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978-1-107-06272-6 - Greek Narratives of the Roman Empire Under the Severans: Cassius Dio, Philostratus and Herodian

Adam M. Kemezis

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GREEK NARRATIVES OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE UNDER THE SEVERANS

The political instability of the Severan Period (AD 193–235) destroyed the High Imperial consensus about the Roman past and caused both rulers and subjects constantly to re-imagine and re-narrate both recent events and the larger shape of Greco-Roman history and cultural identity. This book examines the narratives put out by the new dynasty, and how the literary elite responded with divergent visions of their own. It focuses on four long Greek narrative texts from the period (by Cassius Dio, Philostratus and Herodian), each of which constructs its own version of the empire, each defined by different Greek and Roman elements and each differently affected by dynastic change, especially that from Antonine to Severan. Innovative theories of narrative are used to produce new readings of these works that bring political, literary and cultural perspectives together in a unified presentation of the Severan era as a distinctive historical moment.

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For my mother, Sarah

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Acknowledgements

This book began about ten years ago when David Potter suggested to me that Cassius Dio would be a good author to look at for a Ph.D. field exam. My largest debt remains to him, for the good counsel and instruction he offered throughout the subsequent dissertation process, for his continued support and friendship, and for the uncounted times in the revision process when some insight of his from years before has found its way back into my memory, with enlightening results. The generous and astute contributions that Sarah Ahbel-Rappe, Susan Alcock, Bruce Frier, Jim Porter and Ray van Dam made to that dissertation are still felt everywhere in this book. My thanks go out once again to my other professors, fellow-students and friends from that time, for their wisdom and companionship.

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The four texts that are the main subject of this book are each in its different way textually problematic, and a brief explanation is in order of the texts I have followed and the ways I have cited them. The most complex problem is presented by Cassius Dio, above all because the text of his latter books has mostly had to be reconstructed from quotations and epitomes. This is admirably done in the edition of U. P. Boissevain (1898), but that work's formidable scholarly authority comes at the expense of convenience: Dio is an exceedingly awkward author to cite. For all citations from the fragmentary books, I have included afterwards in parentheses the source of the fragments as follows: (Xiph.) – Xiphilinus; (EV) – *Excerpta Valesiana*; (Zon.) – Zonaras; (EM) – *Excerpta Maiana*; (EU) – *Excerpta Ursiniana*; (PP) – Peter the Patrician. In addition, it is usually necessary to cite two book numbers, because Boissevain (and following him Cary in the Loeb edition) used a different system of numbers and divisions from all previous editions, while preserving the old chapter and section numbers even where his re-ordering of passages or moving of book-divisions had disrupted the sequence of the chapters. This means that in many instances the Boissevain book number by itself does not uniquely identify a passage: his Book 62, for instance, contains two sections numbered “1,” neither of which is at the beginning. Given this, and since many references in earlier scholarship still use the old numbering system, I have cited passages using first Boissevain's book number, then the traditional number in brackets, which can be found at the top of the right-hand page in Boissevain, or in the margin of Cary. Lastly, there are a few instances in which due to transpositions of fragments and typographical errors, a given passage is exceedingly difficult to locate in Cary's Loeb: for those I have given volume and page numbers as well. I apologize for the inelegance.

Neither of Philostratus' longer works has received a proper critical edition since Kayser's unsatisfactory 1870–1 Teubner, though in the case of the *Apollonius*, one is now in progress, edited by G. J. Boter. At present, for the

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Apollonius, C. P. Jones' 2005 Loeb represents an important advance, and I have used it, with some exceptions that are noted. For the *Sophists*, I have used Kayser *faute de mieux*. Herodian, by contrast, has received a remarkable amount of editorial attention for such an otherwise neglected author, perhaps because he has many more manuscript cruxes than the other texts. I have used the most recent Teubner edition, Lucarini's of 2005, but with reference also to the editions of Mendelssohn (1883), Stavenhagen (1922) and Whittaker (1969). Details are noted where appropriate. For other authors I have generally used the most recently available Oxford or Teubner editions. However, since the physical format of several of these editions is quite different, I have preferred to use the "Loeb page" as a standard unit of text-length, regardless of what edition I have consulted when quoting or citing the author in question. Translations are my own except where otherwise noted, and in general I have emphasized clear and accurate expression over stylistic fidelity to the original.