CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
0521376963 - Dio Chrysostom: Orations VII, XII and XXXVI
Edited by D. A. Russell
Excerpt
More information

INTRODUCTION

1. DIO'S WORLD

Of the three speeches in this volume, the work of the foremost Greek orator of the first century A.D., one (36, *Bor.*) was delivered in his native city, Prusa in the Roman province of Bithynia, one (12, *Ol.*) at the great Hellenic religious centre of Olympia, and one (7, *Eub.*) probably, though not certainly, in Rome (see on 7.145). This neatly symbolizes the three loyalties that Dio, like Plutarch and many others of his contemporaries, felt and reconciled. To his native city, he owed the duties of advice and generous use of his means and abilities for the public good; to Hellas at large the duty to proclaim its values and nurture its pride, even in its subjection to Rome; and to the Romans, the duties of a client and an educator. Inseparable from these, there was for Dio – as, again, for Plutarch – an obligation often felt to address all his audiences in a philosophical mode, imparting moral and theological doctrines of universal concern and relevance.

In all this, Dio is typical of the Greek men of letters who practised in the world of the Roman Empire, though not all, of course, shared his moral seriousness. They addressed themselves both to Greek and to Roman audiences. This had been going on for a long time. Since the second century B.C., it had been common ground that Greek was a necessary part of the education of Romans of standing. As patrons and figures of power, such people naturally became the addressees of Greek poets, philosophers, and historians. Indeed, many of them (like Dio's Stoic mentor, Musonius Rufus) themselves wrote in Greek as well as in Latin. The literature of the Empire is thus bilingual: Dio belongs to the same literary culture not only as Plutarch, but as Pliny and Tacitus.[1]

It is important to keep in mind that, on the Greek side, this culture expressed itself, both linguistically and in choice of subjects, in very classical terms. At least since the time of Dionysius of Halicarnassus, who taught rhetoric and wrote history at Rome under Augustus, the

[1] This perspective is now clearly seen in the synthesis by A. Dihle, *Die griechische und lateinische Literatur der Kaiserzeit* (Munich 1989; Eng. translation in preparation).

© Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
0521376963 - Dio Chrysostom: Orations VII, XII and XXXVI
Edited by D. A. Russell
Excerpt
More information

principal vehicle in which Hellenic *paideia* was conveyed was a studied reproduction of the language and style of the Attic orators, historians, and philosophers of the fifth and fourth centuries. In varying degrees, most of the Greek authors of the following period tried to write like Xenophon, Plato, Demosthenes, or Thucydides, while Homer and classical drama were assumed to be 'what every schoolboy knows'. Dio is one of the closer followers of classical models – very different in this from Plutarch – and he clearly had a marvellous ear for the cadences and idioms of fourth-century prose. It is entirely characteristic that he is supposed to have taken two books only on his wanderings: Plato's *Phaedo* and Demosthenes' *On the false embassy*. In fact his debt to other works of Plato – especially *Republic* and *Laws* – and to Xenophon is more conspicuous; but the story is well invented none the less, and much in the taste of the sophists of the second century, of whose linguistic purism Dio is, in some ways, a precursor. Dio also quotes the poets – we shall hear him on Homer and Euripides – but not more recent ones. In his only extant work that deals with rhetorical teaching (*Or.* 18), he emphasizes Xenophon, and only very tentatively suggests some modern orators for study 'because we are not enslaved in our judgement before we approach them'. This is odd, and stands out as something controversial.

This use of an ancient idiom, removed from ordinary speech and to some extent also from the speech of the cultured in academic contexts, did not prevent these writers from presenting moral and social lessons appropriate to their own time. Archaism is as old as Greek literature, and was never in itself a bar to profundity or originality of thought. For Dio and his classicizing or archaizing contemporaries, some 'dressing up' of contemporary things was demanded, as it were, by the genre-rules: Roman governors were 'satraps', the emperor *basileus* with overtones of the Persian monarchy. But Dio, like most of his fellow orators, was involved in local and sometimes in imperial affairs, and was as acutely conscious as, say, Seneca or Tacitus, of the moral, political, and ideological issues of the age.

Yet 'Longinus' – probably Dio's contemporary, and certainly a sharer of his broadly Stoic philosophy – complains of the 'cosmic dearth' of any kind of literature that he could call 'sublime'.[2] And he was surely

[2] *De sublimitate* 44.

© Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
0521376963 - Dio Chrysostom: Orations VII, XII and XXXVI
Edited by D. A. Russell
Excerpt
More information

right. It is in the calmer reaches of humour, epideictic, and *belles lettres*, that this period excels. Dio himself, when he is serious and intense, is an exception; there are parts of our *Olympicus* and *Borysthenitic us* that 'Longinus' could easily have acclaimed as ὑψηλά, both for the grandeur of the subject and the Platonic eloquence of the language.

2. DIO'S LIFE

Who was this Dio? He appears in history, apart from his own works and texts derived from them, in a short exchange of letters between Pliny, when he was governor of Bithynia, and Trajan, written in A.D. 110–11 (*Epist.* 10.81–2). Cocceianus Dio, a prominent citizen of Prusa – modern Broussa, a less important place in ancient times than later – has been accused by a political opponent of allowing the graves of his wife and son to be sited in the same building as a statue of Trajan. The accuser wishes to get Dio convicted of *maiestas*. Trajan very reasonably observes that Pliny need not have hesitated: it was an invidious and provocative charge, which it would be discreditable to admit. Dio was perfectly willing to have the accounts of the public works he had undertaken examined; his enemy's political manoeuvre should be left to fail.

At this time, Dio was quite elderly; he had long resumed the public career in his own city which his background called for, but which had been interrupted by the long exile which coloured all his subsequent life and literary career.

The date of his birth is not known; estimates vary between A.D. 40 and A.D. 60, the earlier part of that period being slightly more probable. His grandfather was a Roman citizen (*Or.* 41.5) and his own citizenship probably derived from his family. The name *Cocceianus* implies a connection with one of the Coccei, but, though he claimed friendship with Nerva, it need not be from this that the name, or the citizenship, derived. In any case, he was a prominent and reasonably wealthy member of the ruling élite of Prusa – his father and grandfather had presided in its βουλή – and he never relinquished his obligations to the city. He also had an inheritance of culture. He tells us (46.3) that his maternal grandfather, having lost one fortune on public benefactions (εἰς φιλοτιμίαν), acquired a new one ἀπὸ παιδείας καὶ παρὰ τῶν αὐτοκρατόρων, 'from culture and from the emperors'. Imperial favour,

© Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
0521376963 - Dio Chrysostom: Orations VII, XII and XXXVI
Edited by D. A. Russell
Excerpt
More information

it seems, was conjoined with a reputation as a teacher, orator, or philosopher; it is difficult to be precise. That philosophical interests could well have formed part of Dio's background is important to notice. He was certainly influenced by the Roman Stoic, C. Musonius Rufus,[3] who was exiled under Nero, and the likeliest period for Dio to have had contact with him is the late sixties. All this is typical of his age and class: local wealth, elaborate education, literary success, a client relationship with influential Romans.

The circumstances of Dio's exile are not clear. Domitian, probably early in his reign (perhaps in 82), banished him from Italy and Bithynia. Dio (13.1) tells us that his crime was friendship with a great noble who was disgraced: the common conjecture is that it was Flavius Sabinus, Domitian's cousin.[4] We shall see in the story of the hunters of Euboea (7.11–12) how the fall of a great man ruined his dependants all down the line to the peasant farmer or herdsman: Dio may well have his own experience in mind in creating this story. Banishment lasted until Domitian's death: according to Philostratus (*VS* 488) he was actually with Roman troops when news came of the emperor's murder, and he checked their disorder by his eloquence, like Odysseus casting off his rags and appearing in his true person. Like Pliny and Tacitus, and perhaps with better reason, he could praise the *felicitas temporum* of the new régime.

Yet, in some way, the exile was crucial to Dio's career and literary development. Its effect has been the main subject of discussion about his life since ancient times. Its importance was emphasised especially by the Christian moralist Synesius of Cyrene, writing in the early fifth century. Synesius admired Dio;[5] he knew and approved the nickname χρυσόστομος, 'golden tongue', which had become attached to him, for his fluent eloquence.[6] He also disapproved of the way in which

[3] See A. C. van Geytenbeek, *Musonius Rufus* (Assen 1963) 14–15.

[4] Cf. Suet. *Dom.* 10.4. But note that another victim was a Salvius Cocceianus, a relative of Otho.

[5] Synesius' *Dio* is reprinted in von Arnim, de Budé, and the Loeb Dio (vol. v). Critical edition by N. Terzaghi (Rome 1944); commentary by H. Treu (Texte und Untersuchungen 71 (1958)).

[6] See Menander Rhetor 390.1 Spengel, with Russell–Wilson (1981) *ad loc.* *Fluency* seems important: cf. Cicero's characterization of Aristotle (in his exoteric works), *aureum fundens flumen orationis* (*Ac.* 2.110). Malice later made out that Dio's nickname was a euphemism to indicate his bad breath (Arethas: Loeb Dio, vol. v p. 414).

© Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
0521376963 - Dio Chrysostom: Orations VII, XII and XXXVI
Edited by D. A. Russell
Excerpt
More information

Philostratus, the author of *Lives of the sophists*, had included Dio among his subjects. Philostratus, he thought, had failed to see that Dio's experiences in exile had converted him from 'sophistic' to 'philosophy'. In Synesius' view, the exile was decisive. He noted that the titles of some speeches included the words 'Before exile' or 'After exile', and he thought that editors should make this distinction for them all. In his earlier days, according to Synesius, Dio wrote specifically 'sophistic' pieces, like the *Encomium of the parrot* or the ecphrasis of Tempe or the statue of Memnon; he also attacked philosophers in polemical works. None of the pieces Synesius quotes survives, and we are thus dependent on him for an estimate of their 'sophistic' character (Tempe, in particular, was a standard theme; it is possible that Aelian, *VH* 3.1 depends in some way on Dio). It is also clear that his interpretation of the πρὸς Μουσώνιον as a serious polemic against the Stoic moralist was controversial. In any case, the 'conversion' theory of Dio's development, which owes its origin to Synesius, has dominated discussion ever since. It is the basis of most authoritative accounts of his career, and especially von Arnim's. It was elegantly and modestly stated by Henri Weil (Clerc (1915) 195): 'un bel esprit ambulant, il devint un sermonneur ambulant'.[7] But it is of course largely speculative and certainly too simple. Without going as far as Moles ((1978) 100) and calling the 'conversion' a 'fraud', it is right to have great reservations.[8]

The basis of the theory is what Dio says in *Or.* 13, a speech delivered in Athens at an unknown date. Here Dio expounds what he says was his reaction to the sentence of exile. It was to review mythical and historical *exempla* – Odysseus, Orestes, the advice of Apollo to Croesus – and to ask the Delphic oracle what he should do. He was told to go on doing what he was doing 'till he came to the ends of the earth'. So he put on poor clothes, 'chastened' himself (κολάσας ἐμαυτόν) and went on his wanderings. Some of those he met called him a beggar or a vagrant, some a philosopher. These would ask him 'what seemed to him good or evil', and he found himself forced to answer them. He thus became a sort of Socrates.

If we can take this literally, then Dio's moral conscience was first

[7] See also, e.g., S. Dill, *Roman society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius* (London 1904; repr. N.Y. 1957) 334–83; A. D. Nock, *Conversion* (Oxford 1933) 173.

[8] So also Desideri (1978) who rightly emphasizes the continuity in Dio's career.

© Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
0521376963 - Dio Chrysostom: Orations VII, XII and XXXVI
Edited by D. A. Russell
Excerpt
More information

aroused at this time. But the signs of a studied performance and the adoption of a recognized pose are evident. The application to Delphi is modelled on Socrates; and the rest of the speech in which this story is told is heavily indebted to the Socratic tradition, especially Plato's *Apology* and *Clitophon*. It is perhaps close to the truth to say that he used his exile (which was after all no disgrace) to refashion his literary career, using his great gifts of classical eloquence and his thorough training in λόγοι to convey a morally acceptable message to the educated in every city he visited. The vagrancy of his exile is the setting of many pieces – our *Eub.* and *Bor.* among them – and it is clear that, even after his return home, Dio maintained the same *persona* of the visiting preacher, distinct in appearance and message from the σοφισταί he attacks: witness especially the *prolalia* of *Ol.*, which is certainly 'post-exilic'. Travelling speakers and teachers were a common phenomenon in the Roman world, and the spectrum of their interests was wide, from declaimers to moralists and professional philosophers. Their audiences too were various; Dio at least addressed himself strictly to the well-educated, who would be attracted by his classicizing language, and could understand it. When we hear him addressing the crowd at Olympia on theology, we think of St Paul on the Areopagus, a generation before. When we read his moral and social advice in *Eub.*, we think of the rich Cypriot, Demonax, Dio's close contemporary, who gave up wealth to be a moral teacher, and whose life by Lucian throws so much light on the culture to which Dio belonged.[9]

Dio is often regarded as a Cynic, on the ground that he used Diogenes as a model, and that his discourses on kingship have many Cynic features (Moles (1978) 94). But his philosophical beliefs were mainly Stoic, as our three speeches clearly show; and, though he adopted something of the simplicity and homeliness of the Cynic preacher, there was clearly a difference between him and the 'barking dogs' like Demetrius.[10] His rags, his beard, and his vehemence were all, we may suspect, well under control.

For most of the corpus, we have no clear evidence of date.[11] Perhaps

[9] The historical validity of Lucian's *Demonax* is widely accepted, even by Anderson (1976) 64–6; see also Jones (1986) 90–98.

[10] On Demetrius and other Cynics, see M. Billerbeck, *Der Kyniker Demetrius* (Leiden 1979) and 'La réception du cynisme à Rome', *A.C.* 51 (1982) 151–73. Dio sometimes distances himself from the Cynics (*Or.* 34.2).

[11] Jones (1978) 133ff. offers a speculative chronology.

© Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
0521376963 - Dio Chrysostom: Orations VII, XII and XXXVI
Edited by D. A. Russell
Excerpt
More information

this does not matter very much. If the foregoing considerations are just, and Dio's attitudes and culture were formed in his youth, and merely modified and exploited by exile and subsequent fame, 'Before exile' and 'After exile' would not be as meaningful as Synesius hoped.

3. DIO'S WORKS

The corpus of Dio's works, as we have it, consists of about 80 pieces. It lacks, as we have seen, some that were known to Synesius; and his important historical and geographical work, *Getica*, is also lost.[12] On the other hand, we have many pieces which Synesius does not mention, and the collection undoubtedly includes some *spuria*. Photius' ninth-century list, however, is precisely what we have, though in an order distinct from that of most of our manuscripts and of modern printed editions. Only the sixteenth-century Meermannianus – an important witness despite its late date – has Photius' order (see below p. 24). But this order does make some sense, and indicates some editorial policy. There seem to have been five main groups:

(i) speeches on kingship, addressed to Trajan (*Or.* 1–4), with the curious 'Libyan myth' (*Or.* 5) which belongs with them;
(ii) pieces featuring the Cynic Diogenes, who, with Socrates and Odysseus, was a rôle-model for Dio in his wanderings (*Or.* 6, 8–10);
(iii) speeches believed to have been delivered elsewhere than in Bithynia: *Or.* 11–13, 7, 31–7. This is a very miscellaneous collection; and the place of 7 (*Eub.*) was clearly in dispute (in some MSS it comes after 6, in others near the end, after 77/8);
(iv) speeches delivered in Bithynia, *Or.* 38–51;
(v) a mixed bag (52–80, 14–30) including some obituary encomia (*Melancomas*, *Charidemus*) and a large number of short dialogues and essays, some plainly incomplete.

This classification of course gives a very imperfect view of Dio's production. Our three speeches, different as they are from one another, all figure in group (iii); nor is any distinction made between Dio's politi-

[12] On *Getica*, see von Arnim's edition (1896) II iv–ix; he also lists the lost works with the evidence for them. Photius' evidence (with Synesius' and Arethas') is reprinted in the editions (conveniently in Loeb, vol. v).

© Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
0521376963 - Dio Chrysostom: Orations VII, XII and XXXVI
Edited by D. A. Russell
Excerpt
More information

cal and moral discourses and those which have a more literary content. Yet these last are important: especially *Or.* 11 (*Troica*), which argues sophistically that Homer did not tell the truth about the Trojan War; *Or.* 52, a comparison between the treatments of the Philoctetes theme by the three great tragedians; and *Or.* 55, 57, 58 all on matters concerned with Homer. The collectors of the corpus evidently had many problems, not only the introduction of *spuria* (*Or.* 37 is certainly the work of Favorinus), but the existence of so many manifestly incomplete scraps. We must remember that most of the works really were speeches; very few have the form of written compositions, intended, like letters, for distant addressees, like most of the essays collected as Plutarch's *Moralia*. An exception, conspicuous for this reason, is *Or.* 18, in which Dio, in the rôle of a serious teacher of rhetoric, advises a Roman notable on a course of useful reading. *Eub.*, *Ol.*, and *Bor.* are all speeches; and, as we shall see, only *Bor.* is free of serious structural problems, strongly suggesting that our texts are an imperfect reproduction of what Dio said. He was famous as an improviser; improvisation in classical style and language, without putting a foot wrong in grammar, syntax, or word-choice, was a much admired skill; and, though no doubt much was done before every performance by way of private μελέτη, including writing up special passages, we should imagine him as speaking largely impromptu. The resulting texts – perhaps in part the product of note-taking by the audience – often have a spontaneity which compensates the reader for the failures in coherence which he is all too likely to notice.

4. *EUBOICUS*

Our first speech, *Eub.* (= *Or.* 7), is the longest in the whole corpus. It is also the best known, because of the obvious charm and interest of the narrative of Dio's shipwreck (§§1–80). But was he really shipwrecked on Euboea, and did he really meet these hunters? Von Arnim's answer, 'possibly', is as far as one can go. An important consideration is the repeated reflection of the wanderings of Odysseus: also shipwrecked, also concerned with killing a stag (*Od.* 10), also entertained by humble but hospitable people (Eumaeus). Odysseus was certainly one of Dio's rôles (Jones (1978) 46–51), and both his wisdom and his mendicancy were used as models by the Cynics. The setting seems to be the exile (despite the alleged σπουδή, 'urgent business' (§6); at any rate the

© Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
0521376963 - Dio Chrysostom: Orations VII, XII and XXXVI
Edited by D. A. Russell
Excerpt
More information

introduction does not exclude an exile setting, see note on §1), and we may compare the more obviously fictitious episode related in *Or.* 1.50–84 where Dio loses his way on the road to Olympia and encounters a Doric-speaking prophetess, who foretells his future and tells a story of Heracles. What kernel of real experience there was does not much matter; the many parallels that can be adduced (Hunter (1983) 66–7, Anderson (1976) 94–8) between this narrative and the pastoral romance of Longus or Lucian's treatment of Anacharsis or Polyphemus and Galatea cannot demonstrate that the whole thing is fiction.[13] Nor is it particularly helpful to stress the influence of New Comedy (Highet (1973)) or to try to determine the genre of this narrative in relation to the novel. What we have here is a carefully-structured narrative, using many pastoral topics (note especially the culture-shock of the countryman in town: cf. Virgil, *Ecl.* 1 and Calpurnius Siculus, *Ecl.* 7) but directed at specific moral ends. Naturally we think of Theocritus, and of Longus – and of Rousseau[14] or *Paul et Virginie*, and again of parts of *I Promessi Sposi* – but the essential point is the professed lesson: that poverty is no bar to hospitality, nor, in general, to a good and happy life.

The narrative itself includes a story within the story: the hunter's account (§§22–63) of his earlier visit to the neighbouring city and the debate in the assembly concerning his alleged failure to pay his rent. This of course points the contrast between rural honesty and urban chicanery; but the story is developed and enlarged for its own sake – it has potentialities for humour and paradox – because Dio and his audience knew their classical orators and enjoyed a parody which lightly mocked the teaching of the rhetorical schools. There are resemblances also to some famous fictitious debates: Euripides, *Orestes* 867–952 and Menander, *Sicyonius* 169–271 (Highet (1973) 35–40).

The second part of the speech (§§81–152) begins by asserting that the preceding part was not a digression, but was undertaken as an illustration of the thesis that the poor can live as well as, or better than, the rich, especially in their readiness and ability to succour strangers. This discourse is, formally, a discussion of a text from Euripides' *Electra* (424–31: see on §82) which it seeks to refute. Rhetors would call this an

[13] E.g. Dio 65 ~ Longus 3.8.2; 71 ~ Longus 3.39.2; 24 ~ Lucian, *Anacharsis* 23; 53 ~ Lucian, *Dial. deorum* 10(4).2.

[14] F. Boll, 'Hellenismus und Orient', in *Kleine Schriften* (1950) 296.

© Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
0521376963 - Dio Chrysostom: Orations VII, XII and XXXVI
Edited by D. A. Russell
Excerpt
More information

ἀνασκευή, 'demolition'; it was a recognized exercise.[15] It is thus clear that the narrative, as we have it, cannot have been the beginning of the original speech. Von Arnim (1891) clearly showed that some kind of *propositio* or prooemium must have preceded it, and it is idle to fight against this conclusion.

In §§81–102, Dio addresses himself fairly steadily to this theme. He draws mainly on Homer (§§83–96), but comes back to his text from Euripides in §102. This use of poetical texts to introduce moral precepts is characteristic of the culture of the age; one does not teach literature without using it to teach about life. Indeed, the practice goes back to classical times. Dio can appeal (§102) to the usage of Cleanthes (not mentioned by name, but clearly intended) but there are many earlier instances, notably Socrates' discussion of some lines of Simonides in Plato's *Protagoras* (339Aff.). The best extant collection of such material is Plutarch's *De audiendis poetis*, written within a few years of these speeches of Dio's; but it is written from a Platonist and not a Stoic point of view, and its aim is to offer justifications of the classical texts used in education, whereas Dio is prepared to argue against what the poets say. This may seem an unexpected contrast, because it is the Stoic tradition to allegorize and justify, and the Platonic (based on the *Republic*) to condemn – and yet it is Plutarch who justifies and Dio who condemns. The reason is that Dio takes the stance of a philosopher, distancing himself from poets and sophists, whereas Plutarch takes that of an educator determined to use poetry as preparation for philosophy. Plutarch addresses the young through their teachers; Dio the grown men who need to be disturbed or reformed. At the same time, there is a lighter element in all this. As we see from Dio's other works (especially the 'Trojan speech' (11), in which he gratifies the citizens of Ilion by rejecting most of Homer's version of the Trojan War), he and his audiences enjoyed paradoxical revaluations of the classics, especially Homer, whom they all knew best. It is difficult to get the balance between seriousness and fun quite right; but, in *Eub.* at least, straight-

[15] ἀνασκευή, 'destructive analysis' : e.g. Aphthonius, *Progymnasmata* 5; D. L. Clark, *Rhetoric in Greco-Roman education* (N.Y. 1957) 190–2. On Dio's use of the technique in *Or.* 11, see W. Kroll, *Rh. Mus.* 70 (1915) 607–10, with useful general remarks.

© Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org