

# Processes of Cultural Change and Integration in the Roman World

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# ‘Ein völlig romanisierter Mann’? Identity, Identification, and Integration in the *Roman History* of Cassius Dio and in Arrian

Christopher Burden-Strevens

## Introduction

In the early 180s CE Cassius Dio settled in Rome after leaving his native Nicaea in the Roman province of Pontus-Bithynia.<sup>1</sup> His father, Cassius Apronianus, held numerous provincial commands: governor of Dalmatia, proconsul of Lycia-Pamphylia, and *legatus* of Cilicia around 182, for which post his son accompanied him.<sup>2</sup> Dio’s own political career would be no less distinguished than that of his father: his ascent through the *cursus* began with the praetorship for 194 promised by the short-lived emperor Pertinax and culminated with his second consulship with Severus Alexander in 229.<sup>3</sup> A lifetime of familiarity with the political and administrative infrastructure of the Roman state would assist his composition of an 80-book history of Rome from the arrival of Aeneas in Italy to the historian’s withdrawal from public life in 229.

The substantial political aspect of Dio’s life and parentage is important. Dio was not of Roman descent, but Greek, and composed his *Roman History* in self-consciously polished Attic.<sup>4</sup> Within the context of the second and third centuries, it is not at all surprising that a hellenophone provincial should attain the consulship: under Septimius Severus, a third of the known membership of the *ordo senatorius* consisted of Hellenophone eastern provincials, indicating

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1 73.4.2.

2 Cassius Apronianus: *PIR* C 413; governor of Dalmatia: 69.1.3; proconsul: *IGRR* 3.654; *legatus* of Cilicia: 69.1.3 and 73.7.2, with Rich (1990, 1) for the date.

3 Praetorship: 74.12.2; consulship: 80.5.1 and *RMD* (1985) no.133; *PIR* 2 C 492.

4 55.12.4–5.

considerable access to public office.<sup>5</sup> Yet the visible presence of this political aspect within the text, and the historian's 'absolute and unquestioned' identification with the Roman state as a political organism,<sup>6</sup> of which numerous examples will follow, have led to two interesting phenomena in discussions of Dio's identity and his integration into the Roman establishment.

The first is the assertion that Dio is a fully Romanised man, 'a Roman through and through',<sup>7</sup> who is 'aloof' from the Greek world and, bizarrely, the values of Greek culture.<sup>8</sup> The language of 'Romanisation', which has been applied to Dio specifically on numerous occasions,<sup>9</sup> has been problematised in recent years and has been subject to scrutiny, particularly within the provincial context.<sup>10</sup> In the case of Dio, this scrutiny is justified: we meet in him not the question of 'Romanisation' within the provincial context, of the acculturation of a non-native population, but rather that of the questionable 'Romanisation' of a Roman citizen from birth, resident at Rome for almost half a century. My discussion will demonstrate that any interpretation of the historian as a Roman through and through or aloof from the values of Hellenic culture is untenable—though this is not its principal aim.

The second phenomenon is a departure from the 'Romanisation' assertion which moves in a more sympathetic direction. This is the notion that adopting a Roman political identity demanded no abnegation of Greek cultural identity in Dio's case:<sup>11</sup> the historian was politically Roman, but culturally Greek.<sup>12</sup> This view is attractive: concurrent but distinct identities are possible.<sup>13</sup> In the context of the second and third centuries, this hypothesis is symptomatic of historical developments: Greek identity was to become 'more and more a cultural and moral, rather than a political, identity, since the political aspect had been resorbed by the universal breadth of the Roman Imperial state'.<sup>14</sup> The dissolution of *πόλις* ideology and curtailment of Greek political identity, and the consequent 'retreat' of Greeks under the Early Empire into their Hellenic culture, has already been masterfully discussed, and is surely a factor in this case.<sup>15</sup>

5 Hammond (1957, 77).

6 Millar (1964, 190).

7 Palm (1959, 82); also Gabba (1959, 378).

8 Aalders (1986, 283).

9 Palm (1959, 81); Aalders (1986, 283); Reinhold (1986, 220); Gowing (1992, 1, 10 n. 6).

10 Millett (1990); Terrenato (1998); Woolf (1998); Mattingly (2002); Id. (2004); Id. (2006).

11 Millar (1964, 182).

12 Millar (1964, 191); Swain (1996, 402–8).

13 Hölscher (2000); Id. (2008); Wallace-Hadrill (2008, 1–7, 14); Roselaar (2012, 9).

14 Desideri (2002, 233).

15 Bowie (1970); see Ameling (1997, 2475).

My conclusions will support this view. However, this creates a dichotomy that demands attention: Hellenic cultural and Roman political identities are treated as separate and distinct, particularly in Dio's case. In this paper, I argue that this distinction is unsustainable; in the *Roman History*, Greek culture is continually and deliberately moulded and adapted to Roman historical events in a manner that demonstrates that the two identities are complementary. This may alter our understanding of the significance of Hellenic culture, not as a retreat on the part of literary Greeks from the political reality of Empire as has often been remarked,<sup>16</sup> but as a means of *expressing* that reality.

There are other issues at stake here. The location of points within the text where Dio refers to the Romans in the first person plural has been assumed as proof that the historian felt himself 'a Roman through and through'. However, these uses of 'we' have been taken out of context, and I argue from an examination of these contexts that these uses of the first person plural designate a particular 'voice'. This voice, when shared with other Greek historiographers of Rome, indicates a particular process of integration which Dio and others underwent.

In this paper, I shall first consider what is signified by Dio's use of the first person plural (this having been so instrumental in earlier determinations of his identity), before discussing the presence of a 'consular voice' as reflective of the process whereby the historian was integrated. I shall then discuss Hellenic culture itself as a part of this process.

### *Magistratus Romanus*

'Dio is so Romanised that on several occasions he says *we* when speaking of Romans and their Roman ways', an earlier scholar once held.<sup>17</sup> This use of the first person plural has understandably attracted interest: the evidence has been cited, out of context, on a number of occasions in support of the argument that in these cases, it is the Romans—a group to which Dio ostensibly felt himself to belong—that are signified.<sup>18</sup> Yet the particular contexts of these instances of ἡμεῖς reveal that it represents a distinct range of nuances and crafts a particular identity which the historian uses for his own historiographical aims, and which we can use to reflect more broadly upon migrant integration in the political class in this period.

16 Bowie (1970, 17); Anderson (1993, 101); Ameling (1997, 2476).

17 Palm (1959, 81).

18 Aalders (1986, 283); Swain (1996, 403).

In Dio, ἡμεῖς occurs repeatedly in the political sphere of international affairs. Its use in such contexts can be best demonstrated with a few examples. In his narrative of Caesar’s campaign of 56 BCE against the Veneti, Dio notes the contemptuous underestimation of the βάρβαροι of the design of the ships brought by D. Junius Brutus to battle: ‘these boats had been built rather light in the interest of speed, after the manner of our naval construction (τὸν τῆς παρ’ ἡμῖν ναυτιλίας τρόπον) . . . accordingly, the barbarians, who had never had any experience of such a fleet, despised the ships as useless.’<sup>19</sup> A campaign of M. Licinius Crassus—against the Parthians in 53 BCE—admits of a brief excursus on the resolute opposition of this people to Roman rule; Dio notes that even in his time they continued to hold out ‘against us’ (πρὸς ἡμᾶς) in successive Roman incursions.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, Rome’s engagements in this region in the wake of Septimius Severus’ second Parthian campaign in 198 are a source of particular concern for Dio:

Severus declared that he had added a vast territory to the empire and had made it a bulwark of Syria. On the contrary, it is shown by the facts themselves that this conquest has been a source of constant wars and great expense to us (ἡμῖν). For it yields very little and uses up vast sums; and now that we have reached out to peoples who are neighbours of the Medes and the Parthians rather than of ourselves, we are always, one might say, fighting the battles of those peoples (προσεληλυθότες αἰεὶ τρόπον τινὰ ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν μαχόμεθα).<sup>21</sup>

This despair at the contemporary military situation in the Parthian theatre forms even the epilogue to Dio’s *History*: the threat from the aptly-named Persian-imperial revanchist Artaxerxes, whose successes in Mesopotamia in 229 challenged Roman control in the region, had become ‘a source of fear to us’ (φοβερός ἡμῖν ἐγένετο).<sup>22</sup> In a similar way, the narrative of Severus’ successful but costly Caledonian campaign of 208–210 enabled Dio to state that ‘of all this territory we hold (ἔχομεν) a little less than one half’.<sup>23</sup>

In isolation these instances of the first person plural reveal only that Dio identified fully with Rome as a political organism within contexts pertaining to international affairs; in such contexts it is the Empire specifically which is designated in relation to other diplomatic entities. However, the stating of

19 39.41.1–2.

20 40.14.1.

21 75.3.2–3.

22 80.4.1.

23 77.12.5.

this solitary fact does not explain *how* this identification with the Roman state came to be, and such an explanation is lacking.

Turning to the use of ἡμεῖς as demonstrative of Dio's personal involvement in the administrative and political infrastructure of the Empire furnishes answers. Within the contemporary history—his own eyewitness account from Commodus to Severus Alexander which represents Books 72–80<sup>24</sup>—ἡμεῖς often signifies not the Empire as a whole, but the senatorial body. Dio relates 'we senators' (ἡμεῖς μὲν οἱ βουλευταὶ) entering the amphitheatre,<sup>25</sup> under duress, to cheer Commodus in his gladiatorial exploits; an anecdote on one of these occasions has the *imperator* approach 'us senators' (πρὸς ἡμᾶς τοὺς βουλευτάς) brandishing the severed head of an ostrich, to the concealed derision of the *ordo*.<sup>26</sup> Again, Dio later records the anxiety felt by ἡμεῖς μὲν οἱ βουλευταὶ at the ensuing conflict between Septimius Severus and Clodius Albinus for the throne in 197, and the pressure not to appear devoted to either side for fear of reprisal.<sup>27</sup> At other points, the pronoun stands alone, with the noun βουλευταὶ clearly implicit but not stated.<sup>28</sup>

It is in this connection, this laboured identification with the senatorial elite, that the use of the first person plural advanced by some scholars as evidence for Dio as 'a Roman through and through' indicates the process of integration the historian underwent. The *cursus honorum* and army were essential 'contexts for interaction',<sup>29</sup> and recent studies have explored these as avenues to cultural contact and integration.<sup>30</sup> Dio's own experience as a member of this senatorial elite, and particularly as a provincial governor drawn from that elite, has a role to play in the work: it is from the perspective of a Roman governor that we learn about the Empire in the history. When describing Pannonia Superior in his narrative of Caesar's campaign in the region, Dio states confidently that his descriptions are trustworthy given his legateship of the province in 226:<sup>31</sup>

The Pannonians dwell near Dalmatia... they are very high-spirited and bloodthirsty, as men who possess nothing that makes an honourable life worthwhile. This I know not from hearsay or reading only, but

24 Or taken from other eyewitnesses: cf. Moscovich (2004).

25 73.20.1.

26 73.21.1.

27 76.4.2.

28 For example 74.3; 74.12; 74.14; 75.4.6; 78.11.2.

29 Roselaar (2012, 4).

30 Rosenstein (2012); Sacchi (2012).

31 49.36.4.



I have learned it from actual experience as once their governor, for after my command in Africa (ἐν τῇ Ἀφρικῇ) and in Dalmatia (the latter position my father also held for a time) I was appointed to what is known as Pannonia Superior, and hence it is with exact knowledge of all conditions among them that I write.<sup>32</sup>

The insistence on autopsy and its traditional enhancement of narrative authority here needs no elaboration.<sup>33</sup> Rather, it is the perspective of the author in his capacity as a Roman provincial *legatus*, the historiographer in the 'voice' of a Roman governor, which merits discussion. Dio takes pains to locate himself, as a narrator, within the governing elite, and to write from that basis of authority.

The description of the etymology of the word 'Pannonia' which follows this excerpt exemplifies the penchant for viewing the world through Roman eyes in geopolitical contexts, seen earlier in Dio's use of ἡμεῖς. Their name, the historian informs us, is derived from the strips of clothing or *panni* from which their tunics were made.<sup>34</sup> *Pannus* is transliterated into Greek, πάννους, from the Latin.<sup>35</sup> This is a clearly Roman etymology. Dio's dismissal of the Greek habit of naming them *Paeones* as inaccurate and his eager support for the Roman etymology, in addition to his comments on his and his father's experience as governors in Dalmatia and Africa, remind the reader that they are being introduced to the world outside Rome through the eyes of a Roman provincial governor who writes from personal experience, 'with exact knowledge of all their conditions'.<sup>36</sup>

Pannonia Superior returns later. A glance back at the example of the Persian Artaxerxes in 80.4 demonstrates the link between Dio's use of the first person plural in political contexts and his strong self-identification as a member of the Roman governing establishment. This is important. Talking down the threat, the historian writes that the danger lay not in Artaxerxes' might, but in the fact that 'our armies' (τὰ στρατιωτικὰ ἡμῶν) are in such a state that some of the troops are actually joining him: 'they indulge in such wantonness... and the Praetorians complained of me to Ulpian, because I ruled the soldiers in Pannonia with a strong hand (ἐγκρατῶς ἡρξά)'.<sup>37</sup> There is a clear connection

32 49.36.2–4.

33 *q.v.* Schepens (2011).

34 49.36.5–6.

35 49.36.5.

36 49.36.4.

37 For a discussion of this sentence, see Cleve (1988).

here between Dio's identification with the Empire, expressed by ἡμεῖς, and his ability as a provincial *legatus* to pass comment on the issues that concern it. Experience lends authority<sup>38</sup>—and concern as a governor for the well-being of the provincial administration is what makes them 'our' troops. With *imperium*, Dio has been given a vested interest in the security of the Roman state.

In the two Pannonian excerpts, the historian speaks not simply as a Roman, but specifically as a former consul, a provincial governor, and as the son of one. This is Dio's political persona, conveyed in the 'voice' of a Roman magistrate.

When viewed through the lens of his career in Roman administration, we begin to see why it is that 'we' represents the Empire. Dio's reference to his command 'in Africa' (ἐν τῇ Ἀφρικῇ) in his excursus on the character of the Pannonians may appear unusual for a Greek writer: Eunapius wrote of 'Libya (Λιβύη), which the Romans in their native tongue call Africa'.<sup>39</sup> Herodian too, in his description of Scipio's *cognomen*, highlights the terminological distinction: 'they called their commander Africanus (Ἀφρικανόν), having given him this name for those deeds. For this is what the Libyans (Λίβυες) are called in the Roman tongue.'<sup>40</sup> Yet within the context of the excursus on Pannonia Superior, Dio gives reference to the province of Africa which he himself governed in the capacity of a Roman proconsul in 223; it is therefore entirely appropriate for him to write Ἀφρικῇ rather than Λιβύη. Here, we ought not to see Dio as 'fully Romanised' or as simply 'Roman', but rather as a character who, after four decades in Imperial administration, expresses the geopolitical landscape of Empire in the language of Empire where it is demanded by the political, public nature of the subject matter. In this context Dio's consular 'voice' is clearly visible. When considered in connection with his rejection of the Greek appellation *Paeones* for the Pannonians and his endorsement of the Roman etymology *panni*, Dio's preference for the Latin Ἀφρικῇ is cast into higher relief. The historian views the world through politically Roman eyes—but it is specifically his role in governing the Roman world, in this instance as proconsul of Africa, that has caused this to be.

Dio is not alone in his. His use of the first person plural to signify identification with the Empire and his use of Roman geopolitical vocabulary is paralleled by that other Greek consul of Rome in the second century from Dio's native Bithynia, Arrian. When describing Rome's relationship with the Sanni, a western Georgian tribe, Arrian, consul in 129, refers to the Romans as 'we': 'They were tributaries to the Romans long ago, but owing to piracy they do not

38 Plb. 12.25ff.

39 Eunap. *vs* 7.3.8.

40 Herod. 7.5.8.

pay regularly. But now they will have to be more exact, or we will exterminate them (ἢ ἐξελοῦμεν αὐτούς).<sup>41</sup>

There are clear parallels here between the two historians' use of the first person plural. Dio's usage falls into two groups: identification with the Roman governing elite, signified by his use of ἡμεῖς to indicate his place in the *ordo senatorius*; and employment of the first person to identify with the Empire in political contexts, exemplified by his comments on the Veneti, Parthians, and Artaxerxes in contradistinction to 'us'. The context in Arrian here corresponds to this latter category. Again like Dio, Arrian too refers to Ἀφρικὴ rather than Λιβύη in a work attributed to him.<sup>42</sup> The two Greek consuls of Rome talk about the state in the first person and use transliterated Latin geopolitical terminology precisely because they are personally involved in its governance.

The cases of Dio and Arrian in these respects have been described as exceptional for the period, and for the former as an example of his 'Romanisation'.<sup>43</sup> This exceptionality may be true—but this is not because it would have been unusual for Greeks invested with *imperium* to identify with the Empire. The problem is one of transmission: we are simply lacking in individual historiographical testimonies from Hellenes who held high administrative functions in the Roman state in this period. Nevertheless, the examples of Arrian, consul in 129, and Dio, who ascended the *cursus* and held provincial governorships in Africa, Dalmatia, and Pannonia Superior, serve as limited but telling evidence. When educated Greeks are given a vested interest and personal involvement in the administration of the Empire, they identify with it: the Empire and the *imperium*-holding Greek become 'we'. This identification, which results from individual political participation and enfranchisement, reveals itself clearly in geopolitical contexts in their histories. It is in these contexts that ἡμεῖς is employed.

It is the presence of the voice of a Roman magistrate and governor that has caused Dio to be identified as a Roman: 'we' collectively as an Empire comes to be because 'we' additionally signifies the senatorial and governing elite into which the historian takes pains to locate himself. Had Dio not enjoyed such an illustrious career, from his quaestorship around 189 to his second consulship in 229, the clear identification with Rome as the only viable political power to represent would be absent from the history. The inclusion of content pertaining to Rome's relationship with foreign powers facilitates, even demands,<sup>44</sup>

41 Arrian *Perip. Pont. Eux.* 11.1–2.

42 For the authorship and date of the *Peripl. Mar. Ery.*, see Schoff (1912); Kornemann (1921); Charlesworth (1928).

43 Aalders (1986, 283).

44 *q.v.* Gruen (1993, 52ff).

that Dio as a provincial governor and Roman consul use the first person plural, as does Arrian. The political context in these instances gives rise to this evidence—but this evidence should be used not to state that the historian was ‘Romanised’, but rather to reflect on how Dio, Arrian, and other Greeks of the governing class were integrated in the second and third centuries. The exceptionality of Dio and Arrian as Greek consuls of Rome who identified politically with the Empire in their histories stems precisely from the fact that they were Greek consuls of Rome who wrote histories. The pool is small. Nevertheless, the available evidence indicates that political participation in the form of tenure of office was a process of integration among literary elites from the Greek East in this period.

The role of Dio’s career in his identity formation and integration into Roman public life should additionally be considered in light of the means of distribution of power in the Early Empire. By Dio’s time the allotment of magistracies fell increasingly to the emperor, not to the *comitia* or Senate. In the comprehensive programme of political reforms advocated in Book 52, Maecenas’ exhortation to Augustus that the emperor alone be responsible for such appointments indicates Dio’s approval of this system,<sup>45</sup> and clearly he has benefitted under it: he states himself that it was to emperor Pertinax that he owed his praetorship for 194,<sup>46</sup> to emperor Macrinus his curatorship of Pergamum and Smyrna in 218,<sup>47</sup> and to Severus Alexander his second consulship.<sup>48</sup> If for Dio, Arrian, and other Greeks of their class the instrument of integration into Roman political life is the *cursus honorum*, then the emperor had become one of the forces which set the integration process into motion. Dio approves.

### *Graecus pepaideumenos*

My conclusions to this point have supported the notion that Dio was made politically Roman, but have tried additionally to locate and explain the origins of this phenomenon. The remaining part of this discussion, exploring the historian as an exponent of Hellenic literate culture, will equally pose no challenge to the traditional view of Dio as culturally Greek. It will, however, attempt to address the dichotomous ‘politically Roman, culturally Hellenic’ rubric occasionally seen in studies on the historian,<sup>49</sup> and reflect on how Hellenic culture

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45 52.20.2–3.

46 74.12.2.

47 80.7.4.

48 80.5.1.

49 Millar (1964, 191); Swain (1996, 402–8).

could be used by Greeks to express rather than hide from the political reality of Roman dominion.

An established view concerning the period known to us from Philostratus as the Second Sophistic holds that, as opportunities for independent political expression by Greeks waned under the Roman Empire, the Greek literature of this period retreated into *παιδεία* as a means of continuing to assert Hellenic identity on the one hand, and of avoiding the reality of subjugation on the other.<sup>50</sup> Archaism of style, setting, *topoi*, and subject matter had come to provide a defensive retrenching, while extensive quotation from a Greek literary ‘canon’ demonstrated *παιδεία* in a self-consciously *paideutic* world.<sup>51</sup> In terms of subject matter, Dio clearly does not belong to this trend: the historian has opted not to recreate a glorious Athenocentric past, but to tackle fundamental questions concerning the governance of the Empire and its relationship with the Greek cities, with forty years of Imperial administration behind him.<sup>52</sup> His use of quotations drawn from the Greek literary canon—which have equally been cited as evidence that he ‘wrote in a sophistic fashion’—additionally place the historian outside of these trends.<sup>53</sup> While certainly demonstrative of his *παιδεία*, such quotations serve a very specific purpose: to move toward an understanding of Rome in Greek terms, and to address the Roman world rather than retreat from it.

A number of quotations from Greek poets permeate the history: Homer on nine occasions;<sup>54</sup> Euripides four times;<sup>55</sup> Menander and Sophocles once each;<sup>56</sup> and unknown, fragmentary poets in another three instances.<sup>57</sup> These quotations serve an historiographical purpose: they elucidate the political situation at Rome and the characters of Roman figures by connecting these to figures in Greek literature. This may be considered an example of ‘indirect characterisation’,<sup>58</sup> and an investigation of these instances reveals that Roman political history and Hellenic literate culture are not separate, but complementary.

50 Bowie (1970, 17); Anderson (1993, 101); Ameling (1997, 2476–8).

51 On this canon cf. Morgan (1998, 71, 313).

52 See my brief discussion of the speech of Maecenas in Book 52 on pp. 301–3 below.

53 For the quote, cf. Reardon (1971, 209); for Dio more generally as a ‘sophistic historian’ cf. Bowie (1970, 10ff), Gowing (1992, 290), Bowersock (1996, 113), Sidebottom (2007, 77).

54 56 F 2; 59.19.2; 59.28.6; 60.16.7; 77.15.1; 79.8.6; 79.30.1; 79.40.4; 80.5.3.

55 38.18.2; 58.24.4; 79.8.4; 79.8.6.

56 61.29.3; 42.4.3.

57 47.49.2 (Nauck *TGF*<sub>2</sub> 910); 58.23.4 (Nauck *TGF*<sub>2</sub> *Adespota* 513); 61.29.3 (Kock *CAF Adespota* 487).

58 Pitcher (2011, 107–10).

During his narrative of the reign of Caligula, Dio records a dispute between the emperor and Cn. Domitius Afer. Domitius had accused a relative of Agrippina some years before, and consequently incurred Caligula's wrath for this insult to his mother's family. The encounter between the two follows: 'But when Agrippina met Domitius and noticed that he was standing out of her path because of embarrassment, she called out to him, saying "take heart, Domitius: it is not you I hold responsible, but Agamemnon".'<sup>59</sup>

These are Achilles' words to the heralds of Agamemnon in *Iliad* 1.335, who take his war-prize Briseis from him.<sup>60</sup> When Dio's Agrippina quotes this verse, the reader is invited to formulate the comparison between Agamemnon and Caligula. In the section immediately preceding Agrippina's quotation, Dio describes the greedy rapaciousness of Caligula at length: Domitius was executed and his property appropriated by Caligula on the pretext of having offended Agrippina's family, but in reality his true motivation for these accusations was to restock the depleted treasury;<sup>61</sup> many more died for no other reason than their wealth;<sup>62</sup> and his greed and extravagance were prodigal.<sup>63</sup> When placed within this context, the quotation from the *Iliad* is à propos: by quoting Achilles, Dio's Agrippina forms a comparison between the greed of Agamemnon, and the avaricious rapaciousness of Caligula.

The situation is similar in Claudius' quotation from Homer. A possible heir of Caligula, L. Annius Vincianus, had formed a plot to gain the throne for himself, and failing to find sufficient military backing, invited the governor of Dalmatia, Furius Camillus Scribonianus, to his cause. Annius subsequently fled to Issa and committed suicide following a *coup-entre-coup* in which Camillus assumed command of the rebel forces and avowed to restore the Republic.<sup>64</sup> Exhorting his soldiers to vigilance, Claudius quotes: 'you must avenge yourself upon the one who first injured you'.<sup>65</sup> These are the words of Telemachus in *Odyssey* 16 and 21, where Telemachus insists upon his own weakness and inability to avenge himself against his assailants: 'I am but a young man and have insufficient experience in combat to avenge myself upon one who first

59 59.19.2.

60 *Il.* 1.334–335: χαίρετε κήρυκες Διὸς ἄγγελοι ἠδὲ καὶ ἀνδρῶν, ἄσπον ἴτ': οὐ τί μοι ὕμμες ἐπαίτιοι, ἀλλ' Ἀγαμέμνων.

61 59.18.1.

62 59.18.5.

63 59.21–23.

64 60.15.1–4.

65 60.16.7: ὥστε καὶ σύνθημα τοῖς στρατιώταις τὸ ἔπος τοῦτο συνεχῶς διδόναι, τὸ ὅτι χρῆ ἄνδρα ἀπαμύνασθαι ὅτε τις πρότερος χαλεπήνη.'

injures me.<sup>66</sup> This is entirely consistent with Dio’s presentation of Claudius elsewhere: Claudius was terrified of Annianus’ rebels and was prepared to abdicate;<sup>67</sup> after Caligula’s murder in 41, he hid away in fear;<sup>68</sup> his constitution was weak and shaky;<sup>69</sup> and he had been prey to illness and fear from birth, to such extent that his character was ‘servile’ and ‘craven.’<sup>70</sup> By quoting Telemachus’ insistence that he is too weak and inexperienced to avenge himself against his assailants, Dio’s Claudius recalls the original context of the quotation, and then exemplifies it—to the derision of those soldiers who could understand him (γέλωτα).<sup>71</sup> Given that the *ethopoia* of Claudius as an excessive citer of Greek verse (to general mirth) is of course satirically played out in his contemporary Seneca’s *Apocolocyntosis*, Dio’s insertion of the words of Telemachus into the philhellene’s mouth here is particularly appropriate: the Greek literary quotation is well-suited to the narrative of Roman history.

There are other examples of Dio’s use of Greek literary quotation to shed light on Rome’s past and give expression to key figures in its history through the mouths of the Greek poets. The revolt of the Maeatae in Caledonia in 210 led Septimius Severus to advocate a policy of brutal slaughter to subjugate the region:

When the inhabitants of the island again revolted, he summoned the soldiers and ordered them to invade the rebels’ country, killing everybody they met; and he quoted these words: ‘let no one escape sheer destruction, no one our hands, not even the babe in the womb of the mother, if it be male; let it nevertheless not escape sheer destruction.’<sup>72</sup>

These are Agamemnon’s words to his brother Menelaus, who in *Iliad* 6, having had his knees clasped in supplication and a bounteous ransom offered by his Trojan captive Adrastus, is dissuaded from ransoming his prisoner.<sup>73</sup> In contravention of customary *ἵκετεία*, all must perish.<sup>74</sup> The connection to be made

66 *Od.* 16.69–72: αὐτὸς μὲν νέος εἰμι καὶ οὐ πῶ χερσὶ πέποιθα ἄνδρ’ ἀπαμύνασθαι, ὅτε τις πρότερος χαλεπήγη; also *Od.* 21.133.

67 60.15.4.

68 60.1.2.

69 60.2.1.

70 60.2.5–6.

71 60.16.8.

72 77.15.1.

73 *Il.* 6.55–59: ‘τῶν μὴ τις ὑπεκφύγοι αἰπὺν ἄλεθρον χεῖράς θ’ ἡμετέρας, μηδ’ ὄν τινα γαστέρι μήτηρ κοῦρον ἐόντα φέροι, μηδ’ ὄς φύγοι...’

74 On *hiketeia* see Gould (1973); Pedrick (1982).

here between the bloodthirsty advocacy of Agamemnon and the ruthlessness of Severus here and elsewhere in the *Roman History* is plain to see. Dio notes with approval Severus' promise upon his accession in 193 not to put any senator to death—'such as the good emperors of old had given'<sup>75</sup>—but writes that this promise was immediately broken with the execution of Julius Solon, listed among other things that aggravated the *ordo*.<sup>76</sup> Protecting the lives of 'we senators' (ἡμεῖς μὲν οἱ βουλευταὶ) is of fundamental importance to Dio.<sup>77</sup> Severus' brutality in having the head of the defeated pretender Clodius Albinus conveyed to Rome on a pole 'showed clearly that he possessed none of the qualities of a good ruler',<sup>78</sup> and his encomium in the *curia* of the severity and cruelty of Marius, Sulla, and Commodus shows him in a deliberately unflattering light.<sup>79</sup> Again, a character in Dio's *Roman History* recalls the original context of a Greek quotation, and then exemplifies it himself.

As a consul and a contemporary of Caracalla and Alexander Severus, Dio is interested in narrating Roman political history and Roman public figures. Yet as a Greek *pepaideumenos*, as an exponent of παιδεία, he does so through the voice of the Hellenic poets. It is within Roman mouths, not Greek, that these quotations are placed. All of the characters who make such quotations are exclusively Romans:<sup>80</sup> Pompey, Cicero, Claudius, Tiberius, Agrippina, Caligula, Septimius Severus, and Caracalla each quote Greek poets at various points. When Dio's Pompey steps aboard the ship to Alexandria, thereby delivering himself into the hands of his assassins, he quotes Sophocles: 'whoever to a tyrant wends his way, his slave is he, even though his steps be free'.<sup>81</sup> Significantly, these are his last words. Caligula's eccentric habit of repeatedly hurling a javelin at a rock in response to a thunderbolt carries with it a verse of Homer: 'either lift me, or I will thee'.<sup>82</sup> And Caracalla, addressing Dio himself at the end of a banquet in Nicomedia, quotes lines frequently found in Euripidean epilogues—also his last words.<sup>83</sup> In these instances, it is Greek modes of expression, not Roman, that key figures in history choose for the

75 75.2.1.

76 75.2.2–6.

77 Cf. for example cf. 73.5, 73.6, 74.5, 74.6, 75.8.4, 78.5, 78.6.

78 76.7.

79 76.8.1–2.

80 Aside from Claudius' *libertus* Polybius, who in 61.29.3 quotes Menander *Epitrepontes* 5.116.

81 42.4.3; Sophocles *Invent. Fab.* 789 (Nauck): ὅστις γὰρ ὡς τύραννον ἐμπορεύεται, κείνου 'στί δοῦλος, καὶν ἐλεύθερος μὲν ἔσθι.

82 59.28.6; *Il.* 23.725: ἢ μ' ἀνάειρ', ἢ ἐγὼ σέ.

83 79.8.4–5.



situations in which they find themselves. Hellenic cultural identity in Dio can function as a means to *communicate* Roman politics, not retreat from it.

The historian's own last words in his *Roman History* serve as an equally characterising epilogue. Dio likens his withdrawal from public life in 229 to Homer's Zeus leading Hector 'forth out of range of the missiles, out of the dust and the slaying of men and the blood and the uproar'.<sup>84</sup> There is no need to see this as a premonition of the downfall of the Empire,<sup>85</sup> unfavourable a presentation of Roman public life though this may be. The important point here is that it *is* a presentation of Roman public life. Roman history and Roman personalities find a voice in Dio; it is that of Greek culture.

It is not surprising that in a history written in Greek, the historian should employ quotations from Greek literature, given the translational issues. However, Dio can clearly translate Virgil from the Latin into Greek on one occasion,<sup>86</sup> and in the second and third centuries, to quote *utraque lingua* would be acceptable for an educated audience. We know of Greek translations of the *Aeneid* and Sallust in the first and second centuries respectively,<sup>87</sup> a trend further exemplified by fourth-century papyri.<sup>88</sup> Dio clearly has the option to quote Latin literature, and (probably) the ability.<sup>89</sup> Yet he chooses Greek almost exclusively; only once does he quote a Latin poet.

This may be part of a broader project: to present himself as a model of successful cultural interaction whereby Greek literate culture is presented as a valid route for Roman expression. Cohesion in the Empire is important to Dio: the speech of Maecenas prior to the Augustan Settlement of 27 BCE in particular is an anachronistic discussion of Greco-Roman political unity, including various detailed suggestions for the management of the Greek East. Maecenas' arguments aim at centralisation: Greek cities should not be allowed to mint their own coins;<sup>90</sup> they should bring their grievances not to the *imperator* in the form of diplomatic embassies, but to their provincial governor;<sup>91</sup> horse-races should only be held in Rome;<sup>92</sup> rivalries between individual cities, reminiscent of the *πόλις* ideology of the Classical past, ought to be quashed;<sup>93</sup>

84 80.5.3. Hom. *Il.* 11.163–4.

85 Pace Bering-Staschewski (1981, 126).

86 76.10.2.

87 Reichmann (1943); Fisher (1982, 176 n. 12).

88 *P. RyI.* 478 a–c.

89 Millar (2005, 32–3).

90 52.30.9.

91 52.30.9.

92 52.30.7–8.

93 52.30.3–4. Dio of Prusa's *Orationes* 38–41 exemplify the rivalries Dio is addressing here.

the euergetism of the sophists in these cities is excessive and demands curtailment.<sup>94</sup> Here, Dio as a member of the Roman governing elite addresses the political reality of the Greek East in his lifetime—and this is simply another part of his project, not to retreat into παιδεία to recreate or recall a glorious Greek past, but to use Hellenic literate culture (in the form of Demosthenic rhetoric articulated in Maecenas' speech) to communicate the Roman world. Dio's use of indirect characterisation with Greek literary quotations too shows that Hellenic culture can express Rome: Roman political and Hellenic cultural identities are not only mutually inclusive, but complementary.

The linking and likening of Greece with Rome was not uncommon. Dionysius of Halicarnassus had argued that Romans were fundamentally of Greek descent;<sup>95</sup> Polyainos viewed the Parthian wars as a continuation of the Macedonian Wars which led to Greek annexation;<sup>96</sup> and Claudius Charax, suffect consul in 147, connected Greek history with Roman history in a unified narrative.<sup>97</sup> It may be rash in this connection to state that 'Greeks of the second century A.D. had come to view the city and its empire as a unified whole, with Rome as a single πόλις embracing innumerable fields and villages'.<sup>98</sup> That Dio should feel the need to react against the attempted political and cultural individuality of the Greek cities and argue for centralisation and uniformity in Maecenas' speech indicates that this was not uniformly the case. Certainly in this speech Dio has his orator declare, in a universalising language reminiscent of Aristides' *Roman Oration*,<sup>99</sup> that Rome as a πόλις could come to embrace the world:

Each of the citizens should be enfranchised with citizenship (πολιτείας), so that in their equality with us in this respect they may be our faithful allies; living in a single city (πόλιν)—our own—and considering it a city in truth, but thinking their own homes merely fields and villages (ἀγρούς καὶ κώμας).<sup>100</sup>

94 52.30.5.

95 D.H. *AR* 1.90.1; Fox (1996, 60).

96 Palm (1959, 62–3); Ameling (1997, 2478).

97 *AE* (1961, 320); Andrei (1984).

98 *Pace* Ando (1999, 7); also Palm (1959, 81) and Aalders (1986, 283). Ando cites Dio's use of the noun πόλις to signify Rome as evidence for this claim, but πόλις in Dio is simply synonymous with *urbs*. No Roman consul, Greek or not, would define Rome as τὸ ἄστυ, and no Roman would call the city an *oppidum* or *moenia*. πόλις is simply the most appropriate parallel expression to *urbs* for want of other options.

99 Millar (1964, 104–5); Ando (1999, 25).

100 52.19.6.

But Dio clearly viewed the *Constitutio Antoniniana* of 212 (or 214),<sup>101</sup> which granted the *πολιτεία* to all free men within the boundaries of the Empire, as a sham. In his assessment, it had been designed by Caracalla to extort taxes out of the new citizens of the Empire in the same way he extorted large gifts and monies from Dio and other elites for his wasteful projects.<sup>102</sup> In this context, Maecenas’ lofty statement on fields and villages could be viewed as much a satire of Aristides’ panegyric as an endorsement of it—particularly if the hypothesis that the historian recited it to Caracalla himself is accepted.<sup>103</sup> Nevertheless, this need not trouble us too severely. Where Dionysius, Polyainos, and Claudius Charax endeavoured to establish a relationship between the political history of Rome and that of Greece, Dio’s own narrative demonstrates a real attempt to mould Greek literate culture to Roman political history in a manner that is appropriate to the context and historiographically sound. His purpose in doing so was to advertise precisely the unity and cohesion between Greek and Roman worlds that his Maecenas is made to advocate. Hellenic culture, Dio argues, was a legitimate vector for Roman history. Having his *personae* quote those excerpts of Homer, Sophocles, or Euripides which most exemplified their depicted character traits was a means of educating and informing Dio’s audience in a language they would best understand.

Whether this is particular to Dio or is exemplified by other Greek officeholders of Rome such as Arrian and Appian (this latter to a lesser extent; he never held *imperium*) would be a worthy study. Dio’s Greek quotations are for the most part uniquely attested, but the last words of Pompey, quoting Sophocles, are found additionally in Plutarch’s biography of him.<sup>104</sup> This then raises the question of whether Dio’s use of Hellenic literate culture as a means of communicating Roman history is indicative of a more widespread trend. Those quotations found in the contemporary history (Books 73–80) which fulfil the indirect characterisation model by linking back to the original context may be more likely assumed to be Dio’s own and not gathered from a literary source because his account from Commodus onward is an eyewitness one.<sup>105</sup> The earlier quotations of Agrippina and Claudius fit this rubric—recalling the original context of a quotation and then exemplifying it oneself for characterisation purposes—which would indicate that they additionally are Dio’s own; they conform to his practice in Books 73–80. This aside, Dio’s use of the *poietai*

101 For the dates, cf.  *OCD*<sup>4</sup>, s.v. ‘*Constitutio Antoniniana*’; contra Millar (1962).

102 78.9.3–7; Millar (1964, 105).

103 Millar (1964, 104).

104 Plut. *Pomp.* 78.4.

105 73.18.3–4.

takes Greek literate culture in a fundamentally different direction to the manner in which it has been traditionally understood in the period known as the Second Sophistic. Not a refuge, but a communicative medium.

### Conclusion

The *Roman History* supports a reading of Cassius Dio as politically Roman but culturally Greek time and again. This paper poses no challenge to such a pattern—but it has argued against the prevalent separatism of the two notions. Dio sounds most ‘Roman’ of all—the Romans are ἤμεις—when he is discussing the relationship of the Empire to other diplomatic entities, as within the public and political ‘space’, Dio speaks from administrative experience. By conferring *imperium*, the Empire has given the historian a vested interest in the continuing security of the Roman state. An extension of this political ‘voice’ and persona is found in his endorsement of Latin geopolitical terms, which have been employed as evidence that the historian was ‘fully Romanised’. Dio states confidently the appropriateness of the Roman nomenclature of Epidamnus, citing the Latin meaning of *damnum*, ‘loss’, in connection to the hazardous shoreline.<sup>106</sup> As with the transliterated Ἀφρονή, Dio endorses a Roman world-view: he governed the province himself as proconsul in 223, and to refer to the territory by the name under which he held it is only natural and appropriate. To this trend belongs also the historian’s advocacy of the Latin etymology for Pannonia, which he additionally governed as *legatus* in 226. In this period and social class it is individual participation in the administration of the Roman state, via the Senate and *cursus honorum*, that make one ‘sound Roman’ when discussing the political theatre. Dio’s fellow-consul and fellow-Bithynian Arrian equally exemplifies the same integrative process.

This does not mean that one need be aloof from the Greek world and the values of Greek culture. Quite the opposite. Studies of Dio’s identity have tended to divide the political and the cultural into distinct camps, as individual and separate spheres of identification.<sup>107</sup> In terms of form, this discussion has been similarly divided—yet this method concludes that Hellenic cultural identity could be employed by Greeks to communicate and discuss, rather than retreat from, the political realities of the day. In this respect Dio lies far outside the Classical and Athenocentric escapism of the sophists; his narrative, far from using *παίδεια* to distance the reader from political realities, endeavours rather to move toward an understanding of the Roman world and its characters in

<sup>106</sup> 41.49.3.

<sup>107</sup> Millar (1964, 191); Aalders (1986); Swain (1997, 402–8).

terms acceptable to Greeks. Through the medium of Greek rhetoric in the speech of Maecenas in Book 52, modelled stylistically on Thucydides and Demosthenes, Dio discusses fundamental questions concerning the administration of the Empire and its relationship with the cities of the Greek East. Greek culture can characterise and communicate Roman history and address the Roman world. Determining whether such a course was pursued by other Greeks of the time, particularly those engaged in the Imperial administration, would elucidate still further how Hellenic cultural identity could be employed by politically enfranchised Greeks as a lens for viewing, understanding, and advocating the Roman world under the Early Empire.

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