

# COMMODUS ANTONINUS

AELII LAMPRIDIJ

I. De Comodi Antonini parentibus in vita Marci  
2 Antonini satis est disputatum. ipse autem natus est  
apud Lanuvium cum fratre Antonino gemino pridie  
kal. Sept. patre patruoque consulibus, ubi et avus  
3 maternus dicitur natus. Faustina cum esset Com-  
modo cum fratre praegnans, visa est in somnis  
4 serpentes parere, sed ex his unum ferociorem. cum  
autem peperisset Commodum atque Antoninum,  
Antoninus quadrimus elatus est, quem parem astrorum  
5 cursu Commodo mathematici promittebant. mortuo  
igitur fratre Commodo Marcus et suis praeceptis  
et magnorum atque optimorum virorum erudire co-  
6 natus est. habuit litteratorem Graecum Onesicratem,  
Latinum Capellam Antistium; orator ei Ateius San-  
ctus fuit.  
7 Sed tot disciplinarum magistri nihil ei profuerunt.  
tantum valet aut ingenii vis aut eorum qui in aula  
institutores habentur. nam a prima statim pueritia  
turpis, improbus, crudelis, libidinosus, ore quoque pol-

<sup>1</sup> *Marc.*, i. 1-4.

<sup>2</sup> *Cf. Pius*, i. 8.

# COMMODUS ANTONINUS

BY

AELIUS LAMPRIDIUS

I. The ancestry of Commodus Antoninus has been sufficiently discussed in the life of Marcus Antoninus.<sup>1</sup> As for Commodus himself, he was born, with his twin brother Antoninus, at Lanuvium—where his mother's father was born, it is said<sup>2</sup>—on the day before the Kalends of September, while his father and uncle<sup>31 Aug.</sup> were consuls. Faustina, when pregnant with Com-<sup>161</sup>modus and his brother, dreamed that she gave birth to serpents, one of which, however, was fiercer than the other. But after she had given birth to Commodus and Antoninus, the latter, for whom the astrologers had cast a horoscope as favourable as that of Commodus, lived to be only four years old. After the death of Antoninus, Marcus tried to educate Commodus by his own teaching and by that of the greatest and the best of men. In Greek literature he had Onesicrates as his teacher, in Latin, Antistius Capella; his instructor in rhetoric was Ateius Sanctus.

However, teachers in all these studies profited him not in the least—such is the power, either of natural character, or of the tutors maintained in a palace. For even from his earliest years he was base and dishonourable, and cruel and lewd, defiled of mouth, more-

8 lutus et constupratus<sup>1</sup> fuit. iam in his artifex, quae stationis imperatoriae non erant, ut calices fingeret, saltaret, cantaret, sibilaret, scurram denique et gladiatorum perfectum ostenderet. auspiciū crudelitatis apud Centumcellas dedit anno aetatis duodecimo. nam cum tepidius forte lautus esset, balneatorem in fornacem conici iussit; quando a paedagogo, cui hoc iussum fuerat, vervecina pellis in fornace consumpta est, ut fidem poenae de foetore nidoris implet.

10 Appellatus est autem Caesar puer cum fratre suo Verō.<sup>2</sup> quarto decimo aetatis anno in collegium sacerdotum<sup>3</sup> adscitus est. cooptatus est inter trossulos<sup>4</sup> principes<sup>5</sup> iuventutis, cum togam sumpsit. adhuc in praetexta puerili congiarium dedit atque ipse in Basilica Traiani praesedit. indutus autem toga est Nonarum Iuliarum die, quo in terris Romulus non apparuit, et eo tempore quo Cassius a Marco<sup>6</sup> descivit. profectus est commendatus militibus cum patre in Syriam et Aegyptum et cum<sup>6</sup> eo Romam

<sup>1</sup> *constuppatus* P.      <sup>2</sup> *suo Verō* Ursinus; *Seuero* P.  
<sup>3</sup> *sacerdotis* P.      <sup>4</sup> *trossulos* Lipsius; *tres solos* P.      <sup>5</sup> *principes* P.      <sup>6</sup> so P corr.; et *cum* om. in P<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Dio, on the other hand, describes him as not naturally vicious, but weak and easily influenced; see lxxii. 1, 1.

<sup>2</sup> On the coast of Etruria, near the southern end; it is the modern Civitā Vecchia.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. c. xi. 13; *Marc.*, xii. 8 and note.

<sup>4</sup> M. Annius Verus, who died in 169; see *Marc.*, xxi. 3.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. c. xii. 1; *Marc.*, xvi. 1 and note. His election to the college of pontifices is commemorated on a coin; see Cohen, iii<sup>2</sup>, p. 311, no. 599.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. c. xii. 3; *Marc.*, xxii. 12 and note.

<sup>7</sup> See note to *Marc.*, vi. 3. The title *principes iuventutis* appears on his coins of this period (Cohen iii<sup>2</sup>, p. 311 f., nos. 601-618), and in an inscription from Africa (*C.I.L.*, viii. 11928). *Trossuli* was an old name given to the Roman

over, and debauched.<sup>1</sup> Even then he was an adept in certain arts which are not becoming in an emperor for he could mould goblets and dance and sing and whistle, and he could play the buffoon and the gladiator to perfection. In the twelfth year of his life, at Centumcellae,<sup>2</sup> he gave a forecast of his cruelty. For when it happened that his bath was drawn too cool, he ordered the bathkeeper to be cast into the furnace; whereupon the slave who had been ordered to do this burned a sheep-skin in the furnace, in order to make him believe by the stench of the vapour that the punishment had been carried out.

While yet a child he was given the name of<sup>12 Oct.</sup> Caesar,<sup>3</sup> along with his brother Verus,<sup>4</sup> and in his fourteenth year he was enrolled in the college of priests.<sup>5</sup><sup>20 Jan.,</sup><sup>166</sup><sup>175</sup>

II. When he assumed the toga,<sup>6</sup> he was elected one of the leaders of the equestrian youths,<sup>7</sup> the trossuli, and even while still clad in the youth's praetexta he gave largess<sup>8</sup> and presided in the Hall of Trajan.<sup>9</sup> He assumed the toga on the Nones of July—the day on<sup>7 July,</sup> which Romulus vanished from the earth—<sup>175</sup> after the time when Cassius revolted from Marcus. After he had been commended to the favour of the soldiers he set out with his father for Syria<sup>10</sup> and Egypt, and with him he returned to Rome.<sup>11</sup> Afterward he was

cavalry. It was supposed to have been derived from Trossulum, a town captured by the cavalry, but even in the second century B.C., its meaning was no longer understood; see Pliny, *Nat. Hist.*, xxiii. 2, 35 f.

<sup>8</sup> Commemorated on coins; see Cohen, iii<sup>2</sup>, p. 266 f., nos. 291-294.

<sup>9</sup> See note to *Hadr.*, vii. 6.

<sup>10</sup> In July, 175. See *Marc.*, xxv. 1.

<sup>11</sup> See *Marc.*, xxvii. 3. Commodus' return to Rome was celebrated by an issue of coins with the legend *Adventus Caes(aris)*; see Cohen, iii<sup>2</sup>, p. 228, nos. 1-2.

4rediit. post haec venia legis annariae impetrata consul est factus, et cum patre imperator est appellatus V kal. Dec. die Pollione et Apro consulibus et 5 triumphavit cum patre. nam et hoc patres decreverant. profectus est cum patre et ad Germanicum bellum.

6 Adhibitos custodes vitae suae honestiores ferre non potuit, pessimos quosque detinuit et summotos usque 7 ad aegritudinem desideravit. quibus per patris molliem restitutis popinas et ganeas in Palatinis semper aedibus fecit neque umquam pepercit vel pudori vel 8 sumptui. in domo aleam exercuit. mulierculas formae scitioris ut prostibula mancipia per speciem<sup>1</sup> lupanarium et ludibrium pudicitiae contraxit. imi- 9 tatus est propolas circumforanos. equos currules sibi comparavit. aurigae habitu currus rexit, gladiatoribus convixit, atque se<sup>2</sup> gessit ut lenonum minister, ut probris natum magis quam ei loco eum crederes,<sup>3</sup> ad quem fortuna provexit.

III. Patris ministeria seniora summovit, amicos senes 2 abiecit. filium Salvii Iuliani, qui exercitibus praeerat,

<sup>1</sup> per speciem Turnebus; perficiam P<sup>1</sup>; perficiens P corr.  
<sup>2</sup> atque se Editor; aquam P, Peter. <sup>3</sup> crederet P.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Marc.*, xxii. 12 and note.

<sup>2</sup> On the occasion of Marcus' triumph; see c. xii. 4; *Marc.*, xvi. 2 and note.

<sup>3</sup> See c. xii. 5 and note to *Marc.*, xvii. 3.

<sup>4</sup> See c. xii. 6 and *Marc.*, xxvii. 9.

<sup>5</sup> But not in public, except on moonless nights; see Dio, lxxii. 17, 1.

granted exemption from the law of the appointed year and made consul,<sup>1</sup> and on the fifth day before 177 the Kalends of December, in the consulship of Pollio<sup>27 Nov., 176</sup> and Aper, he was acclaimed Emperor together with his father,<sup>2</sup> and celebrated a triumph with him.<sup>3</sup> 23 Dec., 176 For this, too, the senate had decreed. Then he set<sup>3 Aug., 178</sup> out with his father for the German war.<sup>4</sup>

The more honourable of those appointed to supervise his life he could not endure, but the most evil he retained, and, if any were dismissed, he yearned for them even to the point of falling sick. And when they were reinstated through his father's indulgence, he always maintained eating-houses and low resorts for them in the imperial palace. He never showed regard for either decency or expense. He dined in his own home. He herded together women of unusual beauty, keeping them like purchased prostitutes in a sort of brothel for the violation of their chastity. He imitated the hucksters that strolled about from market to market. He procured chariot-horses for his own use. He drove chariots in the garb of a professional charioteer,<sup>5</sup> lived with gladiators, and conducted himself like a procurer's servant. Indeed, one would have believed him born rather to a life of infamy than to the high place to which Fortune advanced him.

III. His father's older attendants he dismissed,<sup>6</sup> and any friends<sup>7</sup> that were advanced in years he cast aside.

<sup>5</sup> e.g. Tarrutenius Paternus, now prefect of the guard (see c. iv. 1), and C. Aufidius Victorinus, governor of Germania Superior under Marcus. He retained his father's friends for a "few years" (Herodian, i. 8, 1), i.e. until about 183.

<sup>7</sup> See note to *Hel.*, xi. 2.

ob<sup>1</sup> impudicitiam frustra temptavit atque exinde  
 3 Juliano tetendit insidias. honestissimos quosque aut  
 per contumeliam aut per honorem indignissimum  
 4 abiecit. appellatus est a mimis quasi obstupratus  
 eosdemque ita ut non apparerent subito deportavit.  
 5 bellum etiam quod pater paene confecerat legibus  
 hostium addictus remisit ac Romam reversus est.  
 6 Romam ut rediit, subactore suo Saotero post se in  
 curro locato ita triumphavit ut eum saepius<sup>2</sup> cervice  
 reflexa publice oscularetur. etiam in orchestra hoc  
 7 idem fecit. et cum potaret in lucem helluareturque  
 viribus Romani imperii, vespera etiam per tabernas ac  
 8 lupanaria volitavit. misit homines ad provincias  
 regendas vel criminum socios vel a criminosis com-  
 9 mendatos. in senatus odium ita venit<sup>3</sup> ut et ipse  
 crudeliter in tanti ordinis perniciem saeviret fieretque  
 e contempto crudelis.

IV. Vita Commodi Quadratum et Lucillam compulit  
 ad eius interfectionem consilia inire, non sine prae-

<sup>1</sup> ob P, Petschenig; *ad* Peter.    <sup>2</sup> *serius* P.    <sup>3</sup> *uehit* Pl.

<sup>1</sup> P. Salvius Julianus, consul in 175. He was apparently in command of troops on the Rhine.

<sup>2</sup> See c. iv. 8.

<sup>3</sup> According to Herodian (i. 6) he gave up the war against the advice of Marcus' friends and advisers, especially his own brother-in-law, Pompeianus. He did, however, force the Quadi, Marcomanni, and Buri to accept terms of peace which were not discreditable to Rome (Dio, lxxii. 2-3) and was acclaimed *Imperator* for the fourth time.

<sup>4</sup> For the official expression of reception see c. xii. 7. His return is commemorated by coins of 180 with the legends *Adventus Augusti* and *Fort(una) Red(u)x*; see Cohen, iii<sup>2</sup>, p. 238, no. 3, and p. 248, no. 165.

<sup>5</sup> Called in an inscription *triumphus felicissimus Germanicus secundus*: see *C.I.L.*, xiv. 2922 = Dessau, *Ins. Sel.*, 1420.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *Ver.*, iv. 6.

The son of Salvius Julianus, the commander of the troops,<sup>1</sup> he tried to lead into debauchery, but in vain, and he thereupon plotted against Julianus.<sup>2</sup> He degraded the most honourable either by insulting them directly or giving them offices far below their deserts. He was alluded to by actors as a man of depraved life, and he thereupon banished them so promptly that they did not again appear upon the stage. He abandoned the war which his father had almost finished and submitted to the enemy's terms,<sup>3</sup> and then he returned to Rome.<sup>4</sup> After he had come<sup>22 Oct.</sup> back to Rome he led the triumphal procession<sup>5</sup> with 180 Saoterus, his partner in depravity, seated in his chariot, and from time to time he would turn around and kiss him openly, repeating this same performance even in the orchestra. And not only was he wont to drink until dawn and squander the resources of the Roman Empire, but in the evening he would ramble through taverns and brothels.<sup>6</sup> He sent out to rule the provinces men who were either his companions in crime or were recommended to him by criminals. He became so detested by the senate that he in his turn was moved with cruel passion for the destruction of that great order,<sup>7</sup> and from having been despised he became bloodthirsty.

IV. Finally the actions of Commodus drove Quadratus and Lucilla,<sup>8</sup> with the support of Tarrutenius

<sup>7</sup> Especially after the conspiracy of Quadratus and Lucilla, according to Herodian, i. 8, 7.

<sup>8</sup> On this conspiracy, formed probably toward the end of 182, see Dio, lxxii. 4, 4-5, and Herodian, i. 8, 3-6. Quadratus was probably the grandson of Marcus' sister; see *Marc.*, vii. 4. Lucilla was Commodus' elder sister, the wife of Lucius Verus, and after his death, of Claudius Pompeianus; see *Marc.*, xx. 6.

2 *fecti praetorio Tarrutenii Paterni consilio. datum autem est negotium peragenda necis Claudio Pompeiano*  
 3 *propinquo. qui ingressus ad Commodum districto gladio, cum faciendi potestatem habuisset, in haec verba prorumpens 'Hunc tibi pugionem senatus mittit' detexit facinus nec implevit, multis cum*  
 4 *eo participantibus causam. post haec interfecti sunt Pompeianus primo et Quadratus, dein Norbana atque Norbanus et Paralius; et mater eius et Lucilla in exsilium exacta.*  
 5 *Tum praefecti praetorio cum vidissent Commodum in tantum odium incidisse obtentu Saoteri, cuius potentiam populus Romanus ferre non poterat, urbane Saoterum eductum a Palatio sacrorum causa et redeuntem in hortos suos per frumentarios occiderunt.*  
 6 *id vero gravius quam de se ipso Commodo fuit.*  
 7 *Paternum autem et huius caedis auctorem et, quantum videbatur, paratae necis Commodi conscium et interventorem, ne coniuratio latius puniretur, instigante Tigidio per lati clavi honorem a praefecturae administratione summovit. post paucos dies insimulavit eum coniurationis, cum diceret ob hoc promissam Iuliani filio filiam Paterni, ut in Iulianum*

<sup>1</sup> According to Dio, lxxii. 5, 2, Paternus had no share in the conspiracy.

<sup>2</sup> Apparently Claudius Pompeianus Quintianus, the son of Lucilla's husband, Claudius Pompeianus, by a former marriage. Herodian speaks of him as a youth at this time.

<sup>3</sup> Lucilla was exiled to Capri, where she was put to death; see c. v. 7.

<sup>4</sup> See note to *Had.*, xi. 4.

<sup>5</sup> Tigidius Perennis, appointed co-prefect with Paternus in 182.

<sup>6</sup> He was granted the right to wear the broad purple stripe on his tunic, the exclusive privilege of the senatorial

Paternus, the prefect of the guard,<sup>1</sup> to form a plan for his assassination. The task of slaying him was assigned to Claudius Pompeianus, a kinsman.<sup>2</sup> But he, as soon as he had an opportunity to fulfil his mission, strode up to Commodus with a drawn sword, and, bursting out with these words, "This dagger the senate sends thee," betrayed the plot like a fool, and failed to accomplish the design, in which many others along with himself were implicated. After this fiasco, first Pompeianus and Quadratus were executed, and then Norbana and Norbanus and Paralius; and the latter's mother and Lucilla were driven into exile.<sup>3</sup>

Thereupon the prefects of the guard, perceiving that the aversion in which Commodus was held was all on account of Saoterus, whose power the Roman people could not endure, courteously escorted this man away from the Palace under pretext of a sacrifice, and then, as he was returning to his villa, had him assassinated by their private agents.<sup>4</sup> But this deed enraged Commodus more than the plot against himself. Paternus, the instigator of this murder, who was believed to have been an accomplice in the plot to assassinate Commodus and had certainly sought to prevent any far-reaching punishment of that conspiracy, was now, at the instigation of Tigidius,<sup>5</sup> dismissed from the command of the praetorian guard by the expedient of conferring on him the honour of the broad stripe.<sup>6</sup> And a few days thereafter, Commodus accused him of plotting, saying that the daughter of Paternus had been betrothed to the son of Julianus<sup>7</sup> with the under-

order. For other instances of the elevation of a prefect of the guard into the senatorial order see note to *Had.*, viii. 7.

<sup>7</sup> See c. iii. 1-2, and for his execution Dio, lxxii. 5, 1.

transferretur imperium. quare et Paternum et Iulianum et Vitruvium Secundum, Paterni familiarissimum, qui epistulas imperatorias curarat, interfecit. 9 domus praeterea Quintiliorum omnis extincta, quod Sextus Condiani<sup>1</sup> filius specie mortis ad defectionem 10 diceretur evasisse. interfecta et Vitrasia Faustina et 11 Velius Rufus et Egnatius Capito consularis. in exsiliium autem acti sunt Aemilius Iuncus et Atilius Severus consules. et in multos alios varie saevitum est.

V. Post haec Commodus nunquam facile in publicum processit neque quicquam sibi nuntiari passus est nisi 2 quod Perennis ante tractasset. Perennis autem Commodi persciens invenit quem ad modum ipse potens 3 esset. nam persuasit Commodo, ut ipse delicias vacaret, idem vero Perennis curis incumberet. quod 4 Commodus laetanter accepit. hac igitur lege vivens ipse cum trecentis concubinis, quas ex matronarum meretricumque dilectu ad formae speciem concivit,<sup>2</sup> trecentisque aliis puberibus exoletis, quos aequae plebe ac nobilitate vi pretiisque<sup>3</sup> forma disceptatrice collegerat, in Palatio per convivia et balneas bac-

<sup>1</sup> *Condiani* Casaubon; *condiciani* P.      <sup>2</sup> *conciuit* Egnatius; *conciitii* P.      <sup>3</sup> *vi pretiisque* Madvig, Peter<sup>4</sup>; *nuptisque* P; *uultusque* Turnebus, Peter<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> The brothers Sex. Quintilius Condianus and Sex. Quintilius Valerius Maximus. According to Dio, lxxii. 5, 3-4, their reputation and wealth caused them to be suspected.

<sup>2</sup> More correctly, the son of Quintilius Valerius Maximus and consul in 180. He was included in the sentence pronounced against his father and uncle. On his escape see Dio, lxxii. 6.

standing that Julianus would be raised to the throne. On this pretext he executed Paternus and Julianus, and also Vitruvius Secundus, a very dear friend of Paternus, who had charge of the imperial correspondence. Besides this, he exterminated the whole house of the Quintilii,<sup>1</sup> because Sextus, the son of Condianus,<sup>2</sup> by pretending death, it was said, had made his escape in order to raise a revolt. Vitrasia Faustina, Velius Rufus,<sup>3</sup> and Egnatius Capito, a man of consular rank, were all slain, Aemilius Iuncus and Atilius Severus, the consuls,<sup>4</sup> were driven into exile. And against many others he vented his rage in various ways.

V. After this Commodus never appeared in public readily, and would never receive messages unless they had previously passed through the hands of Perennis<sup>5</sup>. For Perennis, being well acquainted with Commodus' character, discovered the way to make himself powerful, namely, by persuading Commodus to devote himself to pleasure while he, Perennis, assumed all the burdens of the government—an arrangement which Commodus joyfully accepted. Under this agreement, then, Commodus lived, rioting in the Palace amid banquets and in baths along with 300 concubines, gathered together for their beauty and chosen from both matrons and harlots, and with minions, also 300 in number, whom he had collected by force and by purchase indiscriminately from the common people and the nobles

<sup>3</sup> Consul in 178.

<sup>4</sup> The year of their consulship is unknown. They were not necessarily consuls in 182.

<sup>5</sup> According to Herodian, i. 11, 5, he spent most of the time in his suburban estate.

5 chabatur. inter haec habitu victimarii victimas im-  
 molavit. in arena rudibus, inter cubicularios gladia-  
 tores pugnavit lucentibus aliquando mucronibus.  
 6 tunc tamen Perennis cuncta sibi vindicavit. quos  
 voluit interemit, spoliavit plurimos, omnia iura sub-  
 7 vertit, praedam omnem in sinum contulit. ipse autem  
 Commodus Lucillam sororem, cum Capreas misisset,  
 8 occidit. sororibus dein suis ceteris, ut dicitur, con-  
 stupratis, consobrina patris complexibus suis iniuncta  
 uni etiam ex concubinis matris<sup>1</sup> nomen imposuit.  
 9 uxorem,<sup>2</sup> quam deprehensam in adulterio exegit,  
 10 exactam relegavit et postea occidit. ipsas con-  
 11 cubinas suas sub oculis suis stuprari iubebat. nec  
 inruentium in se iuvenum carebat infamia, omni parte  
 corporis atque ore in sexum utrumque pollutus.  
 12 Occisus est eo tempore etiam Claudius quasi a la-  
 tronibus, cuius filius cum pugione quondam ad Com-  
 modum ingressus est, multique alii senatores sine  
 13 iudicio interempti, feminae quoque divites. et non-  
 nulli per provincias a Perenni ob divitias insimulati  
 14 spoliati sunt vel etiam interempti. iis autem quibus  
 deerat ficti criminis adpositio obiciebatur, quod  
 scribere noluisse<sup>3</sup> Commodum heredem.

<sup>1</sup> *matris* P; *patris* Salmasius, Peter. <sup>2</sup> *imposuit. uxorem*  
 Heer; *imposuit uxoris* P, Peter. <sup>3</sup> *noluisse* Casaubon,  
 Baehrens; *voluisse* P, Peter.

<sup>1</sup> Dio, on the other hand, declares that his administration  
 was characterized by integrity and restraint; see lxxii. 10, 1.  
 Herodian (i. 8) has the same point of view as the biography.

<sup>2</sup> See note to c. vii. 7.

solely on the basis of bodily beauty. Meanwhile,  
 dressed in the garb of an attendant at the sacrifice,  
 he slaughtered the sacrificial victims. He fought  
 in the arena with foils, but sometimes, with his  
 chamberlains acting as gladiators, with sharpened  
 swords. By this time Perennis had secured all the  
 power for himself. He slew whomsoever he wished  
 to slay, plundered a great number, violated every  
 law, and put all the booty into his own pocket.<sup>1</sup>  
 Commodus, for his part, killed his sister Lucilla,  
 after banishing her to Capri. After debauching his  
 other sisters, as it is said, he formed an amour with  
 a cousin of his father,<sup>2</sup> and even gave the name of  
 his mother to one of his concubines. His wife,<sup>3</sup> whom  
 he caught in adultery, he drove from his house, then  
 banished her, and later put her to death. By his  
 orders his concubines were debauched before his own  
 eyes, and he was not free from the disgrace of in-  
 timacy with young men, defiling every part of his  
 body in dealings with persons of either sex.

At this time Claudius also, whose son had previ-  
 ously come into Commodus' presence with a dagger,  
 was slain,<sup>4</sup> ostensibly by bandits, and many other  
 senators were put to death, and also certain women  
 of wealth. And not a few provincials, for the sake  
 of their riches, were charged with crimes by Perennis  
 and then plundered or even slain; and some, against  
 whom there was not even the imputation of a fic-  
 titious crime, were accused of having been unwilling  
 to name Commodus as their heir.

<sup>3</sup> Crispina; see note to *Marc.*, xxvii. 8.

<sup>4</sup> See c. iv. 2 and note. The biographer has apparently  
 confused the father with the son, for Claudius Pompeianus  
 was alive in 193; see *Pert.*, iv. 10; *Did. Jul.*, viii. 3.

VI. Eo tempore in Sarmatia res bene gestas per  
 2 alios duces in filium suum Perennis referebat. hic  
 tamen Perennis, qui tantum potuit, subito, quod  
 bello Britannico militibus equestribus loci viros prae-  
 fecerat amotis senatoribus, prodita re per legatos  
 exercitus hostis appellatus lacerandusque militibus  
 3 est deditus. in cuius potentiae locum Cleandrum ex  
 cubiculariis subrogavit.  
 4 Multa sane post interfectum Perennem eiusque  
 filium quasi a se non gesta rescidit, velut in integrum  
 5 restituens. et hanc quidem paenitentiam scelerum  
 ultra triginta dies tenere non potuit, graviora per  
 Cleandrum faciens quam fecerat per supradictum  
 6 Perennem. et in potentia quidem Cleander Perenni  
 successerat, in praefectura vero Niger, qui sex tantum  
 7 horis praefectus praetorio fuisse perhibetur. muta-  
 bantur enim praefecti praetorio per horas ac dies,

<sup>1</sup> According to Herodian, i. 9, this son of Perennis, in command of the Illyrian troops, formed a conspiracy in the army to overthrow Commodus, and the detection of the plot led to Perennis' fall and death.

<sup>2</sup> In 184. According to Dio, lxxiii. 8, the Britons living north of the boundary-wall invaded the province and annihilated a detachment of Roman soldiers. They were finally defeated by Ulpius Marcellus, and Commodus was acclaimed Imperator for the seventh time and assumed the title *Britannicus*; see c. viii. 4 and coins with the legend *Victoria Brit(annica)*, Cohen, iii<sup>2</sup>, p. 349, no. 945.

<sup>3</sup> An innovation which became general in the third century, when senatorial commanders throughout the empire were gradually replaced by equestrian.

<sup>4</sup> According to Dio, lxxii. 9, it was at the demand of a delegation of 1500 soldiers of the army of Britain, whom Perennis had censured for mutinous conduct (cf. c. viii. 4).

VI. About this time the victories in Sarmatia won  
 by other generals were attributed by Perennis to his  
 own son.<sup>1</sup> Yet in spite of his great power, sud-  
 denly, because in the war in Britain<sup>2</sup> he had dis-  
 missed certain senators and had put men of the  
 equestrian order in command of the soldiers,<sup>3</sup> this  
 same Perennis was declared an enemy to the state,  
 when the matter was reported by the legate in  
 command of the army, and was thereupon delivered  
 up to the soldiers to be torn to pieces.<sup>4</sup> In his  
 place of power Commodus put Cleander,<sup>5</sup> one of his 185.  
 chamberlains.

After Perennis and his son were executed, Com-  
 modus rescinded a number of measures on the ground  
 that they had been carried out without his authority,  
 pretending that he was merely re-establishing pre-  
 vious conditions. However, he could not maintain  
 this penitence for his misdeeds longer than thirty  
 days, and he actually committed more atrocious  
 crimes through Cleander than he had done through  
 the aforesaid Perennis. Although Perennis was suc-  
 ceeded in general influence by Cleander, his successor  
 in the prefecture was Niger, who held this position as  
 prefect of the guard, it is said, for just six hours. In  
 fact, prefects of the guard were changed hourly and

The mutiny was finally quelled by Pertinax; see *Pert.*, iii, 5-8.

<sup>5</sup> A Phrygian by birth, brought to Rome as a slave; see Herodian, i. 12, 3. After securing his freedom he rose in the Palace and finally became chamberlain, after bringing about the fall and death of his predecessor, Saoterus; see c. iv. 5 and Dio, lxxii. 12, 2. He also contributed to the fall of Perennis; see Dio, lxxii. 9, 3. He was not made prefect until 186, but exercised great influence in his capacity as chamberlain (see §§ 6 and 12).



Commodo peiora omnia, quam fecerat ante, faciente.  
 8 fuit Marcius Quartus praefectus praetorio diebus  
 quinque. horum successores ad arbitrium Cleandri  
 9 aut retenti sunt aut occisi. ad cuius nutum etiam  
 libertini in senatum<sup>1</sup> atque in patricios lecti sunt,  
 tuncque primum viginti quinque consules in unum  
 10 annum, venditaeque omnes provinciae. omnia  
 Cleander pecunia venditabat; revocatos de exsilio  
 11 dignitatibus ornabat, res iudicatas rescindebat. qui  
 tantum per stultitiam Commodi potuit, ut Burrum,  
 sororis Commodi virum, reprehendentem nuntiantem-  
 que Commodi quae fiebant in suspicionem regni ad-  
 12 defendebant, pariter interemptis. praefectus etiam  
 Aebutianus inter hos est interemptus; in cuius locum  
 ipse Cleander cum aliis duobus, quos ipse delegerat,  
 13 praefectus est factus. tuncque primum tres praefecti  
 praetorio fuere, inter quos libertinus,<sup>2</sup> qui a pugione  
 appellatus est.

VII. Sed et Cleandro dignus tandem vitae finis  
 impositus. nam cum insidiis illius Arrius Antoninus  
 fictis<sup>3</sup> criminibus in Attali gratiam, quem in pro-

<sup>1</sup> *senatu* P.    <sup>2</sup> *libertinus* Jordan; *libertinos* P.    <sup>3</sup> *factis*  
 P.

<sup>1</sup> So also Dio, lxxii. 12, 3-5.

<sup>2</sup> L. Antistius Burrus; he seems to have been previously  
 accused on the same charge by Pertinax; see *Pert.*, iii. 7.

daily, Commodus meanwhile committing all kinds of  
 evil deeds, worse even than he had committed before.  
 Marcius Quartus was prefect of the guard for five  
 days. Thereafter, the successors of these men were  
 either retained in office or executed, according to the  
 whim of Cleander. At his nod even freedmen were  
 enrolled in the senate and among the patricians, and  
 now for the first time there were twenty-five consuls  
 in a single year. Appointments to the provinces<sup>189</sup>  
 were uniformly sold; in fact, Cleander sold everything  
 for money.<sup>1</sup> He loaded with honours men who were  
 recalled from exile; he rescinded decisions of the  
 courts. Indeed, because of Commodus' utter de-  
 generacy, his power was so great that he brought  
 Burrus,<sup>2</sup> the husband of Commodus' sister, who was  
 denouncing and reporting to Commodus all that was  
 being done, under the suspicion of pretending to the  
 throne, and had him put to death; and at the same  
 time he slew many others who defended Burrus.  
 Among these Aebutianus was slain, the prefect of  
 the guard; in his place Cleander himself was made  
 prefect, together with two others whom he himself  
 chose. Then for the first time were there three  
 prefects of the guard, among whom was a freedman,  
 called the "Bearer of the Dagger".<sup>3</sup>

VII. However, a full worthy death was at last meted  
 out to Cleander also. For when, through his intrigues,  
 Arrius Antoninus<sup>4</sup> was put to death on false charges  
 as a favour to Attalus, whom Arrius had condemned

<sup>3</sup> *i.e.* Cleander himself. The dagger was the symbol of  
 the office of prefect.

<sup>4</sup> Together with Burrus he had been accused by Pertinax  
 of aspiring to the throne (see *Pert.*, iii. 7), but he seems to  
 have been a highly respected man and official.

consulatu Asiae damnaverat, esset occisus, nec eam tum invidiam populo saeviente Commodus ferre potuisset, plebi ad poenam donatus est, cum etiam Apolaustus aliique liberti aulici pariter interempti sunt. Cleander inter cetera etiam concubinas eius constupravit, de quibus filios suscepit, qui post eius interitum cum matribus interempti sunt.

4 In cuius locum Iulianus et Regillus subrogati sunt, 5 quos et ipsos postea poenis adfecit. his occisis interemit Servilium et Dulium Silanos cum suis, mox Antium Lupum et Petronios Mamertinum et Suram filiumque Mamertini Antoninum ex sorore sua genitum. et post eos sex simul ex consulibus Allium Fuscum, Caelium Felicem, Luceium Torquatum, Larcium Eurupianum, Valerium Bassianum, Pactumeium<sup>1</sup> Magnus cum suis, atque in Asia Sulpicium Crassum pro consule et Iulium Proculum cum suis Claudiumque Lucanum consularem et consobrinam patris sui Faustina Anniam in Achaia et alios infinitos. destinaverat et alios quattuordecim occidere, cum sumptus eius vires<sup>2</sup> Romani imperii sustinere non possent.

<sup>1</sup> *Pactumeium* Casaubon; *Pactulcium* P. <sup>2</sup> *vires* Ursinus; *iuriis* P<sup>1</sup>; *iniuriis* P corr.

<sup>1</sup>In 189, on the occasion of a riot due to a lack of grain, for which the mob held Cleander responsible; see Dio, lxxii. 13.

<sup>2</sup>See *Ver.*, viii. 10.

<sup>3</sup>He married one of them, Damostratia, according to Dio, lxxii. 12, 1.

<sup>4</sup>For Julianus' death see Dio, lxxii. 14, 1. He is probably to be identified with L. Julius Vehilius Gratus Julianus, whose interesting career is recorded in an inscription from Rome; see Dessau, *Ins. Sel.*, 1327.

<sup>5</sup>Perhaps M. Servilius Silanus, consul in 188.

during his proconsulship in Asia, Commodus could not endure the hatred of the enraged people and gave Cleander over to the populace for punishment.<sup>1</sup> At the same time Apolaustus<sup>2</sup> and several other freedmen of the court were put to death. Among other outrages Cleander had debauched certain of Commodus' concubines,<sup>3</sup> and from them had begotten sons, who, together with their mothers, were put to death after his downfall.

As successors to Cleander Commodus appointed Julianus and Regillus, both of whom he afterwards condemned.<sup>4</sup> After these men had been put to death he slew the two Silani, Servilius<sup>5</sup> and Dulius, together with their kin, then Antius Lupus<sup>6</sup> and the two Petronii, Mamertinus and Sura,<sup>7</sup> and also Mamertinus' son Antoninus, whose mother was his own sister;<sup>8</sup> after these, six former consuls at one time, Allius Fuscus, Caelius Felix, Luceius Torquatus, Larcus Eurupianus, Valerius Bassianus and Pactumeius Magnus,<sup>9</sup> all with their kin; in Asia Sulpicium Crassus, the proconsul, Julius Proculus, together with their kin, and Claudius Lucanus, a man of consular rank; and in Achaia his father's cousin, Annia Faustina,<sup>10</sup> and innumerable others. He had intended to kill fourteen others also, since the revenues of the Roman empire were insufficient to meet his expenditures.

<sup>6</sup>His grave-inscription is preserved; see *C.I.L.*, vi. 1343.

<sup>7</sup>The brothers M. Petronius Sura Mamertinus and M. Petronius Sura Septimianus were consuls in 182 and 190 respectively.

<sup>8</sup>Perhaps Cornificia.

<sup>9</sup>Consul in 183.

<sup>10</sup>Annia Fundania Faustina, daughter of M. Annius Libo, Marcus' uncle (see *Marc.*, i. 3). She is probably the woman referred to in c. v. 8.

VIII. Inter haec Commodus senatu semet in-  
 ridente,<sup>1</sup> cum adulterum matris consulem designasset,  
 appellatus est Pius; cum occidisset Perennem, ap-  
 pellatus est Felix, inter plurimas caedes multorum  
 2 civium quasi quidam novus Sulla. idem Commodus,  
 ille Pius, ille Felix, finxisse etiam quandam contra se  
 3 coniurationem dicitur, ut multos occideret. nec alia  
 ulla fuit defectio praeter Alexandri, qui postea se et  
 4 suos interemit, et<sup>2</sup> sororis Lucillae. appellatus est  
 Commodus etiam Britannicus ab adulatoribus, cum  
 5 Britannii etiam imperatorem contra eum deligere  
 appellatus est etiam Romanus Hercules,  
 quod feras Lanuvii<sup>3</sup> in amphitheatro occidisset. erat  
 enim haec illi consuetudo, ut domi bestias interficeret.  
 6 fuit praeterea ea dementia, ut urbem Romanam  
 coloniam Commodianam vocari voluerit. qui<sup>4</sup> furor

<sup>1</sup> *senatu semet inridente* Peter<sup>2</sup>; *senatu semettridente* P<sup>1</sup>;  
*senatu ridente* Peter<sup>1</sup>. <sup>2</sup> *et om.* in P. <sup>3</sup> *lanuuium* P.  
<sup>4</sup> *cui* P.

<sup>1</sup> Probably L. Tutilius Pontianus Gentianus, said to have been one of Faustina's lovers (see *Marc.* xxix. 1), and *consul suffectus* in 183, the year in which the name *Pius* was bestowed on Commodus.

<sup>2</sup> The name is borne by Commodus in the Acts of the Arval Brothers for 7 Jan., 183; see *C.I.L.*, vi. 2099, 12. It also appears on the coins of 183, e.g. Cohen, iii<sup>2</sup>, p. 229, no. 13; the real reason for its assumption is not known.

<sup>3</sup> This name appears on his coins of 185; e.g. Cohen, iii<sup>2</sup>, p. 233, no. 49. It had been assumed as a cognomen by the Dictator Sulla.

<sup>4</sup> Julius Alexander, from Emesa in Syria. According to Dio, lxxii. 14, 1-3, his execution was ordered because he had speared a lion while on horseback; he killed those sent to execute him and then made his escape, but was overtaken.

<sup>5</sup> See c. iv. 1-4.

<sup>6</sup> An allusion to the mutiny in Britain; see note to c. vi. 2.

VIII. Meanwhile, because he had appointed to the consulship a former lover of his mother's,<sup>1</sup> the senate 183 mockingly gave Commodus the name Pius;<sup>2</sup> and after he had executed Perennis, he was given the name Felix,<sup>3</sup> as though, amid the multitudinous 185 executions of many citizens, he were a second Sulla. And this same Commodus, who was called Pius, and who was called Felix, is said to have feigned a plot against his own life, in order that he might have an excuse for putting many to death. Yet as a matter of fact, there were no rebellions save that of Alexander,<sup>4</sup> who soon killed himself and his near of kin, and that of Commodus' sister Lucilla.<sup>5</sup> He was called Britannicus by those who desired to flatter him, whereas the Britons even wished to set up an emperor against him.<sup>6</sup> He was called also the Roman Hercules,<sup>7</sup> on the ground that he had killed 192 wild beasts in the amphitheatre at Lanuvium; and, indeed, it was his custom to kill wild beasts on his own estate. He had, besides, an insane desire that the city of Rome should be renamed Colonia Commodiana.<sup>8</sup> This mad idea, it is said, was inspired in

<sup>7</sup> See also § 9. *Romanus Hercules* appears among his titles as given by Dio, lxxii. 15, 5, and also in an inscription of Dec., 192; see *C.I.L.*, xiv. 3449 = Dessau, *Ins. Sel.*, 400. He had the lion's skin and club, the attributes of Hercules, carried before him in the streets (Dio, lxxii. 17, 4), and had himself portrayed as Hercules on coins (Cohen, iii<sup>2</sup>, p. 251 f., nos. 180-210), and in statues (c. ix. 2; Dio, lxxii. 15, 6), e.g. the famous bust in the Capitoline Museum, Rome.

<sup>8</sup> So also Dio, lxxii. 15, 2. *Colonia L(ucia) An(toniniana) Com(modiana)* appears on coins of 190; see Cohen, iii<sup>2</sup>, p. 233, nos. 39-40. He also gave the name Commodianus to the senate (§ 9 and Dio, *ibid.*), the people (c. xv. 5), the Palace (c. xii. 7), the legions (Dio, *ibid.*), the city of Carthage, and the African fleet (c. xvii. 8).

7 dicitur ei inter delenimenta Marciae iniectus. voluit  
 8 etiam in Circo quadrigas agitare. dalmaticatus in  
 publico processit atque ita signum quadrigis emit-  
 9 tendis dedit. et eo quidem tempore quo ad senatum  
 rettulit de Commodiana facienda Roma, non solum  
 senatus hoc libenter accepit per inrisionem, quan-  
 tum intellegitur, sed etiam se ipsum Commodianum  
 vocavit, Commodum Herculem et deum appellans.

IX. Simulavit se et in Africam iturum, ut sump-  
 tum itinerarium exigeret, et exegit eumque in con-  
 2 vivia et aleam convertit. Motilenum, praefectum  
 praetorii, per ficus veneno interemit. accepit statuas  
 in Herculis habitu, eique immolatum est ut deo.  
 3 multos praeterea paraverat interimere. quod per  
 parvulum quendam proditum est, qui tabulam e  
 cubiculo eiecit, in qua occidendorum erant nomina  
 scripta.

4 Sacra Isidis coluit, ut et caput raderet et Anubim  
 5 portaret. Bellonae servientes vere exsecare brac-  
 6 chium praecepit studio crudelitatis. Isiacos vere

<sup>1</sup> His mistress, who afterwards conspired against him ; see c. xvii. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Called *chiridotae Dalmatarum* in *Pert.*, viii. 2. It was a long-sleeved tunic reaching to the knee. Dio describes it (lxxii. 17, 2) as made of white silk with gold threads.

<sup>3</sup> See note to c. viii. 5.

<sup>4</sup> An Egyptian deity regarded as the protector of corpses and tombs and represented with the head of a jackal, or, by the Greeks and Romans, with that of a dog. His cult was often combined with that of Isis, and according to Juvenal

him while listening to the blandishments of Marcia.<sup>1</sup> He had also a desire to drive chariots in the Circus, and he went out in public clad in the Dalmatian tunic<sup>2</sup> and thus clothed gave the signal for the charioteers to start. And in truth, on the occasion when he laid before the senate his proposal to call Rome Commodiana, not only did the senate gleefully pass this resolution, out of mockery, as far as we know, but also took the name "Commodian" to itself, at the same time giving Commodus the name Hercules, and calling him a god.

IX. He pretended once that he was going to Africa, so that he could get funds for the journey, then got them and spent them on banquets and gaming instead. He murdered Motilenus, the prefect of the guard, by means of poisoned figs. He allowed statues of himself to be erected with the accoutrements of Hercules;<sup>3</sup> and sacrifices were performed to him as to a god. He had planned to execute many more men besides, but his plan was betrayed by a certain young servant, who threw out of his bedroom a tablet on which were written the names of those who were to be killed.

He practised the worship of Isis and even went so far as to shave his head and carry a statue of Anubis.<sup>4</sup> In his passion for cruelty he actually ordered the votaries of Bellona to cut off one of their arms,<sup>5</sup> and as for the devotees of Isis, he forced them to beat

(vi. 534), the chief priest of Isis was often dressed as Anubis.

<sup>5</sup> The cult of Bellona, brought to Rome from Asia Minor in the time of Sulla, was characterised by orgiastic music and dances, in which the votaries, like Mohammedan dervishes, slashed their arms and bodies; for a description see Tibullus, i. 6, 45 f.

pineis usque ad perniciem pectus tundere cogebat. cum Anubim portaret, capita Isiacorum graviter obtundebat ore simulacri. clava non solum leones in veste muliebri et pelle leonina sed etiam homines multos adflixit. debiles pedibus et eos, qui ambulare non possent, in gigantum modum formavit, ita ut a genibus<sup>1</sup> de pannis et linteis quasi dracones tegerentur,<sup>2</sup> eosdemque sagittis confecit. sacra Mithriaca homicidio vero polluit, cum illic<sup>3</sup> aliquid ad speciem timoris vel dici vel fingi soleat.

X. Etiam puer et gulosus et impudicus fuit. adolescens omne genus hominum infamavit quod erat 2secum, et ab omnibus est infamatus. iridentes se feris obiciebat. eum etiam, qui Tranquilli librum vitam Caligulae continentem legerat, feris obici iussit, quia eundem diem natalis habuerat, quem et Caligula. 3 si quis sane<sup>4</sup> se mori velle praedixisset, hunc invitum praecipitari iubebat.

In iocis quoque perniciosus. nam eum,<sup>5</sup> quem 4 vidisset albescentes inter nigros capillos quasi ver-

<sup>1</sup> *gentibus* P.    <sup>2</sup> *tegerentur* Petschenig, Peter<sup>2</sup>; *degenerentur* P, Peter<sup>1</sup>.    <sup>3</sup> *illhic* P.    <sup>4</sup> *sane* P, Peter; *ante* Mommsen.    <sup>5</sup> *eum* Jordan; *eam* P.

<sup>1</sup> *i.e.* dressed as Hercules; see note to c. viii. 5.

<sup>2</sup> According to Dio, lxxii. 20, he actually attached figures of serpents to their legs. The performance was an imitation of the mythical combats between the gods and the giants, in which the latter are usually represented, *e.g.* on the great altar from Pergamum, as having serpents for legs.

their breasts with pine-cones even to the point of death. While he was carrying about the statue of Anubis, he used to smite the heads of the devotees of Isis with the face of the statue. He struck with his club, while clad in a woman's garment or a lion's skin,<sup>1</sup> not lions only, but many men as well. Certain men who were lame in their feet and others who could not walk, he dressed up as giants, encasing their legs from the knee down in wrappings and bandages to make them look like serpents,<sup>2</sup> and then despatched them with his arrows. He desecrated the rites of Mithra<sup>3</sup> with actual murder, although it was customary in them merely to say or pretend something that would produce an impression of terror.

X. Even as a child he was gluttonous and lewd.<sup>4</sup> While a youth, he disgraced every class of men in his company and was disgraced in turn by them. Whoever ridiculed him he cast to the wild beasts. And one man, who had merely read the book by Tranquillus<sup>5</sup> containing the life of Caligula, he ordered cast to the wild beasts, because Caligula and he had the same birthday.<sup>6</sup> And if any one, indeed, expressed a desire to die, he had him hurried to death, however really reluctant.

In his humorous moments, too, he was destructive. For example, he put a starling on the head of one

<sup>3</sup> A Persian deity, whose cult was brought to Rome in the time of Pompey, and became very popular about the end of the first century after Christ. In the course of the next two centuries the god, under the name *Sol Invictus Mithras*, was worshipped throughout the Empire, and his cult was probably the most formidable rival of Christianity.

<sup>4</sup> But see note to c. i. 7.

<sup>5</sup> *i.e.* Suetonius; see note to *Hadr.*, xi. 3.

<sup>6</sup> See c. i. 2, and Suetonius, *Caligula*, viii. 1.

miculos habere, sturno adposito, qui se vermes sectari  
 crederet, capite suppuratum reddebat obtusione oris.<sup>1</sup>  
 5 pinguem hominem medio ventre dissicit, ut eius  
 6 intestina subito funderentur. monopodios et luscinius  
 eos, quibus aut singulos tulisset oculos<sup>2</sup> aut singulos  
 7 pedes fregisset, appellabat. multos praeterea passim  
 exstinxit alios, quia barbarico habitu occurrerant,  
 8 alios, quia nobiles et speciosi erant. habuit in deliciis  
 homines appellatos nominibus verendorum utriusque  
 9 sexus, quos libentius suis osculis<sup>3</sup> applicabat. habuit  
 et hominem pene prominente ultra modum animalium,  
 quem Onon appellabat, sibi carissimum. quem et  
 ditavit et sacerdotio Herculis rustici praeposuit.  
 XI. dicitur saepe pretiosissimis cibus humana stercorea  
 miscuisse nec abstinuisse gustum aliis, ut putabat,  
 2 inrasis. duos gibbos retortos in lance argentea sibi  
 sinapi perfusus exhibuit eisdemque statim promovit  
 3 ac ditavit. praefectum praetorii suum Iulianum  
 togatum praesente officio suo in piscinam detrusit.  
 quem saltare etiam nudum ante concubinas suas iussit  
 4 quatientem cymbala deformato vultu. genera<sup>4</sup> legu-  
 minum coctorum ad convivium propter luxuriae con-  
 5 tinuationem raro vocavit. lavabat per diem septies

<sup>1</sup> obtusione oris Petschenig, Peter<sup>2</sup>; obtusioneris P; obtusionibus Peter<sup>1</sup>.  
<sup>2</sup> oculos om. in P<sup>1</sup>, add. in P corr.  
<sup>3</sup> osculis Urinus; oculis P. <sup>4</sup> genera . . . uocavit P, Peter<sup>2</sup>; genere . . . uocavit Salmasius, Peter.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> i. e. ass.

<sup>2</sup> Apparently a private cult, carried on in one of the emperor's suburban estates.

<sup>3</sup> See c. vii. 4.

man who, as he noticed, had a few white hairs, resembling worms, among the black, and caused his head to fester through the continual pecking of the bird's beak—the bird, of course, imagining that it was pursuing worms. One corpulent person he cut open down the middle of his belly, so that his intestines gushed forth. Other men he dubbed one-eyed or one-footed, after he himself had plucked out one of their eyes or cut off one of their feet. In addition to all this, he murdered many others in many places, some because they came into his presence in the costume of barbarians, others because they were noble and handsome. He kept among his minions certain men named after the private parts of both sexes, and on these he liked to bestow kisses. He also had in his company a man with a male member larger than that of most animals, whom he called Onos.<sup>1</sup> This man he treated with great affection, and he even made him rich and appointed him to the priesthood of the Rural Hercules.<sup>2</sup> XI. It is claimed that he often mixed human excrement with the most expensive foods, and he did not refrain from tasting them, mocking the rest of the company, as he thought. He displayed two misshapen hunchbacks on a silver platter after smearing them with mustard, and then straightway advanced and enriched them. He pushed into a swimming-pool his praetorian prefect Julianus,<sup>3</sup> although he was clad in his toga and accompanied by his staff; and he even ordered this same Julianus to dance naked before his concubines, clashing cymbals and making grimaces. The various kinds of cooked vegetables he rarely admitted to his banquets, his purpose being to preserve unbroken the succession of dainties. He used to bathe seven and

- 6 atque octies et in ipsis balneis edebat. adibat<sup>1</sup> deorum templa pollutus<sup>2</sup> stupris et humano sanguine.  
 7 imitatus est et medicum, ut sanguinem hominibus emitteret scalpris feralibus.  
 8 Menses quoque in honorem eius pro Augusto Commodum, pro Septembri Herculem, pro Octobri Invictum, pro Novembri Exsuperatorium, pro Decembri Amazonium ex signo ipsius adultores vocabant.  
 9 Amazonius autem vocatus est ex amore concubinae suae Marciae, quam pictam in Amazone diligebat, propter quam et ipse Amazonico habitu in arenam Romanam procedere voluit.  
 10 Gladiatorium etiam certamen subiit et nomina gladiatorum recepit eo gaudio quasi acciperet triumphalia. ludum semper<sup>3</sup> ingressus est et, quotiens indigredereur, publicis monumentis indi iussit. pugnasse autem dicitur septingentis tricies quinquies.  
 13 Nominatus inter Caesares quartum iduum Octobrium, quas Herculeas postea nominavit, Pudente et Polli-  
 14 one consulibus. appellatus Germanicus idibus Hercu-

<sup>1</sup> *adibat* ins. by Klein.      <sup>2</sup> *pollutus* P; *polluit* Peter.  
<sup>3</sup> *semper* P, Lenze; *saepe* Casaubon, Peter.

<sup>1</sup> Similar mutilations are recorded by Dio, lxxii. 17, 2.

<sup>2</sup> The complete list of the new names as given to the months is contained in Dio, lxxii. 15, 3. They are all Commodus' own names and titles. In Dio's enumeration the new names are applied differently from the list as given here, but the dates given in c. xi.-xii. accord with Dio, and comparison with known events shows that his is the correct order.

<sup>3</sup> See note to c. viii. 6.

<sup>4</sup> For a description of a spectacle lasting fourteen days, in which Commodus fought with wild beasts and gladiators, see Dio, lxxii. 18-21.

<sup>5</sup> See c. xv. 8.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. c. xv. 4.

<sup>7</sup> But see c. xii. 11.

eight times a day, and was in the habit of eating while in the baths. He would enter the temples of the gods defiled with adulteries and human blood. He evenaped a surgeon, going so far as to bleed men to death with scalpels.<sup>1</sup>

Certain months were renamed in his honour by his flatterers; for August they substituted Commodus, for September Hercules, for October Invictus, for November Exsuperatorius, and for December Amazonius, after his own surname.<sup>2</sup> He had been called Amazonius, moreover, because of his passion for his concubine Marcia,<sup>3</sup> whom he loved to have portrayed as an Amazon, and for whose sake he even wished to enter the arena of Rome dressed as an Amazon.

He engaged in gladiatorial combats,<sup>4</sup> and accepted the names usually given to gladiators<sup>5</sup> with as much pleasure as if he had been granted triumphal decorations. He regularly took part in the spectacles, and as often as he did so, ordered the fact to be inscribed in the public records.<sup>6</sup> It is said that he engaged in gladiatorial bouts seven hundred and thirty-five times.<sup>7</sup>

He received the name of Caesar on the fourth day before the Ides of the month usually called October,<sup>12 Oct.</sup> which he later named Hercules,<sup>8</sup> in the consulship of <sup>166</sup> Pudens and Pollio.<sup>9</sup> He was called Germanicus<sup>10</sup> on the Ides of "Hercules" in the consulship of Maxi- <sup>15 Oct.,</sup> <sup>172</sup>

<sup>8</sup> On these names of the months see note to c. xi. 8.

<sup>9</sup> For these dates see c. ii. 1-5, and notes.

<sup>10</sup> The surname was doubtless assumed by Commodus at the same time that it was taken by Marcus (see note to *Marc.*, xii. 9). It appears on a coin of Marcus and Commodus of 172; see Cohen, iii<sup>2</sup>, p. 133, no. 2.

XII. leis Maximo et Orfito consulibus. adsumptus est in omnia collegia sacerdotalia sacerdos XIII kal. Invictas  
 2 Pisone Iuliano consulibus. profectus in Germaniam  
 3 XIII kal. Aelias, ut postea nominavit. iisdem consulibus togam virilem accepit. cum patre appellatus imperator V kal. Exsuperatorias Pollione et Apro iterum<sup>1</sup> consulibus. triumphavit X kal. Ian. iisdem  
 6 consulibus. iterum profectus III nonas Commodias  
 7 Orfito et Rufo consulibus. datus in perpetuum ab exercitu et senatu in domo Palatina Commodiana conservandus XI kal. Romanas Praesente iterum consule.  
 8 tertio meditans de profectione a senatu et populo suo  
 9 retentus est. vota pro eo facta sunt nonis Pii  
 10 Fusciano iterum consule. inter haec refertur in litteras pugnasse illum sub patre trecenties sexagies  
 11 quinquies.<sup>2</sup> item postea tantum palmarum gladiatoriarum confecisse vel victis retiariis vel occisis, ut  
 12 mille contingeret. ferarum autem diversarum manu sua occidit, ita ut elephantos occideret, multa milia. et haec fecit spectante saepe populo Romano.

XIII. Fuit autem validus ad haec, alias debilis et infirmus, vitio etiam inter inguina prominenti, ita ut

<sup>1</sup> so Peter; *iterum et Apro* P.

<sup>2</sup> *quinties* P.

<sup>1</sup> The official language describing his enthronement.

<sup>2</sup> See note to c. viii. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Perhaps because of the plague (see *Marc.*, xiii. 3) which seems to have broken out again about this time; see Dio, lxxii. 14, 3; Herodian, i. 12, 1-2.

<sup>4</sup> A gladiator provided with a heavy net in which he tried to entangle his opponent; if successful he then killed him with a dagger.

<sup>5</sup> But see c. xi. 12.

<sup>6</sup> See note to c. xi. 10.

mus and Orfitus. XII. He was received into all the sacred colleges as a priest on the thirteenth day <sup>20 Jan.</sup> before the Kalends of "Invictus," in the consulship <sup>175</sup> of Piso and Julianus. He set out for Germany on the fourteenth day before the Kalends of the month <sup>19 May,</sup> which he later named Aelius, and assumed the toga <sup>175</sup> in the same year. Together with his father he was acclaimed Imperator on the fifth day before the <sup>27 Nov.,</sup> Kalends of "Exsuperatorius," in the year when <sup>176</sup> Pollio and Aper served their second consulships, and he celebrated a triumph on the tenth day before the <sup>23 Dec.,</sup> Kalends of January in this same year. He set out <sup>176</sup> on his second expedition on the third day before the <sup>3 Aug.,</sup> Nones of "Commodus" in the consulship of Orfitus <sup>178</sup> and Rufus. He was officially presented by the army and the senate to be maintained in perpetuity in the Palatine mansion,<sup>1</sup> henceforth called Commodiana,<sup>2</sup> on the eleventh day before the Kalends of <sup>22 Oct.,</sup> "Romanus," in the year that Praesens was consul <sup>180</sup> for the second time. When he laid plans for a third expedition, he was persuaded by the senate and people to give it up. Vows<sup>3</sup> were assumed in his behalf on the Nones of "Pius," when Fuscianus was <sup>5 April,</sup> consul for the second time. <sup>188</sup> Besides these facts, it is related in records that he fought 365 gladiatorial combats in his father's reign. Afterwards, by vanquishing or slaying retiarii,<sup>4</sup> he won enough gladiatorial crowns to bring the number up to a thousand.<sup>5</sup> He also killed with his own hand thousands of wild beasts of all kinds, even elephants. And he frequently did these things before the eyes of the Roman people.<sup>6</sup>

XIII. But, though vigorous enough for such exploits, he was otherwise weak and diseased; indeed,



eius tumorem per sericas vestes populus Romanus  
 2 agnosceret. versus in eo multi scripti sunt, de quibus  
 3 etiam in opere suo Marius Maximus gloriatur. virium  
 ad conficiendas feras tantarum fuit, ut elephantum  
 conto transfigeret <sup>1</sup> et orygis cornu basto transmiserit  
 et singulis ictibus multa milia ferarum ingentium con-  
 4 ficeret. impudentiae tantae fuit, ut cum muliebri  
 veste in amphitheatro vel theatro sedens publice  
 saepissime biberit.  
 5 Victi sunt sub eo tamen, cum ille sic viveret, per  
 legatos Mauri, victi Daci, Pannoniae quoque com-  
 positae, in <sup>2</sup> Britannia, in Germania et in Dacia im-  
 6 perium eius recusantibus provincialibus. quae omnia  
 7 ista per duces sedata sunt. ipse Commodus in sub-  
 scribendo tardus et neglegens, ita ut libellis una  
 forma multis subscriberet, in epistulis autem plurimis  
 8 'Vale' tantum scriberet. agebanturque omnia per  
 alios, qui etiam condemnationes in sinum vertisse  
 XIV. dicuntur. per hanc autem neglegentiam, cum et  
 annonam vastarent ii qui tunc rem publicam gerebant,

<sup>1</sup> *transigeret* P.

<sup>2</sup> *in om.* in P.

<sup>1</sup> An inscription from Mauretania, set up between 184 and the death of Commodus, records the construction and repair of redoubts along the border, and is probably to be connected with this outbreak; see Dessau, *Ins. Sel.*, 396. This may also be the revolt alluded to in *Pert.*, iv. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Probably in 182, when Commodus was acclaimed *Imperator* for the fifth time (see Cohen, iii<sup>3</sup>, p. 337, nos. 840-847). A large number of Dacians who had been driven from their homes were granted land in Roman territory; see Dio, lxxii. 3, 3.

he had such a conspicuous growth on his groin that the people of Rome could see the swelling through his silken robes. Many verses were written alluding to this deformity; and Marius Maximus prides himself on preserving these in his biography of Commodus. Such was his prowess in the slaying of wild beasts, that he once transfixd an elephant with a pole, pierced a gazelle's horn with a spear, and on a thousand occasions dispatched a mighty beast with a single blow. Such was his complete indifference to propriety, that time and again he sat in the theatre or amphitheatre dressed in a woman's garments and drank quite publicly.

The Moors<sup>1</sup> and the Dacians<sup>2</sup> were conquered during his reign, and peace was established in the Pannonias,<sup>3</sup> but all by his legates, since such was the manner of his life. The provincials in Britain,<sup>4</sup> Dacia, and Germany<sup>5</sup> attempted to cast off his yoke, but all these attempts were put down by his generals. Commodus himself was so lazy and careless in signing documents that he answered many petitions with the same formula, while in very many letters he merely wrote the word "Farewell". All official business was carried on by others, who, it is said, even used condemnations to swell their purses. XIV. And because he was so careless, moreover, a great famine arose in

<sup>3</sup> An inscription of 185 records the construction of redoubts along the Danube; see *C.I.L.*, iii. 3385 = Dessau, *Ins. Sel.*, 395.

<sup>4</sup> See c. vi. 2 and note.

<sup>5</sup> Probably in 187-188. It is referred to in an inscription as *expeditio felicissima tertia Germanica*; see *C.I.L.*, v. 2155 = Dessau, *Ins. Sel.*, 1574. According to c. xii. 8, Commodus wished to lead the expedition but the "senate and people" would not allow it.

etiam inopia ingens Romae exorta est, cum fruges  
 2 non<sup>1</sup> deessent. et eos quidem qui omnia vastabant  
 3 postea Commodus occidit atque proscripsit. ipse vero  
 saeculum aureum Commodianum nomine adsimulans  
 vilitatem proposuit, ex qua maiorem penuriam fecit.  
 4 Multi sub eo et alienam poenam et salutem suam  
 5 pecunia redemerunt. vendidit etiam suppliciorum  
 diversitates et sepulturas et imminutiones malorum et  
 6 alios pro aliis occidit. vendidit etiam provincias et  
 administrationes, cum ii per quos venderet partem  
 7 acciperent, partem vero Commodus. vendidit non-  
 nullis et inimicorum suorum caedes. vendiderunt  
 8 sub eo etiam eventus litium liberti. praefectos  
 Paternum et Perennem non diu tulit, ita tamen ut  
 etiam de iis praefectis quos ipse fecerat triennium  
 nullus impletet, quorum plurimos interfecit vel veneno  
 vel gladio. et praefectos urbi eadem facilitate mutavit.

XV. cubicularios suos libenter occidit, cum omnia ex nutu  
 2 eorum semper fecisset. Eclectus<sup>2</sup> cubicularius cum  
 videret eum tam facile cubicularios occidere, praevenit  
 eum et factioni mortis eius interfuit.

3 Spectator gladiatoria sumpsit arma, panno purpureo  
 4 nudos umeros advelans. habuit praeterea morem, ut

<sup>1</sup> So P (Ballou in "Class. Philol.," iii. p. 273); *et non* in P  
 acc. to Peter. <sup>2</sup> *Eclectus* Moimmsen, Peter; *electus* P.

<sup>1</sup> See note to c. vii. 1.

<sup>2</sup> It was enacted by special decree, according to Dio, lxxii.  
 15, 6.

<sup>3</sup> See c. iv. 7-8 and vi. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. c. vi. 6-8; vii. 4; ix. 2. Even Cleander was prefect  
 only from 186 to 189.

<sup>5</sup> He had been a freedman and favourite of Lucius Verus;  
 see *Ver.*, ix. 6.

<sup>6</sup> See c. xvii. 1.

Rome, not because there was any real shortage of  
 crops, but merely because those who then ruled the state  
 were plundering the food supply.<sup>1</sup> As for those who  
 plundered on every hand, Commodus afterwards put  
 them to death and confiscated their property; but  
 for the time he pretended that a golden age had  
 come,<sup>2</sup> "Commodian" by name, and ordered a general  
 reduction of prices, the result of which was an even  
 greater scarcity.

In his reign many a man secured punishment for  
 another or immunity for himself by bribery. Indeed,  
 in return for money Commodus would grant a change  
 of punishment, the right of burial, the alleviation of  
 wrongs, and the substitution of another for one con-  
 demned to be put to death. He sold provinces and  
 administrative posts, part of the proceeds accruing to  
 those through whom he made the sale and part to  
 Commodus himself. To some he sold even the  
 lives of their enemies. Under him the imperial  
 freedmen sold even the results of law-suits. He did  
 not long put up with Paternus and Perennis as pre-  
 fects;<sup>3</sup> indeed, not one of the prefects whom he him-  
 self had appointed remained in office as long as three  
 years.<sup>4</sup> Most of them he killed, some with poison,  
 some with the sword. XV. Prefects of the city  
 he changed with equal readiness. He executed his  
 chamberlains with no compunctions whatever, even  
 though all that he had done had been at their bidding.  
 One of these chamberlains, however, Eclectus  
 by name,<sup>5</sup> forestalled him when he saw how ready  
 Commodus was to put the chamberlains to death, and  
 took part in a conspiracy to kill him.<sup>6</sup>

At gladiatorial shows he would come to watch and  
 stay to fight, covering his bare shoulders with a purple

omnia quae turpiter, quae impure, quae crudeliter, quae gladiatorie, quae lenonie faceret, actis urbis indi-  
 5 uberet, ut Marii Maximi scripta testantur. Commodianum etiam populum Romanum dixit, quo saepis-  
 6 sime praesente gladiator pugnavit. sane cum illi saepe pugnanti ut deo populus favisset, inrisum se credens populum Romanum a militibus classiariis, qui vela ducebant, in amphitheatro interimi prae-  
 7 ceperat. urbem incendi iusserat, utpote coloniam suam. quod factum esset, nisi Laetus praefectus  
 8 praetorii Commodum deterruisset. appellatus est sane inter cetera triumphalia nomina etiam sescenties vicies Palus Primus Secutorum.

XVI. Prodigia eius imperio et publice et privatim  
 2 haec facta sunt: crinita stella apparuit. vestigia deorum in foro visa sunt exeuntia. et ante bellum desertorum caelum arsit. et repentina caligo ac tenebra in Circo kalendis Ianuariis oborta; et ante

<sup>1</sup>The *Acta Urbis* or *Acta Diurna* was a publication begun by Julius Caesar and continued by his successors, which contained official announcements, and general news that the government desired to convey to the public.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. c. xi. 11.

<sup>3</sup>See c. viii. 6 and note.

<sup>4</sup>See c. xi. 10 and note.

<sup>5</sup>In 192 a fire devastated the district east of the Forum and a portion of the Palatine; see Dio, lxxii. 24, and Herodian, i. 14, 2-6. This seems to be the fire here alluded to, but according to Dio, Commodus was in no way responsible for it. After rebuilding what the fire had destroyed, Commodus assumed the title *Conditor*; see Cohen, iii<sup>2</sup>, p. 251 f., nos. 181-184.

<sup>6</sup>See c. xvii. 1.

<sup>7</sup>According to Dio, lxxii. 22, 3, this was engraved along with his other titles on the Colossus (see c. xvii. 10). The term

cloth. And it was his custom, moreover, to order the insertion in the city-gazette<sup>1</sup> of everything he did that was base or foul or cruel, or typical of a gladiator<sup>2</sup> or a procurer—at least, the writings of Marius Maximus so testify. He entitled the Roman people the “People of Commodus,”<sup>3</sup> since he had very often fought as a gladiator in their presence.<sup>4</sup> And although the people regularly applauded him in his frequent combats as though he were a god, he became convinced that he was being laughed at, and gave orders that the Roman people should be slain in the Amphitheatre by the marines who spread the awnings. He gave an order, also, for the burning of the city,<sup>5</sup> as though it were his private colony, and this order would have been executed had not Laetus,<sup>6</sup> the prefect of the guard, deterred him. Among other triumphal titles, he was also given the name “Captain of the Secutores”<sup>7</sup> six hundred and twenty times.

XVI. The prodigies that occurred in his reign, both those which concerned the state and those which affected Commodus personally, were as follows. A comet appeared. Footprints of the gods were seen in the Forum departing from it. Before the war of the deserters<sup>8</sup> the heavens were ablaze. On the Kalends<sup>1</sup> Jan., 193

*primus palus* is formed on the analogy of *primus pilus*, the first centurion of a legion. The *palus* was the wooden pike used by gladiators in practice. A *secutor* wore a helmet and greaves and was armed with a long shield and a sword.

<sup>8</sup>An outbreak in Gaul in 186, headed by a soldier named Maternus, who gathered a band of fellow-soldiers and desperadoes and plundered the country. The Roman troops under Pescennius Niger defeated and scattered them; whereupon, Maternus himself fled to Italy and attempted to assassinate Commodus, but was caught and beheaded; see Herodian, i. 10, and *Pesc. Nig.*, iii. 4.

3 lucem fuerant etiam incendiariae aves ac dirae. de  
 Palatio ipse ad Caelum montem in Vectilianas aedes  
 4 migravit, negans se in Palatio posse dormire. Ianus  
 geminus sua sponte apertus est, et Anubis simulacrum  
 5 marmoreum moveri visum est. Herculis signum  
 aeneum sudavit in Minucia per plures dies. bubo  
 etiam supra cubiculum eius deprehensa est tam Romae  
 6 quam Lanuvii. ipse autem prodigium non leve sibi  
 fecit; nam cum in gladiatoris occisi vulnus manum  
 misisset, ad caput sibi detersit, et contra consuetudi-  
 nem praenulatos iussit spectatores non togatos ad mun-  
 7 vestimentis praesidens. galea eius bis per portam  
 Libitinensem elata est.  
 8 Congiarium dedit populo singulis denarios septin-  
 genos vicenos quinque. circa alios omnes parcissimus  
 fuit, quod luxuriae sumptibus aerarium minuerat.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *minueret* P.

<sup>1</sup> Regarded in early times as birds of ill-omen; in the first century after Christ, however, there was considerable difference of opinion as to their identification; see Plin., *Nat. Hist.*, x, 36.

<sup>2</sup> The school for gladiators; it was in the general neighbourhood of the Colosseum. Commodus planned to spend the night of 31 Dec., 192 here, before appearing in public on the next day as a *secutor*: see Dio, lxxii, 22, 2.

<sup>3</sup> It was an ancient custom that these gates should be open when Rome was at war.

<sup>4</sup> See note to c. ix, 4.

<sup>5</sup> The two *porticus Minuciae* were situated in the low-lying district between the Capitoline Hill and the Tiber, close to the Theatre of Marcellus. They were called respectively *Vetus* and *Fruentaria*; in the latter were distributed the tickets which entitled the holders to receive grain from the public granaries.

<sup>6</sup> According to Dio, lxxii, 21, 3, these cloaks were never worn at the theatre except when an emperor died.

of January a swift coming mist and darkness arose in the Circus; and before dawn there had already been fire-birds<sup>1</sup> and ill-boding portents. Commodus himself moved his residence from the Palace to the Vectilian Villa<sup>2</sup> on the Caelian hill, saying that he could not sleep in the Palace. The twin gates of the temple of Janus<sup>3</sup> opened of their own accord, and a marble image of Anubis<sup>4</sup> was seen to move. In the Minucian Portico<sup>5</sup> a bronze statue of Hercules sweated for several days. An owl, moreover, was caught above his bed-chamber both at Lanuvium and at Rome. He was himself responsible for no inconsiderable an omen relating to himself; for after he had plunged his hand into the wound of a slain gladiator he wiped it on his own head, and again, contrary to custom, he ordered the spectators to attend his gladiatorial shows clad not in togas but in cloaks, a practice usual at funerals,<sup>6</sup> while he himself presided in the vestments of a mourner. Twice, moreover, his helmet was borne through the Gate of Libitina.<sup>7</sup>

He gave largess to the people, 725 denarii to each man.<sup>8</sup> Toward all others he was close-fisted to a degree, since the expense of his luxurious living had drained the treasury. He held many races in the Circus,<sup>9</sup> but rather as the result of a whim than as

<sup>7</sup> The gate of an amphitheatre through which were dragged the bodies of slain gladiators. Libitina was the goddess who presided over funerals.

<sup>8</sup> This sum must be greatly exaggerated, unless it is a computation of what each citizen received during the whole of Commodus' reign. According to Dio, lxxii, 16, 1, he often gave individual largesses of 140 denarii, and his coins show nine occasions when largess was given by him, seven of which date from the time of his reign as sole emperor.

<sup>9</sup> On one occasion he exhibited thirty races in two hours; see Dio, lxxii, 16, 1.

9 circenses multos addidit ex libidine potius quam religione et ut dominos factionum ditaret.

XVII. His incitati, licet nimis sero, Quintus Aemilius Laetus praefectus et Marcia concubina eius 2 inierunt coniurationem ad occidendum eum. primumque ei venenum dederunt; quod cum minus operaretur, per athletam, cum quo exerceri solebat, eum strangularunt.

3 Fuit forma quidem corporis iusta, vultu insubido, ut ebrios solent, et sermone incondito, capillo semper fucato et auri ramentis inluminato, adurens comam et barbam timore tonsoris.

4 Corpus eius ut unco traheretur atque in Tiberim mitteretur, senatus et populus postulavit, sed postea iussu Pertinacis in monumentum Hadriani translatum est.

5 Opera eius praeter lavacrum, quod Cleander nomine 6 ipsius fecerat, nulla exstant. sed nomen eius alienis 7 operibus incisum senatus erasit. nec patris autem sui opera perfecit. classem Africanam instituit, quae subsidio esset, si forte Alexandrina frumenta cessasset. 8 ridicule etiam Carthaginem Alexandriam Commodianam togatam appellavit, cum classem quoque Africanam 9 Commodianam Herculeam appellasset. ornamenta

<sup>1</sup> See note to *Ver.*, iv. 8.

<sup>2</sup> The story of the murder is given in greater detail by Dio, lxxii. 22, 4, and especially by Herodian, i. 16-17. Electus was also one of the conspirators; see c. xv. 2.

<sup>3</sup> It was customary to fasten a hook to the bodies of condemned criminals and thus drag them to the Tiber. The populace had demanded that this should be done to the body of Tiberius (Suetonius, *Tiberius*, lxxv. 1).

<sup>4</sup> Cf. c. xx. 1, and Dio, lxxiii. 2, 1. For his sepulchral inscription see *C. I. L.*, vi. 992 = Dessau, *Ins. Sel.*, 401.

<sup>5</sup> The *Thermae Commodianae*; their exact site is unknown.

an act of religion, and also in order to enrich the leaders of the factions.<sup>1</sup>

XVII. Because of these things—but all too late—Quintus Aemilius Laetus, prefect of the guard, and Marcia, his concubine, were roused to action and entered into a conspiracy against his life. First they gave him poison; and when this proved ineffective they had him strangled by the athlete with whom 31 Dec., he was accustomed to exercise.<sup>2</sup> 192

Physically he was very well proportioned. His expression was dull, as is usual in drunkards, and his speech uncultivated. His hair was always dyed and made lustrous by the use of gold dust, and he used to singe his hair and beard because he was afraid of barbers.

The people and senate demanded that his body be dragged with the hook and cast into the Tiber;<sup>3</sup> later, however, at the bidding of Pertinax, it was borne to the Mausoleum of Hadrian.<sup>4</sup>

No public works of his are in existence, except the bath which Cleander built in his name.<sup>5</sup> But he inscribed his name on the works of others; this the senate erased.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, he did not even finish the public works of his father. He did organize an African fleet, which would have been useful, in case the grain-supply from Alexandria were delayed.<sup>7</sup> He jestingly named Carthage Alexandria Commodiana Togata, after entitling the African fleet Commodiana Herculea.<sup>8</sup> He made certain additions

<sup>6</sup> Cf. c. xx. 5. Many inscriptions found throughout the empire show Commodus' name carefully erased. The same procedure followed the death of Domitian.

<sup>7</sup> The fleet was to convey grain to Rome from the province of Africa.

<sup>8</sup> See note to c. viii. 6.

sane quaedam Colosso addidit, quae postea cuncta  
 10 sublata sunt. Colossi autem caput dempsit, quod  
 Neronis esset, ac suum imposuit et titulum more solito  
 subscripsit, ita ut illum Gladiatorium et Effeminatum  
 11 non praetermitteret. hunc tamen Severus, imperator  
 gravis et vir nominis sui, odio, quantum <sup>1</sup> videtur, senatus  
 inter deos rettulit, flamine addito, quem ipse vivus  
 sibi paraverat, Herculaneo Commodiano.  
 12 Sorores tres superstitis reliquit. ut natalis eius  
 celebraretur, Severus instituit.

XVIII. Adclamationes senatus post mortem Com-  
 2 modi graves fuerunt. ut autem sciretur quod iudi-  
 cium senatus de Commodo fuerit, ipsas adclamationes  
 de Mario Maximo indidi et sententiam senatus con-  
 sulti :

3 "Hosti patriae honores detrahantur. parricidae  
 honores detrahantur. parricida trahatur. hostis  
 patriae, parricida, gladiator in spoliario lanietur.  
 4 hostis deorum, carnifex senatus, hostis deorum, par-  
 5 ricida senatus ; hostis deorum, hostis senatus. gladi-  
 atorem in spoliario. qui senatum occidit, in spoliario  
 ponatur ; qui senatum occidit, unco trahatur ; qui  
 innocentes occidit, unco trahatur. hostis, parricida,

<sup>1</sup> quantum Peter ; quam P.

<sup>1</sup> On the Colossus see *Had.*, xix. 12-13 and note. This passage is incorrect, since Hadrian had replaced the head of Nero by that of the Sun. According to Dio, lxxii. 22, 3, Commodus also added the club and lion's skin characteristic of Hercules (see c. viii. 5). Dio also gives the inscription (cf. c. xv. 8).

<sup>2</sup> Commemorated by coins with the legend *Consecratio* ;

to the Colossus by way of ornamentation, all of which were later taken off, and he also removed its head, which was a likeness of Nero, and replaced it by a likeness of himself, writing on the pedestal an inscription in his usual style, not omitting the titles Gladiatorius and Effeminatus.<sup>1</sup> And yet Severus, a stern emperor and a man whose character was well in keeping with his name, moved by hatred for the senate—or so it seems—exalted this creature to a place among the gods<sup>2</sup> and granted him also a flamen, the "Herculaneus Commodianus," whom Commodus while still alive had planned to have for himself.

Three sisters<sup>3</sup> survived him. Severus instituted the observance of his birthday.

XVIII. Loud were the acclamations of the senate after the death of Commodus. And that the senate's opinion of him may be known, I have quoted from Marius Maximus the acclamations themselves,<sup>4</sup> and the content of the senate's decree :

"From him who was a foe of his fatherland let his honours be taken away ; let the honours of the murderer be taken away ; let the murderer be dragged in the dust. The foe of his fatherland, the murderer, the gladiator, in the charnel-house let him be mangled. He is foe to the gods, slayer of the senate, foe to the gods, murderer of the senate, foe of the gods, foe of the senate. Cast the gladiator into the charnel-house. He who slew the senate, let him be dragged with the hook ; he who slew the guiltless, let

see Cohen, iii<sup>2</sup>, p. 234, no. 61 ; see also p. 359, nos. 1009-1010. He also appears as Divus Commodus in inscriptions.

<sup>3</sup> Arria Fadilla, Cornificia, and Vibia Aurelia Sabina.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *Av. Cass.*, xiii. 1 and note. The outcries are mentioned by Dio, lxxiii. 2, 2-4.

6 vere vere.<sup>1</sup> qui sanguini suo non pepercit, unco  
7 trahatur. qui te occisurus fuit, unco trahatur. no-  
biscum timuisti, nobiscum periclitatus es. ut salvi  
simus, Iuppiter optime maxime, serva nobis Per-  
8 tinacem. fidei praetorianorum feliciter. praetoriis  
cohortibus feliciter. exercitibus Romanis feliciter.  
pietati senatus feliciter.

9 Parricida trahatur. rogamus, Auguste, parricida  
10 trahatur. hoc rogamus, parricida trahatur. exaudi  
Caesar: delatores ad leonem. exaudi Caesar: Spera-  
11 tum ad leonem. victoriae populi Romani feliciter.  
fidei militum feliciter. fidei praetorianorum feliciter.  
cohortibus praetoriis feliciter.

12 Hostis statuas undique, parricidae statuas undique,  
gladiatoris statuas undique. gladiatoris et parricidae  
13 statuae detrahantur. necator civium trahatur. parricida  
civium trahatur. gladiatoris statuae detrahantur.  
14 te salvo salvi et securi sumus, vere vere, modo vere,  
modo digne, modo vere, modo libere.

15 Nunc securi sumus; delatoribus metum. ut securi  
simus,<sup>2</sup> delatoribus metum. ut <sup>3</sup> salvi simus, delatores  
de senatu, delatoribus fustem. te salvo delatores ad  
16 leonem. te imperante delatoribus fustem.

<sup>1</sup> *vere* Peter; *severe* P.      <sup>2</sup> *sumus* P.      <sup>3</sup> *ut* ins. by  
Salmasius; om. in P.

<sup>1</sup> Evidently addressed to Pertinax

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Pert.*, v. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Apparently an informer.

him be dragged with the hook—a foe, a murderer, verily, verily. He who spared not his own blood, let him be dragged with the hook; he who would have slain you,<sup>1</sup> let him be dragged with the hook. You were in terror along with us, you were endangered along with us. That we may be safe, O Jupiter Best and Greatest, save for us Pertinax.<sup>2</sup> Long life to the guardian care of the praetorians! Long life to the praetorian cohorts! Long life to the armies of Rome! Long life to the loyalty of the senate!

Let the murderer he dragged in the dust. We beseech you, O Sire, let the murderer be dragged in the dust. This we beseech you, let the murderer be dragged in the dust. Hearken, Caesar: to the lions with the informers! Hearken Caesar: to the lions with Speratus!<sup>3</sup> Long life to the victory of the Roman people! Long life to the soldiers' guardian care! Long life to the guardian care of the praetorians! Long life to the praetorian cohorts!

On all sides are statues of the foe, on all sides are statues of the murderer, on all sides are statues of the gladiator. The statues of the murderer and gladiator, let them be cast down. The slayer of citizens, let him be dragged in the dust. The murderer of citizens, let him be dragged in the dust. Let the statues of the gladiator be overthrown. While you are safe, we too are safe and untroubled, verily, verily, if in very truth, then with honour, if in very truth, then with freedom.

Now at last we are secure; let informers tremble. That we may be secure, let informers tremble. That we may be safe, cast informers out of the senate, the club for informers! While you are safe, to the lions with informers! While you are ruler, the club for informers!

XIX. Parricidae gladiatoris memoria aboleatur, parricidae gladiatoris statuæ detrahantur. impuri gladiatoris memoria aboleatur. gladiatorem in spoliario. exaudi Caesar: carnifex unco trahatur. carnifex senatus more maiorum unco trahatur. saevior Domitiano, impurior Nerone. sic fecit, sic patiatur. memoriae innocentium serventur. honores innocentium restituas, rogamus. parricidae cadaver unco trahatur. gladiatoris cadaver unco trahatur. gladiatoris cadaver in spoliario ponatur. perroga, perroga: omnes censemus unco trahendum. qui omnes occidit, unco trahatur. qui omnem aetatem occidit, unco trahatur. qui utrumque sexum occidit, unco trahatur. qui sanguini suo non pepercit, unco trahatur. qui templa spoliavit, unco trahatur. qui testaments delevit, unco trahatur. qui vivos spoliavit, unco trahatur. servis serviimus. qui pretia vitae exegit, unco trahatur. qui pretia vitae exegit et fidem non servavit, unco trahatur. qui senatum vendidit, unco trahatur. qui filiis abstulit hereditatem, unco trahatur.

7 Indices de senatu, delatores de senatu, servorum

Let the memory of the murderer and the gladiator be utterly wiped away. Let the statues of the murderer and the gladiator be overthrown. Let the memory of the foul gladiator be utterly wiped away. Cast the gladiator into the charnel-house. Hearken, Caesar: let the slayer be dragged with the hook. In the manner of our fathers let the slayer of the senate be dragged with the hook. More savage than Domitian, more foul than Nero. As he did unto others, let it be done unto him. Let the remembrance of the guiltless be preserved. Restore the honours of the guiltless, we beseech you. Let the body of the murderer be dragged with the hook, let the body of the gladiator be dragged with the hook, let the body of the gladiator be cast into the charnel-house. Call for our vote, call for our vote: with one accord we reply, let him be dragged with the hook. He who slew all men, let him be dragged with the hook. He who slew young and old, let him be dragged with the hook. He who slew man and woman, let him be dragged with the hook. He who spared not his own blood, let him be dragged with the hook. He who plundered temples, let him be dragged with the hook. He who set aside the testaments of the dead, let him be dragged with the hook. He who plundered the living, let him be dragged with the hook. We have been slaves to slaves. He who demanded a price for the life of a man, let him be dragged with the hook. He who demanded a price for a life and kept not his promise, let him be dragged with the hook. He who sold the senate, let him be dragged with the hook. He who took from sons their patrimony, let him be dragged with the hook.

Spies and informers, cast them out of the senate.



subornatores de senatu. et tu nobiscum timuisti;  
 8 omnia scis et bonos et malos nosti. omnia scis,  
 omnia emenda; pro te timuimus. o nos felices, te  
 vere<sup>1</sup> imperante! de parricida refer, refer, perroga.  
 9 praesentiam tuam rogamus. innocentes sepulti non  
 sunt. parricidae cadaver trahatur. parricida sepultos  
 eruit; parricidae cadaver trahatur."

XX. Et cum iussu Pertinacis Livius Laurensis, pro-  
 curator patrimonii, Fabio Ciloni consuli designato  
 dedisset, per noctem Commodi cadaver sepultum est.  
 2, 3 senatus adclamavit: "Quo auctore sepelierunt? par-  
 ricida sepultus eruatur,<sup>2</sup> trahatur." Cincius Severus  
 dixit: "Iniuste sepultus est. qua pontifex dico, hoc  
 4 collegium pontificum dicit. quoniam laeta<sup>3</sup> percensui,  
 nunc convertar ad necessaria: censeo quas<sup>4</sup> is, qui  
 nonnisi ad perniciem civium et ad dedecus suum vixit,  
 ob honorem suum decerni coegit, abolendas statuas,  
 5 quae undique sunt abolendae, nomenque ex omnibus  
 privatis publicisque monumentis eradendum menses-  
 que iis nominibus nuncupandos quibus nuncupabantur,  
 cum primum illud malum in re publica incubuit."

<sup>1</sup> *uere* Editor (cf. *Claud.*, iv. 3); *uiro* P; *uero* Exc. Cusana, Mommsen; *uiso* Hirschfeld, Peter<sup>2</sup>. <sup>2</sup> *seruatur* P.  
<sup>3</sup> *laeta* Peter<sup>1</sup>; *laetam* P; *laeta iam* Baehrens, Peter<sup>2</sup>.  
<sup>4</sup> *quae* P.

<sup>1</sup> Commemorated in an inscription from Rome, *C.I.L.*, vi. 2126. He is one of the characters in the *Deipnosophistai* of Athenaeus.

<sup>2</sup> An office probably created by Claudius. The *patrimonium* comprised the estates regarded as the property of the emperor and transmitted from one emperor to another, even when there was no direct succession. It was distinguished, both from the *fiscus*, or imperial treasury, and from the *res privata*, the private property of any individual emperor; the latter

Suborners of slaves, cast them out of the senate. You, too, were in terror along with us; you know all, you know both the good and the evil. You know all that we were forced to purchase; all we have feared for your sake. Happy are we, now that you are emperor in truth. Put it to the vote concerning the murderer, put it to the vote, put the question. We ask your presence. The guiltless are yet unburied; let the body of the murderer be dragged in the dust. The murderer dug up the buried; let the body of the murderer be dragged in the dust."

XX. The body of Commodus was buried during the night, after Livius Laurensis,<sup>1</sup> the steward of the imperial estate,<sup>2</sup> had surrendered it at the bidding of Pertinax<sup>3</sup> to Fabius Cilo,<sup>4</sup> the consul elect. At this the senate cried out: "With whose authority have they buried him? The buried murderer, let him be dug up, let him be dragged in the dust." Cincius Severus<sup>5</sup> said: "Wrongfully has he been buried. And as I speak as pontifex, so speaks the college of the pontifices. And now, having recounted what is joyful, I shall proceed to what is needful: I give it as my opinion that the statues should be overthrown which this man, who lived but for the destruction of his fellow-citizens and for his own shame, forced us to decree in his honour; wherever they are, they should be cast down. His name, moreover, should be erased from all public and private records,<sup>6</sup> and the months<sup>7</sup> should be once more called by the names whereby they were called when this scourge first fell upon the state."

was placed in charge of a special procurator by Severus; see *Sev.*, xii. 4.

<sup>2</sup> See c. xvii. 4.

<sup>4</sup> See *Carac.*, iii. 2 and note.

<sup>5</sup> See *Sev.*, xiii. 9.

<sup>6</sup> See c. xvii. 6.

<sup>7</sup> See c. xi. 8.

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WITH AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION BY  
DAVID MAGIE

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