

Princeton/Stanford Working Papers in Classics

**Magna mihi copia est memorandi: Modes of Historiography in the Speeches of
Caesar and Cato (Sallust, *Bellum Catilinae* 51-4)**

Version 1

October, 2009

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Abstract: This paper analyzes the historiographic dimension of the paired speeches of Caesar and Cato at the climax of Sallust's *Bellum Catilinae*. Where Caesar stresses the continuities between past and present and so the capacity of history, rationally analyzed, to offer general precepts for political behavior, Cato by contrast stresses the radical difference of the past. Each perspective allows a different reading of Sallust's own narrative. Yet rather than privileging one point of view over the other, Sallust uses the tension between them to focus attention on the question of what history is for in an age of civil discord.

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**Magna mihi copia est memorandi: Modes of Historiography in the Speeches of
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My starting point for this paper is something the historian does not say. In the preface to the *Catiline*, Sallust responds to many of the questions the reader of a historiographic text expects to have answered: we learn how Sallust came to write history and how his life story qualifies him to write about it with authority and without bias. We learn of the scope of the work to come and why its subject is worth recording. We also meet praise of historiography as an appropriate arena for the author to win glory through strenuous labor. What we do not hear explicitly, though, is what his history will do for its readers. Sallust never promises the traditional rewards of historical reading, pleasure or utility, much less defines the terms of that utility.¹ Indeed his one statement about readers, even if it is taken as apotropaic, suggests a very pessimistic view of the contract between author and audience: "... most readers, when you reprimand failings, think you are speaking out of ill will and envy, but when you recall the great virtue and glory of good men, each accepts with equanimity what he thinks would be easy for him to do, but he considers anything beyond that made-up and untrue" (*BC* 3.2). The moral capacities of the present thus threaten the very possibility for a reader to understand history as history, that is, as the genre that by definition records what really happened—the *verum*, not the *fictum*. There are several ways of responding to this absence in Sallust's prologue: one is to attempt to fill it based on generic expectations or by appeal to the author's view of history as something outside the text that we can use to understand it—the most common way of doing this is to turn to more explicit statements in the *Jugurtha* as a clue to how Sallust conceived of the function of the *Catiline*.² My approach, by contrast, will be to assume that the missing piece opens the text up to a particular kind of scrutiny by its reader, who is invited to reflect precisely about why to remember the past and how to construe the relation between past and present. Specifically, I will argue that a large portion of Sallust's text, the paired speeches delivered by Caesar and Cato, and the *synkrisis* of the two that follows, stands out as a sort of *mise en abîme*, a *Catiline* within the *Catiline*, where Sallust directs attention to the functions of historical memory and to the relation of his historiographic text to the world of events.³

* This paper was originally presented at a conference in 2006 on the "Historian's Plupast" at Freiburg University, organized by Christopher Krebs and Jonas Grethlein, and will appear in a volume of papers based on that conference. I wish to thank both of the organizers together with the other participants of the conference for many important suggestions. The revised version of this paper then benefited from the careful reading of Timothy Joseph and Christopher Krebs. The remaining errors are my own contribution.

¹ On the general expectations of a reader approaching a historiographic text, see esp. Marincola 1997: 19-33. For the pleasure/utility opposition see esp. Avenarius 1956: 22-9 and Walbank 1990.

² As was very effectively done by Grethlein 2006a. Though his terms are rather different from mine, I acknowledge the precedent of Gunderson 2000's exploration of Sallust's "philosophy of history" and his picture of this philosophy as contradictory and profoundly affected by the revolutions of his age.

³ My argument thus complements the approach of Sklenář 1998, who shows (206) that Sallust uses the paired speeches of Cato and Caesar to "set his own rationalistic and moralistic ideals in opposition to each other." In contrast to his work, my emphasis will be on how this "autologomachy" affects our understanding of Sallust's historiographic aims rather than his view of morality. Cf. also the conclusions of Batstone (1988: 29) on the function of Sallustian historiography.

Let me make it clear that I am not arguing that the *Catiline* presents itself as a "purposeless" text, nor that none of the commonly available models for understanding historical writing can structure a meaningful response to the *Catiline*. Certainly the universal scope of its beginning, posing questions about the behavior of "all men," (*omnis homines*, BC 1,1) suggests a Thucydidean *ktema eis aiei* predicated on common human tendencies, that make the past useful for understanding the future, and, in a more extended Polybian sense, the nature of all human accomplishment.⁴ What I am suggesting is that the absence of a specific claim about what history is for makes the reader test different models of interpreting the *Catiline*, and that this process in turn highlights central problems in the work.

That Thucydidean opening serves as a case in point. If we assume that Sallust's aim is to illustrate something about the nature of all humans, this stands in striking contrast to some other programmatic statements that might be familiar to readers of Latin historiography. Here we are hampered by the fragmentary nature of the evidence, but it is at least suggestive to consider what Sempronius Asellio, himself a writer of pragmatic history seemingly influenced by Polybius, says history is good for. Sempronius highlights the moral effect of historiography, but he does so in very nationalist terms: as opposed to mere annalistic records, his history will have the capacity "to make men quicker to serve the state, and slower to act wrongly."⁵ It is true that the "*rem publicam*" in question could be any republic, but the impression that he is thinking of his own Roman state makes sense in light of what another, later, historian, Livy (*praef.* 10) claims explicitly about the utility of history, when he argues that the "healthful" effects of the knowledge of events comes in the repertoire of *exempla* they offer, "whence you may choose for yourself and your *res publica*" what to imitate and what to avoid. Livy's language here opens the possibility that "your" *res publica* may no longer be our Roman *res publica*, but such a view would emerge as a variant of a traditional claim that Roman historiography was directed at the moral improvement of Romans *qua* Romans and was as such integral to the preservation of Roman "history." Thus for a Sallustian reader, the very universality of the moral framework evoked at the beginning of the *Catiline* may highlight the absence of a specifically Roman application—will there be a Roman state for it to matter in? This formal implication of his beginning would be amplified by the last sentence of the preface with its dire warning that *imperium* always passes to the best from the less good.⁶ That conclusion seems to predict a possible epilogue for the account of Roman moral decline he presents in the archaeology: the endpoint of Roman history comes when it stops being an account of moral transformations within a distinctively Roman context; when Rome reaches the point of being "less good", her history must follow the course of her *imperium* and move outside the state, where it matters only as an illustration of

⁴Thuc. 1.22.4. For Polybius' views of "pragmatic history", see esp. 1.4.1 with Walbank 1990 and Meissner (1986). For the similarities between Sallust's and Thucydides views of the utility of history, cf., e.g., La Penna's (1968: 149) point that both authors share "la coscienza di una "natura" umana quale fondamento oggettivo di una logica nella storia."

⁵*Nam neque alacriores ad rempublicam defendundam neque segniore ad rem perperam faciundam annales libri commouere quicquam possunt.* (Sempronius Asellio, fr. 2 Chassignet).

⁶*verum ubi pro labore desidia, pro continentia et aequitate libido atque superbia invasere, fortuna simul cum moribus inmutatur. ita imperium semper ad optimum quemque a minus bono transfertur*, BC 2.5-6. I interpret the phrase as referring at once to internal politics and to external, see McGushin 1977: 38-40.

generalized human tendencies. It is ultimately the question of the continuity of Roman history that, I will argue, is raised by the "programmatic elements" in the treatment of Caesar and Cato.

Turning to the beginning of Caesar's speech, which comes in the midst of a senatorial debate about the punishment of the Catilinarian conspirators, we meet language that at once blurs the difference between the deliberative oration reported and the historiographic text that contains it, signaled unmistakably by the recurrence of the monographs first words as Caesar prescribes what "befits" (*decet*) "all men" (*omnes homines*)⁷:

Omnis homines, patres conscripti, qui de rebus dubiis consultant, ab odio, amicitia, ira atque misericordia vacuos esse decet. haud facile animus verum providet, ubi illa officiunt, neque quisquam omnium lubrici simul et usui paruit. ubi intenderis ingenium, valet; si lubrico possidet, ea dominatur, animus nihil valet. magna mihi copia est memorandi, patres conscripti, quae reges atque populi ira aut misericordia impulsu male consuluerint. (BC 51.1-4)

It befits all men, Senators, who deliberate about uncertain matters to be without hatred, friendship, anger, and pity. The mind does not easily foresee the truth when those stand in the way, nor does any one obey pleasure and utility at the same time. When you exercise your intellect, it has power; if pleasure takes control, she is the master. I have a great supply of examples to recall, Senators, of how kings and peoples have deliberated badly when driven by anger or pity.

The verb Caesar uses to describe the activity the senate is then engaged in, *consultant* ("deliberate") also recalls the debate in the preface over the relative importance of mental planning and physical ability in military affairs (1.6), but here with a suggestive difference: Earlier, Sallust had said that deliberation came before action—*prius quam incipias consulto, et ubi consulueris mature facto opus est*. In one sense this "deliberation before action" is just what Caesar's speech, within Sallust's framework, seems to offer, reasoning before taking specific action about punishing the conspirators. And yet in another, Caesar's act of mental judgment is placed after the fact; for it will require both reviewing and judging the deeds of the conspirators themselves and the interpretation of earlier events in Roman history. This image of "deliberation" at an interstitial point before and after action already suggests its close connection with the remembering of the past implicit in any historiographic project. Thus it becomes significant that Caesar's return to the language of the preface adds programmatic claims distinctive to historiography as a genre that supplement what Sallust said in his own voice. "It befits all men who deliberate about doubtful things to be empty of hatred, friendship, anger, and pity. The mind does not easily see the truth when those things are in the way. Nor does anyone equally serve his advantage and his pleasure." The absence of partisanship and its attendant emotions constitutes perhaps

⁷ For these parallels, see especially Sklenář 1998: 206-7.

the claim most essential to establish the authority of any historian.⁸ Sallust himself boasts that he is qualified to write history "because I have a mind free from expectation fear and the parties of the republic."⁹ The ultimate goal of Caesar's inquiry, the "truth" (*verum*) seems at least as at home in the context of historiography as of deliberative oratory, if not more so. So the next sentence deploys terms that would be expected in a historiographic preface, where pleasure and utility conventionally appear as the alternative aims of writing about the past (cf. *supra*, n.1). And at this point Caesar takes on the central task of the historian, *memorandi*, in recounting previous *exempla* of Roman past behavior.

Nor is the language of historiography limited to the first paragraph. For in turning from the exemplary use of the distant past to the immediate past under discussion, Caesar again issues an implicit warning against pity. Those who spoke before him, he claims have "pitied" the misfortune of the republic. They have, specifically, rehearsed a number of *topoi* about what happens when cities are sacked: "how virgins are raped, and boys, children are plucked from the embrace of their parents, and mothers endure what lust inspires in the victors, how shrines and homes are plundered, and slaughter and conflagration ensue, and everything is filled with arms, corpses, blood, and lamentation."¹⁰ These maybe rhetorical *topoi*, but they are also historiographic ones, just the sort of details that a sensationalist historian will trot out every time a city is sacked. In fact, Caesar's critique of how his describe what the Catilinarians would have done recalls almost precisely the language of Polybius' critique of Phylarchus' pathetic account of the sack of Mantinea (2.56.7).¹¹ The Polybian passage also adds a historiographic dimension to Caesar's focus on *miser cordia*, for the aim of these "tragic" displays according to Polybius is just that (εἰς ἔλεον ἐκκαλεῖσθαι τοὺς ἀναγινώσκοντας). And when we recall that the "tragic" tendencies of historiography were explained as an attempt to contribute to the reader's pleasure, the *lubido/usus* opposition made at the opening of his speech also becomes relevant.¹² Good, impartial, utilitarian historiographic practice corrects the rhetoric of others.

Before moving on to unpack what these programmatic statements say about Caesar as a historian, I want to point out how very appropriate such historiographic coloring is to Caesar's speech as a whole, which refers to past events with a density striking even for the exemplum loving Romans and also relies implicitly on a certain vision of the relation of past to present. His entire speech is historically oriented in that he presents the decision he advocates as a way of maintaining continuity with the past.

⁸ For the history of the *topos*, see most conveniently Marincola 1997: 158-64.

⁹ *statui res gestas populi ... perscribere, eo magis quod mihi a spe metu partibus rei publicae animus liber erat.* (BC 4.2), a wonderfully ambiguous expression hinting that the historian's impartiality may arise because there is no longer a republic to motivate fear, expectation, or partisanship.

¹⁰ *plerique eorum, qui ante me sententias dixerunt, compositae atque magnifice casum rei publicae miserati sunt. quae belli saevitia esset, quae victis adcidere, enumerare: rapti virgines, pueros; divelli liberos a parentum complexu; matres familiarum pati quae victoribus conlubuissent; fana atque domos spoliari; caedem, incendia fieri; postremo armis, cadaveribus, cruore atque luctu omnia compleri.* (BC 51.9)

¹¹ Lest we take Caesar simply as a spokesperson for Sallust's views of historiography, the historian seems to have used just such a description of the devastation of a city—wrought by fugitive slaves—in his account of the slave war of Spartacus at *Hist.* 3.98B. Pöschl 1969: 370 suggests that the rhetorical target of Caesar's parody is Cicero himself (*Cat.* 4.11).

¹² Walbank 1990.

The execution of citizens would be something new (*novom*, BC 51.8), not to execute them would be to act as the *maiores* would have, a point he stresses both at the beginning and end of his speech. His arguments indeed offer a catalog of the various ways in which history's usefulness could be described. There is first the simple use of *exempla* to authorize a particular course of action: in not executing the conspirators we are imitating the men who created *imperium* (BC 51.42). The forward-looking aspect of historical continuity becomes equally prominent in Caesar's case; the senators should not only look to the past to guide their own conduct but should consider how they themselves will be remembered in leaving an example for posterity (BC 51.26-7). Both of these conceptions of the social function of remembering presume a Roman audience for Roman history: "...in a great state there are many and diverse characters: it could happen in a different time, under a different consul ... that something false might be believed as true."¹³ But in addition to these domestic aspects of historical memory, there is also an ecumenical strain in Caesar's use of the past (note the frequent references to *cuncti mortales*), one that itself draws on Greek sources and validates Caesar's reference to foreign examples. This emerges from the idea that the past offers models of general human tendencies. When Caesar asks rhetorically "Who will find fault with what we decree against the parricides of the state?" The answer is significantly not an individual, but a series of impersonal causes: "*tempus, dies, fortuna, quoniam libido gentibus moderatur*," (BC 51.25). This Polybian view of why history matters, because the operations of fortune in human affairs constitutes a universal law illustrated in the history of any state or action —itself designed to justify an account of Roman history written for non-Romans (see Polybius 1.4.1-2) — allows Caesar in turn to draw conspicuously on foreign exempla as well as domestic ones. Indeed his concluding, exemplary account of how the *maiores* used foreign models for their own practices reflects both the content of his arguments and the Greek theory of universal pragmatic history that justifies them, another "foreign" import.

What view of the function of historical memory emerges from this model of history in action? At first, apparently, a very optimistic one. Caesar's "holistic" approach to historiography re-unites the two halves of Sallust's preface—the exceptionally general remarks in the opening chapters, which apply to all men everywhere, and the exceptionally personal and specific account of what befell the individual Sallust because of the historical circumstances in which he lived. Caesar's arguments indeed constitute a demonstration of how pragmatic history in the sense of Polybius and Thucydides can be useful for the republic within a specifically Roman political discourse. In this sense what is striking about the opening of Caesar's speech is not that his first two words recall the beginning of Sallust's treatise, but that his first four words translate Sallust's language into a practical Roman context. *Omnis homines, patres conscripti*—here is Sallust read to and for an audience of Roman senators, indeed the very audience from which the facts of the historian's own life expelled him. "Pragmatic" history, free apparently from the partisanship that Sallust himself professes

¹³ *sed in magna civitate multa et varia ingenia sunt. potest alio tempore, alio consule, quoniam item exercitus in manu sit, falsum aliquid pro vero credi.* (BC 51.35-6) Note again the historiographic flavor of the language—does this mean that an unscrupulous future leader might falsify evidence against some future Catilinarians, or that he might, like a bad historian, misreport the past, or even, like a careless or corrupt reader, fail to sort truth from falsehood?

to lack, and capable of a universalizing distance even from the most immediate events claims its place as an essential guide to the conduct of the *res publica*.¹⁴

But before we go too far in taking Caesar simply as an illustration of the illustrious potential of Sallustian historiography, it is important to remember all of the factors that make it difficult to align too closely the positions of the historian and the politician — starting from the most striking fact that his "applied history" fails to persuade its audience. Not only is Caesar's merely one voice in a work, but a voice that is doubly "distanced" from the persona of the historian, first because his speech is so emphatically part of a dialogue, to be answered by Cato's, and also because the figure of Caesar himself becomes a subject of the historian's own analysis. In the second half of this paper, therefore, I consider how both Cato's speech and the following evaluation of Caesar and Cato, conducted in the personal voice of the historian, place the optimistic view of historical memory he implicitly presents in a dialectic with others, and the interpretative possibilities this re-positioning raises for an understanding of the *Catiline* as a whole.

Let me start this process by observing one assumption in Caesar's use of history that makes the syntheses of the foreign and Roman, and of the theoretical and engaged views of history, possible. This assumption is of the consistency of present and past, a model of historical continuity that gives the examples of "our" ancestors a claim on us as Roman senators, and at a broader level implies that universal considerations about what befalls "*omnis homines*" are valid in all historical circumstances. It is in relation to both of these implicit claims that one striking difference between Sallust's and Caesar's view of the big picture of Roman historiography emerges as significant. By and large Caesar's view of Rome's development — with one exception to be discussed below — lacks the sense of a complete moral break between past and present sketched in Sallust's archaeology. Sallust illustrates that transformation with a catalogue of the excesses of luxury and, significantly *lubido: rapere, consumere, sua parvi pendere, aliena cupere, ...* (BC 12.2). This tableau of Romans behaving badly recalls precisely the kind of rhetoric that Caesar wants to dismiss from his own deliberation, the graphic images of destruction his opponents use to inspire pity.¹⁵ This strain of Sallustian historiography seems to be what Caesar wants to rule out, yet not only the substance but the emphatically emotive aspect of this presentation of contemporary immorality are essential to a recognition of the nature of the present. Indeed the historian concludes his complaint with a gesture of *aporia* that hints at a desire for his historical catalogue to achieve a perfect visual mimesis as the only means of making his words credible: "For why should I recall these things which are believed by none except those who have seen them ...?"¹⁶

Indeed the very historical examples that Caesar deploys help highlight this difference in perspective, for they cluster around those turning points that differentiate

¹⁴ Cf. Patzer 1941=1970: 117, ""in Caesar begegnen sich Politik und Geschichtsschreibung in der Anerkennung eines Gesetzlichen im Geschehen."

¹⁵ Both lists are presented as strings of infinitives, both begin with a form of *rapere*, and both stress sexual excesses, the wrongful possession of others' property, and the sacrilegious treatment of shrines.

¹⁶ *nam quid ea memorem quae nisi illis qui videre nemini credibilia sunt... ?* (BC 13.1) Note Levene's 2000: 178 suggestion that "*rapere trahere*" was a Catonian tag associated with his condemnation of contemporary morals. If so, again, Caesar's rejection of this historiographic mode goes together with an emphasis on Rome's moral corruption.

the present from the past in Sallust's account. Thus he begins by using the failure to punish the Rhodians in 167 BCE as an example of the ancestors' moderation and refusal to let their conduct be guided by self-interest and pleasure. As Levene (2000: 185-6) has pointed out, his interpretation of this event echoes the position argued by Cato the Censor in his "most famous speech." Yet to look back at that speech is to see what Caesar has left out, for Cato begins with a dire warning about the moral and intellectual effects of success, a sentiment that seems to lay the groundwork for the whole conception of Rome's moral degeneration as a product of her victories.¹⁷

Yet even within Caesar's view of the past, contradictions emerge that potentially undermine the authority of his own argument and bedevil any such appeal to the universal value of history as a guide to conduct. Most strikingly, his exhortation to remember the examples of the past is paired with a warning that the senators' own deeds are likely to be misremembered in the future: "But most humans remember only the most recent things, and in the case of impious men, forgetful of their crime speak only of their punishment, if it was a little too severe" (*BC* 51.15). Another appeal to a universal principle of human behavior, proven by a knowledge of previous examples, but one that begs the question of whether the mutability of memory applies only to the future. Perhaps Caesar should be read as a historiographic Cassandra, one of the enlightened few whose truly informed view of the past contrasts with the distorted and contingent memories of the many (*plerique mortales*). But the assertion that because of a general law of mankind people in the future will be likely to misunderstand the present at least raises the possibility that Caesar and his audience are also subject to the same process and may thus not be able to rely solely on the guidance of the *maiores*. Conversely, why should we not assume that the future will have its own Caesar to set straight the historically ignorant majority by placing the senate's decision to execute the conspirators in the correct light, a good historian who remembers the causes of actions rather than simply the actions themselves? Thus at the same time that his argument about the future undercuts his own "*copia memorandi*", his capacity to remember the past de-values his warning that the senate should operate on the assumption that their own behavior will be misread.¹⁸

In this context, the orator's most telling example of the mutability of historical memory deserves attention: his treatment of Sulla's execution of the Marian bad guy Damasippus:

nostra memoria victor Sulla quom Damasippum et alios eius modi, qui malo rei publicae creverant, iugulari iussit, quis non factum eius laudabat? homines scelestos et factiosos, qui seditionibus rem publicam exagitaverant, merito necatos aiebant. sed ea res magnae initium cladis fuit. nam uti quisque domum aut villam, postremo vas aut vestimentum aliquoius concupiverat, dabat operam, uti is in proscriptorum numero esset. ita illi, quibus Damasippi mors laetitiae

¹⁷ See *orat. fr.* 163 Malcovati. Levene 2000: 187-8 makes a similar point to mine in the context of a different argument.

¹⁸ A related fracture in Caesar's view of the past appears in his next argument, that the proposal to execute the conspirators should be rejected not because it is cruel, but because it is foreign (*aliena a re publica nostra*, *BC* 51.17); yet the imitation of *aliena instituta* will appear at the end of the speech as a Roman ancestral tradition (*BC* 51.37).

fuera, paulo post ipsi trahebantur, neque prius finis iugulandi fuit, quam Sulla omnis suos divitiis explevit. atque haec ego non in M. Tullio neque his temporibus vereor, sed in magna civitate multa et varia ingenia sunt. potest alio tempore, alio consule, quoi item exercitus in manu sit, falsum aliquid pro vero credi. (BC 51.32-6)

Within our memory, when victorious Sulla ordered Damasippus and others like him, who had profited from the ills of the republic, to be executed, who did not praise the action? They said that criminal and divisive men who had plagued the republic with rebellions deserved to die. But that was the beginning of huge slaughter. For when anyone desired a home or estate, even a dish or piece of clothing, that belonged to another, he would see to it that the owner was among the proscribed. So those who rejoiced at Damasippus' death were caught but a little later, nor was there an end of execution before Sulla had made all his followers rich. I do not fear this possibility in the case of the consul M. Tullius, nor in these times, but in a great state there are many and diverse characters: it could happen in a different time, under a different consul, one with an army in his control, that something false might be believed as true.

The very mention of Sulla reminds us that for Sallust his dictatorship was another central watershed in the moral transformation of the Romans (cf. *BC* 11.3), one that makes it impossible for the present to emulate the past. Indeed the actions that here ensue, indiscriminate plunder and the breakdown of social boundaries, are the same as Sallust emphasizes in the earlier passage. Yet Caesar's tracing of the spread of the corruption seems curiously contained in contrast to Sallust's, and this view of the limits of moral transformation again has historiographic as well as historical consequences. Caesar assumes an audience free from those moral flaws that would render the corruption of the *exempla* under Sulla intelligible as such and not actually attractive, explicitly stating that he does not fear this corruption of memory in the case of Cicero nor in "these times". Yet the Sallustian analysis suggests that "these times" certainly have been transformed by the Sullan moral revolution. Cato will re-iterate the same point in his own attack on the very same senatorial audience as "slaves to pleasures at home and in public to wealth and favoritism" (*BC* 52.23), just the faults that led the followers of Sulla to proscribe those who praised the execution of Damasippus. Simultaneously, the fact that his audience will indeed praise the decision to execute these conspirators, and the *virtus* of the orator who commends it (*BC* 53.1), suggests according to Caesar's analysis that they reproduce in the present the bad judgment that led the contemporaries of Sulla to praise (*laudabat*) that execution.

This last point not only hints at the futility of Caesar's historiographic endeavor; it also suggests that the speaker's whole approach to memory may play a role in Rome's decline. Caesar advocates a dispassionate recording of facts, the absence of those emotions of pity and anger that bad historians will try to engender, but that also reinforce a sense of personal involvement in the events recorded; he wants his audience to judge the present as if it were already history. And yet perhaps this historical

detachment lies at the root of the mistake made in the case of Damasippus. His contemporaries — who as the phrase *nostra memoria* suggests include the orator's own audience — assumed a separation between themselves and Sulla's victims. Those executed are not like "us," they are "criminal and divisive" outsiders to the republic. Yet events will erase this assumed distance between the audience and the events that they believe they are in the position simply to praise or blame. What Caesar means by this is that the bystanders will be killed as Damasippus was, but from a Catonian perspective, they also resemble the killers inasmuch as they are driven by greed and faction. Since faction was certainly a motive for Damasippus as well, all three groups take on a culpable sameness. Caesar's contrasting assumption that the present is exempt from the susceptibility to distort or misbelieve the past looks from this perspective like a continuation of the same error of insisting on a difference between ourselves and the negative example. And this would have been all the more striking to Sallust's own audience in the late 40's, to whom Caesar may well have seemed either yet another victim of faction, or as the very leader who would distort the past to his own advantage.

One final echo of Sallust's preface here helps highlight how Caesar's application of historical memory looks different within the larger context of Sallust's work. The orator expresses the general principle he wishes to illustrate with the Damasippus example as follows: "All bad examples arise from good things: but when *imperium* arrives in the hands of those ignorant of it, or less good, that new *exemplum* is transferred (*transfertur*) from application to those who are deserving and suitable to those who are undeserving and unsuitable" (*BC* 51.27). The reference to the movement of *imperium*, the phrase *minus bonus*, and the verb *transfertur* all recall the historians own precept about power, that as a result of the moral decline of those who possess it, "*imperium* is always transferred from the less good to the best men" (*BC* 2.6). In one sense the two statements complement one another. Sallust sees moral decline as the cause of the motion of power away from the corrupt, whereas Caesar views the decline in the morality of the ruler as something that retrospectively reverses the moral valence of history — ignorance of the past and contemporary badness mean that good deeds are repeated as bad ones. Yet more striking is the direct opposition in the transfer of power in the two accounts, from bad to good according to the historian, but from good to bad according to Caesar. One way of reconciling the two positions derives from the interpretation of 2.6 that I suggested above, that it predicts an inevitable loss of power on the part of the Roman state as a result of their decline. Sallust's "optimistic" view of the relationship between power and virtue, then, is anything but for the Romans and only emerges when their history is put in a truly universal perspective. Caesar, as opposed to looking at Roman history from an imagined position after the collapse of the state, attempts to use universal history within a Roman historical context: as he recalls the past to affect the decision of Roman Senators, so he imagines their actions remembered within the state (*in magna civitate*), specifically with a different consul (*alio consule*, *BC* 51.36). His historical vision acts to make Romanness temporally seamless: his present audience should behave as their ancestors did and in such a way that their own behavior cannot be misinterpreted in the future as a justification for immoral actions. Hence his privileging of the past and his emphatic rejection of whatever is new, the pejorative term he uses of the plan to execute the conspirators, and which recurs again in the description of the dangers of setting a new example. Yet, for

the historian chronicling Rome's decline, it is precisely its "newness" that makes the Catilinarian conspiracy memorable.¹⁹

The close of Caesar's speech recapitulates the fractures we have uncovered in his attempt to unite a universalizing perspective with the Romanizing aims of his oration as his very model of the expediency of importing foreign practices breaks down. At first, as we have seen, the *maiores* are praised for their ability to import new customs and habits, again a Roman model for the application of foreign solutions to domestic problems. We might have expected this pattern to provide a precedent for Caesar's own argument but it does the contrary: the execution of citizens turns out to be an import that worked out badly, an example precisely of how *exempla* deteriorate in different historical circumstances. And just as the suggestion comes that the universal or foreign and the Roman don't always work together, so Caesar for the first time implies that the Romans have already undergone a moral decline. The ancestors preferred to imitate rather than envy the goods of others — we obviously don't share that preference, one that indeed relates closely to the very possibility for exemplary history to function: If we don't want to imitate the *boni* — and as Sallust himself says men reading history are inclined to dismiss any good deed they perceive themselves unable to equal (*BC* 3.2) — then how can we model ourselves on better men? Thus like the speech as a whole, this final summation begins with the optimistic implication that the customs even of foreigners and the political practices of the ancestors are things we can and should imitate, but his rhetoric undermines both positions. Hence the contradictions in his final argument: we must follow our ancestors (those who established the *lex Porcia* preventing the execution of citizens) by not imitating the more distant ancestors who originally imported the Greek practice of executing citizens because our behavior has changed too much since the time when these *maiores* really were expanding their *imperium*.

The speech Cato gives in response to Caesar's, while it does not specifically point out the contradiction implicit in this final argument, nevertheless throws into particular relief the moral break that Caesar's historiographic perspective must paper over. Cato's speech is remarkable not so much for offering a divergent view of Roman history from Caesar's, though it does that too, but for seeming to reject a historicizing view of events in the first place. Returning to the initial Sallustian opposition between "*consulere*" and "*facere*," Cato comes down very much on the side of action. He begins from the position that the Catilinarian conspiracy is not a completed act to be looked back on and deliberated about, but a current danger that, if unchecked, rules out any possibility for judgment because its success threatens the very survival of Rome and her institutions. And if Caesar's argument integrates the Catilinarian conspiracy to a long historical view extending through the development of the Roman state and illuminated by a universal understanding of human nature, Cato addresses an audience with a full awareness that their own moral capacities are profoundly limited by the historical contingencies of the present moment. Thus he rejects the opportunity to correct the avarice of his audience, even presenting this rhetoric of moral correction as something that belongs to the past ("I used to speak about luxury and avarice very often... but now they are no longer the issue," *BC* 52.7-10). Rather Cato first attempts to arouse his

¹⁹ *nam id facinus in primis ego memorabile existumo sceleris et periculi novitate*, *BC* 4.3.

audience precisely by an appeal to a threat to their pleasures — an embracing of moral newness that stands out all the more clearly in light of Caesar's explicit rejection of the *novum*.

Not only does Cato now pass by the opportunity to use arguments aimed at making the present more like the past, he also raises explicitly the famous problem of whether the past can even be known or recognized. Thus at one point he makes the relatively simple assertion that the values of the past were other "*alia*:" They had "energetic work at home, a just empire abroad, and in debate a mind free from influence" — a suggestion that even the kind of impartial judgment Caesar's argument relies on is no longer possible. We have "luxury" and "avarice."²⁰ Earlier he goes even farther, stressing not just the displacement of good morals by bad ones, but the familiar transformation of names by which the terms used to designate good qualities have been re-assigned to bad ones.²¹

These related observations bring out the contradictions in Caesar's view of exemplarity as a pathway to reasoned, advantageous, behavior. The first highlights not just how much the moral climate has changed, but how the basic motives of human action have changed as a result: if Cato is right, his Roman audience simply would never have taken the decision their ancestors did to spare the Rhodians. The second shift, the one affecting the meanings of words, has even more profound and insidious consequences for the transmission of values, for it suggests that each generation can only comprehend them via the very different definitions they apply to the virtues named. How can you recall people to *fortitudo* if *fortitudo* now means "boldness for bad deeds" (*malarum rerum audacia*)?

What renders Cato's rhetorical emphasis on the needs of the immediate moment and the conditions of the present so striking and paradoxical is the implicit assertion that he speaks with the voice of the past. His "far different mind" — the first words of his speech — stresses much more than his dissent from the arguments of his predecessors. As much as Caesar, Cato claims, literally a mental distance that exempts him from the change of values and linguistic shifts that differentiate the present from the *maiores*. Critics, though, have pointed out the logical difficulty of exempting Cato's own language from the process of semantic degeneration it describes.²² And others have well observed how embedded Cato himself is in the politics of his own time: His speech, for instance, reveals many signs of *ambitio* and the kind of party strife that Caesar tries to move beyond.²³

The uncertainty of Cato's own capacity to articulate the perspectives of the *maiores* has profound consequences for this speaker's use of history too, and these emerge especially in the one place where Cato explicitly evokes an incident from the past as an *exemplum*. "Aulus Manlius Torquatus ordered his own son to be killed because he fought against an enemy contrary to orders — and that extraordinary young man paid with his death the penalty for unrestrained bravery (*inmoderatae fortitudinis*):

²⁰ *sed alia fuere, quae illos magnos fecere, quae nobis nulla sunt: domi industria, foris iustum imperium, animus in consulendo liber, neque delicto neque lubidini obnoxius. pro his nos habemus luxuriam atque avaritiam ...*, BC 52.21.

²¹ *iam pridem equidem nos vera vocabula rerum amisimus: quia bona aliena largiri liberalitas, malarum rerum audacia fortitudo vocatur, eo res publica in extremo sita est*, BC 52.11.

²² See esp. Gunderson 2000: 87.

²³ See Sklenář 1998: 213.

do you hesitate about what to decree in the case of the most bloodthirsty parricides."²⁴ Levene (2000: 184-5) has shown how Cato's one-sided interpretation of an event elsewhere reported as causing great dissent contributes to his characterization as an extremist who has lost the capacity to pardon that was always a part of his forbearer's moral equipment. Cato tries to use the example to point up the differences between his contemporaries and the *maiores* — and it is striking how Cato's hortatory *exemplum* stresses disjunction between present and past rather than similarity and aims to shame his audience as much as to persuade them. But his very language reveals how far he himself differs from his own ancestor. We can go even farther in this direction though: the fault for which the younger Torquatus is punished by his father, *immoderatae fortitudinis* suggests the lack of restraint in Cato revealed by a contrast with his own *maiores*. And indeed the quality of *fortitudo* is precisely the one that Cato selects to illustrate the transformation of the language of values. He had claimed that *fortitudo* now meant merely "boldness for bad deeds", but here we learn that the difficulty in interpreting history comes not merely from such meretricious re-naming. Rather the quality of *fortitudo* itself, in its pristine definition of bravery in attacking a foreign enemy, appears as a controversial one needing proper regulation and control. Just as the *pater* within the story checks the old time *fortitudo* of his son, so Cato is exposed to reproach by comparison with his ancestors even as he attempts to use them to attack others. Indeed, one of the words that has here changed its meaning is "Cato," which creates a slippage between Cato Uticensis and his famous ancestor, and conceals the fact that its two referents are in fact very different men. Cato's historiographic pessimism, his charge that the men of the present are unwilling to follow and perhaps unable to comprehend the actions of the *maiores*, is countered by the growing revelation that even his idealizing view of the past is a construct that does not match the historical reality it claims to describe.

Cato's speech at once reveals the problems and inconsistencies of Caesar's attempt to use the *exempla* of the past as a guide to present conduct, to be both a *ktema eis aiei* in the Thucydidean sense and as a repository of specifically Roman precedents. At the same time his rhetoric undercuts his own rigidly historicizing effort to correct present behavior by viewing and describing it in the language of the *maiores*. In concluding, I want to suggest how the transition to the *synkrisis* that follows further distances Caesar's practice as a historian from Sallust's own. While Caesar in contrast to Cato underplays the potential differences between his own present and the past, he does nevertheless stress the possibility of decline in the future. Thus even if Caesar could potentially put historiography into action by persuading contemporaries to modify their behavior through remembering the past, that potential has perhaps vanished in the twenty years that separate his speech as a historical event from Sallust's composition of his account of it.

Sallust begins his own assessment of the characters of Caesar and Cato by stressing his distance from the events recorded, making clear via the perfect *fuere* that both of his protagonists have now died and passed into history. So too he emphasizes that his judgment is that of an individual, informed by the reception of historical texts

²⁴ *apud maiores nostros A. Manlius Torquatus bello Gallico filium suum, quod is contra imperium in hostem pugnaverit, necari iussit, atque ille egregius adulescens immoderatae fortitudinis morte poenas dedit; vos de crudelissimis parricidis quid statuatis, cunctamini?* BC 52.30-31.

(*Sed mihi multa legenti, multa audienti*, 53.2), not of a collective body like the Senate responding to public oratory. In fact, this whole section of Sallust's text is structured as a retreat from events to different levels of representation of them that mirrors the historian's own personal withdrawal from public life. Others have observed how very small a portion of the *Catiline* actually narrates the events of the conspiracy, and the exaggerated scope of these two speeches helps make that point. Caesar's speech, and Cato's, are both part of the story that Sallust is telling — they help determine the fate of the conspirators, but they also constitute, as the historiographic beginning of Caesar's discourse reveals, judgments of those events and arguments about how they should be remembered. And if Caesar and Cato are engaged in evaluating history, so too they themselves are subject to two levels of evaluation themselves, first in the eyes of contemporaries, who endorse Cato over Caesar and draw conclusions about his virtue and his glory, recalling both what Sallust has established as the motivation for all actions and as a particular subject for history.²⁵ Whatever one decides about who emerges as the "winner" of Sallust's *synkrisis*, it emerges as similar in kind to what the Senate did, and also as strikingly less unequivocal. Sallust's judgment then stands at yet a further remove from "history" defined as the events remembered. The impact of how Sallust positions his text in relation to the senatorial debate on our yet more distant evaluation of his own "acts" as a historian is productively ambiguous. We may place the emphasis on the continuities between action and memory and view Sallustian historiography as the continuation of the mutual assessment of others that was always an essential part of Roman politics: the historian may have withdrawn from politics, but we can now see that the senators are in an important sense historians, not necessarily through their ability to influence events by recalling the past, but because their continual reflection on the qualities of actions and actors, acclaiming *virtus* and bestowing glory, resembles that of the historian. On the other hand, we might be inclined to see this retrospective function of history as the consequences of the withdrawal of the historian. Previously I argued that Sallust's preface implies that history takes on a different meaning once *imperium* has passed "to the better from the less good." Using the past to extract general observations about the nature of human actions and the effects of power implies that both audience and author look on that *imperium* as outsiders. In a sense, this makes for better history — it provides the *animus liber* essential for balanced judgment, and Sallust's evaluation of Cato and Caesar indeed offers a richer commentary on *virtus* than the senators' acclamation of Cato because it is not motivated by considerations of personal advantage. Yet if this is so, then we are left with the paradox that history becomes better and more valuable as its abilities to participate in events diminishes.

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²⁵ *virtutem animi ad caelum ferunt...Cato clarus atque magnus habetur*, 53.1. Cf. 2.7-9.

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