Xiphilinos' Agency in the
Epitome of Cassius Dio

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C ASSIUS DIO is *en vogue*.[1] This is only right: the Severan historian is one of our most important sources for the high empire, as well as a critical witness to the end of the Republic and its reception two centuries later. His work is also among the most complex to analyze owing to the state of its preservation. Although Dio's work originally covered the entirety of Roman history from the foundation of the city to the reign of Severus Alexander (r. 222–235) in eighty books, only Books 36 through 60 are preserved directly, and the later books in this range contain significant lacunae. For the material before Book 36, we rely on the *Epitome* of Ioannes Zonaras, a twelfth-century Byzantine administrator and later monk, while for the material after Book 60 (and more realistically after 51 owing to the lacunae) we rely on the *Epitome* of one Ioannes Xiphilinos, though Zonaras also preserves material from Books 44–80. Additional fragments are preserved in a variety of sources, most notably in the tenth-century *Excerpta* compiled

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[1] Recent works include A. Kemezis, *Greek Narratives of the Roman Empire under the Severans* (Cambridge 2014); V. Fromentin et al. (eds.), *Cassius Dion: nouvelles lectures* I–II (Bordeaux 2016); C. H. Lange et al. (eds.), *Cassius Dio: Greek Intellectual and Roman Politician* (Leiden 2016); C. Burden-Stevens et al. (eds.), *Cassius Dio's Forgotten History of Early Rome: The Roman History, Books 1–21* (Leiden 2018); J. Osgood et al. (eds.), *Cassius Dio and the Late Roman Republic* (Leiden 2019); C. H. Lange et al. (eds.), *Cassius Dio: The Impact of Violence, War, and Civil War* (Leiden 2020).

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under the direction of the emperor Konstantinos VII Por-
phyrogennetos (r. 945–959).[2] Work on Dio, especially outside
of the twenty-five books preserved directly, must therefore
grapple with the fact that our image of Dio and his history is
filtered through the agendas, interests, and concerns of a range
of Byzantine mediators. Yet examining Dio in this light is a
challenge that current scholarship has largely declined to take
up.

The goal of this article is to examine the role of one such
Byzantine mediator, Ioannes Xiphilinos. It will argue that
historians have traditionally downplayed the coherence, inten-
tion, and relevance of his *Epitome* to the events of the eleventh
century and as a result have failed to notice his active, co-
herent, and purposeful shaping of his version of Dio's *Roman
History*.[3] By comparing the opening of his *Epitome* to the inde-
pendently extant books of Dio on which it is based this article
demonstrates three related features of his work: (1) that Xiphi-
linos selected episodes based on their similarity to events in the
eleventh century; (2) that he actively intervened in the text of
Dio in order to assimilate late Republican history to contem-
porary Byzantine (Roman) history;[4] and (3) that the goal of this
assimilation was, as Xiphilinos himself claims, to offer ethical
and political lessons drawn from ancient history to his con-
temporary Romans. Xiphilinos' active and coherent agenda in
turn poses problems for the interpretation of Dio's later imper-

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[2] On the *Excerpta* see now A. Németh, *The Excerpta Constantiniana and the
Byzantine Appropriation of the Past* (Cambridge 2018).

[3] Most scholarship on Xiphilinos' method has been narrowly focused; see
inter alia L. Canfora, "Xifilino e il libro LX di Dione Cassio," *Klio* 60 (1978)
403–407; M. Schmidt, "Cassius Dio, Buch LXX. Bemerkungen zur Tech-
nik des Epitomators Ioannes Xiphilinos," *Chiron* 19 (1989) 55–59; C. T.
Herhardt, "Dio Cassius Christianised," *Prudentia* 26 (1994) 26–28; K. Jun-
tunen, "The Lost Books of Cassius Dio," *Chiron* 43 (2013) 459–486.

[4] On the Roman identity of Byzantium see A. Kaldellis, *Romanland: Empire
and Ethnicity in Byzantium* (Cambridge [Mass.] 2019).

ial books, for which Xiphilinos is our only or primary source.

Classical scholars have generally not given much credit to Xiphilinos' agency as an epitomator. His reputation in the twentieth century was largely determined by the late Fergus Millar's classic *A Study in Cassius Dio*, which viewed the *Epitome* as an erratic but largely faithful rendering of selections from Dio.[5] With few exceptions, this view has remained dominant in the scholarship.[6] The image of Xiphilinos as a functionally random epitomizer with no clear agenda of his own has in turn allowed scholars to treat the *Epitome* as a *de facto* text of Dio. On this model, Xiphilinos acts as a conduit operating without authorial agency, allowing scholars to make arguments on questionable grounds, such as from absence or based on appeals to Xiphilinos' (sketchily defined) contemporary interests.[7]

There are exceptions to the general neglect of Xiphilinos, most notably Christopher Mallan, who argued in a seminal article that Xiphilinos' interventions in the text of Dio reveal an epitomator who was "actually *thinking* about the material" (emphasis in the original).[8] Mallan's approach was a global one,

[5] F. Millar, *A Study in Cassius Dio* (Oxford 1964) 2. He later nuanced this view: F. Millar, "Preface," in *Cassius Dio: nouvelles lectures* I 9–10.

[6] See *inter alia* P. Brunt, "On Historical Fragments and Epitomes," *CQ* N.S. 30 (1980) 477–494, at 488–492; Kemezis, *Greek Narratives* 61 n.96; B. Berbessou-Broustet, "Xiphilin, abréviateur de Cassius Dion," in *Cassius Dion: nouvelles lectures* I 94. With slightly more nuance, J. M. Madsen, *Cassius Dio* (London 2019) 9–10, who erroneously describes the *Epitome* as "excerpts" throughout.

[7] Recent arguments from silence: Madsen, *Cassius Dio* 93; A. Kemezis, "Cassius Dio and the Senatorial Memory of the Civil War in the 190s," in *Cassius Dio: The Impact of Violence* 262–263. From contemporary interest: Kemezis 275.

[8] C. Mallan, "The Style, Method, and Programme of Xiphilinus' *Epitome* of Cassius Dio's *Roman History*," *GRBS* 53 (2013) 610–644, at 630. See also K. Biały, "John Xiphilinos on the Civil War between Pompey and Caesar in the *Epitome* of the *Roman History* of Cassius Dio," in D. Słapek et al. (eds.), *Przemoc w świecie starożytnym. Źródła – struktura – interpretacje* (Lublin 2017) 437–

attempting to account for various features that either structure the *Epitome* or recur throughout it. In particular, he argues that Xiphilinos reshaped Dio's annalistic history into a series of biographies, a change that he links to contemporary developments in Byzantine historiography.[9] This paper aims to build on Mallan's work by interpreting the distinctive elements of the *Epitome's* opening and their implications for how we should read the text.

1. *Xiphilinos in context*

The traditional biography of Ioannes Xiphilinos identifies him as a monk, the nephew of the eponymous patriarch Ioannes VIII Xiphilinos (1063–1075), and the author of three works: the *Epitome* of Cassius Dio, a collection of fifty-three homilies, and a *menologion* (a collection of brief notices about saints arranged calendrically according to their feast days) dedicated to the emperor Alexios I Komnenos (r. 1081–1118).[10] I have recently argued that he was neither a monk nor the author of the homilies and *menologion*, but rather a student of Michael Psellos and a high-ranking member of the imperial administration, who held a series of legal posts in the 1060s and 1070s.[11] For the purposes of the current argument, however, it

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449; K. Juntunen, "The Image of Cleopatra in Ioannes Xiphilinos' *Epitome* of Cassius Dio: A Reflection of the Empress Eudokia Makrembolitissa?" *Acta Byzantina Fennica* 4 (2015) 123–151.

[9] Mallan, *GRBS* 53 (2013) 616–618. For biography in eleventh-century Byzantine historiography see A. Markopoulos, "From Narrative Historiography to Historical Biography: New Trends in Byzantine Historical Writing in the 10th–11th Centuries," *ByzZeit* 102 (2010) 697–715.

[10] K. Ziegler, "Xiphilinos," *RE* 9A (1967) 2132–2134; A. Kazhdan, "Xiphilinos, John the Younger," *ODB* (1991) III 2211; Mallan, *GRBS* 53 (2013) 612–615; L. Neville, *A Guide to Byzantine Historical Writing* (Cambridge 2018) 147. Cf. W. Treadgold, *The Middle Byzantine Historians* (New York 2013) 310, who doubts that Xiphilinos was a monk.

[11] M. Kruse, "The Epitomator Ioannes Xiphilinos and the Eleventh-Century Xiphilinoi," *JÖB* 69 (2019) 257–274.

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is only necessary that we accept what our epitomator tells us about himself: that he was a nephew of the patriarch Ioannes Xiphilinos writing during the reign of Michael VII Doukas (r. 1071–1078).[12]

The timing of Xiphilinos' *Epitome* is crucial. Michael VII became emperor following the defeat of his stepfather, the emperor Romanos IV Diogenes (r. 1067–1071), at the battle of Mantzikert in 1071, in which the Seljuk Turks defeated the Romans. While scholars no longer view the battle itself as an irrecoverable disaster, the Roman civil wars it set off occupied the majority of Michael VII's reign and their mismanagement ultimately doomed the Byzantine heartland in Asia Minor, which was lost to the Turks.[13] Even Trebizond, the homeland of the Xiphilinoi, fell to the invaders in the 1070s, only to be reclaimed by the semi-independent Roman general Theodoros Gabras.[14] The reign of Michael VII was not only witness to this collapse, it was also the moment when this period began to crystallize in historical memory as the catastrophic culmination of a long decline. We find this perspective expressed clearly in the two major contemporary histories of the period, Michael Psellos' *Chronographia* and Michael Attaleiates' *History*.

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[12] Xiphilinos *Epitome* 87.6–11. Citations of the *Epitome* refer to the page and line number of the Dindorf edition. For the text see U. P. Boissevain, *Cassii Dionis Cocceiani historiarum Romanarum quae supersunt* (Berlin 1895–1901) III 479–730.

[13] J.-C. Cheynet, "Mantzikert: Un désastre militaire?" *Byzantion* 50 (1980) 410–438; M. Whittow, "The Second Fall: The Place of the Eleventh Century in Roman History," in M. Lauxtermann et al. (eds.), *Byzantium in the Eleventh Century: Being in Between* (London 2017) 109–126. For the aftermath see A. Kaldellis, *Streams of Gold, Rivers of Blood: The Rise and Fall of Byzantium, 955 A.D. to the First Crusade* (Oxford 2017) 252–266; A. D. Beihammer, *Byzantium and the Emergence of Muslim-Turkish Anatolia, ca. 1040–1130* (New York 2017), esp. 198–243.

[14] Anna Komnene *Alex.* 8.9; J.-C. Cheynet, *The Byzantine Aristocracy and its Military Function* (London 2006) xiv, 132–133.

The reign of Michael VII also witnessed a resurgence of interest in ancient Roman history: at the same time that Xiphilinos was composing his *Epitome* Psellos was engaged in a similar project, the composition of the *Historia Syntomos* (likely dedicated to Michael VII),[15] while Attaleiates had completed his *Ponema Nomikon*, which traced the history of Roman law from its monarchical foundations, and was finishing the first draft of his *History* with its extended digression on ancient and contemporary Romans.[16] Meanwhile, Michael VII's successor, Nikephoros III Botaneiates (r. 1078–1081), attempted to burnish his imperial credentials by claiming descent from the family of Nikephoros II Phokas (r. 963–969, about whom more below) and the Republican *gens* Fabia.[17] Xiphilinos' *Epitome* therefore ties him to the intellectual mainstream of the late eleventh century, which had turned its attention to the ancient Roman past in response to contemporary imperial failure.

Xiphilinos is largely invisible in the text of the *Epitome*, foregoing a preface and inserting a statement of purpose only after Actium:[18]

τὸ μὲν οὖν σύμπαν οὕτω τὴν ἀρχὴν διῴκησε, λέξω δὲ καὶ καθ' ἕκαστον ὅσα ἀναγκαῖόν ἐστι καὶ νῦν μάλιστα, διὰ τὸ πάμπολυ

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[15] J. Duffy and S. Papaioannou, "Michael Psellos and the Authorship of the *Historia Syntomos*: Final Considerations," in A. Avramea et al. (eds.), *Byzantium, State and Society: In Memory of Nikos Oikonomides* (Athens 2003) 219–229.

[16] On this digression see A. Kaldellis, "A Byzantine Argument for the Equivalence of all Religions: Michael Attaleiates on Ancient and Modern Romans," *IJCT* 14 (2007) 1–22. For Attaleiates' revision of his *History* in response to the accession of Nikephoros III Botaneiates in 1078, see D. Krallis, *Michael Attaleiates and the Politics of Imperial Decline in Eleventh-Century Byzantium* (Tempe 2012) 142–157.

[17] N. Leidholm, "Nikephoros III Botaneiates, the Phokades, and the Fabii: Embellished Genealogies and Contested Kinship in Eleventh-Century Byzantium," *BMGS* 42 (2018) 185–201.

[18] *Epitome* 87.2–11; cf. Cass. Dio 53.22.1.

ἀπηρτῆσθαι τῶν καιρῶν ἐκείνων τὸν καθ' ἡμᾶς βίον καὶ τὸ πο-
λίτευμα μνημονεύεσθαι.

In this way, [Augustus] administered the empire in its entirety, but I will report as much as is necessary concerning each topic, especially now because of how much our way of life and re-public depend on remembering those times.

Xiphilinos is explicit that he seeks to demonstrate the value of ancient Roman history for "our way of life and republic." This is an unambiguous statement of purpose from an educated member of the Byzantine administration penned during a period of imperial crisis, civil war, and foreign invasion. Xiphilinos' thesis is, in effect, that the earlier history of the Roman state holds ethical ("way of life") and political ("republic") lessons for his contemporaries.[19] Again, this is analogous to the attitudes expressed during the same period by Psellos and Attaleiates.

Xiphilinos' agenda is most evident in the opening of his *Epitome* in part because it is his most compressed section, reducing an original narrative of roughly 69,300 words into a mere 5050.[20] The ruthlessness of this compression is directly proportional to the importance we may attach to the details preserved. We should take the preservation of even small details and set-pieces as evidence of deliberate interest, rather than dismissing them as novelties.[21]

2. *The Byzantine shape of Xiphilinos-Dio's Roman History*

We would naturally expect a biographical treatment of Pompey to begin with his entry onto the Roman political scene

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[19] For the translation of πολίτευμα as "republic" see A. Kaldellis, *The Byzantine Republic: People and Power in New Rome* (Cambridge [Mass.] 2015) 28–31.

[20] Mallan, *GRBS* 53 (2013) 618.

[21] Cf. Mallan on Pompey's night ambush (discussed below), *GRBS* 53 (2013) 632.

during the civil war that followed Sulla's return from the east in 83–82 B.C., an event that we know was recounted by Dio because of a fragment preserved in Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennetos' *On Virtues and Vices*.[22] Given that this section of Dio's text was extant in the tenth century, it was likely available to a well-connected individual, like Xiphilinos, in the eleventh. So it was a deliberate choice for our epitomator to begin his narrative fourteen years later. Even if Xiphilinos' copy of Dio began with Book 36, as some have argued, it was still the epitomator's choice to begin his *Epitome* at that point and in a way that de-emphasizes the importance of Pompey.[23]

Instead of beginning with Pompey, Xiphilinos opens his *Epitome* with the selection of consular provinces in 69 B.C. during the consulship of Metellus Creticus and Hortensius:[24]

Κληρουμένων δὴ τῶν ὑπάτων Ὁρτήσιος τὸν πρὸς Κρῆτας ἔλαχε πόλεμον· ἀλλ' ἐκεῖνος μὲν ὑπό τε τῆς ἐν τῷ ἄστει φιλοχωρίας καὶ ὑπὸ τῶν δικαστηρίων, ἐν οἷς πλεῖστον τῶν κατ' αὐτὸν ἀνθρώπων μετά γε τὸν Κικέρωνα ἠδυνήθη, τῷ τε συνάρχοντι τῆς στρατιᾶς ἐθελοντὴς ἐξέστη καὶ αὐτὸς κατὰ χώραν ἔμεινεν· ὁ δὲ δὴ Μέτελλος ἐστείλατό τε εἰς Κρήτην, καὶ τὴν νῆσον ἅπασαν ἐχειρώσατο μετὰ τοῦτο, καίτοι πρὸς τοῦ Πομπηίου τοῦ Μάγνου, ἤδη τῆς θαλάσσης ξυμπάσης ἄρχοντος καὶ τῆς ἠπείρου ὅσον ἡμερῶν ἀπὸ θαλάσσης τριῶν, ἐμποδιζόμενός τε καὶ κωλυόμενος ὡς αὐτῷ προσηκουσῶν καὶ τῶν νήσων.

When the consuls had been appointed by lot, Hortensius was assigned the war against Crete, but he willingly yielded his com-

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[22] Fr.107.1: Boissevain, *Cassii Dionis* I 349.

[23] For the theory that Xiphilinos lacked the books before 36, see Brunt, *CQ* N.S. 30 (1980) 489; Treadgold, *Middle Byzantine Historians* 310–311. I find this scenario unlikely given that the earlier books were available in the tenth (to Konstantinos VII's compilers) and twelfth (to Zonaras) centuries, and that Xiphilinos was a member of a well-educated and well-connected family: see A.-K. Wassiliou-Seibt, "Die Familie Xiphilinos im 11. Jh. Der Beitrag der Siegel," in B. Caseau (ed.), *Les réseaux familiaux: Antiquité tardive et Moyen Âge* (Paris 2012) 307–324; Kruse, *JÖB* 69 (2019) 257–274.

[24] *Epitome* 1.7–16; the corresponding text of Dio is lost.

mand to his colleague and remained in the area of Rome be-
cause of his love of the region around the city and because he
was, after Cicero, the most powerful of the men in the lawcourts
at that time. After this, Metellus set out for Crete and over-
powered the whole island, but he was hindered and restrained
by Pompey Magnus (he was already in command of the entire
sea and the shoreline as far as three days from the sea), who
claimed that the islands had all been assigned to him as well.

The image of the Roman state that Xiphilinos crafts in the
opening of his *Epitome* is decidedly multipolar and foreign to
Byzantine experience. The casting of lots for consular prov-
inces would have been frankly unintelligible to a Byzantine un-
familiar with the long-obsolete political forms of the Republic,
especially because the consulship itself had been a dead office
since the reign of Justinian (r. 527–565). This is the only point
in the *Epitome* where this custom is mentioned and is a rare
exception to Xiphilinos' general disinterest in the political pro-
cedures of the Republic. The inclusion of this alienating detail
emphasizes the political and temporal distance between the
first century B.C. and the eleventh A.D. It is meant to situate the
story in a period of Roman alterity.

The opening of the *Epitome* also highlights the multipolarity
of the late Republic. Not only are there two consuls, but each
of them is in competition with another more famous Roman,
Hortensius with Cicero and Metellus with Pompey. Moreover,
the areas of competence for the two consuls, the army and the
courts, establish the venues for political advancement that
existed in the Republic, and it is telling that a major politician
would forgo a military command in order to advance his legal
career.[25] Xiphilinos' multipolar Republic is not simply the re-

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[25] Xiphilinos' interest in legal matters may reflect his family's prominence
in legal circles during the eleventh century, including perhaps his own
service as a *krites* (a thematic administrator and judge): Kruse, *JÖB* 69 (2019)
260–269.

sult of a compression of Dio's narrative; the epitomator has borrowed the discussion of Pompey's conflict with Metellus from the seventeenth chapter of the book (Cass. Dio 36.17ᵃ) and moved it here to his opening. It is only by active intervention in the text of Dio that Xiphilinos establishes both the range of political careers and the number of competitors in each field that existed in the late Republic. This reordering further emphasizes the late Republic's multipolarity by undermining the dominance of Pompey: despite Pompey's attempt to steal his victory, Metellus prevails a few lines later and claims his triumph and the cognomen *Creticus* (*Epit.* 1.19–21).

From here, the *Epitome* proceeds to recount not Pompey's pirate command, to which Xiphilinos refers obliquely, but Lucullus' campaigns against Mithridates and Tigranes in Asia Minor. The episode concludes with an assessment of Lucullus (2.24–26): "Lucullus was the most general-like of men, and the first of the Romans to cross the Tauros in a time of war" (ἀλλ' ὅμως καίτοι στρατηγικώτατος ἀνδρῶν ὁ Λούκουλλος γενόμενος, καὶ πρῶτος Ῥωμαίων τὸν Ταῦρον διαβὰς ἐπὶ πολέμῳ). Xiphilinos uses this praise to transition to a comparison of Lucullus and Pompey as military commanders, one that ultimately favors Pompey (2.29–3.5). Lucullus' presence thereby develops the theme of multipolarity in the late Republic, and allows Xiphilinos to signpost an important first in Rome's eastward expansion (crossing the Tauros). It is only then, after a discussion of the pirate attack on Ostia, that Xiphilinos turns his attention to the career of Pompey.

There is a clear geographic bias to the opening of Xiphilinos' *Epitome*: it is focused on the initial conquest of what would become the eastern Roman empire, specifically Crete and the Tauros mountain range.[26] Both of these territories were central to the military activities of the Roman empire of Xiphilinos' time, at least at the time of his birth, and the conquest of both

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[26] Noted, but not analyzed, by Brunt, *CQ* N.S. 30 (1980) 489–490.

had parallels in the tenth century. Specifically, the general Nikephoros Phokas had reconquered Crete in 961 and then, after becoming emperor (r. 963–969), annexed Kilikia in a series of campaigns. Nor is Xiphilinos' interest in these sorts of parallels restricted to this opening: later in the *Epitome* he makes a point of mentioning the initial annexation of Cyprus by the Romans (12.19–20), an event that also had tenth-century parallels (again, Nikephoros Phokas in 965). The temporal proximity of these events in the 960s parallels the rapid expansion of Rome into what would become the contours of Xiphilinos' own Byzantine (Roman) empire. Xiphilinos has therefore selectively preserved details that trace the origin of the Roman presence in the east, with implicit parallels to recent Byzantine history. In this way, he creates a stereoscopic effect: the ancient Roman past is simultaneously distant and familiar, unimaginably old but simultaneously relevant to and instructive for the Roman empire of the eleventh century.

Xiphilinos' interest in the Roman origins of his contemporary empire structures his account of Pompey's eastern campaigns, which follows his account of the pirate war. Pompey's conquest of Iberia and Armenia are given a relatively high level of detail, including discussions of military maneuvers (5.31–6.27), while his arrangements in Syria, Palestine, and Arabia are reported in only a few sentences (6.27–7.11).[27] Xiphilinos does preserve slightly more information on Pompey's actions in Jerusalem, though the majority of this discussion focuses on the Jews and an astrological digression. (Astrology, as it happens, was widely popular in Byzantium; in the eleventh century it attracted the attention of major intellectual figures including Psellos and Symeon Seth, while in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries it was discussed by Ioannes Pediasimos, who

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[27] Unfortunately, Dio's text is defective here, and we rely on Xiphilinos to reconstruct Cass. Dio 37.7ᵃ.

cites this passage from Xiphilinos' *Epitome*.)[28]

Xiphilinos paid less attention to events that occurred beyond southern Syria because they did not map onto his contemporary experience. By contrast, Pompey's campaigns in Iberia and Armenia, like Metellus' in Crete and Lucullus' in Kilikia, mapped onto the recent expansion of the Byzantine empire: these areas were roughly equivalent to the territories of Kartli, Ani, and Vaspurakan, which had been annexed by Byzantium in the early- to mid-eleventh century.[29] They were also, like Kilikia, areas that were falling out of Byzantine control at the precise time of Xiphilinos' writing. In fact, there is a recurring focus in the opening of the *Epitome* on the deep Roman history of places that, by the reign of Michael VII Doukas, were either no longer under or rapidly passing out from under Byzantine control. The same Tauros range first crossed by Lucullus had served as a lynchpin of the Byzantine defense of Asia Minor from the seventh century until Nikephoros II Phokas expanded the border out through Kilikia to Antioch in the tenth century. In the decade after Mantzikert, the government in Constantinople lost control of the region, first to Romanos IV Diogenes and then to an Armenian commander, Philaretos Brachamios, who did not recognize Michael's regime.[30]

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[28] The only text mentioned by name in Psellos' *Chronographia* is the pseudo-Platonic *Epinomis*, an astrological text that, like Dio's digression preserved by Xiphilinos, identifies the planets and stars as divinities: *Chron.* 6.39–40. On Byzantine astrology see P. Magdalino, *L'Orthodoxie des astrologues: La science entre le dogme et la divination à Byzance* (Paris 2006), and "Astrology," in A. Kaldellis et al. (eds.), *Cambridge Intellectual History of Byzantium* (Cambridge 2017) 198–214. On Pediasimos' citation of Xiphilinos see R. B. Todd, "The Manuscripts of John Pediasimus' Quotations from Cassius Dio," *Byzantion* 56 (1986) 275–284.

[29] For an account of this process see Kaldellis, *Streams of Gold* 131–134 and 191–192.

[30] For Brachamios see G. Dédéyan, *Les Arméniens entre Grecs, musulmans et croisés: Étude sur les pouvoirs arméniens dans le Proche-Orient méditerranéen* I (Lisbon

Xiphilinos' interest in the deep Roman history of lost Byzantine territories also accounts for small, otherwise irrelevant details preserved in his narrative of Pompey's campaigns against Mithridates. In particular, Xiphilinos includes accounts of the founding of two cities, Pompeioupolis and Nikopolis, by the general (4.19–21, 5.25–29). Neither of these was a major event in Dio's original, nor were these cities major centers in the eleventh century. Nevertheless, Xiphilinos not only preserves both, but actively inserts a comment into the text of Dio calling the foundation of Pompeioupolis, which was established as a refuge for the pirates Pompey had defeated, "beautiful and philanthropic" (καλὰ μὲν οὖν ταῦτα καὶ φιλάνθρωπα τοῦ Πομπηίου, 4.21–22). The emphasis on this event likely reflects contemporary practice: the eastern Roman empire had a long history of resettling foreign groups, even former enemies, inside its territories and, by the eleventh century, this was part of a well-established procedure for Romanizing these groups.[31]

In the eleventh century, Pompeioupolis was a city of local importance in the theme of Kilikia; it had been a metropolitan see since the late seventh century and an *epoptes*, a type of minor tax official, is attested there by a seal in the eleventh century.[32] Nikopolis, on the other hand, had been a military center in the tenth century, boasting a *strategos* (provincial general) during the reign of Leon VI (r. 886–912) and a *katepano* (regional commander) in the reign of Konstantinos VII

2003) 5–178; W. Siebt, "Philaretos Brachamios—General, Rebell, Vassall?" in E. Chrysos et al. (eds.), *Captain and Scholar: Papers in Memory of Demetrios I. Polemis* (Andros 2009) 281–295; I. Koltsida-Makre, "Philaretos Brachamios, Portrait of a Byzantine Official: An Unpublished Lead Seal in the Byzantine Museum of Phthiotis (Greece)," *TravMém* 21 (2017) 325–332.

[31] Kaldellis, *Romanland* 123–154.

[32] F. Hild and H. Hellenkemper, *Tabula Imperii Byzantini* V (Vienna 1990) 381–382.

Porphyrogennetos (r. 945–959).[33] It was located in the small frontier theme of Koloneia, which bordered the theme of Chaldia, whose territory included Trebizond, the homeland of the Xiphilinoi.[34] As mentioned above, Kilikia fell out of Roman control during the reign of Michael VII Doukas, whom Philaretos Brachamios refused to recognize, though the regime was able to hold onto Antioch. Koloneia, meanwhile, had been caught up in Roger Crépin's mutiny in 1069 and appears to have fallen to the Turks shortly after Mantzikert in 1071, though it may also have formed part of Roussel de Bailleul's Norman statelet from 1073–1076.[35]

Once again we find Xiphilinos preserving details that create a stereoscopic effect, simultaneously calling attention to the depth of Roman history in these regions and, by implication, highlighting their contemporary status as lost or endangered territories. We need not assume that Xiphilinos viewed the collapse of Asia Minor as a permanent state of affairs or that he was concerned with an imminent 'fall', though such attitudes towards Mantzikert were being expressed at least as early as 1079/80.[36] In fact, Xiphilinos' narrative carries the opposite implication: that these territories were recoverable. After all, the expansion of Byzantium into Crete and Kilikia in the tenth century had been, from the Roman perspective, wars of re-conquest.

[33] *De Admin. Imp.* 50.123–124 and 45.146–147. On the posts of *strategos* and *katepano* see H. Glykatzi-Ahrweiler, "Recherches sur l'administration de l'empire byzantin aux IX–XIᵉᵐᵉ siècles," *BCH* 84 (1960) 1–111, at 36–67.

[34] *De Them.* 10.4–9.

[35] A. A. M. Bryer and D. C. Winfeld, *The Byzantine Monuments and Topography of Pontos* (Washington 1985) 147–148. On Ballieul's Norman statelet see Kaldellis, *Streams of Gold* 256–261; on the Turkish occupation of Asia Minor see Beihammer, *Emergence of Muslim-Turkish Anatolia* 198–243.

[36] Attaleiates *History* 20.24. For the composition and publication of the *History* see Krallis, *Attaleiates* xxx–xxxiv.

Xiphilinos' interventions go beyond selecting events for their contemporary relevance and interest: he also edited episodes in order to enhance their correspondence to recent Byzantine history. This is especially evident in his accounts of military events. Although he does not preserve a single battle narrative from Dio's account of Caesar's Gallic campaigns, he retains both a discussion of the pirate attack on Ostia and a detailed (by his standards) account of a night battle between Pompey and Mithridates.

On the subject of Ostia, Xiphilinos reports (3.5–20):

ἐν τούτῳ τῷ χρόνῳ καὶ ὁ πειρατικὸς πόλεμος ἐπολεμήθη Ῥωμαί-
οις οὐδενὸς ἔλαττον καταπλήξας αὐτούς. τὸ γὰρ καταποντιστῶν
φῦλον ἐπιπολάσαν ἐν τῇ θαλάσσῃ, καὶ διὰ τὴν ἐν τοῖς πολέμοις
τῶν Ῥωμαίων ἀσχολίαν ἀδείας ἐπειλημμένον, καὶ ὑπερφυῶς
αὐξηθέν, νεῶν καὶ στόλων καὶ κακῶν μυρίων οὐ τὴν θάλασσαν
μόνον, ἀλλ' ἤδη καὶ τὴν ἤπειρον ἀποβαῖνον ἐς αὐτὴν καὶ κώμας
καταφλέγον, καὶ πόλεις διαρπάζον, πεπλήρωκε· καὶ τέλος
ἄπλουν ἐμπόροις τὴν θάλασσαν ἐργασάμενον ἐξαίσιον ταῖς
πόλεσι καὶ μάλιστα τῇ Ῥώμῃ λιμὸν ἐμπεποίηκε· καὶ ἐς αὐτὰ
γὰρ τὰ Ὄστια ἐσέπλεον, καὶ τάς τε ναῦς ἔκαιον καὶ πάνθ'
ἥρπαζον. κατὰ τούτων οὖν οἱ Ῥωμαῖοι στόλον ἐξέπεμψαν, ναύ-
αρχον ἑλόμενοι τὸν Πομπήιον καὶ στρατηγὸν αὐτοκράτορα.

At this time, a pirate war was waged by the Romans, which terrified them no less than any other war. For this nation of flotsam had the upper hand on the sea after seizing the opportunity when the Romans were occupied by wars. Having grown strong not only on the sea but also the mainland, they were supplied with ships, arms, and a thousand evils, and disembarked onto the land, burning villages and seizing cities. Finally, they closed the sea to merchants and brought about an extraordinary famine for the cities and especially Rome. They even sailed into Ostia itself, burnt the ships, and seized everything. On account of these things, the Romans sent an army, having selected Pompey as the admiral and commander-in-chief.

Why does Xiphilinos devote so much detail to the pirate threat —106 words compared to 101 for Caesar's initial campaigns in

Gaul—in particular to establishing the context for their attack and highlighting the fear and suffering they caused the Romans?[37] The answer can be found again in recent Byzantine history, specifically a surprise naval attack on Constantinople mounted by the Rus' under Juroslav I in 1043. The attack came on the heels of the rebellion by Georgios Maniakes against the regime of Konstantinos IX Monomachos (r. 1042–1055). After failing to extort money from the Byzantines, the Rus' fleet was repulsed by the Byzantine navy.[38] Put differently, while the Byzantines were preoccupied with other (civil) wars, a massive raiding fleet was assembled, came within sight of New Rome, and necessitated a hasty and massive military mobilization.

Xiphilinos' editing of Dio's narrative enhances the latent parallels between the outbreak of the pirate war and the Rus' raid of 1043. First, our epitomator compresses nearly three chapters of background provided by Dio (36.20–22) into three sentences. What in Dio was a potted history of the gradually growing power and depredations of the pirates becomes in Xiphilinos a sudden and unexpected rise. Xiphilinos moreover maintains focus on the naval threat posed by the pirates by framing them as an amphibious force that used the sea to attack and occupy the land. In Dio, on the other hand, the culmination of the pirates' transgressions is their attempt to occupy and settle the land, not merely raid it (36.22.3). Similarly, Dio presents the pirates as a pan-Mediterranean problem and the sack of Ostia as just another depredation, one that did not rouse the Romans to meaningful action (36.22.2–3). Xiphilinos, on the other hand, makes Ostia the climax of the pirate attacks, focusing Dio's pan-Mediterranean threat onto a single

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[37] Caesar in Gaul, *Epit.* 11.25–12.4; cf. Cass. Dio 38.31–39.5. Dio's account of the pirate war is six chapters, excluding speeches on the topic (36.20–24 and 37).

[38] Skylitzes 21.6; Psellos *Chron.* 6.90–95; Attaleiates *History* 5.3–4.

city and reordering Dio's presentation of events in the process. He also introduces the idea of a famine (*limos*), where Dio (36.23.1–2) simply reported the end of grain imports. Independent of its compression, Xiphilinos' account of the pirate threat recasts what Dio presented as a long-term, chronic, and pan-Mediterranean threat into a sudden, acute, and targeted campaign against Rome. All of these changes enhance the correspondence between this raid and that of the Rus' in 1043.

Xiphilinos' deliberate editing of episodes from Dio served not only to assimilate episodes from Dio to recent Byzantine history, but also to highlight the relevance of that Roman history to the eleventh-century Roman polity. It is likewise didactic potential, rather than novelty, that motivates the preservation of Pompey's night battle. The battle occurs in Xiphilinos' account of Pompey's campaign against Mithridates, which follows directly upon his account of the pirate war. Xiphilinos preserves the essential details of the ambush (5.1–20): the occupation of the high ground, the coordinated assault by Pompey's forces, the opening salvos of missiles, the final charge, and the terror these actions inspired throughout. All of these elements are hallmarks of the ambush-style warfare that was practiced extensively along the Byzantine borderlands in Asia Minor into the tenth and eleventh centuries. In fact, the elements that Xiphilinos preserves closely correspond to specific instructions given in the text *On Skirmishing* (attributed to the emperor Nikephoros II Phokas) for ambush encounters, including night ambushes.[39]

Xiphilinos' editing allows for the episode to serve a didactic purpose. In the 1070s, when Turkish raiders were pouring into the Byzantine heartland in Asia Minor, the first major invasions of the region since the reign of Konstantinos VII

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[39] *On Skirmishing* 3, 11, 17, 23, 24 (ed. G. T. Dennis, *Three Byzantine Military Treatises* [Washington 1985] 144–239).

Porphyrogennetos, Xiphilinos chose to preserve only one battle from all of Pompey's eastern campaigns: a battle between Romans and a mobile (φυγομαχεῖν) eastern enemy operating in Asia Minor who was defeated by precisely the tactics that had safeguarded that region since the seventh century. In other words, this night battle held ethical and political implications for the regime of Michael VII Doukas. Pompey's success in this battle is moreover contrasted with Crassus' subsequent failure in open battle against a similar enemy at Carrhae, a battle that, as we will now see, Xiphilinos assimilates to the Roman defeat at Mantzikert in 1071.

3. *From Carrhae to Mantzikert*

In Dio, Crassus' eastern campaign is placed at the center of Book 40, which opens with Caesar's campaigns in Britain and Gaul. After reporting Crassus' defeat, the narrative returns to Caesar's victories before covering the murder of Clodius in Rome and ending with escalating tensions between the two surviving triumvirs following the expiration of Caesar's Gallic command. Dio does not present the defeat of Crassus as a major military catastrophe—he specifically notes that most of the Roman army escaped destruction (40.27.4) and that the subsequent Parthian invasion of Syria was repulsed (40.28–30)—nor as the spark that ignited the conflict between Pompey and Caesar. Instead, Dio's treatment of Crassus is framed biographically and links the triumvir's death to his greed. His account begins with a discussion of Crassus' motives and his first year of campaigning (40.12–13), followed by a historical digression on the Parthians (40.14–15), and finally the core narrative of Crassus' doomed campaign, which begins with an extended digression on the negative omens Crassus received and ignored (40.17–19). In Dio, the defeat of the Romans under Crassus can be broken down into three major phases: the defeat in open battle following the betrayal by Abgar (40.21–24); the Roman retreat from Carrhae and the death of Crassus (40.25–27); and the repulse of the Parthians by Cassius

Longinus (40.28–29).

Xiphilinos reshapes Dio's account through exclusion, re-ordering, and active intervention. He preserves Dio's report of Crassus' motives, but where Dio reports a series of omens observed in Rome, our epitomator ignores these to focus on the omens Crassus experienced directly, namely the refusal of the legionary standards to pass the Euphrates, the subsequent collapse of the Roman bridge, and Crassus' ill-phrased remark that none of his men would return (*Epit.* 14.13–15.1). After these episodes, Xiphilinos inserts his abbreviation of Dio's historical digression on the Parthians, which ends with a discussion of their military tactics that transitions directly into his account of the battle (15.10–29):

εἰσὶ μὲν γὰρ ἱπποτοξόται πάντες, καὶ ὁ οὐρανὸς ἥ τε χώρα αὐτοῖς συναίρεται πρὸς ἀμφότερα. ὁ μὲν γὰρ ξηρότατος ὢν ἐντονωτάτας αὐτοῖς τὰς τοξείας παρέχεται· ἡ δὲ πεδιάς ἐστι καὶ ἱππήλατος σύμπασα. τοῖς γοῦν Ῥωμαίοις ἀντίπαλοί εἰσι. πρὸς οὖν τούτους καὶ Ὀρώδην τὸν βασιλέα σφῶν …[40] ὁ Κράσσος ἐστράτευσε· καὶ αὐτὸς καὶ ὁ υἱὸς αὐτοῦ Κράσσος καὶ τὸ Ῥω-μαϊκὸν σχεδὸν σύμπαν στράτευμα διεφθάρη· καὶ αὐτοῦ χρυσὸν ἐς τὸ στόμα οἱ Πάρθοι ἐνέτηξαν ἐπισκώπτοντες· οὕτω γὰρ δὴ πολυχρήματός τε καὶ φιλοχρήματος ἦν, ὡς καὶ οἰκτείρειν ὡς πένητας τοὺς μὴ δυναμένους στρατόπεδον ἐκ καταλόγου οἴκο-θεν τρέφειν. Πάρθοι δὲ μέχρι τῆς Ἀντιοχείας αὐτῆς ἐλάσαντες, καὶ τὰ ἐν ποσὶ πάντα χειρούμενοι, ὑπὸ Κασσίου Λογγίνου ἀνεκόπησάν τε καὶ ὀπίσω ἐχώρησαν. καὶ τὰ μὲν Κράσσου πρὸς Πάρθους οὕτως ἠτυχήθη, καὶ ἡ τῆς συμφορᾶς μνήμη διὰ τὸ μέγεθος ἐξήρκεσε τῷ αἰῶνι. μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα πόλεμοι κατέλαβον ἐμφύλιοι μέγιστοι τοὺς Ῥωμαίους.

For [the Parthians] are all horse-archers, and the weather and the region aid them in both respects. For the weather, because it is very dry, makes their bows extremely sinewy, while the region is entirely a plain and suitable for horses. They are therefore evenly matched with the Romans. Crassus marched against

[40] A lacuna of twenty to twenty-five letters.

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these men and their king Orodes … This man [Crassus], his son Crassus, and virtually the whole Roman army were destroyed. And the Parthians, as a joke, poured molten gold into Crassus' mouth because he was exceedingly rich and greedy, such that he pitied men who were so poor that they were unable to support an army from their household property. The Parthians, having come up to Antioch itself and overpowered everything in their path, were driven back by Cassius Longinus and withdrew back to their land. The affair of Crassus against the Parthians occurred in this way, and the memory of the disaster lasted through the ages on account of its greatness. After these events great civil wars seized the Romans.

Xiphilinos reorders and edits Dio's account of the customs of the Parthians to create an implicit narrative of the defeat of Crassus that corresponds to the defeat of Romanos IV Diogenes at Mantzikert in 1071. In Dio, the battle of Carrhae hinges on the ability of the Parthians to continually unbalance the Romans by alternating between attacks with horse archers and pikemen, a description that picks up on Dio's earlier comment (40.15.2) that the entirety of the Parthian army was composed of these two units. By contrast, Xiphilinos has removed the pikemen entirely, but, unable to condense the battle in a logical way without them, has juxtaposed his edited description of Parthian battle tactics with his brutally succinct summary of the battle's outcome. The effect is to imply rather than explicate the means by which Crassus' army was destroyed, that is, by an army of mounted archers. The audience is then left to imagine the tactics by which this victory was achieved (perhaps some help was given by the twenty- to twenty-five-character lacuna). This would not have been a problem in the 1070s, when Turkish armies composed primarily of mounted archers were ravaging Asia Minor, other Turkish armies were being recruited to imperial service, and the first narratives of the battle of Mantzikert were being composed. Moreover, Xiphilinos' Byzantine audience, especially those likely to read a work in a classicizing Attic register, was

accustomed to seeing contemporary peoples behind archaic ethnonyms and would have had no trouble reading the Parthians as Turks.[41]

The attempt to assimilate Carrhae to Mantzikert accounts for both what Xiphilinos cuts from Dio and what he preserves, namely the omens that accompanied the campaign and the uniquely cruel punishment of the commanding Roman general. Our best source for the Mantzikert campaign, Michael Attaleiates, includes an extended list of the various omens that preceded the defeat, including the emperor's landing at Helenopolis (City of Helen), nicknamed Eleeinopolis (Pitiful City) by the locals, the collapse of his tent, and the burning of his horses and equipment.[42] There is even a parallel for Crassus' poor turn of phrase following the bridge collapse: an ominous passage from the Gospel of John read at the opening of the battle.[43] These omens became a part of the prevailing historical memory of the event, at least judging from their inclusion in the text of Skylitzes Continuatus.[44] It is therefore likely that they were being widely discussed in Constantinople during the 1070s, when the memory of these events was developing and Attaleiates was composing his history.

In a similar vein, Xiphilinos' *Epitome* (14.11–12) obscures the fact, made clear in Dio (40.12.1), that Crassus was killed before being drowned in molten gold. As a result, this 'joke' comes across as a cruel and inhumane punishment, though one

[41] Attaleiates, for instance, variously refers to the Turks as "Nephthalite Huns" and "Persians," *History* 8.1, 14.1, 17.3–4. For classicizing ethnonyms in Byzantium see A. Kaldellis, *Ethnography after Antiquity: Foreign Lands and Peoples in Byzantine Literature* (Philadelphia 2013) 106–117.

[42] Attaleiates *History* 20.3 (crossing and tent) and 5–6 (fire). See also Krallis, *Attaleiates* 134–142 and 205–211.

[43] Attaleiates *History* 20.15.

[44] Skylitzes Contin. 5.1–2 and 5.9 (ed. E. T. Tsolakes Ἡ συνέχεια τῆς χρονογραφίας τοῦ Ἰωάννου Σκυλίτση [Thessalonica 1968] 142 and 145).

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perhaps symbolically merited by Crassus' financial motives for launching the Parthian campaign. The extreme and remarkable nature of Crassus' punishment calls attention to itself and, for an audience already primed to see shades of Mantzikert in Carrhae, recalls and contrasts the vicious blinding and death of Romanos IV by the regime of Michael VII after his failure to regain the throne.[45] But while Crassus' punishment is thematically consistent with his failings and inflicted by barbarians, Romanos received famously cordial treatment from his conqueror Alp Arslan.[46] It was Romans acting in contravention of sacred oaths who blinded Romanos, an act that was widely viewed as unjustifiable and dramatized with tremendous pathos by Attaleiates.[47] Xiphilinos thereby shapes his account of Carrhae not only to recall the failed campaign of Romanos, but to offer an implicit ethical lesson to his leaders by condemning the punishment of Romanos as a deed worthy of barbarians.

More importantly, Xiphilinos reframes the context of Carrhae in order to make it a critical turning point in the history of the late Republic. In doing so, the epitomator makes some of his most significant and telling interventions in the text of Dio. Xiphilinos signposts the battle by inserting his own comment stressing the scale of the disaster and the longevity of its memory (15.27). This sentiment is not found anywhere in the text of Dio and represents an editorial intrusion on the part of the epitomator. The precise shape of the disaster is clarified in the following line, in which Xiphilinos directly associates the disaster at Carrhae with the subsequent outbreak of civil war

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[45] Attaleiates *History* 21.10–13; Skylitzes Contin. 5.21 (153–155). Cf. Psellos *Chron.* 7.163–164 (b 42–43).

[46] Attaleiates *History* 20.26–27; Skylitzes Contin. 5.16–18 (150–152).

[47] *History* 21.10–13. Some measure of contemporary condemnation for the act can be gleaned from Psellos' effort to establish Michael's innocence, *Chron.* 7.164 (b 43). Romanos' shade also appears as a sympathetic figure in the *Timarion* 20–22 (R. Romano, *Pseudo-Luciano: Timarione* [Naples 1974]).

between Caesar and Pompey—the beginning of the end of the multipolar Republic. This transition represents a loss of roughly forty chapters of Dio (40.28.4–41.4.2) and cannot be dismissed as a byproduct of Xiphilinos' general disinterest in Republican politics. The disaster at Carrhae is an unambiguous instance of our epitomator thinking critically about the Roman past and altering the text of Dio in order to impose his (eleventh-century) interpretation of that past onto the text of Dio. He wants the defeat at Carrhae to lead to a Roman civil war because the defeat at Mantzikert also led to a (highly destructive) Roman civil war.

It is important to stress that Xiphilinos' reframing of Carrhae would be undetectable without the full text of Dio. If we did not have Dio's original, then under prevailing standards of interpretation scholars would attribute Xiphilinos' judgment on the root causes of the end of the Republic to Dio.

Xiphilinos' linking of Carrhae to the civil war between Pompey and Caesar also advances his assimilation of Carrhae to Mantzikert. No observer in the 1070s could have failed to notice the political chaos that followed the battle, including the 'rebellion' of Romanos IV Diogenes, the acclamation of Michael VII Doukas, the tonsuring and deposition of the empress Eudokia, the independence of Philaretos Brachamios in Kilikia, a Bulgarian rebellion in the west, and Roussel de Bailleul's establishment of a Norman statelet followed by his march on Constantinople in 1074. And these were just the events that took place before 1075, the likely terminus ante quem for Xiphilinos' *Epitome*.[48]

4. *The ethical and political lessons of ancient Roman history*

The arguments so far presented demonstrate that Xiphilinos was working purposefully and intervening actively in the text of

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[48] Based on the implication in his preface that his uncle was still alive: Treadgold, *Middle Byzantine Historians* 310.

Dio in order to highlight ethical and political lessons that had direct relevance to his own period. His assimilation of the first century B.C. to the eleventh A.D. was therefore the means rather than the end of the opening of his *Epitome*. This prompts the question: is there a larger argument in the opening of the *Epitome*?

The answer can be found in the figure of Pompey. Although the opening of the *Epitome* is not a biography of Pompey, his achievements are the most detailed and consistently signposted, especially as compared with his rival, Caesar. Xiphilinos intervenes in the text of Dio both to praise Pompey early in his career and to criticize him in the lead-up to the civil war. The terms of this praise and criticism, moreover, complement one another and focus on the willingness of Pompey to tolerate a multipolar Republic.

Xiphilinos' explicit praise of Pompey comes at the end of his eastern command, when Pompey disbanded his army at Brundisium and entered Rome as a private citizen, openly repudiating the example of his erstwhile mentor Sulla. The episode is likewise reported in Dio, but the differences between the original and the *Epitome* are telling. Compare Dio (37.20.3–6):

ἀλλὰ ταῦτα μέν, καίπερ μεγάλα τε ὄντα καὶ μηδενὶ τῶν πρόσθε Ῥωμαίων πραχθέντα, καὶ τῇ τύχῃ καὶ τοῖς συστρατευσαμένοις οἱ ἀναθείη ἄν τις· ὃ δὲ δὴ μάλιστα αὐτοῦ τε τοῦ Πομπηίου ἔργον ἐγένετο καὶ θαυμάσαι διὰ πάντων ἄξιόν ἐστι, τοῦτο νῦν ἤδη φράσω. πλείστην μὲν γὰρ ἰσχὺν καὶ ἐν τῇ θαλάσσῃ καὶ ἐν τῇ ἠπείρῳ ἔχων, πλεῖστα δὲ χρήματα ἐκ τῶν αἰχμαλώτων πεπορισμένος, δυνάσταις τε καὶ βασιλεῦσι συχνοῖς ᾠκειωμένος, τούς τε δήμους ὧν ἦρξε πάντας ὡς εἰπεῖν δι' εὐνοίας εὐεργεσίαις κεκτημένος, δυνηθείς τ' ἂν δι' αὐτῶν τήν τε Ἰταλίαν κατασχεῖν καὶ τὸ τῶν Ῥωμαίων κράτος πᾶν περιποιήσασθαι, τῶν μὲν πλείστων ἐθελοντὶ ἂν αὐτὸν δεξαμένων, εἰ δὲ καὶ ἀντέστησάν τινες, ἀλλ' ὑπ' ἀσθενείας γε πάντως ἂν ὁμολογησάντων, οὐκ ἠβουλήθη τοῦτο ποιῆσαι, ἀλλ' εὐθύς, ἐπειδὴ τάχιστα ἐς [τε] τὸ Βρεντέσιον ἐπεραιώθη, τὰς δυνάμεις πάσας αὐτεπάγγελτος, μήτε τῆς βουλῆς μήτε τοῦ δήμου ψηφισαμένου

τι περὶ αὐτῶν, ἀφῆκεν, οὐδὲν οὐδὲ τοῦ ἐς τὰ νικητήρια αὐταῖς χρήσασθαι φροντίσας.

One could attribute these things, although they were great and had been done by no earlier Roman, to luck and to the soldiers serving with him. But I will describe the deed that in particular belongs to Pompey alone and is worthy of being marveled at for all time. For although he had the greatest strength both on sea and on land, although he had acquired the greatest amount of money and captives, although he was a guest-friend with rulers and kings, although he had persuaded the peoples whom he ruled, so to speak, to be well-disposed to him by means of good works, and although he would have been able on account of these things to seize Italy and gain possession of the whole power of the Romans (because most would have willingly received him, but even if some men opposed him, they would have consented out of their utter weakness), nevertheless he did not consider doing this. Instead, straightaway, as soon as he crossed over to Brundisium, he dismissed all his forces of his own free will, although neither the senate nor people had held any vote concerning them, and he did not give any consideration to their use in his triumphs.

to Xiphilinos (9.25–10.2):

τῶν μέντοι Πομπηίῳ πεπραγμένων τὰ μὲν ἄλλα, καίπερ μεγάλα ὄντα καὶ μηδενὶ τῶν πρόσθεν Ῥωμαίων πραχθέντα, καὶ τῇ τύχῃ καὶ τοῖς συστρατευσαμένοις αὐτῷ ἀναθείη ἄν τις· τὸ δὲ μέγιστον καὶ κάλλιστον πάντων, ὅτι δυνηθεὶς ἂν ῥᾳδίως τήν τε Ἰταλίαν κατασχεῖν καὶ μοναρχῆσαι τῆς Ῥώμης δι᾽ ὑπερβολὴν ἰσχύος, οὐκ ἠβουλήθη, ἀλλ᾽ εὐθὺς ἐπειδὴ τάχιστα ἐς τὸ Βρεντήσιον ἐπεραιώθη, τὰς δυνάμεις πάσας αὐτεπάγγελτος, μήτε τοῦ δήμου μήτε τῆς βουλῆς ψηφισαμένης τι περὶ αὐτῶν, ἀφῆκεν.

One could attribute the rest of the deeds of Pompey, although they were great and had been done by no earlier Roman, to luck and to the soldiers serving with him. But the greatest and most beautiful of all his deeds was the fact that although he would easily have been able to seize Italy and rule Rome as a monarch on account of his overwhelming military force, he did not consider doing so. Instead, straightaway, as soon as he

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crossed over to Brundisium, he dismissed his forces of his own free will, although neither the people nor the senate had held any vote concerning them.

Where Dio's account is focused on the breadth and diversity of extra-Republican powers Pompey had accumulated prior to his arrival in Italy, Xiphilinos is uninterested in these details and reduces Pompey's power to a simple calculation of military force (ὑπερβολὴν ἰσχύος). Likewise, Dio's formulation of Pompey's domination remains vague, referring only to his taking possession of the "whole power (κράτος) of the Romans," while Xiphilinos' formulation is precise: Pompey could have ruled as a monarch (μοναρχῆσαι). Mallan has argued that the divergence between these two accounts is the result of Dio looking back to the previous strongmen of the Republic, while Xiphilinos looks forward to the principate. This is certainly correct, but there is more to it. Mallan himself notes that Xiphilinos routinely calls attention to successful generals who do not rebel against their emperors and for whom Pompey is the archetype.[49] This persistent interest is another direct reflection of eleventh-century history, which is replete with examples of rebellions launched by successful generals.[50] Xiphilinos' interest in Pompey, and his interest in multipolarity more generally, is not the result solely of his looking forward to the principate, it is also the result of his looking at what was going on around him in the 1070s.

The achievement of Pompey praised by Xiphilinos is thus different from that praised by Dio. Xiphilinos has altered the context and framing of Pompey's relinquishment of his authority at Brundisium in order to compare him implicitly to the various rebels whose revolts wracked Byzantium in the

[49] Mallan, *GRBS* 53 (2013) 627–629 and n.54.

[50] For a complete list of rebellions attested from the death of Basileos II in 1025 to the deposition of Michael VII in 1078, eighty-two in total, see J.-C. Cheynet, *Pouvoir et contestations à Byzance (963–1210)* (Paris 1990) 38–85.

eleventh century and, in the decade after Mantzikert, ultimately deprived the Romans of Asia Minor, which they had held for more than a millennium—that is, since precisely the period with which Xiphilinos began his *Epitome*.

Xiphilinos' praise for Pompey's actions at Brundisium sets the stage for his condemnation of Crassus after the battle of Carrhae. As mentioned above, Xiphilinos draws a straight line between the death of Crassus and the outbreak of the civil wars that ended the Republic. He then proceeds to offer his own analysis of the motivations of the two remaining triumvirs heading into their civil war (15.27–16.7):

μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα πόλεμοι κατέλαβον ἐμφύλιοι μέγιστοι τοὺς Ῥωμαίους, Πομπηίου καὶ Καίσαρος συμπεσόντων ἀλλήλοις. καὶ προφάσεις μὲν λέγονται πολλαὶ τοῦ πολέμου· ἡ δὲ ἀληθεστάτη αἰτία ἡ φιλοπρωτία ἦν καὶ ἡ φιλαρχία. Πομπήιος μὲν γάρ, καίτοι τὸ πρῶτον αὐτὸς αὐξήσας τὸν Καίσαρα, φθονεῖν ἤρξατο εὐτυχοῦντί τε καὶ λαμπρυνομένῳ, καὶ λάθρα τὸ πρῶτον κολούειν αὐτοῦ τὴν ὑπεροχὴν σπεύδων, εἶτα καὶ φανερῶς ἐπολέμησε. Καῖσαρ δὲ μὴ φέρων ἐλαττωθῆναι, καὶ μέγιστος πάντων γενέσθαι σπουδάζων, τὴν Γαλατίαν ἀφεὶς ἤλαυνεν εἰς τὴν Ῥώμην ὡς ἀπαράσκευον ἔτι ληψόμενος τὸν Πομπήιον.

After [the battle of Carrhae], great civil wars seized the Romans because Pompey and Caesar came to blows with one another. Many pretexts were given for the war, but the truest causes were the love of being first and love of ruling. For Pompey, although he had at first promoted Caesar, began to begrudge him his good fortune and fame. At first Pompey secretly sought to impede Caesar's prominence, later he made war on him openly. Caesar, meanwhile, because he would not suffer being diminished and was eager to become the greatest of all, neglected Gaul and marched for Rome in order to catch Pompey while he was still unprepared.

This entire summary[51] is an original contribution by Xiphi-

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[51] Boissevain, *Cassii Dionis* III 487.

linos. Though he was doubtless informed by the narrative of Dio that he had excised, the framing and presentation of these events represents a direct and active intervention in the text. Mallan points out that Xiphilinos is here importing terminology, likely from Plutarch, in order to analyze Pompey's and Caesar's motivations.[52] To this observation we can here add the logical connection between the scene at Brundisium and the outbreak of civil war, and the way these two events structure Xiphilinos' Republican narrative.

Xiphilinos begins his *Epitome* by emphasizing the multipolar world of the Republic, a world in which Metellus and Lucullus compete with Pompey in the field and in politics. This image persists through his triumviral narrative, as Caesar conquers Gaul while Pompey, more importantly for Xiphilinos' purposes, lays the foundations of the Roman east. This period of expansion is brought to a sudden halt by the disaster at Carrhae, which is a disaster not because of the defeat itself but because of the civil wars it inspired. The ultimate cause of these wars was the inability of the two leading men to tolerate one another as rivals owing to their love of being first (φιλοπρωτία) and love of ruling (φιλαρχία). For Caesar, these failings are implied to be part of his character, but for Pompey Xiphilinos is explicit that they represent a change, reinforcing the implication of his narrative of Pompey's arrival at Brundisium.

The civil war between Pompey and Caesar marks the beginning of the end of the Republic and of the multipolar politics that drove the expansion Xiphilinos has so far recounted. The (at least temporary) end of expansion is implied by Caesar's neglect of Gaul in pursuit of his war with Pompey, while the end of multipolarity is articulated by yet another direct intervention in the text (16.19–22):

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[52] Mallan, *GRBS* 53 (2013) 629–631.

πολλὰ μὲν οὖν καὶ παρὰ πολλῶν ἀρίστων τε καὶ δυνατῶν
ἀνδρῶν ἐν τοῖς καιροῖς ἐκείνοις καὶ ἐπράχθη καὶ ἐρρέθη· διὰ δὲ
τὸ τὴν ἐξουσίαν καὶ τὸ κῦρος σχεδὸν ἁπάντων εἰς Καίσαρα
ἀνήκειν καὶ Πομπήιον, τούτων ἡ ἐπιτομὴ μνημονεύει καὶ μόνων.

Many things were said and done in these times by many noble
and powerful men, but because the power and authority of vir-
tually all of them was attached to either Caesar or Pompey, this
epitome will mention only these men.

It is at this point that Xiphilinos begins to transform his *Epitome*
into a biographical text, focusing on the civil war and sub-
sequent campaigns of Caesar, who immediately overtakes
Pompey as the focus of the narrative. Xiphilinos has thus con-
flated the narrative structure of his *Epitome* with the political
dynamics of the Roman polity, explicitly shifting generic ex-
pectations in order to conform to the newly bipolar, and soon
to be monopolar, world of Roman politics. The era when Hor-
tensius could yield his province to Metellus, or when Metellus,
Lucullus, and Pompey might operate simultaneously for the
good of the state, had passed.

5. *Conclusion*

One of the challenges in reading the *Epitome* as a historical
work in its own right is understanding the relationship our
epitomator imagined between himself and the original text he
was editing. It is evident from the *Epitome* that Xiphilinos
sought to foreground content from Dio and, where possible, to
preserve the original wording, even if this required him to
stitch together clauses and phrases from different sentences.
Nevertheless, Xiphilinos' approach to Dio was not servile. He
might have largely, though not exclusively, used Dio's words,
but he did so to convey his own message.[53] As demonstrated
above, when the ancient Roman historian failed to express an

[53] For Xiphilinos' introduction of other authors into the *Epitome* see
Mallan, *GRBS* 53 (2013) 622–625.

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idea Xiphilinos wished to include, the epitomator had no qualms about inserting his own comments, implicitly in Dio's voice, or revising the historical logic of the original narrative. The *Epitome*, then, is not merely a summary or condensation of Dio's *Roman History*, but an interpretation of that history that foregrounds its contemporary relevance, exactly as stated by Xiphilinos himself.

The study of the relationship between Xiphilinos and Cassius Dio is governed by a hermeneutic Catch-22: where we can observe the ways in which Xiphilinos intervened in the text of Dio, scholars need not rely on Xiphilinos; where scholars most rely upon Xiphilinos, we are unable to compare him with the text of Dio. It is therefore impossible to prove that Xiphilinos continued to intervene throughout the text of Dio in the same way he did in the opening books, especially in Dio's Severan narrative, for which the *Epitome* is a critical and unique source. Nevertheless, Xiphilinos was not, or at least was not uniformly, merely a filter: he actively impressed both the shape of his contemporary history and his analysis of ancient Roman history onto the text of Dio in ways that would be both misleading and undetectable if Dio's narrative had not been independently preserved.

Xiphilinos' interventions do not affect all uses of his text equally. There is, for instance, no indication in the opening of the *Epitome* that he imported episodes not originally reported by Dio, so we may with some confidence assume that the events Xiphilinos reports were in fact in Dio. (The one major exception is the material in Books 70 and 71 of Dio, but Xiphilinos himself explains [256.7–257.3] that he did not have access to these books and is drawing his information from other sources.) When addressing broader questions of interpretation, however, the role of Xiphilinos necessarily looms larger, especially given his willingness to insert his own analysis where we might reasonably expect him to report that of Dio (e.g. his assessment of the motivations of Pompey and Caesar going into their civil

war, or his comments on the magnitude of the disaster at Carrhae). Scholars attempting to read Dio through Xiphilinos must therefore either grapple explicitly with how they intend to compensate for Xiphilinos' distortions—no small feat given that many are likely to be virtually undetectable—or make the case for why his potential distortions do not affect their arguments.

The surest path forward is a comprehensive analysis of Xiphilinos against the surviving fragments of Dio in order to establish, as completely as possible, the nature of the epitomator's interventions in the text. These interventions must then be analyzed through the lens of Xiphilinos' eleventh-century literary and historical context, a project that will require active engagement with scholars working in the middle Byzantine period. Only after Xiphilinos' work is thus understood on its own terms will scholars of the second and third centuries be able to recover Dio from the *Epitome* with confidence. In any case, scholars working on Dio will need to engage more directly and explicitly with the epitomator; the current *status quo* of dismissing Xiphilinos' agency or simply ignoring his role entirely is no longer tenable.

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