THE PERCEPTION OF ROMAN IMPERIAL AUTHORITY IN HERODIAN'S WORK

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The Greek historian Herodian may have lived from about A.D. 180 until some time after A.D. 250.¹ Geza Alföldy convincingly argues that he was a freedman or a freedman's son from Western Asia Minor who had entered the emperor's service.² In my view Alföldy's case has never been refuted. Like

¹ On Herodian's life and work see C.R. Whittaker, *Herodian I*. Loeb Classical Library (London/Cambridge, MA 1969), IX-LXXXII, esp. XLIII, LII ff., and LXXII ff.; W. Widmer, *Kaisertum, Rom und Welt in Herodians Meta Markon Basileias Historia*. Geist und Werk der Zeiten 16 (Zürich 1967), esp. 65 ff.; F. Kolb, *Literarische Beziehungen zwischen Cassius Dio, Herodian und der Historia Augusta*. Antiquitas 4. Reihe, Beiträge zur Historia-Augusta-Forschung 9 (Bonn 1972); G.W. Bowersock, in P.E. Easterling, et al., eds., *The Cambridge History of Classical Literature I: Greek Literature* (Cambridge 1985), 710 ff.; J.J. Torres Esbarranch, *Herodiano, Historia del Imperio Romano después de Marco Aurelio* (Madrid 1985), 8 ff.; G. Alföldy, *Die Krise des Römischen Reiches. Geschichte, Geschichtsschreibung und Geschichtsbetrachtung*. Ausgewählte Beiträge (Stuttgart 1989), containing among other contributions G. Alföldy, 'Herodians Person', *ibid.* 240-269 (= *Ancient Society* 2 [1971], 204-231), with *Nachträge*, *ibid.* 269-272 and Idem, 'Zeitgeschichte und Krisenempfindung bei Herodian', *ibid.* 273-293 (= *Hermes* 99 [1971], 429-449), with *Nachträge*, *ibid.* 293 f.; D. Roques, *Hérodien, Histoire des empereurs romains de Marc Aurèle à Gordien III (180-238 ap. J.-C.)* (Paris 1990), 1-15; H. Sidebottom, 'Herodian's Historical Methods and Understanding of History', in W. Haase & H. Temporini, eds., *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt II* 34, 4 (Berlin/ New York 1998), 2775-2836; G. Marasco, 'Erodiano e la crisi dell' impero', *ibidem*, 2837-2927; I. Opelt, 'Furcht und Schrecken bei Herodian', *ibidem*, 2928-2952; L. de Blois, 'Emperor and Empire in the Works of Greek-speaking Authors of the Third Century A.D.', *ibidem*, 3415-3423; M. Zimmermann, 'Herodians Konstruktion der Geschichte und sein Blick auf das stadtrömische Volk', in Idem, ed., *Geschichtsschreibung und politischer Wandel im 3. Jahrhundert nach Chr.* Historia Einzelschrift 127 (Stuttgart 1999), 119-143, and Th. Hidber, 'Zeit und Erzählperspektive in Herodians Geschichtswerk' in M. Zimmermann, ed., *Geschichtsschreibung und politischer Wandel im 3. Jahrhundert nach Chr.* Historia Einzelschrift 127 (Stuttgart 1999), 145-167.

² See Alföldy, 'Herodians Person', in Idem 1989, op.cit. (n.1), 255-269 (= *Ancient Society* 2 [1971], 219-233). Names of cities from western Asia Minor occur relatively frequently in Herodian's work and he appears to be most familiar with this particular region and with the city of Rome. Knowledge of the map of Rome may be borrowed from other writers, but the density of information about Western Asia Minor seems to preclude such procedures. According to Kolb and Zimmermann conclusions about Herodian's life and career are founded on literary fiction and should not be drawn (see Kolb 1972, op.cit. [n.1], 25-34; Zimmermann, 'Konstruktion' 1999, op.cit. [n.1], 127 and 129). In my view they are too sceptical about specific information, which Herodian explicitly or implicitly provides.

Cassius Dio, on whose work he is often dependent,³ Herodian clearly felt personally involved in Roman state affairs.⁴

Herodian's work is a mixture of history, *enkomion*, novel, and biography. Like Plutarch in his *Vitae*, Herodian mentions all kinds of trivialities, characteristic of the personalities of the emperors, whereas dates, geographical data, and important historical facts are sometimes dealt with only very briefly and rather inaccurately. Herodian liked to be a dramatist and used all kinds of rhetorical devices to bring his accounts to life. He made use of contrasting schemes and employed traditional commonplaces to interpret historical facts and to label his personalities.⁵

As opposed to some earlier interpreters, Zimmermann demonstrates that Herodian's work does not represent the viewpoint of the lower strata in society.⁶ In my opinion Herodian's audience and his political views were not much different from those of Cassius Dio, who wrote his work to inform Greek-speaking members of the higher orders, wherever they lived.⁷

How was the Roman empire perceived in the work of this Greek writer? The answer to this question cannot be found in Herodian's explicit statements, but has to be formulated on the basis of an analysis of passing remarks, in which the author more or less betrays how he sees the Roman empire. Like Cassius Dio, although less explicitly, Herodian emerges from his work as an advocate of a strong monarchical government in a fixed hierarchical socio-political system in which various groups each have their

³ See G. Alföldy, 'Cassius Dio und Herodian über die Anfänge des Neupersischen Reiches', in Idem 1989, op.cit. (n.1), 229-235 (= *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 114 [1971], 360-366), with *Nachträge*, 235 ff.; Alföldy, 'Zeitgeschichte', in Idem 1989, op.cit. (n. 1), 275 f. (= *Hermes* 99 [1971], 431 f.). Kolb, op.cit. (n.1), tries to demonstrate that Dio's Roman History was a very important source of Herodian's work. His views are put into perspective by T.D. Barnes, *Gnomon* 47 (1975), 368-373 (in a review of Kolb's book). According to Sidebottom 1998, op.cit. (n.1), 2780-2792, Herodian certainly used Dio's work regularly, without using it as a *Hauptquelle*.

⁴ Herodian was also interested in the vicissitudes of noble families that had dominated the senate and higher senatorial functions under the Antonines. According to Whittaker, Herodian's work was to some extent a history of the fortunes of senatorial families, which had belonged to the grand set of Antonine times. See Whittaker, op.cit. (n.1), LXXXI.

⁵ See Whittaker, op.cit. (n.1), LII ff.; B.P. Reardon, *Courants littéraires grecs des II^e et III^e siècles ap. J.-C.* (Paris 1971), 216 ff.; Kolb 1972, op.cit. (n.1), 54 ff.; Sidebottom 1998, op.cit. (n.1), 2813-2822; Zimmermann, 'Konstruktion' 1999, op.cit. (n.1), 123 ff.; Hidber 1999, op.cit. (n.1), 166 f.

⁶ Zimmermann, 'Konstruktion', op.cit. (n.1), 127 f. Cf. Sidebottom 1998, op.cit. (n.1), 2823.

⁷ See M.-L. Freyburger-Galland, *Aspects du vocabulaire politique et institutionnel de Dion Cassius* (Paris 1997), 225; cf. L. de Blois, *Gnomon* 73 (2001), 135 f. (review of M. Hose, *Erneuerung der Vergangenheit. Die Historiker im Imperium Romanum von Florus bis Cassius Dio* [Stuttgart/ Leipzig 1994]). Cf. Sidebottom 1998, op.cit. (n.1), 2822-2826; Marasco 1998, op.cit. (n.1), 2908 ff.

own functions and statuses, like organs in a body.⁸ The constituent elements of this polity are, besides the emperor who is the dominant part, the senate, the soldiers, the populace of the city of Rome, Italy and the provinces, and the cities within them. In his Maecenas speech, Cassius Dio mentions, besides emperors and senators to whom he pays a relatively large amount of attention, *equites*, centurions, *caesariani*, the notables in the cities, imperial freedmen, soldiers, the populace of Rome, and the *dèmoi* of the other cities in the empire.⁹ Herodian is less explicit and specific. He does not speak about senators as frequently as Dio does and he does not pay as much attention to specific roles and positions of *equites*, *decuriones*, *caesariani*, and centurions. In some passages and speeches, such as 1.5, 1.7, 2.9-14, 3.8.3 ff. and 6.1.2 Herodian has the soldiers, the senate and the populace of Rome appear as the units that can accept an imperial position of power. In 2.4.2 Herodian states that Pertinax met with approval throughout the empire, in all of the provinces, client states and armies. Armies (*stratopeda*), plural. In Herodian's work the armies of different frontier zones and Italy are seen as different entities.¹⁰

In Herodian's histories the Roman empire is seen as a conglomerate of peoples who all lie under the dominance of Rome and the emperor. All those peoples have specific characteristics: Egyptians are passionate (1.17.6), Syrians are fond of holidays, witty and erratic (2.7.9; 2.10.7), Pannonians are tall, handsome, fierce in battle and slow-witted (2.9.11) and Greeks are naturally inclined to quarrel with one another (3.2.8). In a speech to his troops, which Herodian puts into the mouth of Septimius Severus to his troops, the author indicates that the city of Rome is the very seat of the empire (2.10.9). Its populace is the *demos* of the dominant city of the empire. In a similar way Cassius Dio speaks about "the city and its entire empire".¹¹

⁸ See Cassius Dio F 17.10 ff.; 41.29-31; 44.2; 52.30. This may originally be a fourth century B.C. Greek view. Analogous opinions are offered by Aristotle, *Ethica Nicomachea* 1130b10-1131b24 and *Politica* 1282b14-1283a23. In keeping with this organic view of the state is Isocrates' opinion that the constitution is its soul (*Areopagiticus* 14).

⁹ Cassius Dio 52.19-22, 24-26, 27, 30-32, and 37. See L. de Blois, 'The Perception of Emperor and Empire in Cassius Dio's Roman History', *Ancient Society* 29 (1998-1999), 271.

¹⁰ Herodian 2.4.2; 2.7-10; 6.7-8; 8.2.1f.; 8.5.8.

¹¹ In 2.10.7 ff. Herodian has Septimius Severus say that the provinces and the towns will accept the emperor chosen by the army of Illyria and Pannonia and that he will be the first to march his troops into Rome, the very seat of the empire. See M. Reinhold, *From Republic to Principate. An Historical Commentary on Cassius Dio's Roman History, Books 49-52, 36-29 B.C.* (Atlanta 1988), 189 f. ad 52.19.6. Cf. Cassius Dio 38.36.2; 41.56.1; 44.2.4; 59.9.5; 74.11.3; 78.26.1. On such views of the

Rome, not Italy. In Herodian's view Italy is no longer a dominating power. Rome was the seat of the empire and the armies of Pannonia and Illyria were now the most powerful elements in the Roman world (2.8.10; 2.9-10; cf. 6.7.3). In 2.4.6, in a passage on the land reforms planned by Pertinax, Herodian speaks of Italy and the *other* provinces.¹² Cassius Dio perceives the position of Italy within the empire in a similar way. In his view the Roman empire was a worldwide *polis*, the city of Rome serving as the *astu* and the rest as the *chora* (Dio 52.19.6). In Dio's view, Italy was not much different from the provinces. It was the land that contained Rome (F. 1.3) and where senators had country houses.¹³

In Herodian's model, the emperors are the backbone of the state and the polity. They determine the nature of the government, the distribution of influence and burdens among the various major groups of society, the atmosphere in the empire, and the security of the citizens. The reigns of the emperors determine the structure of Herodian's work and their actions dominate the narrative. Herodian often sets speeches of emperors and pretenders to the throne at the centre of passages of ring composition. Some of those speeches in Herodian's work are vivid Second Sophistic *meletai*, which characterise the emperors who are giving them.¹⁴

At the beginning of his work, in book I, Herodian portrays Marcus Aurelius as the role model for emperors. Not only did he possess all the traditional virtues and qualities which Greek writers had ascribed to good princes ever since the fourth century B.C., such as a good family background,

Roman empire see F. Unruh, *Das Bild des Imperium Romanum im Spiegel der Literatur an der Wende vom 2. zum 3. Jahrhundert n.Chr.* (Bonn 1991), 188.

¹² In a short excursus in 2.11.3-5 Herodian explains that Italy did not supply many troops, because in the imperial age it had started to concentrate more on agriculture and less on warfare. The armies of Pannonia and Illyria were now the most powerful elements in the Roman empire (2.8.10; 2.9-10; cf. 6.7.3). By implication Herodian indicates that in his view the supplying of troops was a quintessential basis of real power of the regions in the Roman empire.

¹³ See Cassius Dio F. 1.3; 52.30.1 ff. See De Blois 1998, op.cit. (n.1), 3407 f. See also L. de Blois, 'The World a City: Cassius Dio's View of the Roman Empire', in L. Aigner Foresti, et al., eds., *L'Ecumenismo Politico nella Coscienza dell' Occidente, Atti del Congresso Bergamo 18-21 settembre 1995* (Rome 1998), 359-370.

¹⁴ See for example 2.8.1 ff., a speech of Pescennius Niger in which he focuses on sophistic standard themes like rashness and hope; 2.10.1 ff., a speech of Septimius Severus to his troops, A.D. 193; 3.6.1 ff., Septimius Severus against Albinus; 4.5.2 ff., an oration of Caracalla in the senate at Rome; 4.14.4 ff., a speech of Macrinus towards his troops on the eve of a battle against the Parthians, A.D. 217; 7.8.4 ff., a speech of Maximinus Thrax to his troops on unwarlike senators and other opponents, A.D. 238; 8.7.4 ff., an oration of the senatorial emperor Maximus towards the soldiers at Aquileia, A.D. 238.

an excellent education, interest in culture and philosophy, moderation, zeal, courage, and charity, but he also excelled in military prowess, competence in legal matters, and the selection of good assistants (1.2-3).¹⁵ His regime was based on goodwill rather than on power, money and violence. Herodian has the emperor say, on his deathbed: "Money is not enough to compensate for the licence of a tyrant and a bodyguard is not sufficient protection for a ruler unless he has the goodwill (*eunoia*) of his subjects as well" (1.4.4). Herodian tells us that when the report of Marcus' death was known, the whole army that was with him and the common people alike mourned for him, and that there was not a single subject throughout the Roman empire that did not grieve at the news and join together with one voice to proclaim his praise (1.4.8). In this way he suggests that goodwill was widespread indeed everywhere in the empire and among all classes of society. In this description of Marcus as the ideal ruler, Herodian follows a standard arrangement of a *basilikos logos*. The rhetorical manual of Menander, which may have been written between A.D. 250 and 300, gives ample information on such orations.¹⁶

Herodian knew very well that in his own time historical reality differed markedly from this ideal picture. The populace of Rome seldom behaved like the majestic *dēmos* of a city that dominated the civilised world and the emperors became increasingly dependent on the military, whom they had to pay well in order to stay on the throne.

On a few occasions Herodian goes into detail, using very negative commonplaces, regarding the populace of the city of Rome.¹⁷ In such passages Herodian describes the Roman mob as a heterogeneous unreliable

¹⁵ See Whittaker, op.cit. (n.1), LXXII f.; Alföldy, 'Zeitgeschichte' 1989, in op.cit. (n.1), 279 and 287 (= *Hermes* 99 [1971], 435 and 443); Idem, 'Herodian über den Tod Mark Aurels', *ibid.* 14-22 (= *Latomus* 32 [1973], 345-353) with *Nachträge*, 22-24; Roques, op.cit. (n.1), 215 f.; Sidebottom 1998, op.cit. (n.1), 2804 f.; Marasco 1998, op.cit. (n.1), 2840-2843; De Blois 1998, op.cit. (n.1), 3416; Zimmermann, 'Konstruktion' 1999, op.cit. (n.1), 123 f.

¹⁶ See L. de Blois, 'The Eis Basilea of Ps.-Aelius Aristides', *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 27 (1986), 281 f. On the dating of Menander see G.A. Kennedy, *The Art of Rhetoric in the Roman World* (Princeton 1972), 636 f. (third century); V. Nutton, 'The Beneficial Ideology', in P.D.A. Garnsey & C.R. Whittaker, eds., *Imperialism in the Ancient World* (Cambridge 1978), 214 (c. A.D. 270); D.A. Russell & N.G. Wilson, eds., *Menander Rhetor* (Oxford 1981), XL (c. A.D. 300).

¹⁷ 7.7.1; 7.10.5 f. See Zimmermann, 'Konstruktion' 1999, op.cit. (n.1), 133 ff.; 141. On p. 135 Zimmermann says: "Chameleongleich wechselt die *plebs urbana* also in der Schilderung des Historiographen die Farbe und passt sich der Gesamtkonzeption des Geschichtswerk folgend den jeweiligen Thronprätendenten und Kaisern an. Angesichts der expliziten Anknüpfung an einen Topos aus der *peri basileias* -Literatur, nach dem sich die Untertanen der Qualität des Herrschers anpassen, ist dies nicht überraschend".

mass without guts. In 7.7.1 he says: “Although every lower-class mob is quick to revolt, the population of Rome, made up of a vast, heterogeneous conglomeration of human beings, can change its allegiances frequently and capriciously”. Nonetheless, in Herodian’s model, it is the sovereign people of the dominant city, who should not be maltreated by undisciplined soldiery. In 2.4.1 Herodian has the good emperor Pertinax issue the order to the soldiers to stop their insulting behaviour to the populace. Soldiers in Rome were forbidden to carry axes or to strike any passer-by.¹⁸

This brings us to Herodian’s view of the military and of their role and position in the Roman imperial state. Several times Herodian explicitly connects soldiers with tyranny. According to him, the soldiers were a dangerous, greedy group that was difficult to keep under control and would rather support a tyrant who gave them everything they wanted than a good emperor.¹⁹ In a passage on the murder of Pertinax and the sale of the emperorship to Didius Julianus in the praetorian camp Herodian writes:

“This was the first time that the soldiers’ characters gradually began to be corrupted. They learned to have an evil and insatiable lust for money and to ignore any feeling of respect for their emperors. The fact that there was nobody to take revenge on the perpetrators of this savage murder of an emperor, and nobody to prevent the shameful auction and sale of the empire, was a prime cause of the development of a shameful state of indiscipline that had permanent consequences for the future. The ever-increasing avarice of the soldiers and their contempt for authority had developed to the extent of murder” (2.6.14).

According to Herodian, Septimius Severus accelerated the process of decay (3.8.4 f.) by not only giving the soldiers a large *donativum* but also by granting them hitherto unknown privileges: he increased their wages, allowed them to wear a gold ring and to live in their own household, with a lawful

¹⁸ In passages mentioning fights between the urban populace and the soldiers of the Praetorian Guard Herodian clearly takes sides with the urban populace, which, standing up against flagrant military control, shows courage, even if it is defeated. Besides, in Herodian’s work the urban *dēmos* usually likes the good emperors, like Marcus Aurelius (1.4.8), Pertinax (2.4.1), the senatorial emperors of A.D. 238 (8.8.1), and out in the streets and in the amphitheatres the people express their disapproval of tyrants like Caracalla and Maximinus (4.6.4 f.; 7.3.6).

¹⁹ See De Blois 1998, op.cit. (n.1), 3421 f. Cf. Marasco 1998, op.cit. (n.1), 2862 f. and 2878 ff.

wife. Then came the pampering of the soldiers by Caracalla (3.15.5; 4.7.4) and the futile attempt by Severus Alexander and Mamaea to turn the tide (6.6.4; 6.8.4; 6.9.1 ff.). Under Maximinus Thrax the Roman world was plundered and sacrificed for the soldiers' material demands and for Maximinus' expensive wars in Germany (7.1-3). In Herodian's work the rise of military power and the soldiers' demands are painted in very dark colours. In his view the soldiers should know their place and should not demand too much money and power. They were only one part of the body politic and not the highest one. Herodian has the good emperor Maximus (as he calls Pupienus), one of the senatorial emperors of A.D. 238, exhort the soldiers in Rome to respect law and order and to be loyal to the senate and the emperor, and keep the oaths they have taken (8.7.4 ff.). In vain. Shortly afterwards the soldiers in Rome set a child, Gordian III, on the throne and killed the good senatorial emperors. Once again the military unlawfully dominated politics and usurped a position to which they were not entitled. How could that happen and how could the soldiery turn upside down the good state of the emperor Marcus and take much more than their due within the organic structure, which was the empire?

In Herodian's eyes there was a sharp contrast between Marcus Aurelius and his successors. Some of them were military tyrants, like Caracalla and Maximinus, others were youngsters who were dependent on relatives and advisers, and some of them had good intentions, but lacked Marcus Aurelius' good family background, his education, and his wide range of skills and qualities and so were not able to impress either the higher orders or the military or both.²⁰ The result was instability, military misconduct, tyranny and decay.²¹ In this way, Herodian is maintaining his exaggerated estimate of the power of the emperors, only now in a negative sense. The

²⁰ See 1.5-16 (Commodus); 2.3-4 (Pertinax); 2.7-14 and 3.7-10 (Septimius Severus and his rivals of the years 193-197); 3.15, 4.3-4 and 4.6-9 (Caracalla); 5.1-2 (Macrinus); 5.5-7 (Elagabalus); 6.1-9 (Severus Alexander); 7.1 and 3-4 (Maximinus Thrax); 8.6-8 (the senatorial emperors of 238 and the wrong mental attitude of the soldiery). See De Blois 1998, op.cit. (n.1), 3416-3419. Inexperienced youngsters were Commodus, Elagabalus, Severus Alexander and Gordian III. See Sidebottom 1998, op.cit. (n.1), 2803-2812; Marasco 1998, op.cit. (n.1), 2844-2857.

²¹ In 1.1.4 Herodian tells us: "A comparative survey of the period of about two hundred years from Augustus (the point at which the regime became a monarchy) to the age of Marcus would reveal no such similar succession of reigns, variety of fortunes in both civil and foreign wars, disturbances among the provincial populations, and destruction of cities in both Roman territory and many barbarian countries. There have never been such earthquakes and plagues, or tyrants and emperors with such unexpected careers, which were rarely if ever recorded before". On tyranny and military misconduct in Herodian's work see De Blois 1998, op.cit. (n.1), 3416 ff. and 3421 f.

behaviour of the emperors and their personal qualities trigger and guide everything, either in a good or a bad direction. However, passages from Cassius Dio and from Herodian himself, combined with many other sources, point to structural developments which put all emperors under a heavy strain and gave them minimal latitude. The emperor Marcus Aurelius had scarcely been able to find sufficient recruits to fight his wars in the Danube region. Septimius Severus solved this problem by making military service more attractive and raising the soldiers' pay by 50 %, from 300 to 450 *denarii* per annum.²² Since the military budget now took three quarters of the emperor's income,²³ from that moment onwards all emperors were in financial straits, but they could not reduce the soldiers' pay without risking their throne and their lives. In 78.36 Cassius Dio tells us that in a letter to the city-prefect of Rome the short-lived emperor Macrinus (217-218) wrote that it was financially impossible to give the troops their full pay in addition to the donatives that they were receiving, yet equally impossible (for reasons missing in a lacuna) not to give it. This letter was probably made up by Cassius Dio, but nevertheless points to a genuine dilemma. And if large groups of soldiers, such as armies passing through, wanted to plunder people within the empire, what power did Roman emperors have to stop them? Cassius Dio knew this problem very well. In his opinion the majesty and authority of the Augustan monarchy constituted the proper counterweight to military misconduct.²⁴ This form of government was based on *eunoia* in all classes of society and could also satisfy the military. Likewise Herodian saw the ideal monarchy of Marcus Aurelius as the proper counterweight to military licence and to mischief wrought by unsuitable assistants of the emperors. On top of all his other qualities, which brought about *eunoia* among all people, this emperor was also a good war-time commander, who was able to inspire his soldiers and to earn their respect. None of his successors had his broad range of qualities and so they could not check military licence and avarice, the most dangerous destabilising factor in the Roman world.

²² On the military reforms of Septimius Severus see R.E. Smith, 'The Army Reforms of Septimius Severus', *Historia* 21 (1972), 481-500; P. Cosme, *L' état romain entre éclatement et continuité. L' empire romain de 192 à 325* (Paris 1998), 75 ff.; J.-M. Carrié & A. Rousselle, *L' empire romain en mutation. Des Sévères à Constantin, 192-337* (Paris 1999), 73-76.

²³ See R.P. Duncan - Jones, *Money and Government in the Roman Empire* (Cambridge 1994), 45 ff.

²⁴ See De Blois 1998-1999, op.cit. (n. 14), 278 f.

In Herodian's work a kind of double perception of the Roman imperial system exists. Harsh reality comes to light in passages on the fickleness of the Roman mob and in chapters on incompetent emperors, military tyranny, and military misbehaviour, but in spite of that the influence of the *exemplum Marci* and of the organic model of an imperial polity that Herodian implicitly advocates is manifestly present. Emperors like Marcus Aurelius could have been, in Herodian's view, a proper counterweight to military misconduct and usurpations by bad characters at court. Herodian may exaggerate the significance of emperorship, but he shows that he knows a great deal about actual power relations.

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