

CLCS4009: READING ANTIQUITY: A SURVEY OF ANCIENT LITERATURE

LECTURE 13 (WEEK 5) WORKSHOP: ROMAN RHETORIC AND MORALISTIC DISCOURSE II

Reading for next lecture (Tuesday 1st November):
Read Herodotus' *Histories* Book 1

Workshop Task

Read the following speech and consider the following questions (your group will be asked to report your ideas and thoughts near the end of the session):

- 1/ What techniques does Cicero use to defend himself against Antony?
 - 2/ How does Cicero attempt to prove his credibility?
 - 3/ How does Cicero attempt to disprove Antony's credibility?
 - 4/ What other rhetorical techniques can you see being used in the speech?
 - 5/ How does Cicero use the subject of oratorical and rhetorical skill to attack Antony? (see Extract 2 particularly)
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Background

Antony reacted to Cicero's *First Philippic* by declaring himself Cicero's enemy and he called a meeting of the senate for 19 September to deliver his response. On the 19th, the senate convened in the Temple of Concord, which was ringed with soldiers and Antony delivered a scathing invective attacking Cicero's whole career. That speech went without answer in the senate because Cicero did not attend out of fear for his safety. On 9 October Antony left for Brundisium to take command of several Caesarian legions that were being transferred from Macedonia. On 25 October, Cicero sent Atticus a draft of the *Second Philippic*, a work written in the form of a speech as though actually delivered on 19 September in response to Antony's invective.

Although this work is a pamphlet in oratorical form, it strives throughout to maintain the fiction that it was an actual speech delivered in Antony's presence on 19 September.

In his *Tenth Satire*, Juvenal singles out the *Second Philippic* as Cicero's masterpiece.

Reading: Extracts from Cicero's *Second Philippic Oration Against Marcus Antonius*

[1]To what destiny of mine, O conscript fathers, shall I say that it is owing, that none for the last twenty years has been an enemy to the republic without at the same time declaring war against me? Nor is there any necessity for naming any particular person; you yourselves recollect instances in

proof of my statement. They have all hitherto suffered severer punishments than I could have wished for them; but I marvel that you, O Antonius, do not fear the end of these men whose conduct you are imitating. And in others I was less surprised at this. None of those men of former times was a voluntary enemy to me; all of them were attacked by me for the sake of the republic. But you, who have never been injured by me, not even by a word, in order to appear more audacious than Catiline, more frantic than Clodius, have of your own accord attacked me with abuse, and have considered that your alienation from me would be a recommendation of you to impious citizens.

[2] What am I to think? that I have been despised?

I see nothing either in my life, or in my influence in the city, or in my exploits, or even in the moderate abilities with which I am endowed, which Antonius can despise. Did he think that it was easiest to disparage me in the senate? a body which has borne its testimony in favour of many most illustrious Citizens that they governed the republic well, but in favour of me alone, of all men, that I preserved it. Or did he wish to contend with me in a rivalry of eloquence? This, indeed, is an act of generosity; for what could be a more fertile or richer subject for me, than to have to speak in defence of myself and against Antonius? This, in fact, is the truth. He thought it impossible to prove to the satisfaction of those men who resembled himself, that he was an enemy to his country, if he was not also an enemy to me.

[3] And before I make him any reply on the other topics of his speech, I will say a few words respecting the friendship formerly subsisting between us, which he has accused me of violating,—for that I consider a most serious charge.

[4] You have said, that you retired in my favour from the contest for the augurship. Oh the incredible audacity! oh the monstrous impudence of such an assertion! For, at the time when Cnaeus Pompeius and Quintus Hortensius named me as augur, after I had been wished for as such by the whole college, (for it was not lawful for me to be put in nomination by more than two members of the college,) you were notoriously insolvent, nor did you think it possible for your safety to be secured by any other means than by the destruction of the republic. But was it possible for you to stand for the augurship at a time when Curio was not in [Italy](#)? or even at the time when you were elected, could you have got the votes of one single tribe without the aid of Curio? whose intimate friends even were convicted of violence for having been too zealous in your favour.

[5] But I availed myself of your friendly assistance. Of what assistance? Although the instance which you cite I have myself at all times openly admitted. I preferred confessing that I was under obligations to you, to letting myself appear to any foolish person not sufficiently grateful. However, what was the kindness that you did me? not killing me at [Brundisium](#)? Would you then have slain the man whom the conqueror himself who conferred on you, as you used to boast, the chief rank among all his robbers, had desired to be safe, and had enjoined to go to [Italy](#)? Grant that you could have slain him, is not this, O conscript fathers, such a kindness as is done by banditti, who are contented with being able to boast that they have granted their lives to all those men whose lives they have not taken? and if that were really a kindness, then those who slew that man by whom they themselves had been saved, and whom you yourself are in the habit of styling most illustrious men, would never have acquired such immortal glory. But what sort of kindness is it, to have abstained from committing nefarious wickedness? It is a case in which it ought not to appear so delightful to me not to have been killed by you, as miserable, that it should have been in your power to do such a thing with impunity.

[6] I, however, grant that it was a kindness, since no greater kindness could be received from a robber, still in what point can you call me ungrateful? Ought I not to complain of the ruin of the republic, lest I should appear ungrateful towards you? But in that complaint, mournful indeed and miserable, but still unavoidable for a man of that rank in which the senate and people of [Rome](#) have placed me, what did I say that was insulting? that was otherwise than moderate? that was otherwise than friendly? and what instance was it not of moderation to complain of the conduct of Marcus Antonius, and yet to abstain from any abusive expressions? especially when you had scattered abroad all relics of the republic; when everything was on sale at your house by the most infamous traffic; when you confessed that those laws which had never been promulgated, had been passed with reference to you, and by you; when you, being augur, had abolished the auspices, being consul, had taken away the power of interposing the veto; when you were escorted in the most shameful manner by armed guards; when, worn out with drunkenness and debauchery, you were every day performing all sorts of obscenities in that chaste house of yours.

Extract 2

[40] You have said that no inheritances come to me. Would that this accusation of yours were a true one; I should have more of my friends and connections alive. But how could such a charge ever come into your head? For I have received more than twenty millions of sesterces in inheritances. Although in this particular I admit that you have been more fortunate than I. No one has ever made me his heir except he was a friend of mine, in order that my grief of mind for his loss might be accompanied also with some gain, if it was to be considered as such. But a man whom you never even saw, Lucius Rubrius, of [Casinum](#), made you his heir.

And see now how much he loved you, who, though he did not know whether you were white or black, passed over the son of his brother, Quintus Fufius, a most honorable Roman knight, and most attached to him, whom he had on all occasions openly declared his heir (he never even names him in his will), and he makes you his heir whom he had never seen, or at all events had never spoken to.

I wish you would tell me, if it is not too much trouble, what sort of countenance Lucius Turselius was of; what sort of height; from what municipal town he came; and of what tribe he was a member. "I know nothing," you will say, "about him, except what farms he had." Therefore, he, disinheriting his brother, made you his heir. And besides these instances, this man has seized on much other property belonging to men wholly unconnected with him, to the exclusion of the legitimate heirs, as if he himself were the heir.

[42] Although the thing that struck me with most astonishment of all was, that you should venture to make mention of inheritances, when you yourself had not received the inheritance of your own father. Was it to rake this stuff together, you addle-brain, that you spent all these days declaiming in a country house that does not belong to you? Though, to be sure, you do that to clear your head of intoxication from wine, not to sharpen your wits; that's what your closest friends claim. Ah, but then for sport, you and your drinking companions, voted to set up as the master of the ceremonies a professional, and you gave him permission to say whatever he liked against you – a witty fellow, no doubt, but you and your crowd make easy targets for satire. Observe, however, the contrast between you and your grandfather: he spoke with deliberate care words that advanced his case; you speak in contradictions, helter-skelter.

[43] And what wages have you paid this rhetorician? Listen, listen, O conscript fathers, and learn the blows which are inflicted on the republic. You have assigned, O Antonius, two thousand acres¹ of land, in the Leontine district, to Sextus Clodius, the rhetorician, and those, too, exempt from every kind of tax, for the sake of putting the Roman people to such a vast expense that you might learn to be a fool. Was this gift, too, O you most audacious of men, found among Caesar's papers? But I will take another opportunity to speak about the Leontine and the Campanian district; where he has stolen lands from the republic to pollute them with most infamous owners. For now, since I have sufficiently replied to all his charges, I must say a little about our corrector and censor himself. And yet I will not say all I could, in order that if I have often to battle with him I may always come to the contest with fresh arms; and the multitude of his vices and atrocities will easily enable me to do so.

[44] Shall we then examine your conduct from the time when you were a boy? I think so. Let us begin at the beginning. Do you recollect that, while you were still clad in the [praetexta](#), you became a bankrupt? That was the fault of your father, you will say. I admit that. In truth such a defense is full of filial affection. But it is peculiarly suited to your own audacity, that you sat among the fourteen rows of the knights, though by the Roscian law there was a place appointed for bankrupts, even if any one had become such by the fault of fortune and not by his own. You assumed the manly gown, which you soon made a womanly one: at first a public prostitute, with a regular price for your wickedness, and that not a low one. But very soon Curio stepped in, who carried you off from your public trade, and, as if he had bestowed a matron's robe upon you, settled you in a steady and durable wedlock.

Further Reading: Bibliography

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