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REVIEW–DISCUSSION

THE LAST BOOKS OF CASSIUS DIO

Andrew G. Scott, *Emperors and Usurpers: An Historical Commentary on Cassius Dio's* Roman History *Books 79(78)–80(80) (A.D. 217–229)*. Society for Classical Studies, American Classical Studies, Volume 58. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018. Pp. xxi + 191, 1 map. Hardcover, £79.00/ $99.00. ISBN 978-0-19-087959-4.

In his Acknowledgements, Scott (henceforth S.) writes that 'This study began as an Appendix to my Ph.D. thesis at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey', but does not include his thesis in his list of 'Works Cited'. It is worth registering that it was called *Change and Discontinuity within the Severan Dynasty: the Case of Macrinus* (PhD Rutgers, 2008), and was referred to approvingly by O. Hekster and T. Kaizer (2012) 91 n. 12: 'For Dio, see especially appendix I of S. (2008) 180–236', and listed in their Bibliography at 107. During the past decades there has been a remarkable upsurge of scholarly interest in Dio's *History*.[1] As well as a Preface to his Commentary, S. provides a 'Series Preface' about the American Dio Project, launched over thirty years ago, and the more recent Cassius Dio Project.

S. begins with the following statement at p. 1, in the first part of his Introduction, on 'Dio's life and career': 'In the first half of the third century A.D., Lucius Claudius Cassius Dio Cocceianus (henceforth Dio) composed a history of Rome in eighty books that covered the beginnings of the city down to his own time. Dio, who came from a senatorial family from Nicaea in Bithynia, was born around A.D. 165 and lived primarily in Rome from approximately A.D. 180.' He states in a footnote to the first sentence that '[b]ecause of scholarly uncertainty I have printed Dio's entire possible name, on which see Gowing (1990) and Swan (2004) xiv'. Gowing (1990) showed convincingly that Dio was not in fact called Cocceianus and that the attribution of this name to him was the result of a Byzantine confusion with Dio of Prusa. On 'Lucius Claudius' one may note the sane comment by Rich (2012) 288: 'His full name was perhaps L. Cassius Dio, as on M. M. Roxan, *Roman Military Diplomas* 2 (1985), no. 133. ('Cl.' on *AE* 1971, 430 could attest the further name 'Claudius',

[1] See the Review-Discussion in this journal by Adam Kemezis (2019) of the two-volume work edited by Valérie Fromentin and four others (2016). That derived from a project intended to mark the fiftieth anniversary of Fergus Millar's monograph (1964), and Millar was recruited to write a preface to the collection.

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but is probably a stonecutter's error.)'[2] As to the statement that Dio 'lived primarily in Rome from approximately A.D. 180', this is an assumption based, of course, on his own statement, 73(72).4.2, that he could state the facts about Commodus' reign 'not, as hitherto, on the authority of others' reports, but from my own observation'. But caution is required on the almost universal view that Dio was born in Nicaea and spent his early years there.[3] As his father was a senator,[4] he would have been required to live at Rome or at least in Italy,[5] so it is perfectly possible, indeed likely, that Dio was born at Rome. When his father served abroad, for example as proconsul of Lycia-Pamphylia (*IGR* 3.654) and legate of Cilicia, he no doubt took his family with him, as is specifically attested by Dio in the case of Cilicia (60.1.3; 73(72).7.2).[6]

In the next section of the Introduction (2–3), 'Text and Citations', S. explains that he uses the numbering according to Boissevain's reformed system, also found in the Loeb edition by E. Cary. S. has helpfully given all his references to Dio with both 'reformed' and 'standard' numbers, e.g., 79(78).35.1 is 'reformed' (i.e., Boissevain) chapter 79.35.1 and 'standard' chapter 78.35.1. He also adds the source for passages from excerptors or epitomators. For much of the period covered he has the benefit of the single surviving manuscript, *Codex Vaticanus Graecus* 1288, that transmits the text of 79(78).2.2–80(79).8.3 with some lacunae.

[2] M. Molin (2016) 432 has some rather curious ideas about Dio's names. He accepts that Claudius was one of them, adding, however, 'Cassius étant non le gentilice'. One can only recommend consultation of Salomies (1992), esp. 61–80, 90–108 for numerous examples of Romans with two *gentilicia*.

[3] Thus, e.g., Millar (1964) 8–14; cf. more recently, cited by S. at 13 n. 72, Zecchini (2016) 117: 'né en Bithynie'. The latter's familiarity with the period of Dio's last books seems to be less than it should be, since he refers at 121 to 'la nouvelle province transtigritane de Mésopotamie'. Severus' new province was bounded in the east by the Tigris but did not extend beyond it.

[4] Hose (2007) 462 is disturbingly inaccurate about Dio's father: 'His father, Cassius Dio Apronianus, had pursued the Roman *cursus honorum* and had attained (at least) the praetorship.' Apronianus is not known to have had the name 'Dio' and attained not just the praetorship but the consulship, from which he went on to be legate of Dalmatia. (By mishap at 13 n. 72 S. cites 'Hose (2009)' as also in his list of 'Works Cited' at p. 161—there with a further confusion, as A. B. Bosworth and B. Bravo are mistakenly named as additional editors as well as J. Marincola, the sole editor of the work, actually published in 2007, in which Hose's paper is included.)

[5] Cf. Talbert (1984) 40 and recently in detail Eck (2017) 103–7.

[6] It is evidently because of Dio's statement at 73(72).4–2, cited above, that Groag in *PIR*^{2} C 485 believed that his father's governorship of Cilicia may have begun 'vel iam ante a. 180, cum *Dio filius, qui se patrem in provinciam comitatum esse testatur*, inde ab illo anno per totum fere Commodi imperium Romae degisse videtur'. Millar (1964) 15 finds the argument hard to understand.

Introduction §3: 'Cassius Dio as Historical Guide' (3–9). This is a helpful survey of Dio's treatment of his material and of his attitudes to the system under which he lived. Dio saw himself as a Roman senator, who was happy to accept the monarchy as a necessary form of government. He regarded Marcus Aurelius as the ideal emperor and is relentlessly critical of bad emperors and of what he saw as bad policies, such as Severus' annexation of a new eastern province, not 'a bulwark for Syria' but an unnecessary expense, and Caracalla's grant of universal citizenship, dismissed as a pure tax-raising device. S. devotes no more than a paragraph to the Agrippa–Maecenas debate in Book 52 and resists the temptation to date its composition precisely, but contents himself with pointing out that 'there are many points of contact between these speeches and the books under consideration in this volume', giving a few examples. In a famous passage, 53.19, on the beginning of the principate, Dio stressed how difficult it was to obtain information about decisions made after the end of the Republic, as they were from then onwards taken in secret. But for events and policies in his lifetime, where he could claim to be well informed and accurate, Dio did not hesitate to point out what the truth was. Here S.'s use of the adjective 'reactionary' to describe Dio's critical response to official propaganda is perhaps slightly unfortunate, given that the word usually means extreme conservatism: Dio certainly reacted against the government's line but can surely not be called a 'reactionary', even if he was an elitist.

Introduction §4: 'Time of Composition and the Nature of Dio's Contemporary History' (10–14). S. begins with Dio's famous statement at 73(72).23 that Commodus' death was followed by 'wars and very great civil conflicts' and his reason for writing about them. He had written a pamphlet on the dreams and portents that foretold Severus' rise to become emperor. After sending a copy to the emperor and receiving a favourable reply he had a dream in which a divine power commanded him to write history. This dream convinced him 'to write about the events which I am now setting forth', i.e., the wars and civil conflicts that followed Commodus' death. After gaining Severus' approval for this second work he decided to cover the entire history of Rome. He spent ten years collecting material as far as Severus' death and another twelve years composing the history. 'As for the rest, this will be recorded, as far as is permitted to me.' S. then cites the two further key passages, first, at 79(78).10.1–2, where Dio records a dream after Severus' death (4 February 211) in which the emperor urged him to compose an accurate account of events—this must have been in A.D. 211, at the end of which year Caracalla killed Geta and gained sole rule, *πρὶν ἐς τὴν μοναρχίαν καταστῆναι*. Finally, at the very end of his work, 80(80).5.1–3, Dio reports that he requested permission from Severus Alexander to return to Bithynia, where he evidently brought his work to an end. These statements by Dio have resulted in a variety of modern

interpretations. S. gives a convenient summary of the different theories: early, A.D. 194–216 or 196/7–217/18, including Millar (1964); middle, A.D. 201/2–223/4; and late, A.D. 211–early 230s, or later, the latter being his own preferred option. As Millar's work is still probably the best known, it needs to be mentioned here that it must be used with caution. Excellent though this book is in many respects, it is a pity that its faults are not recalled, notably the arbitrary view on the time and manner of composition. Millar decided that the *History*'s ten years of note-taking were from A.D. 197–207 and the twelve years of composition from A.D. 207–19—in spite of Dio's statement that he 'collected material down to the death of Severus' (72(73).23.5), which was in A.D. 211. Even more problematic is Millar's idea that the actual year in which individual books were written can be discovered by dividing the books up over the twelve years in which they were supposedly composed. The impossibility of this notion was forcefully pointed out in his review by Bowersock.[7]

Introduction §5: 'Cassius Dio, Greek Annalist' (15–17). 'The uniqueness of Cassius Dio's history has recently been noted, especially his use of annalistic form and senatorial persona, not seen since the time of Tacitus, in a history written in atticizing Greek', thus S. in the opening sentence of this section. Then the currently popular focus of discussion, Dio's cultural identity, whether Dio saw himself as a Roman or a Greek, is briefly discussed. Dio's choice of language need not of course surprise. He imitated Thucydides for one thing, and there were plenty of predecessors writing history in Greek, including Roman history, notably Dionysius and Appian, not to mention Plutarch, albeit a biographer rather than an historian; and Arrian, a fellow-Bithynian and also a senator and consul, wrote not only about Alexander but also produced the *Parthica*.[8] Dio clearly knew Livy, no doubt Tacitus also. Greek was the language of choice for intellectuals, as Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations* bear witness.

Introduction §6: 'Other Sources for the Reigns of Macrinus and Elagabalus' (17–21). Here S. devotes a few pages mainly to Herodian and the *Historia Augusta*. In most respects Herodian is markedly inferior to Dio, whose work he certainly used or rather very often distorted. What he says about himself is seriously

[7] Bowersock (1965) 470–3. Regrettably, however, at 473–4 he questions Millar's convincing discussion in his Appendix II of the date of Dio's first consulship, calculated as having been in A.D. 205 or 206. On Dio's career before and after the consulship Molin (2016) 439–40 has some very speculative suggestions. (Note that Bowersock (1965) 471, on Millar's dating of Dio's work on the *πόλεμοι* and *στάσεις* comments that '[o]n his hypothesis M. can admit but one war, the expedition into Mauretania in 195': he should have written 'into Mesopotamia'.)

[8] At 15 n. 83 S. refers to 'the *Suda*'s claim that Dio wrote a biography of … Arrian', whom S. calls 'his [Dio's] contemporary', which is curious, as Arrian was probably dead before Dio was born, see, e.g., *OCD*[3] 175–6.

doubtful, he is hopeless on chronology, and mostly refrains from naming individuals. In a few cases he supplies information not in Dio or other sources, for example on the cult of Elagabalus (5.3.1–9). S. duly cites the latest scholarly discussion of Herodian, although in this reviewer's opinion the monograph by Zimmermann (1999) is unsurpassed.[9] On the *Historia Augusta* S. is undeterred by Millar's comment: 'But the problem of the *Historia Augusta* is one into which sane men refrain from entering'.[10] However, he does not refer to the massive commentary on the *HA Vita* of Elagabalus published in 2014.[11] S. initially mentions Marius Maximus' lost *Vitae Caesarum*. He duly cites my own article on Maximus (Birley (1997)) but not the ultra-sceptical contribution by Paschoud (1998).[12] A particularly relevant part of the *HA* is the account of Elagabalus' death in the *vita* of that ruler, *Hel.* 17.1–7, full of detail not in Dio or Herodian, which Syme (1971) 118–21 and Barnes (1972) argued must have derived from Maximus. Both these scholars, it must be noted, rejected the idea that Maximus was the main source for the 'good' *vitae* in the *HA*, proposing instead an unknown biographer of the Caesars ('Ignotus'), whose coverage ended with Caracalla—hence Maximus seemed to them the only possible source for what they regarded as reliable information in *HA Hel.* S. discusses the question whether Dio could have used Maximus and concludes that this is 'uncertain and more than likely doubtful'. Molinier-Arbo (2009), in S.'s 'Works Cited' listed under Arbo, has some useful remarks on the relationship between Dio and Maximus and their respective writings. It may be, of course, that

[9] At 18 n. 96 S. notes that the arguments put forward by G. Alföldy on Herodian and the third-century crisis have been challenged. It may be noted that Alföldy replied to critics in a posthumously published paper: see Alföldy (2015). It deserves mention that five articles by Alföldy, including the two referred to here, are listed in S.'s 'Works Cited'; but he does not note that four out of the five were reprinted, with *Nachträge*, in Alföldy (1989). Alföldy took a uniformly negative view of the accuracy of Herodian.

[10] Millar (1964) 124. Ironically, at the time that Millar wrote these words his former supervisor, Sir Ronald Syme, was already 'entering the problem', which he was to describe at the end of the first of his four monographs on the subject as 'a morass', 'a gulf profound as that Serbonian bog/betwixt Damiata and mount Casius old/where armies whole have sunk': Syme (1968) 220. (The quotation is from Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Book 2.) Syme delivered his first paper at a Bonn Historia-Augusta-Colloquium in 1965, a year after Millar's book was published: Syme (1966). It is perhaps of interest to mention that as early as October 1960, when I had my first D.Phil. supervision with Syme, his advice was that I read the two famous articles by Hermann Dessau in *Hermes* 1889 and 1892, which set the ball rolling in research on the *Historia Augusta*.

[11] By Zinsli (2014b).

[12] It might have been useful to mention Paschoud and Wirz (2007), who convincingly pointed out a flaw in the case made by Birley (1997), namely the attempt to detect a characteristic of Maximus' style in the *HA vitae* for which he could be claimed as the main source. But against the completely negative attempt by Paschoud (1998) to deny the very existence of Maximus' *vitae Caesarum*, they were ably defended by Schlumberger (2010).

Maximus had read Dio's two early works and, for example, in his *vitae* that covered that period, A.D. 193–7, reacted against Dio's version.

Introduction §7. 'Modern Scholarship on the Reigns of Macrinus and Elagabalus' (22–3). As S. points out, modern work on Macrinus is not extensive (he does not mention his own unpublished dissertation, cf. above), whereas Elagabalus' reign has received a great deal of attention in the past decade, to which he refers briefly here, although as mentioned above he overlooks the recent commentary by Zinsli (2014b).

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S.'s Commentary is divided by reigns: it begins with 'Book 79(78): Macrinus', occupying 24–101, covering Dio 79(78).1–79(78).40.3–4, and of course covering in detail the demise of Caracalla. First comes an introductory section (24–9) on the structure of Book 79(78) and the sources for the book, followed by the Commentary proper, on which various detailed comments and suggestions are offered below.

At 29 S. refers to Caracalla's 'preference for bodyguards who were Scythians and Germans' (Dio 79(78).6.1). He has rendered Dio's Σκύθας καὶ Κελτούς as 'Scythians and Germans' (as does the Loeb editor), not noticing that Dio conservatively not only calls Germans 'Celts' but Goths 'Scythians'. —At 37–8 on the killing of Caracalla: the two tribunes enlisted by Macrinus to carry out the deed chose as their agent the *evocatus* Julius Martialis, who 'had a personal grudge against Caracalla because he did not assign him to the position of centurion upon his request', Dio 79(78).5.2–3. S. comments as follows: 'A usual career for a praetorian guardsman such as Julius Martialis would have included appointments as a tribune in the urban cohorts (perhaps, but not necessarily, with earlier service as a legionary tribune) and then a position in the praetorian guard. *Evocati* (retired praetorian soldiers who were invited back to duty) frequently become centurions.[13] Such a promotion pattern (unfulfilled in this case) is the basis for Martialis' grievance in Dio's account.' He cites for this analysis Bingham (2012/20133) 60–1, but her discussion has been garbled. She properly cites Durry (1938), still the standard work on the praetorian guard as well as various contributions by D. J. Breeze and B. Dobson (cf. Breeze and Dobson (1993)). It would have been preferable had she also referred to Dobson's monograph on the *primipilares* (1978) and further perhaps one of his later articles on the subject (2000). —At 39, on 79(78).5.5–6.1, S. registers that Martialis himself was then killed 'by one of the Scythians who was with Antoninus'. S. should surely have noticed that a work that he cited in his Bibliography, Speidel (1994), at 66 translates the passage as follows: 'This Goth was with the emperor not just as an auxiliary but as a guardsman, for the emperor kept Goths and Germans about him … These he trusted more than the soldiers and honored them, among other things with

[13] 'frequently' is hardly correct: it was far from normal for *evocati Augusti* to be commissioned as centurions. E. Birley (1981), in a study of just over 280 men of this status then known, found that only 12.5 percent actually achieved the centurionate.

centurionates, calling them *Lions*.' Speidel argues that the promotion of these Goths to the centurionate, no doubt in the *equites singulares Augusti*, would have caused resentment among praetorians who were denied the rank.

At 38–9, discussing Caracalla's journey from Edessa to Carrhae during which he was murdered, S. duly notes that Dio ignores the emperor's intention to visit the temple of the moon-god Lunus, as the *HA Cc.* 6.6, with further detail at 7.3–5, correctly reports (not the goddess Selene as Herodian has it, 4.13.3). S. cites Hekster and Kaiser (2012), who have valuable comments on the moon-cult; but he seems to have missed what was perhaps the most important point of the brilliant paper by Alföldy (1996), with his analysis of *CIL* VI.1080 (= 31236). Alföldy's restoration of this dedication by the Guild of Fishers and Divers on Caracalla's birthday in A.D. 211 indicates that Caracalla had falsified his year of birth, making himself out to be two years older than was actually the case, supposedly reaching his twenty-fifth birthday in that year—he was actually born in A.D. 188 and was thus only twenty-three. That also meant, however, that his fictitious birthday, in A.D. 186, would have been on a Monday, the day of the Moon, a deity with which, as Alföldy showed, Caracalla was more or less obsessed (it also had the additional benefit of making him even older than his hated younger brother Geta). —At 41 S. does cite Alföldy (1996) but only for the date of Caracalla's death. —At 44 on 79(78).8.1, 'in the opinion of some he predicted he would die when he sent a letter to the Senate that said, "Stop praying that I rule for a hundred years"'. This would have been a good place to cite Alföldy's restoration of that Rome dedication, lines 8–9, [*f*]*elicia tempora quatt*<*u*>*or in*[*sequantur ex hoc s*]*ancto die nativitatis tuae*, 'May four further fortunate time-spans follow on from this Holy Anniversary of Thy Birth!' —At 45 on 79(78).9.2, the eventual deification of Caracalla, it might have been worth noting that as emperor Severus Alexander is regularly called *divi Magni Antonini filius*. —At 56 S. writes that Aelius Decius Triccianus 'was prefect of the second Parthian legion under Caracalla' and shortly afterwards 'Under Macrinus he became prefect of the Alban legion', evidently forgetting that the 'Alban legion' was simply a nickname for II Parthica. —At 67, on erasing Macrinus and Diadumenianus from the record cf. another comment at 89 and especially on 115f., see below. At 69, on 'a certain Domitius Florus', 79(78).22.2, 'otherwise not attested', see now *AE* 2016, 1581, Thyatira, a statue-base, giving his career as far as legate (to the proconsul) of Asia. —At 70 on 79(78).22.3, C. Julius Asper's home town was surely Attaleia or Pisidian Antioch, not Tusculum, where the family had a residence, cf. *PIR*^{2} J 182. —At 80, on Osrhoene, as well as Wagner (1983) one should cite Speidel (2007). —At 81, S. cites several scholars on the change supposedly made by Septimius Severus, viz., allowing soldiers to live with their 'wives'. But this has been generally interpreted—or over-interpreted—by reliance on a passage in Herodian (*Hist.* 3.8.4–5). The translation by C. R. Whittaker (Loeb ed., 1969), 'and the right to live at home with their wives', reads too much into the Greek. Herodian's words, that Severus allowed soldiers γυναιξί τε συνοικεῖν, simply mean that he allowed them to live with (their) women, not that he permitted legal marriage. Decisive evidence has now come to light, in the shape of the auxiliary diploma from the year 205 or 206, published by Eck (2011); see now *AE* 2012, 1960. As Eck points out (75–6), the formula in the diploma rules out the possibility that soldiers had already been permitted to contract a *iustum matrimonium* before their *honesta missio*. As he stresses, terminology in the jurists such as *maritus* and *uxor* in the case of soldiers and their women does not have to refer to a legal marriage, nor does *uxores* in the diplomas in the expression *uxores, quas tunc habuissent, cum est civitas iis data*, mean any more than what in English used to be called 'common-law

wives'. —At 86–7, on the debated question of the identity of Gannys and Eutychianus, S. cites Arrizabalaga y Prado (1999), an online version of a very lengthy discussion.[14] That scholar makes a convincing case for these two names having belonged to separate persons. S., however, writes that '[i]f we take the evidence altogether, it seems that Eutychianus and Gannys should be identified as the same person, distinct from P. Valerius Comazon'. The identity of the first two was denied by A. Stein, *PIR*² G 74 (1952): '*Cf. Boissevain in editione Dionis III 438 qui tamen cum Gannym eundem putat atque Eutychianum non recte iudicasse mihi videtur. Nam etsi 31,1 narratio incipit ab Eutychiano, fieri potest ut subsequentibus lacunis haustum sit nomen Gannyis.*' Further, on 79(78).31.1–2 *καίτοι αὐτός τε οὐδέπω πάνυ ἐς ἄνδρας ἐτέλει*, on the face of it meaning that Gannys or Eutychianus was not yet adult, Stein commented 'id si vere traditur nescio an errore contendat Dio 78,31,2 confundens nempe eum cum Elagabalo'. This certainly seems to be probable. However, either Stein or E. Groag followed Boissevain in identifying Eutychianus with Comazon, as shown by the line following *PIR*² E 130 (by Groag (1943)), a reference forward to the future article on P. (M.?) Valerius Comazon. Groag, like many others, was of course influenced by the phrase in Xiphilinus 344, *Εὐτυχιανὸς ὁ καὶ Κωμάζων*, which must surely be the result of a misunderstanding. The entry on Comazon only appeared over seventy years later, in 2015: *PIR*² V 59, P. Valerius Comazon, by M. Heil, who dismissed the equation of Comazon with Eutychianus, 'qui quidem aut idem est ac Gannys supra G 74 … aut potius iuvenis aliunde ignotus. Item diversus est Comazon a Ganny, cum uterque nominetur eodem loco Dio 79,39,4. Cui rei operam accurate dat … Arrizabalaga y Prado [citing the online article], qui tres discernit viros in disputatione electronice edita.'[15]

In general Dio clearly disapproved of Macrinus, above all because he was of too low an origin to become emperor, even though he shared the relief felt by the senate at the removal of Caracalla. He makes no allowances for Macrinus' difficult situation when expressing criticism of his failure to observe regularity in making appointments.

The section on the next reign, 'Book 80(79): Elagabalus', is covered at 102–47, of which 102–10 are introductory: overview and structure of Book 80(79); the sources for the book; 'assessing Elagabalus' reign'; an historical outline; religion; Elagabalus' demise.

The Commentary itself occupies pp. 110–47, little more than half the number of pages devoted to the much shorter reign of Macrinus, although that

[14] The internet link that S. gives does not connect to this article, which can, however, be reached under n. 2 to the Wikipedia article on Gannys (consulted 07.05.2020). It is also now available on paper in Arrizabalaga y Prado (2017) 315–79.

[15] Millar (1964) 167 n. 1 had already cast doubt on the equation of Comazon with Eutychianus on the grounds that 'Dio's wording, 78(79).31.1, *Εὐτυχιανός τις*, makes it difficult to believe that he is referring to a figure who was prominent in the following years'. Note that in his perceptive article (rather neglected by S.) Salway (1997) 144 n. 84 writes as follows: 'It was amongst the soldiers of the camp at Raphanaea that the rising in favour of Elagabalus was first fermented by a gymnast named Eutychianus and then led by Soaemias' lover Gannys.'

part also has a large section on the end of Caracalla. Dio was evidently not in a position to report from his first-hand knowledge of events for this reign. This does not prevent him from giving detailed and thoroughly hostile coverage about the young emperor's behaviour.

Various comments and suggestions on individual items follow below. —At 115–16 evidence, not least from papyri, is cited to suggest that Macrinus' reign was as far as possible erased from the record, making it seem as if Elagabalus directly succeeded Caracalla. This would account for the fact that Marius Maximus seems not to have written a *vita Macrini*. —At 124 that 'the legion [III Gallica] was disbanded' shortly after a coup attempt, for which Whittaker's Loeb Herodian commentary, II 22 n. 1, is cited, is misleading: the legion was soon reinstated. —At 125, on Tineius Sacerdos' proconsulship of Asia to date it 'from 205 through 210' is a slip: *PIR*^{2} T 229, on this man, which S. cites, refers to four inscriptions dating the office to 209/10 or 210/11. —At 126, discussing Dio's views on religion, S. properly cites the Maecenas speech, in which at 52.36 punishment for those who try to distort Roman religion is advocated and suggests that Dio may have been thinking of Elagabalus' innovations here—but perhaps also Christianity, nowhere mentioned in what survives of Dio's work? —At 131–2 S. discusses Elagabalus' religious practices, including the alleged child sacrifice. Cf. on this matter the version in the *HA Hel.* 8.2, discussed by Bertrand-Dagenbach (2014). —At 140ff. on Elagabalus' death S. duly cites Barnes (1972), who argued that the account in *Hel.* 17 and indeed the whole of chapters 13–17 in the *vita*, derived from a good source, which he identified as Marius Maximus. Recently Zinsli (2014a and b) has attempted to demolish Barnes' case, but his preference for the *Annales* of Nicomachus Flavianus as the source is unlikely to find much support, not least because his evident approval of Paschoud's attempt (cited above) to dismiss the existence of Maximus' *vitae Caesarum* has now been effectively refuted by Schlumberger (2010). —At 147 the important paper by Salway (1997) is cited along with much less convincing discussions by others and without citing *ILS* 1329, the most convenient text of this anomalous career of a man whose name ended -atus, and whose irregular mixture of equestrian and senatorial positions is explained by Salway as a product of the reign of Macrinus. Yet at 119 S. cites *ILS* 1329 without reference to Salway, and there treats it briefly as a symptom of Elagabalus' handling of appointments.[16]

The final section of the Commentary, 'Book 80(80) Severus Alexander', is understandably kept short (148–53). Given S.'s advocacy of the late date for Dio's composition, it is no surprise that he here has Dio admitting that 'aside from certain thematic statements, the book is a superficial account of the reign of Severus Alexander'. One wonders whether Dio in fact wrote more than this but also whether he actually 'published' these later books in his lifetime.

It might well have been embarrassing for him to put out the damaging remarks about Caracalla, referred to by a disparaging nickname (Tarautas). This is the man who had become *divus Magnus Antoninus* during the reign of his

[16] By mishap this is listed in 'Works Cited' as by 'Salway B. P. M,' instead of just 'Salway B.'.

'son'. Indeed, the series of even more disparaging labels for Elagabalus (Pseudantoninus, Assyrios, Sardanapallos, Tiberinos) and the circumstances of the Emesa family's rise and their conduct between 218 and 222 were perhaps better forgotten for a while.[17]

The book ends with a list of 'Works Cited' (155–71), an Index of Citations (173–82) and a Subject Index (183–91). The works cited are so numerous that it is hard to spot just where they crop up in the text, hence an index of modern scholars might have been a welcome addition. A great many items are quite recent and it is helpful to see how many contributions by members of S.'s own generation are represented. One criticism of the list must be mentioned. S. cites four articles by R. Syme without mentioning that two were reprinted in Syme's *Roman Papers* (I (1979) and III (1984)) and two in his *Historia Augusta Papers* (1983), which S. also cites. Conversely, the paper by E. Birley, 'Septimius Severus and the Roman army', *Epigraphische Studien* 8 (1969) 63–82, is cited only by the reprinted version in his *The Roman Army: Papers 1929–1986* (1988) 21–40. It is very commendable that S. can cite the Halle dissertation by F. W. Drexler, *Caracallas Zug nach dem Orient und der letzte Partherkrieg* (1880)—who at 60 wrote 'von einem scythischen (gothischen?) Leibwächter' on the bodyguard who killed Caracalla's murderer, cf. above on 37–8. However, he could have refrained from citing some other older works, such as S. E. Stout (1911) on *The Governors of Moesia* or G. A. Harrer's *Studies in the History of the Roman Province of Syria* (1915). Stout was rendered obsolete by A. Stein, *Die Legaten von Moesien* (1940), Harrer by J. F. Gilliam, *AJPh* 79 (1958) 225–42, and indeed Stein and Gilliam are effectively replaced by the lists in Leunissen (1989). All three are also cited by S. There was no need to refer (at 83) to A. Radnoti (1961) on the new Augsburg inscription of Elagabalus' maternal grandfather, at least without a warning that his interpretation was at once shown to be mistaken; or (at 84) to J. Klass in *RE* VIIIA.1 (1955) on Sextus Varius Marcellus, the father of Elagabalus: better to refer simply to H. Halfmann, whose 1982 paper (also cited by S.) showed that previous views on these two men's careers were completely wrong.

The book is well produced, although the font used for the footnotes is uncomfortably small. Misprints or typos are very few: 53, 4 up: 'had attempting'; 67, 12 up: 'were then be interpreted'; 134, line 6, 'freedman' should no doubt be 'freedmen'; 141, 9 up, 'Elagabulus'; 166, under Oates, 'Thames on Hudson' 'on' should be 'and'; 167, under Rea, 'Elagabablus'.

[17] Note Barnes (1972) 66–7 on the sentence in the *vita*, *Hel.* 5.1, 'Alexandrum, quem Caesarem senatus Macrino interempto appellaverat': 'The erroneous notion that the Senate saluted him Caesar immediately after the death of Macrinus in June 218 appears not only in the *HA* (*Macr.* 4.1, *Elag.* 10.1, *Alex.* 1.2) but also in Victor (*Caes.* 23.3). It might derive ultimately from Marius Maximus and be a deliberate contemporary invention from the reign of Severus Alexander.' Dio correctly reported the actual date when Alexander was made Caesar, 80(79).17.2–3, cf. *CIL* VI.2001.

Notwithstanding the various points of criticism offered above on details in the commentary, S.'s achievement in making this period more accessible and in increasing our understanding of Cassius Dio must be welcomed wholeheartedly.

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