

JULIUS CAESAR AND HIS TIMES

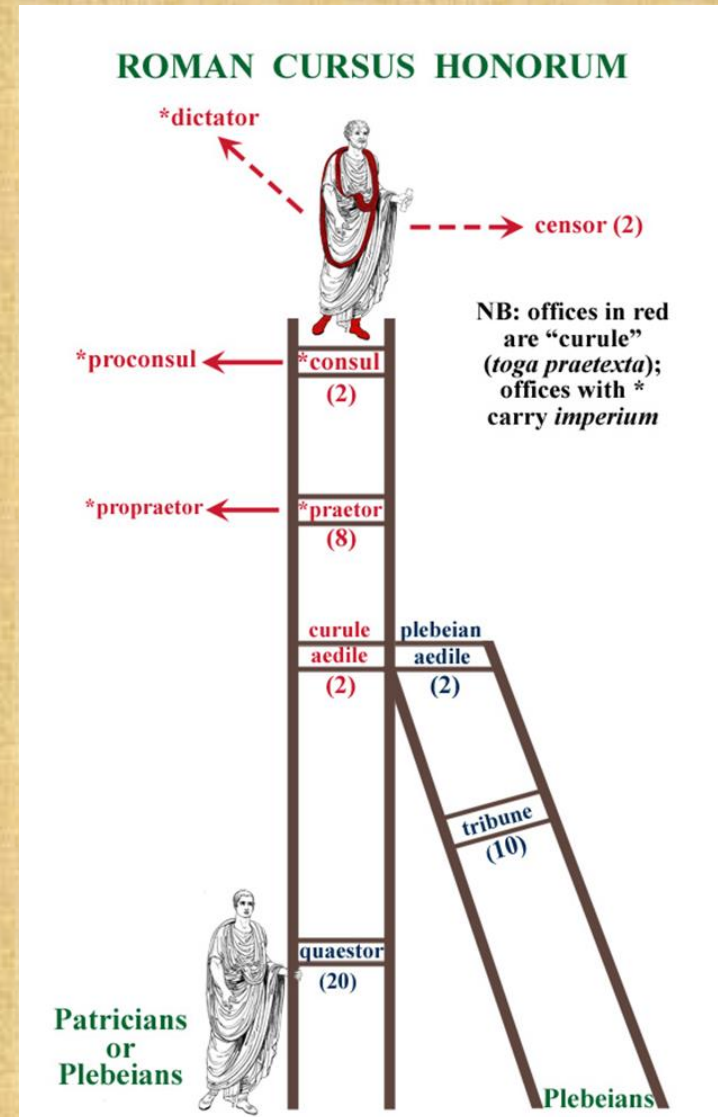
Unit 2 – Getting one's hands dirty, or:
Caesar and Catiline



CLAH7002

Climbing up the Career Ladder

- Acquires office as a military tribune in 72 BC.
- Quaestorship in 69 BC.
 - Following year he served as a proquaestor under C. Antistius Vetus in Hispania Ulterior.
- Funeral eulogy to his aunt Julia and his wife Cornelia (who was the daughter of Cinna) in 69 BC.
- 63 BC: Caesar elected Pontifex Maximus.



The *populares*

- ▣ Highly problematic to refer to it as a party, or indeed, even a faction.
- ▣ A strategy for advancement?
 - Figures need not be permanently bound to this, e.g. Pompey.
- ▣ Caesar associated with *populares* tradition – family connections, support for the undoing of the Sullan reforms, etc.
- ▣ Caesar managed to gain popularity through prodigality but also appear free from corruption.

“He was unsparing in his outlays of money, and was thought to be purchasing a transient and short-lived fame at a great price, though in reality he was buying things of the highest value at a small price. We are told, accordingly, that before he entered upon any public office he was 1,300 talents in debt. Again, being appointed curator of the Appian Way, he spent vast sums of his own money; and again, during his aedileship, he furnished 320 pairs of gladiators, and by lavish provision besides for theatrical performances, processions, and public banquets, he washed away all memory of the ambitious efforts of his predecessors in the office. By these means he put the people in high spirits that every man of them was seeking out new offices and new honours with which to requite him.” – **Plutarch *Julius Caesar* 5.8-9.**

The (second) Catilinarian conspiracy

Electoral Corruption

- ▣ Autronius Paetus and P. Cornelius Sulla convicted for *ambitus* in elections of 66 BC.
 - Bar from taking up the consulships for 65 BC.
- ▣ L. Sergius Catilina (Catiline) disbarred from standing by L. Volcaciuss Tullus.
- ▣ So called “First Catilinarian conspiracy”.

“Paetus and Cornelius Sulla, a nephew of the great Sulla, who had been elected consuls and then convicted of bribery, had plotted to kill their accusers, Lucius Cotta and Lucius Torquatus, especially after the latter had also been convicted. Among others who had been suborned were Gnaeus Piso and also Lucius Catiline, a man of great audacity, who had sought the office himself and was angry on this account.” – **Cassius Dio 36.44.3-4.**

The Costs of Politics

- ▣ Intense competition and high debts – suppression of city's *collegia* (64 BC).
- ▣ Three major consular candidates for 63 BC – Cicero, C. Antonius and Catiline.
- ▣ Catiline stands on a more radical platform for the consulship of 62 BC – defeated again.

“And yet Catiline's frenzy did not abate. On the contrary, he increased his activity every day, made collections of arms at strategic points in Italy, and borrowed money on his own credit or that of his friends, sending it to Faesulae to a certain Manlius, who afterwards was the first to take the field.” – **Sallust**
Bellum Catilinae 24.2.

The Conspiracy Revealed

- ▣ Catiline flees Rome and takes control of Manlius' forces.
- ▣ P. Cornelius Lentulus Sura – attempted incitement of the Allobroges.
- ▣ Arrest of five conspirators.
- ▣ Debate over the fate of the arrested in the Senate.
- ▣ Conspirators put to death by Cicero.

“As soon as Cato had taken his seat, all the ex-consuls, as well as a great part of the other senators, praised his proposal and lauded his courage to the skies, while they charged one another with timidity. Cato was hailed as great and noble, and a decree of the senate was passed in accordance with his recommendation.” – **Sallust**
Bellum Catilinae 53.1.

Defeat of Catiline

“When the battle was ended it became evident what boldness and resolution had pervaded Catiline's army. For almost every man covered with his body, when life was gone, the position which he had taken when alive at the beginning of the conflict. A few, indeed, in the centre, whom the praetorian cohort had scattered, lay a little apart from the rest, but the wounds even of these were in front. But Catiline was found far in advance of his men amid a heap of slain foemen, still breathing slightly, and showing in his face the indomitable spirit which had animated him when alive. Finally, out of the whole army not a single citizen of free birth was taken during the battle or in flight, showing that all had valued their own lives no more highly than those of their enemies.” - **Sallust**
Bellum Catilinae 61.

Caesar and Crassus implicated?

- ▣ 63 BC: Caesar a supporter of a controversial agrarian bill put forward by the tribune Servilius Rullus.
 - Cicero does not attack Caesar directly in any of his speeches opposing the bill.
- ▣ Crassus had passed on a letter to Cicero outlining the conspirators plans.
- ▣ L. Vettius and Q. Curius included Caesar in a list of senators who had allegedly supported the conspiracy.



“Cato even helped to raise suspicion against Caesar by what he said. As a result, the men were handed over to the executioner, and many of the young men who at that time formed a body-guard for Cicero ran together with drawn swords and threatened Caesar as he was leaving the senate. But Curio, as we are told, threw his toga round Caesar and got him away, while Cicero himself, when the young men looked to him for a sign, shook his head, either through fear of the people, or because he thought the murder would be wholly contrary to law and justice.” – **Plutarch *Julius Caesar* 8.1.**