

REVIEW

THE NEW *BELLES LETTRES* OF CASSIUS DIO XLVII

Valérie Fromentin and Estelle Bertrand, edd., *Dion Cassius, Histoire romaine. Livre 47*. Collection des Universités de France. Série grecque, 505. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2014. Pp. cv + 138. Paperback, €53.00. ISBN 937-2-251-00589-8.

Book 47 of Dio's *Roman History* opens with the arrival of Lepidus, Antony, and the young Caesar in Rome in November 43 BC and the establishment of the triumvirate by law. A gory account of 'the murders by proscription' (3.1) follows, and then other measures of the triumvirs are described in unusual detail, including stringent financial exactions and magnificent honours for the 'first Caesar' (18.1). Dio then backtracks to tell the story of Brutus and Cassius after the Ides of March, embedding within this a further flashback to the situation in Syria since 47 BC. A new front in the civil war had opened there in 46 BC, as an equestrian with Pompeian sympathies named Caecilius Bassus staged a coup overthrowing Caesar's governor (and relative), Sex. Iulius Caesar. Bassus was still in control of the region on the Ides of March. After relating Brutus' ventures in the Balkans and Cassius' in Syria, Dio brings book 47 to a close with the battle of Philippi.

Adding to a recent upsurge of interest in the politics and wars of the triumvir period and their historiography, Fromentin and Bertrand bring out in this valuable new edition the riches of Dio's narrative.¹ As has been noted before, his treatment of Cassius and Brutus is favourable—more favourable than earlier in his history (Book 44)—and includes unique details (such as the plot of Messalla Corvinus' brother Gellius Publicola against both Brutus and Cassius). Dio's emphasis on the *clementia* of Cassius and Brutus, not to mention their defence of *libertas*, takes us back to the memory wars that raged for some years after Philippi and to ideological struggles at the time of the battle itself. Fromentin and Bertrand suggest the possibility that Messalla's *Memoirs* may have been an important source for Dio (xx).

Another angle the editors explore is Dio's understanding of civil war, and the influence in particular of Thucydides (see esp. xxxvi–xxxvii). This influ-

¹ Major recent studies include C. H. Lange, *Res publica constituta: Actium, Apollo and the Accomplishment of the Triumviral Assignment* (Leiden and Boston, 2009) and K. Welch, *Magnus Pius: Sextus Pompeius and the Transformation of the Roman Republic* (Swansea, 2012). In 2014 I published *Turia: A Roman Woman's Civil War* (Oxford).

ence can be conceived of in artistic terms; echoes of Thucydidean language give Dio's well-schooled readers a frisson of horror. But Dio is also influenced by Thucydides' insight as a political scientist, especially the notion that civil wars are often marked by a 'one-upmanship in atrocity'. Dio's flashback to the situation in Syria after 47 is not merely useful background information. As the editors rightly suggest, it adds depth to his analysis of the struggle over the East (xiv). Civil war, between various factions we can loosely call 'Pompeian' and 'Caesarian', was an ongoing process. It involved epiphenomenal violence, like the attack of neighbouring cities upon one another (as Dio clearly shows: 31.2).

Historians and students of historiography alike—not that the two should or really can be separate groups—will find Fromentin and Bertrand's work an invaluable tool in study. A thorough introduction written by both editors situates Book 47 within the larger arc of Dio's history, elucidates its structure, and highlights Dio's novel approach—including synchronizations that allow events in different theatres to be coordinated (this is essential for understanding the strategy of the Liberators, about which Dio has interesting things to say).² The introduction also considers Dio's sources; the often high quality of his geographic information; Dio's understanding of the triumvirate (never for him dignified with the title of *archê*, as it is in Appian); Dio's distinctive treatment of the proscriptions (the contrast with the Sullan precedent is important); Dio's attention to fiscal measures and the honours for Caesar; and Dio's attitude to the Liberators as well as his thoughts on the fate of the free Republic. A helpful chronological table is also included.

After the general introduction, Fromentin alone discusses the textual tradition for Book 47. Two manuscripts, M (*Marcianus graecus* 395) and L (*Laurentianus* 70.8), present a full text, free of lacunae. This allows Fromentin to study thoroughly the indirect transmission of Book 47 (via the *Excerpta Constantiniana*, Xiphilinus, Zonaras, and John of Antioch). Her discussion will be of interest to anybody studying later books of Dio that can only be reconstructed indirectly. The text that follows the Introduction is also the work of Fromentin and in my opinion makes some good improvements on Boissevain's (e.g., 17.5; 20.3; I am less sure about 22.3).

The translation was produced by the editors in collaboration. It is a pleasure to read, doing better justice to Dio's sharp and splendid narrative than Cary's Loeb. At numerous points I believe they improve on Cary, sometimes significantly (e.g. 2.2; 3.1, 3; 5.3; 10.1; 12.1, 2; 13.2). I will recommend it over Cary to students with French. The editors also produced the commentary together. Like other more recent Budé editions—including those for neighbouring books of Dio—this is thorough and always worth

² Welch (n. 1 above) 163–97 has good remarks on Dio *passim* in her reassessment of Republican strategy.

consulting. The editors make excellent suggestions about the resonances of Dio's lexical choices (e.g. 67 n. 42; 72 n. 65; 111 n. 269). They also use Dio, alongside other sources, to advance helpful historical interpretations. I was particularly impressed by their discussion of triumviral policy concerning the property of the proscribed. According to Dio, the triumvirs announced that they would grant to the 'wives of those murdered' their dowries, but this rarely happened (14.1–2). As Fromentin and Bertrand point out *ad loc.*, this should be related closely to Plutarch's claim that the triumvirs were able to sell the property of those who were murdered, 'by bringing false charge additionally against their wives and relatives' (*Ant.* 21.3). The charges—perhaps of conspiring to help the proscribed—were necessary to secure the whole estate.

The only criticism I would make, and it is a mild one, is that occasionally the commentary omits references to helpful discussions or evidence. I will cite some instances here. Readers should be told of Lange's novel discussion of the *lex Titia* (60 n. 8).³ For Augustus' *clementia* (66 n. 39) Dowling's book is essential.⁴ In reference to Dio's claim that young Caesar saved many during the proscriptions they comment 'On ne connaît que deux personnages qui furent rayés des listes par le jeune César: M. [Lollius Paullinus] ... et T. Vinus ...' (67 n. 41): but what about the husband of the so-called *Laudatio Turiae*? Some mention of that text would be welcome here. Also, in their account of Vinus' wife, Tanusia (67 n. 44), a reference to an article by Sumi would be welcome.⁵ Finally, in assessing the relationship between the Lycian cities and the Liberators mention should have been made of the recently published treaty between Rome and Lycia of 46 BC.⁶

Beautifully produced and fairly priced at 53 euros, this is a book that belongs in all good Classics collections. Anybody engaged in study of Dio or the triumviral period of Roman history will wish to own it. It is a tribute to the enduring value of the Association Guillaume Budé as well as the fine scholarship of Fromentin and Bertrand. They deserve warmest congratulations.

Georgetown University

JOSIAH OSGOOD
j039@georgetown.edu

³ See Lange (n. 1 above) 18–26.

⁴ M. B. Dowling, *Clemency and Cruelty in the Roman World* (Ann Arbor, 2006).

⁵ G. S. Sumi, 'Civil War, Women and Spectacle in the Triumviral Period', *Ancient World* 35 (2004): 196–206.

⁶ *SEG* 55.1452 = *AE* 2005 no. 1487.