CICERO

IN CATILINAM I & II

Edited with Introduction,
Notes and Vocabulary by

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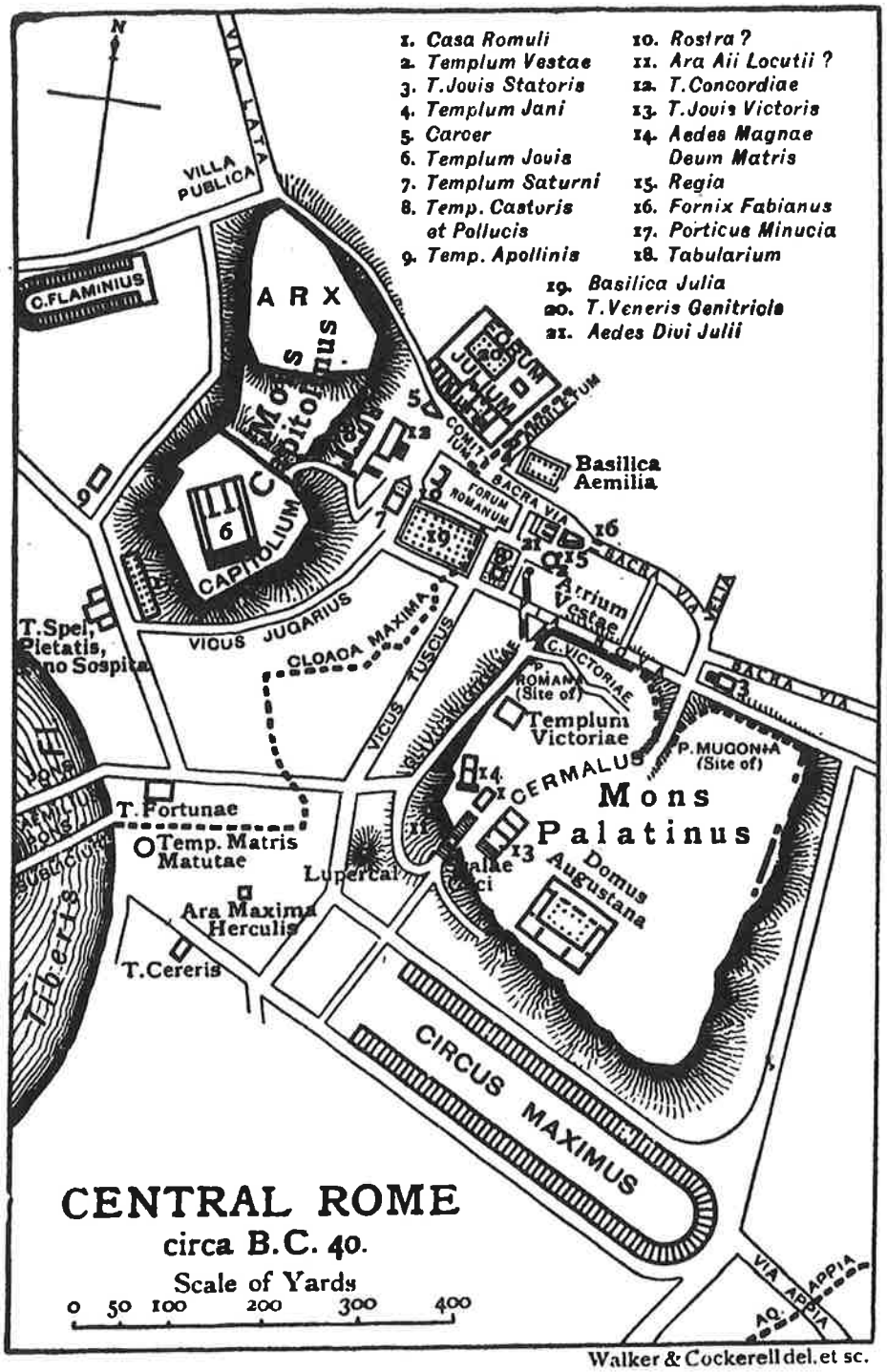
Bristol Classical Press



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INTRODUCTION

(i) MARCUS TULLIUS CICERO

CICERO was born near Arpinum on January 3rd, 106 B.C., and lost his life in December, 43 B.C., in the proscriptions which Antony organised in the troubled period following Caesar's murder. Cicero's life, then, covers the period which saw the collapse of the Roman Republic and the beginning of what was to be the Roman Principate in which the Emperors had the powers of dictators.

He began his career as a lawyer and had such brilliant success at the Roman bar that he was able, although not a member of the governing class, to obtain the regular sequence of magistracies and a seat in the senate. He spent his quaestorship in Sicily, where his conduct was marked by honesty and integrity, and, finally in 51 B.C., he held a provincial governorship in Cilicia, south-east Asia Minor. Cicero's vanity and pride in the fact that he had climbed to the highest offices in the state by his own merit and ability made him deeply attached to the constitutional forms of the Roman Republic, and blinded him to the many political and social evils of the day, such as the narrow-mindedness and selfishness of the ruling class (the senatorial order), its failure to provide a strong and efficient government either in Rome or in the provinces

and, above all, its inability to control the successful generals and their armies who were destined to overthrow the Republic.

A short sketch of some of the most important issues at stake in the political sphere during this century will help to make Cicero's position clear.

Theoretically the Roman Republic was democratic in its working, but in reality all the power lay in the hands of a few families identified with the senate, whose ambition it was to retain the reins of government to the exclusion of all others. A generation before Cicero's birth, their political supremacy had been temporarily shaken by two ardent reformers, the brothers, Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus, who seem to have made an honest attempt to solve several serious problems, such as unemployment, the disappearance of the small farmer, and the relations between Rome and her allies in Italy. The senate put every obstacle in their path, and when eventually the Gracchi lost their lives in street fighting, the senatorial order quickly re-established its supremacy. In the first century B.C., however, the senate had to meet further attacks from other reformers, and, as both sides were now resorting to force, they both looked for support to the outstanding general of the day who could get bills passed with the aid of his troops. Thus civil war broke out, which was characterised by cruelty and massacre on both sides.

For example, during the second decade of the first century, when Cicero was just beginning his career at the bar, there were three civil wars, and Rome was twice besieged and captured by Roman generals in

command of Roman and Italian troops. More terrible still, in 80 B.C., Sulla began the system of ' proscriptions ', under which all those whose political opinions were regarded as dangerous to the winning side could be killed with impunity.

The next twenty years, 80–60 B.C., were momentous in the history of the Roman Republic. Sulla's attempt to bolster up the power of the senate gradually collapsed before attacks from several quarters, especially from Pompey and Caesar, the latter of whom was beginning to take an active part in politics.

During this period, too, Cicero had established his reputation as a lawyer and orator, and, in particular, he had distinguished himself by a successful prosecution of Verres for misgovernment in Sicily. At this time, also, he entered political life, became aedile in 69, praetor in 66, and consul in 63 B.C. His consular year of office will always be remembered for the vigorous way in which he crushed a dangerous attempt to effect a *coup d'état* on the part of Catiline, an unscrupulous noble who hoped to rally to his side the many discontented elements in Italy. The fact that there was so much discontent in Italy is a strong indictment of the senatorial government of the preceding seventy years.

Cicero attempted to form a strong government, capable of maintaining order in Rome and the provinces, and of controlling the recklessness of demagogic tribunes and their irresponsible followers among the landless and workless in Rome. He aimed at establishing a kind of ' National Government ', a combination of senators, business men and financiers, and

PLATE OF COINS

SILVER COIN (57 B.C.)

Showing the head of Sulla, and inscribed SULLA CO(n)S(ul).

SILVER COIN (44 B.C.)

Showing portrait of Julius Caesar wearing a laurel wreath. The inscription runs CAESAR DICT(ator) PERPETVO.

GOLD COIN (42–38 B.C.)

Showing portrait of Pompey and Pompey and his eldest son Gnaius. The inscriptions are MAG(nus) PIVS IMP(erator) ITER(um) and continued on the reverse PRAEF(ectus) CLAS(sis) ET OR(ae) MARIT(imae).

BRONZE COIN (after 30 B.C.)

Showing a head of Cicero's only son. There is some resemblance between it and the busts of his father, shown in the frontispiece.

SILVER COIN (28 B.C.)

Celebrating the capture of Egypt by Octavian (29 B.C.). The inscription on the obverse is CAESAR COS VI. The crocodile is the symbol of Egypt.

the upper classes in the Italian cities, protected by a loyal general and a strong force of troops. He cast Pompey for the role of protector of the constitution.

Such a plan, however, failed to work. In the first place, in 60 B.C., the alliance between Caesar, Pompey and Crassus, known as the First Triumvirate, showed that the senate had now lost all power of independent action. Secondly, there was Julius Caesar to be reckoned with, an ambitious man who gradually came to realise that the Roman Republic was too far gone for remedial treatment, and should be replaced by a new system.

Thus, during the next sixteen years, 60–44 B.C., Cicero's political ideal was completely shattered. He himself was exiled in 58 [1] and recalled in 57 B.C. During 58–51 B.C. Caesar was adding to the Roman province a new and rich Empire, Gaul, which he annexed after a brilliant series of campaigns. In Rome itself, constitutional government broke down and anarchy became so widespread that the senate had to call in Pompey and his troops to restore order. Gradually the senate succeeded in alienating Pompey from Caesar, and in 49 B.C. civil war broke out between Caesar and the senate, led by Pompey.

It took Caesar four years to crush the senatorial party, and by 45 B.C. he was virtually the sole ruler of the Roman Empire. A year later, he was assassinated by a group of senators led by Brutus, who seems to have honestly believed that, with Caesar removed, the Roman Republic would be restored to its former position.

[1] The reason for his exile was that during his consulship in 63 B.C., he had executed without trial certain fellow-conspirators of Catiline.

If we are to understand Cicero's feelings at this time, his distress at his exile, his unrestrained joy at his recall, his dismay at the dictatorial position of Julius Caesar, and his delight at his murder, we have to remember that to Cicero a political career in what he considered a free state with democratic forms of government was the only legitimate career for a free man. He could never forget that he himself had risen to the top and obtained the consulship and a seat in the senate by his own ability and merit. He failed to see, as Caesar saw clearly enough, that the Republic was past mending. Thus after Caesar's murder, Cicero attempted once more to form a 'National Government'. Not only did he fail again, but he lost his own life. For he had embittered Antony, Caesar's successor, and, when the Second Triumvirate was formed, consisting of Antony, Lepidus and Octavian, Antony got his revenge by having Cicero's name put down on the list of the proscribed.

(ii) L. Sergius Catiline and the Catilinarian Conspiracies

L. Sergius Catiline was born of a patrician family in 108 B.C., and was thus two years older than Cicero. Both our contemporary authorities (Cicero and Sallust, who wrote a monograph on him) testify to his tremendous mental and physical powers and to the depraved immorality of his youth. But we must discount many of the horrible crimes which Cicero imputed to Catiline in his own partisan electoral speech, and which, if true, would make him one of the worst monsters of mankind.

Again, both our authorities mention Catiline's rare gift of making loyal friends and the versatility of his character, which enabled him to mix easily with all types of men and win the support even of good men, as Cicero says,[1] by the appearance, so to speak, of an assumed virtue. Unfortunately for Rome, Catiline lacked the rich inheritance which would easily have enabled a man of his birth, drive, and ambition to attain to the highest offices of state.

But his attitude to such political honours was fundamentally different from Cicero's. Catiline regarded them as a birth-right, which, if he could not obtain them by fair means, he meant to have by violence. Moreover, the opportunities for enrichment, especially as a governor of some rich province after his consular office, were necessary for an aristocrat of his type to restore his bankrupt and mortgaged fortunes.

He first appeared in public life as a devoted partisan of Sulla in the Sullan proscriptions of 80 B.C., and in 68 B.C. he secured the praetorship. The following year he spent as governor in N. Africa, but he acted in such an oppressive manner that, even before his year of office terminated, native envoys had made strong representations to the senate about his scandalous behaviour. These accusations were a severe blow to his hopes of obtaining the consulship of 65 B.C., because they prevented his being accepted as a candidate. Hence arose what came to be known as the First Catilinarian Conspiracy. Allying himself with two other rejected nominees who had been found guilty of bribery, Catiline formed the hare-brained scheme of

[1] See the fine picture in Cic., *pro Caelio*, 13.

murdering the incoming consuls and other prominent senators on the 1st January 65 B.C., and then of seizing the consular power for himself and his associates. As, however, the conspirators failed to maintain any secrecy, the execution of their plans was postponed until the following month, and even then miscarried because, it is said, Catiline gave the signal too soon to the conspirators, who had not yet appeared with sufficiently large numbers of armed men.

In 65 B.C. Catiline had to stand his trial for misgovernment in N. Africa, and, although he obtained a favourable verdict by buying off his accuser and bribing the jury, he was again debarred from standing for the consulship, i.e. of 64 B.C. By this time he was deeply in debt, and he seems to have been taken up by Crassus, a very wealthy and ambitious financier, who was on the look-out for men like Catiline whom he could use for his own ends. He had already won his support by enabling him and his fellow-conspirators to escape punishment for the First Catilinarian Conspiracy.

Financed by Crassus, who had marked him out as a possible military leader against his rival Pompey,[1] Catiline appeared as a candidate for the consulship of 63 B.C. In addition to four other candidates, there was the successful lawyer and orator Cicero, whose otherwise strong prospects were weakened by the fact that he was a *novus homo*, ' a new man ', i.e. one who did not belong to the governing classes. The latter distrusted Cicero for his previous support of Pompey, and, in any

[1] Pompey, who was conducting a successful campaign against Mithridates, a powerful prince in Asia Minor, was likely to return to Italy that year.

case, were not willing to admit even talented men within their own circle. Yet Cicero was one of the elected consuls and Catiline again failed,—a failure which was as much due to his own unscrupulous behaviour before the elections as to the fact that the senate may have been alarmed over his real designs and the part which Crassus was playing behind the scenes.

Catiline was now completely exasperated and in danger of financial ruin. In 63 B.C. he was again a candidate for the consulship, i.e. of 62 B.C., and, no longer enjoying the financial support of Crassus, he openly based his candidature on a programme of *novae tabulae*, 'a clean slate', or cancellation of debts, and made a strong appeal to Sullan veterans who had sunk into debt, and, above all, to the many aristocrats who had been made bankrupt by their heavy expenditure in seeking office,[1] an expenditure which was inevitable if they wished to keep these political honours among themselves. Thus, viewed as a piece of legislation, this scheme of Catiline can only be dubbed as reactionary.

Catiline's chances of success were weakened by a financial panic, by his own arrogant and overweening behaviour, and by the firm attitude of the consul Cicero. In his first Catilinarian Oration, the latter tells us how he persuaded the senate to put off the elections for a few days, and how he appeared at the elections armed with his own cuirass and protected by a bodyguard of young equites, and thus prevented the electors from being panicked. Catiline failed again.

[1] E.g., electoral expenses such as bribes to electors, and the pay-roll of a vast army of clients.

His reply was that of the man whose patience is exhausted, an attempted *coup de main*, known as the Second Catilinarian Conspiracy, in which it is interesting to note first, that of sixteen known conspirators twelve were of senatorial standing, and second that the main object for many was not so much the seizure of political power as the remission of debts.

Catiline's plans were as follows: to maintain in Rome a hired band of gladiators and to arouse the Sullan veterans and other discontented elements in Etruria under the leadership of an experienced Sullan centurion, named Manlius. The force of Manlius was to advance on Praeneste and then on the 27th October to effect a night march on Rome. On the following day, there was to be a joint rising in Rome by the troops of Manlius and Catiline's gladiators.

Unfortunately for the success of this *coup d'état*, Cicero learned of these plans through a secret agent, a woman, named Fulvia. Thereupon he summoned the senate and was authorised by it to make full enquiries.

On October 21st, after reports had been received that Manlius was mustering his army, Cicero again summoned the senate, which after two days' discussion, proclaimed a state of emergency and gave the consuls unrestricted powers to provide for the safety of the state by their resolution, *videant consules ne quid res publica detrimenti capiat*, ' let the consuls see to it that the state suffer no harm '.

Thus empowered, Cicero acted vigorously. He moved the gladiators to Capua, called out the municipal levies, and commissioned the praetor Metellus Celer to raise fresh levies in Northern Italy. But, lacking

complete evidence, he felt himself unable to arrest Catiline. In any case, as a *novus homo*, one who was still not sure of the support of the governing class to which he did not belong, Cicero did not dare to risk making a mistake, for, as has been well said, the aristocrats no doubt objected to their being saved by an ' outsider '.

His previous plans thus checked, Catiline at first protested his innocence and offered to place himself under voluntary arrest. Then he resolved on even more desperate action. Slipping out from custody and, no doubt, with the connivance of his gaoler, M. Metellus, on the night of November 6th-7th, he met several of the conspirators at the house of one, Laeca, ' in the Sickle-makers' Street '. There he matured his new plans, announced his intended departure from Rome to join Manlius, decided who was to stay behind in Rome, allotted the various roles each conspirator had to play in the riots, murders, and conflagrations that were to follow, and finally gave to two Roman knights the task of assassinating Cicero. The latter, however, was warned in time by the same secret agent, prevented his own murder, and on November 8th, delivered the First Catilinarian Oration before the senate in the presence of Catiline himself. In it, he denounced him as an arch-fiend and the bane of his country, disclosed all his new plans, and implored him to rid his country of his presence. It is probable that, in making this request, the consul was hoping to force the senate's hand and make it say, ' No! arrest him at once.' But the senators did not give him that support.

The next day, Catiline left Rome, ostensibly, under protest, for Marseilles and voluntary exile, but in reality to join Manlius. Then followed the Second Catilinarian Oration in which Cicero hailed his departure as a glorious victory, expressed his hope that, with the ringleader departed, the conspiracy would collapse, and endeavoured to persuade the conspirators still left behind to give up their mad schemes and ambitions.

But his hopes were not fulfilled. Catiline continued to carry on a vigorous recruiting campaign in Etruria, while the conspirators in Rome, led by P. Cornelius Lentulus, made plans to murder Cicero and the leading senators, to set the city on fire, to call out the slaves and lower orders to loot, and then to break through to Catiline.

Cicero again got news of these moves, this time through some envoys from the Allobroges, a Gallic tribe in South-East France, whom the conspirators had approached with a view to their joining in the revolt. By their agency, the consul succeeded in getting written evidence of the conspiracy, and obtained from the senate the power to have the leading conspirators in Rome arrested. After a long debate in which Julius Caesar intervened and suggested perpetual custody for the conspirators in Italian towns, the senate at last decided on capital punishment.

Cicero's Third Catilinarian Oration, which he delivered to the people, gives the details of the events leading up to the arrest of the conspirators, while his Fourth Oration, delivered in the senate during the debate mentioned in the last paragraph, merely examines the question whether the conspirators

should be executed or not, from the point of view of his own personal safety.

At the beginning of the next year, 62 B.C., Catiline was killed, fighting bravely at the head of his forces.

This short account of the Catilinarian Conspiracies may be concluded with one additional note. Attempts have been made to represent Catiline as a true reformer, i.e. as one who was the legitimate successor of the Gracchi brothers, of Saturninus, Drusus, and Sulpicius, men who had tried to solve some of the pressing problems to which reference has been made in the introduction, p. x. Modern views, however, tend to reject these attempts as a complete misconception of the facts and maintain the traditional idea that Catiline was a man of great power both mental and physical, but obstinate, amoral, and reactionary.

(iii) The Works of Cicero

The works of Cicero may be divided into three groups: (i) his speeches, both legal and political, by which he established an undisputed reputation as the master of Roman eloquence; (ii) his voluminous correspondence, which gives us a picture of Roman political and social life under the later republic, more vivid and varied than that of any other period of Roman history; and finally (iii) his philosophical works, in which he aimed at explaining and criticising for the benefit of educated Romans the doctrines and tenets of the leading Greek philosophical schools. Under (iii) we may classify the two essays on 'Old Age' and 'Friendship'.

This volume in the 'Modern School Classics' contains the first two of the four speeches Cicero delivered against Catiline, the first on November 8th, 63 B.C., in the Temple of Jupiter Stator, before the senate, and the second before the people on the following day, when Catiline had voluntarily left Rome, ostensibly to go into exile, but in reality to join Manlius.

All the speeches were published later by Cicero himself, and, though no doubt he carefully revised and edited them, they may be taken to represent most of what Cicero himself said. They have always been popular, as the number of extant manuscripts copied during the Middle Ages shows, and, as they are not too difficult, they make an excellent introduction to Cicero's oratorical works. In them can be found most of the characteristics of his style, his perfect mastery of the Latin tongue, his brilliant powers of description and narration, and his irony and sarcasm.