



## The Date of the Composition of the *Historia Augusta*

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Zawallis of the city of Zidkhara inspires the prophetic vision the *dammaranza* women turn away (the eyes); they go and repeat (*or* interpret) afterwards the tongues; the temple they purify; and the oracles which were delivered in regard to the Sun-god and to Antaras, these they give, and what they uttered at dawn this before the Sun-god [they declare]. Now while they in Zidkhara [obeyed?] the word of the Sun-god, on the third day let them be up at dawn and then the god delivers (the message) to them, and so to the gods and to the Sun-god they repeat (*or* interpret) the same. He (*i.e.*, the god) repeats the same (prophecy) as before. Then the Sun-god, on being made acquainted (with it), gives presents to the altar-table which has been

purified and to the other altar-tables afterwards.'

'Now the god of the city of Akkhiyawa, who is also the god of the city of Lazpa, and our own god, turn together to the Sun-god; an oracle is delivered; the god of the king himself hands on the same and they (the prophetesses) hand it on. Then they repeat (*or* interpret) the same on the third day to the Sun-god. Now the god of the cities of Akkhiyawa and Lazpa on the third day as before takes his share (*lit.* is a partner). After being informed the Sun-god once more inspects the altar-tables when they have been purified again.'

The site of the city of Zidkhara is unknown.

A. H. SAYCE.

#### THE DATE OF THE COMPOSITION OF THE *HISTORIA AUGUSTA*.

FOR students of the history of the Roman Empire the problem of the character of that strange compilation—the so-called *Historia Augusta*—cannot fail to cause embarrassment. When and under what circumstances was it composed? It appears to be now generally agreed that the compilation is pseudonymous and that it is the work of a single author. Mommsen's famous article,<sup>1</sup> directed against Dessau's attack<sup>2</sup> upon the authenticity of the work, is considered to have failed in its main contention. The majority of modern writers would now date the composition of the collection to the later years of the fourth century, to the reign of Theodosius the Great; so recently (*inter alios*) Hirschfeld,<sup>3</sup> Geffcken,<sup>4</sup> Hohl,<sup>5</sup> and Rosenberg.<sup>6</sup>

Seeck<sup>7</sup> would, however, place it in the fifth century, and holds that it was written during the reign of the usurper Constantine. There are difficulties to be met before either view can be accepted. The most obvious difficulty was forcibly stated by Mommsen: it lies in the author's glorification of the Emperor Claudius II. as ancestor of Constantius I. The words of Mommsen will be recalled: 'Die Biographie des Claudius mit ihren überschwänglichen Lobreden auf einen ephemeren und längst verstorbenen Herrscher, mit der unverfrorenen Erklärung, dass dies des Constantius wegen geschehe, mit ihrer feierlichen Hinweisung auf die Unvergänglichkeit der flavischen Dynastie trägt unverkennbar den Stempel des—natürlich gleich allen seinen Collegen durch die reine Wahrheitsliebe zu solcher Verherrlichung gedrängten—Officiosus; und die Hypothese, dass hier in mühsamer Fälscherconsequenz der Preis einer zur Zeit der Abfassung ausgestorbenen Dynastie verkündet werde, wird einfach widerlegt für jeden Unbefangenen durch das *cui bono*, das bei litterarischen Producten dieser Art nicht trügen kann.'<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Die Scriptorum historiae Augustae. Gesammelte Schriften* VII., pp. 302-363 [= *Hermes* XXV. (1890), pp. 228-292.]

<sup>2</sup> H. Dessau: *Über Zeit und Persönlichkeit der Scriptorum historiae Augustae* (*Hermes* XXIV. [1889], pp. 337-392); *Über die Scriptorum historiae Augustae* (*Hermes* XXVII. [1892], pp. 561-605).

<sup>3</sup> *Kleine Schriften* (Berlin, 1913), pp. 887-891.

<sup>4</sup> J. Geffcken: *Religionsgeschichtliches in der H.A.* (*Hermes* LV. [1920], pp. 279-295).

<sup>5</sup> E. Hohl: *Über den Ursprung der H.A.* (*Ibid.* pp. 296-310).

<sup>6</sup> A. Rosenberg: *Einleitung und Quellenkunde zur römischen Geschichte* (Berlin, 1921), pp. 231-241.

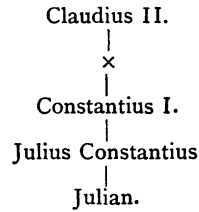
<sup>7</sup> Especially in the *Jahrbücher für classische Philologie*, Vol. CXXI. (1890), pp. 606-639, and in the *Rheinisches Museum* for 1912, N.F. LXVII.

<sup>8</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 303.

An attempt to meet this difficulty in the case of the Theodosian dating was made by Hirschfeld,<sup>1</sup> who pointed out that Gratian had married Constantia, the daughter of Constantius II., and thus might well have sought to accentuate his affinity through this marriage with the house of Constantine. But so far as I am aware there is no evidence from contemporary literature to support the view that the story of the connexion of Constantius I. with Claudius II. was in fact revived at this time, and the very pious Emperor Gratian does not seem a likely person to have asserted a claim to descent from a pagan emperor of the third century; he would not seek to go further back than the first Christian sovran, Constantine. For the fifth-century dating Seeck<sup>2</sup> has observed that the usurper Constantine on some of his coins bears the name 'Flavius,' and concludes, again without any support from contemporary evidence, that he revived the claim which Constantine had invented on the overthrow of the Herculan dynasty. But in either case it would not seem easy to explain the oracle (*Claudius* c. x. 5) promising that the dynasty of Constantine should not come to an end, when it was well known that in fact it had so terminated with the death of Julian. The *natural* interpretation of this oracle is surely that the compilation of the *Historia Augusta* took place *before* Julian's death. My suggestion is that the *Historia Augusta* does indeed date from the reign of Julian the Apostate.

In the *Historia Augusta* Constantius I. is the *nepos* of Claudius II: he was the father of Julius Constantius, whose son was the Emperor Julian. The Emperor Claudius came from the Balkan lands where, as Toutain has demonstrated, there was a widespread cult of the Sun-god.<sup>3</sup> Maurice has shown in his *Numismatique Constantinienne* how in 310 to the Hercu-

lian dynasty succeeds the *solar* dynasty of Constantius—Constantine. Julian's 'solar' family-tree is thus:



With this *cf.* Julian: *Or.* IV. (ed. Hertlein), p. 170, *κάλλιστον μὲν οὖν εἶ τῷ ξυνηνέχθη καὶ πρὸ τριγωνίας ἀπὸ πολλῶν πάνυ προπατόρων ἐφεξῆς τῷ θεῷ [= Helios] δουλεύσαι κ.τ.λ.: πρὸ τριγωνίας* = precisely the Emperor Claudius II., and behind him stand the line of Balkan sun-worshippers.<sup>4</sup> This is the background of the *Historia Augusta*.

This explains the oracle in *Vita Claudii* c. x. 4; the passage runs as follows:

'cum in Apennino *de se* consuleret [*sc.* Claudius] responsum huius modi accepit,  
Tertia dum Latio regnantem viderit aestas;  
*item cum de posteris suis,*  
His ego nec metas rerum nec tempora  
ponam':

—for himself three summers, *i.e.* A.D. 268-270: for his posterity an immortality of rule: Julian's descendants are to inherit the imperial throne.

With this key in our hands I venture to think that the difficulties which have troubled Seeck and others are difficulties no longer. To notice a few of these: first the famous passage in *Claudius* c. ii. 6 which, we must agree with Seeck, is incomprehensible if written at the time suggested by the pseudonymous author. 'Quid enim magnum vir ille domi forisque non habuit? amavit parentes. quid mirum? amavit et fratres: iam potest dignum esse miraculo.' (How had the sons of Constantine loved one another?) 'amavit propinquos: res nostris temporibus comparanda miraculo' (the murder of Julian's kin and the participation of Constantius; the

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 889-90.

<sup>2</sup> See *ref.* in note 7 *supra*.

<sup>3</sup> For a similar sun-worship in the case of Diocletian and Maximian *cf.* G. Costa: *Religione e Politica nell' impero romano* (Torino, 1923), pp. 186-188. The reader will at once recall the story of the Pannonian stonemasons.

<sup>4</sup> *Cf.* Maurice: *L'Origine des seconds Flaviens* in the *Comptes Rendus* of the *Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, 1910, pp. 96-103. *Cf.* Himerius: *Ecl.* XII. 6. of Constantius II. σοὶ . . . ὁ προπάτωρ Ἡλίου.

death of Gallus; Julian's own treatment by Constantius). There follows a veiled panegyric on Julian: 'invidit nulli, malos persecutus est. fures iudices palam aperteque damnavit. stultis quasi neglegenter indulsit' (the Christians?). 'leges optimas dedit. talis in re p. fuit ut eius stirpem ad imperium summi principes eligerent, *emendatior senatus optaret*' (cf. *infra*). The programme of a reign is revealed to those who would at once realise that this was a piece of contemporary history.

The meaning of the much-discussed passage *Severus* 20 is now obvious. 'Et reputanti mihi, Diocletiane Auguste, neminem [facere] prope magnorum virorum optimum et utilem filium reliquisse satis claret. Denique aut sine liberis veris interierunt' (Diocletian dying with only adopted 'sons'), 'aut tales habuerunt plerique ut melius fuerit de rebus humanis sine posteritate discedere' (Constantine's sons again). The whole chapter is a biting commentary on the history of the successors of Constantine.

The theory of succession propounded in *Claudius* c. xii. 3 which troubled Seeck is no less clear. On the death of Claudius 'Quintillus frater eiusdem, vir sanctus et sui fratris, ut vere dixerim, frater' (= Gallus and Julian) 'delatum sibi omnium iudicio suscepit imperium, non hereditarium, sed merito virtutum, qui factus esset imperator etiamsi frater Claudii principis non fuisset'—surely a clever use of past history to illustrate Julian's title to the throne.

The whole of the close of the life of Alexander Severus is again *Zeitgeschichte*. It is unfortunately too long to quote here, but it deserves careful study. It is, of course, the contrast between the eunuch-ridden fool (*fatuus*) Constantius and Julian surrounded by friends such as Sallustius. For Julian's clearance of the court from the eunuch tribe c. 67 is peculiarly interesting. Again these chapters state the programme of the reign. Even Basilina, whose memory Julian cherished, finds her place ('et optimae matris consiliis usus est'). The bitterness of Julian's life in Gaul calumniated by the agents of Constantius at the court of Milan is mirrored in c. 66. 3, just as it is

reflected in the words put into the mouth of Diocletian in *Aurelianus* c. 43. It is Julian's scorn of the circus and his dislike of the lavish waste of money upon the games which finds its echo in *Aurelianus* 15. 3-6 and *Carinus* c. 20.

Another passage, which Seeck in the *Rheinisches Museum*, N.F. LXVII. (1912), was at a loss to explain, can now be understood without difficulty. In *Carus* c. 9 the author writes, after inserting an apocryphal letter of Julius Calpurnius, 'Hanc ego epistulam idcirco indidi quod plerique dicunt vim fati quamdam esse, ut Romanus princeps Ctesiphontem transire non possit, ideoque Carum fulmine absumptum, quod eos fines transgredi cuperet, qui fataliter constituti sunt. sed sibi habeat artes suas timiditas, calcanda virtutibus. licet plane ac licebit, ut per sacratissimum Caesarem Maximianum constitit, Persas vincere atque ultra eos progredi, et futurum reor, si a nostris non deseratur promissus numinum favor.' Not only a prophetic vision of Julian's success in his Persian campaign, but also surely a proof that there were those in Julian's day who did not share the emperor's military aims.

We have noticed the *senatus emendatior* of the Claudius biography; we can now understand the enigma of the attitude of the compiler of the *Historia Augusta* to the senate. This is no reference to Stilichonian policy, as Seeck unconvincingly suggested; the attitude of the author towards the senate reflects throughout the constitutional archaism of Julian. Julian wrote, we know, a letter to the senate: hence the forged correspondence with the senate invented by the author. This explains the part played in the *Historia Augusta* by the representatives of Roman senatorial families. Gallienus, the enemy of the senate, is matched against Claudius-Julian. We have here a contemporary source which shows us the effect produced by Julian's attitude towards the historic council of the capital.

Now we can understand the Gallic colouring of the whole work.<sup>1</sup> Seeck took exception to the author's state-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Hohl, *op. cit.*, p. 305 and p. 308.

ment that Constantius I. was chosen Caesar by Diocletian that '*Gallias Romanis legibus redderet*' (*Carinus* 20. 3)—a contemporary, he argued, would have written *Briannias*. True, but the passage finds its conscious contrast in Gallienus—the villain of the piece, who 'perdita Gallia risisse . . . perhibetur' (*Gallienus* 6. 6). That contrast appears again in *Gallienus* 4. 3, 'Cum Gallienus in luxuria et improbitate persisteret cumque ludibriis et helluationi vacaret neque aliter rem p. gereret, quam cum pueri fingunt per ludibria potestates, Galli, quibus insitum est leves ac degenerantes a virtute Romana et luxoriosos principes ferre non posse, Postumum ad imperium vocarunt, exercitibus quoque consentientibus, quod occupatum imperatorem libidinibus querebantur.' It is the revolt of Julian from Constantius. The same theme is more explicitly developed in *Trig.-Tyr.* 5. 5: 'Ita Gallieno perdente rem p. in Gallia primum Posthumus deinde . . .' (the Gallic usurpers) 'adsertores Romani nominis exstiterunt. Quos omnes datos divinitus credo, ne, cum illa pestis inauditae luxuriae impediretur malis, possidendi Romanum solum Germanis daretur facultas. Qui si eo genere tunc evadissent, quo Gothi et Persae, convenientibus in Romano solo gentibus venerabile hoc Romani nominis finitum esset imperium.' We might be reading Ammianus Marcellinus on the Gallic campaigns of Julian.

Further we are in a position better to appreciate the religious attitude of the *Historia Augusta*. Bidez has shown<sup>1</sup> that at the beginning of Julian's reign his religious policy was that of tolerance towards the Christians: Christian bishops, for example, were summoned to his court. It was only later, especially at Antioch, that he became embittered. Geffcken has remarked that in Julian's work a clear distinction is drawn in his treatment of Christ as differentiated from that of the Christians.<sup>2</sup> In the same way the person of

Christ is treated with respect in the *Historia Augusta*. The work represents Julian's earlier position: it is rather a plea for paganism than a violent attack upon Christianity. It would justify men in seeking 'opem deorum quae numquam cuiquam turpis est' (see Geffcken in *Hermes*, *loc. cit.*, p. 291 for the text of *Aurelianus* 19. 5); 'neque enim indecorum est dis iuvantibus vincere. sic apud maiores nostros multa finita sunt bella, multa coepta' (*Aurelianus* 20. 7). The bitterness displayed in Hadrian's letter is perhaps explained by Julian's well-known difficulties in Alexandria; the much-discussed reference to the 'patriarcha' is surely an unkind hit against Athanasius—the one Alexandrian patriarch of whom the West of Europe had any intimate knowledge! (*Saturninus* cc. 7-8.)

This paper only attempts to deal with passages which have recently been the subject of debate. The *Historia Augusta* must be restudied from the point of view of the history of Julian's reign. Contemporaries doubtless knew it for what it was—a clever *Tendenzschrift*. It remained for Symmachus to use it as an historical source.<sup>3</sup> Hohl has recently written: '*Vestigia terrent*. Manche absonderliche Eintagsblüte hat der Boden der *Historia-Augusta-Forschung* schon getrieben. Da wird man sich nur zögernd zu einem weiteren Versuch entschliessen.' I am conscious of the risk, but I know of no insuperable difficulties standing in the way of the suggested dating. For the names of Roman aristocratic families mentioned in the *Historia Augusta* I would refer to the admirable remarks of Hirschfeld, *Kleine Schriften*, pp. 890-891; for the Probus oracle to Mommsen, *Gesammelte Schriften*, VII., pp. 345-346; for the union between the families of Albin and Caesonii Postumii to Seeck, *Jahrbücher für classische Philologie*, CXLI. (1890), p. 633, who has shown that this must have taken place *ca. A.D.* 350; while Menadier's very careful study *Die Münzen und das Münzwesen bei den Scriptoribus Historiae Augustae* (Berlin dissertation, 1913) only results in the conclusion that the work cannot have

<sup>1</sup> J. Bidez, *L'Évolution de la Politique de l'Empereur Julien en Matière religieuse* [= *Extrait* from the *Bulletin de l'Académie royale de Belgique*. (*Classe des Lettres, etc.*, No 7 [1914], pp. 406-461)]. Bruxelles, 1914.

<sup>2</sup> *Hermes*, *loc. cit.*, p. 283, and *Zwei griechische Apologeten* (Leipzig, 1907), p. 307.

<sup>3</sup> *Hermes*, *loc. cit.*, p. 298.

been compiled before the second half of the fourth century.

It remains for others to judge whether

the suggested explanation is after all but another *Eintagsblüte*.

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### PERSIUS, II. 37.

Hunc optet generum rex et regina ; puellae  
Hunc rapiant ; quidquid calcaverit hic, rosa  
fiat !

'THE first and last wish undoubtedly have their origin in nursery tales and probably the second,' says Friedländer (*Roman Life and Manners*, IV., p. 90). Though nearly right, this is not quite accurate. The reminiscence is not of fairy story, but of the blessings invoked by the singers of seasonal songs upon members of a household which shows itself generous to the waits. That such conventional blessings formed part of ancient seasonal songs, as of modern carols, may be seen in the Samian *Eiresione* (*Hom. Epigr.* XV.) :

τοῦ παιδὸς δὲ γυνὴ κατὰ διφράδα βήσεται ὕμνῳ  
κτλ.

Their forms are very stereotyped. Here are a few parallels to the three wishes in Persius taken from modern

Greek carols. They could easily be multiplied, but these may suffice to illustrate my contention.

1. 'And if you have a girl child, may a golden fate be hers, may she take for a husband the son of the King of Spain' (τοῦ Ῥήγα Σπᾶνια τὸ ὑγῖδ' ἀντρα νὰ τόνε πάρη, *Λαογραφία*, II., p. 684. Compare the three princesses who broider the satchel for the son of the house, *B.S.A.* XX., p. 56).

2. 'Lady mine, your little son, Lady, your precious one, five little girls are in love with him and eighteen big ones' (πέντε μικρὲς τὸν ἀγαποῦν καὶ δεκοχτῶ μεγάλες, Passow, cccci).

3. 'And, Lady, when you go to church, the path is full of roses from your tread' (ἡ στράτα ῥόδα γέμησεν ἀπὸ τὴν περπατιζιά σου, *B.S.A.* XX., p. 41. Compare Passow, ccxcv, line 17).

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### LATICES SIMULATOS FONTIS AVERNI.

DIDO in her despair summoned a priestess skilled in the magic art. This priestess used for a solemn sprinkling *latices simulatos fontis Auerni* (*Aen.* IV. 512). Conington *ad loc.* remarks: 'Virgil candidly admits that the water used by the priestess was not genuine,' and his words are echoed by Papillon and others. But such an admission would be out of place. Virgil is here describing a scene of love-magic as it was practised in his own time.<sup>1</sup> He has emphasised the correct ritual details, *exuuias* (*cf.* Fahz, *R.G.V.V.* II., p. 131 ff.), *crinis effusa* (*cf.* Hor. *Sat.* I. 8. 24), *falcibus aenis* (*cf.* Seru. *ad Aen.* I. 448 for the use of a bronze knife to cut the hair of the *flamen Dialis*; Macrobian *Sat.* V. 19. 13 for the same custom of Sabine priests, and for the bronze plough in the Etruscan ceremonies connected with the foun-

dation of towns<sup>2</sup>), *unum exuta pedem uinclis* (*cf.* Hopfner, *Griechisch-Aegyptischer Offenbarungszauber*, p. 240, § 858, O. Gruppe, *Bursians Jahresb.* 186, p. 178, Frazer, *G.B.*<sup>3</sup> III., pp. 311 ff.), *in ueste recincta* (*cf.* Hor. *Sat.* I. 8. 23; Ou. *Met.* VII. 182; Hopfner, *op. cit.*, p. 239, § 857), and *sparserat* (*cf.* Macrobian *Sat.* III. 1. 6).

Servius guides us to a better interpretation with the note: 'in sacris, ut supra diximus, quae exhiberi non poterant simulabantur et erant pro ueris' (the earlier note is that on *Aen.* II. 116).<sup>3</sup> The pretence is a definite ritual pretence, like the pretence of human sacrifice (*G.B.*<sup>3</sup> IV., p. 214 ff.), or of mowing down visitors to a harvest field (*G.B.*<sup>3</sup> VII., p. 229 ff.), or of throwing people into fire (*G.B.*<sup>3</sup> X., pp. 110, 148, XI., p. 25). It probably here implies a specific incantation of water: 'Oh, water! be thou water of Avernus.' We

<sup>1</sup> Fahz, *R.G.V.V.* II., pp. 144 ff., argues that descriptions of magic in Latin poetry are due to literary models. At the same time it is not necessary to assume that Virgil followed them rather than his own observations of contemporary magic, or to conjecture with Radermacher, *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft* XXI., pp. 238 f., that the love magic in the *Confessio S. Cypriani* is copied from Lucian, *Philopseudes*. Magic was practised in Virgil's time, and represented in Pompeian wall-painting (as Reinach,

*Rép. peint. gr. rom.*, p. 241. 4; *Dar. S.* III., p. 1515, figs. 4783, 4784); and we can see from *Georgics* IV. 125 that Virgil was observant. In the same way love magic was not unknown in the fourth and fifth centuries of the Christian era (*cf.* Delahaye, *Anal. Boll.* XXXIX., p. 322).

<sup>2</sup> Clearly a survival from the Bronze Age (Samter, *Pauly-Wissowa* VI. 2489).

<sup>3</sup> He is followed, I find, by Lacerda in his note *ad loc.* (dated 1613). Penquitt's dissertation *De Didonis Vergilianae exitu* (Königsberg 1910) is not accessible to me.