

which she examined and, where possible, emended vexed passages. The attention she devoted to the palimpsest and earlier editorial activity will serve as a model for future textual critics working on Fronto.

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A REVISED LOEB OF *HISTORIA AUGUSTA*

MAGIE (D.), ROHRBACHER (D.) (edd., trans.) *Historia Augusta. Volume I.* (Loeb Classical Library 139.) Pp. liv + 471. Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2022. Cased, £19.95, €25, US\$28. ISBN: 978-0-674-99744-8.

MAGIE (D.), ROHRBACHER (D.) (edd., trans.) *Historia Augusta. Volume II.* (Loeb Classical Library 140.) Pp. vi + 463. Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2022. Cased, £19.95, €25, US\$28. ISBN: 978-0-674-99745-5.

MAGIE (D.), ROHRBACHER (D.) (edd., trans.) *Historia Augusta. Volume III.* (Loeb Classical Library 263.) Pp. vi + 562. Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2022. Cased, £19.95, €25, US\$28. ISBN: 978-0-674-99746-2.

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With these volumes, Rohrbacher presents a long-awaited revision of the severely outdated triplet of the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* in the Harvard UP *Loeb Classical Library* series. The volumes now appear under the name of *Historia Augusta* (henceforth *HA*), and rightly so, in conformity with the consensus that has been reached in modern scholarship, that the alleged *scriptores* are not the authors of the work. The six fictitious names under which the 30 biographies appear are the means of the (still anonymous) author of hiding his identity.

The three volumes are a revised edition of the volumes edited by Magie in 1921 (the lives of Hadrian up to Clodius Albinus, LCL 139), 1924 (Caracalla up to Maximus and Balbinus, LCL 140) and 1932 (the two Valerians up to Carus, Carinus and Numerianus, LCL 263). The revision is a *desideratum*: Magie, being a historian, was not always aware of the philological and literary trickery that the *HA* is infamous for, and his translation was not always accurate. In addition, the volumes were produced before important new insights into the nature of the work had been gained.

Rohrbacher's introduction of some 20 pages (bibliography excluded) provides a brief overview of the most important questions that have occupied *HA* scholarship in the past century. First, in reaction to Magie's treatment of the same issue in the 1921 preface, the problem of the title: while it is stated that the title found in medieval manuscripts, *De Vita Caesarum* ('On the Lives of the Caesars'), 'has often been accepted as authentic' (at least Mommsen did in *Hermes* 13 [1878], 301; I know of no later example), Rohrbacher's preferred title is *De Vita Principum* ('On the Lives of the Emperors'),

which is supposed to cover the content better. Both titles are taken from passages in the *HA* (the former from the *Vita Opilii Macrini* [*OM*] 1.1; the latter from the *Triginta Tyranni* 33.8 and the *Vita Aureliani* 1.2). As for the title under which the work is generally known, *Historia Augusta*: it was F. Sylburg in 1688 (not Casaubon, as stated in vol. III, p. 306 n. 37) who first christened the work thus, borrowing it from the *Vita Taciti* 10.3: *Cornelium Tacitum, scriptorem historiae Augustae*.

Next, the problem of the date: it was Hermann Dessau's momentous discovery, published in *Hermes* 24 in 1889, that the text should not be dated to the first decades of the fourth century, but to its last decade, on account of the use of sources (Aurelius Victor, Eutropius) and references to situations and events indicating a later time of origin. In some respects, the introduction's conciseness leads to assertions about the state of scholarship that are, at least to my taste, too confident: the identity of Marius Maximus, for instance, is highly controversial. A majority of scholars accept his activity as a biographer in the early third century as a successor to Suetonius, but the question how his work (of which very little can be said with certainty) relates to the *HA* is still hotly debated. The same applies to some proposed parallels between the *HA* and Ammianus Marcellinus' *Res Gestae*: in fact, none of these are entirely convincing, so that not a few scholars are unwilling to accept them as proof of the author's use of Ammianus as a source.

Rohrbacher's assurance regarding uncertain premises also holds for the acceptance of a preface and a life of Trajan that are supposed to be lost (linking the series more closely to Suetonius' *De vita XII Caesarum*). There are arguments to indicate the opposite, given the exact match between the *HA* and the *XII panegyrici Latini*, collected and published in about 389, that embrace the lives of the *HA* with Pliny's *Panegyricus Traiani* at the start and the praise of Diocletian and Constantine at the end – panegyric is an important element in the *HA*, both in the author's authorial comments (in which he repeatedly promises to apply the 'higher style') and with regard to the subject of the work, the praise of the good emperors (notably in the later lives from the *Vita Alexandri Severi* [*Alex. Sev.*] onwards). Rohrbacher has no doubt either about the question of the lacuna between the lives of Maximus and Balbinus and the two Valerians: recently, it has been established beyond doubt by J. Stover (whose articles from 2020 were known to Rohrbacher according to the bibliography, p. lii) that the lacuna is the result of accidental loss in the manuscript tradition, not the fruit of the author's whimsical imagination.

Rohrbacher explains the questions surrounding the 'purpose of the work' (pp. xxiv–xxviii) crisply and clearly, and he outlines the different directions interpretations may take briefly and relevantly. One could wish that this cautious approach was also applied to the problem of the *Enmannsche Kaisergeschichte* (EKG – of which the existence was recently put in doubt by Stover and G. Woudhuysen in their book on Aurelius Victor [2023]) and other issues surrounding the *HA*. That would have made Rohrbacher's preface (and concomitant notes) more accurate. In addition, are all documents fictitious, as is stated on p. xxii, even the ones from the *Vita Commodi* 18, that belong to the more reliable parts of the *HA*? If Rohrbacher (vol. I, p. xxiii) is right in supposing that Marius Maximus 'seems to have included considerable archival material in his biographies', then the author's word can be believed that *ipsas adclamationes de Mario Maximo indidi* ('I have quoted the acclamations themselves from Marius Maximus').

The text of the *HA* as printed in the new volumes is, according to Rohrbacher, 'in accordance with contemporary consensus'. If only there were one. The most recent texts have been provided by P. Soverini (1983), A. Chastagnol (1994) and the individual lives in the Budé editions (notably by F. Paschoud between 1996 and 2018). No new collation has been made, as is customary, and indeed unnecessary, for Loeb editions. But which text did Rohrbacher take as his base? Presumably Magie, but that can hardly

be considered ‘contemporary consensus’, based as it is on H. Peter’s Teubner edition from 1865 (second edition in 1884, not, as mentioned on p. vii, published in 1892). The most authoritative version is still E. Hohl’s, from 1927, revised in its fourth edition by C. Samberger and W. Seyfarth in 1965, which Magie was not able to use.

This is how Rohrbacher probably proceeded: a file was made of both the Latin text and the translation, based on a scan, and subsequently elaborated. The misprints in Magie’s volumes point in that direction: in my version of Magie’s edition of the *HA*, in *Alex. Sev.* 59.6, one of the letters *n* is somehow erased, to leave a blank space just right of the margin. This resulted in Rohrbacher reading *latrociantium* instead of *latrocinantium*, without emendation. Something comparable is the case in *OM* 2.5: Rohrbacher prints *Antoninums*, instead of *Antoninum*, which is caused by the insertion of a note, *Antoninum*¹, in Magie’s original, that has been recognised by the scanner as the letter *s*.

Mistakes present in Magie’s version are copied in Rohrbacher’s new version: in *Alex. Sev.* 48.7 a note has been added after Encolpius (vol. II, pp. 258–9 n. 182), reporting that Acholius (earlier mentioned in *Alex. Sev.* 14.6) and Encolpius (earlier mentioned in *Alex. Sev.* 17.1–2; let ‘-2’ be erased) are ‘otherwise unknown and presumably fictitious’. Not a word about Septimius, who is mentioned earlier in *Alex. Sev.* 17.2 as one *qui vitam eius non mediocriter exsecutus est* (‘who has given a good account of Alexander’s life’; I would probably opt for ‘detailed’ for the litotes *non mediocriter*). Apart from the absence of a note devoted to Septimius, the name should, according to contemporary consensus, rather be read as *Septiminus*. Peter erroneously preferred to read Septimius, possibly suggested by Septimius Arabianus in the next section, and this was followed by Magie. A similar case occurs in the *Vita Maximinorum duo* (*Max.*) 23.7: Peter erroneously has *missi etiam Romam capita sunt eorum*, instead of the correct *missa*, a mistake that was copied by Magie, and now again by Rohrbacher.

In the translation similar things happen. In *Alex. Sev.* 65.5 Rohrbacher translates ‘This was told said to Trajan by Homullus’, because, in an attempt to replace ‘told’ by ‘said’, he omits to erase Magie’s ‘told’ in ‘was told ... by Homullus’. Sometimes, Rohrbacher fails to add a final ‘-n’ to the indefinite article ‘a’ when a word beginning with a consonant has been replaced by one beginning with a vowel. In the *Vita trium Gordianorum* 6.3 (p. 371) Rohrbacher translates ‘He was very affection toward his family’, because Magie has ‘His affection for his kin was remarkable’ – the example shows how Rohrbacher tries to tweak old-fashioned language (forgetting to replace a substantive by the corresponding adjective). The tweaking is also apparent in matters of sexuality, that are rendered more explicitly, such as in the *Vita Maximi and Balbini* 6.1, *res veneria* is now ‘sex’, where Magie had ‘affairs of love’. This principle leads to quite different translations in, for example, the sexually loaded *Vita Heliogabali* (*Hel.*).

Spelling is sometimes inconsistent: *Vita Commodi* 5.5 and 11.9 have *harena*, where six other places show *arena*. (This is in line with Magie, except for *Comm.* 11.9, where Magie has *arena*.) In Greek loanwords, *ph*’s (*elephans*, *triumphus*, *triumphalis*) are consistently spelled (even better than Hohl does), but not so in the *Vita Getae* 5.8 (*fasianus*), for the just reason that the first letter has to correspond with *farrata* and *ficus*: Geta liked to have dinners served with ingredients beginning with the same letter. Where in the *Vita Marci Antonini* 25.3 *Marcus tamen non exultavit* (because Avidius Cassius’ head was brought to him), in the *Vita Avidii Cassii* 8.1 *ille non exsultauit*, with an *s* added and *u* instead of *v* (the latter probably a relic of Peter) – Magie has the same. The index of names at the end of the third volume has been lightly revised, but still contains the same mistakes that are encountered in Magie.

The great *HA* scholar S. Ballou, in two reviews in *Classical Philology* of 1925 and 1928 on Magie's first two volumes, commented on some errors and inconsistencies that are still present in the new Loeb. To mention one example (Ballou, *CP* 20 [1925], 85): in the *Vita Hadriani* 22.5 Magie quite remarkably translates 'on each occasion' for *in dies* (an addition by Mommsen, according to Peter [1884], p. 24), while in the *Vita Aelii* 6.5 he has 'every day' for the same expression. Checking this against Rohrbacher, *in dies* has (rightfully, but without a note in the apparatus) been erased in the Latin text, but in the translation 'on each occasion' is still present. In other instances (*Hel.* 15.4 and *Max.* 11.6) Rohrbacher translates 'each day' and 'day by day' respectively – no need to use the same translation for the same expression, of course, but for a typical *HA* expression as this one, consistency might have been applied. A similar lapse, this time by Magie, occurs in *Sev.* 14.7, where *cum eo* (an addition by Peter [1884], p. 146) 'was not admitted in the Latin text' (Ballou 1925, 85), while the translation still has 'in his company' – the *lapsus*, however, has not been seen and corrected by Rohrbacher. In brief, Peter still sounds through where he should not; the new editor might have profited from the reviews on the earlier edition. *Longum est omnia persequi*, as the author states repeatedly with a fostered expression on several occasions (translated by Rohrbacher as 'It would take a long time to enumerate all these details' in *Max.* 31.4; and differently on other occasions).

The volumes, welcome as they are, are too replete with errors in interpretation, translation and referencing to be wholly satisfying for present-day users. They are impractical too: many notes seem to have shifted by one digit, for which a logical explanation might be that one note has been erased, without adaptation of the references; but then, this happens in several *vitae* at the same time.

Regarding the constitution of the text, I have tried to describe the method, which has more regularities than at first sight may be gathered; strangely enough, Rohrbacher does not waste a word on his *modus operandi*. It should also be noted that Rohrbacher adduces *variae lectiones* from various sources. No system seems to govern the philological annotation – the textual variants accounted for seem to have been chosen randomly (sometimes relying on nineteenth-century scholars and sometimes on recent ones).

In the past one hundred years the *HA* has all but diminished in literary value. It was M. Yourcenar who adored 'the red or green cloth-bound volumes of the Loeb-Heinemann editions, that had become a country of [her] own', during her 25 years' work on *Mémoires d'Hadrien* (published in 1951). She must have held Magie in her shaking hands, when a heart ailment began to manifest itself, as Yourcenar herself describes in her diary; the shaking hands that she was to transfer directly to her Hadrian.

It is this Magie, which in the present revision has not been updated according to modern standards, in spite of progress in scholarship, but is in many ways a restorative edition that still bears the marks of mid-nineteenth century research. Admittedly, opinions about the *HA* differ as the idle weeds that grow in the crown of King Lear, who acts 'as mad as the vexed sea, singing aloud' (Act 4, Scene 4, Cordelia speaking), but there is a method to the madness – it is a scholar's task to uncover it (the method, not the madness).

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