E. V. Ilyushechkina [ab]
ORCID: 0000-0001-9220-9351
✉ *ilyushechkinae@gmail.com*
[a] *Российская академия народного хозяйства и государственной службы при Президенте РФ (Россия, Москва)*
[b] *Российский государственный гуманитарный университет (Россия, Москва)*

Some remarks on the Preface of Caius Iulius Solinus

Аннотация. В статье основное внимание уделяется так называемому первому предисловию к компиляции Гая Юлия Солина «Collectanea rerum memorabilium» и, в частности, тому, как его особенности (стилистические, структурные, риторические и жанрообразующие) раскрываются на фоне риторической системы конца III в. Анализ семантических связей, сравнений, метафор и других риторических элементов в предисловии помогает лучше понять авторское «я», цели и замысел произведения в целом, методы, намерения и вкусы автора. Используя темы и общие места, традиционные для латинских предисловий, Солин излагает методы отбора источников для своей компиляции, особенности материала, говорит даже о привлечении парадоксографических сюжетов и о собственном видении построения географического сочинения, что в результате создает уникальный текст. Что касается риторических приемов Солина, то он использует синонимы, антонимы, метафоры, проявляет особенное внимание к звукописи, употребляя уменьшительные суффиксы, ассонансы и пр. Отличительной чертой произведения Солина является то, что он начинает географический рассказ (описание ойкумены) с отрывка об основании Рима и краткой истории Вечного города, о чем автор говорит уже в предисловии.

Ключевые слова: Гай Юлий Солин, Плиний Старший, Клавдий Салмазий, латинские предисловия, античная этногеография, риторическая топика

Для цитирования: *Ilyushechkina E. V.* Some remarks on the Preface of Caius Iulius Solinus // Шаги / Steps. Т. 6. № 1. 2020. С. 101–112. DOI: 10.22394/2412-9410-2020-6-1-101-112.

Статья поступила в редакцию 1 декабря 2019 г.
Принято к печати 20 декабря 2019 г.

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E. V. Ilyushechkina [ab]
ORCID: 0000-0001-9220-9351
✉ *ilyushechkinae@gmail.com*
[a] *The Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration (Russia, Moscow)*
[b] *Russian State University for Humanities (Russia, Moscow)*

Some remarks on the Preface of Caius Iulius Solinus

Abstract. The article focuses on the so-called "first" preface to Solinus' *Collectanea rerum memorabilium*, and especially on the way its functions (stylistic, structural, rhetorical and genre-defining) are revealed against the background of the third-century rhetorical system. The genre status and semantic connections of the preface, the similes, metaphors and various rhetorical elements created on their basis are discussed. By analyzing them we should be able to better understand the figure of the author himself, his methods, intentions and even personal tastes, as well as the aim and focus of this work as a whole. While utilizing themes and common places that are traditional for Latin prefaces, Solinus reveals the methods of selecting material for his compilation, the features of the material, he even comments on the attraction of paradoxography and on his own vision of of composing a geographical work; all this, as a result, creates a unique text. As for Solinus' rhetorical devices, these include, but are not limited to, the use of synonyms and polysemy; special attention is paid to the sound of words and phrases (he uses diminutives, assonances, etc.); and to the use of metaphors and juxtapositions of contrasting words. A distinctive feature of Solinus' work is that he starts a geographical account (a description of the *oikoumene*) with a passage about Rome's founding and a brief history of the Roman Empire as the author tells already in the Preface.

Keywords: Gaius Iulius Solinus, Pliny the Elder, Claudius Salmasius, Claude de Saumaise, Latin prefaces, ancient ethnogeography, rhetorical topics

To cite this article: Ilyushechkina, E. V. (2020). Some remarks on the Preface of Caius Iulius Solinus. *Shagi / Steps, 6*(1), 101–112. DOI: 10.22394/2412-9410-2020-6-1-101-112.

Received December 1, 2019
Accepted December 20, 2019

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In 1629 Claude de Saumaise (better known by his Latinized name, Claudius Salmasius) published his famous *magnum opus* "Plinianae exercitationes in C. Iulium Solinum", which apart from Solinus' compilation included Salmasius' own indispensable text-critical and philological commentary [Salmasius 1629 (2nd ed. 1689)]. It is not by chance that Salmasius, lauded by both Scaliger and Casaubon as one of the great scholars of the 17th century[1], became interested in Solinus, who for many centuries remained a relatively popular figure among scholars and readers alike. At least 250 manuscripts and 85 editions are silent witnesses to the prestige of his work[2], known as *Collecteanea rerum memorabilium* ("Collection of Curiosities") or *Polyhistor* ("Multi-descriptive"), which is in fact a description of the ancient world, with remarks on historical, social, religious and natural history questions.

It was only later that Solinus' reputation was tarnished by Mommsen's harsh judgement expressed in his 1864 critical edition of the *Collectanea* [Mommsen 1864 (2nd ed. 1895)]. Since then, it has become conventional wisdom that Solinus' compilation is a deeply unoriginal work, hardly worth any scholarly attention. I, however, am convinced that such a condemnation is unjust and unwarranted. In fact, recently there has been a new and welcome surge of interest among classicists in the *Collectanea*, and not just because the work so far has been largely overlooked but because it represents an important and not very well understood aspect of Graeco-Roman culture.

In 2001, Francisco J. Fernández-Nieto published a Spanish translation of Solinus' book, complete with an introductory chapter about Solinus' style and content, his date and manuscript tradition [Fernández Nieto 2001: 7–114]. In 2014, thanks largely to the efforts of Kai Brodersen, a conference dedicated to his oeuvre was held in Erfurt that resulted in a published volume; almost simultaneously a new bilingual edition of the *Collectanea*[3] appeared. Thus, it soon became apparent that it is due to grave scholarly oversight that Solinus lay forgotten for such a long time, and that the *Collectanea* deserves our full attention both as a historical and geographical source and as a literary work.

It should be noted that the compilation-genre which flourished during the Imperial period and to which Solinus' book obviously belongs was not as homogenous as one would imagine: it included both systematizing works, such as Pliny's *Natural History*, and compilations in commentary-form, such as Probus', Servius', and Donatus' commentaries on Virgil. Instead of expressing their own ideas and thoughts the creators of such compilations assumed a more modest task of excerpting and recombining other authors' material in order to please and engage their audience and to meet as best they could the demands of the current cultural moment (see more in [Formisano 2007]). As for Solinus, in his compendium of ancient ethnographic knowledge he approached his sources and source-selection quite creatively and thus managed to expand his readers' knowledge about the world they lived in.

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[1] See, e. g. [Bots 2018: 99–101] (on Salmasius at Leiden University); [van Miert 2011] (on the correspondence between Scaliger and Salmasius).

[2] Cf. "The chief Latin geographer to a millenium" [Milham 1986: 74]. On the manuscripts tradition of Solinus see [Ibid.: esp. 73–75; Brodersen 2014b: 201–209].

[3] [Brodersen 2014b] (conference proceedings), [Brodersen 2014a] (an edition of Solinus' text with parallel Latin and German versions; the Latin part is based on the edition by Mommsen [1864]). See also [Brodersen 2018: 87–94].

In this article I shall focus on Solinus' preface to the *Collectanea*. I am especially interested in the way its stylistic, structural, rhetorical and genre-defining functions are revealed against the background of the 3rd century (the date favored by most scholars)[4] rhetorical system. Solinus' preface takes the form of a dedicatory epistle addressed to his benefactor, a man by the name of Adventus, otherwise unknown to us. I will attempt to demonstrate how this preamble may help us better understand the author's methods, intentions and even personal tastes, as well as the aim and focus of his entire work.

Solinus begins his introductory epistle by — as the common rules of literary etiquette demand — first thanking his patron for his unwavering interest in his oeuvre and Latin literature in general:

> *Solinus Advento salutem*
> (1.1) *Cum et aurium clementia et optimarum atrium studiis praestare te ceteris sentiam idque oppido expertus de benivolentia tua nihil temere praeceperim, e re putavi examen opusculi istius tibi potissimum dare, cuius vel industria promptius suffragium vel benignitas veniam spondebat faciliorem*[5].

Such formal addresses and/or dedications were commonplace but still very flattering for the addressee, whose name became forever associated with the work; it worked also vice versa in case of favor to the author of some high-ranking official (cf. [Herkommer 1968: 31]). Solinus here reproduces a fairly standard Latin mode of address, *captatio benevolentiae*, which may be directed alternatively at the addressee, the reader or the listener[6]. He then asks his benefactor to be the judge and critic of his work (also a common demand in dedicatory letters of this sort), which he calls *opusculum* ("this little work [of mine]"). Such deliberate minimizing of one's achievement and false modesty was likewise a well-established rhetorical device[7].

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[4] Th. Mommsen preferred to date Solinus' compilation with the period between 200 and 400 AD, i. e. 3rd century [Mommsen 1895: vi–vii], Fernández Nieto places Solinus' in the period between 290 and 350 AD [Fernández Nieto 2001: 11–27], while K. Brodersen speaks about late 3rd century AD [Brodersen 2014a: 8]. R. Talbert relates the time of Solinus' work to 300 AD and connects it with the origin date of the Peutinger map [Talbert 2010: 136]; cf. [von Martels 2014: 22] for the 3rd AD century as well; cf. [Walter 1969].

[5] "(1.1) Solinus greets Adventus. As I feel that you surpassed others by the clemency of your ears and your diligence in the finest arts — and I do not say this thoughtlessly, since I very much experienced your benevolence — , I thought I ought to give to you the initial critique of this little work of mine, because your diligence promised a quicker assent, or your kindness easier forgiveness" (here and below English trans. by Zweder von Martels [Brodersen 2014b: 9]).

[6] On rhetorical formulas in the prefaces of Latin historians see [Janson 1964: 65–67; Herkommer 1968: 199–224; Nicolaïdis 1988; Lausberg 1990: 156–160 (esp. § 273–279 on four varieties of the rhetorical formula *benevolum parare*)]. Cf. [Curtius 1948: 233–250; Moles 1993] (on Liv. *Proem*. 2–3, 4–5).

[7] Starting from the time of Augustan Principate, the topic of the author's "self-derogation" was established in Roman literature: cf. *mea parvitas* (Val. Max. *prolog*); mediocritas mea (Vell. Pat. II.3.3, cf. Gell. XIV.2.25); *mea petulantia* (Plin. *Nat. Hist. praef*. 2). The use of self-derogatory formulas in Latin prefaces in the 2nd — 3rd centuries is connected, notes Janson, with the conditional topic of "modesty" either in relation to personal merits of the author, or in relation to their works [Janson 1964: 145–146].

The goal of all these rhetorical formulae seems clear enough: by addressing the reader or his patron directly and asking them, for example, to be charitable towards his work, the author wants to engage his readership, to produce in them a sense of trust and ultimately to dispose them favorably towards what is to come[8].

Touching further on the nature of his content and purpose of the work, Solinus clarifies:

> (1.2) *Liber est ad conpendium praeparatus, quantumque ratio passa est ita mode-rate repressus, ut nec prodiga sit in eo copia nec damnosa concinnitas. Cui si animum propius intenderis, velut fermentum cognitionis magis ei inesse quam bratteas eloquentiae deprehendes*[9].

As for his work's intent and theme, Solinus says that it is a brief overview of — or a short introduction to — ethnogeography composed mainly for didactic purposes and thus belonging to the ancient didactic tradition. He thus considers brevity to be one of the book's chief merits, but not the sole one. Solinus adds that he does not want his narrative to be either too dry or too verbose and long-winded[10]. He uses the adverb *moderate*, which probably refers both to the style and the substance of the *Collectanea*.

The noun *concinnitas* ("a neat, elegant, skilful joining of several things", "beauty of style, produced by a skilful connection of words and clauses"), derived from the adjective *concinnus*, is used several times by Cicero[11] and was relatively common during the Early Imperial period[12]. In this case, the term *concinnitas*, which means a skillful combination of words or phrases and is usually used to characterize a literary style, as does the adjective close to it, *concinnus*, indicates the expressiveness of the style and its features[13].

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[8] According to the anonymous treatise attributed to Cicero (*Rhet. ad Heren*. I.6–8) and in the opinion of Cicero himself, the form of the preface to historical works of Latin authors was completely regulated by rhetorical conventions: in the preface, the author should, first of all, achieve the inclination of the reader / listener (*concliemus eos nobis*, *qui audiunt*, Cic. *De or*. II.115) and "gain his favor" (*conciliari quam maxime ad benevolentiam*, Cic. *De or*. II.182), while using lenitas orationis (*De or*. II.129), which equally applies to the "manner of statement" (*elocutio*) and to the "content of speech itself" (*actio*); cf. Quint. III.8.10; IV.1.5; IV.1.7–15; IV. 1.72; X.1.48. See more in [Gasparov 1972: 7–74].

[9] "(1.2) The book is prepared as an abridgement, restrained with moderation so that the multitude of subjects discussed is not extravagant, and the beauty of its style is not unfortunate. Reading it closely one will discover that the book, instead of the gold leaves of eloquence, contains as it were the ferment of knowledge".

[10] Cf. [Santini 1998]: according to him, the word-combination *copia prodiga* ("multitude of subjects [is not] extravagant", cf. Plin. *Ep*. V.20.4) logically opposes the expression *damnosa concinnitas* ("beauty of its style [is not] unfortunate") of the subordinate clause, as a result of which we can assume that *concinnitas* is used in the meaning of *dicendi brevitas*. It should only be clarified that this is not about "brevity" of the content or of the work, but about the characterization of the author's style, which is devoid of rhetorical "embellishments" (cf. Cic. *De or*. III.100).

[11] E. g. Cic. *Or*. 81; 149; 164–167; 201; *Brut*. 325.

[12] Cicero noted that Latin authors began to take care of "speech ornaments" relatively "recently"; cf. Sen. *Ep*. 115.2; Suet. *Aug*. 86 etc.; Gell. II.26.4. See more in [Gasparov 1972: 17–18].

[13] The adjective *concinnus* is synonymous with *venustas* and *elegans* cf. e. g. Plin. *Nat*. *Hist*. XXXV.36.111: *elegans ac concinnus ita, ut venustate ei pauci conparentur*.

Oddly enough, in Solinus' text the word *concinnitas*, which normally has a positive meaning and refers to an elegant literary style, is followed by a pejorative adjective, *damnosa*: taken together this must mean something like "unexpressive, uncultivated style". Such an interpretation of *damnosa concinnitas* seems to be confirmed by a passage in the introduction where Solinus juxtaposes knowledge and rhetoric. The former, i. e. knowledge of the facts collected in the *Collectanea*, he urges the reader to pursue, while the latter is nothing more than skillful yet superficial embellishment. Like other writers of the didactic tradition, Solinus' clearly wanted to raise the prestige of his chosen field — ethnogeography — in the eyes of the reading public.

However, Solinus does not want to abandon rhetoric altogether in order to focus solely on useful knowledge. In fact, his fairly cliched remarks on the superiority of useful substance over empty style are themselves variations of similar tropes found in Cicero and Quintillian[14].

Latin authors liked to brag about their industriousness and the labor it took to compose their works, and Solinus is no exception[15]. He mentions how carefully he selected all the volumes from which he made his excerpts:

> (1.3) *Exquisitis enim aliquot voluminibus studuisse me inpendio fateor, ut et a notioribus referrem pedem et remotis largius inmorarer. Locorum commemoratio plurimum tenet, in quam partem ferme inclinatior est universa materies. Quorum commeminisse ita visum est, ut inclitos terrarum situs et insignes tractus maris, servata orbis distinctione, suo quaeque ordine redderemus*[16].

Actually, he is talking here about the "library", or his book's sources, on which Solinus depends. The goal of this 'library-work' was to filter out well-known ethnogeographic facts in favor of the more obscure and rare ones. As Solinus himself points out, the larger part of his compilation is dedicated to the description of "places of the earth and tracts of the sea" (*terrarum situs et tractus maris*) of the *orbis terrarum*. He chose the well-trodden path of describing them systematically (*ordine*) according to a previously outlined plan. Doing so was considered important by Latin authors: it had long become a *topos* among them that a good literary work needs an underlying structure or plan[17].

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[14] Cf. *etenim ex rerum cognitione efflorescat et redundet oportet oratio. Quae, nisi res est ab oratore percepta et cognita, inanem quondam habet elocutionem et paene puerilem* (Cic. *De or*. I. 20); *Sunt qui, neglecto rerum pondere et viribus sententiarum, si vel inania verba in hos modos depravarunt summos se iudicent artifices* (Quint. IX.3.100).

[15] See, e. g., Plin. *Nat. Hist. praef*. 12; Gell. *praef*. 12 etc. More in [Janson 1964: 97; Ilyushechkina 2001: 78–89, esp. 86–87].

[16] "(1.3) For this book, I studied several carefully selected books with the intention of keeping my feet away from the more common ones, and staying with the more remote ones. The larger part of the book is concerned with the record of geographical places; most of its subject-matter is more fit for that part. It seemed proper to mention them so that we should produce the famous places of the earth and tracts of the sea, each in their order, observing the division of the world".

[17] Cf. *prius ordine dicam* (Verg. *Georg*. IV.537); *ut breviter cognosci possint, ab inlustribus electa auctoribus digerere* (sic Kempf, codd. deligere) *constitui* (Val. Max. *praef*.); στοϊχηδόν (Dion. Per. 63); *easque nunc excerptiones nostras variis diversisque in locis factas cursim digessimus* (Gell. XVII.21.1); *in ordinem… convenirent* (Macr. *Sat*. I *praef*. 3).

In the next paragraphs Solinus, reproducing another didactic *topos*, discusses the topics that are both useful (he uses the word *utilitas*) and entertaining (i. e. they have *venustas* and bring *delectatio*):

> (1.4) *Inseruimus et pleraque differenter congruentia, ut si nihil aliud, saltem varietas ipsa legentium fastidio mederetur. Inter haec hominum et aliorum animalium naturas expressimus. Addita pauca de arboribus exoticis, de extimarum gentium formis, de ritu dissono abditarum nationum, nonnulla etiam digna memoratu*[18].

He knows that his book must be interesting and enjoyable and argues that thanks to the variety (*varietas*) of his chosen themes and topics the reader will never be bored by it (cf. Phaedr. 2, *prol*. 10: *ut delectet varietas*)[19]. Among such topics worth mentioning (*digna memoratu*), intended to provide both pleasure and benefit, Solinus mentions the various paradoxographic excursions that help 'rhetorize' his work.

Such paradoxographic digressions were clearly directed at readers who were typically newly middle-class, with enough money and leisure time to peruse the various kinds of educational and didactic literature that developed during the "Second sophistic" (periegeseis, periploi, chorographiae, breviaria and didactic poems of various kinds)[20].

Next Solinus announces that he intends to "follow the traces of the ancient stamp" (*vestigia monetae veteris*), that is, imitate the old Latin writers[21]:

> (1.5) *quae praetermittere incuriosum videbatur quorumque auctoritas, quod cum primis industriae tuae insinuatum velim, de scriptoribus manat receptissimis. Quid enim proprium nostrum esse possit, cum nihil omiserit antiquitatis diligentia, quod intactum ad hoc usque aevi permaneret? Quapropter quaeso, ne de praesenti tempore editionis huius fidem libres, quoniam quidem vestigia monetae veteris persecuti opiniones universas eligere maluimus potius quam innovare*[22].

[18] "(1.4) We have inserted also a great many things that are different, though compatible so that, if nothing else, variety, at least, remedies the reader's sense of distaste. Among these things we have portrayed the natures of men and other living creatures. Added are a few things on exotic trees, on the form of peoples living in the most remote places, on the different customs of hidden races, and also on several other things worthy to be mentioned".

[19] Judging by the context, the term *varietas* is used here in relation to the substantial part of the *Collectanea* (cf., e. g., Nep. XIII.4; XXV.10). At the same time, there are frequent cases when *varietas* (often together with *copia* "abundance, wealth, integrity", which is synonymous with *eloquentia*) appears in Latin texts as a rhetorical figure serving to indicate expressiveness of style (cf. Cic. *De or*. I.59: *varie copioseque*; III.98–100: *varietas*; see more in [Fitzgerald 2016: 47–50]); cf. also Gell. XII.14.1–7: a passage about the origin and meaning of the particle *saltem* used in Solinus' phrase next to *varietas*.

[20] Cf. Gell. IX.4.3.

[21] Cf. a similar metaphor with the designation "minted in high standard coin" (*moneta*), associated with first-class poetry like poems by Virgil or Horace: Iuven. VII.54–55. See also [Pavlock 2014: 27–28].

[22] "(1.5) It seemed to be careless to pass over these things, the authority of which — and this I should especially like to recommend to your assiduity — flows from the best received authors. For what could be ours, since the diligence of the ancients has left nothing to stay untouched until our age? Therefore, I ask you, do not judge the trustworthiness of this edition on the basis of the present time, for, following the traces of the ancient stamp, we have preferred to select universal opinions, rather than to alter them".

Apart from rhetorical reasons, he uses the metaphor "ancient stamp" (*moneta veteris*) to emphasize the authority of the ancient tradition and ancient writers. He does so, in part, to place the responsibility for the veracity of the reported facts not on himself but on "the best received authors" (*scriptoribus receptissimis*) from whom he made his excerpts[23]. It is also worth noting that the term *auctoritas*, here employed in reference to the *receptissimi scriptores*, was used in republican Rome in connection with figures of great political authority, whose opinions and pronouncements carried special weight.

Among his sources for the *Collectanea* Solinus mentions a host of different authors, such as the antiquarian Varro (he names several of his works, including a treatise *quod de litoralibus est* — XI.7); Juba the Numidian king; the annalists Lucius Cincius Alimentus, Quintus Fabius Pictor, Gneius Gellius, and the famous Marcus Portius Cato, Titus Pomponius Atticus, Cornelius Nepos, Marcus Tullius Cicero, Marcus Antonius Gnifo, "the most famous scholar" Lucius Tarruntius. He also quotes from Lutacius, the likely author of a book on the towns of Istria. Solinus' list also includes various foreign, i. e. non-Latin, texts and authors, among them Hanno, the anonymous Punic books and Zoroaster; and a number of Greek authors: Aristotle, Callimachus, Democritus, Xenophon of Lemnos, Apollonides, Sotacus, a certain Demodamas (a general in Seleucus' and Antiochus' armies) and many more. Despite Solinus own admission that he only takes from ancient authors, there are several references in the *Collectanea* to his immediate predecessors and, maybe, even to some contemporaries — the 2nd century historian Granius Licinianus, Bocchus and Tiberius Fabianus.

What strikes one as odd, however, is that Solinus never names his two primary sources — Pomponius Mela and Pliny the Elder (in Theodor Mommsen's view, Pliny's *Natural History* was Solinus' chief source), from whom he quite possibly got his information about earlier authors. In fact, we do not know if Solinus had any first-hand knowledge of them or if he relied entirely on Pomponius and Pliny for his information about the 'ancients'. Be that as it may, in the introduction Solinus asks his benefactor Adventus to judge his work by how it compares to the texts of the 'old masters' and not modern writers.

In the next paragraph he again stresses the reliability of his ancient sources and by extension his own book.

> (1.6) *Ita si qua ex istis secus quam opto in animum tuum venerint, des velim infantiae meae veniam: constantia veritatis penes eos est quos secuti sumus*[24].

Again, adopting the rhetorical pretense of modesty, he blames passages his patron may find objectionable on his supposed ineloquence. At the same time, he once more affirms the reliability of ancient sources, which as a whole made up "the steadfastness of truth".

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[23] Cf. similar passages in Pliny and Aulus Gellius: Plin. *Nat*. *Hist*. XIX.72; XXVIII.112; Gell. IX.4.11; X.12.5.

[24] "(1.6) So, if somehow you understand things otherwise than I wish, please forgive my want of eloquence: the steadfastness of truth is found in the authors followed".

At the end comes the most authentic passage:

> (1.7–8) *Sicut ergo qui corporum formas aemulantur, postpositis quae reliqua sunt, ante omnia effigiant modum capitis, nec prius lineas destinant in membra alia, quam ab ipsa ut ita dixerim figurarum arce auspicium faciant inchoandi, nos quoque a capite orbis, id est ab urbe Roma principium capessemus, quamvis nihil super ea doctissimi auctores reliquerint, quod in novum praeconium possit suscitari, ac supervacuum paene sit relegere tramitem decursum tot annalibus.* (8) *Ne tamen prorsus dissimulata sit, originem eius quanta valemus persequemur fide*[25].

Solinus compares the writer to a painter who works on a piece of canvas[26]; he argues that the most important part of a painted picture is the head, while other body parts are of less consequence. This type of metaphor, when the organic unity of a text is compared to the organic unity of a body, is not uncommon in Greek and Roman literature and likely goes back to Plato[27]. Solinus here plays with different meanings of the word *caput*, which can be both 'head of a body' and 'chapter of a book', but can also have strong political connotations: the city of Rome is often referred to as *caput mundi*[28], a cliché that has been used over and over for propaganda-purposes. Solinus thus reproduces an old rhetorical propaganda tool, and yet his own worldview is markedly similar here to Pliny's. He starts his narrative with the founding of Rome and its establishment as a world-power (I.1–54). He points out that the vast territory occupied by the Roman Empire is itself a sign of Rome's special place and special role in the world-order[29].

It had been usual practice since the so-called annalists — 3rd/2nd century BC Roman historians distinguished by their characteristic dry and matter-of-fact narrative style — to start a history of Rome *ab Urbe condita*. Yet, Solinus says that it is no use going down a road so well-trodden by the annalists, and that he does not intend to blindly imitate their concise prose-style but use 'rhetorical embellishments.' Apart from style, the ethnogeographic substance of Solinus' compilation is also markedly different from that of the annalists (despite the fact that he does indeed start his work "from the founding of the City")[30], since it was not his intention to chronicle the history of Rome year by year as they did.

To sum up, in his introductory epistle Solinus states that 1. (a) His work is a short compilation, (b) its theme is ethnogeography, (c) it touches on a wide variety of

[25] "(1.7) In the same way as those, who endeavor to emulate the parts before they have made a beginning with the head: allow us also to take our start from the head of the world, that is from the city of Rome, although the best authors have left nothing that may be added to the praise thereof, and it is almost superfluous to go by a path which has so often been traversed. (1.8) Yet in order not to remain silent about it, I shall put all my effort into following its origin".

[26] Cf. the commentary of Salmasius to this passage: *Linea in pictura, nihil aliud est quam penicilli ductus* [Salmasius 1689: fol. 4, col. 2 D].

[27] See, e. g., Plato. *Phaedr*. 264 c; *Gorg*. 503e–504 (cf. also Horat. *De arte poet*. 6–9).

[28] Cf. Liv. I.16.7 *caput orbis terrarum*; Luc. II.653–654: *caput mundi*; Verg. *Aen*. VI.851–853; CIL VI.29849a: *Roma caput mundi* etc.

[29] Cf. [Romer 2014: 78].

[30] For more information on the fundamental difference between Solinus' picture of the world and the organization of space in comparison with the works of Pomponius Mela and Pliny the Elder, see [Brodersen 2013: 185–201].

topics. 2. (a) His sources are written works by ancient authors on whose authority he relies and does not intend to question, (b) his aim is to expand his readers' erudition and knowledge of ethnogeography, and not to criticize his sources. 3. (a) Solinus justifies his use of paradoxography by invoking the rhetorical aims of his works, (b) but he places the responsibility for the truthfulness of such stories firmly on his ancient sources. 4. What is different about Solinus' work is that he starts a geographical account (a description of the *oikoumene*) with a passage about Rome's founding and a short history of the Roman Empire.

As for Solinus' rhetorical devices, these include, but are not limited to, the use of synonyms and polysemy; special attention to the sound of words and phrases (he uses diminutives, assonance, rhymes etc.); the use of metaphors and juxtapositions of contrasting words. The latter may be due to an attempt on Solinus' part at a 'competition' (*aemulatio*) with ancient authors and their use of similar metaphorical expressions. Cf., e. g., *aurium clementia* "the clemency of your ears", *damnosa concinnitas* "unfortunate beauty of the style", *bratteas eloquentiae* "gold leaves of eloquence", *vestigia monetae veteris* "the footsteps of ancient authors", lit. "of an ancient stamp", *antiquitatis diligentia* "the diligence of the ancients", *constantia veritatis* "the steadfastness of truth" (cf. [Lakoff, Dzhonsen 1990]).

The idea of a 'world-empire' first emerged and took hold during the Augustan age and soon became a useful ideological instrument and propaganda-tool for legitimizing the Principate and its rule (cf. [Galinski 2017]). In Solinus' time the territory inside the Empire's borders finally became an ordered geographical space with Rome at its center. His compilation covertly seeks to reinforce and consolidate in his readers' mind the already crumbling "Roman myth", which, in turn, served to strengthen the conservative ideology of the Empire.

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Информация об авторе

Екатерина Викторовна Илюшечкина
канд. ист. наук, PhD
доцент, старший научный сотрудник, Лаборатория античной культуры, Школа актуальных гуманитарных исследований, Российская академия народного хозяйства и государственной службы при Президенте РФ
Россия, 119571, Москва, пр-т Вернадского, 82
Тел.: +7 (499) 956-96-47
доцент, кафедра классической филологии, Институт восточных культур и античности, Российский государственный гуманитарный университет
Россия, 125993, Москва, ГСП-3, Миусская площадь, д. 6, корп. 1
Тел.: +7 (495) 250-69-38
✉ *ilyushechkinae@gmail.com*

Information about the author

Ekaterina V. Ilyushechkina
Cand. Sci. (History), PhD
Associate Professor, Senior Researcher, Laboratory of Classical Culture School of Advanced Studies in the Humanities, The Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration
Russia, 119571, Moscow, Prospekt Vernadskogo, 82
Tel.: +7 (499) 956-96-47
Associate Professor, Institute for Oriental and Classical Studies Department of Classical Philology, Russian State University for Humanities
Russia, 125993, Moscow, GSP-3, Miusskaya Sq., 6, Corp. 1
Tel.: +7 (495) 250-69-38
✉ *ilyushechkinae@gmail.com*