A Fork in the Road:
The Catilinarian Conspiracy's Impact on Cicero's relationships with Pompey, Crassus` and Caesar

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> But concerning friendship, all, to a man, think the same thing: those who have devoted themselves to public life; those who find their joy in science and philosophy; those who manage their own business free from public cares; and, finally, those who are wholly given up to sensual pleasures — all believe that without friendship life is no life at all. . . .[1]

The late Roman Republic was filled with crucial events which shaped not only the political environment of the Republic, but also altered the personal and political relationships of the individuals within that Republic. Four of the most powerful, and most discussed, characters of this time are Marcus Tullius Cicero (106 BC – 43 BC), Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus (106 BC – 48 BC), Marcus Licinius Crassus (c. 115 BC – 53 BC), and Gaius Julius Caesar (c. 100 BC – 44 BC). These men often crossed paths and some even had close friendships with each other. Other than Pompeius, better known as Pompey, all the aforementioned individuals were involved, or reportedly involved, in one event which had profound effects on the personal and political relationships of all four individuals. This event is known as the Catilinarian Conspiracy of 63 BC.

The Catilinarian Conspiracy was a pivotal episode in the politics of the Late Roman Republic that damaged both the political and personal relationships of Cicero, Pompey, Crassus, and Caesar. Politics in the Roman Republic was dominated by a small number of members of the senatorial class. The Catilinarian Conspiracy illustrates how theses senators reacted to a single stressful crisis that lead to detrimental changes in the political and personal relationships of Cicero with Pompey, Crassus, and Caesar.

One of the most important aspects of Roman life, in particular of Roman politics, was friendship. The opening quote from Cicero expresses how important friendship was to the

[1] Marcus Tullius Cicero, *De Amicitia.* Translated by William Armistead Falconer, (Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1923), XXIII.86. "De amicitia omnes ad unum idem sentiunt; et ei qui ad rem publicam se contulerunt, et ei qui rerum cognitione doctrinaque delectantur, et ei qui suum negotium gerunt otiosi; postremo ei qui se totos tradiderunt voluptatibus, sine amicitia vitam esse nullam. . . ."

Romans. According to Cicero, friendship was the most valuable thing a man could have and without it, he would have nothing.

Plutarch confirms that Cicero's relationships with Pompey, Crassus, and Caesar were severely damaged from the events of the Catilinarian Conspiracy. Pompey and Cicero had mixed emotions for each other — they were neither friends nor foes — and Crassus and Caesar became Cicero's enemies. Plutarch writes that in 58 BC, when Clodius became tribune and attacked Cicero for the unlawful execution of the conspirators resulting in Cicero's exile, Cicero needed help from one of his former friends so he could avoid exile. However, Plutarch writes, "Now, of the three men who at that time had most power, Crassus was an out-and-out foe of Cicero, Pompey was dallying with both, and Caesar . . . was not a friend, but an object of suspicion owing to the affair of Catiline. . . ."[2] Therefore, after the conspiracy Cicero went from having these powerful relationships to having, as Cicero expressed in the opening quote, nothing.

The political struggles of the second and first centuries BC, so it can be argued, began in 133 BC with Tiberius (c. 168 - 133 BC) and Gaius (c. 154 - 121 BC) Gracchus. The Gracchi brothers saw a decline in the citizenry joining the Roman army and they responded by creating new farms for the dispossessed, but these farms began to fall to the control of the nobility. The brothers were both killed in the political violence that ensued; Tiberius was murdered in 133 BC and Gaius was killed in 121 BC.[3] This initiated a century of violence that ended with the fall of the Roman Republic.

After about forty years of relative peace, violence once again took center stage in Rome; it would last until the Republic collapsed. In 82 BC, Lucius Cornelius Sulla (c. 138 - 78 BC)

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[2] Plutarch, *Plutarch's Lives: Cicero*. Translated by Bernadotte Perrin, (Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1919), XXX.2.

[3] Guy Maclean Rogers and C. Warren Hollister, *Roots of the Western Tradition: A Short History of the Ancient World*, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2008), 188-189.

successfully got himself appointed by the Senate and Assembly as dictator — Rome's first dictator. He served until 79 BC when he retired. During his three years as dictator, he established proscriptions to make certain people officially enemies of the state; he did this as a way to restore the Roman Treasury. These proscriptions were not liked by many Romans and became a matter that set a precedent for the violent actions that continued to the end of the Republic. These violent actions often had negative impacts on personal and political relationships of those involved. A leading example of this is the event of the Catilinarian Conspiracy which had detrimental effects on Cicero's relationships with Pompey, Crassus, and Caesar.

Problem with Sources

There are few primary sources and a number of secondary sources available to analyze that cover the political and personal lives of Cicero, Pompey, Crassus, and Caesar as well as the Catilinarian Conspiracy itself. The two sources most relied upon for this examination of the conspiracy and its effects on the political and personal relationships of Cicero with Pompey, Crassus, and Caesar are Plutarch's *Lives* and Sallust's *Bellum Catilinae*. The problem with analyzing these sources is that Plutarch, for example, was writing over a century after the events had occurred and therefore was not physically present when they transpired; however, he had access to a number of primary sources that we do not currently have available to us. Sallust, on the other hand, was closer to the events that had occurred. Both historians, however, have their own emphases, so they only included information in which they personally found important or necessary for their purposes.

Plutarch (c. 46 AD - 120 AD) had access to a number of primary sources, some that may not exist today, and, therefore was able to utilize more direct information to include in his biographies. However, "Plutarch did not at all times have access to the original sources for the

information which he imparts. He may well have taken, and in innumerable instances demonstrably did take, his facts at second hand, which does not, however, necessarily render the testimony given either worthless or even less in value. . . ."[4]

Sallust (86 BC – 35 BC) is a key source for analysis of the Catilinarian Conspiracy itself. Historian L. A. MacKay suggests that the "publication of the *Catiline* may be dated somewhere between 44 and 40."[5] Additionally, Sallust may have been present when Cicero was giving his speeches against Catiline. Regardless, he was involved in the politics of Rome at this time so it is likely that he had direct knowledge of the incident. Sallust, however, was writing about twenty years after the crisis, so he was writing off of memory and Cicero's speeches alone; therefore, some of the language may be different than what was actually used, but it is likely that main themes are accurate. For example, Sallust and Cicero explained that Caesar spoke in favor of imprisoning the Catilinarian conspirators and confiscating their property.[6] Therefore, both Plutarch and Sallust, as primary sources, are two of the most dependable sources we have from the first century BC to the first century AD.

In addition to Plutarch and Sallust, Suetonius (c. 70 AD – c. 130) and Appian (c. 95 AD – c. 165) authored books concerning the events at this time. Suetonius authored a book about the lives of Caesar that provides information about Caesar and how he lived and interacted with Cicero, Pompey, and Crassus. Appian, however, wrote a book on the Civil Wars of Rome. He briefly covers the Catilinarian Conspiracy and the relationships of Cicero with Pompey, Crassus, and Caesar as well as the First Triumvirate.

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[4] A. Gudeman, "A New Source in Plutarch's Life of Cicero," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 20, (1889): 140.

[5] L. A. MacKay, "Sallust's 'Catiline': Date and Purpose," *Phoenix* 16, no. 3 (1962): 181.

[6] Gaius Sallustius (Sallust) Crispus, *Bellum Catilinae*. Translated by J. C. Rolfe, (Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1921), LI.43. Marcus Tullius Cicero, *Cicero: In Catilinam I-IV*. Translated by C. Macdonald, (Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977), IV.7.

Brief Biographies of Cicero, Pompey, Crassus, and Caesar before 63 BC

It is important to be aware of who these men were prior to the Catilinarian Conspiracy in order to determine how this crisis effected these relationships. They all were from affluent backgrounds and had known each other at an early age.

Cicero

In 106 BC Cicero was born to a wealthy, honorable woman name Helvia, but the details of his father are not well-known, according to Plutarch, who mentioned that "of his father nothing can be learned that does not go to an extreme. For some say that he was born and reared in a fuller's shop, while others trace the origin of his family to Tullus Attius. . . ."[7] Therefore, little is known about Cicero's family background, but based on what Plutarch says about Cicero's mother, it is believed that he came from a wealthy, aristocratic family. Furthermore, Plutarch mentions that when Cicero was a child his natural talent was seen by many and even some of the fathers of Cicero's classmates would show up to observe his talents.[8]

Cicero is known today, as he was during his time, as the greatest orator in Rome. Plutarch acknowledges Cicero as being "not only the best orator, but also the best poet among the Romans."[9] The oldest speech we have of Cicero, his case in defense of Sextus Roscius against the charge of parricide in 80 BC, is where we see his career begin; however, it was not until 70 BC when he served as the prosecutor against Gaius Verres that his career really took off.[10]

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[7] Plutarch, *Cicero,* I.1. In ancient Rome, all the clothing worn was cleaned and dyed in Fuller's shops.
[8] Plutarch, *Cicero,* II.2.
[9] Plutarch, *Cicero,* II.4.
[10] Parricide was considered the worst crime a Roman could commit — the killing of one's father or mother. The punishment was the most severe: the offender was beaten then placed in a sack with a dog, a snake, a rooster, and a monkey, and then the sack was thrown into the Tiber River. Gaius Verres was the Governor of Sicily in 70 BC and he was prosecuted by Cicero for severely plundering the land he governed.

Cicero won both cases. Cicero continued to lead a prominent public life which eventually earned him the consulship in 63 BC; the same year in which the Catilinarian Conspiracy occurred.[11]

Pompey

Plutarch writes that Pompey was the son of the widely hated Roman general Strabo who died by being struck by a "thunderbolt" in 87 BC.[12] Plutarch mentions that, although Strabo was hated, Pompey was loved because of "his modest and temperate way of living, his training in the arts of war, his persuasive speech, his trustworthy character, and his tact in meeting people. . . ."[13]

Pompey was an experienced military commander at a young age; however, he was not politically active and did not hold a seat in the Senate.[14] Historian Gonzalez Lodge expressed that all of Pompey's training had been with the military and Pompey had no political familiarity.[15] Lodge further explains how Pompey began his military career as a soldier at the age of seventeen and he reached his military peak at twenty eight.[16] Pompey maintained a high military prestige in a number of campaigns and, as historian Pat Southern stated, "Pompey's career might have been stopped in its tracks or at least stunted if Sulla had not actively promoted him."[17]

Crassus

Crassus was a military leader who was very wealthy. Historian Allen Mason Ward suggested that "Crassus had to take advantage of every possible way to acquire wealth in order to

[11] A consul was a chief annual magistrate of the Roman Republic (always one of a pair).
[12] Plutarch, *Plutarch's Lives: Pompey*. Translated by Bernadotte Perrin, (Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1917), I.1.
[13] Plutarch, *Pompey*, I.3.
[14] Gonzalez Lodge, "Caesar, Cicero, and Pompey," *The Classical Weekly* 13, no. 18 (1920): 140.
[15] Lodge, *Caesar, Cicero, and Pompey*, 140.
[16] Lodge, *Caesar, Cicero, and Pompey*, 140.
[17] Pat Southern, *Pompey the Great* (Charleston: Tempus Publishing, 2002), 27.

achieve the power he desired."[18] Crassus' career really took off when he proved himself militarily while serving under Sulla. Crassus was a valuable lieutenant in Sulla's army.[19]

In 72 BC, Crassus was ordered by the Senate to suppress the rebellion of Spartacus that broke out the year prior.[20] After a number of consuls were defeated, the Senate requested that Crassus take command.[21] Crassus took the command of four of the consuls' legions and gathered six more.[22] In 71 BC, Crassus defeated Spartacus; however, 5,000 slaves escaped and on their journey northward Pompey caught them and slaughtered them and, therefore, he was able to take credit for ending the war.[23] After defeating Spartacus, Crassus and Pompey were elected as the consuls for 70 BC.[24]

Caesar

Caesar is one of the most well-known individuals in the history of Rome. It is widely accepted that Caesar was born in 100 BC; however, as historian Adrian Goldsworthy pointed out the exact year is debated because "the opening of both Suetonius' and Plutarch's biographies of Caesar have been lost."[25] Goldsworthy also explains that Caesar came from a prominent family of patricians, the oldest aristocratic class at Rome.[26] Not much is known about Caesar's life as a child but he had an extensive military and political career.

Caesar is mostly known for his dictatorship from 49 to 44 BC; however, he had a long, political career that lead up to his dictatorship, which ended in his assassination. He entered

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[18] Allen Mason Ward, *Marcus Crassus and the Late Roman Republic* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1977), 70.

[19] Mary T. Boatwright, Daniel J. Gargola, and Richard J. A. Talbert, *The Romans: From Village to Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 207.

[20] Ward, *Crassus and the Late Roman Republic*, 83. Spartacus (c. 109 BC-71 BC) was a Thracian taken slave by Rome who rebelled in the 70s against the Romans for being imprisoned and sold as a gladiator.

[21] Ward, *Crassus and the Late Roman Republic*, 83.

[22] Boatwright, Gargola, and Talbert, *The Romans*, 207.

[23] Boatwright, Gargola, and Talbert, *The Romans*, 207.

[24] Ward, *Crassus and the Late Roman Republic*, 100.

[25] Adrian Goldsworthy, *Caesar: Life of a Colossus* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2006), 30.

[26] Goldsworthy, *Caesar: Life of a Colossus*, 31.

military service in 81 BC, according to Suetonius, in Asia serving under the governor of the province, Marcus Thermus.[27] Suetonius also wrote that Caesar served under Servilius Isauricus in Cilicia in 78 BC.[28] Suetonius and Plutarch added that Caesar began his political career in 77 BC by losing a case that he brought against Gnaeus Cornelius Dolabella for extortion. [29] In 70 BC, Caesar earned his first office by votes of the people — the office of military tribune.[30]

Many historians agree that Caesar hit his political height when, as *pontifex*, he decided to run against two ex-consuls in 63 BC for the position of *pontifex maximus* and, thanks to heavy bribery which landed Caesar in debt, he won the election to this lifetime position.[31] Plutarch mentions that the acquisition of this coveted position was difficult for Caesar to achieve, but he narrowly defeated Isauricus and Catulus and, "thereby made the senate and nobles afraid that he would lead the people on to every extreme of recklessness."[32]

Cicero's relationships with Pompey, Crassus, and Caesar prior to the conspiracy

Very little is known about the personal and political relationships between Cicero, Pompey, Crassus, and Caesar; however, enough is known to formulate an understanding of how Cicero related to the other three. Most of the information we have about these relationships prior to the conspiracy concerns Cicero's relationship with Pompey.

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[27] Suetonius. *Lives of the Caesars: Vol. 1: The Deified Julius*, Translated by J. C. Rolfe, (Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), I.II.1.

[28] Suetonius, *Julius*, I.III.1.

[29] Suetonius, *Julius*, I.IV.1. Plutarch, *Plutarch's Lives VII: Caesar,* IV.1. It is important to note that Gnaeus Cornelius Dolabella is not the same Dolabella that married Cicero's daughter. Publius Cornelius Dolabella is the man who married Cicero's daughter Tullia Ciceronis.

[30] Suetonius, *Julius*, I.V.1. From the early fifth century BC, annually elected "tribunes of the plebs" (*tribune plebis*) with their own authority (*tribunicia postestas*) were recognized as the leaders of the plebeian citizen body (*plebs*). In addition, and quite separately, "military tribunes" (*tribune militum*) were army officers of sufficient importance for some of them even to be chosen as joint heads of state in certain years during the late fifth and early fourth centuries B.C. (*tribune militum consular potestate*). Thereafter, there continued to be army officerships with the title *tribunes militum*, but typically these we no longer of high rank.

[31] Boatwright, Gargola, and Talbert, *The Romans*, 221. A pontifex was a member of one of the major groups or "colleges" of Roman priests, headed by the *pontifex maximus*.

[32] Plutarch. *Plutarch's Lives: Caesar*. Translated by Bernadotte Perrin, (Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1919), VII.3.

Cicero and Pompey

Although Pompey intended to stay politically neutral, he was supported politically by one of the most prominent optimates, Cicero. Plutarch best describes Cicero and Pompey's relationship prior to the Catilinarian Conspiracy: "Pompey actually paid court to Cicero, and Cicero's political efforts contributed much towards Pompey's power and fame."[33] Although Pompey was able to earn fame through his military prestige, he owed much of this prestige to Cicero since Cicero often supported Pompey.

However, historian Beryl Rawson proposed the idea that Cicero was somewhat hostile toward Pompey in and around the year 70 BC.[34] Rawson based this on Cicero's attitude toward the politics of this time period as well as a speech that Cicero gave that seemed unfavorable to Pompey's father.[35] However, Rawson failed to recognize that Pompey's father Strabo was hated by every Roman and, therefore, Cicero's stance against Strabo would not be too detrimental to the political relationship between Cicero and Pompey.[36]

Furthermore, Cicero gave a speech in support of Pompey taking command against King Mithridates VI of Pontus in Asia Minor. It is important to recognize that in his speech in support of Pompey, which he gave to the Assembly in 66 BC, he praised Pompey and asked the people to give Pompey control of the military in the war against Mithridates.[37] Throughout this speech, Cicero continuously praises Pompey saying that he is an "outstanding, pre-eminent genius" and that "the abilities of Cnaeus Pompeius are too vast for any words to do them justice."[38]

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[33] Plutarch, *Cicero*, VIII.4.
[34] Beryl Rawson, *The Politics of Friendship: Pompey and Cicero* (Sydney: Macarthur Press, 1978), 46.
[35] Rawson, *Politics of Friendship*, 46.
[36] Plutarch, *Pompey*, I.1.
[37] The name of the speech Cicero gave to the Assembly in 66 BC is unknown; however, it is generally called *About the Manilian Law* or *In Support of the Manilian Law*, but contemporary historians often refer to it as *On the Command of Cnaeus Pompeius.*
[38] Marcus Tullius Cicero, *On the Command of Gnaeus Pompeius*. Translated by Michael Grant in *Selected Political Speeches*. (London: Penguin Books, 1969), 36 and 49.

Therefore, prior to 63 BC, Cicero and Pompey had an excellent relationship. Whether they were personal friends or simply political allies can be debated, but they had a personal and political relationship that was relatively close and supportive of each other.

Cicero and Crassus

Little is known about Cicero's relationship with Crassus before the Catilinarian Conspiracy and Cicero does not mention Crassus in his letters or speeches until during the conspiracy itself. When Cicero gave his support for Pompey to fight Mithridates in the East (66 BC), Crassus' name was not on the list of opponents. Historian Bruce A. Marshall suggests, however, that Crassus' absence from the list of opponents does not mean that he was out of the debate. Additionally, no speech by Crassus in support of the bill exists today; however, Marshall suggests that Crassus and Gaius Manilius had some sort of a connection to each other, and, therefore, Crassus could have supported the bill because of this connection to Manilius, a tribune in 66 BC, who supported giving Pompey control of the military in order to destroy Mithridates. [39]

Therefore without knowing much of how Cicero and Crassus interacted directly, we can only develop a theory on their relationship based on the ways they acted politically. Politically, the only connection that can be made is that Cicero supported the Manilian Law in which Manilius proposed that Pompey should be in command of the troops against Mithridates. Since Crassus did not oppose this proposition, and possibly had a personal relationship with Manilius, it is possible that he was in support of Pompey gaining control of the military forces in the East. Furthermore, since Cicero does not mention anything about Crassus in his speeches or letters before the advent of the conspiracy, we can assume that they were not enemies.

Cicero and Caesar

[39] Bruce A. Marshall, *Crassus: A Political Biography* (Amsterdam, Adolf M. Hakkert Publisher, 1976), 64.

Although little is known about Cicero's relationship with Caesar prior to 63 BC, we know enough to determine that while they did not have a close relationship, they did not have a distant one either. Cicero does not mention Caesar in his speeches or letters until 63 BC in the Fourth Catilinarian; therefore, it is likely that Caesar was not an important individual to Cicero because in Cicero's speeches and letters, he continuously refers to individuals who either are his close friends or his worst enemies.

Plutarch claims that Cicero feared Caesar's public policy and that Cicero said that he did not believe that Caesar would overthrow the Republic.[40] Therefore, even though Cicero did not agree with Caesar politically, he was not worried that Caesar would cause the downfall of the Roman Republic.

Although they may have not had a close relationship, they were also not enemies. Leading classical scholar Andrew Lintott proposes that Cicero and Caesar were actually friends when they were children.[41] Even though they were not political allies, they may have still had a good standing personally. So in result, they may have disagreed on many political aspects, but personally, they were not foes. In fact, since neither Cicero nor Caesar spoke or wrote against each other prior to the conspiracy, it is likely that they were not adversaries and may have been friends — at least in their youth.

The Catilinarian Conspiracy

It is important to remember that, according to Sallust, Lucius Catiline was a man of noble birth.[42] Catiline, however, wanted more than nobility; he wanted the prestige, honor, and power of holding one of the highest positions in the Roman Republic — the consulship. Catiline had unsuccessfully been a candidate for the consulship three times in his lifetime. The third time he

[40] Plutarch, *Caesar*, IV.4.
[41] Andrew Lintott, *Cicero as Evidence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 206.
[42] Sallust, *Bellum Catilinae*, V.1.

attempted was in 63 B.C., the year of his conspiracy. Many scholars agree with historian E. D. Eagle's statement that "The formation of the conspiracy took place after the consular elections in July, 63 B.C. and was the direct result of Catiline's defeat in those elections. The organization of it occupied the interval up to the middle of October and the original day for putting it into effect was October 28."[43] Cicero spoke directly to Catiline in his first speech, given to the senate on November 8, and mentions that he had revealed to the Senate that Catiline planned on taking up arms against the Republic on October 28.[44] If this is accurate, then between July, when Catiline failed to be elected as consul, and October 63 BC, Catiline and his associates were able to prepare for the conspiracy that, if successful, Catiline would have been able to forcefully take the consulship.

Now that the day, October 28, has been established as the original date of the conspiracy we can briefly examine what the conspiracy involved. According to Eagle:

> The original plan of the conspiracy, to have been put into effect on that day, was a relatively simple one. Manlius and his force of rural malcontents were to attack Rome from without while the conspirators within the city were murdering Cicero and a few other leading citizens. Catiline was to become consul. Nothing more than a short, vigorous palace revolution was planned.[45]

Cicero discovered these plans thanks to Crassus who brought a few letters to Cicero on October 18 that discussed the conspiracy. One of the letters was addressed to Crassus. He opened it and immediately went to Cicero's house and presented Cicero with all the letters. Cicero brought and read those letters to the Senate the following day. "All the letters alike were found to tell of a plot."[46] That plot was Catiline's violent takeover of the Roman Republic. This incident demonstrates that Cicero and Crassus were not enemies at this early stage of the conspiracy.

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[43] E. D. Eagle, "Catiline and the *Concordia Ordinum," Phoenix* 3, no.1 (1949): 27.
[44] Cicero, *In Catilinam,* I.7.
[45] Eagle, *Catiline and the 'Concordia Ordinum,'* 27.
[46] Plutarch, *Cicero,* XV.3.

Where was Pompey?

During this crisis in Rome, Pompey was away fighting Mithridates in the East. Pompey had been placed in command of the military efforts to defeat Mithridates, thanks to Cicero, in 66 BC and his campaign continued through the conspiracy in 63 BC.

With Pompey away, men such as Cicero, Caesar, Crassus, and Catiline were fighting for either control of the Republic or the favoritism of Pompey, who some believed would return to rule Rome. Historian Lily Ross Taylor identifies Pompey, Crassus, Caesar, and Catiline as popular leaders; however, she further explains that "each of them was interested in his own advancement."[47] Therefore, with Pompey gone, it opened the doors for Crassus, Caesar, and Catiline to make their moves to obtain a powerful position in Rome. Crassus and Caesar attempted to use Catiline and place him at the post of consul while those two controlled Catiline's actions as consul. Upon Pompey's arrival, Rome would be drastically different. It would be ruled by Crassus and Caesar with Catiline there to take the fall if anything was to go awry.

Cicero defeats Catiline

After receiving letters from Crassus revealing the conspiracy, Cicero reported them to the Senate on October 19 and then, on November 8, he delivered his first speech to the Senate against Catiline. Since Catiline was a member of the Senate, he was present and Cicero spoke directly to Catiline: "You cannot remain among us any longer; I cannot, I will not, I must not permit it."[48] Moreover, Cicero, again speaking directly to Catiline, began to portray Catiline as an assassin who planned to murder the optimates in the senate including Cicero: "You, Catiline, should have been led to your death long ago and on a consul's orders. It is upon yourself that the

[47] Lily Ross Taylor, *Party Politics in the Age of Caesar* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1949), 120.

[48] Cicero, *In Catilinam*, I.10.

fate which you have long been planning for all of us ought to be visited."[49] Throughout his speeches against Catiline, Cicero depicts him as an angry, vengeful man who desired simply to ruin the Republic and assassinate all who stand in his way of being consul; therefore, Cicero considered that it was his duty to defeat Catiline.

Furthermore, Cicero, in his second oration, attempted to destroy Catiline's credibility when he said, "would you think that your estates will be regarded as sacred in the general devastation? Or are you waiting for new books? You need not expect them from Catiline."[50] When Cicero mentioned "new books," he was referring to debt cancellation. In this passage, he was telling the Romans that Catiline may promise the cancellation of debts, but he was ill-equipped to deliver on such a promise. Cicero found it important to emphasize how terrible Catiline was and how he would not bring the people what they desired, but he would bring them death and destruction.

Cicero clearly believed that he was responsible for defeating Catiline before Catiline could destroy the Republic. Many modern scholars, in particular Charles M. Odahl, believe that even if Cicero failed in suppressing Catiline, Pompey would have returned and taken care of the situation effectively; however, this would have resulted in Pompey being a dictator.[51]

Crassus' and Caesar's involvement

It has been suggested that Crassus and Caesar were, essentially, Catiline's puppet masters. The reason that this theory has been accepted by many is that Catiline had been a pawn for Crassus and Caesar in 65 BC.[52] Eagle agrees with this theory stating that "it was not a

[49] Cicero, *In Catilinam*, I.2.
[50] Cicero, *In Catilinam*, II.18.
[51] Charles M. Odahl, *Cicero and the Catilinarian Conspiracy* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 71.
[52] The conspiracy of 65 BC is a debated event in Roman history. Some suggest Catiline had nothing to do with the conspiracy, others believe that he conspired with Gnaeus Calpurnius Piso to kill all the senators and the new consuls.

Catilinarian conspiracy at all. As usual, Catiline was merely a tool in the hands of Caesar and Crassus."[53] Additionally, historian E. T. Salmon suggests that "Crassus and Caesar went ahead with their plan to obtain a favourable executive. In 63 Catiline was once again their choice for the consulship."[54] Crassus and Caesar wanted Catiline in power because they could easily manipulate Catiline, so they would be, in reality, consuls of Rome. Therefore, there is some historical consensus that suggests that Caesar and Crassus played key roles in the conspiracy, so key that it could be considered Caesar's and Crassus' conspiracy not Catiline's.

Ward, on the other hand, suggests that Caesar and Crassus supported Catiline until he launched his wretched plot to seize power at Rome.[55] Ward then says that Caesar and Crassus may have known about the plot, but they were not involved in it and stopped supporting Catiline.[56] Historian Ernle Bradford agreed with Ward and explained that since Catiline failed in his second attempt, he was of no use to Crassus or Caesar, so they stopped supporting him.[57]

However, historian Pamela Marin suggests that there was no evidence that Crassus or Caesar supported Catiline in 63 even though they supported him in 65.[58] She believes that just because they were associated in 65 does not mean that they were also associated in 63. However, there is no evidence to disprove that they were involved. Furthermore, two of our most dependable primary sources, Plutarch and Sallust, accuse Crassus and Caesar of having roles in the conspiracy of 63 BC. Therefore, it is likely that Crassus and Caesar supported Catiline throughout the conspiracy.

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[53] Eagle, *Catiline and the 'Concordia Ordinum,'* 22.
[54] E. T. Salmon, "Catiline, Crassus and Caesar," *The American Journal of Philology* 56, no. 4 (1935): 309.
[55] Ward, *Crassus and the Late Roman Republic*, 191.
[56] Ward, *Crassus and the Late Roman Republic*, 191.
[57] Ernle Bradford, *Julius Caesar: The Pursuit of Power* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1984), 63.
[58] Pamela Marin, *Blood in the Forum: The Struggle for the Roman Republic* (New York: Continuum, 2009), 105.

Cicero, in his orations and writings that survive, does not implicate Crassus or Caesar in the conspiracy. It is from Sallust's account that we first hear of Crassus' potential involvement. Sallust claims that Lucius Tarquinius brought a letter to the Senate that was addressed to Catiline from Crassus. He gave up this letter in exchange for a pardon. As Sallust states, the letter "had been sent by Marcus Crassus to advise Catiline not to be alarmed by the arrest of Lentulus, Cethegus, and the other conspirators, but to make the greater haste to come to the city, in order that he might thereby revive the spirits of the rest, and that they might the more easily be saved from their danger."[59] Therefore, Sallust makes the stunning argument that Crassus was in fact controlling Catiline in direct opposition to Cicero.

In regards to Caesar, Cicero explains that "I see that so far there are two proposals: one of Decimus Silanus who proposes that those who have attempted to destroy Rome should be punished by death; the other of Gaius Caesar who opposes the death penalty but advocates the full rigor of the law with other punishments."[60] Therefore, Cicero acknowledged that Caesar attempted to save the lives of the conspirators, but he does not mention if there was an ulterior motive for doing so. If Caesar was involved in the conspiracy, he may have been trying to protect his fellow conspirators from death; however, it can equally be argued that Caesar was sympathetic to these individuals' lives and did not want to see them put to death without a proper trial.

It is from Plutarch that we find an interesting reference to Crassus and Caesar supporting Catiline. Plutarch says that "Cicero, in one of his orations, plainly inculpated Crassus and Caesar."[61] However, there is no oration that exists today in which Cicero claims that Crassus and

[59] Sallust, *Bellum Catilinae*, XLVIII.4.
[60] Cicero, *In Catilinam*, IV.7.
[61] Plutarch, *Plutarch's Lives: Crassus*. Translated by Bernadotte Perrin, (Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1916), XIII.3.

Caesar were involved. Plutarch further suggests that Crassus gave Cicero a letter that gave the details of the Catilinarian Conspiracy.[62] Yet again, we do not have any surviving orations from Cicero which confirm this accusation that Plutarch made, but since Plutarch had access to more primary documents as well as secondary information than we do today, his account is likely to be accurate.

Although arguments can be made that Crassus and Caesar were not involved in the conspiracy, Sallust and Plutarch both implicate Crassus as having a role and Plutarch implicates Caesar as sharing in that role. Crassus and Caesar attempted to put their puppet consul Catiline in power. This attempt made by Crassus and Caesar to control the Republic proved to be detrimental in the relationship between Cicero and these powerful *populares* leaders.

Cicero's relationships with Pompey, Crassus, and Caesar after the conspiracy

Once the Catilinarian Conspiracy was suppressed and Catiline was killed in battle in 62 BC, Cicero's relationships with Pompey, Crassus, and Cicero became strained and never recovered. By 60 BC Pompey, Crassus, and Caesar were on good terms, but Cicero was unable to maintain his friendships or his political dominance because of Crassus and Caesar's involvement in the conspiracy and Cicero's unlawful execution of the conspirators resulting in his exile. When Cicero was exiled, his former friends Pompey, Crassus, and Caesar did not support him or prevent his exile.

The differences in political ideologies made clear during the Catilinarian Conspiracy greatly affected Cicero's relationships with Pompey, Crassus, and Caesar. While Cicero was striving to get the Republic back to a more democratic government, much like it was before Sulla had taken dictatorial control over it, Pompey, Crassus, and Caesar were looking to establish an oligarchy in Rome. Furthermore, Cicero was considered an *optimate*, an individual who

[62] Plutarch, *Crassus,* XIII.3.

supported the interests of the aristocracy, and Crassus and Caesar, and sometimes Pompey as well, were considered members of the *populares* ideology, which was made up of individuals who supported popular interests. [63] Although Cicero uses the term *optimates* in a number of ways, he mainly uses this term as a way to distinguish himself from other powerful political individuals such as Pompey, Crassus, and Caesar.[64]

Cicero and Pompey

After a successful campaign against Mithridates in the East, Pompey returned to Rome in 62 BC. Upon his return he "dismissed his troops on arrival at Brundisium; he would be no dictator in the Sulla mould."[65] Pompey did not want to become a dictator like Sulla because Sulla was widely hated by Romans; therefore, he would not risk losing his current power and prestige to become a hated dictator. Lodge stated that because of Pompey's military prestige, the Roman people loved him, but the Senate was afraid that he would become a dictator in the likes of Sulla.[66] Pompey knew that the Senate would suspect him as desiring to be a dictator; therefore, his disbanding of his troops was most likely his way of showing the Senate that he was not striving to be a dictator. According to Appian, Pompey enjoyed the prestige and power that came from his success and this fame made a number of senators jealous.[67] One of those senators was Pompey's enemy, and later friend thanks to Caesar, Crassus. Out of all the senators, Crassus was the most jealous and feared that Pompey would be a dictator more so than any other senator.[68] Cicero, however, is believed to have, as Rawson explains, served as a counterpart to Pompey for

[63] M. A. Robb, *Beyond Populares and Optimates: Political Language in the Late Republic* (Germany: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2010), 109.
[64] Robb, *Populares and Optimates*, 109-111.
[65] John Murrell, *Cicero and the Roman Republic* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 73.
[66] Lodge, *Caesar, Cicero, and Pompey*, 140.
[67] Appian, *The Civil Wars*. Translated by John Carter (London: Penguin Books, 1996), 73.
[68] Boatwright, Gargola, and Talbert, *The Romans*, 219.

Rome.[69] Cicero's suppression of the conspiracy ensured that Pompey, his long time friend, would arrive at a Rome that was much like the one he left.

Cicero's relationship with Pompey after the conspiracy appears to have been somewhat strained. There are a number of letters that Cicero wrote in which he refers to Pompey after his return from the East. Furthermore, Cicero even wrote letters to Pompey expressing their intimacy and how disappointed he was in his friend.

Cicero shows, in a letter he wrote to Pompey in 62 BC, complete frustration with Pompey because Pompey failed to acknowledge, in letters he wrote to Cicero, what a good deed Cicero did for Rome by suppressing the conspiracy. Cicero wrote to Pompey saying that:

> My achievements have been such that I did expect some congratulatory reference to them in your letter, in consideration, not only of our intimacy, but of their importance to the state; and I can only suppose that you omitted any such reference because you were afraid of wounding anybody's feelings.[70]

Therefore, Cicero was comfortable in telling Pompey how he felt because of their close relationship, but this lack of congratulatory reference in his letter to Cicero strained the relationship between the two. After the conspiracy, Cicero expected many congratulations from his powerful friend Pompey, but, in return, he received none and was thoroughly disappointed in his long time friend.

In his letter addressed to Lentulus Spinther, the proconsul of Cilicia, that he wrote on January 13, 56 BC, Cicero seems frustrated that Pompey did not heed his advice: "As regards Pompey, I never cease urging and imploring him — nay even frankly rebuking him, and warning him, not to incur a storm of public obloquy; but he has left absolutely no room for any entreaties

[69] Rawson, *Politics of Friendship*, 90-91.
[70] Cicero, *Letters to Friends*, V.VII.3.

or admonitions of mine. . . ."[71] However, two days later, Cicero wrote another letter to Lentulus and, in this letter, he mentions that he dined with Pompey and believes that Pompey actually was considerate of what he had to say to him.[72] Additionally, in another letter sent to Lentulus, this one in January of 55 BC, Cicero continuously refers to Pompey as his friend and that he supports him. He claims that he has a "friendly feeling towards Pompey. . ." and that he will "support what Pompey advocates. . . ."[73]

The lack of respect for what Cicero considered his greatest achievement was coupled with a political union that took place about three years after the conspiracy began. This union is known to us today as the First Triumvirate. In about 60 BC, Pompey, Crassus, and Caesar joined in a political union that brought Cicero's former friend Pompey together with two of Cicero's enemies, Crassus and Caesar. The First Triumvirate will be discussed in more detail below, but it is important to recognize here that this union permanently damaged Cicero's already strained relationship with Pompey.

After Cicero achieved his greatest success, in his mind at least, he expected his friend Pompey to be proud of him and acknowledge his great work. Pompey, on the other hand, did not even acknowledge it and he even joined forces with Cicero's enemies, Crassus and Caesar. Cicero now struggled to maintain a relationship with Pompey, but at the same time could not stand in complete opposition with him because of Pompey's great influence in Rome. So, Cicero and Pompey were no longer close friends as they were before the conspiracy, but were not sworn enemies because of the tough political atmosphere of the Late Roman Republic.

Cicero and Crassus

[71] Cicero, *The Letters to His Friends*, I.I.2. A proconsul was an ex-consul who, at the end of his term in office, accepts an assignment (governorship of a province, for example) that continues, or "prorogues," his magistrate's authority for a set period.

[72] Cicero, *Letters to Friends*, I.II.3.

[73] Cicero, *Letters to Friends*, I.VIII.2. Cicero, *Letters to Friends*, I.VIII.3.

Crassus is not mentioned in Cicero's writings or orations until after the conspiracy so what we know of their relationship up until 62 BC (the year after the conspiracy was suppressed by Cicero), is simply based on their political actions. During the conspiracy, Cicero's speeches that survive do not mention any conflict between him and Crassus, but Plutarch does mention that Cicero implicated Crassus in the conspiracy. Regardless of whether Cicero implicated Crassus or not, it is evident that Crassus most likely supported Catiline in the conspiracy because he wanted anyone to take Pompey's place of prestige — most likely because he resented Pompey for holding such a high military stature even though Crassus halted Spartacus' rebellion.

Therefore, if Cicero suppressed Catiline who was supported by Crassus, Cicero would not have had a very good relationship with Crassus during or after the conspiracy. Furthermore, in 54 BC, Cicero wrote a letter to the Imperator P. Lentulus and said that he was on good terms with Crassus; however, he further states that he was only on good terms with Crassus because it was "in the interests of public harmony."[74] This is evident in a letter that Cicero wrote to Crassus in early 54 BC when Cicero asked that their relationship be brought to good terms. He wrote to Crassus saying that "If there have occurred any ruptures between us, due not so much to acts as to suspicion on either side, false and fanciful as they have proved to be, let them be eradicated for ever from our hearts and lives."[75] Therefore, Cicero was attempting to make peace with Crassus for implicating him in the Catilinarian Conspiracy.[76]

The conspiracy altered Cicero and Crassus' relationship because Crassus supported Cicero's biggest enemy at this time — Catiline. Although they were now enemies, Cicero and Crassus became civil with each other shortly before Crassus' death in 53 BC because it was

[74] Cicero, *Letters to Friends*, I.IX.20. Imperator was a title for a successful military commander.
[75] Cicero, *Letters to Friends*, V.VIII.3.
[76] If we are to consider that Plutarch had access to an oration of Cicero's, that has long since been lost, in which he implicates Crassus as a co-conspirator.

better for the Republic if they were not at odds with each other. Even though Cicero attempted to be friends with Crassus again, it was just for appearances and in reality they were still enemies because of Crassus' role in the conspiracy.

Cicero and Caesar

In his letter to the Imperator P. Lentulus in 54 BC, Cicero mentions that the *optimates* were "delighted that I failed to satisfy Pompey and that Caesar would be my bitterest enemy."[77] However, in the same letter, he continuously references his long standing friendship with Caesar.[78] With this conflicting information given in the same letter, it is important to note what has occurred at this time. After the conspiracy, Caesar united with Pompey and Crassus (c. 60 BC) to formulate what we know as the First Triumvirate. Although it is impossible to know the exact date that this political union was established, it is generally believed, as historian Henry A. Sanders points out, to have been a secret union established before Caesar became the consul in 59. [79] Pompey and Crassus thus assisted Caesar in being elected; therefore, the union must have been established in 60, if not earlier. This pact was simple — the members of this alliance would never do anything disagreeable to the other members. Cicero is generally believed to have had an opportunity to join the Triumvirate. It is often agreed among historians that Cicero was offered a position of power with Pompey, Crassus, and Caesar, but he refused to join forces with them because of his strained relationship with Crassus and Caesar. [80]

In addition to the First Triumvirate and Caesar being consul in 59 BC, it was difficult for Cicero to speak out against Caesar because Cicero was exiled in 58 BC and returned to Rome in

[77] Cicero, *Letters to Friends*, I.IX.10.
[78] Cicero, *Letters to Friends*, I.IX.12.
[79] Henry A. Sanders, "The So-Called First Triumvirate," *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 10, (1932): 57.
[80] Raymond Astbury, "Varro and Pompey," *The Classical Quarterly* 17, no. 2 (1967): 405. And Boatwright, Gargola, and Talbert, *The Romans*, 233.

57 BC.[81] However, after a long absence from the public forum, Cicero gave a speech, known as *Pro Marcello,* in support of Marcus Claudius Marcellus, given in 46 BC in which he speaks about Caesar. In this speech, he criticizes Caesar. Cicero claims that Caesar can change his ways and restore the Republic to greatness: "It is for you and you only, Gaius Caesar, to revive all you see lying in ruins around you, inevitably shattered and overthrown by the violent shock of war."[82] Therefore, Cicero is criticizing the way Caesar was running the government and makes the request that he revive Rome to what it was before he became dictator in 49 BC.

During the conspiracy, Cicero and Caesar stood on opposing ends — Cicero attempted to destroy Catiline and save the Republic and Caesar attempted to use Catiline to gain power over the Republic — so it is likely that their opposition to each other would continue beyond the conspiracy. Like Cicero's relationship with Crassus, the conspiracy was detrimental to his relationship with Caesar. Not only did Caesar's potential involvement in the conspiracy affect their relationship, but the fact that Caesar spoke in favor of imprisoning the conspirators instead of the execution of the conspirators like Cicero was advocating drastically affected this relationship as well. Cicero and Caesar began as childhood friends and the Catilinarian Conspiracy stands as the singular event that drove a wedge between the two personally and politically.

Conclusions

From the late second century BC onward, the Roman Republic was in political turmoil. By the 60s BC, Rome had experienced a number of political issues that brought about the end of

[81] Clodius had a proposal passed that said no Roman citizen could have someone executed without a trial. Since Cicero recognized that this proposal was more or less directed at him for having the Catilinarian conspirators executed, he fled Rome for Macedonia rather than stay and be prosecuted. Clodius then passed a measure that declared Cicero an exile.

[82] Marcus Tullius Cicero, *In Support of Marcus Claudius Marcellus*. Translated by Michael Grant in *Selected Political Speeches,* (London: Penguin Books, 1969), 289.

the Roman Republic. During this time, a number of individuals strove for power. Cicero, Pompey, Crassus, and Caesar were four of those individuals, who led commanding political careers. During the political struggles of the late first century BC, they were at times allies; at other times they clashed. Understanding their relationships is essential in understanding Roman politics in the Late Republic. The Catilinarian Conspiracy stands as the critical moment when these relationships collapsed and Cicero's former friends became enemies.

Cicero and Pompey served in the military together under Sulla and became close friends. Cicero even helped his friend Pompey to be elected to lead the fight against Mithridates in Asia Minor. Their personal and political lives were very close and they clearly helped each other out at every opportunity until the Catilinarian Conspiracy of 63 BC when Pompey was fighting in the East and Cicero was working to help Pompey by preventing Catiline from taking over the Republic. Upon Pompey's return, Cicero received no honor or praise from his friend and their relationship suffered from then onwards.

Although little is known of Cicero's relationship with Crassus and Caesar, it is generally believed that he at least knew them both. However, it is likely that he did not feel they were a threat early on. In fact, he may have even been childhood friends with Caesar. Even though Cicero was an *optimate* and Crassus and Caesar were *populares*, they were not enemies. If they were, Cicero would have spoke out against them in his early career. It was not until the Catilinarian Conspiracy, according to Plutarch, that Cicero spoke out against them because they were supporting Catiline. Sallust confirms that Crassus was involved in the conspiracy. Therefore, the conspiracy clearly defines the moment that Cicero's relationships with Crassus and Caesar took a turn for the worst. They went from being acquaintances to being adversaries. After the conspiracy, Cicero's political influence declined and he only made attempts to become

friendly with Crassus and Caesar because it was in his, and the public's, best interest to be on good terms with two of the most powerful and most influential men in Rome.

One of the most dependable sources we have on Cicero, Plutarch, confirms that after the conspiracy, Cicero was no longer friends with Pompey and was, in fact, enemies with both Crassus and Caesar. Therefore, after the conspiracy, Cicero and Pompey went from being close, supportive friends to having mixed feelings for one another. Crassus and Caesar, however, thanks to their involvement in the conspiracy, became enemies of Cicero.[83]

The Catilinarian Conspiracy proves to be the critical moment when former friends — Cicero, Pompey, Crassus, and Caesar — were driven apart in search of personal glory and power. Pompey, Crassus, and Caesar formed the First Triumvirate in order to obtain this power, but Cicero refused to join his former friends on a matter of principle. That principle was that Cicero was no longer politically or personally involved with the other three and there was no way that he would join forces with people who only cared for their personal glory and power and did not care for the Republic or put the Republic's concerns above their own. The Catilinarian Conspiracy was the singular event that drove a wedge between Cicero and Pompey, Crassus, and Caesar; their relationships never recovered from this crucial event that changed the political landscape of the Roman Republic.

[83] Plutarch, *Cicero,* XXX.2.

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