

Conspiracy at the Door: *Paraclausithyron* in Cicero's *First Catilinarian*

Scholarship on Cicero and the Catilinarian conspiracy is expansive. Some scholars have endeavored to determine the probable dates of events mentioned in Cicero's speeches (Batstone 1994), while others have even scrutinized whether or not there was a conspiracy to begin with (Gruen 1969). The analysis of Cicero's numerous and varied rhetorical devices has also been a very fruitful area of inquiry (Craig 2007). While there has been some work done on comedy's influence on Cicero (Leigh 2004), there is virtually none on the comedic and poetic tropes in play in Cicero's *First Catilinarian*.

This paper will examine the orator's systematic use of the *paraclausithyron* trope in Cicero's *First Catilinarian*. Through an exploration of three examples, namely those of the failed night-attack of Praeneste [8], the failed assassination attempt [9-10], and the entreaty to seek refuge under Cicero's roof [19], Cicero transforms Catiline into an *exclusus amator*, the figure who is laughed at in Roman Comedy, but later pitied in Roman elegiac and neoteric writings. Cicero also aligns his physical body, in danger once and sought twice, with the city of Rome, which Catiline ultimately seeks to possess. Cicero's representation of Catiline creates a parallel between his attempt to violate Cicero's physical body and his efforts to possess and violate the body of *Roma*. Such a comparison is unusual for a man so concerned with preserving his *gravitas* and *virtus*, but in his nobility any suggestion that Cicero might be feminizing himself is washed away. Senators, and later readers of the speech, would have recognized these tropes and comparisons, and thus would have viewed Catiline through the lens of a man incapable of achieving what he seeks, one who is virtually impotent.

The contribution of this paper to the corpus of work on the *First Catilinarian* will be to expand the field of investigation, not only to historical facts and figures, but also to the literary

intertextuality between Cicero and poets around and before his time. The analysis presented by this paper also seeks to pique interest in whether similar situations can be found within Cicero's other writings, and thereby this paper will continue work that was begun by Hughes (1992) in his study of the Second Philippic.

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