On the occasion of the tenth anniversary of his A.D. 202 coming to power Severus presented to the entire populace that received the grain dole and to the soldiers of the pretorian guard gold pieces equal in number to the years of his reign. He prided himself especially on this largess, and, in fact, no emperor had ever before given so much to the whole population at once; the total amount spent for the purpose was two hundred million sesterces. The nuptials of Antoninus, the son of Severus, and Plautilla, Plautianus' daughter, were also celebrated at this time; and Plautianus gave as much for his daughter's dowry as would have sufficed for fifty women of royal rank. We saw the gifts as they were being carried through the Forum to the palace. And we were all entertained together at a banquet, partly in royal and partly in barbaric style, receiving not only all the customary cooked viands but also uncooked meat and sundry animals still alive. At this time there occurred, too, all sorts of spectacles in honour of Severus' return, the completion of his first ten years of power, and his victories. At these spectacles sixty wild boars of Plautianus fought together at a signal, and among many other wild beasts that were slain were an elephant and a corocotta. This last animal is an Indian species, and was then introduced into Rome for the first time, so far as I am aware. It has the
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...colour of a lioness and tiger combined, and the general a.d. 202 appearance of those animals, as also of a dog and a fox, curiously blended.1 The entire receptacle in the amphitheatre had been constructed so as to resemble a boat in shape, and was capable of receiving or discharging four hundred beasts at once; and then, as it suddenly fell apart, there came rushing forth bears, lionesses, panthers, lions, ostriches, wild asses, bisons (this is a kind of cattle foreign in species and appearance), so that seven hundred beasts in all, both wild and domesticated, at one and the same time were seen running about and were slaughtered. For to correspond with the duration of the festival, which lasted seven days, the number of the animals was also seven times one hundred.

On Mount Vesuvius a huge fire blazed up, and there were bellowings mighty enough to be heard even in Capua, where I live whenever I am in Italy. I have selected this place for various reasons, and particularly for its quiet, in order that when I have leisure from the offices of the capital I may write this history. In view, now, of what happened on Vesuvius, it seemed probable that some change in the State was about to occur; and, in fact, there was an immediate change in the fortunes of Plautianus. This man had in very truth grown great and more than great, so that even the populace in the Circus once exclaimed: "Why do you tremble? Why are you pale? You possess more than do the three." They pretended, to be sure, that they were not saying this of him but in another connexion, but

1 Pliny (N. H. viii. 21, 30) describes the corocotta as the offspring of a dog and wolf, and again (viii. 30, 45) as the offspring of a hyena and lioness. Capitolinus (Vit. Antonia. 240

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...
by "the three" they meant Severus and his two sons, Antoninus and Geta; and Plautianus was always pale and trembling because of the kind of life he lived, the hopes he entertained, and the fears he felt. And yet for a time most of this conduct of Plautianus was not noticed by Severus himself; or, if he did know of it, he pretended not to know. When, however, his brother Geta on his deathbed revealed to him all the facts about Plautianus,—for Geta hated the prefect and now no longer feared him,—the emperor set up a bronze statue of his brother in the Forum and no longer held his minister in the same honour, but stripped him of most of his power. Hence Plautianus became very indignant; he had even before this hated Antoninus for slighting his daughter, but now detested him more than ever as being responsible for this slight which had been put upon him, and he began to behave rather harshly toward him.

For these reasons Antoninus, in addition to being disgusted with his wife, who was a most shameless creature, felt resentment against Plautianus as well, because he kept meddling in all his undertakings and rebuking him for everything that he did; and so he conceived the desire to get rid of him in some way or other. Accordingly he got Eudus, A.D. 205, his tutor, to persuade a certain centurion, Saturninus, and two others of the same rank with him to bring him word that Plautianus had ordered ten specified centurions, these three being of the number, to kill both Severus and Antoninus; and they read a certain written communication, pretending that they had received it in connexion with this very plot. Now this was all carried out suddenly at the festival held
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in the palace in honour of dead ancestors, after the a.d. 205 spectacle was over and as dinner was about to be served. These circumstances in particular betrayed the fraud; for Plautianus would never have dared to give such instructions either to ten centurions at once, or in Rome, or in the palace, or on that day, or at that hour, and especially not in writing. Nevertheless Severus believed the information trustworthy, as much as he had dreamed the night before that Albinus was alive and plotting against him.

He therefore summoned Plautianus in haste, as if upon some other business. And Plautianus hurried so, or rather Heaven gave him such an intimation of his approaching destruction, that the mules that brought him dropped in the palace yard. And when he entered, the porters at the latticed gates admitted him alone inside and would permit no one else to go in with him, just as he himself had once done in the case of Severus at Tyana. This caused him to suspect something, and he became alarmed; but as he had no way of withdrawing, he went in. Severus talked to him in a very mild manner, and asked: "Why have you seen fit to do this? Why did you wish to kill us?" He also gave him an opportunity to speak and acted as if intending to listen to his defence. But Antoninus, as Plautianus was making denial and expressing amazement at what was said, rushed up, took away his sword, and

1 Apparently an “All Souls’ Day,” the departed ancestors (or “heroes”) probably being, in this case, the deified emperors.

2 aυτόν R. Steph., aυτῷ VC.

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4 δήσας ἀφείλετο καὶ πῦξ ἐπαίση καὶ ἱθήλησε μὲν καὶ αὐτοχειρία σφάται εἰπώντα ὡς "ἔθηθι μὲ κτεῖναι," ὑπὸ δὲ τοῦ πατρὸς κωλυθείς ἐκέλευσέ τινι τῶν υπηρετῶν φονεύοιτο αὐτόν. καὶ αὐτῶν τις τῶν τρίχων τοῦ γενεῖον ἐκτίλλας 1 τῇ Ἰουλίᾳ καὶ τῇ Πλαυτίλλῃ 2 προσήνηγεν ὁμοῦ οὕσας, πρὸν καὶ ὅτι αὐτὸς ἀκόμης καὶ ἔπεμ "ὁδεῖ τὸν Πλαυτιανὸν ὦμον," καὶ τοῦτο τῇ μὲν πένθος τῇ δὲ χαρᾷ ἐπέβαλεν. ἐκεῖνος μὲν καὶ μέγιστον τῶν ἐπτ' ἐμοὶ 3 ἀνθρώπων δυνηθείς, ὡστε καὶ αὐτῶν τῶν αὐτοκρατόρων 4 μᾶλλον πάντας καὶ φοβερᾶς αὐτὸν καὶ τρέμων καὶ ἐπὶ μεῖζόνος ἐπιδίοιοι αἰφνιδείς, οὕτως ὑπὸ τοῦ γαμβροῦ ἐσφάγη καὶ ἀνοικθεὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ παλατίου ἐς ὅδον τινα ἐρίφη 5 μὲτα ταῦτα γὰρ καὶ ἀνηρέθη καὶ ἐτάφη τοῦ Σεουὴρου κελεύσαντος.

5 Καὶ ο Σεουήρος μετὰ ταῦτα συνήρχηκε μὲν τῇ βουλῇ ἐς τὸ συνέδριον, οὔ μὲντοι καὶ κατηγόρησε τι τοῦ Πλαυτιανοῦ, ἀλλ' αὐτὸς μὲν τὴν καὶ τὸν ψυχἀν τὴν κατηγορίαν ὡς μὴ δυναμεῖν τιμᾶς ὑπεργόνους 2 στήγειν ὁδύρατο, καὶ ἐαυτὸν ἦταν ὅτι οὕτως αὐτὸν ἑστηκόμες καὶ ἐπεφήλλεκα, τοὺς δὲ δὴ μηνύσαντας οἱ τὴν ἐπιβουλήν 5 αὐτοῦ πάνθ' ἤμιν εἰπεὶν ἐκέλευσαν, ἐκβαλὼν ἐκ τοῦ συνεδρίου τούς οὐκ ἀναγκαίους, ἦν' ἐκ τοῦ μηδὲν δηγήσαθαι 3 ενδιέξθαι ότι οὐ πάντα σφίξῃ πιστεύει. πολλοὶ μὲν οὖν διὰ τῶν Πλαυτιανῶν ἐκδιώκησαν, καὶ τινες καὶ ἀπέθανον· ο μέντοι Κοίρανος ἔλεγε μὲν, οἰά ποὺ πλεῖστοι πρὸς τοὺς εὐπροσυνάτους πλάτ-

1 ἐκτίλλας H. Steph., ἐκτίλλας VC.
2 Πλαυτίλλῃ R. Steph., πλακίλλῃ VC.
3 ἐμῷ H. Steph., ἐμὲ VC.
4 αὐτοκράτορων H. Steph., ἀυτοκράτορων VC.

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struck him with his fist; and he even wanted to kill a.d. 205 him with his own hands, after the other had remarked, "You have forestalled me in killing." But, being prevented by his father, Antoninus ordered one of the attendants to slay Plautianus. And somebody plucked out a few hairs from his beard, carried them to Julia and Plautilla, who were together, before they had heard a word of the affair, and exclaimed, "Behold your Plautianus," thus causing grief to the one and joy to the other. Thus this man, who had possessed the greatest power of all the men of my time, so that everyone regarded him with greater fear and trembling than the very emperors, and who had been led on to still greater hopes, was slain by his son-in-law and his body thrown down from the palace into a street; for it was only afterwards that, at the command of Severus, he was taken up and buried.

Severus later called a meeting of the senate in the senate-house, where, however, he uttered no accusation against Plautianus, but merely deplored the weakness of human nature, which cannot endure excessive honours, and blamed himself in that he had so loved and honoured this man. Then he ordered those who had informed him of Plautianus' plot to tell us everything; but first he removed from the chamber those whose presence was not necessary, so as to make it clear, through his refusal to reveal anything to them, that he did not altogether trust them. Many, accordingly, found their lives in danger on account of Plautianus, and some were actually put to death. As for Coeranus, however, though he admitted (a mere pretence, no doubt,
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toutai adei, etaipros te autou elnai, kai osakis ge ekivouno pro tov allon tov apostomewn auton esekalovento, supefipetov sphi mexi tis kyn-
klides tis televntais, ou mvento kai ekoinonei 4 tov aporriton, alli' ev te metaikyma diatrepov Plautov mete exw tois de exw eidoiv edokei elnai kai dia te1 touto pleron upotesth, kai dioti ovan poto tou Plautov idontos ichtus
pairas ek toul Tiberidov anavantas pros tois powdas autou prospetokevai, efh kai tis rh
5 auton kai toul idatos arxein, alli' ovtos epieippa ethe ev nisov perioristeis kai
khi te metatou, kai ef tivn kai inovin protos Aiguntiwn
catekhth, kai upasteusei mythology allh
6 proarbas, wesper ou Poliphos. Kavaklos meitoi
'smeikolas ev teis protous tov kolakov autou
amboimenos, povrhia de kai aselgeia oudeon
anibropow deuterow on, katepsifosthe apotheinei,
elthon de oikade kai oinov epivnuv emplhrtheis
to te potirion, o pentes muphrados eowpto, synet
trivs, kai epaptodhenei autov tas flegias temw.
6 satorinou meintoi kai Eudodos tote mven epitih-
theiav, osteron de uto tou 'Antoninov didanato-
thsavan. phiezmewon de homon etainous pairas tdoes
Eudor ou Sevonros ekolusen eiptwn "aiuchon
esow ev domati imwv toisot tis peri Kaiaparion

1 te supplied by Bk.

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such as most men are wont to indulge in when A.D. 205
referring to those who are favoured by Fortune) that
he had been an intimate of Plautianus and that,
whenever the other suspected senators were invited
into his house in advance of the general throng of
those who came to pay Plautianus their respects, he
had accompanied them as far as the last gate, yet he
denied that he had shared in Plautianus' secrets,
asserting that he always remained in the space mid-
way, thus giving to Plautianus the impression that
he was outside and to those outside that he was
inside. Because of this he was regarded with all
the greater suspicion; and there was the further
reason that once, when Plautianus dreamed that
fishes came up out of the Tiber and fell at his feet,
Coenus had declared that he should rule both the
land and the water. But this man, after being con-
finned on an island for seven years, was later recalled,
was the first Egyptian to be enrolled in the senate,
and became consul, like Pompey, without having
previously held any other office. Caecilius Agricola,
on the other hand, who was numbered among the
foremost flatterers of Plautianus and was second to
no man on earth in knavery and licentiousness,
was sentenced to death; he accordingly went home
and, after drinking his fill of chilled wine, shattered
the cup, which had cost him two hundred thousand
sesterces, and cutting his veins, fell dead upon the
fragments. As for Saturninus and Eudoxus, they
were honoured at the time, but were later executed
by Antoninus. While we were engaged in voting
sundry eulogies to Eudoxus, Severus restrained us,
saying: "It would be disgraceful for anything of
that sort concerning an imperial freedman to appear
2 ἀνδρὸς γεγραφθαν.” καὶ οὐ τούτων μόνων ἀλλὰ καὶ τούς ἄλλους ἀπαντας τοὺς βασιλικοὺς ἀπελευθέρωσιν οὔθ ὑβρίζειν οὔθ ὑπεραυχεῖν εἶτ' ἐφ' ο' καὶ καλῶς ἤκουεν. ἡ δ' αὖ γερουσία ὑμνοῦσα τοτε αὐτὸν καὶ αὐτὸ τούτο ἀντικυρο ἐξεῦθησεν, ὅτι “πάντες πάντα καλῶς ποιοῦσιν, ἐπειδ' γὰρ καὶ ἀρχεῖσιν.” Πλαυτίλλα δὲ καὶ Πλαῦτιος, οἳ τοῦ Πλαυτιανοῦ νεῖς, τότε μὲν ἐσώθησαν ἐς Λυπάραν ἐξορισθέντες, ἐπὶ δ' Ἀντωνίνου ἀπώλοντο, καίτοι καὶ ζώντες ἐν τε δεῖ καὶ ταλαιπωρία πολλὴ τῶν τε ἀναγκαίων οὐκ ἐπορία διήγον.—Xiph. 314, 13—318, 9 R. St., Exc. Val. 350 (p. 741).

7 Οἱ δὲ τοῦ Σευνίρου παιδες, ὁ τε Ἀντωνίνος καὶ ὁ Γέτας, οἰον παιδαγογοῦ τινὸς ἀπηλαγμένοι τοῦ Πλαυτιανοῦ, οὐδὲν ὁ τι οὐκ ἐποίουν. καὶ γάρ καὶ ὑμνάκας ἄρχην καὶ παίδας ὑβρίζον χρήσατο τε παρέξελεν, καὶ τοὺς μονομάχους τοὺς τε ἀρματήλατας προσαναρίζων, τῇ μὲν ὁμοίότητι τῶν ἔργων ζηλοῦτες άλλοις, τῷ δὲ ἀντιστοιχάζοντες στασιάζοντες: εἰ γὰρ τῷ ὁ ἔτερος προσέθετο, πᾶντος ἀν τὸ ἐναντίον ὁ ἐτέρος ἁνθηρείτο. καὶ τέλος συμβαλόντες ἐν γημασίᾳ τινών ὀπτῶν σμικρῶν ξένησαν ἐς μεγάλην φιλονεικίαν ἠλάσαν, ὡστε τοῦ Ἀντωνίνου ἐκπεισόν τε ἐκ τοῦ δικαίου καὶ τὸ σκέλος κατειδία. παθόντως δὲ αὐτοῦ τοῦ τούτω καὶ νοσηλευομένου ὁ Σευνής οὐδὲν τῶν ἄναγκαιν τὸ παράπτων ἐξέλιπεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐδικαζὲν καὶ πάντα τὰ τῇ ἀρχῇ προσάγοντα διώκει. καὶ ἐπὶ μὲν τούτῳ καὶ ἐπηνίκετο, τὸν δὲ Ἰουτίλλου τὸν Πλαυτιανὸν φονεύσαι αἰτίαν

1 Πλαῦτιος Συλβ., Πλαῦτος ΒΚ.

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in one of your decrees.” Nor was this the only instance of such an attitude on his part; he also refused to allow any of the other imperial freedmen, either, to act insolently or to give themselves airs; and for this he was well spoken of. The senate, in fact, while chanting his praises once went so far as to shout out these words: “All do all things well since you rule well.” Plautilla and Plautius, the children of Plautianus, were for the time being permitted to live, being banished to Lipara, but in the reign of Antoninus they perished; and yet even while they lived they passed their lives in great fear and wretchedness and with no abundance of the necessities of life.

The sons of Severus, Antoninus and Geta, feeling that they had got rid of a pedagogue, as it were, in Plautianus, now went to all lengths in their conduct. They outraged women and abused boys, they embezzled money, and made gladiators and charioteers their boon companions, emulating each other in the similarity of their deeds, but full of strife in their rivalries; for if the one attached himself to a certain faction, the other would be sure to choose the opposite side. And at last they were pitted against each other in some kind of contest with teams of ponies and drove with such fierce rivalry that Antoninus fell out of his two-wheeled chariot and broke his leg. Severus, during his son’s illness that followed this accident, did not neglect any of his duties in the least, but held court and attended all the business pertaining to his office. And for this he was praised; but he was censured for killing

2 aυτοῦ Val., aυτὸ cod. Pir.
3 μὲν supplied by Bk.
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