

7. A Political Biography: Dion Chrysostomos

Family background

For no other local politician of the Roman world do we possess anything approaching the amount of detail at our disposal concerning the life and career of Dion “Chrysostomos”, the golden-mouthed rhetor of the second sophistic in Prusa. For better or for worse, almost all this information comes from Dion himself, in the nearly eighty speeches that have survived down to the present day. Apart from that, scattered information is found in the letters of Pliny, in the *Lives of the Sophists* by Philostratos and in a Byzantine literary history, the *Bibliothèque* of Photios.

By birth, Dion was a third-generation, possibly a fifth-generation, Prusan. His maternal grandfather was a Roman citizen and a wealthy benefactor of the city, spending, if we are to believe Dion, “all that he had inherited from his father and grandfather, until he had nothing left; then acquired a second fortune by learning and from imperial favour”.¹ He was a friend of “the emperor”.² Of the paternal grandfather we know nothing, of his father very little. When Dion mentions his parents together, the father is always mentioned in the inferior position.³ His mother had clearly married below her own status level, and while her family possessed the Roman franchise, the father was almost certainly a *peregrinus*.⁴ Since the maternal grandfather received his Roman citizenship from Claudius, the name of Dion’s mother was Claudia. According to Photios, the father’s first name was Pasikrates.⁵ As the son of a citizen mother and a peregrine father, Dion himself was born a *peregrinus*. If he received his citizenship from Vespasian or Titus, his name will have been (Titus?) Flavius Dion; the additional *cognomen* Cocceianus may have been taken later – it is attested only in Pliny’s correspondence with Trajan⁷ – to advertise his friendship with the emperor Nerva.

Dion’s rural property included vineyards in the farming belt surrounding Prusa and herds of cattle.⁸ Within the city, he owned a town house (presumably inherited from his father) and a row of workshops that he rented out.⁹ Since the workshops were in the part of the city “near the hot springs” (*epi tôn thermôn*) we may take it that Dion’s family residence was also located in this attractive suburban area.

We are furthermore informed by Dion himself that his father’s fortune was “said to be large, but small in value” and combined with the information

that “four hundred thousand [drachmas] were in outstanding debts” without security (*asphaleia*),¹⁰ the conclusion must be that Dion’s father, among his other business activities, was a moneylender of the more speculative sort, offering loans without security at correspondingly high rates. There is no other way to explain how Dion could expect his audience to accept his claim that an inheritance of 400,000 drachmas (equal to 1.6 million HS, four times the equestrian property qualification) was “not large”, even if it had to be divided among Pasikrates’ heirs. The sums originally lent by Dion’s father were no doubt much smaller, but with the rapid accretion of compound interest, the nominal value of the bad debts would soon reach an extravagant level; their real worth was of course far less, as his audience would appreciate.

The picture of Dion’s background that emerges from the scattered autobiographical material may be summarised as follows. Claudia came from one of the city’s leading families; Pasikrates was a *parvenu* who made a considerable fortune for himself by letting houses and lending money rather than by the traditional upper-class occupation of farming. Like Matidianus Pollio (above, p. 109), Pasikrates married upwards and into an established family of Roman citizens. His son Dion grew up in a wealthy suburb near the hot springs, among families that perhaps included some of his father’s debtors. We may imagine that Pasikrates was charismatic, a risk-taker and something of an optimist in economic matters, qualities often found in businessmen and certainly found in his son. His family background could have posed a problem for young Dion. Social climbers are rarely held in high esteem by those already at the top, and money-lenders tend to be feared rather than respected by their neighbours. As the son of an *arriviste*, the relationship of the young Dion to his contemporaries was perhaps not an easy one. It may be significant that as far as we know, Dion did not find his wife among the upper class of Prusa.

Nonetheless, when Pasikrates died and the estate passed into the hands of his children,¹¹ Dion made a determined attempt to fill his rôle as a member of Prusa’s municipal élite. He ran for public office and undertook several liturgies, even some of the more onerous ones.¹² In public and possibly also in private, he identified himself with the ideology of Prusa’s landowning class. This comes out very clearly in the earliest of his extant municipal orations, addressed to the *ekklêsia* during a grain shortage in Prusa. The choice of arguments reflects the traditional patronising arrogance of the wealthy squire: I am not nearly as rich as you think; I have already borne my share of the burden on earlier occasions; the high grain price is not unreasonable and there are other cities where it is always that high; true need leads to wisdom (*sophrosynê*).¹³

From imperial favour to exile

Not long after, Dion left his hometown for Rome. Of his life in the capital we know comparatively little.¹⁴ He studied with the Stoic philosopher Mu-

sonius Rufus and moved in the highest circles of society where he made the acquaintance of the later emperor Nerva, the emperor Titus and the latter's cousin, T. Flavius Sabinus. Early in the reign of Domitian, Flavius Sabinus fell from grace and was executed. His friend Dion was brought down with him but escaped with a sentence of *relegatio* and *interdictio certorum locorum*. This, the mildest form of exile, banned him from Rome and his native province but left him otherwise free to travel.¹⁵ The thirteenth oration of Dion is devoted to his exile, and here, he relates how in the course of his wanderings he visited the oracle at Delphi. Encouraged by Apollon, he turned away from the sophistic activities of his youth and followed the vocation of an itinerant philosopher.¹⁶ Most modern scholars reject the story of Dion's philosophical conversion as fictional and with it, the division of his work into a "sophistic" and a "philosophical" phase. But assuming that Dion made this story up, he may have been motivated by a self-awareness that his outlook had changed over time and a perceived need to justify the difference in between his earlier and later writings. Given his traumatic experiences in Rome and during fifteen years of exile, it is not surprising that he should have reached a different perception of the human condition, even if this was not the fruit of a divinely inspired conversion.

One field where a clear difference between the pre-exilic and the post-exilic Dion is clearly visible is in his attitude to local politics. When Dion returns to Prusa, he no longer identifies himself with the municipal elite and makes no attempt to win a place for himself in the political *agôn*; on the contrary, he assumes the role of the philosopher-advisor and, apart from heading an embassy to Rome, does not undertake any municipal office. Why?

The banal explanation would be that on his return to Prusa, Dion *could* not resume his place in the city's political class because he did not have sufficient funds to undertake liturgies. Indeed, in a later speech, he complains that his property had been ruined, his land seized and his slaves allowed to escape during his exile.¹⁷ Yet his sister was living in Prusa and would surely have kept an eye on the family property,¹⁸ and Dion makes no mention of his personal financial troubles until, some years after his return, he is challenged to meet his *pollicitatio* for a building project.

It seems more likely that to Dion, the meeting with Roman high society had been an eye-opener, revealing that the exalted status that the magnates of Prusa enjoyed, and to which his father had aspired, counted for very little in the wider context of the Empire. The estate of a millionaire like Pasikrates was impressive in its own right and even when compared with an Italian multi-millionaire like the younger Pliny (whose total assets perhaps amounted to 10 million HS) – but it was puny compared with the enormous fortunes amassed by Seneca or by Claudius' freedman secretary, Pallas. Wealth on this scale was not accumulated through farming or moneylending, but by exploiting the favour of the emperor. Dion's self-confidence was matched by his ambition, and he may well have dreamed of creating a fortune of his own

“by imperial favour” as his grandfather had done. When the fall of Flavius Sabinus destroyed these hopes, Dion’s reaction followed the classic Aesopian pattern: he renounced what he could not attain, and chose the *persona* of a wandering philosopher for himself. In this sense, there may be some substance to the story of Dion’s “conversion” – and it would not be unlike Dion to transform the tale of his failure at Rome into a narrative of divine inspiration at Delphi.

Return

When Domitian died in September 96, Dion’s *relegatio* was revoked. The Prusans gave him a warm welcome, as can be seen from his forty-fourth oration, given some time after his return and probably in the spring or summer of 97.¹⁹ Dion opens with a quotation from Homer, “nothing is sweeter than one’s native land”,²⁰ and goes on to praise his fellow-citizens and express his gratitude for the honours they have proposed. As far as we can judge from this and his later orations,²¹ Dion never made any attempt to stand for public office or undertake municipal liturgies in Prusa. Of course, the junior liturgies – e.g., gymnasiarch or agoranomos – would hardly be relevant for someone of his age and social standing (and in any case, he may have filled some of these before his exile).²² One would have imagined, however, that the post of agonothete, with its opportunities for public display and oratory, might have appealed to him. Even more surprisingly, for all his efforts to transcend the stifling confines of small-town politics, there is no evidence that he was active within the *koinon*.

He did, however, assume a task for which he – philosopher, rhetor, cosmopolite and friend of the emperor – was singularly qualified: leading a municipal embassy to Rome. The forty-fourth oration was presumably held after Dion had been nominated as head of the delegation, and it ends with Dion’s reading of a letter from the emperor (unfortunately not preserved) which served to document his close ties with Nerva.

Dion also found time to visit Nikomedia and Nikaia. The visit to Nikomedia was prompted by the city’s offer of an honorary citizenship and in his speech of acceptance (*Or.* 38), Dion shares some of the insights gained in Rome with his audience. The *Leitmotif* of the speech is the need for concord, *homonoia*, between the Nikomedians and the neighbouring city of Nikaia. It may seem odd that in return for the distinction they have offered him, Dion should harangue an audience of his honorary fellow-citizens in this manner. But *homonoia* and its opposite, *stasis*, were favourite themes in Greek political philosophy generally and in the work of Dion, so the example offered by Nikomedia and Nikaia was too good to pass up. The two cities had been engaged in competition for titles and formal “primacy” – *proteia* – since Octavian established the imperial cult in Bithynia, and this rivalry had increased under the Flavians. On its coinage, Nikomedia now also claimed the title “first city”

Fig. 27. Seated statue of a philosopher, Bursa Museum (author's photo).



which the Nikaiaans had previously reserved for themselves.²³ At great length, Dion explains how the inability of Nikaia and Nikomedia to cooperate leaves them open to exploitation by unscrupulous persons, criminals²⁴ and grasping governors who bribe the cities with empty titles²⁵ and go unpunished since the cities cannot agree to prosecute them.²⁶ Indeed, Dion tells his audience, this childish love of titles is derided by leading Romans who look down on what they call “Greek diseases” (*hellênika hamartêmata*).²⁷ Dion’s solution to the problem at hand – the question of *proteia* – is that *both* cities should be “first”. Predictably, it failed to gain the sympathy of his hearers and from the evidence of the coinage, it appears that the Nikomedians insisted on claiming exclusive *proteia* for themselves.

Because Dion’s thirty-ninth oration, supposedly held in Nikaia, also deals with concord, it is generally taken to be contemporaneous with the thirty-eighth, though it makes no direct mention of a conflict with Nikomedia (unlike the Nikomedian oration, where references to Nikaia abound) and it is primarily concerned with *internal* concord and its benefits. Perhaps the Nikaiaans had recently gone through a period of civil conflict; it is not clear whether Dion’s detailed exposition of the many benefits of *homonoia* is intended as a veiled warning to those who would stir up discord, or whether it is merely a rhetorical showpiece on a familiar theme. Apart from Dion’s concluding invocation of the founding deities,²⁸ there are few specific references to Nikaia, and

some of the arguments are also found in the thirty-fourth oration addressed to the people of Tarsos.²⁹ The oration is uncharacteristically brief, and Dion apologizes for abbreviating his presentation because his health and his voice are failing him.³⁰

In both cities, Dion strikes the pose of the teacher – to be more precise, the lecturer. He makes few attempts to be pedagogic or maieutic, apart from a sprinkling of biological and historical parallels to bolster his preconceived arguments. The patronising attitude of his early oration 46 resurfaces in orations 38 and 39, but the speaker is no longer the condescending squire addressing his social inferiors, rather a teacher or father lecturing his pupils or children. Occasionally, he employs the first person plural for rhetorical effect, so that the Nikomedians may understand that Dion considers himself one of them: “if *we* gain the primacy, then what?”³¹ But otherwise the Nikomedians are generally, and the Nikaiaans exclusively, addressed in the second person.

In Nikaia, Dion complained that he was falling ill; it may have been the same illness that led him to postpone his departure for Rome as leader of the Prusan delegation to the emperor. By the time he was ready to leave, word had arrived that a new emperor had ascended the throne.

Success abroad

The news of Nerva’s death must have come as a severe blow to Dion. While their relationship may never have been quite as close as he was later to claim,³² we have no reason to doubt that Dion had known Nerva at Rome in the seventies. The successor was a different matter. Despite Dion’s insistence on the *philanthrôpia kai spoudê* shown him by Trajan³³ and the extravagantly tall story found in Philostratos³⁴ (and nowhere else) about that emperor’s affection for Dion, there is little real evidence for a personal relationship between the two and no indication that their contact antedated Trajan’s accession.³⁵ Unlike Nerva, who was some ten years older than Dion and pursued a political career at Rome (he was *consul ordinarius* for 71) during Dion’s time in the capital, Trajan was some fifteen years Dion’s junior and followed a military career, reaching the quaestorship in 78 (possibly later) and becoming praetor in 84, by which time Dion had been exiled from Rome.

Nerva’s adoption of Trajan came as a surprise to most political observers³⁶ and no doubt to Dion as well. A few months after news of the adoption reached Bithynia, Nerva was dead, and the new emperor was an unknown quantity. Furthermore, at his accession in January 98, Trajan was at Cologne – more than 2,000 kilometres from Prusa – and did not enter the capital until late in the following year. Late in 99 or, more likely, early in 100, Dion and his Prusan delegation finally met up with Trajan. Dion, however, had put the intervening period to good use composing four orations “on kingship” to present before the emperor.³⁷

Ambassadors were usually drawn from the top echelons of provincial

society³⁸ and Dion's readiness to accept the leadership of an embassy reveals where he saw himself in the social hierarchy of Prusa: marked out for higher tasks than the mundane liturgies of the traditional municipal *cursus*. In a person of good family and established reputation such as Dion's near-contemporary Cassius Chrestos of Nikaia (above, p. 112), such an attitude might be accepted. In a recently returned exile whose father was a moneylender, it may well have raised some eyebrows among the better families of Prusa who already found Dion's behaviour a size too large for his status. While biding their time for the moment, they were ready to launch a smear campaign when opportunity presented itself.

In the event, Dion's voyage to Rome³⁹ was a considerable success. The flattery of the *Orations on kingship* may have played their part; in addition, Trajan was eager to present his rule as a break with the Domitianic past: since Dion had been one of that emperor's victims, Trajan could be relied on to accommodate him up to a point, but no further. Prusa was granted the extension of the city council that the city had asked for, and likewise its own assizes, but not *eleutheria*, "freedom" from taxes and full independence for the city. This had been a Prusan pipe-dream since the days of Dion's grandfather, no doubt revived in the sixties by Nero's grant of *eleutheria* to the cities of Achaia – a concession that was soon reversed by the economical Vespasian. For that was the crux of the matter: a responsible emperor could not grant immunity from taxation left and right without endangering the financial stability of the empire, and there was no obvious reason why Prusa – founded by Rome's arch-enemy Hannibal – should be singled out for this privilege among hundreds of other Greek *poleis*.

Opposition at home

When Dion returned to Prusa late in 100 or early in 101, he might have expected a warm welcome and the gratitude of his fellow-citizens for the concessions he had achieved for Prusa; but that was not what he found. On the contrary, he faced severe public criticism on several counts: his conduct of the embassy to Rome and the handling of a building project in Prusa. From a lengthy speech (*Or.* 40) given shortly after his return and devoted to refuting the attacks of his opponents, we get a fairly precise impression of their nature.⁴⁰

The first, and in a sense the most damaging, set of accusations was that Dion had neglected his duties as leader of the delegation, that the emperor had not been pleased to see him – a clear counter-challenge to Dion's own claim of friendship with Trajan – and that in consequence, Prusa had failed to obtain the same concessions as other cities, notably Smyrna.⁴¹ That Dion returns to this subject in a later speech (*Or.* 45) bears witness to the success of his opponents' smear campaign and the efficacy of informal weapons in the political arena.

The second point of attack concerns a building project that Dion has initiated, apparently before leaving Prusa for Rome. As it involves a colonnade and is on a sufficiently large scale to require the permission of the governor,⁴² the overall ambition may have been to provide Prusa with a colonnaded main street that would place it on a level with other major cities of the East.⁴³ Dion obtained the necessary permission from the governor and solicited contributions from leading members of the community.⁴⁴ These would be in the nature of *pollicitationes* or *hyposchêseis*, i.e. formal undertakings to make a financial contribution. His project for the embellishment of the city centre inevitably involved demolishing existing buildings, some of which – so his detractors now claim – had historical or sentimental value.⁴⁵

The third accusation concerns the extension of the city's council with a hundred new members. There seems to have been a concern on the part of Dion's opponents that he would seize the chance to fill the vacant seats with his friends and allies, presumably of a more democratic orientation than the established oligarchs. That Dion refutes this allegation in some detail⁴⁶ indicates that his fellow-citizens had taken it seriously.

Dion's opponents in Prusa had obviously taken advantage of his absence to foment opposition against him and against his projects. But who were those opponents, and why did they disapprove so strongly of his initiatives? In his political speeches, Dion does not identify his adversaries by name, but his oblique references to "certain persons" scattered throughout his orations (and supplemented by gestures, glances and postures, which the written text fails to capture) left his hearers in no doubt who was the intended target. In the fortieth oration, Dion informs us that his opponents attempted to "prevent anyone making a contribution" to the proposed building project.⁴⁷ Most of the potential contributors are to be found among Prusa's propertied élite; and since they would hardly yield to pressure from their social inferiors, the opposition to Dion's project must come from their equals or superiors – in other words, from Prusa's wealthy upper class, corresponding to the *évergètes* of Veyne and the *Honoratioren* of Quass.

Several of Dion's other clues point in the same direction. In the forty-fifth oration (held some time later, but devoted to the same topics as the fortieth) Dion laments that "leading and highly honoured" citizens of Prusa should be so unambitious on the city's behalf⁴⁸ and later in the same speech, prophesies that "certain persons" who are at present veiling their hostility towards him behind "mild and ambiguous" words will eventually attempt to block (*kôlyein*) his project.⁴⁹

What had Dion done to alienate the *honoratiore*s of Prusa? The charge that Dion neglected his duties as ambassador can be discounted; it is merely an instrument in a smear campaign. The other two issues, his building project and his alleged attempt to manipulate the composition of the *boulê* are related in one respect: they both challenge the traditional monopoly of municipal decision-making held by the *Honoratiorenschicht*, the "benefactors" and litur-

gists of Prusa. The energetic Dion had immersed himself profoundly in the details of the construction project, measuring the site and selecting suitable building materials in the quarries behind Prusa.⁵⁰ He had solicited contributions (in the form of *pollicitationes*) from the wealthy citizens and he had approached the Roman governor on behalf of the city.⁵¹ He had, in short, filled all the functions of the traditional civic benefactor.

Once the sensibilities of the bouletic class had been ruffled, it is easy to understand that the addition of a hundred extra members to Prusa's council was seen as another threat to elite dominance. As the *boulê* was essentially recruited "from the top down", the new members would necessarily be drawn from a lower social and economic class than the incumbents. This was only natural and would under other circumstances have been an acceptable price for the benefits – financially and in terms of prestige – of extending the city council. Conflicts arose either because the motives for the extension were called into question or because the rivalry between the contenders for the vacant seats degenerated into factionalist politics. The latter explanation is the one given by Dion – trying to place himself in the best possible light – who blames the disturbance on political "clubs" (*hetaireiai*). To avoid being associated with any party, he says, Dion absented himself from Prusa during the last days of the council elections.⁵² If we accept his version of the events, there was no substance to the allegation that Dion was trying to manipulate the composition of the council, but the fears upon which it was based were real enough.⁵³

As for the charge that he was destroying historic landmarks, Dion reduces this to the question of an old smithy; while some may claim that it had sentimental value, according to Dion it was an eyesore, and when the governor visited the city, the citizens were ashamed that he should see such an old and dilapidated a building in the centre of the city.⁵⁴

Homonoia with Apameia

No doubt Dion was, in his own view, acting from the best motives, and he had clearly not anticipated the hostile reaction to his initiatives. Otherwise he would not have gone on to present an ambitious scheme for a union with the neighbouring city of Apameia, camouflaged under his pet theme of *homonoia*. During his absence in Rome, there had been a conflict between the Apameians and the Prusans.⁵⁵ This matter is in the process of being settled to everyone's satisfaction when Dion now proposes to carry the process one step further, ostensibly towards "concord" but effectively towards a synoikism. The exact nature of this project may have been elaborated in the last part of oration 40, which is lost. In oration 45 he looks back on the failure of his initiative and states clearly that his vision was a synoikism of the region's cities, including Apameia, with Prusa as its centre.⁵⁶

The timing of the proposal for *homonoia* with Apameia was not ideal and

apparently Dion's intervention was provoked by a motion laid before the assembly by one of the archons.⁵⁷ Dion's suggestion was unlikely to please his critics among the councillors, for not only did it once again place Dion at the centre of attention, it also meant that the bouleutic elite, having just agreed to share their power with an additional hundred Prusans, should now welcome another hundred or more Apameians into their circle, and possibly a number of Kians as well.⁵⁸ If the original size of Prusa's council was two hundred, the original members could soon find themselves a minority within the bouleutic elite.

Apameia was a *colonia*, the only Roman colony in all of Bithynia, and to judge from their dealings with Pliny, its leaders were highly conscious of the privileges that colonial status entailed, even vis-à-vis a Roman governor.⁵⁹ From their point of view, what would the Apameians stand to gain from a synoikism with the larger but lower-ranking city of Prusa? Dion's forty-first oration, devoted to this subject and held in Apameia, fails to provide any answers. The speech is short, no more than 14 chapters, of which the first ten are devoted to an encomium of Apameia and a detailed description of Dion's family connection with the city;⁶⁰ the last four to a very general exposition of the virtues of *homonoia*. We find the same asymmetry that was observed in Dion's speeches on *homonoia* between Nikomedia and Nikaia. In the fortieth oration, as in the Nikomedian, Dion expounded the comparative advantage of both cities: for Prusa, access to the sea; for Apameia, to Prusan timber resources.⁶¹ The Apameian oration is nearly as short as its Nikaian counterpart. Both confine themselves to lofty and abstract matters and avoid discussing mundane realities. Even the Prusan timber, allegedly so attractive to the Apameians, gets no mention at all.⁶²

Neither the Nikomedian/Nikaian nor the Prusan/Apameian orations on *homonoia* show signs of long or profound preparation. In both cases, their composition was prompted by a specific event: in the first, the grant of Nikomedian citizenship to Dion; in the second, the archon's motion in the Prusan assembly. As Salmeri notes,⁶³ the images and examples used are not particularly original; Dion or any other competent rhetorician could at short notice work this material into a passable oration on a familiar subject such as *homonoia*. Speaking retrospectively a short time later, Dion – not often given to self-deprecation – acknowledges that others may call his vision a “childish or foolish ... desire”.⁶⁴ The word “desire” (*erôs*) is used deliberately and echoed a little further on where Dion compares his repeated speeches in favour of synoikism to the talk of lovers (*erôntes*).⁶⁵ The apologetic implication is obvious and would be immediately understood by his hearers: Dion's proposal for a Prusan-Apameian synoikism may have been impulsive and reckless, but it was heartfelt, and the audience should bear with him because he was motivated by love of the *patris*, just as one must excuse lovers for sometimes speaking impulsively and without due deliberation.

There is no reason to suspect Dion of insincerity. No doubt he regrets



Fig. 28. Prusan notable of the Roman period. Bursa Museum (author's photo).

having launched the synoikism project at an unpropitious time and is sorry for the antagonism that it provoked, coming on the heels of the extension of the *boulê*; on the other hand he does not explicitly renounce it and seems convinced that it represents the way forward for Prusa and Apameia.⁶⁶ His problem is that his outlook is so different from that of his audience: he views Prusa and Bithynia in their imperial context, while his listeners are content to view their city in isolation. As Dion correctly sees it, petty *poleis* like Prusa, Kios or Apameia will never achieve greatness on their own.

To his Prusan audience, such arguments made little sense. The place of their city in the imperial scheme of things was not important to them and the mere idea that cities could be fused into larger units was difficult to grasp. In the first book of his *Politics*, Aristotle introduced the concept of the *polis* by ascending stages of natural social organisation: marriage, the household, the village, the *polis*.⁶⁷ To the average middle-class thinker, the many points in common between households and *poleis* were more obvious than the subtle differences distinguishing them from each other. In the world-view of Dion's audience, the Prusan *polis* was not really that different from a household, and just as no householder would want his house amalgamated with his neighbour's, why should anyone want his ancestral *polis* united with that of the neighbouring Apameians?

Stasis and katharsis at Prusa

After the supernumerary councillors had been appointed, Dion's synoikism project had been shelved and the rumours of his failure as an ambassador been forgotten or laid to rest, the controversial building project still remained. It was moving forward at a slow pace, and evidently Dion's detractors were still exploiting the sentimental value of the "smithy of so-and-so" that Dion had caused to be torn down.⁶⁸ The central theme of oration 47 is Dion's refutation of those who criticise his handling of the colonnade project,⁶⁹ but inevitably, there are a number of digressions en route. The style of the piece shifts between heavy irony and despondent disillusion; the latter may partly be rhetorical effect but also a genuine reflection of Dion's disappointment with the unenthusiastic reaction of his fellow-citizens. He notes that some of the greatest Greek intellectuals – Zenon, Kleanthes, Chrysippos, Pythagoras, Homer – chose to live far from their native cities.⁷⁰ Sokrates on the other hand chose to remain among the Athenians, but earned no gratitude from them;⁷¹ Aristotle used his influence at court to have Stageira resettled after its destruction by Philip, but later came to regret it.⁷² Despite the depressed and disappointed tone of this passage, Dion's choice of examples is proof that his professional self-esteem is intact.

It would be useful to know something about Dion's domestic affairs at this stage in his life. Presumably the sister's death and Dion's inheritance have improved his financial situation, although – in typically Dionian fashion – he

insists that her estate has brought him no benefits.⁷³ His main sources of income would be his estates and teaching fees. Though the teaching income of a Prusan sophist was not comparable to that of the most popular professors in Smyrna, Ephesos or Athens,⁷⁴ Dion did collect an audience of pupils during this period, two of whom (Polemo and Favorinus) rose to later prominence in their own right.⁷⁵ Certainly Dion's financial situation has improved somewhat, for whereas his earlier speeches stressed his financial difficulties,⁷⁶ he now offers to pay more than his share of the promised contributions; he also hints at the possibility of asking the Roman governor to enforce the *pollicitationes* of those who are not meeting their obligations.⁷⁷

The negative undertone of the speech reflects not only Dion's own state of mind but a deteriorating political climate in Prusa during these years. Underlying tensions unknown to us had been sprung by the controversy surrounding the appointment of the hundred extra councillors. In oration 45, Dion had expressed his apprehension that the process would lead to division or factionalism within the city,⁷⁸ and his fears turned out to be well founded. Within a few years, the political discourse at Prusa had become so polarised and violent that the governor suspended the meetings of the *ekklêsia*. It was unusual for governors to intervene in a city's self-government in this way; it was also a serious blow to the Hellenic self-perception of the Prusans. A governor would hardly have taken this measure unless conditions in Prusa had deteriorated to the point where there was a perceived risk of *stasis*. Fortunately, Prusa was eventually allowed to resume the meetings of the *ekklêsia*. In what was apparently the first assembly meeting after the ban had been lifted, Dion expresses the gratitude of the citizens to the governor, Varenus Rufus,⁷⁹ and a general sense of elation and optimism. The meeting is described as a purification rite⁸⁰ giving the Prusans an opportunity to cleanse themselves of the past and its civic discord. This of course provides an occasion, which Dion cannot pass up, for a long digression on concord. If the Prusans will bury their past differences and strive for *homonoia*, the future of their city is bright. The general optimism even extends to the building project, which is nearly finished and will soon be completed.⁸¹

Reconciliation

What was Dion's position in the conflict that divided the Prusans so violently? As part of a polemic against his opponents in another matter, he publicly speculates that "certain people" want him out of the way so that he cannot again help the common people (*ho dêmos*) or those who are unjustly accused.⁸² Given his political record since the time of his exile, it should not surprise us to find Dion posing as the champion of the *dêmos*, nor that his opponents had branded him a "tyrant" (in the classic sense of the word: an ambitious politician using the masses as an instrument to seize absolute power).⁸³ Dion's relations with the bouleutic elite were evidently still strained, and for some

time he absented himself from the meetings of the *boulê*.⁸⁴ In a speech given when he resumed his place in the council, preserved as oration 50, Dion takes pains to distance himself from his recent democratic views and point out that he has never been a member of a party (*hetaireia*).⁸⁵ A large part of the oration is given over to an encomium of the *boulê*, garnished with parallels from the history of Athens and Sparta. In return, the council proposes to nominate Dion as one of next year's archons, an offer he politely refuses.⁸⁶

Dion has several sound reasons for seeking a *rapprochement* with the council at this time. For one thing, his son has won a place on the *boulê* and the father does not want his own conflicts to affect the son's career.⁸⁷ The colonnade project, which has infested Dion's political life for nearly a decade, has been completed – at least we hear no more of it.⁸⁸ Thirdly, Dion has found a new and potentially powerful ally: the governor Varenus Rufus. Perhaps he hopes that Varenus, taking the imperial rather than the local view, will support his project for federating the scattered Bithynian cities into larger communities.

Once again, Dion's political plans go off course. His son dies within a few years, and his close relationship with Varenus turns into a serious liability. In the course of his term as governor, Varenus Rufus had alienated numerous members of the provincial elite, and some of these later alleged that they had been unjustly persecuted by the governor. When his term expired, he was called to account in a suit *de repetundis*, but the province withdrew the charges before the case had been heard (see also p. 86).

In his forty-third oration, Dion defends himself in the Prusan assembly at a time when accusations have already been brought against Varenus, but the case has not yet reached a hearing at Rome. The charges brought against Dion by his adversaries include his "having misled a bad governor" to persecute the people of Bithynia without cause, forcing some of them into exile and driving others to suicide; worse, "even now" (*nyn*) he continues to cooperate with the governor, who is attempting to gain the upper hand over the cities and inhabitants (*poleis kai dêmous*) of the province. Unfortunately, the rest of the speech, containing Dion's refutation of the charges, is not preserved.

Dion's love of *hyperbolê* as a rhetorical device is matched by his opponents, and it is difficult to extrapolate the exact accusations brought against Dion from his long and somewhat generalised list of his opponents' grievances. Two charges are clearly stated, however. With good cause or without it, Varenus sentenced some leading citizens of Bithynia et Pontus to relegation, and some of those condemned had committed suicide instead of going into exile. Exile was no unusual punishment; it had been employed by one of Varenus' predecessors and would once more be imposed by his successor.⁸⁹ Second, Dion "even now" (*nyn*) continues to cooperate with the governor. That Varenus was "misled" on to this course by Dion may be imputing a too active rôle,⁹⁰ but Dion was not adverse to the idea of using the governor (or the threat of intervention by the governor) for his own purposes⁹¹ and may well have agreed with the policies of Varenus in the early phase of his proconsulate.

Whether Dion continued to do so at the time when oration 43 was held, and whether he felt bound by his former friendship with Varenus, is less clear;⁹² based on his experience at the fall of Flavius Sabinus, it would be entirely understandable if he chose to abandon Varenus Rufus rather than risk being dragged down with him.

Flavius Archippos

No orations have been preserved from Dion's last years in Prusan politics. He continued to be active in municipal life and as a builder. This brought him into conflict with another of the philosophers in Prusa, Flavius Archippos. Though it had no direct impact on Dion's political career, the story deserves retelling for the light that it sheds on informal social relations and the way in which provincials might instrumentalise the power of Rome for their own petty purposes.

Among Dion's many adversaries, Flavius Archippos is one of the few that can be named, and though he is never mentioned by Dion, a good deal of his biography is known from the letters of Pliny. Archippos was a contemporary of Dion's or perhaps slightly younger, and like Dion, he was born a peregrine. In his early years, he was indicted for forgery, found guilty in the governor's court and sentenced to hard work in the mines (*damnatus in metallum*).⁹³ Archippos either escaped (as his detractors later claimed) or was released, and through the favour of Domitian obtained not only the Roman citizenship but a grant enabling him to acquire a farm of his own near Prusa.⁹⁴ He first appears in the correspondence of Pliny on account of having claimed exemption, as a philosopher, from jury service; this prompted some citizens to revive his old conviction for forgery and claim that Archippos had never served his full prison term. Their spokeswoman was a lady of good family, Furia Prima,⁹⁵ who signed her name to a petition directed to the emperor. Pliny wisely forwarded the whole file, including Furia's petition and the copious documentation provided by the ex-forgery Archippos, to Trajan for consideration.⁹⁶ The emperor instructed Pliny to take no further action in the matter,⁹⁷ and Archippos was still at large some time later, when he once more appears before Pliny, this time in the role of plaintiff.⁹⁸

Pliny was concluding one of his periodic visits to Prusa⁹⁹ when one Claudius Eumolpos, acting on behalf of Flavius Archippos, lodged a formal complaint against Dion. At a meeting of the *boulê* – of which Archippos must thus have been a member – Dion had asked the city to assume financial responsibility for a building project (*opus*). It is not clear whether Dion had undertaken the construction on behalf of the city or whether this was a private building project of Dion's that he now wanted the city to take over.¹⁰⁰

Through Eumolpos, Flavius Archippos is laying two charges before the governor: first, that Dion has refused to open his accounts for inspection by the city and is suspected of dishonest conduct; second, he has set up a statue

of the emperor in the building although it also contains the tombs of Dion's wife and son. On behalf of Archippos, Eumolpos formally requested that the governor should hold a judicial inquiry (*postulavit ut cognoscerem pro tribunali*).¹⁰¹

We have no other clues to the nature of the building, identified by Pliny simply as a work, *opus*, that Dion wishes to transfer to the city.¹⁰² It included a library and a small court surrounded by colonnades, a description that might fit a small gymnasium or school (perhaps built to house Dion's lecture classes) as well as a sumptuous private house. It might even be the ancestral residence, rebuilt by the now childless Dion to serve as a library and a memento of his loyalty to the emperor.

The second charge was in theory lethal, but in practice trivial. Placing an emperor's image in conjunction with a private burial could be construed as a serious act of desecration, detrimental to the imperial *maiestas*. Some previous emperors had been notorious for the frequency and severity of *maiestas* trials, but there had been none since the early years of Trajan's reign, a fact of which both Pliny and Dion were well aware.

Perhaps because he thought the question could be settled summarily, Pliny acceded to the request of Archippos and Eumolpos and offered to hold an inquiry at once, but as Eumolpos needed time to prepare his case, it was agreed to have it at Nikaia (presumably the next stage on the governor's circuit). At Nikaia, however, the plaintiffs requested yet another adjournment, while Dion, as defendant, wanted his case heard. After a great deal of talking on both sides – *etiam de causa*, as Pliny sarcastically remarks, "some of it even of relevance to the case" – the governor adjourned the case *sine die* to consult the emperor for advice. As in the previous case concerning Archippos, this required both sides to submit written petitions that Pliny could forward to Rome.

Dion immediately agreed, but Eumolpos declared that he would confine himself to the question of the building accounts; for the second charge, he had merely been acting on the instructions (*mandata*) of Archippos. Archippos then volunteered to write the second petition himself.

After several days, Pliny had received Dion's submission but nothing from the plaintiffs. He sent Dion's statement to Trajan with a covering letter in which he describes the building in question. Trajan's statue is in a library, while the burials are in a different part of the complex, in a courtyard surrounded by a colonnade.

Trajan's reply is short and to the point. No action is to be taken on the *maiestas* charge, and Dion must open his account books for inspection, "which he has not refused to do and cannot refuse" (*aut recuset ... aut debeat recusare*).¹⁰³ This last sentence is our only clue to the contents of Dion's submission, which has not been preserved.

From a purely legalistic perspective, the behaviour of the chief characters may seem inexplicable, but when informal relations and social standing are included in the equation, their actions are easier to understand.

First, Dion. In an earlier speech he had made an oblique but sarcastic attack at people who failed to account for a public work.¹⁰⁴ On his own statement, he was not fond of appearing in court;¹⁰⁵ unlike Eumolpos, who keeps asking for adjournments, Dion wants to get the case over with; since he did not refuse to open his accounts, he presumably had nothing to hide. There is no plausible reason why Dion should turn down a request for an audit, except that the request was made by Archippos – a social inferior, a competing philosopher, a protégé of the emperor at whose hands Dion had suffered, and a convicted forger to boot – in the full public view of the *boulê*. To accede then and there involved an intolerable loss of “face”, an acknowledgment that for the moment, Archippos was one up and Dion was one down. From what we know of Dion from his municipal speeches, we would not be surprised if he was provoked, nor that he should assume his familiar pose: “I am a personal friend of the emperor, touch me if you dare”.

Dion’s refusal was an open challenge to the standing of Archippos, whose counter-claim (made not in the *boulê*, but before the governor) is that this self-stated imperial intimate is in fact an *enemy* of the emperor, guilty of *maiestas*. In the heat of the moment, Flavius Archippos and Claudius Eumolpos apparently, somewhat naïvely, believed that they might obtain a conviction on a *maiestas* charge; given time for closer reflection, their interest soon cooled. Dion, of course, would immediately have seen through their counter-charge, realising that under the new regime, a *maiestas* charge was at best an empty gesture and that with luck, it might even be exploited to make its originators look ridiculous. Eumolpos (who, unlike Archippos, may have been a trained lawyer) was the first to withdraw from what he evidently considered to be a hopeless case and leave it to Archippos, who likewise failed to follow his charge up with a written submission. Interestingly, the pair also failed to pursue their claim that Dion would not produce his accounts for inspection.

Which brings us to Pliny. Like Dion, he would be well aware that *maiestas* prosecutions were a thing of the past; in his *Panegyric* to Trajan, held shortly after the emperor’s accession, he said so himself.¹⁰⁶ The question of the building accounts was more delicate. On the one hand, Pliny was concerned about urban finances and had a duty to see that building accounts were properly audited; on the other hand, his attempts to enforce general rules in the case of the imperial freedman Maximus (see above, p. 64)¹⁰⁷ had revealed that he could not always count on imperial backing where Trajan’s personal friends were involved. How far should Pliny go in this case – in other words, just how close an *amicus principis* was Dion? As we know, Dion was an energetic name-dropper, reminding his fellow-citizens how he enjoyed the emperor’s affection (*agapê*),¹⁰⁸ friendship and interest (*philanthrôpia kai spoudîê*).¹⁰⁹ In the less formal environment of the *agora* or his lecture-hall, he may have gone further; after all, the extravagant anecdote of Dion riding in Trajan’s golden chariot, found in the *Lives of the Sophists*¹¹⁰ is unlikely to have been invented

by Philostratos; it must come from one of Dion's pupils, and thus ultimately be based on a story told by Dion himself.

Unsure what to do, Pliny decides to consult the emperor. He cannot ask Trajan openly whether Dion, like Maximus, is so close an intimate of the emperor that he is *de facto* above the law; but the charge of *maiestas* (which by definition involves the emperor himself) provides a convenient pretext for consultation on both issues. When the answer arrives, Pliny finds himself reprimanded ("My dear Pliny...") for raising the issue of the *maiestas* charge, but this is a small price to pay for the clear guidance of Trajan on the other matter: Dion must produce his accounts for inspection.

Resignation and utopianism

The last years of Dion's life were not happy. The loss of his son, on whose career he had evidently set his hopes, must have been a serious blow. His wife probably also died in the first decade of the second century.¹¹¹ Dion had at least one other son or daughter¹¹² but we hear nothing of the others; probably none of his children survived him. Looking back on the years that had passed since his return from exile, his finest hour in civic politics had also been the first, when as leader of the Prusan delegation to Rome, he had proved himself as the city's spokesman and friend of the emperor. But his subsequent participation in municipal life had been plagued by snide after-the-fact criticism of his embassy and his building project, and the situation had been aggravated first by Dion's attempts to pose as a champion of the *dêmos*, then by his alliance with Varenus Rufus. As we have seen, he went out of his way to seek reconciliation with the *boulê*, not least for the benefit of his son, but he still had enemies in Prusa – as the Flavius Archippos affair revealed all too clearly.

The seventh, or Euboian, oration was composed towards the end of Dion's political life.¹¹³ It was not written for a municipal assembly and does not conform to the normal pattern of a political speech, yet in a certain sense it may be read as the political testament of Dion.

The structure of the Euboian oration is symmetrical, its first half taking the form of a narrative, the second a philosophical discussion of traditional moral and political problems: the nature of the good life, urban unemployment, virtuous and unworthy occupations, etc.¹¹⁴ These general precepts, however, are of limited interest for a study of Dion's view of local politics; for that we must turn to the first part of the speech.

The I-narrator relates how he sailed from Chios towards the Greek mainland in a small boat but was wrecked on the coast of Euboia. Without anyone to guide him, he wandered aimlessly along the shore until he met with a hunter who invited him to share his dinner. En route, the hunter tells the story of how he and his brother came to settle in the marginal lands of Euboia, living simply but happily off the fruits of the land, which their families have

planted with grain, vines and olives. The hunter's brother has never visited the city, but the hunter has been there twice, once as a boy and again more recently. The story that he tells the shipwrecked traveller about his visit to the city¹¹⁵ forms a separate tale within the larger narrative.

The hunter relates how he came to the city and found himself in the *ekklêsia*, which was assembled in the city's theatre. He is intimidated by the aggressive speeches and the volume of noise in the assembly, and one of the speakers accuses him of being a parasite, living off public land but paying no taxes nor performing any public duties. He and his family are free from taxes and liturgies (*ateleis kai aleitourgêtoi*), behaving "as though they were benefactors of the city" (*hôsper euergetai tês poleôs*).¹¹⁶

While the first speaker is haranguing the poor hunter in this manner, "another" (*allos*) man comes forward and argues that tilling waste land is no crime; in fact, the hunter deserves the praise of his fellow citizens.¹¹⁷ Much good land is lying untilled, the second speaker points out; in any case, the real villains are not those who reclaim the bush, but rather those who are ploughing the *gymnasion* and pasturing cattle in the *agora*, whose sheep are grazing around the *bouleutêrion*. When visitors visit the city, the speaker continues, "they either laugh at it or pity it".¹¹⁸

The hunter counters the accusations of the first speaker to the best of his ability, and while he is talking, a third townsman rises from his seat to speak. He and his neighbour had been shipwrecked on the same shore two years ago, and saved by the very same hunter and his family who housed and fed



Fig. 29. The theatre of Nikaia. Theatres were often used for *ekklêsia* meetings, as in Acts and in the seventh oration of Dion Chrysostomos (Jesper Majbom Madsen).

them, even giving one of them the youngest daughter's tunic to keep him warm.¹¹⁹

The hunter is thus revealed to be a benefactor. Prompted by the second (*allos*) speaker, the assembly now votes him the free use of his farm without taxes or duties, and various gifts in addition.¹²⁰ The tale-within-a-tale comes to an end and the narrative returns to the main storyline. While listening to the hunter's story, Dion has now reached the farm, where he is treated to a simple, yet sumptuous dinner and introduced to the daughter of the house and her fiancée. At Dion's prompting, the wedding takes place two days later and provides the speaker with the cue for a final encomium on the simple lifestyle and sincere family relationship of the hunter and his kin, explicitly contrasted to the empty artificiality, "promises and deceptions, contracts and agreements" that accompany wedding ceremonies in the city.¹²¹

The story possesses many of the hallmarks of fictional narrative: the utopian setting, the blushing young lovers, the stylised characters, the clear division into episodes, the *coup de théâtre* in the assembly (taking place, indeed, in the city's theatre).¹²² Some have read it as a description of actual events that can be located in time (Dion's exile) and space (the city of Karystos),¹²³ but we should be wary of accepting this carefully constructed tale-within-a-tale as a piece of Dionian *reportage*. It's not, and it doesn't even attempt to be; a brief comparison with the Borysthenic oration, which purports to report a real visit to a real place (the city of Olbia) reveals important differences.

On the other hand, when setting the stage for his story, constructing a fictional city complete with inhabitants, Dion would naturally draw on his own experience of places and people; so Dion's unnamed Euboian city will be no further from contemporary reality than Stephen Leacock's Mariposa from real-life Orillia.

The city described by the hunter¹²⁴ could be inspired either by a port visited by Dion in the course of his travels, or by the city of the Phaiakeans in the *Odyssey*,¹²⁵ which it resembles in having a strong surrounding wall and a natural harbour. Of conditions inside the walls, the hunter tells us little; it is from the "second" speaker in the debate that we learn that civic buildings are in disrepair and the public spaces being farmed or grazed¹²⁶ (the huntsman, who has only once before visited a city, of course would not notice this: to him, cattle and crops were not out of place *intra muros*).¹²⁷

This second speaker is the "good" orator who takes it upon himself to defend the hunter, not for the hunter's own sake, but on general principles. In fact, he talks very little about the huntsman but a great deal about the common interests of the city and how they are best served by allowing the poor man his plot of land. The same theme – that poor "men willing to work with their hands" should be given the chance to support their families in respectable occupations – is taken up again in the second half of the speech, with a direct reference back to the story of the hunter.¹²⁸ There can be no doubt that the hero of the piece, the loquacious "second" speaker who treats the assembly

to a reasoned philosophical exposition of a policy that will be in everyone's best interest, is Dion's *alter ego*. It is significant, however, that in the end the audience is *not* swayed by the logic and eloquence of the second speaker, but by the unexpected appearance of the "third" speaker.

The third speaker is introduced only for the purpose of the final *dénouement*, and unlike the "second" speaker, whose manner and appearance are described in positive terms by the huntsman,¹²⁹ there is no attempt whatever at characterising the "third".¹³⁰

This leaves the "first" speaker. He is hostile to the huntsman from the moment he sets eyes on him, and his opening speech contains elements that are immediately recognizable to the reader of Dion's municipal orations. The hunter's paraphrase of the "first" speaker's aggressive address is closely reminiscent of the way in which, in the municipal orations, Dion paraphrases the arguments of his political antagonists.¹³¹ The "first" speaker is characterized by arrogance, selfishness, lack of self-control and a violent temperament – in one word, *hybris*. The extravagance of the "first" speaker's accusations – for instance, that the huntsman and his family are wreckers and lure passing ships to destruction with lights on the shore – again stamp him in our eyes: a thoroughly nasty character, a specimen of the "traitors and informers (*prodotai kai sykophantai*) who stop at nothing to harm their fellow citizens" that according to Dion have infested the Greek cities since the time of Epaminondas, if not earlier.¹³²

Two other features of the "first" speaker's address deserve to be noted. He is very exact about figures and income – "a thousand *plethra* of the best land, from which you could get three Attic *choinikes* of grain per head".¹³³ This attention to petty detail contrasts with the "second" speaker, who discusses only general principles; and with Dion himself, in whose municipal orations (save for oration 44, dating to his pre-exilic period) exact figures are rare. (We are, for instance, never told the total cost of Dion's colonnade, nor the sum of the outstanding contributions towards it.) One furthermore notes the "first" speaker's remark that the huntsman and his family "live free from taxes and liturgies as though they were *euergetai*".¹³⁴ The speaker's implicit assumption that *euergetai* are entitled to privileges as well as, or in exchange for, duties marks a break with the unwritten social contract that underlies the liturgical system, and with the proud traditions of classical Greece. It combines with the unseemly interest in financial details to mark the "first" speaker as avaricious and out to secure something in return, not unconditionally generous as a true *euergetes* should be. Dion's arrow is not aimed at the bouleutic class as a whole, but at those who do not live up to the norms and traditions of that class (as defined by Dion).

If it is accepted that the "second" speaker, overflowing with sound advice and *sophrosynê*, is the *alter ego* of Dion, then the "first" speaker is a personification of his adversaries in Prusan political life. This fits well with what we are told of these adversaries: they belonged to the bouleutic class, they were

hostile towards good people (i.e., Dion), they were selfish and reluctant to contribute to the public good (i.e., Dion's building project). The character of the "first" speaker may be based on one specific person whom Dion remembers as a *bête noire* of Prusan political life, or it may be a more general attack at the *honoratiores* as a class.

In any case, one cannot escape the impression that the Euboian oration is at one and the same time the political testament of Dion and a resigned retrospective view of his own life. The scene in the *ekklêsia* compresses the hopes and frustrations of Dion's political career into one short exchange between the "first" (bad) and the "second" (good) speaker, just as the idyllic image of the hunter's nuclear family household no doubt reflects Dion's longing for the family life that he himself had once known and his plans that were dashed by the death of his children.

Notes

- 1 Dion, *Or.* 46.3.
- 2 This unnamed emperor must be Claudius. Dion takes a dim view of Nero and would hardly boast of his ancestor's close association with Caligula. *Or.* 41.6 implies that the grandfather did not receive the Roman franchise until after the birth of Dion's mother. The grandfather acquired a "second fortune" by imperial bequest; such generosity would be more typical of Claudius than of the notoriously parsimonious Tiberius.
- 3 *Or.* 41.6: Dion's grandfather and mother received Roman citizenship from the emperor, his father through the favour of the Apameians. *Or.* 44.3: Dion's father was honoured by the Prusans; his mother was likewise honoured but additionally received "a statue and a shrine".
- 4 Sherwin-White (1966, 676), followed by Moles (1978, 86) and Salmeri (1982, 18 n. 49; 2000, 66-67 and 89) conclude that Dion's father was a *peregrinus*, against the earlier view of Arnim that he was a Roman citizen. At some point in his life, however, Pasikrates received the Roman franchise, since this would presumably be a precondition for Apameian citizenship (*Or.* 41.6; 10; Raggi 2004).
- 5 Photios, *Bibliothèque* 209 (165a)..
- 6 Attempts to identify the fragmentary inscription *IK* 39.33 as the epitaph of Dion or his son are not convincing.
- 7 *Ep.* 10.81-82.
- 8 Dion, *Or.* 46.8.
- 9 Dion, *Or.* 46.13; 46.9.
- 10 Dion, *Or.* 46.5. For loans at very high interest rates, cf., e.g., the rate of 48 % p.a. charged by Brutus on a loan to the city of Salamis, Cicero *Att.* 6.1. In Pliny's time, the normal rate in Bithynia was 12 % p.a. (*Ep.* 10.54).
- 11 Dion had a sister who died c. 105 and at least two brothers.
- 12 In *Or.* 46.6, Dion claims to have performed the "greatest liturgies" (*megistas leitourgeias*), more than any other in the city. Though Dion was fond of hyperbole, he would hardly expect to get away with such an extravagant claim if it did not contain some substance of truth, especially as his having performed previous liturgies is crucial to the success of his later argument (46.14)
- 13 *Or.* 46.5-11.

- 14 For a useful survey of the available evidence and *Stand der Forschung*, see Moles 2005, esp. 120-121.
- 15 Stini 2006, 301.
- 16 *Or.* 13.9-12.
- 17 *Or.* 45.10.
- 18 Arnim 1898, 319 hypothesizes that, as “nach dem Tode der Bruder kein nähere Verwandter vorhanden war, der die Vormundschaft über Dios Kinder und die Verwaltung seines Vermögens übernehmen konnte”, the city had appointed an administrator of Dion’s property. It is not clear, however, that his children would need a guardian, and in *Or.* 47.21 Dion implies that his sister administered part of his property (or perhaps of their joint inheritance?).
- 19 The attempt of Jones (1978, 139) to date *Or.* 44 to c. AD 101 and thus later than *Or.* 38-41 is unconvincing and rejected by Salmeri (1982, 30). According to Jones, the assizes, larger council, freedom etc. mentioned in 44.11 suggest a date *after* Dion’s embassy to Rome; but a) the reference to *eleutheria* follows naturally from the mention of Dion’s grandfather in 44.5, b) it would not be typical of Dion to downplay his own achievements, c) if *Or.* 44 was given shortly before the projected departure date of Dion’s embassy, the city would naturally have drawn up a “wish list” of privileges; this is probably it. Oration 44 ends with Dion’s reading of a letter from the emperor, and since this reading is mentioned as a *fait accompli* in 40.5, *Or.* 44 must antedate *Or.* 40.
- 20 *Od.* 9.34, quoted at 44.1.
- 21 Vielmetti (1941, 97) takes the archon mentioned in the closing lines of *Or.* 48 as a veiled reference to Dion himself; it would, however, be uncharacteristic of Dion to downplay his achievements in this manner, and even more to describe himself as *apeiros*, “inexperienced”. Cuvigny (comm. ad *Or.* 48, p. 162) assumes that *apeiros* merely means “not having held the office before”. Arnim (1898, 390) more plausibly interprets this somewhat condescending expression as referring to Dion’s son, but there is no other evidence that Dion junior had reached an archontate by this time.
- 22 Cf. *Or.* 44.6.
- 23 Robert 1977, 3-4.
- 24 *Or.* 38.42.
- 25 *Or.* 38.37.
- 26 *Or.* 38.36.
- 27 *Or.* 38.38.
- 28 *Or.* 39.8.
- 29 The citizens as a ship’s crew with their leader as captain, cf. *Or.* 39.6 and 34.16; the city as a body, cf. *Or.* 39.5 and 34.22.
- 30 *Or.* 39.7-8.
- 31 *Or.* 38.26.
- 32 *Or.* 45.2.
- 33 *Or.* 45.3.
- 34 VS 487.
- 35 C.P. Jones’ assumption (1978, 52) that Dion was “making or renewing” an acquaintance with Trajan on the Rhine or Danube border in 99 is pure speculation; the same applies to the claim that Trajan took Dion with him from Rome to Dacia “to secure a favourable account of the war in Dio’s history” (1978, 53).
- 36 Eck 2002 216, 223-224.

- 37 Cf. Jones 1978, 116-121.
- 38 Ziethen 1994, 16-22.
- 39 Jones (1978, 52-53; 138-139) proposes an alternative and highly complicated chronology for the early post-exilic period, claiming that Dion made *two* visits to Rome within this short period. For a refutation, Sheppard 1984, 160-161.
- 40 Two other short speeches (*Or.* 42 and 51) should probably also be dated to this period, but provide no additional information on the questions dealt with here.
- 41 *Or.* 40.13-14, cf. 45.3.
- 42 *Or.* 45.15.
- 43 Dion refers in a general way to the achievements of four important cities: Tarsos, Smyrna, Ephesos and Antioch on the Orontes (40.11). Antioch and Tarsos are mentioned again at 47.16-17, along with Nikomedia, Athens and Sparta, as well as the colonnades of Rome. The Antiochene colonnade and its urban context are described in greater detail than the others, so presumably Dion's project was meant to emulate the colonnades of Antioch.
- 44 *Or.* 45.15-16.
- 45 *Or.* 40.8.
- 46 *Or.* 45.8.
- 47 *Or.* 40.12.
- 48 *Or.* 45.6.
- 49 *Or.* 45.15.
- 50 *Or.* 40.6-8.
- 51 *Or.* 45.15.
- 52 *Or.* 45.9-10.
- 53 Cf. Appian's description of the reaction of the senatorial élite at Rome to the proposal of M. Livius Drusus to double the number of senators (91 BC), *Civil Wars* 1.35.
- 54 *Or.* 40.9. Dion's claim is not entirely unfounded; Pliny, when he visited Prusa, found several old and dilapidated buildings in the city, cf. *Ep.* 10.23; 10.70.
- 55 *Or.* 40.17. The nature of the conflict is not known; Jones (1978, 91) basing himself on *Or.* 40.30 hypothesizes that it may have been a boundary dispute.
- 56 *Or.* 45.12-13. This could be Dionian rationalisation after the fact, but finds some support in the reference in the earlier oration to common festivals and spectacles (40.29), implying a synoikism. The phrasing of 45.12, relating how Dion wished to equip "the city" (singular) with "harbours and shipyards" leaves no doubt that a fusion into one political unit is meant.
- 57 *Or.* 40.20. The subject of the motion is not specified but from the context, it must have been linked with the formal declaration of friendship (*philia*) with Apameia (cf. 40.17) after the previous conflict, possibly a motion to ratify the terms reached by arbitration between the cities.
- 58 The size of Apameia's council is not known. As a Roman colony, its councillors may have numbered one hundred (the usual figure for colonies in the west) – possibly more, but hardly less.
- 59 Pliny *Ep.* 10.47.
- 60 For a discussion of Dion's possible family ties to Apameia, see Arnim 1898, 360-361.
- 61 *Or.* 40.30.

- 62 The reference to Apameia's interest in Prusan timber may merely have been thrown in by Dion to impress his Prusan audience. Given the cost relationship between sea and land transport and the problems of transporting large timbers, it was probably more attractive for Apameia to obtain her timber by water from the Marmaran shores than overland from the hinterland of Prusa.
- 63 Salmeri 1982, 94.
- 64 *Or.* 45.13.
- 65 *Or.* 45.14.
- 66 Cf. the hedge at *Or.* 45.15: "If the opportunity should ever arise..."
- 67 *Politics* 1252a24-1253a17.
- 68 *Or.* 47.11.
- 69 *Or.* 47.18-20.
- 70 *Or.* 47.2; 5. One notes the contrast – obvious to Dion's readers, though not to his listeners – with the opening paragraph of *Or.* 44 where Dion quotes Homer to the effect that no place is sweeter than one's *patris*.
- 71 *Or.* 47.7.
- 72 *Or.* 47.9.
- 73 *Or.* 47.21.
- 74 Cf. Anderson 1993, 24-25.
- 75 In *Or.* 12, Dion claims that he takes no pupils (cf. also 35.10), but as Charidemos, the subject of *Or.* 30, had clearly been a pupil of Dion, "I do not take" (*ou ... lambanō*) in *Or.* 12.13 must mean "at the present time". Since they are unlikely to have accompanied Dion on his wanderings and were too young to have known him in Rome before his exile, we should place Favorinus' and Polemo's acquaintance with Dion later in the first decade of the new century. Favorinus, a native of Arelate in southern Gaul, may have met Dion in Rome during the latter's embassy to Trajan and joined him in Prusa some time after the date of *Or.* 12, which can on internal evidence be dated to the immediate post-exilic period.
- 76 Most recently *Or.* 45.11.
- 77 *Or.* 47.19.
- 78 *Or.* 45.8.
- 79 *Or.* 48.1-2. Vielmetti (1941) read the apologetic mention of an "unexperienced" archon as a reference to Dion himself, thus assuming that Dion was receiving the governor as the leading archon of Prusa. It would be unlike Dion, however, to downplay his own qualifications in this manner, and there is no other evidence that he ever held an archontate. On another occasion he refused precisely this honour; see *Or.* 49.
- 80 *Or.* 48.17.
- 81 *Or.* 48.11.
- 82 *Or.* 43.7.
- 83 *Or.* 47.24-25.
- 84 *Or.* 50.10.
- 85 *Or.* 50.3.
- 86 *Or.* 49.
- 87 *Or.* 50.10.
- 88 The claim that Dion has "raised [Prusa] to the level of the leading cities" (*Or.* 43.1) presumably refers to the completion of the building project.
- 89 Plin. *Ep.* 10.56.

- 90 Dion has certainly not functioned as *delator*, since he makes the point that only once has he appeared in the courtroom, and then he was speaking for the defense, 43.6-7.
- 91 *Or.* 45.8-9, 47.19.
- 92 According to Jones' reconstruction of events (Jones 1978, 102) Dion "had certain of his enemies exiled" through his influence with the governor; when Varenus was summoned for trial, Dion stood by his friend and ally, collecting evidence in his favour and eventually engineering the "shift of votes in the provincial council" that led to the abandonment of the case. He further assumes that the departure to which Dion alludes at 43.8 is a journey to Rome, where he intends to support Varenus' case. However, the use of *tyrannêsas* at 43.11 suggests that Dion is trying to distance himself from Varenus. Against Jones' interpretation it should also be noted that a) Dion is not otherwise known to have taken a part in politics at the provincial level; would he possess the necessary influence to have the charges against Varenus dropped? b) there is no indication whatever in Pliny, *Ep.* 10.81-82 that Pliny and Dion were previously acquainted, as they would certainly be if Dion had been present in Rome during Varenus' case.
- 93 Pliny, *Ep.* 10.58. The governor was Velius Paulus, and the events would have taken place around or shortly after AD 80. The nature of the punishment indicates that Archippos at this time was not yet a Roman citizen, *contra* Sherwin-White 1966, 641.
- 94 *Ep.* 10.58.
- 95 The *gens Furia* ranked among the oldest and most prestigious patrician clans of Rome. A number of Furi are attested in Asia Minor, but nothing more is known of this Furia or her relationship to other members of the family. The assumption of Sherwin-White (1966, 675) that she belonged to the "côterie" of Dion is pure speculation.
- 96 *Ep.* 10.58-59.
- 97 *Ep.* 10.60.
- 98 *Ep.* 10.81.
- 99 According to Sherwin-White (1966, 639; 675) the events related in *Ep.* 10.58-59 and 10.81 took place during the *same* visit of the governor to Prusa. Pliny, however, makes no link between the two cases, though their protagonist (Archippos) is the same person. Further, the question of Archippos' legal standing would surely have to be resolved before Pliny could deal with his complaint against Dion? And while in 10.58 it is clearly stated that Pliny is in Prusa to enroll jurors, in 10.81, though dealing with a legal problem, he makes no mention of his own judicial function, merely that he is in Prusa "on public business" (*negotiis publicis*).
- 100 Pliny's phrase *curam egerit* suggests that Dion had been acting on behalf of the city throughout, but the following statement that Dion's wife and son were buried in the same building (*in eodem*) points to the private nature of the original project. Had Dion used public money or property to bury his relatives, Archippos and Eumolpos would surely have seized on this rather than the far-fetched accusation of *maiestas* that was to follow. Perhaps the transfer of the building was in the nature of a partial gift, Dion receiving a sum of money in return to cover some of the costs involved.
- 101 *Ep.* 10.81.2.
- 102 Cf. Sherwin-White 1966, 675-676. Some commentators, e.g. Jones (1978, 114) have tried to identify the *opus* of Dion with the colonnade mentioned in *Or.* 40, 45, 47

and 48, but this is plainly impossible; for one thing, the colonnade was already nearing completion in the proconsulate of Varenus, for another, the inclusion of two burials indicates that this second *opus* was outside the *pomerium* (most likely on the suburban property of Dion's family), whereas the colonnade was intended to beautify the city centre.

103 *Ep.* 10.82

104 *Or.* 47.19.

105 *Or.* 43.7.

106 *Pan.* 42.1.

107 *Ep.* 10.27-28.

108 *Or.* 45.2

109 *Or.* 45.3

110 VS 488.

111 It is remarkable that while Dion often discusses relations within the family in a general sense (cf. Hawley 2000), we never hear about his wife; not even her name is known.

112 *Or.* 41.6: Apameia is the *patris* of his children (plural).

113 *Or.* 7.1: the speaker is *presbys*, "old".

114 Since the two halves differ in style as well as content, it appears that the second half originally formed a separate oration, later re-used by Dion as a sequel to his Euboian tale.

115 *Or.* 7.22-63.

116 *Or.* 7.28.

117 *Or.* 7.33.

118 *Or.* 7.38-39.

119 *Or.* 7.54-58.

120 *Or.* 7.60-62

121 *Or.* 7.80.

122 For a discussion of the relationship between genre and reality in *Or.* 7, see Reuter 1932; Ma 2001; Bertrand 1992.

123 Jones 1978, 56; 58; less categorically, Anderson 1993, 70.

124 *Or.* 7.22.

125 *Od.* 6.262-273. The two stories share other features as well, e.g. the shipwrecked narrator, the confrontation in the council/assembly etc. For other examples of the *Odyssey* as inspiration for writers of the Second Sophistic, cf. Anderson 1993, 75-77; for other literary parallels to the framing narrative of the *Euboicus*, cf. Reuter 1932, 13-15.

126 *Or.* 7.38-39.

127 Cf. Ma 2001, 109.

128 *Or.* 7.126.

129 *Or.* 7.33.

130 *Or.* 7.53.

131 E.g., *Or.* 40.8, 47.18.

132 *Or.* 43.7.

133 *Or.* 7.29.

134 *Or.* 7.28.

