

## THEOGNIS AND CASSIUS DIO

Cassius Dio enjoyed a typical aristocratic education, rich in the study of ancient literature. This is reflected in his historical writing. The names of Thucydides (his model and inspiration)<sup>1</sup> and Xenophon<sup>2</sup> appear in his work (38.28.1), and he also refers to many other authors. Often he conceals his learning and does not cite these authors directly but only offers allusions to them<sup>3</sup>.

So far as I know, nobody has previously discovered allusions to Theognis of Megara in the work of Cassius Dio. The object of the present contribution is to suggest that in two places Cassius Dio does indeed recall lines from the poetry of Theognis.

Augustus believed in the existence of a great conspiracy against him, and he wanted to destroy the conspirators. He asked Livia, his wife, for her opinion on the situation:

‘λέγ’’, ἧ δ’ ὃς Αὔγουστος, ‘ὄ τι δὴ ποτε τοῦτο ἐστίν’. ἡ οὖν Λιουία ‘φράσω’, ἔφη, ‘μηδὲν κατοκνήσασα, ἅτε καὶ τὰ ἀγαθὰ καὶ τὰ κακὰ ἐκ τοῦ ἴσου σοι ἔχουσα, καὶ σωζομένου μέν σου καὶ αὐτὴ τὸ μέρος ἄρχουσα, δεινὸν δέ τι παθόντος, ὃ μὴ γένοιτο, συναπολουμένη’ (D.C. 55.16.2).

The words ἅτε καὶ τὰ ἀγαθὰ καὶ τὰ κακὰ ἐκ τοῦ ἴσου σοι ἔχουσα appear to draw on the final line of the following verses of Theognis:

παύρους εὐρήσεις, Πολυπαῖδη, ἄνδρας ἐταίρους  
πιστοὺς ἐν χαλεποῖς πρήγμασι γινομένους,  
οἵτινες ἂν τολμῶιεν ὁμόφρονα θυμὸν ἔχοντες  
ἴσον τῶν ἀγαθῶν τῶν τε κακῶν μετέχειν. (Thgn. 78-81)

If this were an isolated instance, one might have reason to be doubtful. But another example comes soon after. When Tiberius gave the funeral oration for Augustus, he commented on the fair way in which the emperor dealt with his enemies:

ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν ἐπιβουλευσάντων αὐτῷ μόνους τοὺς μηδ’ ἂν ἑαυτοῖς  
λυσιτελούντως ζήσαντας ἐδικαίωσε, τοὺς δὲ δὴ λοιποὺς οὕτω διέθηκεν ὥστε  
παμπληθῆ χρόνον μηδένα μήτ’ οὖν ἀληθῆ μήτε ψευδῆ αἰτίαν ἐπιθέσεως

<sup>1</sup> E. Litsch, *De Cassio Dione imitatore Thucydidis*, Freiburg 1893.

<sup>2</sup> C. M. Lucarini, *Xenophon et Cassius Dio*, “Philologus” 147, 2003, 173-174.

<sup>3</sup> On Cassius Dio’s use of other literature, see generally H. S. Reimarus, *Cassii Dionis Historiae Romanae*, vol. II, Hamburg 1752, 1539-1540, and G.J.D. Aalders, *Cassius Dio and the Greek World*, “Mnemosyne” 39, 1986, 291-294.

λαβεῖν. θαυμαστὸν μὲν γὰρ οὐδὲν εἰ καὶ ἐπεβουλευθῆ ποτέ· οὐδὲ γὰρ οὐδ' οἱ θεοὶ πᾶσιν ὁμοίως ἀρέσκουσιν (D.C. 56.40.7).

The words οὐδὲ γὰρ οὐδ' οἱ θεοὶ πᾶσιν ὁμοίως ἀρέσκουσιν appear to draw on the following verses of Theognis:

οὐδὲ γὰρ ὅς θνητοῖσι καὶ ἀθανάτοισιν ἀνάσσει,  
Ζεὺς Κρονίδης, θνητοῖς πᾶσιν ἀδεῖν δύναται. (Thgn. 803-804)

It is curious that both apparent allusions to Theognis occur in passages dealing with Augustus and those who conspired against him. Whether this has any special significance, I cannot say. Dio Cassius seems to have decided that the words of the archaic poet offered a suitable model for some of the emotions he wished to put into the mouths of Livia and Tiberius at this point in the narrative. His more learned ancient readers may well have recognized the references.

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ABSTRACT:

It is suggested that Cassius Dio was familiar with and alluded to the poetry of Theognis. Part of the speech of Livia to Augustus (D.C. 55.16.2) draws on Thgn. 81, and part of the funeral speech of Tiberius for Augustus (D.C. 56.40.7) draws on Thgn. 803-804.

KEYWORDS:

Theognis, Cassius Dio, archaic poetry, Roman history.