Caesar *Chrematopoios*

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Dio Cassius relates that Julius Caesar, on his return to Rome from Asia in 46 BCE, collected great sums of money, at times by questionable means. This was typical of Caesar, Dio says, because he was a "money-getter" (*chrematopoios*) who habitually declared that money and soldiers were the only route to power (*Roman History* 42.49-50). Yet in his own *Bellum Ciuile* (*BC*) Caesar obscures the sources of funding for his war policy, no less than in his *Bellum Gallicum* (Collins 1972, 938), emphasizing instead the generous actions that won him favor. Comparison with the accounts of later historians, as well as Lucan's epic *Bellum Ciuile*, shows that Caesar is not simply burnishing his image for practical advantage and posthumous reputation. He is also preempting the sort of charges of greed and financial trafficking that survive into Dio's account, charges that threatened to undo his immensely useful reputation for generosity.

In a letter from early March, 49, two months after he crossed the Rubicon, Caesar states explicitly that he is pursuing a "new policy for victory" (*noua ratio uincendi*, Cic. *Att.* 9.7C.1) relying on forgiveness and generosity (*misericordia et liberalitate*; Batstone and Damon 2006, 118). Correspondingly, in his *BC* Caesar shows himself pardoning conquered enemies and acting liberally with the wealth under his control. He even pointedly returns six million sesterces to his enemy Domitius after capturing and freeing him, although he was entitled to take them as public war funds. Caesar downplays his own money-getting, glossing over his raid on the Roman treasury (*BC* 1.33.3-4; cf. e.g. Lucan 3.112-53, Plut. *Caes*. 35). The Pompeians, however, are rapacious. Scipio, for example, is seen looting temples and extorting money from provincials (3.31-2). Yet in his eagerness to draw this contrast, Caesar tips his hand. He accuses the Pompeians of looting Roman temples at the outset of the war (1.6.8), although there is no record of this elsewhere, and we later find the funds in the temple of Saturn untouched (1.14.1).

In his epic *Bellum Ciuile*, Lucan conveys how Caesar's enemies might have turned these accusations back upon him. For Lucan, Caesar's generosity is hollow: Domitius exhorts himself to flee Caesar's clemency (*Caesaris effuge munus*, 2.525), amplifying Cicero's concern for the obligations that would follow (*insidiosa clementia*, *Att*. 8.16.2). Caesar's path to power involves the sort of petty calculation and trade that elite Romans rejected in favor of cultivated generosity (Morley 2007, 84-5). Caesar is the only major character involved in "buying" (e.g. *pax . . . empta*, 10.107); he speaks of the "payment" due him for his labors (*merces*, 1.340; *mercede* 9.1101); and there is much discussion of "payments" for his soldiers (*merces*, 5.268; *mercede*, 5.331; *mercede*, 7.751). Dio, possibly working from primary sources lost to us, confirms the currency of Lucan's charges by describing Caesar as a *chrematopoios* and recounting that he faced the suspicion of pursuing private gain during the war (43.18).

The contrast with these sources highlights the extent to which Caesar occludes the need to secure funds, by fair means or foul, to distribute as largess. It thus also reveals the paradox at the heart of Caesar's "new strategy." Caesar could use his reputation for generosity to win converts among the populace and elites (Cic. *Att.* 8.13.1), encourage loyalty among his soldiers, and prompt defections of Pompeians (Appian 2.47, 2.73, 2.92). But the very activity that funded his benefactions, money-getting, threatened to undermine the reputation they were meant to achieve. The *BC* thus reflects Caesar's concern to suppress this connection during the war (whether published during the Alexandrian war [Collins 1972, 945] or later), publicize his benefactions, and thereby defend and foster his reputation for generosity as a tool to meet future challenges.