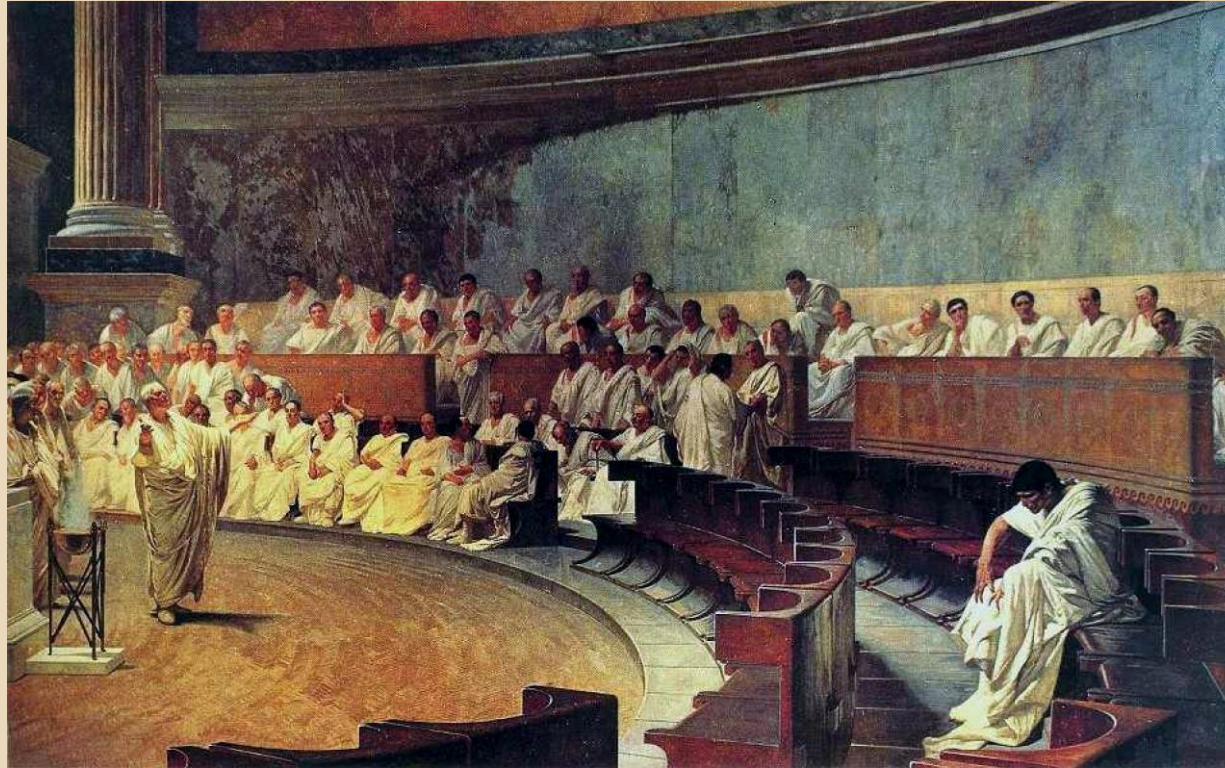


Against Catiline 1



Timing



- 64 Catiline failed in first bid to get consulship (losing out to Cicero and Antonius)
- 63 Cicero (aged 42) has the consulship; Catiline failed in second bid to get consulship; the Catilinarian conspiracy and the execution of five of the conspirators; speeches include *Against Catiline*
- 62 Catiline (Lucius Sergius Catilina) defeated and killed; further trials of alleged conspirators, including Cicero's defence *Pro Sulla*;
- 58-57 Cicero's exile and return (4 September)

For historical background, see introduction by Berry, D. 2006. *Cicero, Political Speeches* (Oxford World's Classics)



Historical background to conspiracy

Before election Catiline gave inflammatory address at his house

“[Catiline] is represented in the sources as having depended for his support on three groups of people: those of all levels of society who were suffering as a result of debt; Sullan veterans who had been rewarded with land but had fallen on hard times; and people who had been dispossessed in Sulla's confiscations (the first group obviously overlapped to some extent with the other two).” (Berry 2009)

“I know that you have also sent on ahead that silver eagle which will, I trust, bring death and destruction to you and all your followers and for which an evil shrine has been set up at your house. Could you be parted any longer from that eagle which you used to worship on your way to commit murder and from whose altar your sacrilegious hand often passed to the slaughter of citizens?” (*In Cat.* 1.24)”

Historical background



“[This] would suggest that he appealed more to the third group, dispossessed Marians, than to the second: Cicero would then have exaggerated, in order to increase Catiline's unpopularity, the extent to which he relied on Sullan veterans (a group with whom few probably had much sympathy).” (Berry 2009)

Cicero heard of content > persuaded the senate to postpone elections to discuss the speech. When the senate met, Catiline made similar speech (election went ahead: Catiline attended with a gang of armed men. Cicero with a bodyguard/ cuirass)



Catiline



The voting took place (Silanus and Murena were elected. Sulpicius and Cato then began a prosecution of Murena under the *lex Tullia* for electoral malpractice).

> start of the conspiracy. In September the senate seems to have discussed Catiline's conspiracy but there was a lack of hard evidence against him.

19th (or perhaps 18th) October, Crassus came to Cicero's house with anonymous letters (warned him of an impending massacre by Catiline and advised him to leave Rome in secret). Next morning Cicero convened the senate and had the rest of the letters read aloud by their addressees.

20th October: Quintus Arrius, reported that news had come from Faesulae that Manlius was preparing an armed rising > 'SCU'> Manlius in open rebellion. Cicero took a number of security measures



Catiline



6th November: Catiline held secret meeting in Rome with his chief supporters. Arrangements were made for Catiline himself to go to Manlius' army, and for other conspirators to go and take charge of the risings elsewhere in Italy. Others to organize assassinations and the firing of various parts of the city.

“Cicero makes much of the Catilinarians' alleged intention to burn Rome, and it was largely this claim which enabled him to turn the urban plebs against the conspiracy. It is incredible, however, that Catiline should have intended a general conflagration—though quite possible that he planned specific, localized fires, and was foolish enough to imagine that they would not spread.” (Berry 2009)

Gaius Cornelius and Lucius Vargunteius were to go to Cicero's house early the next morning and assassinate him > Cicero found out > defended his house > called a meeting of the senate and spoke...



In Catilinam 1



Challenges: e.g.: legally dodgy (anticipating problems)
e.g. Cicero a “new man”

Revisions? NB question of audience(s)

“As time went by, Cicero found it increasingly necessary to defend the action that he had taken in 63, especially once he had made an enemy of Clodius—a more dangerous opponent than Nepos—at Clodius' trial for sacrilege in May 61. In 60 he decided on a propaganda campaign,” (Berry 2009: 153)



In Catilinam 1: do we have what was delivered?

“What in the text can we believe to have been actually delivered on 8 November? First, Cicero must have ordered Catiline to leave the city on the ground of constituting a public danger and cited evidence in justification. Secondly, it is unlikely that Cicero inserted *post eventum* the threats that Catiline could be killed on the spot (ibid. 2–4): at the time, as the *pro Rabirio* shows, he was a ‘hawk’ on public security. And it would have been pointless to add in 60 BC material which could be used by his enemies as evidence of his *crudelitas*. Rather, Cicero left these arguments in, because he was known to have used them, but perhaps tempered them in the published speech with an elaborate display of caution regarding what would have appeared justifiable to a wider public under the influence of secret Catilinarian sympathizers. The reference to people believing his actions to be ‘tyrannical’ and ‘cruel’ reflect the reaction after the executions on 5 December.” (Lintott 2008: 145-6)

Ethos



Ethos:

“The prominence of Cicero’s own ethos is perhaps the most characteristic feature of the consular orations. In these speeches Cicero exerts the weight of his position and accomplishments both without mercy and without end. The consular orator exercises the full range of the *auctoritas* and the *dignitas* of his office, which had been enhanced dramatically by his quick and effective handling of the Catilinian affair. As the threat of exile moves closer, his defence of his clients is often coupled with a defense of his own actions, and it is common to find the Pater Patriae demanding the acquittal of his client almost solely on the basis of his own authority and position in the Republic.” (May 1988: 164)



Ethos



“Cicero appears as a new type of consul, one who does not rush in to use violence against a traitor, but who tries to use reason and rhetoric to educate his audience about unseen dangers (30). He exhibits the opposite qualities of Catiline’s *furor* [“frenzy”] and *amentia* [“madness”] (1-2, 8, 15, 22, 25, 31). He tries to show the popularis qualities of *clementia*, *lenitas* and *misericordia* familiar from the other consular speeches (4, 12, 16). He reiterates his hope that Catiline himself can be brought back to reason (6, 12-13, 21-22).” (Cape 2002 *Brill’s Companion to Cicero* : 145)



Questions to consider

Aims? See e.g. Craig CJ 1993

Fair portrayal of Catiline?

Accused of murder; charged with extortion 65 BCE following governorship of Africa in 67-66 BCE (Cicero actually considered defending him: *Att.* 1.2.1!)

“Catiline was supposed to be bringing down civilisation as Cicero knew it, and planning to nuke Rome. The only trouble is, it is just as likely that Catiline was a relatively innocent stooge, set up by Cicero looking for reds under the bed, and for an excuse for a brutal campaign of summary executions (or, in our nicer days, detention without trial)...not a dangerous “terrorist” at all.”

(Mary Beard *TLS* November 2007)

How does Cicero use stylistic means to denigrate Catiline?