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Introduction

Herodian's period of life, place of origin, and social standing are shrouded in mystery.[1] The only testament to his existence is the *History of the Empire from the Death of Marcus*, a work he composed in the third century.[2] In eight books the historiographer narrates the series of imperial successions and usurpations of the Roman throne over a sixty-year period of unrest and turbulence. The narrative begins with the death of Marcus Aurelius in 180 CE, which deprives the empire of a putatively exemplary leader, leaving it adrift in the throes of successive disputes for power, civil wars, and sociopolitical ferment, and concludes with the ascent of Gordian III in 238 CE. Even as the narrative persona though, Herodian remains anonymous, only providing his readers with the information that he writes about events he allegedly saw and heard during his lifetime, or even participated in during his "imperial or public service", advertising thus his work as contemporary history (Hdn. 1.2.5: ἀὸδὲὸμετὰὸτὴν Μάρκου τελευτὴν παρὰ πάντα τὸν ἐμαυτοῦ βίον εἶδόν τε καὶ ἤκουσα – ἔστι δ᾽ ὧν καὶ πείρᾳ μετέσχον ἐν βασιλικαῖς ἢ δημοσίαις ὑπηρεσίαις γενόμενος – ταῦτα συνέγραψα[3]).

Herodian's composition has received less attention than other works, chiefly the *Roman History* of Cassius Dio (books 72–80) and the *Historia Augusta*, which both describe the incidents of the same period. Regardless, important content- or methodology-related aspects of the Herodianic *History* such as the biography of Herodian and the dating of his work (see Càssola [1957a], Alföldy [1971b], Sidebottom [1997] and Polley [2003]),[4] the author's approach, evaluation, and consequent use of his sources (such as Càssola [1957b], Gascó [1984], Torres Esbarranch [1985] 59–70 and Coloru [2022]),[5] as well as issues of textual and stylistic criticism (such as Szelest [1951], Stein [1957], Càssola [1963], Roques [1990b], Lucarini [2005b, 2017], Mecca [2004], Arbo [2022]) constitute the focal point of numerous studies. Even so, historical and philological research has – up to a point − dismissed the *History* as a vulgar, low-ranking source, closer to a

1 Roques (1990a) 1; Hidber (2004) 201; for a discussion on Herodian's potential status see e. g. Whittaker (1969) xix–xxxi; de Blois (1984) 358; Torres Esbarranch (1985) 19–32; Sidebottom (1998) 2822–2824; Zimmermann (1999a) 305–319; Hidber (2006) 5–10; on his birthdate and origins see e. g. Gascó (1982), Torres Esbarranch (1985) 7–19, Hidber (2006) 1–16.

2 The majority of scholars place the composition under the emperor Philip the Arab (244–249) or Decius (249–251), see e. g. Grosso (1964) 30–31, Whittaker (1969) ix–xix, Rubin (1980) 17, 87–88, Alföldy (1989) 245–255, Marasco (1998) 2839, Zimmermann (1999a) 285–302, Polley (2003), Hidber (2006) 12–15, Kemezis (2014) 300–304; for a different opinion see Sidebottom (1997).

3 On the debated contemporary status of Herodian see e. g. Rubin (1980) 17, 85–89, Torres Esbarranch (1985) 7–19, Sidebottom (1997) 272–273, Kuhn-Chen (2002) 251–252 with n. 11, Hidber (2007) 197–198, Scott (2023) 156–164.

4 See also Whittaker (1969) ix–xxxvi, Torres Esbarranch (1985) 7–19, de Blois (1998) 3415–3423, Hidber (2006) 1–16.

5 See also Whittaker (1969) lxi–lxxi, Kolb (1972), Rubin (1980) 89–92.

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novel than to actual history due mainly to Herodian's occasionally artistic style embellished with a plethora of dramatic elements that create an allegedly selective and unsophisticated narrative.[6] This perspective led to Cassius Dio's work being upheld for decades as the ultimate authoritative source for this period Roman history. However, even though some scholars have been eager to undermine and question Herodian's veracity (see e.g. Hohl [1954, 1956], Alföldy [1971a] 431–432, Ameling [1997] 2491–2492) many others, such as Whittaker (1969) xxxvi–lxi, Bowersock (1975), Piper (1975), Galimberti (2014) 9–32, and Kemezis (2016) mainly 190–191, (2022) rush to the historiographer's defense.

Especially the dawn of the 21st century (mostly from 1990 onwards) marks a currently increasing interest in Herodianic studies, best exemplified by Lucarini's (2005a) new edition of the text[7] and some illuminating and influential publications. To begin with, the works of Zimmermann (1999b, 1999c), Sidebottom (1998), Kuhn-Chen (2002, 249–327), Hidber (2004), Pitcher (2009 39–44), Kemezis (2014) mainly 227–272, (2022), Chrysanthou (2020), and Baumann (2022) examine Herodian's narrative technique and methodology. In particular, Pitcher (2012, 2018 respectively) explores the narrative space and characterization technique in our source,[8] and Hidber (1999, 2007, cf. Castelli [2008]) the topic of narrative time. Chrysanthou (2023, 2024 respectively) elaborates on the concept of "group mind" thinking in Herodian as well as the use of digressions, while Timonen (2000),[9] Bingham/Imrie (2015), and Scott (2018) focus on the plot and scene patterns in Herodian's storyline.[10] Moreover, the publications of Zimmermann (1999a), Marasco (1998), Hidber (2006), and Chrysanthou (2022a) along with the volumes edited by Galimberti (2017a, 2022a) analyze the Herodianic corpus from different and manifold viewpoints, whereas the recent commentaries of Galimberti (2014) and Guida (2022) center on the first and eighth book respectively.

The research has also given prominence to the general theme of "crisis" in the narrated period (see e.g. Buongiorno [2017], Gonzales [2017], Andrews [2019], Davenport/Mallan [2020])[11] and to concrete thematic strands of the text such as religion (see e.g. Rowan [2005], Galimberti [2022b]), rhetoric and speeches (see e.g. Kemezis [2014] 252–260, Mallan [2022], Pitcher [2022], Iglesias Zoido [2023]), topography (Schettino [2017] mainly 86–89, Mecella [2022], Ruiz del Árbol Moro [2022]), ethnography (Sánchez Sánchez [2020]), *paideia* (Asirvatham [2017], Roberto [2017, 2022]),[12] imperial

6 On the reception of Herodian's text from the fifteenth century onwards see Zimmermann (1998) with Hidber (2006) 20–58.

7 The widely used translation for Herodian's text is Whittaker's (1969–1970) Loeb edition. Other translations include Echols (1961) (English), Càssola (1968) (Italian), Torres Esbarranch (1985) (Spanish), Roques (1990a) (French), Müller (1996) (German).

8 See also Hidber (2006) 188–272.

9 Timonen includes the *Roman History* of Cassius Dio and the *Historia Augusta* in his analysis.

10 See also Hidber (2006) 124–187.

11 See also Gascó (1986), de Blois (1984), Marasco (1998) 2910–2914, Sidebottom (1998) 2792–2803.

12 See also e.g. Zimmermann (1999b) 20–23, Sidebottom (1998) 2804–2812, 2822 and (2007) 80–81, Kuhn-Chen (2002) 273–277.

authority and power (de Blois [2003], Buongiorno [2017], Hekster [2017], Bérenger [2020], Arbo [2021]), Greek and Roman cultural identities (Bekker-Nielsen [2014]); popular morality (Rodríguez Horrillo [2009]) and wonders and marvels (Arbo [2017]).[13] Last but not least, person-centered studies rely on Herodian's *History* or employ the text among other sources, in order to form the portraits or explore specific aspects of individual imperial figures like Commodus (see e. g. de Ranieri [1997], Kozlowski [2008], Hekster [2002], Cadario [2017]), Pertinax (see e. g. Hohl [1956], Philippides [1984], Appelbaum [2007]), Septimius Severus (see e. g. Bersanetti [1938], Meulder [1999], Hekster [2017], Chrysanthou [2022b], Scott [2023]),[14] Julia Domna (Laporte [2021]), Caracalla (see e. g. Marasco [1996a], Hekster/Kaizer [2012], Scott [2012], Davenport [2017], Galimberti [2017b], Motta [2020], Baumann [2022]), Macrinus (see e. g. Marasco [1996b], Bérenger [2017]), Elagabalus (see e. g. Scheithauer [1990], Sommer [2004], Kemezis [2016], Bérenger [2017]), Severus Alexander (see e. g. Roberto [2017, 2022]), and Maximinus (see e. g. Burian [1988], Martin [2006], Speidel [2016], Mecella [2017], Boragno [2021]).

The *History of the Empire from the Death of Marcus* establishes more and more its place among the literary studies of ancient historiography. In this regard, this volume aims to contribute to the ongoing, growing attention to Herodian and enrich the scope of research by highlighting various aspects of the text itself and analyzing its correlation with other literary works, of its own time and/or genre and beyond. In doing so, the volume brings together two strands of looking at and interpreting Herodian's work: on the one hand, our contributors shed light on the textual and literary side of the *History of the Empire from the Death of Marcus*, an approach which, on the other hand, also has significant historicizing implications which are consciously explored in the volumes' articles. As for Herodian's literary technique, three aspects stand out as important topics – and also findings – of the present volume.

First, many of our articles show how Herodian employs certain recurring key motifs to shape his narrative and lend significance to its individual episodes by connecting them around common notions and concepts. Time and space are important here (cf. Androulakis on the right moment (καιρός) in Herodian and Markov on the symbolic and thematic functions of imperial space), but also emotion markers (for example desire [πόθος], see Baron) and plot elements such as news and messages (see Chrysanthou). In all these cases, the motifs serve to highlight important narrative junctions, form vivid descriptions of battles or places, explain historical causation or contribute to the portrayal of characters – in short: they are crucial in making Herodian's "story" forceful and readable, in the double sense of enjoyable (cf. the notion of τέρψις, pleasure, in the proem, 1.1.3) and understandable.

13 See also e. g. Zimmermann (1999c) and Motta (2017, 2022) on the *demos*, Bérenger (2022) on provinces, Opelt (1998) on the depicted emotion of fear, Laporte/Hekster (2022) on imperial deaths and Buongiorno (2022) on the Senate.

14 See also Rubin (1980) 85–131.

Moreover, our contributors frequently draw attention to the marked intertextuality of Herodian's *History.* Herodian interacts, of course, with various other works of historiography. A prime example is Thucydides: Herodian proclaims a kinship to him, but at the same time reinterprets and adapts the concepts of his classical predecessor to meet his own aims and needs (cf. Pitcher on civil unrest (στάσις) in Thucydides and Herodian). Perhaps more surprising is the broad literary outlook that emerges when the authors of the volume investigate the intertextual backdrop against which Herodian unfolds narratives of failing philosophers and educators (cf. Baumann/Zacharioudaki) or generically "mixed" depictions of (again all too often failing) accessions to the throne (see Laporte on Didius Julianus). Throughout Herodian's *History*, pre- and intertexts of numerous genres come into play, from Greek and Roman drama and philosophical texts to epigrams and elegy. These results not only help to grasp the complex characterization of the protagonists in Herodian's narrative, but they also provide new insights into the literary composition of the *History of the Empire from the Death of Marcus,* in particular the textual layers Herodian employs to create meaning in the act of narration.

A further aspect of the literary strand of interpreting Herodian are audience-related questions. Many articles of the volume highlight how the *History of the Empire from the Death of Marcus* appeals to its readers, invites them to engage with the text and, at times, challenges them to reassess their understanding of Roman history and the processes that underlie it. In this vein, our authors show how Herodian takes up the disparate memories of his readers and forms them into an organized narrative (Scott), describe the deliberate ambivalence in the portrayal of characters and how it invites the readers to rethink their assumptions (Baumann/Zacharioudaki), analyze the effect of recurring motifs on the narratees' appreciation of the story (Chrysanthou), and demonstrate that the variegation (ποικιλία) of Herodian's *History* serves the purpose of both pleasure and utility (Laporte). In addition, the volume's perspective is further enriched by taking the reception of Herodian in later antiquity into account (see Kemezis on how the author of the *Historia Augusta* read – and used – Herodian).

As mentioned above, the textual approaches to Herodian seen in this volume also have a significant historicizing component that reveal him as a part of many ongoing stories of his own, in addition to the immediate political action he describes. Herodian can at times create a feeling of timelessness, as if he is a detached observer of events even as he lives through them, but this is a deceptive effect: Herodian's work is as specific to its time as is that of many an author who gives themselves a more explicit setting. Writing in the 240s–250s, he is the immediate heir of authors such as Philostratus, Cassius Dio and Lucian, who have done much to create our modern periodization of a unified high empire elite culture that flourishes under the Antonines and slowly breaks down under the Severans.[15] An earlier generation of scholarship thus tried to fit him into a narrative centered around a pre-determined "third-century crisis", but as the

15 For dating, see note 2 above.

idea of a monolithic universal crisis has receded, so also its limited usefulness as an interpretive guide to Herodian has become clear.[16] On the other hand, Herodian's most notable direct contemporaries among authors are probably Origen (d. 254/255) and Plotinus (d. ca. 270), and it remains for a brave historian to place them in the same context with him.[17] He is a witness to a post-Severan moment in the empire's historical and ideological development, linked by experience and outlook to earlier generations but writing a work that often points the way to forms and historical problems familiar from late antiquity.

The experience and outlook come through above all in his choice of a time-scale. It is probably best not to read literally Herodian's claim to be an eyewitness of events going back into the 180s, but it is highly significant that he imagines the years back to Marcus' death as a unified episode that might represent a single life-experience, just as it is still possible for us to think of one person's memory covering all the years since World War II.[18] Violent political upheaval dominates this experience: roughly half of Herodian's narrative content is taken up with two four-to-five year periods, one leading up to and including the Severan dynasty's beginning (192–197) and the other dealing with its fall and the succeeding chaos (235–238). Several of our articles look at Herodian as he processes especially the earlier of those two periods. This means digesting imperial propaganda and generating counter-narratives (see Galimberti); reassessing the value of an existing Thucydidean template for internal violence (Pitcher); and plotting the trajectory between the two great periods of violence and finding the zero point of Marcus' reign from which to measure later events (Scott).

Civil war, however, is far from the only historical development in which our contributors aim to place Herodian. The imagined lifetime he posits, from the 170s to 240s, saw important changes in the cultural geography of the empire, the meaning of Roman identity and its relationship to the rulers whose stories are Herodian's main concern. Although Herodian appears to have lived and written in Rome, he rarely uses the city as a concrete *lieu de mémoire:* if anything its peculiar institutions and sacred geography are an object of quasi-ethnographic curiosity.[19] Instead he sees it in more abstract relational terms, as a center that then defines a periphery, and the interaction between the two is a key dynamic that drives imperial history (as explored in this volume by Markov). On to this increasingly multi-polar geography Herodian still has to map the traditional ecumenical claims of Roman imperialism and Hellenistic culture, and to mark

16 The most influential argument for Herodian as indicative of a crisis is Alföldy (1971a) and (1974); a more measured approach is found at e. g. Hidber (2006) 274–276.

17 The closest approach is perhaps Alföldy (1974). Galimberti (2022b) 165–168 places Herodian in the context of contemporary Christian culture, though without direct comparison with specific authors.

18 Sidebottom (1998) 2777–2778 and Hidber (2006) 69–71 both consider Herodian's decision to write the events of his own lifetime unusual for the era, though see the considerations of Kemezis (2014) 238 n. 29.

19 Schettino (2017) explores Herodian's use of Roman topography in the Pertinax-to-Severus narrative of Book 2, but his overall portrayal of the city would still reward a fuller study.

out a narrative identity that incorporates them both (see Makhlaiuk). That evolving version of the empire also had to be defined in relation to its ruler. Chronologically, Herodian stands roughly at a halfway point between Augustus and Justinian. The monarchy he describes is ever less associated with the language of magistracy and imperial consensus familiar from the Principate, while retaining and enhancing its sacral aspects and the sense of the emperor as an epoch-defining figure that will persist into later historiography (see Mecella's article).

This link with the formal aspects of Herodian's work brings up another story in which he represents a key stage, that of the historical genre and its development. Given Herodian's self-positioning as an old man remembering the days of Marcus, his Atticizing style, and his gestures toward a classical tradition running from Thucydides to Lucian, there are many ways to see him as continuation or even end point.[20] Connections to an earlier world can be seen in his intertextual fluidity (an aspect that has already been mentioned above), where he continues a tradition going back to Tacitus and before of incorporating *topoi* and narrative modes from a surprising range of genres, not excluding comedy or elegy (see Laporte's essay). New historical realities in the mid-third century enable reassessments and reappropriations of authoritative elements of the past. These include, as we have seen, Thucydidean paradigms of στάσις (Pitcher) as well as the infinitely applicable figure of Alexander, the ruler as object of desire (Baron). Conversely, however, the dysfunction of Herodian's world gives him a chance to question the entire value of historical knowledge and experience for ruler seeking guidance (Asirvatham). Much work remains to be done in positioning Herodian as a starting point or link to a later world.[21] His way of structuring narrative around rulers points the way to Eunapius or the breviarists (Mecella) and he serves as a significant conduit for facts and object of emulation for authors including Ammianus and the *Historia Augusta* author (Kemezis). These are only initial soundings, and we look forward to future explorations of how Herodian's mobile geographical vision and fictionalizing narrative technique may have resonances not just with classicizing authors but with the emerging Christian world of hagiography and ecclesiastical history.

An Outline of the Volume

The first part of the volume emphasizes *the sources, the genre, and the reader in Herodian's narrative.* The contribution of Alessandro Galimberti starts from the historical question of the role Pertinax played in the overthrow of his predecessor Commodus. After reviewing Pertinax's remarkable career in high administration, Galimberti re-

20 For his place in a larger-scale development of Roman-era Greek historiography, see Potter (2011).
21 The area most studied thus far is his source-relationship to the *Historia Augusta* and other later traditions, for which see Rohrbacher (2013), Paschoud (2018) and other works cited in Kemezis' article in this volume.

jects the view found in most (but not all) literary sources that he remained ignorant of the plot until the conspirators selected him after their coup. Rather he was a significant player in factional politics and emerged as candidate from a field that included Claudius Pompeianus and Didius Julianus. Herodian's version does not give us explicit details but does, in Galimberti's view, include useful information, independent of Cassius Dio, for reconstructing the reactions of such figures as Sosius Falco to the coup. The question remains of how to account for Herodian's highly favorable view of Pertinax and his actions as emperor. In addition to ideological factors posited in the work of Chrysanthos Chrysanthou, Galimberti argues for Herodian's use of Septimius Severus' autobiography, which would presumably have invoked Pertinax positively as the predecessor Severus set out to avenge. Galimberti concludes by considering the place of Pertinax, with his relatively humble origins, in the ideology of ἀριστοκρατία favored by Herodian elsewhere and notably in his narrative of Macrinus.

The genre of Herodian's *History* is the focus of Karine Laporte's contribution. Central to her argument are the notions of mixture (μίξις) and variegation (ποικιλία) that characterize literary genres in general and Herodian's complex textuality in particular. Laporte traces the development and conceptualization of generically "mixed" forms of historiography, with Dionysius of Halicarnassus as the most important reference. On a methodological level, she adopts the concept of "literary interaction" (König/Whitton) as the most appropriate model to describe "mixed" historiographical compositions. Laporte then devotes the main part of her paper to a detailed analysis of Herodian's account of Didius Julianus. She shows that this passage is generically "mixed" in the sense that Herodian takes up numerous elements from comedy (Julianus as another *miles gloriosus*) and elegy (Julianus as a kind of *exclusus amator*). All these elements, as Laporte demonstrates, are fused into a composition that remains a work of historiography, albeit a much enriched one, both in terms of literary form and content. Laporte concludes that this way of writing history is particularly effective in combining utility and pleasure, the principal functions of such "variegated" forms of historiography.

Adam Kemezis in his article looks forward to a notable reader of Herodian in Late Antiquity, namely the author of the *Historia Augusta* (*HA*). That unknown author relies heavily on Herodian as a source for his accounts of Maximinus, Pupienus/Balbinus and the Gordians. Kemezis is mostly interested, however, in the rhetorical use that the *HA* makes of Herodian through explicit citations, of which there are around a dozen. These citations, while accurate in a strict sense, do not give a very good impression of how fully the *HA* has used Herodian. Rather, in Kemezis' view, they set Herodian up as a counterpoint to the version of late Severan and subsequent history found in Eutropius, Victor and the Latin breviary tradition. Curiously, the *HA* explicitly sides with the Latin authors against Herodian for the reign of Alexander Severus, only to switch and endorse Herodian's version when it comes to the (parodically exaggerated) controversies over the number of Gordians and the correct nomenclature of Pupienus/Maximus. Kemezis reads this as part of the *HA*'s overall fiction about its own authorship: this is considered both as applied to readers who are unaware of Herodian's text and those who

know Herodian and can understand the *HA*'s manipulation, and its implications for the stability of past emperors as objects of knowledge and sources of political authority.

Moving on to the concept of '*communities and communication*' *in Herodian*, the contribution of Mario Baumann and Maria-Eirini Zacharioudaki investigates the presence of philosophical criticism in the *History*, focusing on two aspects: the recurrent motif of pseudo-philosophers and the failure of parental and teaching figures to initiate their sons or students in philosophical principles. In 1.9.1 – 6, a man with the outward appearance of a philosopher appears before the assembled Roman crowd and warns Commodus about Perennis' plot. Despite the soundness of the advice, the man is seemingly dismissed as a caricature of a philosopher, who merely seeks to satisfy his greedy self-interest. The article begins with an analysis of this exemplary and remarkably ambivalent episode, which gives rise to a series of similarly ambiguous "caricatures" in Herodian's text, this time in the guise of emperors. In the second part, Marcus Aurelius and Septimius Severus are assessed as rulers but also as fathers based on their equal inability to educate their sons and provide worthy heirs to the Roman throne. Specifically, Commodus, the son of a "philosopher king", and Caracalla, the son of an aspiring imitator of Marcus, turn out to be immoral tyrants and thus negative counterparts of their predecessors. Delving into the younger emperors' upbringing, the reasons for their eventual debasement are explored and inevitably bring the flaws in their fathers' character and life choices to the fore. This discussion on futile pedagogical strategies underpins the well-known pattern of ineducable students and unsuccessful teachers of philosophy, which is intertextually examined through parallel texts in the final section of the article.

The concepts of memory, emulation, and imitation in Herodian's work are the focus of Andrew Scott's article. In the preface of the *History*, Herodian highlights his aim to record the incidents of a period still fresh in the readers' minds. The starting point of his narrative is the death of Marcus Aurelius, whose idealized figure and reign are set as a benchmark. The article points out that despite the allegedly eternal memory of Marcus Aurelius, some emperors turn away from his example, and model their imperial careers on other rulers, such as Commodus, Pertinax, or Caracalla, embracing and emulating these men's deeds, stance, and way of ruling. Even the emperors who indeed attempt to imitate Marcus, such as Macrinus, fail to properly follow his example. The shifting preferences of the different components of society as well as their conflicting viewpoints regarding the qualities of an ideal leader become also a matter of discussion. For instance, the populace longs for the revival of a Marcus-like regime, whereas the soldiers always desire to reinstate a rule by Commodus' standards. Therefore, the article investigates how the sequence of successions, and the subsequent Roman decline, is after all in Herodian's work inextricably associated with, and to an extent defined by, the different rulership models that aspiring rulers prefer to emulate, and that social groups support or seek for.

In his contribution, Chrysanthos S. Chrysanthou analyzes the presence and function of news and messages in Herodian's work, taking into account on each occasion the main parts of the communicative act: the sender, the receiver, the message, and

the context. In particular, Chrysanthou highlights three aspects that characterize Herodian's use of news and messages: (1) Herodian resorts to the spread of news in organizing his narrative discourse. He makes use of how news spreads like wildfire, noting its ability to travel across different places, in order to bring about a narrative shift and smooth the transition from one place, character, or subject to another. (2) News and messages also serve as a factor in historical causation. They not only highlight remarkable events (such as accessions, deaths, battles, conspiracies, and ceremonies), but also play a major part in their initiation and development. (3) The creation, dissemination, and reception of oral and written reports are crucial to the portrayal of characters. This happens either by revealing specific traits, virtues, and vices of certain persons and groups or by drawing attention to the acts of construction, propagation, manipulation, or even the falsification of news by specific individuals as well as the multiple affective and evaluative responses generated in the recipients.

Concerning *time and space in Herodian's text*, Laura Mecella's contribution aims to place Herodian within a long-term developmental narrative about the historiographical genre. For her, Herodian is in part the heir of a high-imperial historical tradition that includes both Thucydidean-style pragmatic history (represented by Cassius Dio) and a more biographical form that had become increasingly anecdotal (as seen in Marius Maximus). Herodian, in Mecella's view, concentrates less on either of these than on particular reigns as political units, each with a particular *Regierungsstil* that consists above all of the monarch's relationship with key political groups such as senate and army. Politically, Mecella sees in this a connection to the increasingly military and sacral nature of Severan dynastic ideology. In literary terms, it draws on the existing elements of "Kingship Literature" as seen in Philostratus' *Apollonius*, ps-Aristides' *Eis Basileia* and the fragments of Ecphantus' treatise on kingship. Looking forward, however, Mecella sees Herodian as above all the forerunner of a kind of historiography common in Late Antiquity that uses emperor-reigns as a time-structuring device. This can be seen in the works of Eunapius as well as the Latin breviarists, but makes its first appearance before the traditional historiographical watershed of the mid-third century, in Herodian.

Panagiotis Androulakis explores the concept and usage of καιρός in the *History* of Herodian. The author defines καιρός as a pivotal, advantageous moment in time dissociating it with the notion of χρόνος, which represents the linear time period. At first, the article examines how καιρός and τύχη (chance) principally coexist in an inversely proportionate way in the text. In a second section, the temporal aspects of καιρός are thoroughly addressed, since Herodian underscores the critical moments when he recounts the emergence of imperial claimants as well as the prevalent and temporally extended crises during the reign of Commodus. The author also elaborates on the right timing in the *History*, namely the use of καιρός as an indicator of an opportune moment, which is seized or – most of the time − missed by the agents. In this regard, the failure or success of the narrated conspiracies appears to significantly hinge on whether the perpetrator is adept at acting in a suitable moment. The final section of the article concerns the spatial aspect of καιρός, since Herodian specifically employs

the adjective καίριος and the adverb καιρίως to describe fatal wounds opportunely inflicted in a vital place of the body crowning an attack with success.

The contribution of Konstantin Markov revolves around the spatial aspects and their particularly symbolic and thematic functions within Herodian's narrative and his depiction of Roman political life. Herodian often emphasizes the importance of control over space (especially borders) as a main struggle for every emperor and aspiring usurper throughout the *History*. This observation leads the author to the conclusion that the success or failure of political leaders is actually defined by their ability to dominate (more) imperial space; the place from which they would choose to govern plays a similarly crucial role, considering – for instance − the fact that withdrawal into the city's outskirts seals the failure of Commodus. In addition, Herodian often records the prevailing sociopolitical and topographical conditions in different regions, providing vivid descriptions of landscapes as well as ongoing scenes mainly in the streets of Rome. These specific references open up a further discussion on whether and to what extent the historiographer was an eyewitness of the narrated events. The article also investigates how the spatial factor and specifically the *cliché* physical and behavioral characteristics attributed to various ethnicities can predetermine the support of an emperor and subsequently, his chances to succeed, the public reaction to a social change, or even the outcome of battles.

The last part of the volume is devoted to *the Greek tradition in Herodian's* History. In her chapter, Sulochana Asirvatham sets out to survey Herodian's view of the longer-range past, in the few asides found in his text. She is particularly interested in the internal function of such stories, as Herodian's characters try to process earlier iterations of the history they are living through, and surprisingly often fail. This begins with a few glimpses into earlier Greek and Persian history: Herodian in Book 3 engages with a metanarrative of intra-Greek conflict in which the disunity of Classical Greece, which made it vulnerable to conquest, continues in the form of inter-city rivalries that allow Severus and Niger to enlist various cities in their civil war. More unexpected is Herodian's treatment of the Sasanian Ardashir in Book 6. That monarch shows a remarkable awareness of his Achaemenid predecessors and their place in Greek history. As Asirvatham argues, he is able to place himself on the winning side of an East-versus-West narrative and to assert that role in warfare against Alexander Severus, who proves deficient both in battle and as an interpreter of earlier history. Asirvatham goes on to consider the ultimately unsuccessful ways in which Marcus Aurelius and Caracalla both try to enlist *exempla* as a way of framing dynastic succession, and then concludes with the original exemplary emperor, Augustus. He makes a cameo appearance in Book 8 in a curiously negative role, blamed for the demilitarization of Italy that leaves it vulnerable to barbarized armies from the frontier.

Alexander V. Makhlaiuk starts from the observation that there are great discrepancies, and even contradictions, in current scholarly assessments of Herodian's general view of the Roman empire and the extent of his "Greekness" and "Romanness". His paper aims to evaluate the arguments in favor of or against the proposed points of view and, by clarifying some nuances of Herodian's narrative, to accentuate the au-

thor's specific "Greek Romanness" (*une romanité grecque*, as Denis Roques defines it) in his perception and representation of Rome's empire. To this end, Makhlaiuk focuses on three pivotal points: firstly, Herodian's view of the Roman world as a kind of common fatherland and ecumenical empire in its spatial and ethnic dimensions; secondly, his "constitutional" vision of the Empire in its social and political constraints and driving contradictions; and thirdly, the historian's positive ideal of the imperial statehood. Makhlaiuk concludes that on the whole, it must be acknowledged that Herodian not only was reconciled to, but even identified himself with Rome and saw its Empire as his own world, that is the Graeco-Roman *oikoumenē* where the power was Roman and the culture was Greek.

Christopher Baron explores the concept of πόθος in Herodian's text. The noun appears for the first time in the dying words of Marcus Aurelius, who considers public goodwill and longing to be the most substantial protective measure for an emperor. The first part of the article focuses on the opening scenes of the *History*, where the usage of the term functions as an indicator of the contrast between Commodus and his father. Specifically, the death of Marcus signals a widespread longing for an exemplary ruler now deceased, whereas Commodus' desires will be what reveal his corrupted character from the beginning. Given the term's prominent place in Greek historiography owing to the famous figure of Alexander the Great, in a second section, the author examines how Herodian employs the πόθος-leitmotif in his narrative of Commodus' accession to the throne, as well as in his description of the young man's physical attributes, to potentially create allusions to the Macedonian king. The article concludes with a discussion on the appearance of the word πόθος in the rest of Herodian's work, and mostly its use to denote the love or affection felt by groups of people for seemingly good rulers and their eventual unfulfilled expectations. The discussion is thus brought back to Marcus and the failure of Commodus to live up to his father's example.

To conclude the volume, Luke Pitcher examines the concept of στάσις (civic unrest) in Herodian. He shows that Thucydides' analysis of στάσις in Corcyra (Th. 3.70.1 – 81.5) may have nudged Herodian in the direction of fashioning his own generalizing account of στάσις. In a complex intertextual movement, Herodian redeploys Thucydidean vocabulary to develop a vision of στάσις, inter- rather than intra-civic, which is at some distance from Thucydides, even as it proclaims a kinship to that earlier work. As Pitcher demonstrates, Herodian's concept of στάσις is in line with some expansions in the sense of that term which we find in other historiographical and para-historiographical texts of the Roman Empire. On the other hand, Herodian's usage reflects the particular interests and interpretations that inform his unique work: by shying away from Thucydides' earlier sense of στάσις, in a way imperial Greek authors such as Dionysius of Halicarnassus and Appian do not when talking about the Roman Republic, Herodian cements his own vision of how power works in the Rome of his lifetime. Contention between senate and people, or the other axes of social conflict which are central to older treatments of intra-civic discord, are not altogether impossible in Herodian. But the settled power of the emperor and the armies makes

such contention a lot less relevant than it was. As Pitcher concludes, the world has changed since the early Republic, and Thucydides' Corcyra.

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