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Cassius Dio

Greek Intellectual and Roman Politician

Edited by

Carsten Hjort Lange
Jesper Majbom Madsen



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Fictitious Speeches, Envy, and the Habituation to Authority: Writing the Collapse of the Roman Republic

*Christopher Burden-Strevens**

The surviving speeches of Cassius Dio's *Roman History* have not traditionally been enthusiastically received. The historian visibly imitated the language and style of Demosthenes and Thucydides.¹ Often his orators appear to make little detailed reference to the specific historical context.² Certain of them simply do not 'sound' Roman, and would seem more at home in the Athenian democracy than in the internecine conflicts of the Late Republic.³ And, as Andriy Fomin shows, the content of Dio's speeches was demonstrably informed by the preliminary exercises (*progymnasmata*) of the Imperial schools of rhetoric. The view expressed by Millar in his landmark study, that the speeches are banal expositions of commonplace moral ideas which characterise Dio's work as a whole, has been influential.⁴ As Barbara Saylor Rodgers has recently remarked, these compositions appear to serve the historian's philosophical or moralising proclivities better than they serve history.⁵

These considerations, particularly on Dio's relationship with Classical models and with the *progymnasmata*, are important aspects of the historian's speechwriting. Certainly he wished to demonstrate his culture (*παιδεία*), particularly writing during a self-consciously intellectual period.⁶ But Dio also had

* I am grateful to C. Hjort Lange and J. Majbom Madsen for arranging the conference at which I presented an earlier version of this paper, and for their considerate approach to its revisions in the editorial stage. Further thanks are also due to the reviewers for their invaluable corrections and suggestions. Translations are my own unless otherwise specified and preferred book numbers are those of Carey's *LCL* edition.

1 Vlachos 1905; Saylor Rodgers 2008, 313–318.

2 Millar 1964, 78–83; Gowing 1992, 243–244.

3 Greenhalgh 1980, 88; McKechnie 1981.

4 Millar 1964, 49–55, 78–83.

5 Saylor Rodgers 2008, 297.

6 Brandon Jones contribution to this volume in particular gives a good overview in which Cassius Dio may be considered a member of a 'sophistic' intellectual climate. His attitude to the sophists and to centres of sophistic activity in the Greek East seems to me very often

his own story to tell about how and why the Republic collapsed, and despite the considerable bibliography on the speeches, remarkably little work has been undertaken on how he used speeches to tell that story.⁷ Rhetoric was, fundamentally, a means of persuasion; this much was made clear to ancient authors even in school. Yet among the literature on Dio's speeches, a question that seems to me important has met little attention: the question of how the historian used rhetoric to form a persuasive interpretation of why the Republic collapsed, and why the new Augustan regime was a successful replacement.⁸ As he states himself, Cassius Dio firmly believed that monarchy was the best form of government;⁹ and as such he was particularly interested in explaining how the Principate under which he lived came to be. Accordingly, he made the Late Republic the longest and most detailed section of his work.¹⁰ Although it is not commonly recognised (and occasionally rejected outright),¹¹ Dio did apply a causative framework to that constitutional change; but a significant part of that, I suggest, can be very clearly identified in the speeches.

In this paper I focus on two aspects of that framework. The first is the 'habituation to authority' (*imperii consuetudo*) which the historian viewed as the inevitable consequence of successive office-holding, and especially of military authority in the provinces. This phenomenon, Dio argues through his speech

hostile (Cass. Dio 52.30.3–10; 52.36.3–4; 52.37.9–10; 54.23.8; 72.53.1–2; 78[77].17.2; 78[77].18.4; 78[77].19.1–2) although I do not think that this is inconsistent with Brandon Jones' point. Dio criticised squabbling *poleis*, witchcraft, sophistry, and false philosophers, but not the intellectual milieu in which he lived.

- 7 The analysis of Fechner 1986 is the first serious attempt to unearth the causal, historical, and theoretical framework contained within Dio's speeches by considering them in relation to the narrative that surrounds them. However, while Fechner examined these compositions innovatively to find that framework, he did not set out how Dio used his speeches to explain the causal effect it exerted upon historical events. For this thesis, see Burden-Strevens 2015a.
- 8 Giua 1983; Reinhold 1988, 12; Reinhold and Swan 1990; and Swan 2004, 13–17 point out the positivity of Dio's presentation of the Augustan Principate.
- 9 Cass. Dio 44.2.1. He presents its counterpart in the Republic (called *δημοκρατία* in his work and in Appian, for which see Aalders 1986, 296–299; Freyburger-Galland, 1997, 116–123) as untenable, at least in the first century BCE. But as Kemezis 2014, 129 has recently observed, by the historian's time monarchy had 'long ceased to be something one was for or against'.
- 10 Swan 1997, 2533 shows that the number of years per book increases significantly after Augustus' rule; his account of the Late Republic was far more detailed and less compressed.
- 11 Pace Millar 1964, 46, 77, 115, who writes that Cassius Dio had no general historical views whatsoever, was not profound or original in his approach, and did not have an overarching or consistent interpretation of the causes for the decline of the Republic. Millar's remains the most influential study of Dio.

of Q. Lutatius Catulus, engendered monarchical ambitions in all the major military figures of the Late Republic, whose repeated positions of authority made them addicted to power. The second is the proliferation of envy (*φθόνος*) as a motivating factor in the hostile actions of the senatorial elite. The historian suggests through a patchwork of speeches that this factor was no mere commonplace, but was deeply embedded in his historical perspective on Late Republican aristocratic discord. Importantly, Dio used the Agrippa-Maecenas debate of Book 52 to reflect upon both of these issues, and to suggest his own interpretation of the measures necessary in the new regime to counter them. My focus throughout will not be on the content of the speeches *per se*, but on how this content is consonant with Dio's authorial comments elsewhere; on how the speeches relate to one another in their argumentation; and on how both elements, speech and narrative, were arranged in a particular order to build a persuasive argument about the drivers of constitutional change over many books, which, growing cumulatively more convincing, culminates with the Augustan Principate.

Imperii Consuetudo

I begin with *imperii consuetudo*. The phrase first appears a century before Dio, in Suetonius' biography of Julius Caesar. "Some", he writes, "think that Caesar was overcome by his habituation to his own authority (*captum imperii consuetudine*) and that, when he had weighed up his own strength and that of his enemies, he embraced the opportunity to seize power".¹² Perhaps this was obvious to Suetonius. By the time of the Civil War, Caesar had been in possession of *imperium* for a period of thirteen years: praetor, governor of Lusitania, consul, and then proconsul in Gaul for eight years. Commanding had simply become his habit (*consuetudo*), and he was loath to give it up.¹³ As Eckstein argues, the experience of governing a province for years at a time, with absolute authority and far from senatorial oversight, inevitably caused the expansion of Caesar's ambitions in particular. He had become addicted to power, and this was directly caused by the way that the Republic organised its empire, with frequent over-reliance upon individual commanders.¹⁴

In Dio's view, Caesar was not the exception in the Late Republic, but the rule. For him, the problem of *imperii consuetudo* originated long before

¹² Suet. *Iul.* 30.5.

¹³ App. *B Civ.* 2.28 makes a similar suggestion.

¹⁴ Eckstein 2004, esp. 285. See also Crawford 2008, 631–643.

the Civil War of 49–45 BCE.¹⁵ It was a key factor in the downfall of the Republic. But it is in three speeches, and not solely in narrative, that Dio most clearly elucidates that argument.

To begin with the first, in the oration of Q. Lutatius Catulus (36.31–36) the historian sets out his interpretation of the causes of *imperii consuetudo* and explores its ramifications for the Republic. This speech, placed within Dio's account of the year 67 BCE, is framed as a vehement rejection of the controversial *lex Gabinia*, proposed by the tribune A. Gabinus to rectify the issue of Mediterranean piracy. The pirate problem had grown to extraordinary dimensions, and in consequence called for an extraordinary solution: a grant of proconsular *imperium* for a period of three years over the entire Mediterranean and fifty miles into the littoral, with a vast army and fleet at the chosen commander's disposal.¹⁶ In Dio's account of this episode, both Pompeius and Gabinus are first made to give short speeches in the *contio* – the former disingenuously pretending to reject the command, the latter exhorting the people to ratify it – before the set-piece of Catulus, longer than the first two speeches combined.

Amongst this trio, Dio brings Catulus' to the fore not only by its length, but its credibility. Shortly before Pompeius and Gabinus are made to speak, Dio underlines in the narrative that both were motivated purely by self-interest.¹⁷ This authoritative preface directs our negative reading of these disingenuous speeches. In the prefatory remarks prior to the speech of Catulus, however, the orator is described favourably as “one who always spoke and acted for the people's advantage”, and Catulus correspondingly begins in the *proemium* by underlining his devotion to the state.¹⁸ In this way we are actively directed to read what follows as a trustworthy piece of analysis. This method of furnishing the reader with a guiding preface to a speech is common in Dio's technique.¹⁹

15 Of course Dio does not use this Latin term, nor finds a simple Greek expression to denote “habituation to authority”; but his Greek expressions such as “ruling successively” (κατὰ τὸ ἐξῆς ἀρχάς) and “for many years in succession” (τοσοῦτοις ἐφεξῆς ἔτεσι) capture the sense of the historical problem.

16 Ferrary 2007 gives an overview of the terms of the law and our sources. For the nature of Pompeius' *imperium* in 67 BCE, see Jameson 1970. On Pompeius' military career in general and his use of deception before the people to further this, as in Dio, see Vervaeet 2009, 2010; van der Blom 2011.

17 Cass. Dio 36.23.4–5; 36.24.5–6.

18 Cass. Dio 36.30.5–31.1. See also the favourable necrology of Catulus at 37.46.3.

19 Cass. Dio 38.35.1–3 (Caesar at Vesontio); 41.26.1–2 (Caesar at Placentia); 41.15.1–2 (Caesar in the Senate); 53.2.6–7 (Augustus in the Senate). In each case, our reading of the speech, generally negative, is directly informed by Dio's comments.

But it is especially important in this case. Dio is not merely acknowledging the encomiastic tradition of writing Catulus as the ideal Republican statesman.²⁰ Here, he ensures that the argument about *imperii consuetudo* which his speaker will raise cannot be doubted on the basis of character. This is particularly important in that Catulus' speech is the first elaboration of this problem. An unconvincing exposition here would render Dio's comments on *imperii consuetudo* unpersuasive later.

Having laid this foundation, Dio's Catulus moves on from the *proemium* to the first of three argumentative sections. The first maintains that the *lex Gabinia* is forbidden by law (36.31.3–32.3). The second, that the extraordinary new powers enshrined in it are unnecessary as long as other *imperium*-holders exist (36.33.1–34.4). And the third, that the proposed command would be better exercised by a number of generals directly answerable to the people (36.35.1–36.4). Although the title of each of these headings is debatable, this is cosmetic.²¹ All three sections have at their heart the fundamental question of *imperii consuetudo* in Dio's history: the effect of prolonged power upon the individual and upon the *res publica*. The opening to Catulus' first section is worth quoting in full:

ἐγὼ τοίνυν πρῶτων μὲν καὶ μάλιστα φημι δεῖν μηδενὶ ἐνὶ ἀνδρὶ τοσαύτας κατὰ τὸ ἐξῆς ἀρχὰς ἐπιτρέπειν. τοῦτο γὰρ καὶ ἐν τοῖς νόμοις ἀπηγόρευται καὶ πείρα σφαλερώτατον ὄν πεφώραται. οὔτε γὰρ τὸν Μάριον ἄλλο τι ὡς εἶπεῖν τοιοῦτον ἐποίησεν ἢ ὅτι τοσοῦτους τε ἐν ὀλιγίστῳ χρόνῳ πολέμους ἐνεχειρίσθη καὶ ὕπατος ἐξάκις ἐν βραχυτάτῳ ἐγένετο, οὔτε τὸν Σύλλαν ἢ ὅτι τοσοῦτοις ἐφεξῆς ἔτεσι τὴν ἀρχὴν τῶν στρατοπέδων ἔσχε καὶ μετὰ τοῦτο δικτάτωρ, εἶθ' ὕπατος ἀπεδείχθη. οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν ἐν τῇ τῶν ἀνθρώπων φύσει ψυχὴν, μὴ ὅτι νέαν ἀλλὰ καὶ πρεσβυτέραν, ἐν ἐξουσίαις ἐπὶ πολὺν χρόνον ἐνδιατρίψασαν τοῖς πατρίοις ἔθεσιν ἐθέλειν ἐμμένειν.

First and *most importantly*, I say that we should never entrust so many commands to a single man, one after another. For this is not only forbidden by law, but has been found to be *very dangerous in our experience*. Nothing else made Marius 'what he was', so to speak, except being entrusted with so many wars in the shortest space of time and being made consul six times

20 Amply represented at: Cic. *Brut.* 133, 222; *Phil.* 2.12; *Leg. Man.* 51; *Red. sen.* 9; *Sest.* 122; Vell. Pat. 2.31–32; Plut. *Pomp.* 16.1, 17.3; possibly Sall. *Hist.* 5 frg. 23, though it is not clear whether the fragment actually refers to Catulus as Gelzer 1943, 180 suggests.

21 Jameson 1970, 546 and Fechner 1986, 45–46 both define these three sections slightly differently.

in the briefest period. Nor Sulla, except that he commanded our armies for *so many years in succession* and after this was made dictator, then consul. For it is not in human nature, not only in the youthful spirit but the elder too, to wish to abide by the customs of our ancestors *when one has been in power for a long time.*²²

According to Dio's speaker, the lust for power that led Marius and Sulla to seize control could be explained as the direct result of Rome's over-reliance upon their skills. Historically, C. Marius owed his six consulships in the period 107–101 BCE to the threat of Jugurtha in Numidia and a possible Cimbrian invasion. L. Cornelius Sulla took continual charge of the First Mithridatic War between 87–83 BCE before serving as dictator and then consul in the two following years, as Dio's Catulus outlines here.²³ The fact that the *lex Villia* effectively forbade successive office-holding (which the historian may be hinting at in this passage) did not prevent this. Whether this is the first point at which the historian explicitly states that Marius' and Sulla's protracted periods of authority made them seek absolute power is unclear, as his narrative of their careers is extremely fragmentary. Is this explanation of the cause of Marian and Sullan tyranny merely a representation of what the historian believed to be the standard or commonplace views of a Republican *optimas* objecting to unconstitutional powers?²⁴ Or, is Dio using his speaker to articulate his own historical interpretation about the destructive role of *imperii consuetudo* in the Late Republic?

Earlier fragments on Sulla suggest the latter. In the aftermath of the battle of the Colline Gate, Dio describes the shift in Sulla's character following his victory over the Marians. Although he had once been considered the "foremost in humanity and piety", Sulla was transformed by his victory. It seemed as if he had left behind his former self, in Dio's own words, outside the city walls, and proceeded to outdo Cinna and Marius in brutality.²⁵ Prior to this time he had relied upon good men; "but when he grew closer to his desire of absolute conquest, he considered their advice of no worth, and placed his trust instead in the basest". Although Dio concedes that his longing for power may have lay dormant from the beginning, his interpretation in these passages is clear:

²² Cass. Dio 36.31.3–4.

²³ Although the precise date of Sulla's resignation of the dictatorship is debatable, see Hinard, 1999 for a recent analysis with accompanying bibliography. Hinard suggests an early date of resignation, within the permitted six-month term.

²⁴ Leach 1978, 68.

²⁵ Cass. Dio frg. 109.1–3.

it was closeness to power, Sulla's experience of absolute conquest (τοῦ παντελῶς κρατήσῃν), that corrupted his character and made him institute a tyranny over the Republic.²⁶

Dio plays out a similar argument in his narrative of Caesar's third consecutive term as dictator and consul in 46 BCE, though in more prosaic language. Caesar's reforms to the provincial administration, the historian states, were informed by the experience of his own career:

ὅτι τε αὐτὸς πολλοῖς τῶν Γαλατῶν ἐφεξῆς ἔτεσιν ἄρξας ἕς τε τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ τῆς δυναστείας μᾶλλον προήχθη καὶ ἕς τὴν παρασκευὴν τῆς ἰσχύος ἐπηυξήθη, κατέκλεισε νόμῳ τοὺς μὲν ἐστρατηγηκότας ἐπ' ἐνιαυτὸν τοὺς δὲ ὑπατευκότας ἐπὶ δύο ἔτη κατὰ τὸ ἐξῆς ἄρχειν, καὶ μηδενὶ τὸ παράπαν ἐπὶ πλεῖον ἡγεμονίαν τινὰ ἔχειν ἐξεῖναι.

*Because he himself had ruled the Gauls for many years in succession and as a result of this had been led to desire absolute power and to increase his military might, he limited by law the term of propraetors to one year and proconsuls to two consecutive years, ruling that absolutely no one be permitted to hold any command for a longer time than this.*²⁷

Two accounts of this law survive which predate Dio: Cicero's *First Philippic* and Suetonius *Life of Julius Caesar*.²⁸ Mention of the dictator's previous career is absent in these. Although it is likely that the historian read both,²⁹ Dio is our only ancient author who argues that Caesar's own experience of ruling Gaul precipitated his reassertion in 46 BCE that commanders ought not to wield power over extended periods. In Dio's view, continual military authority had habituated Caesar to his own power and led him to desire monarchy. He therefore moved to prevent anyone following in his footsteps. Catulus' reflection on the careers of Marius and Sulla therefore looks forward as well as back, crystallising the historical problem of *imperii consuetudo* into a single persuasive

26 Cass. Dio frg. 108.1.

27 Cass. Dio 43.25.3.

28 Cic. *Phil.* 1.9; Suet. *Iul.* 42.1–3.

29 Dio's use of the *Philippics* is commonly attested in older scholarship, for which see Fischer 1870; Haupt 1884, 688–690; Gabba 1957; Millar 1964, 53–54. For a more detailed rhetorical analysis of the historian's use of Cicero, see Burden-Strevens (2015a) 47–72, with Burden-Strevens (forthcoming 2017a) for comments also on his re-elaboration of Cicero's letters. On the complexities of Dio's relationship with Suetonius, see Millar 1964, 85–87, 105; Manuwald 1979, 260–268; Rich 1989; Swan 1987; Swan 1997.

moment which applies not only to Caesar as Suetonius wrote, but to earlier generals too.

Dio's Catulus opens the second section of his speech by reiterating that his first argument, that power ought not to be concentrated repeatedly in one man's hands, is the most important of all.³⁰ But this next section asserts that the unconstitutional powers of the *lex Gabinia* were in any case not required, as the usual system of propraetors and proconsuls functioned perfectly well. "For why bother to elect the annual magistrates at all", Catulus asks, "if you are not going to make use of them for such tasks? Surely not just so they can go about in purple-bordered togas?"³¹ It is possible that Dio imitates Demosthenes in this thought,³² although it is revealing, in the context of Catulus' rejection of Pompeius' power, that the purple toga is particularly relevant to Pompeius: Cicero in a letter to Atticus quips that "our good pal Pompeius is protecting that little purple toga of his (*togulam illam pictam*) with his silence".³³

More of interest to the problem of *imperii consuetudo* is the point that the speaker raises in this section about the dictatorship. He states that, if the pirate problem required far-reaching powers, a dictator could be appointed. Dio makes this argument deliberately illogical: such a person, Catulus observes, would have to fight the pirates from Italy, as the law required that *dictatores* remain there.³⁴ The historical message made implicit in this by Dio is that the supreme emergency power of the Republic was unable to respond to the needs of the newly-enlarged empire, thereby necessitating the monarchy. Again, this laboured focus upon the dictatorship returns to the destructive impact of *imperii consuetudo*:

πῶς δ' ἂν ὀρθῶς ἔχοι καινὴν ἡγεμονίαν, καὶ αὐτήν ἐς ἔτη τρία καὶ ἐπὶ πᾶσιν ὡς εἰπεῖν καὶ τοῖς ἐν τῇ Ἰταλίᾳ καὶ τοῖς ἔξω πράγμασιν, ἀποδειχθῆναι; ὅσα γὰρ ἐκ τοῦ τοιοῦτου δεινὰ ταῖς πόλεσι συμβαίνει, καὶ ὅσοι διὰ τὰς παρανόμους φιλαρχίας τὸν τε δῆμον ἡμῶν πολλάκις ἐτάραξαν καὶ αὐτοὶ αὐτοὺς μυρία κακὰ εἰργάσαντο, πάντες ὁμοίως ἐπίστασθε.

30 Cass. Dio 36.33.1.

31 Cass. Dio 36.33.2.

32 Saylor Rodgers 2008, 315 places this passage alongside Dem. 4.26, although there is little similarity between the two beside the fact that both argue that officials ought to be allowed to do their jobs, and verbal parallels are very few.

33 Cic. *Att.* 1.18.6.

34 Cass. Dio 36.34.2.

How can it be right that a new command be created, and that for three years and over all affairs within Italy, without Italy, and, in a word, over everything? For I think that you all know how many *disasters come to states from this practice*, and how many men *have often disturbed our people* and wrought incalculable harm upon themselves *because of their lust for extra-legal powers*.³⁵

By this point Dio's readers have seen for themselves the validity of this statement. Though fragmentary, the earlier narrative of Marius and Sulla's control over Rome is discernibly savage. Here again Catulus lights upon the problem not only of great authority, but of great authority over a protracted period of time, and the deleterious consequences of "this practice" (ἐκ τοῦ τοιούτου). Allowing ambitious commanders to become habituated to the experience of wielding power had, and would again, upset the harmony of the state. The existing yearly magistrates should be maintained, and no single person should have too much power, especially military power. Dio confirms later in his narrative of events following Caesar's infamous "funeral" in the Forum that this argument of Catulus is his own. The historian simply lists the events here, except for one: the *lex Antonia*, M. Antonius' law abolishing the dictatorship. Dio viewed this as especially misguided: "for they passed this law for posterity, thinking that the disgrace of men's actions lay in their titles; but in fact, those actions arise from their possession of armed forces (ἐκ τῶν ὀπλῶν)".³⁶ In the context of the *lex Antonia* this is a reflection upon Caesar in particular. But Catulus speech makes clear that to Dio, Caesar was merely a further iteration of a problem which went further back, to Marius and Sulla: of individual commanders holding military power for long periods.

The third section underscores this argument about *imperii consuetudo* a final time. But it is also used by Dio to set a chain-reaction into motion which, in the historian's view, culminated two decades after the *lex Gabinia* with the defeat of Pompeius at Pharsalus and the inception of Caesar's monarchy.³⁷ Marianne Coudry's contribution to this volume rightly explores Dio's presentation of the *lex Gabinia* in institutional terms as a turning point in the Republican constitution. But the historian also judged the consequences of the law of 67 BCE in

35 Cass. Dio 36.34.3–4.

36 Cass. Dio 44.51.3.

37 I use the loaded term "monarchy" as a reflection of what Cass. Dio himself calls Caesar's rule at 44.2, but see Carson (1957) and Rawson (1975) for other views on Caesar's position in the few years leading up to 44 BCE.

strongly moral terms – ones which had significant historical consequences, as his Catulus predicts.

τίς γάρ οὐκ οἶδεν ὅτι οὐτ' ἄλλως καλῶς ἔχει οὔτε συμφέρει ἐνί τινι τὰ πράγματα προστάσσεσθαι καὶ ἓνα τινὰ πάντων τῶν ὑπαρχόντων ἡμῖν ἀγαθῶν κύριον γίγνεσθαι, κἂν τὰ μάλιστα ἀριστός τις ᾖ; αἶ τε γὰρ μεγάλαι τιμαὶ καὶ αἱ ὑπέρογκοι ἐξουσίαι καὶ τοὺς τοιούτους ἐπαίρουσι καὶ διαφθείρουσιν.

Who does not know that it is neither remotely appropriate nor advantageous to entrust all our business to one man, or for any one man to be master of all our possessions, even if he is the most excellent? *Great honours and excessive powers exalt, and then destroy, even such excellent men.*³⁸

As I outlined earlier, the reader has already observed the truth of this in the now fragmentary accounts of Marius and Sulla. In Dio's assessment, the character of Sulla in particular was exalted by his great and continual power, and then destroyed by that same agency. Dio's argument in this passage is that granting Pompeius yet another position of great authority, enshrined in the *lex Gabinia*, would make him as habituated to his own power as his predecessors, exalting and ultimately destroying him. The Republic would again suffer as a result.

This is precisely what the later consequences of Pompeius' *imperii consuetudo* turn out to be. In his prefatory comments before the narrative of the battle of Pharsalus, Dio outlines that both Pompeius and Caesar were ambitious for absolute power.³⁹ His reflection on their respective careers at this point is interesting, and I think relevant. He envisages the pair enumerating their former achievements, Pompeius thinking of Africa, Sertorius, Mithridates, and his pirate command, and Caesar of Gaul, Spain, the crossing of the Rhine, and the expedition to Britain. "And thinking, indeed, that all those achievements were at stake, and each being eager to appropriate the other's glory, they were most excited".⁴⁰ The pair were thus incited to battle, and indeed to the civil war, by their long and glorious careers. Caesar, Dio states, had no intention of becoming a private citizen again after "commanding for such a long time" (ἐκ χρόνιου ἡγεμονίας);⁴¹ but Pompeius, too, had been similarly corrupted by his *imperii consuetudo*. Too corrupted, in fact, even to win

38 Cass. Dio 36.35.1.

39 Cass. Dio 41.53.2.

40 Cass. Dio 41.56.2–3.

41 Cass. Dio 40.60.1.

at Pharsalus. Dio's interpretation of the battle makes clear that Pompeius lost not because of a tactical error, but because of his complacency: in view of his career, he expected an easy conquest and took victory for granted.⁴² The *lex Gabinia*, the historian argues through Catulus, was instrumental in Pompeius' moral decline and failure to save the Republic at Pharsalus – though we are not supposed to believe he was even trying. Dio places Pompeius in a continuum of ambitious generals whose lengthy tenure of military authority corrupted and destroyed both them and the *res publica*.

One view accepts that the oration of Catulus appears to elucidate the historical situation more effectively than Dio's other speeches.⁴³ I think that we can go further than this. The composition seems to me a careful exploration of a fundamental problem in the organisation of military power under the Late Republic as Dio perceived it. Dio achieves this, on the one hand, by simply having his speaker state views which are his own: for example, on the role of successive and lengthy periods of authority in the degeneration of Marius and Sulla. On the other hand, I posit that the historian expects his readers to recall the speech of Catulus at later points in the narrative, in for example his own comments on Caesar's motivation in limiting the tenure of pro-magistracies, or on the *lex Antonia*. Catulus' recurring argument on the destructive role of *imperii consuetudo* in the Late Republic functions, on the one hand, as a standalone set-piece on the dangers of prolonged personal power. But within the broader narrative context, it is also clear that the concerns voiced by Dio's Catulus apply to all the major military actors of this period. The speech of Catulus, fictitious though it may be,⁴⁴ is the author's method of exploring the historical problem of *imperii consuetudo* and of persuading his readers of the validity of his interpretation.

How, then, to prevent *imperii consuetudo* among the commanders of the regime that followed the Republic? Manuwald's analysis of Dio's treatment of Octavian-Augustus finds the lack of positive or negative extremes rather bland, and his necrology of the first *princeps* a sober, albeit generally positive,

42 Cass. Dio 42.1.1–2.1.

43 Millar 1961, 15 n. 46.

44 Although the speech of Catulus is clearly Dio's own composition, it is also evident that he drew a number of key arguments from the *De Imperio* of Cicero, as Van Ooteghem 1954, 170 n. 1; Saylor Rodgers 2008, 308–313; and Kemezis 2014, 113 n. 53 have briefly noted. It is not clear, in fact, whether Catulus actually spoke in 67 BCE as Vell. Pat. 2.32.1–3, Val. Max. 8.15.9, Plut. *Pomp.* 25.5–6, and Cass. Dio suggest. However, it is clear that the evidence of Cicero alone is not sufficient to assert with Saylor Rodgers 2008 that Catulus did not speak in 67 BCE; for the detail, see Burden-Strevens (2015a) 47–49.

summary.⁴⁵ Perhaps so, but it is hardly possible to escape the idea that the historian treated the Augustan Principate as an enlightened example of effective monarchy,⁴⁶ especially in contradistinction to the turpitude of the δημοκρατία which immediately preceded it. But even that change, certainly for the better in the historian's assessment, could not in itself directly address all the flaws of the *res publica*.

Dio's hortatory speeches of Agrippa and Maecenas suggest that in his interpretation the key lay in Augustus' reforms to the provincial administration. The Agrippa-Maecenas debate is framed as a *controversia*: after being called by Augustus to deliberate with him on the future of the constitution, Agrippa argues for the restitution of the Republic, and Maecenas for the return of the monarchy. The two speeches seem to be the historian's own fabrication; Dio may have drawn inspiration for the role at least of Agrippa from a literary tradition which depicted him arguing for the restoration of the republic.⁴⁷ Even so, Dio again uses these speeches to persuade the reader of the gravity of the problem of *imperii consuetudo* in the Late Republic, and posits effective solutions in the speech of Maecenas.

First Dio's Agrippa in his rejection of monarchy outlines the key issue that the absolute ruler would have to face: men who are naturally proud detest the rule of another on principle.⁴⁸ This would be problematic: "for if the monarch allows these to grow in strength, he cannot live in safety; but if he tries to curtail them, he cannot do so justly. What will you do with them, then?"⁴⁹ Worse still, such men would have to be sent out to the provinces, far from the monarch's oversight. Augustus, Dio argues through his speaker, could not manage the empire alone:

καὶ γὰρ εἰ αὐτὸς μόνος πρὸς τε τὸ τὰ πολιτικά καὶ πρὸς τὸ τὰ πολεμικά καλῶς καὶ κατὰ καιρὸν πράττειν ἐξήρκει, καὶ μηδενὸς συνεργοῦ πρὸς μηδὲν αὐτῶν

45 Manuwald 1979, 273–276.

46 As Millar 1964, 100–105; Manuwald 1979, 273–284; Giua 1983, 441–450, 445–456 discuss, Dio's presentation of Augustus is not uniform. In particular, as Reinhold 1988, 13 spells out, Dio seems to have endorsed Augustus as an emperor, but not approved of his earlier incarnation, Octavian, as a Late Republican dynast. In this connection, Rich 1989, 96–97 states that it is a mistake to view the historian's presentation of Octavian as particularly hostile in any case, as the Senate and tyrannicides were the ones to blame in Dio's view. Rich furthermore concludes at 101–102 that to Dio, Augustus was "a model emperor both at home and abroad".

47 Millar 1964, 105, Reinhold 1988, 166–167; Rich 1989, 98–99.

48 Cass. Dio 52.8.1.

49 Cass. Dio 52.8.1.

ἔχρηζες, ἕτερος ἂν ἦν λόγος: νῦν δὲ πᾶσά σε ἀνάγκη συναγωνιστάς πολλούς, ἅτε τοσαύτης οἰκουμένης ἄρχοντα, ἔχειν, καὶ προσήκει που πάντας αὐτοὺς καὶ ἀνδρείους καὶ φρονίμους εἶναι. οὐκοῦν ἂν μὲν τοιοῦτοις τισὶ τὰ τε στρατεύματα καὶ τὰς ἀρχὰς ἐγχειρίζεις, κίνδυνος ἔσται καὶ σοὶ καὶ τῇ πολιτείᾳ καταλυθῆναι.

For if you alone were enough to respond properly both to political and military circumstances and didn't need assistants to help in any of them, then that'd be a different story. But as it is, you will need to have many helpers in governing so great an empire, and those must all of course be brave and spirited. And so, if you entrust armies and offices to such men as these, *both you and your government will be in danger of overthrow*.⁵⁰

Of course this applies to the Late Republic more than any other period in Dio's narrative. The reader cannot fail to think of Marius, Sulla, Pompeius, and Caesar as examples of generals in the empire who attempted to overthrow the government. Indeed, the speaker later uses these precise *exempla*.⁵¹ Agrippa's argument on the relative danger of monarchy compared to Republicanism is deliberately illogical on the historian's part, but not because the speech acts as a cosmetic prelude to the main feature of Maecenas.⁵² Rather, Dio suggests through Agrippa that *imperii consuetudo* would always be an issue when the strong are given military authority far from the city of Rome, regardless of the constitution. It certainly had been under the Republic, which Dio's Agrippa idealises into unpersuasive fantasy.

The historian interpreted the solution to the problem through his Maecenas. The speech has traditionally been examined as a political pamphlet on Dio's part, an essay on effective monarchy third century CE.⁵³ This was surely one aspect; but it additionally serves an explanatory purpose. Augustus, the speaker advises, should neutralise the fractious elements in the senatorial class by simply hand-picking them himself. He advises firstly that Augustus cleanse the Senate of unsavoury figures and install loyal aristocrats in their place: "for in this way, you will have many assistants and secure the loyalty of the leading provincials; and the provinces, having no reputable leaders, will

50 Cass. Dio 52.8.3–4.

51 Cass. Dio 52.13.2–4.

52 For this point see Gabba 1955, 316; McKechnie 1981, 150.

53 Hammond 1932; Gabba 1955, 320–322; Bleicken 1962; Reinhold 1988, 182–183; Dorandi 1985. Kuhlmann 2013, 110–112 has also recently returned to the very familiar topic of the speech's anachronisms.

not cause political uprisings”.⁵⁴ Secondly, Augustus should appoint magistrates and governors himself. This, Maecenas argues, would prevent “the same things happening all over again” (ἵνα μὴ τὰ αὐτὰ αὖθις γένηται) and give ambitious commanders neither reason nor opportunity to again march on Rome.⁵⁵ Finally – and crucially – Maecenas insists on a long hiatus between a magistrate’s tenure in the city and his position of command abroad. Pro-magistrates should not go out immediately after their urban office, but should wait: “for after being private citizens for a time, they will be milder, and, not having been placed in command of legions alongside the prestige of their titles, they will not rebel”.⁵⁶ Maecenas’ recommendations of Book 52 are framed as a response to the Late Republican problem of individual commanders growing habituated to their own authority by long periods in power.

This is exactly the interpretation that the historian applies to Augustus’ reforms to the provincial administration in 27 BCE in Book 53. Dio writes that the new *princeps* feigned a reluctant acceptance of the absolute power offered to him by the Senate,⁵⁷ and, wishing to appear “democratic” (δημοτικός), declared that he would not govern all the provinces himself. Instead, he made some senatorial, and others imperial, entrusting to the Senate the weaker provinces, “on the pretext that they were safer and peaceful and not at war”, but to himself the stronger provinces. Dio’s analysis is incisive: “he said that he was taking this course so that the Senate might enjoy the best of the empire without fear while he himself would have all the hardships and dangers. In reality, it was so that under this pretext the Senate would be unarmed and feeble, while he alone would have arms and maintain troops” (αὐτὸς δὲ δὴ μόνος καὶ ὄπλα ἔχει καὶ στρατιώτας τρέφει).⁵⁸ To complete the package, Augustus decreed that the governors of the imperial provinces be selected by the *princeps* himself, while those of the senatorial provinces be chosen at random, by lot – thereby imposing his direct control over the stronger territories.⁵⁹ Against the backdrop of Maecenas’ recommendations, Dio’s interpretation of Augustus’ provincial reforms is significant. The historian implicitly frames these measures as a preventative response to the problem of military authority under the Republic, which the reader has to this point seen played out numerous times.

54 Cass. Dio 52.19.3.

55 Cass. Dio 52.20.3.

56 Cass. Dio 52.20.4.

57 See Rich 2010 and Vervaeke 2010 on Augustan *recusatio imperii*.

58 Cass. Dio 53.12.1–3.

59 Cass. Dio 53.13.2–5. For a discussion of the relationship between the *princeps* and the proconsuls, see Hurler 2006.

So Catulus' *dissuasio* of Pompeius' pirate command and the Agrippa-Maecenas debate seem to form a logical unity, one which book-ends a Late Republican narrative in which *imperii consuetudo* is of fundamental historical importance. An historical analysis is being formed. By reflecting on *imperii consuetudo* as one of the dangers of monarchy, Agrippa is in fact made to reiterate, implicitly, the consequences of this problem in the Republic. The reader has by this point already seen these grave consequences reflected on, and predicted further, in the speech of Catulus. Maecenas, by way of response, verbalises the historian's interpretation of the measures necessary to address that issue. And, finally, Dio's own later account of Augustus' reforms spells out how the new *princeps*, by acting in accordance with Maecenas' recommendations, was able to prevent strong and independently-minded provincial governors from becoming habituated to power. Dio's is a convincing exploration of the problem of *imperii consuetudo* over a span of twenty books, and the speeches played a considerable role in that argument.

Φθόνος

Dio also devotes considerable attention in his speeches to the problem of spiteful envy (*φθόνος*) in the Late Republic.⁶⁰ It is easy to dismiss this focus. On the one hand, the suggestion that successful political figures would incur the jealousy of their competitors was commonplace enough, and this may be the reason that remarkably little research has been undertaken on the prominence of *φθόνος* as a factor of history in Dio's work.⁶¹ On the other, traditions of Late Republican moral decline were naturally canonical in the historiography of this period, and easy enough to replicate. Sallust's portrait of the political culture of the 60s depicts an aristocracy in a state of endemic *invidia* that is only momentarily set aside with the temporary return of *metus hostilis* in Catilina.⁶² Not that Sallust, who by critiquing the turpitude of his contemporaries "inscribed his own condemnation all too well in the pages of his history",⁶³

60 On the spiteful connotations of *φθόνος* as distinct from other signifiers of jealousy (*νέμεσις*), see Kaster 2003.

61 Although see some brief comments in Kemezis 2014, 110–115 and in Marianne Coudry's contribution to this volume.

62 Sall. *Cat.* 23. As both Sallust (*Cat.* 10.3) and Tacitus (*Hist.* 2.38) attribute Late Republican moral decline to the disappearance of *metus hostilis*, the inverse in 63 BCE is not a surprising point to make.

63 Cass. Dio. 43.9.3.

was too sententious to accept the corrupting influence of *invidia* even upon himself, as he admits in his preface.⁶⁴ But the causal ramifications of φθόνος were a significant motivating factor in the decline of the Republic in Dio's view, even in spite of the time-honoured place of envy as an historiographical *topos*.⁶⁵ As the historian again uses his speeches to elucidate his interpretation not only of the role of φθόνος in internecine conflict and its consequences, but also of the alleviation of this problem by the Augustan Principate, it merits consideration here.

I wish to dwell on Catulus and the other speeches surrounding the *lex Gabinia* a moment longer. As we have seen, in Catulus the historian foreshadowed the later consequences of Pompeius' extraordinary position. Like Marius and Sulla before him, the general was corrupted by power, leading not only to his destructive ambitions, but to his complacency and ultimate defeat at Pharsalus. In the same fashion, Catulus' oration against the *lex Gabinia* makes a further prediction: the gravity of the φθόνος that would result from further extraordinary powers. In one fragment of Book 36 attributed to the speech of Catulus, Dio's speaker warns that Pompeius' "monarchy" (μοναρχῆσαι) over all the Romans' possessions "will not be free from envy" (οὔτε ἀνεπίφθονον ἔσται).⁶⁶ Quite simply, further powers would be harmful not only to the *res publica*, but to the holder's safety at the hands of his competitors. In fact Dio's Catulus is merely rounding off a thought that had already been alluded to in the previous two speeches. Pompeius in his disingenuous rejection of power (*recusatio imperii*) declines the honour, on the grounds that "all such positions of power incur envy and hatred" (ἐπίφθονα καὶ μισητὰ).⁶⁷ No man, he argues, could happily live among those who envy him (τίς μὲν γὰρ ἂν εἰς φρονῶν ἡδέως παρ' ἀνθρώποις φθονοῦσιν αὐτῷ ζῶη;).⁶⁸ The speech of Gabinius which follows builds on this theme: Dio's speaker encourages Pompeius not to fear the

64 Sall. *Cat.* 3.5: *Quae tametsi animus aspernabatur insolens malarum artium, tamen inter tanta vitia imbecilla aetas ambitione corrupta tenebatur; ac me, cum ab reliquorum malis moribus dissentirem, nihilo minus honoris cupido eadem, qua ceteros, fama atque invidia vexabat.*

65 And not only in the tradition that Sallust, Livy, and Tacitus represent; Harrison 2003 and Rees, W. 2011, 30–35 have shown the role played by φθόνος in Herodotus and Thucydides respectively.

66 *Anecd. Bekk.* 157, 30.

67 Cass. Dio 35.26.1. On Pompeius' rhetorical strategies in the *contio*, see van der Blom 2011. For Pompeius' *recusatio imperii* in particular, see Wallace-Hadrill 1982, 36; and Vervaeat 2010, who with Rich 2010 views Pompeius as the model for Augustus' later adoption of the tactic.

68 Cass. Dio 35.26.2–3.

envy of others (μηδὲ ὅτι τινὲς φθονοῦσι φοβηθῆς), but to make even more of a success of the pirate command and thereby spite his competitors.⁶⁹

The prediction of Dio's Catulus again proves true. In Book 37, the historian narrates Pompeius' victorious return from Asia Minor in 62 BCE. Landing at Brundisium like Sulla two decades before, Pompeius symbolically disbanded his legions, in order, Dio states, to avoid a repetition of the Sullan precedent.⁷⁰ Although he returned with a host of political settlements for the East,⁷¹ his measures were effectively blocked by his own favoured candidate for the consulship of 60 BCE, Q. Caecilius Metellus Celer. Pompeius could accomplish nothing, and in Dio's assessment the simple reason for this was φθόνος: after declaring that his enemies envied him and that he would communicate this to the people, "he realised that he was not actually powerful, but really possessed only the reputation and the envy for his previous positions" (τὸ μὲν ὄνομα καὶ τὸν φθόνον ἐφ' ὅς ἡδυσνήθη ποτὲ εἶχεν).⁷² Simply put, in the historian's view the *lex Gabinia*, as his Catulus and Pompeius expressed in advance, generated the φθόνος which led to Pompeius' political impotence in 60 BCE. This envy, in fact, had farther-reaching consequences: Dio states explicitly that he entered the First Triumvirate that year to regain the political power he had recently lost,⁷³ and it is hard not to think of the φθόνος of Metellus in this context.

Not that the case of Pompeius is the only example of Dio using his speeches to underline the historical ramifications of φθόνος in the Late Republic. In the wake of Caesar's assassination, Dio inserts a speech into the mouth of Cicero, advocating an amnesty for the tyrannicides and the ratification of the former dictator's acts. Whether the historian drew some content from previous versions of a written Amnesty speech of Cicero is unclear, as none but Dio's exists.⁷⁴ It may be that the historian took only the historical occasion of speech and fabricated the content himself, with some references to Demosthenes, Thucydides, and the Athenian Amnesty of 403 BCE thrown in. Despite this, Dio's speech of Cicero slots neatly into the interpretative framework that the historian applied to the downfall of the Late Republic because of its focus on

69 Cass. Dio 36.29.2.

70 Cass. Dio 37.20.3.

71 See Steel 2013, 148–149 for a synopsis of these arrangements.

72 Cass. Dio 37.50.6.

73 Cass. Dio 37.56.3.

74 Cic. *Phil.* 1.1 and *Att.* 14.10 and 14.14 indicate that Cicero did speak publicly on March 17th 44 BCE in favour of an amnesty. Vell. Pat. 2.58.4 and Plut. *Cic.* 42 merely allude to such a speech and do not provide details, and it is not mentioned in App. *B Civ.* For summaries of the source-material for this speech see Millar 1961, 17–18; Fechner 1986, 58 n. 111.

envy. Cicero encourages the Senate to “relinquish our enmities or jealousies (πρὸς ἀλλήλους ἔχθρας ἢ φιλονεικίας), or whatever you want to name them, and instead return to our former condition of peace, friendship, and concord”.⁷⁵ The idea returns later, where Cicero states that it is φιλονεικία that universally drives men to civil strife, with the important Republican *exempla* of Marius, Sulla, Cinna, Strabo, Pompeius, and Caesar as proof.⁷⁶ The preceding decades of the first century BCE, and indeed decades earlier as the *exemplum* of the Gracchi makes clear,⁷⁷ is reflected upon as an envious contest between individual dynasts.

The vocabulary in this instance is slightly different to the *lex Gabinia* speeches: φιλονεικία, rather than φθόνος, is the undesirable aspect of Republican political culture most to be abandoned. But while reading Cicero’s reflection upon senatorial competition the reader cannot fail to think of the assassination of Caesar which occurred a few chapters before. The cause of this, Dio states moments prior the Amnesty speech, was φθόνος: “because of envy (φθόνῳ) of his advancement and hatred of the honours he had received instead of them, a destructive frenzy struck certain men, and they unjustly killed him”.⁷⁸ Were the point not sufficiently laboured, the historian reflects a chapter later upon the danger of φθόνος, arguing that it is germane to republics (δημοκρατία) in general.⁷⁹ But Dio additionally suggests that the spiteful envy that was fatally attached to Caesar was the deliberate creation of the Senate: they voted him extravagant honours not in order to gratify him, “but in order that he might be the more swiftly destroyed, wishing to make him envied and resented all the sooner” (ἔς τε τὸ ἐπίφθονον καὶ ἐς τὸ νεμνηστὸν).⁸⁰ Dio appears to have made a conscious and deliberate choice in the Amnesty speech to bring forward the theme of φιλονεικία, and predicates this upon an immediately preceding narrative in which φθόνος takes centre-stage as a key motive in dynastic power-struggles.

These comments on the danger of envy in the speeches are consistent with the historian’s interpretation of aristocratic behaviour throughout the Late Republic. There are only eight instances of an historical character acting

75 Cass. Dio 44.24.3.

76 Cass. Dio 44.27.4–28.5.

77 Cass. Dio 44.30.4.

78 Cass. Dio 44.1.1.

79 Cass. Dio 44.2.3.

80 Cass. Dio 44.7.3.

because of their φθόνος in the half-millennium period prior to the Gracchi.⁸¹ This may be influenced by the lacunose state of Dio's Regal- to Mid-Republican narrative; although the fragments suggest that Dio may have conceived of the Mid-Republic as a golden age, at least compared to the decline that followed.⁸² In the century between the Gracchi and the reign of Augustus, however, φθόνος becomes significantly more pronounced, especially as the catalyst for hostile individual action. All told, in the period from the Gracchi to the death of Augustus (Books 25–55) there are 82 instances of the morpheme -φθον-, indicating envy.⁸³ It is telling that eight of these occur in the narrative of Caesar's assassination and funeral.

This focus upon φθόνος as a causal force in history is particular to Dio among our Imperial Greek historians of this period. Causal participles of the verb φθονεῖν, the phrase “because of envy” (ὕπὸ τοῦ φθόνου), and the dative of cause (φθόνῳ) appear frequently, but much less so in Plutarch and Appian, who place far less emphasis on envy as a factor of history. Cassius Dio thus applies a framework of historical causation to the late *res publica* in which the emotive aspect, the jealous begrudging of another's success, plays a central role in aristocratic discord. The historian accordingly made his speeches of the Late Republic consistent with that framework.

Like *imperii consuetudo* the historian viewed this issue as distinctly Late Republican and as the inevitable product of individual power under that constitution. But paradoxically, it was again the absolute power of a single monarch in Augustus which in Dio's view broke the cycle of competition and envy, restoring the elite to relative harmony. The constitutional debate of Agrippa and Maecenas serves, again, as the historian's final reflection on this problem

81 Cass. Dio 5 frg. 19; 11 frg. 43.1–2; 14 frg. 57.20; 17 frg. 57.54; 17 frg. 57.62; 19 frg. 63; 21 frg. 70.9; 22 frg. 74.

82 For a comparison of Dio's presentation of these two periods, see Kemezis 2014, 104–112. As I suggest at Burden-Strevens 2016, 12, there is ample evidence to indicate that the historian in fact broke with idealised traditions of early Rome, and formed a more negative interpretation which is distinctive within Roman historiography; see the contributions of Lange and Lindholmer in Burden-Strevens & Lindholmer (forthcoming, 2017b).

83 Cass. Dio 25.85.3; 26.89.3; 27.91.1; 27.91.1; 29.98.2; 30–35 frg. 109.10; 36.14.3; 36.24.6; 36.26.1; 36.26.2; 36.29.2; 36.43.4; 37.23.4; 37.50.6; 38.11.2; 38.11.4; 38.12.7; 38.21.2; 38.36.4; 38.39.2; 39.25.4; 39.26.1; 39.26.2; 39.37.4; 40.8.1; 40.51.1; 41.28.1; 42.1.3; 42.20.5; 43.12.1; 43.18.3; 44.1.1; 44.2.3; 44.3.1; 44.7.3; 44.29.3; 44.36.5; 44.36.5; 44.39.2; 44.43.1; 45.4.3; 45.8.1; 45.11.4; 46.8.3; 46.17.2; 46.55.2; 47.15.4; 47.33.2; 47.38.3; 48.45.6; 49.7.5; 49.18.7; 49.21.1; 49.23.2; 49.41.6; 51.12.7; 52.2.2; 52.2.2; 52.11.3; 52.15.3; 52.25.4; 52.26.4; 52.30.8; 52.31.4; 52.31.4; 52.33.8; 52.33.9; 52.33.9; 52.40.2; 53.3.1; 53.6.2; 53.8.6; 53.10.3; 53.23.3; 53.29.6; 54.1.5; 54.12.2; 54.29.3; 54.31.1; 55.15.1; 55.18.5; 55.24.9.

in the Late Republic and on the measures necessary to resolve it. In his argument against monarchy and its associated troubles, Dio's Agrippa sets out the problem:

μη θαυμάσης, ὦ Καίσαρ, εἰ μέλλω σε ἀποτρέπειν ἀπὸ τῆς μοναρχίας, καίπερ πολλὰ καὶ ἀγαθὰ ἀπολαύσας ἂν ἀπ' αὐτῆς σοῦ γε αὐτὴν ἔχοντος. εἰ μὲν γὰρ καὶ σοὶ ὠφέλιμος γενήσεσθαι ἔμελλε, καὶ πάνυ ἂν αὐτὴν ἐσπούδασα: ἐπειδὴ δ' οὐδὲν ὅμοιον τοῖς τε αὐταρχοῦσι καὶ τοῖς φίλοις σφῶν παρέχεται, ἀλλ' οἱ μὲν καὶ ἀνεπιφθόνως καὶ ἀκινδύνως πάνθ' ὅσα ἐθέλουσι καρποῦνται, τοῖς δὲ καὶ φθόνοι καὶ κίνδυνοι συμβαίνουσιν, οὐ τὸ ἐμαυτοῦ ἴδιον, ὥσπερ οὐδὲ ἐν τοῖς ἄλλοις, ἀλλὰ τὸ σὸν τό τε κοινὸν προῖδέσθαι ἐδικαίωσα.

O Caesar, do not be surprised if I try to turn you away from monarchy, even if under that system I would acquire many benefits from it – or at least if you held it. For if it were to be in your interest, I would of course desire it very much. But since monarchy does not offer the same benefits to rulers as to their friends, but the friends can reap the fruit of all the benefits they wish *safely and unenvied* and the rulers on the other hand get only the *jealousies and dangers*, I have decided as usual to look not to my own interests, but to yours and the common good.⁸⁴

It may be reading too much into Dio to suggest that Agrippa's focus on φθόνος is especially significant here: it is among the opening lines of the speech. This admonishment against monarchy in fact begins by emphasising a key problem of the Republic in its opening words. But even if we do not accept this significance, the reader knows from all that has come before, and especially from Caesar, that this was no empty warning. Agrippa is here being used to articulate a very real historical problem in Dio's reconstruction: by setting himself up as monarch, Augustus risked following the same course as previous dynasts of the Late Republic invested with great power.

In the historian's assessment, part of the solution to the problem of φθόνος lay in the title that the *princeps* was to adopt, and indeed in the self-presentation of the Augustan regime more generally. In his response to Agrippa's defence of δημοκρατία, Maecenas concludes his list of recommendations for the new constitutional settlement by suggesting, last of all, that Augustus assume the title not of "king", but "*imperator*" (αὐτοκράτωρ), "so that you may reap the fruit of all the reality of kingship, without the envy that comes with the name" (ἀνευ

84 Cass. Dio 52.2.1.

τοῦ τῆς ἐπωνυμίας αὐτῆς ἐπιφθόνου).⁸⁵ Perhaps deliberately, Dio book-ended the Agrippa-Maecenas debate with φθόνος, both opening and closing the *controversia* with an historical problem endemic in his account of the Late Republic. To ensure that the reader is convinced of this argument about φθόνος, Dio also places it in the opening lines to Augustus' *recusatio imperii* in the following book, as one of the speaker's (false) bases for rejecting absolute power.⁸⁶ By reiterating the problem of envy as a cause of violence and civil strife in the speeches of Agrippa, Maecenas, and Augustus, Dio thus recalls not only the destructive influence of φθόνος in the Late Republic, but suggests through Maecenas one of the reasons for the success of the Augustan Principate: the studious avoidance of the appearance of kingship.⁸⁷

Dio is more explicit in this regard later. The Romans, he states, "hated the name of monarchy so much that they called their rulers neither dictators nor kings, nor any other such name". But since monarchy was in any event necessary, they chose the name *imperator*, even for rulers who had not conquered in battle, "in order that the rulers might seem to have their power not from domination, but from the laws". As such, Augustus assumed the title.⁸⁸ However, in 22 BCE an enamoured populace gave the now-abolished title of *dictator* a final attempt, and Dio's interpretation is revealing:

τὴν δὲ δικτατορίαν οὐ προσήκατο, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν ἐσθῆτα προσκατερρήξατο, ἐπειδὴ μηδένα τρόπον ἄλλως σφᾶς ἐπισχεῖν, μήτε διαλεγόμενος μήτε δεόμενος, ἡδυνήθη: τὴν τε γὰρ ἐξουσίαν καὶ τὴν τιμὴν καὶ ὑπὲρ τοὺς δικτάτορας ἔχων, ὀρθῶς τό τε ἐπίφθονον καὶ τὸ μισητὸν τῆς ἐπικλήσεως αὐτῶν ἐφυλάξατο.

Augustus did not accept the dictatorship, and even rent his clothes when he could find no other way to restrain the people, either through speaking to them or begging them. For since he already had power and honour well superior to the dictators anyway, *he rightly staved off the jealousy and the hatred of their title*.⁸⁹

So φθόνος, as the natural result of individual success within a competitive governing elite in Dio's presentation of the Republic, was overcome by a single *princeps*. This *princeps* had, on the one hand, the authority to reform the

85 Cass. Dio 52.40.2.

86 Cass. Dio 53.3.1.

87 On which see Wallace-Hadrill 1982.

88 Cass. Dio 53.17.2–4.

89 Cass. Dio 54.1.4–5. In this Dio captures the self-justifying tone of *RG* 5.

provincial administration and prevent individuals' *imperii consuetudo* from precipitating conflict. On the other hand, his avoidance of the appearance of kingship remedied the problem of φθόνος. The fora in which the Republican elite had attempted to compete – the Senate floor, popular elections and assemblies, and the provinces – were not only brought under monarchical control, as Dio explains in Book 53. They were brought under the control of a monarch who, by avoiding the trappings of kingship which had brought fatal φθόνος to Caesar, avoided φθόνος himself, and secured the transition from Republic to Principate.

This may explain why the moral problem of φθόνος takes a less prominent role in the later account. The morpheme -φθον-, which occurs 82 times in the century from the Gracchi to Augustus' time (Books 25–55), occurs only 39 times in the two hundred years which follow (Books 56–80).⁹⁰ This may be a problem of transmission, as the text becomes less secure from the reign of Tiberius. But more likely, the historian conceived of φθόνος as a distinctly Late Republican issue which, though always inevitable in human nature, was especially pervasive and acute in the power-struggles of the first century BCE. In any case, it is clear that in Dio's interpretation the problem of φθόνος and Augustus' measures to counter it played a significant role in the decline of Dio's *res publica* and the success of the new regime. In his speakers of this period – Pompeius, Gabinius, Catulus, Cicero, Agrippa, Maecenas, and Augustus – the historian found a persuasive means of articulating that problem, and assessing its implications in the process of constitutional change.

Conclusion

Dio's speeches form a thematic unity which makes clear the interpretative skeleton the historian applied to the Late Republic. Of course they served to enhance his own self-presentation as an educated elite who could write in polished Attic and declaim on a set theme. The studies of Andriy Fomin and Brandon Jones in this volume demonstrate that Cassius Dio was very much an author of his time, who frequently deployed his rhetorical education and his familiarity with Classical texts to assert his παιδεία. Most of all in the speeches. But in tandem with this aesthetic aspect, Dio also used these compositions

90 Cass. Dio 56.35.5; 56.35.6; 56.40.1; 56.40.6; 56.41.4; 57.6.1; 57.18.7; 57.21.5; 58.3.2; 58.14.2; 59.17.4; 59.27.4; 60.6.7; 60.23.2; 60.27.3; 60.30.5; 62.14.2; 63.28.5; 64.13.3; 66.10.3; 66.16.3; 66.18.2; 66.21.1; 67.14.3; 68.6.4; 68.15.5; 68.32.5; 69.3.3; 69.4.6; 71.20.2; 75[74].9.3; 75[74].10.3; 75[74].15.3; 76[75].16.3; 77[76].11.5; 78[77].24.2; 79[78].10.3.

to reflect upon key historical problems in the Roman Republic. Envy, and the trend of celebrated commanders growing accustomed to their own power, are repeatedly underlined. This does not seem a coincidence, but rather a conscious and deliberate choice on Dio's part to use his speeches to build a persuasive picture of the historical significance of these issues.

The historian achieved this in a number of ways. Often his method is rather simple: for example, placing concerns about φθόνος in the opening lines to Agrippa's oration and then reiterating these in the closing lines of Maecenas' which follows, effectively framing the debate; or having his Catulus explicitly posit *imperii consuetudo* as the cause for Marius and Sulla's tyranny, using the speaker to express clearly his own view.

At other points his use of speeches within this framework is more complex. Catulus' predictions of the ramifications of the *lex Gabinia* – the degeneration of Pompeius' character through continued authority and the φθόνος the *lex* would bring – are only realised when one looks far beyond the immediate context, to Pompeius' blocked eastern settlement in 60 BCE or the Battle of Pharsalus. Agrippa's defence of δημοκρατία appears another well-constructed case. By making his speaker hold forth on the dangers of envy and *imperii consuetudo* within monarchies, the historian merely states all the more clearly that these problems were distinctly Late Republican, with all the preceding narrative as proof. This deliberately weak argument serves the historian's purpose of underlining the problems of the Republic and the desirability of monarchy. But it also functions in a call-and-response relationship with Maecenas' speech, which underlines the measures necessary to rectify these problems – measures which Dio's later narrative implements. The argumentative purpose of the speeches becomes clearer when they are read not only in relation to the broader narrative, as Marianne Coudry's study here shows, but in relation to each other. They reveal a more coherent and sophisticated explanation of the downfall of the Republic than is generally recognised, and which appears to be Dio's own.

Of course this particular analysis may have been informed by Cassius Dio's own experiences. While it is possible to overstate the historian's consciousness of the looming Crisis of the Third Century,⁹¹ Dio himself lived to see ambitious commanders again struggle for control of the Roman state. He had been made praetor for the following year by the short-lived emperor Pertinax in 193 CE, a year which famously boasted no fewer than five emperors. The transition from Antonine to Severan, "from a kingdom of gold to one of iron and rust",⁹²

91 Rees, W. 2011, 2–5.

92 Cass. Dio 72.36.4. Kemezis 2014, 30–74 provides a clear discussion of this change.

involved bloodshed. Indeed, his historical project as a whole was inspired by a war monograph on Septimius Severus' campaigns.⁹³ In these contexts, it is hard not to imagine that Dio saw similarities between the *imperii consuetudo* of the dynasts of the Late Republic and the generals of his own time who vied for supremacy. But even if this is the case, Dio's evaluation of the causal role of *imperii consuetudo* and φθόνος in the collapse of the Roman Republic merits consideration in its own right, divorced from the Severan context, as an historical interpretation. He may not have been wrong. And how better to persuade the audience, than in a speech?

93 Cass. Dio 73[72].23.1–3.