

### IN CATILINAM ORATIO PRIMA

sed etiam honestarunt, certe verendum mihi non erat ne quid hoc parricida civium interfecto invidiae mihi in posteritatem redundaret; quod si ea mihi maxime impenderet, tamen hoc animo semper fui, ut invidiam virtutis partam gloriam, non invidiam putarem.

Quamquam non nulli sunt in hoc ordine, qui aut ea quae imminet non videant aut ea quae vident dissimulant; qui spem Catilinae mollibus sententiis aluerunt coniurationemque nascentem non credendo conrobaverunt; quorum auctoritatem secuti multi non solum improbi, verum etiam imperiti, si in hunc animadvertissem, crudeliter et regie factum esse dicerent. nunc intellego, si iste, quo intendit, in Manliana castra pervenerit, neminem tam stultum fore qui non videat coniurationem esse factam, neminem tam improbum qui non fateatur. hoc autem uno interfecto intellego hanc rei publicae pestem paulisper reprimi, non in perpetuum comprimi posse. quod si se elegerit secumque suos eduxerit et eodem ceteros undique conlectos naufragos adgregarit, exstinguetur atque delebitur non modo haec tam adulta rei publicae pestis, verum etiam stirps ac semen malorum omnium.

Etenim iam diu, patres conscripti, in his periculis coniurationis insidiisque versamur, sed nescio quo pacto omnium scelerum ac veteris furoris et audaciae maturitas in nostri consulatus tempus erupit: quod si ex tanto latrocinio iste unus tolletur, videbimur fortasse ad breve quoddam tempus cura et metu esse relevati, periculum autem residebit et erit inclusum penitus in venis atque in visceribus rei publicae. ut saepe homines aegri morbo gravi, cum aestu febrile iactantur, si aquam gelidam biberint, primo relevari videntur, deinde multo gravius vehementiusque adflictantur, sic hic morbus, qui est in re publica, relevatus istius poena,

### FIRST ORATION AGAINST CATILINE

of Saturninus and the Gracchi and Flaccus and a number of their predecessors, then surely I need have no fear that the killing of this assassin of his fellow citizens would redound to my discredit in the future. Even if the threat were very imminent, it has always been my conviction that unpopularity gained by right conduct is not unpopularity but glory.

And yet there are some in this body who either do not see the impending danger or pretend not to see what they do see; they are men who have nourished Catiline's hopes by their sentimental softness and have strengthened the nascent conspiracy by their disbelief; men upon whose authority many persons, not only the bad but also the inexperienced, would declare that I had acted brutally and tyrannically if I had taken measures against this man. Now I am sure that if that man reaches the Manlian camp which is his destination, there will be no one so stupid as not to see that a conspiracy has in fact been formed, no one so unprincipled as not to acknowledge the fact. If this one man is killed I know that the plague to the state will be checked for a little, not crushed forever. But if he throws himself out and carries his own people with him and assembles the rest of his shipwrecks gathered from all quarters to that same place, not only will this ripened infection in the state be extinguished and blotted out, but the stock and seed of all our troubles with it.

We have for a long time, gentlemen of the senate, been surrounded by these dangers and intrigues of conspiracy, but, I know not how, the ripeness of all wickedness and inveterate madness and effrontery has broken out in the period of my consulship. If out of that whole gang this one individual is done away with, we shall perhaps seem to be relieved of anxiety and fear for some brief span, but the danger will remain, shut deep in the veins and vitals of the commonwealth. Just as people sick of some grave disease seem relieved at first, when they toss in hot fever, if they drink cold water, but then they are afflicted more grievously and more seriously, so will that disease which is in the commonwealth seem relieved by the punishment of that man