] Some even claim that the 'Historia Augusta' is the lost *Annales* of a late fourth-century aristocrat, Nicomachus Flavianus, or his son.[186] Thus they ignore the simple fact that this corpus was published 'in the form, not of annals, but of biographies of emperors'.[187]

As we have seen, the authors of the corpus never claimed to provide serious political history: both their paratexts and texts present the corpus as biographies with potentially varying degrees of historicity and fictionality. Accordingly, an informed literary critic, outside *HA-Forschung*, rightly claims that these writers were frank

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[181] *Introduction*.
[182] Syme 1971b:283; 1983:14 ('the author of the HA is not a historian').
[183] For instance: Barnes 1978:18–22; 2011:28; Syme 1968:26–27; 1971b:283; 1988. The latter criticizes chronological problems in Hadrian's long journey to the East *c.*130, according to *H.*13.4–14.8; Syme overlooked major sources, see Baker 2012:160–162. Wiseman 2011:315–317 lists Vopiscus as an example of 'lying historians'. Cf. the confusion of a historian: Crook 1955:86n.2.
[184] Straub asserted (rather than demonstrated) that, 'the Historia Augusta has to be regarded as historia adversus Christianos' as an antidote to Orosius' *historia adversus paganos* (Straub 1963:xxvi, *passim*≈Kulikowski 2012:100). Straub's thesis was proved defective even on its own terms (Dornseiff 1954; Alan Cameron 1965b:240–248; Lippold 1998:27–30).
[185] Bleckmann 1997; Fündling 2006; Burgess 2011; Alan Cameron 2011a; Rohrbacher 2010; 2013; Paschoud 2009; Johnston 2013.
[186] Ratti 2010:217–279; Festy and Callu 2010; these are 'unsupported by evidence' (Rohrbacher 2011; Alan Cameron 2011a).
[187] Alan Cameron 2011b:636; this would seem to explain why some incorrectly think that the 'HA' was divided into 'books' and confusingly refer to 'earlier and later books' similar to Tacitus *Annales* (e.g. Syme 1968:179; Rohrbacher 2013: *passim*), even though neither the paratexts nor the texts suggest it.

about what they wrote.[188] The original nature of the biographies was well noted by a conservative pluralist:

> It is perhaps unfair to regard the compilation as history; probably they were not intended to be much more than a series of scandal-loving biographies, filled with personal details of the monarchs of whom they treat; in the result they are for the most part an inartistic *farrago* of unordered trivialities.[189]

This is not far from the generic expectations of ancient biographies. These included fact, personal details, and fiction.[190] Hohl held a similar view, and even stressed that fiction and historical 'inaccuracies' in the narratives of some biographies do not indicate that the corpus is a forgery (*Fälschung*), because its 'original purpose' was not to provide 'accurate history', and 'the collection does not belong to proper history, but to biography: and this meant an even greater difference for the ancients, than it is for us.'[191] In short, Hohl and more recently Lippold claimed that the corpus was not a *Fälschung*, because its authors never claimed to be providing accurate history, but biography or 'light literature' (*Unterhaltungsliteratur*)[192]—unlike the incorrect posthumous title attached to them. And indeed studies of ancient biography have shown that the ancient authors and readers had a clear understanding of what constituted fictionality and its links with the biographical genre, and that these texts and authors were far from being forgeries, forgers, or forged.[193]

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[188] Leigh 2013:184, cited above (p.43).
[189] R.V.N. Hopkins 1907: xii–xiii.
[190] Momigliano 1993:41, 56.
[191] Hohl 1914:705–706 (also cited); Hohl 1937:141.
[192] Hohl 1914:706. Hohl was therefore applying Bernheim's technical definition of *Fälschung*: 'wenn eine Quelle ganz oder zu einem Teile sich für etwas anderes ausgibt, als sie tatsächlich ist' (Bernheim 1889:205), and Hohl concluded its stated genre and content did not qualify to this definition (*pace* Barnes 1995a). Other than the inaccurate posthumous title, the authors had no claim to provide accurate history. In fact, from the perspective of its modern title, the corpus would fit the definition of *Irrtum*: 'wenn man eine Quelle ohne deren Zuthun ganz oder teilweise für etwas anderes hält, als sie ist.' (Bernheim 1889:243). Cf. Klebs's lucid definition of *Fälschung* in the context of *HA-Forschung* (1892:1–3, 21; overlooked by Barnes).
[193] Hodkinson 2010:11–16 and *passim* with many insightful comments, showing that 'fictions are deliberate, rather than examples of… "bad biography", or "forgeries"' (11), as 'this only works if "fiction"="untruth" or "lie", not for "fiction" as literary text' (14). See also: Momigliano 1993:56–57. Contra Syme 1983:216.

Conclusion and implications

The investigation of the corpus's titles demonstrates the importance of exploring an ancient work's paratexts and comparing them with the claims made by ancient authors in the text. Genette defined these texts as 'thresholds of interpretations'. It therefore seems that the use of the modern *editorial* paratext, 'HA', without its early modern context has been blocking one of the main avenues to a straightforward understanding of the corpus and its claims. This paratext gives the incorrect impression that the corpus claimed to be accurate history; it misled modern scholars into thinking the corpus was a forgery and even brought them to look for the intention of the alleged 'forger' in it. The *transmitted* paratexts appear to provide better explanations for what the corpus claims to be on two levels.

Generic expectations. The paratexts of the corpus present its works as imperial biographies using the standard generic markers of biographies and fiction. These claims are compatible with the statements in the main text. The degrees of fictionality and historicity of such works may vary widely, but nowhere does the corpus claim to provide an accurate history. On the contrary, some of its stated authors state openly that they wrote the biographies with attention to curiosities and fiction. Once the *narratives* in the corpus's works are acknowledged as biographies, which contain self-conscious or deliberate fictions, at least one basis for the accusation of 'forgery' disappears. The self-conscious fictions, curiosities, biographical elements, and possibly historical 'inaccuracies' narrated in Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*, the *Lives* of Plutarch, and the biographies of Suetonius, do not mean that their authors' existence is part of the fiction and hence forged.[194] And the same seems to apply to even more peculiar texts such as Seneca's *Apocolocyntosis* with its criticism of historical writing

[194] On the features of these works: Momigliano 1993:9–10, 46, 55–57, 65–100; Pelling 2002 (Chapter 6); Hodkinson 2010.

and imperial politics, and Julius Valerius' Latin accounts of the fictional Alexander Romance.[195]

We should therefore make a clear distinction between the question of the 'reliability' and 'truthfulness' of the corpus's narratives of its historical biographees, and the question of the existence and the possible activity time of the stated biographers.

In conclusion, a work of fiction or a work with fiction is completely different from a 'forgery', and the paratexts and authorial claims of the corpus should be evaluated irrespective of questions of fictionality and historicity in the narratives of some of its works. These paratexts and claims will be evaluated in the next two chapters.

Eclectic nature. The overlooked title of the corpus in the Bamberg manuscript presents the corpus as selections (*excerpta*) of longer series of imperial biographies, in which each series or biography stems from a different author. This, as we have seen, places the corpus in a new light and brings up further questions about the possible intervention of the excerptor, who might have made the selection, and the need to reconsider the imperfections of the corpus. These will also be considered in the next two chapters in the context of authorial attributions and evaluation of unitarist approaches to the corpus.

[195] Seneca: Wiseman 2011:314–315; Valerius (active between Diocletian and Constantius II): Stoneman 1999:167–168, 173–180; Barnes 2011:197, 221n.39; Alan Cameron 2011b:560, 779. I fail to understand the notion that the author or authors of our corpus must have wanted to conceal their identities and date because they were 'ashamed' of their works' fictional elements (Dessau 1892:576–578≈Alan Cameron 2011b:778–782 and others); the surviving biographical works and novels of antiquity seem to indicate otherwise (e.g. Hofmann 1999).

Chapter 2: manuscripts, paratexts, and biographers

Each work of the corpus has its own superscription ('incipt') and subscription ('explicit'), which signal the transition from one biography to the next. These usually contain an authorial ascription to one of the stated authors and in some cases (and only in *some* manuscripts) a so-called 'dedication' to either Diocletian or Constantine. This type of evidence is often overlooked in discussions of ancient authors, who are less controversial and have a well-established textual transmission. A general survey of the transmission of these paratexts, especially in multi-author corpora, will make the discussion of the biographical corpus's paratexts easier to follow. The main question in this chapter is whether the difficulties that surround the paratexts and text of this corpus are in any way different from those of other texts and could indicate a single-author forgery; or are they in fact part of the solution to the various 'inconsistencies' in the corpus?

Scribal and authorial attribution of ancient works

Titles and ascriptions were the most fragile parts of classical texts, transmitted in medieval manuscripts as a result of the way these manuscripts were produced. The titles and ascriptions were copied by a rubricator after a scribe copied the body of the text: 'work on a manuscript is divided between the scribes and the rubricator (who can also, naturally, be a scribe); he, however, did not always complete his part of the task.'[196] Burgess therefore concludes that such paratexts 'are the most fragile parts of the text, often failing to be treated with the same consideration as the works themselves.'[197]

Indeed, examples of various corruptions could be multiplied indefinitely.[198] Ancient authors' names were among the victims. Most manuscripts refer to the second-century epitomator Florus as 'Lucius Annaeus Florus', while one manuscript refers to him as 'Iulius Florus'—and for similar reasons it remains undecided whether he is the

[196] Bischoff 1990:42.
[197] Burgess 2011:VIII.80.
[198] Pp.34ff. above.

same literary figure as 'Annius Florus'.[199] The author of the *Epitome of Military Science,* Fl. Vegetius Renatus, in one manuscript of that work and in all the manuscripts of his *Digesta Artis Mulomedicinae*, 'bears' the name of 'Publius' (rather than Flavius). Thus scholars prefer 'to combine the two strands of evidence' into Publius Flavius Vegetius Renatus;[200] if so, we are dealing with a person's name that was split into two in the manuscript tradition of his works.

These complications become more marked in complex and multi-author works or in manuscripts containing works of more than one author (*codices miscellanei*).[201] A Bamberg manuscript (Msc.Class.31) of the ninth or early tenth century contains four literary works: the fictitious *de excidio Troiae historia* of Dares of Phrygia (1r–16v); the *Breviarium* of Festus (17r–26v); a short excerpt from Eutropius' preface (26v); and Florus' epitome of Roman History (27r–107v).[202] This manuscript teaches us that works of various 'qualities' can end up in the same manuscript and specifically how one subscription could contaminate the following 'superscription' or dedication. Burgess has recently shown that Eutropius is referred to as *magister memoriae* only in this manuscript (followed by modern editors), and that this is most probably a contamination from the subscription on the same page of Festus 'EXPLICIT BREVIARIUM AB URBE CONDITA FESTI VC MAGISTER MEMORIAE'. In the case of Eutropius, we have sufficient manuscripts to expose this possible contamination.[203]

Corpus Caesarianum and the Theodosian Code

The classic examples of complex works with defective paratexts of various sorts are the *Corpus Caesarianum*, Latin Panegyrics, and *Theodosian Code*. It is well established that some headings, dates, ascriptions, and subscriptions of the *Theodosian Code* are

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[199] *PIR*[2] A650; Burgess 2011:VIII.79.
[200] Milner 1993:xxxii–xxxiii (cited); Burgess 2011:VIII.80. These approaches are considered aberrations in *HA-Forschung* (Syme 1983:103–104; cf. Paschoud 2013:2–3).
[201] Metzger 1972:10.
[202] According to reproduction: http://bsbsbb.bsb.lrz-muenchen.de/~db/0000/sbb00000095/images/index.html (accessed 26/09/13)
[203] Burgess 2011:VIII.80–81 contra *PLRE* 'Eutropius 2'.

corrupted beyond repair, especially as there are patent contradictions between its texts and paratexts. Modern scholars, therefore, emend these paratexts according to the text and context, even when this means completely disregarding the manuscript evidence, and even when the palaeographical process through which these paratexts were supposedly corrupted is unclear.[204]

By the second century the *Corpus Caesarianum*, containing Julius Caesar's *Wars* and his contemporaneous continuators, had had authorship-attribution problems. Suetonius noted that the *African, Alexandrinian*, and *Spanish Wars* were not by Caesar, but by either Hirtius or Oppius.[205] The medieval paratexts of this corpus seem to have honoured Suetonius' erudition by nominating him as one of the 'authors' of this corpus. Accordingly, most manuscripts ascribe to Suetonius some of the works; the eighth book of the *Gallic War*, despite containing a preface that rules out Caesar as its author and despite being attributed to Hirtius in some manuscripts, is attributed to Caesar in others. The manuscripts distribute the *African* and *Alexandrinian Wars* between Caesar and Suetonius. Even worse, Julius Celsus Constantinus, a late antique reader and corrector of Caesar's works, became the 'author' of the *Alexandrinian War* as 'Julius Constantinus Caesar' in two manuscripts of the corpus.[206] *Corpus Caesarianum*—even though it contains clear signs of editing and interpolation by Caesar's continuators, later readers/correctors, and even a lacuna—was never claimed to belong to the same hand or a forgery.[207] A unitarist approach to the corpus, or corpora, of the Latin Panegyrics was conceived, and they therefore require a closer look for the purposes of this discussion.

The Latin Panegyrics

In the Latin Panegyrics there are problems in the text and paratexts of the orations. This corpus allows us to draw methodological conclusions about the transmission of

[204] *CLRE*, pp.71–84; Burgess 2011:VIII.80; Seeck 1919.
[205] *Caes*.56; on this corpus: *BNP*, s.v.; *T&T*, 35–36.
[206] Based on the catalogue of incipits and explicits in Seel 1961:cxv–cxxii; on Celsus Constantinus and Julius Caesar in late antiquity: Alan Cameron 2011b:460–461, 476–477.
[207] Hirtius's address to Balbus in *BGall.* 8 (2–4); *BHisp.*1.1, 42. *T&T*, 36n.10; *BNP*, ibid.

a multi-author corpus, whose state is similar (but not identical) to the original state of the 'SHA', especially because its professions of plural authorship were contested towards the end of the nineteenth century. We shall therefore consider it in some detail.

This is a corpus of twelve speeches delivered to emperors between 100 and 389. It contains two corpora combined together with individual speeches of the same genre: one corpus of seven Gallic Panegyrics (*panegyrici diversorum VII*) contains speeches given in various dates between 289 and 311, the second corpus added Nazarius' speech of *c.*321 to the first corpus and probably the last speech in the manuscript order.[208] The remaining three speeches of Pliny (100), Pacatus (389), and Mamertinus (362) at the beginning of the current corpus were added by the postulated editor of the corpus, who is *conventionally* identified as Pacatus. The manuscript order of the speeches is inconsistent with their chronology.[209]

This multi-author format has left its footprint on the paratexts transmitted in the manuscripts, which are confused and in some cases introduce 'contradictions' or 'inconsistencies' with the text as a whole. Nearly all the surviving manuscripts of this corpus derive, directly or indirectly, from a single manuscript discovered in Mainz in 1433, which is now lost (M).[210] The exceptions are two lost manuscripts, which apparently belong to a tradition earlier than the lost M: *Berinensis*, reported in the 1599 edition of Ioannes Livineius, and the additional material of words and entire clauses from another lost manuscript in the 1513 edition of Ioannis Cuspinianus.[211] This rather straightforward manuscript tradition enables us to trace how copyists could have introduced confusion and inaccuracies to the paratexts of these works, and consequently 'contradictions' to the text of the corpus as a whole. Lassandro's

[208] Barnes 2011:182–183. He also suggests that Nazarius (after 321) incorporated the two Gallic corpora into one, before the editing of Pacatus (hence three editorial stages). Rees 2012:28.
[209] Rees 2012:24–28, 429 (with further literature).
[210] Mynors 1964:viii, reprinted in Rees 2012:51.
[211] See Nixon and Rodgers 1994:35–37 (with stemma); Rees 2012:14, 16–28.

full apparatus reports the variants in the incipits and explicits of the speeches in the various manuscripts.[212]

These variants in the paratexts of the various panegyrics ultimately illustrate that a reading in a given manuscript or a group of manuscripts does not reflect the paratext or authorial claims of ancient authorities or even the possible authorial attributions of the supposed editor(s) of the corpus (or corpora) under discussion. There are clear absurdities (apart from the misspelling of the word Panegyric in Latin and the emperors' names) and difficulties that cannot be solved with certainty. Some manuscripts omit incipits and explicits, and the speeches lack any chronological or authorial order. The superscriptions to Panegyric V mark the beginning of the 'Gallic Corpus', but are inconsistently reported in the manuscripts: some report the 'Gallic Corpus' contains seven panegyrics (H and its descendants; incipit type 1), whereas others state it contains eight panegyrics (stemming from the lost *Exemplar Aurispae*; incipit type 4). This is presumably so because scribes could easily confuse the Latin numerals VII and VIII. This confusion is also reflected in M^2's reference to Panegyric XII as the eighth panegyric, either in the 'Gallic Corpus' or 'to Constantine' (more below). In Panegyric X, one manuscript (Z) misreports it as the fifth in the 'Gallic Corpus', when it is the sixth in number.

The transmission of the corpus illustrates how copyists can corrupt paratexts to the extent that they create inconsistencies with the text itself. In Panegyric VIII, delivered to Constantius I after his victories in Britain (*c.*297),[213] the manuscripts stemming from the *Exemplar Aurispae* refer to it as a panegyric to Constantine (incipit type 2), either because these names were easily confused or because the explicit of Panegyric VII to Constantine and Maximian in the exemplar(s) confused their copyists. The latter instance perhaps explains why some manuscripts of the same group (incipit type 3) referred to Panegyric VIII as if it were pronounced to Maximian. Luckily we

[212] Lassandro 1992 is the closest to an *editio maior*, because 'Mynors suppresses the detail on which any dissenting voice would rely' (Rees 2012:20).
[213] Nixon and Rodgers 1994:105–106; Rees 2012:24.

use the main text itself (and other manuscripts) to show that these paratexts are wrong and were incorrectly copied by scribes with complete disregard for the text itself.

Less certainty surrounds the authorial ascriptions of some speeches as a result of 'clashes' between the paratexts and the texts, especially as a result of the common formula 'eiusdem'. Panegyric V and VI could appear to belong to Nazarius, the author of Panegyric IV, or at least to the same author, according to the incipit of M^2 and P^3 in VI (*eiusdem rhetoris*). As we shall see with scholarship on another multi-author corpus, one could argue that this is an indication of 'forgery' because there is 'patent contradiction' between the two speeches. Whereas Panegyric VI of 310 invites Constantine to visit Autun, Panegyric V of 311 knows nothing about this. Such 'contradictions' in fact show that the two speeches are not by the same hand and that the paratext should be disregarded.[214]

The panegyrics linked with the name Mamertinus pose further chronological and ascription problems. Panegyric III given to Julian in 362 is ascribed to Mamertinus, whose consulship the speech celebrates. His full name, Claudius Mamertinus, is known from a self-citation within the speech; a man by that name was consul in 362.[215] The problems start with Panegyric XI of 291. This speech, celebrating the birthday of Maximian Herculius,[216] is attributed in *H*, the closest witness to M, to 'the same *magister* Mamerti(nus)', to 'the same *magister*' in NA or simply 'to the same'. Some scholars have therefore taken this as an indication that Panegyric X of 289 was also by this 'Mamertinus'.[217] The Mamertinus of III cannot be identical with the Mamertinus of X/XI, especially because of 'his' possible age: he would have been a centenarian in 362 if he did perform all three speeches, which implies an improbable

[214] VI(7)22; Pichon 1906:59 (page numbers according to its reprint in Rees 2012); Seeck 1888. Pichon even used such an argument in his classic demolition of Seeck's unitarist theory applied to this corpus.
[215] III(11).17.4; this allows the circumstantial identification with (Fl.) Claudius Mamertinus in *ILS* 755 and papyri (*PLRE* 'Mamertinus 2').
[216] Diocletian's name seems to have found its way into the paratexts of some manuscripts because of the preceding speech.
[217] Rees 2012:25–26 with further references.

length of literary activity.[218] Thus a 'contradiction' in the corpus, to which two reasonable solutions are proposed:

(1) The Mamertinus of X and XI was a father or grandfather of Claudius Mamertinus of III, while noting that 'Mamertinus Senior' is *unknown* outside the corpus.[219]

(2) The coincidence is a result of a scribal error: 'the name Mamertinus… can easily have been copied from another part of the manuscript by a scribe.' In other words, the incipit of III seems to have contaminated the incipits of X and XI.[220]

This suggests that in a multi-author corpus a contributor's name could incorrectly 'migrate' between works that are seven works apart. The corruption process remains unclear. Seeck went even further and argued that the incipit of XI should be corrected and understood as: *item eiusdem <Eumenii v(iri) p(erfectissimi)> magistri mem(oriae) et <rhetoris latini> genethliacus Maximiani Augusti.* In short, Seeck—who wanted to ascribe this speech to Eumenius, the undisputed author of Panegyric IX—freely rewrote the ascription in order to solve this 'contradiction'. Recently, Barnes has revived and slightly revised Seeck's view on this incipit.[221] Generally, modern scholarship never takes this type of paratext as providing secure indications of authorial ascriptions and even boldly revises them, especially in multi-author corpora.

Methodological considerations

The less disputed corpora, the Latin Panegyrics and *Corpus Caesarianum*, are fine examples of how scribes could complicate the links between paratexts and texts in such corpora. Modern scholarship deals with these and similar inconsistencies and

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[218] Galletier 1955:3; Rees 2012:25–26.
[219] *PLRE* 'Mamertinus 1'; Galletier 1949:5–6; Rees 2012:26; Galletier provides internal links to support the view that X and XI are by the same author (whether he is Mamertinus Senior or not).
[220] Nixon and Rodgers 1994:10, 388 (cited).
[221] Seeck 1888:713–715, according to Galletier this was too much to put on a text (1949:xviii with n.2). Barnes 2011:222.

contradictions, especially between paratexts and texts, in these corpora in the same way that they are approached in other classical texts. Specifically, in the Latin Panegyrics there are interlocking discussions and scholarly disagreements about the exact dates, the number of the panegyrists, and authorship attributions of some panegyrics: some scholars try to redistribute the panegyrics between the known panegyrists, while others will opt for an individual panegyrist for each speech. These solutions involve 'juggling' with ascriptions (i.e. rewriting or reorganizing the incipits and explicits in the manuscripts) and various attempts at redating and renumbering the various panegyrics.[222]

These attempts might be viewed as complex theories, but the solutions they offer are simple and within the limitations of the common understanding of classical texts and their transmission. Naturally, one can say that there is a simpler hypothesis: the postulate of a single author.[223] This was the suggestion of Otto Seeck, who was also a Dessauist. He showed 'the greatest disregard for the manuscript titles'[224] and argued that all eight speeches of the 'Gallic Corpus' belong to a single orator, Eumenius.[225] This implausible theory is obsolete, following its demolition by René Pichon in 1906.[226] Pichon noted blatant errors and the misrepresentation of simple facts in Seeck's approach,[227] and his demolition included three important arguments that are methodologically relevant to the discussion of 'SHA':

(1) Similarities and dissimilarities in language, themes, and ideas prove nothing: 'these general arguments can be bent in every direction'.[228] For the similarities

[222] Earlier literature in Bury 1926:481. Pichon 1906 is vague about their number. See Rees 2012: *passim*.
[223] Cf. pp.61ff. below.
[224] Rees 2012:26.
[225] Seeck 1888.
[226] Nixon and Rodgers 1994; Rees 2012.
[227] Seeck misreported the earlier speeches as shorter than the others (Pichon 1906:57); falsely ascribed Panegyric V to Eumenius without any evidence to support it (58–59); falsely claimed that VIII was written by a *magister memoriae* (hence Eumenius), although the text says something completely different (61); falsely inverted the stated dates of two Panegyrics (62–63); misstated the references to Roman-Persian relations (64). Similar problems can be found in Seeck's approach to 'SHA', as we note in Chapter 1 and in Part II *passim*.
[228] Pichon 1906:58.

are a result of dealing with the same political and literary milieu (e.g. praise of a Roman Emperor), whereas the dissimilarities could be a result of 'different authors who are trying to rejuvenate a banal tradition'.[229]

(2) Internal links within the corpus cannot be used as secure indications of authorial ascriptions, as they could be used in any direction. For instance, the author of Panegyric XII claimed he had always been accustomed to praise the achievements of Constantine.[230] Seeck asserted this statement had to relate to the speeches we have in the corpus. Pichon, being aware the entire corpus was *only* a selection, noted that the reference could be to other speeches and that the 'chances are the same for both sides'.[231] The same could be said about the claim that Panegyric VIII (*c.*297) to Constantius is by the same author of Panegyric X (*c.*289) to Maximian only because VIII claims it was performed before Maximian following a commendation of him by Constantius. This creates an improbability because Constantius could not have known the panegyrist of X as early as 289. Accordingly, Pichon concluded that the author of VIII 'was not the same as the author of X', and the internal link was simply to another speech, not necessarily transmitted in this corpus.[232] Pichon therefore rejected the single-author hypothesis with the next point.

(3) The speeches contain contradictions and improbabilities, which negate the idea of single authorship. Panegyric VI of 310 invites Constantine to visit Autun—Panegyric V of 311 knows nothing about it, when it relates the imperial visit to that city;[233] Panegyric IX, the only one actually ascribed to Eumenius in the manuscripts, refers to one son, whom the panegyrist wished to be promoted in the imperial court, but Panegyric VI refers to five biological

[229] Pichon 1906:58.
[230] XII(9)1.1.
[231] Pichon 1906:58.
[232] Pichon 1906:61–62.
[233] VI(7)22; Pichon 1906:59

children, for whom the panegyrist sought advancement;[234] Constantius' naval expedition to Britain of 297 is differently described: Panegyric VIII of *c.*297(?) refers to a rather difficult expedition due to hostile weather and a stormy sea, whereas Panegyric VI describes the sea as calm and welcoming to Constantius.[235]

In addition to these arguments, Pichon used the prima facie state of the corpus in general and the 'Gallic Corpus' in particular as evidence against Seeck's single-author hypothesis. He emphasized throughout the article the need to respect the manuscript tradition and especially the superscription before Panegyric V: *incipiunt panegyrici diversorum septem* (or eight). This paratext, he argued, should be sufficient evidence that the 'Gallic Corpus' was not written by a single author, namely Eumenius.[236] Moreover, the chronological disorder of the speeches in the manuscripts cannot have been the result of an editor who redacted the works of a single author—on the contrary it pointed to an editor who made a selection of various speeches by various authors.[237] Such was Pichon's firm and solid conclusion: 'everything invites us to view these as works of different authors'.[238] Pichon, however, did not specify exactly how many orators there were or their respective shares in the corpus.

Intermediate conclusion and the state of *HA-Forschung*

The discussion has so far recorded several key points about the transmission of texts and paratexts in Antiquity and the Middle Ages. We have seen that ancient works could be grouped together in the same manuscript tradition either by chance or as a result of them probably being collected already in antiquity. Works transmitted in these circumstances fared badly especially in terms of their paratexts, and thus 'contradictions' between their texts and paratexts crept into them. In some cases,

[234] IX(5)6.2; VI(7)23.2; Pichon 1906:59–60, who also notes how Seeck garbled these facts. It seems to me that this 'contradiction' proves nothing, but as we shall see, even lesser 'contradictions' were overstated in *HA-Forschung*.
[235] VIII(4)14.3–15; VI(7)5.4; Pichon 1906:60 (cf. Nixon and Rodgers 1994:138n.63, 224n.22).
[236] Pichon 1906:55, 67, 73–74.
[237] Pichon 1906:67, 73.
[238] Pichon 1906:74.

even a complete paratext could simply misreport the authorial attribution, as in the case of Julius Caesar and his continuators. Such 'contradictions' in ancient works could be easily and simply explained as a result of errors in the textual transmission, but with what some might call 'complicated' methodologies of philology and textual criticism. In general, the main texts are given priority over the fragile paratexts, because even complete paratexts providing an authorship attribution could simply be an error by a scribe.

When it comes to *HA-Forschung*, the authorial ascriptions to plural biographers and the prima facie state of the whole text are completely ignored for two reasons (their order is sometimes inverted):

(1) The paratexts, especially authorial ascriptions, are *assumed* to be as solid as complete inscriptions set in stone and to be an integral part of the main text. Thus the text as a whole is claimed to contain 'contradictions'. These contradictions are then taken to be an indication of a sophisticated and highly competent *Fälschung*.

(2) Dessau, portrayed with positive epithets, is *assumed* to have provided decisive philological proof for a unitary authorship of the corpus. The paratexts and authorial claims are then rejected. [239]

The complete disregard for the paratexts of the corpus has become an integral part of the customary reference to Dessau, which is also roundly used against scholars who suggest plausible explanations for the authenticity and multi-authorship of the corpus.[240] This, as we have seen, derives from Syme's overstatement of Dessau 1889 in the first page of his book and other publications. There then follow a few lapidary assertions about the alleged existence of contradictions.[241] Syme himself, after

[239] Dessau 1889:337–344; Seeck 1890:*passim*; Syme 1968:v, 177–182; 1983:27–28 (and *passim* in his various publications); White 1967:esp.124, 126; J. N. Adams 1977; Barnes 1978:14–15; 2000:307; Kolb 1987:1; Birley 2003:133–134; Paschoud 2004; Alan Cameron 2011b:743–745; G. W. Adams 2012:20–21; Thomson 2012:20–37, 89–103; Rohrbacher 2013:146–147 and many others.
[240] See *Introduction*.
[241] Syme 1968:1 and publications in n.239; *Introduction*.

admitting that 'a single author has been assumed' throughout his book,[242] attempted to substantiate the single-author hypothesis by restating Dessau's alleged contradictions and 'philological proof'.[243] As Dessau's important philological argument will be evaluated in Chapter 3, here we shall focus on the first point.

Syme's approach to the paratexts and texts of the corpus thus fundamentally consists of assertion. At the outset of his discussion of authorship he states:

> The corpus carries in its superscriptions the names of six authors… As for the authorship, internal evidence in the first half betrays several contradictions. The labels have been assigned without much thought. It is a gain to disregard them.[244]

After reiterating Dessau's single-author argument, Syme noted other similarities (all relating to the common stock of biography) between the authors to support his hypothesis, such as their references to 'genealogies and relatives; literary works; physical appearance; personal habits; heirlooms and pictures; clothing and equipment'.[245] He then deployed the Dessauist 'criticism' of pluralists:

> Those who accept and defend the plurality of authors are reduced to arbitrary devices. They juggle with ascriptions. And more contortions still when they combine therewith the imperial dedications, which in the main *Vitae* shift from Diocletian to Constantine with the *Elagabalus*, in the subsidiary with the *Clodius Albinus*. Hence theories of intolerable complexities.[246]

As we have seen, correcting or reattributing paratexts, such as authorial ascriptions, is standard philological work. Syme then continued to repeat his mantra that 'a simpler hypothesis might use the *postulate* of a single author',[247] in greater detail:

> In five instances, it will be observed, the ascriptions clash with the statements made by biographers about what they plan or have already achieved. There is no point in trying to straighten them out (or even registering them). An easy

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[242] Syme 1968:176.
[243] Syme 1968:178.
[244] Syme 1968:176 following Dessau 1889: *passim*.
[245] Syme 1968:179=1983: 215 *without* any references to the corpus. For such 'peculiarities' in ancient biographies, see Hägg 2012:93, 100, 127–128, 190–191, 200–204, 219–230, 311–312 and *passim*.
[246] Syme 1968:180. Cf. pp.105ff., 134ff. below.
[247] Syme 1968:182; cf. White 1967:125: 'in the meantime it seems convenient to believe that one man wrote the *HA*', whereas at the outset of his article he states that he 'presuppose(s) agreement that the collection misrepresents its date and provenance' (ibid.115). Honoré 1987 acknowledges dependence on these 'two assumptions' (156).

> explanation avails. Most of those statements were written by the author before he thought of multiplying his identity.[248]

Thus not only the paratexts and claims of plurality should be ignored as a result of alleged 'contradictions' (which Syme *refrained* from registering), but also basic philological practices of dealing with classical texts. Moreover, Syme does not provide a single valid argument against the authorial ascriptions and so-called 'dedications' other than alleged 'contradictions'. With this practice, one could classify many ancient works as forgeries—the Legal Codes, Latin Panegyrics, *Corpus Caesarianum*, and *Corpus Aurelianum*—only because their investigation involves 'theories of intolerable complexities', such as 'juggling with ascriptions' or alleged 'contradictions'. Even François Paschoud, who believes in the total victory of Dessau, has recently found a restatement of Syme, which argued that the Dessauist single author was responsible for the ascriptions in the corpus hard to swallow.[249] As we shall see, however, in publications subsequent to 1889 Dessau had already retracted such sweeping statements, and admitted that 'juggling with ascriptions' was a legitimate method of dealing with the contradictions he allegedly found in 1889.[250] Nonetheless, the residue of that 'epochal year of Hermann Dessau'[251] had its 'half-life' through the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Towards a reassertion of the paratext

The discussion from this point onwards will evaluate the two questions separately, in order to avoid both Dessau's 1889 circular *petitio principii* of first assuming that the paratext-text contradictions point to a single forger, and the Dessauist prior assumption of a single author, which rejects the plural authorship claimed by the paratexts and texts and presents the corpus as a unitary work with chronological

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[248] Syme 1968:182–183, similar assertions in most of the publications listed in n.239 above.
[249] Paschoud 2013:6 discussing Thomson 2012:89–102 (≈Honoré 1987:170–173); Paschoud's article also records factual errors throughout Thomson's discussion, which are not 'scholarly disagreements', but the misreporting of modern scholars' views and what manuscripts and modern editors actually state. He concludes: 'the conclusion of Thomson: "there is considerable evidence that the author himself was responsible for the manuscript order of the lives' (p.93)" *Credat Iudaeus Apella, non ego*.'
[250] Dessau 1892:598; see pp.114ff. below.
[251] Syme 1983:12.

inconsistencies and contradictions about its claimed scope and dates.[252] We shall discuss the following two points:

(1) Does the corpus really contain contradictions between its paratexts and texts, sufficiently peculiar compared to other ancient texts to justify the discredit of authorial claims (and its authenticity in general)?

(2) The validity of the single-author philological argument brought against the claims in the corpus. Was there indeed a single author who presented himself as several different authors?

In both these cases, we shall pay due attention to scholarly views that are not part of the Dessauist 'orthodox' view, from both before and after Dessau.

The prima facie state of the corpus

The paratexts in the manuscripts present the corpus as a selection from various biographies and various authors.[253] The manuscripts also ascribe each of the biographies to an individual author. The incipit and the 'ungrammatical explicit'[254] (with or without *feliciter*) affixed to each biography of the corpus are standard formulae in medieval manuscripts. These formulae are medieval in origin[255] and therefore cannot belong, on any reckoning, to the 'activity' of the Dessauist single author.[256] Moreover, the manuscripts manifest traces of physical damage in their now-lost hyperarchetype(s).[257] The following sections will show how acknowledgement of the difficulties could explain the 'peculiarities' and 'contradictions', both within the main text and between the main text and the paratext.

[252] Barnes 2000; Birley 2003:133–137; Alan Cameron 2011b:743–745—these are typical recent restatements.
[253] Chapter 1.
[254] Bischoff 1990:44.
[255] Bischoff 1990:43–44.
[256] Pp.64ff. with n.249 above.
[257] Hohl-SHA, *praefatio*, viii–ix.

The two classes of the corpus's manuscripts; order and disorder

The two distinct manuscript groups, Π and Σ, each preserves the imperial biographies in a different order.[258] Neither group preserves them in correct chronological order, whether of composition or imperial succession. Moreover, some biographies are ascribed to different authors in different manuscripts. These variants allow a better understanding of the reliability of the transmitted paratexts of the corpus, before we compare them with the evidence of the main text itself and before we consider modern views about the authorial ascriptions of the corpus.

<u>The Π class</u>

The following table records the order of the biographies and their incipits and explicits in Π, representing the consensus of P and B, the oldest surviving manuscripts of the ninth century.[259] The problematic paratexts, which we shall shortly discuss, are shaded.

Mod. ID	MS .#	Incipit and Explicit in Π
1(H)	I	spartiani de vita hadriani||vita divi hadriani explicit
2(Ael.)	II	incipit eiusdem spartiani helvius||explicit vita
3	III	incipit iuli capitolini antoninus pius feliciter||vita antonini pii explicit
4	IIII	incipit marci antonini philosophi eiusdem iuli capitolini||finit vita antonini philosophi
5	V	incipit eiusdem verus feliciter||explicit eiusdem verus feliciter
9	VI	incipit didius iulianus aeli spartiani feliciter||didius iulianus explicit
7	VII	incipit antoninus aeli lampridi||commodus antoninus aelii lampridii explicit
8	VIII	incipit pertinax iuli capitolini||helius pertinax explicit
6	VIIII	avidius vulcacii gallicani vc. feliciter||cassius vulcacii gallicani vc expl
10	X	incipit aeli spartiani severus||aeli spartiani severus explicit
11	XI	incipit pescennius niger||pescennius niger aeli spartiani expl
13	XII	incipit antoninus caracallus||antoninus caracalus spartiani expl
14	XIII	incipit antoninus geta feliciter||antoninus geta explicit
17	XIIII	incipit aeli lampridii antoninus heliogabalus feliciter||aeli lampridii varius heliograbalus explicit
16	XV	incipit diadumenus antoninus lampridii||diadumenus antoninus aelii

[258] On the clear division between the Σ-class and so-called Π-class, see Peter 1884a:I, xxii ff.; Hohl 1913; Callu 1992:xcix–c with n.341.

[259] I cite the paratexts following the conventions of modern *apparatus critici:* manuscript text in roman type, editorial comments in italics. The incipit and explicit of each biography are separated by ||. Minor variants are not recorded.

		lampridii explicit
15	XVI	incipit poilius macrinus iuli capitolini feliciter||*the explicit is missing*
12	XVII	incipit vita clodii albini iulii capitolini||vita clodi albini iuli capitolini explicit
18	XVIII	incipit alexander severus aeli lampridii||alexander severus l aelii lampridii explicit
19	XVIII I	incipiunt maximini duo iuli capitolini feliciter|| *missing*
20	XX	incipit gordianus||gordianus tertius explicit
21	XXI	incipit maximus||maximus sive puppenus et balbinus iuli* capitolini explicit
22	XXII	incipit eiusdem valeriani duo||*missing*
23	XXIII	incipit eiusdem gallieni duo||*missing*
24	XXIII I–L	incipit eiusdem tyranni triginta||*missing*
25	LI	incipit eiusdem feliciter||explicit trevelli pollionis divus claudius
26	LII	incipit flavi vopisci syracusii divus aurelianus||*subscription is missing*
27	LIII	incipit eiusdem tacitus||tacitus explicit
27	LIII	incipit florianus||florianus explicit
28	LV	incipit eiusdem probus feliciter||*subscription is missing*
29	LVI	incipit eiusdem firmus saturninus proculus et BONOS||*subscription is missing*
30	LVII	incipit eiusdem carus et cari & numerianus feliciter||*specific subscription is missing, the corpus ends with the following* : explicitae vitae diversorum principum et tyrannorum a divo adriano usque ad numerianum feliciter utere felix

Table 1.

Most notable are the errors in the order of the first eighteen biographies. The biographies of Avidius Cassius (r.175) and Didius Iulianus (r.193) have been misplaced, and switching the two restores the chronological order. The question that remains is whether or not the authorial attribution was confused when this transposition happened; whether, for instance, *Avidius* was in fact ascribed to Speratianus or to another author, as the evidence of the main text seems to suggest.[260]

The biography of Niger (r.193–194) interrupts the sequence between the biographies of Severus (r.193–211) and his sons, Caracalla and Geta (r.211–217, 209–210). Moreover, *Niger* is separated from *Clodius Albinus* by five biographies, which are not in chronological order (XII–XVII). Here again, the transposition resulted in confusion

[260] Pp.107ff., 112ff. below.

about the authorial attribution, especially if we take into account the fact that the index of Π refers to the author(s) of the biographies with the formula *eiusdem* ('of the same').

The biographies of Elagabalus (r.218–222) and Severus Alexander (r.222–235) are separated by three biographies, which in their turn are out of chronological order; those of Macrinus and Diadumenianus (rr.217–218), father and son, are in reverse order. *Clodius Albinus* (r.193–197) that follows them is completely unrelated here. *Diadumenianus* and *Clodius Albinus*, both ascribed to *eiusdem* in the index are fine illustrations of how the explicit of the preceding biography could contaminate a subsequent incipit. In the correct chronological order the *eiusdem* of *Diadumenianus* in the index would have meant Capitolinus rather than Lampridius, as it did for the rubricator. The fact that *Macrinus* lacks an explicit may explain the incipit of the *Albinus*, which ascribes it also to Capitolinus (either rightly or wrongly). The omission of the explicit, after all, could be the result of the hyperarchetype having the same author attribution in the incipit of *Albinus*.

The incipits and explicits of two biographies do not provide authorial claims. The *Geta* (XIII), between Speratianus' *Caracalla* (XII) and Lampridius' *Elagabalus* (XIV), does not report an author, and even the index simply states its author as *eiusdem*. The same applies to the *Three Gordians*. As we shall see, in themselves these facts could solve some alleged contradictions between these biographies and others 'ascribed' to the same authors by modern editors.[261]

The formula *eiusdem*, found especially in the index and some incipits and explicits, further complicates the situation. In the incipits there is a difference between 'eiusdem spartiani' in the *Aelius* (II) and *eiusdem* without a name as in the *Verus*. In the latter case a scribe might have omitted the name, in which case the ascription of the biography to Capitolinus—whether right or wrong—would be the result of

[261] Chapter 8.

modern interpretation. Further difficulties are found in the biographies subsequent to *Maximus and Balbinus* (XXI) up to the *Thirty Tyrants* (XXIV–L), their incipits having an *eiusdem*: this formally means that they should be ascribed to Julius Capitolinus—even though the *Thirty Tyrants* and the *Claudius* of Trebellius Pollio appear to have internal links. In these cases, modern editors have tried to 'correct' the text by ascribing *Two Valerians*, *Two Gallieni*, and *Thirty Tyrants* to Trebellius Pollio—as we shall see, in the first two biographies this editorial practice, simply accepted by modern scholars, has introduced more problems than it has solved.[262]

This state of disorder and confusion in the incipits and explicits, even though their language is medieval in origin, has been ascribed to the craftiness of the Dessauist forger, as we have seen.[263] Nevertheless, irrespective of the validity of Dessau's single author argument,[264] we possess a separate group of manuscripts that illustrate how arbitrary the order of contributions and authorial ascriptions can be in multi-author works.

The Σ class

The Σ class is a family of *recentiores*, whose oldest surviving manuscript is from the fourteenth century: D (Laurentianus Sanctae Crucis 20.sin.6).[265] This class has distinctive characteristics such as omissions and additions compared to Π; a different order of paragraphs within several biographies; a different text in the lacuna between *Maximus and Balbinus* and the *Two Valerians*; a more 'correct' order of the biographies; and different authorial ascriptions.[266] This group of manuscripts does not derive from P (or Π), but most probably shares a common hyperarchetype with it.[267] The main difficulty with Σ is its representation in the Teubner text: Hohl did not

[262] Chapter 8.
[263] Pp.61ff. above.
[264] Chapter 3.
[265] It is not possible to go through every variant in the dozens of manuscripts of this class in a study of this scope, and even the various Budé texts of this corpus do not report all the manuscripts.
[266] See pp.80ff. below. Hohl 1913:263–265, 387–423; Ballou 1914:60–70; Callu 1992:xcix–cii; Paschoud 2013:6–10.
[267] Hohl-SHA, *praefatio* ix–x; Hohl 1913:400–401, 408–410; discussion in Paschoud 2013:8–9; even if Ballou 1914 were right that Σ is a result of a late medieval/humanist 'redaction' (or rather recension)

fully integrate its readings into his edition, even though he recognized well the importance of Σ for the establishment of the text. Klotz, who established the importance of Σ, noted the deficiencies of Hohl's edition long ago.[268] Moreover, Hohl overlooked the oldest surviving manuscript in this group (D).[269] Likewise, Hohl did not report the order of the biographies and authorial attributions in this group of manuscripts. The paratexts in D, the oldest surviving manuscript of the Σ class, are as follows;[270]

Mod. ID	MS. #	D (Laurentianus Sanctae Crucis 20.sin.6)[271]
		Expliciunt gesta diuersorum principum et tyrannorum, qui romanam rempublicam tenuerunt seu invaserunt. Ab Adriano usque ad Numerianum
1(*H*)	I	helius spartanus | explicit de gestis adriani helius spartianus
2(*Ael.*)	II	ceyonii helii comodi cesaris || *missing*
3(*AP*)	III	*missing*||iulius capitolinus feliciter
4(*MA*)	IV	gesta divi marci antonini aurelii philosophii augusti verissimi|*missing*
5(*V*)	V	gesta veri lucii helii antonini augusti iulius capitolinus feliciter|explicit Lucius
7(*C*)	VI	gesta comodi antonini helyus Lâpridius|expliciût gesta comodi antonini
8(*P*)	VII	incipuît gesta pertinacis|explicit heluii pertinacis
9(*DJ*)	VIII	incipiût gesta didii julianii|expliciût gesta didi Iuliaî
6(*AC*)	IX	incipiunt avidii cassii|excpliciût gesta avidii
10(*S*)	X	incipiût gesta severi|excpliciût gesta severi
11(*PN*)	XI	incipiunt gesta poscenni nigri|*missing*
12(*Cla*)	XII	*Missing*|explicit clodius albinus
13(*Cc.*)	XIII	Incipiût antoîni caracalli vel bassiani|explicit antoînus caracallus
14(*G*)	XIV	incipit antoninus Getha|explicit geta antoninus *(followed by a missing half line)*

made on the basis of P, this group would still demonstrate how a classical text could be susceptible to subsequent alterations by redactors, readers, and copyists—a possibility deprecated in *HA-Forschung* (pp.134ff. below).

[268] Hohl-SHA, *praefatio* viii knew that Σ 'haud spernendum affert testimonium' and that 'cum enim in P quaternionibus compluribus alienis in locis positis sit perturbatus ordo nonnullarum vitarum, in Σ omnino non est confusus. Accedit, quod conservavit Σ, quae in P desunt…'; Hohl even demonstrated the importance of Σ for the establishment of the text (Hohl 1913:408–410 and *passim*). In his edition, however, Hohl chose only to *supplement* P with '*quas* ex Σ familiae codicibus ratione et via *selegi*, *lectionibus*' (ix; my emphasis). Klotz 1928; 1929.

[269] So Callu and Desbordes 1989:258.

[270] I have seen the manuscripts through reproductions. I have noticed that Desbordes and Ratti 2000 in their edition of *Val.* and *Gall.* in many cases misreported the readings of D.

[271] All paratexts are in red ink and in the hand of a rubricator unless otherwise stated; I do not include the corrections and comments, as they belong to the humanist Tedaldo della Casa (Callu 1992:c; Callu and Desbordes 1989:258).

15(OM)	XV	Gesta opilii macrini|*missing (blank space of three lines)*
16(Dd.)	XVI	*Missing, three blank lines*|*missing*, three blank lines
17(Hel.)	XVII	*Missing alongside the explicit of the Dd., (three blank lines)*|expliciût gesta heliogabali
18(*AS*)	XVIII	gesta alexandri seueri|*missing, three blank lines*
19(*Max.*)	XIX	*Missing alongside the explicit of AS*|expliciût gesta max(*mi)*in(*orum*)
20(Gd.)	XX	De gestis tribus gordianis|explicit d*(e)* gestis gordiano*(rum)* tres
21(MB)	XXI	Incipiût gesta Maxi(*mus)* pupienus balbini [???] iulius captolinus|expliciût
		Summary of emperors down to Valerian
22(*Val.*)	XXII	*Incipit missing*|valeriano iuniori|explicit
23(*Gall.*)	XXIII	Incipiût gesta galieni|*missing, empty half line*
24(*T*)	XXIV	*Missing*|*rubrics with names of various usurpers*|*missing explicit*
25(*Cl.*)	XXV	*Missing, one blank line*|explicit trebellii pollionis. Divus Claudius (*in black ink, by the same hand of the main text*)
26(*A*)	XXVI	*Missing, three blank lines*|*missing*
27(*Tac.*)	XXVII	Incipit vita taciti|*missing two blank lines*
28(*Pr.*)	XXVIII	*Missing alongside the explicit of Tac.*|*missing*
29(*Q*)	XXIX	Gesta saturni. Flavius scripsit|*missing, one blank line*
30(*Car.*)	XXX	*Missing alongside the explicit of Q*|felicit*(er) (in black ink*)

Table 2.

This manuscript reduces the authors to *five*: Aelius Speratianus (misspelled as 'helius sparatanus'); Iulius Capitolinus; Aelius Lampridius (misspelled as 'Helyus Lampridius'); Trebellius Pollio and one Flavius (Vopiscus?); 'Vulcacius Gallicanus' is not included in any of the incipits and explicits. Moreover, many of the biographies simply lack authorial ascriptions and do not even include an 'eiusdem' to link them to a preceding biography. Thus we have a classic example of a rubricator who did not finish his work, perhaps because he did not have the information or did not feel equipped to guess.

The order of the biographies is generally according to imperial succession: this manuscript (as all the others in the Σ) does not have the disorder we find in Π between *Elagabalus* (17) and *Alexander* (18): in Π they are separated, in the following order, by *Diadumenus* (16), *Macrinus* (15), and *Clodius Albinus* (12). In Σ *Albinus* is between *Niger* and *Caracalla*—its proper chronological place according to

succession;[272] similarly *Macrinus* and *Diadumenus* are in their correct order and follow *Geta*, and *Elagabalus* and *Alexander* are in their proper chronological order. Nevertheless, Σ contains a different type of disorder between *Marcus* and *Severus* compared to Π, illustrated in the following table.

Order in Σ	Order in Π	Apostrophe in main text
Marcus	Marcus	Diocletian
Verus	Verus	Diocletian
Commodus	Didius	
Pertinax	Commodus	
Didius	Pertinax	
Avidius	Avidius	Diocletian
Severus	Severus	Diocletian

Table 3.

The order of these biographies in Σ is more difficult to explain than that in Π: whereas in Π only *Didius* and *Avidius* appear to have been switched, in Σ *Avidius* appears to have been copied after *Pertinax* and *Didius*. In fact, comparing the two manuscript traditions indicates that the position of *Avidius* before *Severus* could be an error that can be ascribed to a lost hyperarchetype common to Σ and Π;[273] the position of *Didius* in Π before *Commodus* might explain the origin of the error: the names Didius and Avidius are similar enough to be confused. It is not inconceivable that at a certain point in the transmission someone attempted to move *Avidius* to its 'proper' place, but ended up moving *Didius*.

Further complications: lacunas, interpolations, and a medieval recension

The two classes of manuscripts, Σ and Π, demonstrate that the incomplete work of rubricators could have introduced further complications into classical 'texts' as a whole. The notable examples are the varying order of the works and the authorial

[272] I can confirm this from examining reproductions of manuscripts; as Paschoud noted, Thomson badly misrepresents Σ (he did not consult any of its witnesses) and makes 'false claims (affirmations fausses)' (Paschoud 2013:7, 9 with n.12) about this group of manuscripts, such as 'The *Vita Clodii Albini* appears outside its chronological order sequence in all the manuscripts' (Thomson 2012:98). Thomson's blatant errors and inaccuracies are far from being 'scholarly disagreements'; and his errors nullify the observations and conclusions he makes about the corpus as a whole (see in detail: Paschoud 2013:6–10; cf. above).

[273] Hohl 1913:401–410; Hohl-SHA, viii-ix (with further references).

ascriptions—both appear to be very arbitrary and probably accidental. In addition to these cases, we shall see how two manuscripts of Σ illustrate how accidental the inclusion and exclusion of works with multi-author corpora—and this corpus in particular—could be. Moreover, the physical condition of Π and the revisions and additions in Σ seem to shed new light on our understanding of the 'lacuna' in the corpus and medieval interventions in ancient works in general.

Vopiscus out, Suetonius in

A manuscript of the Σ class (*Laur.*66.32) was recently studied by Paschoud as a representative of this class only up to *Severus Alexander*. The more important issue with this manuscript is that it *excludes* the biographies ascribed to Vopiscus from the corpus, and ends with *Claudius II*.[274] Our understanding of the corpus would have been completely different if this were our only manuscript or all our manuscripts belonged to the same tradition. For instance, 'Syme tends to generalize on the basis of the later lives',[275] and Paschoud and Demougeot tried to construct a 'Vopiscus/Nicomachus Flavianus-theorie', which Lippold refuted.[276] These theories and discussions, and consequently the modern understanding of the whole corpus, would have been quite different.

A fifteenth-century manuscript (Paris Lat.5807)[277] contains Suetonius' *Caesares* followed by this entire corpus, but with chapters 16–21 of the *Carus and his sons* omitted: the corpus ends with the sentence: *dictum est de caro, dictum est de numeriano. superset nobis de numeriano*.[278] These chapters correspond to the biography of Numerianus. The *editio princeps* of Bonus Accursius (1475) included

[274] I examined a digital reproduction; Paschoud 2013 overlooks this important fact, which Hohl 1913:396 had briefly noted.
[275] Alan Cameron 1971:255 on Syme 1968; Crook 1972:248 made a similar point on Syme 1971b.
[276] Demougeot 1953; Paschoud 1996; Lippold 1998:xii–xv (with Christ 2000:40); Lippold 1999 and subsequent publications *passim*. Notice already Momigliano 1966:151 and nn.16 with bibliography against the antecedents of the Flavianus theories.
[277] We might recall that our earliest manuscripts of *Corpus Aurelianum* and Latin Panegyrics are from the fourteenth and fifteenth century respectively.
[278] ≅*Car.*15.7; Paschoud's Budé text does not indicate this; Peter-SHA, xxiv–xxv was the last to discuss this manuscript.

Suetonius' *Caesares* and the SHA. If this tradition—and after all we are not dealing with a closed recension and most surviving manuscripts of ancient authors are a result of chance—were our only witness to this corpus, our understanding would have been different. For instance, Suetonius, whose career until 1952 was only known through *the Life of Hadrian*,[279] might have ended up as a 'contributor' to the Dessauist forgery. As we shall see, some of Dessau's 'unerhörte Wortverbindungen' outside the corpus have their respected intertextual counterparts in Suetonius himself (and his text could be shown to have 'knowledge' of Aurelius Victor). Moreover, the omission of *Numerianus* means that we would not have possessed the transition to the Tetrarchy—Diocletian's usurpation, the civil wars under the sons of Carus, and the establishment of the first Tetrarchy—and consequently the unlikely *termini* Dessauists imposed on these biographies.[280]

In general, the whims of fortune have in many cases been responsible for the works transmitted in ancient corpora, as they are responsible for the transmission of our existing classical works. The fact that an ancient author claims to have written more than what has been handed down to us does not make it a forgery, whether it belongs to a single author or a multi-author corpus. This issue with classical authors is also found in Velleius Paterculus, Plutarch, Suetonius, Tacitus, Pliny the Elder, and the Latin Panegyrics.

The long lacuna

It has been well known since the late humanist period that the corpus has a lacuna between *Maximus and Balbinus* (rr.*c.*238) and *Valerian* (r.253–260); the latter starts abruptly with a letter to King Sapur I in what appears to be the final chapters,[281] and *Gallienus* (r.253–268) has palpable textual corruption.[282] Biographies of Philip the Arab and his son (rr.244–249), Decius (r.249–251), Trebonianus Gallus (r.251–253),

[279] *H.*11.3; *AE.*1953.73.
[280] Chapter 4.
[281] It starts after Valerian's capture by the Persian King (*Val.*1–2; Hohl-SHA, pp.73–74).
[282] See reproductions below.

and Aemilianus (r.253) are not transmitted in this corpus. The controversy over the corpus has caused some Dessauists to claim that this lacuna is due to the 'criminal' intention of Dessau's forger—even though other Dessauists have also objected to this notion.[283]

We have already seen that both manuscript classes present a different unchronological order of the biographies. The lost hyperarchetype, at least of the Π class, had suffered physical damage, probably a misplacement of some of its sheets. This damage caused the misplacement of several paragraphs between *Severus Alexander,* the *Two Maximini*, and *Maximus and Balbinus*; a similar defect appears in Vopiscus' biographies.[284] Accordingly, we have no guarantee that the 'lost' biographies were actually in chronological order, whatever the reason for their 'loss'.[285] It is enough to glance at reproductions of P and B to see that their scribes indicated physical damage (and explanations for the lacuna) in the contiguous biographies. The transition between *Valerian* and *Gallienus* appears as follows in P (154r-v, 155v; notice also the correction attempts in 155v);

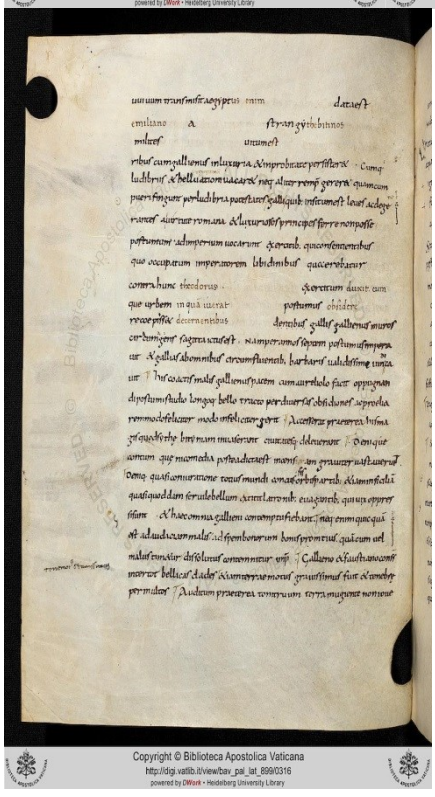
[283] The physical condition of the manuscripts in these sections had been acknowledged long ago by Peter 1884a:II, 72, 78–80, 82–83; Ballou 1914:Taf.III.1, 72–76; Hohl-SHA:II, 73, 77–83. The frivolous attempt to show that the lacuna is the intention of Dessau's forger (resulting from ignorance of the manuscript tradition) has again been refuted by Alan Cameron 2011a:841–842 (against Desbordes and Ratti 2000:xix–xxviii with many irrelevant references, following A. Birley in *HAC* 7 [1974], 55–62; even his mentor was not able to accept it: Syme 1971b:199–203).

[284] Richter 1850:25–29 had already noted the defects. Hohl 1913:263–265, 277–280, 394–395; Ballou 1914:40–44; Paschoud 2013:6–10

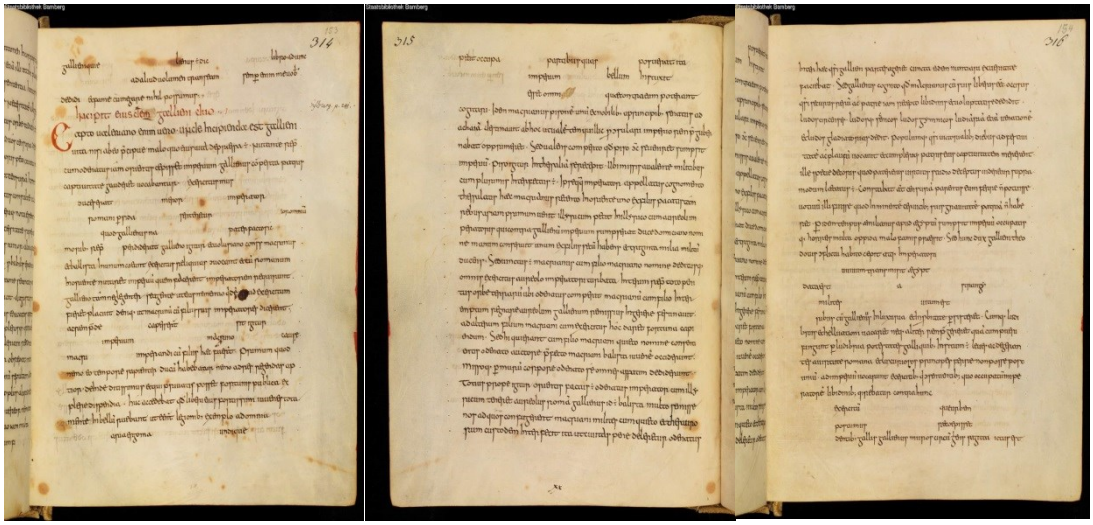
[285] Contra den Hengst 1981:77n.5, who assumes that the biographies were transmitted in their chronological order, and restates Birley 1976b about the lacuna (regurgitated in Birley 2003:132–133, 136).


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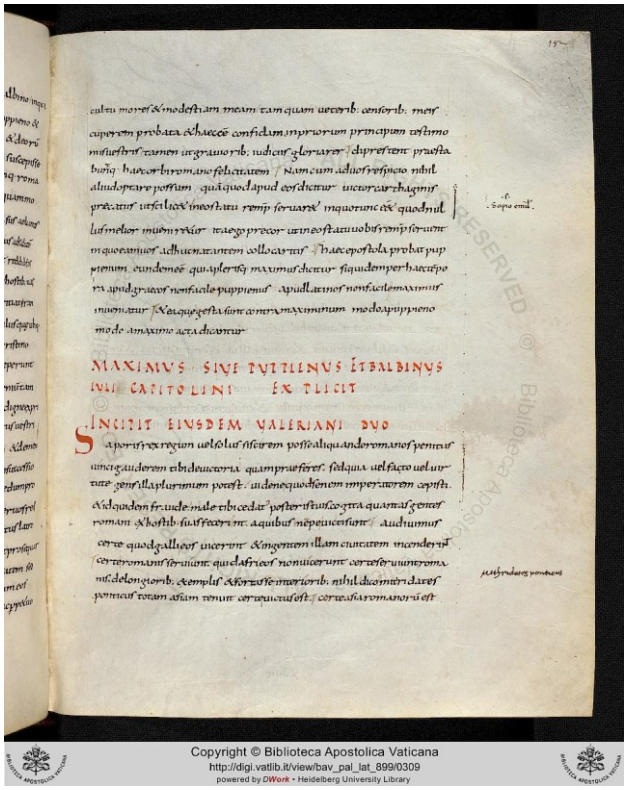
The transition in B appears as follows (153r-v, 154r):



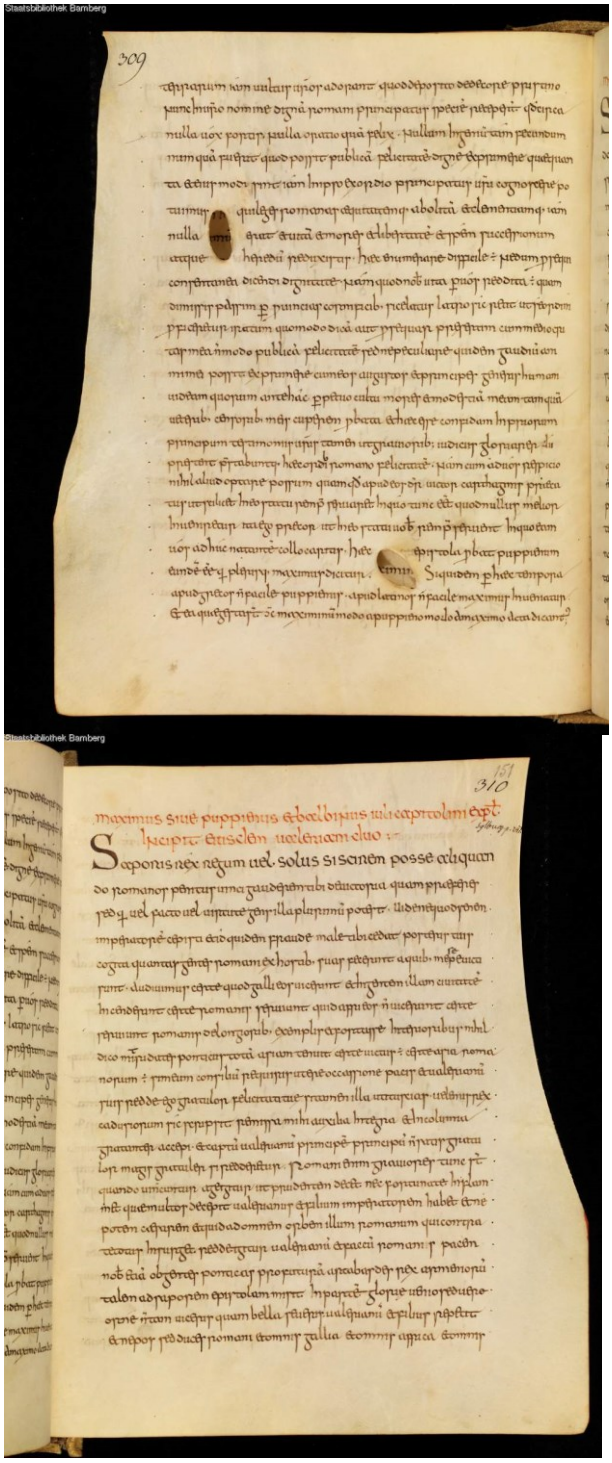
In short, both manuscripts indicate that their archetype was *physically* mutilated in some way, and both lack an explicit for *Valerian*. This adds to the unquestionable defects we find throughout the manuscript transmission. Nevertheless, on the lacuna some Dessauists assert that 'there are no frayed edges at the beginning or at the end of it' (as if we had the *Urtext* and a scroll of that), and then ascribe it to the craftiness of Dessau's alleged single forger.[286]

Even the beginning of *Valerian* shows some defect in the archetype. In Σ a medieval scribe or editor tried to 'straighten out' the lacuna, as we shall see. Meanwhile, the beginning of *Valerian* (1.1) in P (152r) appears as follows:

[286] den Hengst 1981:71. Birley 2003:136 cites him in agreement as part of his own reiteration of Birley 1976b, and claims den Hengst provides further support. Desbordes and Ratti 2000:xix–xxviii; Rohrbacher 2013:151 restates these points, and overlooks Ballou 1914:72–76; Syme 1971b:199–203; Alan Cameron 2011a:841–842.



There is clearly a generous space left by the scribe for the rubricator between these biographies, and even a single line separates the explicit of *Maximus and Balbinus* from the incipit of *Valerian*. This, again, could indicate some damaged text in the archetype. The 'stretch marks' and 'holes' in B perhaps provide the equivalent to the 'frayed edges' Dessauists claim to be missing from the corpus. The last two sheets of *Valerian* thus appear in it (150v-151r).



In 151r the paratexts of *Maximus and Balbinus* (explicit) and *Valerian* (incipit) are at the top of the sheet. This appears to explain the lack of space there is here compared to P.

However we look at the lacuna, we do not have as clean a transition between *Maximus and Balbinus*, *Valerian*, and *Gallienus* as we have between the other

biographies of the corpus. This consideration of the lacuna in the context of the physical state of the manuscripts shows how 'lower criticism' might help solve questions of historical 'higher criticism'. Considering that even some Dessauists found it hard to accept the lacuna as part of the forgery, and Cameron's recent historical argument against an intentionally forged lacuna, there appears to be no philological, textual, or historical basis to suppose that the lacuna has anything to do with ancient creators or authors of the corpus.[287]

The Σ class: a different recension?

Ernst Hohl, the last editor of a complete edition of the corpus, insisted on the independence of Σ from Π. The Latinist Klotz further augmented this thesis, despite his strong criticism of Hohl's editorial practice, which did not report the readings of Σ properly.[288] Hohl's view about the independence of Σ has received more attention than his thesis and conclusions about the genesis of the Σ group, or rather recension. This genesis-thesis, even if Σ depends on Π instead of a common hyperarchetype, allows a glimpse on the way ancient texts could be revised and interpolated during transmission, in a manner similar to *Corpus Aurelianum*, as I hope to demonstrate.

The different order of the biographies' authorial ascriptions in Σ; the fact that Σ does not have the misplaced passages between *Severus Alexander, Two Maximini*, and *Maximus and Balbinus* and the different paragraph order which it presents in *Marcus Aurelius* brought Hohl to conclude that Σ was a product of a medieval edition, or rather recension. This recension seems to have been based on an archetype, which was not later than that of Π (before the ninth century) and did not have the misplaced sheets.[289] Moreover, Hohl added three arguments in support of this group being an independent recension: (1) Σ handled freely the word order, grammatical usage of

[287] Alan Cameron 2011a:841–842. There may be intention behind this lacuna, but it has nothing to do with the alleged ancient 'mastermind'/forger behind the corpus. The intention *might* be similar to the famous lacuna in Zosimus' account of Diocletian, for which a medieval scribe is responsible.
[288] Hohl 1913:387–423; Klotz 1928; 1929. Hohl-SHA, *praefatio*.
[289] Hohl 1913:391–400; on these issues see above.

prepositions, conjunctions, and moods;[290] (2) Σ showed a more tolerant approach to passages dealing with paganism and polytheism, and did not have 'scars of that silly castration':[291] 'while the pagan statements fall victim to a "Christian revision" in P, they are fortunately maintained in Σ.'[292] Mehl has recently noted the possible 'medieval Christianisation' of this corpus.[293] One example from *Aurelian* (19.5; a speech of a *praetor urbanus*) should suffice.[294]

Audivimus litteras, quibus rogavit opem deorum, quae numquam cuiquam turpis est. vir fortissimus adiuvetur. Σ *Paschoud Hohl* We heard his letter, in which he [sc. Aurelian] asked for the help of the gods, which is never disgraceful to anyone. Let this most courageous man [i.e. Aurelian] be assisted.	*Audivimus litteras, quibus rogavit opem dei, ut vir fortissimus adiuvetur.* Π *Peter* We heard his letter, in which he asked the help of God, so that this most courageous man be assisted.

Such interventions in a transmitted text, as we can see in Π, seem to have been common in Carolingian times.[295] (3) Hohl's decisive argument noted the way Σ dealt with the lacuna. He did not, however, report on the state of the text at that point and only referred to an earlier (and partial) publication of it.[296] This issue therefore requires special attention.

The lacuna once more: medieval interpolations in Σ

It seems that in all the manuscripts of this class there is an attempt to 'straighten out' the damaged text at the beginning of *Gallienus* without adding much text;[297] and that the transition between *Maximus and Balbinus* and *Valerian* is filled with two

[290] Hohl 1913:408.
[291] 'Narbe dieser törichten Kastration' (Hohl 1913:391).
[292] Hohl 1913:390; a fact overlooked by those Dessauists who have tried to decide whether Dessau's forger, mainly on the basis of passages in Vopiscus' biographies (*Aurelian* to *Carinus*) was a Christian (Mundt 2001), an uncompromising pagan (Ratti 2010) or a Christian apostate (Paschoud 2003). A study on 'Religion in the HA' does not record a single variant of the manuscripts (Birley 1991).
[293] Mehl 2011:175.
[294] Paschoud's exegesis (1996:125–127) makes no clarifications on the issue.
[295] Hohl 1913:390 with n.4 (further references there).
[296] Hohl 1913:393–394, referring to the texts as printed separately in Peter-SHA, xxii.
[297] Hohl 1913:391–393; Desbordes and Ratti 2000:18–25 fudge the problematic passage in the lacuna; Hohl-SHA, II, pp.77–85 is more accurate for the lacuna.

paragraphs, the first of which is most probably an 'observation of the editor'.[298] Since these paragraphs were not included in Hohl's edition, and are therefore overlooked, printing them alongside short notes about their sources could assist the reader in understanding how a medieval 'editor' could interpolate an ancient text.

Σ has the following paragraphs after the last sentence of *Maximus and Balbinus* (18.2).[299] Some of the sentences seem to have parallels in Paul the Deacon (underlined).[300]

> 1.1 Hic ab hiis hystoriographis obmittuntur: duo Decii, qui de Pannonia Budalie antiquam originem traxerunt. Quorum antiquior multis dinitatibus claruit, vir industria militari strenuus. 1.2 Ambo Caesares appellati, sed prior a plerisque dictus est Augustus, qui Valerianum amicum habuit et prouexit. 1.3 Huius fraude Philippus imperator cum filio interfectus est quamuis diversis locis.
> 2.1 Hic etiam obmittuntur ab eisdem duo alii, qui post predictos imperium invaserunt, videlicet Gallus cum filio suo Volusiano, qui nichil memoriae reliquerunt. 2.2 Sub hiis Aemilianus in Moesia res novas molitus. Ad quem comprimendum cum ambo profecti essent, inter Danubium amnem interfecti sunt non completo biennio. 2.3 Sola pestilentia, morbo et egritudinibus eorum fuit cognitus principatus. Aemilianus obscurissime natus obscurius imperavit, si quidem Maurus fuerat ac tertio mense periit.

The two paragraphs refer to the omission of the emperors between the Decii and Valerian, but they say *nothing* about the exclusion of the two Philips from the corpus. As we saw earlier, Σ presents the biographies in a more accurate order for the biographies, and this might indicate that the originator of Σ might have had access to a lost index, which included their names. Gallus, his son, and Aemilianus,[301] it would seem, did not rule long enough or achieved anything memorable, so their complete biographies were never written in the first place (the corpus, at least, makes no

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[298] Hohl 1913:394.
[299] The following is a collation of the text of Peter-SHA, xxii (pub.1884) with D, Ch, v and *Laur.*66.32; my paragraph division.
[300] I looked for verbal parallel in Aurelius Victor, Eutropius, *EDC*, Orosius, Jordanes, Paul the Deacon, and *Historia miscella*.
[301] *PIR*^{2} A330, declared in Moesia; not to be confused with Aemilianus the usurper in Egypt (*PIR*^{2} M757)

statement about their biographies).[302] Thus, it appears that only the Decii were omitted from Σ's possible index.

The wording of the first paragraph, as far as I can tell, has no parallel in the extant Latin sources for the period covered. The editorial comment 'ab hystriographis' might appear to be influenced by *Gordians* (21.4). The elevation of the Decii to the rank of Caesares (and only of the senior to Augustus) appears to have no clear parallel. Pannonia at 1.1 only appears in Eutropius and the *Historia miscella* has 'Pannonia inferior', but this could have been added by a geographically informed interpolator. The second paragraph, with the exception of the 'editorial' note in 2.1, is an almost exact parallel to Paul the Deacon's *Roman History* (eighth century). Hence the 'common opinion' that the passage in Σ is an interpolation from Pauls' *History*, which distinguishes this group of manuscripts.[303]

After the incipit of *Valerian*, Σ contains the following paragraphs; some of the last sentences seem to have parallels in Orosius (underlined):

> 1a.1 Inter haec, Valerianus in Raetia existens ab exercitu Augustus est appellatus volente populo ac senatu gaudente. 1a.2 Fuit enim vir nobilis, scientia et eloquentia clarus, qui per multas dignitates ac officia rem p. nobilissime administravit. Fuit enim praetor insignis, censor equissimus. 1a.3 Post adeptum principatum in dispositione ducum et magistratuum nemo iustior, nemo melior. Quo tempore Romae Gallienus filius eius a populo Caesar est appelatus. 1b.1 Valerianus igitur cum ingenti exercitu profectionem paravit in Persas, relicto, ut plerique asserunt, Romae filio Gallieno. 1b.2 Denique Valerianus regnum Persarum potenter invadens incauto suorum ductu <u>a sapore persarum rege captus</u> est. <u>1b.3 Imperator populi Romani ignominiosa apud Persas servitute consenuit ac infamis officii donec vixit dampnationem sortitus, ut ipse acculiuis humi regem semper ascensurum in equum non manu sed dorso attoleret.</u>

Here again the first paragraph appears to have no parallel in the extant Latin sources (1a). The second paragraph is an almost exact parallel to Orosius' *History* (1b.2-b.3≅7.22.4). Hence the conclusion that 'our redactor [of Σ] sticks closely to Orosius

[302] Not even in *A*.2.1, which does mention the two Philips.
[303] As suggested by Hohl 1913:399; Callu 1992:xcix–ci.

for the captivity of Valerian.'[304] This is the interpretation of Hohl, who consistently held that the corpus was published no later than June 363; Dessauists maintain his view about the interpolation, irrespective of their exact putative dating after that date but before 410.[305] Nevertheless, the difficult question of Orosius' unknown source for Valerian's captivity complicates things further, as we shall see.

The medieval redactor and interpolator

The three reasons examined above brought Hohl to the conclusion that Σ was a medieval recension stemming from a redactor or editor. The terms he used were 'der Redaktor von Σ', 'der mitterlaterliche Herausgeber der Σ-Klasse', 'eine Art von redaktionellem Eingriff desselben Mannes', and so forth.[306] Hohl concluded that the redaction of Σ took place no later than the beginning of the fourteenth century, and after the second half of the eighth century, the publication of Paul the Deacon's *Roman History*.[307] He characterized the creator of Σ as follows.

> It must be acknowledged that the 'Herasugegeber' read the HA not without appreciation and with devoted enthusiasm… he devoted special attention to Marcus Aurelius, the philosopher on the throne: he called him in the superscription *Augustus verissimus,* and so he made up his mind to *bring order* to his biography.[308]

Hohl is referring here to the recasting of the paratext, which also does not include an authorial ascription, as well as to the omission of paragraphs 5.6–9.5 and the rearrangement of 15.1–29.10 according to chronological order in *Marcus Aurelius*.[309] Hohl then moved to possible characterization: 'our learned Monk was not a fanatic', and the completeness of the biographical collection was important to him, in order to allow him tolerance towards paganism. According to Hohl: 'had it been up to him, we would have perhaps had a complete HA without the lacuna between *MB* and *Val.*'[310]

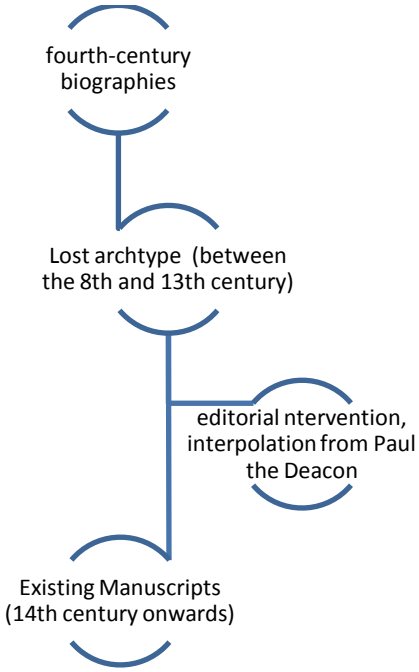
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[304] Hohl 1913:393n.7.
[305] Desbordes and Ratti 2000:xvi–xviii.
[306] 1913:392–394, 399–400 (with or without scare quotes).
[307] 1913:399.
[308] 1913:400.
[309] A recent commentary and reprint of Hohl's text overlooks these facts (G. W. Adams 2012).
[310] Hohl 1913:400.

Hohl thus implied that the cause of the lacuna is similar to that of the lacuna in Zosimus' account of Diocletian: a zealous Christian copyist in the middle ages.

Conclusion

The genesis of the Σ recension, according to Hohl and his followers, is as follows:



In sum, these were readers, copyists, and a redactor who were responsible for Σ and the terrible state of the corpus in general. This is a sober and important conclusion, which cannot be easily dismissed, especially when it comes from Hohl, the 'champion of Dessau'.[311] In fact it further supports the thesis of Wölfflin (one of Dessau's uncompromising critics) on the influence of a redactor, rather than an editor, and copyists on the formation of the corpus. Dessau deprecated this reasonable thesis: 'according to Wölfflin, redactor, copyists and readers took a hand in the shape of the biographies… to a degree, which is only manifested in a few works of antiquity.'[312] Fortunately subsequent scholars acknowledged Hohl's 'return' to Wölfflin's thesis,[313] and the Σ-recension appears to demonstrate Wölfflin's point quite well, irrespective of the possible date of the 'HA' in the fourth century. It remains unclear, however,

[311] As Syme 1983:234 thought.
[312] Dessau 1892:599 on Wölfflin 1892. See pp.134ff. below.
[313] Diehl 1913:2062; Sehlmeyer 2005:71.

why the Σ-redactor chose Paul the Deacon for the first paragraph and Orosius for the second, if he were as tolerant towards paganism as Hohl argues. For this reason, apparently, the Orosius-interpolation does not include Orosius' claim that Valerian's persecution was the cause for his captivity. Both passages contain unparalleled information, however, which cannot be corroborated elsewhere: (1) the elevation of the Decii to the rank of Caesares and only one of them to that of Augustus; (2) Valerian's praetorship, which is as problematic as his censorship reported later in the biography.[314] Moreover, Orosius' description of Valerian's captivity derives from an unrecognized source, unlike his other plagiarized passages.[315]

These issues might perhaps suggest that the interpolation comes from a medieval text that combined these three elements, or that the 'addition' in Valerian is a different issue—but in the meantime, one has to admit, like Simple Simon, that we do not have a penny.[316] A methodological comparison might be more revealing, especially with regard to the possible time of composition of this biographical corpus.

A methodological comparison: Corpus Aurelianum and Origo Constantini

Corpus Aurelianum (contaminatum)

The so-called *Origo Gentis Romanae* ('History of the Roman People'), or its current name *Corpus Aurelianum*,[317] is probably a fourth-century compilation made several years after the publication of *de Caesaribus* (*Caesares*) conventionally attributed to Aurelius Victor, even though some scholars maintain a possible compilation between the sixth century (Cassiodorus) and the eleventh century. This tripartite work contains three parts: OGR (*Origo Gentis Romanae*), DVI (*De Viris Illustribus*), and

[314] Respectively: Interpolation 1.2, *Val.*1a.2 (*Val.*5–6). On the censorship and its relevance under Constantine, see Momigliano 1966:168.
[315] Zangemeister's *editio maior* classified Orosius' paragraph thus (ad loc.).
[316] Prof. Burgess of Ottowa, with whom I consulted about this issue, has suggested that I publish a critical edition of these neglected texts with a commentary. This involves identifying Orosius' sources for the period and the afterlife of the 'HA' in medieval epitomes and authors, which goes beyond the scope of this study.
[317] See pp.32ff. above.

Caesares of *c.*360. The first two have clearly been interpolated long after their dates of composition in the fourth century.[318]

This corpus is currently available in only two *humanistic* manuscripts of the *fifteenth* century: Oxford, Bodl. Canon. Class. Lat. 131 (o), copied in Italy *c.*1450–1455, and Brussels 9755–63 (p), copied *c.*1475–1500. The *Oxoniensis* is acknowledged as an earlier and more reliable witness to the lost archetype common to these two manuscripts. Unfortunately, this manuscript was only discovered late in the nineteenth century, and Pichlmayr published critical editions of *de Caesaribus* and the entire *Corpus Aurelianum* based on it in 1892 and 1911 respectively. Although Pichlmayr's edition 'has a very inaccurate apparatus' and other deficiencies,[319] this edition improved scholars' understanding of the works included in *Corpus Aurelianum*, and in the specific case of *Caesares* avoided the humanistic practice of correcting passages in this work on the basis of 'SHA' or vice versa.[320] The next section will demonstrate the far-reaching implications of these modern editorial practices on the modern understanding of our biographical corpus.

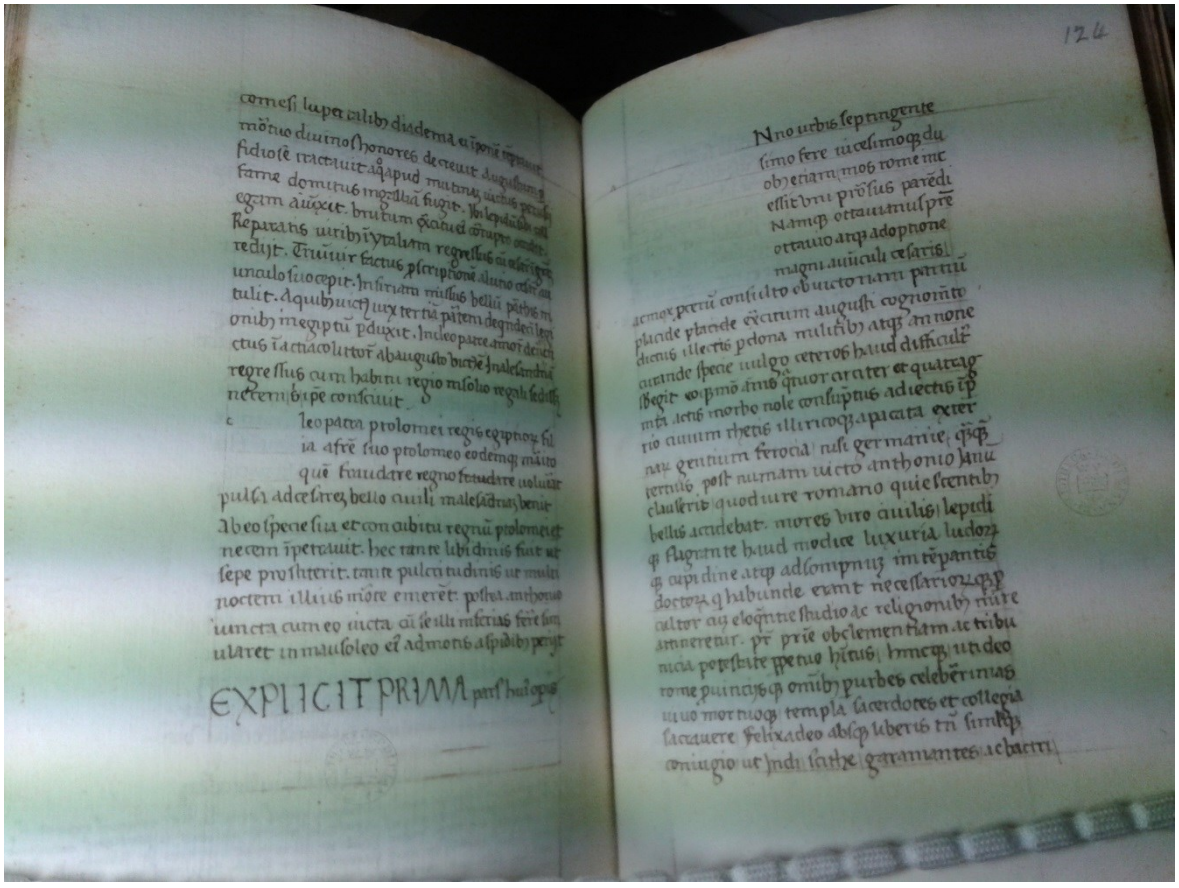
OGR and DVI are fourth-century works (written either shortly before or shortly after *Caesares*). These works were redacted, interpolated, and revised both when they were incorporated into the corpus and afterwards, i.e. between the fourth and fifteenth centuries.[321] The creator (whether editor or redactor) of this tripartite corpus is not identical with the interpolator.[322]

DVI is preserved in two recensions: A, transmitted in *Corpus Aurelianum*, and B transmitted independently in several manuscripts outside the corpus. The A-recension contains lacunas, intentional omissions, and additions compared to B. A

[318] Summaries in Dufraigne 1975:vii–viii; Sehlmeyer 2004:16–22. The latter accepts Momigliano's view about its dating, and provides an introduction to the issues of *Corpus Aurelianum* in general (7–27).
[319] *T&T*, 152 and n.22.
[320] Rühl 1912.
[321] *T&T*, 149–153.
[322] Momigliano 1958:157.

appears to have interpolations from Eutropius, Orosius, Paul the Deacon, and/or Landolphus Sagax's *Historia Miscella*. At least three passages are certainly taken from the latter (the parallels with the first three are still disputed).[323] This suggests at least that the interpolator was either active after the eleventh century—as Sagax's *Historia Miscella* was published *c.*1050—or was Sagax himself.[324]

The A-recension omits the first chapter of DVI of the B-recension, but contains a short 'editorial' note by the ancient redactor that connects it to the narrative of OGR, which precedes it, in order to amalgamate the two works as the 'first part' of *Corpus Aurelianum*. This editorial note is ascribed to the late antique editor.[325] The explicit of DVI, followed by *Caesares*, clearly mentions OGR and DVI as the 'first part', as the transition in *Oxoniensis* shows (123v–124r).



[323] Momigliano 1958:152–154 (with a list of passages); Sehlmeyer 2004:19–20.
[324] Momigliano 1958; cf. Sehlmeyer 2004.
[325] Momigliano 1958; Sehlmeyer 2004.

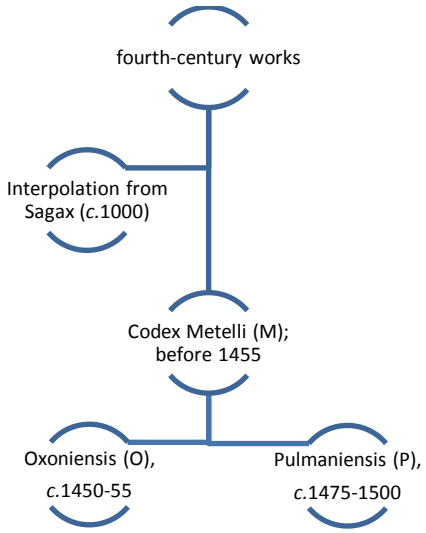
Victor's name is not mentioned before the first sentence of *Caesares*, and the first letter is missing, because it was supposed to be an ornamented drop cap. Hence we have a missing incipit and an ascription problem with the *Caesares*. Aurelius Victor was eventually ascribed with the authorship of the entire corpus (reported dozens of sheets before 'his' *Caesares*), and the authorship of the *Caesares*, transmitted only in *Corpus Aurelianum* as the 'pars secunda', still remains questionable in modern research.[326]

OGR might have been an extract from a longer text and it seems to have gone through several revisions before it was incorporated into this corpus, and there is an obvious lacuna in this text. The compiler of *Corpus Aurelianum* and the author of OGR refer to the many sources used in this work, which cannot always be identified and might in some cases be reported inaccurately.[327] This and the other difficulties surrounding it had brought Barthold Niebuhr to brand the work a forgery in the nineteenth century, and this verdict 'remained influential until the first part of the twentieth century', according to Sehlmeyer's recent contribution.[328] Indeed it was Momigliano's common sense that shifted the scholarly paradigm regarding OGR and *Corpus Aurelianum*; *inter alia* he stated: 'we do not expect scholarly precision in the references of the "Origo" to its authorities; and lack of scholarly precision need not imply forgery.'[329]

In short, it seems that after Momigliano's magisterial article on *Corpus Aurelianum* there is a broad consensus to accept the difficulties of authorial ascriptions, peculiarities, and imperfections of the corpus, alongside the presence of an ancient editor, redactors, copyists, and even a medieval interpolator, but without rejecting the fourth-century context and origin of the works transmitted in the corpus. Its genesis is conventionally illustrated as follows:[330]

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[326] Pp.90ff. below.
[327] Momigliano 1958:165–170.
[328] 2004:7.
[329] Momigliano 1958:169.
[330] Diagram based on P. L. Schmidt 1978:1601; Sehlmeyer 2004:22.



This process is quite similar to that of the formation of the Σ-recension of 'SHA', as we have seen. In neither of these cases, however, would any sensible modern scholar suppose an eleventh-century or later forgery.

Origo Constantini and Orosius

A similar difficulty can be found in the *Origo Constantini* transmitted in the *Excerpta Valesiana* together with the *Theodericiana* (a narrative of mainly Italian events, 476–526). On any dating between 337 and *c.*395, this *Origo* contains verbatim parallels with Orosius' *History*, composed after 417.[331] No scholar, to my knowledge, has tried to date this *Origo* beyond the death of Theodosius (395), even though this text is transmitted in a corpus whose last event is the death of Theoderic the Great (526). There appears to be a general agreement that 'a redactor working after 417… interpolated passages from Orosius' into an early fourth-century text—a point made by Elimar Klebs, one of Dessau's most vocal critics in *HA-Forschung*.[332]

Methodological conclusion and Aurelius Victor's text(s)

Redaction and interpolation of ancient texts with other texts subsequent to their publication has nothing to do with their dating. This discussion calls into question

[331] Lieu 1996:40–42 (e.g. *Origo* 20, 33–34<Oros. 7.28.18, 28.1, 28.29–31).
[332] Barnes 1989:161 (cited); König 1987:26–27; Lieu 1996:40. In essence they all follow Klebs 1889b.

whether exact parallels between texts (not allusions or intertextual links), which are most reasonably explained as interpolations, can be taken as a definitive support for dating an entire work or corpora of works beyond their stated date of composition, and consequently as 'forgeries'.

Our investigation also brings up the question whether the 'current' *Caesares*, conventionally attributed to Victor, was contaminated in any way by Sagax, the fourth-century redactor, or the early modern copyists as the other works transmitted in *Corpus Aurelianum*. Moreover, up until late in the nineteenth century scholars were willing to debate whether Aurelius Victor had written the *Caesares* (*c.*360) or *epitome de Caesaribus* (*c.*395; transmitted in a tradition separate from *Corpus Aurelianum*, but ascribed to Aurelius Victor).[333] Some even suggested that we did not possess the *UrVictor* but two separate adaptations of Victor (*Caesares* and *epitome*), and that the *epitome de Caesaribus* was a continuation of Victor. As late as 1986 Tarrant and Reeve stated that the *Caesares* transmitted in *Corpus Aurelianum* 'may of course be either the original or an adaptation by the compiler' of this corpus.[334] The father of the postulated *EKG*, Alexander Enmann, rejected these views, however, and thought he could explain the evidence with his lost and anonymous *Kaisergeschichte* together with an anonymous continuator.[335] As a result, none of these developments are considered in *HA-Forschung* or recent studies on fourth-century *breviaria*.[336] The state of research *c.*1880 and *c.*1986 is illustrated as follows.

[333] P. L. Schmidt 1978.
[334] *T&T*, 149n.3. Summary of views earlier than Enmann and Dessau in Opitz 1872:205–206, 210–211, 216; Enmann 1884:396–399.
[335]Enmann 1884:399–407.
[336] On 'SHA' and 'Victor': pp.92ff. below and for instance Bird 1984; Bird 1994:xi–xxii; Rohrbacher 2002:42–48; Burgess 2011.

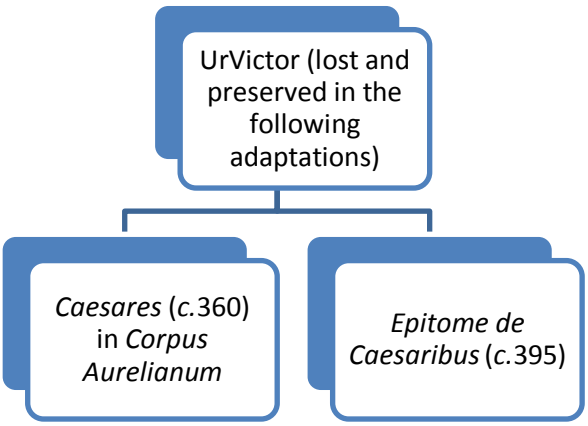


Figure 2. The non-Enmann tradition.

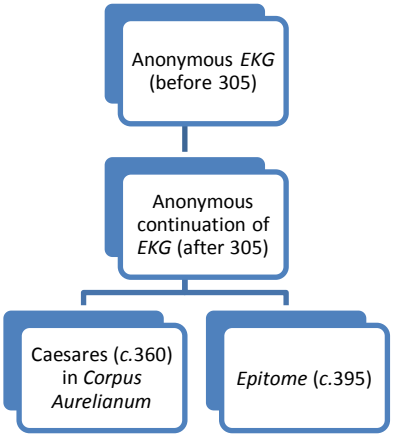


Figure 3. The Enmann tradition.

With these considerations in mind, we can discuss the alleged correspondence between the *Life of Severus* and Victor's (?) *Caesares* of *c.*360, to which Dessauists have attributed much weight.

The 'SHA', 'Aurelius Victor', and lost common sources: interpolation and a new terminus ante?

The claim that Dessau has 'proved' that a section in the *Life of Severus* (17–19) depends verbatim on Victor's *Caesares* (20) has become an integral part of the customary appeal to Dessau,and the starting point of further speculations for most scholars, especially since Momigliano noted that this *could* have been a compelling argument, but was in fact inconclusive.[337] Moreover, Dessau himself found dissimilarities between the passages, which were difficult to explain as *Severus*

[337] Momigliano 1966:152–153.

'copying' from Victor,[338] and he explicitly admitted that he *presupposed* the corpus was written in the second half of the fourth century when he explained the interrelation between the passages noted by earlier scholars, although he did *not* rule out completely the possibility of a common source.[339] Dessau thus created a circular argument, and modern Dessauists have simply restated his 'demonstration': 'the only secure terminus post quem for the HA, the use of Aurelius Victor (361).'[340]

More recently some Dessauists have propounded a common-source theory for this correspondence, without seeing its position in the debate and the broader implications on *HA-Forschung* and the validity of Dessau's hypothesis:[341] they still use Dessau 1889 as the starting point for further speculations.[342]

Both before and after Dessau many scholars provided plausible arguments in support of a common source, rather than direct dependence of *Severus* on Victor or vice versa, which was also suggested. Most notably, the father of the '*Kaisergeschchite*', the oft-quoted Alexander Enmann, had suggested that the correspondence goes back to a *common source*: whether his 'lost' KG, a biography of Severus, or Marius Maximus.[343]

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[338] Dessau 1889:365–367. His arguments about other possible correspondences, as with the two Gordians, are less compelling, as he himself admitted (366, 372–373).

[339] Dessau 1889:361, 372: 'there remains the possibility that the *Scriptores* used the *Vorlage* of Victor'; but immediately said that 'they *could have interpolated* a slightly modified passage… from Victor' (ibid.). As den Hengst 2010:181–182 notes, Dessau's formulation was intentionally left vague on these matters (see pp.137ff. below).

[340] Alan Cameron 2011b:759, 743 (referring only to the *Severus*-Victor passages), following Hohl 1955:228; Hohl 1958:148–149 (but Alan Cameron 1964:374n.5 contra Hohl). Same point in (s.v. 'HA'): *OCD*[3=4], *BNP*; Birley 2003:137–139; Alan Cameron 2011a:842; Johnston 2013:3249; Cornell 2013:76. And earlier overstatements (without citing the passages): Syme 1968:106–107; Birley 1976a:12, 217n.51; Chastagnol-HA:lxvi–lxviii, 330n.4; Paschoud 1996:xv; Barnes 2000:307.

[341] Chausson 1997; Rohrbacher 2013:150 (citing Chausson with agreement, while overlooking the Paschoud-Lippold debate). Paschoud also refuted Chastagnol's alleged parallels between Victor and the 'SHA' by demonstrating that they derive from a common source (*EKG*; as in Paschoud 1996:xxxix–xli, *passim*). Paschoud still refused to reconsider the Dessauist dogma, according Lippold 1999:161; Birley 2003 overlooks Paschoud's criticism of Chastagnol.

[342] Paschoud 1996:xii; Chausson 1997:97; Rohrbacher 2013:146, and those in n.340 above.

[343] Common source: Enmann 1884:364–370, 396, 440–441; Vermaat 1893:41–48; Peter 1892:94–98; Lécrivain 1904:42, 428–436; Rühl 1912:156–162 (against Leo 1901). Notice Klebs 1890:440–446 against Mommsen 1890:228, 273–274. Victor's sporadic use of 'SHA': Opitz 1872:229–254; Vermaat 1893:30 (both refer to earlier literature). Chausson 1997 and Rohrbacher 2013 ignore these publications.

Groß-Albenhausen, in a recent commentary on Victor's *Caesares*, also noted the possible use Victor made of 'SHA'.[344]

Moreover, early modern editors of the 'SHA' even tried to correct and supplement the passage in *Severus* by Victor—a practice that Rühl justifiably castigated by noting: 'Salmasius has caused a great confusion here, which has had repercussions up to the present day. He had an interpolate text of Spartianus in front of him' and tried to supplement it with Victor.[345] The supplement was made from the defective tradition of the *Bruxellensis* manuscript of *Corpus Aurelianum* (and hence Victor), and a reasonable edition of *Corpus Aurelianum* was only published in 1911.[346] This situation seems to explain the shaky foundation of Dessau's argument when it is tested with 'modern' critical editions.

There is, therefore, no point in registering all the arguments regarding this correspondence, but since Momigliano's account of Dessau has been misrepresented as an acceptance of Dessau's argument, which is in turn misrepresented as 'conclusive'; and since Momigliano's remark on this correspondence had a lasting impact on *HA-Forschung*, his remarks on the *Severus*-Victor passage will be cited, and his assumptions tested:

> If the HA utilized Aurelius Victor, it must have been written after 360 and therefore was not compiled under Diocletian and Constantine, as it purported to be. Unfortunately, things are not so simple… (1) In other cases the HA and Aurelius Victor undoubtedly depend on a common source. (2) We are simply not in a position to compare the HA and Aurelius Victor with this common source because the common source has not survived… the present state of the evidence does not allow us to form an opinion with full knowledge of the facts.[347]

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[344] Groß-Albenhausen and Fuhrmann 2009:157–159.
[345] Rühl 1912:157–158. On Victor's manuscripts see pp.86ff. above.
[346] I have the impression that the discrepancy between Dessau and subsequent scholars who read the two passages in better critical editions is as follows: the superior Oxford manuscript of *Corpus Aurelianum* was first acknowledged and inaccurately collated by Cohn 1884:70–104, and Haverfield 1886 noted some of Cohn's deficiencies. Even though these developments antedate 1889, only in 1892 did Pichlmayr publish a reasonable critical edition of Victor, based on the two surviving manuscripts in a *Programma* of a Munich Gymnasium. He later published the 'current' Teubner text of *Corpus Aurelianum* in 1911 (republished with corrections in 1960 and 1970; Pichlmayr 1970:xxiii–xiv).
[347] Momigliano 1966:153, referring to the *Severus*-Victor passages (ibid.).

This shows Momigliano's characteristically sensible 'attention to the traps' and 'grip on reality'.[348] It duly shows that the passages in question have no probative force. Nevertheless, it misconceives the debate. Firstly, this common source, or rather sources, might have been no other than the *EKG* or Marius Maximus, both favoured by modern Dessauists.[349] Secondly, he falls into the common trap of generalizing on the whole 'HA' on the basis of a given biography or a given passage, as if it were a unitary work and as if ancient works were never interpolated during their transmission. At most, this *might* amount to an interpolation in the *Severus* only, had Dessauists proved their case. Thirdly, Momigliano did not explore the possibility of cross-contamination or interpolation in either direction (say, by later scribes)—as we have seen, this is a common phenomenon in classical texts. In fact, interpolation of *Severus* with Victor was Mommsen's view in 1890.[350] Fourthly, Momigliano, following Dessau, simply *assumed* that 'the derivation of Aurelius Victor from the HA is made extremely unlikely by the general method of composition of Aurelius Victor.' This was based on Dessau's assumption that Victor, in case we do have his original work, never followed earlier extant sources, such as Suetonius, verbatim.[351]

Suetonius and Victor

Reading through the two passages shows that in most cases the parallels are not as striking as subsequent Dessauists have alleged, and that there are in fact more striking parallels between Suetonius and Victor. For instance, let us consider the verbal correspondence between Vitellius and Victor on the actions of Vitellius after his early defeat.[352]

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[348] Finley 1987:81.

[349] The contradiction between the postulated *(Ur)kaisergeschichte* of Enmann (not what modern scholars impute to Enmann; e.g. Paschoud 1996:10–12; Burgess 2011:IV–VII) and Dessau was noted by Peter 1894:124, Rühl 1912:158 and Lippold 1998:20: 'against Barnes' who thinks (e.g. 1970a:15) that it was accepted by Dessau and that 'the controversy over the HA is irrelevant to its [sc. the EKG] existence.' Lippold 2006:358 clearly expressed Enmann's misrepresentation. Even Chausson 1997, who suggests that 'le passage en question dérivait de l'*EKG* plutôt que d'Aurélius Victor', thinks that Enmann established the '*EKG*' on the basis of 'similitudes entre Aurélius Victor et Eutrope' (98).

[350] Mommsen 1890:228, 273–274; see pp.86ff. above.

[351] Momigliano 1966:153; Stern 1953:21–22. Both restate Dessau 1889:362–363.

[352] Such similarities between Suetonius and the fourth-century *Breviaria* were listed in Ihm 1907.

*Vit.*15 .2	Victor 8.5
Salutem sibi et milies sestertium a Flavio Sabino Vespasiani fratre pepigit; statimque pro gradibus Palati apud frequentes milites, cedere se imperio… professus He settled with Flavius Sabinus, Vespasian's brother, for his safety and 100 million sesterces; he immediately declared, on the steps of the palace before an assembly of soldiers, that he was abdicating.	*Vitellius ab Sabino urbi praefecto, Vespasiani fratre, sestertium milies pepigerat arbitris militibus imperio decedere* Vitellius settled with Sabinus, the Urban Prefect and Vespesian's brother, for 100 million sesterces, and abdicated before the soldiers who witnessed it.

The verbal similarities are so strong that Victor seems to reproduce Suetonius.[353] One could say, however, that Victor has 'urbi praefecto', which is not in Suetonius; or that Suetonius has 'statimque pro gradibus' not in Victor, and then postulate a common source. If Suetonius was one of the *scriptores* of the *HA*, as at least some manuscript tradition makes him, he would presumably have been accused of 'excerpting' Victor or combining Victor with a common source.[354] This is far from being the case, and the reasonable explanation is that Victor made direct use of Suetonius and added 'urbi praefecto' perhaps because of his link to this office as well.

Victor and the *Life of Severus*: common source(s) and common sense

We can now compare this verbal similarity with the first paragraph of the alleged parallel between *Severus* and Victor's *Caesares*.

S.17.5	Victor 20.1
Et quoniam longum est minora persequi, huius magnifica illa, quod victo et occiso Iuliano praetorianas cohortes exauctoravit, Pertinacem contra voluntatem militum in deos rettulit, Salvii Iuliani decreta iussit aboleri; quod non optinuit.	*Igitur Septimius, Pertinacis nece, simul flagitiorum odio, dolore atque ira commotior cohortes praetorias statim militia exemit cunctisque partium caesis Helvium senatusconsulto inter divos refert; Salvii nomen atque eius scripta factave aboleri iubet; quod unum effici nequivit.*

The passages are less similar than those we have just seen of Suetonius and Victor on Vitellius, both in content and in wording. The only *verbal* similarities are in the

[353] Dessau claimed that Victor (and Eutropius) never copied Suetonius verbatim or slavishly.
[354] Dessau used similar arguments to establish his case; and similar arguments are still being used to establish the existence of *EKG*, or the knowledge the 'SHA' shows of the *Breviaria* of the fourth century (e.g. Burgess 2011:*passim*).

reference to the praetorian cohorts, their descriptive adjective is *not* the same (*praetorianae* vs. *praetorias*), and the phrase *iubere aboleri* is used in different tenses and a different word order. The cognomen of the emperor Pertinax is used in two different contexts: in *Severus* for his deification, in Victor for his death. Even the only similar verb *referre* does not have the same usage: *in deos* in Severus, and *inter divos* in Victor. In comparison *pangere* has almost identical usage in Suetonius and Victor: *a/ab Sabino… Vespasiani fratre pangere*.

The *content* of the passages does not seem to indicate direct dependence either: (1) *Severus* states that Septimius deified Pertinax 'against the will of the soldiers' whereas Victor states that he achieved that through a *senatus consultum*.[355] Neither of the passages seems to copy the other 'verbatim' as Dessauists have suggested. In fact, the two passages seem to supplement each other so as to suggest that they might have truncated a common source or tradition independently. This *common source* might have had something similar to 'Severus deified Pertinax through a *senatus consultum* and against the wishes of the soldiers.' (2) Victor does *not* refer to the defeat and death of Didius Iulianus. (3) *Severus* refers to the attempt to abolish the decrees of a certain Salvius Iulianus, Victor refers to a *damnatio memoriae* of a certain Salvius, and abolition of this Salvius' literary works, as Victor's subsequent digression on literary figures suggests.[356] (4) In *Severus*, the general formulation and the reference to decrees (rather than *damnatio* and literary works in Victor), which are *not* linked to the victory over Didius Iulianus, suggest that *Severus* refers to a person who is *not* the conquered Didius Iulianus. As Rühl had noted, the reference to *Salvius* Iulianus is an attempt to alert the readers that Salvius and Didius are *different* 'Iuliani'.[357] Moreover, *Didius*, apparently by the same Speratianus, states that *the senate* removed Didius from power. So the failed attempt to abolish the decrees of

[355] With Rühl 1912:159; contra Dessau 1889:159.
[356] 20.2–5.
[357] Rühl 1912:161; contra Syme 1968:105–107 who ignored him.

Salvius shows that Speratianus did not confuse the two:[358] he is 'free from an error that Victor personally caused'.[359]

Speratianus' statement therefore seems to provide a possible explanation for the confusion that later epitomizers made between the two. *Severus*, or its source,[360] was the first text to juxtapose the defeat of Didius Iulianus with Severus' attempt to abolish the decrees of Salvius Iulianus, the proconsul of Africa who tried Severus in 168–169.[361] The confusion of the two Iuliani in Victor's previous account of Didius and in Eutropius was a natural development.[362]

However we look at them, the two texts are reporting significantly different narratives and do not follow each other slavishly. This is the degree of similarities one finds between the subsequent paragraphs of the two passages. After reading them with Victor's use of Suetonius in mind, it seems to me that in *most* cases a *direct* link between the passages cannot be proved. As a Dessauist noted on his own attempt to find even more far-fetched and non-existent parallels between the biographical corpus and another late fourth-century author: 'confrontation of the two passages fails to convince', and 'the case is not quite proved.' But he later claimed these far-fetched parallels as decisive proofs;[363] Momigliano later criticized this practice, and demonstrated that 'the case is not proved at all'.[364] Three recent contributions to *HA-Forschung* have independently reached Momigliano's conclusion.[365]

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[358] *DJ*.8.7; Rühl 1912:ibid.
[359] Klebs 1890:445.
[360] Chausson 1997:105 with n.7.
[361] *S*.2.1; cf. Birley 1988:45–46 (but with my reservations above).
[362] Eutropius 8.17; Victor 19.1–20.1: 'Didius (an Salvius?) Iulianus'. The words in brackets are a gloss (Rühl 1912:160n.1; Alan Cameron 1965c:21). Cameron's view on this issue (ibid.) is quite close to this suggestion, and I do not reject it out of hand: Eutropius could be following 'HA'. The 'HA' therefore is not 'misled by Aurelius Victor' (Birley 1988:45), but probably caused the confusion in the later accounts.
[363] Syme 1968:26, 29. For instance, as if it were a proven fact that the *Hadrian* had shown knowledge of Ammianus, rather than the other way around (69–72≠74), even though an intertextual link does not exist there. The usual Dessauist treatment of the *Severus*-Victor parallel seems to manifest the same scholarly practice.
[364] Momigliano 1975:96, and *passim*.
[365] Lippold 1991:122–135; Alan Cameron 2011b:747–750; Cornell 2013:76, 79.

As we noted earlier, the confusion between Didius Iulianus and his relative Salvius Iulianus could belong either to Victor's misunderstanding of *Severus* or to its source. In one paragraph Victor provides several explanations as to why Severus was given the cognomen 'Pertinax'. Victor ascribes the explanations to an earlier tradition, by stating 'many think'. In *Severus* we find only this view in a completely different wording.

S.17.6–7	Victor 20.10–11
Denique cognomentum Pertinacis non tam ex sua voluntate quam ex morum parsimonia videtur habuisse. Then he appears to have had the cognomen of Pertinax not out of his own wishes, but because of his parsimonious nature.	*Horum infinita caede crudelior habitus et cognomento Pertinax, quamquam ob vitae parsimoniam similem ipsum magis ascivisse plures putent: nobis mens ad credendum prona acerbitati impositum.* Because of the ceaseless slaughter of those mentioned, he was considered rather cruel and [obtained] 'unyielding' (Pertinax) as his cognomen; even though many would think that it was rather because he himself adopted a similar parsimony in life. We are inclined to believe that the cognomen was imposed on him because of extreme harshness.[366]

Again, these passages do not manifest verbatim parallels that indicate that one passage is slavishly copying the other. Only 'caede crudelior habitus' appear in the same order, but in different contexts: in *Severus* this is just a statement of fact, in Victor this is *one* of three explanations for Severus' cognomen.

The relation between the passages appears to be more revealing than has traditionally been assumed. The concessive clause in Victor (*quamquam*) in fact reports the version provided in *Severus*, alongside other versions. This in itself suggests that Victor had more than one source in mind.

Common sense would suggest that Victor's 'many would think' refers either to SHA's *Severus* or the tradition reported in it, but common sense (as Alan Cameron has

[366] Rühl 1912:157–158 noted on this passage: 'es zum Teil unmöglich ist, richtig zu verstehen.' Hence the attempt to translate this passage.

observed) is not part of *HA-Forschung*.[367] It would appear that Victor's *Caesares* (*c.*360) might be providing either a *terminus ante* for the biographical corpus, or simply used one of its sources, irrespective of the date of *Severus* or the corpus to which it belongs.[368] In any event, *Severus* does not reproduce Victor verbatim, and Dessau's argument and its restatements therefore do not stand up.

The possibility that Victor had access at least to the *Severus*; his verbatim copying of Suetonius; and the interpolations in *Corpus Aurelianum*—these enable us to look more cogently and without ad hoc arguments at one sentence in these long passages (about three pages in Teubner editions).[369] The only verbatim concordance appears in two paragraphs (the two texts vary widely before and after these sentences; dissimilarities are double underlined).

*S.*18.9	Victor 20.25–26
Idem, cum pedibus aeger bellum moraretur idque milites anxie ferrent eiusque filium Bassianum, qui una erat, Augustum fecissent, tolli se atque in tribunal ferri iussit, adesse deinde omnes tribunos, centuriones, duces et cohortes, quibus auctoribus id acciderat, sisti deinde filium, qui Augusti nomen acceperat. Cumque animadverti in omnes auctores facti praeter filium iuberet rogareturque omnibus ante tribunal prostratis, caput manu contingens ait: "Tandem sentitis caput imperare, non pedes!"	*Nam cum pedibus aeger bellum moraretur idque milites anxie ferrent eiusque filium Bassianum, qui Caesar una aderat, Augustum fecissent, in tribunal se ferri, adesse omnes, imperatoremque ac tribunos, centuriones et cohortes, quibus auctoribus acciderat, sisti reorum modo iussit. Quo metu cum stratus humi victor tantorum exercitus veniam precaretur: "Sentitisne," inquit, pulsans manu, "caput potius quam pedes imperare?"*

The exact parallels in the first two lines have no probative force of their own, and could be explained as follows:

(1) There is clear evidence that the two other works in *Corpus Aurelianum*, in which Victor's *Caesares* is transmitted, were redrafted and interpolated in some places in antiquity, the Middle Ages, and the Early Modern period with authors from the fourth, fifth, eighth, and eleventh centuries.[370] The *Caesares*

[367] Alan Cameron 2011a:836.
[368] See Part II.
[369] I exclude Victor's personal observations/digressions.
[370] Pp.86ff. above.

itself, as we have seen, might be an adaptation of Victor made by the redactor of *Corpus Aurelianum*. Moreover, *Corpus Aurelianum* (and hence the *Caesares*) is only preserved in two humanistic manuscripts of the fifteenth century. It is also well known that early modern editors of the 'SHA' tried to supplement the *Severus*-Victor passages from one another.[371] It therefore appears not inconceivable that Victor's text was also touched in some way, when or after it was included in this corpus. If these two lines are a result of interpolation into either of the texts, their directionality can never be proved, and these twelve words have no probative force one way or the other (compare the interpolation from Paul the Deacon in Σ, or those in the *Origo Constantini*). Thus, according to standard of classical scholarship, the concordance indicates that these words could go either way (SHA↔Victor).

(2) Considering Victor's verbatim copying of Suetonius, it seems difficult to accept that this parallel has a probative force in the Victor→SHA direction. The Teubner of Victor's account of Severus is *c.*672 words (84 lines with about 7/8 words a line), and his longest account of any emperor until the period of the tetrarchy. The twelve words corresponding to *Severus* are 1.7% of Victor's account of this emperor. The account of Vitellius is *c.*248 words, and contains six words taken from Suetonius. These are 2% of Victor's account of that emperor (or 1.2%, if one adopts a minimalistic approach of a string of only three words). These figures invite us, again, to consider that Victor's text is copying *Severus* as it did with Suetonius.

(3) Following Victor's earlier 'plures putent', which might refer to SHA, one could argue that Victor's text lacks 'tolli', 'duces', and 'id' from *Severus*.[372] Thus, it might point to the SHA→Victor direction.

Other than these two lines, the two paragraphs are significantly different, both in context and content. Each narrates a completely different account of events. (1) In

[371] See above.
[372] These outweigh the exclusion of 'Caesar' in *Severus*; notice the remarks of Chausson 1997:104.

Severus all those involved, except Caracalla, were punished (*animadverti*) whereas in Victor, Severus asked all those involved, including the 'imperator' (Caracalla, who was declared Augustus), to stand like culprits (*reorum modo*). It would seem that Victor is condensing *Severus* or its source into a single sentence here, as he is more 'abrupt' than *Severus*.[373] (2) Severus' dictum in each paragraph is completely different: one is an exclamation, the other is a question. Most of the wording in the two passages is demonstrably *different*.

The broader context of the passages seems to suggest *Severus* preserves the fuller account and might have been excerpted by Victor. The *Severus* appears to have the broader context clearer: the episode is part of the rubric dealing with Severus' lax control of his family, exemplified by his forgiving nature to his wife and his treatment of Caracalla.[374] Victor does not place the two episodes under the family rubric, and the Caracalla-dictum episode therefore lacks clear context.[375] Moreover, before this episode both passages report Severus' literary education and activity, and the *Severus* is far more detailed than Victor.

*S.*18.5–7	Victor 20.21–22
Philosophiae ac dicendi studiis satis deditus, doctrinae quoque nimis cupidus. Latronum ubique hostis. Vitam suam privatam publicamque ipse composuit ad finem, solum tamen vitium crudelitatis excusans. De hoc senatus ita iudicavit illum aut nasci non debuisse aut mori, quod et nimis crudelis et nimis utilis rei publicae videretur.	*Philosophiae, declamandi, cunctis postremo liberalium deditus studiis;* *idemque abs se texta ornatu et fide paribus composuit.*

Considering the vocabulary, it is clear that neither is copying the other verbatim. At this point the *Severus* is more detailed than Victor. Common sense appears to suggest that the latter is abbreviating the former, and omits the Senate's view of Severus.

[373] Cf. Chausson 1997:104.
[374] *S.*18.8–11 (starting with 'domi tamen minus cautus').
[375] Victor 20.23–25.

This passage adds to other details being included in *Severus*, which do *not* appear in Victor, noted by Chausson and critics of Dessau: Severus' acclamation as 'Britannicus', his supply of oil to the Roman people, the naming of Geta as 'Antoninus', Severus' deification.[376] These details further support the directionality SHA→Victor, rather than the other way round. Victor seems to have abbreviated passages from this corpus' *Severus* and other sources.

Outcome: 'tetrarchic renaissance' and a *terminus ante*?

This subsection reconsiders the alleged verbatim correspondence between two passages of the *Life of Severus* and Victor with new insights: (1) the transmission and state of *Corpus Aurelianum*, through which Victor was preserved; (2) the use Victor's text made of Suetonius.

We hope to have demonstrated that in most cases there is no verbatim correspondence between the long passages, and that the very short verbatim correspondence found between the two passages is also found between Victor's text and Suetonius. Most of the parallels are a result of a common tradition (source or sources), and we can see why some scholars 'refused to accept Dessau',[377] or rather had good reasons to counter Dessau's tentative arguments. Whether the common source is Marius Maximus, a biography of Severus, the *EKG* (before 305/316[378]) or any other lost source cannot be determined, because too many works of the third century (like most Latin literature) are lost.[379]

The *Caesares* attributed to Victor seems to have used more than one source, even according to its statements. In one paragraph it gives three explanations for Severus' cognomen, and only one of them appears in a different formulation in *Severus*. Common sense would suggest that Victor had access to the *Severus* of this biographical corpus alongside other sources. This possibility is further supported by

[376] Respectively: *S*.17.5, 18.3, 19.2, 19.4; Rühl 1912:159–160; Chausson 1997:106; Cf. n.367 above.
[377] Syme 1968:106.
[378] Lippold 1998:20; Burgess 2011:V.117–118n.31.
[379] Victor's sources in general: Groß-Albenhausen and Fuhrmann 2009:158–159.

the parts where Victor appears to be abbreviating or omitting information in corresponding passages in *Severus*, as in the account of Severus' cognomen, his education, autobiography, and the view of the Senate. In short, Victor seems to have used Speratianus' *Severus* alongside other lost sources.

This case study and its conclusion fit comfortably with recent advances on fourth-century historiography. Bruno Bleckmann, in his reconsideration of *EKG* and tetrarchic historiography, has concluded that Aurelius Victor, in the *Caesares*, apparently had access to many literary sources of the third and early fourth centuries, now lost, in addition to the postulated *EKG*. Bleckmann therefore suggests that this probably reflects 'the remains of a richer Latin historiography of the age of the tetrarchy';[380] and uses the relative tranquillity in the empire (e.g. *c.*293–305; 308–316), as an explanation for the 'tetrarchic renaissance', characterised by increased literary activity.[381] Furthermore, Groß-Albenhausen considered the 'SHA' as a potential source for Aurelius Victor.[382]

In sum, the isolated *Severus*-Victor correspondence cannot be used as a 'secure' indication of a post-361 forgery of the entire biographical corpus. Indeed, common sense and internal and external evidence seem to suggest that the correspondence provides a *terminus ante* of *c.*361 rather than a *post quem* for this biography, and perhaps for other biographies of the corpus, as pre-Dessau and more recent scholars have noted. Victor seems to have used at least some works of this biographical corpus.[383]

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[380] Bleckmann 1997:29, reaching independently to the same conclusion as Lécrivain 1904:14–15, who noted a 'renaissance des études historiques' under Diocletian and Constantine, and used to defend the stated era of the biographical corpus.
[381] Bleckmann 1997:29–36. These conclusions have broader implications on the Dessauist notion that the 'SHA' claims to have been active in a period 'not noted as a golden age of Latin historiography' (Cornell 2013:75, following Syme 1968:214; Syme 1971b: *passim*, and ignoring Bleckmann 1997 and Lécrivain 1904).
[382] Groß-Albenhausen and Fuhrmann 2009:157–159.
[383] Cf. Opitz 1872:229–254; Groß-Albenhausen and Fuhrmann 2009:159.

Conclusions and implications: towards a reconsideration

So far we have looked at the way in which the corpus was handed down to us in its two distinct traditions of Π and Σ. The prima facie state of the corpus is that of a selection (*excerpta*) from various authors and works, as we have seen in Chapter 1. In this chapter, we have seen that the position of a given biography in the corpus, as well as its paratext (authorial ascription), are a product of the textual transmission in antiquity and the Middle Ages, rather than of the authors or excerptor of the corpus. This type of confusion is no different from other difficulties classical scholars encounter with other ancient works.

Moreover, we have shown that classical texts, most notably through the examples of *Corpus Caesarianum*, *Corpus Aurelianum*, and the *Origo Constantini*, were susceptible to later modification, such as redrafting and interpolations (in addition to unintentional modifications of paratexts) by scribes, redactors, and readers (both ancient and modern). It would seem that the transmission of this biographical corpus between the ninth and the fourteenth centuries is a good illustration of that: the interventions of a medieval redactor in Σ in the text (interpolations from Paul the Deacon and Orosius), paratexts, and the general order are fine illustrations of the phenomena we have seen in the manuscript traditions of other classical texts. Yet Dessau claimed that 'after their publication the biographies did not undergo any remarkable changes'[384] and was dismissive of any suggestion of intervention by redactor(s) or scribes.[385]

Specifically, transmitted paratexts of ancient works cannot be taken to be as reliable as complete inscriptions set in stone and to be an integral part of the text—neither does a position of a given biography in this corpus, as opposed to the first Dessauist assumption, as noted above. The most that we have here is a multi-work corpus composed of a selection from various authors, whose authorial ascriptions and order

[384] Dessau 1892:599 (≅Syme 1968:176=Syme 1983:28).
[385] Dessau 1892:599≈Syme 1968:180.

went wrong in the process of transmission. Nevertheless, Dessauists firmly believe that they caught their forger red-handed because of the contradictions they claim to have found between the paratexts and the main text; in their words: 'the statements in the text sometimes contradict the manuscripts' or 'the ascriptions clash with the statements made by biographers about what they plan or have already achieved'.[386] We are then expected to accept 'Dessau's plain firm statement: a single author for the whole *corpus*', and the 'postulate of a single author' is then offered as a 'simpler hypothesis'.[387]

Dessauists have recently inverted the contradictions-single-author assertion and thus created a circular argument about date, authorial claims, and single-author hypotheses (and consequently forgery).[388] This problem of a single-author assumption and circular arguments about the late date has been recently criticized by Andreas Mehl.[389] Regarding the date, we have seen that recent scholarship has suggested that Victor's *Caesares* of *c.*360 made use of 'SHA', thus providing a *terminus ante* for the corpus. The case study of the *Severus*-Victor passage, discussed separately from the authorship question, might indicate that *Caesares* did make use of *Severus* and other lost literary texts from the 'tetrarchic renaissance', such as the '*Ur-EKG*'.[390]

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[386] Respectively: White 1967:124; Syme 1968:182. Notice that White complains about 'the shallowness' (115) of conservative publications such as Wölfflin 1892 and Klebs 1890; 1892 . For instance, he criticizes Klebs because 'he pleads that… the *Geta*, which the manuscripts do assign to Spartianus, be re-assigned because [it] do[es] not fit the system (Klebs 1892:543).' (White 1967:126). As we have seen, even Π does not ascribe *Geta* to Speratianus, and even Dessau (1892) admitted that reassigning biographies is a legitimate way of solving the alleged contradictions.

[387] Syme 1968:178, 182; Birley 1976a:11–12; Barnes 1978:14–17.

[388] Birley 1976a:7; Barnes 2000:306–307; Alan Cameron 2011b:745; Thomson 2012:21–52; Johnston 2013. White's assertions are the most striking: 'the conservative… must admit they lied about their dates and relationship… In the meantime it seems convenient to believe that one man wrote the *HA*… This suggestion admittedly depends upon the proof of a late date.' (White 1967:124–125). This comes after the article states at the outset that the 'relatively unimportant' question 'of one author or many' is discussed in isolation from the question of the date (ibid.115), but that he 'presupposes agreement that the collection misrepresents its date' (ibid.). Cf. nn.247, 386 above. This article remains in high esteem among Dessauists, who ignore Meißner 1993 and Lippold's conclusions (e.g. *OCD*[3=4]; Alan Cameron 2011b:744n.5; Sogno 2012:74n.9; Johnston 2013; Cornell 2013:75).

[389] Mehl 2011:174–175=2001:150.

[390] Pp.103ff. above.

In the next chapters, we shall see whether the SHA might be considered part of that 'renaissance', rather than a late fourth-century forgery. The question now is whether the multi-author claims can be further defended and considered in light of their textual transmission, irrespective of the question of the corpus' 'late' date.

In order to avoid the Dessauist circular argumentation, we need to try and answer the two questions about the validity of the Dessauist arguments separately: (1) Dessau's single-author 'proof'; and (2) the authorial-ascription contradictions. We shall start with the question of authorial and ascription contradictions (2), before we move to the single-author 'proof' (1) in Chapter 3.

'Contradictions' and authorial claims

Following Dessau's 1889 article, Dessauists claim to have detected several types of 'internal inconsistencies',[391] and therefore indications of a highly competent single-author forgery. As we saw earlier, such inconsistencies, implausibilities, and contradictions in multi-author corpora could simply be either indications of plurality of authorship, rather than 'proof' of single authorship; or might prove nothing at all, as modern scholarship and other ancient literary texts demonstrate.[392] The alleged authorial contradictions and inconsistencies, which Dessauists note as indications of a forger, can now be assessed in light of the prima facie state of the corpus and normal practices of classical scholarship.

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[391] Cornell 2013:75 and n.54, following Barnes 1978:13–16.

[392] Pp.54–64 above. Ancient authors and even modern scholars could contradict themselves, even when they reprint their own works—it does not follow that they are later forgeries. See O'Hara 2006 on Roman epic; Alan Cameron 2011a:835 on Ratti 2010; Gurd 2012:75–76 on contradictions in Cicero's *Brutus*. Cf. also Pelling 2002, Ch.4 on contradiction in Plutarch's *Lives*. But a Dessauist asserts: 'in the *HA*, which is riddled with contradictions, any given Scriptor often contradicts himself between different biographies' (White 1967:128); as we have seen, the authorial ascriptions are not set in stone and these *could* be an indication of the need to reattribute them. White continues (ibid.): 'one cannot a priori infer independent authorship from discrepancies between Scriptores'. And he concludes: 'internal contradictions, then, cannot be invoked as evidence of separate authorship unless every other explanation of them can be excluded.' (130). Considering White's Dessauist presuppositions (nn.386, 388 above), his assertions are a classic *petitio principii*.

Excerpts and the claimed scope

The authors claim to have written more biographies than they actually 'wrote' in this eclectic corpus, or their statements about the scope of their work overlap.[393] This is indeed true for Speratianus, the author of the misplaced *Avidius Cassius*, and Lampridius. In *Aelius*, Speratianus addresses Diocletian and claims that he has written biographies of all the 'emperors' from Julius Caesar down to Aelius and now expands his programme to include rulers who only held the title of 'Caesar'; a similar claim, in almost the same language, is made in *Avidius Cassius*, which might indicate that these two biographies in fact belong to Speratianus.[394] Lampridius, in the *Elagabalus*, elaborates on his intention to write biographies up to the time of Constantine, including the members of the tetrarchies.[395] Moreover, Dessauists note the overlapping claims in *some* biographies of *some* authors as indications of a forgery.[396]

The corpus is a set of selections (*excerpta*) from various biographical *oeuvres* of various authors and therefore does not claim to transmit the complete work of its authors. As we have seen, a manuscript could include all the 'HA' biographies down to Claudius II, while omitting the Vopiscus part of *Aurelian* to *Numerianus*, even though the title of the corpus promises to continue to Numerian, and the *Elagabalus* transmitted in it to Constantine.[397] Another tradition (including the *editio princeps*) includes Suetonius' *Caesares*—this does not mean that if this were our only tradition for the corpus Suetonius and Speratianus are the same person, or because their claims 'clashed' with one another, 'Suetonius' was part of the Dessauist forgery. Moreover, Plutarch refers to planned (and currently non-existent) biographies of *Loenidas* and *Metellus* (*Mal.Hdt.*866b; *Marius* 29.12), but no-one has found that

[393] White 1967:124; Syme 1968:180–183; Birley 1976a:11 (=Birley 2003); Cornell 2013:75; and many others.
[394] *Ael.*1.1, 7.4–5; *AC*.3.1; see above; notice Salmasius on *AC* (HAS-1671: 1.439) and Mommsen's suggestion below.
[395] *Hel.*35.2–6 (discussed in Part II).
[396] E.g. Barnes 1978:15; Birley 2003:133; publications in *Stellenbibliographie* ad locc.
[397] See above; on the eclectic nature of the corpus, see already: Mommsen 1890:244.

suspicious. These problems with the text are therefore not as serious as Dessauists have claimed, and seem to be better and more easily explained by the prima facie state of the corpus, as we *currently* have it. Overlaps between authorial claims in various biographies could simply be the result of an arbitrary 'selection process' by a scribe and/or a later corruption of the paratexts.

To sum up, the authorial claims within the main text should be given priority over the fragile paratexts, but even in this case they cannot be used to reattribute biographies securely within the corpus, because—as we noted with the Latin Panegyrics—they could simply be references to biographies of given biographers, which were not transmitted in the surviving manuscripts of the corpus.

Activity under Diocletian and Constantine

Two of the named authors, according to the conventional authorship attribution based on Π alone, address Diocletian (r.284–305, d.313) and Constantine (r.306–337), and Dessauists claim it is improbable, because of the long interval of time and the allegedly stark contrast between the political legitimacy of the two: adoptive and hereditary monarchy.[398] Lippold has already shown that this alleged 'contradiction' is not as absurd as Dessauists perceive it to be.[399] The authors in question are Speratianus and Capitolinus. All the biographies traditionally ascribed to Speratianus are indeed dedicated to Diocletian with the exception of *Geta*, dedicated to Constantine. As we have seen, however, the ascription of this biography is far from being secure. *Macrinus*, traditionally ascribed to Capitolinus, contains an apostrophe to Diocletian, even though 'his' other biographies address Constantine.[400] As was noted, if we only possessed manuscript D, this biography would have lacked authorial ascription, and we have no guarantee that the paratexts did not become corrupt when this biography was placed out of its chronological order in Π or its exemplar.

[398] Dessau 1889:337–338, 341–342, 378; Barnes 1978:14–16; Birley 2003:134–135; Thomson 2012:21, 37–38; see next subsection.
[399] On slightly different grounds than this discussion (see n.404); Lippold 1991:24–25, 35, 258, 260–261 (politely noting the absurdities of Dessau 1889).
[400] See Part II.

Moreover, Constantine held Diocletian in high esteem, Constantinian historiography did not portray Diocletian in the blackest terms, and until 325 still viewed Constantine as trying to preserve some of the order of the first tetrarchy.[401] In addition, it is not inconceivable that an author who was active in the later years of Diocletian (say *c.*303–305) was also active some time later under Constantine's rule in the West (*c.*306–325).[402] After all, the datable literary activity of the *Christian* Lactantius was around 303–325, and he 'was put on the payroll of two emperors, Diocletian and Constantine.'[403] Iulius Valerius (*fl. c.*270–330) is no different.

In sum, these imperial apostrophes are far from being 'contradictions', and therefore in *themselves* cannot be used either as 'proof' of a highly competent forgery at a later age, or as a basis for a reattribution of a given biography to a given author, or to Mommsenian 'groups' of biographies: Diocletianic and Constantinian.[404] Indeed, prima facie it seems reasonable that our corpus is part of the 'tetrarchic renaissance' of literary activity in a period of relative stability, which Bleckmann has detected by other means outside *HA-Forschung*—a possibility already noted by Lécrivain.[405]

Elective and hereditary succession

The various biographies of the corpus contain places where elective succession could appear to be 'praised', whereas others contain praise of hereditary succession.[406] This

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[401] *Origo Constantini* 1, 14; Schlange-Schöningen 2004; cf. Lippold 1991:35, 258 within *HA-Forschung*, and Part II below.
[402] Lippold 1991:23–25, 260.
[403] Bowen and Garnsey 2003:3–4 (4 cited).
[404] *Pace* Mommsen 1890:245–246, 249; Wölfflin 1892:*passim*.; Bury 1900:445–446. I agree with Lippold that the transition from Diocletian and Constantine was not a clear break for Constantinian contemporaries, but disagree with his remarks, which he admits to be tentative, that 'the "redactor" in the Constantinian era' of the corpus could also have written the references to Diocletian because this redactor saw no difference between Diocletian and Constantine (Lippold 1991:35n.21, 258n.4). It seems to me that this interpretation could perhaps explain why in *c.*337–340 a redactor could have maintained the apostrophes to Diocletian: after all he did not suffer a *damnatio memoriae.* Lippold 2006 (a posthumous publication) suggests the corpus was more eclectic than that.
[405] Lécrivain 1904:14–15; Bleckmann 1997:29–36.
[406] Dessau 1889:337, 341–342; Baynes 1926; 1955:209–210 (pub.1928); Hartke 1951:*passim*, esp. 58–59, 241 (a problematic and erratic book, see Walbank 1953; Last and Baynes 1953; Wickert 1954:2209. The book rests upon the invalid presuppositions of Hartke 1940, see Enßlin 1942); Alan Cameron 2011b:750–751. The question of 'child-emperors', often confused with the praise of or contempt for hereditary monarchy, will be discussed in Part II (*passim*)

is far from being a problem if the prima facie state of the text is accepted: an eclectic selection from various authors who wrote at various times between Diocletian and Constantine under changing political circumstances—a fact De Sanctis had noted, and used to support the authenticity of the corpus.[407] The same 'contradiction' could be 'detected' in the Gallic Corpus of the Latin Panegyrics (all pronounced in *c.*284–316), when they are taken as a whole, and even in Pliny's panegyric to Trajan.[408] Moreover, Wickert, in the magisterial *RE* entry 'princeps', dedicated a long section to the tension between hereditary and meritocratic (viz. 'elective'/adoptive) principles. He demonstrated that this contrast (rather than 'contradiction') existed from the dawn of the principate and that its roots lay in Hellenistic political theory and Roman republican history.[409] Specifically, Wickert noted about Diocletian: 'while he incorporated the adoption into his system, he also recognised, even apart from the intermarriages between the tetrarchs, the hereditary principle as binding (*gültig*).'[410] And he concluded: 'Diocletian's "system" is not determined only by the meritocratic principle, whereas Constantine's dynasty is not determined only by the hereditary principle.'[411] Additionally, Barnes outside *HA-Forschung* has independently arrived at this conclusion.[412] The 'SHA' apparently did not run counter to the political reality of the Roman Empire, nor did 'they' contradict themselves.

To conclude, this 'contradiction' is not as serious as Dessauists present it in *HA-Forschung*—and even if it did exist, the prima facie state of the corpus is more than enough to explain it: there should not be a problem with a Diocletianic biography emphasizing (rather than praising) the advantage of meritocratic monarchy, and a later Constantinian biography emphasizing the hereditary monarchy (irrespective of

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[407] De Sanctis 1927:340–341; cf. Lippold 2006:355; see Part II.
[408] Plin.*Pan.*7.4–7≠94.5 (with Wickert 1954:2213).
[409] Wickert 1954:2200–2222 ('Erbprinzip und Leistungsprinzip').
[410] Ibid.2211.
[411] Ibid.2215 (contra Hartke 1951:170–171); Corcoran 2008:232 concluded the same independently.
[412] Barnes (2011:50): 'there has been a widespread modern fancy that Diocletian set the principle of hereditary succession completely aside when he devised the tetrarchic system… But that idea, which appears to derive ultimately from Burckhardt, is anachronistic and runs counter to the political reality of both the Roman and the Byzantine Empires.' (this is clearly contra Dessau 1889:ibid. and Hartke 1951:ibid.).

authorship attribution). If this points to anything, it is to a *lack* of an organizing 'mastermind' behind the corpus—whether a highly competent forger or a very active Mommsenian 'editor'.[413] The alleged 'inconsistencies' in the corpus seem to support the eclectic nature of the corpus, and possibly the confused political reality of the stated era of composition.[414]

Ascriptions and the status quo ante

From the Northern Renaissance up to the emergence of Dessauism in the middle of the twentieth century, scholars have tried to reattribute the various biographies to the various authors, whose names were transmitted in the paratexts, according to biographers' claims, palaeographical problems, and for philological-stylistic reasons.[415] Yet Dessauists believe this approach was only a reaction to Dessau's alleged contradictions.[416] This approach respected the manuscript tradition but assumed it to be flawed, not without good reason: as we have seen, if manuscript survival patterns had been different, some of the conventional authorship attributions—and consequently contradictions—would also be different. Herman Peter, in a *Litteraturbericht* of works published on the corpus in 1883–1892, still stated that Gemoll (1886), by starting with the 'tradition' (*Überlieferung*)[417] rather than with a 'preconceived opinion', had 'reduced the number of "contradictions" in the *HA*'.[418] Since in 1892 Dessau acknowledged the validity of this approach as did Bury, and since the next chapter questions the validity of the single-author argument, it would be useful to tabulate the *status quo ante* Dessauism.[419]

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[413] *Pace* Mommsen 1890:*passim*; Lippold 2006:355.
[414] See Part II's *Introduction*.
[415] Summary in Lippold 1991:25–28.
[416] E.g. Syme 1968:180 and Paschoud 2013:6, while listing the inaccuracies of Thomson 2012, claim this question has been 'often neglected until today'.
[417] This refers both to the statements in the text and the paratexts.
[418] Peter 1894:122 (scare quotes in the original).
[419] The table is based on the tables in the surveys of Brocks 1869:42–43; Peter 1884b; Gemoll 1886:13 with my addenda of subsequent literature.

Biography /author	Speratianus	Gallicanus	Capitolinus	Lampridius	Pollio	Vopiscus
Hadrian						
Aelius						
Pius	Rübel, Plew, Brocks, Dreinhöfer, Böhme, Teuffel					
Marcus	Plew, Brocks, Dreinhöfer, Böhme, Teuffel					
Verus	"					
Avidius						Wölfflin
Commodus	Plew, Dreinhöfer, Böhme		Rübel			
Pertinax	Plew, Dreinshöfer, Böhme (or Lampridius)			Brocks, Böhme (or Speratianus)		
Didius						
Severus				Dodwell		
Niger				"		
Albinus	Dirksen, Rübel, Plew, Dreinhöfer, Teuffel, Böhme (or Lampridius)			Böhme (or Speratianus)		
Caracalla			Rübel	Böhme		
Geta			Dodwell, Rübel	Brocks, Böhme		
Macrinus	Böhme			Dirksen, Rübel, Plew, Dreinhöfer, Teuffel		
Diadumenus			Dodwell, Becker, Bernhardy			
Elagabalus	Becker		Bernhardy			
Alexander			Dodwell, Becker, Brocks			

This table demonstrates that both before and after Dessau 1889, scholars—including Enmann—were willing to debate the question of authorship attribution, which could be inconsistent between various manuscripts, in the same way as the subscriptions of the legal codes, the authorship attributions of *Corpus Aurelianum*, *Corpus*

Caesarianum, and the Latin Panegyrics are.[420] It was not until the emergence of Dessauism in the 1960s that these were completely disregarded, even by 'conservatives' such as Momigliano and recent scholars who neglected these issues.[421]

The question of the single-author argument should be re-examined, *irrespective* of the reattribution attempts.

Towards a reassessment of the single-author argument

This *status quo ante*, the investigation of the manuscripts, and the common standards of classical scholarship demonstrate why conservative critics, irrespective of their explanation for the genesis of the corpus, found it difficult to accept Dessau's 1889 contention about 'contradictions' as indications of a highly competent forgery. Mommsen, Wölfflin, Klebs, and Bury noted the attribution difficulties only on the basis of Π and the *eiusdem* formulae;[422] they therefore acknowledged the supremacy of the main text over the paratexts as shown, for instance, by Mommsen's words:

> According to the texts of the biographies, which are surely transmitted much more reliably than the subscriptions, the biographies of Hadrian, Aelius, and Verus belong to the same author… When the subscriptions conflict with the texts, this can only be the fault of the copyist; it is simply impossible that the creators, forgers or not, would have contradicted themselves in this way.[423]

Mommsen, one must note, then stressed the eclectic nature of the corpus from various biographical series. Accordingly, Mommsen's contention was that the main text should be given priority over the paratext (internal links, and apostrophes to emperors), and he then tried to redistribute the biographies accordingly.[424] If we are

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[420] See above; Enmann 1884:375; Mommsen 1890:245; Klebs 1890:436–438; 1892:518–521; Wölfflin 1892:515–521; Bury 1900:444–446

[421] *Introduction*; Momigliano 1966:146–147.

[422] See n.420.

[423] Mommsen 1890:244; such an approach invalidates later Dessauits claims, see n.427 below.

[424] Mommsen 1890:244–246; Syme misrepresents him by stating that juggling with ascriptions was 'pointless and profitless, according to Mommsen, *Ges. Schr.*, vol. 7 (1919), 318'. Mommsen, in fact, argued that a 'Diaskeuast' made an eclectic compilation out of several series of biographies, and that the text should be aligned according to the internal claims (1890:244). He suggested that all the Diocletianic series could perhaps have belonged to Capitolinus and Lampridius, and the Constantinian series to Speratianus. He did so because he followed Dessau in incorrectly dating Vopiscus' activity to no later than *c.*305–306, and because Vopiscus mentioned Lampridius and Capitolinus (*Pr.*2.7) but did

not dealing with a forgery, a historian might ask, rather than '*cui bono*?', '*quid ergo*?' regarding this philological investigation.

Recently an ancient historian, Burkhard Meißner, investigated the conceptions of past, present, and future and the approach to the emperors' personal qualities and the political assessment of the emperors. Meißner concluded that the various biographies and authors approach these themes so differently as to indicate plural authorship. He, however, overlooked the complex manuscript tradition and pre-Dessauist scholarship and therefore found it difficult to explain why some biographies 'attributed' to Capitolinus manifest Speratianian characteristics; for instance, 'the biographies of Antoninus Pius, Marcus Aurelius, Pertinax, and Verus correspond to the model of a well-structured *Vita* in the form of the *vita Hadriani*.'[425] Thus Meißner unknowingly made a welcome and genuine confirmation of the need to redistribute the biographies rather than reject the authorial claims. It is worth observing that Elimar Klebs also noted intratextual links between those biographies, and suggested reattributing them to Speratianus.[426] In short, Meißner's contribution illustrates the need to combine the philological-textual evidence and pre-Dessauist scholarship with modern historiographical research.

To return to pre-Dessauist scholarship, in 1892 Dessau admitted:

> When earlier scholars ascribed several works from the first part of the collection to one of the authors of the other works from the same part, this had justification because of the state of the textual tradition [Ueberlieferung].[427]

We shall return to Dessau's later observations about the genesis of the corpus.[428] At this point it is important to note that Dessau admitted, in a publication subsequent to 1889, that his alleged 'web of contradictions' is too fragile, once the complexity of the manuscript evidence is acknowledged.

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not mention Speratianus (ibid. 245). This tentative reattribution is unnecessary, because Vopiscus' literary activity apparently took place well beyond 306. See below Chapter 4.

[425] Meißner 1993:280; summary of his work on 'SHA' in Mehl 2011:173–174

[426] Klebs 1892 (*passim*).

[427] Dessau 1892:598 contradicting Dessau 1889:386; Syme 1968:176, 181–182.

[428] Pp.134ff.

To sum up, the ascriptions in the corpus may 'have been assigned without much thought'[429] not by a highly competent 'forger', as Dessauists suggest, but by careless and confused copyists and rubricators.[430] Yet Dessauists disregard the manuscript tradition and the arguments discussed above with claims like the following:

> Dessau's thesis of a single author put, all at once, an end to this entanglement in the question of the authors, which goes back to some manuscripts.[431]

In order to avoid this circularity and because of the complex transmission of the authorial attributions, the next chapter will therefore first assess Dessau's philological argument for a single author and the 'conservative' reactions to it, irrespective of the transmission of the paratexts and of the corpus' dates.[432]

[429] Syme 1968:176=Syme 1971b:283: 'the labels of the first four biographers were carelessly affixed.'
[430] See above.
[431] Johne 1976:19 restated in Johne 2008:46; Syme 1968:183; the entry on 'Spartianus' in *PIR*[2] (S 794, pub. 2006): 'absque dubio persona ficta est, quae sub Diocletiano scripsisse simulator, vide iam H. Dessau *Hermes* 24, 1889, 337–92.' despite reporting 'Speratianus' a *praefectus provinciae Numidiae* in *c.*293–305 (S 797).
[432] An independent disproof of Dessau's single-author argument obviously dismisses any Dessauist attempt to claim that the alleged forger added the paratexts to the main, and that later scribes confused the forger's original order (cf. Paschoud 2013 against Thomson 2012), or that the revisions in Σ are a second edition of their single forger.

Chapter 3: unity and diversity in the corpus

Preconceptions and recent studies

So far we have explored the prima facie state of the text, and the possibility that it could explain better some of the alleged 'contradictions', or rather inconsistencies, in the corpus. It is now possible to examine the negative argument brought against the original state of the text: Dessau's single-author 'proof',or rather 'disproof' of our corpus' authorial claims.

The question of unity and diversity in the corpus appears to be a topic barely studied in the second half of the twentieth century.[433] The exceptions are the detailed computer and statistical studies of the 1990s, most notably those of Meißner, who also conducted a literary and historiographical analysis of the corpus with similar results. These studies have shown that the corpus lacks homogeneity in style and that it is very likely that various authors were included in it.[434] As we noted earlier, however, Meißner (and similar studies) ran into trouble with authorship ascriptions because he was not fully aware of the complexity of the manuscript tradition; in some cases Meißner's results simply pointed to the need to reattribute a given biography to a different author within the corpus.[435] It is even admitted that his conclusions 'will be difficult to refute.'[436]

However, as we have seen in the *Introduction*, most scholars state Dessau's disproof as decisive, and any attempt to suggest a viable alternative to the single-forger hypothesis meets the Dessau 1889 wall; and this includes the earlier conservative defences of Klebs, Wölfflin, and Frankfurter. These studies offered constructive

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[433] As pointed out by von Albrecht 1994:1103; den Hengst 2010:177; Alan Cameron 2011b:744. See, however, the historical studies of Lippold 1998:esp. ix–xxvi, 1–14; Lippold 2006, Meißner 1993, and Arand 2003.

[434] Meißner 1992; 1997; Gurney and Gurney 1998a; 1998b; Tse, Tweedie, and Frischer 1998; Marriott 1979, which Syme used as decisive proof (Syme 1983:209–223), was shown to have used a defective methodology at the time of publication and is therefore invalid; see Sansone 1990, esp. 177. It also contradicted Syme's theory about the alleged use the corpus made of his postulated sources, such as *Ignotus* (Alan Cameron 1985).

[435] Meißner 1992:63–71; 1997:214–215; see pp.112ff. above.

[436] Mehl 2011:174.

defences of multi-authorship, but Dessauists simply disregard their arguments. Moreover, Dessauists themselves admit that Dessau's single-author hypothesis was restated rather than substantiated,[437] and assert that Dessau's forger reproduced verbatim lost, postulated, and non-existent sources, in order to explain away the palpable heterogeneity of the corpus.[438]

Owing to Dessau's continuing influence, and since modern scholars have uncritically followed Dessau's single-author hypothesis, his evidence and arguments must be re-examined. This will be done in isolation from the question of the dates, in order to avoid the circular argument we have noted. Additionally, the *TLL* (1900–), Lessing's *SHA-Lexicon*, and modern electronic resources, as well as scholarly advances such as intertextuality, can further emphasize how various authors can use the same expression in disparate or even similar contexts.[439]

Dessau's philological argument: 'common' expressions and 'neologisms'

In his oft-cited article, Dessau provided a list of various 'repeated' expressions and 'neologisms' which he claimed were found in *all* the authors and *not* attested elsewhere. Dessau explained that these repeated expressions must be understood as 'proof' of a single author. The opening of Dessau's 'philological' discussion states:

> But only the language can be decisive for the judgement about the biographers' relationships to one another… For example, the various authors use uniformly [gleichmässig] certain, and otherwise unknown, expressions [unerhörte Wortverbindungen].[440]

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[437] *Introduction*; den Hengst 2010:177; Alan Cameron 2011b:743n.2; cf. Crook 1972:247; Syme 1983:111. See statements at the beginning of these studies: Syme 1968:vi, 176; Birley 1976a:12; Barnes 1978:13, 16–18; Paschoud 1996:xiii–xvi; Chastagnol-HA:xv–xix≈Paschoud 2004; Birley 2003:137–138; Alan Cameron 2011b:743; Rohrbacher 2013:146; Johne 2008:46.

[438] *Introduction*; for instance, Barnes 1978; Paschoud 2004; Alan Cameron 2011b:744; Thomson 2012:19, 94–96; see also pp.137ff. below.

[439] A comparison with the corpus of the Latin Panegyrics revealed that such phenomena, even if they were indeed peculiar to this corpus, can be found in multi-author corpora, see above. See the remarks of Nixon and Rodgers in their introduction to the language of this less disputed corpus (1994:14–16); cf. Vereeke 2012; Maguinness 2012; Rodgers 2012:330–334 (setting aside their disagreement about the Panegyrists). Similar observations can be made about 'unobtrusive mannerisms', the type which J.N. Adams (1972; 1977) used as a proof for single-authorship, in that corpus (Nixon and Rodgers 1994:16 under 'postclassical constructions'; Maguinness 2012:esp. 286–287). Cf. below n. 484.

[440] Dessau 1889:386≈Dessau 1892:596.

For the sake of clarity and argument, these 'many similarities of style and diction'[441] found by Dessau will be examined closely, and further intertextual analyses of these references will be made where possible. Because of this discussion's exploratory nature, I shall also mention the possible and traditional authorship attribution. The two major questions are (1)whether these are indeed 'otherwise unknown expressions', and (2)whether all of Dessau's expressions appear in all the authors.

Rei publicae necessarius

Dessau and Dessauists presented this expression as lacking parallels in other authors: '*rei publicae necessarius*, to my knowledge not found elsewhere, is used eight times…'[442] Straub, one of the conveners of the *colloquia*, took Dessau's claim further and claimed the alleged 'forger' used this expression under the influence of Eutropius, who in fact never used this term.[443] These statements are simply inaccurate.[444]

A *vir necessarius* or *res necessaria rei publicae* is found in Latin authors from Cicero onwards, including Suetonius, but not in Symmachus or Ammianus.[445] This expression is not fixed, appears nine times in the corpus, and its distribution and intertextual usage is not consistent throughout the corpus. The expression is used casually once and quite differently by Speratianus(?) (*PN.*3.5: *necessarius rei p. vir*), Lampridius/Speratianus (*Hel.*13.5 [on Severus Alexander]: *iuvenis optimus et rei p. necessarius*), Capitolinus (*MB.*2.7, in a speech by a senator[446]), Capitolinus/Pollio (*T.*9.2: *Ingenuus… fortissimus ac rei p. necessarius et militibus... acceptissimus*), Pollio (*Cl.*16.1: *nostrum Claudium... castris, senatui et rei p. necessarium*), and Vopiscus

[441] Alan Cameron 2011b:743§2; Thomson 2012:23.
[442] Dessau 1889:387; Syme 1968:178; Paschoud 2011:87.
[443] Eutr.9.14; Straub 1952:120–121 Hohl exposed this error (1954:47; cf. Momigliano 1966:168).
[444] Wölfflin (1892:478) and Hohl (1954:46–47) found the references to Suet.*Tit.*7.2 and Heges. 3.2.50.
[445] See, for instance, Cic.*Leg.* 3.46; Val.Max.: 3.7.1d; Gell. *NA.*6.3.52. L. Fulvius Aburnius Valens (second-century jurist; *PIR*[2] F526) in *Dig.*50.8.6; Veg.*Mil.* 2.1.5*;* Iord.*Rom.* §304*.* On *necessarii* in general see *OLD* s.v. 'Necessarius 2' (this term requires a study in its own right).
[446] '*ego principes dico, vos firmate, si placet, sin minus, meliores ostendite: Maximum igitur atque Balbinum, quorum unus in re militari tantus est, ut no*⟨*b*⟩[*il*]*itatem generis splendore virtutis e*⟨*v*⟩*exerit, alter ita clarus nobilitate est, ut et morum lenitate re*⟨*i*⟩ *p*[*i*]*. sit necessarius*'; the textual problems of this passage are irrelevant here (Peter-SHA ad loc.).

(*Car.*10: *Carinus, quem vir rei p. necessarius Augustus Diocletianus… interemit*); and twice in the same biography by Speratianus/Gallicanus(?) (1.2, citing Asinius Quadratus;[447] 3.5, in a letter of Hadrian: *bonus dux sit et severus et fortis et rei p. necessarius*).

In a passage of *Severus Alexander*, there appears to be a strong intertextual link with Suetonius' *Titus*. Suetonius described how Titus's imperial entourage had become a model useful even to subsequent emperors. Lampridius/Speratianus uses this statement of fact but reversed, as a motto of Alexander concerning bad emperors, thus creating an 'opposite allusion'.[448] Both these biographies clearly portray a young emperor, who became an ideal ruler, despite the negative expectations resulting from his age and previous acts.[449]

Suet.*Tit.*7.2	Lampridius/Speratianus, *AS.*15.3
[7.1–2 Titus refutes suspicions that he would become a tyrant because of his behaviour *and age*; puts an end to bad practices (e.g. leaving Berenice)] *Amicos elegit, quibus etiam post eum principes ut et sibi et rei p. necessariis adquieuerunt praecipueque sunt usi.* For the variants on *utilis*/*uti* with this expression cf. Cic. *Fam.* 12.14.3; Val. Max.: 3.7.1d	[15.1–2: Alexander dismisses corrupt officials; cleans the imperial court] *dicens malum pu⟨blic⟩um esse imperatorem, qui ex visceribus provincialium homines non necessarios nec rei p. utiles pa⟨s⟩ceret.*

This example shows that our biographers used Latin expressions that were common with other literary works, and most importantly, were acquainted with the text of their *Muster* Suetonius.[450]

[447] 'Avidius Severus… *cuius Quadratus in historiis meminit, et quidem graviter, cum illum summum virum et necessarium rei p. adserit et apud ipsum Marcum praevalidum*.' This historian wrote history in the ionic dialect, from the foundation of Rome down to Severus Alexander or Carus; he existed (*PIR*² A1245) and has excellent *testimonia* in Byzantine authors (such as the Suda; cf. *PIR*² A1244 and A1246).
[448] On this kind of intertextuality: Kelly 2008:198–201.
[449] On *AS* see chapter 6; Chastagnol-HA:549, 555–557.
[450] Chapter 1.

Forma conspicuus (=pulcher)

This expression appears in the corpus *three* times: twice in biographies traditionally ascribed to Capitolinus/Speratianus (*AP.*2.1;[451] *Gd*.18.1) and once in *Valerian* of Capitolinus/Pollio (8.1). The use of *conspicuus* with *ablativus respectus* is attested in authors since Ovid.[452] *Forma conspicuus* was quite common in Silver-Latin authors such as Pliny, Tacitus, and Apuleius. It was therefore common at that period in both the 'high' and 'low' register of the language.[453] For Dessau, however, this expression was one of those 'unheard-of expressions, that hardly come from popular speech (*Volkssprache*)', 'strange, because it was ambiguous without a qualifying adjective', and 'was used many times in descriptions of persons' in the corpus.[454]

In fact, this expression is a fine example of how the same fixed expression, not attested earlier than the second century, suddenly emerges in various Silver-Latin authors working in the same period. Such evidence therefore is not a valid philological 'proof' of single authorship, especially when we are dealing with contemporaneous authors and even if the expression in question is not attested elsewhere before.[455]

Conflictu habito

The corpus is perhaps one of the first places where this phrase is attested in a military sense. It is found six times in *two* authors only: Capitolinus (*ClA.*9.1; *OM*.8.2), Pollio/Capitolinus (*Gall.*4.2; *T*.9.3, 11.4), and Pollio (*Cl.*5.1).[456] Cicero used *conflictus*, the supine of *confligere* ('to clash together'; already in Caesar), to describe the clash

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[451] Or Speratianus (?).
[452] For instance: Ov.*Am.* 2.11.4; *Pont.*4.7.31; see *TLL*: IV.499.23ff.; on the ablative see Menge, Burkard, and Schauer 2005:50–510 (§381).
[453] Tac. *Germ.* 6.2; *Hist.* 3.33, 4.14; Plin. *Ep*. 7.24.3; Apul. *Met.* 4.28, 10.29. This phrase is attested as part of a pleonasm once in Ammianus (14.11.28 *forma conspicuus bona*), and also re-emerges in Cassiodorus (*Var.* 3.50; 11.1). Some of these references were cited by Klebs (1890:453n.1§3) and Wölfflin (1892:478).
[454] Dessau 1889:386–387.
[455] Contra Dessau 1889:386. Cf. above n. 442 and below n. 456.
[456] Nevertheless, this did not prevent Dessau from considering this expression as evidence for his single-author theory (Dessau 1889:387>J. N. Adams 1977:93).

between bodies of soldiers.[457] This explains how *conflictus* may have received the elliptical meaning of *certamen* or *proelium* in later authors, such as the tetrarchic/Constantinian Iulius Valerius (*fl. c.*270–330): *coepto conflictu* (2.9, l.538).[458]

Habere or *haberi* (in the sense of *to perform an action*) with a verbal noun, *including* the supine, is typical usage in classical Latin; even with *habere* in PPP and the ablative absolute, e.g. *oratione habita* (in all major republican authors), *censu habito*, and *dilectu habito*. These fixed expressions appear in various contemporaneous authors in earlier periods.[459] Tantalizing in this context is '*prima per legatos habita certamina* (*sc. sunt*)' in the second-century author Florus (2.10).[460]

All in all, *Conflictu habito* does not manifest any peculiar grammatical usage.[461] Two or more concurrent authors can be expected to use similar or even identical expressions that are not necessarily documented earlier or later, as we have seen with *forma conspicuus* in Silver-Latin authors and as we shall see with *imagines deponere* in Tetrarchic/Constantinian texts.

Vestis aliqua subserica

The adjective *subsericus* appears seven times in various contexts and expressions by the various authors of the corpus: Lampridius/Speratianus (*Hel.*26.1; *AS.*40.1); Pollio

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[457] Cicero, *Caecin.*43 (*TLL* IV, 237.21–22). *Confligere* as part of a battle is in Caesar, *B.Gall.*5.15.1.

[458] If we exclude this corpus, he would appear to be the first author to use *conflictus* in this sense; see *TLL*: IV.237.34ff. for a full list. Not mentioned by Dessau 1889:387n.4 or J. N. Adams 1977:93.

[459] The following are a few examples. *Habere* and *haberi* in general Cic. *De or.* 3.2; Livy 2.32.1, 3.11.1; Quint. *Inst.* 2.17.4, 9.2.63 (cf. Fronto, *Ep.*1.2.11). Ablative absolute in Caesar, Cicero, Nepos, and Sallust: *oratione habita*. Caes. *B.Gall.* 1.32, 1.33, 1.41, 5.27; *B Civ.* 2.28, 3.90; Cic.*Att* 15.3.2; Nepos *Att.*22.1; Sall.*Cat.*22.1; *Iug.*86.1; the expression is picked up in the *Corpus Caesarianum*: *B.Afr.* 45.1, 90.1, *B.Alex.* 9.1; *contione habita.* Caes.*B.Gall.* 5.52.5, 7.53.1*; B.Civ.* 2.21, 3.74.1; Sall.*Cat.*43.1; *Corpus Caesarianum B.Afr*.88.6; *B.Alex.*57.6; Val.Max.5.3.2; Tac.*Ann.*15.72; Speratianus, *DJ.*3.3; Lampridius, *Dd.*2.6. The former fixed expression is rarely found in authors subsequent to this period (Livy 9.45.2, 35.37.2; Tac.*Ann.*12.25, 15.73). For supine as part of an ablative absolute with *haberi*, see e.g. Caes. *B.Gall.* 1.29.3: *eorum qui domum redierunt, censu habito ut Caesar imperaverat, repertus est numerus milium centum et decem.* Cf. *dilectu habito* in *B.Gall.* 1.31.2 and Livy 4.26.3.

[460] Cf. also Eutropius 6.2: *Levia proelia habuit contra varias gentes*; Yet Dessau>Adams (ibid.) insisted that *conflictum habere* must mean *proelium committere*, even though it is a reasonable fusion for Latin authors of the first half of the fourth century to make.

[461] Contra Dessau (1889:388).

(*Cl.*14.8, letter of Valerian): *alba subserica una cum purpura Girbitana*; (17.6 , letter of Gallienus): *vestes diversae sedecim, alba subserica*; Vopiscus (*A.*15.4): *tunicae subsericae*; (*Q* 15.8, letter of Aurelian): *tunicae palliolatae ia⟨n⟩thinae subsericae, tunica auro clavata subserica librils una*. When its usage is closely investigated, this rare adjective alone is insufficient to support a theory of single authorship.

Vestis subserica, compared to *vestis* (*vel sim.*) *serica* (from Horace onwards)[462] or *holoserica*, appears first in a rescript of Marcus Aurelius and Commodus *apud* Aelius Marcianus, the Severan Jurist, regarding the taxation of goods.[463] This adjective, as well as *holosericus*, is also found in Diocletian's *Edict on Maximum Prices,* promulgated in his 18th year of tribunician power (21.11–31.12.301).[464] Tertullian made elliptical usage of it.[465] From a linguistic point of view, *holosericus* was a natural development of Latin once half-silken (*subsericus*) clothes were introduced: *vestis serica* henceforward was being used collectively for both (see below).[466] Considering these adjectives in terms of chronology, they fit a Diocletianic or Constantinian date perfectly.[467]

The Lives of Elagabalus and Severus Alexander by Lampridius/Speratianus form a continuous literary, chronological, and historical unit, and both have the same literary and political aims.[468] In the narrative of these Lives, both claiming to be written under Constantine,[469] the two emperors represent extremes that balance one another: a morally corrupt emperor, Elagabalus, and an ideal emperor, Severus

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462 *OLD*², s.v. 'sericus'.
463 PIR² A 215; *Dig.* 39.4.16.1pr., 6–8; Souter 1949:395, s.v.
464 *BNP*, s.v. 'Edictum Diocletiani'; *subsericus*: *Ed.Diocl.*7.50; 19.9, 10, 12–14; 20.1a, 9; 22.8–10. *holoseri(c)us*: *Ed. Diocl.* 7.49; 19.15–19; 20.2, 7, 10–11; 22.12-15.
465 *Res.* 27.3 with Evans 1960:76 apparatus ad loc.; Blaise and Chirat 1954:786, s.v. Dessau's statement about this word can be dismissed (1889:389).
466 Löfstedt 1993 states nothing relevant to this issue.
467 *Introduction*.
468 See Chapter 2 for their order and manuscript attribution.
469 *Hel.*2.4, 34.1; *AS.*65.1; discussed in Part II.

Alexander.[470]. The contrast is also expressed with an 'intratextual'[471] reference to the type of clothes used by the emperors in these two highly detailed narratives.

Elagabalus	Severus Alexander
*Hel.*26.1 *Primus Romanorum holoserica veste usus fertur, cum iam subsericae in usu essent.* 29.6 *et cuius placuisset commentum, ei dabat maximum praemium, ita ut sericam vestem donaret, quae tunc et in raritate videbatur et in honore.*	*AS.*40.1 *Vestes sericas ipse raras habuit; holosericam numquam induit, subsericam numquam donavit.*
	Cf. [the extravagant behaviour of Caligula] Suet. *Cal*., 52: *…in publicum processit; aliquando sericatus et cycladatus;*

The possible veracity of the first statement in the *Elagabalus* is confirmed by the reference to *vestis subserica* in the rescript of Marcus Aurelius and Commodus. While half-silken clothes were already common, whole-silken clothes would have appeared even more extravagant than 'just' silken clothes. Silken clothes were linked to extravagant behaviour[472] and Elagabalus' fondness for silk is reported by Herodian (5.5.4). Severus Alexander's modesty is characterized through the intratextual connection that echoes the two passages from *Elagabalus*: he hardly had any of these clothes, in contrast to the extravagant behaviour of his predecessor. Furthermore, he did not give away the cheaper version of a silken cloth. The contrast of this cloth with *vestis holoserica* follows strong early fourth-century terminology (stated date of composition).

Specific words

Cut from the same cloth are Dessau's statements about specific words, including the above-mentioned *subsericus.* To support his single-authorship theory, Dessau also claimed that the vocabulary of the corpus was not used at an earlier date or was

[470] Chastagnol-HA:557–559. Herodian's narrative offers a similar reception (5.12–6; esp. 6.1.2, 9.8).
[471] I am grateful to Dr Alan Ross for a clarification of the term 'intratextual'.
[472] E.g. Tac. *Ann*. 2.33.1. Chatagnol is incorrect (1994:532n.2 following Turcan 1993:214n.147): 'En fait, la robe tout soie (*holoserica*) avait été portée par Caligula (Suétone, *Calig.*, 52, 2)'. Suetonius does not use the word *holosericus* but *sericatus*. This term is a *hapax legomenon* in Suetonius (*OLD*, s.v.), a passive participle in a predicative position to describe how Caligula walked around in public, 'clothed in silks'.

rarely used in later authors, such as the the third- or fifth-century (?) Martianus Capella.[473]

Speciatim

For s*peciatim*, Dessau claimed 'I found citations only in Martianus Capella.'[474] This is inaccurate. *Speciatim* is found in the third-century Cyprian of Carthage,[475] in an inscription from the middle of the fourth century (*c.*351),[476] and in Jerome, Symmachus, Orosius, and Augustine.[477] The meagre and uneven distribution of this word in the corpus—seven times and mostly in biographies before *Severus Alexander*—seems to suggest that, (1) perhaps this corpus represents the increasing distribution of this word after the third century; (2) each of its authors had a different preference or tendency to use this word. [478]

Rebellio

Rebellio is the masculine for *rebellis* (adj./n.; 'rebel'). *Rebellio* as such would appear to be attested *four* times,[479] but not necessarily each time with the meaning of a 'rebel' in the masculine, as Dessau thought.[480] In Capitolinus/Pollio (*Gall.*19.6) it means a 'revolt' in the *classical* sense of the word. In Vopiscus (*Pr.*9.1) the noun is not qualified with an adjective or a pronoun and also appears in the classical sense of the word.[481]

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[473] *TCT* (s.v.; pub. 2010) states: 'virtually nothing is certain about the author Martianus Capella beyond his name. His single work… has been dated as early as the end of the 3rd century and as later as the first third of the 6th century, its completion and publication are likely to have fallen between 410 and 429.'

[474] Dessau 1889:389; Mart.Cap.9.939.

[475] Cypr. *Ep*. 69.1; noted by Klebs (1890:453n.1), Souter 1949:383 (s.v.) and Blaise and Chirat 1954:768 (s.v.).

[476] AE 1967.478. The inscription's context and date require an independent study, see AE 1973.525 and PLRE, I: s.v. 'Flavius Philippus 7'.

[477] Jer. *Ep.*14.5; Oros. *Hist.*5.19.2, *Apol.*19.3, 20.5; Aug. *Quaest.Hept.* 3.8; Symmachus *Ep.*2.57.1; 2.86.2; 5.22.1; 8.27.1; 11.24.2; 11.24.3, 11.33.2.

[478] Speratianus, *H.*13.9, 24.6; Lampridius/Speratianus, *Hel.*17.7, *AS.*35.5; Speratianus/Gallicanus(?), *AC.*6.5; Capitolinus *ClA.*12.1; Vopiscus, *Tac.*2.3. Pollio used *specialiter* (*Cl.*14.15) and Vopiscus used *specialiter* more than *speciatim* (*Q*.8.10; *Car.* 4.7), see Lessing 1906:624.

[479] Lessing 1906:s.v. 'rebellio'.

[480] Dessau 1889:389–390; Syme 1968:178. Dessau also claimed that it appears three times in the corpus and that this phenomenon was only found in the sixth-century authors Marcellinus Comes and Jordanes (without giving references). In fact, it appears once in the fourth-century Hegesippus (3.8.3; Souter 1949:341).

[481] For the classical meaning in the feminine plural see Cic. *Scaur.*42: *ab his orti Poeni: multis Carthaginiensium rebellionibus, multis violatis fractisque foederibus nihil se degenerasse docuerunt.* The

Only in the first part of the corpus does *rebellio* in the masculine appear with the sense 'rebel': once in Speratianus/Capitolinus (*MA.*29.4) and once in Speratianus/Gallicanus (*AC.*9.11; in a letter of Faustina).[482] This part of the corpus suffers the most from authorship-attribution problems.[483] The Latin Panegyrics contain more striking similarities with far greater distribution over a smaller tract of text,[484] indicating such a phenomenon and its meagre distribution is inadmissible as evidence for a single author.

Mittere

Mittere has the sense of 'to put into a certain state'[485] or *referre*. Dessau argued that this particular meaning of *mittere*, as in *in litteras* or *in libros mittere*,[486] was peculiar to the corpus. This expression, nevertheless, is quite similar to *in acta mittere* in Seneca, Pliny the Younger, and Arnobius (*fl. c.*284–305), Lactantius' teacher.[487] This usage may perhaps indicate the peculiar style of Vopiscus, who nevertheless preferred the Ciceronian expression *in litteras referre* (ten times) to *in litteras mittere* (four times).[488]

Contundere: an overall assessment

Contundere is common since Cato the Censor and Plautus. It appears in all periods with various meanings, usually 'to suppress or subdue someone or something'.[489] In

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passage in *Gall*. could mean 'other revolts' (*pace* Lessing 1906): *fuisse autem et alias rebelliones sub eodem proprio dicemus loco…* (alias *Σ* ||alios *P*; with the exception of *allas* [*sic*] in Ch.) In *Pr.* Lessing placed a '?'.

[482] These cases might also be simply scribal errors.

[483] Chapter 2.

[484] See above, and n.439; see the observations of Rodgers (2012:294–295, and the tables in Rodgers 2012:330–334. Such similarities in no way led to perpetuation of single-authorship theories for that corpus, despite the need to reattribute these works to their authors (see, however, Chapter 2).

[485] See *OLD*, s.v. §15c–d; 19.

[486] The distribution is not even throughout the corpus. Dessau 1889:386; Lessing 1906:s.v. 'mittere'§3.d and 'litterae'§3. The cricisism of den Hengst against Dessau regarding this expression saves me many words (2010:178; cf. already Mommsen 1890:280 with n.2).

[487] *In acta mittere*~'to publish as news', *OLD*, s.v. 'actum'§3; Sen. *Ben.*2.10.4; Plin. *Pan.*75.1; Arn. *Adv. nat.* 5.15: *neque in litteras contulerimus ullas neque in publicam testificationem sacrorum celebritatibus miserimus.* Cf. also *in acta referre* in Plin. *HN* 2.147; Suet. *Calig.*36.2.

[488] Cic. *Verr.* 2.1.88 (twice), 89; in Vopiscus: *referre*, *A*.1.4; *Tac*.1.1, 7.5; *Pr*.1.1, 2.3, 3.2; *Q*.7.6; *Car*.11.2, 16.1, 21.1; *mittere*: *A*.1.9, 16.4, 24.9, *Tac*.11.7.

[489] Cato, *Agr.* 7.4, 107.1, 105.2, 114.1, 157.4; Plaut. *Amph.* 407 ('to crush/grind' or 'to hit'). See *TLL*, IV.804.81–806.80; *OLD*, s.v. The later military sense derives from these basic meanings.

the *TLL* (s.v. 806.12–806.70) and OLD (s.v. §3) this meaning of *contundere* is reported in Vergil, Sallust, Livy, Valerius Maximus, Tacitus. Even Nazarius used it in his Panegyric of Constantine.[490] Lewis and Short noted about this verb: 'very freq. and class. in prose and poetry'. In the corpus it is attested nine times: twice in biographies traditionally ascribed to Capitolinus (*AP.*5.4; *MB* 5.9), twice in Speratianus (*S.*18.3, *Cc.*[491] 11.3) and five times in the biographies of Vopiscus (*A.*31.1, 32.1; *Pr.*16.2; *Q* 13.1; *Car.* 9.4).

Dessau thought this word was rare in historical texts and pointed out that it only appeared once in Ammianus. The verb was eventually misrepresented as if it had appeared *only* in this corpus.[492] Dessau's argument on the supine of *participare*/*participari* and *participatio* is similar to that of *contundere*.[493]

General consideration

This discussion has attempted to demonstrate the need to contend with Dessau's statements rather than to try and explain them or to re- or overstate them. It appears that in *HA-Forschung* Classical Latin expressions and words become rare and 'Vulgar Latin' expressions, when Dessau is followed. Moreover, much the same can be said about other words and phrases that have been pointed out by subsequent commentators.[494] *Contundere* is apparently the best example, as even Cicero used it: *calumniam stultitiamque eius obtrivit ac contudit.*[495]

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[490] Verg. *Aen.*1.263–264; Cic. *Phil.*13.9; Sall. *Iug.*43.5; Livy 27.2.2 and 12.11; 40.52.6; Val.Max.2.7.1 and 11, 6.4.1, 3.7.1c and 7.3ext.; Tac.*Hist.*2.19.3, *Ann.*12.31; Plin.*Pan.* 44.7; Nazarius, *to Constantine Augustus* (IV(X)) 37.4. Klebs (1890:453n.1§3) noted Tacitus (*Hist.*4.28.11; *Ann.*4.46).

[491] There is a problem with the inscription of this biography.

[492] Dessau 1889:389: 'Und dieses sonst bei Historikern nicht gerade häufige Wort… Ammian hat es nur einmal (14, 8, 13)'. The *RE* entry (Diehl 1913:2099.1–20) listed it as peculiar to the corpus only, see pp.132ff. below.

[493] Dessau 1889:389; nine times and *not* in *Vopiscus* (Lessing 1906:s.v. 'participatus'); *OLD*: s.vv. '*participare'* and '*participatio'*; and *TLL*, s.v. '*participatus'*; cf. Paschoud 2011:72.

[494] See *General Introduction* for the criticisms of Alan Cameron and Adkin of Ratti and Paschoud (respectively). J.N. Adams attempted to draw conclusions from phenomena that appear only three times in the corpus (1977:96): '*Post*, on the other hand, is used freely as the first word in a main clause without an attached adverb: Spart.*Hadr.*13.3 "post in Siciliam navigavit"; Cap.*Pert.*2.2 "post in Moesia rexit alam"; Spart.*Did.Jul.*1.9 "post Germaniam inferiorem rexit" (note that in these three passages *post* is immediately followed by a place name; moreover twice in different Scriptores the verb is the same).' Clearly Adams appeals to the lowest common denominator, and overlooks the fact that in *DJ* the 'place

Deponere statuas/tabulas/imagines

Dessau treated this expression as a vulgar expression peculiar to this corpus, and an indication that Capitolinus and Speratianus are one and the same.[496] It appears twice in Capitolinus' *Maximini* (12.11: '*quas quidem tabulas post mortem eius senatus et deponi iussi*[*sse*]*t et exuri*'; 23.7: '*statuae atque imagines depositae sunt*'), once in *Gordiani* (31.7: '*statuas deponere*'), and once in Speratianus' *Severus* (14.5: '*depositis statuis eius*'; sc. Plautiani). These expressions are not identical.

Deponere in the sense of present-day English 'to take down a building' (*demoliri, destruere*, or *deicere* according to Dessau) is found in first- to third-century Jurists and in Tertullian.[497] This term has a similar sense and probably derives from one of

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name' is a name of a province in the accusative because it is a direct object of *regere* (unlike the locative prepositional phrases in Speratianus). If the examples Adams cited show anything, it is that Speratianus and Capitolinus had utilized word order differently; one placed the direct object before the verb, the other after it. Another example is Adams's attempt to find 'unobtrusive mannerisms *common to most of the Scriptores* which *were not general in Literary Latin*.' (ibid. 93), for instance by pointing out: 'When *postea* is first [*sic*] word in a principal clause, it almost always occurs in *certain* collocations or correlative expressions: Cap.*Pert.*2.6 *postea* iterum, Spart.*Sev.*14.7 *postea iterum*; Vop.*Aurel*.18.3 *postea tamen*; Vop.*Prob.*21.4 *postea tamen*; Cap.*Marc.Aurel*.9.1 "quod Marcus per verecundiam *primo* recusavit, *postea tamen* recepit"; Lamp.*Sev.Alex.*26.3 "senatores… usuras accipere *primo* vetuit… *postea tamen* iussit, ut…"; Cap.*Max.*11.5: "sed Maximinus *primo* ei gratias egit, *postea tamen ut* proditorem odio habuit." Cap.*Clod.Alb.*9.5 "quibus *primum* veniam dedit, *postea vero* eos cum matre percussit"; Cap.*Opell.Macr*.8.3 "*primo* Macrinus repugnavit, *postea vero* missis legatis petit pacem"; Cap.*Max.*14.3 "et *primo* quidem invitus Gordianus purpuram sumpserat, *postea vero*... volens suscepit imperium; cf. ib.1.7 "sed haec nomina Maximinus *primis* temporibus ipse prodidit, *postea vero*… occuli praecepit.' (95; my emphases). What this meagre distribution of two different phenomena (collocation and correlative use) perhaps shows, is that even on Adams's terms, prima facie this 'unobtrusive mannerism' (especially the 'reinforcement' of *postea* with an adverb when part of a 'correlative') is mostly common to Capitolinus (*seven* out of the *eleven* reported by Adams). The claim that *postea* as a 'correlative expression' was an 'unobtrusive mannerism… not general in literary Latin' is refuted by the following references: Caes. *B Civ.* 3.41.4: *Pompeius enim primo ignorans eius consilium, quod diverso ab ea regione itinere profectum videbat, angustiis rei frumentariae compulsum discessisse existimabat; postea per exploratores certior factus postero die castra movit breviore itinere se occurrere ei posse sperans*; cf. also Caes. *B Civ.* 3.45.3 (*OLD*, s.v. 'postea'); Livy 5.5.5; Plin. *HN* 4.67, and especially Speratianus, *S*.5.6 (reported by Lessing). On *postea vero* as part of a correlative: *quam (sc.turris) primo ad repentinos incursus humilem parvamque fecerunt. huc se referebant;... postea vero, ut est rerum omnium magister usus, hominum adhibita sollertia inventum est magno esse usui posse, si haec esset in altitudinem turris elata.* (Caes. *B Civ.* 2.8.1–3; cf. Cic. *De or.* 1.103; *Fam.* 13.1.2 (with *tamen*); Ulp. *Dig.* 43.3.1.14). *Postea* not part of a correlative but with a 'certain collocation' (as in the two instances from Vopiscus); with *vero*: Caes. *B Gall.* 4.37.4 (in Lewis and Short); Cic. *Verr*. 2.4.42; Plin. *HN* 34.19; Quint. *Inst.* 12.10.13; Sen. *Q Nat.* 3.11.5. Fronto, *Ep.* 3.3; Gai. *Inst.* 2.197. Suet. *Iul.* 54.3. with *tamen*: Gai. *Inst.* 4.15; Gell. *NA* 10.8.3, 10.16.12.

[495] *Caecin*.18.

[496] Dessau 1889:388.

[497] Iavolenus (*Dig.* 41.3.23.2): *depositis aedibus*; Ulpian (*Dig.* 8.2.17.1). Full list in *TLL*, s.v. 'depono' (V.580.54–75; 1911) and *OLD* s.v. §4. Tert. *pudic*. 20.11 (*TLL*, V.580.71–72). Cf. Klebs's remarks (1892:29–30n.3)

the classical meanings of this verb: *omittere*, *abiecere*, and *exuere*.[498] *Deponere* was also linked to termination or renunciation of political power or its symbols in several authors from various periods.[499]

The use of *deponere* with *statuas/tabulas/imagines* in the context of *damnatio memoriae* is found in two other authors, whose dates of composition are contemporary to the stated dates of composition of the corpus. The Tetrarchic-Constantinian author, Iulius Valerius, has: '*vos simulacra et imagines patris mei e templis ac sacris vestris deponendas esse duxistis*' (2.5 l.330). Lactantius (*c.*313–325) used this phrase for the *damnatio memoriae* of Maximian Herculius (*c.*310–11)[500] in the same way that Capitolinus described that of Maximinus Thrax. The following parallels illustrate this:

Lactantius	'SHA'
DMP.42.1: *Eodemque tempore senis Maximiani statuae Constantini iussu revellebantur et imagines, ubicumque pictus esset, detrahebantur. Et quia senes ambo simul plerumque picti erant, et imagines simul deponebantur amborum.*	Cap.*Max.*12.10–11: *iussit praeterea tabulas pingi ita... ut facta eius pictura loqueretur. quas quidem tabulas post mortem eius senatus et deponi iussi*[*sse*]*t et exuri,* Cap. *Max.* 23.7: *in oppido igitur vicino statim Maximini statuae atque imagines depositae sunt,*
Cf., Suet.*Oth.*7.1 [Otho is perceived and acts like a follower of Nero] *ac super ceteras gratulantium adulantiumque blanditias ab infima plebe appellatus Nero nullum indicium recusantis dedit... certe et imagines statuasque eius reponi passus est.*	*Gd.*31.7: [Philip the Arab, after conspiring successfully to kill Gordian III, tries to view himself as his follower] *Denique Philippus, cum eum interfecisset, neque imagines eius tollere neque statuas deponere neque nomen abradere.*

Dessau proposed that Speratianus' use of this phrase in *Severus* suggests that 'the same hand is present as in the Lives of Capitolinus'.[501] Following this logic, Lactantius' *de mortibus persecutorum* and Valerius' *Alexander* should also belong to that 'same hand'. Or rather, this is a political expression, common around the beginning of the fourth century, like *forma conspicuus* in Silver-Latin authors. A

[498] *TLL*, V.577.52–579.68; *OLD*, s.v.§2.
[499] *TLL* V.577.58–60; 578.34–44; 581.78.
[500] Creed 1984:117; Städele 2003:198n.138.
[501] Dessau 1889:388.

similar phrase found in both Capitolinus and Lactantius is the *vestis regia* (imperial robe).[502] The two passages do not seem to be the result of reciprocal Pagan-Christian polemic, but 'any such allusion to Lactantius' tract would, of course, strongly support a Constantinian date for the *HA*, when Lactantius was still worth answering'.[503] A quasi-intertextual connection of political expressions exists among early fourth-century authors, who claim to have worked around the same period[504] and who used political expressions from the time of the tetrarchy.

The remains of Dessau's single-authorship argument

Out of the *nine* words and phrases considered by Dessau as neologisms peculiar to the corpus and hence 'proofs' of single authorship,[505] *eight* are either common in all periods or well anchored in the diachronic chain of Latin language and literature.[506] Their meagre distribution, their use only by *some* of the authors in the corpus, and the ascription problems in the manuscripts show that Dessau's negative argument against the corpus' multi-author claims is simply invalid.[507] Moreover, the expressions are so common or have such meagre distribution that they cannot even be used to re-attribute the biographies among the authors stated in the manuscripts, where the authorship attribution is uncertain.

Interestingly, Dessau himself admitted that his *hypothesis* was problematic, after he restated his disregard of the chronological statements, which he held to be

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[502] Lact. *DMP*.29.3: *Maximianus… deponit regiam vestem*; Capitolinus, *Max.*17.1–2 *Maximinus...conscindebat vestem regiam.* The expression resurfaces in a much later text, the so-called *Chronica Theodericiana* (Anon. Vales. II) §53.

[503] Alan Cameron 1965b:248 (replying to a Dessauist attempt to date the entire corpus to the 390s, because it supposedly contains a polemic against Lactantius); there are other possible intertextual links between Constantinian biographies of the corpus and Lactantius, and these links further support the Constantinian dating. See Peter 1892:33–35; Lippold 1991:109, 266n.38, 319–320.

[504] *Max.*1.1–3; *Gd.*34.6; see Part II.

[505] Dessau 1889:386–390.

[506] Respectively: *rei publicae necessarius*, *forma conspicuus* and *contundere*; *conflictum habere* and *mittere≈reffere*; the only exception being *rebellio* (twice).

[507] Philological arguments and errors, similar to Dessau's, had been used in the past to claim that *Origo Gentis Romanae* (Niebuhr), Lactantius' *DMP* (S. Brandt) and the *Testamentum S. Remigii* (Krusch) were forgeries. These forgery-arguments are nowadays obselete because they were refuted on similar lines, respectively, by Momigliano 1958; Bury 1926; Jones, Grierson, and Crook 1957 (with further references). My emerging conclusion, therefore, does not lack precedents in modern scholarship.

inconsistent (in a corpus attributed to six different authors; in itself a *petitio principi* of a circular argument):[508]

> If we take all the references to the personalities of the six authors as deceptions [Maskerade], what prevents us from assuming that the biographies, in the form and shape that we have them, are the work of one and the same writer? I cannot deny (verhehlen), that this rather simple conclusion also has its difficulties.[509]

This important concluding remark— 'Dessau's simple firm statement: a single author for the whole *corpus*' or 'firm and lucid'[510]—is overlooked, unlike Dessau's 'Eine Mystification liegt vor', too often cited and echoed, even in popular works.[511] Later critics of Dessau's theory even noted that it caused more trouble than the alleged problems it pretended to solve.[512] How so problematic a *hypothesis* came to be established, suggesting, as it does, an unparalleled large-scale forgery on the basis of non-existent similarities between six authors and a few scribal errors, is perhaps the mystification.

The *antiquus error* appears to go back to Baynes, who adopted a unitarist approach to the corpus and preferred to dismiss the counter-Dessau arguments because he was writing as 'a student of history'.[513] Susan Ballou noted about single-author assumptions:

> The weakest spot in this, as in all other attempts to prove single authorship, is confessed by the author in his frank disregard (p.75) of all literary considerations: 'Upon the stylistic differences to which Klebs, Wölfflin and Frankfurter have attributed great importance, I confess that I do not feel qualified to express a judgement. I write as a student of history and not a literary critic.' But the literary criteria do form an important crux, and any theory that disregards them is inadequate.[514]

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[508] Dessau 1889:337–348, 390; cross-references and references to 'present-day' events could sometimes appear to be inconsistent, even in much less disputed authors, e.g. the possible dates of various Panegyrics (for instance: Nixon and Rodgers 1994:*passim*; Barnes 2011:181–184) and Plutarch (Pelling 2002:7–10). See Part II.
[509] Dessau 1889:390–391.
[510] Respectively: Syme 1968:178; Syme 1983:210=221; see further below and especially n. 559.
[511] Dessau 1889:392; Birley 1976a:18; Syme 1983:13>Birley 2003:138.
[512] Frankfurter 1893:221–222; Crees 1911:23–58.
[513] Baynes 1926:75, 110; cf. Syme 1968:212.
[514] Ballou 1928b:410–411.

It now appears that these views, alongside recent pluralist approaches to the corpus, deserve to be given priority over Dessau.[515] The studies of Wölfflin and Klebs have rightly questioned the validity of Dessau's thesis and provided a real conservative defence of the corpus's claims. In *HA-Forschung*, however, only Dessau 1889 is taken into account, and rarely with lip service to Mommsen's 1890 'conservative' and unsuccessful attempt to compromise with, rather than criticize, Dessau's 'findings' by postulating active 'editing' of the corpus in a later period.[516]

In short, Dessau 1889 can no longer be used as a trump card to dismiss claims of plurality of the corpus and pluralist theories. Both the manuscript tradition and real conservative views deserve to be respected.[517]

Dessau's critics and the 'editor theory'

The later reaction of two philologists, Eduard Wölfflin and Elimar Klebs,[518] provided solid and consistent defence of multiple authorship. Their lines of enquiry were based on several major issues.[519] Firstly, Dessau's single-author argument contained factual errors, yet they were unable to dismiss all of Dessau's philological 'proofs'. Secondly, they offered various explanations for the few repeated expressions pointed out by Dessau and for some neologisms. They argued on similar lines that the authors had either used quasi-everyday language ('newspaper' language), imitated the biographical genre of their predecessors (e.g. Suetonius, Marius Maximus), or used a flat language similar to that of the Jurists.[520] Thirdly, Wölfflin originally suggested Vopiscus as the final editor of the corpus who formed its 'unity', and Klebs suggested

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[515] Contra Paschoud 2004:330 and others.
[516] As in Barnes 1978:*passim*; 2000; Birley 2003:138, 146–149; Johne 2008:45–46; Burgess 2010; Rohrbacher 2013:146. *Introduction*.
[517] Contra White 1967:133 and others (e.g. in n.516). *Introduction*.
[518] For the historical arguments of Klebs (1890; 1892; cf. n. 519) see below.
[519] Their articles were not only discussions of the language of the corpus as some assume (Baynes 1926:75; Momigliano 1966:150, 176nn.10–11; Syme 1968:178n.4, 180; J. N. Adams 1972:186; Paschoud 2004; den Hengst 2010:177–185). They also provided historical (e.g. Klebs 1890:440–452; 1892:5–14; Wölfflin 1892:486–488) and literary discussions (e.g. Wölfflin 1892:498–511; Klebs 1892:19–24).
[520] Klebs 1892:24–30; Wölfflin 1892:469–473 (they refer to each other's studies, and both accepted some of the other's arguments).

a possible comparison with the *Panegyrici Latini* to explain similarities in diction.[521] Wölfflin and Klebs's disagreement mainly concerned the nature and character of the possible editor/redactor and his possible influence on the language of the corpus. Wölfflin, unlike Mommsen, provisionally identified the final redactor with Vopiscus,[522] and formulated his editor theory in order to explain the formation and state of the corpus rather than compromise with Dessau's findings, which he refuted. Klebs simply rejected the editor theories of both Mommsen and Wölfflin, and argued that the corpus was completely eclectic.

The studies of Klebs and Wölfflin contained two valuable observations: (1) they both indicated that paratexts were corrupted during the medieval transmission; the difficulties had been known since the Renaissance and could explain most of the 'inconsistencies'; (2) more importantly, they both pointed out differences in the language of the various authors.[523] Their arguments were bluntly dismissed or ignored by subsequent scholars, as we have seen.

The ad hoc editor theory introduced by Mommsen, in order to explain away Dessau's philological argument, was formulated before the studies of Wölfflin and Klebs were published. Mommsen's name, however, seems to have guaranteed its half-life through the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.[524] For instance, the influential *RE* article states:

> The activity of the redactor of the collection, however, was not limited only to a selection from Lives by various authors mentioned in the text…, and the six authors exhibit the closest points of contact in their linguistic and stylistic relation…: numerous typical phrases and words, that are found only in the HA, and indeed in almost all its authors uniformly [gleichmäßig], such as (*in litteras*)

[521] Wölfflin 1892:511–516; Klebs 1892:19.
[522] Wölfflin later followed Peter 1892 and identified the redactor with Capitolinus (*Literarisches Centralblatt für Deutschland* 1893, 120–121). The identity of a possible editor/redactor for the corpus, if there was any in antiquity, remains anyone's guess; cf. Chapter 1.
[523] Klebs 1890:436–438; 1892:518–521; Wölfflin 1892:515–521. Chapter 2.
[524] Mommsen 1890:280, followed by Momigliano 1966 and to a lesser extent by Lippold 1998; Lippold 2006, see *Introduction*.

> *mittere*, *rei publicae necessarius*, *conflictu habito*, *statuas* oder *tabulas deponere*, *contundere*, *speciatim*, *participatus* (rather than *-io*), *rebellio* (= *-is*).[525]

Lippold and other 'conservatives' held a similar view.[526] This theory is no longer necessary or relevant, and Klebs had noted the invalidity of Mommsen's editor compromise, after exposing some of Dessau's 'peculiar' expressions as common expressions.[527] This discussion seems to support further Klebs's view about the eclectic nature of the corpus.[528]

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The 'redactor' in this case turns out to be no more than an excerptor or collector who collected the biographies from various biographical series. Moreover, the inclusion or exclusion of an author or biography in the corpus could have been influenced by scribes and copyists, as we have seen. The formation of the corpus as a whole appears to be more eclectic than *HA-Forschung* assumed in the late twentieth century.

Dessau's reaction in 1892

In 1892, Dessau published his reply to his critics but added nothing new to the debate. He simply restated with greater emphasis his 1889 arguments about the inconsistencies of the stated dates of composition,[529] his critique of Enmann's *Kaisergeschichte* to explain the similarities between the corpus and Eutropius and Victor,[530] and his philological 'proof'.[531] Nevertheless, Dessau half-heartedly noted that Klebs's comparison with the corpus of the *Panegyrici Latini* could be viable, only to dismiss it with a circular argument about literary activity in the third century.[532] Dessau's comments in that reply were either overlooked or restated as further 'proofs' of single authorship by subsequent scholars. It therefore seems advantageous

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[525] Diehl 1913:2099.1–20.
[526] Lippold 2006:355–356 (but more moderate than Mommsen and Lippold 1998); Momigliano 1966:*passim*. Cf. *Introduction*.
[527] Klebs 1890:453.
[528] Klebs 1890:464; Bury 1900:444.
[529] E.g. Dessau 1892:563–567≤Dessau 1889:339–347.
[530] Dessau 1892:562–563≤Dessau 1889:361–370; replying to Klebs 1890:440–449;
[531] Dessau 1892:590–591, 594–601≈Dessau 1889:386–390.
[532] Dessau 1892:594.

to examine these comments as well, to see whether they supported his original case or in fact refuted what he had originally set out to prove.

Texts, paratexts and Dessau's subjectivity

While criticizing Wölfflin's conservative discussion of the ascriptions,[533] Dessau admitted:

> When earlier scholars reassigned particular works [*Stücke*] from the first half of the collection to an author of another work from the same half, then this practice had justification in the state of the manuscript tradition. Evidently the works are, of course, not transmitted in their correct order. And since the manuscripts do not repeat the author's name, where several works have the same author but write *eiusdem*, the claims/ascriptions [*Anrecht*] of the various authors to various works must have been confused through the alterations in the order of the works. The transfer of works, however, from the first part of the collection to an author of the later groups, which are clearly separated in the tradition from the other groups, does not have this justification.[534]

As we noted in Chapter 2, this insight into possible corruptions in manuscript ascriptions—a possibility originally eschewed by Dessau[535]—can indeed solve the 'web of contradictions', which Dessauists use to discredit the authorial claims of the corpus.[536] Moreover, it is in fact possible for an author's name in a multi-author corpus to become corrupt or to be shifted between separated parts of the same corpus, as we have seen with Mamertinus in the Latin Panegyrics and Victor in *Corpus Aurelianum*.

Nevertheless, Dessau roundly dismissed all this, together with Wölfflin's suggestions of potential corruptions and reattributions, by asserting:

> In my view, titles and all the passages, where the *authors* speak of themselves, are false labels, originating from the *authors* themselves, whose *mala fides* is otherwise sufficiently established. After their publication the biographies did not go through any remarkable changes.[537]

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[533] Dessau 1892:596–599.
[534] Dessau 1892:598≠Dessau 1889:386.
[535] Dessau 1889:338, 386≥Syme 1968:176, 180; see further below.
[536] Dessau 1889:337–347≥Syme 1968:182–183≅Barnes 1978:13–18 >Birley 2003:134–137.
[537] Dessau 1892:599 (≅Syme 1968:176=Syme 1983:28); this was basically a restatement of his original conclusion, which disregarded the tradition, in Dessau 1889:390.

Syme repeated this statement as an argument in favour of single authorship.[538] Titles and ascriptions of ancient works are the most fragile part of the transmission, and were therefore susceptible to corruption and contamination, as we saw in Chapter 2 with numerous cases. In addition, most classical texts obviously did go through changes after their publication in antiquity and during the medieval transmission:[539] there are not many cases where we possess the *Urtext* of an ancient work (or even a manuscript earlier than the ninth century). In fact, the differences between the two classes of manuscripts of the corpus (Π and Σ) are a good example of alterations made to ancient texts in the medieval period long after they were published.

At this point, one can also dismiss Dessau's criticism of Wölfflin's methodology and any subsequent Dessauist refusal to discuss the problems of the manuscript transmission. Syme eschewed the textual problems because he viewed them as 'theories of intolerable complexity'.[540] In this he again followed Dessau faithfully:

> According to Wölfflin, redactor, copyists and readers took a hand in the shape of the biographies transmitted to us. This was done to a degree which is only manifested in a few works of antiquity; but in any case only in works such as popular books [*Volksbücher*], construction books, school books and handbooks—these were particularly exposed to such a fate. Whether this treatment of the transmission and of the entire situation is correct—the reader may decide.[541]

This discussion, it is hoped, will enable the reader to evaluate Dessau's last statement in particular and his other arguments in general. As we have seen, other multi-author corpora did go through various types of editing stages, most notably *Corpus Caesarianum* and *Corpus Aurelianum*, and even the Latin Panegyrics. Moreover, what prevents us from seeing the corpus as a *Volksbuch*? It was 'a champion of Dessau',[542]

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[538] Syme (1968:176≈181–182).
[539] On modification and revision of texts in antiquity (whether by the author or not), see Mülke 2008; Gurd 2012.
[540] Syme 1968:180; he also noted that Wölfflin's argument was 'not easy to comprehend' (ibid.); cf. below n.541.
[541] Dessau 1892:599≈Syme 1968:180, 182; 1983:28, who accuses conservatives of 'juggling' ascriptions. It appears to be a legitimate method, however, when there is an obvious or possible manuscript corruption; to make an argument out of the dismissal of the critics of Dessau is less so.
[542] Syme 1983:110, 234.

Ernst Hohl, who noted that the 'HA' was a *Volksbuch* of 'light literature' (*Unterhaltungsliteratur*)—a suggestion already made by Wölfflin.[543] Moreover, we have seen that the Σ-class of the corpus was in fact a product of a *medieval* reader and redactor, who tried to correct the defects of the hyperarchetype and preserved the original readings in some passages, which went through Christian 'castration' in Π, during the Carolingian era.[544]

Verbatim use of non-existent source (?)

To return to Dessau's single-authorship argument: replying to the stylistic and linguistic diversity expounded by Klebs and Wölfflin, Dessau attempted to explain them as a result of his postulated author working with various sources. This argument was later restated by Syme and his followers, mostly to counter pluralist arguments.[545] This reply was contradictory to Dessau's own original attempt to pre-empt criticism by stating that the 'common' and 'peculiar' mannerisms that he found could not have been explained by the use of sources common to the various authors or biographies, e.g. Marius Maximus, or the facts that they were contemporaneous.

Dessau 1889:	Dessau 1892:
That the authors belong to the same era... and had the same *Muster* in front of them is not a sufficient explanation. The continuators of Caesar also had the same *Muster* and belonged to the same era, but they differ [unterscheiden], as we know, through sufficient peculiarities. To pin the similarities on the sources is difficult. (385–386)	It does not occur to me to deny that in various points of the *Vitae* the language is very different. But I do not think, that this diversity can be explained with a diversity of authors. (601) An author, who hardly adapted the substance of his sources, will hardly (or rarely) have taken the trouble to influence their language: he will have 'transcribed' [abgeschrieben] them in a way quite different from that of other ancient historians. *In my view*, the *Vitae* disintegrate linguistically into three parts: those transcribed from Latin sources, those translated from Greek

[543] Hohl 1914:705–706; 1937:141.
[544] This was the thesis of Hohl, see pp.80–86 above.
[545] As we saw pp.117ff. above.

	sources, and finally those of the author's own work. (602≈577≈601)[546]

Such statements remained unsubstantiated, and can never be substantiated because they rely on *assumptions* that the entire corpus is a forgery, that Dessau's single forger existed, and that the forger copied verbatim 'lost' and non-extant sources: Marius Maximus, Syme's postulated *Ignotus*, the hypothetical *Kaisergeschichte* of Enmann, and an unknown Greek source.[547] None of these sources 'survives', and for three of them we do not even have *testimonia* (not to mention fragments). Only Marius Maximus has circumstantial evidence, and his 'fragments' can only be restored from direct quotations of his by some of the authors of the corpus. Yet Dessau and Dessauists are willing to dismiss all the sources and authors mentioned in the corpus (some with good *testimonia*) as apocryphal, and claim that biographical writing was uncommon under the Empire, even though we know this is far from being the case.[548] Plutarch, Suetonius, Marius Maximus, and putative sources such as *Enmann's (Ur)kaisergeschichte* and Syme's *Ignotus* are believed to have been written as biographies before the 'SHA' put pen to paper; thus are earlier in terms of relative chronology, irrespective of the actual date of the corpus.

In sum, with this type of circular (and even contradictory) assertions, one could dismiss the multi-author claims of other ancient corpora, or claim that Pliny, Tacitus, and Suetonius or republican authors are the same author, and hence forgeries. Jean Hardouin would have welcomed such assertions, as he even claimed that the leader

[546] Restated in Syme 1983:211≅Syme 1968:178, 182≤Barnes 1978:*passim*≥Birley 2003:140; Burgess 2010:790; Alan Cameron 2011b:744; Rohrbacher 2013.
[547] Pp.117ff. above; *Introduction*.
[548] Dessau 1892:594. On the increase in biographical writing under the Empire see Momigliano 1993:9. Some of the sources cited in the corpus have at least circumstantial evidence for that period. On some authors, see Schanz-Hosius: §§545, 547 (on Cordus, before he was replaced by Syme's *Ignotus* in *HLL*) and 548: 'Mag auch der eine oder der andere fingiert sein, sie alle für apokryph zu halten, ist unmöglich.' The statement is followed by good *testimonia* for some of the authorities (overlooked by Dessauists); cf. also Bury 1900:446; Alan Cameron 1965b:250; Janiszewski 2006. *FRHist* (esp. Cornell 2013) follow Dessau, and overlook these publications and reservations, including the detailed cases of Peter, the editor of *HRRel.*, for including the authors cited in the corpus in a collection of fragments and for accepting the corpus' texts as authentic (Peter 1892).

of this large-scale forgery of nearly all the Classics left his footprint in the 'SHA'.[549] The problem with Dessau's argument was well noted by a former Dessauist:

> In his opinion, once the author had decided to present his work as a collection of lives written a century earlier, he felt free to reproduce his sources without adapting them to his own style of writing… If only Dessau had taken the trouble to explain to his less penetrating readers exactly how it could be proved that these segments had been taken over without changes, I for one would have been deeply grateful to him. As it is, Dessau leaves us to our own devices.[550]

Unfortunately, the same could be said about the '*Quellenforschung*' of Dessauists in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, which used this type of argumentation as a 'reply' to pluralists.[551] Curiously, Lactantius' *DMP* has gone through similar abuse, when it was taken to be a forgery on similar grounds as the corpus, and was dated to the 360s because *Quellenforschung* had 'demonstrated' that he had copied a recension of the *EKG* from *c.*350.[552] This question of the sources requires a reorientation within reasonable limitations, especially since Dessau did not make any valid argument in support of single authorship; indeed, Dessau later admitted that he had *not* proved his case.

Cui bono? and Dessau's *désaveu*

Dessau's critics, mostly Mommsen and Klebs, have pointed out the unprecedented scale and general improbability of the forgery he was suggesting,[553] even if one sets aside Dessau's 'philological' argument. Dessau's reply, other than restating the inconsistencies in the corpus,[554] included an attempt to 'extend', or rather skew, Mommsen's question of *cui bono*, which was strictly directed to the invalidity of Dessau's argument about the prophecy relating to the descendants of Claudius II[555] and for which Dessau had 'no satisfactory answer'.[556] Dessau then attempted to apply

[549] Hardouin: Momigliano 1966:16; *ODCC*[3] (s.v.); *Q.*2.1.
[550] den Hengst 2010:181–182 on Dessau 1892:577–601.
[551] Syme 1971a; Barnes 1978; Alan Cameron 2011b:744; Cornell 2013; Rohrbacher 2013.
[552] See Part II.
[553] Mommsen 1890:*passim*, esp. 229, 245, 280; Klebs 1892:e.g. 2–5.
[554] Dessau 1892:564–565, 567, 578.
[555] Mommsen 1890:229, 254n.1. On this issue, see Part II *passim*.
[556] Hohl 1958:145.

this question on the entire problem of the motives of the forger.[557] Two points from the beginning and closing of this part of Dessau's discussion illustrate the nature of his arguments:

> *Cui bono* the authors (or author) of the biographies put on the masks under which they speak, according to my assertion? With regard to this question, I must attempt to state how I see the sequence of events.
> But first I should like to state that we must believe in a forgery (*Fälschung*), if it is proven [wenn sie erwiesen ist], even when the motives of the forger are not clear to us.[558]

And only to end his discussion of the forgery with the following sentence:

> I cannot prove [beweisen] that this was the sequence of events, it must suffice that my construction is possible and takes the difficulties of the situation into account.[559]

In short, Dessau not only twisted Mommsen's question but admitted that he did not have an answer to his own distorted question. The 'schwierigkeiten' are the alleged contradictions and inconsistencies he had found in a multi-author corpus, the 'similarities' in language, and the 'anachronisms' he thought were compelling evidence for a later date, such as the *Severus*-Victor correspondence.[560] *Erweisen* and *beweisen* are almost synonyms even in present-day German (both mean 'to prove'), and roughly translate into the Latin *demonstrare* ('to demonstrate'), according to the *Deutsches Wörterbuch* of the Brothers Grimm (s.vv.).[561] It is precisely this practice that was later reproduced by subsequent Dessauists: to suggest hypothetical and ad hoc arguments as solutions to a non-existent problem and admit they are not

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[557] Dessau 1892:572–579; this confused Momigliano (1966:163) and subsequent scholars (e.g. Rohrbacher 2013:146). The only scholars to report Mommsen's original observation correctly were Baynes (1926:53) and Hohl (1958:145–146).
[558] Dessau 1892:572≈Syme 1968:183.
[559] Dessau 1892:579; cf. also his hesitant remarks about 'der oder die Verfasser' in 576 (cf. the self-contradicting statement in 577).
[560] See *Introduction*; Part II; Chapter 2 and pp.92ff. above.
[561] http://woerterbuchnetz.de/DWB/ and www.duden.de/rechtschreibung/beweisen; I am not sure that Dessau would have said he 'demonstrated' his case (as some suggest; e.g. Rohrbacher 2013:146, following Syme 1983:28≈Syme 1968:182–183).

necessarily valid, only in order for them to be restated more firmly in subsequent literature.[562]

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The supposition that Dessau proved or demonstrated a single author misrepresents both his 'philological proof' and his original statements. His proposal that there was a single author behind this corpus was incorrect. Basing articles and monographs on, and roundly dismissing statements in the corpus and pluralistic arguments with, a reference to Dessau alongside positive epithets, are far from valid approaches to the problems inherent in this corpus. As Syme himself wrote: 'the "literature of the subject" is a fatal substitute' for reading any text.[563] The text of this multi-author corpus deserves to be read and analysed in its own right, as are other classical literary texts.

[562] See *Introduction*.
[563] Syme 1983:212: 'One wonders whether conservative critics examine the HA as a whole, whether they read it often enough. The "literature of the subject" is a fatal substitute.'

Conclusions

This part has looked at the prima facie state and claims of the corpus, and the arguments brought against them. Each chapter has demonstrated separately that this state, both in terms of authorial claims and generic expectations, are different from those conventionally applied to this corpus. In Chapter 1 it has been shown that the modern title applied to this work, 'Historia Augusta', is a result of a modern misconception of early modern naming practices. One of the stated authors, Vopiscus, used this title for the works of Tacitus and made it clear that he had perceived himself, and other imperial biographers, as writing in a completely different generic framework. This awareness of genre and generic expectations fits well with the statements we find in earlier biographers, such as Cornelius Nepos and Plutarch. The need to mark one's biographical account of an emperor as biography, rather than history, seems to have been a logical development under the Empire, where the lines between an emperor's personal and public activities were perceived as having a direct link to his public activity. The same generic expectations are also reflected in the paratexts, which mark the biographies of the corpus as accounts of historical figures, but with potentially varying degrees of fictionality, which is completely different from 'forgery'. In short, the corpus never passed itself off as serious political history or intended to deceive its reader by claiming to be such. We have also seen that ancient works of, or with, fiction carry their authors' names *without* modern suspicion that their authorial attribution is part of the fiction or a 'forgery', especially when we are dealing with less famous personalities.

On the same footing of paratextuality, Chapter 1 discussed an important neglected title of the corpus in one of the two earliest surviving manuscripts, the undamaged Bamberg manuscript. The corpus as a whole was most probably presented as selections (*excerpta*) of a longer series of imperial biographies, where each biography, or series of biographies, originated from a different author. The questions and implications deriving from this title—notably the *possible* intervention of the

'excerptor' and the need to reconsider the imperfections of the corpus—were explored in the subsequent chapters.

Chapter 2 examined the prima state of the individual paratexts and the state of the main texts (the biographies). It tried to survey and compare the state of other multi-author corpora in antiquity, and show that the *lack* of order and confused authorial ascriptions in such ancient works can easily be explained as a result of scribal negligence or confusion already in antiquity (as with the continuators of Caesar). The two branches of the manuscript tradition, Σ and Π, manifest different types of disorder of the biographies in the corpus—they are always out of chronological order, whether of composition or imperial succession. The various manuscripts also manifest different authorial ascriptions. Moreover, some manuscript traditions included Suetonius in the corpus, while others excluded the biographies ascribed to Vopiscus. All this demonstrates how arbitrary and accidental an authorial ascription or the position of a work in an ancient multi-author corpus can be—our perception of such corpora might have been completely different in the case where only one tradition had come down to us (e.g. with or without Suetonius or Vopiscus, and so forth).

This investigation therefore might have broader implications on our understanding of the formation and transmission of other corpora, especially on the Latin Panegyrics. The latter's authenticity may be less disputed, but its surviving manuscripts are much later and clearly go back to the same archetype, unlike our corpus. The clear differences we noted among the manuscripts of 'SHA' seem to suggest that scholars should put less emphasis on the order of the panegyrics and be more cautious about drawing conclusions from their non-chronological order, and consequently the possible intervention of Pacatus in the corpus.

This chapter also looked at the intervention of scribes in ancient texts. It has shown, *inter alia*, how *Corpus Aurelianum* was formed in antiquity and later interpolated

during its transmission in the eleventh century. I have attempted to compare it with the medieval redactor of Σ, any time between the ninth and thirteenth centuries. This redactor interpolated the biographical corpus with passages from Orosius and Paul the Deacon, in order to fill in the lacuna in the biographical corpus, which is clearly due to physical damage in the hyperarchetype.[564] The comparison with *Corpus Aurelianum* and the *Origo Constantini* has shown that these are authentic fourth-century works, despite much later interpolations. Such interpolations are traditionally used to explain exact similarities between earlier and later texts, and never used to challenge the earlier dating. We then considered the alleged similarity between the *Life of Severus* and Aurelius Victor; it has shown that the similarity is not so compelling as previously thought and is most probably a result of a common source used by both in most passages as scholars, especially subsequent to Dessau, have suggested. Only in one passage is there an 'exact' similarity, most probably because Victor's text copied *Severus* (as he did with Suetonius), and Victor therefore provides a *terminus ante* of *c.*360 for the *Severus* and possibly the biographical corpus. We briefly noted the cross-contamination between the two passages in humanistic and early modern editions. Therefore, a vertical interpolation between two texts has no probative force to support a forgery or a dating of an entire corpus of texts.

As a prelude to Chapter 3, the general imperfections and inconsistencies in the corpus were surveyed, and two possible conclusions were offered: (1) these imperfections and inconsistencies could easily be explained through the original state of the corpus: selections (*excerpta*) from various authors and biographical series; (2) these imperfections appear to indicate the lack of any organizing 'mastermind' behind the corpus as we have it. On this aspect, the intervention of the excerptor appears to have been almost non-existent: he did not even try to straighten out the inconsistencies, even the authorial claims about the scope of their work, which in

[564] Pp.74–80 above.

some biographies goes beyond the scope of the corpus we *currently* have. The two arguments brought against the authorial claim were therefore the alleged contradictions between the paratext and text, which scholars were able to correct according to reasonable standards of classical scholarship, and Dessau's single-author argument.

Chapter 3 noted the special position Dessau 1889 has in modern scholarship, in which his single-author conclusion is simply taken for granted. This chapter has demonstrated that Dessau's argument is simply unfounded: all the expressions, which Dessau thought were unrecorded elsewhere and appeared throughout the corpus, turned out to be either common in all periods or well anchored in the diachronic chain of Latin language and literature. Moreover, these expressions appear only in some of the authors (in some cases only three times throughout the corpus), and have well-established diachronic developments and intertextual links with earlier authors outside the corpus. This conclusion also dismisses Mommsen's postulated editor, whom he and other 'conservatives' postulated in order to explain Dessau's 'unerhörte Wortverbindungen'. Klebs, who refuted some of Dessau's philological arguments, noted the corpus's eclectic nature—this seems to apply also to the excerptor, who simply made an arbitrary selection of longer biographical series of imperial biographies. One may rightly ask: 'how did the thing take shape?'[565] The simple answer appears to be that 'it never had a shape', at least as we currently have it. This is what the confused paratexts, varying scope of the corpus in various manuscripts, and lack of linguistic unity seem to suggest.

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Considering that Dessau himself was hesitant about his single-author conclusion, and later admitted that he did had not proved his case, there is no obvious reason to maintain an overstatement of Dessau 1889 as the basis for further speculations

[565] Syme 1971b:70 (*passim*, several times)

about, or as a trump card against conservative approaches to, the corpus. We could also maintain reasonable scepticism about his other arguments. Dessau's many critics and non-Dessauists, working outside *HAC*, seem to have been right all along, more or less.

The authors of the corpus, and the corpus itself, deserve to be examined in their own right. This will be done in Part II with the establishment of their stated era of composition and their possible contribution to our understanding of that important and quite obscure period of Roman history.

PART II: THE CORPUS AND THE TETRARCHIC-CONSTANTINIAN PERIOD

Introduction

The modern reasons for depriving the corpus of its stated authors having been removed, it is now possible to examine whether one can accept the various stated dates of composition given in the various biographies by their stated authors. As we have already seen, this question was in fact Dessau's first line of argument: to suggest the corpus was *possibly* a *Fälschung* from a later period (*c.*395) only because *his* understanding of the chronological statements of *some* biographies, made in a prima facie multi-author corpus, pointed to *c.*305/310 or earlier and manifested what he viewed as a 'web of contradictions' and improbabilities/inaccuracies.[566] Consequently he came to the assertion that some biographies cannot have been written before Constantine and therefore must have been written after Constantine,[567] and consequently *perhaps* by a single author.[568] Dessauists and some 'conservatives' have restated either verbatim or with minor variants this appeal to alleged chronological contradictions,[569] even though there were alternative explanations for the chronological statements in the corpus published both before and after Dessau's article (1889), Mommsen's reply (1890), and Momigliano's sceptical summary of the issue (1954).[570]

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[566] Dessau 1889:337–348, esp. 337, 344 and 347.

[567] 'Since these writings contain absolutely no traces of pre-Constantinian composition, it is most obvious to see them as a clumsy work of the post-Constantinian age' (Dessau 1889:344; cf. also 347, 375). Lippold noted other absurdities (1991:10, 25, 31, 35).

[568] 'Or is the plurality of its authors, like the date of composition (*Entstehungzeit*) of the biographies, also fake (*fingirt*)?' (Dessau 1889:378). Chapter 3 explored the validity of the answer to that question.

[569] Dessauists: Seeck 1890:615–629; Stern 1953:28–31; Syme 1968:101, 176, 180–182; 1971b:261; Barnes 1978:13–16; 2000; Birley 1976a:9–12; 2003:133–137; den Hengst 1981:11; Kolb 1987:1; Alan Cameron 2011b:743, 745; Thomson 2012:21, 37–39, 53. 'Conservatives': Momigliano 1966:169–170 (pub.1954), followed by Jones 1964:1071n.1, appealing only to Mommsen's (1890) editing theory (see n. 570).

[570] Most important: Gemoll 1886:4–14; Vermaat 1893:71–115 (most comprehensive treatment so far); De Sanctis 1896:63–71, 75–80; Bury 1900:444–445; 1926:479–480; Lécrivain 1904:13–16, 21–27; Romano 1977; 1978:esp.249; and the summaries of earlier views in Peter 1884b:141–148; 1894:122–136 (esp.134); 1907:1–14 (esp.6); Bury 1926:479.

The following chapters will examine the stated dates of each author afresh, by developing two major themes of investigation. The first shall be the simple question of whether we really have reasons to doubt the chronological statements each author provides. The second shall be the relevance of the references to contemporary events to each stated date of composition of a given biography. Additionally, the discussion will explore whether these statements are compatible with modern views and questions regarding the *stated* era of composition, and whether these statements have value *independent* of other contemporary texts in a way that supplements them. It will be examined whether those statements, as Alan Cameron once noted, are 'the simple truth'.[571]

It is worth noting that neither the Mommsen-Momigliano nor the Dessau-Syme schools has maintained the necessary level of accuracy in dealing with the stated dates and authorial claims. The following instances (others will be registered throughout this discussion) underscore this point. Two biographies of the corpus contain references to the *Baths of Diocletian* as built and in full use.[572] These baths were dedicated, and therefore already built, by May 305 at the earliest or June 306 at the latest, but Dessau, followed by Momigliano and subsequent scholars, thought this placed these biographies 'shortly before 305'[573] rather than any time *after* 305/6. Vopiscus, the stated author of the *Life of Aurelian*, claimed to have met an urban prefect named Iunius Tiberianus during a celebration of the *Hilaria*.[574] There were two urban prefects named Iunius Tiberianus: between 18.2.291 and 3.8.292, and between 12.9.303 and 4.1.304/4.6.304.[575] A festival of *Hilaria* was celebrated twice a year: on 25 March and 3 November.[576] There are at least two ways of understanding

[571] Alan Cameron 1968:17 on *MA.*19.12; see below p. 267.
[572] *T.*21.7; *Pr.*2.1.
[573] Dessau 1889:340, 345–346; Momigliano 1966:169; see pp. 189, 282ff. below.
[574] *A.*1–2.
[575] Respectively: *PIR*² I843, I841; see pp. 169ff. below.
[576] *CIL* I²: pp. 313, 334; Latte 1960:342, 443; see below; Dessau 1889:344–345) admitted it.

the statement about the meeting.[577] Neither these nor anything else seem to support the assertion 'that no Junius Tiberianus was *praefectus urbi* at the time of the *Hilaria* (*Aurel.* 1.1ff.)'.[578] To these may be added cases of arbitrarily attributing to the authors of the corpus false stated dates, which they never claimed;[579] arbitrary interpretation of references to emperors, such as those to a certain Maximian, when there were two emperors by that name, Herculius (r.285–305, 306–308) and Galerius (r.293–311), and the passages were open to a much wider interpretation.[580] Such frivolous claims have introduced unnecessary 'contradictions' into the corpus only in order to support the *Fälschung* view.

A brief survey of the general methods of establishing stated dates of literary works will make it easier for the reader, therefore, to follow the discussion on the fundamental questions arising from the analysis of the statements each author provides. We shall deal here with two issues: the first will be the ways in which we can establish such dates of literary works; the second will survey historiographical, philological, and political considerations which are specifically practical for the time of the tetrarchies, the tetrarchic civil wars, and their sequels (293–337 and beyond).

Approaching stated dates of composition

The general stated dates of composition of most literary works, ancient and modern, are established by examining the invocations of living persons or rulers and *clear*

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[577] See below; Dessau was aware of it (1889: 345) and later distorted it (378), but Mommsen (1890:257 with n.1) had long ago exposed Dessau's confusing representation of the situation. See also Romano 1977:269–273.

[578] Barnes 1978:77, appealing to Syme 1971a:31–33. This is an overstatement of Dessau's confusing assertion (1889:378 cited below in n. 699). Alan Cameron 2011b:743 appeals to Barnes 1978.

[579] For instance, turning *termini post quos* into *ante quos* or exact dates (Barnes 1978:15; Alan Cameron 2011b:743, 747; see p. 155 below); referring to the author of *Aelius* as 'the "Constantinian" author of the Aelius' (Seeck 1890:628), whereas the biography (in all editions) starts with 'Diocletiano Augusto' (see p. 260 below); ascribing the *Life of Severus* to exactly 293 (Seeck 1890:627), when the dating is any time after that year (De Sanctis 1896:77; see pp. 270ff. below).

[580] The difficulty is generally noted in other texts relating to the tetrarchy, even Lactantius (e.g. Corcoran 2008:232). For instance, the hostility towards a Maximian in *Hel*.35.4 (written after 325) is taken by Dessauists to refer only to Maximian Herculius and therefore inconsistent with his rehabilitation in *c*.312 (Seeck 1890:620; Barnes 1978:15, 77; Thomson 2012:37)—even though the context of the passage, and indeed the inconsistency they note, make it clear the passage refers to Maximian Galerius and not Herculius (see pp. 234ff. below; note already Peter 1892:32–33; De Sanctis 1896:79).

references to events, buildings, or institutions. Methodologically these chronological statements can be divided into two: (1) invocations of living persons, such as emperors; and (2) casual chronological references.

Invocations

Invocations are places where an author can be said to claim a definite time of composition by directly addressing a living person, whether through apostrophe or dedication. Invocation of the Roman emperor was not uncommon under the empire and 'could be employed in all genres'.[581] Pliny the Elder dedicated his *Naturalis Historiae* to the future emperor Titus through a 'dedication letter' (i.e. *c.*78).[582] Polyaenus addressed *each* book of his collection of stratagems, containing both facts *and* fictions, to 'the most sacred emperors, Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus' (i.e. *c.*161–169); he even proclaimed a purpose: to provide them with practical exempla for their actions, such as winning in their Parthian campaign (162–166) and maintaining peace.[583] Iulius Pollux repeatedly addressed Commodus in epistolary form at the beginning of each of the ten books of his *Onomasticon*; he even refers to his own appointment as 'professor' of rhetoric in Athens (not before 178).[584] Shortly before Diocletian's accession, Olympius Nemesianus addressed his *Cynegetica* to Carinus (r.283–285) and Numerianus (r.283–284) after the death of Carus (283), their father, and promised them to publish an account of their successful wars. This is therefore the first datable poem (283–284) after the literary 'silence' of the third-century crisis.[585] Even in the first half of the fourth century one finds excellent examples, setting aside the Latin panegyrics and this corpus. Lactantius invoked Constantine in his *Divine Institutes* seven times in each of these seven books—and not just in the prefaces.[586] Optatianus Porfyrius addressed his poems to Constantine, and

[581] See the survey in Janson 1964:100–106 (101 cited); and even OCD[3=4], s.v. 'dedications, Latin'.
[582] *HN*, praef.
[583] Polyaenus, *Strat.* 1 proem., and the prefaces to books 2–8 (esp. 3 and 6).
[584] *Onom.* 8.
[585] *Cyn.*64–75; note he is only known from his own work and a passing reference in Vopiscus (*Car.*11.2); *NHLL* 5: 49, 353–358.
[586] Div. inst. 1.1.13-14, 2.1.2, 3.1.1, 4.1.1, 5.1.1, 6.3.1 7.26.10a with Bowen and Garnsey 2003:48–50, who take their authenticity for granted (cf. p. 167 below).

even specifically refers to his *vicennalia* (*c.*325/6 but before the execution of Crispus in 326); he also provided autobiographical remarks.[587] Firmicus Maternus addressed his *Concerning the Error of Profane Religions* to Constantius II and Constans, and advised them to take measures against pagan rites (*c.*343–50).[588] In the *Mathesis*, written before his own conversion, he made it very clear, despite dedicating it to a private person (Lollianus Mavortius; *cos. designatus* for 338), that he was writing under Constantine the Great's sole rule, by alluding to the career of Ceionius Rufius Albinus (*c.*335) and by providing autobiographical information; this work is therefore dated between 334 and 337.[589]

In sum, to invoke an emperor, even in works of fiction, and repeatedly provide a stated date or dates of composition, were not 'suspicious' features peculiar to the so-called 'SHA' or a reaction to the epitomizers of the second half of the fourth century, as Dessauists assert.[590] Invocations to emperors are found only in ten biographies (out of the surviving fifty-seven), which can be ascribed to Speratianus, Capitolinus, Lampridius, and in two 'orphan' biographies.[591] These invocations, as we shall see, are quite heterogeneous, and in some cases are very casual apostrophes rather than 'dedications'.[592] Only the *Life of Aelius* contains a dedication, where Speratianus crafts it as an epistle to Diocletian, similar to Pliny the Elder's dedication to Titus.[593] The

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[587] *Carm.*2.31; 9.35 (*vicennalia*); autobiographical data collected in Schanz-Hosius, 4/1²: 12; *NHLL* 5: 272–273, 275.
[588] *Err. prof. rel.* 16.4; 20.7. *NHLL* 5: 100–101 (on date).
[589] *Math.* 1.praef.1–7; 1.10.13–14; 5.praef.4; 6.30.26; 8.5.1, 33.1; on Albinus: *Math.* 2.29.10–20; complete autobiographical data collected in *NHLL* 5: 94–96.
[590] Alan Cameron 2011b:745 with nn.11–12 (relying on Momigliano II: 136–137 and Barnes 1978:14–15); Dessau 1889:338n.1.
[591] Alan Cameron (2011b:745 and n.12) notes 'the dates at which they so insistently claim to have written' and 'the very number of dating references is suspicious. In Suetonius (e.g.) there are none.' It is unclear to me how the broader literary context, ten invocations of emperors, and two or three casual references to buildings or places can justify these statements. I also fail to see how the example of Suetonius is relevant, as the preface with the dedication to Septicius Clarus, a praetorian prefect under Hadrian (i.e. before *c.*122, according to John Lydus, *mag.* 2.6), and the first part of his *Julius Caesar* were lost during the Middle Ages. Moreover, Suetonius does refer to places and buildings, like the *thermae diocletianae* in this corpus, in his own time (e.g. *Aug.* 5, 43.1; *Claud.* 1.2; *Dom*. 5).
[592] *Pace* Dessau 1889:*passim*; Momigliano 1966:169; Syme 1968:176; Alan Cameron 2011b:743; cf. Lippold's remark on the terminology: 'diese Apostrophen, die man nur zum Teil als Dedikationen bezeichnen kann' (1998:4; cf. 22). 'Invocation', if we follow Lactantian scholarship, appears to be the better general term for both (Bowen and Garnsey 2003:3, 43, 48–49).
[593] *Ael.*1; see above.

other 'speratianian' biographies contain only apostrophes to Diocletian and note the intention to write biographies of emperors in *separate* works.[594] The apostrophes of Capitolinus and Lampridius are also different: the former addresses Constantine in the prefaces to explain his decision to include hereditary emperors in a single work;[595] the latter provides advice to Constantine or congratulates him for his achievements in epilogues at the end of two biographies.[596]

These invocations provide only a broad dating only of *termini* for some specific biographies and only *termini post quos* for the corpus as a whole: 293–313/16 for the Diocletianic biographies and 312–337 for the Constantinian biographies. This broad dating can be further narrowed down, when the relevant chronological references are considered. The other biographies, most notably the last six ascribed to Vopiscus, do not contain any invocations and invoke private persons; their possible dates can be established using *relevant* chronological references.

Chronological references

Chronological references are usually made in passing without an author's special purpose. References to buildings, deaths, and appointments of persons to positions can provide a literary work with implicit *termini post quos*—and these in many cases can be very broad, override one another, and thus become irrelevant for the obvious reason that historical texts usually report events that have already happened. For instance, a tourist guide referring to the Eiffel Tower as built or a history book reporting Adolf Hitler's birth were obviously written any time after 1889, but no one would suggest that it must have been written shortly before, or even shortly after that year. Such references are found in ancient and modern works, and scholars traditionally use them to establish a possible composition date of literary texts.

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[594] *MA*.19.12; *V*.11.4; *AC*.3.3(≅*Ael*.1.1–3); *PN*.9.1; *S*.20.4.
[595] *Max*.1.1; *Gd*.1.1, 34.6. See Lippold 1991:33–34, 290–292, except for *ClA*.4.20.
[596] *Hel*.2.4, 34.5, 35.5; *AS*.65.1.

Pliny the Elder and Suetonius describe the Colossus of Nero,[597] and their works were obviously written *after* it was erected in *c.*64–68 rather than before or at the time. Suetonius' *Caesares*, when taken as a whole,[598] was obviously published after Julius Caesar's murder, but such a *terminus post quem* is superseded by many other events, for example, Vespasian's decision that his sons would succeed him, and these in turn are superseded by the murder of Domitian (96).[599] The *Agricola* contains a reference to the present, when 'Nerva Caesar has blended things once irreconcilable, sovereignty and freedom, although Nerva Trajan is *now* daily augmenting the posterity of the time.'[600] This obviously suggests the text was written *after* October 97, Nerva's adoption of Trajan. A hypercritical scholar—if he or she follows the 'strict' practices of the *HA-Forschung*, as we shall see—might even suggest this was written before January 98, Nerva's death; an observation that would allegedly 'clash' with a reference to Trajan as *princeps*, 'which shows that he was already emperor and that Nerva was dead'.[601] Rather than branding the Agricola a 'Severan forgery', the sober scholar would usually appeal to the broad literary meaning of 'princeps', or point out that 'Tacitus has merely omitted to style Nerva *divus*', and would conclude this work was written in *c.*97/8[602] or several years later.

Similar and more serious difficulties are found in the *Dialogus de oratoribus*. Tacitus could be claimed to be 'writing' during Vespasian's sixth regnal year (*c.*74/5), while making a computation of 120 years from the death of Cicero 'to this day' (*c.*77/8);[603] he later refers to a person already dead by *c.*77 and to himself as 'iuvenis admodum' (i.e. 18 years of age; *c.*73?).[604] But a hard-core exponent of Dessauism did his best to

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[597] *HN* 34.45; *Ner*.31, *Vesp*.18.
[598] The question of the book division and order of publication is not salient for this purpose.
[599] Suet. *Iul.*81.4–82.3; *Vesp.*25; *Dom.*17.
[600] *Agr*.3.1.
[601] *Agr.* 44.5; Ogilvie and Richmond 1967:10–11.
[602] Ogilvie and Richmond 1967:11 with nn.1–2.
[603] *Dial*.17.3: *ac sextam iam felicis huius principatus stationem, qua Vespasianus rem publicam fovet: centum et viginti anni ab interitu Ciceronis in hunc diem colliguntur, unius hominis aetas.* (cf. 24.3).
[604] *Dial.*1.2 ('precisely datable, a man aged eighteen', so Syme, *Tacitus*, 671), 37.2 (Licinius Mucianus; see Plin. *NH* 32.62). Apparently the 'SHA' are not the only authors of antiquity who attempted to provide precise stated dates of composition (*pace* Alan Cameron 2011b:745 following Barnes 1978:14–15; Dessau 1889:337–348; Momigliano 1966:169–170).

dismiss or reconcile them, only to suggest that 'the *Dialogus* could quite well belong in or close to 98'[605] and that because the dialogue invokes Fabius Justus (suffect consul in 102), it was probably dedicated during his consulate: 'the *Dialogus* was composed either about the time of Fabius' consulate or some four or five years later.'[606] In other words, Syme preferred to date the dialogue to *c.*106/7, about 33 years after what appears to be the stated date of composition—or rather the actual date of the dialogue[607]—rather than suggest a forgery, following the 'strict' standards set by *HA-Forschung*.[608] In any case, 33 years for 41 pages of a modern edition is quite some time, even for a gap between the time when the conversation took place (*c.*77?) and its actual publication (106/7).[609] Tacitus obviously did not 'tweet' his meetings with his interlocutors on Twitter or Facebook nor, for that matter, did Vopiscus who wrote a longer text.[610]

As we shall see, such 'small slips'—whether justified or not—have been detected, invented, and inflated in the past to brand ancient works as forgeries or to deprive them of their named authors, most notably this corpus, Lactantius, and even Tacitus' *Dialogus*.[611]

The discussions so far might appear to be stating mere and banal facts, and these are indeed simple facts. Nevertheless, when it comes to *HA-Forschung* such references and irrelevant *termini post quos* in the corpus are exploited as 'exact' stated dates of composition, or worse, as *termini ante quos*. For instance, a passing reference to Constantius' appointment as 'Caesar' is used to claim that the biography reporting it

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[605] Syme, *Tacitus*, 672.
[606] Syme, *Tacitus*, 672.
[607] Syme (*Tacitus*, 670–673) seems to be amalgamating the date when the dialogue took place, the date of its composition, and the date of its publication into one date.
[608] Syme 1968:101, 180–183; Barnes 1978:14–16, following Dessau 1889:337–348; on these 'contradictions' *passim* below.
[609] See n. 607 above.
[610] Vopiscus' first biography, *Life of Aurelian*, whose writing started after *c.*292/304, covers 39 pages, and all his works are 100 pages in Hohl's text. Yet Dessauists assert he 'ostensibly' composed all his works 'exactly' in *c.*305 (e.g. Syme 1968:101 overstating Dessau 1889:344–347), see below.
[611] See below; on *Dialogus*: summary in Syme, *Tacitus*, 370, and in detail: W. Peterson, *Cornelli Taciti dialogus de oratoribus with introductory essays and critical and explanatory notes,* Oxford 1893, ii–xxii.

was written before his elevation to Augustus in *c.*305, when he was alive,[612] and therefore 'clashes' with an earlier reference to 'him' (Constantius' name in that passage is unwarranted) as 'iam imperator',[613] which Dessauists claim only means 'Augustus', and thus after 305.[614] Setting aside the broader meaning of 'Caesar' and 'imperator' in literary texts,[615] this is no better than arguing that Suetonius was ostensibly writing in *c.*44 BCE/96 CE, that the Agricola was written in *c.*98, or that Ammianus wrote when Nerva was 'Caesar'.[616] Worse still, an apostrophe to Constantine referring to his victory over Licinius either in *c.*314/6 or *c.*324/5—once taken as 'the latest chronological indication supplied by the SHA themselves'[617]—is now taken as indicating 'no later than 325'.[618] In fact, the latest secure *terminus post quem* for the corpus is the reference to the rehabilitation of Ceionius Rufius Albinus in *c.*335.[619]

Towards a reassertion

Lippold recently made the very important observation that some of the apostrophes in the corpus, based on his careful examination of contemporary tetrarchic and Constantinian texts,[620] are formally correct for the stated dates of composition of *c.*293–337:

> The address made in the *Life of Maximinus* (1.1) is formally correct. The epithet *maxime* found in *Max.* and *ClA*.4.2, *AS*.65.1 and *Gd*.34.6 is possible after 312. The form of address *clementia tua* is also suitable for the time of Diocletian and Constantine… Formally correct and carrying no problems… are the apostrophes

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[51] *Car.* 17.6 with similar incorrect interpretation to a passing reference to Galerius at 9.3, see Dessau 1889: 347; Momigliano 1966: 170; Barnes 1978: 14; Vermaat 1893: 111 already noted this infelicity; see below.
[52] *A.*44.5; below chapter 4.
[614] Dessau 1889:346–347. Syme 1968:101(= Syme 1971b:261) and Barnes 1978:14 follow Momigliano 1966:170 ≅ Mommsen 1890:258.
[615] See p. 161.
[616] 31.16.9.
[617] Alan Cameron 1965b:250 appealing to 'Note D' in Momigliano's 1954 seminal article (= 1966:169–170) on the basis of Lampridius, *Hel.*35.7; Capitolinus, *Gd.*34.5; noted already by Lécrivain 1904:26.
[618] Alan Cameron 2011b:747, 743; or 'not ca. 330' (ibid. 781); or perhaps: 'before the conversion of Constantine' (2011a:838). Indeed 'the year 325 imports a factor of discrepancy with an opinion about the date of the *HA*' (Syme 1971a:50).
[619] Capitolinus, *ClA*.4.2 with Lippold 1991:34–35 (cf. Lécrivain 1904:26); pp. 208ff. below.
[620] Lippold 1991:30–36, 281–292; Peter 1892:252–255 and Lécrivain 1904:21–22 made similar comments about all the apostrophes, but Syme, Barnes, and subsequent scholars ignored them.

> to Constantine at the beginning and end of the *Three Gordians*, also ascribed to Capitolinus.[621]

He concluded that 'in the addresses to Constantine, especially in the *vitae* ascribed to Capitolinus, there is nothing that could indicate a post-Constantinian invention or interpolation.'[622] These observations cannot easily be dismissed, especially when one considers that the only argument Dessauists brought against the 'chronological' statements and the invocations of emperors was the claim of alleged 'contradictions' and 'inconsistencies', such as those we have already seen.[623]

The following chapters will therefore attempt to detect and rectify, or eliminate, such misconceptions about the authors' chronological statements, and will extend and apply Lippold's comments on the apostrophes of Capitolinus (and Lampridius' *AS*) to other biographies of the corpus. This will be done within the general limits of the stated era of composition.

Practical considerations

We have seen that chronological references and apostrophes to rulers were common in ancient works, and that these authors' statements should therefore be treated as those made in any ancient work. Nevertheless, when one comes to date a literary text of the tetrarchic era—by which I mean the two tetrarchies and the tetrarchic civil wars (293–313) and their aftermath (313–337)—there are three objective and practical considerations to emphasize.

Chronological difficulties

The modern scholar simply lacks a contemporary and detailed narrative account of the period, and therefore must have recourse to the highly rhetorical allusions in the Latin Panegyrics (whose dates and order are complicated for the same reason), the

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[621] Lippold 1991:33–34.
[622] Lippold 1991:35.
[623] Syme 1968:176, 180; Barnes 1978:14–15; on Dessau 1889, see Lippold (1991:10n.3): 'Vermerkt sei, daß die Kritik Dessaus sich nicht an der formal einwandfreien Anrede entzündete.' Subsequent publications kept restating Dessau, while ignoring Lippold at least on this issue (Alan Cameron 2011b; G. W. Adams 2012; Thomson 2012; Sogno 2012:74–75); others had nothing but irrelevant insults to say against Lippold (Barnes 2000:307;Birley 2003:138n.45).

later fourth-century epitomizers, the problematic subscriptions in the legal codes, and other later chronicles. One then has to supplement them with scant epigraphic and numismatic evidence. These in many cases provide inconsistent, and even result in contradictory, dates for events. The difficulties of dealing with this period have been clearly asserted in the introduction to a chapter titled 'Diocletian and the first tetrarchy' in a standard reference work:

> We lack a good, detailed and reliable narrative source for the period... Much depends on the necessarily lacunose and scattered evidence of inscriptions, papyri and coins and, on the literary side, Lactantius... *DMP*, which has often been characterized as biassed and unreliable, various works of Eusebius..., and the relevant *Panegyrici Latini*.[624]

It is not surprising that 'uncertain' is a key word in that chapter[625] and in other modern studies: this is indeed the case with the tetrarchic period and even the sequel of the wars between Constantine and Licinius up to their deaths.[626] Even the *dies imperii* and dating of *tribunicia potestas* are in many cases contradictory or hard to determine with any certainty, especially as a result of appointments of joint emperors and political uncertainties.[627] Moreover, Eusebius' 'method of computing regnal years in the *Chronicle* is not wholly certain.'[628] In relation to this period, the modern scholar is bound to admit that for most of that period 'the precise chronology and the individuals involved are uncertain'.[629] Even a Dessauist acknowledges that 'we cannot write a meaningful political narrative of the reign of Constantine after the

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[624] *CAH*[2], vol. 12: 68 n. 2.
[625] Ibid. (67–89): 68 n. 2, 70, 71, 75, 78 n.53, 80 (twice), , 85 n.88, 86, 88.
[626] *CAH*[2], vol. 12: 90–94 (by Averil Cameron); Barnes 2009:376–377 against two recent assertions 'that are profoundly mistaken and deeply misleading' (376) made by Van Dam 2007:15 ('Constantine is one of the best documented of the Roman emperors, and a political narrative of his life and reign is straightforward enough.').
[627] Stein 1959:434–435n.11; Barnes 1982:25–26, 28–29; Kuhoff 2001:33–35. Barnes (ibid.) is an example of a well-informed scholar confusing the dating of the *tribunicia potestas*. On p. 25 we are told: 'Diocletian, for example, who received the tribunician power on 20 November 284, renewed it for the first time on 10 December 284, and thus became *trib. pot. II* on that day'; but later: 'hence the titles of Diocletian, which show no irregularities, are numbered as follows: trib. pot. Imp. 20 November–9 December 284 trib. pot. II imp. 20 December [*sic*] 284–19 November 285'.
[628] Barnes 1970b:404.
[629] *CAH*[2], vol. 12: 80.

Battle of the Milvian Bridge on 28 October 312' and appeals to 'our ignorance even about important episodes.'[630]

The most notable example is the death of Diocletian: 'the date and manner of his death are uncertain: either suicide or illness in either 311 or 312'.[631] Or rather, perhaps in 313 if we follow some ancient authorities and take an overlooked pronouncement of Licinius and Constantine at face value;[632] or in 316 if one follows Jerome's chronicle, the so-called *Consularia Constantinopolitana* and Seeck.[633] One finds a similar difficulty with the dating of the Battle of Cibalae between Constantine and Licinius in 313/314 or, probably more correctly, in 316.[634] Both of these issues, together with the question of Crispus' age, had a direct correlation with the dating of Lactantius' *DMP* and allegations against its authenticity.[635] With regard to this corpus, as Diocletian remained politically active after his abdication, almost certainly in May 305,[636] he held the title of 'Senior Augustus', retained the name 'Diocletianus',[637] and was even appointed consul in 308—the few biographies invoking him therefore have

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630 Barnes 2009:377 (irrespective of his position in *HA-Forschung*; this is also the problem before the battle, see *CAH*², ibid. 91). With this scepticism, we are reminded that one could challenge even the date of the celebrated battle and place it in 311 (Bruun 1960; noted by Momigliano 1977:107, 124n.2).

631 *CAH*², ibid. 88; complete survey of evidence and earlier scholarship in Moreau 1954:420–423. Nakamura's recent attempt to date his death to *c.*312 and Barnes's reply castigating it while insisting on *c.*311 (Nakamura 2003; Barnes 2010) provide a survey of the evidence, and a salutary reminder of such problems. Trajectories of a year or two, especially in literary sources, were not uncommon (Bickerman 1980:77, 91: 'anyone… should remember the legal maxim: *caveat emptor*').

632 *EDC* 39.7 suggests any time after February 313 (Barnes 2010:319); Socrates (*HE.*1.2.10) *c.*313. *CTh.*13.10.3 from June 313 refers to Diocletian as 'dominus et parens noster Diocletianus senior Augustus' and therefore 'implies the emperor is still alive in 1 June 313', so Moreau 1954:421) who prefers 313; cf. Mommsen (ad loc.): 'subscriptio legis propositae vivo Diocletiano in partibus Orientis nisi fallit, lex aut a Licinio emissa aut a Maximino errore recepta est, cum horum imperatorum constitutiones compilatores non admiserint.'; and also Corcoran 2000:151 (Barnes 2010:318–319 overlooks this pronouncement).

633 Jerome (Helm 230[d]); *Chron. Min.*, I, 231 (= Burgess 1993:235); Seeck 1919:165; the date is restated in later accounts and modern scholarship; listed and refuted in Moreau 1954:421–422; Barnes 2010:319.

634 313: Jerome (Helm 230[a]); 314: *Chron. Min.*, I, 231 and Seeck 1919:163; 316: Barnes 2010:319; Harries 2012:326.

635 See p.167 below.

636 Rather than April 304 according to the so-called *Consularia Constantinoplitana* (*Chron. Min.*, I, 231 = Burgess 1993:235)

637 See in detail pp. 267–268 below. Lactantius' statement that he returned to his pre-imperial name 'Diocles' and the later notion of the epitomizers and modern scholars that he was not politically active are contradicted by the epigraphic and numismatic evidence (Kuhoff 2001:320; Van Dam 2007:246; *pace* e.g. Harries 2012:41 following *Epit.*39.5), and even by Lactantius' own statements (*DMP* 41.1, 42.2, 43.6; Städele 2003:144n.70).

a broader dating between *c.*293 and *c.*311–316, rather than a *terminus ante quem* of *c.*305.[638]

Political instability and uncertainty: their influence on contemporaries

The era of the tetrarchies, with the exception of the relative stability of *c.*293–303, was a succession of political upheavals and shifting political alliances, even within a given year.[639] As early as *c.*303, before the abdication of 305, Maximian Galerius is said to have threatened to start a war against Maximian Herculius.[640] Within a year of the celebrated abdication of the first tetrarchy (May 305), the biological sons of the adoptive senior tetrarchs, Constantine and Maxentius, were declared emperors (306) but Constantine's original position as 'Augustus' was downgraded to 'Caesar' in exchange for Galerius' recognition that same year.[641] The tetrarchs were linked through intermarriages and adoptions, but this did not prevent fathers, sons, and brothers—whether biological, adoptive, or in law—from going to war against each other: Galerius sent Severus and later himself marched against Maxentius, his son-in-law (*c.*306–307). Maxentius was allied with Constantine in 307. Maximian Herculius is said to have conspired against his own son, Maxentius, and married off his daughter, Fausta, to Constantine, whom he re-elevated to the rank of Augustus (*c.*307). Later, this Maximian is said to have conspired against his new son-in-law (310). Constantine and Maxentius, two brothers-in-law, eventually ended up fighting each other in the Battle of the Milvian Bridge (*c.*312).[642] This did not prevent Galerius from promoting his personal favourite, Licinius, directly to the rank of Augustus (308), or from considering promoting his nine-year-old son to the rank of Caesar, in 'defiance' of the 'Diocletianic ordinance' of succession. Attempts were made at reconciliation in the Carnuntum conference (308)[643] but this compromise soon

[638] See pp. 260ff. below.
[639] A short and lucid introduction is still Jones 1966:29–30; cf. Harries 2012:25–26.
[640] Lactant. *DMP* 18.1.
[641] His position changed several times, depending on the geographical place; see Barnes 2009:382 (= 2011:89).
[642] Lactant. *DMP* 25–30, 44–45; *Origo Constantini* 6–12; Harries 2012:41–45, 106–111.
[643] Lactant. *DMP* 20.3–4; 29.2; *Origo Constantini* 8, 13; Van Dam 2007:245; Harries 2012:44.

disintegrated and ended in the unstable duumvirate of 312–324 of Constantine and Licinius, which ended with the monarchy of Constantine (324).

These struggles for political supremacy saw attempts at establishing legitimacies and ideology through various means, and left their footprint on the surviving contemporary historiography. Contemporary accounts, such as Lactantius, Eusebius, and even the panegyrics, could at times provide confusing accounts that would appear inconsistent with their 'exact' stated dates of composition. For indeed, 'keeping up with all these changes in seniority and ideology must have been confusing already in the ancient world.'[644] Maximian Herculius, for instance, as a result of his double-dealings with and against Constantine, was vilified after his death (*c.*310) in Constantinian propaganda and suffered a *damnatio memoriae*. After the Battle of the Milvian Bridge (312) Constantine decided to rehabilitate his memory. Nevertheless, this did not prevent Lactantius (and Eusebius)—writing several years after that battle (i.e. *c.*316–325)—from restating this negative line of propaganda and even reporting that Maximian's statues were torn down 'on the order of Constantine'.[645] The reasonable explanation for this dichotomy is that Lactantius was a confused contemporary who 'innocently repeated'[646] the propaganda which he 'heard constantly reiterated at the court of Trier in 311 and 312',[647] or 'was allowed considerable freedom of speech' because he was 'writing about Maximianus after 312.'[648] Yet *HA-Forschung* has developed a double standard. Lampridius, the stated author of the *Life of Elagabalus* (allegedly in *c.*314/316–325), manifested similar negativity towards a certain Maximian, *conventionally* taken as Herculius.[649] As a result *HA-Forschung* referred to Lampridius as 'lazy and irresponsible',[650] 'the most

[644] Van Dam 2007:247.
[645] *DMP* 42.1; cf. Euseb. *HE* 8.13.15.
[646] Barnes 2011:74; restating Barnes 1973 on anything related to Lactantius.
[647] Barnes 2011:ibid.
[648] Momigliano 1966:173.
[649] See pp. 233ff.
[650] Momigliano (1966:162): 'lazy and irresponsible people find it more difficult to inform themselves about almost contemporary events'.

ignorant and subversive of contemporaries'[651] who 'did not know that Constantine had rehabilitated the memory of Maximian.'[652] Similar 'contradictions' and 'inconsistencies' can be found in Lactantius' (and Constantine's) approach to Diocletian;[653] Eusebius' fickle treatment of Licinius, when his *Ecclesiastical History* is taken as a whole (*c.*326), 'could not avoid embarrassing contradiction';[654] and the panegyrist of *c.*289 referred to the imperial succession in an improper way for that year.[655]

This brings us to the question of whether such contradictions are indeed a sign of a highly competent forgery or *Fälschung* or simply a result of confused—rather than lazy, irresponsible, and ignorant—contemporaries.

Standard limitations of literary texts

On a more basic level literary texts, as we have already seen, cannot manifest the same accuracy one usually finds in epigraphic evidence for objective reasons. These are linked with historiographical and chronological issues.

Loose imperial terminology

Literary texts in all periods manifest loose terminology when it comes to administration. Specifically in relation to this discussion, the titles Imperator, Caesar, Princeps, and Augustus were freely interchanged even in tetrarchic and post-tetrarchic texts. The *Origo Constantini*, 'a sober and accurate source'[656] written shortly after Constantine's death (which it reports),[657] used the terms 'Caesar' and 'Imperator' in a very loose manner, and thus 'formally' only referred to Constantius

[651] Barnes 1978:15–16.
[652] Barnes 1978:77.
[653] Schlange-Schöningen 2004:182–183, who also notes that the panegyrist of 310 portrayed Diocletian positively in order to contrast him with Maximian Herculius (VI[7].15.4; cf. Barnes 1982:35n.31); *pace* Barnes 1978:15n.5, 77 on the 'SHA'). See pp. 233ff. below.
[654] Barnes 1981:68; see pp.212ff. below.
[655] X(2).14; Nixon and Rodgers 1994:75n.50; and pp.269ff. below.
[656] Syme 1983:61.
[657] *Origo Constantini* 35; *NHLL*, 5.226; Barnes 1989:159 (following the anti-Dessauist Klebs, he denies any knowledge of Jerome in this text) and Lieu 1996:40 (both against König 1987). All this against Syme (1983:73).

I's (and Galerius') 'elevation' to the rank of 'Caesares' by Diocletian (*c.*293). Likewise, the elevations of Constantine and Licinius to the rank of Augusti in 306 and 308 respectively are recorded as if they were only 'Caesares'.[658] Even Constantine's victory over the Goths in *332* is recorded as 'per Constantinum Caesarem', 'using *Caesarem* in a non-technical sense.'[659] Constantine was not alive when this text was written. The panegyrist of *c.*289 directly addressed Maximian Herculius as 'Caesar', when he was in fact Augustus (since *c.*285/6), and as 'Imperator'.[660] The sober interpretation of this 'anomaly' is that this is 'a "nontechnical" term of address; Maximian was Augustus, not Caesar, in rank.'[661] The panegyrist of *c.*297, reporting the *dies imperii* of the then-Caesares Constantius and Galerius,[662] referred to them both as 'Caesares' and 'Imperatores' in the same paragraph.[663] Likewise Lactantius used the term 'imperatores' 'to refer to a Caesar as well as an Augustus', namely Galerius and Diocletian respectively in *c.*303, or Maxentius in *c.*306.[664]

Thus, such references—in addition to providing (perhaps irrelevant) *termini post quos* as the murder of Julius Caesar or Augustus' adoption for Suetonius—cannot be used subtly to determine when a literary text claims to have been written, say before or after May 305; especially when they are included in general past narratives[665] and even in invocations. Nevertheless, as we shall see, with regard to the *HA-Forschung*,

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[658] *Origo Constantini* 1, 8.
[659] *Origo Constantini* 31; Barnes 1982:79n.134; cf. *idem* (*ZPE* 20 [1976], 151 n. 5): 'observe that "per Constantinum Caesarem" means merely by the emperor Constantine.' Obviously he was not alive when the *Origo* reported this.
[660] X(2).6.3.
[661] Nixon and Rodgers 1994:63n.26.
[662] 1 March as in the panegyric and Lactant; *DMP* 35.4; Barnes 1982:60, 62; Nixon and Rodgers 1994:112n.8; Kienast 2009:280.
[663] VIII(4).3.1: *O felix beatumque uer nouo partu...nec ipsis tantum fauoniis et luce reserata laetum atque uenerabile, quantum ortu Caesarum maximorum!... O kalendae Martiae, sicuti olim annorum uoluentium, ita nunc aeternorum auspices imperatorum!*
[664] Creed 1984:95; *DMP* 14.2; cf. *DMP* 26.1: 'Maxentius had been made *imperator* in Rome'; and the sober *Origo Constantini* (6) also reports that the praetorians made him 'imperator'. This was on 28 October 306, although he seems to have 'refused at first to accept the title of Augustus' (Lieu 1996:52n.23–24; Barnes 2011:67) and 'did not take the title "imperator" or "Augustus" before the summer of 307' (Creed 1984:106). I fail to see how 'a Caesar lacked the title *imperator* (which well-informed contemporary writers use as a synonym for Augustus)' (Barnes 1982:25–26)—this is not only refuted by the evidence shown above, but also by that scholar's own statements (e.g. ibid. 179; Barnes 2011:67).
[665] See below *passim*.

the few casual references in past narratives to figures which had held these titles and positions in the corpus are *restricted* to their most literally sense: *imperator* means only Augustus and Caesar only Caesar and what is more, they are taken to mean they were alive, all in order to extract 'exact' stated dates of composition and later 'inconsistencies' and prima facie support for the Dessauist *Fälschung* view.[666]

Transmission and textual corruption

Scribes and copyists, as is well known, introduced errors into ancient works. This in many cases could have distorted an ancient author's text and therefore even his intentions. The earliest surviving manuscript of this corpus, as we have seen, is from the ninth century—this was obviously not the authorised *Urtext* and neither were the other manuscripts.[667] More specifically, it is well known that word order, especially in the case of lists, was easily distorted and 'examples could be multiplied indefinitely'.[668]

In short, when the order of rulers in a literary text appears to be 'inconsistent' with their so-called 'seniority order' and 'more' contemporary evidence, such as epigraphic findings, this could be the result of subjective or objective motives. Objectively, a scribe could have simply changed the order of rulers. Subjectively, the author might prefer an 'informal' order to create rhythm, although a later copyist could change the order for this reason as well;[669] or an author might prefer a

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[666] Cf. p.154 above, and below *passim*. See Barnes 1978:14–16, e.g. asserting: 'a close examination discloses inherent contradictions' and 'imperator, which implies a date between his elevation to the rank of Augustus on 1 May 305 and his death'; 'the subsequent Carus uses phraseology which ought to imply that he is still [*sic*] only Caesar'; referring to *Car.*9.3: *per… Caesarem Maximianum*; (cf. n. 659 above; more below); Barnes 2000; Syme 1968:101, 180 (= Syme 1971b:261). They apparently follow the restatement of Dessau in Mommsen (1890:258–259 with nn.1–3) and Momigliano 1966:169–170 (e.g. '"*imperator*"—that is, presumably, Augustus').

[667] See Part I.

[668] West 1973:22; 21–22, 124, 129, 144.

[669] West 1973:21; this could explain Vopiscus, *Pr.*1.5 (*usque ad Maximianum Diocletianumque*) and similar cases, as Norden's addition to Mommsen's contribution (Mommsen 1890:252) in *Ges. Schr.*, vol. 7, 325 n. 1 (pub. 1909; referring also to *Ael.*2.2, *Car.*18.3): 'the author chose this order for the take of rhythmic clausula. And this dismisses the objection made by Seeck (*Jahrb. f. Phil.* 141, 1890 [N. erroneously wrote 1880], p. 618) against this order.' Barnes 1978:15 and Paschoud 2001:51, 393 restate Seeck without reference or reservation. Remarkably, Paschoud is willing to give due consideration to correct '*Cari, Numeriani et Carini*' into '*Cari, Carini et Numeriani*' at *Car.*18.3 (ibid., ad loc.; against all the manuscripts).

balanced structure, such as anaphora, for stylistic and perhaps political reasons, depending on the circumstances. For instance, the panegyrist of *c.*289 not only referred to Maximian Herculius first and Diocletian second, contrary to the 'order of seniority', but he also stated: 'Ideoque hoc nunc ambo, sacratissime imperator, ipso estis Scipione potiores, quod et tu (sc. Maximianus) Africanum et te Diocletianus imitatus est.'[670] The subordinate clause obviously creates a chiasmus and an anaphora.[671] The various inscriptions of this panegyric also 'disregard' Diocletian's seniority.[672] Therefore, the attempt to over-criticize *two* sentences in the corpus, because they appear to be *only superficially* inconsistent with contemporary texts or with the so-called 'seniority' must be dismissed from the outset.[673]

Moreover, similar names could be easily confused, as with the names of Maximianus and Maximinus (and even Galerius and Gallienus).[674] More relevant to this discussion is the confusion of the names of Constantius and Constantinus and Constantia and Constantina. A passage from the introduction of Firmicus Maternus' *Mathesis* is an excellent example, for unless the modern conjecture is accepted, the work could be dated to the reign of Constantine II, rather than his father, Constantine the Great; but the text is corrected according to the broader context of the work:[675]

> *Dominus et Augustus noster ac totius orbis imperator, pius, felix, providus princeps, Constantinus scilicet maximus, divi Constanti*[*n*]*i filius*
> Constantii *Zie*[1]: Constantini *MPRN Ksz*

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[670] X(2).8.6.
[671] Rees 2003:459; this also seems to be the case in *Car.*18.3.
[672] Lassandro, the editor of the latest edition (Turin, 1992: 315), heads it as '*Mamertini Panegyricus dictus Maximiano et Diocletiano*'; see further Rees 2003:452.
[673] Vopiscus, *Pr.*1.5; *Car.*18.3 (in Speratianus, *Ael.*2.2 'Maximianus' could mean either Herculius or Galerius and is therefore irrelevant). Cf. Stern 1953:30n.3 and see pp. 260ff. below. *Pace* Seeck 1890:618; Barnes 1978:15; Paschoud 2001:51, 393. The latter (ibid. on the two passages) thinks that, 'these alone are sufficient to prove that the *HA* cannot have been written at the time of Constantius or Constantine.'
[674] Lactant. *DMP* 36.1 (Maximianus in the manuscript corrected to Maximinus by all editors; Creed 1984:54); *Thirty Tyrants* 31.12: 'sub Maximi[a]no' (Paschoud 2011 ad loc.: 'maximino *P corr. Σ*; -miano *P ante corr. Teste B.*); Gallienus for Galerius (obviously incorrect), see Paschoud 2001:339 apparatus on *Car.*18.3; note Barnes 2011:116.
[675] *Math.* 1.10.13 (ed. Monat 1992); *NHLL*, 5: 96; this interrelates with the history of the dedicatee, Lollianus Mavortius, who is referred to as 'consul designatus' although he became ordinary consul only in 355 (*NHLL* ibid.).

There are several similar examples in other authors, especially where the context was not clear enough for scribes.[676] These instances, therefore, make it quite clear why Dessauists, outside *HA-Forschung*, were willing to discuss and suggest conjectures on these names, even against all the available manuscripts of literary evidence, in cases where they thought the context required it. A passage in the *Origo Constantini* (9) with a currently accepted conjecture of an early Dessauist, Otto Seeck,[677] runs as follows:

> *Hunc ergo et Maximinum Caesares Galerius fecit Constanti*[*n*]*o nihil tale noscente.*
> Galerius made him and Maximinus Caesares, while Constantius/Constantine knew nothing on that matter.
> Constanti[n]o *Seeck*: Constantino B *rett. edd. omnes*

Another Dessauist noted a similar problem regarding the daughter(s) of Constantine. He bluntly asserts that, 'ancient references to a Constantia, daughter of Constantine, are sheer mistakes for Constantina.'[678] He then accuses *almost all* the literary sources of having confused the name of Constantia with Constantina: Philostorgius (*apud* Photius) 'is speaking of Constantina and his "Constantia" is merely a verbal slip.' And again: 'Peter the Patrician… too misstates the name of Constantina as Constantia (frag. 16)'.[679] He then refers to an out-of-date edition of the medieval *Liber Pontificalis* (1886): 'Duchesne's critical apparatus reveals that some manuscripts read Constantina'.[680] This is indeed the case, as the later edition of Mommsen (1898) states:[681]

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[676] Citing the accepted text followed by the apparatus in the brackets of the following works illustrates this: Euseb. *HE* 8.17.4 (ed. Schwartz): κωνσταντῖνοσ bDMΣ*Λ* κωνστάντιοσ ATER. Aur. Vict. *Caes*. 40.2: *nequiens Constantinus* (Constantius *p corr. Schott*). The situation is even worse with the sons of Constantine: Jerome, *Chronicle*: 230[e]: *Crispus et Constantinus, filii Constantini*… (Constantius *verbessert in O*; idem, 231[a]: *Constantius, filius Constantini, Caesar factus* (†2constantius] constantinus *LM*).
[677] The editions of Moreau and Velko (1968) and König (1987) are identical here.
[678] Barnes 2011:151.
[679] Barnes 2011:152.
[680] Barnes 2011:152.
[681] *Liber Pontificalis* 37.4–5; Th. Mommsen (ed.), *Libri pontificalis pars prior,* Berlin 1898, p. 78 (*MGH*: *Gestorum pontificum romanorum*, vol. 1). The scholarly edition is still: Duchesne, Louis and Vogel, Cyrille, eds. *Le Liber pontificalis: texte, introduction et commentaire*. 3 vols., 2nd expanded ed. with a preface by Jean Bayet. Paris: E. Thorin, 1955–1957. The apparatus of this edition merely states for the variant Constantina: '*cet.*'

> *Rediens autem Liberius de exilio habitavit in cymiterio sanctae Agnes aput germanam Constanti Augusti… Tunc Constantia Augusta… nolouit rogare Constantium Augustum germanum suum, quia senserat consilium.*
> On his return from exile Liberius lived at the cemetery of St Agnes… Then Constantia Augusta… refused to ask her brother the emperor Constantius, as she had realized what the scheme was.
> tunc Constantia (*sic* $A^{1\text{-}2}$ $E^{1\text{-}6}$, constantina $C^{3}B^{1\text{-}2\text{-}3\text{-}4}$)

Chausson cited this passage to support the possible existence of a second daughter named Constantia who survived infancy, because Constantina died in 354 and Pope Liberius returned from exile in 357.[682] Nevertheless, Barnes has gone through all this effort to rule out this suggestion and to claim that 'Chausson… fails to note either the textual or the historical difficulty involved'.[683] Whether Constantine had another daughter through a third marriage or a concubine should perhaps remain an unsettled question (unless the entire episode is not wholly fictitious),[684] but it is hoped that this discussion shows that literary texts are not carved in stone and similar names could easily be confused by later scribes.

In this corpus, such difficulties exist in several key passages, which Dessauists have used in order 'to date' the corpus. Unfortunately, the Dessauist argument and subsequent assumptions failed to note the textural or historical difficulties involved in those passages.[685] We hope to establish that merely acknowledging the difficulties holds the simple solution to alleged contradictions and subsequent claims of *Fälschung*.

Tetrarchic limits and post-tetrarchic forgery

When one considers how many chronological and historical uncertainties surround the era during which the authors claim to have written, one wonders even more whether one is entitled, prima facie, to make an issue of a few alleged chronological 'inconsistencies' in the corpus based on arbitrary dating of a given biography, say, to

[682] Chausson 2007:115–116.
[683] Barnes 2011:152.
[684] Vogel's index to Duchesne (n.681 above) refers to Constantia as 'Constantini Magni filia ficta'.
[685] Pp. 174ff. and 278ff. below.

before or after 293, 305, or 325;[686] especially when this is done only in order to elaborate theories presupposing—rather than demonstrating—that this corpus is a later *Fälschung* as 'demonstrated' by Dessau (although he himself made no such claim).[687] As we shall see, these contradictions are either non-existent or no worse than those perceived in other literary works or are perhaps simply a result of gaps in our knowledge of the period. It is worth noting in passing how this formalist obsession with 'exact' dates and their 'inconsistencies' brought scholars to discredit the Lactantian authorship of *DMP* from *c.*316–324: his claim of being present in Nicomedia during the great persecution appeared to be difficult to settle with the date of the *Divine Institutes*, Diocletian's death, Constantine's conversion, the date when he left for Trier to educate Crispus, and the latter's possible age.[688] This work was later dated using *Quellenforschung* to any time after 355–363, because it appeared to have known a later continuation of 'Enmann's' *Kaisergeschichte* from those years; worse still, the addresses to the emperor in *Divine Institutes* were taken to be a by-product of *c.*370 or several years later.[689] It took almost a century for scholars to come to the sober conclusion that 'he was writing his tract… (*DMP*), on any dating, before the final victory of Constantine over Licinius in AD 324'[690] and 'that the *de mortibus* is his authentic work, despite its peculiar provenance… The precise date and location of its composition remain obscure although some probability is possible.'[691] The probable date(s) and location are obviously determined in accordance with its author's statement,[692] rather than with the over-ingenuity and generalization of the modern scholar.

[686] Above pp. 156ff.; cf. Momigliano 1966:160 on our lack of knowledge of the fourth century.
[687] Pp.139ff. above.
[688] All taking place roughly at the same time, *c.*310–316.
[689] This 'cumulative argument', or rather farrago of scholarly curiosities—not taken seriously by any scholar today (e.g. Bowen and Garnsey 2003; Städele 2003:9–10; Barnes 2011:176–178; Potter 2013:301–302)—is summarized and refuted in Bury 1926:483–484 and Christensen 1980:75–76.
[690] Averil Cameron 1993:47.
[691] Leadbetter 2009:8.
[692] But see Barnes 2011:176–178 for an attempt at precise chronology.

To recapitulate, the following discussion will therefore establish the stated dates of composition of the various authors, as any other literary text. The relevance and importance of statements about contemporary events to our understanding of the period will also be considered.

Chapter 4: Flavius Vopiscus' literary activity

The biographies ascribed to Vopiscus are also the last in the corpus and cover a period that could be seen as the prequel to the tetrarchic period, starting with the emperor Aurelian and ending with the murder of Carinus and the successful usurpation of Diocletian, who formed the tetrarchy (270–*c.*293). Since this group of biographies is the last in the corpus in terms of the emperors covered and since it provides a passing reference (and the only reference) to other authors of the corpus, establishing its stated dates could solve many of the 'contradictions' allegedly found in the corpus. As we have seen in the introduction, the discussion of Vopiscus' stated date has fared badly: *HA-Forschung* imputed to him non-existent *termini ante quos*, especially by misrepresenting his statements and by overstating simple references to the tetrarchs—especially in the *Life of Carinus*—as the 'exact' date of composition *c.*305/6.

This chapter will therefore look at the various chronological references. It will start with the meeting of Vopiscus and the allegedly 'non-existent' Prefect of the City, and then look closely at the various references to the tetrarchs in order to eliminate irrelevant 'chronological references'. After the accurate (rather than 'exact') *terminus post* of the various biographies is established, the chapter will look at contemporary references that could help to establish the 'inferred' dates of composition. It tries to illustrate that adopting a literary approach could offer a simpler solution.

The meeting of Vopiscus and Tiberianus: fact and fiction

In the preface of the *Life of Aurelian* Vopiscus describes the meeting he had with the Prefect of the City of Rome, Iunius Tiberianus, after a celebration of *Hilaria*, which were celebrated twice a year on 25 March and 3 November.[693] Tiberianus, it is said, encouraged him to write a biography of Aurelian in Latin (1.1–8). Considering the Dessauist distortion already noted, we should first consider two basic questions: (1)

[693] Lydus, *Mens.*, 4.148.1; Wissowa 1902:295, 497, 513 = Wissowa 1912:321, 354, 573, 591; Cumont 1913:1598; *CIL* I²: pp. 313, 334; Latte 1960:342, 443.

which prefect is Vopiscus referring to?;[694] and (2) could this meeting have taken place on the date stated by Vopiscus?

It is obvious that there were two Prefects of the City by this name towards the end of the third century and the beginning of the fourth century; one who served between 18 February 291 and 3 August 292, and another who served between 12 September 303 and 4 January/June 304.[695] The meeting with the former could have taken place after the *Hilaria* of 25 March. The main difficulty that scholars have found so far with this evidence was that a meeting with the prefect of 291/292 might appear too distant in time from other statements in the *Life of Aurelian*: Diocletian is already referred to as 'privatus' (43.2; i.e. after May 305), and Constantius/Constantine (?) is already referred to as 'Imperator' (44.4–5; i.e. after May 305 or after June 306).[696] In this case, as we have seen with Tacitus' *Dialogue*, there could be a gap, even of several decades, between the time of the meeting's occurrence and its account.

The only 'substantial' objection that Dessau was able to find to a meeting between Vopiscus and the prefect of 303/304 was that the *Hilaria* celebrated on 25 March did not fall under his prefecture. This problem at first caused Dessau to question, rather than reject, the meeting with Iunius Tiberianus in 304, and most subsequent Dessauists only followed his argument up to this point.[697] Dessau was well aware, however, that such a meeting could have taken place *immediately after* the *Hilaria* of 3 November,[698] but later in the same article he concealed and distorted this simple fact, only to overstate this difficulty and claim that the meeting could not have taken

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[694] This question is much older than Dessau 1889; see e.g. Richter 1850:18; Rühl 1888:598–599.
[695] Chronograph of 354 = *MGH AA* IX: 66; *PIR*² I841 and I843 (with further evidence); Richter 1850:18–20; Dessau 1889:344–345; Mommsen 1890:257; Chastagnol 1962:17–20, 40–41; their family relations are less salient to this discussion, see Chastagnol 1962:ibid.; *PIR*² I843.
[696] See p. 174 below; objections: Richter 1850:18–19; Dessau 1889:345 (and subsequent Dessauists); rejoinder already in Rühl 1888:598, 601, 603.
[697] Dessau 1889:344–345 only noted it in order to raise suspicion about the meeting, but his observation was exaggerated by Syme 1971a:31–33; Barnes 1978:77; Chastagnol-HA:117* (on the latter see Alan Cameron's recent criticism, in which he rejects the various late fourth-century 'anachronisms' in this passage (2011b:746; following Momigliano, *Quatro Contributo,* 535–541; Vera 1981:55–56, whom Chastagnol ignored). Syme (1971a:31–33; 1983:120) only reported the *Hilaria* celebrated on 25 March.
[698] Dessau 1889:345.

place.[699] Two of Dessau's critics refuted this claim of improbability about the meeting. Mommsen, after acknowledging the two *Hilaria*, noted in a formalist approach: 'Either the less-known *Hilaria* of the autumn is meant, or it should be written *prid. non. Iun.* instead of *prid. non. Ian.* in the Chronograph.'[700] Even Seeck, an early Dessauist, was willing to accept this conjecture, but said the titulature of the emperors was contradictory (more on this below), and indeed such conjectures are commonly admitted in the legal codes.[701] De Sanctis, while referring to Mommsen's conjecture of June, appealed to common sense and suggested it was a simple human error: 'Vopiscus, writing the introduction a few years after the meeting, could have easily confused the two festivals in his memory. In whatever manner one solves this slight difficulty, even this section confirms the authenticity of the *vitae*.'[702]

To sum up, it is quite clear that an urban prefect named Iunius Tiberianus existed and could have held office in the *Hilaria* whether in 292 or 304. It is unfortunate that Dessau chose to make an issue of a slight chronological problem. As Mommsen saw it: 'Whatever one wants to choose, each of these ways is more feasible than to consider the well-documented Iunius Tiberianus, with everything that depends on it, as a *fiction* of the Theodosian period.'[703] It is more unfortunate that later Dessauists, Syme and Barnes, chose to ignore the evidence of De Sanctis and Mommsen and reached a false assertion about Vopiscus: 'he probably neither knew nor cared that no Junius Tiberianus was *praefectus urbi* at the time of the Hilaria (*Aurel*. 1.1 ff.)'.[704]

Naturally, such a meeting did take place. Whichever explanation, urban prefect, and subsequent date for the famous meeting is preferred, the most we have here is a *terminus post* of 292 or 304. This date has no bearing on the date of publication of *this*

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[699] Dessau (1889:378): 'Es erklärt sich, dass dieser selbe Autor ein Gespräch mit einem fungirenden Stadtpräfecten gehabt haben will an einem Festtage, an dem dieser Statdpräfect entweder noch nicht oder nicht mehr im Amte war.'
[700] Mommsen 1890:257n.1.
[701] Seeck 1890:616. On the codes, see e.g. Seeck 1919:64, 160; Corcoran 2010:100.
[702] De Sanctis 1896:63.
[703] Mommsen 1890:257n.1; 'fiction' is used in the original.
[704] Barnes 1978:77 following Syme 1971a:31–33; see also n. 697 above.

biography (and obviously Vopiscus' subsequent biographies). Vopiscus, like most ancient authors, did not 'blog' or 'tweet' his meetings and thoughts, and a few years or decades could have passed between the meeting and Vopiscus' highly rhetorical account of it.[705]

Nevertheless, Dessau asserted that the *Life of Aurelian* claimed to have been written in *c.*305–306, and that *some* of the subsequent biographies were written between that date and 310/313—the year in which he thought Diocletian died.[706] He then noted his alleged 'contradictions' between his superficial understanding of the references to the tetrarchs and the dates he imposed on the other biographies—all in order to deploy his formula that a given biography was written either before Constantine's accession or at a *much* later time after his death.[707] It was the alleged earlier date of the *Aurelian* (*c.*305) that was imposed by subsequent Dessauists on all of Vopiscus' biographies to support the alleged contradictions and *Fälschung* view,[708] and was later defended by some Mommsenian 'conservatives', such as Momigliano, using their 'editor/editing theory'.[709]

This situation is a result of casual readings of the references to the tetrarchs and contemporary events out of their literary, historical, and philological contexts— these will be reconsidered in the following sections. As we have seen, not all scholars accepted this strict dating but any counter-arguments were ignored in the subsequent debates. The suggested dating of Vopiscus' literary activity to *c.*310–330, or even *c.*340, will be given due consideration.

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[705] Similar remarks in Romano 1977:269–276; see p.153 above.
[706] Dessau 1889:344, 346–347. He thought Diocletian died in 313.
[707] Dessau 1889:347.
[708] Seeck 1890:615–616; Syme 1968:180 (and all his subsequent publications); Barnes 1978:15; Paschoud 1996:203; 2001:155, 162.
[709] Mommsen 1890:259; Momigliano 1966:169–170.

References to the tetrarchs in Vopiscus

Vopiscus professes to have written his biographies in chronological order[710] and makes statements about the tetrarchs, which at 'face value'—according to some scholars—would seem to make it difficult to accept his statements about order and dates of composition.[711] But is this the case?

Diocletian: retired, dead, or alive?

The *Life of Aurelian* contains several references to Diocletian, which do not provide any clear chronological indications about his physical state.[712] The most notable of them is the reference to Diocletian allegedly as a 'private citizen' (*iam privatus)*. Dessauists conventionally cite these two words only, as if they meant that the biography was written immediately after his abdication in *c.*305–306, while he was alive.[713] The sentence, however, has a different meaning:

> *Sed ego a patre meo audivi Diocletianum principem iam privatum dixisse nihil esse difficilius quam bene imperare.*
> But I heard from my father that Diocletian—already as a private-citizen emperor—had said that there was nothing more difficult than to rule well. (*A.*43.2)

There are three undeniable facts about this sentence: (1) it does not state whether Diocletian is alive or not; (2) *Diocletian's* observation was made any time after his abdication, as already noted by Casaubon;[714] and (3) Diocletian is cited indirectly by Vopiscus' father. This last fact clearly suggests that Diocletian was cited several years after his abdication, and Vopiscus could have cited his father and Diocletian long after

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[710] *Pr.*1.5, 24.6-8; *Q.*1.4, 15.10.
[711] Dessau 1889:347–348; Syme 1971b:260–261; Barnes 1978:14–15, 77. In addition to the references given above about the order of composition, Barnes (1978: 14) adds several incorrect references: *A.*2.1 (a reference to Trebellius Pollio; *Tac.*18.4 (an alleged letter of the Senate to the City of Carthage); *Car.*1.8 (this paragraph number does not exist in any of the standard modern editions: Peter 1884a; Hohl-SHA; Chastagnol-HA ad loc.).
[712] The references to Diocletian in 42.3–44.3 are part of the same narrative cluster discussing the qualities of good and bad emperors. 29.3 relates that Diocletian, like Aurelian and Probus, searched for a specific type of purple.
[713] For instance, Syme 1971b:261; Paschoud 1996:203—this a misrepresentation of Dessau (1889: 347), see n.717 and p.185 below.
[714] In HAS-1671, II: 532 ('post depositam purpuram, cum Salonis viveret'); Momigliano 1966:180n.43.

their death.[715] Moreover, the term *princeps privatus* and the name 'Diocletianus' (rather than Diocles) are accurate post-abdication terminology, as recently noted: 'after their abdications Diocletian and Maximian were classified with an oddly hybrid label as "private-citizen emperors."' That is *principes privati*.[716]

In brief, this passage—conventionally taken as providing an 'accurate' composition date of *c.*305—actually provides a remote, and therefore irrelevant, *terminus post quem* for the *Life of Aurelian*.[717] Diocletian could already have been long dead when this biography was published.

Constantius/Constantine and Claudius II

The irrelevant *terminus* given above is superseded by the following statement in the same biography, according to Paschoud's recent edition:

> *Dicebat enim quodam tempore Aurelianum Gallicanas consuluisse Dryadas sciscitantem, utrum apud eius posteros imperium permaneret, cum illas respondisse dixit nullius clarius in re publica nomen quam Claudii posterorum futurum. 5 Et est quidem iam †Constantinus† imperator, eiusdem vir sanguinis, cuius puto posteros ad eam gloriam, quae a Dryadibus pronuntiata sit, pervenire*. (*A.*44.4–5)
> 5 constantius PDX: constantinus Chv[718]

As the apparatus suggests, the name of the emperor involved is questionable and, as we saw earlier, the names Constantius and Constantinus (Constantine) were often confused by scribes; even in works where we possess only one manuscript or there are no *variae lectiones* the person named is also questionable, unless the context is clear enough.[719]

The three main problems that this passage presents are: (1) the actual emperor involved; (2) the meaning of the title 'imperator'; and (3) the prophecy about the

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[715] Note Rühl 1888:600.
[716] Van Dam 2007:246; appealing only to Maximian as *privatus princeps* in *Pan. Lat.* VII(6).10.5; Diocletian's name: see here pp. 159, 189, 266–268. Note Richter 1850:19 (cited p. 187 below).
[717] Strangely enough, Dessau noted: 'this passage was written long after 305', but asserted it clashed with the *terminus ante* of 306 he imposed on it (1889:346–347); this *terminus* does not exist, as we shall see.
[718] The apparatus of Paschoud 1996:ad loc. is cited.
[719] See pp. 164–166 above and p. 278 below.

descendants of Claudius. The traditional argument—without considering the manuscript tradition—has focused on the last two issues. With regard to (2) it has been argued—by Dessauists and 'conservatives' alike—that a reference to Constantius as *imperator* must have meant that he was already Augustus, and hence the statement was made between May 305 and July 306, after the abdication of Diocletian and before Constantius I's death.[720] This dating, it was argued, could not be authentic for two reasons. First, the prophecy about the future of the descendants of Claudius II (3): it would have provoked the other joint rulers and the links between the house of Constantine and Claudius II were only broadcast in a panegyric to Constantine of 310/311—a composition date of the panegyrics which has been challenged in recent years.[721] Second, it 'clashes' with *passing* references to Constantius as 'Caesar' in the later biographies ascribed to Vopiscus.[722]

This argument is invalid in itself. The title *imperator* could mean either Augustus or Caesar,[723] thus refuting the alleged and superficial contradictions with references to Constantius in subsequent biographies, although this is far from being the case.[724]

The argument based on the prophecy about Claudius II's descendants is *ex silentio* and *a priori*—it presupposes that such a claim did not exist before 310 or was inauthentic, and that the panegyric was indeed given in that year. Besides, it seems that other tetrarchs also claimed that they were his descendants.[725] More recently, scholars have claimed that the alleged descent of the second Flavian dynasty might be

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[720] Dessauists: Dessau 1889:346; Syme 1968:101; Barnes 1978:14. Conservatives: Mommsen 1890:258 with n.4; Peter 1892:39; Momigliano 1966:170; Lippold 1999:154 n.5. Dates: Kienast 2009:280.

[721] Dessau 1889:346–347; Barnes 1978:16; Syme 1983:67; but see the criticisms by Mommsen 1890:253–254; De Sanctis 1896:54–60; Momigliano 1966:154–155, 164–165; Lippold 1998:170–172. Dessau (1889:340) thought that Panegyric VI (VII) had been given around 310/311, but this panegyric has a broader dating of 307–311 (see a summary in Nixon and Rodgers 1994:212; Barnes 1996:539–542); see further below.

[722] See pp. 177–187 below.

[723] De Sanctis 1896:65; Lessing 1906:s.vv.; Paschoud 2005:105.

[724] See pp. 177–187 below.

[725] E.g. Diocletian and Maximianus refer to him as 'pater noster' (*CJ* 2.13.1). On this issue of Claudius II see in detail pp. 231, 278ff. below.

either authentic or had already been propagated as early as 297.[726] The first hypothesis was even promoted by a Dessauist outside *HA-Forschung*, claiming that, 'the historiographical trial initiated in 1889 against Constantine (and not reopened since) is based on presumptions rather than on evidence.'[727]

Nonetheless, even if one accepted the suppositions about the title 'imperator' and Claudius II, Constantius' name and the *terminus ante* of 306 are unjustifiable. Acknowledging the textual problem solves the issue. Baynes and Giri attempted to provide ingenious answers to the simple question they posed: 'why is there no mention of Constantine in such a passage as Aurelian 44.5?'[728] (i.e. this passage); the desideratum was also noted a year before Dessau's article.[729] The simple answer is that Constantine *is* mentioned in the passage, and only in some manuscripts is Constantius merely a *scribal* slip for Constantinus (Constantine).

In that case, this statement provides a *terminus post* of 306 with a *terminus ante* of 337 for *this* biography. Thus it can even accommodate the Dessauist supposition that Constantine's Claudian ancestry was only published in 310. The statement about the *posteri* of Claudius II and Constantine whom Vopiscus thought 'are arriving at the glory, which the Druids foretold' is most probably a reference to Constantine's sons, whom he started elevating to the rank of Caesares in 317, or perhaps even to Licinianus, the son of Licinius and Constantia (Constantine's sister) in that year.[730]

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[726] See, respectively, Chausson 2007:25–95; Lippold 1998:160–183 (pub. 1981; ignored by Syme 1983:160–183).
[727] Chausson 2007:95; but does not reconsider the implications on the Dessauist dogma, also produced in 1889. Potter 2013:125–126, 312 and Alan Cameron 2011b:753 overlook this publication. Balanced summary in Van Dam 2007:98–99.
[728] Baynes 1955:215 (suggesting it referred to Julian the Apostate in 360–363); Giri 1905:59–63 (suggesting it referred to the link between Claudius II and Constantius II *c.*350; observe *PLRE*, s.v. 'Vopiscus'). Both also observed that 'Constantius est quidem iam' could be a 'historical present' (ibid.). Rejoinder in De Sanctis, *Scritti Minori*, vol. 6.1, 342. Lippold made a similar remark (Lippold 1999:154n.5).
[729] Rühl 1888:603; *pace* Mommsen 1890:258n.4.
[730] Kienast 2009: 296, 310; Cf. Alan Cameron 1965b:250 on other references to 'child emperors'.

To conclude, the two passages discussed above do not seem to suggest that Vopiscus is 'writing *c.*305' or 'profess(es) to be writing earlier, under the Tetrarchy.'[731] If they suggest anything, it is that Vopiscus wrote and published his *Aurelian* several years after 305, most probably around or after 310/317. But is this dating, as the old dating of 305–306, contradicted by subsequent references to the tetrarchs?

The tetrarchs in the Lives of Carus and his sons

The last biographies of Vopiscus in the corpus are those of Carus and his sons (r.282–285), who ruled before Diocletian's accession (284) and the formation of the tetrarchy (293). For this reason, they contain three passing references to members of the first tetrarchy and to its formation. As these references have conventionally been exploited as *termini ante quos*, they will be examined one by one.

Galerius' Persian campaign of 297

The emperor Carus died during his successful campaign against Persia near Ctesiphon (283). For almost three centuries the Romans attempted to organize a campaign that would wipe out the Persian Empire and, starting with Julius Caesar's plans for a massive campaign against the Parthians that was cut short by the Ides of March, there were events that impeded such campaigns throughout the centuries. The fact that the Romans 'successfully attacked' Ctesiphon—under Trajan (116), Verus (165), Septimius Severus (198), and Carus (283)—is a reminder that they never managed to occupy that city permanently. In the case of Carus it was premature death either by a 'lightning' strike or from disease that caused the Roman withdrawal from the campaign. Vopiscus, by providing a summary of a letter, tried to show it was not lightning that killed Carus but a disease,[732] for the following reason:

> This letter I have inserted for the reason that many declare that there is a certain decree of Fate that no Roman emperor may advance beyond Ctesiphon, and that Carus was struck by the lightning because he desired to pass beyond

[731] Respectively, Barnes 1978:15; Syme 1983:120 referring to *A.*43.2 and 44.5. Syme constantly reiterated this misconception (1968:101, 192; 1971b:261; 1971a:49; 1971b; 1983).

[732] *Car.*8.7: 'the chamberlains, grieving for the death of their prince, fired his tent; and the rumour arose, whatever its source, that he had been killed by lightning, whereas, as far as we can tell, it seems certain that he died of his illness.' A recent narrative history accepts this account (Potter 2004:279).

> the bounds which Fate has set up. But let cowardice, on which courage should set its heel, keep its devices for itself. (*Car.*9.1–2)

This paragraph has received several inventive explanations suggesting it alluded to Julian's Parthian campaign, the time of Honorius and Arcadius, or even Constantius III's usurpation (*c.*407).[733] If one so wishes, this could also refer to Hercalius' campaign in the seventh century, or perhaps even the current deliberations on the US attacking Iran. As Momigliano noted: 'it may allude to anything—or to nothing… Any patriotic Roman could say at any moment: "if we are brave, we shall go beyond Ctesiphon."'[734]

The reason for these far-fetched explanations is the next sentence in this paragraph. Dessauists claim it contradicts the other dates Vopiscus provided in earlier biographies (306 or later), and therefore points to a forgery at a later date.

> *Licet plane ac licebit—per sacratissimum Caesarem Maximianum constitit—Persas uincere atque ultra eos progredi* (*Car.*9.3)
> Clearly it is granted to us and will be granted to us—this was proven by the venerable Maximian when Caesar—to conquer the Persians and progress beyond them

The conventional argument, whether of Dessauists or Mommsenian 'conservatives', is to argue that, 'no one would have given to Maximian the title of Caesar after 1 May 305, when he was created Augustus. This proves that the *Vita Cari*… was written between A.D. 297 and 1 May 305.'[735] This is incorrect. The title 'Caesar' could be used for both Augustus and Caesar, and the title *sacratissimus* in no way suggests that Galerius was alive or served as 'Caesar' when Vopiscus wrote or published *this* biography.[736] Vopiscus only mentions in passing the success of Galerius and his titles at the time of the event, his 297/298 campaign against the Persians.

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[733] Summaries in Momigliano 1966:155–156; Barnes 1978:77; Paschoud 2001:359–361 with further ingenious notions, which are in any case refuted by his own comments, which unknowingly undermine Dessau (see below).
[734] 1966:156.
[735] Baynes 1955:213 (pub. 1928); picked up from Dessau 1889:347, followed by Mommsen 1890:258; Seeck 1890:616; Syme 1971b:261; cf. De Sanctis 1927:341–342.
[736] For instance, *sacratissimus* for an emperor who was certainly dead; Gai. *Inst.* 1.77: *senatus consulto, quod auctore diuo Hadriano sacratissimo factum est* (see also 1.53, 1.94); the lack of the title *divus* in

It is therefore only a truthful statement that Galerius Maximianus, as the Caesar in the East (and he was indeed Caesar at the time of that campaign),[737] had a successful campaign against the Persians. A textbook referring to Galerius as 'the junior Caesar… who would ultimately achieve the most spectacular military success' against Persia, was not ostensibly published before 305 or 311, Galerius' death.[738] We should be grateful to Paschoud, who unknowingly refuted this Dessauist assertion:

> Many commentators want to infer from this passage that the author tries to create the impression that he writes at the same time, when Galerius' campaign is ongoing in Persia, or very shortly afterwards.[739] Actually, the perfect *constitit* proves that for the author of those lines Galerius' campaign is meant to belong to the past; and the fact that he is qualified as Caesar only indicates that he held this position at the time of the aforesaid campaign. This is perfectly accurate, and does not prevent the assumption that these lines could have been written at any time—whether before or after 1 May 305.[740]

One of these commentators is Dessau himself, who used the alleged *terminus ante* he thought this passage provided to support his late fourth-century *Fälschung* hypothesis.[741] Yet Paschoud is either unwilling or unable to reconsider the Dessauist dogma, in whose 'total victory' he believes and which he follows.[742]

This passage therefore cannot be used to argue that Vopiscus was 'ostensibly' writing around or before 305, and it does not provide an earlier stated date for the *Carinus* that contradicts the later dates of the earlier biographies. The reference to Galerius' Persian expedition is simply an irrelevant *terminus post* of 298.

Car. has no bearing on the date (pp. 153 above; Nerva is only 'Caesar' and not 'divus' in Amm. Marc. 31.16.9). Contra Mommsen 1890:258n.2; Baynes 1955:213–214 and others.

[737] Kienast 2009: 283.

[738] Harries 2012:35; cf. Vermaat (1893:111): 'Car. cap. 9…inde vero tantum efficitur Galerium Maximianum Caesarem fuisse *cum Persas vinceret*, minime eum Caesarem fuisse *cum haec scriberentur*. Nos quoque nostris temporibus dicimus: "Galerius Caesar Persas vicit".' Even in 2013 apparently.

[739] 'Thus, e.g. Chastagnol-HA:1156n.2'.

[740] Paschoud 2001:360, overlooking De Sanctis's elegant remark (1896:65n.1): 'In *Car*.9.3… Galerius is called Caesar, because as Caesar he conquered the Persians'; the same view in Lécrivain 1904:25; cf. n. 738 above. The irrelevance of such statements for establishing the stated dates was well noted by Richter 1850:19 (against Casaubon), whom Dessau and Dessauists chose to ignore.

[741] 1889:347, 375.

[742] In other places he maintains the composition date of *c.*305 on the basis of such passages (1996:203; 2001:155, 162); Paschoud 2009:204 (cited); on a similar inability of his to reconsider the dogma, see Lippold 1999:161. A similar problem is manifested in Kolb 1987:*passim*.

On a positive note, this passage could confirm a Constantinian date of composition. It seems to refer to the prequel of Constantine's plan to attack the Persian Empire in the second half of his reign[743] and to allude to Constantine's service in that campaign (298), when he probably inspected the ruins of Babylon after the Romans advanced beyond Ctesiphon, according to Constantine's statement in his *Speech to the Assembly of the Saints* (*c.*317/323).[744] Potter now notes that Nazarius' account of Constantine's involvement in the Battle of Verona (312, panegyric pronounced in *c.*321) 'has Constantine doing his best imitation of Galerius during the Persian war.'[745]

These are not *termini* but indications of the political milieu of the stated date around those years.

Carinus, Constantius, and the tetrarchy

The remaining two references to the tetrarchs in this biography, conventionally taken as *termini ante quos*, are even less relevant for establishing the stated date of composition. As Diocletian and his co-rulers rose to power shortly after the deaths of Carus and his sons, these statements are as relevant for establishing the date of composition of this biography as the murder and *damnatio memoriae* of Domitian are for the *Caesares* of Suetonius.

In the *Life of Carinus* Vopiscus records Carus' distaste for the behaviour of his son Carinus who served as Caesar, and his attempt to get rid of him.

> When his father heard of all that he was doing, he exclaimed, 'he is not my son,' and then decided to appoint Constantius—who was afterwards made Caesar (*qui postea Caesar est factus*), but then administered the governorship Dalmatia—in his stead, because no man seemed better; and he even planned, as Onesmius says, to kill him (i.e. Carinus). (*Car*.17.6)

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[743] Euseb. *VC* 4.56 with Averil Cameron and Hall 1999:335–336; cf. already Tropea 1900:II, 16–19 on *Car.* and Constantine's plans.
[744] Thus Barnes 1978:78 (contradicting himself, ibid. 14); Kolb 1987:14. Both refer to Constantine's *Speech* 16.4. On Constantine and Babylon: Barnes 2011:51–52; Potter 2013:63. Date of the *Speech*: Barnes 2011:115–116.
[745] *Pan. Lat.* IV(10).26.3–5; Potter 2013:141, 328 n.7.

This reference to Constantius' later appointment as 'Caesar' has also been taken by Dessau and subsequent scholars (including Paschoud) to mean that this biography claimed to have been written before May 305, apparently because Vopiscus does not seem to be aware of Constantius' later promotion to the rank of 'Augustus'.[746] The title 'Caesar', however, was loosely used in Latin literature, even in tetrarchic texts, to denote an emperor (i.e. Augustus, *imperator*, *princeps*), as we saw earlier. Vopiscus also used it in this manner: 'what shall I say of this, that so few good emperors (*principes*) appeared, while there were so many emperors (*Caesares*)?'[747] He then lists emperors from Augustus onwards, through the Flavians, the Antonines, and the third-century crisis. In comparison, the *Origo Constantini* dealing with events up to the death of Constantine the Great, stated that Constantius had been created 'Caesar' and that the family of Constantine descended from Claudius Gothicus, while making *no* statement about his elevation to the rank of Augustus.[748] As we have seen, the same *Origo* refers to Constantine's victory over the Goths in 332, and claims it was achieved 'by Constantine the Caesar (*per Constantinum Caesarem*)'.[749] Moreover, Constantius' elevation to the rank of 'Caesar' is the first promotion, that is more important in signalling the upwards trajectory.[750] The reference to Constantius as Caesar, therefore, has no probative power regarding his state during the time of composition.

In sum, the reference to Constantius, similar to the other passages Dessauists have exploited, again provides an irrelevant *terminus post* of his first appointment as emperor.[751] On the positive side, other statements in the passage seem to support

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[746] Dessau 1889:347; Paschoud 2001:347, 389. The reference cannot be a mistake for Constantine the Great, because he was too young to hold the post of governor of Dalmatia.
[747] *A.*42.3; observe Richter 1850:19; Lessing 1906:s.v. 'Caesar'.
[748] *Origo Constantini*, 1. König 1987:59–60 does not explain this 'rank' for Constantius.
[749] *Origo Constantini* 31; Barnes 1982:79n.134; pp. 154ff. above.
[750] I owe this last observation to Chris Pelling's suggestion.
[751] In addition to this, according to De Sanctis (1896:65): 'there is also another hypothesis. The title Caesar can derive from Vopiscus having literally transcribed Onesimus, whom he cites. The ancient writers have committed more of these anachronisms, by foolishly transcribing from their sources without reference.' He then provides an example from Diodorus Siculus (cf. Janiszewski 2006:350). This would mean, in any case, that Vopiscus used a Constantinian source.

both its accuracy and a Constantinian dating of the biography. Barnes recently noted that the date this passage provides for Constantius' term of office as governor of Dalmatia between *c.*283 and spring 285 'is both plausible and doubtless correct.'[752] The reference to *Dalmatia* in the singular is accurate for the time of the event, as we know that 'Dalmatia was already a praesidial province in AD 277'.[753] The reference to Onesimus, whom the Suda describes as a historian from the time of Constantine, certainly places this biography a few years into Constantine's reign, most probably any time between 312 and 337 (the early years of Constantine in power are too early for the work of Onesimus).[754]

Onesimus' attempt to show that Carus even wanted to kill his son Carinus fits well with any time between the formation of the tetrarchy and the time of Constantine. Constantine's legitimacy, at certain points, rested *inter alia* on Diocletian's or Maximian's appointment of Constantius to the rank of Caesar.[755] None of the tetrarchs, or anyone linked to them including their sons (Constantine included), would have wanted to be seen as usurpers or supporters of the 'usurper' Diocletian. Thus delegitimization of Carinus fits the Diocletianic-Constantinian period. Vopiscus' reference to Carus' wish to appoint Constantius as Caesar certainly puts a *Constantinian* 'twist' on this story.

<u>Diocletian's accession and the formation of the tetrarchy</u>

The last reference to the tetrarchs is made at the end of the *Life of Carinus*. Diocletian served under Numerian as the commander of his *domestici* (283–284), and after Numerian was killed by Aper, his praetorian prefect, the troops declared Diocletian

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[752] Barnes 2011:28.

[753] Bury 1923:136 and n.4 on the basis of *CIL* 3.8707 and *CIL* 3.1805 (of 280 CE); noting: 'cp. Vopiscus, *V. Carini.* 16,6, *praesidiatus Dalmatiae*' (he writes 16 for 17 in an oversight; see *Stellenbibliographie* on *Car.*17.6).

[754] This historian certainly existed and there is no room for the a priori attempts of Dessauists, such as Syme and Chastagnol, based on the presupposition that Dessau was certainly right, to reject his existence and produce far-fetched explanations for his name and citations. See Momigliano 1977:146–147; Lippold 1999:160–161; Janiszewski 2006:332–351, esp. 343–348. Testimonia in *FHG*, III: 728 and Janiszewski 2006:332.

[755] Schlange-Schöningen 2004; Potter 2013:171; for details see pp. 233ff. below.

Augustus at Nicomedia (20 November 284). A campaign against Carinus shortly followed and ended with Diocletian's victory at the Battle of the Margus in spring 285. Carinus died in that battle.[756]

It is not surprising, therefore, that the last chapters of his biography refer to the regime changes—such as Diocletian's accession and the formation of the first tetrarchy—without any authorial intentions of providing a stated date of composition or referring to the physical or political situation of the persons mentioned at the time of publication. In the *Life of Carinus* Vopiscus makes the following comment about Carinus:

> When he learned that his father had been killed by lightning and his brother slain by his own father-in-law, and that Diocletian had been hailed as Augustus (*Diocletianum Augustum appellatum comperit*), Carinus committed acts of still greater vice and criminality… he fought many battles against Diocletian, but finally, after he was defeated in a battle near Margus, he perished. (*Car.*18.1–2)

There is nothing in this paragraph to suggest any date of composition or that Vopiscus is writing close to the events—there is obviously no reference to Constantius as Caesar or that the first tetrarchy is still in power. It simply recounts how Carinus lost the empire to Diocletian. Nevertheless, Dessauists think that this passage means that the biography was written before 305 because the '*Carus* uses a phraseology which ought to imply that he [i.e. Constantius] is still only Caesar (*Carus* 18.1ff.).'[757] Once again, an irrelevant *terminus post* of 285/293–305 was misconceived as a *terminus ante*.

This *terminus* is in any case superseded by Vopiscus' reference to the end of Carus and his sons and the formation of the first tetrarchy and its early achievements (293–298):

> We have now come to the end of the three emperors, Carus, Numerian and Carinus. The [gods] gave as their successors the emperors Diocletian and Maximian and joined to these men Galerius and Constantius: one of them was

[756] Potter 2004:279–290.
[757] Barnes 1978:14 taken from Dessau 1889:347; Momigliano 1966:170.

> born to remove the disgrace incurred by Valerian's capture—the other to bring back the Gauls under Roman Laws. (*Car.*18.3)

Again, this passage does not suggest the circumstances of, or a *terminus ante quem* for, the composition, as some Dessauists have asserted.[758] Rather recently, Callu has noted that this passage does not suggest a stated date prior to the abdication of the tetrarchy in May 305.[759]

The two further objections Dessauists posed to its authenticity are: (1) the order of the rulers; and (2) the reference to Constantius' victory in Gaul.[760] As regards (1), there are viable explanations for this order. First, we have seen that even other literary texts from the time of the tetrarchy, the Latin Panegyrics, did not strictly follow the order of rulers for literary and political reasons. In this specific case it would appear that Vopiscus wrote the rulers in that order for stylistic reasons; it places the junior emperors in the corresponding order of their senior emperors in anaphora: (A) Diocletian (B) Maximian—(A) Galerius (B) Constantius. And indeed Galerius was Diocletian's Caesar, and Constantius was Maximian's Caesar—in the order of seniority Diocletian was superior to Maximian, who was at first the former's Caesar. Second, as we noted earlier and perhaps for this reason, it is known that 'keeping up with all these changes in seniority and ideology must have been confusing already in the ancient world.'[761]

So the 'confused' order of rulers points more to a confused contemporary,[762] rather than the highly 'competent' Dessauist forger, who is allegedly said to have been familiar with the works of Victor and Eutropius. As Lippold noted, there is a stark

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[758] N. 757 above and Paschoud 2001:393–397.
[759] Callu 1992:lxi n.192: 'La mention des Tétrarques en Car.18.3–5… n'oblige pas à une datation antérieure à l'abdication de Dioclétien'.
[760] Seeck 1890:616–618, 635; Barnes 1978:77–78; Dessau (ibid.) only thought it meant they were alive.
[761] Van Dam 2007:247.
[762] Cf. Mommsen (1890:252): 'the incorrect reference to Constantius… in *Car.*18.3 is simply an error'; but cf. n.669 above.

difference between the account of the tetrarchs in Victor and Eutropius on the one hand, and Vopiscus (the 'HA') on the other.[763]

As for (2), Seeck asserted that a contemporary author would not have referred to Constantius I's victories in Gaul, and then concluded that this was an allusion to Constantinus III's usurpation in Gaul (407)—all in order to support his implausible and ingenious hypothesis that the entire 'HA' was written to support that usurper. The entire theory was rejected even by Dessau himself.[764] Nevertheless, as De Sanctis noted, one does not need to go beyond the Latin Panegyrics to Constantius to understand that this statement is quite correct.[765]

There is nothing in this passage (*Car.*18) or the other two passages (*Car.*9, 17) so far discussed to suggest that any of these tetrarchs were alive during the time of publication, and that it was written before 313 or 310; in fact, Vopiscus seems to imply that all of them were already dead,[766] but the great Dessau asserted:

> The biographies of Carus, Carinus, and Numerian must have been written before Diocletian's death (313), because of the high esteem he enjoyed (*Car.*18). I should find this passage—together with its high esteem towards Maximian and its praise of the union of the four emperors—to be proof (*Beweiss*) of the formation of this work either under the joint reign of the four emperors, or before the time when Maximian retook the imperial robe in defiance of his former colleagues, and made himself hated by every one—in any case before his ignominious death in 310. The passing laudatory reference to Galerius and Constantius as Caesares (*Car.*9, 17) would also fit the time of the joint rule of the four emperors.[767]

We know enough about the history of the tetrarchy and its sequel, despite scant surviving evidence, that Diocletian was held in high esteem under Constantine, and that Constantine rehabilitated Maximian Herculius shortly *after* his death in 310.[768]

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[763] Vopiscus, *Car.*18.3–4; Victor 39, Eutropius 9.19; Lippold 1999:168.
[764] Seeck 1890:635–638; Dessau 1892:585.
[765] *Pan. Lat.* VIII(4).6.1; De Sanctis 1896:67; Peter 1892:44; Lécrivain 1904:25 with n.1. As a Dessauist admits: 'the *HA* is right' (Barnes 1978:78 but overlooking De Sanctis, ibid.); note that Seeck also imposed an implausible single-author theory on all the Gallic panegyrics (Rees 2012:26–28).
[766] *Car.*18.5 with Tropea 1900:20–21 and Callu 1992:lxi n.192.
[767] Dessau 1889:347; the last sentence, as we have seen, is simply not true, even according to some subsequent Dessauists.
[768] Barnes 1982:35n.31; Schlange-Schöningen 2004; Barnes 2011:74; Potter 2013:171.

In addition, the ideal of the tetrarchy was not discontinued even as late as *c.*316–325. A Constantinian mouthpiece, the 'sober and accurate' *Origo* reports that Constantine and Licinius thought about coming to a quasi-'tetrarchic' arrangement:

> Sometime later, Constantine sent Constantius to Licinius, suggesting that he should make Bassianus (who had married Constantine's other sister Anastasia) a Caesar, so that Bassianus could hold Italy as a buffer between Constantine and Licinius, following the example set by Diocletian and Maximianus. (*Origo* 14)

In short, the praise of Diocletian, Maximian, and obviously Constantius in the *Life of Carinus* are not surprising. In fact, Vopiscus' nostalgic praise of the first tetrarchy speaks in favour of a *terminus ante* of *c.*325 (Constantine's victory of Licinius) or several years later, while it was only becoming clear to contemporaries that they were living under Constantine's monarchy.

So far the discussion of this passage (*Car.*18) might appear to be a scholarly disagreement about dating a tetrarchic text to a few decades later on the basis of its statements and Dessau's misunderstanding of the political situation, but it is Dessau's corollaries of arbitrarily dating the *Lives of Carus, Numerianus*, and *Carinus* to any time before 310 that are the greater issue, and consequently the biographies that precede them. Dessau's next line was to point out references or allusions to events and people he thought were only relevant between 310 and *c.*325 in the earlier biographies of Vopiscus; for example, a reference to a consulship of a certain Probus (only relevant after 310) or the passing reference to two other authors of the corpus, Capitolinus and Lampridius (on which he imposed an incorrect *terminus post* of 324).[769] He then repeated his mantra that these biographies, as the entire corpus, were written in a much later period than 310—rather than later revised or interpolated—because of these later 'anachronisms'.[770] The next sections will evaluate these 'anachronisms' in light of the new dating.

[769] Dessau 1889:347–348, see below.
[770] Dessau 1889:375.

Intermediate conclusion

Vopiscus' stated dates of composition turn out to be more open than the impression one gets from Dessau, Mommsen, Momigliano, Syme, and subsequent handbooks. The irrelevant *termini ante quos* have now been eliminated, and some more relevant temporal references have been emphasized. These in fact point to dates much later than 306, more probably *c.*310–325. It has also been recorded that Mommsen's approach, which is traditionally taken as the 'conservative' approach to Dessau, at times provided valid arguments against Dessau (as with Tiberianus) but in some cases was unable to refute his arguments regarding the stated dates of composition because of Mommsen's formalist approach to imperial titulature in literary texts. We have also seen that subsequent scholars in the nineteenth century and later, such as De Sanctis and Lécrivain—and even modern Dessauists, such as Paschoud (unknowingly) refuted some of Dessau's misconceptions.

It can be concluded, therefore, that almost none of the references to the tetrarchs in the biographies of Vopiscus provides any clear *terminus ante quem*, and the latter seems to be open. As Rühl noted, 'we must acknowledge that the number of available dating references is extremely small.'[771] The current situation in modern research—after the emergence of Dessauism in the 1960s rather than immediately after Dessau[772]—seems to be not a result of nineteenth-century positivism or formalism but of Dessau's selective reading of seventeenth-century commentaries and the much later restatement of the former, while ignoring the counter arguments of scholars other than Mommsen.[773] It is thought provoking to read Franz Richter's exemplary critique of Casaubon's comments on Vopiscus from 1850:

> Casaubon goes too far, when he claims that the *Life of Carus* was written immediately after the victory of Galerius over the Persians; and the several places, where Diocletian is titled Augustus and Galerius and Constantius are titled Caesares, should not be overestimated. For that word refers not only to

[771] Rühl 1888:603; see n. 808 below.
[772] See *Introduction*.
[773] E.g. note how Momigliano 1966:169–170; Barnes 1978:14–15, 77 overlooked Lécrivain 1904:25–27, who rectified some of Dessau's inaccuracies.

> the reigning emperor: Diocletian and Maximian are called, for instance, *seniores Augusti* in the inscription we mentioned; and Caesar in these writers is also found as synonymous with Augustus and Imperator.[774]

The only secure dates that we could have about Vopiscus' literary activity are that he started working on the *Life of Aurelian* after 304, and that his biographies subsequent to the *Aurelian* could have been published any time after 306, as Bury and Lécrivain saw at the turn of the twentieth century. My only disagreement with these two scholars is that the *Life of Aurelian* was not *published* before July 306, the date of Constantius' death—this appears to be the result of the overlooked problem in the manuscript tradition, which points to the name 'Constantinus'—but any time after 306 under Constantine.[775]

Beyond this, we have seen that some of the passages suggest a composition and publication in the order suggested by Vopiscus any time between 306 and *c.*337.[776] These possible dates should now be examined against the alleged 'later' anachronisms Dessauists have found in Vopiscus, alongside other temporal indications.

Contemporary events and persons: the inferred dates of composition

The open dates of composition sometime around Constantine allow us to look soberly at the references Vopiscus provided to contemporary events and persons one by one—and to see how they are in fact part of the solution, rather than the problem.

Vopiscus' approach to contemporary events has received Lippold's thorough consideration. His remarkable, but overlooked, article, 'Past and Present: the interpretation of Roman history and the presentation of the recent time in Vopiscus', demonstrates satisfactorily that the references to contemporary events, persons, the

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[774] Richter 1850:19.
[775] Bury 1900:445 (noting 'after May 305 and begun before July 306'); Lécrivain 1904:23, 27. Observe Bury 1926:479 against Dessau and Seeck's general validity, and Lippold 1999 against Paschoud 1996.
[776] Contra Momigliano's formalist approach, which yields to Dessau's inaccuracies (1966:170): 'though Vopiscus says that he wrote his lives in chronological order… he seems clearly to presuppose in the life of Carus that Constantius was a Caesar (before May 305; cf. 9, 17, 18). This on the traditional theory can be explained only by the admission of some revision.'

senate, religion, and the use of literary sources in the biographies of Vopiscus point to a composition date between *c.*305 and *c.*326, rather than to the Dessauist *Fälschung* from *c.*400. Nevertheless, he did not consider the general validity of Dessau's arguments.[777] Because Lippold's article and positive approach were either ignored or firmly dismissed with an appeal to the alleged tangled web of 'contradictions' noted by Dessau, 'a young and brilliant Jewish scholar',[778] the following sections will focus on re-evaluating the remaining conventional arguments advanced by Dessau.

Events

The references to events allow a possible postulate of more accurate dates of composition for some of the biographies.

Baths of Diocletian: libraries and scholarship

In his third biography, the *Life of Probus*, Vopiscus states:

> I chiefly consulted the books from the Ulpian Library, in my time in the Baths of Diocletian, and likewise from the House of Tiberius, and I have also used the registers of the clerks of the Porphyry Portico. (*Pr.*2.1)

All the references to the libraries are correct.[779] Vopiscus' use of books from the Ulpian Library in the Baths of Diocletian certainly fits with the practice of reading books in baths in the Roman world.[780] The objection Dessauists posed to this statement and Vopiscus' chronology is that his use of the Baths of Diocletian meant that his work was written before 305.[781] This is simply a misunderstanding of historical reality.

The chronological framework for the completion of these baths is given by Jerome and an inscription. Jerome's *Chronicle* stated that in 302: 'the Baths of Diocletian were

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[777] Lippold 1999 and also Lippold 1998:198–229.
[778] Barnes 2000:307 (against Lippold); Barnes 1995b:4. Alan Cameron 2011b; McEvoy 2013:306, and others overlooked Lippold (n. 623 above). Lippold noted the irrelevance of the specific passage to child emperors in *c.*390–400 several times and relevance in *c.*325 (1998:xxi, 213–215 (pub.1989); 1999:166).
[779] Magie-SHA, 3.337.4–6; Robathan 1939.
[780] Casson 2001:89–92.
[781] See Introduction to this part, see also pp.282ff. below.

made (*factae*) in Rome—and those of Maximian in Carthage'.[782] The actual completion of the Baths is quite different from their dedication a few years later, and therefore they 'were erected between 298 and 305/6'.[783] The inscription dedicating them to the Roman people had been chiselled in at least four copies, as can be inferred from its complex transmission: we only have fragments of this inscription and we mostly rely on the ninth-century *Anonymus Einsidlensis*, an itinerary of Rome which also recorded the inscriptions of Rome—a text preserved in a single manuscript of the same century.[784] The inscription states:

> *DD(omini) nn(ostri) Diocletianus et* [[*Maximianus*]] *Invicti / Seniores Augg(usti) patres Impp(eratorum) et Caess(arum) et / dd(omini) nn(ostri) Constantius et Maximianus Invicti Augg(usti) et /* [[*Severus et*]] *Maximinus nobilissimi Caesares / thermas Felices* [*Dio*]*cletianas quas /* [*M*]*aximianus Aug(ustus) re*[*dien*]*s ex Africa sub / [pr]aesentia maie*[*state*] *disposuit ac /* [*f*]*ieri iussit et Diocletiani Aug(usti) fratris sui / nomine consecravit coemptis aedificiis / pro tanti operis magnitudine omni cultu / perfectas Romanis suis dedicaverunt* (*CIL* VI 01130 = *CIL* VI 31242 = ILS 646)[785]

The imperial titulature of the emperors and the events stated in the inscription can now be dated accurately. The building of the baths most likely started in 298/299, when Maximian returned to Rome from Carthage: *rediens ex Africa* (?);[786] and were already built when they were dedicated: *thermas… Diocletianas… perfectas Romanis suis dedicaverunt.* The titulature of Diocletian and Maximian as *Seniores Augusti* and the titulature of the members of the second tetrarchy point to the earliest *terminus post* of the *dedication*. This dedication consequently provides the *terminus ante* of the baths' completion, which is the abdication of Diocletian and Maximianus on 1 May 305, when they made way for the second tetrarchy.[787] Constantius is still alive, so the

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[782] Helm 1956:227g.
[783] Fagan 2002:115.
[784] On its transmission and restoration see *CIL* VI, on pp. 845, 3071, 3778, 4326, 4340; *ILS* 646 (Dessau's notes ad loc.); Walser 1987:9–10, 76–77 (mistakenly ascribing it to the first tetrarchy, as pointed out by Kuhoff 2001:636, n. 1345); Kuhoff 2001:210 with n. 572; 2007:802 with n.5; AE 2007, 42.
[785] Cited according to the text provided in Epigraphik-Datenbank (www.manfredclauss.de).
[786] Barnes 1982:59; Nixon and Rodgers 1994:201 n.32; Kuhoff 2001:210 and n.572; Kienast 2009:273 mostly on the basis of this inscription (*ILS* 646). It should be noted that the evidence for his journey from Carthage to Rome in this year is very slender, as Halfmann 1986: 244) notes.
[787] Lactantius, *DMP* 19.1; Städele 2003:143 with n.66.

terminus ante quem of the *dedication* is 25 July 306, the date of his death.[788] It may assist readers to tabulate the chronology inferred from the literary and epigraphic evidence.

State of the Baths	**Date**
Maximian's decision to build	*c.*298/299
Physically completed	302
Dedicated and officially opened	May 305–July 306
Destruction of their aqueducts (?); Justinian's Gothic War	*c.*535–554
A Roman is able to say he has seen them as already built	302 to *c.*535–538
A Roman is able to say he has used them	305–306 to *c.*535–538

Table 4: Dates of Diocletian's Baths

In sum, as noted earlier, a reference to these baths in a literary work as having been built does not mean that the work was written 'shortly before 305'.[789] This also has a corollary on the dating of the so-called *Thirty Tyrants*.[790] The most that these statements about the baths can teach us is that these biographies were written any time after the baths were built (302?) and dedicated (305–306)—two irrelevant *termini post*. Again we meet an irrelevant *terminus post* that Dessauists turned into a *terminus ante*. There is nothing in this passage to suggest Vopiscus did not publish this biography or subsequent biographies several decades after 306.

Civil war and peace

The negative approach and fear of civil war is a recurring theme in Latin literature ever since the first century BCE. Civil war was morally condemned, and subsequent literary representation of such wars, written under the winners, was a difficult task. The representations of such wars in many cases appear to be topoi.[791] The historical

[788] Kienast 2009:280.
[789] Dessau 1889:340.
[790] On the *Thirty Tyrants*, see pp. 282ff. below. This dating has been suggested both by conservative pluralists and unitarists. Dessau took this date from Peter 1860:9; Syme 1968:101, 180 restated him. Conservatives: Peter 1860:9–10; 1892:35; 1894:135; Momigliano 1966:169. See the criticisms already by Mommsen 1890:253 with n.8. Dessau *himself* later pointed out that the *termini* for this inscription were between May 305 and July 306 when he published the inscription in his collection of inscriptions in 1892 (*ILS* 646 notes ad loc.). Demandt 2007:426 (restated in 2008:344) has suggested the building was completed in 306.
[791] In general, Jal 1963.

facts make it absolutely clear on any interpretation (especially after Constantine's accession in 306), that 'the orgy of civil wars which followed Diocletian's abdication shows that it was no system, but Diocletian's personality, which gave peace to the empire for twenty years'; and that 'the ironical outcome of this extended experiment in collegiate emperorship was a return to the pre-Tetrarchic era of civil wars between emperors.'[792]

The *Life of Probus*, we have seen, could have been published any time after 306. This *Life* refers to Romans who are 'now' preparing for civil war.

> Let them now go forward—those who equip soldiers for civil wars, arm the hands of brothers (*fratres*) to slay their brothers (*germani*), and call on sons to wound their fathers, and who deny to Probus his Divinity (*Pr.*23.5)

This passage illustrates how paying attention to the correct *terminus post* of 306 could prevent subsequent ingenious notions and far-fetched allusions. Momigliano, a Mommsenian 'conservative', committed to a *terminus ante* of 305/6, described it as 'a difficult allusion to civil war'. This difficulty derives from 'that great but erratic scholar Seeck.'[793] The latter firmly asserted that 'nothing entitles us to date the work of Vopiscus beyond 25 July 306' (even Dessau 'dated' parts of Vopiscus' work to before 310) and concluded that this passage means that 'war… had already broken out, and this does not fit the time between 304 and summer 306 in any way.'[794] This was enough to open the floodgates of inventiveness—with attempts to date this passage (and consequently the whole corpus) to any time between Magnentius' usurpation (350–351)—through Julian the Apostate (*c.*360), the Battle of Frigidus (394), and the sons of Theodosius (*c.*398)—and the usurpation of Constantine III (*c.*407; according to Seeck).[795] Paschoud remarks: 'any discussion on this point is futile',[796] but on the basis of Seeck asserts:

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[792] Jones 1966:30; Van Dam 2007:246 (respectively).
[793] Momigliano 1966:170 (cited), 144 (cited), 150–151.
[794] Seeck 1890:616, 618.
[795] It suffices to follow the references in *Stellenbibliographie* and Paschoud 2001:ad loc.
[796] 2001:161; cf. Momigliano (1966:173): 'this passage can be made to agree with all the possible theories about the *HA*—including the traditionalistic, as Mommsen showed.'

> Firstly, this allusion is totally unsuitable to the traditional dating around 305, since at the time of the transition from the first and second tetrarchy tranquillity prevailed in the empire: the troubles did not start before the death of Constantinus in summer 306.[797] Secondly, this allusion is well suited for the year 398.[798]

This biography never had a *terminus ante* of 305/306. Acknowledging this simple fact places this biography any time between 306 and 325—a period of successive civil wars. In fact, Lactantius tells us that even shortly before 305—the Seeck-Paschoud 'traditional dating'—Galerius 'had already of late clashed with the elder Maximian and terrified him with the alarming prospect of civil war.'[799] Indeed looking at the tree helps to avoid the dark forest of Seeck and subsequent complex notions.[800]

This passage, when read in its broader context, is in fact a melancholic frustration of civil wars, which Vopiscus presented as a result of the assassination of Probus. The panegyrical stance of this biography is universally acknowledged,[801] and the paragraphs leading to this sentence are an elaboration on the theme of 'what would have happened if Probus was not assassinated'—there would have been universal peace, no need for soldiers and consequently no civil wars.[802] So the answer is that there would not have been any soldiers and consequently, civil wars. Such wars were associated with topoi of moral corruption in Latin literature,[803] and Vopiscus' pretentious rhetoric seems to suggest that anyone who wages civil war acts against the will of his object of admiration, they 'deny to Probus his divinity'. As Purser noted: 'no one will deny that Vopiscus has something of the rhetorician about him.'[804]

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[797] 'This has already been noted by Seeck 1890:617–618'.
[798] Paschoud 2001:161.
[799] *DMP* 18.1; noted by De Sanctis 1896:68.
[800] Note Lécrivain 1904:24, suggesting 306, and Rühl 1888:604, suggesting preparations for war between Constantine and Licinius *c.*322–323.
[801] De Sanctis 1896:67–68; Chastagnol-HA:1069–1070.
[802] *Pr.*23–24.
[803] Jal 1963:360–390, 417–426.
[804] 1909:44.

The previous generation's admiration of the tetrarchs

An overlooked passage in the *Life of Probus* refers in passing to the fate of some of Probus' generals: 'For from his training came Carus, Diocletian, Constantius, Asclepiodotus, Hannibalianus… and all the others whom our fathers admired and from whom many good princes arose.'[805]

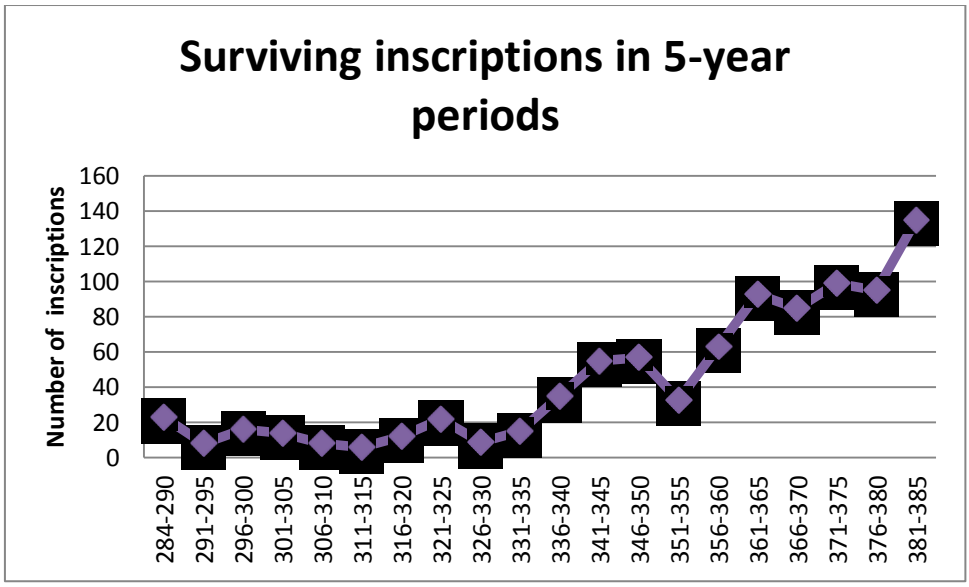
Such a statement, similar to the reference to Diocletian in the *Life of Aurelian*,[806] supports a date of composition several decades after *c.*306, when the acts of the tetrarchs could have been said to have been admired by the generation before Vopiscus. At the time of publication these emperors could have been long dead—Rühl made a similar remark one year before 'the epochal year':[807] he claimed the statement could not have been made by a contemporary of Constantius I. But rather than to record a 'contradiction' and the elaborate inventiveness of a *Fälschung*—he correctly acknowledged that the works of Vopiscus contain a very small number of *relevant* dating references and that the references to the tetrarchs did not indicate they were alive during their publication. Rühl simply noted that this pointed to a publication date of *c.*322–323 of *this* biography. Unfortunately, his views were badly misrepresented by Dessau and later overlooked.[808] As we saw earlier, a Constantinian author should not have had a problem with the admiration of Carus, Diocletian, and Constantius I.[809]

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[805] *Pr.*22.3.
[806] P.173 above.
[807] Syme 1983:99.
[808] 1888:601, 603–604; cf. Crees (1911:39): 'Rühl examines soberly the evidence as to the date of Vopiscus, but, as he indulges in no rash speculations, other critics, who have been too busy flying their own kites, have ignored his careful examination of the evidence.' Paschoud also ignores Rühl—and his own refutation of the passages brought to support the Dessauist stated date (Paschoud 2001:360; see p. 179 above)—and assuming that such a statement could have been made several years after 305, and 'that "Vopiscus"… pretends to write *c.*305', he cynically concludes: 'once again, our great man betrays his historical artefacts' (ibid. 155).
[809] See above and below; Lippold 1999:177.

Persons

When one deals with prosopographical arguments relating to the stated date of composition, one has to acknowledge the void in our knowledge.[810] For 'the last detailed list of suffect consuls comes from 289… and they disappear from view.'[811] Moreover, there is a clear gap in the distribution of inscriptions—the most crucial evidence for any prosopographical study—between the period 284–335 and the period 336–385. For these two periods, which span 100 years, nearly 85% of inscriptions come from the period 336–385; and the gap even increases if we include the period 336–340 as the stated date of composition and add the early Theodosian period. The following figures and chart, based on the raw numbers of inscriptions reported in *CLRE*,[812] illustrate this point.



Years	Inscriptions	Years	Inscriptions
284-290	23	336-340	35
291-295	8	341-345	55
296-300	16	346-350	57
301-305	14	351-355	33
306-310	8	356-360	63
311-315	6	361-365	93
316-320	12	366-370	85

[810] As difficult as it might be for the modern historian, see Finley 1985:16.
[811] Corcoran 2008:242.
[812] Pp.58–59.

321-325	22	371-375	99
326-330	9	376-380	95
331-335	15	381-385	135

Table 5 Distribution of inscriptions 284–385

It is therefore not surprising when one finds names, which are hardly attested in the Diocletianic-Constantinian era, in the later and better documented period. The danger of such arguments was acknowledged by Dessau's critics, and even restated by Alan Cameron quite recently: 'the fact remains that we simply do not have material to warrant confident *ex silentio* inferences that families were not prominent half a century or more before we happen first to hear of them.'[813]

The prophecy on Probus' descendants

The open date of composition of the *Life of Probus* (after 306), and most probably *c.*310–326, allows us to reconsider the prophecy about the Probi. To begin with the prophecy, it states:

> When a portrait of Probus in the region of Verona was struck by lightning in such a fashion that the colour of its bordered toga was altered, the soothsayers responded that future generations of his family would rise to such distinction in the senate that they all would hold the highest posts (*summi honores*). As yet, however, we have seen none. (*Pr.*24.2)

The first question is whether this 'prophecy' is *post eventum* or not; the second, whether it fits with the stated date of composition. Momigliano, who 'followed' Dessau and dated the *Life of Probus* (and most of the works of Vopiscus) to before c.305,[814] found it difficult to settle with the fact that the prophecy might have referred to a consulship of a descendant of Probus in 310 and 322. But does *summi honores* refer to the consulship or rather, for example, to the Urban Prefecture?

Nevertheless, some scholars are eager to state that, 'it provides a key argument in Dessau's revolutionary argument presented in his famous article of 1889 (355): the announcement of this bright future does not make sense in the context of 305.'[815] In

[813] Alan Cameron 1999:480; cf. the caveats already noted by Diehl 1913:2101–2102.
[814] Dessau's arguments for this stated date are invalid, see above.
[815] Paschoud 2001:162.

fact, Dessau thought the stated *terminus ante* was 310 and approached the prophecy in *Prob.*24 by asserting: 'if we assume that the passage was written towards the end of the fourth century, rather than the beginning, so its context is found.'[816] From such an assumption, it is only too easy to fall into circular arguments. This prophecy was therefore used in the *HA-Forschung* in support of almost any theory from Stern's forgery view of the 340s down to Seeck's dating of it to c.407, including various sideshows in the 360s, 380s, and 390s. In all these cases it is *assumed* that the prophecy is *post eventum*, as it is taken to allude to a consulship of a certain Probus/Probinus around the time that fits a given theory.[817] If one really wishes it, this prophecy could be relevant up to 490–525—and Paschoud is not reluctant to reject a publication date of his *Histoire Auguste* in *c.*485 by Memmius Symmachus.[818] Such frivolities cannot, in their own right, challenge a stated date of composition.

The question is still whether this 'prophecy' was relevant in *c.*310–337—and apparently it was. There are several examples of possible descendants of Probus that were eminent around the time of Constantine (310–341), but their relationships cannot be determined with certainty: Pompeius Probus (*cos.*310, PPO 310–314), Petronius Probianus (*cos.*322, PUR 329–331), and Petronius Probinus (*cos.*341, PUR 345–346).[819]

The only question that remains open is whether the prophecy is *post eventum* or not, which is less salient to the stated date. If it is *post eventum*, we have here an early *terminus post* of 310 or 322. As Momigliano saw, 'the prophecy on the Probi, even as a prophecy *post eventum*, need not be later than *c.*322.'[820] The same could be said about a 'real' prophecy in which Probus' 'descendants' did not hold 'the highest posts'—it does not need to be later than 322–345.[821] Indeed, if *summi honores* refers to the

[816] 1889:347, 355 (cited).
[817] Surveyed in Momigliano 1966:156–157; Paschoud 2001:162–164; Alan Cameron 2011b:773–775. Barnes 1978:18; Thomson 2012:57–58 use it to support their dating of *c.*395.
[818] Paschoud 2012a:384–385; in that case it would not be a prophecy *post eventum*.
[819] *CLRE* under those years. *PLRE*, s.vv. (pp.733–735, 740).
[820] 1966:157.
[821] On Vopiscus on the 340s see pp.201ff. below.

urban prefecture, rather than the consulship, the reference is most probably to Petronius Probinus, and thus could further support a publication in *c.*322–329.

Pollio, Lampridius, and Capitolinus

Vopiscus refers to these three biographers, which are also transmitted in the corpus. As we have seen so far, there is nothing to justify the claim that their names are 'forged' in any way, indeed these names are 'attested elsewhere';[822] there is also no reason to deprive the various biographies of their names on the basis of Dessau's invalid single-author argument. The only argument brought against Vopiscus' references is that the stated dates of composition of the other authors 'contradicted' those of the biographies where they are mentioned. As we shall see, this was far from being the case.

In the *Life of Probus*, which can be dated any time between 306 and 325, Vopiscus refers to Capitolinus and Lampridius, without stating which biographies they wrote or that they were even part of the corpus, as the narrators of curiosities (rather than biographers) that he wishes to imitate.[823]

The Dessauist argument—although not Dessau's own—is that 'Vopiscus is ostensibly writing *c.*305' but refers to Lampridius (and Capitolinus), who is 'subsequent to 324'.[824] This was apparently an antidote to Momigliano's conservative claim that 'Capitolinus is mentioned in *Probus* 2.7, allegedly written about 305' who appealed to 'some revision'.[825] Syme mocked this attempt by stating: 'the two names are an interpolation. Thus have decreed two paladins of the conservative cause'[826] and referred to Peter and Klebs, while stating that 'Klebs was duly scarified by Seeck'.[827]

[822] Lippold 1999:155; see *Introduction*.
[823] *Pr.*2.7 (cited and discussed in Chapter 1).
[824] Syme 1968:180; he dates Lampridius on the basis of the reference to Licinius' surrender to Constantine in *Hel.*35.7. He overstated this point in Syme 1971b:261; Paschoud 2001:59, 155, 162, 347, 360, 389, 397 constantly reiterates this view.
[825] Momigliano 1966:170–171.
[826] Syme 1968:180.
[827] Syme 1968:180n.2 > White 1967:131–132.

Nevertheless, if we leave this dark and violent forest, and look at the ground and the seeds of the tree, we can perhaps come to a different conclusion.

The references to Capitolinus and Lampridius could simply be to works they wrote before the *Probus* was published: Lampridius' *Life of Elagabalus* has a broader dating of *c.*316–326 and certainly refers to biographies he had written earlier, for example, the *Commodus*—Capitolinus was also active under Diocletian, as some biographies ascribed to him might suggest.[828] Such was the view of De Sanctis, who rejected both Peter and Klebs on these grounds, because he demonstrated that Vopiscus wrote *after* May 305 and concluded that the names were 'also a confirmation of the authenticity of the biographies.'[829] Even Dessau, who dated the *Probus* incorrectly to before 310, admitted this could simply be a reference to earlier works of the two authors, but he overstated it as a contradiction and support for his later *Fälschung* theory several pages later.[830] Unfortunately, Dessau was skimmed over and De Sanctis's 'views did not exercise much influence beyond the bounds of Italy.'[831] (Is this supposed to invalidate them, or are we dealing with an *ad personam* argument?)

These references end up providing a *terminus post quem* that could fall between, say *c.*316 and 325 for the *Probus*, and consequently—as Rühl saw—support the dating of the *Probus* to the 320s.[832] The 'conservative' editing or interpolation theories are not necessary here; nor does this passage suggest 'team work' in any way; this is just a passing reference.[833]

Vopiscus is more elaborate when it comes to Trebellius Pollio. He refers to him twice: in his account of the meeting with Tiberianus, and once more in the *Quadrigae*

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[828] See below pp. 205ff, 230ff., 274ff.
[829] De Sanctis 1896:75–76.
[830] Dessau 1889:347–348, 375.
[831] Syme 1971a:83; Paschoud still reproduces this misconceived contradiction of 305 against 325 (2001:59–60).
[832] 1888:603–604; Dessau (ibid.) ignored his refutation of the 'interpolation' theory of Peter 1860:11; Brunner 1868:9; cf. n. 808. Lippold 1999:154, 177 also uses this statement as a *terminus post*—Paschoud ignores him (n. 831 above).
[833] *Pace* Momigliano 1977:121.

Tyrannorum (*QT*). The last reference carries no chronological difficulty. Vopiscus specifically refers to an edition of Pollio's *Thirty Tyrants*, published around or after 305/306: 'Pollio… included in a single book the thirty pretenders of the time of Valerian and Gallienus and the emperors who lived not long before or after them.'[834] As the *QT* was written after the *Probus* (i.e. after *c.*316–326),[835] there is no difficulty with this reference—at most it provides a later *terminus ante* of *c.*326 for the *Thirty Tyrants*.

The first reference has attracted more attention because of the alleged 'contradiction' it might manifest. The *Life of Claudius* could have been written, broadly speaking, between 293 and 305, but scholars took the latest possible date and claimed it 'clashed' with the date of the meeting with Tiberianus in 304.[836] Even ignoring the absurdity of such argumentation, this 'contradiction' can be settled in two ways, if one pays attention to Vopiscus' words:

> Our talk had fallen on Trebellius Pollio, who has handed down to memory all the emperors, both illustrious and obscure, from the two Philips to the Deified Claudius and his brother Quintilius (*usque ad divum Claudium et eius fratrem*). (*A.*2.1)

In the first scenario, Vopiscus, as we have seen, did not 'tweet' the meeting with Tiberianus, but published its 'minutes' several years later, when he published his *Aurelian* several years after July 306.[837] In this case Vopiscus might have conversed with Tiberianus about earlier works of Pollio, but when he published the Aurelian, Pollio's *Claudius* was already published. In the second scenario (not necessarily contrary to the first), Vopiscus and Tiberianus discussed the other works of Pollio, which did not survive in the manuscripts, excluding the published *Claudius*. This conforms to Vopiscus' usage of 'usque ad' when he refers to his own work. He never intended it to go beyond Carinus (and indeed it did not), so he refers to his intention

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[834] *Q.*1.3; on the *Thirty* and their dates, see p. 282.
[835] *Q.*1.4.
[836] The list in *Stellenbibliographie* ad loc. suffices.
[837] See pp. 169ff., 174ff. above.

to write the lives of emperors '*usque ad* Diocletian and Maximian'.[838] Vopiscus in this earlier reference to Pollio does not refer to the *Thirty Tyrants*, which is probably much later than 306,[839] and therefore does not provide a *terminus ante* for all the works of Pollio, notably the *Thirty Tyrants* and the *Claudius*.

Whatever path one may prefer, this alleged 'contradiction'—which could also be explained simply by an earlier publication date of the *Life of Claudius*, say even in 293 to celebrate the marriage of Constantius and Theodora (daughter of Maximian) or the birth of one of their children later—is no worse than other 'contradictions' in ancient works, for example, in Tacitus' *Dialogus*. This might simply be the result of 'our ignorance even about important episodes'[840] especially in that period.[841]

Vopiscus' private addressees

In two biographies, the *Probus* and the *Quadrigae*, Vopiscus addresses private persons named Celsinus and Bassus in respectively. At the turn of the last century, Tropea tried to argue that the apostrophe to Bassus in the *Quadrigae*, written after the *Probus*, referred to the consul of 331, Iunius Bassus. He put this forward as further support for his theory that Vopiscus wrote and published in *c.*323–337.[842] More recently Lippold noted that both these names fit the nomenclature of Vopiscus' stated date, which he placed in *c.*305–326. Bassus could in fact fit any time between 285 and 330.[843]

Conclusion

To sum up, Vopiscus never meant or stated anywhere that he published any of his biographies before or around 305, and this date therefore cannot be used as a linchpin for 'contradictions' Dessauists have noted in his work in support of the

[838] *Pr.*1.6.
[839] See pp. 282ff. below.
[840] Barnes 2009:377.
[841] See p. 156ff. above.
[842] Tropea 1900:II, 20–23; *CLRE* 331.
[843] Lippold 1999:156, 158–159 n.32 (also against the inventiveness of Paschoud and Chastagnol surveyed there).

Fälschung view. It is hoped that this discussion has drastically reduced the number of these 'contradictions'. The historical nucleus behind his statements seems to be the meeting he had with the Urban Prefect of Rome, most probably in 304, when he started *working* on the *Life of Aurelian*. The publication of this biography and the subsequent biographies was most probably completed in the following two or three decades, perhaps up to *c.*330 (340?).

I hope to have demonstrated that many of the chronological 'indications', mostly in the *Aurelian* and *Carinus*, are simple references to the tetrarchs, who had been militarily and politically active under those emperors and succeeded them. We have also seen that there is perhaps a plausible *terminus post* for the *Life of Probus* in *c.*322–325—but anything beyond that remains speculative.

The dating of Vopiscus' literary activity turns out to be an open question on similar grounds to the open dates of Lactantius' *DMP* and Tacitus' *Dialogus*. I do not wish to exclude outright a publication date of *c.*343 for Vopiscus, as Romano suggested in the later 1970s.[844] According to this theory, Vopiscus published his biographies in instalments under Constantine—rather than *c.*305 (all according to Vopiscus' statements)—and decided to republish them as a complete set in *c.*343. This theory is not far from Frankfurter's notion that the whole corpus of the 'SHA' is a selection of several sets of biographies, where each set of biographies was published by its stated author, and that what we currently have is only an eclectic selection from various sets.[845] In addition, Romano's theory could explain some of the later Constantinian 'anachronisms' and the reference to the consulship of Placidus (only documented in 343).[846] The reference to Placidus in Vopiscus, however, is traditionally taken as a reference to the suffect consulship of his father or grandfather—our gaps in the consular list around the time of the tetrarchy are too wide; and it is almost impossible

[844] Romano 1977; 1978.
[845] Frankfurter 1893.
[846] Vopiscus, *A.*15.4; *CLRE* 343.

to distinguish between 'anachronisms' of *c.*325 and *c.*340.[847] In comparison, Firmicus Maternus in the *Mathesis* addresses Lollianus Mavortius as 'ordinarius consul designatus', whereas Mavortius was ordinary consul only in 355.[848] In short, we should not rely on such evidence, nor should we reject the possibility that Vopiscus was still active in the 340s.

The dates suggested in this discussion, alongside the overlooked views of scholars can be summarized in the following table, in the hope that this will stimulate further discussion on this matter. The years I suggest are the broad range of publication dates for each biography, not the time frame when they were written.

	Baker	**Romano**	**Tropea**	**De Sanctis, Bury**	**Rühl**	**Dessau**	**Dessauists or Mommsenian 'conservatives'**
Born	*c.*280 (?)	*c.*280	284 (?), died after 337	-	-	-	-
Came to Rome	*c.*300 (?)	*c.*300		-	-	-	-
Aurelian	Several years after July 306, *c.*310–325 (?)	304–306	323–329	'After May 305 and begun before July 306'	*c.*305/6 (?)	*c.*305–306	*c.*305–306
Tacitus	After *Aurelian*	306–313	323–329	After 306	After *Aurelian*	Before *Probus*	*c.*305–306
Probus	*c.*312–329 (*c.*322–329 ?)	306–313	330	After 306	*c.*322–323	Before 25 July 306	Before 25 July 306
Quadrigae	After *Probus*	306–313	331–336	After 306	After *Probus*	Before *Quadrigae*	*c.*305–306
Carus and sons	*c.*316–325 (?)	306–313	336–337	After 306	After *Quadrigae*	Before 310 or 313 (his	*c.*305–306

[847] On the 'fasti': Momigliano 1966:172; a similar view is still held outside the *HA-Forschung*, e.g. Corcoran 2008:242. On Placidus: *CLRE*, p. 220: 'If the passage has any genuine reference at all, a suffect consulate celebrated by the father or grandfather of the consul of 343 is an obvious possibility.' Momigliano 1966:172; Lippold 1998: xvii n.43; 1999:156 n.20.
[848] *NHLL*, 5: 96 with further references; *CLRE* 355.

						dating of Diocletian's death)	
Revision and publication as a corpus	*c.*337–344 (?)	*c.*344	n/a	n/a	n/a	Contradictory dates, hence forgery from *c.*395	Contradictory dates, hence forgery from *c.*395 or Constantinian editor (respectively)
Secure *TA*	*c.*380 (used by Jerome)		n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Chapter 5: The Constantinian biographies of Julius Capitolinus

The following chapters discuss the Constantinian biographies traditionally ascribed to Capitolinus and Lampridius. These two authors seem, prima facie, to have published at similar times and addressed Constantine in a similar language, which is formally correct for the period.[849]

The apostrophes

The biographies ascribed to Capitolinus are, with a high degree of certainty, those of Clodius Albinus, the two Maximini, and the three Gordians;[850] these—with the exception of the questionable life of Macrinus[851]—all contain apostrophes to Constantine the Great. In the *The lives of the two Maximini* and the *three Gordians*, appearing in successive order in the manuscripts, the apostrophes to Constantine are part of the programmatic prefatory remarks explaining Capitolinus' decision to include the lives of emperors related by blood in a single book. This practice is not manifested elsewhere in, and is completely different from the practices of, other authors of the corpus (e.g. with Marcus and Commodus, the Severi, or Macrinus and Diadumenus). These authorial remarks are therefore heterogeneous, as already noted.[852] The prefaces both state:

Max. 1.1	Gd. 1.1–5; 34.6
Ne fastidiosum esset clementiae tuae, Constantine maxime, singulos quosque principes vel principum liberos per libros singulos legere, adhibui moderationem, qua in unum volumen duos Maximinos, patrem filiumque, congererem; serva<v>i deinceps hunc ordinem, quem pietas tua etiam ab Tatio Cyrillo, clarissimo viro, qui Gr<a>eca in Latinum vertit, servari voluit.	*Fuerat quidem consilium, venerabilis Auguste, ut singulos quosque imperatores exemplo multorum libris singulis ad tuam clementiam destinarem. nam id multo<s> fecisse vel ipse videram vel lectione conceperam. sed inprobum visum est vel pietatem tuam multitudine distinere librorum vel meum laborem plurimis voluminibus occupare. quare tres Gordianos hoc libro conexui, —quae omnia, Constantine maxime,*

[849] See p. 155 above.
[850] See above.
[851] See pp. 274ff. below.
[852] Lippold 1991:281, 286–287; cf. already Frankfurter 1893. Both are overlooked by den Hengst 2010; Alan Cameron 2011a.

	idcirco sum persecutus.

The terms and titles Capitolinus uses to address the emperor undoubtedly point to the time of Constantine the Great. The title *Maximus* (μέγιστος) appears to have been very common and is found in the *intitulatio* preserved in literary texts, coins, and inscriptions.[853] It was most probably given to him by the senate, when he entered Rome a day after the Battle of the Milvian Bridge, on the 29 October 312, according to Lactantius;[854] this is also made clear by the dedication on the Arch of Constantine from 315, where he is styled *Constantinus maximus*.[855] This collocation, with *maximus* as an attribute, in securely dated literary works outside this corpus first appears in Nazarius' panegyric delivered in *c.*321, probably in Rome;[856] *imperator maximus* is already found in the panegyric to Constantine of *c.*313.[857] In *c.*336 Firmicus Maternus referred to him as 'scilicet Maximus', probably to distinguish him from his sons.[858] It is also attested, alongside *venerabilis* found in *the Gordians*, in the correspondence of P. Optatianus Porfyrius with Constantine from *c.*312/325.[859] These two letters are considered authentic and 'a contemporary witness for the emperor's reign'.[860]

The adjective *venerabilis*, with or without *maximus* as part of the *intitulatio*, is also attested in contemporary literary texts and inscriptions: in statue bases of

[853] Rösch 1978:78, 128, 159–160; Lippold 1991:290.
[854] *DMP* 44.11; Lippold 1991:290; Kienast 2009:299, cf. Barnes 2011:83.
[855] ILS 694; for other inscriptions see below.
[856] Nazarius to Constantine (*Pan. Lat.* 4[10]) 3, 29, 36, 37 (twice), 38. On its date and place: Nixon and Rodgers 1994:338; Barnes 2011:183.
[857] *Pan. Lat.* 12(9) 26.5; already noted by Lippold 1991:290.
[858] *Math.* 1.10.13.
[859] *PLRE*, s.v. 'Optatianus', no. 3. Dated to 325 by Lippold 1991:290 and others (*PLRE*, ibid.; survey in Barnes 1975a), and exactly to November/December 312, and definitely before 324 (because Porfyrius does not refer to Constantine as 'Victor' or 'Trimuphator'), by Barnes (1975a:173, 185–186 with n.34; Barnes 2011:84). We should remember that this is a literary text that does not have to conform perfectly to the full imperial titulature of inscriptions; e.g. Porfyrius does not include Constantine's full name either.
[860] Barnes 1975a:173 and *passim*; he discusses the stated dates of composition of Porfyrius, while ignoring accusations of later composition or forgery of the letters. Barnes 2011:84, 209–210n.34 (also negating the possibility that 'the letter represents only the general tenor'): 'The authenticity of the letters was denied in his critical edition of the poet by Giovanni Polara, who dismissed them as a much later school exercise. His arguments are a priori, aesthetic, unhistorical and completely unconvincing.' Nevertheless, it would appear that these letters require a better defence than this, especially when one considers the standards of the *HA-Forschung*, as even more robust defences against such scepticism about authenticity were classified as 'credulity', 'cycle of delusion', 'scholars impervious to the odour of fraud' by Syme 1968:218 (mainly against Momigliano and A.H.M. Jones). Barnes's criticism might meanwhile be applied to most of the Dessauist arguments.

Constantine dedicated to him in Rome; in 328 by the *Curator aquarum et Miniciae*, Egnatius Lollianus;[861] and in *c.*337–340 by the *praefectus annonae*, L. Crepereius Madalianus.[862] The adjective is also common when referring to other members of the house of Constantine, starting with an inscription dedicated to Constantine by C. Caeionius Rufius Volusianus in *c.*311/314, which refers to his father, Constantius I, as 'ubique venerabilis'.[863] Likewise, it is applied to Constantine's mother (Helena), his second wife (Fausta, hence before 326),[864] sister (Constantia), and daughter (Constantina) under his sons.[865] In literary works other than the corpus,[866] *venerabilis* alongside *maximus* is manifested in Porfyrius' correspondence. Porfyrius addresses Constantine: *Domino Constantino maximo pio invicto et venerabili semper Augusto*; and Constantine refers to himself as: *Invictus Constantinus maximus Augustus*.[867] This was therefore an adjective applied to Constantine and his dynasty, for there appears to be no instance—even in the apostrophes to Diocletian in this corpus—of this adjective being applied in *formal* invocations to, or used by, emperors or their relatives earlier than the time of Constantine.[868]

The use of *clementia tua* and *pietas tua* also fits well with the post-tetrarchic forms of address (inclusive), as the use of abstract nouns in Latin as a form of address appears

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[861] *PLRE*: 512–514, s.v. 'Lollianus' no. 5; *CIL* 6.36951 (= ILS 8943). On the consuls: CLRE 328; cf. also *CIL* 6.1136 = 31244 (= *Epigraphica* 2009: 251).
[862] *PLRE*: 530, s.v. 'Madalianus'; *CIL* 6.1151 (= 31248, ILS 70, LSA-273).
[863] Rufius Volusianus (*PLRE*, [s.v.]) was twice ordinary consul in 311 and in 314 and hence the issue of dating this inscription; see Chastagnol 1962:57–58. The reference to Constantine as Maximus could support the dating of this inscription to 314. *CIL* 6.1140 (=ILS 692; LSA-837).
[864] Kienast 2009:305; Barnes 2011:144–149 (on accounts of her death).
[865] Helena: *CIL* 6.36950, 10.1484 (*Epigraphica* 2009: 247); Fausta: *CIL* 12.668 (restored), *CIL* 10.678 (= ILS 710; *Epigraphica* 2009: 242), AE 2007: 354. In the last two inscriptions her name was erased as was that of Crispus; Constantia: *CIL* 6.40777 = 1153 (= ILS 711); Constantina: 6.40790 (= AE 1995: 195).
[866] The adjective also appears twice more in Lampridius in a slightly different form (*Hel.* 34.1; 35.5), see below. Cf. Lippold 1991:482. On *venerabilis* in Latin literature in the context of the corpus in general see Lippold 1991:482–483; unfortunately, like den Hengst 1981:65, he overlooked the epigraphic evidence.
[867] *Ep. ad Const.* 1, and *ep. ad Porf.* 1 respectively. This adjective, however, is not found in the Latin Panegyrics (even Pacatus'); cf. Lippold 1991:482.
[868] The adjective is used to refer to emperors only in biographies which are later than *c.*305/6 in this corpus (*Gall.*15.3 for Claudius, Constantine's alleged ancestor; *A.*24.2; *T.*32.5); although the usage might be informal as in Capitolinus, *P.*12.1 (Pertinax is 'senex venerabilis') and *Gd.*8.5 (on Gordian I); cf. Tac. *Dial.* 8.3, where Vespasian is '*venerabilis senex*'), see *OLD*, s.v.

to have been more common in the rhetoric of the later empire, especially after Diocletian.[869] The collocation *clementia tua* is as early as Cicero, and appears to have been first used in a similar way to the preface to *Max*., by Fronto in a letter to Antoninus Pius.[870] It is also common, outside this corpus, in the panegyrics to Constantine of *c*.310–321,[871] and in Eumenius' speech on the restoration of schools of *c.*298, when he addresses Diocletian.[872] Especially worth noting are the cases where this collocation is very similar to a demonstrative: 'clementiae tuae gratias agimus'.[873] Porfyrius also used this collocation in his correspondence.[874] *Pietas tua* has a similar distribution in the panegyrics—Pliny the Younger uses it to address Trajan—and Lippold noted that, 'it is not found in the panegyrics to Julian and Theodosius.'[875]

At this point, we can conclude that the language used to address Constantine in the biographies ascribed to Capitolinus fits well with the rhetoric of the literary milieu of his reign, any time *after* the Battle of the Milvian Bridge in 312. Beyond that, these biographies also contain direct references to contemporary events and persons.

Contemporary event: Constantine and the Ceionii Albini

The apostrophe to Constantine in the *Life of Clodius Albinus* contains an explicit reference to relations between the family of the Ceionii and Constantine, and describes them in positive terms; Constantine has already strengthened them and he should continue to do so. This passage, as it would appear to contain a reference or 'allusion' to the rise of the Ceionii Albini, has been *cautiously* adduced by Dessau as a composition of the later fourth century. He was also well aware, however, of their prominence in the early fourth century,[876] but was misstated by subsequent scholars who maintained it was one of the 'proofs' of composition in a period later than the

[869] Corcoran 2000:161, 184, 324–325; specifically on this corpus: Lippold 1991:33, 289–290, 292.
[870] Fronto 3.2
[871] Nazarius IV(10).4.5, 8.1, 9.2; V(8).5.6; VI(7).20.1; XII(9).5.6, 7.7, 12.1, 13.3, 20.2.
[872] IX(5).21.2.
[873] V(8).5.6 (cf. Nazarius IV(10).8.1), see Lippold 1991:33.
[874] *Ep. ad Const.* 1.
[875] Plin. *Ep.* 10.1; Lippold 1991:292.
[876] Dessau 1889:355; one wonders why they were part of his argument to begin with.

one claimed. As Barnes has finally acknowledged the political position of the Ceionii Albini under Constantine,[877] it is time to examine the passage on which Dessau's structure is based.

> *fuit, ut dixi, Albinus Hadrumetinus oriundo, sed nobilis apud suos et originem a Romanis familiis trahens, Postumiorum scilicet et Albinorum et Ceioniorum. quae familia hodie quoque, Constantine maxime, nobilissima est et per te aucta et augenda* (*ClA* 4.1–2)
> But to return to Albinus, he was, as I have said, Hadrumetine by origin, but was noble among his own people and traced his descent from families of Rome, namely the Postumii and Albini and Ceionii. The latter family is still one of the noblest today, greatest Constantine, by you it has been exalted and deserves to be exalted[878]

The passage is rather informal and attempts to report the *origo*—invented or not—of the emperor Clodius Albinus. Postumii and Ceionii (or Caeionii) are *nomina gentilicia* of noble families that were prominent before the time of Constantine; for instance there were links between the Ceionii and the Antonine dynasty.[879] Albinus was a *cognomen* (!) that was common in the families of the Clodii, Postumii, Nummii, and others and 'Postumii Albini did exist during the republic.'[880]

It is not surprising, therefore, that a person with the *cognomen* Albinus, with possible links to the Postumii or Ceionii, should want to be, or would have been, seen as related to them. As Chausson recently demonstrated, such links—whether authentic

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[877] Syme 1968:154–164; Barnes 1972:146. They rejected the nomenclature of the *praefectus urbi* of 256 and 261–263 'Nummius Ceionius Albinus' (mentioned as 'Ceionius Albinus' in Vopiscus, *A.*9.2, and as 'Nummius Albinus' by the Chronograph of 354 [= *MGH AA IX*: 65]), because they thought the family relations between the Nummii and the Ceionii were only formed in the late fourth century (argument restated in *PIR*² N227). Nevertheless, a *praetor urbanus* with this nomenclature from the late third century or early fourth century is attested: M. Nummius Ceionius Annaius Albinus (PIR², N.231; *PLRE*, s.v. 'Albinus' no. 5; Barnes 1982:120–121). It should be noted that the nomenclature of this *praefectus urbi* was acknowledged in *PLRE* (s.v. 'Albinus' no. 9), but was rejected by Barnes 1972:146. On Ceionius Rufius Albinus; *cos.*335 and *Praefectus Urbi* 30.12.335–10.3.337, see now Barnes 2011:148–149, who seems, however, to be unaware of the broader implications of these and other observations on the validity of the Dessau-Syme-Barnes thesis (e.g. ibid. 28).

[878] So Birley's translation (1976a:239), who by taking 'quae familia' as referring to the Ceionii, further supports a counter-Dessau argument.

[879] See stemma in Birley 1976a:321 and further detail in Chausson 2003.

[880] KlP, s.v. 'Albinus'; Momigliano 1966:178n.27. I fail to see how this passage supports the claim that 'Seeck has shown that the union of the families of the Albini [*sic*] and Ceionii Postumii can only have taken place about AD 350' (Baynes 1926:46; Seeck 1890:633). Even if the statement were accurate, the period of the tetrarchy and Constantine is badly documented as far as epigraphic evidence is concerned, and the epigraphic evidence dramatically increases only after the 340s, see *Introduction*.

or not—are simply attempts by (re-)emerging families under Diocletian and Constantine to provide a noble ancestry for themselves.[881]

What requires further attention is the appearance of a *cognomen* in what purports to be a list of *nomina gentilicia*, and the transition from other families to the particular family of the Ceionii. The reference to this last family is explained by a relative clause containing the apostrophe to Constantine.[882] Thus the main focus is the family of the Ceionii alone, considered to be *nobilissima* in the past and 'also today' under Constantine.[883]

The clause referring to the Ceionii contains two statements about their relations with Constantine: the first that their family has been exalted (*aucta*) by him, the second that it should be exalted (*augenda*) by him. The former statement seems to corroborate the evidence about this family's rise to prominence under Constantine, as Lippold noted:[884]

[881] Chausson 2003 (Fündling 2004 only restated Syme against him). The biographers could simply be restating the true or even false claims of the families in their stated date; see Lécrivain 1904:35–39 and note Mommsen 1890:280, who compares the situation around the tetrarchic civil wars with the end of the republic. See also Chapter 4.
[882] Barnes 1975b:44 overlooks this relevant relative clause in his critique of the 'HA'.
[883] Their possible links with the Antonines should be enough to explain the title 'nobilissima', if this is not an exaggerated rhetoric; *pace* Baynes 1926:47, see n. 880 above.
[884] Lippold 1991:34.

C. Ceionius Rufius Volusianus	PUR 313–315, *cos.*311, 314; he also served under Carinus, Diocletian, and Maxentius; he was probably rehabilitated under Constantine.[885]
M. Ceionius Iulianus Kamenius	PUR 333–334; he also seems to have served as PPO under an emperor conquered by Constantine.[886]
Ceionius Rufius Albinus	*cos.*335, PUR 335–337; he is the son of the afore-mentioned Volusianus.[887]

Table 6: Ceionii under Constantine

The last person, Ceionius Rufius Albinus, is traditionally identified, according to scholarly consensus since Mommsen, with the person referred to in a horoscope interpreted and revealed by Firmicus Maternus in his *Mathesis*, written in *c.*334–337.[888] The horoscope states:

> The father of this native after two consecutive consulships was sent into exile, but the native himself was exiled for the crime of adultery and suddenly brought back from exile, was first chosen for the administration of Campania, then the consulship of Achaia, but afterwards was made proconsul of Asia, <ordinary consul> and prefect of Rome. (2.29.10)[889]

According to the traditional interpretation of the horoscope, Albinus was exiled after being accused by his enemies, and tried by Constantine for adultery and magic. He would have suffered a premature death in exile, had not the stars ordained otherwise. He was eventually recalled from exile and pursued a brilliant career: governor of

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[885] *PLRE*, 'Volusianus 4'; *RE*, 'Ceionius 17' (by Seeck); Alan Cameron 2011b:138. Notice also how a relative of his with the same nomenclature could be used to support a 'Julianic' or 'post-Julianic' date (*PLRE*, 'Volusianus 5').

[886] Liban. *Or.* 1.524; *PLRE*, 'Iulianus 26'; RE, 'Ceionius 19' (by Seeck).

[887] *PLRE*, s.v. 'Albinus 14'; RE, s.v. 'Ceionius 21' (by Seeck); Alan Cameron 2011b:138. Notice how a relative with the same nomenclature could be used to support a 'theodosian' composition date (*PLRE*, s.v. 'Albinus 15' PUR 389–391). Perhaps Firmicus Maternus is also a theodosian 'forgery'?

[888] Mommsen 1894, who is followed by Barnes 1975b; 2011:148 ('the horoscope of a Roman aristocrat who can only be Ceionius Rufius Albinus, consul in 335'); *NHLL*, 5: 96 n. 7; Bram 1975:310. Note that the horoscope does not give a name and the identification is literally based on the similarity of the careers of the father and son, Volusianus and Albinus. The argument scholars have adduced on this matter was never considered alongside the evidence given in this passage or its relevance to the validity of Dessau's thesis.

[889] Alan Cameron 2011b:138 n.41; Barnes 2011:219 n. 9–both think the reference to his ordinary consulship was omitted because of a scribal homoeoteleuton.

Campania, proconsul of Achaea and Asia (successively), ordinary consul (335), and urban prefect (335–337).[890]

On this basis, Barnes has constructed 'a series of hypotheses to explain the fall and sudden recall of Albinus'. The two most important are: (1) Constantine condemned Albinus together with Crispus for his involvement with the criminal offences of the latter (*c.*326); and (2) 'Constantine recalled Albinus when he decided that Crispus had been wrongfully condemned'.[891] In other words, Rufius Albinus is supposed to have been exiled in 326 and restored in *c.*335.

If Ceionius Volusianus did indeed marry an Albina (whether Numia or Postumia),[892] he fits the category of *aucta* and his son the category of *augenda*. This statement is also supported by the chiastic structure of the two sentences with the polysyndeton of *et*: *et* (A) *Albinorum et* (B) *Ceioniorum. quae familia… et per te* (B) *aucta et* (A)*augenda*. Thus an Albinus, who also belongs to the exalted Ceionii, is expected to be exalted: this fits well with the possible career of Ceionius Rufius Albinus under Constantine *before* 335.

We can therefore conclude that the statement made in the apostrophe to Constantine is certainly supported by the well-documented career of at least three Ceionii; and that the second statement (*augenda*) could be read as an implied or concealed appeal for the return of Ceionius Rufius Albinus from exile made in *c.*326–334. A biography of Clodius Albinus was a good place to make a passing statement and appeal in favour of other Ceionii (Albini).

Contemporary fiction: Constantine, Licinius, and Philip the Arab

In the last paragraph of the *Lives of the Gordians*, as part of an apostrophe to Constantine, Capitolinus views Licinius in a negative light by suggesting that he

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[890] Barnes 2011:148–149; Alan Cameron 2011b:138 (both restating Barnes 1975b).
[891] Barnes 2011:149.
[892] Barnes 1975b admits there is no evidence for his hypothesis that she belonged to the Postumii; cf. above n.877.

wanted to be seen as a descendant of Philip the Arab, and that for this reason he tried to conceal the conspiracy his alleged ancestor made against a legitimate emperor, Gordian III, by destroying an inscription that might have implied Philip's involvement in the conspiracy.

> *Gordiano sepulchrum milites apud Circesium castrum fecerunt in finibus Persidis, titulum huius modi addentes et Graecis et Latinis et Persicis et Iudaicis et Aegyptiacis litteris, ut ab omnibus legeretur: 'divo Gordiano victori Persarum, victori Gothorum, victori Sarmatarum, depulsori Romanarum seditionum, victori Germanorum, sed non victori Philipporum.' quod ideo videbatur additum, quia in campis Philippis ab Alanis tumultuario proelio victus abscesserat, simul etiam quod a Philippis videbatur occisus. quem titulum evertisse Licinius dicitur eo tempore, quo est nanctus imperium, cum se vellet videri a Philippis originem trahere. quae omnia, Constantine maxime... sum ⟨per⟩ secutus* (*Gd.* 34.2–6)

There are obvious reasons to argue that this passage is pure fiction (rather than forged or falsified), for both the circumstances for the setting of the inscription—although some scholars would argue that it may be an authentic reflection of multi-lingual reality[893]—and its destruction by Licinius, let alone his ancestry, would indeed appear to be very suspicious, if only because it is hard to believe that a tombstone honouring an emperor would have included such a bold reference to an obvious defeat 'but not victor of the Philips'. Capitolinus does not state, however, that he is providing a verbatim quote of the tombstone (*titulum huius modi*), nor does he take responsibility for the actions of Philip and Licinius as an omniscient narrator. He prefers the impersonal construction (*videbatur; dicitur*) for the events relating to Philip and Licinius, and to pass the claim for the ancestry through Licinius' wishes (*vellet videri*). The use of such verbs, as noted elsewhere, is a clear indication of intentional fictional narrative, especially in biographies.[894]

It is therefore not a question of the factual authenticity of this fictional narrative, which is common in ancient biographies,[895] but of the authenticity of the fiction and the possible historical nucleus and reality behind it. We shall consider whether this

[893] See the discussion between Stoll 2001:59 and Eck 2007:162
[894] Hodkinson 2010.
[895] See, in general, the various publications in Borghart and Temmerman 2010 and Hägg 2012:2–4.

fictional narrative fits the stated date of composition and its political milieu, and consequently whether it allows one to infer a closer date of composition for this biography. Together with the dating question, we shall consider the relevance of the events given in Capitolinus to our understanding of the historiographical questions that surround Philip and Licinius and their representation in contemporaneous literary texts, namely the questions of the alleged ancestry of Licinius and the conspiracy of Philip.

The stated date of composition of the *Life of the Gordians* seems to be the troubled years of *c*.312–337.[896] This passage contains a piece of information not found in the other highly abbreviated and much later sources: Licinius *wanted to be seen* as a descendant of the two Philips[897] when he became emperor. This alleged ancestry, to which Capitolinus does *not* commit himself, is given as the reason why Licinius tried to hide Philip's involvement in the conspiracy against Gordian III; the act is symbolically presented through his destruction of Gordian's tombstone. In other words, it is implied that *Licinius* is the one who tried to hide the evidence for Philip's conspiracy against Gordian III.

Both Licinius and Philip the Arab have had a special and controversial position in historiography since antiquity. Philip, first praetorian prefect (243) and then emperor (244–249), was seen as the instigator of a conspiracy that brought down a legitimate emperor, Gordian III.[898] Moreover, some ancient authorities considered Philip to be the first Christian emperor:[899] whether legend or not, his Christianity must have been taken for granted in some circles by the fourth century.[900] For this

[896] Pp. 205ff. above.
[897] Nowhere does Capitolinus suggest that Licinius actually descended from Philip (*pace* Kienast 2009:294).
[898] Capitolinus, *Gd.* 28.5–30.9; Vict. 27.8; Eutr. 9.2.3; Festus 22.2; *EDC* 27.2; Jer. *Chron*. = Helm 1956:217a. The confusion between Gordian II and Gordian III made in some of the sources is irrelevant to this discussion.
[899] Euseb. *HE* 6.34; Jer. *Chron*.=Helm 1956:217c; Oros. 20.1 (following and censoring Eutropius and Jerome for different and obvious reasons; cf. Lippold 2001:2.488).
[900] On Philip's Christianity and modern scholarship see Körner 2002:268–273, and see further below. *Pace* Bowersock (1983:126), who argued 'that the universal silence of pagan sources in the matter of any Christian leanings make it highly unlikely that Philip had actually become a Christian.'

reason his conspiracy against Gordian III would appear to have been suppressed in subsequent Christian historiography. We shall therefore explore whether the evidence given in this corpus may shed more light on this issue.

Similiary to Philip, Licinius was considered a pro-Christian emperor, who signed the edict of toleration and was viewed in a positive light, while he was co-ruler with Constantine. This portrayal is clearly found in Lactantius—whose exact date of composition between *c.*312 and 324 is difficult to establish *inter alia* because of these historiographical difficulties—and in the earlier edition(s) of Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*.[901] He was, however, also viewed in a negative light at certain points of his joint rule with Constantine (312–324) and was eventually called a 'tyrant'. The official Constantinian historiography, therefore, had to condemn him as such, even when it required some revisions of already published work, as in the case of Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* and the joint legislation of Licinius and Constantine.[902]

Licinius in contemporary historiography

The actions of Licinius are obscured by later Constantinian historiography for obvious political reasons. An old friend of Galerius, he served under him in his Parthian campaign (297; probably with Constantine as well) and negotiated with Maxentius for him, perhaps as his praetorian prefect (307).[903] He was elevated directly to the ranks of Augustus in the Caruntum conference (308) at Galerius' instigation.[904] The death of Galerius in 311 and Maximinus Daia's seizure of his Asian provinces induced him to form an alliance with Constantine through an engagement to his sister, Constantia.[905] Maximinus allied with Maxentius and the civil war

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Unfortunately, all we have are mostly abbreviated sources, and we have a similar problem with Constantine: except for the Christian sources (and the interpolation from Orosius in *Origo Constantini*, Anon. Vales. 33), we have no indication of his Christianity or conversion (Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 40–41.20; Eutr. 10.4–8; *EDC* 40–41.19). What is more, Philip's Christianity was not mentioned in Eusebius' later account (*VC* 4, 62.4; overlooked by Bowersock). See the sensible remarks of Dagron 2003:128–129.

[901] See below.

[902] Corcoran 2010.

[903] Lactant. *DMP* 20.3; *Origo Constantini* 7; Eutr. 10.4.1; Victor 40.8. See further in Barnes 1982:44, 137.

[904] Lactant. *DMP* 29.2 (with Creed 1984:109); *Origo Constantini* 8, 13. Barnes 1982:80; Kienast 2009:294.

[905] Anon. Val. 13; Barnes 1982:44; Kienast 2009:294.

culminated in the Battle of the Milvian Bridge in 28 October 312. The empire was again divided between East (Licinius) and West (Constantine) with an agreement that Licinius would tolerate Christianity in the East once he had defeated Maximinus Daia. After his victory over Maximinus in Adrianople (30.4.313),[906] the agreement was fulfilled in June 313 with the publication of the edict of toleration (according to Lactantius and Eusebius).[907] Lactantius, certainly before 325, viewed Licinius in a manner quite similar to that of the 'Christian' Constantine before the Battle of the Milvian Bridge, especially by ascribing him a similar dream prior to the battle of Adrianople.[908] Unfortunately, 'such a sympathetic account of Licinius' progress was excised from later accounts.'[909]

By 316–317, for obscure reasons, things turned sour between the two rulers and the renewed civil war seems to have resulted in a sequence of battles and the defeat of Licinius in Cibalae. A new agreement between the two was then reached, which probably lasted between the joint consulship of Licinius and Priscus in 318 and *c.*323.[910] The hostilities were renewed in 324, which, following the final defeat of Licinius, resulted in the sole rule of Constantine and his sons.

The untimely death and *damnatio memoriae* of Licinius in 325 signalled the desired line historiography should take: that Licinius should be viewed as a tyrant and persecutor of Christians.[911] This has left its mark on works written and revised around that time to fit this new policy, most notably in Eusebius' revision of his

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[906] Lactant. *DMP* 46.8; Kienast 2009:288, 294.
[907] *DMP* 48.1–13; *HE* 10.5.1–14 (in his final edition, see further below).
[908] Lactant. *DMP* 46.1–6 (to be compared with Constantine's dream at 44.5–6), 48.1; on these episodes: Creed 1984:120–121; Stephenson 2009:160–161.
[909] Stephenson 2009:161; Barnes (2011:xi) welcomes this work's arguments.
[910] Kienast 2009:294 (citing the so-called *consularia constantinoplitana* with agreement) suggests 314; Barnes 1982:82 suggests 316. The exact date is questionable, as most of the sources for this event are the fourth-century epitomators, who do not provide an exact date for this battle or the agreement that lasted until 324: Victor 41.2, 5–6; Eutr. 10.5–6 summarizes eight years, 317–325 (Müller 1995:296); *EDC* 41.5. The *Origo Constantini* (15–22) is not helpful in deciding the issue; see König 1987:142. A more detailed account of the negotiations between the two is found in an often overlooked fragment of Peter the Patrician (*frg.*15 FHG, IV:189; see König 1987:130–132).
[911] Barnes 1981:214; 2011:145, 213n.1; Kienast 2009:294; Licinius' public image: Stephenson 2009:178 and below.

Ecclesiastical History. This work, or at least some of its surviving manuscripts, contains 'embarrassing contradiction(s)' as a result of Eusebius' attempts to reconcile his positive image of Licinius in *c*.312–314/6 as Constantine's joint ruler with the official negative propaganda subsequent to *c*.324/325. This was done either by subsequent insertions accusing him of madness in later life or revisions that attributed all the credit of his earlier success to Constantine or god's favour.[912] After *c*.324 Licinius had to be viewed as 'the common enemy of the civilized world', according to Constantine in Eusebius's *Life of Constantine*.[913]

Some notable revisions in the *Ecclesiastical History* are worth noting, as they provide a good glimpse of the way a contemporary author had to revise his text because of the volatile political situation, while still leaving traces of earlier strata. The translation of the relevant passages and relevant sections of E. Schwartz's apparatus are as follows.

Galerius' proclamation ending the persecution of Christians in April 311 (*HE* 8.17.3–5, ed. Schwartz, pp. 790 line 21, 792 lines 1–10):[914]

> The Emperor Caesar Galerius Valerius Maximianus Invictus Augustus… Consul for the eighth time, pater patriae, Proconsul †a…a† And the Emperor Caesar Flavius Valerius Constantinus (Κωνσταντῖνος) Pius Felix Invictus Augustus, Pontifex Maximus, with tribunicia potestas, Emperor for the fifth time, Consul, pater patriae, Proconsul (ἀνθύπατος)†b…b†
>
> Apparatus: L.9. After ἀνθύπατος ATER add from the earlier edition: And the Emperor Caesar Valerius Licinianus Licinius Pius Felix Invictus Augustus, Pontifex Maximus, fourth tribunician potestas, Emperor for the third time, Consul, pater patriae, Proconsul: to the people of their provinces, greeting. (…) ATERbDMΣΛ (…) 6/7 κωνσταντῖνοσ bDMΣΛ κωνστάντιοσ ATER

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912 Euseb. *HE* 9.9.1, 9.12, 10.3, 11.8; Barnes 1981:68,320n61; Stephenson 2009:160–162, 178; on other authors of the corpus see p.239 below.

913 *VC* 2.66.

914 See Barnes 1982:22–23 for his rather pedantic emendations to the titles of the emperors. These expect epigraphic accuracy from a literary text that has no claim for verbatim transcription of the imperial ordinances (*HE* 8.17.2: διατάγματα... τοῦτον περιέχοντα τὸν τρόπον; *continentia hunc modum* in Rufinus).

The manuscript tradition makes it clear that Licinius originally appeared in the first edition of the *Ecclesiastical History* (†b…b†). He was included in the original proclamation probably together with Maximinus, as Lactantius suggests Galerius issued the proclamation in the name of his colleagues.[915] Maximinus suffered *damnatio memoriae* in 313, so his name (†a…a†) was either not included in the first edition of the history or missing in Eusebius' copy of the proclamation.[916] Licinius' name was clearly excised after his defeat by Constantine in 324, alongside the greeting to the provinces, thus creating a clumsy sentence.

The confusion of the names of Constantius and Constantine in lines 6–7 is a suitable reminder of the common confusion of the names of these two emperors, as we saw earlier.[917]

The victories of Constantine and Licinius over Maxentius and Maximinus Daia were tampered with as well. The result is two different versions (*HE* 9.9.1). These correspond to the same manuscript division in the previous paragraph.

Thus in truth Constantine…and Licinius who ranked next to him—both honoured for their understanding and piety—were stirred up by the King of kings, God of the universe and Saviour, two men beloved of God, against the two most impious tyrants; and when war was formally engaged, God proved their ally in the most wonderful manner, and Maxentius fell at Rome at the hands of Constantine, while he of the East did not long survive him, for he too perished by a most disgraceful death at the hands of Licinius, who had not yet become mad (οὔπω μανέντα τότε). ATER Apparatus: 'ATER according to the earlier edition. ὅυπω–τότε: addition of the last edition'	Thus in truth Constantine… was stirred up by the King of kings, God of the universe and Saviour, against the most impious tyrants; and when war was formally engaged, God proved his ally in the most wonderful manner, and Maxentius fell at Rome at the hands of Constantine, while he of the East did no long survive him, for he too perished by a most disgraceful death at the hands of Licinius, who had not yet become mad (οὔπω μανέντα τότε). BDMΣ

915 *DMP* 36.3.
916 According to Eusebius (9.1.1), Maximinus did not publish the proclamation in his provinces. Cf. Barnes 1982:23. Eusebius may well have twisted the facts, as he most probably published his first edition in *c*.314 (after Maximinus had suffered *damnatio*), see below.
917 Pp.164ff.

The same tendency in the revision is also found in the prequel to Licinius' war against Maximinus Daia, where Eusebius deprived him of the title of Emperor in the final edition, and again ascribed insanity to Licinius in later life (9.9.12, ed. Schwartz p. 832, lines 15–16):

> And after this Constantine himself, and with him †the emperor† Licinius (Βασιλεὺς Λικίννιος), whose mind was not yet deranged by the madness into which he afterwards fell (οὔπω—ἑκτραπείς), having propitiated God as the Author of all their good fortune, both with one will and purpose drew up a most perfect law.
> Apparatus: 15 Λίκινιος BDMΣΛ Βασιλεὺς Λικίννιος ATER according to the earlier edition—15/16 οὔπω—ἑκτραπείς addition of the last edition.

These examples, it is hoped, provide a general illustration of Eusebius' need to adapt his work to a changing political reality.[918] In manuscripts ATER, Licinius is still not completely excised from the narrative and is still regarded as a legitimate emperor, 'beloved by God' and operating under divine influence alongside Constantine. Yet, the last two passages from Book 9 contain references to his 'later' madness, demonstrating that even the surviving earlier edition has been tampered with to introduce mild anti-Licinian statements. Thus, the version we have in ATER most probably reflects an uncertain political situation between Constantine and Licinius, most probably before *c.*317 and certainly before the complete breakdown of their joint regime and Licinius' final 'damnatio memoriae' in 324/5—this later state is the one presented in manuscripts BDMΣΛ.

The earlier state of the narrative clearly corresponds to the temporary tension between Licinius and Constantine that existed in *c*.314–316; their political relations were re-established for quite some time after that (*c*.318–323). Indeed, it has been noted that 'the manuscripts reveal traces of an edition completed in 313/4, 315/6 and a modification of the 324/5 edition in 326 to remove Crispus', and that 'there is no trace in the manuscripts of any edition earlier than 313.'[919] This gap of ten years

[918] This is the orthodox explanation of the various 'inconsistencies' and 'revisions' in the *Ecclesiastical History*, e.g. Lane Fox 1986:607; Burgess 2011:I.494.
[919] Burgess 2011:I.483, 484 and 486; cf. Lane Fox 1986:607.

between the various revisions is what most probably facilitated the survival of the pre-325 version in the manuscript tradition.[920]

Interestingly enough, even an inscription on an arch in Cillium (Africa Proconsularis) manifests the changing political reality: Licinius' name was erased and carved again, and thus most probably signifies the tension of *c*.314–316 and the re-establishment of the peace between 317 and 324, and most importantly a *damnatio* of the earlier *damnatio memoriae*.[921]

To sum up the discussion so far: Eusebius had to revise his work several times, and his dynamic and at times contradictory representation of Licinius is a fine example of the difficulties of writing history in that period. It has also been shown that Eusebius' revision was incomplete and clumsy. In several places the positive representation of Licinius did manage to fall between the cracks of his censorship, and his name was not completely excised even in the later edition, where the context had allowed it (*HE* 9.9.1). These passages are also a reminder that literary texts—as opposed to inscriptions in most cases—are not written in stone, are more dynamic, and are susceptible to either authorial editing or subsequent innocent corruption in the transmission process.

As for Licinius' public image, the revisions of Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*—which even in their last form are still contradictory to the approach in the *Life of Constantine*—, the lukewarm approach or indecision of Lactantius, and the fickle *damnatio memoriae*, demonstrate that there must have been several narratives of Licinius' actions. Most importantly there appears to have been a positive propaganda policy, which later Constantinian reactions obscured.

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[920] As against Barnes's purely hypothetical assumption of an edition earlier than *c.*293 that has no traces in the manuscripts; see Momigliano 1977:108; Burgess 2011:I.484.
[921] *CIL* 8.210=11299=ILS 5570.

A silenced conspiracy: Licinius' ancestry, Philip the Arab, and Gordian III

Eusebius, who portrayed Licinius positively in an earlier version of his history, is also one of the earliest authorities not to include a statement on Philip's conspiracy against Gordian III. For him the entire episode was summarized with the understatement: 'after Gordian ruled the Roman Empire for six whole years, Philip, together with his son, succeeded to the principate', or with the passing statement that Gordian was killed in Parthia.[922]

At first sight, it would appear that the reason for avoiding the issue was Philip's relation or conversion to Christianity; Jerome, however, was able to introduce Philip's conspiracy into Eusebius' chronicle while maintaining that he was the first Christian Roman emperor.[923] Moreover, *none* of the subsequent authorities reports anything similar to Eusebius' sketchy account of Philip's accession.[924] The earliest text to accuse Philip of the conspiracy is either this passage in the *Gordians* or the *postulated EKG* (if it existed), whose earlier edition(s) seem(s) to have become available around 305–316.[925] The story was probably disseminated to subsequent authors from one of these two.[926] The various versions of the relevant sources are tabulated as follows:[927]

[922] Euseb. *HE* 6.34; *Chronicle* (Karst 1911:225).
[923] Helm 1956:217a–c, placing an asterisk in the relevant entries to highlight the additions.
[924] With the exception of Orosius, who censored Eutropius and Jerome (see above n. 899).
[925] Lippold 2002:309–310, 325–326, 342; Lippold 2006:358 suggests various dates around 305–324. Burgess 2011:V.117–118, 128 suggests that 'there could have been an earlier history… that concluded in ca. 313' (118).
[926] Sober logic would place the *Gordians* before all the others sources, which might have taken the account from the 'SHA' or an intermediate source that used the latter.
[927] *Gd.*; Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 27.8; Eutr. 9.2.3; Epit. 26.2; Jer. *Chron.* (Helm 1956:217a,c); Oros. 7.19.4 (censored account of Eutropius and Jerome); Zos. 1.18–19; John Ant. *frg.* 171 (ed. Mariev); Zonar. 12.17–19 (following Eusebius about Philip's Christianity) does not contribute anything of relevance, as 'the source tradition or traditions that Zonaras reflects are both confused and confusing' (Banchich and Lane 2009:82 ad loc.).

Authority	CS[928]	Euseb.	*Gd.*	Victor	Eutr.	EDC	Jerome	Oros.	Zos.[929]	John Ant.	Zonar.
Philip's conspiracy	X(?)		X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Philip as Christian		X					X	X			X
Gordian as Constantine's ancestor						X					
Licinius Negative		X	X	X		X		X	X	X	X

Table 7: Philip's conspiracy

It seems plausible, therefore, that there was a different reason for the discrepancy between Eusebius and all other fourth-century authorities with regard to Philip's conspiracy. It appears to rest in Eusebius' and Capitolinus' need to comply with the volatile political situation of their times. As we have seen, Eusebius did not revise his history thoroughly, and it contained pro-Licinian statements, which are contradicted by his later revision(s) of the history, and sometimes contradict the *Life of Constantine*.

This type of contradiction is also found in Eusebius' treatment of Philip the Arab as the first Christian Roman emperor. In the *Ecclesiastical History* Eusebius noted Philip's accession and continued:

> τοῦτον κατέχει λόγος Χριστιανὸν ὄντα ἐν ἡμέρᾳ τῆς ὑστάτης τοῦ πάσχα παννυχίδος τῶν ἐπὶ τῆς ἐκκλησίας εὐχῶν τῷ πλήθει μετασχεῖν ἐθελῆσαι (6.34.1)
> It is recorded that Philip, because he was a Christian, wished on the day of the last paschal vigil to take part in the prayers at the church along with the multitude

In this passage, Philip's Christianity is reported with a participle (Χριστιανὸν ὄντα rather than εἶναι) that has a factual or causative meaning that can only mean either

[928] Common Source(?) or tradition: one of *EKGs* (?) or simply 'SHA'.
[929] Zosimus would not have missed the opportunity to note that a Christian emperor was responsible for the downfall of another Christian emperor. He was probably using a source common to the Latin tradition.

'because he was Christian' or 'who was a Christian', and thus pre-empts and explains the narrative that follows. Only Philip's will to pray in the church and the priest's demand that he should confess his sins first are reported under κατέχει λόγος and the accusative plus infinitive construction. So in this account, the Christianity of the emperor Philip was already taken for granted, and seems to have been based on a tradition from Antioch.[930]

Nevertheless, in the later *Life of Constantine*, written more than a decade after 325, he stated: 'Alone of all the Emperors from the beginning of time Constantine was initiated by rebirth in the mysteries of Christ'[931] without providing any statement about the peculiarity of Philip's Christianity. Later Christian authorities, with the same knowledge as Eusebius but *without* his political constraints, did find it necessary to state that he was 'the first of all the emperors who was a Christian' and that Constantine 'was the first Christian emperor with the exception of Philip.'[932]

So Eusebius' account in the *Life of Constantine*, obviously written after the *damnatio memoriae* of Licinius in 325, ignores Philip's relation to Christianity. The most plausible explanation for this appears to have been made by Crouzel in 1992: 'if Eusebius does not mention him in his Life of Constantine it is because that emperor associated Philip's memory with the *damnatio memoriae* of his claimed descendant Licinius.'[933] Thus, if Capitolinus' narrative is accepted as reflecting the political reality of the time of Constantine and Licinius, his narrative could supplement our

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930 Cf. above p.214 and n.900; and further below.

931 *VC* 4.62.4 (Av. Cameron and Hall 1999: 178, 342 are silent on this matter).

932 Oros. 7.20.1; 28.1; also the interpolator of the *Origo Constantini* 33; cf. Jer. *Chron*. (Helm 1956:217a–c), Synkellos AM 5731, 5737.

933 P. Crouzel, 'Philip the Arab' in Angel Di Berardino (ed.), *Encyclopedia of the Early Church*, trans. Adrian Walford (Cambridge: J. Clarke, 1992), 682; following Crouzel 1975 and York 1972 (these two scholars disagree about the sources for Philip's Christianity). Licinius' claimed ancestry is also maintained by Stephenson 2009:131, which is approved by Barnes (2011: xi). Körner rejects this view—the result of his blind acceptance of Dessau's *hypothesis* (2002:15–18)—by roundly stating (2002:269n.44): 'Now this supposed origin of Licinius by Philip is only handed down to us in the notoriously unreliable HA (*Gord.* 34.5)'. Besides overlooking the condemnation and *damnatio* of Licinius after 324 explaining the scant evidence we have about him, this statement is a priori and entails the classical *petitio principii* of rejecting statements in the corpus without checking if they actually fit or contribute to our understanding of other sources and the historical reality pertinent to the issue in hand.

understanding of the development of the historiography and historical reality of the period perhaps even further. In 312/316 Licinius might have tried to view himself or might have been viewed as a descendant of Philip the Arab, because of his relations with, or need for, Christian supporters.

Combining Eusebius' *surviving* positive comments on Licinius with his alleged relation to Philip reported by Capitolinus seems to provide a plausible explanation for Eusebius' peculiar attempt to conceal Philip's conspiracy in the *Ecclesiastical History* and any reference to him and his relation to Christianity in the *Life of Constantine*. Eusebius, we have seen, manifests a gradually escalating negative tone towards Licinius in the various versions of his *History*. Although he attempted to suppress his memory and assassinate his character in the last edition,[934] the pro-Licinian statements did manage to slip past the censorship of that edition: concealing Philip's conspiracy, while perhaps removing any statement about Licinius' ancestor, appears to belong to the edition(s) written before 316/325. The *Life of Constantine* never contained these pro-Licinian strata because it was written after 325, when the need to remove and condemn any memory of Licinius and his alleged ancestor had already been signalled.

Eusebius and Capitolinus seem to be two sides of the same coin, as they manifest idiosyncratic views that supplement each other, rather than show knowledge of one another. The narrative of Capitolinus about Licinius' attempt to hide Philip's involvement in the conspiracy appears to fit well with the peculiarity of Eusebius' account in the *Ecclesiastical History* that avoids the affair altogether. The two accounts appear to be later echoes of positive Licinian propaganda: Eusebius' *History*, written originally in the East under Licinius, echoes the remains of the desired Licinian version of events, whereas Capitolinus' account, written in the West under

[934] See above, and especially in the last book of the history: 10.8.2–9.4. In this book BDΣΛ, the representatives of the later edition, omit imperial ordinances from the time of the joint rule of Licinius and Constantine, *including* the so-called 'Edict of Milan' (*HE* 10.5–7).

Constantine, reflects the Constantinian counter-version when Licinius fell out of grace in the West, either in *c.*314/316 or after 324.

Philip and Licinius: an intratextual comparison

The alleged descent of Licinius from Philip could therefore be considered as a reasonable attempt by Licinius to win favour among Christians in *c.*312–314/316, which was later used by Capitolinus, who wrote under Constantine with a different political agenda, to stain his name. This author seems to have implied that Licinius obtained his *imperium* in a manner similar to that of Philip, if one follows the intratextual echo between Philip's rise to power and Licinius' attempt to conceal it when he became emperor. The two passages are very similar:

Philippus autem, ne a crudelitate nancisci videretur imperium, Romam litteras misit quibus scripsit Gordianum morbo perisse seque a cunctis militibus electum (*Gd.*31.2)	*quem titulum evertisse Licinius dicitur eo tempore, quo est nanctus imperium, cum se vellet videri a Philippis originem trahere.* (*Gd.*34.5)

Capitolinus had both these emperors attempting to hide the conspiracy against Gordian III, when they came to power. Philip did this by sending a letter to the senate, telling them that Gordian III had died of illness; Licinius tried to do so by destroying Gordian's tombstone, which allegedly implied the conspiracy. The motive for their actions is similar: how they wanted or did not want to be seen in relation to the conspiracy. Philip wanted to hide his cruelty by which he had obtained his power, while Licinius wanted to be seen as his successor and therefore tried to hide the consequences of his cruelty. The same verb (*nancisci*) is used to describe their arrival to the imperial throne, thus *a crudelitate nanisci…imperium* relating to Philip is also resonated in Licinius' *nanctus imperium*; the phrase 'a Philippis' compares them to 'a crudelitate'. In this way Capitolinus subversively refers to Licinius' cruelty. This characteristic had already been loosely attested in Lactantius, and was usually contrasted with Constantine's clemency.[935]

[935] Lactant. *DMP* 50; Creed 1984:xxxiv–xxxv; Av. Cameron and Hall 1999: 228–229 with references, and n.936 below.

The theme of Licinius' cruelty was overtly developed in post-324 Constantinian propaganda as reflected in Eusebius' later accounts, and was attested in the later epitomators with the exception of Eutropius, who provided a different account of the Licinius-Constantine affair.[936] Only Eutropius provides no negative account of Licinius' character, holds Constantine responsible for the collapse of the treaty by his attack on Licinius, and 'openly admits' Constantine's cruelty.[937] This has broader implications on the interrelationship between Eutropius, Lactantius, the other epitomators, and the putative *EKG*: it shows that Eutropius at least was not following the same source as Victor and the *epitome*.[938] This further supports the view that there was more than one account available for the fourth-century epitomators other than the *EKG*, and that one of them was probably not written under Constantine; the division between these sources seems again to fall around 316.

Capitolinus also suggested that Philip's conspiracy against Timesitheius resulted in a Gothic ('Scythian') invasion—a characteristic of the third-century crisis.[939] From a historiographical point of view, this could appear to have viewed Philip the Arab, Licinius' 'ancestor', as responsible for the so-called 'third-century crisis', in particular the Gothic invasions. This last aspect of the crisis, which was averted by Claudius II 'Gothicus', Constantine's alleged ancestor, is attested in literary texts from *c.*297–310, if we exclude this corpus.[940] This 'link' is further supported by the claim of the pro-Constantinian *Origo*, which presents Licinius as being allied with the Goths against Constantine.[941]

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[936] Euseb. *HE* 10.8.11–16~*VC* 1.54.2–56.1, esp. 55.3; Victor 41.5 (cf. *EDC* 41.8–9).
[937] 10.5–6; Bird 1994:190.
[938] *Pace* Burgess 2011: *passim*.
[939] *Gd*.31.1: *Argunt Scytharum rex finitimorum regna vastabat, maxime quod conpererat Misitheum perisse, cuius consilio res p. fuerat gubernata*. This Argunt is 'certainly to be identified with the Gothic chieftain Argaithus, whom Jordanes mentions' (Chastagnol-HA:738n.3). According to Jordanes, the Goths became enemies of Rome either in Philip's second or third year in power, *c.*246–247 (*Get.*16, §§89, *Rom*. §283 respectively), and Argaithus/Argunt together with Gunthericus ravaged the eastern area of the Black Sea, Dobroudja (Moesia according to Jordanes), and laid siege to Marcianopolis (*Get.*16, §§.90–92).
[940] On Claudius II see Lippold 1998:160–183; 2002, and here pp. 174ff, 278ff.
[941] *Origo Constantini* 27.

To sum up, the rhetoric of the passages relating to Licinius suggests a subversive and subdued criticism of Licinius. The negative tone is perhaps more severe than that of Lactantius, who could have referred to the actual cruelty of Licinius and the earlier versions of Eusebius' *History* (before 324). Yet it is still not as overt as in the post-324 Constantinian accounts.

At this point there are two possibilities and one appears more likely than the other: (1) Philip did indeed conspire against Gordian III and brought about his downfall, and Licinius' ancestry was invented by Constantine to stain the former's name (this hypothesis leaves Eusebius' reference to Philip's relation to Christianity and its complete neglect in the *Life of Constantine* unexplained, and therefore seems less likely); (2) Licinius claimed Philip, who must have been known for his Christianity at least in the East, as his ancestor to obtain the support of Christians, perhaps in his war against Maximinus Daia, and Philip's conspiracy was therefore not reported by Eusebius in the earlier edition of the *Ecclesiastical History*, either because it was not yet invented or because this was the earlier pro-Licinian line he had to adopt. The possibility that Licinius' 'ancestor' was the first Christian emperor, after the *damnatio memoriae* of Licinius, had to be avoided most probably in *c.*316 and certainly after 324.

Be that as it may, these issues would not have been relevant any time after the death of Constantine, but would have been relevant when these two emperors fought for supreme power and when the name of the fallen emperor had to be stained. Inventing or reacting to an invented ancestry for Licinius, as in the case of Constantine's family (and the other tetrarch's) 'relationship' to Claudius II in *c.*297–310,[942] would have made no sense any time after Constantine.[943]

To conclude, the inferred date is most probably during a period of tension between Constantine and Licinius. Attempts to stain the latter and his family's reputation

[942] See pp.174ff., 278ff.
[943] See further in the Conclusion below.

could have been made in *c.*314/316 and again in *c.*324. If this paragraph is considered together with the historiographical difficulties manifested in Eusebius and to some extent in Lactantius, it not only strongly suggests the time of Constantine, but also seems to provide an additional, and perhaps important, piece in the reconstruction of two historical puzzles: Licinius and Philip. The historical nucleus seems to be Licinius' propaganda about his alleged ancestry and the Constantinian reaction to it.

The broader implications of the images of Philip the Arab and Licinius in, and the historical nucleus behind, ancient accounts now deserve reconsideration in light of this discussion.

Conclusion

The references to contemporary events allow us to postulate a date of composition for these specific biographies and contribute to our understanding of the era of composition under Constantine. The *Life of Clodius Albinus* made an appeal in support of the Ceionii Albini, which were part of the emerging and rehabilitated aristocracy under Constantine, and can be seen as an appeal for the return of Ceionius Rufius Albinus from exile in *c.*326–334. His reinstatement was signalled through his consulship in 335 and appointment as prefect of the city in that same year. We might therefore have a possible *terminus ante* of the middle of 335, when it was clear he was rehabilitated. This passage, we have seen, could also lend further support to other modern hypotheses about the rise of his family and his rehabilitation in the later part of Constantine's reign.

The fictional narrative about Licinius and Philip the Arab becomes an important piece of the historiographical puzzle of the emperor Licinius. Since this emperor has twice suffered *damnatio memoriae*, his public image and aspirations are difficult to infer from the censored versions of Eusebius and Lactantius. In this case Capitolinus' fiction provides a version of events, which shows independence from the Christian

narratives of Eusebius and Lactantius and provides valuable idiosyncratic information both about the propaganda of Licinius and the Constantinian reaction to it. Scholars in recent years have taken Licinius' relation to Philip as a 'fact', while keeping its source of information as hidden as possible.[944] This is not surprising: the current 'orthodox' view in the *HA-Forschung* attempts to dismiss the entire episode altogether with a few general remarks to the effect that the 'HA' is known to be an 'unreliable' source, as proved by Dessau.[945] It is to be hoped that this discussion will enable the reader to evaluate the relevance of Capitolinus' fictional narrative in its historiographical, literary, and historical context and to re-evaluate dismissals of statements in the corpus by an a priori dependence on Dessau's article, whose validity is by now rightly questioned.

To sum up, we can infer that the *Life of Clodius Albinus* was written in *c.*326–335 and that the *Life of the Gordians* was written during a period of tension between Constantine and Licinius, but after the latter had broadcast his claim of being a descendant of Philip II, most probably in 313. The possible dates are either *c.*316–318 during the first hostilities with Constantine, or after 324 when this duumvirate suffered its last blow.

[944] Leadbetter 1998:80, 85n.46; Van Dam 2007:99 with n.23; Stephenson 2009:130–131.
[945] Körner 2002:15–18, 269n.44; discussed and cited on p.223 and in n.933 above.

Chapter 6: The Constantinian biographies of Aelius Lampridius

The apostrophes in the epilogues

Among the biographies that are ascribed to Lampridius with certainty, even among those traditionally ascribed to him by the currently accepted text, only the *Life of Heliogabalus* and *The Life of Severus Alexander* contain apostrophes to Constantine. These apostrophes are part of the long and programmatic epilogues, and their main purpose appears to reflect on the quality of past, present, and future emperors and to provide explanations and advice to Constantine on topics discussed in these biographies and pertinent to political events.

The adjectives and forms of address are those common in literary works and inscriptions from the time of Constantine, as we have seen earlier with Capitolinus.[946] Constantine is addressed in the second person singular with the abstract nouns *clementia* and *pietas tua*,[947] and with the adjectives *venerabilis, maximus*, and *sacratissimus*.[948] As an epithet to an emperor the last adjective is already attested in Statius and Gaius, but only becomes common in the Latin Panegyrics of *c.*289–313, including those addressed to Constantine, and in Firmicus Maternus.[949] It is only used twice in the corpus: once in Lampridius and once in an address to Diocletian allegedly made in *c.*284–305.[950] This adjective, therefore, conforms well to the stated dates of these biographies.[951] On the basis of the title *maximus*, as we have seen earlier, these apostrophes were made any time after 312.[952] Thus the broad stated date of

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[946] Above pp. 155, 205.
[947] Respectively: *Hel.* 34.4; *AS* 65.3. *Hel*. 34.5, *AS* 65.3.
[948] Respectively: *Hel.* 34.1; *AS* 65.1. *Hel.* 2.4.
[949] Stat. *Silv.* 2.praef., 3.praef; Gai. *Inst.* 1.53, 77, 94. Panegyric to Maximian: X(2).1.1, 5, 8.6 (alongside Diocletian), 13.5 (*c.*289); XI(3).1.1–2, 2.3, 3.8, 5.1, 6.1, 8.4, 13.1, 15.3, 19.1 (*c.*291); to Constantine V(8).1.1, 3, 2.2; VI(7).1.1; XII(9).1.1 (*c.*310–313). Firm. Mat. *Err. prof. rel.* 3.2, 6.1, 7.7, 8.4, 20.7. This obviously does not place Statius and Gaius in the fourth century, because the phrase 'sacratissimus imperator' is more common in that period—although this would appear to be the verdict according to *HA-Forschung* standards (see Part I above).
[950] *MA.*19.12, see pp.260ff. below.
[951] An *HA-Forscher* would argue that they were all late fourth-century forgeries; this is no better than arguing that Statius who is the first to use the term was writing in the fourth century, because it is more common in the Latin Panegyrics and the 'SHA' (Nixon and Rodgers 1994:53n.1).
[952] Pp. 205ff. above.

composition of these biographies is 312–337, and this can be narrowed down when references to present-day events are considered.

Contemporary events: the implied date of composition

Past and present emperors

The epilogue to the *Life of Heliogabalus* contains references to accounts of emperors that Lampridius intends to write alongside brief observations on the nature of their rule or their relation to Constantine. Prima facie, the entire passage was apparently written in a time when Licinius could have been said to have been made subject to Constantine's authority;[953] in the West, such a statement could have been made either during the tension of *c.*316 around/immediately following the battle of Cibalae, or after Licinius' final defeat in 324. But do the other statements in the passage contradict these dates?

Claudius and Aurelian

Lampridius first observes the emperors who followed Elagabalus and Severus Alexander with a short summary of the third-century crisis, with emphasis on two emperors. The passage runs:[954]

> Now I shall begin to write of emperors who followed after. Of these Alexander was the best and should receive serious treatment, as he was *princeps* for thirteen years. The others lasted for six months or barely one or two years, while Aurelian is outstanding and the glory of them all is Claudius, the founder of your family. (*Hel.* 35.2)

This casual description of the crisis that followed Severus Alexander's rule seems to reflect something of the imperial propaganda of Constantine because only two emperors are named before Diocletian in the next passage. The reference to Aurelian and Claudius appears to fit quite well with Constantine's propaganda, and the link he and his dynasty formed with Apollo/Sol Invictus and the two named emperors.

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[953] *Hel.* 35.6; the text is damaged, but the meaning is clear; see further below.
[954] Translation of Birley 1976a:316.

In the celebrated Panegyric of *c.*310 (or rather *c.*307–311)[955] two relevant points regarding Constantine's legitimacy were made: his ancestry from Claudius II, allegedly known already to those who loved him (since 297?),[956] was officially 'restated'; and the panegyrist ascribed to him a divine vision of Apollo, proclaiming his fitness to rule and comparing him with Apollo/Sol Invictus.[957]

The patron god of Claudius II was identified as Apollo/Sol Invictus, and Aurelian is commonly held to have revived the cult of Sol Invictus in Rome.[958] It appears that after 310 'Constantine's new style echoed that of Aurelian, who had struck coins commemorating the deified Claudius Gothicus and portrayed himself wearing the crown of Sol Invictus.'[959] Moreover, if the hypothesis—promoted by Dessauists irrespective of this corpus and based *inter alia* on the *face value* of a convoluted passage in the same panegyric of *c.*310—about Constantine's father's, Constantius, military service under Aurelian (*c.*270–275) and the auspices of Sol Invictus is accepted,[960] this passage seems to allude to the link between the two. Potter concludes:

> Aurelian's version of Elagabal as Invincible Sun would prove immensely important for both Constantius and Constantine. Constantius, who may well have been at the battle of Emesa, appears to have been devoted to the god, and Aurelian's example showed Constantine that it would be possible to make a

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[955] Nixon and Rodgers 1994:212.

[956] Homo 1903:92–95 (suggesting 300 for the invention); Lippold 1998:160–182 (suggesting 297); Chausson claims the ancestry is authentic (Chausson 2007:25–95, esp. 94), but fails to acknowledge the implication on the validity of Dessau's thesis (2007: 95). Even if one accepts the Dessauist supposition that this ancestry was invented only in 310 (according to the arbitrary dating of the panegyric), this passage lends no further support for the later Dessauist claim that this is an anachronistic pedigree from *c.*310 (e.g. Dessau 1889:340–344; Syme 1983:66–79; Alan Cameron 2011b:751, 753; Thomson 2012:38; last two follow Syme), because this biography seems to have be written *after* 312.

[957] Respectively: VI(7).2.1. and 21.3–7.

[958] Potter 2013:21–22, 313.

[959] Stephenson 2009:130.

[960] VI(7).4.2; Barnes 2011:27, 35–37 (with relevant corrections to the problematic text); Potter 2013:21–22. It is quite surprising that a scholar, who is eagerly willing to accept what 'Constantine's propaganda represented him doing' (Barnes 2009:381n.25) in *c.*306 and *c.*272 at face value (2011: ibid.), is reluctant to accept the statement about Constantius' relation to Claudius as known to some *before* 310 according to the *same* panegyric, only because it does not conform with Syme, despite the solid arguments of Lippold and Chausson (n. 956 above; Barnes 2011:72–73, 208n.15).

> previously unpalatable divinity acceptable in the imperial pantheon—especially if that god was connected with a notable victory.[961]

To sum up, Aurelian's and Claudius' names are highlighted in this passage for reasons that were only relevant under Constantine. In the case of Aurelian, Lampridius' statement could even provide written support, in the form of a literary allusion, to a modern hypothesis about the relation between Constantine's father, Constantine, and Aurelian.[962]

Diocletian and a Maximian: gold and iron

The next paragraph relates to the closer past with a rather convoluted reference to two members of the first tetrarchy, Diocletian and a certain Maximian.

> To these must be joined Diocletian, father of the golden age, and Maximian, as he is commonly known, father of the iron age, and others as far as your piety. (*Hel*. 35.4)

The two lines manifest unavoidable philological and historical questions. Historically, one might challenge the reference to Diocletian as 'father of the golden age', as an overt provocation under a 'Christian' emperor like Constantine,[963] but Diocletian's persecution, similar to Constantine's 'Christianity', inasmuch as both are ignored by fourth-century pagan authors, seems to have had no meaning to an apparently pagan author such as Lampridius. The panegyric to Constantine of *c.*307 described Diocletian's rule as *viginti annorum continua felicitas*.[964] *Origo Constantini*, a piece of late Constantinian propaganda, viewed Diocletian as the source of Constantius' legitimacy as 'Caesar', and contrary to other reports.[965] The same source also noted

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[961] Potter 2013:22.
[962] Cf. also Constantine's reference to Aurelian as 'parens noster' (*Cod. Iust.* 11.59.1).
[963] Turcan 1993:234; Chastagnol-HA:542n3; Barnes 1978:15 with n.4 (ignoring Lactantius) mostly on the basis of ambiguous passages in Eusebius' later accounts (*VC* 1.12.2, 2.24ff., 48ff.). The only clear passage is in the so-called 'Speech to the assembly of the saints' attributed to Constantine (25). Its accounts of Diocletian and of the great persecution clash with Lactantius and the *Origo Constantini* (see below, and n. 993). As we see with Eusebius and the representation of Licinius (above pp. 215ff.) and with Lactantius and Maximian (this section below), an author or authors working under the volatile politics of the tetrarchy could and did produce 'contradictions' and contradictory portrayals of emperors and influential figures, as a result of shifting political alliances and constraints.
[964] VII(6).10.1 noted by Turcan 1993:234.
[965] *Anon. Val.* 1: *Constantius… a Diocletiano Caesar factus est* cf. *Ael.* 2.2. In fact, he seems to have been appointed Caesar and adopted by Maximian Herculius first (1 March 293), and only later was this

that Constantine was willing to divide the empire in a similar way to what had been done under the tetrarchy: 'exemplo Diocletiani et Maximiani.'[966] Even from a Christian perspective, Lactantius, certainly writing after 312, described Diocletian as *viginti annorum felicissimus imperator*.[967] He minimalized Diocletian's involvement in the bloodshed of the great persecution and *represented* Diocletian as ruling *summa felicitate*.[968] Lactantius also viewed Diocletian as promoting him in his early career and willing to appoint Constantine as Caesar in the second tetrarchy, because Diocletian considered Constantine popular and potentially better than his father, Constantius.[969] When considered alongside later Christian accounts, such as Eusebius, the most that can be said about Diocletian's image is that it shifted between negative and positive, yet once his minimalist involvement in the great persecution is set aside (it was irrelevant for non-Christian authors), he could have been viewed in a positive light.[970] Therefore, Diocletian's literary public image in this passage fits quite well with the stated date of composition of *c.*314/316–325, even from a Christian perspective.

The Maximian named as the father of the 'iron age' could be one of two: Diocletian's Caesar and later colleague as Augustus in the West, Maximian Herculius (M. Aurelius Valerius Maximianus, r.285–305, 307–308);[971] or Diocletian's junior colleague and Caesar (293–305) and later Augustus in the East (305–311), Maximian Galerius (C.

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arrangement recognized by Diocletian (21 May 293?); see further discussion in Barnes 1982:60, 62 (overlooking the Origo); König 1987:59–60; Kienast 2009:280, 283.

[966] *Origo Constantini* 14.

[967] *DMP* 42.3 noted by Turcan 1993:234.

[968] *DMP* 9.11 with the exception of the persecutions, which he pinned on Maximian Galerius' influence on Diocletian. See *DMP* ibid., 10.6, and especially 11.3–4*;* see further below. Lactantius' narrative does indeed contain stories which are 'highly surprising from a Christian point of view' (Creed 1984:110).

[969] *DMP* 18.10–11 (reporting Diocletian's words on Constantine): *Hic vero et amabilis est et ita imperaturus, ut patre suo melior et clementior iudicetur*; Stephenson 2009:115–116. *Pace* Barnes 1978:15 on the negative image of Diocletian in other Constantinian authors (he overlooks the positive accounts of the *Origo* and Lactantius).

[970] On the Constantinian 'double standard' towards Diocletian, see: Schlange-Schöningen 2004. Cf. also the confusion in modern scholarship; Lampridius 'did not know that Constantine… displayed a consistent hatred of Diocletian (*Heliog.*35.4)' (Barnes 1978:77), whereas outside *HA-Forschung* we are told: 'Constantine showed respect toward Diocletian during his life time' (Barnes 1982:35n.31).

[971] *PIR*² A.1628; *PLRE* 573 s.v. no. 8.

Galerius Valerius Maximianus, r.293–311).[972] Acknowledging the difficulty of identifying the emperor named Maximian—present in ancient authorities and most notably in Lactantius[973]—seems to hold the key to possible solutions to an alleged contradiction with Constantine's propaganda after 312.[974]

In order to determine to whom Lampridius is referring, the meaning of *ferreum saeculum* requires further clarification, beyond the classical meaning that the world deteriorates from gold through silver to iron.[975] Suetonius used *ferreum saeculum* as part of the public reaction to Tiberius' cruelty. In the long account of his severe cruelty and savage behaviour, already manifested during his childhood,[976] Suetonius refers to short verses that were circulated in the following circumstances:

> Tiberius did so many savage and cruel things (*multa… ita saeve et atrociter factitavit*) under the pretext of severity and the improvement of morals, but in reality he conformed to his evil nature (*naturae contemperans*), that some (*nonnulli*) reproached the present evils and warned of those to come with short verses (*versiculis*)…
> Caesar, you have changed Saturn's golden age (*aurea Saturni saecula*) / for as long as you are alive, there will always be age(s) of iron (*ferrea*). He doesn't care for wine, because he drinks blood now / he drinks it thirstily as he used to drink undiluted wine…
> He later proved them true and accurate. (*Tib*.59.1–2)

So *ferreum saeculum*[977] also had a political meaning that was linked to atrocities perpetrated by cruel and *bloodthirsty* emperors. Both authors ascribe it to popular tradition (*vulgo dicitur*, *nonnulli versiculis*) and making the same sharp transition from a golden age to an iron age. Even outside the 'Suetonian' tradition of Latin

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[972] *PLRE* 574 s.v. no. 9.
[973] Creed 1984:xlvii, 90; Städele 2003:111n.27.
[974] Stern 1953:42 and Turcan 1993:235 acknowledge the difficulty, but firmly insist it refers to Maximian Herculius without any discussion. Peter 1892:32–33 argued it referred to Maximian Galerius (De Sanctis 1896:79). Barnes 1978:15–16 with n.6, 77 (=Thomson 2012:37) overlooks it (together with Seeck 1890:620; Magie-SHA 2.174.3, Momigliano 1966:173 and Hohl-Merten-Rösger-Straub 1.308 and 484 n. 155). He presupposes the passage can only refer to Maximian Herculius, and presents it as another 'contradiction' and further support for Dessau's forgery hypothesis. As we shall see, the Dessauist observations can in fact be used to exclude Maximian Herculius as the emperor in question.
[975] Chastagnol-HA:542n.3 and other scholars who commentated on the passage only note this interpretation, as far as I can ascertain.
[976] *Tib*. 49–66.
[977] In Suetonius the plural is poetic.

imperial biography, Cassius Dio used the same contrast of gold and iron to describe the transition from Marcus Aurelius to his corrupt son Commodus.[978]

This direct or indirect intertextual link suggests therefore that Lampridius viewed the said Maximian as a cruel and savage emperor.[979] The question now is, which Maximian fits this profile better after 312?

Maximian Herculius, despite the *damnatio memoriae* of *c.*311 and his alleged intrigues against Constantine, had been rehabilitated in 312, after the Battle of the Milvian Bridge. The Roman Senate consecrated his memory, and in *c*.317/318 Constantinian mints depicted him as *divus* alongside Constantius and Claudius II.[980] This did not prevent Lactantius, however, writing in *c.*316–325, from repeating earlier Constantinian propaganda. In Constantine's court, Lactantius most probably heard the accounts of Maximian's bad character and intrigues against Constantine;[981] he also explicitly noted Constantine's order of his *damnatio memoriae*.[982]

This is another reminder that texts written during those years might contain inconsistencies as a result of the rapidly evolving political situations. In which case, even maintaining the 'traditional' identification of the Lampridian Maximian with Herculius[983] could be compatible with the literary standards of the period.[984]

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[978] Dio 71.36.4=Boissevain 279[9-11]. It may be worth noting that the earliest concept of successive kindgoms/reigns described as metals of decreasing value, from gold to iron, can be found in the book of Daniel, 2.31–43, 7.3–7. I am not aware of any direct borrowing of this idea in classical literature earlier than Suetonius—it could appear to be a topos.

[979] Rather than 'an insinuation' about the 'severe and military character' of Maximian Herculius (Hohl-Merten-Rösger-Straub 484 n. 155; cf. Stern 1953:42n.5). Even if this interpretation is accepted, Lampridius most probably used the same pretext Suetonius used for Tiberius' cruelty (*Tib.* 59.1: cited above).

[980] Barnes 1978:16n.6; Kienast 2009:273–274; Barnes 2011:4, 72–74.

[981] *DMP* 30 with Creed 1984:110; cf. also *DMP* 29.4–5 with Barnes (2011:72): 'an *ex post facto* invention of Constantinian propaganda designed to blacken the character of Maximian.'

[982] *DMP* 42.1: *Eodemque tempore senis Maximiani statuae Constantini iussu revellebantur et imagines ubicumque pictus esset, detrahebantur* (cf. Euseb. *HE* 8.13.15). See Creed 1984:117; Barnes (2011:4) is fully aware of this: '*After* the Battle of the Milvian Bridge on 28 October *312*, however, Constantine decided to rehabilitate his memory…' and 'Constantine's propaganda started to paint Maximian in the blackest terms possible… which Lactantius doubtless heard constantly reiterated at the court of Trier in 311 and 312—and which he *innocently repeated* in his *DMP*' (my emphases).

[983] See references in n. 972. I fail to see how the following alleged 'contradiction' in this passage in Lampridius could support Dessau's hypothesis or undermine the Constantinian date of composition after *c.*314/316: 'Only the most ignorant and subversive of contemporaries could utter remarks so

Nevertheless, the post-312 official Constantinian propaganda, rehabilitating Maximian Herculius, could in fact suggest that Lampridius did not have Herculius in mind.

Could a reference to Maximian Galerius be more in line with Constantine's official propaganda after 312? Lampridius' intertextuality seems to suggest that his Maximian was a bloodthirsty emperor, crueller than the post-312 Maximian Herculius. The official Constantinian propaganda, mostly as it is reflected in the *Origo Constantini* and Lactantius' *DMP*, had a *consistent* negative line towards Galerius: he was considered to be Constantius' antagonist, who had convinced Diocletian not to appoint Constantine as Caesar after the abdication of the first tetrarchy.[985] He was accused of conspiring against and making several attempts to kill Constantine.[986] This line is made clear in Lactantius' introduction of Maximian Galerius, quite similar to Suetonius' account of Tiberius as well (especially the link they made between the size of the body and the cruelty of the ruler): [987]

> But the second Maximian, whom Diocletian took as his son-in-law, was not only worse than these two men, whom our times have experienced, but worse than all bad men, who ever lived. This beast had in him a natural barbarity (*naturalis barbaries*), and a wildness quite foreign to Roman blood. (*DMP* 9.1–2)

Lactantius used the terrifying stature and behaviour of Galerius to explain the strong influence he had had over Diocletian.[988] He also held Galerius' cruelty and bloodthirstiness as the key to the Great Persecution of 303.[989] Diocletian, on the other

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discordant with Constantine's public pronouncements and propaganda... Diocletian was responsible for persecuting Christians and thus embroiling the Roman Empire in civil war and calamity. Maximian, in contrast had been rehabilitated: he was Divus Maximianus and grandfather of Constantine's sons.' (Barnes 1978:15–16 on *Hel.*35.4 and followed by Turcan 1993:234; perhaps Lactantius was also 'ignorant and subversive' and therefore a Theodosian 'forgery'?)

984 Cf. Momigliano (1966:173): 'anyone writing about Maximianus after 312 was allowed considerable freedom of speech.'

985 *DMP* 18.11–12.

986 *DMP* 24.3–8; *Anon. Val.* 2–4. Praxagoras *frg.* 1 (*apud* Photius). These do not necessarily reflect the actual historical reality of Galerius's actions, according to Stephenson (2009:116, 330; followed by Barnes 2011:62–63), but it is the literary representation of Galerius' actions in Constantinian propaganda *c.*310–324 that is relevant here.

987 Cf. above, and: Suet. *Tib.* 68.1, *DMP* 9.3–4.

988 *DMP* 9.3–4, 7–11.

989 *DMP* 10.6, 11.3–4, 14.1–3, 5–7; cf. also Creed 1984:92.

hand, is portrayed as having wanted a minimalist persecution—if he wanted one at all—strictly limited to ordering people to make sacrifices to the gods and discharging military and palace officials, without bloodshed.[990] This fits quite well with the rather positive image of Diocletian in *DMP* we noticed earlier.[991] It is Lactantius' account of the meeting between 'Maximian Caesar' (i.e. Galerius) and Diocletian in Bithynia[992] that is most telling:

> For a long time the old man resisted the other's frenzy (*furor*), pointing out how disastrous it would be for the world to be full of unrest, and for there to be extensive bloodshed. The Christians, he reminded him, had the habit of dying gladly; it would be enough to debar *only* members of the palace staff and of the army from the religion. But he could not restrain the *madness* of his headstrong colleague (*praecipitis hominis insania*)…
> Thus Diocletian was led away from his own policy; unable to resist the combination of his friends, the Caesar, and Apollo, he *tried* to preserve some moderation by ordering the business to be carried though *without bloodshed* (*eam rem sine sanguine transigi iuberet*)—though the Caesar wanted those who resisted sacrifice to be burnt alive (*vivos cremari vellet*). (*DMP* 11.3–8)

Galerius considered the publication of the famous edict insufficient, and 'in order to drive Diocletian towards a policy of really ruthless persecution (*crudelissima persecutio*), he set fire to the palace by means of secret agents'.[993] The bloodthirstiness and cruelty of Galerius, we have seen, is common to other literary texts that followed the official line of Constantinian propaganda. Considering the meaning of the Lampridian *ferreum saeculum*, it is much more probable that he, following Constantine's consistent propaganda, was referring to Maximian Galerius, rather than to Maximian Herculius, as the embodiment of a bleeding iron age.

To recapitulate: the positive reference to Diocletian and the negative reference to either of the Maximians seem to fit well with the stated date of composition, if the volatile political situation and the mixed messages that followed it are acknowledged.

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[990] *DMP* 10.3–5, 11.3–8.
[991] *DMP* 9.11. Lactantius pins Diocletian's negative acts on his advisors and Galerius (ibid.; 11.4–8).
[992] *DMP* 10.6.
[993] *DMP* 14.1–2; the so-called 'Speech to the assembly of the saints' (25) attributed it to a thunderbolt (cf. above n. 963), but neither the speech nor Eusebius (*HE* 8.6.6) attributes the fire to Galerius (Creed 1984:94).

Diocletian's positive image seems to accord well with Constantinian propaganda at certain points (*c.*311/312?). The *Origo*, most probably written immediately after Constantine's death, still viewed Diocletian as the source of legitimation of Constantius' appointment as Caesar (and subsequently that of Constantine), rather than Maximian Herculius, even though the latter option would appear to be the official line after *c.*312. Thus this type of confusion is typical of contemporary sources, Lactantius, Lampridius, and the *Origo*. Constantine's view towards Maximian Herculius and Diocletian shifted several times, and this indeed explains the inconsistencies we find even among Christian sources, namely between Lactantius' and Eusebius' approach to Diocletian and Constantius.[994] This type of confusion among ancient authorities could provide possible explanations for Lampridius' view about either of the Maximians, and that the more plausible explanation, which fits better with the political reality of *c.*314/316–325, is to identify Maximian, father of the iron age, with Galerius.

Extolling Constantine's glory with his enemies' virtues

After excusing himself from writing a biography of Constantine with a typical *recusatio,* Lampridius refers to his intention to write about emperors of the second tetrarchy, most of whom were probably dead by that time. At first sight, the passage would appear to have historical 'inaccuracies' in the way it presents Maxentius and Licinius, as it promises:

> To these must be added [the accounts of] Licinius, Severus, Alexander, and Maxentius, all whose power was made subject to your authority (*quorum omnium vis in dicionem tuam venit*), but in such a way that nothing would be detracted from their virtues (*nihil de eorum virtute derogetur*). (*Hel.* 35.6–7)

There are two difficulties in this passage: (1) Licinius and Maxentius should have been viewed as tyrants, the former after 314/316 and again after 324, as we have

[994] On Diocletian see above and n. 963. Constantius' involvement is also telling. According to Lactantius (*DMP* 15.7): 'Constantius, to avoid appearing to disagree with the instructions of his seniors, allowed the churches—that is, the walls, which could be restored—to be destroyed'; the act is denied altogether by Eusebius (*HE* 8.13.13; *VC* 1.13). See Creed 1984:23, 96.

seen, the latter after 312, but whose father's memory was rehabilitated after 312; (2) Severus (r.305–307) and Alexander (r.308–310) were not exactly conquered by Constantine himself, rather Severus was conquered by Maximian Herculius and Alexander by Rufius Volusianus, Maxentius' praetorian prefect.[995] Nevertheless, Birley maintains that all these emperors were 'four of Constantine's rivals.'[996]

In the case of (1), it seems that the next sentence in the paragraph, linked to the sentence cited above with *enim* ('for'),[997] explains Lampridius' rationale for treating these emperors as he did:

> For I shall not do what many authors are used to do, and shall not speak in disparagement of those (*de his detraham*; lit. detract from them), who were conquered: because I realize that I will add to your glory (*gloriae tuae accedere*), when I report all that is true about the good qualities they are claimed to have possessed (*bona in se habuerint*). (*Hel*. 35.7)

Thus, Lampridius covers himself with a 'literary insurance policy' about any positive statement he is about to make, or has already made in his drafts, about emperors that were considered 'public enemies' *at that given time*. He even presents his case rhetorically by placing the addition to Constantine's glory (A: *gloriae tuae* B: *accedere*) in parallel with not detracting anything from Constantine's past 'enemies' (A: *de his* B: *detrahere*). Similar maxims are found in Velleius Paterculus and Tacitus, as a seventeenth-century commentator, Jan Gruter, had already noted.[998]

This approach is not at all surprising, considering the shifting political, and subsequently literary, reality of the time. Licinius was originally viewed in a positive light before 313, damned in *c.*314/316, and rehabilitated only to be damned again after 324; this situation had caused confusion both to Lactantius and to Eusebius, a

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[995] Severus: Lactant. *DMP* 26.8–10; *Origo Constantini* 10; Barnes 1982:38–39; Kienast 2009:290; Alexander: Barnes 1982:14–15; Kienast 2009:293.
[996] Birley 1976: 316 n. 32 ad loc.
[997] Dessau 1889:338–339; Barnes 1978:77; Thomson 2012:37 overlooked this sentence.
[998] Cf. Tac. *Ann.* 12.36: 'et Caesar dum suum decus extollit, addidit gloriam victo.' Gruter in HAS-1671: 903 (ad loc.): 'Similis locus supra fine Pescenii Nigri [12.2–7]; quem perpendimus ad illud Taciti lib.xi.. Annal.cap.36' followed by Vermaat 1893:87 (against Dessau and Seeck). On the practice of condemning the present or recent past (a practice not always seen in favour): Vell. Pat. 2.92.4–5; Tac. *Ann.* 2.88.4, 3.55.6. Yet Dessau, who partially cited this paragraph, thought it was 'unerhörter Freimuth' (Dessau 1889:338).

confusion most notable in the various editions of Eusebius, as we have seen and as is well known. The *Ecclesiastical History*—when taken at face value after the death of Crispus (*c.*326)—would appear to contain positive statements about Licinius, which are sometimes inconsistent with its 'date' of composition.[999]

As Mommsen noted from a rather different perspective, 'it is unintelligible to me, why Dessau (338) took this case as an exception. Generally, boasting of impartialness is characteristic of servile people in all periods and was harmless (*ungefährlich*) at all times… In my view, this phraseology carries much more the stamp of contemporaneity.'[1000]

The case of Maximian Herculius, Maxentius' father, is even more bizarre: an emperor who had been dead for two years was suddenly rehabilitated in *c.*312, after a *damnatio memoriae* in *c.*311 and his conspiracy against Constantine that resulted in his premature death in *c.*310. Nevertheless, Lactantius, ostensibly writing *after* *c.*314–315, still 'innocently repeated' Constantine's pre-312 propaganda that painted this 'Maximian in the blackest terms possible'.[1001]

With regard to (1), we can conclude that the 'positive', or rather 'diplomatic', references to Licinius and Maxentius, alongside the overlooked rationale behind them, manifest a strong similarity with the confusion scholars have found in Lactantius and Eusebius towards Licinius, Maximian Herculius, and to a lesser extent in the *Origo* and Lactantius towards Diocletian (compared to Eusebius).[1002]

With regard to (2) a comparison with Lactantius' approach to Maximian Herculius and Eusebius' revision of the *Ecclesiastical History* is also telling. Earlier we saw that later Constantinian propaganda had caused Eusebius to *try* and excise Licinius' name and positive actions in several passages. Yet Licinius is still part of Eusebius'

[999] Pp. 215ff. above.
[1000] Mommsen 1890:260n.3; cf. Lippold 1991:33n.14.
[1001] Both quotes from Barnes 2011:74.
[1002] See above and Schlange-Schöningen 2004.

narrative causing 'embarrassing contradiction(s)': *HE* 9.9.1 is most revealing.[1003] And indeed 'manuscript variants show that in 325 Eusebius revised these passages in order to attribute all the credit to Constantine—and Licinius' name was removed from the heading to Galerius' edict of 311'.[1004] In short, it seems to have been common practice to deprive an emperor, who had fallen out of favour, of his deeds and attribute them to Constantine or his court.

In this political and literary atmosphere, therefore, it must have been quite normal for the credit for the victories over Severus and Alexander to have been attributed to Constantine and his court in general terms. After all, Severus competed with Constantine over the office of the Western Augustus *c.*306–7.[1005] He was viewed by Constantine's propaganda, together with Maximinus Daia, as a 'Caesar' that Galerius imposed on Diocletian contrary to earlier arrangements and at the expense of Constantine. For at least according to this propaganda or the actual expectation of the troops, Constantine was supposed to be elevated to the rank of Caesar.[1006] This political reality, together with the brief damnation of Maximian Herculius in *c.*311, could point to an earlier official version of Constantine's court with regard to 'his' victory over Severus. Lampridius—as Lactantius did with other political affairs—probably restated this version a few years later.

The reference to the suppression of Domitius Alexander's revolt (*c.*308–10), unless an innocent scribal gloss over 'Severus',[1007] seems to have a similar rationale behind it. This short-lived revolt against Maxentius in Africa was suppressed by the latter's praetorian prefect, Rufius Volusianus. This Volusianus was one of Maxentius'

[1003] Barnes 1981:68 on 9.9.1 see above pp. 215ff.
[1004] Barnes 1981:320n.61 on *HE* 9.9.1, 9.12, 10.3, 11.8.
[1005] Lactant. *DMP* 24.8–9, 25.5.
[1006] *DMP* 18.11–12; 19.4–5 (with Harries 2012:42–43).
[1007] Casaubon (in HAS-1671: 93): 'Quis iste Severus Alexander? nam duo reliqui notissimi. Non potest dubium esse Severum intelligi, qui a Galerio Constantii in imperio collega, Caesar creatus. Atqui non Severus Alexander hic dicebatur; sed Marcus Aurelius Severus. delenda igitur hic vox Alexander: quam imperiti homines inseruerunt, cum putarent eum intelligi, cujus vita sequitur.' Mommsen is traditionally credited with athetizing both names (Alexander and Severus) since Jordan and Eyssenhardt 1864 (see also Hohl's Teubner; cf. Mommsen 1890:260n.3). This is unnecessary.

followers whom Constantine rehabilitated after 312 and allowed to continue their political career. The praetorian prefect at the time of the revolt still commanded troops.[1008]

These two facts and perhaps the damnation of Maxentius can explain why Constantine's court may have been willing to assume the credit for the victory over Alexander after *c.*312.[1009] It apparently claimed that 'he was killed by Constantine's army', and created the impression that 'the town of Cirta, which had been demolished during the siege of Alexander, was rebuilt, fully redecorated and given the name Constantina.'[1010] Indeed, Constantine revived some of Maxentius' restoration enterprises, including those in Africa.[1011] These two accounts (the *Epitome* and Victor) and Lampridius' *Elagabalus* are idiosyncratic enough to show that they do not depend on one another. Yet they are not contradictory, can supplement each other, and therefore either reflect a nucleus of historical reality, or a shared source from which each made a selective and different choice of material. Victor's knowledge 'may derive from local knowledge or personal opinion.'[1012] Alan Cameron can 'conclude that the *Epitome* drew on the *HA*, which was therefore available *before* the close of the fourth century.'[1013]

In sum, Lampridius—as did Lactantius on Maximian Herculius and Eusebius on Licinius—was innocently reporting Constantinian propaganda regarding the revolt of Domitius Alexander. This was probably done in detail in his lost account of Domitius

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[1008] *PLRE* s.v. 'Volusianus 4' (976–978) and pp. 208 above; Kuhoff 2001:863–869; Potter 2013:123; PPO's authority: Jones 1964:100–103.
[1009] The singular inscription from the time of the revolt (*ILS* 8936) is therefore irrelevant (Barnes 1982:14; *pace* Potter 2013:123).
[1010] Respectively, *EDC* 40.6, Victor 40.28.
[1011] Victor 40.27–29; Potter 2013:133.
[1012] Syme 1971b:229 (followed by Bird 1994:183).
[1013] Alan Cameron 2011b:761 (759–761 on the basis of *Hadrian* and *EDC*). Lécrivain 1904:440–442 already made a more detailed argument about the possible use the *EDC* made of the 'SHA', and listed the relevant parallel passages.

(briefly reported here), from where it apparently spread into later accounts, notably the *Epitome*.[1014]

What has so far been viewed as a statement 'inconsistent' with the address to Constantine turns out to fit comfortably into the literary atmosphere, standards, and difficulties authors faced under Constantine. This seems to be a case of a confused or realistically cautious author, as three of his near contemporaries seem to have been. Lampridius probably did not want to commit himself to a given political narrative, either because of his reluctance to revise his work (contrary to Eusebius) or because of his fear of a changing political reality; and perhaps he may have wanted to provide a subdued criticism of, or explanation for, the historiographical practices of his contemporaries, especially when even emperors that were already dead and had suffered *damnatio memoriae* (e.g. Maximian Herculius) could have been suddenly rehabilitated *post mortem*.

A Syrian 'boy' emperor and his council

Lampridius concludes the *Life of Alexander Severus* with a long epilogue on the reasons that enabled Alexander to be a good emperor, despite his age (b.208, r.222–235) and origin. The epilogue is modelled as an answer to a question Constantine is said to have constantly posed about Alexander and his Syrian origin:

> You constantly inquire, most mighty Constantine, why it was that a man who was a Syrian and an alien-born became so great an emperor, whereas so many of Roman stock and so many from other provinces proved to be evil, filthy, cruel, base, unjust, and lustful. (*AS.*65.1)

It seems that in Greek and Roman literature 'all Syrians are inferior, whether they speak Greek or a Semitic language',[1015] and they are often ascribed with the very

[1014] This *Epitome* (*EDC*) must have had access to lost portions or works of the '*SHA*', if we accept Cameron's (or rather Lécrivain's) contention. Kotula argued that the account of Domitius Alexander went back to a common source, probably an unknown lost account of Constantine and *not* the so-called *EKG* (Klio 40 [1962]: 161, 168–170; cf. Bird 1994:183)—but is it really so inconceivable that Lampridius' lost account(s) provided a core of 'facts'? (cf. Kotula's hesitant remarks about 'la continuation de l'Histoire Auguste'; ibid. 168, 170). I fail to see why 'it is strange indeed that the *HA* should know of him [i.e. Domitius Alexander] and name him in an invocation of Constantine… (*Elag.*35.6)'. (ibid.)

[1015] Isaac 2004:338.

features, among other negative characteristics,[1016] that the Lampridian Constantine ascribes to Romans and other provincials in the passage above. In the third century, Cassius Dio had already linked Caracalla's bad qualities to his Syrian ancestry.[1017] Alexander was indeed of Syrian origin, but he seems to have ruled well despite the usual prejudice and expectations, for even Dio and Herodian considered him a good emperor. These facts seem to explain the curiosity of Constantine—or of any Roman for that matter—on this issue, and the strong contrast between Syrians on the one hand and Romans and other provincials on the other, but they do not clarify the presence of the question here. Do this question and the long epilogue that follows it have any contemporaneous relevance to the stated date of composition (*c.*312–337)?

Syrian child emperors: prejudice and exempla

Constantine married Fausta, the daughter of Maximian Herculius and Eutropia, and had three sons with her, who later ruled as Constantine II (b.316/317; r.317–340), Constantius II (b.317; r.324–361), and Constans I (b.320/323; r.333–350).[1018] Eutropia, as we know, was Syrian. She was also the mother of Maxentius and of Theodora, Constantius I's wife and mother of Constantine's half-brothers and sisters.[1019] They also had a role in Constantine's dynastic ambitions, as the marriage of Constantia, his half-sister, and Licinius in *c.*313, and the elevation of their son Licinius to the rank of Caesar, illustrate (b.315; *c.*317–324).[1020]

After 317, year of the elevation of Constantine II to the rank of Caesar, it was clear that Constantine's son or sons were to inherit the imperial throne, at least in the

[1016] Isaac 2004:337–351 and 335–336 on the definition of 'Syrian'.
[1017] Dio 78(77).6.1[a] (Boissevain 379[17]–380[3] = *excerpta de virtutibus* 361)≅Dio 78(77).10.2 (Boissevain 389[13–15]=Xiphilinus 331.5–10). The location of the excerpt in relation to Xiphilinus' narrative is not guaranteed, hence the 'repetition' (see Boissevain 379 ad loc.); on Caracalla: Isaac 2004:146, 347.
[1018] Dates of birth are roughly estimated, and years in power are from their appointment as 'Caesares'; see Kienast 2009:310–318; Barnes 1982:44–45; Potter 2013:242, 314.
[1019] *PLRE* 316, s.v. 'Eutropia 1', 895, s.v. 'Theodora 1'; Barnes 1982:33; Potter 2013:63–64. Whether Theodora was the daughter of Eutropia and Maximian (*Origo Constantini* 1; there is no evidence for a previous marriage of Maximian) or the daughter of Eutropia from a previous marriage (as implied by later accounts, from Victor 39.25 onwards; see *PLRE*, ibid.; Barnes 1982:33) is less salient here. The evidence is apparently so confusing that a well-informed scholar could report both versions as 'facts' (Potter 2013:33, 316). Her Syrian origin and the fruits of her marriage with Constantius I are secured.
[1020] Barnes 1982:45; Kienast 2009:296.

West.[1021] The Roman Empire was about to be ruled by 'Syrian' and 'boy' emperors—a fact that Constantine's court would not have been able to disguise or distort easily without completely destroying his dynastical aspirations, even with the death or removal of Fausta and the obliteration of her memory (*c.*326/8?)[1022] as *mater semper certa est*.[1023]

One despised emperor in the fourth century who had been rumoured to be a Syrian was Maxentius, Constantine's arch-enemy. The *Origo* reports immediately after Maxentius' death that Eutropia 'his mother confessed that he had been begotten by a certain Syrian, when she was asked about his ancestry.'[1024] A doubtful 'ancestry' for Maxentius was immediately necessary in *c.*312, when the public image of Maximian Herculius, until then considered to be Maxentius' father, had been rehabilitated.[1025] A Syrian origin of both mother *and* father could appear to be an easy way to blacken the name and explain the tyranny of Maxentius. It is, however, very unlikely, considering that Constantine's sons were also Syrian, that the ethnic origin of the illegitimate father was exactly what Constantinian propaganda was communicating; rather it was an attempt to view Maxentius as an illegitimate son of the rehabilitated Maximian Herculius. Moreover, in *c.*321 Nazarius' panegyric to Constantine provided a more moderate version of Maxentius: 'the insane tyrant of 312 has been folded into a disappointing relative'.[1026] The *Origo*, rather than Lampridius, seems to have narrated fiction at this point, on the basis of the common Roman prejudice:[1027] this was inconsistent with the facts about Constantine's dynasty, and subsequently with the desired propaganda.

[1021] Kienast 2009:310; Alan Cameron 1965b:250 (also on the relevance of this fact to the 'child-emperor' theory).
[1022] Barnes 2011:147–149; Potter 2013:245, 314, who is against the notion that she was killed on Constantine's orders: 'she disappears from public life in 326.'
[1023] Claiming that *pater semper incertus est*, as Constantinian propaganda apparently did regarding Maxentius immediately after 312 (*Origo Constantini* 12) would have meant the complete destruction of Constantine's dynasty at this point.
[1024] *Origo Constantini* 12.
[1025] Pp.233ff. above.
[1026] Potter 2013:171 on *Pan. Lat.* IV(10).10.1–11.1.
[1027] On the prejudice see above; Barnes (1982:34) suggests this passage of the *Origo* (*Anon. Val.* 12) 'might imply that Maxentius was born, or at least conceived, in Syria'.

Constantine's question, therefore, and the long answer that follows touch upon a relevant issue of the stated date of composition. They are an attempt to reconcile, and even refute, the inherent Greco-Roman prejudice towards Syrians with the partial Syrian ancestry of Constantine's children. Fausta, the Syrian mother of Constantine's children, appears to have been a good reason for perceiving Constantine as constantly asking why a Syrian 'became so great an emperor.' Severus Alexander must have been a good answer to the concerns of Constantine and probably other Romans: a Syrian could be a better emperor than true Romans or other provincials.

The explanations Lampridius provides for the contrast between Alexander's Syrian origins and his good regime are twofold. First he appeals to the *possibility* that a good emperor could be born from nature, which is 'the one universal mother'. Lampridius later elaborates on Alexander's good nature[1028] and thus dismisses potential concerns about the nature of a Syrian emperor vis-à-vis Constantine's sons: the 'biological' mother may be certain, but not what some might have perceived as her 'inherent inferior' qualities as a Syrian, as it is only the 'universal' mother who can produce a good emperor.

The second, and longer, explanation Lampridius provides is the influence of an emperor's entourage, the so-called 'consilium principis'[1029] on his behaviour and actions. Lampridius first establishes a theoretical framework on this issue, and then describes Alexander's qualities and interaction with the imperial *amici* and the notorious eunuchs.

Show me your friends: the theoretical perspective

Lampridius restated and developed a common maxim or historical fact that the emperor's *amici* could make a difference between good and bad government—a theme that was well developed in the literature of the empire.[1030] According to

[1028] *AS* 65.2: *iam primum possum de bonorum virorum respondere sententia potuisse natura, quae ubique una mater est, bonum principem nasci; AS* 66.1–2.
[1029] Crook 1955:104–114.
[1030] See Crook 1955:26–30.

Lampridius, it is better for the state to have an (naturally) evil person at its head, rather than a good emperor with bad companions (*mali amici*). He ascribed the observation to Marius Maximus and to an advice given to Trajan by an *amicus*, Homullus—most certainly M. Iunius Homullus, suffect consul in 102 and *Legatus augusti propraetore* of Cappodocia in *c.*114, who is well attested in Pliny's letters and Dio's *History*[1031]—regarding Domitian.[1032] And indeed around the time of Homullus, as Tacitus and Suetonius suggest, it was established that 'there was no greater instrument of good government (*bonum imperium*) than good friends (*boni amici*).'[1033] Suetonius, in a passage alluded to in Lampridius' *Alexander Severus*, presented Titus' appointment of good *amici* who were also *rei publicae necessarii* as one of the steps he took to prevent himself from becoming a bad emperor; otherwise his earlier association with bad friends *and eunuchs* would have made him so.[1034]

Lampridius added hindsight to these observations, apparently touching upon a relevant issue of his time: 'for indeed one evil man can be made better by many good men, but in no way can many evil men be held in check by one man, however righteous he may be.'[1035] And he even further developed it at the end of the biography and this epilogue, returning to the question posed by Constantine at *AS* 65.1: 'these are the men who made the Syrian a good emperor, as likewise evil friends (*amici mali*) caused Romans to seem evil, even to posterity, by burdening them with

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[1031] On his well-documented career see *PIR*^{2} I760. *CIL* 16.47 (his full name); Plin. *Ep.* 4.9.15, 5.20.6; Dio 68.19.1 (Boissevain 206$^{18–19}$). This seems to be more than enough to identify the Homullus in this passage, presented as an *amicus* of Trajan, with Iunius Homullus (Crook 1955:190); the only objection Syme 1971b:97 (restated by Chastagnol-HA:634n.2) produced was: 'Some scholars have looked for the person in the annals of Trajan's reign; and M. Junius Homullus offers, consul suffect in 102. That was an aberration.' He then bluntly concluded that the alleged Dessauian author 'invents a Trajanic Homullus to convey an anecdote.'

[1032] *AS* 65.4–5 (the text of 66.5 is damaged, but the meaning remains the same, regardless of modern emendations); for sensible remarks on Alexander and his *consilium*: Crook 1955:26, 86–91. On Syme's approach to this episode (Syme 1971b:e.g. 155), note Graham 1973:260 (among other errors in Syme's work). Cf. n.1031 above.

[1033] Tac. *Hist.* 4.7.3 (Helvidius Priscus).

[1034] Suet. *Tit.* 7.1–2; as we have seen this passage is closely related to Lampridius' narrative of Alexander Severus, see Chapter 3.

[1035] *AS.*65.4: *siquidem unus malus potest a plurimis bonis corrigi, multi autem mali non possunt ab uno quamvis bono ulla ratione superari.*

iniquities.'[1036] This apparently alludes to the Constantinian ambivalent approach to Diocletian. For according to Lactantius, Diocletian ruled *summa felicitate* but 'ruined the state with this kind of *consilia* and *socii*' and he was led away from his subdued and mild actions against Christians because he was 'not able to resist either the *amici* or the *Caesar* (i.e. Galerius)'.[1037]

This theoretical perspective, therefore, appears to have a twofold relevance to the stated date of composition. First, the author lifted an almost topical maxim that even an emperor who is inherently bad could be checked by good advisors—as some Romans might have suspected when it came to 'Syrian' emperors—namely, Alexander and Constantine's sons. Second, the emperor's advisors, mostly the *amici*, could also drag down even a good *Roman* or non-Syrian emperor. Thus he touched upon the ambivalent approach of Constantine's court to Diocletian.[1038]

Lampridius afterwards turns to what he presents as the facts that made Alexander the good emperor he was. First, that he had a good nature, and secondly that this is what enabled him to surround himself with good advisors, including *amici*, whose good qualities and absent bad qualities are listed extensively.[1039] Thus he returns to the theme of his natural quality. This theme is repeated in the last paragraph, after the short digression on imperial eunuchs: there, Alexander is again claimed to have had a good nature that enabled him to remove the bad advisors of Elagabalus from his court.[1040] This, in fact, restates what is said about him in several places in the narrative of the biography.[1041]

[1036] *AS.*68.4: *hi sunt, qui bonum principem Surum fecerunt, et item amici mali, qui Romanos pessimos etiam posteris tradiderunt suis vitiis laborantes.*
[1037] *DMP* 9.11 and 11.8.
[1038] See above.
[1039] *AS* 66.2.
[1040] *AS* 68.2–3.
[1041] For instance: *AS* 3.1–5; 4.1–3, 5–6; 14.7; 15; 21.1; 22.3, 6; 24.1, 4; 26.5–6, 9; 27.2; 39.2; 44.1–2.

Mother knows best: Mamaea and Fausta

Lampridius also claims that Alexander followed 'the counsels of a righteous mother',[1042] Mamaea. By his time it was possible to point out that Mamaea had prevented this young emperor from declining into oriental despotism and committing crimes associated with his Syrian forebears, while overlooking the upheavals in their relationship.[1043] Throughout the biography Lampridius relates none of the major conflicts between the two, nor does he mock her influence on Alexander—in complete contrast to Herodian. He therefore seems to have customized the facts and the narrative to suit the demands of his own time.[1044] Interestingly enough, Eusebius even noted a meeting she had had with Origen, and described her as a 'most religious woman (θεοσεβεστάτη γυνή)'.[1045]

Considering the fact that after 317 it was quite clear that Constantine's sons would succeed him,[1046] the statement about Mamaea's positive influence on the *young* Alexander seems to be an attempt to view their mother, Fausta, despite being considered a Syrian, as a potential positive influence on Constantine's young sons.[1047] Potter has argued that 'in 324, Fausta's role in guaranteeing a new generation of rulers began to be widely advertised.'[1048]

[1042] *AS.*66.1.

[1043] *AS.*66.1≈60.2, 14.7, 26.9 (devotion to his mother; cf. 63.4). On Mamaea's positive influence see also Herodian 5.7.5, 8.10, 6.1.1, esp. 6.1.5: 'Mamaea, left alone with her son, still tried to control and dominate him. Realizing that he was now a young man in his prime, she was also afraid that his youthful vigour might perhaps be encouraged by his unrestricted position of power and drive him to commit some of the crimes associated with his forebears.' (Whittaker's Loeb). Cf. also 'Dio' (Boissevain 477§2 = Zonaras 12.15) with Crook 1955:86.

[1044] See references in the previous note, and the neutral or balanced references to her in *AS* 3.1, 20.3, 51.4, 63.5. Contrast the conflicts between the two Herodian reports and his overall tone in 6.1.8–10, 5.9, 9.8. This shows that Lampridius did not follow Herodian verbatim (if at all; contra Dessau 1892:*passim*; Kolb 1972) or any earlier source (e.g. Dio, whose extant fragments on this point are less than useful). The mild references about the avarice of Alexander and Mamaea appear to be part of commonplaces applied to Syrians in general (Isaac 2004:335–350), but these are not said to have had any bad influence on Alexander's reign (*AS* 14.7; 59.8 reports one version of their assassination and the accusations made by the soldiers). This is also in complete contrast to Herodian (6.1.8, 9.8).

[1045] *HE* 6.21.3.

[1046] See above p. 245; cf. Alan Cameron 1965b:250.

[1047] As Cameron (1965b:250) rightly noted: 'It cannot have been at all self-evident to anyone writing in the 320's that Constantine would reign long enough for his three surviving sons to reach the age 21, 20 and 17 respectively at their accession—and this was hardly maturity.'

[1048] Potter 2013:242–245 (242 cited) on her public image.

Ex hypothesi this might imply a composition date *before* her death or disappearance from public view in *c.*326/8 for this biography.[1049] This could to fall neatly within the possible later *terminus post quem* of the *Life of Elagabalus* of 316/325.[1050]

Eunuchs in court

The last fact about Alexander, woven into Lampridius' apostrophe to Constantine, is that he removed the eunuchs from his court. This is a recurring motif in this biography, mostly in places where the contrast between the worst emperor, Elagabalus, and the best emperor, Alexander, is stressed. And indeed out of the ten *relevant* references to eunuchs in the entire corpus, seven are found in the *Life of Alexander*—the remaining three are in fact one, as they are part of the same narrative cluster in Capitolinus' *Life of the Gordians*, who in any case does *not* manifest the same distaste for eunuchs as Lampridius.[1051]

It can easily be demonstrated how the literary representation of eunuchs in those passages is no different from their representation in other literary works of the imperial age, even though the negative representation of eunuchs in the corpus has been crystallized as a 'recurring motif' throughout the corpus and an anachronism under Diocletian and Constantine in modern reference works.[1052]

In direct relevance to this apostrophe, Dessauists, even in recent years, have claimed two things against the authenticity of this passage: (1) that the reference to eunuchs

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[1049] On Fausta see Barnes 1982:9; Kienast 2009:305.
[1050] Pp. 239ff. above.
[1051] *AS* 23.4–5 (twice), 23.6–7 (twice), 34.3, 45.4, 66.3 (uses only *eunuchus*); Capitolinus, *Gd.* 23.7, 24.2–3, 25.1 (always *spado* with one exception of *eunuchus*). There may even be a historical nucleus behind the Elagabalus-Alexander contrast, especially with the eunuchs; see Alan Cameron 1965a:157–158n.5.
[1052] For instance, 'Many other arguments advanced since the time of Dessau, relating to Roman imperial institutions (for example *Eunuchs)' (OCD[3=4], s.v. 'Historia Augusta'). The anomaly becomes clear when one reads (ibid., s.v. 'Eunuchs'), after several examples from the early imperial age: 'By late antiquity, however, imperial eunuchs were more than mere domestic servants. In the time of Diocletian they could be described as those "on whom the whole palace and emperor himself depended" (Latant. *DMP* 15), and they came to occupy a central place in the late Roman court.' Alan Cameron 2011b:750–751, 778 (esp. (750n.37) manifests the same dichotomy. See also: Alan Cameron 1965a:157–158 ('a mere half-dozen brief references to eunuchs' and 'the references to eunuchs in the *HA* may then be anachronisms… but there is no *necessity* to date them after Constantine.'; and Alan Cameron 1965b:250. See, however, Lippold's recent criticism of this approach (1998:5–6, 147, 157n.6; 1999:165–166).

is an anachronism in the period between Diocletian and Constantine; and (2) that Lampridius could not have *implored* Constantine to dismiss his eunuchs, as this would have meant—according to them—a direct criticism of the emperor addressed.[1053] The passage, however, says something completely different.

To take the second issue first, Lampridius in no way *implores* Constantine to reduce their power; in fact, he views him as having already done so—probably in an implied stark contrast to some of his predecessors (see below).

> I know, o emperor, that it is perilous to say these words to an emperor (*apud imperatorem*) who has been in subjection to such creatures, but after you have learned (*posteaquam intellexisti*)—greatly to the welfare of the state—how much evil resides in these pests, and how they mislead rulers, you also keep them in their proper place (*et tu eos eo loci habes*), so that you have bidden them not to wear a soldier's cloak and have assigned them only to the necessary duties of your household. (*AS* 67.1)

In short, as Alan Cameron had pointed out—but was overlooked—this passage 'does not *implore* the Emperor to dispense with eunuchs: it *congratulates* him on having already done so.'[1054]Dislike of eunuchs was not only relevant under Constantine—and even the first tetrarchy for that matter[1055]—but it was also a common theme throughout imperial literature. The cases of Nero who appointed a eunuch to command his troops, according to Tacitus; Titus' 'herds of eunuchs', which he later dismissed, according to Suetonius; Caracalla's eunuch, Sempronius Rufus, who dominated the Romans to the disgrace of the senate in Cassius Dio; Maximinus Daia's use of them as informers in Lactantius—all illustrate well enough that eunuchs were

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[1053] Seeck 1890:631; followed by Hohl-Merten-Rösger-Straub 531n.376; Chastagnol-HA:636n.1.

[1054] Alan Cameron 1965a:156; see also Lippold 1998:147 and Vermaat (1893:88): 'Non igitur haec duplex reprehnsio est sed duplex laus: verum libere dici posse Constantino Augusto, et Imperatorem emendasse ea in quibus se errasse agnovisset.' cf. the remarks of Salmasius ad loc. in HAS-1671: 1042.

[1055] Elton in Potter 2006 (199): 'Another tetrarchic change was the introduction of increasingly elaborate court ceremonial... New officials, often eunuchs, are now attested as playing an important role in controlling access to the emperor.'; Corcoran 2008:236.

stigmatized as a sign of a bad or autocratic emperor.[1056] In fact, distaste for eunuchs goes back much earlier, for instance even in Horace.[1057]

Lampridius, therefore, is elaborating on a common theme, as with the case of the imperial *amici*, to illustrate that even an emperor, who according to some Romans may have had bad qualities, was able to rule well. This, therefore, seems to be a sign of relief: Constantine reduced the power of the eunuchs, and by doing so reduced another factor that might corrupt his sons.

As for the first issue, does Lampridius provide any special insights that may be relevant or irrelevant (and hence 'anachronistic') to the stated date of composition?

In a paragraph before this apostrophe to Constantine, Lampridius provides an example of the good emperor by stating that Alexander 'never had eunuchs in his councils or in official positions' and that they caused Roman emperors to behave 'as the kings of the Persians'.[1058] From the time of Diocletian onwards, eunuchs seems to have been powerful, and Hopkins—without reference to the corpus—even suggested that 'the capture of the Persian king's harem by Galerius in AD 298 led to a proliferation of eunuchs in the Roman court.'[1059] He also claims this also had an effect on the rest of the imperial college and subsequent emperors, who also used eunuchs because of their acquaintance with the ritual of the Persian court.[1060] Indeed, Lactantius even accused Galerius of imitating the Persian king.[1061]

Licinius, Constantine's ally until 325, is known to have been a 'vehement suppressor of all eunuchs and courtiers, calling them worms and vermin of the palace.'[1062] This

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[1056] Tac. *Ann.* 14.59; Suet. *Tit.* 7.1–2 (*spadonum greges*); Dio 78(77).17.2 (Boissevain 396[12–16]=Xiphilinus 333.10–15). Lactant. *DMP* 38.2. Perhaps these are all late fourth-century forgeries with senatorial 'Tendenz' and Rufus is an allusion to Eutropius and Rufinus?
[1057] Hor.*Epod* 9. I am grateful to Prof. Chris Pelling for stressing the last point to me.
[1058] *AS.*66.3.
[1059] K. Hopkins 1978:192–193.
[1060] K. Hopkins 1978:193; on eunuchs from Diocletian onwards see ibid. pp. 176, 187–188, 192–194; Corcoran 2010:108–109.
[1061] *DMP* 21.2.
[1062] *EDC* 41.10: *Spadonum et aulicorum omnium vehemens domitor tineas soricesque palatii eos appellans.* Whether this derives from a 'Constantinian' (recension of the) *Kaisergeschichte*, or perhaps

clearly illustrates the imperial approach to eunuchs in *c.*313–325, and 'Licinius might voluntarily imitate Constantine's legislation, though the similar problems facing any emperor make similar legislation inevitable.'[1063] The historical nucleus is apparently an attempt by Constantine and Licinius to limit the numbers and influence of eunuchs who rose from the tetrarchy onwards.

In sum, this passage touches upon, and perhaps even reflects, issues relevant in the period between Diocletian and Constantine.

As far as delegating eunuchs to the 'duties of the household' is concerned, we seem to be dealing with a *Zeitgeschichte* of Constantine's. If one follows, as most scholars seem to do, the much later sources—obviously not available to Lampridius (or indeed to any Dessauian forger)—it seems that *praepositus sacri cubiculi* ('officer in charge of the sacred bedchamber') and *primicerius sacri cubiculi* ('superintendent of the sacred bedchamcer') are *first* attested in *c.*326 and *c.*312/326 respectively.[1064] This seems to fall neatly with the suggested date of composition for this biography, between *c.*317 and *c.*326/8, according to the representation of Mamaea and Fausta.[1065]

By the same token, a fragment of Philostorgius suggests that 'already by the reign of Constantine, the empress was attended by eunuchs' in her bath.[1066] Again, in the main narrative of Alexander's biography we read that he 'gave orders that eunuchs should serve his wife as slaves' and 'removed them from all the duties of the palace except the care of the women's baths'.[1067]

Lampridius' *Life of Licinius* (reported in *Hel.*35.6), should be further discussed elsewhere (cf. Chapter 3 and *General Conclusion*)

[1063] Corcoran 2010:111.

[1064] K. Hopkins 1978:176n.14 (followed by Elton 2006, above n.1055)—they base it on the tenth-century *Patria of Constantinople*, 18, 21. The *castrensis sacri palatii* is also attested in 315 (*CTh.* 10.14.1; Corcoran 2010:108).

[1065] Pp.250ff. above.

[1066] K. Hopkins 1978:176n.15 appealing to the later accounts of Philostorg. *HE* 2.4a and patria 18 and 21.

[1067] *AS.*23.4; 23.5.

The digression and these passages in the *Life of Alexander*, therefore, turn out to be a *Zeitgeschichte* or simply a *Geschichte* of the time of Constantine, and once more accommodate and supplement modern views that were reached independently of the passages in the corpus. From this perspective the *Life of Alexander* again strongly reflects the time of Constantine.

Conclusions

The epilogues in the Constantinian biographies of Lampridius serve different purposes from those of Capitolinus. The epilogue in the *Life of Elagabalus* provides a brief view of the imperial biographies Lampridius was writing or about to write beyond this biography up to the time of Constantine. These biographies were not transmitted in the manuscripts we currently have. Conversely, the prefaces of Capitolinus to the *Lives of the two Maximini* and the *Lives of the three Gordians* only justify the publication these two works, and Capitolinus says nothing about his intentions of writing further biographies.

Lampridius' reflections about the tetrarchic emperors provide various *termini post quos* between 307 and 312, but the reference to Constantine's victory over Licinius either in *c.*316 or in *c.*324 supersedes them—the only secure *terminus ante* for *this* biography is the death of Constantine in 337. Therefore the accurate (rather than 'precise') and broad date(s) of composition could be *c.*316–337, were they not limited by 'external' evidence. The *terminus ante* can be inferred from the reference to the *Elagabalus* in the *Severus Alexander*.[1068]

The date of the *Alexander* could be *deduced* from Lampridius' optimistic approach to the young emperor and the influence of his mother, Mamaea. This, we have seen, mirrors the Constantinian propaganda of Fausta as responsible for the success of the new generation of rulers, namely Constantine's sons, who were appointed Caesares after 317. The Mamaea-Fausta analogy, *ex hypothesi*, could provide a *terminus ante* of

[1068] *AS.*1.1.

*c.*326/8, when Fausta disappeared from public view, for *this* biography and consequently for the *Elagabalus*. One should note, however, that these dates are inferred from, rather than stated by, Lampridius' statements, and there is nothing here to suggest that he is 'obsessed' with providing 'precise' dates of composition.

Regarding the Dessauist contradictions and claims of inauthenticity, we can conclude that they are unsustainable. The claim that a Constantinian author could not have referred to Diocletian as father of the 'golden age' is simply incorrect: we have seen enough evidence, including a recent hypothesis independent of the corpus, that Diocletian's image was positive and that Constantine held him in high esteem. This can be found not only in non-Christian authors but also in the Christian Lactantius. The positive reference to Diocletian in an apostrophe to Constantine lends further support to these views.

A closer look at the historical, historiographical, and literary context of a certain Maximian as the 'father of the iron age' has, it is hoped, demonstrated two important conclusions. First, the Maximian being referred to is almost certainly Maximian Galerius, rather than Herculius. This dismisses the implausible claim that Lampridius could only have referred to Herculius and was ignorant because he did not know of Herculius' rehabilitation. Even if this were the case, similar—but not identical—confusion is found in Lactantius' *DMP* also written in *c.*314–325.

The second, more far-reaching conclusion is the importance of combining an intertextual approach to illuminate a historical and historiographical difficulty. Acknowledging the intertextual link of *ferreum saeculum* in Suetonius' *Tiberius* as a reference to a cruel and bloodthirsty emperor has enabled us to come to a better understanding of the expression in general,[1069] and to conclude confidently that the reference in the passage was to Maximian Galerius, who was generally portrayed as a cruel ruler and was most probably so until his death.

[1069] Commentators have so far overlooked this link, as far as I can tell.

As far as the alleged chronological contradictions are concerned, the two apostrophes allow us to postulate a composition date between 316 and 326/8 for these two biographies—rather than a chronology of Lampridius' literary activity, which could have stretched a few years earlier or later for this other biographies. In Chapter 4 we noted the Dessauist attempt to ascribe falsely to Vopiscus a composition date of before or around 305, and we demonstrated that he was in fact writing several decades after 306. There is therefore nothing wrong in Vopiscus' passing reference to him in the *Life of Probus*, written between 306 and 325.

Reading the two epilogues of Lampridius within their actual literary context and time of composition sheds light on some episodes of the period. The epilogue of the *Elagabalus*, we have seen, might provide interesting insights into the difficulties of writing an account of nearly contemporaneous events. The epilogue of the *Alexander* has also touched upon entrenched Dessauist misconceptions that should therefore be briefly recapitulated.

Constantine's dismissal of eunuchs from important posts, reported in the *Alexander*, fits comfortably with modern hypotheses, based on much later sources, about the increase in number of court eunuchs under the first tetrarchy (especially under Galerius and Maximinus Daia) and attempts to reduce their numbers during the duumvirate of Constantine and Licinius (*c.*312–324). Of course, eunuchs were often perceived as signs of bad emperors, but Lampridius also noted that a young emperor, Alexander, could rule well as long as he kept the eunuchs in their place, probably by alluding to the anxieties that surrounded Titus. And this leads us to the political milieu of young/'child' emperors.

Although Dessauists often try to make capital out of references to 'child emperors', which they dub as 'anxieties'/'dislike' of the late fourth century and which they often confuse with the close but different question of hereditary succession,[1070] Lampridius

[1070] Baynes 1955:209–210 (pub.1928); Syme 1968:74; Alan Cameron 2011b:750–751 (following Kolb 1987 with incorrect page numbers); Kolb mainly focuses on Gordian III, but applies his hypothesis to

shows no such anxiety in the *Alexander* or the *Elagabalus*, either about hereditary succession or about young emperors. In fact, the *Alexander* manifests positive enthusiasm for this young emperor, who ascended the throne at the age of 14.[1071] This approach is not surprising for a biography written in *c.*316–325, when Constantine's dynastic intentions were made clear through his appointment of his one-year-old son, Constantine II, to Caesar.

Considering that this biography is often taken as the portrayal of an ideal ruler, it can be seen as an appeal in favour of young emperors rather than anxiety about his age. Moreover, this biography has three themes that support the relevance of this biography to the later years of Constantine and improve our understanding of this period.

The main theme is the Syrian origin of Severus Alexander and Constantine's sons. Throughout the biography Alexander is portrayed as being ashamed of his Syrian origin—a theme that is picked up by Constantine's question on the ability of a Syrian to be a good emperor.[1072] Isaac, the author of a recent book on racism in antiquity, found it difficult to explain Alexander's shame of his Syrian ancestry, when he tried to read the biography through the perspective of Syme.[1073] This difficulty, we have seen, is easily solved once the stated date of composition under Constantine is accepted (*c.*316–326/8). Both Constantius and Constantine married the daughters of the Syrian Eutropia, and the problem has become more salient with the sons of Constantine. It was the racial prejudice rather than the age of Alexander that

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Elagabalus and Severus Alexander as well (1987:52–87 published in *Antiquitas Reihe 4* restating his hypothesis in Kolb 1997, published in *HAC*; these are essentially restatements of Straub 1952:75–98). Lippold (1998:145–156) has already demolished Kolb's arguments. These Dessauist arguments (with the exception of Baynes) are admittedly restatements of Hartke 1951:*passim*, esp. c.190ff.; Straub 1952:75–98. On the invalidity of Hartke's child-emperor arguments see already Walbank 1953, and esp.48: 'a formulation which has to take account of the special treatment accorded in the *HA* to Severus Alexander, Gordian III, Commodus, Diadumenus, and Heliogabalus may seem somewhat elastic.'

[1071] See above; Kolb and others fail to note this simple fact (n. 1070 above); interestingly the *AS* is not included in the Dessauist canon of such passages reported in Hartke 1951:192–193=Last and Baynes 1953:137–138=Alan Cameron 2011b:751.

[1072] *AS*.28.7, 65.1–2.

[1073] Isaac 2004:348–349.

bothered the Lampridian emperor (Alexander-Constantine). The other two themes—the elimination of court eunuchs and the intervention of Mamaea-Fausta—and the actions of Alexander-Constantine that followed them are simply an attempt to prepare the ground for the succession of young Syrian emperors, the sons of Constantine.

Chapter 7: Speratianus and the Diocletianic biographies

Most of the biographies containing direct addresses to Diocletian are either those ascribed to Speratianus in the manuscripts or those that can be ascribed to Speratianus with some certainty for philological and stylistic reasons.[1074] The vocabulary of these addresses, as we have seen with Constantine, is formally correct for the stated date of composition between Diocletian and Constantine.[1075] It is worth noting that in these addresses, unlike those to Constantine, the second person plural is preferred over the singular, or rather the 'metaphysical' over the 'physical'. This is quite usual in tetrarchic texts, where the 'presence' of an emperor or his co-emperors is only metaphysical: an address to one emperor in the plural could actually refer to his colleagues, in addition to being simply a majestic plural.[1076]

Aelius Caesar: a precedent for Diocletian's succession procedure

The only biography in the corpus that contains a real dedication to an emperor is the *Life of Aelius*. Both the opening and closing remarks are crafted in the form of a letter, quite similar to Pliny's preface of his *Natural History*. Speratianus invokes Diocletian to explain his literary intentions.[1077] Among these Speratianus explains why the biography of Aelius, Hadrian's heir apparent, is important despite his short life.

> Ceionius Commodus, who was also called Aelius Verus—whom Hadrian adopted…—had nothing memorable in his life except that he was the first to be named Caesar, not through a will and testament (*testamento*), as was previously the custom, and not through the way Trajan was adopted, but in the same manner, through which in our own time Maximian and Constantius were named Caesares by your clemency (*vestra clementia*), as if they were [real] sons of emperors and designated heirs of the Augustan Majesty. (*Ael.*2.1–2)

This passage attempts to provide, on a basic level, a precedent for the elevation of a certain Maximian and Constantius to the rank of Caesares *irrespective* of their

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[1074] See Part I above.
[1075] Cf. pp.205ff., 230ff. above.
[1076] *Ael.*2.2; *V.*11.4; *MA.*19.12; Peter 1892:29–30; Lécrivain 1904:22 with nn.3–4, who notes that in the invocations of Constantine only one contains a plural, most probably 'non-metaphysical' (*Gd.*12.2). Lécrivain 1904:22, see further below p.266. On 'physical' and 'metaphysical' addresses to emperors and their literary and political significance: Rees 2003.
[1077] *Ael.*1, 7.4–5; Lécrivain 1904:237, 239.

adoption into the imperial family, in other words in a manner more akin to the elevation of Titus and Domitianus to the rank of Caesares as heirs apparent,[1078] rather than that of the adoption of Trajan. The only difference from the first instance was that Aelius never lived to become Augustus.[1079] This episode is of paramount importance for, and relevance to, the institutional development of the Antonine dynasty and Diocletian's arrangements.[1080] Concerning the authenticity and date of composition two overlooked points require further discussion.

First, the persons involved: as with other contemporary accounts, most notably Lactantius, the reference to a Maximian poses a problem,[1081] especially when the context is unclear or remains unexplained. Both Maximians were elevated to the rank of Caesares before becoming Augusti; Maximian Herculius was elevated to this rank in *c.*285 *without* adoption,[1082] whereas Maximian Galerius was elevated to this rank and was probably adopted by Diocletian in March or May (?) 293.[1083] Constantius, at least as a Constantinian account was able to claim, was elevated to the rank of Caesar by Diocletian perhaps a few months earlier or at the same time (March 293).[1084] This sequence of events ensured the seniority, or at least a claim for seniority, of Constantius over Maximian Galerius. Maximian Herculius was naturally senior to these two, as his later elevation to the rank of Augustus in the West suggests.

These unchallenged facts, the order of seniority of Maximian Herculius and possibly Diocletian's adoption of Galerius, certainly suggest that the Maximian mentioned is Herculius and not Galerius, as only few scholars have observed.[1085] It is thus a strange

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[1078] The same applies to the biological sons of Marcus Aurelius, Septimius Severus, and Carus (Kienast 2009:111, 115, 147, 162, 166, 260–261).
[1079] Callu 1992:139–140 ('Aelius is the prototype of the tetrarchic Caesar').
[1080] Callu 1992:131–132, 139–140; Levick 2009:222; see below.
[1081] See above, *passim*.
[1082] On the precise date of his elevation—almost impossible to establish—see Kuhoff 2001:31–35, esp. 32–33.
[1083] Kienast 2009:283.
[1084] *Pan. Lat.* VIII(4).3.1; Lactant. *DMP* 35.4; *Origo Constantini* 1.1; '*Consularia Constantinopolitana*' under 291 gives the date (=Chron. Min., I, 230; Burgess 1993:234); Barnes 1982:60, 62; Nixon and Rodgers 1994:112n.8; Kienast 2009:280.
[1085] Birley 1976a:89n.2; thus he unconsciously removed another element of the Dessauian theory he follows; cf. 'Maximian' in the index to Hohl-Merten-Rösger-Straub, 2.478 and Baldwin 2010:450.

aberration when reputable scholars, well versed in the problems of the tetrarchy and transmission of classical texts, follow the Dessauist assumption by firmly insisting that this passage can only refer to Galerius and conclude that the passage is either problematic or forged, this only because Constantius should have been named before Galerius.[1086] Nevertheless, *even if* it is Galerius, a literary text cannot be expected to have the same accuracy and consistency as inscriptions, for both objective and subjective reasons.[1087] For instance, Stern noted that Galerius had been the Caesar and adopted son of the senior Augustus, namely Diocletian, and it is therefore reasonable for him to be named before Constantius in an address to Diocletian—but such an interpretation might be unnecessary here:[1088] either a scribe inverted the order of rulers or the reference is to Maximian Herculius. This could also simply be the result of a confused contemporary.[1089] We therefore have three reasonable explanations for Speratianus' statement, as it appears in the *textus receptus*, about the colleagues of Diocletian.[1090]

Second, the elevation of L. Ceionius Commodus (L. Aelius Caesar) to the rank of Caesar: this elevation was most probably *distinct* from his adoption. Xiphilinus' abridgement of Dio's *History* simply states that Hadrian 'appointed L. Commodus to be Caesar for the Romans'—this appears to be an eleventh-century Byzantine paraphrase.[1091] Only later does he refer to his adoption as a fait accompli, while

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[1086] Seeck 1890:618, 628; Barnes 1978:15, 77; Syme 1983:73 (pub. 1974); Kolb 1987:13; Callu 1992:140; Chastagnol-HA:68n4; unfortunately, including Mommsen 1890:252n.3 and Momigliano 1966:169. See, however, Norden's addition to Mommsen's contribution in *Ges. Schr.*, vol.7, 325n.1 (pub. 1909; referring to *Ael.*2.2, *Pr.*5.1 and *Car*.18.3; cited above n.669).

[1087] See pp.156ff. In another context (Lactant. *DMP* 19.2) a Dessauist is willing to suggest that, 'Lactantius is speaking both of Diocletian and of the place where Diocletian was proclaimed emperor; therefore, the name "Maximianus" should be deleted as a later gloss.' (Barnes 1982:62n.73); against this intervention, see Creed 1984:100; Nixon and Rodgers 1994:112n.8; Städele 2003:142.

[1088] Stern (1953:30–31n.3 on *Car.*18.3): 'Galerius was the younger brother of Constantius Chlorus. But he was the adopted son of Diocletian, the senior emperor, while Constantius was the adopted son of the junior emperor, Maximian Herculius. Taking into account the order of adoptions, Constantius could, indeed, be placed *after* Galerius.' Barnes 1978:15; 77 and others have overlooked this.

[1089] On other contemporaries, see Van Dam 2007:246–247.

[1090] Cf. above p.163.

[1091] Dio 69.17.1 (Boissevain 236^{16-17}=Xiphilinus 252.17–18): Κόμοδον μὲν Λούκιον, καίτοι αἷμα ἐμοῦντα, Καίσαρα Ῥωμαίοις ἀπέδειξε ('he appointed Lucius Commodos as Caesar to the Romans, although he vomited blood'). The emphasis Ῥωμαίοις seems to suggest an intervention of Xiphilinus. This is most probably an attempt to avoid confusion with the dignity of καῖσαρ given to foreign rulers

maintaining his pre-adoption name throughout.[1092] These gaps in the narrative, notably the omission of the adoption procedure, are to be attributed to Xiphilinus. Moreover, we find this distinction more clearly in Speratianus, as he states that Aelius 'was the first to receive only the name of Caesar, *after* he was admitted to the family of the *princeps* through the adoption of Hadrian.'[1093] In other words, adoption in itself did not guarantee his succession to the throne and elevation to the rank of Augustus. And indeed a similar reorganization of Caesares, Augusti, and co-emperors can be attributed quite definitely to the time of Hadrian.[1094]

Following his elevation to the rank of Caesar, Aelius held this position until his death (136–138). This indeed set a precedent,[1095] for until Aelius' time only heirs apparent by blood held the title of Caesar for a long period of time: Vespasian appointed Titus and Domitian Caesares in 69—a position they held until 79 and 81 respectively.[1096] Conversely, Trajan and Hadrian, if the latter was indeed adopted, did not hold the position of Caesar for an extended period.[1097] Aelius was therefore appointed Caesar in the manner of real sons, and Speratianus stated this to provide the necessary precedent to Diocletian's appointments of Maximian Herculius and Constantius '*as if* they were real sons'.

These facts and the literal meaning of the passage under discussion (*Ael*.2.2) make the following statement even harder to accept: 'the "Constantinian" author of Aelius (2.2)… styles Constantius and Galerius, whom he by the way introduces in incorrect

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from the eighth century onwards (*ODB*, I: 363, s.v. 'Caesar'). There is similar intervention shortly after, regarding Turbo's praetorian prefecture (Dio 69.18.1; Boissevain 237^{13}–238^{1}=Xiphilinus 253.1–2).

[1092] Dio 69.20.1–5 (Boissevain 239^{8}–240^{10}=Xiphilinus 253.25–254.11).

[1093] *Ael.*1.2: '*primus tantum Caesaris nomen accepit, adoptione Hadriani familiae principum adscitus*' (≅2.3, 3.1); note Vermaat 1893:74.

[1094] Victor 13.12–13 with Damsté, *Mnemosyne* n.s. 40 (1916), 377; Callu 1992:140. Victor's *Caesares* might be based on *Aelius* here (*Introduction*).

[1095] Callu 1992:131, 139.

[1096] The position of the title 'Caesar', before or after the emperor's cognomen was, however, unstable under the first Flavian dynasty. See PIR^{2} F399, F259 (esp. p.148); Kienast 2009:111, 115–116.

[1097] Trajan: Plin. *Pan.* 8.6: *simul Caesar, mox imperator et consors tribuniciae potestatis et omnia partier et statim factus est*.; Hadrian: *H*.4.5–10; Dio 69.10.2 (Boissevain 222^{6}=Xiphilinus 242.15–20, claiming to cite verbatim Dio's report of his father's words): 'Attianus… and Plotina appointed him Caesar and *Imperator* (καῖσαρ καὶ αὐτοράτωρ).

order, *quasi quidam principum filii*… However, it is well known adoptive sons are not *quasi quidam filii,* but they do count as biological sons.'[1098] None of this is helpful, and it remains a highly subjective and garbled assertion. Speratianus explicitly addressed the *Life of Aelius* to Diocletian and Constantine's name is not mentioned anywhere in this biography.[1099] A reference to Galerius in this passage is far from being warranted, and so is the claim for the incorrect order of rulers. Moreover, Speratianus refers to the position of Maximian and Constantius as Caesares, who—like Aelius at the time—were to serve in this position for quite some time until they were elevated to the rank of Augusti (irrespective of their adoption),[1100] all three in the manner of Vespesian's biological sons, Titus and Domitian. Speratianus introduced Aelius as a precedent for this practice.

Unfortunately, the assertion cited above belongs to Otto Seeck, a scholar who was the first to argue for a composition date well into the fifth century, and it is still possible to say that the dominant group in *HA-Forschung* 'collects the most recent students of the *HA* and follows the distant leadership of Seeck' including, I might add, Paschoud and Ratti.[1101] It is even more unfortunate that De Sanctis's remarks on this passage were overlooked.[1102] As he had noted, Speratianus' statement was, *pace* Seeck,[1103]

[1098] Seeck 1890:628.

[1099] *Ael.*1–2; there are no textual problems that could justify this far-reaching interpretation; see n.1100.

[1100] Vermaat (1893:74): 'Itaque nostro loco Aelius non dicitur per adoptionem *quasi* quidam Hadriani *filius* esse factus ut Maximianus et Constantius quasi quidam filii Diocletiani, sed ut hi duo ita Aelius dicitur Caesar appellatus fuisse *quasi virtute designatus Augustae majestatis heres*, cum jam principis factus esset filius. Non igitur ex hoc loco effici potest quod vult Seeck.' This discussion clearly dismisses the bizarre conclusion regarding this passage that, 'since under Constantine the nomination of a successor through adoption had completely ceased, this practice was no longer familiar to our biographer.' (Seeck 1890:629).

[1101] Momigliano 1966:151. He refers to the frivolous and extreme views of Hartke 1951; Straub 1952; 1963; Demougeot 1953, who followed Seeck and ascribed the entire corpus to the 'pagan' circle of Nicomachus Flavianus or the man himself. Their factual inaccuracies and arguments were demolished by Enßlin 1942; Last and Baynes 1953; Walbank 1953; Hohl 1954; Alan Cameron 1965b (survey in Momigliano 1966:151, 167–168, 176–177nn.12–19). These defective theses of the 'Nicomachian circle' produced by Hartke and others are picked up by Callu 1992; Ratti 2008; 2010; Paschoud 1996; Paschoud 2001. Following Cameron's recent demolition of Ratti and Barnes's dismissal of their views (Alan Cameron 2011b:627–690, 743–782; 2011a; Barnes 2012b), it seems proper to note the weakness in Seeck's argumentation.

[1102] Not included in *Stellenbibliographie*; Syme noted, about his own 1968 work (1971a:82–83): 'De Sanctis happens there to be mentioned twice, in the annotation but only as a name. His views did no

perfectly compatible with the time of Diocletian: 'it is easy to reply [to Seeck] that the words of Spartianus want to say two things only: 1) that the Caesares are *considered as* (*considerati come*) sons of the Augusti; 2) but as (*come*) sons who are appointed for the succession, because in the Diocletianic order the sons of the *principes* can be excluded. For example, the case of Maxentius and that of Constantine suffice: they were not nominated Caesares, when Constantius and Galerius were promoted to the rank of Augusti. Accordingly, Spartianus' sentence exactly reflects the ordinance of Diocletian.'[1104] Moreoever, in *c.*306 Galerius, whom Lactantius presents as willing to maintain the so-called 'tetrarchic system', is said to have known that the appointment of Licinius to the rank of Caesar would have meant nominating him as a *filius* (rather than adopting him), and he therefore avoided it.[1105]

We can therefore conclude that Speratianus' statements are compatible with the broad stated date of composition under Diocletian, and that no valid argument has so far been made against the authenticity of the address to Diocletian and its content. Momigliano's observation on this passage remains conclusive: 'this is alleged to have been written under Diocletian, and it must be admitted that it was a good moment for writing it.'[1106]

In terms of the inferred date of composition, the only secure *terminus post* for this biography is the elevation of Constantius to the rank of Caesar in 293; this terminus is also relevant to the subsequent biographies ascribed to Speratianus. The *terminus ante* for this biography is probably the abdication of Diocletian in May 305. One may even postulate that Speratianus wrote these lines closer to the latter date to justify Diocletian's ordinance.[1107] Thus the allegation that Speratianus, and other authors of

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exercise much influence beyond the bounds of Italy' And later made irrelevant comments about Italian scholars (Syme 1983:212). See the reaction of Momigliano 1984:398.

[1103] Seeck 1890; De Sanctis 1896:77–78.

[1104] De Sanctis 1896:78; see also n.1100.

[1105] Städele 2003:146n.72; *DMP* 20.3; it seems Lactantius is presenting Galerius as working against the system he was imposing, when it came to Constantine (and Maxentius); see below pp. 267ff.

[1106] Momigliano 1966:173.

[1107] Even if one assumes, rightly or wrongly, that this passage was referring to the elevation of Constantius and Galerius to the rank of Caesares.

the corpus, wrote in an improbably prolonged stint between 284 and 337 is further diminished; with Speratianus, at least, we have evidence that his documented literary activity started after 293, and it did not continue beyond the death of Diocletian in *c.*313/316, as we shall now see.

Diocletian and the other 'Speratianian' biographies

The apostrophes to Diocletian in the subsequent five biographies in the 'Speratianian' series could have been written at any time until Diocletian's abdication (305) and in some cases perhaps even after his abdication and up until his death (313/316), as they contain no further chronological statements besides the titles of 'Augustus', 'Imperator', and 'maximus augustorum'.[1108] Three biographies, however, do contain two reflections that confirm the Diocletianic *Zeitgeist* of their apostrophes.

Diocletian and Marcus Aurelius

In the *Lives of Marcus Aurelius* and *Lucius Verus* Diocletian is again addressed in the plural. This fits perfectly with the rhetoric of the first tetrarchy, especially when an emperor was addressed *in absentia*,[1109] as perhaps in this case. Diocletian's admiration and special veneration of Marcus Aurelius are then integrated into the apostrophes.[1110] For instance, about the two emperors the *Life of Marcus* states:

> Even now he [i.e. Marcus] is held to be a god, as has ever seemed right and does now so seem to you yourself (*vobis ipsis*), Most Sacred Emperor (*sacratissime imperator*) Diocletian, who worship (*veneramini*) him among your deities (*numina vestra*), not as you worship the others [Emperors] but in a special way. (*MA.*19.12)

In 294 Diocletian issued a law in Nicomedia, in which he referred to Marcus as 'Divus Marcus pater noster religiosissimus imperator'.[1111] Alan Cameron once noted this similarity and concluded, 'if anything at all is to be deduced from the passage about

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[1108] As imperator: *MA*.19.12; as Augustus: *V*.11.3–4, *AC*.3.3, *S*.20.4; as *Maximus Augustorum*: *PN*.9.1 (probably equivalent to 'Senior Augustus' after his abdication, see below); on the 'Speratianian' characteristics of these biographies see above in Part I.
[1109] Rees 2003:*passim*; cf. Corcoran 2000:318–320.
[1110] *MA*.19.12, *V*.11.4.
[1111] *Cod. Just*. 5.17.5; cf. also 2.36.3pr.

the date of composition, it is that it was written by a contemporary of Diocletian rather than by someone who lived a century or more later.'[1112] Even Dessauists found it difficult to evade Cameron's clear contention, and it is hoped it is further validated through this study: 'there is not the slightest reason to doubt that the statement is the simple truth'.[1113]

The perils and pitfalls of imperial succession

In a long apostrophe to Diocletian in the *Life of Severus*, Speratianus reflects on the disadvantages of hereditary over adoptive imperial succession, following the bad experience of Septimius' sons. His direct apostrophe states:

> And when I reflect on the matter, Diocletian Augustus, it is sufficiently clear that no great man has left *a son* who is excellent and useful. For such men either die without children or for the most part have children of such a kind that it would have been better for the human race if they had died without descendants. (*S.*20.4–5)

What follows are examples from Greek and Roman history of great men who either died without leaving children or who left terrible children, and a short and elusive reflection on the history of adoptive succession.[1114] But to begin with, let us examine the possible stated date(s).

<u>Diocletian before and after the abdication of 305</u>

The address to Diocletian as Augustus does not include an exact date of composition. At first sight it would appear to have been written before his abdication in 305, but there is nothing to suggest it was not written afterwards. After their 'abdication', Diocletian and Maximian Herculius 'could not have become private individuals and remained Augusti.'[1115] They held the titles *Seniores <u>Augusti</u>*, *patres imperatorum et*

[1112] Alan Cameron 1968:18 (cf. Momigliano 1966:157–158).
[1113] Alan Cameron 1968:17; Syme bluntly stated (1971b:272): 'If one might be authentic, why not any other? The consequences are delirious' and then deployed his usual formula that the 'dedications' (or more correctly apostrophes) 'are merely a device of the author' invented by Dessau in 1889 (273=Syme 1968:176–177). Or, following Syme's appeal and the Dessauist Pavlovian assumption, a circular statement is made to 'a source' in case 'the facts are deemed too much' (Barnes 1978:77; Corcoran 2000:63n.127 reasserts this view).
[1114] *S.*21.3–5.
[1115] Moreau 1954:308.

Caesarum, and were at least presented as part of a college of six with Diocletian's post-proclamation name *Diocletianus*, as the epigraphic evidence suggests,[1116] and in sharp contrast to the *later* literary representation of him after his abdication.[1117] We simply have no additional contemporary texts to clarify what exactly the 'formal' *literary* form of these titles, if there was any, could have been, and this for an obvious reason: Diocletian was the first, and last, emperor to 'abdicate' and to retain his titulature.[1118] Even Lactantius, despite his fictitious claim that Diocletian was again called Diocles after his abdication,[1119] kept adhering to the name *Diocletianus* for events after 305, or rather 308.[1120] Diocletian remained on the political stage, at least in theory, as Moreau, Kuhoff, and Van Dam have surmised.[1121] When the crisis broke out in *c.*306–307 as a result of the actions of the *sons* of Maximian Herculius and Constantius, Maxentius and Constantine, Severus II, Galerius, and Herculius himself, Diocletian was also summoned to Carnuntum and held his eighth consulship in that same year (308).[1122] We are even told that Herculius considered reinstating him as emperor at some stage.[1123] One Dessauist, irrespective of his position in *HA-Forschung*, even suggested that Diocletian might have been acknowledged as a member of the imperial college around the time of the Carnuntum summit, following

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[1116] For instance, the celebrated dedication of the Baths of Diocletian (*CIL* 6.31242=ILS 646; cited and discussed above pp.189ff.) And the commemoration of the building of granaries in Tupusuctu, Mauretania (present-day Tiklat; *CIL* 8.8836, 20648=ILS 645). Cf. also: AE 1964, 235), and further: *CIL* 8.10171=22286; 8.21916; 8.22569=22570=22571, *AE* 2005, 772; *AE* 2009, 1612 (*pater imperatorum et Caesarum*).

[1117] Besides Lactantius, Eutr. 9.27.2–28; Victor 39.48; *EDC* 39.7 and the complete list of much later accounts in Kuhoff 2001:320n.827. According to Kuhoff (2001:320) such an assertion about Diocletian 'steht in krassem Widerspruch zu numismatischen wie epigraphischen Zeugnissen und muß deshalb als tendenziöse Falschmeldung abgelehnt werden.'

[1118] See Van Dam 2007:246–247 with n.26 on the general problem with Diocletian and Maximian; only in the late fifth century do we have cases of emperors who abdicated, but lived: Iulius Nepos in 475 and Romulus Augustus in 476, although the latter was not recognized in the East.

[1119] *DMP* 19.5–6: *Huic purpuram Diocetianus iniecit suam qua se exuit, et Diocles iterum factus est. Tum descenditur, et reda per civitatem veteranus rex foras exportatur in patriamque dimittitur.* Cf. 52.3 (a general assessment of Diocletian).

[1120] *DMP* 41.1, 42.2, 43.6; noted by Städele 2003:144n.70 and overlooked by Moreau 1954:263, 318; Creed 1984:101, 116–118. The last time he is referred to as Diocles in the narrative of events is when he is summoned to Carnuntum (*DMP* 29.2; pace Städele 2003:ibid.).

[1121] Moreau 1954:308; Van Dam 2007:246; Barnes 1982 (e.g. 49–56) did not discuss Diocletian's deeds and titles after his abdication.

[1122] Lactant. *DMP* 29.1–2; Jerome 229^{c}; Zos. 2.10.3–4; *CLRE*, 308; for reconstructed narrative: Creed 1984:109; Barnes 1981:32.

[1123] *DMP* 43.6.

Lactantius' concluding remark about a college of 'six emperors'.[1124] As Van Dam notes: 'by 310 there were six senior emperors (four active, two nominally retired).'[1125]

Thus, potentially, the apostrophe could have been written between 293, the *terminus post* of the *Aelius*, and *c.*313/16, Diocletian's death.[1126] As we shall see below, however, the references to biological sons could be used to postulate a more exact date of composition.

Hereditary and adoptive succession

Speratianus' scepticism about the *possible success* of hereditary succession appears to fit well with the questions and tensions of imperial succession both before and after Diocletian's abdication. As early as *c.*289 the panegyrist of Maximian Herculius[1127] seems to have implied that his son Maxentius, when he was still a small child, 'will be groomed to succeed his father when he comes of age'[1128]—a fact De Sanctis had already noted.[1129] This seems to confirm the various statements Lactantius makes about the arrangements of the imperial succession of *c.*305. In a celebrated passage, he claims that Galerius imposed on Diocletian the appointment of Severus and Maximinus Daia instead of Diocletian's immediate preference for the sons of

[1124] Straub 1964:47–48; *DMP* 29.2: *sic uno tempore sex fuerunt*. This may not be as far-fetched as scholars have assumed (Moreau 1954:367–368; Creed 1984:109), especially if one considers the epigraphic evidence demonstrating that abdicated emperors were considered part of the imperial college as *Seniores Augusti* (*CIL* 8.21916; cf. n.1116 above), the declaration of Maxentius as a public enemy, and the fact that Lactantius refers to Diocletian as Diocletianus after 308 (n.1120 above). Cf. Städele (2003:168n.105): 'Oder zählt Laktanz Diokletian statt des Usurpators Maxentius mit?' Lactantius probably had in mind the following college: Seniores Augusti: Diocletian and Maximian; Augusti: Galerius and Licinius; Caesares: Maximinus Daia and Constantine (for the last four see Barnes 1982:6).

[1125] 2007:246.

[1126] Cf. De Sanctis 1896:77 who apparently suggested the later years of Diocletian's 'reign' (*c.*303–305; 'ultimi anni di Diocleziano'); on this see below.

[1127] X(2).14.1–2: *Sed profecto mature ille inlucescet dies, cum uos uideat Roma uictores et alacrem sub dextera filium, quem ad honestissimas artes omnibus ingenii bonis natum felix aliquis praeceptor exspectat, cui nullo labore constabit diuinam immortalemque progeniem ad studium laudis hortari... uestra illi facta demonstret, uos identidem et semper ostendat praesentes et optimos imperatoriae institutionis auctores.*

[1128] Nixon and Rodgers 1994:75n.50; on his age: Barnes 1982:34.

[1129] De Sanctis 1896:77.

Constantius and Maximian Herculius.[1130] In May 305 'everyone was astonished' when the appointment of Severus and Daia was declared, rather than Constantine's.[1131] These observations were obviously written in Constantine's court but by a person who had most probably witnessed the events; and Diocletian's consideration of Maxentius as a Caesar, reported by Lactantius, seems to vouch for this.[1132] Beyond that, they do fit the historical facts: within about a year after Diocletian's abdication the sons of the second two *Augusti*, Constantine and Maxentius, were declared emperors (306). Irrespective of this, Galerius is also said to have been planning on elevating his then nine-year-old son, Candidianus, to the rank of Caesar.[1133]

One can therefore conclude that the order of succession—whether elective/adoptive or hereditary—was far from established in the eyes of contemporaries at least up to *c.*311, the death of Galerius, if not later.

Thus, the tension between the hereditary and elective elements of imperial succession was even more apparent at the time of the first tetrarchy.[1134] Speratianus' apostrophe reflecting this tension could have been written any time *after* 293 (the *terminus post* of his *Aelius*), probably even much later.[1135] It is therefore quite unclear why Seeck (an influential Dessauist),[1136] referring to this passage, held that 'the so-called Spartianus must have possessed an amazing gift of prophecy, if he had hinted already in *c.*293 at a succession order that was not known to any one at the time, not even to the emperors.'[1137] Unfortunately, the arbitrary date he imputes to

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[1130] *DMP* 18.8–14.
[1131] *DMP* 19.4; Maxentius, who is earlier considered as a potential *Caesar* by Diocletian, was probably omitted either because the event took place in the East or because of the influence of Constantine's court that imposed some, but not always successful, censorship (see above).
[1132] *DMP* 18.9–10; the character assassination, not ascribed to Diocletian, is obviously a later Constantinian reflection.
[1133] Lact. *DMP* 20.4.
[1134] It undoubtedly derived from the dichotomy created by the tetrarchs' intermarriages as early as 293. On this issue, Barnes 1982:37–38, 125; 2011:50; Corcoran 2008:232.
[1135] See below.
[1136] This Part has registered the strength (or otherwise) of his arguments several times already.
[1137] Seeck 1890:627; by the same token, could the panegyrist of *c.*289 be said to have had the same 'amazing gift of prophecy' for the events of 306? Or rather, 'Is it fair to conclude that "Mamertinus" knows of no plans for a tetrarchy, or succession by adoption?' (Nixon and Rodgers 1994:75n.50).

Speratianus' *Life of Severus* is misleading and, taking into account the actual broad dating, it is easy to refute this statement. In De Sanctis's words: 'even admitting all of Seeck's presuppositions, it would be easy to respond that the *vitae*, attributed to Spartianus in the manuscript tradition, could have been composed in the last years of Diocletian, when the well-informed circles had to be the propaganda mouthpiece of whatever cause he had prepared.' And 'if the lives that the manuscripts attribute to Spartianus really belong to him, these lives would have been composed between 1 April 293 and 1 May 305.' [1138]

This is sensible enough and one can subscribe to the last sentence. Nevertheless, as we have seen, the apostrophe to Diocletian might well have been made after 305, and it is therefore possible to infer two plausible dates of composition. One, following De Sanctis, close to the abdication of Diocletian or immediately after it (*c.*305–306), in order to justify and explain Diocletian's (and Galerius') decision not to promote Constantine and Maxentius at all—an action that seems to have astounded some contemporaries.[1139] Nevertheless, it leaves the following elusive reference to adoptive emperors in the same apostrophe unaccounted for—a reference that apparently could suggest a later date of composition:

> What about Augustus, who did not even have a good son by adoption, although he could have chosen from all men? Trajan himself, also, made a mistake when he chose his fellow-townsman and nephew. But to omit adoptive sons, lest the Antonines, Pius and Marcus, divine spirits of the republic, come to mind, let us turn to real sons. What would have been more fortunate for Marcus than not to have Commodus as his heir? (*S.*21.3–5)

[1138] De Sanctis 1896:77; moreover, Seeck's presupposition (ibid.), that 'from 293 the succession order was established… on kinship and marriage relation', is unwarranted. In fact, it was a mixture of both (see references in n.1134 above). Cf. De Sanctis (1896:77–78): 'But we must not concede easily to what Seeck supposes. With the nomination of Constantius and Galerius as Caesares the right of succession had been de facto established on a different basis of legitimacy. Maxentius, who must have been at least 15 years old, was set aside; and this in itself clearly demonstrates what the intentions of Diocletian were from his point of view. Naturally, it was *not* ruled out that a child of one of the four *principes* would be nominated as Caesar. But *the rights of Constantine or Maxentius were theoretically equal* to those of a certain general or official.' (my emphasis).

[1139] See above.

This could fit neatly with a date of *c.*306–308, more specifically 308. At that time the devastating results of civil wars between the 'dispossessed' *biological* sons of the former *adopted Augusti* manifested themselves, and Diocletian was summoned to Carnuntum in order to prevent further catastrophes (308).[1140] Indeed at that time, Speratianus was very astute when he inferred, in this apostrophe to Diocletian, that great men 'either die without children or for the most part have sons of such a kind that it would have been better for the human race if they had died without descendants',[1141] and when he artfully stated that even adopting emperors could make the wrong choice, such as Augustus with Tiberius and Trajan with Hadrian, in contrast to the adoption of Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius—in the latter case an ancient contemporary must have found a dichotomy similar to that of the 'tetrarchic' civil wars.[1142] This appears to have been a 'consolation' to Diocletian for having adopted Galerius, and later taking his advice. This consolatory demonstration is neither a praise nor criticism of either elective-adoptive succession or hereditary succession.

In that case, this apostrophe must have been both a 'consolation' to Diocletian for his decisions, and perhaps an appeal to him to save the Roman state from the calamities of civil wars that the biological children of adoptive emperors had initiated in reaction to the decisions of Diocletian's adopted son, Maximianus Galerius. This inherent dichotomy of the two tetrarchies was apparently clear enough to contemporaries, such as Speratianus.

[1140] See above.
[1141] *S.*20.5; formally before the 'dynastic' duumvirate of Constantine and Licinius (*c.*313).
[1142] *S.*21.3–4.

Chapter 8: Orphan biographies, revisions, and imperfections

Three other biographies and one sub-corpus of *Thirty Tyrants* also contain temporal references, but—as we have seen in Chapters 1 and 2—these works cannot be ascribed with certainty to any author. They can be divided into two groups: (1) the *Lives of Geta* and *Macrinus* which contain apostrophes to Diocletian and Constantine respectively,[1143] and whose position in the corpus according to the manuscript tradition is completely out of both compositional and chronological order;[1144] (2) the *Life of Gallienus* and the *Thirty Tyrants*, which at first sight contain internal links, and the dating of the former therefore could have influenced the dating of the latter as well. The accidental lacuna in the manuscripts of the corpus has caused difficulties in ascribing these biographies to their respective author(s)[1145] and materially deprived us of any possibility of determining with some certainty who was addressed in the second person in those biographies. Furthermore, the reference to the 'Constantius Caesar' in the *Life of Gallienus* is unwarranted, once the manuscript tradition is reconsidered, and might therefore have broader implications on the dating of the *Thirty Tyrants*.

Some of these works also manifest various types of imperfection, which have conventionally been called 'contradictions' that point to a much later forgery. This chapter will examine these imperfections not only in light of the manuscript tradition, but also in light of literary revision theories, in other words treating them as a 'work in progress'. The question we shall tackle, especially concerning the *Geta*, *Macrinus*, and the *Thirty Tyrants*, is whether these minor imperfections are any different from those found in other literary works. For such a literary approach to such imperfections, which also takes into account the possibility of human and/or scribal error, appears to offer a sufficient explanation.

[1143] *G*.1.1: *Constantine Auguste*; *OM*.15.4: *Diocletiane Auguste*.
[1144] See Part I.
[1145] See Part I.

Geta, *Macrinus*, the Gordians, and the *nomen antoninorum*

The *Life of Geta*, as we saw in Part I, lacks a secure authorial ascription in the manuscripts, but modern editors traditionally ascribe it to Speratianus. The biography contains an apostrophe to Constantine. The *Life of Macrinus* would appear to be incorrectly ascribed to Capitolinus, because it contains an apostrophe to Diocletian. So far, this seems to be a simple confusion in the manuscript tradition, as Enmann and J.B. Bury noted.[1146]

The allegedly 'flagrant' contradictions in these two biographies are: (1) the same author could not have been active under both Diocletian (r.284–305, died *c.*313/316) and Constantine (r.306–337); and (2) Capitolinus' reference to two Gordians in *Macrinus* but later to three Gordians in *Gordians*. This has been the dogma since Dessau.[1147] These 'contradictions', however, are not as serious as they first appear, especially when we concentrate on the facts and on what the authors actually said.

Literary activity under Diocletian and Constantine

A literary figure could have been active under both Diocletian and Constantine and in various geographic locations, as we saw earlier.[1148] Literary figures were not in any way *coloni* bound to their land. Lactantius' documented career, including his lost works that are only known through Jerome's *de viris illustribus*, illustrate well that 'he attracted the attention, and was put on the payroll, of two emperors, Diocletian and Constantine.'[1149] This author, as is well known, was born and educated in Africa. In *c.*295 he was appointed professor of rhetoric at Nicomedia (under Diocletian), travelled between Africa, Trier, and Nicomedia between *c.*305 and 325, and educated Constantine's son, the Caesar Crispus (perhaps after 317); the 'exact' chronology is speculative and could entail chronological 'contradictions'—a sober scholar prefers

[1146] Bury 1900: 445; Enmann 1884 at 375 on ascription problems in the 'SHA'.
[1147] Dessau 1889:337–338, 372; Syme 1968:180; Barnes 1978:14; Thomson 2012:37–38. Dessau is re-cited with several variants in most of the Dessauist publications listed in *Stellenbibliographie* on *G.*1, *OM.*15.4, *Gd.*2.1.
[1148] *General Introduction*; Chapter 2
[1149] Bowen and Garnsey 2003:4.

the *ars nesciendi* rather than an ingenious chronology that could lead to claims of 'forgery'.[1150]

This is sufficient in itself to eliminate both the Dessauist dogma of later forgery and the 'conservative' response of trying to settle these 'contradictions'. At most, what we have here is an author, say Capitolinus, who was active under two successive emperors. Broadly speaking, the apostrophe to Diocletian in the *Macrinus* could have been made at any time until Diocletian's death (*c.*313/316).[1151]

We are thus left with the 'flagrant contradiction' regarding the three Gordians, which first requires us to register some facts.

The number of Gordians and the name of the Antonines

The first Gordian was serving in Africa as proconsul when a mob, dissatisfied with the burden of taxes levied by Maximinus Thrax, declared him emperor against his will in 238 at the age of 80. He then moved to Carthage and appointed his son and namesake, Gordian II, as co-emperor. They were both called M. Antonius Gordianus Sempronianus Romanus Africanus. This was a failed attempt: despite Gordian II being recognized by the senate in Rome, the governor of neighbouring Numidia, Capelianus, defeated and killed him at Carthage and Gordian senior committed suicide. The senate, which defied Maximinus Thrax, had no choice but to appoint M. Clodius Pupienus Maximus and D. Caelius Balbinus as emperors in opposition to Maximinus. This civil war lasted less than a year (238) and ended with the murder of Maximus and Balbinus and the appointment of Gordian III as Augustus—he had earlier been appointed Caesar of the two Augusti—by the troops in the middle of that eventful year. [1152]

[1150] Städele 2003:75–78, who prefers to admit that there are aspects of Lactantius (and his *DMP*) we do not know about, rather than attempt a 'precise' chronology (e.g. Barnes 2011:176–178). Lactantius' 'forgery' as a result of failure to establish 'precise' chronology: Bury 1926:485–486; Christensen 1980:21–26, 83n.40; see pp.167 above.

[1151] See above, *passim*.

[1152] For a narrative and possible chronology: Potter 2004:169–172; Kienast 2009:188–197; Ando 2012:105–109.

Gordian III (r.238–244) was declared first Caesar and later Augustus in Rome, when he was only 13. He was the *grandson* of Gordian I through his daughter, Maecia Faustina, and Iunius Balbus. Oliver and Graham, using neglected epigraphic evidence, have shown that Capitolinus' *Gordians* was correct in terms of the family relations and nomenclature of Gordian I. Capitolinus' account of Gordian I's family relation has become very credible.[1153] It is now clear that Gordian III was genealogically, politically, and geographically distant from the first two Gordians: he gained supreme power through the agreement of the senate and the troops in *Italy*, after the Pupienus-Balbinus interlude in circumstances quite different from those of his namesakes.

In three of the biographies, other than the *Lives of the Gordians*, there is a discussion about which emperors were called Antonines. In these passages two Gordians are mentioned, as though it was unclear whether they were *Antonii* or *Antonini* (Antonines). The name of the Antonines has often been taken as a recurring motif in the entire corpus, ever since Tropea used it in support of the traditional date(s) of composition of the Lampridian and Capitolinian biographies.[1154] With regard to the Gordians it seems that the problem was that earlier authorities confused their true name (*Antonii*) with a corruption (*Antonini*), and this has nothing to do with the existence of two or three Gordians, as the following passages illustrate:

> And hence later some think that two Gordians, *father and son*, were named Antonines (*Antoninos cognominatos*), but it is one thing when it is assumed as a *praenomen*, and another when it is used as the actual name. (Lampridius, *Dd.*6.3–4)

In the *Elagabalus*, Lampridius again refers to the two Gordians as:

[1153] J. H. Oliver 1968; Graham 1968:82–83. They both corrected Syme's misconception about the family of Gordian I. Syme preferred to restate his view, claim that 'no other explanation avails' other than his late fourth-century forgery view (Syme 1968:162–163), and reprinted his 1966-*HAC* article unaltered in Syme 1971b:1–16. Chastagnol-HA (704) does not to register these publications, and only restates Syme.

[1154] Tropea 1900:II, 5–13; Momigliano 1966:157–158.

> Father and son, who wanted to be called after the family of the Antonines, but first it was not their name (*nomen*) but their *praenomen* and secondly—as I find in many books—they are called *Antonii* and not *Antonini*. (*Hel.*34.6–7)

These two passages inform us that the two Gordians, considered incorrectly as Antonines by some, were the father and the son, and that this has nothing to do with the existence of two or three Gordians. In a celebrated passage in the 'orphan' *Life of Macrinus*, which has been misread as a contradiction to the *Lives of the Gordians*, we find a similar statement:

> Not to be included among the Antonines are two Gordians, either because they only had the *praenomen* of Antonines, or because they were called Antonii, and not Antonini. (*OM*.3.5)

The only difference between this statement and the previous statements is that the author of these lines—or perhaps a scribe—omitted the reference to 'father and son'. This passage, therefore, cannot be taken to mean that its author knew of only two Gordians. In fact, even in the *Lives of the Gordians*, which criticizes authors who had thought only two existed,[1155] a similar statement is made about the two Gordians and the Antonines:

> However, I find in many books that this Gordian and his son were declared *imperatores* and were named Antonines (*Antoninos cognominatos*), but in others that they are named Antonii. (*Gd.*9.5)[1156]

To conclude, none of the passages suggests that Lampridius, Capitolinus, or any possible author of the *Macrinus* at any point thought that there were *only two*

[1155] *Gd.*2.1: *Gordiani non, ut quidam inperiti scriptores locuntur, duo sed tres fuerunt*; the *inperiti scriptores*, as the oft-quoted Enmann noted long ago, are the same tradition(s) behind the common source of Eutropius and Victor; his hypothetical *EKG* (Enmann 1884:375; Bird 1994:123) written before *c.*285 or 305/311 (Enmann 1884:442–443; Lippold 2002:309–310, 325–326, 342; Lippold 2006:358; Burgess 2011:V.117–118, 128). Claiming that this is a 'direct polemic' against Eutropius and Victor (Dessau 1889:371–374; Brandt 1996:17–18, 57–63) undermines the Dessauist claim that the entire 'HA' was 'forged' in order to compete with the popular works of these two during the alleged time of the alleged forgery of *c.*370–395 (Dessau 1889:375–376). If the parallels between 'SHA' and the epitomizers were so strong (which they are not), a 'contemporary' reader would have noticed the 'forgery' immediately (see further below). Mommsen had already noted this inherent contradiction (1890:269 with n.2), and Dessau himself admitted (on Capitolinus' references to *inperiti* or *Latini scriptores*): 'after all, it cannot be proved that the polemic of the biographer is not directed against the common source of Victor and Eutropius' (Dessau 1889:373; this self-negation was noted by Lippold 1991:11n.9). *EDC* could have learned of three Gordians through knowledge of Capitolinus (the 'SHA'; see Alan Cameron 2011b:760–761).

[1156] Same point in *Gd.*4.7.

Gordians. What they all suggest is that the actual name of the father and the son (Antonius) was confused with Antoninus, during the nearly 100-year gap between their death and the author's time of activity (*c.*330-340). This has nothing to do with the question of the actual existence of Gordian III or Gordian I's son (and the number of Gordians).

Gallienus and the 'Thirty' Tyrants of Trebellius Pollio (?)

These two works, in particular the *Life of the two Gallieni*, have suffered badly as a result of the medieval manuscript tradition. These lives, as can be seen in any respectable critical edition including Hohl, indicate that the exemplar had suffered physical damage in and around that biography and the *Valerian*. In addition to the lacuna between the *Balbini* and *Valerian*, it is not surprising that the inscription of this biography is either missing (as in Π-class) or ascribed—rightly or wrongly—to Julius Capitolinus (as in some manuscripts of Σ-class).[1157] The marginal note of P^2, which provides a dedication 'ad Constantinum aug[ustum]' at the beginning of the *Two Gallieni* might preserve something of value considering the condition of the manuscripts, especially if one reconsiders the 'internal' evidence.

Gallienus and Constantine's ancestry

In two places this work contains explicit references most probably to Constantine, rather than Constantius I, contrary to what has been previously supposed by Dessau and subsequent scholars.[1158] The editorial conjecture of 'Constantius' appears to be a result of an arbitrary attempt by Casaubon—who was obviously not aware of all the manuscripts and had disagreed with Robertus de Porta's ascription of the *Gallieni* to Capitolinus—to ascribe this work to Trebellius Pollio, who he thought was writing before 305. Nevertheless, Casaubon and subsequent early modern editors, unlike

[1157] Lacuna: Chapter 2; Capitolinus: next sub-section.
[1158] See n.1161 below.

more recent editors, were quite cautious and did *not* introduce it into the text itself without reservations.[1159]

The two passages, with an augmented version of the apparatus provided by two Dessauists in the Budé text,[1160] run as follows:

*Gall.*7.1 *Contra Postumum igitur Gallienus cum Aureolo et Claudio duce, qui postea imperium optinuit, principe generis †Constantini† Caesaris nostri, bellum iniit,* constanti Π, (-ii) *edd.* : constantini Σ	Gallienus, then, waged war against Postumus, having with him Aureolus and the general Claudius—who later became emperor—the head of the family of Constantine, our 'Caesar'.
14.3 *Is enim est Claudius, a quo Constantinus, vigilissimus Caesar, originem ducit.* constantinus ΠΣ : constantius *edd.*	For he is that Claudius from whom Constantine, the most watchful 'Caesar', derives his descent.

As can be seen, these passages suggest quite a broad dating, rather than the strict *terminus ante* of *c.*305 conventionally imposed on them,[1161] if two major factors are taken into consideration: (1) the emperor being referred to; and (2) the meaning of the title 'Caesar'.

As for the emperor, it is clear that in 14.3 Constantine, rather than Constantius, is being referred to and that in 7.1 the two groups of manuscripts—especially if the Σ-class is considered to be independent of Π, as Dessauists firmly maintain[1162]—cancel each other out. Indeed, as we have seen, the names Constantinus/Constantius and Constantia/Constantina are often confused in manuscripts of ancient works and in some cases are even hotly debated, especially when the context is far from clear.[1163] It is crystal clear that the use of these passages as evidence for the publication of *this* biography (rather than the corpus) before 305 is unwarranted, in terms of the emperor referred to. Indeed, the manuscript tradition and the marginal note 'to

[1159] See his and Salmasius' text and comments in HAS-1671, II: 171, 187, 201, 224. On the general questions of attribution see Part I.
[1160] Desbordes and Ratti 2000:26, 35.
[1161] This textual crux is not recorded in Dessau 1889:340; Mommsen 1890:253n.7; Lécrivain 1904:22 with n.7; Syme 1971a:49. Desbordes and Ratti (2000:119–120, 161) register the variants without further discussion.
[1162] Desbordes and Ratti 2000:vii–xxv.
[1163] See pp.164–166 above.

Constantine Augustus' point to the reign of Constantine the Great—but how does this conform to the reference to Constantine as 'Caesar' in these passages?

As for the title 'Caesar', as we have seen in the introduction to this part and as is well known,[1164] literary texts could use the terms 'Imperator' and 'Caesar', especially in, but not necessarily restricted to, informal contexts where an appointment or elevation to an imperial rank was not involved. To reiterate, a literary text—even in a formal address to a physically present Augustus—could use the term 'Caesar'.

The immediate corollaries are quite clear: the reference to Constantine in the *Lives of the Gallieni* could have been made any time between 306 and 337, whether he was officially 'Caesar' or 'Augustus'. Even if by any chance this passage did refer to Constantine's father, Constantius I, it could have been 'formally' written at any time up to 25 July 306. The wording of the statements, however, does not necessarily suggest that any of them was alive—both sentences could simply mean that the house of Constantius/Constantine was related to Claudius II. Thus, even on the basis of the Dessauist supposition that the pedigree was divulged in *c.*310—as we have seen this Dessauist presumption is circular, *ex silentio*, and unwarranted—we merely have an irrelevant *terminus post* of 310. A minimalist might even want to consider these passages as *loci nondum sanati*. In sum, whichever path one chooses the stated date is much broader than has so far been assumed.

The broader implications of these two possible dates are twofold, as they *might* create a domino effect on two issues relevant to the composition and authenticity of the corpus: (1) the claim of the second Flavian dynasty that it descends from Claudius II; (2) the date and authorial attribution of the so-called *Thirty Tyrants*.

Claudius II

The second Flavian dynasty's claim of descent from Claudius Gothicus, as more recent discussions have concluded, might be either authentic or already propagated as early

[1164] Pp. 161ff.

as 297 under Constantius.[1165] Other members of the first tetrarchy all referred to Claudius as 'our ancestor' as early as 293. More importantly, Maximian Herculius, whose daughter Theodora Constantius I 'married and later had six children with her'[1166] (obviously before 306), will have had no problem with a prophecy promising that a descendant of Claudius 'will beget many Augusti.'[1167] The same could be said about Constantine, who married Fausta, also a daughter of Maximian, in *c.*307.[1168] Whatever the case, the broader dating of the *Gallieni*, quite probably to any time under Constantine the Great and probably by an *incertus auctor*, excludes these works from the usual Dessauist claim that the Claudian ancestry 'reflects the historical situation in the year 310,' and 'cannot have been written, as it purports to be, under the tetrarchy'[1169] because it contains 'two early references to Constantius Caesar and his ancestry (*Gall.* 7.1; 14.3)'.[1170] Nevertheless, one does not have to concede to these inaccurate assumptions, for apparently any member of the first tetrarchy could have subscribed to a Claudian ancestry,[1171] and in the West in particular as Maximian Herculius had grandchildren from his biological daughter Theodora and his son-in-law Constantius I.

[1165] Chausson 2007:25–95 suggests it is authentic and claims that 'the historiographical trial initiated in 1889 against Constantine (and not reopened since) is based on presumptions rather than on evidence' (ibid. 95), but is not willing to reconsider the Dessauist dogma, instigated by Dessau 1889, as he thinks the '*HA*' was written 'sous Stilicon' (ibid.); Lippold 1998:160–183 (pub.1981) suggests it was known since 297, but is ignored in Syme 1983:63–78, and in *Stellenbibliographie* ad loc. See Lippold 1998:183–197 demonstrating the ancestry could also have been (re-)circulated in *c.*305; and Lippold 2002, also noting the inability of Dessauists to appreciate the ramifications of their non-*HA*-*Forschung* research on the validity of the Dessauist dogma (ibid. 317, 342). See also pp.174–177 with nn.725–727 above.

[1166] *Origo Constantini* 1.1: *filiam Maximiani Theodoram duxit uxorem, ex qua postea sex liberos, Constantini fratres, habuit.*; see above pp.174ff.

[1167] *Cl.*10.7.

[1168] Kienast 2009:298. Note that Maxentius might not have been a real son of Maximian Herculius, and he was definitely not his favourite 'son', as Maximian's double-dealings with him suggest (e.g. Lactant. *DMP* 28.1–4; events before 308) and the later sources note (*Pan. Lat.* XII[9].4.3; *Origo Constantini* 12; *EDC* 40.13–15; cf. *PLRE* 571, s.v. 'Maxentius 5'). Yet Dessau thought it was impossible to propagate the Claudian ancestry before 310, because it would have upset Maximian Herculius who had a son, Maxentius (Dessau 1889:340–341, 346). Vermaat 1893:96–104; De Sanctis 1896:54–62 noted the absurdity of this argument.

[1169] Syme 1983:67.

[1170] Syme 1983:74; and note his attack (ibid.: 79) on a monograph on Gallienus (Manni 1949:98): 'one recent scholar boldly affirms a conviction that the biography was composed beyond doubt in the time of Constantine. Not a true and integral conservative.' Syme apparently classified all 'conservatives' as if they had agreed with Mommsen and Momigliano's argument.

[1171] Pp.174 above.

Momigliano once noted that 'the use of Claudius Gothicus in the *HA* smacks of the age of Constantine'[1172]—this generalization for the whole corpus is most probably true, especially for the *Gallieni*, if one takes the rereading of the relevant passages into account (and the Constantinian biographies of Lampridius).[1173] But if one insists on retaining the reference to Constantius and the unwarranted attribution to Pollio in *c.*305, this could have been relevant as early as 293, as it seems also to suggest the age of the tetrarchies (293–316/325).

Twenty or Thirty Tyrants

The *Gallieni* and the *Thirty Tyrants* (*TT*) might appear at first sight to be linked to one another: *TT* contains a reference to the Lives of Valerian and Gallienus, but it is uncertain whether the author of *TT* was the same author of either the *Lives of the Valeriani* or the *Gallieni* found in the corpus. To begin with, the author of the *TT* only refers to the lives of Valerian I and Gallienus I. Moreover, the author of the *Gallieni* in most places refers to *twenty* tyrants, rather than the thirty we have in this corpus.[1174] Likewise in the *Gallieni*, Gallienus is said to have acknowledged Odaenathus as Augustus—this statement, irrespective of its veracity, should have prevented him from being counted among the *Thirty Tyrants*.[1175] Such and other discrepancies make it more probable that these two works, as we have them in the corpus, were not written either by the same person or at the same time. The possible dates of composition of the *Thirty Tyrants* provide further corroboration of the last possiblity.

Work in progress: the 'Thirty Tyrants'

This work does not provide a stated date of composition. Towards the end it contains a direct address to a reader, whose identity remains obscure due to the poor state of the manuscripts.[1176] This address makes it explicitly clear that the *Thirty Tyrants*

[1172] Momigliano 1966:155; cf. n.1165.
[1173] Pp.231ff. above.
[1174] *Gall.*16.1, 19.6–7, 21.1; noted by Manni 1969:18–20, 103–104, 109–110 (cf. Peter 1892:37–38, who did not consider ascription problems between Capitolinus and Pollio).
[1175] *Gall.*12≠*T.*15.1.
[1176] *T.*31.7–10, 33.7 (second person singular), 21.7 (second person plural).

(*TT*), as we currently have it, is a result of later revision(s), following the wish to omit two women:

> I cunningly included women, with the purpose of mocking Gallienus… In order for this book to include the lives of thirty male pretenders, I shall even add two *Tyranni*, 'beyond' the number (*quasi extra numerum*), because they belong to different periods: one in the time of Maximinus [Thrax], the other in the time of Claudius. (*T*.31.7)

The two women are Zenobia and Victoria, and the two men are Titius Quartinus and Censorinus.[1177] The reason for this defensive statement and for excluding women from the number is a reaction to readers' response (most probably men):

> No one in the Temple of Peace will say that I placed women between *Tyranni*, that is *tyrannas* or *tyrannides*, as the people there refer to me with laughter and mockery. (*T*.31.10)

The revision of published literary works, as we have seen in the case of Eusebius, was very common in antiquity, usually as a reaction to changing political realities or part of the social performance.[1178] Thus revision(s) of 'one of the authors of the HA', as a recent monograph on a 'work in progress' in antiquity refers to the author of *TT*,[1179] cannot be expected to have been different. It was clearly not always possible for an author to eliminate earlier works in circulation, which may explain what might appear to be 'inconsistencies' with 'later' or even 'earlier' published work of the same author or reactions to other readers. The *locus classicus* is in Cicero's letter to Atticus

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[1177] There is no reason to doubt these persons existed, or at least could have, in the times *TT* claimed they had; Kienast 2009:241–242, 247. Titius Quartinus is named Titus as result of a scribal error (cf. *RE* 24: 836, s.v. no. 1 by R. Hanslik [pub. 1963]; on him: Herodian 7.1.9 with Whittaker ad loc.); Straub's far-fetched interpretation of this biography's link to Jerome 'has been doubted by Lippold' (Paschoud 2011:209; Lippold 1998:29). Regarding the senatorial usurper Censorinus, Dessauists themselves admit, 'it is not necessary to suppose a reference to a particular real character of the fourth century, because the name Censorinus is attested in the senatorial order throughout the imperial period.' (Paschoud 2011:211, admittedly following Johne, *BHAC* 1972/1974, 135–136 with nn.13, 17–18). As the evidence these scholars provide shows (Paschoud 2011:212–213), the anachronisms in this person's alleged *cursus honorum* do not go beyond the time of Constantine or with the case of successively being *praefectus urbi* and *praefectus praetorio* shortly after—'not attested before *c.*340' (ibid.: 212). But could one really see such a fine resolution between *c.*340 and, say, *c.*316–337, especially for a work whose only secure *terminus post* is any time after 305/6 and has gone through revisions, as Paschoud himself admits? Cf. below.

[1178] Pp.215 above; in general: Gurd 2012.

[1179] Gurd 2012:9; on the far-fetched Dessauist attempts to overgeneralize about the composition of the corpus on the basis of *TT* alone, see Lippold 1991:28–30 (especially against the oft-quoted J. Schlumberger, *HAC* 7, 1972–1974 [1976], 221ff.)

(*Att.*16.6.4). In Gurd's words: 'revising authors do not know what they want, or they want more than a single version can accommodate.'[1180]

The possible secure *terminus ante* for *TT* would appear to be Trebellius Pollio's reference to it as his own work in the preamble to the *Life of Claudius*, ostensibly written before *c.*305/306,[1181] that is if *TT* in the corpus belongs to his pen—and it is very likely that it does—because of the apologetic stance concerning the inclusion of women in the *TT* 'corpus'. Pollio states:

> I have now come to the Emperor Claudius… I could not refuse to write of him, because I had already written of other emperors created in tumult… in that book which I published about the thirty pretenders, which now includes (*nunc detinet*)[1182] even the descendant of Cleopatra, [Zenobia], and Victoria. (*Cl.*1.1)

Paschoud himself states: 'the words *nunc detinet* suggest that an earlier version of *TT* existed without the biographies of the two women.'[1183] Or rather, Paschoud simply admits that *TT* (and *Claudius II*) are a product of at least two revisions, and thus unknowingly agrees with Momigliano and earlier scholars who suggested such revisions.[1184] But combining the statement in *Claudius* with those in *TT* seems to suggest three stages of revision:

Date	**Notable features**	**Authorities**
Before *c.*305/306	Without Victoria and Zenobia	*Cl.*1.2; admitted by Paschoud
*c.*305/306	With Victoria and Zenobia	*TT.*30–31 *Cl.*1.2; admitted by Paschoud.
Any time after 305/306 (or 310, 315 etc.)	Victoria and Zenobia removed; Titus and Censorinus added.	*TT.*31.7, 12; 32–33. The current version.

To recapitulate, the *TT* as we have it in the current corpus is a product of at least three revisions.[1185] It is the revision that *post-dates* the *Life of Claudius* by several

[1180] Gurd 2012:9–23 (21, cited); 47, 52–57, 66–76, 105–108.
[1181] Pp.198ff. above.
[1182] *Detinere*=*continere*; Paschoud 2011:246, cf. Magie-SHA, ad loc.
[1183] Paschoud 2011:246; despite Dessauists' Pavlovian assumption that disregards such statements.
[1184] Momigliano 1966:160 (in general). Casuabon (HAS-1671: 2.338, 348) and Clinton, *Fasti* 1.333, 353 suggested *Claudius II* and *TT* were revised under Constantine in *c.*307.
[1185] There might have been another stage between the second and the third, most probably in the form of a draft, but it cannot be determined for certain: *Quaeso, qui expletum iam librum acceperas, boni consulas atque hos volumini tuo uolens addas, quos ego, quem ad modum Valentem superiorem huic*

years—say, from the 310s to the 330s—that was transmitted in the current corpus. Moreover, the varying representation of Zenobia within the *TT* seems further to support two of these possible revisions.[1186]

It is therefore quite reasonable to find in this mini-corpus of pretenders anachronisms or references to events that *might* appear to post-date the composition date of the *Claudius*, the most notable of which is the reference to the *thermae diocletianae*, whose construction was begun in *c.*298/299 and which were dedicated between May 305 and 25 July 306. Their construction was therefore completed between May 305 at the earliest and 306 at the latest. In *TT* a passing reference is made to these baths, when the statue of the usurper Piso is discussed:

> One can still see his statue, but the chariot, which had been decreed for him, was removed as if it was going to be transferred elsewhere and has not yet been returned. For it used to be where the Baths of Diocletian were built (*Thermae Diocletianae sunt exaedificatae*; *T*.21.7).

The perfect of *exaedificare* ('to finish building') whether in the perfect or the aorist sense could mean that this statement was made either shortly after or long after *c.*298, and unlike the reference in Vopiscus, it does not entail that the baths were open to the public. Consequently, this does not mean that 'Pollio allegedly wrote when the "*Thermae Diocletianae*" could be said to be "*exaedificatae*": hardly long before 305 [*sic*]',[1187] as most scholars assume, following Momigliano's restatement of Dessau's misconception.[1188] Rather, one could have made such a statement at any time after 298, and obviously after 305 or 315 for that matter.

Conclusion: revision, imperfection and open dates of composition

This chapter has examined minor imperfections present in the corpus, and traditionally used as indications of a later forgery. In two cases the alleged inconsistencies turned out to be unproblematic. With the number of the Gordians, we

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uolumini, sic post Claudium et Aurelianum his, qui inter Tacitum et Diocletianum fuerunt, addere destinaueram. Sed errorem meum memor historiae diligentia tuae eruditionis auertit. (*T*.31.8–9).

[1186] Varying representation noted by Lippold 2006.

[1187] Momigliano 1966:169.

[1188] P.189 above.

once more saw that a careful re-reading of the passages solved an alleged inconsistency in the corpus: the reference to two Gordians, father and son, was simply part of a discussion of their name: Antonii rather than Antonini. Thus, even if the biographies discussing the problem of the two emperors' name belong to the same author of the *Three Gordians*, this is not an inconsistency but two separate discussions: one of their name—the other of their actual number. Regarding the literary activity of an author or authors under two successive emperors, Diocletian and Constantine, we have seen that literary figures, such as Lactantius (in addition to the well-documented cases of Eusebius, the Gallic Panegyrists, and Firmicus Maternus) could be active under consecutive emperors and in various geographical positions. These cases demonstrate that literary figures, including their dates and works, were dynamic and their activity could be more fluid than is supposed in *HA-Forschung*.

The *Life of Gallienus*, *Thirty Tyrants* and the *Life of Claudius* seem to illustrate this point even better. These three works contain indications of literary activity and revision between 305/306 and *c.*330, according to the authorial statements and the manuscript tradition. The minor inconsistencies in these works, as we have seen, are a result of revisions, as is clearly acknowledged by their author and even by modern scholars. Such inconsistencies and revisions were common in ancient works, especially in periods of political upheaval. These were usually a result of authors' indecision about a specific version, and/or their attempts to revise in order to meet changing political situation or readers' feedback. As Gurd's study shows, such literary revision was part of the social performance in Rome.[1189]

Therefore, the signs of revision and inconsistencies in these works seem to provide us with an interesting and well-documented case of authorial revisions and response to audience feedback. This conclusion seems to show that Gurd's observation about earlier periods in Rome was also relevant in late antiquity.

[1189] Gurd 2012.

Acknowledgement of this more dynamic nature of literary activity, as well as revision process, allows us to reconsider a point once made by a 'conservative' critic of the corpus. Momigliano wrote:

> *Ex hypothesi* the alleged writers composed their biographies in uncertain places and circumstances at various moments between, say 285 and 337 AD and had plenty of time to revise what they wrote, if they cared, before the present collection of biographies was put together.[1190]

One can subscribe to the idea of later minor revisions in some cases, as we have seen; and to the insight—too often overlooked—on the varying location of the authors.[1191] The *terminus post* and *terminus ante* that Momigliano conferred on the corpus, however, are far from established. As *some* of the biographies of Vopiscus, Lampridius, and Capitolinus show, all we have are *termini post quos* of 325 or 336 for their literary activities. It can reasonably be surmised that they most probably remained active after those years. This is especially true when we consider that the biographies in the corpus ascribed to them *without* chronological indications, and even their own statements about writing or intending to write other biographies.[1192] For example, the *terminus post* for Capitolinus' literary activity is most probably *c.*335, and the *Lives of the Gordians* were published after *c.*324—it is not inconceivable that the *Lives of Maximus and Balbinus* were published a few years later, say in *c.*337–340s, without admitting the forgery view that Momigliano and subsequent scholars would have attributed to them, because they were active after Constantine's death.[1193]

In this case, there is a world of difference between assuming later forgery and accepting that authors continued their literary activity, whether through writing or revising into, say, Constantius II's reign (r.337–361). More specifically, there is a clear difference between the plausible hypotheses of Giri and Romano who placed the

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[1190] Momigliano 1966:160.
[1191] All scholars, perhaps with the exception of Lippold 1999:157, seem to assume that all the biographies were published in Rome.
[1192] Above Part I and below Part III.
[1193] *Introduction*.

publication of some of Vopiscus' biographies in the early 340s on the basis of their interpretation of his statements, and the forgery view of Henri Stern, who identified the entire corpus as a forgery of the 340s, following the Dessauist reading of the alleged contradictions in the corpus.[1194] As we have seen, Momigliano, following the faulty logic of Dessau, committed himself to a non-existent *terminus ante* of exactly 305 for some biographies and a *terminus ante* of exactly 337 in his attempt to defend the 'stated' dates of composition. These dates, we have seen, are irrelevant: the literary activity of ancient authors, even those included in the corpus, was far more dynamic than has previously been assumed, and their dates far more flexible.

[1194] Chapter 4.

Conclusion and overall assessment

Part II adduced arguments to support the authenticity and trustworthiness of the authorial claims about the works' dates and scope. The key elements were: careful readings of the authors' claims regarding their dates; verifications of other statements about historical episodes relating to those dates; literary and historical analyses of episodes in their narrative pertinent to persons, institutions, and the historiography of the stated period; and comparison with literary activities of other classical authors (both earlier and contemporary). The authenticity of the actual stated dates of composition has been defended, irrespective of residual questions relating to the number of the authors and their specific attribution to a given biography. This qualification is important, if only because of the confused state of the paratexts in the various manuscripts. Moreover, the single-author argument or rather, the negative argument brought against the multi-author claims and dating references of the corpus has been independently refuted beyond reasonable doubt.[1195] The combination of historical analysis and philological investigation yields a major advantage: henceforth, neither the single-forger thesis nor any alleged contradictions can be used as trump cards against the authorial claims in the corpus.

We have now reached a point where we can begin to record the general conclusions we have reached about the texts in the corpus, and the potential implications of these texts for our understanding of the tetrarchic-Constantinian period and early fourth-century historiography. The methodological ramifications, especially regarding the application of literary theories to historical texts, are no less important.

Dates, imperfections, revision, and intertextuality

The stated dates of composition for the various authors, deduced from the several biographies that contain relevant chronological references, are more flexible than the arbitrary dates Dessauists have traditionally imposed on them in order to suggest internal contradictions and hence, forgery. This is clear especially in the works of

[1195] Part I.

Vopiscus and those of Lampridius and Capitolinus. Their documented literary activity seems to have spanned the period between *c.*304 and any time *after* 325 or 336 respectively. Speratianus, on the other hand, was active a few years earlier, probably shortly before 293, but his activity, recorded in the corpus, can be dated between 293 and Diocletian's death in *c.*313/316.

Evidently, the first stated datable chronological statement in the whole corpus, as we currently have it, is *c.*293, the appointment of Constantius as 'Caesar', reported in Speratianus' apostrophe to Diocletian, which could have been made at any time until 313/316. The latest *terminus post quem* is the rehabilitation of the Ceionii Albini in *c.*336, reported by Capitolinus.[1196] Furthermore, our discussion has also shown that modern scholars, both before and after Dessau (even as late as the 1970s), have provided plausible interpretations for the authors' references to contemporary events, which are more faithful to them and to their literary and historical context than those imposed on them by Dessauists.

It has been conclusively demonstrated that the attempts to ascribe some biographies a stated *terminus ante* of 305 or 325 are simply misconceived. Indeed, it transpires that the text of the corpus as a whole lacks a clear *terminus ante*. The open *termini* for the entire corpus—the lack of a clear *terminus ante* and the existence of a *terminus post* of *c.*336—undermine not only the Dessauist claims but also the 'conservative' attempts, made by the Mommsen-Momigliano school, to postulate the active editing of the corpus in the fourth century. This last group in some cases accepted the inaccurate dates imposed by Dessau on some biographies (especially those of *Aurelian* to *Carinus*; discussed in Chapter 4), and tried to impose a *terminus ante* of 337, Constantine's death, on the entire corpus.

The advantages of the new dates are several. Firstly, yet again, it can no longer be claimed that Dessau's demonstration is irrefragable. Secondly, the Mommsen-

[1196] Chapters 5 and 7.

Momigliano attempt to postulate an active ancient editor for the corpus is unnecessary, either in order to explain the linguistic unity, or to explain the chronological inconsistencies and Constantinian anachronisms in some of the biographies.[1197] Therefore, the Mommsen-Momigliano acceptance of some of Dessau's arguments must not be taken as a partial admission of these arguments, as some have done.[1198] Even if there had been an editor, or rather an excerptor/redactor, he must have played a different role. This 'editor' would seem to be similar to the editor of *Corpus Aurelianum*. Thirdly, the redating of some of the Diocletianic biographies has shown that they could have been dedicated to him after his abdication in 305 or in his later years as *princeps privatus*. Last but not least, close reading of the passages traditionally used to date the corpus has shown that some of these are irrelevant, and that the Constantinian anachronisms, found in biographies claiming to be written in *c.*305–340, are in fact consistent with their stated dates of composition. Thus Momigliano's and Lippold's defence of a general Constantinian dating becomes more powerful for some of the biographies.

The last point was demonstrated in Chapter 4, where the biographies ascribed to Vopiscus, traditionally attributed to the 'precise' date of 305/310 were shown to have publication dates of *c.*306–340. The latter is accurate, rather than precise. The first line of argument was to show that the 'precise' date was based on a misunderstanding of key passages, such as those referring to the Baths of Diocletian and to the members of the first tetrarchy after the death of Carinus. They were all shown to be providing an irrelevant *terminus post* of 305 (like Caesar's murder to Suetonius' *Caesares*), and that the Vopiscian biographies had no clear *terminus ante*. This new dating then allowed us to reconsider the post-310 anachronisms, which were shown to be supporting an accurate dating of *c.*306–340, such as the reference to civil wars (mostly relevant after 306); the allusion to the prominence of the Probi (relevant after 310); the citation of the Constantinian author Onesmius; Roman

[1197] Chapter 3 and Chapters 4–7 (esp. 4).
[1198] E.g. Syme and Barnes; above *passim*.

campaigns against the Persians; and the Claudian ancestry of the Constantinian dynasty.

We have therefore seen that these biographies supplement our knowledge of the era of composition, especially in terms of prosopography, lost historians, and the formation of the tetrarchy. Moreover, we have argued that the 'inconsistency' regarding the titles and seniority of the members of the first tetrarchy is a result of literary preferences (such as chiasmus and anaphora) and/or the confusion prevailing among contemporaries about imperial seniority and ideology (both reflected in other contemporary texts, including inscriptions). These minor imperfections seem to speak in favour of these statements' authenticity rather than against them. For instance, Eutropius and Victor writing after 360 did not have these imperfections, since the tetrarchic-Constantinian narratives had become more stable.

The next two chapters then looked at the biographies containing apostrophes to Constantine. Following the lead of Lippold's recent publications, we noted that the imperial titles and epithets used by their stated authors, Capitolinus and Lampridius, are formally correct to the time of Constantine (after 312), and in some cases manifest titulature that does not appear after *c.*350. Moreover, these two authors present heterogeneous remarks about their literary aims, when compared to each other and to the other biographers. Capitolinus' apostrophes refer only to his decision to include biographies of fathers and sons in the same book (the Maximini and the Gordians), whereas Lampridius' apostrophes refer to his wider scheme to narrate accounts of emperors up to and including the time of Constantine, while providing glimpses of these accounts. This heterogeneity, we have seen, was used in the past in defence of plurality of authorship.

Chapter 5 argued that relevant passages in the biographies of Capitolinus fit their Constantinian dating of *c.*312–337 and indeed improve our understanding of episodes in that period. The reference to the Ceionii Albini in *Clodius Albinus* fits well

with the time of Constantine. The fictional narrative about Philip the Arab's conspiracy against Gordian III and Licinius' later attempt to conceal it was shown to be relevant only under the time of Constantine. A comparison was made with other contemporaneous texts regarding the complex relations between Constantine and Licinius, and with the complexities these created in those texts. I hope to have shown that Capitolinus manifests a similar difficulty in narrating contemporary history, but still exhibits the idiosyncratic knowledge of a contemporary, which rules out knowledge of Eusebius or Lactantius. As we shall see in the next subsection, this enables us to draw historical conclusions on the basis of this text.

Most importantly, in both passages Capitolinus has deployed sophisticated literary devices to make his points. For instance, his attempt to equate Philip with Licinius is made through complex intertextual and intratextual links within the narrative of Gordian III's biography, leading up to his allusions to Philip's responsibility for the third-century crisis, and especially the Gothic invasions. Philip, Licinius' alleged ancestor, is made responsible for the Gothic invasions under Gallienus—invasions that were checked by Claudius II Gothicus, the ancestor of the Constantinian dynasty. This, we have seen, also fits well with another Constantinian mouthpiece, *Origo Constantini*, which claimed that Licinius used Gothic mercenaries in his war against Constantine. This *Origo* also put an emphasis on Constantine's victory over the Goths in the 330s. Capitolinus was therefore active in *c.*316–336, but this does not mean that he ceased activity after the death of Constantine: the *Lives of Maximus and Balbinus*, ascribed to him, contain no apostrophes and must have been published several years after those of the Gordians, that is *c.*338–340.

Chapter 6 dealt with datable biographies ascribed to Lampridius, and focused on the epilogues of two of them: *Elagabalus* and *Severus Alexander*, both with a general date of *c.*312–337. In the epilogue to the former, Lampridius discussed past and present emperors. We have seen that the emphasis on Aurelian, Claudius II, and the cult of Apollo/Sol Invictus had contemporary relevance under Constantine, and

corroborates modern hypotheses about Constantine's relationship with these emperors; these hypotheses were reached without the evidence of this corpus, which further supports them. We then demonstrated that Lampridius' summary of his lost accounts of nearly contemporary emperors, from Diocletian to Constantine, manifests praise, confusion, and caution towards those emperors. These are manifested in a similar manner in other contemporary texts, such as the Gallic Panegyrics, *Origo Constantini*, Eusebius, and Lactantius. For example, the positive approach to Diocletian, traditionally taken as contradictory to Constantinian propaganda and utterances, was shown to be consistent with Constantinian propaganda: Lactantius presented Diocletian in a good light, and was even willing to promote Constantine to the imperial college—according to Lactantius it was Galerius who ruined Diocletian's plans and was responsible for the great persecution. The *Origo* even presented Constantine as trying to restore the tetrarchy in *c.*320, and a similar stance was adopted by the various panegyrics to Constantine.

The chapter also shows the importance of intertextuality to the interpretation of what appeared to be a moot but overlooked question. Lampridius refers to Diocletian as 'father of the golden age', and to a certain Maximian as 'father of the iron age' (*ferreum saeculum*). Whereas the former statement is defensible, the second is more complex. For most of the twentieth century, as we have seen, scholars were not able to understand the expression *ferreum saeculum* or the reference to Maximian Herculius as its father, but the discussion has revealed two things: (1) that there was a debate in the nineteenth century regarding the identity of that Maximian—whether he was Herculius or Galerius; and (2) that *ferreum saeculum* was a political expression in imperial literature applied to murderous emperors (especially in Suetonius and Dio). Several arguments have demonstrated that the emperor referred to was almost certainly Galerius, not Herculius.[1199] Furthermore, we noted that both

[1199] Even though we also noted that even if Lampridius had had Herculius in mind, this would not be incompatible with the political situation after 316/325: Lactantius was also confused about Herculius at around the same time.

Lactantius and Lampridius made intertextual allusions to Suetonius' negative portrayal of Tiberius when they referred to Galerius. Each of them used different passages from Suetonius apparently in order to make a similar point about Galerius' murderous nature. Thus, it would seem, both texts belong to the *same* zeitgeist and the same sphere of Constantinian propaganda.

On a different note, the *Life of Severus Alexander* was reconsidered in light of the ethnic origin and age of Constantine's son. After acknowledging the current consensus that this biography is the portrayal of an ideal ruler (on any dating), and that it is impossible to reconcile this with Alexander's Syrian origin (as a result of Roman racial prejudice), we compared the biography's epilogue and other themes in its main narrative with issues pertinent to the Constantinian dynasty. It was demonstrated that this biography was an attempt to show that a young emperor of Syrian origin, such as Alexander, could rule well and even better than other Romans. A comparison was then made with Constantine's sons who were appointed as emperors at a very young age after 317, and could have succeeded Constantine at about the age of Alexander at his own succession. We then argued that they were also considered Syrian, because of their mother Fausta's Syrian origin. The biography is therefore an attempt to suggest that child emperors, even Syrians, could be good rulers. Rather than expressing 'anxiety' about child emperors, this biography is an attempt to show that they could rule well, if certain conditions were met. These conditions, such as the reduction of court eunuchs and the influence of good advisors on an emperor, were all identified as important issues of the tetrarchic-Constantinian period. As we shall see, they even allow us to supplement our knowledge of that period. We also saw that the representation of Mamaea and her positive influence on Severus was somewhat similar to the Constantinian portrayal of Fausta's importance in securing the new generation of rulers. Given Fausta's disgrace in *c.*326 and subsequent disappearance from the public scene , a *terminus ante* of *c.*326 for this biography may be inferred.

The few Diocletianic biographies were discussed in Chapter 7. It has again been observed that the apostrophes and single dedication to Diocletian are formally correct for the period of composition, especially the preference for the plural over the singular address (compared to Constantinian biographies). It has been argued that the literary activity of Speratianus, or of the biographers of the Diocletianic biographies, was between *c.*293 and Diocletian's death (*c.*313/316) rather than his abdication (305). The accurate dates were shown to lend further support for earlier conservative defences of the relevant episodes of Aelius' appointment as Caesar and Diocletian's veneration of Marcus Aurelius. One further argument has been adduced to support a composition date of *c.*306–308 for the *Life of Severus*. The apostrophe in that biography reflects on the potential problems of both hereditary and elective (adoptive) succession. A careful reading of the passages has revealed that this is not a support of the latter over the former, as previously assumed. In fact, it is a consolatory demonstration that both systems could go wrong. The tension between these two systems existed throughout the principate, as we have noted in several places,[1200] and became even more acute in *c.*289–325, as a result of the formations of the tetrarchies and imperial colleges, which involved adoptions, intermarriages, and the promotion of biological sons, as well as the election of outsiders. Accordingly, it has been suggested that the apostrophe may have been an appeal for Diocletian's recall to public duty *c.*306–308, following the succession crisis and civil wars that followed his abdication.

Chapter 8 looked at the biographies with questionable authorial attribution and various other imperfections. The inconsistencies surrounding the number of Gordians and *nomen antoninorum* were eliminated. The chapter then focuses on the biographies traditionally ascribed to Trebellius Pollio. It notes that the *Life of Gallienus* is ascribed to Capitolinus in some manuscripts and to Pollio in others. Whereas certainty about the authorial attribution is difficult to establish, the date of

[1200] Chapter 2 and Part II.

that biography was shown to be Constantinian rather than pre-Constantinian, as the references in the biography were shown to be to Constantine, rather than to his father Constantius. This, we have seen, conformed well to Momigliano's earlier observation about the Constantinian dating of that particular biography.

The remaining inconsistency in the corpus was detected in the mini-series of biographies, *The Thirty Tyrants*. It appears to have been written by the same person who wrote the *Life of Claudius II*, but to have been revised at least three times, according to statements in the text. This possible revision explains some of the Constantinian anachronisms in that mini-series. It is clear that it was written in *c.*305 and revised again after *c.*306–325.

The signs of revision and minor inconsistencies in these works seem to vouch for the authenticity of the texts contained in the corpus, and to provide us with a well-documented case of authorial revisions and responses to audience feedback.

*

The corpus appears to provide hitherto 'missing' *testimonia* to literary activity around the tetrarchic period, and perhaps to the authors that predated it. The authors, as we have seen, show difficulties, hesitation, and minor inconsistencies similar to other contemporary texts, yet their knowledge of the issues is idiosyncratic enough to suggest they did not rely on those texts (or on one another). This idiosyncratic knowledge, there minor confusions, and the difficulty of following the rapidly changing politics arguably speak in favour of the stated dates rather than against them.[1201]

The corpus as a whole turns out to be an important document and a major contribution to our understanding of its original age, as we have seen in the

[1201] Cf. Momigliano (1966:162): 'Is it likely that the author(s) were unsubtle forgers of documents, but clever composer(s) of the context?' Apparently not; as he later states (ibid.): 'the fact that the author(s) are not well informed about the details of the history of the late third century can hardly prove that they wrote in the late fourth century.'

conclusions to the chapters of Part II and as we shall highlight in the following sections.

The corpus and beyond

It is submitted that the biographies and authors in the corpus are genuine. The case against their authenticity is very weak. None of Dessau's arguments, whether historical, prosopographical, linguistic, philological, or factual is conclusive, and indeed many are false or frivolous. There is nothing in the context, language, or content of the corpus that is demonstrably incompatible with its stated dates and claimed authors,[1202] and we have in fact proposed several arguments in support of the genuineness of the last two.

Part II has also demonstrated, through several specific items and broader exploreations, the implications of considering the corpus as genuine. It is a corpus of considerable historical and literary interest. In several points its biographies confirm the accuracy and trustworthiness of historical episodes, the literary atmosphere presented in other texts, and modern hypotheses. In some cases they even improve our knowledge of the tetrarchic period, thus allowing us to draw historical conclusions. In the following we shall examine the more general points and implications of this argument.

History, prosopography, zeitgeist, and 'anachronisms'

The texts in the corpus provide further instances of the emerging literary activity of the Diocletianic-Constantinian period. Throughout this study we have discussed key passages and themes, which in most cases have been used to support various theories regarding the dating and the authorship of the corpus. We have demonstrated that in all those cases there are simple answers to the simple question: do episodes and themes in those passages fit the actual dates of composition and their zeitgeist?

[1202] Cf. the wording of Jones, Grierson, and Crook 1957:368–369 against Bruno Krusch's forgery view regarding the *testamentum s. Remigii*.

To begin with historical issues and 'anachronisms', the references to the issues of imperial succession can fit any time of the imperial period. The tension between hereditary and elective succession was present throughout the principate, as we saw in Chapters 2, 6, and 7. In fact, it reached its peak in the tetrarchic period, when the tetrarchs were linked to one another through intermarriage, adoption, and elevation to imperial ranks. Neither Diocletian nor Constantine clung strictly to a specific system of succession and even the Gallic Panegyrics show inconsistency regarding the 'proper' method. This tension, the issue of 'child' emperors, and the alleged ancestries of the tetrarchs have been incorrectly conflated into a single issue, as we have noted on several occasions.

The alleged motif about child or rather, young, emperors is fairly heterogeneous in the authors of the corpus and fits the dates and events of the relevant biographies. Firstly, it is an irrefutable fact that the biographers of the corpus provided accounts of young emperors, such as Commodus (appointed Caesar aged 5, Augustus aged 16), Diadumenianus, Elagabalus, Severus Alexander, and Gordian III. Scepticism about, or perhaps hostility towards, some of these emperors can also be found in Herodian and the fragmentary Cassius Dio. Even Suetonius presented a similar approach to young Titus, before he came to power. Thus, this is the reality of the principate and not necessarily a topos.[1203] Secondly, the key passages that openly address the issue of young emperors are only two in number. One is in *the Life of Tacitus*—in which Vopiscus puts a speech in the mouth of a senator—which praises that emperor's old age as a guarantee for his positive actions and contrasts it with the calamities of just these young emperors: Nero, Elagabalus, and Commodus. This passage was independently shown to be relevant in *c.*325.[1204] It therefore conforms to Vopiscus' period of activity in *c.*320–340, suggested in Chapter 4. The second passage is in the *Life of Severus Alexander*. This biography culminates with its author's own epilogue, which explains how it came about that a boy emperor of Syrian origin became an

[1203] Chapter 6, and cf. Walbank 1953 against arguments for seeing this as a late fourth-century bias.
[1204] *Tac.*6.5 with Lippold 1999.

example of a brilliant emperor. Lampridius, we have argued, presents the case that a boy emperor of this type could rule well under certain circumstances. These were relevant both to him and to Constantine's and Licinius' sons after *c.*317 (elevated to the rank of Caesares and heirs to the throne at a very young age). As part of this zeitgeist, we also mentioned Galerius' appointment of his nine-year-old son as Caesar.

In short, the issue of 'child' emperors was relevant in the tetrarchic-Constantinian period. What we have here are two different voices on the issue: Vopiscus' rather pessimistic voice, which he focalized internally through the perception of a senator and restricted to specific examples, rather than generalized; and Lampridius' attempt to pre-empt the common prejudice against young emperors, using the specific example of Severus Alexander.

The alleged ancestries of Constantine's dynasty and Licinius were shown to conform well to the actual Constantinian dating of the biographies referring to them, and in the last case to solve a historiographical issue. The prophecies about the alleged descendants of Claudius II, his eulogistic treatment, and the alleged link between him and the tetrarchs (especially Constantius and Constantine) were discussed at various points in Chapters 4–7. They were shown to be found in biographies published decades after *c.*310–312. The earliest reference to this Claudian ancestry *outside* this corpus is a panegyric to Constantine pronounced in *c.*307–310, which referred to this ancestry as already known *before* those years.

In light of the crystallization and influence of the forgery argument based on Claudius II's relation to Constantine, it is worth highlighting the various points made and their significance. Firstly, Dessauists have assumed that the Claudian ancestry was forged by Constantine's propaganda, and was made known in the panegyric of *c.*307–310. This, it was claimed, did not correspond with the precise *terminus ante* of 305 of some biographies. We have seen, however, that the biographies reporting that alleged ancestry were written several years after that date, under Constantine. Secondly, the

alleged contradiction between this ancestry and the 'elective' monarchy is artificial: we have argued, together with recent scholars, that the election of a ruler from the aristocracy was common in antiquity. Thirdly, this ancestry and praise of Claudius II and his descendants could also have been relevant under the first tetrarchy and Constantius I (293–305). In Chapter 4 we saw that other tetrarchs also claimed to be descendants of Claudius II, that the latter was presented as a forerunner of Diocletian, and that Maximian Herculius married off his daughter, Theodora, to Constantius I in 289. They had six children before Constantius' death in 306. The forgery argument unfolded as follows: the corpus contained a prophecy about the success of Claudius II's descendants as rulers of the empire; and since he was the ancestor of Constantius and hence from Constantine's dynasty it would have 'upset' the other tetrarchs in the west before 305, especially Maximian Herculius, which therefore suggests a much later forgery. This is difficult to accept in light of the contemporaneous evidence, which is not incompatible with this prophecy.

The prophecy must have been invented and propagated in order to celebrate an alliance between the tetrarchs and the house of Constantine, and therefore fits any time after 289. The question of the authenticity of the ancestry is unrelated to the prophecy's date and the authenticity of the corpus. The relevant biographies resonated with tetrarchic-Constantinian propaganda. Finally, as we have seen, the very *assumption* that the link between Claudius II and the second Flavian dynasty is forged has been challenged in recent years on various grounds, and suggestions have been made to reconsider the verdict proclaimed against it in 1889.[1205] Indeed this issue most probably reflects a special zeitgeist, more current in *c.*289–340, rather than in any time later.

The claim that Licinius was a descendant of Philip the Arab, as we observed in Chapter 5, is both representative of the same zeitgeist and apparently solves a historiographical puzzle. So far, the reason why Eusebius' later accounts ignored

[1205] Chapter 4; Chausson 2007.

Philip as the first Christian emperor has been unclear. Owing to its prior condemnation by Dessau, Licinius' claim, reported in the *Life of Gordian*, has not been cited as evidence in the more recent phases of the controversy.

If the biography is cleared of suspicion, this claim acquires some historical value. We have seen that the simple solution is that Licinius *did* claim Philip as his ancestor. After the *damnatio memoriae* of Licinius in 325 his claim produced two reactions: Eusebius completely disregarded Philip and his Christianity, and Capitolinus described Philip in the blackest terms possible. He equated Philip with Licinius, and apparently even invented a narrative about Philip's conspiracy against Gordian III and Licinius' attempt to hide that conspiracy.

It is therefore concluded that both these ancestries and the way imperial succession is represented in the corpus are most compatible with the age of Diocletian in the Diocletianic biographies, and that of Constantine in the Constantinian biographies. The praise of Claudius II and his descendants even fits the later tetrarchic period. The biographies appear to explain why Claudius II was linked to the tetrarchs.

Of equal historical value was the discussion in Chapter 7 concerning the development of the office of Caesar. We noted the usefulness of the detailed account of Aelius' adoption and elevation to the rank of Caesar, and its superiority over the abbreviated account of Dio-Xiphilinus. It was possible to conclude that the precedent of the division between Augustus and Caesar through adoption and later appointment as Caesar of an heir apparent was Hadrian's creation. This was exactly what later constituted the tetrarchic system. It seems, therefore, that this biography was written at a time when Diocletian, who is addressed in this biography, needed a precedent and a justification for his actions. It was therefore important for a contemporary author to report the constitutional development in detail.

The representation of eunuchs in the imperial court in some biographies was also shown to fit the Constantinian era, rather than speak against it. Indeed, it allowed us

to confirm modern hypotheses about them made outside *HA-Forschung*, and even to draw further historical conclusions. The main points about eunuchs in the corpus are as follows: (1) dislike of eunuchs was common in imperial literature, from Suetonius to Lactantius, and was often linked to despotic emperors; (2) references to eunuchs in the corpus are very limited, and found only in two Constantinian biographies, *Life of Severus Alexander* and *Life of Gordian III*. In both, the representation of eunuchs in imperial service does not differ from the one found in imperial literature; (3) there was a proliferation of eunuchs in the imperial court from the time of the first tetrarchy, especially after Galerius' victory over the Persian king in 298; (4) there is now general agreement, based on good evidence, that eunuchs became influential under Diocletian and the first tetrarchy (298–305). We have also observed that Maximinus Daia (r.308–313) used eunuchs as informers; and (5) according to much later sources, Constantine and Licinius were hostile to eunuchs and tried to reduce their number and limit their activities at court.

It was observed in Chapter 6 that the *Life of Severus Alexander* describes the actions taken by Alexander and Constantine to reduce the influence of eunuchs at court. Alexander, it is claimed, reduced their responsibilities to household duties alone—actions that are quite similar to the institutional developments under Constantine, who instituted similar offices for them in *c.*312–326, according to later sources and modern scholars. We have seen that both Lampridius (in Alexander's biography) and Lactantius (in his description of Galerius and Maximinus Daia) rejected the way in which eunuchs made the Roman court look and act like a Persian court. We have also seen that later literary sources, such as *EDC*, and modern scholars tentatively suggested that Constantine and Licinius tried to reverse this development. The apostrophe to Constantine in this biography, which congratulates Constantine for having reduced court eunuchs in the same manner as Severus Alexander, seems to be a reflection of a historical reality. If Severus Alexander's biography is indeed a *Zeitgeschichte* of *c.*312–325, then we can suggest a historical conclusion based on it:

Constantine and Licinius did their best to suppress the number and influence of court eunuchs, as a reaction to their proliferation under the first tetrarchy.

The prosopography of notable Romans and Roman families has also been reconsidered in light of the actual dating of some of the biographies. It was acknowledged that if a person's nomenclature is not otherwise known, it might merely reflect our very limited knowledge of nomenclature for the early fourth century. In Chapter 4 we noted the lack of lists of suffect-consuls for the third century onwards, as well as the limited epigraphic evidence, which only increased towards the end of the century. For this reason, apparently, Herodian's account—written in the second half of the third century—of third-century events also contained some otherwise unknown figures. Moreover, we have seen from the outset that some of the 'non-existent' persons, such as the urban prefect, Iunius Tiberianus, and the Trajanic suffect-consul M. Iunius Homullus, did exist. Therefore, the prosopographical arguments brought against the corpus were in many cases just as valid as the philological argument based on verbal expressions that are 'non-existent' outside the corpus, as noted in Chapter 2. Finally, the two key prosopographical arguments brought against the dates of the corpus were shown to fit the actual dates of composition, and even to supplement modern hypotheses regarding those families and persons: (1) in Chapter 5, we saw that the reference to the rise of the Ceionii Albini fits their prominent position in the early fourth century. Moreover, the appeal to Constantine to further increase this family was shown to be an appeal in favour of Ceionius Rufius Albinus, exiled in 326 and restored in 335. This appeal, made with complex literary devices, fits well with Maternus' account in his *Mathesis*, and further confirms the modern hypotheses about his career suggested by recent scholars; (2) it was observed in Chapter 4 that the prominence of the Probi was easier to explain with the actual dates of composition. Since the nineteenth century it has been clear that the 'prophecy' about that family, according to any interpretation, was relevant in *c.*310–337. The difficulty of explaining it was the incorrect *terminus ante* of 305

imposed on Vopiscus' works. Once again, neither a Constantinian editor nor a much later forgery is needed to explain this paragraph: these are simple cases of Constantinian biographies.

The Diocletianic-Constantinian period saw attempts by numerous upstarts, including the emperors themselves, to acquire some noble ancestry, whether through marriage, false genealogies, or vague guesses and prophecies.[1206] The last two cases, as well as those of Claudius II and the tetrarchs, and Licinius and Philip, seem to fit neatly with that zeitgeist and improve our knowledge of the period when these texts claim to have been written.

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The themes and episodes discussed have been shown to fit the time of composition and its zeitgeist. The tension and issues regarding imperial succession are precise to the tetrarchic and Constantinian era, and even improve our understanding of their precedents. The much-discussed 'anachronistic' references to young emperors and eunuchs are relevant to the actual dates of the biographies discussing them, much like the administrative anachronisms.[1207] The prosopographical passages also confirm the prosopography of the Diocletianic-Constantinian period, and improve our understanding of that rather obscure era.

Once the nature of some biographies as *Zeitgeschichte* is accepted, it is possible to draw historical conclusions, as we have seen. Further studies will now have to consider whether episodes in these texts fit the time of the event or the time of composition.

The claimed scope: ancient and modern historiography

It is now agreed, on good grounds, that the *relative* stability of the Diocletianic-Constantinian period, in comparison to the third-century crisis, resulted in a literary

[1206] Cf. Chausson 2003 and already Momigliano 1966:157.
[1207] *Introduction*.

renaissance. Indeed, especially in the west, with the exception of the civil wars of *c.*306–312, there was political stability between *c.*293 and *c.*340. Bruno Bleckmann recently claimed that there was 'a richer Latin historiography in the tetrarchic era', which was more detailed than the fourth-century abbreviators; but this historiography has been lost, and can only be vindicated through *Quellenforschung* of Victor, Eutropius, *EDC*, the questionable *Annales* of Nicomachus Flavianus, and much later Byzantine sources (from the seventh century onwards).[1208] These sources, however, are claimed to be 'anonymous', such as the recensions and revisions of the various '*EKGs*', (an) unknown Greek source(s), Syme's postulated *Ignotus* biographer, and 'Suetonius Auctus' (for the period between Julius Caesar and Domitian).[1209] Of the last group of texts neither *testimonia* nor a single word survives, and for Nicomachus we only have vague *testimonia*. The difficulty and subsequent futility of this type of *Quellenforschung* of highly questionable sources is well acknowledged.[1210]

The broader implication of this study is now apparent: we have a simple possibility, which is more plausible and better grounded in existing ancient texts. Our biographical corpus contains an eclectic collection of authentic biographies, or biographical series, from the tetrarchic-Constantinian period. The scope of these series, we have noted, was longer than those included in the corpus as we currently have it. At this stage, it is worth reconsidering and expanding on J.B. Bury's overlooked observation:

> The *HA* is a composite work in which several authors, who lived and wrote in the reigns of Diocletian and Constantine, had a hand. These authors, however, were not collaborators and did not write with a view to the production of the work which we possess. The *HA* seems, in the light of recent criticisms, to have

[1208] Bleckmann 1997:29; see also discussions in Chapters 2 and 3.
[1209] The Ur-*EKG* of Enmann allegedly written before *c.*284/305 (1884), the Burgess-Barnes *EKG*s written in *c.*305/315, *c.*337, and *c.*350 (Rohrbacher 2009; Burgess 2011).
[1210] Lippold 1999; Most 2013; the disastrous consequences of this type of *Quellenforschung* and attempts to date texts in this way are well illustrated in Burgess's false conclusion that a seventeenth-century commentator was a fifth-century editor of Ammianus' text who used a later recension of the '*EKG*'—all on the basis of *Quellenforschung* (Paschoud 2006:341–342).

> been an eclectic compilation from a number of different originally independent histories.[1211]

One can obviously dispense with the archaic notion of 'histories', which has caused the confusion explained in Chapter 1, and refer to them as a series of imperial biographies. What is important is the eclectic nature of the corpus and the plurality of authorship, demonstrated and defended in Part I. This eclectic nature is also singled out in the overlooked title of the corpus: *excerpta de principibus*. According to the authorial statements of two authors, which can now be taken as credible, longer series of biographies were written. Speratianus claims to have written biographies from Julius Caesar to Diocletian, and Lampridius, biographies up to and including the time of Constantine. There was clearly overlapping between those series: for instance, Vopiscus wrote a small series of biographies from Aurelian to Diocletian, under Constantine; and Capitolinus even smaller collections and biographies of Claudius Albinus, the two Maximini, the three Gordians, and Maximus and Balbinus. The documented period of activity and claimed scope of these authors is summarized in the following table.

Possible author	Speratianus and 'Speratianian' biographies	Pollio	Vopiscus	Capitolinus	Lampridius
Claimed scope	Julius Caesar–Diocletian;	Philip the Arab–Claudius II	Aurelian–Carinus	Various Severan biographies (*Claudius Albinus*, *Macrinus*)–Gordian III	Various biographies to Severus Alexander–Constantine
Time active/published (documented in the corpus)	284?–313/316	*c.*293–330	*c.*306–340	*c.*316–330	*c.*312–330

[1211] Bury 1900:444.

It is now possible to conclude that the biographers and biographical series are most probably the representatives of the tetrarchic renaissance, detected by past and recent scholars in authors of the second half of the fourth century, such as Eutropius and Victor. This conclusion is consistent with those of recent scholars, who have argued for the possible use by Aurelius Victor and *EDC* of the various biographies included in this corpus. These suggestions were also supported in Part II, as in the case of Philip the Arab's conspiracy against Gordian, and Lampridius' accounts of Constantine's rivals. Moreover, our conclusions seem to solve historiographical issues and provide *testimonia* for the so-far postulated texts. Speratianus seems to provide us with *testimonia* for the postulated Suetonius Auctus, and most of the authors provide the necessary *testimonia* and texts of the various postulated '*EKGs*' detected in the later abbreviators.

Much the same could be said about a reconsideration of the postulated *Ignotus*. Syme suggested that this unknown biographer covered the period from Hadrian to the Severan emperors and was copied verbatim by Dessau's alleged forger, with sporadic additions from Marius Maximus. The alleged forger, Syme then claimed, carelessly distributed the various imperial 'dedications' and authorial ascriptions (manuscript titles) as an afterthought. Momigliano's criticism of this approach was simple: the biographies that Syme claimed were verbatim reproductions of *Ignotus* were in fact biographies of one of the authors in the group (say, Speratianus). Syme's approach, Momigliano argued, was limited by an uncritical acceptance of Dessau's single-forger hypothesis.[1212] Taking into consideration the manuscript tradition, philological arguments discussed in Part I, and the invalidity of Dessau's arguments and hypothesis, it seems that Momigliano's claim is further corroborated. We are simply dealing with a biographer (say, Speratianus) who made use of Marius Maximus, and whose biographical series was included in the corpus. His authorial attribution,

[1212] Momigliano 1975:102–103 contra Syme 1968:92–93, 177, 182=Syme 1971b:30–54 (pub. 1968). The *Ignotus* hypothesis, in any case, is not incompatible with the corpus being an eclectic collection of tetrarchic-Constantinian texts as Lécrivain (1904: esp. 191ff.) argued (cf. *Introduction*).

however, was confused in the transmission process. At this point, it is easier to suggest that we are dealing with a type of error common in textual transmission rather than with wholesale forgery.

Beyond this point, if the recent conclusions about the use Victor and *EDC* made of the biographies included in this corpus are sound, we might suggest that these abbreviators (as well as Eutropius) could have made use of the 'lost' biographies of the authors included in this corpus. For instance, *Origo Constantini*, Victor, and *EDC* might have made use of Speratianus' and Lampridius' accounts of the tetrarchs and Constantine's rivals. These accounts, we have seen, were not included in the corpus—most probably accidentally—for similar reasons that Suetonius' biographies were included in it in some manuscripts and Vopiscus' biographies were omitted in others.

Natural selection: the formation of the corpus

The texts in this biographical collection turn out to be authentic and to have important implications on our understanding of the tetrarchic-Constantinian period. We have seen that we are not dealing with freely distributed apostrophes (as previously thought), but with complex narratives, statements, and literary devices. These enable us to deduce dates for some of the biographies, and we can corroborate these statements with external and internal evidence. And as Momigliano and Alan Cameron once noted, these statements might be the simple truth. One could argue that this illustrates the brilliance of Dessau's forger, but as we have seen throughout this study, neither the historical nor the philological arguments, suggesting a wholesale forgery, withstand basic scrutiny. Moreover, suppose there had been a single forger, why this overkill about the dates? Or rather, *cui bono*? As a Dessau follower recently stated: 'why this elaborate charade? No good answer has been found.'[1213] This study now proposes a simple answer: this is not a charade but the

[1213] Damon 2006:28. As we have noted in several instances in this study, to state—either categorically or on the basis of Dessau 1889—that the authorial statements in the corpus are a charade is just as invalid an approach as to state that authorial claims in other classical texts are also charades.

simple reality. This is an eclectic collection of authentic texts from the tetrarchic-Constantinian period, whose authors' claims about themselves should be accepted.

Beyond the question of the authenticity of the corpus's texts, there remains the question, when were these series of imperial biographies collected into the corpus as we have it? And perhaps also, why were these texts preserved and collected in a corpus? We should start by briefly summarizing what this study has shown about what we can know and not know about the corpus and its texts, on the basis of internal and external evidence.

Regarding the works included in the corpus we have established that the authorial claims of the texts regarding dates and authorship are genuine. There are several authors preserved in the corpus, and each has produced a series of imperial biographies, apparently with a different purpose and scope in mind from that of the current corpus. The authors did not collaborate towards the production of the corpus as we currently have it. The corpus, as a whole, is heterogeneous. Two authors in the corpus claimed to have written a series of imperial biographies beyond its current scope: Speratianus from Julius Caesar to Diocletian, and Lampridius from an unknown point to Constantine. These two points suggest that the person who collected these biographies did not interfere with these authors' texts and statements, but was simply responsible for making an eclectic selection from what was available to him. Moreover, in Chapter 2 we saw that the current scope may simply have been accidental.

The external evidence leaves a wide gap for a *terminus ante* for the corpus as a whole. In Chapter 2 and at various points in Part II we observed that some of the corpus's authors were used by Victor's *Caesares* and *EDC* in *c.*360 and *c.*395 respectively. This does seem to fit with these biographers' time of activity of *c.*293–340, as their works are given a reasonable *terminus ante*, but owing to the complex and multi-author nature of the corpus, Victor and *EDC* provide no secure dating as to when these texts

were collected into the same tradition or rather, when the corpus was created. They only provide *termini ante* for the specific works.[1214]

The only secure *terminus ante* for the corpus as a whole is the first half of the ninth century: the time of the two earliest manuscripts and of the archetype of Σ. In respect of this case, the methodological comparison with *Corpus Aurelianum*, discussed in Chapter 2, is fruitful. This multi-author and tripartite corpus is only preserved in two fifteenth-century manuscripts. The three works contained in them clearly belong to the first two thirds of the fourth century (*c.*300–360). As a result of their manuscript tradition there are varying opinions as to *when* these texts were *collected* (and redacted) into what is now called *Corpus Aurelianum*: a date close to 360 (the last datable event in Victor's *Caesares*); in *c.*400; in the sixth century; or between the eleventh and the fifteenth centuries. Here too we have sporadic *termini ante* for the various works, but not for the corpus as a whole, such as *EDC* to Victor's *Caesares* (*c.*395). The only secure *terminus ante* for *Corpus Aurelianum* as a whole is its fifteenth-century manuscripts, and in all these cases the fourth-century dates of each work are retained.

There is therefore a difference between the dates of composition of texts in a corpus, and the point when they were incorporated into a corpus, or rather when the texts were first included in the same tradition for various reasons, as noted in Chapter 2.

To return to our corpus, we have seen that the main texts do not contain a clear *terminus ante* for the whole corpus. We only have a *terminus post* of *c.*336 for some biographies, and some of the authors could have been active several decades later. If this study's main conclusions are accepted regarding the corpus's texts and their authenticity, it is possible to propose a cautious hypothesis, which would explain the non-interventionist and disinterested creation process of the corpus.

[1214] Much the same could be said about the 'old' *terminus ante* of Memmius Symmachus' (d.525) use of the *Maximini*, indirectly testified in a citation by Jordanes (*Get.*15.83–88); and Alan Cameron's recent *terminus ante* of *c.*380 based on Jerome's use of Vopiscus' *Probus* in *Hilarion* (cf. *Introduction*).

A Carolingian collection of Roman imperial biographies?

The overlooked title of the corpus, the debt of the authors to the Suetonian imperial biography, and the medieval interest in this type of text were discussed in Chapters 1 and 2. The title(s) acknowledge(s) the corpus as selections (*excerpta*) from a series of imperial biographies. We have also recorded the active interest of two medieval scholars in the texts included in this corpus. Sedulius Scottus (*fl.*848–858) who used them as sources for his 'mirrors of princes': the *collectanaeum* and *de rectoribus de christianis*; and the redactor of the Σ-recension (around 850–1300). The Carolingian interest in those texts—together with Charlemagne's attempt to present himself as if he were a Roman emperor—as a possible reason for the corpus's creation might have been suggestive only, rather than attractive, were it not for recent studies on Carolingian literary tastes.

The studies of Wood and McKitterick emphasized the increased interest of Carolingian authors and monks in Roman imperial biography, especially in its Suetonian tradition: both Suetonius and the so-called 'scriptores' of our corpus. This interest is reflected in the geographical distribution of the manuscripts (strongly linked to Lorsch and Fulda), the intertextual and direct references to Suetonius, and the 'scriptores' in Carolingian authors.[1215] The most notable case is Einhard's *Life of Charlemagne*, which imitated the Suetonian imperial biography. Einhard used and alluded to both Suetonius and the 'scriptores'—most probably in order to present Charlemagne as belonging to the same line of Roman emperors, and to legitimize his assumption of the imperial title—and to provide 'mirrors of princes' for his successors. Similar literary tastes are found in other ninth-century authors/scholars: Thegan of Trier, Notker the Stammerer, Lupus of Ferrières, Rudolf of Fulda, and Archbishop Hincmar of Rheims.[1216] To these may be added this study's observations

[1215] McKitterick 2004:30, 40–42, 189–190, 201, 205; Wood 2014.
[1216] Wood 2014 (with further references).

on Sedulius' literary interests and Σ-redactor's activity with the corpus. Moreover, there is the epitome based on the 'scriptores' from Hadrian to just the Maximini.[1217]

In short, there was active literary and scholarly interest in the Roman imperial biographies included in our corpus during the eighth and ninth centuries: they were not just copied in the ninth century, but were used, digested, and re-adapted as sources of inspiration for new literary works.[1218]

Throughout this study we noted the impartiality with which the biographies were incorporated into the corpus. This also included the preservation of their authors' statements about the scope of their original works going beyond the scope of the corpus, minor imperfections, and the lack of chronological sequence in the biographies' order. These would make no sense in a unitary and well thought-out work as a whole.

Regarding the Carolingian period, where scholarly interest in texts correlates to their preservation and transmission, McKitterick notes: 'the varied use made of excerpts and extracts may expand our knowledge of the audience for historical texts. These can be epitomes of texts or extracts from particular texts' and 'rather more fruitful are the historical miscellanies'.[1219] She then notes examples of ninth-century miscellanies, the most notable of which is the creation of a manuscript tradition from the foundation of Rome by including Eutropius, Marcellinus Comes, the *Notitia galliarum*, an adaptation of Gregory of Tours' *Historiae*, and later works.[1220] This again demonstrates that there is a difference between a time when an author wrote his text and when he was included in a corpus. Moreover, despite the attempt to produce a continuous history, the authors' original statements, for example Eutropius', were retained with impartiality.

[1217] BAV Pal.Lat.886; McKitterick 2004:50.
[1218] In general: McKitterick 2004.
[1219] McKitterick 2004:50.
[1220] McKitterick 2004:50–52.

In the ninth century our multi-author corpus was titled 'excerpts about emperors'. The Roman imperial biographies in this corpus were 'mirrors of princes', and provided plentiful examples of 'good' and 'bad' rulers. These biographies provided exactly what Carolingian scribes and scholars were looking for: mirrors of princes and the desired link to the Roman imperial past.[1221] The length of time between the biographies' time of composition and their incorporation into the corpus, therefore, might explain the disinterested way in which the original authorial statements were copied, and carelessness regarding the chronological order of the biographies. The collector was more interested in collecting and transmitting *exempla* of Roman emperors, rather than producing a continuous imperial history.

There now remains the question of the actual scope of the corpus, Hadrian to Carinus, and the possible selection 'criteria'. This corpus, it has been argued, is quite eclectic. The scope itself of such medieval compilations could be completely arbitrary for reasons that may never be clear to us. *Corpus Aurelianum* is one example: this corpus ends in *c.*360. In the Greek east there are interesting cases: the eighth-century chronicle of George Syncellus ends with Diocletian; and John Xiphilinus, who in the eleventh century decided to transform Dio's *Roman History*, through rewriting and abbreviation, into an epitome of 'imperial' biographies from Pompey and Caesar up to Severus Alexander.

As our corpus is made up of various individual biographies or several series of biographies, its scope may have been determined through a 'natural selection' process: it would appear that the Carolingian collector, or rather excerptor, created the corpus from biographies and series of biographies that were available at the time. Additionally, later scribes may have omitted, or added, subsequent biographies.

In conclusion and to propose a hypothesis of the corpus's creation, the person who collected the biographies into a corpus might perhaps have been a Carolingian

[1221] Above *passim*; Wood 2014:287–290.

scholar and the reason for its creation might be the increased interest in Roman imperial biography during the Carolingian period. This interest would certainly explain the preservation of these biographies. To clarify: the biographies in the corpus were written when they claim to have been written; my hypothesis suggests that they were later collected during a period when they were again relevant, *probably* in the Carolingian age for other purposes and reasons, much like Suetonius' imperial biographies. The person who collected the biographies into the corpus and made the selection did not modify either the content of the biographies, at least not extensively,[1222] or the authorial statements.

The Carolingian interest and literary activity based on Suetonian imperial biographies may explain the formation of the corpus. It certainly explains the frequent use of this type of text and may also, therefore, explain the preservation of a corpus which might have been formed earlier between the fourth and ninth centuries with the impartiality we noted throughout this study. Henceforth the discussion about when the Diocletianic-Constantinian biographies were collected into a corpus turns out to be similar to that about *Corpus Aurelianum*, especially when the creation of multi-author corpora in antiquity is also acknowledged.[1223] If this study's main arguments are accepted, it is an invitation to consider and reconsider similar views about this corpus.

Epilogue

This study has dealt with new and old questions, using new and old methodologies, regarding a major collection of texts covering a substantial portion of imperial history (117–337). Its main conclusion is that the texts included in this corpus are authentic: their authorial statements about the actual time of composition and the number of authors are to be accepted as genuine. The biographies in this corpus reflect the

[1222] Cf. Part I.
[1223] In general: De Nonno 2010:34–41.

zeitgeist of the tetrarchic-Constantinian period and in many cases, as we have seen, improve our understanding of that period.

The main implication of this conclusion is that it solves a major issue of ancient historiography. It further supports the plausibility of views held by a few prominent scholars who worked outside Dessau's assumptions and argued that the corpus belongs to the tetrarchic-Constantinian period. Most importantly, it invites us to reconsider fourth-century historiography soberly on the basis of facts rather than speculations or nineteenth-century assumptions. The credibility and authenticity of the sources cited in these biographies, as well as other documents,[1224] now require re-examination, and each instance and author should be given thorough consideration on a case-by-case basis, rather than be subjected to a wholesale rejection under Dessau's authority. Much the same could be said about the historical episodes reported in this corpus and as we have seen in Part II, the main question should be whether an episode fits either the time of the event or the time of composition.

This study's implications also demonstrate the importance of applying modern literary theories, such as intertextuality and paratextuality, on ancient historiographical texts not just for their own sake, but in order to elucidate old problems. This study has shown how the categorization of intertextual references enables us to defend the multi-author claims of the corpus; places some of its authors in line with the Suetonian tradition; and provides new interpretations for specific passages and representations of historical episodes.

The study has also demonstrated how paratextuality combined with an investigation of the corpus's actual title and its authors' generic expectations have enabled us to draw conclusions about what this corpus as whole claimed to be: an eclectic

[1224] These 'written' documents might be evaluated for their artistic, literary, narratological, historical, or even fictional value. The methodological and theoretical framework for this type of investigation seems to have been established by recent scholars, who worked on Greek authors. See Canevaro 2013; Hodkinson, Rosenmeyer, and Bracke 2013.

collection of Roman imperial biographies. Not only the paratexts but also the awareness shown by some of the biographers regarding their 'biographical' genre and audience expectations, as we have seen, have invited us to consider their works in their own terms, rather than as an attempt to pass them off as serious political history.

An important recent contribution to the study of ancient biography has identified a crucial distinction between Suetonian imperial *Lives* and the more historiographical approach of Plutarch (and Tacitus' *Agricola*): the 'Suetonian' Latin imperial biographies appear to be more remote from historiography than the *Lives* of Plutarch.[1225] This study should be seen as an invitation for exploration along similar lines. It therefore invites literary critics, philologists, and historians to explore the importance and relevance of looking further and closer at this corpus's texts as representatives of later developments of Roman imperial biography in Latin during the third and fourth centuries. This can be done both at the level of the biographies themselves and of the authors that they cite, such as Aelius Iunius Cordus, Marius Maximus, and others. It would appear that the corpus's texts and the corpus as a whole may improve our knowledge of literary tastes (and preference for Suetonian biography) in the tetrarchic-Constantinian period, as well as the reception of Roman imperial biography as a vehicle of imperial legitimation in a much later period, under Charlemagne. Further investigation into this corpus's reception, and its literary and historical use by Carolingian authors may be beneficial for both classicists and medievalists. It may be time to widen the canon of Latin imperial biographies: Suetonius, Marius Maximus, Cordus, Speratianus, Capitolinus, Lampridius, Trebellius Pollio, Vopiscus, and… Einhard.

[1225] Power 2014:13–15.

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> *Odi et amo. quare id faciam, fortasse requiris*?
> *nescio, sed fieri sentio et excrucior*

תם ונשלם שבח לאל בורא עולם