

In Your Hearts: A Ciceronian Intertext in Tacitus' *Annales*

Tiberius' impassioned speech at 4.37-38 of Tacitus' *Annales* has long excited comment. Tacitus' Tiberius refuses a temple in his own honor with a speech concerning memorialization and the legitimacy of ruler-worship. In the past, scholars such as Miller, Adams, Wharton, and Syme have approached this speech vis-à-vis Tacitean veracity, and the vexed question of whether Tacitus used Tiberius' own *ipsissima verba* in his composition. More recently, Sinclair has put forward the theory that this passage owes much to sentiments expressed by Cato the Elder in Plutarch's life. While I believe that much of Sinclair's evidence and focus are correct, I would suggest a more immediate intertext for this passage. In this paper, I show that Tacitus' speech at *Annales* 4.37-38 evokes Cicero's *Third Oration Against Catiline*, which Tacitus mobilizes to depict in Tiberius an emperor striving in vain to emulate Republican *exempla*.

The reader of the *Annales* is already familiar with Tiberius "trying on" famous sayings, and *personae*, of Rome's earlier heroes. At the end of *Ann.* 2, for example, Tiberius recalls Fabricius, who refused to have Pyrrhus poisoned, when the emperor, in turn, refuses to have Arminius poisoned, preferring to defeat him by Roman arms (*Ann.* 2.88.1). After this brief reported speech, Tacitus reveals the intertext to the reader, noting that Tiberius was trying to "make himself equal to former commanders" (*qua gloria aequabat se Tiberius priscis imperatoribus*). In Cicero's *In Catilinam* 3.26, the orator refuses the honors that the Roman people, we are to imagine, are on the verge of offering him. Cicero states that he would prefer that the Roman people carry his honors, including triumphs, the monuments of his glory, and the most important praises "in their hearts" (*in animis . . . vestris Cat.* 3.26). This exact phrase is repeated as Tiberius similarly refuses honors at *Ann.* 4.38.2. Further verbal echoes to Cicero's *Catilinarians* within the speech strengthen the likelihood of an intertextual relationship. The

reader is prepared for this allusion to Cicero's *Catilinarians* by the context in which Tacitus places this speech – immediately following the trial and conviction of Cremutius Cordus, the historian of Republican Rome. Tacitus thus recalls Cicero within the context of the failures of the principate to deal with the memory of the Republic. The intertext at 4.38 is especially powerful as it highlights the difference underlying the similarities of the two speeches. Cicero disdains traditional Roman honors because they are silent (*nihil me mutum potest delectare, nihil tacitum*), preferring, instead, that the memory of his deeds grow in speech (*sermonibus crescent*) so that the recollection of Cicero's victory over Catiline bolster that of his consulship (*memoriam consulatus mei*). Tiberius, on the other hand, wishes that a silent people link his good deeds with his name (*famam nominis mei*). Immediately following this speech, Tacitus gives the reactions of the Roman people (4.38.4-5), stressing their negative reception of Tiberius' Republican sensibilities.

Through the use of Ciceronian intertext, Tacitus' Tiberius attempts to coopt Republican *exempla* to his own advantage, but ultimately fails because these sentiments no longer have currency in the sycophantic government of the post-Augustan principate.

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