

AUTHORITATIVE FORGERIES: LATE REPUBLICAN HISTORY RE-TOLD IN PSEUDO-SALLUST*

Nobody should desire to augment the ‘literature of the subject’ without some excuse.
Syme (1958) 55 n. 70 = Syme (1991) 64 n. 70

Abstract: This paper deals with three pseudo-Sallustian texts (the two *suasoriae* to Caesar and the invective against Cicero) and with the pseudo-Ciceronian invective against Sallust. After a brief outline of the reasons that strongly militate against their authenticity, the discussion focuses on the role that authority (or lack thereof) plays in these works. Although their literary and historical context remains largely unclear, the *suasoriae* and the *inuectiuae* provide original standpoints on the main political, social and intellectual issues of the late Republic. They also offer worthy opportunities to reflect on the place of Sallust and Cicero in late Republican culture and on their reception in the imperial period.

1. Authority and Authenticity

Most modern editions of Sallust end with the familiar sequence of four intractable texts, the very function and destination of which are far from clear: the *oratio ad Caesarem senem* (often referred to in modern scholarship as *Epistula I*); the *epistula ad Caesarem senem* (often referred to as *Epistula II*); the invective against M. Tullius Cicero; and the invective against Sallust. The first obvious issue that these texts pose is their authorship—are the first three works really by Sallust? What do they have to do with the canonical triad of Sallust’s works? And what about the invective against Sallust? The dispute on their authenticity has been ongoing for centuries, and I shall come back to it shortly. The philological and methodological fascination of this topic, however, must not overshadow the other issues that these distinctive texts pose. In different ways, these works—so different from each other in several respects—are all reflections on authority: about power, in some cases, and about authoritativeness or credibility—be it political, literary, or moral—in others.¹ Whatever one’s conclusion about their authorship and

* A preliminary version of this paper was presented at a panel on ‘Authority and authenticity in ancient narrative’ at the Celtic Conference in Classics that was held at University College Cork in July 2008. I am grateful to the panel convenors, John Morgan and Ian Repath, and to the other participants for their reactions. I have profited from the comments and criticism of Cynthia Damon, a referee and the *Histos* editors on later drafts, and my reflection on the *suasoriae* to Caesar has greatly benefited from a research seminar that Ruth Morello gave at Durham in April 2011.

¹ Authority in ancient historiography: Marincola (1997).

purpose may be, they all are earnest reflections on late Republican history and interesting discussions of aspects of the devastating crisis that the *res publica* went through in the first century BC.² In short, there are good reasons for reconsidering these four texts from the vantage points of authenticity and authority, and with special emphasis on the versions of the late Republican past that they outline.

2. Four Texts in Search of Authors

While these four texts are usually printed at the end of the modern editions of Sallust, most surviving manuscripts of Sallust do not include them at all. The two texts addressed to Caesar—which in this paper will be referred to with the comprehensive label of *suasoriae*—feature at the end of a tenth century manuscript, the *Codex Vaticanus* 3864, which in fact is not a full edition of Sallust, but a selection of speeches and letters from the three works that are safely attributed to Sallust; and it is surely for this reason that the two texts addressed to Caesar are labelled as a speech (*oratio*) and a letter (*epistula*) respectively. The two invectives feature in a number of manuscripts of Sallust and Cicero, going back as early as the tenth century.³ Quintilian knew the invective against Cicero, and mentioned it twice without questioning its Sallustian authorship, referring on both occasions to the intertextual complexity of the text.⁴ The grammarian Diomedes, who probably lived in the late fourth century, attributed the invective against Cicero to a certain Didius.⁵ There are no references to the other three texts in the ancient evidence, but this is not a weighty factor in the long-time dispute on their authorship. The two *suasoriae* to Caesar and the two invectives form two obvious pairs, but there is no compelling presumption to view them as the works of the same author. In fact, they are best discussed individually and assessed—so to speak—on their own respective merits.

The main criterion to establish the authenticity of the *suasoriae* to Caesar and of the invective against Cicero has traditionally been linguistic and stylistic: their style is patently close to that of Sallust, and this led many to acknowledge them as genuine works of the historian. The Sallustian author-

² Representations of the Roman Republic in imperial literature and culture: Gowing (2005) and Gallia (2012).

³ A list of the manuscripts in Novokhatko (2002); a detailed overview of the manuscript tradition in Novokhatko (2009) 27–110.

⁴ Quint. 4.11.68 and 9.3.89. See also the criticism of Sallust's later imitators in 10.2.17, with Marincola (1997) 16–7.

⁵ *Gramm. Lat.* (ed. Keil) 1.387.6; see Novokhatko (2009) 112.

ship of the two pamphlets to Caesar was argued by a number of scholars between the late 1800s and the early 1900s.⁶ Some great historical minds accepted it: E. Meyer, L. R. Taylor, C. Nicolet, to name just a few. The patent linguistic archaisms in both texts were regarded as a decisive argument, although various historical considerations were also significant. In a seminal discussion, however, E. Fraenkel showed that the use of archaisms of those texts is so systematic that it may be deemed excessive, and in fact finds no parallels outside historiography. Fraenkel proved that the *Epistles* share some archaisms with the writings of Sallust, but in most cases they develop them to an extent that simply is not suitable to the genre to which the epistles purport to belong: ‘if young Sallust had tried to employ that peculiar language for the purpose of a political pamphlet he would have made a fool of himself.’⁷ Fraenkel’s understanding of the problem was very influential in the English-speaking scholarship, as was the detailed case against authenticity made by R. Syme, who firmly ruled out Sallustian authorship for all three texts.⁸ This view appears to be largely prevailing in current scholarship, and it is presupposed in the present discussion.⁹ We will need to go back to the difficult question of why someone bothered to write texts of this kind, in a style that echoed Sallust’s in such a close and deliberate way.

The stylistic analysis of the *Inuectiua in Ciceronem* poses more problems than that of the *suasoriae* to Caesar.¹⁰ It belongs to an altogether different genre to that of the texts that we can safely attribute to Sallust, and it can hardly be studied by comparing or contrasting it to texts of certain Sallustian authorship. There is, however, an interesting similarity between a passage of the *Inuectiua in Ciceronem* and one of the second *suasoria* to Caesar, which was carefully studied by R. Nisbet. They both seem to derive from a lost passage of Lycurgus, the fourth century BC Athenian logographer, which we know in the Latin translation by Rutilius Lupus, a rhetorician who flourished in the late Augustan period.¹¹ Similarities are very striking be-

⁶ Comprehensive overview until 1964 in Leeman (1965) 52–8; a brief, magisterial overview of the two camps (for and against authenticity) in Nicolet (1959) 145–6, fn.1.

⁷ Fraenkel (1951) 194 = (1964) 136.

⁸ Syme (1958) = Syme (1991) 55–64; Syme (1962) = Syme (1991) 65–7; Syme (1964) 274–301, 314–51.

⁹ Samotta (2009) 17–8 accepts the authenticity of the *Epistles* without discussion. Schmal (2001) 25–30 leaves the matter open.

¹⁰ See the comprehensive account of the debate on the invectives in Novokhatko (2009) 111–29. The reference to a *seria et seuera oratio* of Sallust in Gell. 17.18 should not be read as evidence for the genuineness of the *suasoriae* to Caesar: see Last (1923) 91–3.

¹¹ *Inv. Cic.* 5; *Epist. Caes.* 2.9.2; *Rutil. Schem. Lex.* 1.18. See Nisbet (1958); Novokhatko (2009) 113–4.

tween the passage in Rutilius and that in the *Inuectiua in Ciceronem*, while they are less striking between Rutilius and the *suasoria*. All three texts feature and develop a rhetorical commonplace—i.e. the idea that all the parts of the body of the person under attack are suited for wrongdoing—that circulated in the rhetorical schools of the early Principate. It is also conceivable that the *Epistula* may derive from *Inu. Cic.*, as the commonplace is developed less amply than it is in the *Epistula* and in Rutilius. It cannot be ruled out, of course, that the author of the *Epistula* knew Lycurgus independently from Rutilius. We are on very uncertain ground, but Nisbet's demonstration has given strength to the view that the *Epistula* is influenced by *Inu. Cic.* The case for authenticity on linguistic grounds is far from compelling, or indeed attractive.¹² We move onto safer, or more promising, territory if we focus on the contents.¹³

The dramatic dates of these four texts cover different moments of the process that led to the fall of the Roman Republic. The order in which the texts appear in modern editions (i.e. the *suasoriae* to Caesar first, followed by the invectives) has nothing to do with their relative dating. The fictional date of the first *suasoria* to Caesar is either 48 BC (after Pharsalus) or 46 (after Thapsus), while the second one is probably set in 50 BC.¹⁴ For the purposes of the present discussion, which is primarily concerned with the (pseudo-) historical setting of these texts, it is therefore preferable to start from the latter, since it is supposed to be the chronologically earlier *suasoria*.

The dramatic date of the invective against Cicero is 54 BC; the final paragraph has a reference to Cicero's recent defence of his former foe Vatinius.¹⁵ The word *inuectiua*, in fact, does not feature in the title given by the manuscripts, *in M. Tullium Ciceronem oratio*.¹⁶ This piece is a speech purport-

¹² Cf. also the very attractive suggestion by Canfora (1980) 25–8 = Canfora (1993) 129–32, who points out that the second epistle to Caesar has a clear debt to Apuleius, *deo Socr.* 22, and uses this as a stepping stone to argue that the author of the *suasoriae* was a man called C. Sallustius Crispus, who lived in the age of Symmachus and is known to have worked on the text of Apuleius. See also Canfora (1986) 14–6, 210 = Canfora (1993) 90–4.

¹³ Cf. Malitz (1975) 106 on the *suasoriae* to Caesar.

¹⁴ On the possible reasons for this inverted order see Last (1923) 156–7. Both *suasoriae* are addressed *ad Caesarem senem*: 'suspicious entitlement', as Syme (1964) 299 put it; cf. also Latte (1937) 300–301. Pasoli (1967) 222–4 points out that a late title is not in itself an argument against the authenticity of the work; Cugusi (1968) 13 argues that the title was chosen by Sallust, who intended to mark a distance between himself and the elder statesman.

¹⁵ *Inu. Cic.* 7.

¹⁶ It is worth noting that the word *inuectiua* does not appear before Ammianus Marcellinus and that, as Powell (2007) has shown, the concept of 'invective' should be applied with caution to the late Republican context.

edly given in the Senate, with the sole purpose of launching a personal attack against Cicero. The senatorial context is clearly pointed to by the numerous references to the *patres conscripti* throughout the speech; and the whole speech is built on the obvious assumption that Cicero is present and is listening. The purported chronology raises serious problems. First, it is far from certain that Sallust was a senator at the time—it is only from the *Inuectiua in Sallustium* that we learn about his quaestorship. It is certain, however, that in 52 he was a tribune of the plebs.¹⁷ Even if we leave chronology aside and admit that Sallust was a senator in 54, it seems very unlikely that such a junior senator would want and could afford to attack a former consul with such violence on the Senate floor. Moreover, the violence of pseudo-Sallust's attack is consistently accompanied by bitter sarcasm, and is perhaps more suitable to a *contio* or, perhaps, a judicial speech. It is equally unlikely that Cicero would have bothered to put together a public response double the length of the original attack, be it in the Senate or in another public venue. The thesis that the invective against Cicero was indeed written by Sallust, but was never delivered in the Senate and was circulated as an anonymous pamphlet instead, is ingenious, but should be rejected, because it cannot be falsified.¹⁸ The alternative option that the invective was not written by Sallust, but by the *consularis* L. Calpurnius Piso (cos. 58), as a direct response to Cicero's *in Pisonem*, is equally indemonstrable.¹⁹ It is unclear how a perceptive reader like Quintilian could persuade himself that the invective against Cicero was a work of Sallust. While it is conceivable that he may have found its style convincingly Sallustian, he must have overlooked the problem of the dramatic date and not thought hard enough about the context of the speech. We should not assume that a first century AD rhetorician was necessarily familiar with the details of political history of the late Republic.²⁰

If the authenticity of the invective against Cicero is untenable, this has inescapable consequences for our understanding of the response that Cicero supposedly put together: *simul stabunt, simul cadent*. In fact, the authenticity of the pseudo-Ciceronian invective against Sallust is an option that has not been seriously entertained since the sixteenth century, and with good reason: it is beyond doubt a forgery, which is closely modelled on the invective

¹⁷ Ascon. 33, 39, 43, 44, 45. See Syme (1964) 29–33; Malitz (1975) 60–2. On the choice of 54 as the dramatic date of the *Inuectiua* see Lennartz (2011) 179–81. Massa (2006) 417 points out that pseudo-Sallust's decision not to focus on the controversial final years of Cicero's life is noteworthy.

¹⁸ Bibliography and critique in Syme (1964) 315–6.

¹⁹ Syme (1958) 47 = Syme (1991) 56; Syme (1964) 315, 317–8.

²⁰ Massa (2006) 459–64 discusses Quintilian's interest in the *Inuectiua* against the background of Domitianic Rome.

against Cicero.²¹ Moreover, in this case the argument from silence may be used with good reason to argue that the invectives were written some time after the mid-Fifties.²² There is no reference to either invective in the whole of Cicero's work, including his correspondence, which does cover the mid-Fifties; and the invective against Sallust does not mention his eventful tribunate. The two invectives are best read and understood as valuable pieces of evidence for the history of the reception of Sallust and Cicero. No matter how fascinating the style in which they are written may be, they come across as too clever and too bookish to be persuasive.²³ They are, however, interesting efforts to think about the history of the late Republic, and it is under this light that they will be discussed in this paper.

The pamphlets addressed to Caesar pose different sets of problems, but a similar sense of inadequacy and oddity remains. The second *suasoria*, for instance, starts with a curious disclaimer: 'it is always difficult and dangerous to give advice to a king or a victorious commander'.²⁴ This is an anachronism if ever there was one. The letter was supposedly written in 50 BC, as the suggestion to act against the ploys of a hostile consul suggests. No associate of Caesar in his right mind would have even dared to mention such a heavily charged word as *rex* at the eve of the clash with Pompey and the Senate. Even implying that Caesar might be viewed as someone belonging in the same category as a king would have been taboo.²⁵ There is an even more substantial problem: it is far from clear what the point of a list of suggestions to Caesar could have been in 50 BC, at one of the most critical and fluid periods in Roman history with a civil war looming on the horizon. The eloquent case for the importance of clemency and mildness in the aftermath of the war made more sense in a letter that was supposedly written in 48 or in 46 BC; Syme rightly pointed out that its relative brevity makes it less vulnerable.²⁶ The debt that the text appears to have to what we know of Sallust

²¹ Novokhatko (2009) 115.

²² Syme (1964) 299 and Malitz (1975) 19 both regard the latter as a crucial argument against the authenticity of *Inv. Sall.*

²³ Cf. Quint. 3.8.35–54 on the importance of getting impersonation right in the construction of a deliberative speech.

²⁴ *Epist. Caes.* 2.1.1: *scio ego quam difficile atque asperum factu sit consilium dare regi aut imperatori.*

²⁵ An authoritative supporter of the authenticity of the *suasoriae* argued that they were private letters addressed to Caesar ('Visitenkarte'): Vretska (1961) 59–61. The hypothesis would alleviate the difficulty posed by *rex*; but it remains implausible. Cf. La Penna (1962) 470: 'se le lettere sono private ... perché quello stile aulico e pretensioso?'

²⁶ Syme (1964), 335. The case against authenticity in Malitz (1975) 106–8 is very well argued.

is, however, too strong not to raise suspicions. There are several echoes of expressions that may be found in Sallust; the intellectual autobiography of the author matches that of the historian closely.²⁷ The letter asks us to look at the author of the text as if he had the same extent of stylistic maturity that Sallust reached in the Thirties; that he did not refrain from using exactly the same turns of phrase in different works, even at the distance of several years; and that his historical apprenticeship consisted of a moderately successful attempt to style himself as a councillor of the dictator. This list of assumptions is too long to be workable. The hypothesis of Sallustian authorship of these works must be abandoned. The allegiance to the Sallustian paradigm, however, is their fundamental feature.

3. The Lessons of Character Destruction

If the case for authenticity is so flimsy and it must also be ruled out that one author wrote these four texts, the questions of authority and of authoritativeness still deserve attention. These standpoints may help us address some basic problems for the interpretation of these texts: when they were written, what the use of these unusual texts could have been, how their historical and stylistic oddities or inaccuracies may be accounted for. To do so, it is worth approaching these non-historical texts, written by non-historians who were posing as a great historian (or as a great statesman), as historical narratives of a kind, and as attempts to make sense of some decades of sharp historical change. Again, the invectives provide a useful starting point.

Like most personal attacks, the speech against Cicero is indirectly a portrait of the great man that it targets.²⁸ The starting-point is that we know fairly well how Cicero tried to construct his public persona, and we can fully appreciate how painstakingly thorough the attempt of the author of *Inv. Cic.* is to demolish it. The invective is the work of a keen reader of Cicero, who was familiar with his rhetorical strategies of character-assassination, and offers a stimulating reflection on what Cicero set out to do and represent. By producing a biographical account based on a thoroughly negative charac-

²⁷ See the excellent list of parallels in Syme (1964) 324–6, 328–34. On the autobiographical sections cf. *Epist. Caes.* 1.3 and *Sall. BC* 3.

²⁸ Arena (2007) is a good introduction to the role of invective in the political and cultural discourse of the late Republic, and has a perceptive discussion of the moral implications of invectives (albeit, understandably, nothing on the pseudo-Sallustian texts).

terisation of Cicero, the author also produces a reinterpretation of late Republican history.²⁹

The opening lines of the invective are about the moral profile of Cicero. According to pseudo-Sallust, he claims to be a model of restraint and dignity; on the contrary, he is exceedingly ambitious, and he is a deadly threat to the Republic and its survival. There is no serious check to his menace: the people are corrupt and the authority (*auctoritas*) of the Senate is turned into a joke by Cicero's devious schemes. The image of Cicero as the architect of concord of the good and of cooperation among the propertied classes is demolished along with the image of Cicero as the trusted and esteemed advisor to the Senate.³⁰ The attack then moves to Cicero's motives. He is depicted as an impostor: he is a new man, from an obscure *municipium*, but he poses as a great moral leader of the assembly, a man of the same stature as Scipio Africanus. Yet, the Arpinate has very few credentials to boast: his wife and daughter have a reputation for immorality, and even his rhetorical education—to which he owes his very position—was gained through a shady relationship with his teacher M. Pupius Piso (1.2). The house on which he pronounced one of his most famous speeches against his enemy Clodius was obtained through violence and theft (1.3: *ui et rapinis*).

The leading assumption is that there is nothing remarkable about Cicero: he is not as good an orator as he purports to be, he is not a good citizen, and the claim of a special relationship with the gods that he boasted in the difficult days of the Catiline conspiracy is equally groundless. This leads to a more specific line of attack; the Catilinarian affair is ground too fertile to be left untouched. The myth of Cicero's consular year is duly turned upside down: this is the central feature of the systematic denigration of Cicero. Cicero's questionable initiatives in that period become a stepping stone for further allegations: the money of the fines paid by some of the conspirators ended up funding the purchase of Cicero's villas at Tusculum and Pompeii (2.3–4). Cicero is emphatically urged by the speaker to give a public account of the origin of his wealth. The passage smacks of a rhetorical exercise, but it shows the underlying influence of a hostile historical tradition on Cicero's consulship which is known to have taken form in the aftermath of the conspiracy.

As readers of Sallust know, the memory of Catiline's conspiracy swiftly evokes the legacy of Sulla and his times, which presuppose it in many respects. In the invective, the shadow of Sulla casts itself on the man who had

²⁹ Massa (2006) 415–59 claims, rather speculatively, that the reconsideration of late Republican history set out in the *Inuectiua* was a covert attack on the Augustan settlement, probably written in the circle of Asinius Pollio. Cf. also Gabba (1957).

³⁰ Lepore (1954).

dared to speak publicly against the horrors of the proscriptions in his defence of Roscius Amerinus. Indeed, a few lines later Cicero may be significantly likened to M. Licinius Crassus, one of the great Sullan profiteers (though the text is disputed).³¹ The rapacity of Cicero's hands is matched by his inconsistency and fickleness (*homo leuissimus ... fidus nemini, leuissimus senator*; it is at this point that the quotation from Lycurgus discussed above becomes relevant). Cicero's self-assurance becomes ludicrous in the light of the lines that he penned in honour of himself in the poem *de consulatu suo*—the very thought of a *fortunata Roma* appears ludicrous to anyone who is even vaguely familiar with the history of the last century of the Republic.³² Having to endure Cicero's arrogance after the storm of the proscriptions was a disgrace; Cicero was no better than Sulla, and all his boasting that he replaced the weapons with the toga is a hollow claim.³³ The author of the invective shows that he has read his Sallust with care: Cicero becomes a *Romulus Arpinas*, just as Sulla had been labelled a *scaeuus Romulus* in the famous speech of Lepidus from the *Historiae*.³⁴ Pseudo-Sallust fails to fulfil his brief in an important respect, though. The two sides of Cicero—the new Sulla and the incompetent flip-flopper—fail to integrate themselves credibly. On the one hand, Cicero is the ruthless profiteer who led the merciless repression of the conspiracy; on the other hand, he is a marginal player on the great scene of Roman politics, who is now compelled to seek the support of figures like Caesar or Pompey, and owes his return from exile to them.

Even Cicero's record as a judiciary patron is inconsistent, and to say the least questionable: he is found so often to defend people that he once attacked. The year 54 BC is a good vantage point. In that year he took charge of the defence of two men who had formerly been his political foes, P. Vatinius (praet. 55 BC) and A. Gabinius (cos. 58), whom he decided to back in the name of his co-operation with the triumvirate. The issue of Cicero's consistency and of the very soundness of his political project had hardly been more burning. Although the author of the invective lacked the historical intelligence and the rhetorical ability of Sallust, he knew enough about late

³¹ *Inv. Cic.* 3.5: *homo nouus Arpinas, ex M. Crassi familia, illius uirtutem imitatur*, etc. I still prefer the manuscript reading to *L. Crassi*, suggested by some scholars: see the discussion in Novokhatko (2009) 31; cf. also Büchner (1960) 24–5. Malitz (1975) even suggests replacing *M. Crassi* with *C. Marii*. On Crassus as profiteer see Vell. 2.46.2; Plut. *Crass.* 6.6–7.

³² On the attacks on Cicero's poetry in the *Inuectiua* see Canfora (1984) = Canfora (1993) 139–48 (cf. (1984) 109 = (1993) 148: 'polemica più letteraria che politica'); Lennartz (2011) 171–9. For a positive assessment of Cicero's poetry see Goldberg (1995) 148–51.

³³ I find the mild and indirect appreciation of Sulla less difficult to accept than it is for Syme (1964) 341 and Canfora (1980) 29 = Canfora (1993) 134–5.

³⁴ Sall. 1.55 M.

Republican history to find a suitable dramatic date to corroborate his argument. There is much of interest in this account of Cicero's life and career.³⁵ Its central contention is that Cicero's republicanism was no more than an empty construction, which had no ability to put an end to an age of strife and division. Through a hostile reading of Cicero's biography, it is possible to make a contribution to the understanding of how radical the crisis of the republic was. True republicans knew better; so did the author of this text.

The *Inuectiua in Ciceronem* may be understood more fully if one reads it in close association with the invective against Sallust, which provides a comprehensive response to the points made in the speech against Cicero. There is no good reason to think that it was written by the same author as the first invective and one rather strong reason for supposing that it was not,³⁶ but it is clearly modelled on the previous text. The invective against Cicero was entirely based on the contradiction between Cicero's public claims and his authentic nature. Pseudo-Cicero starts his response by stressing that the tone of Sallust's attack is perfectly consistent with his character—it is devoid of any dignity and nobility. The point is made in a suitably Ciceronian fashion; this is surely one of the reasons why this response is so much longer than the first attack. This text is not simply an attempt to restore Cicero's reputation. It is also an attempt to rehabilitate the whole world of Cicero, his intellectual horizons, and his historical models. Pseudo-Sallust's scathing reference to Cicero's fascination with Scipio (1.1–2) becomes an opportunity to assert the importance of those irreplaceable models. Pseudo-Cicero's reply is that Sallust has nothing to do with them: Cicero is a new man, of course, but he can claim to have built on the achievements of the ancestors. Indeed, he argues himself to be the best man of his generation: Rome was fortunate under his watch and a bloody revolt was stopped.

There would be little point in going through all the various responses that 'Cicero' puts together to the arguments of his attacker. However, the arguments that Pseudo-Cicero uses to attack his opponent require some discussion. Sallust is portrayed as a dissolute young man (5.13), a squanderer who sold his father's house when he was still alive, and managed to secure an acquittal in two trials only because of the corruption of the jurors (5.14).³⁷ He was guilty of adultery and was expelled from the Senate in 50 after the

³⁵ As Kaster (1998) shows, most of the early Imperial declamatory tradition on Cicero focused on Cicero's death, rather than on Cicero as orator and statesman; the *inuectiuae* are an exception.

³⁶ See p. 37 below.

³⁷ The section of text (5.14) which seems to point to Sallust's involvement with the religious circle of Nigidius Figulus is uncertain and the picture of a Pythagorean young Sallust should be rejected at any rate: Santangelo (2011).

lectio of the censors.³⁸ He regained access to the assembly by obtaining the quaestorship for the second time after Caesar recalled him to Rome. His second tenure was a curious confirmation of Sallust's well-known working principle that everything was up for sale at Rome, as Sallust oversaw the sale of all kinds of public goods (6.18).³⁹ It was during this quaestorship that Sallust forged his ties with the core of the *factio* of the *populares*, and contracted increasingly embarrassing bonds of loyalty, which compelled him to act even more corruptly in the rest of his career, during his praetorship, which can be dated to 46.⁴⁰ His governorship of Africa was characteristically corrupt, and only Caesar's protection enabled Sallust to escape a conviction.

The core of pseudo-Cicero's response is that Sallust has no authority whatsoever to challenge Cicero's record. On the one hand, his very rank—a senator who did not advance beyond the praetorship—is enough to raise questions if compared to Cicero's own record. On the other hand, the moral profile of Sallust is just not of the same worth as Cicero's, and indeed of any member of the senatorial order. His very presence in the assembly is a disgrace and a reminder of the civil war (8.21: *ciuilis belli memoria*). It is unclear what civil war is meant here, since pseudo-Cicero is supposed to be speaking in 54 BC, and Sallust certainly could not be associated with Sulla and his *dominatio*. This is a symptom of the fundamental problem that underlies the whole section of the *suasoria*. The overview of Sallust's career presupposes that Cicero is speaking in the mid-Forties, after Sallust has been pardoned by Caesar. However, as we have seen, the speech against Cicero that *inv. Sall.* is supposed to respond to (as the opening paragraph makes clear) can be firmly set in the mid-Fifties.⁴¹ This is a serious oddity, which must be explained by the fact that the invectives were written by two different people, possibly at different times, although perhaps in the same context—that of a school of rhetoric. The author of *inv. Sall.* had access to the text of *inv. Cic.* and a good general knowledge of the main stages of Sallust's life and career, but he misunderstood (or overlooked) the dramatic date at which the fictional debate between Sallust and Cicero was supposed to have taken place.

The memory of the Civil Wars (that between Sulla and the Marians, but no doubt the later wars too) is a central issue for the interpretation of these

³⁸ On Sallust's expulsion in 50 see Dio 40.63.4. *Inv. Sall.* 5.16 makes reference to the censors Appius Claudius and Lucius Piso, who are the Appius Claudius and L. Piso Caesoninus who held the censorship in 50.

³⁹ *BC* 10.4; *Bj* 8.1; 20.1; 31.27.

⁴⁰ *Bell. Afr.* 8, 34, 97.

⁴¹ Cf. also the reference to Sallust's *Histories* (3.7), which were written in the early Thirties, definitely after Cicero's death.

texts, and it requires close scrutiny. It is worth asking why a full-scale attack on Sallust or Cicero could seem an activity worth pursuing to several individuals some time after the end of the Republic. Of course, we are in the realm of conjectures: the identity of the authors of these pieces is bound to remain obscure, and speculation is risky. However, two points are reasonably safe. The first is that in late Republican and early imperial Rome there was a strong tradition of rhetorical activity based on the production and delivery of oratorical exercises, speeches known as *suasoriae* (imaginary deliberative speeches) and *controversiae* (imaginary speeches on legal disputes). Historical topics could feature prominently in these works: we know of fictional speeches in defence of Catiline by Messala and Asinius Pollio, and of a response to Cicero's *pro Milone* written by Cestius Pius.⁴² The invective against Cicero can be confidently placed in this period, since it was familiar to Quintilian, and it certainly fits well in this context of rhetorical exercises on historical topics. This point applies to the invective against Sallust too, although one cannot be as certain about its dating. What is certain is that direct attacks on Sallust's character and literary work were launched already during his lifetime. A freedman of Pompey, Lenaeus, wrote an *acerbissima satira* against the historian, where he made fun of his Catonian style and chastised his disreputable life. He had evidently not forgiven Sallust for constructing a hostile portrait of his patron in the *Historiae*.⁴³

Moreover, Sallust and Cicero were significant figures in their own right, with distinctive political profiles. Writing an attack against either of them opened up the possibility of making wide-ranging political statements and provided an opportunity to reflect critically upon late Republican politics. At the same time, Sallust and Cicero were the late Republican personification of two very different approaches to literature: the historiographical commitment of the politician who leaves the *mêlée* and decides to serve the commonwealth in a different capacity, and the rhetorical contribution of the politician who does not renounce the duty of instructing his fellow-citizens on what is good for them and styles himself as the saviour of the fatherland. It would be reductive to interpret these two texts as mere evidence for post-humous attacks on Cicero's character designed to please the emperor.⁴⁴ Writing an attack on Cicero is not just about building an attack on the man but on a paradigm of Roman politics and of the interaction between intellectual and political developments. Taking up a defence of Cicero and

⁴² See Quint. 10.1.24; 10.5.20; Sen. *Contr.* 3, *praef.* 15. See Kaster (1998) 257–9; Novokhatko (2009) 15–6.

⁴³ Suet. *Gramm.* 15.

⁴⁴ As argued in Seel (1966); cf. Syme (1958) 47 = Syme (1991) 56; Syme (1964) 316–7.

launching an attack on Sallust is not simply about taking on a questionable figure of Caesar's *factio*. It is also an attempt to prove that historiography is not a good enough tool to interpret the crisis that Roman society went through and to suggest a solution for it. The most authoritative representative of that literary genre is in fact an unworthy citizen, himself a perfect epitome of the aberrations that his work chastises.

The debate of the two invectives may rightly be seen as an episode of the long-standing confrontation between historiography and oratory, and the debate on their respective merits and pitfalls. It is, at the same time, a visual embodiment of the unsolvable crisis that the Republic went through. The debate between Caesar and Cato on the execution of the Catilinarians and the important, though ultimately inconclusive, lesson that Sallust drew from it may come to mind as a relevant parallel.⁴⁵ The impression that one derives from reading both invectives is that the Ciceronian and the Sallustian solutions were both flawed and inadequate. What made their failure inevitable is, first of all, the moral inadequacy of both men. Such a serious shortcoming is bound to have significant implications on the viability of their intellectual and literary projects. Regardless of the inauthenticity of the two texts and even of the authorial and/or editorial intentions of whoever decided to put them side by side in the same manuscript, their joint message seems to be that authority has to be sought elsewhere. Piquantly, inauthentic texts make a serious point about lack of authority, both literary and political.

4. A Certain Idea of Caesar

The two pamphlets addressed to Caesar take us back to a different phase of the crisis of the Republic and to a different range of problems. Their most obvious purpose is to provide a set of suggestions for the new strong man from a trusted supporter who has a wide-ranging knowledge of politics and history. In fact, they may both be read as accounts of the rise of Caesar and the factors that determined his success—and they are, again, distinctive reflections on authority.

As mentioned above,⁴⁶ the dramatic date of the *epistula* is earlier than that of the *oratio* (which is often referred to as *Epistula I* and comes first in *Vaticanus* 3864), and it is therefore wiser to start from it. Pseudo-Sallust begins with the interesting disclaimer that giving advice to a leading political figure

⁴⁵ Sall. *BC* 51–4. Cf. Woolf (2006) 42 on the moral implication of the *synkrisis*: he wonders whether Sallust's point is 'that morality offers a superior perspective to partisan politics'.

⁴⁶ Cf. p. 30.

is a difficult and dangerous operation: one cannot ever be shrewd or forward-thinking enough to face the twists of Fortune, whose own capricious decisions (*ex libidine sua*) direct the course of events (1.1–2). In typically Sallustian mood, the author moves on to deal with his alleged personal experience.⁴⁷ He has a background in politics, held magistracies, and eventually decided to join the *pars* of Caesar and to do whatever he could to support the reputation of the great man. The main point of the piece is, however, made quite early on. Even an intelligent man like Caesar must be reminded of the interests of the city and of what the community requires. Caesar is addressed like a long-time enemy of the nobility (2.4: *qui iam a principio nobilitatis factionem disturbavit*) and a man who is committed to the cause of the people, within a tradition that dates back to the days of the emancipation of the plebs. This is the first point of historical significance in the text: Caesar, the contemporary of Sallust, may be in many respects exceptional and innovative, and the rising star of contemporary politics, but he must be understood in a long-term perspective. He is part of the framework of an ancient and time-honoured political tradition, that of the struggle of the orders, which dates back to the founding period of the Republic.

The attention is then turned to the specific context of contemporary politics. On the one hand, Caesar is portrayed as a friend of the people; on the other hand, he is the victim of a war of aggression launched by his enemy Pompey (3.1). The two points are more deeply related to each other than it seems at first glance. The aggression launched by Pompey is the consequence of a political programme that—like Caesar’s resolve—has a recognisable history: as so often in the past, the Senate is still keen to pursue its hegemonic plan, especially through the complete control of the courts (3.2–3). Its hegemony resembles the deployment of a military force after the conquest of a city; the analogy with the trauma of the Sullan colonisation, which Caesar himself probably denounced, comes to mind.⁴⁸ And here comes a third point of historical significance: even Sulla is preferable to Pompey and his associates (4.7). Sulla contained human losses and targeted only those whose survival could pose a serious problem to his *partes*; he preferred to apportion rewards (*beneficium*) rather than create fear (*metus*).⁴⁹ On

⁴⁷ There is an obvious parallel with the well-known section of the prologue to *BC* (3.3) which is in turn modelled on Plato’s Seventh Letter, 324B–325A. On Sallust’s shaping of his historiographical persona see Marincola (1997) 44–5. For a critical discussion of the Platonic influence in Sallust see La Penna (1968) 34–43. On the possible influence of the Letter on other sections of the *suasoriae* cf. Last (1923) 161–2.

⁴⁸ App. *BC* 2.94.395. In general on Sulla *vs* Caesar see Giardina (2010).

⁴⁹ Hinard (1985) 136 notes that this balanced judgement of Sulla is not at odds with the views on Sulla expressed in Sallust’s genuine works.

the other hand, people like M. Porcius Cato and L. Domitius Ahenobarbus eliminated forty senators and ‘many young men of excellent promise’ and stripped many individuals of their citizenship and freedom: an enigmatic passage, which may refer to the tragic events that followed the death of Milo in 52 (although an inaccuracy cannot be ruled out in this case).⁵⁰ This supposed elite is unworthy of its role, and its supremacy is not deserved. They are not even able to restrain their envy, and they look at Caesar’s victories with resentment.

The focus of the discussion then suddenly shifts to the historical development of the Roman republic, and to the long-standing opposition between patricians and plebeians, which the author views as an opposition between poor and rich that still awaits to be settled (5-6). Pseudo-Sallust has very clear views on the possible consequences that the extension of the citizenship can have at a time when there is such a lack of corporate spirit. He therefore suggests settling the new citizens into new colonies, along with the poorest of the old citizens (5.8). The enfranchisement of the new citizens is presented as a measure that can serve the cause of *libertas* and is bound to raise massive opposition from the nobility. The author, who clearly views the 90s and the 80s as a defining moment in the history of the Republic, recalls the failure of the proposals of Livius Drusus in 91 BC, which was caused by the end of his partnership with the Senate (6.3–6).

However, the advice for Caesar is not simply to follow a populist line, and the reflection on Roman history is not confined to the contribution of some prominent individuals or to the divide between the political *partes*. The remaking of the citizen body provides a formidable opportunity to build a new corporate spirit within the Republic, and to set the state free from that devastating centrifugal force that is the pursuit of wealth. The same condemnation of greed underpins the subsequent sections of the work, in which further ideas about the organisation of the state may be found, including an intricately worded proposal on the election of magistrates which follows up a law of Gaius Gracchus, probably abrogated shortly after his death (8.1–3).⁵¹

The focus then shifts to some specific examples of the degeneration that affects the senatorial nobility, embodied by individuals like M. Calpurnius Bibulus (cos. 59 BC) and L. Domitius Ahenobarbus (cos. 54).⁵² Even the unquestionable talent of Cato is put under a bad light: he is recognised as an eloquent man, but his main talent has been inherited from the Greeks, from

⁵⁰ Giovinazzo (1999) 96–8 has an exhaustive discussion of the attempts that have been made to solve the textual and historical problems that this passage raises.

⁵¹ See Nicolet (1959) 168–91.

⁵² On these two individuals see Syme (1964) 342 and Canfora (1980) 31 = Canfora (1993) 137.

people who were not capable of preserving their own freedom, and did not show any industry. The nobility must be disposed of, starting from the most extravagant individuals like L. Postumius and M. Favonius,⁵³ but the fundamental change that is needed is the composition and shape of the Senate (10.6–11.7). In a long-winded argument, the basic point is made that the Senate must go back to its original function of advisory body, consisting of the best individuals in the state, whose paramount virtue must be firmness of resolve (*patres consilio ualere decet*).⁵⁴ On the one hand, its size must be increased, so that the assembly can have a higher number of active members and be a more accurate representation of the Roman elite; on the other hand, vote by ballot should be introduced, in order to secure a fairer and more transparent decision-making process (11.5–7). The passage is informed by the concern to identify the boundaries of a solid and dependable elite for the Republic. This theme played an important role in the political debate of the first century BC, especially after Sulla, as well as the control of the criminal courts, briefly touched upon at 12.1.

The whole pamphlet shows a remarkable awareness of the main themes of the political debate of the late Republic.⁵⁵ The political points that are made in this text cannot be narrowly identified with the set of suggestions of a Roman political *pars*. They are, on the contrary, an intelligent appraisal of some central aspects of late Republican history. Moreover, a wide-ranging and reasonably detailed set of policies, rooted in the specific analysis outlined in the *suasoria*, is set out.⁵⁶ The author says that he would be prepared to give further, more detailed advice should Caesar wish to receive it (12.1–2). Even so, the level of detail of the advice to Caesar is not paralleled in any of the authentic evidence. Cicero's *pro Marcello* sets out an ambitious set of recommendations to Caesar and the blueprint of a strategy for the restora-

⁵³ Syme used this passage as a crucial argument against authenticity: Favonius was in fact a *municipalis*, while L. Postumius is not otherwise attested (cf. Cic. *Brut.* 269; *Att.* 7.15.2). Syme (1958) 50–3 (= Syme (1991) 60–3); Syme (1962) = Syme (1991) 65–7; Syme (1964) 337–9.

⁵⁴ The emphasis on the important role that the propertied classes can play in the state (10.4–5) is in tune with the economic and social agenda of Caesar's dictatorship. Cf. La Penna (1968) 112: 'se l'autore delle *Epistulae* non è Sallustio, egli ha capito Sallustio meglio di molti studiosi moderni, che hanno visto in lui o solo l'accusatore della nobiltà o lo storico ormai lontano dalla mischia. Sallustio va capito in tutta la complessità della politica cesariana'.

⁵⁵ Cf. a useful discussion on these lines in Nicolet (1959) 151–69 (who however argues for the authenticity of *Ep.* II); cf. also Hellegouarc'h (1970) 67–75 (although the equation between *libertas* and democracy is misguided).

⁵⁶ Hellegouarc'h (1970) speaks of 'dispositions techniques'.

tion of the *res publica* and the successful management of peace.⁵⁷ While there is a general idea of what political climate should be brought about, there is no detailed set of policy advice. The same seems to apply to the correspondence between Cicero and Caesar that has left traces in book 9 of the *ad Atticum*.⁵⁸ What makes the *suasoria* a unique document in this respect is the wealth of specific advice that is offered and its intrinsic link with an analysis of the late Republican crisis and of the background of Caesar's victory. Moreover, given that the *suasoria* is itself post-Republican, that specific advice has no application to contemporary realities, but is instead an act of remarkable historical imagination.

The last section is a long-winded invitation to Caesar to take action, even without necessarily following his friend's advice: what is paramount is the interest of the Republic and the duty to bring it back to its pristine dignity and glory. The message is finally brought home in an imaginary address to Caesar by the forefathers and the motherland. The author of the *suasoria* makes a point of having made his case in the briefest space he could possibly use (13.8). It is questionable that that aim was reached; the *suasoria* is longer than the first pamphlet to Caesar, where the same claim is made in the conclusion.

The similarities between the two texts addressed to Caesar are indeed considerable; in the first *suasoria*, however, there are fewer autobiographical references (cf. 8.9–10) and a different emphasis on the role of Fortune in human affairs. Although many people had viewed it as a leading factor in the past, it is now apparent that 'every man is the builder of his own fortune' (1.2: *fabrum esse suae quemque fortunae*); it is *uirtus* that determines all historical developments, from the careers of individuals to the ends of empires. *Virtus* is a duty too, especially for those who are in a position of power, not least because it is an excellent tool for dealing with subjects, who can never prosper under a wicked ruler. The difference of tone and substance from the other *suasoria* to Caesar could not be more striking.

The author of the *Oratio* appears to have been more careful a reader of Sallust's meta-historical discussions than the author of the *Epistula*. Although Sallust made much of the motif of fortune, he was also convinced of the close bond between fortune and the practice of virtue. *Fortuna simul cum moribus commutatur* (BC 2.5); and the author of this piece to Caesar (possibly a let-

⁵⁷ See esp. Cic. *Marc.* 7.23–10.32. Cf. the cursory remark on the importance of restoring the law courts and supporting the growth of the population at 23. For two widely different evaluations on the intention of the *pro Marcello* cf. Dyer (1990)—it was a covert exhortation to tyrannicide—and Winterbottom (2002) 24–34—Cicero's praise of Caesar is genuine and must be explained by the specific political agenda of 46 BC.

⁵⁸ See Cic. *Att.* 9.6A, 9.11A; cf. 9.9.3.

ter, possibly a speech) is interested in drawing the great man's attention to the importance of behaving in a way that may enable him to consolidate his power.⁵⁹ This is what the aftermath of the civil war requires: the defeated are fellow citizens, and the greed of the victors must be restrained through the 'kind arts of peace' (1.8: *pacis bonis artibus*). Clemency is especially necessary towards the numerous supporters of Pompey who have survived the defeat in the Civil War. The passage provides a cursory, but illuminating anatomy of the composition of Pompey's camp, which is reminiscent of Sallust's overview of the supporters of Catiline.⁶⁰ Most of those who supported Caesar's enemy did it by chance, 'following their neighbour, as if he were wiser' than themselves (2.4: *post alius alium quasi prudentiorem secuti*); others because of their bonds to former enemies of Caesar, and only a few because of their old enmity with Caesar. The decisive factor was Pompey's inability to come to terms with the presence of a man of comparable stature. Somehow, Caesar's enemy is the very confirmation of the principle of the primacy of *uirtus* asserted at the beginning of the text: he is luckier than wise (2.1: *maiore fortuna quam sapientia*). With these premises, it is not surprising that he abused his position so outrageously.

On the other hand, the coalition that rallied around Caesar is not entirely beyond blame either (2.5–6). Many of Caesar's supporters were interested in the cancellation of debt and were actively busy promoting social instability; many debtors were with Pompey too, especially in the later part of the conflict. The widespread impact of debt is a decisive sign of the implosion of the commonwealth in the aftermath of the war. Again, there is an interesting note of agreement with the analysis developed in the *BC*, where debt is one of the paramount causes of the social crisis that makes the conspiracy possible.⁶¹ At any rate, as he introduces his case for the importance of clemency, pseudo-Sallust outlines a powerful account of the forces that faced each other in 49 and 48, and he does so from an angle that is not quite paralleled in any surviving source for the period.

Attention is also drawn to the deep divisions that cross Caesar's camp (3.4). Urging Caesar to be clement was not an unproblematic move at the time when the *suasoria* was allegedly written. After the victory in the Civil War there were plenty of supporters of Caesar who would have liked to take complete revenge on the Pompeiani. As in the *Epistula*, the contrast between

⁵⁹ See esp. *Epist. Caes.* 1.4–10. The reference to the 'immortal gods' (*quae tibi placuerint di immortales adprobent beneque euenire sinant*) at the very end of the *suasoria* is merely rhetorical (8.10).

⁶⁰ Sall. *BC* 37.

⁶¹ Sall. *BC* 14.2; 16.4; 20.13; 21.2; 24.3; 33.2; 35.3; 40.1, 4, 41.1. See Shaw (1975).

the times of Caesar and the Sullan proscriptions is evoked. The author points out that immediately before Caesar's victory there were a number of 'secret deaths' of citizens (4.2: *occulta civium funera*), and flights of people who were dreading what was to come. The names of three well-known victims of the Sullan proscriptions (Cn. Domitius Ahenobarbus, Cn. Papirius Carbo, and M. Iunius Brutus) are mentioned, but most interestingly a tradition concerning the direct involvement of Pompey in the massacre of the Sullan proscriptions is invoked.⁶² Pseudo-Sallust claims that rumours surrounding Pompey were in circulation before the Civil War (4.1: *quae paulo ante hoc bellum in Cn. Pompeium uictoriamque Sullanam increpabantur*). We may well be having access here to a snapshot of the political debate of the late Fifties—at its lowest, but not least significant and interesting level: that of suspicions and of smear campaigns. Whatever the case may be, the example of the Sullan terror is used to make a specific point about a central figure of the present. The main point of the text is to persuade Caesar to make sure that the past does not come back, and that the members of his coalition who have a different agenda to that recommended by good political sense be isolated.

The second part of the *suasoria* is duly devoted to the exploration of the consequences and rewards of peace (5–8). Perhaps surprisingly, the survey begins from with the evocation of a catastrophic scenario. Rome will not be able to escape destruction one day: everything that has a beginning must have an end. History shows that destruction always happens because of internal discord, which causes war among fellow-citizens. Pursuing concord can be the only way to avoid the destruction of Rome and her empire. Meta-historical speculation meets the needs of political good sense. Indeed, a neat solution is suggested: a limit must be set on private expenditure, so that extravagance and debt on large scale may end, and social cohesion be secured more effectively. This may prevent the reckless exploitation of citizens and allies, and can make revolutionary attempts less likely to succeed, and even just to take shape (5.4–6). Money-lending must be outlawed (5.7–8). This point, of course, develops one of the leading themes of Sallust's historical interpretation, which recurrently emphasises the devastating impact of greed, unrestrained expenditure, and luxury on the fabric of Roman society.⁶³ Moreover, the author must have known that Caesar's policy towards

⁶² The three men chosen by the author of the *suasoria* are three obvious exempla from the age of the proscriptions: Hinard (1985) 53. In the altercation that he had with Pompey in 55 BC (Val. Max. 6.2.8) Heluius Mancius accused him of being responsible for the deaths of Domitius, Carbo, Brutus, and M. Perperna. Cic. *Att.* 9.14.2 shows that in 49 Caesar's propaganda raised the issue of Pompey's responsibility for the proscriptions of Carbo and Domitius: Hinard (1985) 361.

⁶³ See e.g. *BC* 14.2, 16.4, 20.12, 21.2, 24.3, 25.4, 33.2, 40.1, 41.1, 49.3; *BJ* 96.2.

the publicani was anything but friendly. The most striking example is the drastic reform of tax collection in the province of Asia, which led to the exclusion of the publicani from the collection of direct revenues, and hence the end of one of their most lucrative fields of action.⁶⁴ With hindsight, the author of the *oratio* manages to score two points: on the one hand, a Sallustian theme is brought to the fore and, on the other hand, Caesar's policies towards the publicani can be understood as an aspect of the same intellectual and ideological atmosphere.

The following paragraphs reformulate these themes, with special emphasis on the importance of frugality and hard work for the prosperity of the state. There is no further discussion of the recent past of the Republic, but there is room for some political proposals that reflect similar concerns to those underpinning the other *suasoria*: the burden of military service should be equally divided among all the citizens, and the grain distributions should not be addressed to the idle urban plebs, but to the soldiers who have served in the army and have gone back to their hometowns or have joined newly founded colonies (8.4–6). Even in this cursory discussion there is room for a fundamental historical point: the author of this piece appears to have a clear understanding of the structural link between land, military service, and the political crisis of the late Republic.⁶⁵ After a rather abrupt transition, the final sentences restate the importance of giving political advice to a man in Caesar's position (8.7–10). Advising someone who holds such a powerful position is a civic duty; keeping quiet would be unacceptable. The author of the *suasoria* appears to know the late Republic well, but we are already in an imperial mood, if not necessarily in an imperial context.

5. Conclusions

The analysis of the four texts discussed in this paper is arguably more rewarding in matters of details than on points of general interpretation. Many fundamental issues are bound to remain unclear and the general interpretation of these texts is difficult to develop. The authorship of any of these texts is impossible to determine. The only point that can be made with certainty is that none of them was written by Sallust or Cicero. Chronology is equally problematic. At least the *inuectiua in Ciceronem* must date to the late first century BC or the first half of the first century AD, since it was known to Quin-

⁶⁴ On Caesar's tax reform in Asia see App. *BC* 2.92.385, 5.4.19; Dio 42.6.3; Plut. *Caes.* 48.1. Full discussion in Merola (2001) 72–84.

⁶⁵ A broadly similar assessment in Samotta (2009), whose close reading of the *suasoriae* is however undermined by the assumption that they are genuine works of Sallust.

tilian; a later dating is possible for the other texts, especially for the second *suasoria* to Caesar,⁶⁶ but no safe conclusion is within reach.

The contexts in which these works were produced remain uncertain too. It is tempting to read them as the products of training imparted in the rhetorical schools. The authors of these texts tried to appear as convincing impersonators of the characters that they had chosen to speak for. They based their attempts on a thorough familiarity with the work of Sallust and Cicero, with their biographies and with their style. They had also read beyond those two authors. The polemic of the invectives and the political arguments of the *suasoriae* show an impressive familiarity with the main issues of late Republican history. Their claim to authenticity was not based just on stylistic resemblance, but also on generally reliable historical knowledge. As for their ancient reception, it is interesting that as competent a rhetorician and literary critic as Quintilian could unquestioningly accept the Sallustian authorship of the invective against Cicero, while the grammarian Diomedes attributed it to a certain Didius.⁶⁷ Quintilian's response indicates both the quality of the impersonation of Sallust and the text's presence already within the Sallustian corpus; on the other hand, Diomedes presumably read it as a rhetorical exercise. The confused ancient response raises the whole difficult question of pseudepigraphy.⁶⁸ Whether the authors themselves of any of these texts intended to deceive is doubtful, though deception may have been involved in the process of their dissemination.⁶⁹

In an interpretative context where only a few negative conclusions are possible, the most rewarding aspect of these works is arguably the range of accounts of late Republican history that they provide. They are based on a rich knowledge of the history of the period and provide us with angles that can be very rewarding to the modern student of the period. We find—*inter alia*—disenchanted assessments of the composition of the *partes* of Caesar and Pompey; nuanced judgements on the victory of Sulla and the use that he made of political violence; traces of hostile traditions on the role of Cicero in the repression of Catiline's conspiracy; and interesting thoughts on the role of wealth and debt in the last decade of the Republic, which develop a line of thinking that was already pursued by Sallust in *BC*. More-

⁶⁶ See n. 12 above.

⁶⁷ See p. 28 above.

⁶⁸ Speyer (1971); Janßen (2003). Peirano (forthcoming) promises a comprehensive re-consideration of *pseudepigrapha* in Latin literature.

⁶⁹ Syme (1958) 47 = Syme (1991) 57–8 cites the creation of public libraries in Augustan Rome and 'conceit and cupidity in librarians' as factors that may have encouraged the production of pseudonymous writings.

over, they combine an analysis of the political context of the first century BC with a candid assessment of the ethical dimension of the period and the characters of the individuals under discussion; this is especially true of the *Inuectiuae*, but a similarly keen moral interest pervades the works addressed to Caesar too. The overall outcome is a set of intelligent texts, which have much to offer both as literary pieces and as historical sources, even if they elude attempts to frame them into any bigger picture.

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