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POWER STRUCTURE UNDER MARCUS AURELIUS

by

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ABBREVIATIONS1. SPECIAL ABBREVIATIONS

Degrassi <u>FC</u>	A. Degrassi, <u>I fasti consolari dell'impero romano dal 30 av. C. al 613 d. C.</u> ; Rome, 1952.
Pflaum <u>CP</u>	H.G. Pflaum, <u>Les carrières procuratoriennes équestres sous le haut-empire romain</u> , 1-3; Paris, 1960-1.
Lambrechts <u>Comp. 1.</u>	P. Lambrechts, <u>La composition du sénat romain de l'accession au throne d'Hadrien à la mort de Commode (117-192)</u> ; Antwerp, 1936.
Mattingly-Sydenham	H. Mattingly, E.A. Sydenham and others, <u>The Roman Imperial Coinage</u> , Vol. 3; London, 1930.
Migne <u>Patrol. Lat.</u>	J.P. Migne, <u>Patrologia Latina</u> , 221 vols., 1844-1864.
Migne <u>Patrol. Graec.</u>	J.P. Migne, <u>Patrologia Graeca</u> , 161 vols., 1857-1866.

2. PERIODICALS, COLLECTIONS OF DOCUMENTS, REFERENCE WORKS

AE	L'année épigraphique.
AJA	American Journal of Archeology.
Ath. Mitt.	Mitteilungen des deutschen archaologischen Instituts, Athenische Abteilung.
BCH	Bulletin de correspondance hellénique.
CIL	Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum.
CQ	Classical Quarterly.
CRAI	Comptes rendus de l'académie des inscriptions et belles lettres.
FG Hist.	F. Jacoby, Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker.
HA	Historia Augusta.
IG	Inscriptiones Graecae.
IGR	Inscriptiones Graecae ad res Romanas pertinentes.
ILS	H. Dessau, Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae.
Ist. Mitt.	Mitteilungen des deutschen archaologischen Instituts, Istanbular Abteilung.

Jahreshefte	Jahreshefte des osterreichischen archaologischen Instituts in Wien.
JRS	Journal of Roman Studies.
L'ant. class.	L'antiquité classique.
Notiz. d. scavi	Notizie degli scavi di antichità.
OGIS	W. Dittenberger, <i>Orientalis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae.</i>
PIR <sup>2</sup>	<i>Prosopographia Imperii Romani</i> (2nd edition).
P. Oxy.	B.P. Grenfell and A.S. Hunt, <i>The Oxyrhynchus Papyrus.</i>
Proc. Camb. Phil. Soc.	<i>Proceedings of the Cambridge Philo- logical Society.</i>
Proc. Brit. Acad.	<i>Proceedings of the British Academy.</i>
PSI	<i>Pubblicazioni della società italiana per la ricerca dei papiri greci e latini in Egitto.</i>
RE	<i>Pauly-Wissowa, Real-encyclopadie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft.</i>
REA	<i>Revue des études anciennes.</i>
REG	<i>Revue des études grecques.</i>
REL	<i>Revue des études latines.</i>
Rev. Arch.	<i>Revue archéologique.</i>
SEG	<i>Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum.</i>
SIG <sup>3</sup>	W. Dittenberger, <i>Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecum</i> (3rd edition).
TAM	<i>Tituli Asiae Minoris.</i>
TAPA	<i>Transactions of the American Philo- logical Association.</i>
TAPhA	<i>Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philosophical Association.</i>

Recent years have produced quite a few biographies of Marcus Aurelius; of varying quality they all follow the chronological line of the encyclopaedias and none penetrates deeply into the reign. Two Frenchmen, Charles Parain<sup>1</sup> and Pierre de Proyart,<sup>2</sup> both uncritical in their indiscriminate use of sources uncited, especially the Historia Augusta, overemphasize the concept of Marcus as the philosopher king. So does A.S.L. Farquharson.<sup>3</sup> This is a heritage from Marcus' own Meditations. Only rarely are the utterances of emperors extant in literary sources; care in interpretation is essential when they do appear, as in the res gestae of Augustus or in the letters of Trajan to Pliny. In Marcus' case his philosophical theorizing has often led to a false evaluation of his political activities. Fr. Carrata Thomes<sup>4</sup> gives more emphasis to him as a

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1

Parain, Ch., Marc. Aurèle; Paris, 1957.

2

de Proyart, P., Marc Aurèle: un empereur citoyen du monde; Paris, 1962.

3

Farquharson, A.S.L., Marcus Aurelius. his Life and World, posthumously ed. by D.A. Rees; Oxford, 1951.

4

Carrata Thomes, Fr., Il Regno di Marco Aurelio; Torino, 1953.

political figure, but his biographical account of the reign incorporates little of the abundant prosopographical material available. Indeed there seems to be no detailed systematic treatment of internal politics under the Antonines, though individuals receive elucidation from such prosopographical experts as Groag, Syme, Pflaum, Carcopino, Lambrechts and E. Birley. To these men and to the methods refined by them this work naturally owes much.

Marcus must remain the central focus since he was the senior partner in the co-rule, but the position of Lucius should not be ignored. His assumption into co-rule probably owed more to political manoeuvring under Antoninus than to fraternal affection in Marcus. Nor should the parts played by the imperial family and by the Roman senators (nobiles and novi homines) go unrecognised. The following study is a prosopographical history of the reign at senatorial level. Though equites intrude at their upper level only, this is not meant to belittle their importance as instruments of government; only the upper equites were involved in the highest decisions of policy, but many of the senators were among the top imperial amici.

However the senate was not a homogeneous body; it consisted of men of different geographical origins,

men of different social status. The geographical differences were not yet significant, the eastern deluge of senators was yet to come, but social standing played an important role in the differentiation of careers. Nobiles in this age are rarely given their due place in power politics since they are rarely attested in consular commands. The choice may have been their own, for their freedom from official posts was one of several factors giving them greater accessibility to the imperial ear; ostentatious military commands were not the only criterion of power, especially in politically stable times. It was the nobiles who were chiefly responsible for the smooth accession of the co-rulers.

The reasons for this dual accession and its efficiency can be discerned in earlier family and party politics. Many of those supporting the new accession retained their power and bequeathed it to their descendants. Others found favour with the co-rulers through military success or through the normal channels of patronage. One of the greatest patrons, M. Cornelius Fronto, tutor to both princes, gives in his extant correspondence with emperors and amici much valuable information on the workings of patronage.



Appointments and activities during the reign reveal not only the relations between the emperors themselves but also those between the emperors and individuals under their control - advisers, generals, administrators, subordinate commanders and members of the imperial familia. All were potential sources of influence on decision and policy. When Lucius died, Marcus carried on in much the same way. Then came the revolt of Avidius Cassius; a revolt, whatever its motives, is always a significant occasion. This one, almost certainly not the result of a plot to dethrone the reigning emperor by an opposing faction (whether an independent one or one inherited from Lucius), was rather an attempt, provoked by a rumour of Marcus' death, to secure the succession. By a series of constitutional arrangements and political machinations Marcus made a repetition unlikely and the succession of his son Commodus, the logical successor, almost inevitable. In 180 there stand clearly revealed around the new ruler a supporting ring of relatives and powerful amici; the situation in 161 had been more complicated and gives us fewer names, but was analogous in many respects. Even many of the men were from the same families. The type of government and the men used by Marcus were long retained under Commodus.