

The Intellectual Climate of Cassius Dio

# Historiography of Rome and Its Empire

## *Series Editors*

Carsten Hjort Lange, *Aalborg, Denmark*

Jesper Majbom Madsen, *SDU, Denmark*

## *Editorial Board*

Rhiannon Ash, *Oxford, UK*

Christopher Baron, *Notre Dame, USA*

Henning Börm, *Bochum, Germany*

Jessica H. Clark, *Florida State University, USA*

Cynthia Damon, *University of Pennsylvania, USA*

Alain Gowing, *University of Washington, USA*

Lisa Irene Hau, *Glasgow, UK*

Adam Kemezis, *Alberta, Canada*

Christina S. Kraus, *Yale, USA*

J.E. Lendon, *University of Virginia, USA*

David Levene, *New York University, USA*

Christopher Mallan, *The University of Western Australia*

Steve Mason, *Groningen, Netherlands*

Josiah Osgood, *Georgetown, USA*

John Rich, *Nottingham, UK*

Cristina Rosillo-López, *Sevilla, Spain*

Federico Santangelo, *Newcastle, UK*

Andrew G. Scott, *Villanova University, USA*

Christopher Smith, *St Andrews, UK*

Catherine Steel, *Glasgow, UK*

Frederik J. Vervaeke, *Melbourne, Australia*

David Wardle, *Cape Town, South Africa*

Kathryn Welch, *Sydney, Australia*

Johannes Wienand, *Braunschweig, Germany*

## VOLUME 14

The titles published in this series are listed at [brill.com/hre](http://brill.com/hre)

# The Intellectual Climate of Cassius Dio

*Greek and Roman Pasts*

*Edited by*

Adam M. Kemezis

Colin Bailey

Beatrice Poletti

LEIDEN | BOSTON

Cover illustration: Severan Tondo, Altes Museum, Berlin. Art Resource / Antikensammlung, Staatliches Museum, Berlin / Johannes Laurentius / Art Resource, NY.

The Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data is available online at <https://catalog.loc.gov>  
LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2021063120>

Typeface for the Latin, Greek, and Cyrillic scripts: "Brill". See and download: [brill.com/brill-typeface](https://brill.com/brill-typeface).

ISSN 2468-2314

ISBN 978-90-04-51048-7 (hardback)

ISBN 978-90-04-51051-7 (e-book)

Copyright 2022 by Adam M. Kemezis, Colin Bailey and Beatrice Poletti. Published by Koninklijke Brill NV, Leiden, The Netherlands.

Koninklijke Brill NV incorporates the imprints Brill, Brill Nijhoff, Brill Hotei, Brill Schöningh, Brill Fink, Brill mentis, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Böhlau and V&R unipress.

Koninklijke Brill NV reserves the right to protect this publication against unauthorized use. Requests for re-use and/or translations must be addressed to Koninklijke Brill NV via [brill.com](https://brill.com) or [copyright.com](https://copyright.com).

This book is printed on acid-free paper and produced in a sustainable manner.

*For Peter Michael Swan*  
(1931–2021)





# Contents

*Historiography of Rome and Its Empire Series*   XI

*Carsten H. Lange and Jesper M. Madsen*

Acknowledgements   XII

List of Figures and Tables   XIII

Notes on Contributors   XIV

Introduction: Conversations with the Author   1

*Adam M. Kemezis, Colin Bailey and Beatrice Poletti*

## PART 1

### *Political Theory and Commentary*

1   Dio and Pompey: Explaining the Failure of the Republic   33

*David S. Potter*

2   “Safety First”: Cassius Dio on the Augustan Senate   59

*Jonathan Scott Perry*

3   Cassius Dio and the Ideal Constitution   80

*Jasper Majbom Madsen*

4   Monarchy as “True Democracy” in Cassius Dio and the Second Sophistic  
Authors: Irony, Utopia, or Ideal?   109

*Konstantin V. Markov*

5   *Antoninum habemus, omnia habemus*: The *nomen Antoninorum* Issue  
between the *Historia Augusta* and Cassius Dio   138

*Antonio Pistellato*

## PART 2

### *Rome and the Imperial Court*

6   Contested Constructions: Cassius Dio and the Framing of Female  
Participation as Builders   173

*Karin S. Tate*

- 7 Dio and the Dowager Empresses, Part 2: Julia Domna, the Senate, and Succession 198  
*Julie Langford*
- 8 Cassius Dio and the Ritual of the Imperial Admission 226  
*Mads Ortving Lindholmer*
- 9 Cassius Dio and the *Imitatio Alexandri* 253  
*Frances Pownall*
- 10 Cassius Dio, Julia Maesa and the Omens Foretelling the Rise of Elagabalus and Severus Alexander 279  
*Riccardo Bertolazzi*
- 11 Imperial Fortunes: Portents, Prodigies and Dio's Astrology of the State 301  
*Selina Stewart*

### PART 3

#### *Literary Heritage*

- 12 The Novel World of Cassius Dio 327  
*Brandon Jones*
- 13 Telling Tales of Macrinus: Strategies of Fiction in Dio's Contemporary History 355  
*Joel Allen*
- 14 Dio and the Failed Politician Cicero 373  
*Robert Porod*
- 15 Cameo Roles: Dio's Portrayal of Earlier Senatorial Historians 401  
*Adam M. Kemezis*



## PART 4

*Hellenic Culture*

- 16 Bilingualism and Authority in Cassius Dio 433  
*Sulochana Asirvatham*
- 17 Cassius Dio's Asia Minor: Biography and Historiography 456  
*Christina T. Kuhn*
- 18 Dio, Severus, and the *Ludi Saeculares* of 204 CE 481  
*Jeremy Rossiter and Bethany Brothers*
- Index 501



# *Historiography of Rome and Its Empire Series*

*Carsten H. Lange and Jesper M. Madsen*

The *Historiography of Rome and Its Empire* series aims to gather innovative and outstanding contributions that identify debates and trends, and in order to help provide a better understanding of ancient historiography, as well as how to approach Roman history and historiography. The series welcomes proposals that look at both Roman and Greek writers as well as manuscripts which focus on individual writers, or individuals in the same tradition. It is timely and valuable to bring these trends and historical sources together in the series, focusing mainly on the Republican period and the Principate, as well as the Later Roman Empire.

Historical writing about Rome in both Latin and Greek forms an integrated topic. There are two strands in ancient writing about the Romans and their empire: (a) the Romans' own tradition of histories of the deeds of the Roman people at home and at war, and (b) Greek historical responses, some developing their own models (Polybius, Josephus) and the others building on what both the Roman historians and earlier Greeks had written (Dionysius, Appian, Cassius Dio). Whereas older scholarship tended to privilege a small group of 'great historians' (the likes of Sallust, Livy, Tacitus), recent work has rightly brought out the diversity of the traditions and recognized that even 'minor' writers are worth exploring not just as sources, but for their own concerns and reinterpretation of their material, as well as their place within the tradition. The study of these historiographical traditions is essential as a counterbalance to the outmoded traditional use of ancient authors as a handy resource, with scholars looking at isolated sections of their structure. This fragmentary use of the ancient evidence makes us forget to reflect on their work in its textual and contextual entirety.

# Acknowledgements

As editors and conference organizers, we have a great many thanks to offer. This volume comes out of a conference titled “Greek and Roman Pasts in the Long Second Century: The Intellectual Climate of Cassius Dio” that was held in Banff, Alberta, at the Buffalo Mountain Lodge on 25–27 May 2018. It was made possible by the International Network for the Study of Cassius Dio and its chief organizers including Carsten Lange, Jesper Madsen, and Josiah Osgood. Through them we enjoyed the support of the Danmarks Frie Forskningsfond. Further funding came from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and, at the University of Alberta, from the Department of History and Classics, the Faculty of Arts Conference Fund, and the Kule Institute.

We would like to thank the Research Office at MacEwan University and the Research Services Office at the University of Alberta, and, in particular, Craig Taylor, for their assistance in preparing the grant applications; David Marples as Chair of the Department of History and Classics at the University of Alberta and Lindsey Rose as Assistant Chair/Administration; and the staff of the Buffalo Mountain Lodge for their unfailing hospitality and occasional forbearance. This volume appears in Brill’s *Historiography of Rome and Its Empire* series, and we are most grateful to Carsten Lange and Jesper Madsen as series editors, and Carsten in particular for his consistent support of the volume through the review and editorial process. Our thanks also go to the staff and anonymous readers at Brill.

In April 2021, during the last stages of editing this volume, we learned with sadness of the passing of Peter Michael Swan (1931–2021) of the University of Saskatchewan. Professor Swan was the leading organizer of a conference on Dio in Saskatoon in 1982 that led to the still active Dio Commentary project. His own portion of that project (*The Augustan Succession: An Historical Commentary on Cassius Dio’s Roman History Books 55–56* [9 BC–AD 14], Oxford, 2004) and his articles on related topics remain indispensable to our understanding of Dio and are much cited in the pages that follow. It was not our good fortune to know or work with Professor Swan, but we dedicate this volume to him in gratitude for his contributions to Dio scholarship and the study of Classics in Western Canada.

*Adam M. Kemezis (University of Alberta)*

*Colin Bailey (MacEwan University)*

*Beatrice Poletti (Queen’s University)*

August, 2021

# Figures and Tables

## Figures

- 18.1 Gold *aureus* of Septimius Severus (*Laetitia Temporum*) issued around the time of the *Ludi Saeculares* ([www.romanumismatics.com](http://www.romanumismatics.com)) 482
- 18.2 The Hadrianic palaestra and baths at Lepcis Magna, with the Severan nymphaeum in the distance (J. Rossiter) 487
- 18.3 The hippodrome at Lepcis Magna with the Antonine starting gates (*carceres*) in the foreground (J. Rossiter) 487
- 18.4 Circus mosaic from Lyon showing the starting gates and presiding officials (Ursus, CC-BY-SA-3.0, via Wikimedia Commons) 492

## Tables

- 7.1 Binary oppositional pairs in elite masculinity and ethical autocracy discourses 202
- 12.1 Dio's travels (214–230 CE) 331
- 12.2 Dio's bandits 343
- 15.1 Historical authors mentioned in Dio 425

## Notes on Contributors

### *Joel Allen*

Professor of History and Classics at Queens College and the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, Joel Allen is the author of *Hostages and Hostage-taking in the Roman Empire* (2006) and *The Roman Republic and the Hellenistic Mediterranean: From Alexander to Caesar* (2020), as well as numerous articles about ethnicity and imperial culture in the Roman world. He is Executive Officer of the History Program at the CUNY Graduate Center.

### *Sulochana R. Asirvatham*

Professor of Classics and General Humanities at Montclair State University (NJ). She has published widely on imperial Greek prose, on the reception of Alexander the Great and the Macedonians, and on Greek fragmentary mythology and historiography from the Classical through the Imperial periods.

### *Colin Bailey (Editor)*

is Associate Professor of Classics at MacEwan University. He has published papers on Dio Chrysostom, Plutarch of Chaeronea, and Roman Republican history. His research interests focus on early imperial Greek literature and interactions between Greece and Rome.

### *Riccardo Bertolazzi*

obtained his PhD in Greek and Roman Studies at the University of Calgary in 2017 and was a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Toronto between 2017 and 2019. He has published numerous articles on social and military matters related to Roman imperial history, with particular focus on epigraphic texts from Italy, North Africa, and the Danubian provinces. As an Assistant Professor at the University of Verona, he has recently published a book on the relationship between Septimius Severus and the cities of the empire.

### *Bethany Brothers*

is currently a sessional instructor of Classics at MacEwan University and at the University of Alberta. In 2020 she graduated with her PhD from the University of British Columbia. Her dissertation, *Spectacles as a Medium for Dynastic Promotion in the Severan Age*, focuses on how the Severan emperors used public spectacles as a way to legitimize their rule and maintain their authority in Rome, something especially important given the tumultuous nature of

the period. Her research interests include Roman provincial archaeology and Roman material culture.

*Brandon Jones*

is Visiting Assistant Professor in Classical Studies at Boston University. He has taught at Millsaps College, the Intercollegiate Center for Classical Studies at Rome, the University of Puget Sound, and the University of Washington, where he received his Ph.D. in 2015. His chief interests lie in historiography, rhetoric, and social and intellectual history of the Roman Empire. He is author of several articles and chapter-length studies on Cassius Dio, Claudian, Ovid, and Tacitus. His forthcoming book explores displays of Greek *paideia* in Latin prose texts (95–120 CE).

*Adam M. Kemezis*

is Associate Professor in the Department of History, Classics, and Religion at the University of Alberta. He is the author of *Greek Narratives of the Roman Empire under the Severans: Cassius Dio, Philostratus and Herodian* (2014) and numerous articles on Roman imperial historiography and history, as well as the Greek culture of the Roman Empire.

*Christina T. Kuhn*

is an Associate Professor and Tutorial Fellow of Ancient History at the Faculty of Classics and Lady Margaret Hall of the University of Oxford. Her research focuses on the history of the Roman Empire, the provincial administration and civic life of imperial Asia Minor, Roman epigraphy and historiography.

*Julie Langford*

is an Associate Professor of Roman History at the University of South Florida. She studies imperial women and the manner in which they were depicted in literature, art, coins and propaganda. She is also interested in ancient religions both in Greece and Rome and in India.

*Mads Ortvig Lindholmer*

is vice-director at the Danish Institute in Rome, where he is working on a project on the interplay between imperial and Christian rituals and how this interplay contributed to imperial power from Constantine the Great to the Justinianic dynasty. He is also currently completing a monograph on the imperial admission (the so-called *salutatio* and *adoratio*), which explores the connection between this ritual and imperial power in the period from the Severans to Late Antiquity. He is the co-editor (with Christopher Burden-Strevens) of *Cassius*

*Dio's Forgotten History of Early Rome: The Roman History, Books 1–21* (2019) and has also published numerous articles and chapters on Cassius Dio.

*Jesper Majbom Madsen*

Associate Professor, University of Southern Denmark, Jesper Madsen is co-editor of Brill's *Historiography of Rome and Its Empire Series*. He is the author of *Eager to be Roman: Greek Response to Roman Rule in Pontus and Bithynia* (2009) and is the co-editor of *Roman Rule in Greek and Latin Writing: Double Vision* (2014). Apart from the co-edited volume *Cassius Dio: Greek Intellectual and Roman Politician* (2016), he has published extensively on Cassius Dio including "Cassius Dio and the Cult of Iulius and Roma at Ephesus and Nicaea (51.20.6–8)" (*Classical Quarterly* 66/1 [2016]) and *Cassius Dio* (2020). His latest book *From Trophy Towns to City-States; Urban Civilization and Cultural Identities in Roman Pontus* (2020) was recently published.

*Konstantin V. Markov*

Associate Professor, Lobachevsky State University of Nizhny Novgorod, Konstantin Markov is the author of a number of articles on Aelius Aristides, Cassius Dio, Flavius Philostratus and Herodian. His research focuses on Roman historiography in general, as well as imperial Roman political culture and the perception of Rome and Roman Empire by Second Sophistic authors. He has contributed to two volumes of the Russian translation of Cassius Dio's Books 51–63 and 64–80 (2011 and 2014) and his work on the translation of Dio's Books 40–45 is in progress. He is currently working, jointly with Adam Kemezis and Alexander Makhilaiuk, on a collection of English translations of Soviet and Russian scholarship on Roman imperial historiography (under preliminary contract with Brill).

*Jonathan Scott Perry*

is an Associate Professor of History at the University of South Florida and is the Book Review Editor for *The Historian*, the official journal of the Phi Alpha Theta National History Honor Society. He is the author of *The Roman Collegia: The Modern Evolution of an Ancient Concept* (Brill, 2006), which explores modern investigations of an ancient Roman institution from Mommsen through Fascist Italy to the present. He is presently engaged in writing another monograph on international opinion concerning Augustus in the 1930s.

*Antonio Pistellato*

is Adjunct Professor of Latin language and literature at Ca' Foscari University in Venice, Italy. He is the author of the monograph *Stirpem nobilitavit honor*.



*La memoria dei Senzi Saturnini tra retorica e storiografia* (2015) and has written several articles on topics ranging from Roman history to Latin literature, with particular focus on Greek and Roman historiography in the imperial period. He is managing editor of *Lexis. Poetica, retorica e comunicazione nella tradizione classica*. Currently, he is working on a monograph on the Republican ideal in imperial Rome down to 284 CE as seen through the lens of the historiographical record.

*Beatrice Poletti (Editor)*

is Adjunct Assistant Professor of Classics at Queen's University. Her research interests include historiography of Rome, Augustan literature, and Roman religion and mythology. She is co-author of 'Hereditas', 'adoptio' *e potere politico in Roma antica* (2011) and has written several articles on Dionysius of Halicarnassus' *Roman Antiquities* and Augustan historiography and religion. She is currently completing a monograph on the characterization of the Roman 'founders' in the *Roman Antiquities*.

*Robert Porod*

Assistant Professor, University of Graz, is the author of *Lukians Schrift 'Wie man Geschichte schreiben soll'. Kommentar und Interpretation* (2013) and several articles on Lucian of Samosata and contemporaries (including "Neue Perspektiven zu Lukians Schrift 'Wie man Geschichte schreiben soll'", *RFIC* 144 [2016] 436–451), as well as on Roman literature under Augustus (including Livy and Ovid), Curtius Rufus and literary sources on Noricum and Arcadia, including "Hellenistische Konstruktionen eines arkadischen Rom" (2018). He is the co-editor, with Markus Hafner, of a special issue of *SAPERE (Scripta Antiquitatis Posterioris ad Ethicam Religionemque pertinentia)* on Lucian's diatribe *De luctu* (*Lukian. Über die Trauer*, forthcoming). His ongoing publication interests include the various modes of didactic Greek prose in symbouleutic speeches, diatribes and *paraineseis*, with a particular focus on Lucian's literary cosmos.

*David S. Potter*

is Francis W. Kelsey Professor of Greek and Roman History and Arthur F. Thurnau Professor at the University of Michigan. Through his teaching and research, he looks to create a dialogue between the past and the present on subjects such as sport, warfare, and dysfunctional political systems. In addition to his latest book, *Disruption: Why Things Change* (2021), looking at typologies of radical change through time, he has recently written on the failure of Roman democracy in his book *The Origin of Empire* (2019).

*Frances Pownall*

is Professor of Classics at the University of Alberta. She has published widely on Greek historiography, and has contributed updated editions, translations, and historical commentaries of fragmentary historians to Brill's New Jacoby. She has recently published *Ancient Macedonians in the Greek and Roman Sources* (co-edited with T. Howe; 2018), *Lexicon of Argead Macedonia* (co-edited with W. Heckel, J. Heinrichs, and S. Müller; 2020), *Affective Relations & Personal Bonds in Hellenistic Antiquity* (co-edited with E.M. Anson and M. D'Agostini; 2020), and *The Courts of Philip II and Alexander the Great* (co-edited with S. Asirvatham and S. Müller; 2022).

*Jeremy Rossiter*

is Professor of Roman Archaeology at the University of Alberta. His main research interest is the archaeology of Roman Africa, in particular the city of Carthage. He has published extensively on the archaeology of Carthage, most recently contributing several papers to the multi-authored volume *For the Love of Carthage* (*Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplementary Series* No. 109, 2020). He has for many years taught courses on Roman spectacles and has always believed in the importance of integrating textual and material evidence in studying the complex cultural make-up of the Roman World.

*Selina Stewart*

Associate Professor at the University of Alberta in the Department of History, Classics, and Religion, Selina Stewart works on intersections of poetry and science in the classical world, with articles on Archaic and Hellenistic poetry, Homer, Callimachus, Apollonius, Aratus of Soli, and ancient acrostics. She is currently at work on a book manuscript on ancient colour categorization and theories of visual perception, and her translation of Nicole Loraux's *Né de la terre* was published as *Born of the Earth* by Cornell University Press in 2000. She received her PhD from Cornell University in Greek Language and Literature in 1997 and regularly teaches Greek and Roman literature and religion.

*Karin S. Tate*

has recently completed her PhD in Classical Archaeology at the University of Alberta. Her dissertation, *With Her Own Money: Female Benefactions, Urban Space, and Power Relationships in Ancient Rome*, focuses on women's building benefactions in Roman Italy and North Africa. Her special research interests are Roman urbanization, women's networks, and the economic, socio-political, and religious contributions of women during the imperial period. Since 2017 she has been teaching at the University of Saskatchewan and is currently lecturing at the University of Alberta.