Satura Augusta: Satire in the *Historia Augusta*

Alan Cameron first noticed the echoes of Juvenal which occur throughout the *Historia Augusta* (Cameron, 1964): the satirist enjoyed a revival at the end of the fourth century, suggesting a *terminus post quem* in agreement with Dessau’s then-still-controversial thesis (Dessau, 1889). Although Cameron uses his findings for strictly historical purposes, they open the door to a new angle of interpretation for the still vexing biographies. If the author of the *Historia Augusta* was so enamored of Juvenal to allude to him seven times (Juv. 15.63-5 cf. *Tyr. Trig*. 22; 3.76-8 cf. *Hadr*. 16, *Saturn*. 8; 12.106-7 cf. *Aurel*. 5; 12.101 cf. *Tac*. 12; 10.177 cf. *Claud*. 6; 1.79 cf. *Macr*. 11.4), that may indicate a deeper correspondence. This paper will demonstrate that the *Historia Augusta* can be read more profitably not as inferior biography, but as subtle satire. Based on a synthesis of ancient and modern theories of satire, I have compiled a list of characteristics of Roman verse satire—namely, quotidian themes, narrative ambiguity, and an exploration of morals rather than a strict dogma (Griffin 1994, Hooley 2007). Then, taking the *Quadrigae Tyrannorum*, one of the lives of the *Historia Augusta*, as a test case, I will explore the prevalence of these different characteristics—including a previously unnoticed Juvenalian reminiscence—to determine the satiric content of the biography. The results will allow a richer interpretation of the *Historia Augusta* than previous generations of scholarship have afforded this complicated text.

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