CHAPTER 13

PARRHĒSIA IN CASSIUS DIO

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INTRODUCTION

In the preamble to his narrative of the Battle of Philippi, Cassius Dio says (47.39.2-3):

συνέπεσον μὲν γὰρ καὶ αὐτὴς ἀλλήλοις, ὥσπερ καὶ πρότερον ἀλλ’ ἐκείνους μὲν τοὺς ἀγώνας ὑπὲρ τοῦ τίνος ἐπαισχούσουσιν ἐποίησαντο, τότε δὲ οἱ μὲν ἐς δυναστείαν αὐτοὺς ἤγοιν, οἱ δὲ ἐς αὐτονομίαν ἔξηροντο. οἶδεν οὖν ἀνέκυψεν ἕτερον ἀνέκυψεν ἑαυτὸν καὶ ἑαυτόν ἔχαρτον καὶ ἀφθαρσίαν καὶ ὑπὲρ τοῦ τίνος ἐπαισχούσουσιν εὐδοκίαν … ἀλλ’ αὐτὸς τε εἰς αὐτοῦ κρείττων τε ἕκατερον καὶ ἕκατον τοῦ τε δημοκρατικὸν συμπαράλληλον καὶ τὸ μοναρχικόν ἐκφάνοντο.

For though they were again to come to blows with one another, just as they had done previously, these later struggles were for the purpose of finding out what master they should obey, whereas on the present occasion one side was trying to lead them to autocracy whereas the other to self government. Hence the people never attained again the genuine freedom of speech, even though vanquished by no foreign nation … but the people at one and the same time triumphed over and were vanquished by themselves, defeated themselves and were defeated, and consequently they exhausted the democratic element and strengthened the monarchial.

The passage is a significant one in Dio’s broader account of the transition from Republic to monarchy at Rome. On the surface, Dio’s comments seem to echo similar statements which juxtaposed the domination of the Caesars with the idea of Republican libertas found in the Latin tradition. Yet Dio plays with this theme in a particular and specific way, and he focuses his attention not only on a general sense of freedom (that is to say ἐλευθερία), but on the concept of “genuine freedom of speech” (ἀκριβὴς παρρησία), a political freedom, lost as a result the defeat of the Liberators.

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E.g. Luc. 7.695-7; Tac. Agr. 3.1, Tac. Hist. 1.1.1, etc.
As we shall see, the idea of παρρησία (hereafter, parrhêsia) is a recurring theme in Dio’s Roman History, and that it has a distinct, if not unique place in his historical and broader intellectual outlook. This paper comprises three sections. First, I shall consider Dio’s understanding of parrhêsia in his Republican narrative, with a focus on his characterisations of Cicero and the Younger Cato. Second, I shall look at what Dio says about parrhêsia under the empire. Third, I would like to turn the discussion around to look at Dio himself, and the importance of parrhêsia in his project of writing the history of his own age.

**PARRHÊSIA AND THE FALL OF THE REPUBLIC**

The largest cluster of parrhêsia words (that is to say the noun parrhêsia, the verb παρρησιάζομαι) fall in what remains of Dio’s late Republican narrative. 2 Although perhaps such a figure is skewed by what survives of Dio’s text, this distribution is consonant with the democratic connotations of the idea of parrhêsia. Given Dio’s familiarity with the classics of Attic literature, it seems probable that Dio’s understanding of parrhêsia was influenced (to some degree) by his reading of classical texts. For many of the classical Athenian authors of the fifth and fourth centuries, parrhêsia and its twin concept ἱσῆγορία (hereafter isêgoria) were tied not only to the (democratic) Athenian’s self perception, but also was indicative of a state of individual freedom, as opposed to slavery. 3 As we shall see throughout this paper this seems to accord with Dio’s presentation of parrhêsia in his history, and is implicit in the quote concerning the outcome of Philippi, which began this chapter.

[260] By the late second century B.C., Polybius recognized parrhêsia and isêgoria as defining characteristics of democratic constitutions. 4 But uniquely, at least among extant historians of Rome writing in Greek, Dio appears to have considered parrhêsia as a characteristic of the Roman Republic. 5 The appropriateness of this judgment may be questioned. It was argued by Wirszubski long ago that the Romans of the Republic never possessed a sense of freedom of speech cognate with the Classical Athenian sense of parrhêsia. For Wirszubski, such outspokenness would have seemed more like licentia than libertas to a Roman of that age. 6 There is possibly something to this view with regards to Dio’s conception of parrhêsia. At the very least, Dio seems to have been cognizant of some differences between the Athenian-style democracy and what he interpreted as the démokratia of the Romans. Perhaps significantly, isêgoria

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2 Nawijn 1931, 606.
3 An indicative example is Euripides Phoen. 391-2: “And one thing in particular, he is not able to speak freely. This you speak of is the slave’s lot, not to say what one is thinking” (ἐν μὲν μεγίστῳ οὐχ ἐχει παρρησίαν δούλου τόδ᾽ εἶπας, μὴ λέγειν ἃ τις φρονεῖ). For discussion of the parrhêsia in the classical Athenian context, note especially, Konstan 2012; Saxonhouse 2008; Momigliano 1973, 256-263. For the freedom/slavery dichotomy in Dio (and its likely Thucydidean origins), see Lavan 2013, 131-140.
4 Polyb. 2.38.6, 6.9.4-5; cf. Walbank 1957, 657.
5 Cf. Bertrand 2008, 71, 82.
6 Wirszubski 1950, 13. Wirszubski’s conclusions are drawn from Cic. Resp. 3.23; Flacc. 15ff and Phaedrus 1.2.1f. Cf. Momigliano 1973, 261, who suggests that whereas “[i]n the Senate freedom of speech was complete”. He goes on to note that “only persons of authority had the right to speak freely” and that the idea of free speech (libera lingua) thus belonged more to the domain of auctoritas rather than libertas. See further Brunt 1988, 314-317.
— parrhêsia’s ideological twin — does not appear in the extant books of the Roman History.7

Nevertheless, Dio seems to have regarded parrhêsia (in the abstract sense) as a freedom to offer an opinion that might cause offence, or be contrary to the will of the sovereign body (be it the populus/δῆμος, the Senate, a general, or an emperor). Here there is perhaps an overlap with Tacitus’ frequent use of libertas where it appears as something close to ‘candour’.8 Yet as we would expect from Dio there is nuance to this picture, and he seems aware of an ethical boundary between frankness and unrestrained offensiveness. As with many before him, he recognized that the context and manner with which individuals exercised their ‘outspokenness’ or ‘frankness of speech’ was important.9 Yet Dio approached the idea of parrhêsia from what may be termed an historical perspective as well. In his judgment, he saw that it was possible for individuals to exercise parrhêsia under the Republican constitution in a way that would become impossible following the (re)establishment of monarchy at Rome. [261] Here again Dio is not far from the world portrayed in Tacitus’ Dialogus.10 It is in Dio’s narrative of the downfall of the Republic that he develops his characterization of two figures who appear to be paradigmatic in his treatment of parrhêsia: Cicero and the Younger Cato.

Cato provides us with an appropriate starting point. Apart from anything else, Dio’s Cato represents a more straight-forward exemplum of a plain-speaking politician than the senator from Arpinum.11 In a way the two need to be considered together, as Cato represents Cicero’s twin in terms of parrhêsia. Cato was, for Dio, the very model of the Republican senator. Like Cicero, Cato is a doomed figure, albeit a heroic one. Scrupulous in his personal conduct, Cato was the quintessential defender, and ultimately martyr of the Republican system of government.12 Cato’s formal introduction to the narrative, which comes in the context of his opposition to the voting of extraordinary honours to Pompey in 63 B.C., sets the tone of his portrayal (Dio Cass. 37.22.2-3):

He diligently promoted the interests of the plebs and admired no one man, but was thoroughly devoted to the common weal. Suspicious of unlimited power,

7 Interestingly, Xiphilinus uses isêgoria twice — both independently of Dio: cf. Xiph. 41.1 and Dio Cass. 46.34.5; Xiph. 80.31 and Dio Cass. 51.19.
8 E.g. Tac. Dial. 10.8, with Mayer 2001, 121.
9 Stob. Anth. 3.13.47 = Democritus F 226 (Diels-Kranz); Philld. Lib. 2b ll. 11-13; [Xen.] Ath. Pol. 1.6; Isocr. 8.14; Plut. Quomodo adulat. internos. 25-37 = Mor. 66A-74E.
10 E.g. Tac. Dial. 2.1.
11 Note Lintott 1997, 2517, 2520, for a superficial sketch of Dio’s portrayal of the younger Cato.
12 For the reputation of Cato as an exemplum of Republicanism, see Wirszubski 1950, 129-131; MacMullen 1992, 5-8, 18-19; Wilkinson 2012, 37-38, 178. This exemplary status was, however, came to be more moral than it was political: cf. Gowing 2005, 76-79.
he hated anyone who had grown above his fellows, but loved any one of the common people through pity of their weakness. [... He] indulged in outspokenness on behalf of the right, even when it involved danger. Yet he did all this not with a view to power or glory or any honour, but solely for the sake of a life of independence, free from the dictation of tyrants.

The sentiments are pure Dio. As we shall see, Dio’s direct characterization of Cato mirrors the sort of ideal that Dio’s Cicero portrays himself as [262] representing in his speech in Book 45. But unlike Cicero, in the case of Cato the ideal matched the reality. Dio’s characterization of Cato sets him in direct contrast to not only Cicero, but also to Caesar and Pompey: all three men driven by a desire for honours and power (Dio Cass. 36.43.3-44.2; cf. 37.22.1). More than this, Cato’s “outspokenness on behalf of the right” is set against Cicero’s habit of supporting whichever side was to his advantage, and Caesar’s (and indeed Pompey’s) more studied dissimulation. Finally, Cato’s opposition to Pompey, unlike Cicero’s opposition to Antony in Book 45, was not based on personal enmity (Dio Cass. 37.22.4; 46.1.1-2; cf. 46.29.2), but on a desire to preserve the interests of the commonwealth.

The prelude to Cato’s spectacular death at Utica reinforces these themes. Cato, knowing that the cause is lost resolves to kill himself, not wanting to submit to Caesar’s domination. As Cato organizes the passage of his comrades from Utica, the following exchange occurs between Cato and his son (Dio Cass. 43.10.4-5):

πυθομένου τε τοῦ νεανίσκου “διὰ τί οὖν οὐχί καί οὐ τούτο ποιεῖς;” ἀπεκρίνατο αὐτῷ ὅτι “ἐγώ μὲν ἐν τῇ ἐλευθερίᾳ καί ἐν παρρησίᾳ τραφεὶς οὐ δύναμαι τὴν δουλείαν εἰς μεταβολὴν ἔπι γῆρος μεταμαθεῖν· σοὶ δ’ ἐν τοιαύτῃ καταστάσει καὶ γεννηθέντι καὶ τραφέντι τὸν δαίμονα τὸν λαχόντα σε θεραπεύειν προσήκει”.

When the youth asked, “Why, then, do you not do so too?” He [sc. Cato] replied, “I, who have been brought up in freedom with the right of free-speech, cannot in my old age change and learn slavery instead; but for you, who were both born and brought up amid such a condition, it is proper to serve the divinity that presides over your fortunes.”

A similar scene appears in Plutarch’s Life of the Younger Cato, and the two versions may stem from a common tradition. But the Plutarchan version is unelaborated with speech. Indeed, that the brief exchange is Dio’s own creation is clear. We see the presence of the old Athenian connection between political freedom (eleutheria) and parrhêsia. There may also be an echo of Polybius’ statement that whereas the founders of democracies prized parrhêsia (and isêgoria) above all else, their descendants did not, causing individuals to strive for domination over their compatriots (Polyb. 6.9.5). It also serves to emphasise the incompatibility between parrhêsia and the domination of an individual. Cato’s final gnomic statement recalls Dio’s own quasi-religious [263] devotion to Τύχη or the heavenly power (τὸ δαιμόνιον), and contributes to the thematic unity of the work. Moreover, Dio’s

13 Cf. Plutarch’s comments concerning Cato’s parrhêsia (Cato. min. 33.2, 35.6).
14 See further Kemezis’ chapter in this volume.
15 For Dio devotion and religious views, note Liebeschuetz 1979, 227-229; Swan 2004, 8-11.
Cato recognises the futility of maintaining the Republican struggle in a world that is about to change.

Cicero’s *parrhesia* is more problematic than Cato’s. It has been over fifty years since Fergus Millar gave his judgment on Dio’s portrayal of Cicero. The verdict was damning: “Dio’s handling of Cicero is a failure, perhaps the most complete failure in his *History.*” But Millar knew also that Dio’s portrayal of Cicero could (and perhaps should?) be read in what he described as “purely literary terms”. From such a perspective Cicero emerges as is a complex figure, and the pejorative nature of the portrayal in general should not blind us to his many functions in the narrative. From the point of his introduction alongside Caesar in the context of the debate over the *lex Gabinia*, Cicero appears, like Caesar, as a man eager for power and the position of the foremost man in the state. Cicero and Caesar are also complementary figures: whereas it is Caesar’s ability to dissimulate and obfuscate his intentions and plans, Cicero’s defining characteristic is his *parrhesia*.

The problematic nature of Cicero’s *parrhesia* is addressed directly during the Cicero-Philiscus dialogue in Book 38. Philiscus foreshadows Cicero’s death by remarking on Cicero’s reluctance to give up his habit of exercising his characteristic *parrhesia* (Dio Cass. 38.29.1-2). Such an idea stems from Dio’s unexceptionable belief that *parrhesia* is sufficient to incur the hatred of others. For Dio, this was a constant of human nature, and may be seen in the Illyrian Queen Teuta’s decision to execute a group of ambassadors for their plain-speaking. But in the example of Cicero, it is not so much a case of his exhibiting *parrhesia per se*, but the manner in which he did it. For Dio, it was Cicero’s excessive *parrhesia*, which lapsed into slander (*διαβολή*), which caused so much offence and attracted such enmity (Dio Cass. 38.12.6-7). This is again made explicit in the speech of Q. Fufius Calenus which opens Book 46.

The debate between Cicero and Calenus that straddles Books 45 and 46 is crucial to Dio’s consideration of Republican *parrhesia*. The debate is a characteristically multi-dimensional set-piece. Prima facie, both speeches are [264] textbook examples of invective, and function to augment Dio’s characterization of both Cicero and Antony. In the past, these speeches have drawn comparison with the parallel pair of speeches (that is, those of Cicero and L. Calpurnius Piso) given by Appian at the corresponding point in his narrative (App. *BC* 3.213-248). Yet the comparison is deceptive as the speeches in Appian and Dio bear only superficial resemblances to each other. For the Alexandrian historian, the speeches of Cicero and Piso serve as a means of propelling the narrative of events, as well as adding a degree of dramatic colour. The speeches of Cicero and Calenus go beyond this and are in many ways far

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19 Dio Cass. frg. 49.3; cf. 44.10.3.
20 For discussion of the speeches, note in particular Fechner 1986, 63-69; Koster 1980, 200-210; Millar 1961, 18-21. Note also, Millar 1964, 52: “[the debate between Cicero and Calenus is] evidently an attempt to sum up in two balanced speeches the complex political situation at the beginning of 43 B.C.”
21 For a convenient summary of the standard commonplaces in Greco-Roman invective, see Craig 2004, 188-192.
more complex and subtle creations than the speeches of Cicero and Piso as rendered by Appian.  

Traditionally the speeches of Cicero and Calenus have been viewed through the lens of *Quellenforschung*. But such a technique takes us only so far and the cumulative length of the Cicero-Calenus set piece (and this observation can be made for Dio’s narrative generally in Books 44-46). cannot be properly understood simply in terms of Dio’s use of sources. Indubitably Dio had access to a wealth of material, not least such material as Cicero’s own *Philippics*, as well as the corpus of genuine and pseudepigraphical anti-Ciceronian diatribes. Yet it would be wrong to assume that the speeches in Books 45-46 are the result of Dio’s reluctance or inability to condense his source material. As we shall see, part of this programme was to use both speeches to deal with the idea of *parrhēsia* – both as a political ideal and as a political reality. The narrative setting for such a discussion is, as we shall see, appropriate. Moreover, the speeches have a mimetic quality. The unrestrained *ad hominem* arguments presented by both Cicero and Calenus represent examples of *parrhēsia* in action, and point to the limitations of employing such frank speech in political debate.

As with Dio’s other paired speeches – the Agrippa-Maecenas debate in Book 52, and the speeches of Boudicca and Suetonius Paulinus preserved by Xiphilinus – the speeches of Cicero and Calenus must be read together. It would be wrong for us to assume that the text endorses the views of either of the speakers. Indeed, the characters of both speakers should warn against such a reading: Cicero on the one hand, and a partisan of Marcus Antonius on the other. There is more. Cicero may come across in Dio’s narrative as being a generally odious individual, but his speech contains some noble sentiments, and his criticism of Antony justified. Similarly, the speech of Calenus is not straightforward – although again he may be justified in his general criticisms of Cicero, he takes them too far and is guilty of malicious exaggeration.

Rather, it seems that the speeches touch on similar ideas from different perspectives, and thus problematise some of the key concepts raised in each speech. The place of these speeches in the narrative is important. Book 45 opens with Dio’s lengthy description of Caesar’s heir – the future Augustus, and Book 46 concludes the formation of the Triumvirate. Moreover, in the immediate lead up to the speech, Dio explicitly foreshadows the death of Cicero (Dio Cass. 45.17.3-4), as well as that of the Republic (Dio Cass. 45.17.5). Perhaps most tellingly, there is a moment at the beginning of Book 45 where Dio describes the future Augustus as realizing that if he were going to succeed, he would have to restrain his inclination for *parrhēsia* (Dio...
Cass. 45.6.1). The reader, thus primed, reads on with a reinforced knowledge that Cicero and his cause are lost.

Cicero opens his speech with the theme of the impending threat of constitutional change and the impact the shift towards autocracy would have on his prized freedom of expression. Cicero says (Dio Cass. 45.18.2):

οὔτε γὰρ ἐν δυναστείᾳ καὶ τυραννίδι ζῇν ὑπομείναμ’ ἂν, ἐν Ἡ μὴ τολμεύσασθαι μὴ ταχευτήσαι χρησίμως ὑμῖν δύναμαι

For I could not, on the one hand, endure to live under a monarchy or a tyranny, since under such government I cannot live rightly as a free citizen nor speak my mind to you.

These comments set the tenor of his speech. Where Cicero deals with the idea of parrhêsia, he does so in an idealized manner. Cicero’s comments here [266] employ the same connection between parrhêsia and eleutheria that we saw in the Classical Athenian sources and in Cato’s speech at Utica. The theme of parrhêsia and political freedom is continued throughout the speech. Cicero describes Antony’s domination of political affairs since Caesar’s murder, and notes that under Antony’s rule it was impossible for the Senate to exercise parrhêsia without a guard (Dio Cass. 45.22.5, cf. 45.25.1-2). Although this claim is later repudiated by Calenus,27 Dio’s Cicero may be seen to be anticipating one of the great themes of early Roman imperial historiography, that of the tenuous existence of senatorial libertas under a monarchic system. Cicero then drives home these points with another quasi-Athenian statement (Dio Cass. 45.35.1-2):

καὶ πῶς οὐχ οἰσχρὸν τοὺς μὲν προγόνους ἡμῶν ἐν δουλείᾳ τραφέντας ἐπίθυμησαι ἐλευθερίας, ήμᾶς δὲ ἐν αὐτονομίᾳ πολιτευθέντας ἐθελοδουλῆσαι…

Would it not be disgraceful if, after our forefathers, who had been brought up in slavery, and felt the desire for liberty, we, who have lived under a free government, should become slaves of our own accord.

Cicero’s comments, although commonplace, are also an echo of the sentiment made by the Younger Cato discussed above. They are also deeply ironic, like many other features of the Cicero-Calenus set piece. Cicero is ultimately delivering his speech against Antony to further the cause of the ultimate victor in what Dio saw to be the struggle to seize monarchical power – Caesar’s heir.

Cicero concludes his speech with the following (Dio Cass. 45.46.3):

οὔτε γὰρ ἄλλος τὸν θάνατόν ποτε τὸν ἐκ τῆς παρρησίας ἐφοβήθην (καὶ διὰ τούτο καὶ κατώρθωσα πλείστον τεκμήριον δὲ ὅτι καὶ θύσαι καὶ

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27 Dio Cass. 46.26.1: “For certainly you were not deprived of full freedom of speech; at any rate you indulged in a great deal of barking, and to no purpose.” (οὐ γάρ που καὶ παρρησίας ἐνδείχθη ἡθα-πολλὰ γοῦν καὶ μάτην ὑλάκτεις).
ἦορτάσαι ἐφ’ οἷς ὑπατεύων ἐποίησα ἐψηφίσασθε, ὅπερ οὐδὲν πώποτε ἄλλῳ μὴ ὑσὲ ἐν πολέμῳ γε τι καταπράξαντι ἐγένετο), νῦν δὲ καὶ ἤμιστα.

For I have never at any time been afraid of death as a consequence of my outspokenness (this accounts, indeed for my overwhelming success, the proof of which lies in the fact that you decreed a sacrifice and festival in memory of the deeds done in my consulship, an honour which had never before been granted to anyone except one who had achieved some great success in war), and now I fear it least of all.

In the context of the speech, Cicero’s words represent a strong attempt at self-fashioning. Again we may note the irony. As with the comments of Philiscus in Book 38, Cicero this time himself recognizes that his outspokenness could lead to his death. Moreover, any reader who remembered the earlier narrative on the Catilinarian conspiracy and the execution of the conspirators would recognize the dubiousness of Cicero’s claim that his frankness of speech was employed for the good of the State.

If Cicero’s speech represents, at least superficially, the ideal of parrhêsia – frank speech exercised for the good of the commonwealth – Calenus’ speech undermines this very notion. It reinforces the negative portrayal of Cicero as a disreputable demagogue: challenging the reader to reappraise Cicero’s speech in terms of appearances rather than realities. As Calenus notes (Dio Cass. 46.9.4):

καὶ λοίδορεῖς μὲν ἀεὶ πάντας πανταχοῦ, τὴν ἐκ τοῦ θρασείου παρρησιάζεσθαι δοξεῖν δύναμιν περὶ πλείονος <τοῦ> τι τῶν δεόντων εἶπεν ποιούμενος,

And you abuse everybody all the time, setting more store by the influence which comes by appearing to speak your mind boldly than by saying what duty demands.

For Calenus, Cicero’s speciality is slander, exercised for his own personal advantage: “So utterly reckless is he about pouring out anything that comes to his tongue’s end, as if it were mere breath” (οὕτω μὲν οὖν οὐδ’ ὄτι όντι οὐτὸ διαφέρει πᾶν ο τι ποτ’ ἐν ἐπὶ τὴν γλῶτταν αὐτοῦ ἐπέλθῃ, καθάπερ τι πνεῦμα ἐκχέαι), says Calenus at 46.15.3. It is true that this picture of Cicero the slanderer is found in the anti-Ciceronian rhetorical tradition, for example in the pseudo-Sallustian invective against Cicero, where Cicero’s habit of abusing others is a source of criticism (e.g. [Sall.] Inv. 1.1-2). But Dio’s focus on these features is largely his own and feeds into the

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29 And even if not, Calenus will draw attention to the problematic nature of Cicero’s claim in his speech.
30 Cary in his Loeb edition prints (and translates) πλῦµα “soap-suds” following the conjecture of Naber, instead of the MSS reading πνεύµα. The supposed reference to soap-suds is an allusion to the accusation that Cicero’s father was a fuller (cf. Plut. Cíc. 1.2), but I do not see that such an emendation is warranted here, and have preferred to follow Boissevain and others in rejecting it. Cf. Bertrand 2008, 160; Koster 1980, 206 n. 663.
31 Note Philid. Lib. col. 1b ll. 1-13: the good man is the one who employs parrhêsia does not do so to win fame, and never insults, struts, nor shows contempt or cause harm. The reference to soap-suds is an allusion to the accusation that Cicero’s father was a fuller (cf. Plut. Cíc. 1.2).
32 For the question of Dio’s sources, see Millar 1961, 18-21; cf. Millar 1964, 53-54.
broader narrative themes of his Republican narrative, and the speech cannot be fully understood purely in terms of Dio’s putative reliance on the anti-Ciceronian rhetorical tradition.  

Calenus’ characterization of Cicero as a self-serving demagogue who pursues his own interests under the pretext of speaking his mind openly also maintains that Cicero was inimical to the harmony of the Roman state (Dio Cass. 46.25.3). This ties in with one of Dio’s major themes for Books 44-46, which is the importance of homonoia in the state, and the inability of the Republican constitution to safeguard such harmony (Dio Cass. 44.2-3). Yet we would be wrong to assume that Calenus’ speech is a simple attack on Cicero’s behaviour. If Cicero’s parrhêsia is inimical to harmony, so too is that of Calenus. Calenus’ motives are not entirely pure: his decision to speak in defence of Antony, as he himself claims at the beginning of the speech, is because Cicero had earlier insulted him (Dio Cass. 46.1.2).

At the end of Calenus’ speech Dio says (Dio Cass. 46.29.1):

τοιαύτα τοῦ Καλῆνου εἰπόντος ὁ Κικέρων οὐκ ἤνεγκεν· ἀυτὸς μὲν γὰρ καὶ ἀκράτω καὶ κατακορεῖ τῇ παρρησίᾳ ἀεὶ πρὸς πάντας ὀμοίως ἔχοντο, παρὰ δὲ δὴ τῶν ἄλλων οὐκ ἧξον τὴν ὀμοίαν ἀντιλαμβάνειν. καὶ τὸτε οὖν ἄρεις τὸ τὰ δημόσια διασκοπεῖν ἐξ λοιδορίας αὐτῷ κατέστη, ὡστε τὴν ἡμέραν ἐκείνην καὶ διὰ τούτο οὐχ ἤμαστα μάτην κατατριβήναι.

Such language from Calenus, Cicero could not endure; for while he himself always spoke out his mind intemperately and immoderately to all alike (αὐτὸς μὲν γὰρ καὶ ἀκράτω καὶ κατακορεῖ τῇ παρρησίᾳ ἀεὶ πρὸς πάντας ὀμοίως ἔχοντο), he could not bring himself to accept similar frankness from others. So on this occasion, too, he dismissed the consideration of the public interests and set himself to abusing his opponent, with the result that the day was largely wasted, primarily on this account.

Earlier readings have interpreted Dio’s comment here as being nothing more than a superfluous dig at Cicero.  

Such a view is unsatisfying. Dio’s comment [269] draws the two speeches together, and reinforces their central theme. The two speeches, where antagonists exchanged unchecked abuse, result in a wasted opportunity for fruitful debate and resolution, and thus serve to highlight the potential of parrhêsia being an instrument of discord. Hence, we see the speeches playing out Dio’s thesis about the state of the Republic – a time when individuals were driven by their own love of honour, and where moderation (σωφροσύνη) and concord (ὁμόνοια) could no longer be achieved. Not even, as it happens, in the Temple of Concordia, where the speeches of Cicero and Calenus were purportedly delivered (Dio Cass. 46.28.3).

**PARRHÊSIA AND THE PRINCIPATE**

33 pace Lintott 1997, 2515-2516. Syme’s comment (1939, 167 n. 1), that “something at least of Calenus’ speech may be recovered from Dio”, is optimistic.
34 Millar 1964, 55.
35 Cf. Dio Cass. 44.2.4-5; 47.39.4-5.
The transition to monarchy at Rome was a gradual process. Indeed, Dio seems to have considered that there were several key moments which marked this change: Philippi, Actium, the ‘settlement’ of 28/27 B.C. But of the various vestiges of the Republic that were eventually to give way during this process, it was parrhesia that died at Philippi (Dio Cass. 47.39.2-3, quoted above). From that point, Dio believed that parrhesia became an indulgence rather than a guaranteed political freedom. Taken as a generalization, Dio’s views are unexceptionable: tyrannies or autocratic governments (ancient and modern) are seldom tolerant of opposing voices. Dio was not alone in this belief. Some of the more interesting comments on parrhesia made under the Principate are those preserved in the fragments of Musonius Rufus’ tract On Exile. Musonius, taking as his lead Euripides Phoenissae (391-2), argues that it is in fact the exiled man who can exercise his parrhesia without fear, whereas the man still engaged in politics cannot, as he is prevented by his fear of the consequences.

Dio’s imperial narrative represents an important shift in emphasis in his discussion of parrhesia. Dio’s focus turns predominantly to how rulers reacted to displays of parrhesia. An emperor’s tolerance of such outspokenness is a component of Dio’s conception of the ciuîlis princeps (or better δημοτικὸς αὐτοκράτωρ). Part of this idea, like the connection between parrhesia and eleutheria, was long a staple of political discourses on kingship. It is a theme that appears throughout Isocrates’ Cyprian orations, where we see the ideal king eschewing the flattery of toadies, but being tolerant of and receptive to the frank advice of his friends and associates. It is perhaps not surprising that the idea appears in the Meditations of the philosophically minded Marcus Aurelius, where the emperor acknowledges his debt to his tutor Diognetus, who taught him to tolerate displays of parrhesia (Med. 1.6). More generally, the idea that a man should listen to frank criticism is a commonplace of ethical treatises. Most conspicuously it is found in the fragments of Philodemus’ On Flattery (P. Herc. 1082) preserved among the charred papyri of Herculaneum, and perhaps in its most developed, although hardly most original form in Plutarch’s How to tell a flatterer from a friend.

This nexus of ideas finds expression in the context of the Agrippa-Maecenas debate. Before launching into his argument in favour of the Republican form of government, Agrippa craves Augustus’ permission to speak frankly (Dio Cass. 52.3.3). Owing to a lacuna we do not know whether Maecenas made a similar request at the beginning of his speech, but in the body of his speech he advises Augustus to permit his advisors to exercise parrhesia when voicing their opinions (Dio Cass. 52.33.6). In this sense, the Agrippa-Maecenas set piece is in some ways representative of how advisors should behave towards an emperor, and how an emperor should behave towards his advisors.

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37 Muson. frg. 9 [Hense p. 48-50], with commentary in Geytenbeeck 1963, 143. Plutarch (De Exilio 16 = Mor. 605F-606D) reacts to the same lines of Euripides, and his argument is virtually identical to that of Musonius.
38 Wallace-Hadrill 1982, 38-39. For Dio’s adoption of this model, see Davenport 2014; Davenport and Mallan 2014, 645-647; and Jones’s contribution in this volume.
39 For the idea of parrhesia being a special privilege, appropriate to a wise advisor, see Momigliano 1973, 260; cf. Plato Leg. 640B; Laches 188E.
40 For the connection between frank speech and friendship, see now Kemp 2010, 72-76; Momigliano 1973, 260.
When it came to appraising Augustus’ deeds both in Dio’s own authorial commentary and through the device of Tiberius’ funeral oration, the emperor is praised for allowing his friends to employ such outspokenness when offering him advice (Dio Cass. 56.43.1; cf. 56.40.3).

The appraisal of emperors based on their reactions to displays of parrhēsia forms one of the “trans-regnal themes” (to use Pelling’s phrase) of the imperial books. Occasionally this criticism is implicit. In a well-known anecdote, Dio reinvents a well-known folkloric topos in his telling of the story of Hadrian’s sober reaction to an elderly petitioner, who had just reprimanded the emperor for [271] claiming that he was too busy to hear her request (Dio Cass. 69.6.3). Of Dio’s contemporaries, Septimius Severus is praised for not punishing Cassius Clemens, a one time partisan of Pescennius Niger, for the parrhēsia the senator exhibited during his trial (Dio Cass. 75[74].9.1; 75[74].9.4). Especially interesting among these imperial examples is the group of anecdotes concerning parrhēsia under the reign of Tiberius. That notoriously cryptic emperor, although he rarely disclosed his own thoughts or intentions (Dio Cass. 57.1), did not as a rule punish others for demonstrating parrhēsia. When Asinius Gallus called Tiberius’ bluff during the so-called succession debate in September A.D. 14, Dio (57.2.5) tells us that Tiberius was incensed at Gallus, not for his outspokenness, but on account of a long-held grudge. Indeed, Dio, like Suetonius, commends Tiberius’ encouragement of parrhēsia during senatorial meetings. In A.D. 16, Cn. Piso went against the will of the princeps and his son, and seemed to carry the day in the Senate, until his proposal was vetoed by a tribune (Dio Cass. 57.15.9). Of course this sort of parrhēsia was specious. But for Dio, appearances mattered, and such fictions were important to maintain. At the most fundamental level, an emperor who refrained from exercising his constitutional and extra-constitutional powers was preferable to one who did not.

There are points, however, in his imperial narrative where Dio shows interest in how an individual exercised his parrhēsia, and not just an emperor’s reaction to such displays. In this regard we see a continuity of thought between Dio’s attitudes in the Republican and Imperial narratives. As in the case of Cicero, he is critical of individuals who showed little restraint in their manner of speaking (Dio Cass. 65(66).12.1). The hostility Dio shows towards Helvidius Priscus is at first surprising. For Dio, Helvidius Priscus represented the sort of ostentatious, and pointless opposition that had little value. Dio accuses Priscus of trying to stir up the people by praising Republican government and denouncing monarchy. Priscus’ opposition to Vespasian, we are told, was not due to any pure ideals, but rather due – in language that recalls Dio’s reason for Cicero’s opposition to Antony – to Priscus’ personal enmity with the emperor. Dio does not leave the issue here. Rather, he contrasts Priscus with his father-in-law, the [272] exemplary P. Clodius Thrasea Paetus. Paetus represented, in his way, the imperial age’s equivalent to Cato. Yet Paetus was able to

41 For this phrase, note Pelling 1997.
42 For the topos, see Schmidt 2000, 20-21. Hadrian is, of course, hardly an uncomplicated example of a δημοτικός emperor. Note his punishment of the architect Apollodorus for the latter’s parrhēsia (Dio Cass. 69.4.1-3).
43 Dio Cass. 57.7.3-5; 57.17.3.
44 Suet. Tib. 28; Dio Cass. 57.7.3-4.
45 The same may be said for Tacitus’ attitude towards Priscus (e.g. Wirszubski 1950, 166), although Tacitus’s portrayal of Priscus is notably less pejorative than Dio’s.
express his opposition by not saying anything at all (Dio Cass. 65(66).14.1-2). Here Paetus’ actions spoke louder than words. In the political world of the Principate, where the expression of senatorial consensus was expected, and indeed required as a symbol of imperial legitimacy, such silence struck at the very heart of this ideology.

These comments perhaps also reveal something of an underlying tension in Dio’s attitudes towards political behaviour and ideology. Dio might have thought that monarchy was the preferable form of government for a state the size Rome had grown, but many of his ideas about appropriate senatorial and imperial behaviour harked back to idealised Republican models. It is not for nothing that Dio uses the adjective δημοτικός approvingly when noting the exemplary conduct of those emperors who showed appropriate deference to the Senate; much in the same way as Latin authors use ciuilis. Thus, monarchy was preferable only when the ruler conducted himself as though in a Republic. Moreover, a similar observation can be made to his presentation of appropriate senatorial conduct. Hence, it is the ‘Republicans’ like Agrippa, Cato, and Thrasea Paetus, who emerge from our historian’s narrative as exemplary senatorial figures.

THE HISTORIAN SPEAKS OUT

As we saw in the previous section, for Musonius Rufus it was physical exile that allowed a man of affairs the freedom to express his opinions frankly. But there was perhaps another, less drastic form of exile: the writing of history. As a coda to this paper, I would offer some thoughts about the role of parrhésia in Dio’s own self-fashioning as a senatorial historian.

Dio understood that time and occasion mattered when it came to exercising parrhésia. When we recall many of Dio’s descriptions of his own participation in the business of his day, we see him as a silent or otherwise anonymous senatorial participant in affairs. Indeed, Dio the senator appears to know when and when not to speak. When Didius Julianus, a one-time opponent of Dio, [273] was acclaimed emperor by the troops, Dio joined the rest of the senators in endorsing Julianus’ claims to the purple, despite his dislike of the man and belief that Julianus was manifestly not capax imperii. In another scene, when feeling the urge to laugh at Commodus’ actions in the arena, Dio chose instead to disguise his natural urge by chewing on bay leaves (Dio Cass. 73[72].21.2). The contrast with his outspoken criticism of his contemporaries found in the History is profound.

It has long been taken as a truism of ancient historiography that history concerned past emperors and delivers panegyric on those who were still living. While there may be a degree of truth to this in reality, it was clearly not the ideal. We may look to Lucian’s oft quoted How to write history for such an articulation of this ideal. For the second century man of letters, it was a historian’s task to employ parrhésia when describing the deeds of one’s contemporaries. A historian should be in Lucian’s

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46 Dio Cass. 44.2.1-4; Cf. Millar 1964, 93; Rich 1990, 13. Note, however, the nuanced comments of Kemezis (2014, 129) on Dio’s political views: “[T]o label Dio a “monarchist” based on Maecenas’ apparent victory is to misunderstand political discourse in the high empire. In Dio’s own world, monarchy had long ceased to be something one was for or against. The practical workings and ideological basis of monarchy, however, were still very much live issues.”

words (Hist. conscr. 41), “fearless, incorruptible, free, a friend of parrhēsia and truth” (ἀφόβος, ἀδέκαστος, ἐλεύθερος, παρρησίας καὶ ἀλήθειας φίλος). The product of the historian’s labours was for Lucian, as it was for Dio and Thucydides, intended to be a possession for all time – and a monument to the author. As Lucian puts it, readers of a history should think of the historian along the following lines (Hist. conscr. 61): “he was a free man, full of frankness, with no adulation or servility anywhere, but everywhere truthfulness” (ἐκεῖνος μέντοι ἀνὴρ ἦν καὶ παρρησίας μεστός, οὐδὲν οὔτε κολακευτικὸν οὔτε δουλοπρεπές ἀλλ᾽ ἀλήθεια ἐπὶ πᾶσαν).

The conventionality of such a portrait is patent. Lucian’s ideal historian is an amalgam of the familiar rhetorical binaries – a free man and not a slave, who employs frankness rather than flattery.

Yet was this an ideal to which Dio aspired in his writing? We may assume that Dio’s early works were not exemplary specimens of impartiality. At any rate, Dio’s opusculum documenting Severus’ Dreams and Portents which Severus had experienced before staging his coup d’état, and Dio’s short history of the wars under Severus, seem to have been works more influenced by political expediency than a desire for critical independence. The Roman History, as we have it, is a different matter. Dio’s contemporary history determinedly refutes and subverts the propaganda of his contemporary emperors. A few illustrations will suffice. Commodus’ catch-cry of the new Golden Age is turned around by Dio to be the new “age of iron and rust”. Severus’ sanitized version of the battle of Lugdunum against the imperial pretender Clodius Albinus is flatly and explicitly contradicted (Dio Cass. 76[75].7.3). Dio also memorializes the witticism of his coeval, Pollenius Auspex, who congratulated Severus with having found a father, following Severus’ self-adoption into the Aurelii.

More tellingly, the dynastic propaganda of Severus Alexander, the emperor under whom the history was supposedly completed, is subverted. This may be seen most succinctly in Dio’s exposition of Alexander’s parentage. Caracalla, the scion of Severus and Julia Domna was regarded officially as the biological father of both Elagabalus and Severus Alexander: a claim upon which the imperial legitimacy of the

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49 For the commonplace that flattery was inimical to truthfulness, see Marincola 1997, 160-161.
50 Tac. Hist. 1.1.1, with discussion in Sailor 2007, 124-132. Note also, Tac. Hist. 2.101.1, for Tacitus’ pejorative judgment on Flavian historiography.
51 Dio Cass. 73[72].23.1-3. For discussion of these early works, see Schmidt 1997, 2605-2618.
53 Dio Cass. 77[76].9.4. It may be noted that Auspex is one of only a few of Dio’s contemporaries who receives a positive portrayal in the latter books of Dio’s history. For Dio on Severus, note Rantala’s contribution in this volume.
two cousins was based. Yet Dio went about refuting this in a most thorough, and frank, way – not only by his outright rejection of such bogus claims, but also by providing the actual parentage of both Elagabalus and Alexander (Dio Cass. 79[78].30.2-4). Moreover, as if this was not enough, Dio had earlier made a point of revealing Caracalla’s sexual impotence. Other historians were not so diligent, and were prepared to accept the dynasty’s specious claims. So much is clear from the perpetuation of this dynastic fantasy in Herodian and in the tradition dependent on Enman’s putative Kaisergrgeschichte. Finally, as if to ensure his impartiality, Dio eschews any temptation to write about the reign of Severus Alexander directly, and in its place Dio confines himself to the elaborate yet subtle character sketch of himself which closes the work.

CONCLUSION

If the contemporary books of Dio’s history represent an attempt at senatorial parrhēsia, we should give a thought to the sort of parrhēsia which Dio believed died on the field of Philippi. For a clue, we need to turn back to Cicero’s speech in Book 45. As has been noted well in the scholarship, the speech draws freely from Cicero’s genuine Philippics. Dio’s version, although a pastiche of many of Cicero’s more stinging attacks directed against Antony, is not unrepresentative of the tenor of the Philippics as a whole. The nature and direction of Cicero’s attack is crucial. Antony was (in Dio’s mind) the possessor of near absolute power in the Roman world at the time the speech was delivered. Therefore, it must have struck Dio as he read through his Cicero, that such an unchecked attack would have been impossible during his own age: only the insane or the suicidal attacked living emperors with such words. One recalls the Lemnian Philostratus’ comment regarding Aelian’s vehement denunciation of Elagabalus. It was all well and good, but it would have been more impressive had he delivered such a speech while the emperor was alive (Philostr. VS 625). Yet in the case of Cicero, Dio saw a leading senator launch such an attack in the context of an open senatorial debate. This, I would posit, was the parrhēsia that Dio believed was not possible after the defeat of Brutus and Cassius. And he might have been right.

Momigliano believed that “after the first decades of the second century freedom of speech ceased to be an important issue”. Whatever the strength of this observation as a generalisation, it certainly cannot be said to apply to Dio. Although as I have argued many of Dio’s thoughts about parrhēsia were well grounded commonplaces that were firmly classical in origin, the way in which he wove these ideas into his narrative of constitutional change at Rome was largely idiosyncratic, and not without subtlety. As such, Dio’s approach to parrhēsia represents a fascinating snapshot of his own political and historical thought. Moreover, the fact that Dio is the last non-Christian author from antiquity to discuss parrhēsia in any sort of detail should prompt us to

54 The issue of Dio’s attitude to the imperial succession in the Antonine and Severan periods has been discussed recently in Davenport and Mallan 2014, 657-661.
55 Dio Cass. 78[77].16.1; cf. 78[77].16.4.
56 Epit. de Caes. 23.1; Eutr. 8.22. Herodian (5.7.3) and SHA Heliog. 2.1 are non-committal on the truth or spuriousness of the claim that Caracalla was the father of Elagabalus. For Dio’s account of Elagabalus, see the contribution of Osgood in this volume.
57 Cf. Wallace-Hadrill 1982, 38: “Since the execution of Cicero, no man had been free to speak against the dynasty with power of life and death, except to the extent that he permitted it.”
58 Momigliano 1973, 262.
think not only more about Dio, but also about the political and intellectual world in which he lived.