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TOWARDS THE DISCUSSION ON THE TIME OF COMPOSITION OF CASSIUS DIO'S *ROMAN HISTORY*

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В последние годы возобновилась дискуссия о времени написания «Римской истории» Кассия Диона. В данной статье представлен критический анализ основных версий, в том числе рассматриваются недавно представленные М. Линдхолмером и Ч. Летгой аргументы в пользу соответственно «раннего» и «позднего» варианта датировки. Главный вывод статьи заключается в том, что Дион начал собирать материал для своего труда при Септимии Севере, а работа по написанию «Римской истории» приходится главным образом на 220-е гг., вероятно, до конца 229 г. Следовательно, большая часть труда была создана Дионом скорее в период его активной государственной и политической деятельности, нежели по выходе в отставку.

Ключевые слова: Кассий Дион, историография, литература Римской империи, Северы, Септимий Север, Александр Север.

The past decade has seen a revival of the discussion on the chronology of Dio's work on his *Roman History*¹. The outcomes of the debate appear to be especially important for comprehending Dio's opus as a document of the historical and political thought of the Severan era, all the more so given that some scholars have attempted to interpret the author's views as reflecting the policy of particular representatives of the ruling dynasty².

According to Dio himself, he still continued writing after his retirement in 229³, and consequently the final stage belongs to the early 230s. Nevertheless, it is commonly believed that only a limited portion of the text could have first appeared at that time, while the bulk of the work had been written much earlier⁴. This conclusion is based on Dio's own account of his early literary activities, as preserved in Xiphilinus' epitome (LXXIII [LXXII].23.1–5). The author spent 10 years collecting materials on the history of Rome from the times of the legendary kings until the end of Septimius Severus' rule in 211 CE, and another 12 years were devoted to composing the text (LXXIII [LXXII].23.5). Dio's formulation does not necessarily imply that the later stage follows the former immediately [8, p. 12], but modern scholars usually regard the total amount of 22 years as an uninterrupted period [9, S. 2598–2599].

Debates on the exact dates of the composition of Dio's work have been ongoing for decades, with two main versions prevailing. The versions can be conventionally called “the early” and “late”. The former was suggested by Schwartz, Gabba and Millar, who identified the 22-year period respectively as 194/196/197 – 216/218/219 [6, p. 28–30; 10,

S. 1686, 1720; 11, p. 295–297]. According to Schwartz, Dio made significant additions to his original text, including Book 52, under the rule of Alexander Severus. In 1990s, «the early» version was advocated by Hose [7, p. 425–426] and Schmidt. The latter believes that Dio started working on the *Roman History* as early as 195 and that the first 77 books were published in 217 when Macrinus ruled Rome, with the rest of the work being composed after 229 [9, S. 2598–2625]. The earliest chronology has been suggested by Sordi [12, p. 391–395], according to whom Dio collected material from 193 to 202, while the writing stage belongs to 202–213, which means Dio's narrative is mostly a product of Septimius Severus' epoch and the early years of Caracalla's reign. Most recently, new arguments in favour of the «early dating» have been provided by Lindholmer who suggests that the bulk of the work was written most likely no later than 219 [3].

Already in 1960s, «the early» version was questioned by Bowersock [13] followed later by Eisman. The latter points to Dio's open hostility towards the close relatives of Severus Alexander (whose mother was a niece of Julia Domna, wife of Septimius Severus and mother of Caracalla), which makes publication of Dio's work under the Severans, i.e. before 235, doubtful. Dio is not assumed to have lived up to this date. Therefore, he felt free to express his political stance in the final part of the work because he did not expect that his writing would be published during his lifetime [14; 15, p. 8–12]. More specific conclusions are found in articles by Letta, who suggests that Dio started

working on his *Roman History* only after the death of Septimius Severus. Consequently, the ten years of scrutinizing the sources lie between 212 and 222, while the writing stage corresponds to 222–234 [2, p. 41–47; 16, p. 183–185]. The version of Barnes is quite similar to Letta's: the ten years of collecting the evidence were 211–220, literary processing took place not earlier than in 220–231, but most likely it happened later [17]. This version has been recently supported by Scott who points to Dio's relatively independent and critical view of Septimius Severus and considers Dio's *History* to be a product of the 230s, «composed during the latter part of his political career and especially during his retirement to Bythina» [4, p. 31]⁵.

Such are the two main versions, but some scholars admit the third variant, which is «a compromise» one: Dio collected materials from 201/204 to 211/213 and was engaged in writing from 212/214 to 224/225 [20, p. 166; 21, p. 4; 22, p. 555; 23, p. 123]. This version can be traced back to Reimar, who edited Dio in the nineteenth century. In his commentary, Reimar identified the 22-year period as 201–222 [24, p. LX]. Similar dates have also been suggested by such experts in the field as Millar⁶ and Swan. The latter has accepted that Books 1–76 were composed between 200 and 222 and published first at the end of that period, with a revised and supplemented version in 80 books coming later, in the 230s [26, p. 2549–2556; 27, p. 2–3, 32–33]. According to the revised version of Millar, the majority of *Roman History* was created from 201–223 [28, p. 31]. Kemezis' view appears to be very close to this middle dating, though he allows for substantial additions and revisions before publication of the entire work in the early 230s [1, p. 282–283].

As will be evident, the debates on the chronology have not yet resulted in a consensus, with three possible explanations, «the early», «late» and «compromise», still remaining current. Therefore, this article is an attempt to achieve more certainty in defining the period of Dio's work on his *opus*. However, one of the issues is to examine the overall possibility of specifying the exact chronology. The mere fact that nearly every experienced student of Dio suggests corrections to the previous versions raises questions about the validity of the exact chronological reconstructions. Moreover, the different versions are based on different interpretations of the same passages, which implies different understanding of the original text. Here, my aim is to point out some slight but still detectable distinctions between the original words of Dio and their modern readings, in particular the most recent ones, even though some of the readings may have supplanted the actual source material in the course of

the decades of discussion. Therefore, a reconsideration of some of the key passages is needed to determine what comes directly from the original text and what interpretations go beyond the existing evidence.

To start with, let us explore the most extensive of Dio's comments on his literary activities. The passage, as transmitted by Xiphilinus, comes at the end of Dio's account of the events of Commodus' rule. «After this there occurred most violent wars and civil strife. I was inspired to write an account of these struggles by the following incident. I had written and published a little book about the dreams and portents which gave Severus reason to hope for the imperial power; (2) and he, after reading the copy I sent him, wrote me a long and complimentary acknowledgment. This letter I received about nightfall, and soon after fell asleep; and in my dreams the Divine Power commanded me to write history. Thus it was that I came to write the narrative with which I am at this moment concerned. (3) And inasmuch as it won the high approval, not only of others, but, in particular, of Severus himself, I then conceived a desire to compile a record of everything else that concerned the Romans. Therefore, I decided to leave the first treatise no longer as a separate composition, but to incorporate it in this present history, in order that in a single work I might write down and leave behind me a record of everything from the beginning down to the point that shall seem best to Fortune. (4) This goddess gives me strength to continue my history when I become timid and disposed to shrink from it; when I grow weary and would resign the task, she wins me back by sending dreams; she inspires me with fair hopes that future time will permit my history to survive and never dim its lustre; she, it seems, has fallen to my lot as guardian of the course of my life, and therefore I have dedicated myself to her. (5) I spent ten years in collecting all the achievements of the Romans from the beginning down to the death of Severus, and twelve years more in composing my work. As for subsequent events, they also shall be recorded, down to whatever point it shall be permitted me»⁷ (LXXIII[LXXII].23.1–5).

In order to reconstruct the sequence of the events described in the passage, let us single out the individual items and denote them as: a) the composition of an *opusculum* on the dreams and portents and the sending of a copy of it to Septimius Severus; b) the positive feedback from Severus regarding the writing; c) the dream in which the Goddess encouraged Dio to write history; d) the composition on 'wars and civil strife' (πόλεμοι καὶ στάσεις); e) publication of the work and its approval by the audience; f) the idea of writing history from early

times until the moment to be determined by Fate; g) 10 years of collecting materials on the events that might have happened up to Severus' death; h) 12 years dedicated to writing; i) the decision to continue writing for as long as possible. One more item can be extracted here. It coincides with both 'g' and 'h' and, therefore, can be denoted as «gh». This is what Dio writes in §4 about the Goddess visiting him in dreams and encouraging him to continue writing history whenever he occasionally stops. As we can see, Dio's work on Roman history occupies the three final items («g»–«i») of the sequence. Obviously, we might define the starting chronological point for "g" if we date the previous links. There are two main versions of when the first event might happen: 1) a relatively long period from summer 193 until 195 when Dio aimed to confirm his appointment to the position of praetor and, consequently, was interested in being favored by Septimius Severus [17, p. 246]; 2) 197 (after the battle of Lugdunum)⁸, when Dio might be concerned with demonstrating loyalty to the winner⁹. The first dating appears to be correspond better with Dio's words about dreams and portents that encouraged Septimius Severus to hope for imperial power, which means the work was written and a copy of it delivered to Severus before Lugdunum. Severus replied immediately to the message from Dio (item «b»). Consequently, items «a»–«c» were relatively close in time.

Regarding Dio's second volume dedicated to πόλεμοι καὶ στάσεις, most scholars suppose it was devoted to the civil wars of 193–197 and, consequently, written in 197 [6, p. 28; 10, S. 1686; 11, p. 295] or 198 [27, p. 32], though some of the readers, primarily Barnes, believe it was devoted to domestic and foreign affairs including the two Parthian campaigns of Septimius Severus. Barnes refers to the research of Rubin, according to whom Dio's narrative of both of Severus' campaigns in Mesopotamia contains elements of official propaganda, which may indicate the inclusion of the earlier work in the text of the *Roman History* [29, p. 41–43]. Consequently, Dio's work on πόλεμοι καὶ στάσεις, according to Barnes, could not have been finished and published before Severus' return from the East in April 202 and Dio could not start collecting material for the *Roman History* earlier than that date [17, p. 246]. Schmidt has attempted to reassess the traditional understanding of the content of Dio's writings on the history of 190s. Judging by the pronoun τούτων, the work was devoted to πόλεμοι καὶ στάσεις (πόλεμοι δὲ μετὰ τοῦτο καὶ στάσεις μέγιστα συνέβησαν, συνέθηκα δ' ἐγὼ τούτων τὴν συγγραφὴν...), but, according to Schmidt, the pronoun was connected to some other words presuma-

bly omitted by the epitomator when he was abridging the text. The content of the writing is defined by Dio himself the following way: ταῦτα περὶ ὧν νῦν καθίσταμαι ἔγραψα (LXXIII[LXXII].23.2). Schmidt has suggested that this formulation refers to the end of Commodus' rule and Pertinax' coming to power, which means that the first historical work of Dio was intended to denounce the tyranny of Commodus and extol Pertinax, whose memory was cherished by Septimius Severus, especially in the beginning of his rise to power. Consequently, the *opusculum* had been written, published and commended by Severus before he declared himself to be brother of Commodus and provided for that emperor's deification, i.e. before 195. It was in 195, according to Schmidt, that the 22-year period of Dio's work started [9, S. 2603–2613]. This version has been supported by Slavich, who conducted a detailed analysis of Dio's narrative of the civil wars of 193–197 and questioned the conclusions of Rubin. In his opinion, the narrative of what happened after Niger's defeat betrays Dio's hostility towards Septimius Severus. As for the sporadic elements of official propaganda, they can be explained by the specifics of Dio's sources, not necessarily by the topic of the author's previous work [30, p. 131–166]. Moreover, this scholar cites some examples of how Dio can use the word πόλεμοι to define not only foreign campaigns, but civil military conflicts as well, including the war of Severus against Niger and Albinus [30, p. 166].

The arguments of Schmidt and Slavich have recently been questioned by Scott [4, p. 20–24]. The scholar points to Dio's remark on many senators, including Dio, being hesitant to take sides during the civil war between Severus and Albinus (LXXVI[LXXV].4.2). Consequently, it might have been unsafe for Dio to position himself as a partisan of Severus earlier than 197. I can add that the version suggested by Schmidt appears to be questionable because one unknown element (the meaning of ὧν in LXXIII[LXXII].23.3) is employed as evidence for another unknown element (the abridgement of the original text). If we admit the absence of part of the original text, it becomes difficult to explain what the pronoun τούτων refers to, all the more so in that there is no obvious necessity for searching for an alternative to πόλεμοι καὶ στάσεις from the beginning of the passage. Dio's words ταῦτα περὶ ὧν νῦν καθίσταμαι are usually regarded as referring to all the upheavals following the rule of Commodus [27, p. 29]. Therefore, Dio is assumed to have finished that work no earlier than in 197. Now, let us consider one more aspect of Schmidt's version. As has been already mentioned, he believes that Dio started working on the *Roman History* soon after publishing the previous compo-

sition. In this, Schmidt is following one of the postulates that go back to Millar's foundational monograph [6, p. 29–30]. This version is based on the assumption that items «d», «e», «f», «g» follow immediately one by one and are very close to each other in time. But, in actual fact, we have no precise data on how much time Dio needed for his second work and, more important, when Severus read it. The emperor could have had such an opportunity in 197, but only if Dio had managed to compose and publish the work the same year, or, probably, in 202 when he returned from the East. Moreover, Schmidt and some other scholars seem to be overlooking the formulation belonging to the item «f» (LXXIII[LXXII].23.3)¹⁰. Here, Dio recalls that he «decided» to launch a new project (τᾶλλα πάντα τὰ τοῖς Ῥωμαίοις προσήκοντα συνθεῖναι ἐπεθύμησα) [2, p. 174], but nothing is written about him starting work immediately after making the decision¹¹. Item «g» provides us with the key to defining the *terminus post quem*. If Dio spent ten years collecting materials on the history from the ancient times until the death of Severus¹², in February 211, he could not have commenced earlier than in 201 [13, p. 169–170; 21, p. 3–4]. Lindholmer responds to this argument by pointing to πάντα τὰ ἀπ' ἀρχῆς τοῖς Ῥωμαίοις μέχρι τῆς Σεουήρου μεταλλαγῆς πραχθέντα as «the object of both συνέγραψα and συνέλεξα» [3, p. 152]. This, however, can hardly be recognised as «undermining the middle dating» or «removing a fundamental problem for the early dating», because, whatever the reading is, it cannot change the fact that in this sentence Dio defines the chronological scope of the materials he collected during the ten years' period (obviously, πάντα τὰ ἀπ' ἀρχῆς τοῖς Ῥωμαίοις μέχρι τῆς Σεουήρου μεταλλαγῆς πραχθέντα cannot be separated from συνέλεξα... ἐν ἔτεσι δέκα), while the words ἐν ἄλλοις before δώδεκα indicate that the author makes distinction between the periods of collecting and writing.

Item «g» is traditionally regarded by scholars as corresponding to Dio's report of a dream in which the deceased emperor Septimius Severus told him to write about the reign of Caracalla (LXXIX[LXXVIII].10.1–2: «it was foretold to me in a way by his father that I should write of these events also (προεδηλώθη τρόπον τινὰ παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ ὅτι καὶ ταῦτα γράψοιμι)»). Taking into account this episode, supporters of the «early version» come to the conclusion that Dio's initial plan was to bring the work to a close when reaching the end of Severus' rule, but he changed his mind in the course of time [1, p. 285–286; 6, p. 28–30; 10, S. 1686; 11, p. 295]. Such a point of view doesn't actually correspond to how Dio describes what he planned in very beginning (item «f»): to let

Fate determine the final chronological point of his work (LXXIII[LXXII].23.2: ἐς τήνδε τὴν συγγραφὴν ἐμβαλεῖν ἔδοξέ μοι, ἴν' ἐν μιᾷ πραγματείᾳ ἀπ' ἀρχῆς πάντα, μέχρις ἂν καὶ τῇ τύχῃ δόξῃ, γράψας καταλίπω). Nevertheless, quite logically, the formulation «καὶ ταῦτα» is considered to be an indication that Dio had started his history earlier than he had the dream [1, p. 286; 3, p. 146.]. The proponents of the «later» version suggest that the dream instigated Dio not to continue, but to begin writing the *Roman History* [16, p. 154–155; 17, p. 246; 31, p. 42]. Moreover, Barnes asserts that, given the literary traditions of classical antiquity, Dio would write about the rule of a living emperor (i.e. Septimius Severus) not as history but as panegyric, as was the case with the author's first two compositions. This perspective appears to be debatable. First, Dio's prime intention was to write not a biography of an emperor, but a history of Rome (Fr. 1. 1). Second, the author himself regarded his work on πόλεμοι καὶ στάσεις as «a history»: προσέταξε τὸ δαιμόνιον ἱστορίαν γράφειν (LXXIII[LXXII].23.2). Consequently, the prospect of writing about the living emperor could not have prevented Dio from beginning to work, all the more so given that he wrote about Alexander Severus when that ruler was still alive.

It is thought that the dream should be associated with the item «gh» – the visions sent by Fate to Dio in order to bring him back to his literary activities (LXXIII[LXXII].23.4). Consequently, the collection of materials began under the rule of the emperor Septimius Severus, but no earlier than 201. There is, however, no sufficient reason for arguing that 211 was the watershed between the collection of materials and the processing of the text. Moreover, Dio's formulations do not necessarily imply that he proceeded from one stage to another in the same year.

One more argument of the supporters of the «late» version is the dating of the historian's first consulate, which is mentioned several times in different parts of the work (XLIII.46.5; LX.2.3; LXXVII[LXXVI].16.4). According to the traditional Roman *cursus honorum*, Dio could have become consul for the first time after his praetorship in 195, but not before he reached the age of forty, presumably, in 203 or 204¹³. Therefore, some scholars see him as becoming a suffect consul in 205/206 [7, S. 356–357; 32, p. 163] or 207/208 [19, p. 440, 443]. According to an alternative version, the appointment came no earlier than the 220s, with 222 [16, p. 117; 31, p. 41–47], 223 or 224 [11, p. 293; 20, p. 165] being suggested as possible variants of the dating. The main argument for this version is the following expression of Dio's regarding Septimius Severus (LXXVII[LXXVI].16.4). «Again, he rebuked such persons as were not chaste, even

going so far as to enact some laws in regard to adultery. In consequence, there were ever so many indictments (γραφαὶ) for that offence (for example, when consul, I found three thousand entered on the docket (τρισχιλίας γούν ὑπατεύων εὔρον ἐν τῷ πίνακι ἐγγεγραμμένας)»)(LXXVII[LXXVI].16.4).

The suggestion has been made that, since praetors, not consuls, presided over *quaestiones de adulteriis* in Severan times and, consequently, Dio's account can hardly be connected with his official duties, the historian might have obtained the data much later. If so, the figure of three thousand can be interpreted as the total number of adultery charges under Septimius Severus [11, p. 289–290; 16, p. 120–121; 31, p. 164–165]. According to Letta, those 3000 γραφαὶ μοιχείας were delations addressed to the emperor himself, a part of Septimius Severus' personal archive (*tabularium principis*) which might have been accessed by Dio due to his privileged position under Alexander Severus [16, p. 121]. There are some other options for the interpretation of the passage. Mommsen regarded the docket (Gr. πίναξ, Lat. *album*) as a list of those cases that were taken into consideration, but had not yet reached the court [33, p. 220, 696]. Three thousand indictments were unlikely to have been addressed to one court only. Consequently, Dio when consul might have had an opportunity to see the *album* if he (jointly with the entire senate) were responsible for the distribution of the cases among the judges. Such a practice is mentioned by Papinian (Dig. 1.21.1). Moreover, a consul could be involved in administering justice in such cases *extra ordinem* and, therefore, deal with the related documents. Such a possibility can be recognised, theoretically at least, given the rescript *ad Tertullum et Maximum consules* (Dig. 48.5.30.5)¹⁴ and one of the instructions from Ulpianus' *De officio consulis* (Dig. 48.2.16) [34, p. 57]. Besides, one can agree with Barnes that there are no clear indications to what period the three thousand indictments belong. They might have been filed in the early years of Severus' reign, with Tertullian mocking them in one of his speeches written in 196–197 [17, p. 243].

It goes without saying that Dio mentions his consulship (ὑπατεύων) to let the reader know in what capacity he came across the document. According to Letta, one didn't have to be a consul to access *acta* of magistrates in the *aerarium* (Tac. Hist. IV.40.2) [16, p. 243]. On the other hand, very little is known about who and how one might see various materials from *tabularium principis*. Letta regards the 3000 γραφαὶ μοιχείας as comparable with some documents from Caracalla's archive mentioned by Dio in the following passage. «At the time in question Macrinus neither sent to the senate, as they were demanding, nor otherwise pub-

lished any document of the informers, claiming, whether truly or falsely, in order to avoid great commotion, that none such had been found in the royal residence. For Tarautas had either destroyed the greater part of the documents containing any accusation or had returned them to the senders themselves, as I have stated, in order that no evidence of their baseness should be left» (LXIX[LXXVIII].21.1).

The situation depicted in the passage is quite telling. The delations, as potentially dangerous for the senders themselves, were kept secret by the emperor and remained with him wherever he went. Here, Dio admits that a part of the archive was not destroyed by Caracalla, but, anyway, Macrinus was supposed to be the only one who might have had a chance to see it. Consequently, even if we assume that Alexander's closest associates and confidants could have a privilege of accessing the documents of accusation addressed to previous rulers or *commentarii principis*, Letta's version raises the following questions: would Dio's reference to his consulship have made sense then, or could it serve as a sufficient explanation of how the historian saw the document of that kind? Obviously, one may find it difficult to respond positively to both of these questions.

Anyway, there is not enough evidence to claim that γραφαὶ μοιχείας are “lungi dal dimostrare che Dione fu regolarmente console sotto Severo, dimostra piuttosto il contrario, e per un figlio di *consularis* non aver rivestito il consolato *suo anno* o poco dopo è segno chiaro di emarginazione o disgrazia politica” [2, p. 165]. There are no particular indications of any conflict between him and Septimius Severus. Regarding the war of the latter against Clodius Albinus¹⁵, Dio associates himself with those senators who refrained from openly siding with one of the parties (LXXVI[LXXV].4.2). Later, when expressing indignation or resentment with Severus' or Caracalla's activities he speaks for the entire senate, being concerned mostly with the emperors' attitudes to senators in general (LXXVI[LXXV].7.4; LXXVI[LXXV].8.5; LXXVIII[LXXVII].17.1–4). Substantively, Dio's critical remarks on Septimius Severus and Caracalla might not necessarily reflect the vicissitudes of the author's public career, and, besides, some difference between Dio the narrator and Dio the statesman cannot be excluded.

Now let us examine a passage that, according to some scholars, conflicts with «the later» version: «On Mount Vesuvius a huge fire blazed up, and there were bellows mighty enough to be heard (ἐξακουσθῆναι) even in Capua, where I live whenever I am in Italy (ἐν ἧ, ὅσακις ἂν ἐν τῇ Ἰταλίᾳ οἰκῶ). 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 (τοῦτο γὰρ τὸ χωρίον ἐξειλόμην τῶν τε ἄλλων ἔνεκα καὶ τῆς ἡσυχίας ὅτι μάλιστα, ἵνα σχολῆν ἀπὸ τῶν ἀστικῶν πραγμάτων ἄγων ταῦτα γράψαιμι)» (LXXVII[LXXVI].2.1).

According to Sordi, Dio himself witnessed the eruption of Vesuvius in 202 and, consequently, he was working on the *Roman History* then [11, p. 394]. Such an interpretation has been challenged by Letta, who points to the expression ἐς τὴν Καπὼν ἐξακουσθῆναι as an indication that Dio might have heard about the event after purchasing the property in Capua [31, p. 46–47]. There is one more point of view concerning the matter. Hose believes that Dio could have resided in Capua only in the first two decades of the third century, which is inconsistent with the «later» version [1, p. 287; 3, p. 145–146; 7, S. 425–426]. But this assumption appears to be disputable. According to what is known about Dio's career, he was to govern a province in the East after holding the position of praetor in 195. Later, he lived mostly in Italy under Septimius Severus and Caracalla, except for the period from December 214 to April 215. In the winter months of 218–219, he was *curator* in Pergamum (LXXIX[LXXX].7.4) [6, p. 23; 19, p. 441]. As for the 220s, Dio mentions that he did not spend much time in Rome and describes his travels as follows. «Thus far I have described events with as great accuracy as I could in every case, but for subsequent events I have not found it possible to give an accurate account, for the reason that I did not spend much time in Rome (μὴ ἐπὶ πολὺν χρόνον ἐν τῇ Ῥώμῃ διατρίψαι). For, after going from Asia into Bithynia, I fell sick, and from there I hastened to my province of Africa; on returning to Italy I was almost immediately sent as governor first to Dalmatia and then to Upper Pannonia, and though after that I returned to Rome and to Campania (ἐς τὴν Ῥώμην καὶ ἐς τὴν Καμπανίαν ἀφικόμενος), I at once set out for home» (LXXX[LXXX].1.2–3).

It is commonly believed that Dio governed Africa, with the rank of proconsul, in 223 and subsequently performed the duties of legate in Dalmatia (in 224–226) and Upper Pannonia (in 226–228) [7, p. 23; 19, p. 446; 35, p. 106–107; 36, p. 94]. The dating is based on Dio's «silence» concerning his activities under Elagabalus (16 May 218 – 11 March 222) and the account of a false Alexander (LXXX[LXXIX].18.1–3), about whom it is supposed that Dio could only have learned if he had remained in Asia until 221 [9, S. 2637; 19, p. 441]¹⁶, as if there were no other way to learn about this extraordinary story. Both of the arguments are circumstantial. Therefore, it can be admitted, theoretically at least, that Dio might have governed Africa from 220 to 221 and, moreover, he

might not have served full three-year-terms in Dalmatia and Upper Pannonia [17, p. 244–245; 37, p. 144]. Dio might be thinking of his estate in Capua when writing about his return from Upper Pannonia [38, p. 58]. According to his own words, he lived in Capua every time he was in Italy (ὁσάκις ἂν ἐν τῇ Ἰταλίᾳ οἰκῶ), which means he had been absent from the peninsula more than once before writing that. We can assume that he lived in Italy no fewer than ten years before his periodical departures and arrivals started: December 214 – April 215, 218–221/223, 222/224–227/228. Consequently, he might have visited Capua after returning from Africa (even though he did not stay for long in Italy) and, later, after relinquishing his post in Upper Pannonia, in which instance Campania is actually mentioned as his destination (ἐς τὴν Ῥώμην καὶ ἐς τὴν Καμπανίαν ἀφικόμενος). Anyway, we should recognise the possibility of Dio writing the passage in the 220s.

Apart from the issue of dating the passage, Dio's own expression on writing history as a «leisure activity» raises the question of how the 22 years of Dio's work on his history fit different stages of his career, especially in the 220s. Indeed, the author himself explains his inability to give a full and accurate account of Alexander Severus' reign by his absence from Rome (LXXX[LXXX].1.2: «for subsequent events I have not found it possible to give an accurate account, for the reason that I did not spend much time in Rome (τὰ δὲ δὴ λοιπὰ ἀκριβῶς ἐπεξελεῖν οὐχ οἷός τε ἐγενόμην διὰ τὸ μὴ ἐπὶ πολὺν χρόνον ἐν τῇ Ῥώμῃ διατρίψαι)»). Lindholmer reads this phrase as Dio's assertion «that proper history-writing was impossible from Alexander's accession in 222 onwards due to his absence from Rome» [3, p. 139]. It should be noted in this respect that Dio comments not on history writing in general but primarily on narrating about a certain period, which appears to be quite in accordance with his authorial intervention on the contemporary history as an eyewitness narrative which is based on the author's personal observations (LXXIII[LXXII].18.4). Logically, Dio explains that he could not give a proper account of the events that happened in his absence.

Lindholmer's suggestion is that «the writing phase would have been far easier to perform in Rome or in the peace and quiet of Dio's villa in Campania than while he was abroad» [3, p. 244–245]. But does it necessarily exclude the periods of Dio's departures from the 22 years of his work on Roman History? If so, this can be problematic even for some of the «early» dating versions including the one of Lindholmer who has suggested that Dio was writing Book LXXVII in the end of the 210s, i.e. amidst or in the end of his Eastern travels.

Importantly, Dio notes Capua, in Campania, not Rome, as a place for writing history, and he specifically mentions both Rome and Campania separately in the sketchy description of his career in the 220s (LXXX[LXXX].1.2–3). This basically corresponds to how Letta and Barnes date the composition, or at least editing, of individual books of *Roman History*, based on a number of indications provided by Dio himself: Book XLVI was finished no earlier than 218¹⁷, Book LXVIII no earlier than 218/219¹⁸, Book XI no earlier than 220¹⁹, Book XLIII after 220²⁰, Book LII no earlier than 223²¹, Book XLIX in 225 or later, Book XL before 226 at the earliest²². It should be added that Book LXXVI had been finished before Dio ultimately moved to Bithynia in 229, as well as that, according to some scholars, the “Consolation-Dialogue” between Cicero and Philiscus in Book XXXVIII might be a reflection of the author’s own misfortunes of 229 [1, p. 289–290; 16, p. 157–163]. Kemezis has suggested that it «could easily be a later insertion into the text» [1, p. 290]. Letta’s counter-argument is based on his reading of Caesar’s address to his «lieutenants and subalterns» at Vesontio (XXXVIII.36–46), another long speech in Book XXXVIII, as a reminiscence of Dio’s considerations over the interrelation between such issues as insecurity of borders and *disciplina militaris* under Alexander Severus (cf. LXXVIII.26.1, LXXX.3.1): if both speeches were composed in one and the same time they could not be an insertion because they occupy around a half of the book [2, p. 175; 16, p. 163–166]. Nonetheless, it can be agreed with Kemezis that nothing in the contents of both speeches “specifically precludes their having been written earlier” than the late 220s [1, p. 289–290].

In sum, Lindholmer’s recent attempt to reconsider the earliest possible date of the beginning of Dio’s work on *Roman History* doesn’t appear to be convincing. As it comes from the Greek text, the author could not commence his research earlier than ten years before the death of Septimius Severus, and, therefore, the *terminus post quem* is 201. On the other hand, there is not enough evidence to support the Letta’s idea that the vicissitudes of Dio’s public career precluded him from collecting data for his *opus* earlier than 211. According to Dio himself, the collection stage took 10 years and the work over the main part of his *Roman History* – another 12 years. There might have been a pause between the two periods. Given Dio’s mention of Capua in LXXVII[LXVI].2.1, the writing stage, for at least a part of the work, could not come to an end later than 229. Book LXXX[LXXX] (and perhaps some other final books) was written after 229, after Dio had moved back to his native Bithynia. Precise chronology does not seem to be determinable, but

one can infer that Dio began to collect his material under Septimius Severus and that the bulk of writing was made in the 220s. Consequently, Dio wrote the most of *Roman History* in times of his active involvement in political affairs, rather than during retirement as one would expect in a Thucydidean or Sallustian manner.

Примечания

1. The article is essentially a response to the contributions to the debate that have recently been made by Kemezis [1, p. 282–283], Letta [2], Lindholmer [3] and Scott [4, 28–36], which nonetheless does not exclude repetition of some of the arguments from my earlier paper published in Russian [5] and therefore unknown to the foreign audience.

2. For instance, according to Millar [6, p. 78, 83–84] and Hose [7, S. 431], the work of Dio is imbued with political ideas that reflect particular aspects of Caracalla’s reign and are addressed directly to the emperor.

3. Dio mentions returning to his native province Bithynia after performing the duties of consul for the second time in 229 (LXXX[LXXX].5.2).

4. Such a view implies that Dio’s work, as Kemezis puts it, «was substantially complete in the late 210s», with minimal revisions being made later [1, p. 282; 3, p. 134].

5. «The later» chronology is also accepted by Kuhn-Chen [18, s. 137] and Molin [19, p. 445–446].

6. Millar abandoned his previous version in response to Bowersock’s objections [25, p. 1].

7. All English translations of Dio are from Cary’s Loeb edition.

8. The civil war ended with the defeat of Clodius Albinus at Lugdunum on 19 February 196 or 197. The latter is a traditional date, the former is suggested by Barnes [17, p. 246] and Rubin [29, p. 201].

9. According to Swan [27, p. 32], Dio was unlikely to have composed the first work before he was sure about the civil war winner, i.e. until 197.

10. Kemezis’ considerations are especially noteworthy in this respect [1, 282, 284–5].

11. For the suggestion of «a quite immediate time scale» for Dio’s progression from his earliest work to the following two ones mentioned in the excursus, see Kemezis [1, p. 284], Lindholmer [3, p. 147].

12. LXXIII[LXXII].23.5: «I spent ten years in collecting all the achievements of the Romans from the beginning down to the death of Severus, and twelve years more in composing my work (συνέλεξα δὲ πάντα τὰ ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς τοῖς Ῥωμαίοις μέχρι τῆς Σεουήρου μεταλλαγῆς πραχθέντα ἐν ἔτεσι δέκα, καὶ συνέγραψα ἐν ἄλλοις δώδεκα)».

13. Dio is generally recognised to be born in 163 or 164 [6, p. 13].

14. As Letta has suggested [16, p. 119], that might relate to a case of a senator, with judicial hearings being held in the senate under the chairmanship of consuls.

15. According to Letta, that was the first time that Dio stepped on shaky ground because of his pro-Albinus sympathies [2, p. 166].

16. Letta has suggested alternative variants of the dating of false Alexander episode – 219 or 220 [2, p. 168; 16, p. 129–130].

17. In Book XLVI, Dio writes that Septimius Severus proclaimed Plautianus to be entering upon a second consulship, even though the latter had been previously honored only with *ornamenta consularia*, not an actual first consulate, which created the precedent for «other instances» known to the author (XLVI.46.4). Since the author uses the plural form here, those instances could be the appointment of Maecius Laetus in 215, Macrinus' consulate in 218, as well as Valerius Comazon receiving the position in 220 [3, p. 172–179].

18. In Book LXVIII, having mentioned Trajan observing an opening at Ctesiphon that gave off a deadly vapour, Dio describes a similar fissure at Hierapolis in Asia (LVIII.27.2–3) which he might have seen when holding the position of curator of Pergamum and Smyrna in 218/219. Alternatively, Dio might have seen the opening when quaestor in Asia [6, p. 15].

19. The argument for dating Books XI and XLIX is as follows. Dio refers to his appointment to Pannonia in Book 49 (XLIX.36.4) and notes that in his own time the flow of the Colops river had a different appearance from what it was in 35 BCE (XLIX.37.3). Here, Dio specifies that he was appointed to Pannonia after his «commands in Africa and Dalmatia» (XLIX.36.4). Concerning Dalmatia, the author recalls that his father held such a position once, while the command in Africa is left without any comment. According to Barnes, the way Dio clarifies the sequence of his positions would make sense only if he had previously mentioned his service in Africa, probably before narrating the First Punic War in Book XI [17, p. 248].

20. A detailed and accurate description of the location of Thapsus, an African city, appears to be eyewitness data because of its precision (XLIII.7.2).

21. In Book LII, among Maecenas' recommendations we find the statement that the post of praefectus praetorio must be held by no less and no more than two persons (LII.24.1). This is taken to be a reflection of the unprecedented and unpredictable events of 222/223 (or even 228 [39, p. 385–399; 40, p. 251–287]) when Ulpian was appointed to the prefecture as a superior colleague of Flavianus and Chrestus (Zos. I.11.2–3), which resulted in upheavals including the death of all those magistrates (Cass. Dio. LXXX[LXXX].2.2–4). [16, p. 169; 17, p. 251].

22. In Book 40, Dio mentions the Parthians as waging wars against the Romans in his time (XL. 14. 2–4). It is generally held that the author could have written that only before he learned of the end of the Parthian Empire (around 226 CE). But Dio, as suggested by Letta, might not have regarded Ardashir's victory over Artabanus V as the complete disappearance of Parthia, all the more so given that he describes the Persian's failure to take Hatra (LXXX[LXXX].3.2) [16, p. 172–179]. It can be added that, according to Dio, Ardashir managed to acquire a large portion of Parthia, but not the whole country: τὴν Μηδίαν μετέστη, καὶ ἐκείνης τε οὐκ ὀλίγα καὶ τῆς Παρθίας, τὰ μὲν βία τὰ δὲ καὶ φόβῳ, παραλαβὼν (LXXX[LXXX].3.3).

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TOWARDS THE DISCUSSION ON THE TIME OF COMPOSITION OF CASSIUS DIO'S ROMAN HISTORY

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Recent years have seen a renewed scholarly interest in the time of composition of Cassius Dio's *History*. This paper provides a critical assessment of the main versions, in particular Lindholmer's and Letta's recent arguments in favour of respectively "the early" and "late" variants of dating. The main conclusion is that Dio began to collect materials for his *opus* under Septimius Severus and that the bulk of writing was made in the 220s, presumably before the end of 229. Consequently, Dio wrote the most of *History* while politically active, rather than during retirement.

Keywords: Cassius Dio, Historiography, Imperial Literature, the Severans, Septimius Severus, Severus Alexander.

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