

MARCUS AURELIUS' RAIN MIRACLE: WHEN AND WHERE?¹

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Marcus Aurelius' rain miracle: when and where? In his paper the author deals with the two most important problems of the rain miracle during Marcus Aurelius' campaign against the Quadi: where and when did it happen. After examining the written sources (esp. the accounts of Cassius Dio, the *vita Marci* of the *Historia Augusta*, Tertullianus and Eusebius and Marcus Aurelius' forged letter) and the depictions of the Antonine Column in Rome (scenes XI and XVI), the author comes to the conclusion that there were two miracles (lightning and rain miracles: the former one in the presence of the emperor) the year could be 172 AD (but 171 cannot be excluded either) and the miracle happened probably in the borders of the Quadi and the Cotini.

The ancient and medieval sources on Marcus Aurelius' Marcomannic-Sarmatian wars usually highlight two events.² The first of these occurred during the first war between AD 169 and 175, when divine intervention – a lightning and rain miracle – saved the Roman troops, which were surrounded by the enemy and were suffering from a water shortage. Thunderbolts struck the Germans, while rain soothed the Romans' suffering. The Column of Marcus Aurelius depicted the miracles in two different scenes narrating the first Roman campaign in the Barbaricum (Scenes XI and XVI; Fig. 1; 2), clear testimony that the lightning and rain miracle were two different events.³ Among the written sources, only the account in the *vita Marci* in the *Historia Augusta* separates them: *fulmen de caelo precibus suis contra hostium machinamentum extorsit, suavis pluvia impetrata, cum siti laborarent* (24.4). The word *machinamentum* can only be interpreted as a siege-tower. The lightning miracle occurred when the enemy besieged a Roman fort and their siege-tower was destroyed by a thunderbolt (Fig. 1). In the course of the rain miracle, the Roman soldiers suffering from thirst were saved by a storm, while thunderbolts struck and destroyed the Barbarians (Fig. 2). The miracles became extremely famous following the heated disputes over who had invoked the help of the gods and which god had actually intervened. Several versions of the miracles existed and earlier research focused mainly on this topic. According to the earliest, official version, it was naturally the emperor himself who beseeched the gods for help and the deity can most probably be identified with Jupiter as shown by a passage of Tertullian (*Ad Scapulam* 4: *Tunc et populus acclamans Deo deorum in Iovis nomine Deo nostro testimonium reddidit*; cp. also Orac. Sib. 12,194–200 from the 3rd century and Claudian VI. cons. Hon. 349–350: *omne Tonantis Obsequium Marci mores potuere mereri*). Another pagan version has been preserved in Cassius Dio's account (LXXI. 8–10). According to his *epitoma*, there was an Egyptian magician called Arnuphis in Marcus Aurelius' court, whose magical practice

¹ The article is revised version of report which was presented on 24th international conference Grundprobleme der frühgeschichtlichen Entwicklung im mittleren Donauraum, Smolenice 2012.

² Barta 1968; Domaszewski 1894; Fowden 1987; Geffcken 1899; Guey 1948; 1949; Harnack 1894; Israelowich 2008; Klein 1991; Kovács 2009; Maffei 1990; Mommsen 1895; Perea Yébenes 2002; Petersen 1894; 1895; Sage 1987; Weber 1910. The manuscript was written still in 2012.

³ Beckmann 2011; Caprino et al. 1955; Coarelli 2008; Ferris 2009; Petersen/Domaszewski/Calderini 1896; Scheid-Huet 2000; Wegner 1931; Wolff 1990; 1994; Zwicker 1941.



Fig. 1. Scene XI of Marcus Aurelius' Column depicting the lightning miracle. Photo P. Kovács.



Fig. 2. Scene XI of Marcus Aurelius' Column depicting the lightning miracle. Photo P. Kovács.

prompted Hermes Aeriūs' support. That Arnuphis was a genuine person and that he had actually been present in the region is epigraphically proven by an altar dedicated to Isis from Aquileia (AÉp 1934, 245 = Inscr. Aq. 234). According to the latest pagan version (attested only in the Suda I 334), Julian, a Chaldean magician was responsible for the miracle. In Eusebius' (222.1) and Hieronymus' *Chronicon* (206i), the future emperor, Helvius Pertinax commanded the troops at the time of the miracle, a version not attested elsewhere. Simultaneously with the earliest pagan versions at the close of the 2nd century, the Christians also came up with their own variants (cp. Apollinaris in Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* V.5 and Tertullian Ap. V.25, Ad Scap. 4). According to them, divine intervention was effectuated by the prayers of the Christian soldiers of the *legio XII fulminata* from Melitene. Unfortunately, the figure of the rain god in the column cannot be identified with any one deity. In the light of the above, the question of which deity performed the miracle cannot be answered, as several versions existed at the same time.

From the perspective of Roman provincial archaeology, a perhaps more important, but similarly problematic issue is the identification of the exact place and date of the miracles. This section addresses these questions.

WHERE?

This question seems to be the simpler of the two. Most of the sources only mention so much that the miracles occurred during the emperor's German wars (e. g. Tert. App. V.25: *Germanica sitis*, Ad Scap. 4 in *Germanica expeditione*, Or. Sib. 12,195–196: *χώρην δέ μιν ἐξάλαπάξει πᾶσαν Γερμανῶν*, Eus. V.5.1 Μάρκον Αὐρήλιον Καίσαρα λόγος ἔχει Γερμανοῖς καὶ Σαρμάταις ἀντιπαραταττόμενον μάχη). Gregory of Nyssa knew virtually nothing about the location and he therefore mentions the neighbouring town (κατὰ τὴν γείτονα πόλιν) of Melitene where the soldiers of the *legio XII fulminata* served in the miracle's Christian version (Encomium in XL mart. I. PG 46, 757C). Claudian's poem mentions only that Marcus was surrounded *cum gentibus* (VI. cons. Hon. 340). The compiler of the *vita Marci* (24.4), who excerpted the passage from his source (most probably from Marius Maximus' biography), did not specify a place. Cassius Dio adds that the enemy were the Quadi (LXXI.8.2 *κυκλωσάντων γὰρ αὐτοὺς τῶν Κουάδων ἐν τόποις ἐπιτηδεῖοις*). The Quadi are mentioned in Eusebius' *Chronicon* and its different translations too (and, subsequently, in the entire Chronicle tradition: Eusebius' *Chronicon* 222.1 (Karst) = Hier. Chron. 206i: *in Quadorum regione*). A fairly precise location can be found in Marcus Aurelius' forged letter⁴ that appears to have been fabricated at the end of Antiquity, most likely after Galerius' edict of tolerance in 311, in order to prove the authenticity of the Christian version [a much later date does not seem feasible for the same reason, and the debate over the different versions ceased after the 5th century (Harnack 1894), 878 *ὅποια ἐν τῇ Γερμανίᾳ ἐκ περιστάσεως διὰ περιβολῆς ἐπακολουθήματα ἐποίησα ἐν τῇ μεθορίᾳ Κουάδων καὶ Σαρματῶν, ἐν Κοτινοῖς*]. A letter attributed to the emperor purportedly confirming the Christian version appears already in Tertullian's account (Ap. V. 25 *litterae M. Aurelii gravissimi imperatoris*). In addition to the Christian sources, a letter of Marcus Aurelius addressed to the senate, practically a report on the events, is mentioned by Cassius Dio: *καὶ τῇ γερουσίᾳ ἐπέστειλεν* (LXXI.10.5). The authenticity of the letter can be challenged, but the composer of the text includes several interesting details, including the place of the event. According to the letter, the miracle took place in the land of the Cotini, neighbouring on the land of the Quadi and the Sarmatians. We are told which legions took part in the expedition (the *legio I adiutrix*, the *legio X gemina* and the *legio X Fretensis*), and the text also mentions Vitrasius Pollio who, in contrast to the letter's assertion, was not a praetorian prefect, but held the office of the *praefectus urbi*. These details imply that the letter's author did not use Xiphilinus' version and *vice versa* (owing to the omission of the *legio XII fulminata*). Merkelbach was the first to examine the manuscript tradition of the letter; he concluded that the present form of the letter, preserved in a 14th century manuscript, is a blend of two earlier versions, and hence parallel variants of certain sentences or phrases could have survived in the same manuscript. While there can be no doubt that the emperor had sent several letters and reports to the senate during the wars as Cassius Dio and the *vita Marci* attest several times (Dio LXXI.10.5, 17, 27, 30.1, v. Marci 14.8, cp. also Fronto II.3. Haines II. p. 194), the use of these official documents by Christian authors cannot be proven. On the other hand, Tertullian (Ap. V.25) and the *vita Marci* (24.4) both use a very similar expression, an ablative absolute, that could originate from a common source, a letter written by the emperor himself: *prec(ation)ibus ...* (of Marcus or the soldiers) *pluvia (imbri) impetrata*. Cassius Dio also

⁴ Berwig 1970, 135–140; Freudenberger 1968; Harnack 1894, 863–871, 878–882; Kovács 2009, 113–121; Merkelbach 1968.

mentions that the miracle happened *παρὰ θεοῦ* (8.1, 10.5), *οὐκ ἄθει* (8.3), *τὸ θεῖον* (8.1). An “abstract” god would fit in perfectly with Marcus Aurelius’ attitude as shown, for instance, by the philosopher-emperor’s exclamation following the victory won in 171: *περὶ γὰρ τοι τῆς αὐταρχίας ὁ θεὸς μόνος κρίνειν δύναται*, 24.1. *χαλεπαίνειν μὲν γὰρ τί δεῖ πρὸς τὸ δαιμόνιον, ᾧ πάντα ἕξεστιν* (Dio LXXI.3.4). A similar god appears several times in his *Meditationes* (cp. 7.9, 8.34, 9.10; 28, 12.2). As Th. Mommsen has already pointed out, a θεός of this kind could have been mentioned in the emperor’s letter too⁵ and may have inspired some of the different pagan and Christian versions. It is not known what other sources the letter’s composer used beside the Christian versions, although the most obvious possibility is that he drew from Cassius Dio’s work (before Xiphilinus’ epitomatorial work).⁶ If we accept the authenticity of the letter’s source, we can locate the event to the border between the Quadi and Cotini, which is why it is important to examine Cassius Dio’s account (LXXI.8–10) as well as the role of the Cotini.

The story can be found in Xiphilinus’s *Epitoma* written in the 11th century (around 1070).⁷ The epitomist divided the original story into two (Chapter 8 and 10) and he added his own Christian version, adopted from Eusebius (Chapter 9.1). In Chapter 8, Cassius Dio’s story goes as follows: after defeating the Marcomanni and the Sarmatians, Marcus launched a war against the Quadi. During the course of war, they found themselves in great danger, but escaped due to divine aid (8.1). The Quadi, outnumbering their enemy, surrounded the Roman troops, which were in a terrible plight owing to a lack of water and the scorching heat (8.2). The Roman army was saved by the rain that, according to another tradition, was invoked by Arnuphis, the Egyptian mage, who conjured up Hermes Aerius and other gods (8.3–4). At this point, Xiphilinus interrupts the narrative of the events in order to refute the pagan tradition and present the Christian version. The epitomator presents Eusebius’ Christian version of the rain miracle (no doubt adopted from the *Ecclesiastical History*). Xiphilinus then continues with the narrative of the events described by Dio (10): *προστίθησι δὲ ὁ Δίων*. The Roman soldiers and their animals received much-needed water (10.1), and they now drank and fought at the same time; simultaneously, a hailstorm and lightning struck the enemy (10.2). The thunderbolts hit only the enemy, not the Romans (10.3), which is why the enemy rushed over to the side of the Romans (i. e. they surrendered), and even Marcus felt some pity for them (meaning that he was present or at least not too far away; 10.4). His troops acclaimed Marcus as *imperator* for the seventh time and he accepted this title before the senate voted on it. He did, however, inform the senate of the event in a letter; moreover, Faustina received the title *mater castrorum* (10.5).

A. von Domaszewski and other scholars have argued that Chapter 10 is not a continuation of Dio’s work, but Xiphilinus’ fabrication in which he confused the earlier lightning miracle with the rain miracle and assigned wrong dates to the events.⁸ In order to resolve this question, we should first analyze whether the style of Chapter 10 differs from Dio’s style. The answer, in all probability, is “no”. It is hardly mere chance that Mommsen and others argued for the authenticity of the chapter based on the writer’s style.⁹ The rhetorical picture in Chapter 10 is, in J. Geffcken’s words, the “writing up of a historical theme with free fantasy”, which was not unusual for Dio or his age.¹⁰ The image of the soldiers fighting and drinking at the same time, the picture of the fire destroying the enemy and of the hail that even helps the fire appears to have originated from a rhetoric exercise of a rhetorical school in which there are no Christian elements, merely the employment of antonym pairs used in rhetorical images such as bloody fire/water and Roman/enemy. Finally, suffice it here to quote the opinion of U. P. Boissevain, Dio’s critical editor: “*hoc solum addo colorem Dioneum in hoc capite tam manifestum esse ut si unquam hic certe in usu venit notum illud*” τὸ πρᾶγμα φανερόν ἔστι αὐτὸ γὰρ βῶϕ.¹¹ The most decisive argument is that Chapter 10 was used by authors living before Xiphilinus. In his poem written on the occasion of Honorius’ sixth consulship in 404, Claudian described the rain miracle of Marcus Aurelius too (VI. cons. Hon. 339–350). He used the expression *flammeus imber*, “fiery shower”, which is the Latin translation of *χάλαζα πυρώδης* in the fabricated letter of Marcus and he described the enemy hit by the lightning bolts.¹² Dio also used

⁵ Mommsen 1895, 100, 101.

⁶ Mommsen 1895, 91, note 2.

⁷ Krumbacher 1897, 369, 370; PWRE IXA (1967) 2132–2134.

⁸ Domaszewski 1894.

⁹ Berwig 1970, 120, note 1; Geffcken 1899, 258, note 3, 263; Mommsen 1895, 100; Petersen 1895, 460.

¹⁰ Millar 1964, 40–46.

¹¹ U. P. Boissevain, *Cassii Dionis Cocceiani historiarum Romanarum quae supersunt* III. Berlin 1901 (repr. 1955), 260.

¹² Claudianus, VI. cons. Hon. 342–3546 *Laus ibi nulla ducum; nam flammeus imber in hostem/Decidit; hunc dorso trepidum fumante*

the word *χάλαζα* in Chapter 10.2. It seems quite certain that Claudian, the pagan poet, drew from Dio's version. The most obvious argument is provided by the entries "Arnuphis" and "Julian" in the *Suda Lexicon*, written in the 10th century (A 3987, I 334), where Dio's version is quoted: "When the Romans were suffering from thirst, (the story goes that Arnouphis) suddenly created and summoned up dark-coloured clouds and let loose heavy rain along with thunder and lightning bolts one after another."¹³ This would imply that the lightning and rain miracles had already been mixed up in Dio's original account (or, perhaps, lightning bolts helped the Romans during the rain miracle too, even though they are not depicted in Scene XVI of the column).

Another question is why it seems obvious that the details in the forged letter originate from Dio's work. The answer lies in the mention of the Cotini. The name of the tribe seemed so curious to the Scalliger, the letter's first editor, that he emended the word to Carnuntum. In the antique sources, the Celtic Cotini are mentioned only in Tacitus's *Germania* (43) as the neighbours of the Sarmatians (indicating that their localization in the letter is precise), where M. Vinicius attacked them during Augustus' reign (ILS 8965).¹⁴ Tacitus also mentioned their iron mining. A part of the Cotini was described as a tribe living in north-eastern Pannonia by Ptolemy (II.14.2 KÚtnoi). All other information on the Cotini comes from Cassius Dio's historical work and reflects conditions at the time of the Marcomannic wars. According to Dio, following a dedition, the Cotini became allies of the Romans together with Vandals in 171. Under the commandship of Tarrutienus Paternus, the *ab epistulis Latinis*, Roman troops were stationed in the land of the Cotini in order to launch an attack, together with them, against the Marcomanni living to the west (Dio LXXI.12.3). The Cotini broke the peace treaty and even treated the Roman commander "shamefully", and therefore the Roman troops later led a punitive campaign against them (καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα ἐπώλοντο). It seems highly likely that the barbarian warriors wearing Celtic torcs who were deported as captives in Scene LXIX of the Marcus Column can be identified with them. The problem is that the account of this later campaign is not part of Xiphilinus' *epitoma*. It would seem, then, that Dio, who mentioned the Cotini at least twice, was the source of the composer who fabricated Marcus Aurelius' letter. After the Marcomannic wars, the Cotini were settled in south-eastern Pannonia in the territories of Mursa and Cibalae, the hometowns of several *praetoriani* in Rome under Severus Alexander and Decius who styled themselves as *cives Cotini* (CIL VI 2833 + 2389 + 2835 = 32542, 2800 + 2832 + 3419 = 32544, 2831 + 2852 = 32557). Another interesting point is that the *legio X Fretensis* from Jerusalem is mentioned together with Pannonian legions in the letter. There is epigraphic evidence that a vexillation of this legion participated in the Marcomannic wars (CIL XI 6055 = ILS 2743).¹⁵ In this case, the first campaign depicted on the column was directed against the Quadi and the Cotini, and thus the first scenes depict the Roman fort of Brigetio and not of Carnuntum.

WHEN?

The dates of the events are similarly much debated; ancient sources have indicated every year between A.D. 171 and 174. Based on Cassius Dio's account, it is quite certain that the miracle happened during a summer heat wave (he mentions the heat and the heavy rain/hail-storm with numerous thunderbolts several times: LXXI.8.2–3, 10.2). The *communis opinio* is that the miracle can be dated to 172, even though the sources are unsuitable for confirming this date. At the end of his narrative, Cassius Dio mentions the seventh imperial acclamation of the emperor, dated to the summer of 174 (LXXI.10.5). In his Latin translation of Eusebius' *Chronicon*, Hieronymus dated the miracle to the year 173, but in the Armenian and Syriac version of Pseudo-Dionysius, it is dated to 172, while the *Chronicon Paschale* assigns it to 171. The last two dates must be a mistake as Hartmut Wolff has already pointed out.¹⁶ According to Hieronymus, the miracle occurred during 238th Olympiad (between 173 and 176) in the thirteenth year of Marcus Aurelius' reign. The Armenian version dated the event to the 2188th year from the birth of Abraham, to the twelfth year of Marcus' reign, but the first year of the 238th Olympiad. The reason for the one-year

ferebat/Ambustus sonipes; hic tabescente solutus/Subsedit galea liquefactaque fulgure cuspis/Canduit et subitis fluxere vaporibus enses.

¹³ δῖψει ποτὲ καμνόντων τῶν Ῥωμαίων ἐξαιφνης ποιῆσαι νέφη τε ἀγερθῆναι ζοφώδη καὶ ὄμβρον ἀφείναι λάβρον ἅμα βρονταῖς τε καὶ σέλασιν ἐπαλλήλοισι. καὶ τοῦτο σοφία τινὶ ἐργάσασθαι "Arnoufin.

¹⁴ *Pieta* 1982; see also Szabó 2005.

¹⁵ *Dabrowa* 1993.

¹⁶ *Wolff* 1990, 11, 12.

difference is that this version dated the first Olympiad a year earlier (the 1240th year) and the first regnal year of Marcus to 162 (2177th year after Abraham). Based on the same date in the Syriac version, this year was given in the original Greek text too. There are several similarly erroneous dates in the *Chronicon Paschale* owing to the erroneous redaction (e. g. Marcus Aurelius' death was also dated two years earlier).

Only the *epitoma* of Cassius Dio's Book LXXI survived in Xiphilinus' work. The epitomator had significantly shortened the original text. His method can be seen at the end of Chapter 10, which, after the acclamation, ends with Faustina's title of *mater castrorum*. This event has nothing to do with the rain miracle and, moreover, Faustina was not even mentioned earlier. It is also striking that the emperor suddenly appears after the miracle: ἠλέησε γοῦν αὐτοὺς καὶ ὁ Μάρκος [LXXI.10.4: "in any case Marcus took pity on them" (translation by E. Cary)]. Where did he come from? This part of Cassius Dio's original work had to be much longer and we cannot exclude the possibility, earlier proposed by Zwickler and Guey, that the date of the miracle and of the acclamation was not necessarily the same. On the other hand, Dio also reports that during the acclamation, the emperor regarded the victory as having been heaven-sent (LXXI.10.5: παρὰ θεοῦ λαμβάνων).

Various attempts have been made to date the miracle based on the study of the scenes of the Column of Marcus Aurelius. It must generally be accepted that the scenes only depict the events during the campaigns of the first war (between 169 and 175) and that solely the Roman campaigns in the Barbaricum between 171 and 175 are shown, given that Lucius Verus and Commodus are not portrayed; in this sense, the column is a triumphal and funerary monument at the same time, therefore the battles on Roman territory and the Romans' heavy losses are not depicted. In my opinion, the events shown on the column followed each other in chronological order as on Trajan's Column and other Roman historical reliefs. The lightning and rain miracles are evoked in Scenes XI and XVI, i. e. at the beginning of the scenes, implying that they occurred during the first Roman campaign against the Quadi. At this point, we are faced with the same problems that had already bedevilled Mommsen and Domaszewski: how should we date the events? Should the miracle be dated after the scenes of the column as Domaszewski proposed or *vice versa*?¹⁷ On the testimony of the written sources, it seems highly likely that the first Roman campaign in the Barbaricum can be dated to the year 172. The problem remains the same: according to the written sources, the miracle can be dated to 173 or 174, but the column suggests an earlier date: 172. How can this contradiction be resolved? The first solution seems quite obvious: the column's first scenes portray the campaign of 173 and Dio's account gave the date of the imperial acclamation. The epitomist omitted the events between the miracle and the acclamation, and thus the miracle can be dated to any summer between 172 and 174. The problem with this scenario is that as far as we know, the first campaign against the Quadi and the Cotini cannot be dated to 173, but only to 172. The same year, another campaign was launched against the Marcomanni and Marcus received the title *Germanicus* at the end of the year. These campaigns are shown in the first half the column (Scenes I–LV) that ended with the *deditio* of the Marcomanni. The chronology of the column does not support this possibility because in this case, the first half of the column would portray the events of one year only, with the other half (Scenes LVI–CXVI) depicting the campaigns of three years. W. Zwickler contended that the problem could be resolved by dating the victory over the Marcomanni to 173.¹⁸ However, Marcus Aurelius received the title *Germanicus* already in 172. Another hypothesis was proposed by J. Morris who dated the first scenes of the column to 173.¹⁹ According to H. Wolff, the column begins with the campaign of 174.²⁰ In both cases, the victory over the Marcomanni, one the most important events and successes of the first war, would have been omitted, which in my opinion can be ruled out.

There are two other possibilities:

1. The date of 172, when the emperor assumed the title *Germanicus*, is erroneous. It should be dated to 173 and the first half of the column (Scenes I–LV) records the campaign of 172 and 173.
2. The first half of the scenes shows only the events of 172: we know that in this year, the Romans were engaged in two different campaigns, one against the Quadi and another one against the Marcomanni. Thus, Scenes LVI–CXVI show the events of the three years from 173 to 175, as originally suggested by Domaszewski. The events of 174 begin with Scene LXXVII, while those of 175 with Scene CII.

¹⁷ Domaszewski 1896; Mommsen 1896.

¹⁸ Zwickler 1941, 187–196.

¹⁹ Morris 1952.

²⁰ Wolff 1990.

In my opinion, a third possibility that was first proposed by Domaszewski in an early paper cannot be neglected either. He suggested that the column begins with the campaign of 171.²¹ Is it possible to date the campaign against the Quadi to this year? According to this hypothesis, Xiphilinus, Dio's Christian epitomist, made a mistake regarding the number of Marcus' imperial acclamation: in Dio's original text, it was the sixth one that can be dated to 171. Xiphilinus misread the stigma ($\varsigma = 6$) in the Greek manuscript and interpreted it as $\zeta = 7$. The similarity between the letter ς and ζ is obvious. In this case, the miracles would have to be dated to 171 and the victory can be identified with first major Roman victory in the Barbaricum recorded by Dio (LXXI.3.4). The epitomator's mistake seems feasible because according to the Greek historian, the emperor refused the request of soldiers for a donative with the following words: $\pi\epsilon\rho\iota\ \gamma\acute{\alpha}\rho\ \tau\omicron\iota\ \tau\eta\varsigma\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\alpha\rho\chi\iota\acute{\alpha}\varsigma\ \acute{\omicron}\ \theta\epsilon\acute{\omicron}\varsigma\ \mu\acute{\omicron}\nu\omicron\varsigma\ \kappa\rho\iota\upsilon\epsilon\iota\nu\ \delta\upsilon\acute{\nu}\alpha\tau\alpha\iota$ ("as for the fate of sovereignty, the Sole God could alone determine that"; translation by E. Cary), implying that divine intervention played an important role this time too. The expression $\acute{\omicron}\ \theta\epsilon\acute{\omicron}\varsigma\ \mu\acute{\omicron}\nu\omicron\varsigma$ may also have inspired the birth of the Christian version.

In this case, the following dates are the correct ones:

1. The rain miracle can be dated to the summer of 171 and it was followed by Marcus' sixth imperial acclamation. The date given by the Christian version is erroneous.
2. The first campaign in the Barbaricum against the Quadi and Cotini was conducted a year earlier and Scenes I–XXIX of the column depict that year. The Marcomanni and the Quadi were expelled from Italy and the Danubian provinces already in 170.
3. Scenes LVI–CXVI show the years of 173–175 as follows: 173: LVI–LXXVII (capture of Ariogaesus, the German king), 174: LXXVIII–CI, 175: CII–CXVI.

In sum, the column shows only the events of the first campaign and the first year could equally well be 171 or 172. In the latter case, Xiphilinus' mistake must be emended (171 instead of 174). In my opinion, the evidence is still insufficient for resolving this issue. The scenes of the column can hardly begin with the campaigns of 173 and 174, and thus the date specified in the *Chronicon* seems to be erroneous. My answer to the questions raised by Mommsen and Domaszewski is that both sources must be used for dating at the same time.

ADDENDUM

The sources

The rain miracle

- a) The official version: Marcus Aurelius and Iuppiter: Tertullianus, *Ad Scap.* 4; Dio LXXI 10; Themist. *Or.* XV 191b, XXIV 21; *Or. Sib.* XII 194–200; *HA v. Marci* XXIV 4; Claudian, *VI. cons. Hon.* 339–350; Psellus, *Hist. Synt.* 32; Georg. *Acrop. Epitaphius in Ioannem Ducam* 15 (with Emperor Titus); scene XVI of the Column of Marcus Aurelius.
- b) Hermes Aeriis and Arnuphis: Cassius Dio LXXI 8–10; Claudian, *VI. cons. Hon.* 339–350; *Suda* A 3987.
- c) other gods: Dio LXXI 8. 4.
- d) Julian Theurgistes: *Suda* I 334.
- e) Christian version: Tertullianus, *Apolog.* V 25, *Ad Scap.* 4; Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* V 5. 1–7, *Chron.* 222. 1 Karst; the forged letter of Marcus Aurelius (*Harnack* 1894, 878, 879); Greg. Nyss. *Enc. in XL mart.* II. PG 46, 757C–759B; Rufinus, *Hist. Eccl.* V 5; Hier. *Chron.* 206i Helm; Oros. VII 15. 8, 9; ProsperTiro, *Epit. Chron. ad ann.* 173; *Chronica Gallica Chron. Min.* I 641, 372; Alexander Mon. *Inventio crucis* p. 4045–4048; Fredagrius Scholasticus *Chron.* II 37; *Chron. Pasch.* I p. 486 Dindorf; Pseudo-Dionys. *CSCO* 104. SS 43 (1927) p. 127, 8–18; Georg. Mon. *Chron. breve* I 138, *Sym. Log.* (Leon Gramm. 70. 1); Landolf. VIII 144p. 314; Xiphilinus 251. 22–24 und 260. 6 – 262. 5; Georg. Cedrenus 439. 1; Marianus Scotus, *Chronica clara* III 181–183; Hugo Flavianicensis, *Chronicon* PL 154 (1853) 39; *Excerptiones allegoricae* VII 4; Zonaras XII 2; *Synopsis Sathas* (Theod. Scut.) p. 32, 9ff; *Acta Polyucti Acta SS. Febr.* II p. 650–; Niceph. Call. *Hist. Eccl.* IV 12; Ephraim, *Chronicon* 129–139.

²¹ Domaszewski 1895, 123, note 1, 125.

The lightning miracle

HA v. Marci XXIV 4, Scene XI of the Column of Marcus Aurelius.

Tertullianus Ap. V.25

At nos e contrario edimus protectorem, si litterae M. Aurelii gravissimi imperatoris requirantur, quibus illam Germanicam sitim Christianorum forte militum precationibus impetrato imbri discussam contestatur. Qui sicut non palam ab ejusmodi hominibus poenam dimovit, ita alio modo palam dispersit accusatoribus damnatione, et quidem tetriore.

Ad Scapulam 4

Marcus quoque Aurelius in Germanica expeditione Christianorum militum orationibus ad Deum factis, imbres in siti illa impetravit. Quando non geniculationibus et jejunationibus nostris etiam siccitates sunt depulsae? Tunc et populus acclamans Deo deorum in Jovis nomine Deo nostro testimonium reddidit.

Cassius Dio LXXI.8–10

8.1. Μαρκομάνους μὲν οὖν καὶ Ἰάζυγας πολλοῖς καὶ μεγάλοις ἀγῶσι καὶ κινδύνοις Μάρκος ὑπέταξεν ἐπὶ δὲ τοὺς καλουμένους Κουάδους καὶ πόλεμος αὐτῷ συνέστη μέγας καὶ νίκη παράδοξος εὐτυχήθη, μᾶλλον δὲ παρὰ θεοῦ ἐδωρήθη. κινδυνεύσαντας γὰρ ἐν τῇ μάχῃ τοὺς Ῥωμαίους παραδοξότατα τὸ θεῖον ἐξέσωσε. 2. κυκλωσάντων γὰρ αὐτοὺς τῶν Κουάδων ἐν τόποις ἐπιτηδεῖσι συνασπίσαντες οἱ Ῥωμαῖοι προθύμως ἠγωνίζοντο, καὶ οἱ βάρβαροι τὴν μὲν μάχην ἐπέσχον, προσδοκῆσαντές σφας βραδίως ὑπὸ τε τοῦ καύματος καὶ ὑπὸ τοῦ δίψους αἰρήσειν, πάντα δὲ τὰ πέριξ διαλαβόντες ἀπέφραξαν, ὅπως μηδαμῶθεν ὕδωρ λάβωσιρ πολὺ γὰρ καὶ τῷ πλήθει περιῆσαν. 3. τῶν οὖν Ῥωμαίων ἐν παντὶ κακοῦ καὶ ἐκ τοῦ καμάτου καὶ ἐκ τῶν τραυμάτων τοῦ τε ἡλίου καὶ τοῦ δίψους γενομένων, καὶ μήτε μάχεσθαι διὰ ταῦτα μήτε χωρῆσαι πη δυναμένων, ἀλλ' ἐν τε τῇ τάξει καὶ τοῖς τόποις ἐστηκότων καὶ κατακαιομένων, νέφη πολλὰ ἐξαίφνης συνέδραμε καὶ ὑετὸς πολλὸς οὐκ ἄθεοι κατερράγη 4. καὶ γὰρ τοι λόγος ἔχει Ἄρνοῦφιν τινα μάγον Αἰγύπτιον συνόντα τῷ Μάρκῳ ἄλλους τέ τινας δαίμονας καὶ τὸν Ἑρμῆν τὸν ἀέριον ὅτι μάλιστα μαγγανείαις τισὶν ἐπικαλέσασθαι καὶ δι' αὐτῶν τὸν ὄμβρον ἐπισπάσασθαι.

9.1. ταῦτα μὲν περὶ τούτων ὁ Δίων φησίν, ἔοικε δὲ ψεύδεσθαι, εἴτε ἐκῶν εἴτε ἄκων. οἶμαι δὲ τὸ πλέον ἐκῶν καὶ πῶς γὰρ οὐ, ὅστις οὐκ ἠγνόει τὸ τάγμα τῶν στρατιωτῶν τὸ κεραυνοβόλον ἰδίως καλούμενον (ἐν γὰρ τῷ τῶν λοιπῶν καταλόγῳ καὶ αὐτοῦ μνημονεύει), 2. ὕπερ ἀπ' οὐδεμιᾶς ἐτέρας αἰτίας (οὐδὲ γὰρ ἄλλη τις λέγεται) ἢ ἀπὸ τοῦ κατὰ τόνδε συμβάντος τὸν πόλεμον οὕτω προσηγορεύθη. ὁ καὶ αἴτιον τότε τοῖς τε Ῥωμαίοις τῆς σωτηρίας ἐγένετο καὶ τοῖς βαρβάροις τῆς ἀπωλείας, ἀλλ' οὐχ ὁ Ἄρνοῦφης ὁ μάγος οὐδὲ γὰρ μάγων συνουσίαις καὶ γοητείαις ὁ Μάρκος χαίρειν ἰστόρηται. 3. ἔστι δὲ ὁ λέγω τοιοῦτον. τάγμα ἦν τῷ Μάρκῳ (καλοῦσι δὲ τὸ τάγμα οἱ Ῥωμαῖοι λεγεῶνα) τῶν ἀπὸ Μελιτηνῆς στρατιωτῶν εἰσὶ δὲ τὸν Χριστὸν πρεσβεύοντες ἅπαντες. ἐν οὖν τῇ μάχῃ ἐκείνῃ προσιόντα τῷ Μάρκῳ τὸν ἑπαρχον, ἀμηχανοῦντι πρὸς τὴν περίστασιν καὶ δεδιότι περὶ σύμπαντι τῷ στρατῷ, 4. εἰπεῖν λέγεται ὡς οἱ καλούμενοι Χριστιανοὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ὅ τι οὐ δύνανται ταῖς εὐχαῖς, καὶ ὅτι παρὰ σφίσι τάγμα ὅλον τυγχάνει ὃν τούτου τοῦ γένους. τὸν οὖν Μάρκον ἀκούσαντα παρακλήσει χρήσασθαι πρὸς αὐτοὺς ὡς ἂν εὔζωνται τῷ σφετέρῳ θεῷ, 5. εὐξαμένων δὲ αὐτῶν παραχρῆμα ἐπακούσαντα τὸν θεὸν τοὺς μὲν πολεμίους κεραυνῷ βαλεῖν, τοὺς δὲ Ῥωμαίους ὄμβρῳ παραμυθήσασθαι ἔφ' οἷς καταπλαγέντα τὸν Μάρκον ἰσχυρῶς τοὺς τε Χριστιανοὺς κατὰ δόγμα τιμῆσαι καὶ τὴν λεγεῶνα κεραυνοβόλον προσαγορεύσαι. 6. λέγεται δὲ καὶ ἐπιστολὴν τινα περὶ τούτων εἶναι τοῦ Μάρκου. ἀλλ' οἱ Ἕλληνες, ὅτι μὲν τὸ τάγμα κεραυνοβόλον λέγεται, ἴσασσι καὶ αὐτοὶ μαρτυροῦσι, τὴν δὲ αἰτίαν τῆς προσηγορίας ἤκιστα λέγουσι.

10.1. προστίθησι δὲ ὁ Δίων ὅτι τοῦ ὄμβρου καταρραγέντος πρῶτον μὲν ἄνω πάντες ἀνέκυπτον καὶ ἐς τὰ στόματα αὐτὸν ἐδέχοντο, ἔπειτα οἱ μὲν τὰς ἀσπίδας οἱ δὲ καὶ τὰ κράνη ὑποβάλλοντες αὐτοὶ τε χανδὸν ἔσπων καὶ τοῖς ἵπποις πίνειν ἐδίδοσαν, καὶ τῶν βαρβάρων σφίσι ἐπιδραμόντων ἔπινον τε ὁμοῦ καὶ ἐμάχοντο, 2. καὶ ἤδη γέ τινες τιτρωσκόμενοι τὸ τε αἶμα περιχεόμενον ἐς τὰ κράνη καὶ τὸ ὕδωρ ἅμα ἀνερρόφουν. κἂν ἔπαθόν τι δεινὸν ὑπὸ τῶν πολεμίων ἐπικειμένων αὐτοῖς, περὶ τὸ πίνειν οἱ πλείους ἡσυχολημένοι, εἰ μὴ χάλαζα ἰσχυρὰ καὶ κεραυνοὶ οὐκ ὀλίγοι τοῖς πολεμίους ἐνέπεσον.

3. ἦν οὖν ὄραν ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ χωρίῳ ὕδωρ τε ἅμα καὶ πῦρ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ φερόμενά· καὶ οἱ μὲν ὕγραίνοντό τε καὶ ἔπινον, οἱ δὲ ἐπυροῦντο καὶ ἔθνησκον. καὶ οὔτε τῶν Ῥωμαίων τὸ πῦρ ἤπτετο, ἀλλ' εἶπου καὶ προσέμιξέ σφισιν, εὐθύς ἐσβέννυτο· οὔτε τοὺς βαρβάρους ὁ ὑετὸς ὠφέλει, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐπὶ μᾶλλον τὴν φλόγα αὐτῶν ὥσπερ ἔλαιον ἠγειρεν, ὕδωρ τε ὑόμενοι ἐζήτουν. 4. καὶ οἱ μὲν ἑαυτοὺς ἐτί τρωσκον ὡς καὶ τῷ αἵματι τὸ πῦρ κατασβέσοντες, οἱ δὲ καὶ πρὸς τοὺς Ῥωμαίους προσέτρεχον ὡς καὶ μόνους σωτήριον ὕδωρ ἔχοντας· ἠλέησε γοῦν αὐτοὺς καὶ ὁ Μάρκος. παρὰ δὲ τῶν στρατιωτῶν τὸ ἔβδομον αὐτοκράτωρ προσηγορεύθη. 5. καίπερ δὲ οὐκ εἰθώς, πρὶν τὴν βουλὴν ψηφίσασθαι, τοιοῦτόν τι προσίεσθαι, ὅμως ἐδέξατό τε αὐτὸ ὡς καὶ παρὰ θεοῦ λαμβάνων, καὶ τῇ γερούσιᾳ ἐπέστειλεν. μέντοι Φαυστίνα μήτηρ τῶν στρατοπέδων ἐπεκλήθη. Ξιπη.

Eusebius H. E. 5.5.1

τούτου δὴ ἀδελφὸν Μάρκον Αὐρήλιον Καίσαρα λόγος ἔχει Γερμανοῖς καὶ Σαρμάταις ἀντιπαραταττόμενον μάχη, δίψει πιεζομένης αὐτοῦ τῆς στρατιᾶς, ἐν ἀμηχανίᾳ γενέσθαι τοὺς δ' ἐπὶ τῆς Μελιτηνῆς οὕτω καλουμένης λεγεῶνος στρατιώτας διὰ πίστεως ἐξ ἐκείνου καὶ εἰς δεῦρο συνεστάσης ἐν τῇ πρὸς τοὺς πολεμίους παρατάξει γόνυ θέντας ἐπὶ γῆν κατὰ τὸ οἰκεῖον ἡμῖν τῶν εὐχῶν ἔθος ἐπὶ τὰς πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ἰκεσίας τραπέσθαι, 2. παραδόξου δὲ τοῖς πολεμίους τοῦ τοιοῦτου δὴ θεάματος φανέντος, ἄλλο τι λόγος ἔχει παραδοξότερον ἐπικαταλαβεῖν αὐτίκα, σκηπτὸν μὲν εἰς φυγὴν καὶ ἀπώλειαν συναλύνοντα τοὺς πολεμίους, ὄμβρον δὲ ἐπὶ τὴν τῶν τῶν θεῖον παρακεκληκῶτων στρατιάν, πᾶσαν αὐτὴν ἐκ τοῦ δίψους μέλλουσαν ὅσον οὐπω διαφθεῖρεσθαι ἀνακτώμενον. 3. ἡ δ' ἱστορία φέρεται μὲν καὶ παρὰ τοῖς πόρρω τοῦ καθ' ἡμᾶς λόγου συγγραφεύσιν οἷς μέλον γέγονεν τῆς κατὰ τοὺς δηλουμένους γραφῆς, δεδήλωται δὲ καὶ πρὸς τῶν ἡμετέρων. ἀλλὰ τοῖς μὲν ἔξωθεν ἱστορικοῖς, ἅτε τῆς πίστεως ἀνοικείοις, τέθειται μὲν τὸ παράδοξον, οὐ μὴν καὶ ταῖς τῶν ἡμετέρων εὐχαῖς τοῦθ' ὠμολογήθη γεγονέναι τοῖς δὲ γε ἡμετέροις, ἅτε ἀληθείας φίλοις, ἀπλῶ καὶ ἀκακοήθει τρόπῳ τὸ πραχθὲν παραδέδοται. 4. τούτων δ' ἂν εἴη καὶ Ἄπολινάριος, ἐξ ἐκείνου φήσας τὴν δι' εὐχῆς τὸ παράδοξον πεποικυῖαν λεγεῶνα οἰκειᾶν τῷ γεγονότι πρὸς τοῦ βασιλέως εἰληφέναι προσηγορίαν, κεραυνοβόλον τῇ Ῥωμαίων ἐπικληθεῖσαν φωνῇ. 5. μάρτυς δὲ τούτων γένοιτ' ἂν ἀξιόχρεως ὁ Τερτυλλιανός, τὴν Ῥωμαϊκὴν τῇ συγκλήτῳ προσφωνήσας ὑπὲρ τῆς πίστεως ἀπολογία, ἧς καὶ πρόσθεν ἐμνημονεύσαμεν, τὴν τε ἱστορίαν βεβαιῶν σὺν ἀποδείξει μείζονι καὶ ἐναργεστέρῳ 6. γράφει δ' οὖν καὶ αὐτός, λέγων Μάρκου τοῦ συνετωτάτου βασιλέως ἐπιστολὰς εἰς ἔτι νῦν φέρεσθαι ἐν αἷς αὐτὸς μαρτυρεῖ ἐν Γερμανίᾳ ὕδατος ἀπορία μέλλοντα αὐτοῦ τὸν στρατὸν διαφθεῖρεσθαι ταῖς τῶν Χριστιανῶν εὐχαῖς σεσῶσθαι, τοῦτον δὲ φησιν καὶ θάνατον ἀπειλήσαι τοῖς κατηγορεῖν ἡμῶν ἐπιχειροῦσιν οἷς ὁ δηλωθεὶς ἀνὴρ καὶ ταῦτα προσεπιλέγειρ' ἀποταποῖ οὖν οἱ νόμοι οὗτοι, οἱ καθ' ἡμῶν μόνων ἔπονται ἀσεβεῖς, ἄδικοι, ὠμοί; οὐς οὔτε Οὐεσπασιανὸς ἐφύλαξεν, καίτοι γε Ἰουδαίους νικήσας, οὐς Τραιανὸς ἐκ μέρους ἐξουθένησεν, κωλύων ἐκζητεῖσθαι Χριστιανούς, οὐς οὔτε Ἀδριανός, καίτοι γε πάντα τὰ περίεργα πολυπραγμονῶν, οὔτε ὁ Εὐσεβῆς ἐπικληθεὶς ἐπεκύρωσεν. ἀλλὰ ταῦτα μὲν ὅπη τις ἐθέλοι, τιθέσθω.

Eusebius – Hieronymus Chronicon 206i

Imperator Antoninus multis adversum se nascentibus bellis saepe ipse intererat, saepe duces nobilissimos destinabat, in quibus semel Pertinaci et exercitui, qui cum eo in Quadorum regione pugnabat, siti oppresso, pluvia divinitus missa est; cum e contrario Germanos et Sarmatas fulmina persequerentur, et plurimos eorum interficerent.

Exstant litterae Marci Aurelii gravissimi imperatoris, quibus illam Germanicam sitim, Christianorum forte militum precationibus, impenetrato imbri, discussam contestatur.

HA vita Marci 24.4

fulmen de caelo precibus suis contra hostium machinamentum extorsit su<i>s pluvia impenetrata, cum siti laborarent.

Marcus Aurelius' forged letter: (Harnack 1894, 878)

ἰ ὅποια ἐν τῇ Γερμανίᾳ ἐκ περιστάσεως διὰ περιβολῆς ἐπακολουθήματα ἐποίησα ἐν τῇ μεθορίᾳ Κοάδων καὶ Σαρματῶν, ἐν Κοτινοῖς ἰ

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„Zázračný dažď“ Marca Aurelia: kedy a kde?

Péter Kovács

Súhrn

V príspevku sa zaoberáme dvomi najväznejšími problémami „zázračného dažďa“ počas výpravy Marca Aurelia proti Kvádum: kde a kedy k nemu došlo. Po preskúmaní písomných prameňov (predovšetkým správ Cassia Dia, Vita Marci v *Historia Augusta*, Tertuliana a sfaľšovaného listu Marca Aurelia) a zobrazení na stĺpe Marca Aurelia v Ríme (scény XI a XVI) sme prišli k záveru, že došlo k dvom zázrakom (bleskov a dažďa: k tomu prvému v prítomnosti panovníka). Mohlo ísť o rok 172 (ale nemôžeme vylúčiť ani rok 171) a zázrak sa zrejme stal na hraniciach medzi Kvádmi a Kotínmi.

Obr. 1. Scéna XI na stĺpe Marka Aurelia, ktorá zobrazuje bleskový zázrak. Foto P. Kovács.

Obr. 2. Scéna XI na stĺpe Marka Aurelia, ktorá zobrazuje bleskový zázrak. Foto P. Kovács.

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