Giuseppe La Bua

Man of Peace?

Cicero's Last Fight for the Republic in Greek and Roman Historical 'Fictions'

To the dear memory of Harry Gotoff

Posterity unanimously recognized Cicero as the master of the Latin language and a model of rhetorical and linguistic excellence worthy of being imitated by would-be orators. Reduced and simplified to a cultural icon and embodiment of verbal *ingenium*, a result of a long process started in the declamation schools, 1 Cicero was held up as the incarnation of *Latinitas*, the ideal of linguistic sublimity and perfectness pursued by the members of the dominating élite. Different was the story of the reception of Cicero as a historical and political figure in the early Empire. His life and career, his equivocal role in the last years of the Roman aristocratic Republic in particular, affected his reputation and "undermined any claim to ethical authority". Most importantly, Cicero's final years, his struggle for liberty and his 'heroic' death, occasioned later reflections on the role played by the politician in the moral and political decline of the Roman res publica. As Emma Dench notes, "the figure of Cicero suggested to later authors multiple different personae and ways to think about his connection with Rome past and present".3 Alternatively characterized as "a binding-link to the present as much as an epitome of the vanished past", 4 Cicero—and his construction of a distinctively Roman political image-stimulated nostalgic reflections about Roman past history and values, within a more general meditation about the transition from Republican liberty to the princeps' authoritarian regime.5

Cicero's thoughts and actions after the Ides of March were at the very heart of this process of historical renegotiation of the final years of the free Republic. By re-visiting the story of the rift between Cicero and Antony and encouraging a critical reading of the *Philippics* later poets, historians and declaimers questioned the role of Cicero in the downfall of Republican Rome and strove to provide a

¹ Kaster 1998. See also Keeline 2018, 102–140 and La Bua 2019, 106–125.

² Gowing 2013, 243.

³ Dench 2013, 126.

⁴ Ibid., 122.

⁵ See now La Bua 2019, 100 – 112.

reconstruction of the events that marked the rise of Roman imperialistic power.⁶ Yet, they also questioned the role played by Cicero in the outbreak of the civil war of 49–45 BCE, that is the fatal conflict between Caesar and Pompey, which was merely the prelude to the collapse of the Roman *res publica*. Therefore this paper firstly interrogates Cicero's responsibility and engagement in the civil war as narrated in early imperial literature. It starts from Lucan's fictional depiction of Cicero in the theatre of war (7.62–85) and argues that the image of Cicero as warmonger, created notably by a speech he himself delivers, deliberately reverses his self-advertising portrait as saviour of the Fatherland and man of peace in the corpus of Cicero's own works. I will then move on to investigate the re-use and manipulation of Ciceronian and anti-Ciceronian motifs in Cassius Dio's speeches, with special emphasis on Calenus' diatribe (45.18–47) and Cicero's so-called amnesty speech (44.23–33), which reworks themes already touched upon in the *First Philippic* and presents Cicero as a fair-minded politician, engaged in preserving liberty and peace for the survival of the Republic.

As we shall see, Cicero's participation in the events before and after Pharsalus was treated in ambivalent terms. The contradictions inherent in Cicero's relationship with Pompey and the politics of imperial power impacted on later perceptions and receptions of his political figure. In portraying himself as both the spokesman of the Roman ruling class, embodied in Pompey, and the defender of peace Cicero himself fell in a sort of contradiction. While trying to come to terms with the emergence of new political forces, his attempt at preserving the *status quo*—and his political prestige accordingly—was blatantly anachronistic. Later poets and historians exploited these contradictions of Cicero's political practice to depict a man wavering between ambition and desire for peace and stability. It might be tempting to say that the oscillation of the ancient sources in defining Cicero's role in the civil war between Caesar and Pompey reflects the same oscillation that occurred in Cicero's mind, when the changed political conditions forced him to respond to Caesar's—and later Mark Antony's—imperialistic politics.⁷

⁶ On Cicero's political ideology in the *Philippics* and the role played by the young Octavian in Cicero's failure, see Keeline in this volume. Cf. also Bishop in this volume (for the *Philippics* as monuments to Cicero's failure and as allegory of the end of free democratic speech).

⁷ On Cicero's relationship with Roman imperialism, see Rose 1995, 397: "Cicero, far from being the perspicacious and heroic defender of Republican freedom, was from one end of his career to the other fully complicitous in the contradictions that destroyed the Republic".

Lucan's Cicero: political ambition and desire for glory

Lucan's presentation of the figure of Cicero in Book 7 of his *On the Civil War* (7.62–85), an artificial evocation of the role played by the Republican orator and statesman in the moments immediately preceding the fatal battle of Pharsalus, makes a good jumping-off point for a brief re-examination of the reception of Cicero's political legacy in the early imperial period. It fictionalizes a Cicero implicated in civil war, a boastful orator whose speech proved to be decisive in spurring Pompey on to wage war on Caesar. Here is Lucan's passage:

Hoc placet, o superi, cum uobis uertere cuncta propositum, nostris erroribus addere crimen? Cladibus inruimus nocituraque poscimus arma; 60 in Pompeianis uotum est Pharsalia castris. Cunctorum uoces Romani maximus auctor Tullius eloquii, cuius sub iure togaque pacificas saeuos tremuit Catilina securis, pertulit iratus bellis, cum rostra forumque 65 optaret passus tam longa silentia miles. Addidit inualidae robur facundia causae. "Hoc pro tot meritis solum te, Magne, precatur uti se Fortuna uelis, proceresque tuorum castrorum regesque tui cum supplice mundo 70 adfusi uinci socerum patiare rogamus. Humani generis tam longo tempore bellum Caesar erit? Merito Pompeium uincere lente gentibus indignum est a transcurrente subactis. Quo tibi feruor abit aut quo fiducia fati? 75 De superis, ingrate, times causamque senatus credere dis dubitas? Ipsae tua signa reuellent prosilientque acies: pudeat uicisse coactum. Si duce te iusso, si nobis bella geruntur, sit iuris, quocumque uelint, concurrere campo. 80 Quid mundi gladios a sanguine Caesaris arces? Vibrant tela manus, uix signa morantia quisquam expectat: propera, ne te tua classica linguant. Scire senatus auet, miles te, Magne, sequatur an comes". Ingemuit rector sensitque deorum 85 esse dolos et fata suae contraria menti.

Does it give you pleasure, O Gods above, when universal ruin is your plan, to add this guilt to our mistakes? We charge to disaster, demanding warfare which will injure us; in Pompey's camp. Pharsalia is their prayer. The utterances of all were conveyed by the greatest

master of Roman eloquence, Tullius-under his civilian authority fierce Catiline had trembled at the peace-making Axes. He was enraged at warfare, because he longed for Rostrum and for Forum, after enduring silence so long as a soldier. His eloquence gave strength to their feeble cause: "This alone Fortune asks of you, Magnus, in return for all her many favors—that you be willing to make full use of her; we leaders of your camp and your kings together with the suppliant world prostrate ourselves and beg you to allow the conquest of your father-in-law. Shall Caesar mean war for humankind for so long a time? Rightly do the nations who were tamed by Pompey racing past resent that he is slow to conquer. Where has your enthusiasm gone? Or where your confidence in Fate? Ungrateful man, are you alarmed about the gods? Do you hesitate to trust to them the Senate's cause? Of their own accord, the ranks will tear your standards up and spring forward; you should feel shame to have won under compulsion. If you are our bidden leader, if the war is waged for us, give the men the right to fight on whichever field they wish. Why do you keep from Caesar's blood the swords of all the world? Hands brandish weapons: hardly anyone can wait for the signal slow to sound; hurry, or your trumpets may leave you behind. The Senate longs to know; does it follow you, Magnus, as soldier or as retinue?" The leader groaned and felt that this was trickery of the gods and that the Fates were hostile to his own intention.8

Eulogized as the *auctor Romani eloquii*, the "master of the Roman language" (a traditional homage to Cicero's undisputed authority as a prose writer and orator), Cicero is presented as a disgruntled soldier, annoyed at seeing Pompey's hesitance. Pecalling the triumph over the Catilinarian conspirators, Lucan credits Cicero with forcing Pompey into acting swiftly and beginning hostilities. According to the poet, Cicero's fondness for advocacy and his natural inclination for forensic activity played a decisive part in the war: it was Cicero's eloquence, the majesty of his words, that gave strength to Pompey's weak position. ¹⁰

Within Lucan's gloomy meditation of the causes of civil war, it is Cicero, fictitiously placed at the battlefield at Pharsalus, not Pompey, who is invested with responsibility for leading Rome to ruin. As Gowing notes, Lucan's fiction "does not put Cicero in an entirely positive light". Portrayed as a bellicose descendant of the Virgilian Drances, ¹² Cicero is implicitly accused of fomenting war. ¹³ Cicero

⁸ English translation: Braund 1992.

⁹ On the passage see the recent commentary by Lanzarone 2016, 148-166.

¹⁰ On Cicero's speech and its tragic (ironic) effect, see De Nadaï 2000, 238–241. For the parallelism between Cicero's discourse and Curio's speech to Caesar in the first book of the poem, see Radicke 2004, 379–380. See also Fucecchi 1999 (on the dialogue between Terentius Varro and Aemilius Paulus in Silius Italicus 9.1–65 as modelled on Lucan's text).

¹¹ Gowing 2013, 244.

¹² Fucecchi 2011, 247. See also Galli 2015 (on Lucan's Ciceronian sources). On the portrayal of Drances in Book 11 of the *Aeneid* and the impact of the struggle between Antony and Cicero on Virgil's epic, see Sillett in this volume.

ro's self-presentation as a man of peace is thus overturned by Lucan, who manipulates historical reality in order to present the orator as a belligerent politician, overwhelmed by his desire to defend Republican freedom. Parodying the pair *arma/toga*, a clichéd image in Cicero's self-promotion as a *dux togatus* and a consolidated target of criticism, mocked as well by the anonymous compiler of the pseudo-Sallustian *Invective against Cicero*, Lucan engages his readers in questioning Cicero's relation with Pompey and his role in determining the final destiny of the city of Rome, not as "saviour and preserver of the fatherland", as he himself would have loved to be remembered, but as one of the persons who precipitated its downfall. To put it differently, the man who prided himself for saving the city and preserving Roman aristocratic constitution is blamed for the death of Pompey and the beginning of Caesar's dictatorial regime.

Thus, within a larger context, the speech gives a glimpse into the debate over Cicero's political position in the last decades of the Roman Republic and his attitude to the politics of an imperial political system. As Roche puts it, Lucan's choice "to undertake a poem on the civil war of 49–45, to position it openly in relation to the *Aeneid*, and to foreground the same aetiological concerns

¹³ Narducci 2003, 82–84. For Cicero's self-portrait as "encomiast and advocate of peace" (*laudator et auctor pacis*), cf. *Phil.* 7.7–8.

¹⁴ Ahl 1976, 162: "The historical truth of Pompey's dilemma at the historical Pharsalia is driven home by a historical lie. Surely this is the genius of the poet which transcends the mere narration of events. For Lucan provides us with the essence of historical truth in defiance of historical fact".

¹⁵ On parody of Cicero's self-fashioning, see Lanzarone 2016, 148.

^{16 [}Sall.] Inu. in Cic. 6: Atque parum quod impune fecisti, uerum etiam commemorando exprobras neque licet obliuisci his seruitutis suae. Egeris, oro te, Cicero, perfeceris quidlibet; satis est perpessos esse; etiamne aures nostras odio tuo onerabis, etiamne molestissimis uerbis insectabere? 'Cedant arma togae, concedat laurea linguae'. Quasi uero togatus et non armatus ea, quae gloriaris, confeceris, atque inter te Sullamque dictatorem praeter nomen imperii quicquam interfuerit. ("It is not enough that you got away with this unpunished. You even affront the people reminding them of your actions, and they are not permitted to forget their slavery. I implore you, Cicero, having acted and having achieved what you wanted: it is enough that the people have suffered. Will you burden our ears with your hatred: will you harass us with revolting words. 'Let arms give way to the toga, and the military laurel-wreath to the power of speech'? As if you were a man of the toga and not a bearer of arms when you did all that you take pride in! As if there were some other difference, apart from your official title, between you and the dictator Sulla', translation Novokhatko 2009).

¹⁷ Vell. Pat. 2.66, *conseruator rei publicae*; Plin. *HN* 7.117; Sen. *Suas*. 6.19 and 6.26; Juv. 8.240 – 243; Plut. *Cic.* 22.3; App. *B Ciu*. 2.7.

¹⁸ Paying attention to the definition of Pompey as *rector* and his reluctance to enter into combat with Caesar's armies, Ahl 1976, 162 notes that in Lucan "Cicero becomes symbolic of the Senate, the whole theory of the Republic, and its helplessness in the moment of crisis".

with the origin of its own contemporary ideology, is itself a potentially critical response to the Principate". At the same time Lucan's portrayal of Cicero as both an instrument of Fate and an active participant in the process of war is a response to the imperial dispute over Cicero's engagement in politics and his contribution to the end of the Republic. It focuses on one of the most relevant themes of anti-Ciceronian propaganda, that is, Cicero's responsibility for stirring Pompey to action and thereby leading Rome to its collapse. ²⁰

Cicero's speech in Lucan: literary fake and reception text

Cicero's invented appearance in Pompey's camp on the eve of the battle of Pharsalus, a deviation from historical facts, which tends to minimize the heroic qualities of Pompey (portrayed as hesitant and insecure), owes largely to rhetorical practice and declamatory style.²¹ Lucan's speech not only elaborates on rhetorical and historical commonplaces and slogans traditionally associated to the figure of Cicero. Adopting the tones of a *suasoria*, it also testifies to the rhetorical practice of inventing fictional speeches and inserting them in historical epic as a form of 'dramatization'. But we go a step further. In line with Peirano's theoretical reflections about the term 'pseudepigraphic' and the category of pseudonymous literary texts,²² Cicero's speech in Lucan may be labelled as an intentional forgery, a discourse mistakenly, yet voluntarily, attributed to a speaker who was known not to be present at Pharsalus on that occasion. Furthermore, as a literary fake, Cicero's speech is a reception text. It does not only illustrate its author's creativity in imitating the style and manner of the model. It also represents a significant moment in the history of the reception of the figure of Cicero in the first century CE.

Lucan's fake is thus integral to the process of creative reworking and refashioning of the personage of Cicero in early imperial literature. It responds to the rhetorical practice of 'creative supplementation', the construction of fictional situations in which students and/or writers reworked the source-text and exer-

¹⁹ Roche 2009, 3.

²⁰ On Lucan's criticism of Cicero's role in the civil war see also Esposito 2018, 43-50.

²¹ Quintilian comments positively on Lucan's rhetorical qualities, cf. *Inst.* 10.1.90: *Lucanus ardens et concitatus et sententiis clarissimus et, ut dicam quod sentio, magis oratoribus quam poetis imitandus* ("Lucan is ardent, passionate, particularly distinguished for his *sententiae*, and, if I may say what I think, more to be imitated by orators than by poets", translation Russell 2001).

²² Peirano 2012b, 1–8.

cised their inventiveness in reconfiguring the biography of the model. In the case of Cicero, his position in the political crisis of the late Republic and his dominant role in rhetorical training stimulated the production of *pseudepigrapha* and literary fakes, designed as addendum or appendix to Cicero's biography.²³ As Peirano puts it, Cicero's texts—and his life—functioned as backdrop for new fictions, which in turn "filled up the blank spaces in the model".²⁴ Seneca the Elder's *Controuersia* 7.2 (on Cicero and Popillius) and the *Suasoriae* 6 and 7 (on Cicero's deliberation whether to beg Antony's pardon) offer good evidence of how Cicero's final years and his opposition to Antony's imperialistic aspiration captured the declaimers' imagination.²⁵ Students supplemented the political biography of the orator by creating a new, imaginative picture of the author of the *Philippics* and providing a paradoxical (almost scandalous) version of the last acts of the master-author.

To Lucan's eye, Cicero's role in the conflict between Pompey and Caesar was evidently a biographical gap, an untouched moment ready to be developed and exploited. Cicero's ambiguous relationship with Pompey acted as a further stimulus to the creation of a fictional scenario in which the epic poet reinvented the figure and personality of one of the most representative politicians of the Roman Republic. In a sense, Lucan's text parallels 'pseudepigraphic' and literary fakes such as the later *Fifth Catilinarian*, the *Responsio Catilinae*, the *Declamatio in L. Sergium Catilinam* (all additions to the overused theme of the Catilinarian conspiracy), the *Epistula ad Octauianum*²⁶ or the *Pridie quam in exilium iret.*²⁷ And

²³ We have knowledge of a number of mock-Ciceronian speeches or invectives in response to Cicero's orations. Asconius Pedianus mentions two speeches, composed in reply to Cicero's *In toga candida*, one ascribed to Catiline, the other to Gaius Antonius, and touches also on the circulation of forged orations falsely attributed to Cicero's competitors (Asc. 93–94C: *Huic orationi Ciceronis et Catilina et Antonius contumeliose responderunt, quod solum poterant, inuecti in nouitatem eius. Feruntur quoque orationes nomine illorum editae, non ab ipsis scriptae sed ab Ciceronis obtrectatoribus: quas nescio an satius sit ignorare, "Catiline and Antonius replied to this speech of Cicero in an insulting manner; they attacked his 'newness', as this was the only instrument of criticism they had. There are in circulation also speeches published in their names, not composed by them but by detractors of Cicero, which I presume it would be better to ignore", translation Lewis 2006).*

²⁴ Peirano 2012b, 10.

²⁵ For a discussion of these texts, see Keeline and Bishop in this volume.

²⁶ For the letter as a 'hyper-Ciceronian' text, a mosaic of various aspects of Ciceronian language and motifs, to be dated presumably to Late Antiquity, see Van der Velden in this volume.

²⁷ On the importance of these pseudepigraphic sources to the reception of Cicero, see Keeline 2018, 147–151.

last but not least, the *Inuectiua in Ciceronem* ascribed to Sallust and Cicero's purported reply, the *Inuectiua in Sallustium*, both of them spurious scholastic exercises in the form of *prosopopoeiae*, originated in the Augustan declamation rooms, conventional invectives exploiting Sallust's perceived hostility to Cicero.²⁸ But Lucan did something more. He inserted his own recreation of Cicero's historical legacy into a larger, more complex consideration of the causes of Rome's collapse. He re-interpreted the role of Cicero in the decline of the Roman aristocratic Republic within his desolate vision of Roman history. In answering a crucial question left open in the biography of the orator, Lucan reconfigured a new Cicero, probably an unhistorical Cicero but a Cicero who certainly played not a secondary role in the downfall of Roman free Republic.

Cicero after Pharsalus: warmonger or man of peace?

As mentioned above, Lucan's judgment about Cicero is not isolated in early imperial literature. It points to a feature of 'Cicerokarikatur' (to use Zieliński's words) that pervaded the earlier reception of Cicero.²⁹ Not a few blamed Cicero for mishandling the political crisis of the 40s. Turning to the theme proper of the volume, the years 44/43 BCE, Cicero's self-construction as a man of peace and defender of Republican freedom against Mark Antony's tyrannical power was received with much scepticism by political enemies and obtrectatores, who depicted Cicero instead as an unscrupulous politician led by ambition and his extreme passion for glory, intent only on self-aggrandizement and incapable of pondering the risks of civil conflict. As is well known, Asinius Pollio, a strenuous partisan of Caesar and sympathetic to Antony, deemed the "most hostile to Cicero's glory" (infestissimus famae Ciceronis) by Seneca the Elder (Suas. 6.14), defamed Cicero by pointing to his cowardice and political negligence. Pollio's defence of the candidate for praetorship in 42 BCE, L. Aelius Lamia, contained pungent comments on Cicero's flawed political strategy. It was filled with "much more ignoble accusations" (alia sordidiora multo), so false that Pollio himself never had the effrontery to insert them into his *Histories* (Suas. 6.15). A good part of this anti-Ciceronian material was later used and manipulated by the Greek historian Cassius

²⁸ In general, on the pseudo-Sallustian invectives see Novokhatko 2009 (cf. also Santangelo 2012). For the recreation of Cicero's figure in the declamation schools, see now Keeline 2018, 102-140 (cf. also La Bua 2019, 103-108).

²⁹ Zieliński 1929, esp. 11–18.

Dio,³⁰ who built on the *Philippics* to compose Fufius Calenus' reply to Cicero (46.1–28) and capitalized on the rift between Cicero and Antony to convey his personal views on the downfall of the Roman Republic.³¹

Let us dwell on Calenus' speech for a moment, which brings us to one of the most famous events of Cicero's political career after the Ides of March. The senatorial debate on January 1st-3rd, 43 BCE, chaired by the new consuls A. Hirtius and C. Vibius Pansa in the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, was a significant moment in the catastrophic confrontation between the orator and Antony, Replying to the consular Q. Fufius Calenus' proposal for an embassy to be sent to Mark Antony, who was at the moment besieging Decimus Brutus at Mutina in Cisalpine Gaul, Cicero called (in what is for us the fifth *Philippic*) for an immediate declaration of war against the hostis publicus Antony. In Cassius Dio the meeting of the Senate is opened by Cicero's speech (which occupies the chapters 18 – 47 of Book 45), an articulated discourse that draws directly from the *Philippics* (in addition to exploiting Thucydidean-Demosthenic material).32 In his endeavour to convince the senators to wage war against the new tyrant and support Octavian's politics, Cicero recalls his speech in favour of amnesty in the Senate's meeting after the death of Caesar (see below p. 92) and depicts himself as a man of peace and concord, a supporter of the concordia ordinum, portraying Antony, by contrast, as fomenter of disorder and destroyer of Caesar's acta:

Σκοπεῖτε δέ· ἐψηφίσασθε τήν τε εἰρήνην καὶ τὴν ὁμόνοιαν τὴν πρὸς ἀλλήλους, ἐμοὶ πεισθέντες. Ταύτην οὖτος πρυτανεῦσαι κελευσθεὶς οὕτω διῆχε πρόφασιν τὴν τοῦ Καίσαρος ταφὴν ποιησάμενος, ὥστε πᾶσαν μὲν τὴν πόλιν ὀλίγου καταπρησθῆναι, παμπόλλους δὲ αὖθις φονευθῆναι. Ἐβεβαιώσατε πάντα τὰ δοθέντα τισὶ καὶ νομοθετηθέντα πρὸς τοῦ Καίσαρος, οὐχ ὡς καλῶς πάντ' ἔχοντα (πολλοῦ γε καὶ δεῖ), ἀλλ' ὅτι μηδὲν αὐτῶν μετακινηθῆναι συνέφερεν, ὅπως ἀνυπόπτως χωρὶς ὑπούλου τινὸς ἀλλήλοις συνῶμεν. Τούτων ἐξεταστὴς οὖτος γενόμενος πολλὰ μὲν τῶν πραχθέντων ὑπ' αὐτοῦ καταλέλυκε, πολλὰ δὲ ἕτερα ἀντεγγέγραφε.³³

Consider a moment. Through my influence you voted that there should be peace and harmony amongst you. This man, when he was ordered to manage the business, performed it in such a way, taking Caesar's funeral as a pretext, that almost the whole city was burned

³⁰ Gabba 1957; on Dio's speeches see Millar 1961 and 1964. For Calenus' speech in Dio Cass. 36.31–36 (and the Greek historian's treatment of Cicero's *De lege Manilia*), see Rodgers 2008.

³¹ Burden-Strevens 2015; Fomin 2016 (on the connection between Dio's speeches and the *progymnasmata*). On Dio's speeches as a means of persuasion and the historian's use of rhetoric to reflect on the causes of the collapse of the Republic, see Burden-Strevens 2016.

³² The speech (and Dio's use of the Ciceronian sources) is well examined by Burden-Strevens 2018. See also Burden-Strevens 2015, 58 – 70. On the speech as a "patchwork" that "breathes the spirit" of Cicero's invectives, see Keeline 2018, 178. See also Montecalvo 2014, 339 – 406.

³³ Dio Cass. 45.23.4 – 5. Translation Cary 1916.

down and once more great numbers were slaughtered. You ratified all the grants made to various persons and all the laws laid down by Caesar, not because they were all excellent—far from it!—but because it was inadvisable to make any change in them, if we were to live together free from suspicion and without malice. This man, appointed to examine into Caesar's acts, has abolished many of them and has substituted many others in the documents.

Calenus purports to respond to Cicero by formulating an attack *ad hominem* that takes into account both his public and private life.³⁴ Notably, at the outset of his reply Calenus insists on Cicero's responsibility in creating a climate of hostility and preventing any form of reconciliation between Caesar and Pompey:

Οὐδὲ γὰρ ἄλλο γε οὐδὲν διαπρᾶξαι βούλεται ἢ ἵνα ἡμεῖς, τὸ τὰ ἀσφαλέστατα τῷ κοινῷ προϊδεῖν ἀφέντες, στασιάσωμεν αὖθις. Τοῦτο γὰρ οὐ νῦν πρῶτον ποιεῖ, ἀλλὰ ἀπ' ἀρχῆς, ἀφ' οὖπερ πρὸς τὴν πολιτείαν προσῆλθεν, ἄνω καὶ κάτω ταράττων διατετέλεκεν. Ἡ γὰρ οὐχ οὖτός ἐστιν ὁ τόν τε Καίσαρα τῷ Πομπηίῳ συγκρούσας καὶ τὸν Πομπήιον τῷ Καίσαρι καταλλαγῆναι κωλύσας; Ὁ πείσας μὲν ὑμᾶς ἐκεῖνα κατὰ ἀντωνίου ψηφίσασθαι δι' ὧν παρώξυνε τὸν Καίσαρα, πείσας δὲ τὸν Πομπήιον τήν τε Ἰταλίαν ἐκλιπεῖν καὶ ἐς τὴν Μακεδονίαν μετοικῆσαι; Ὅπερ που αἰτιώτατον πάντων τῶν μετὰ ταῦτα συμβάντων ἡμῖν κακῶν ἐγένετο. Οὐχ οὖτός ἐστιν ὁ τόν τε Κλώδιον διὰ Μίλωνος ἀποκτείνας καὶ τὸν Καίσαρα διὰ Βρούτου φονεύσας; Ὁ τόν τε Κατιλίναν ἐκπολεμώσας ἡμῖν καὶ τὸν Λέντουλον ἄκριτον ἀπολέσας; ³5

For the purpose he wishes to accomplish is nothing else than that we should give up providing for the greatest safety of the commonwealth and fall into discord once more. Indeed, it is not the first time he has done this, but from the outset, ever since he entered politics, he has been continually turning things topsy-turvy. Is he not the one who embroiled Caesar with Pompey and prevented Pompey from becoming reconciled with Caesar? Or the one, again, who persuaded you to pass that vote against Antony by which he angered Caesar, and persuaded Pompey to leave Italy and transfer his quarters to Macedonia, a course which proved the chief cause of all the evils that subsequently befell us? Is he not the one who killed Clodius by the hand of Milo and slew Caesar by the hand of Brutus? The one who made Catiline hostile to us and put Lentulus to death without a trial?

Once again, similarly to what happens in Lucan, the anti-Ciceronian propaganda reverses Cicero's political slogans related to the importance of the *consensus omnium bonorum* and harmony in the state, a principle strictly connected to the *cum dignitate otium* slogan. Dio's Calenus exploits—and in a certain sense mocks—Cicero's alleged attitude to peace, manipulating (like Lucan) the traditional image of Cicero as an advocate of concord and political union between the most repre-

³⁴ In Appian's *Civil War* it is Piso who pronounces his invective response against Cicero (*B Ciu.* 3.203 – 248).

³⁵ Dio Cass. 46.2.1-3.

sentative figures of the *res publica*. Yet, it should be noted that while in Lucan it is Cicero himself who gives voice to his own inconsistency, in Cassius Dio the orator is lampooned by a political opponent, as demanded by historical truth.³⁶ By contrast, Lucan's poetic fake breaks with the rules of historical narrative and creates a personage who displays his internal contradictions by his own voice.

Lucan and imperial historiography: historical and ethical assessment of Cicero's political role

From Lucan to Cassius Dio, it appears then that at least some Roman and Greek historians, philosophers and poets challenged Cicero's self-fashioning as a peaceful, conservation-minded politician. In order to reconstruct key moments of the Roman Republic they revisited the part played by Cicero in the decline of Republican freedom and the subsequent ratification of the imperial regime. This point may be further clarified if we turn to Cicero himself and his self-advertising policy for a moment. Inner conflicts and turmoil in the years preceding the outbreak of the civil war compelled Cicero to take a conciliatory approach to opposing parties, while at the same time he propagated an image of himself as a principled and trustworthy politician. Peace and political harmony were central to this self-promotion campaign. Evidence of this comes from a passage of the second *Philippic*. On the charge of causing the rupture of the political alliance between Pompey and Caesar and so determining the outbreak of the Civil War, Cicero protests that he has always favoured reconciliation and concord and tried to negotiate a durable peace:

Quod uero dicere ausus es, idque multis uerbis, opera mea Pompeium a Caesaris amicitia esse diiunctum ob eamque causam culpa mea bellum ciuile esse natum, in eo non tu quidem tota re, sed, quod maximum est, temporibus errasti. Ego M. Bibulo, praestantissimo ciue, consule, nihil praetermisi, quantum facere enitique potui, quin Pompeium a Caesaris coniunctione auocarem. In quo Caesar felicior fuit. Ipse enim Pompeium a mea familiaritate diiunxit. Postea uero quam se totum Pompeius Caesari tradidit, quid ego illum ab eo distrahere conarer? Stulti erat sperare, suadere impudentis. Duo tamen tempora inciderunt, quibus aliquid contra Caesarem Pompeio suaserim. Ea uelim reprehendas, si potes, unum, ne quinquennii imperium Caesari prorogaret, alterum, ne pateretur ferri, ut absentis eius ratio haberetur. Quorum si utrumuis persuasissem, in has miserias numquam incidissemus. Atque idem ego, cum iam opes omnis et suas et populi Romani Pompeius ad Caesarem detulisset seroque ea sentire coepisset, quae multo ante prouideram, inferrique patriae bellum uiderem nefarium, pacis, concordiae, compositionis auctor esse non destiti, meaque

illa uox est nota multis: "Vtinam, Pompei, cum Caesare societatem aut numquam coisses aut numquam diremisses! Fuit alterum grauitatis, alterum prudentiae tuae". Haec mea, M. Antoni, semper et de Pompeio et de re publica consilia fuerunt. Quae si ualuissent, res publica staret, tu tuis flagitiis, egestate, infamia concidisses.³⁷

You further dared to say, and at great length, that detaching Pompeius from Caesar's friendship was my work and that therefore it was my fault that the Civil War broke out. In this you were not entirely wrong, but you were wrong about the timing, which is all-important. In the consulship of that outstanding citizen Marcus Bibulus I did everything I could, no effort spared, to wean Pompeius from his alliance with Caesar. But Caesar had the better luck: he detached Pompeius from his intimacy with me. But after Pompeius had put himself entirely in Caesar's hands, why should I try to draw him away? I would have been folly to hope for that, impertinence to advise it. However, there were two occasions when I advised Pompeius against Caesar's interests, and you may blame me if you can: one when I advised him not to extend Caesar's five-year command, the other when I cautioned him against letting through the proposal that Caesar should be permitted to stand for office in absentia. If he had listened to me on either point, we would never have fallen on these evil times. But after Pompeius had already put all his own resources and those of the Roman people at Caesar's disposal and begun too late to feel the truth of what I had long before foreseen, when I saw that a wicked war was threatening our native land, I never ceased advocating peace, concord, composition. There is a widely known saying of mine: "Gnaeus Pompeius, if only you had either never gone into partnership with Gaius Caesar or never dissolved it! The first course would have befitted you as a man of principle, the second as a man of prudence". Such, Marcus Antonius, was the advice I gave over the years concerning Pompeius and concerning the Republic. Had it prevailed, the Republic would still stand, and you would have been brought low by your scandalous behaviour, your poverty and infamy.

The passage points to a central motif of Antony's propaganda, that is, the portrait of Cicero as a power-hungry politician, never ceasing to long for political violence and fragmentation in order to gain visibility and reinforce his status as preserver of the Republican ideals. Cicero's concern over self-esteem forced him to respond to charges of violence, reinforcing his consolidated image as the ideal magistrate, favourably disposed towards peace proposals and political harmony. Ramsey opportunely reminds us of Cicero's several attempts at portraying himself as responsible and cooperative in his private correspondence.³⁸ In *Fam.* 6.6.5 – 6, a letter written to A. Caecina in the latter half of 46, Cicero laments Pompey's refusal to heed his advice and warnings, based (as always) on a tactful consideration of current political conditions, a point reiterated in the mentioned passage of the invective against Antony.³⁹ In *Att.* 8.2.1 the orator requests his

³⁷ Phil. 2.23 – 24. Translation Shackleton Bailey 2009.

³⁸ Ramsey 2003, 195-198.

³⁹ Cf. also Cic. Att. 7.3.5; 11.11A.2; Fam. 4.1.1; 4.14.2; 6.21.1; 7.3.2; 8.17.1; 16.11.2; Marcell. 15.

friend to read (and approve of) his appeal for the return of concord between the two political competitors.

Cicero's effort to preserve his image of peaceful magistrate left its traces, of course, in later sources. Plutarch, in his *Life of Cicero* 37, calls attention to Cicero's willingness to force Pompey and Caesar to agree to a lasting peace. The argument is reiterated in his *Life of Caesar* 31.2 and *Life of Pompey* 59.5 – 6. Velleius Paterculus blames Curio for breaking the truce, praising at the same time the spirit of cooperation showed by Cicero and the two political enemies. Yet, as we have seen, Cicero's self-construction as man of peace was also a target of criticism in epics and historiography. Within a large-scale meditation on the events following the assassination of Caesar, later authors interrogated the role played by the Republican orator and statesman in the confrontation between political conservatism, embodied in Pompey's virtues and actions, and change of rule, the constitutional reform promoted by Caesar and seen as the beginning of a tyrannical regime. Needless to say, the judgment about Cicero's politics depended on the evaluation of the factors that impacted on the downfall of the Roman *res publica*.

But not only Cicero as a politician during the civil strife was scrutinized and revisited in relation with the advent of the Augustan power and the failure of the free Republic. His whole career, his absence of wisdom, his excess of self-confidence and vanity, and, above all, his very limited contribution to Roman political culture due to his ambition—all this was at the very centre of the debate over Cicero's political legacy in the early Empire. Roman and Greek historians such as Velleius Paterculus, Valerius Maximus, Plutarch, Appian and Cassius Dio all paid homage to Cicero's excellence in rhetoric, yet no one offered Cicero as *exemplum* of political sensibility and moral virtues. ⁴¹ Instead, his political and forensic activity, as a model of deceptive Republican oratory, was evaluated critically in ethical and moral terms. Not all of Cicero was to be reproached, of course. His handling of the Catilinarian conspiracy constituted a positive moment in the political career of the *homo nouus* from Arpinum, as emerges for instance in Cassius Dio,

⁴⁰ Vell. Pat. 2.48.5: *Ad ultimum saluberrimas coalescentis condiciones pacis, quas et Caesar iustissimo animo postulabat et Pompeius aequo recipiebat,* [sc. *Curio*] *discussit et rupit, unice cauente Cicerone concordiae publicae* ("Finally, when a truce was on the point of being concluded in terms of the most salutary character, terms which were demanded in a spirit of the utmost fair-mindedness by Caesar and accepted by Pompey without protest, it was in the end broken and shattered by Curio in spite of Cicero's extraordinary efforts to preserve harmony in the state", translation Shipley 1924). Cf. also App. *B Ciu.* 2.145. On Velleius Paterculus' portrait of Cicero, see Schmitzer 2000, 184–189.

⁴¹ Gowing 2013.

especially in the Philiscus-consolation (38.18–29; cf. also 37.34.1).⁴² Yet, moral appraisals intertwined with political considerations. As recently reasserted, in Cicero's biography Plutarch tends to link the precipitous fall of the Republican statesman to his innate ambition and love for power, reaching its peak in the unwise attachment to the young Octavian—a choice dictated by his desire for glory and thereby destined to end in a political suicide.⁴³ For Plutarch, Cicero's political failure symbolizes the absence of self-control and self-knowledge, virtues reputed as essential to political stability and success.

Similarly, in Cassius Dio's presentation of Cicero's political career before the Ides of March Cicero is depicted as impetuous, lacking in restraint, and affected by excess of φιλονεικία. Like Plutarch and other historians, Cassius Dio adopted different approaches to Cicero's politics, too (see for a positive evaluation below). But one point seems quite clear. To Dio's eyes, Cicero symbolized the gradual decline of the *res publica*. As has been observed, by composing and placing orations at points of major political crisis Dio elaborated on ethical problems and saw individuals' desire for absolute power (*imperii consuetudo*) and ϕ 6όνος, envy and hostility, within the competitive senatorial aristocracy as key factors in the collapse of the Roman Republic. In this perspective, Cicero was central to Dio's moralistic-historical discourse.⁴⁴

Cicero's amnesty speech

So far, we have concentrated mostly on Cassius Dio's critical evaluation (and, in Calenus' speech, even blatant criticism) of Cicero. However, with Cicero's speech against Calenus we have already seen that this was not the only image available to the Greek historian. As stated above, Dio was interested in contrasting positive and negative images of the same figure in order to trigger the moral questions that informed his narrative. In the last part of this chapter, I will turn to another

⁴² Gowing 1998.

⁴³ Plut. Cic. 46.1: Ένταῦθα μέντοι μάλιστα Κικέρων ἐπαρθεὶς ὑπὸ νέου γέρων καὶ φενακισθεὶς καὶ συναρχαιρεσιάσας καὶ παρασχών αὐτῷ τὴν σύγκλητον εὐθὺς μὲν ὑπὸ τῶν φίλων αἰτίαν εἶχεν, ὀλίγῳ δ' ὕστερον αὐτὸν ἀπολωλεκὼς ἤσθετο καὶ τοῦ δήμου προέμενος τὴν ἐλευθερίαν. ("Here, indeed, more than at any other time, Cicero was led on and cheated, an old man by a young man. He assisted Caesar in his canvass and induced the senate to favour him. For this he was blamed by his friends at the time, and shortly afterwards he perceived that he had ruined himself and betrayed the liberty of the people", transl. Perrin 1919). Cf. Benecker 2016.

⁴⁴ Gowing 1992a, 244 notes correctly that "Dio inserted speeches into his *History* only when there was a political or ethical issue that interested him and that he believed would instruct his reader".

instance where Dio reflects a more positive image of Cicero, and will therefore briefly re-examine Cicero's speech on amnesty (44.23–33). It is a "pro-democracy" text,⁴⁵ which sheds further light on the debate about Cicero's position in the aftermath of Caesar's death and the part he played in the permanence of Caesar's legacy and the process of temporal political reunification.

Preliminarily, it should be observed that the amnesty speech conveys an image of Cicero as a dedicated politician, who refuses violence as a means of achieving political superiority. The speech, like the other speeches of Dio, has attracted considerable interest from modern scholars in the last decades. Much scholarship has been devoted to investigating Dio's intents, his use of Ciceronian sources as well as his manipulation of rhetorical commonplaces, and the relevance of the speech to the interpretation of the causes of the civil war. Here my aim is rather to observe the speech from a different perspective, that is, as a piece of Ciceronian propaganda, a text that, however it might have been composed, assembles true Ciceronian passages and, in Thucydidean and Demosthenic forms, presents the orator in a favourable light, as a politician dedicated to the common interest, albeit lacking in political wisdom.

Cicero himself provides us with the historical and political background of his speech on peace and amnesty (*De pace ad senatum*), delivered to the Senate, which had been convened in the temple of Tellus by Antony two days after the death of Caesar (i.e. on March 17th). ⁴⁷ In the beginning of the first *Philippic* he reminds the senators of his willingness to settle the enmities by means of a general amnesty:

Ego cum sperarem aliquando ad uestrum consilium auctoritatemque rem publicam esse reuocatam, manendum mihi statuebam quasi in uigilia quadam consulari ac senatoria. Nec uero usquam discedebam nec a re publica deieciebam oculos ex eo die quo in aedem Telluris conuocati sumus, in quo templo, quantum in me fuit, ieci fundamenta pacis Atheniensiumque renouaui uetus exemplum; Graecum etiam uerbum usurpaui quo tum in sedandis discordiis usa erat ciuitas illa, atque omnem memoriam discordiarum obliuione sempiterna delendam censui.⁴⁸

Hoping, as I did, that the Republic had at last been restored to your guidance and authority, I took the view that I ought to stay on a vigil, so to speak, of the sort that befits a consular and a senator. In fact, from that day on which we were summoned to the Temple of Tellus, neither did I withdraw anywhere from, nor did I take my eyes off public affairs. In that tem-

⁴⁵ Burden-Strevens 2015, 138. On the speech, see Montecalvo 2014, 305 – 337.

⁴⁶ Millar 1961, 1964; Gowing 1992a, 225 – 244.

⁴⁷ Crawford 1984, 244–247. On the amnesty debate in 15th-century commentaries on the *Philippics*, see Pieper in this volume.

⁴⁸ *Phil.* 1.1: cf. also 1.16 and 2.90 – 91.

ple, so far as was in my power, I laid the foundations of peace and revived the ancient Athenian precedent, even adopting the Greek term that was used by that community in laying their quarrels to rest at that time; that is, I proposed that all recollection of disputes should be obliterated and forgotten for all time.

Cicero's speech stands out for the manipulative use of the famous Athenian exemplum of amnesty of 403 BCE, a historical precedent that the orator could easily rely on (by analogy) to persuade the Senate of the absolute necessity of peace and political stability. ⁴⁹ Cassius Dio's speech has its origin in Cicero's statement and enlarges upon the vision of Rome as plagued by civil discord, pointing to the deleterious effects of political instability. Divided into an exordial description of the current status of civil strife and an ample *narratio*—in line with rhetorical theory essentially based on the enumeration of *exempla* drawn from Roman history (both positive and negative)—the speech includes a sort of history of civil wars. Dio's Cicero, consistent with Cicero's self-presentation (as we know him from the *Philippics* and other orations), reminds the senators of the importance of *exempla* to the analysis of the present circumstances and advocates political compromise.

A further point deserves consideration here. In *Phil.* 1.2 Cicero pronounces a eulogy of Antony's speech on peace, a "fine discourse" (praeclara oratio), in which Antony showed "outstanding goodwill" (egregia uoluntas). So, Cicero's speech on the amnesty might be regarded as a reply to what Antony had already said about peace and civic settlement. This leads us to reconsider the vexed issue of the composition of Dio's text. Although there is no doubt that Cicero delivered a speech about amnesty, we have no evidence about its structure and form, with the only exception of the use of the Greek exemplum of amnesty. Whether voluntarily suppressed by its author (and not published) or lost by textual accidents, the text as we read it in Dio's *History* appears as a free composition by the Greek historian, who made use of different Ciceronian sources to provide his readers with a 'true' Ciceronian oration.⁵⁰ Yet nothing prevents us from suggesting an alternative, namely that the speech was composed as a pseudepigraphon by a declaimer or an anonymous compiler as a response to Antony's oration or rather as a rebuttal of anti-Ciceronian material circulating in the rhetorical schools. Dio might have had knowledge of Cicero's speech (believed to be authentic) and inserted it into his history (not refusing to make substantial changes or revisions). The issue remains open to debate. What emerges from the text is a positive portrait of Cicero. The speech represents a not negligible piece of Ciceronian pro-

⁴⁹ Cf. also Vell. Pat. 2.58.4; App. *B Ciu*. 2.142; HA *Aurel*. 39.4; Oros. 7.6.5.

⁵⁰ Millar 1964, 51–52.

paganda. It adds an invaluable perspective to the controversy over the part played by Cicero in the violent transition from the Republic to the absolute power of the *princeps*.

Conclusion

To conclude, Lucan's historical epic poem about the civil war of 49 – 45 BCE and Cassius Dio's speeches, in particular the oratorical confrontation between Cicero and Calenus and Cicero's speech on amnesty, are different faces of a two-sided debate on Cicero's political activity in the last years of the Republic. As Gowing notes, "Lucan creates a scene in which the man most closely identified as the voice, if not the soul, of the Republic is made to confront the man whose defeat at the hands of Caesar ensure the Republic's demise". In similar tones yet with different intents, Cassius Dio recreates—and fictionalizes—the fierce debate about the figure of Cicero and Antony in Calenus' speech; in contrast, in the oration about amnesty he reconfigures 'another', a peaceful Cicero. The twofold representation of the famous orator and statesman serves Dio as a symbol of the precarious state of the Republican regime.

Cicero's claim to moral authority and his self-portrait as man of peace were at the very heart of the historical revisitation and interpretation of the end of the Roman Republic. By restaging the voice of the master of the Roman language and engaging it in often hateful debates with contrasting voices, later historians questioned the relevance of the ideals of peace and political concord to the downfall of republicanism and the emergence of the Roman Principate.