

XIPHILINUS AND THE ALEXANDRIAN EMBASSY OF 57 BC

by

KAMIL BIAŁY

ABSTRACT: The present paper focuses on the analysis of a minor episode from the Xiphilinus' *Epitome* of Cassius Dio's *Roman History* devoted to the issue of restoration of Ptolemy XII's to the Egyptian throne and the actions undertaken by delegation of Alexandrians under the leadership of Dio, a Stoic philosopher, to undermine Ptolemy's efforts. It is argued that Xiphilinus, while providing a derivative account based on a single source, followed in his narrative a different agenda than Dio. His focus lies in presenting actions of Ptolemy and his Roman allies (*dynatoi*) as evidence for unlawfulness, corruption and bribery which in Xiphilinus' view formed a common characteristic of late republican Roman polity.

Xiphilinus' *Epitome*, an abridged version of Cassius Dio's *Roman History*, is a monumental work by the early third century Roman senator and writer who described the history of Rome from its legendary origins up to his own time during the early reign of the emperor Severus Alexander. It could be considered as being one of the most peculiar and significant works of 11th-century Byzantine historiography¹. It was envisaged by its author as a kind of handbook of Roman history and it is widely accepted that its recipient was the emperor Michael VII Doukas². Its aim was to increase the young emperor's historical, political and institutional awareness regarding the ancient Roman roots of Byzantine polity³. In a broader sense, the *Epitome* can be seen as part of an 11th-century resurgence of interest in the ancient Roman past, including its Republican and pre-Christian

¹ The most recent edition is that of BOISSEVAIN contained in his edition of Dio: *Dionis Cocceiani Historiarum Romanarum Quae Supersunt*, ed. U.P. BOISSEVAIN (ed.), vol. 3, Berlin 1885–1901.

² For his programmatic statement see Xiph. 87, 3–11; cf. C. MALLAN, *The Style, Method, and Programme of Xiphilinus' Epitome of Cassius Dio's Roman History*, *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* LV 2013, pp. 611 f.

³ J. LJUBARSKIJ, *Some Notes on the Newly Discovered Historical Work by Psellos*, in: J. JELISAVETA, S. ALLEN, J. LANGDON (eds.), *ΤΟ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΟΝ: Studies in Honor of Speros Vryonis*, New Rochelle–New York 1993, pp. 217–218; A. MARKOPOULOS, *Roman Antiquarianism: Aspects of the Roman Past in the Middle Byzantine Period (9th–11th centuries)*, in: E. JEFFREYS (ed.), *Proceedings of the 21st International Congress of Byzantine Studies*. London, 21–26 August 2006, I. Plenary Papers, Aldershot–Burlington 2006, p. 294.