

VIRTUS EFFEMINATA AND SALLUST'S SEMPRONIA

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Sallust concludes his list of Catiline's co-conspirators with a description of Sempronia (*Bellum Catilinae* 25):

Sed in iis erat Sempronia, quae multa saepe virilis audaciae facinora commiserat. haec mulier genere atque forma, praeterea viro liberis satis fortunata fuit; litteris Graecis Latinis docta, psallere [et] saltare elegantius quam necesse est probae, multa alia, quae instrumenta luxuriae sunt. sed ei cariora semper omnia quam decus atque pudicitia fuit; pecuniae an famae minus parceret, haud facile discerneres; libido sic adcensa, ut saepius peteret viros quam peteretur. sed ea saepe antehac fidem prodiderat, creditum abiuraverat, caedis conscia fuerat: luxuria atque inopia praeceps abierat. verum ingenium eius haud absurdum: posse versus facere, iocum movere, sermone uti vel modesto vel molli vel procaci; prorsus multae facetiae multusque lepos inerat.¹

An attempt to explain this portrait has been deemed obligatory in recent discussions of the monograph. The general consensus is that Sempronia serves as "female counterpart" to Catiline: Syme, Büchner, Earl, Tiffou, Vretska, McGushin, and Ramsey, among many others, all agree that her portrait at *Bellum Catilinae* 25 complements that of Catiline at *BC* 5.² But

¹ All quotations from Sallust are from the third edition of the Teubner text by A. Kurfess (Leipzig 1957).

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² See, e.g., R. Syme, *Sallust* (Berkeley/Los Angeles 1964) 133-134; K. Büchner, *Sallust* (Heidelberg 1960) 131; D. C. Earl, *The Political Thought of Sallust* (Cambridge 1961) 90, and "The Early Career of Sallust," *Historia* 15 (1963) 309; E. Tiffou, *Essai sur la pensée morale de Salluste à la lumière de ses prologues* (Paris/Montreal 1973) 366, note 43; K. Vretska, ed., *C. Sallustius Crispus, De Catilinae Coniuratione* (Heidelberg 1976) 1.272-273; P. McGushin, *C. Sallustius Crispus, Bellum Catilinae: A Commentary* (Leiden 1977) 163 (on *BC* 25.1); and J. T. Ramsey, ed., *Sallust's Bellum Catilinae* (Chico, CA 1984) 135 (on *BC* 25.1). In addition, T. Cadoux, "Sallust and Sempronia," in *Vindex Humanitatis: Essays in Honour of John Huntly*

this explanation is not satisfactory in and of itself; we must still wonder at the length of the passage, its placement in the monograph, and the historicity of Sempronia's involvement in the conspiracy. There is no evidence independent of Sallust for the presence of a Sempronia among the conspirators; even more curious is the fact that Sallust himself alludes to Sempronia at only one other point in the monograph, and then with only the barest of detail (*BC* 40.5).³ Syme's conjectural identification of Sempronia as sister of the Sempronia Tuditani filia who was mother of Fulvia is helpful as far as it goes, since Fulvia too was a woman of great renown, if not notoriety; nonetheless, even Sallust's greatest modern apologist is compelled to suggest that "Sempronia is welcome to fill space . . ."⁴ The verdict pronounced by Goodyear in the recent *Cambridge History of Classical Literature* shows the extent to which Sempronia's portrait has become a *locus desperatus* in Sallust-studies:

The sketch is superb, and justly admired. But Sempronia, who has not appeared in the narrative before, will only once appear again. The extraordinary oddity of this fact protrudes inescapably. We cannot well argue that Sallust wanted a female counterpart for Catiline, and count that a justification. A historian should only make use of a 'female lead' if she belongs to the story, as Tacitus, masterfully imitating Sallust's sketch (*Ann.* 13.45), accords Poppaea the prominence which she merited or may be claimed to have merited historically. . . . In a work clumsily planned as a whole Sempronia is the worst blemish.⁵

Bishop, ed. Bruce Marshall (Armidale 1980) 93–122 provides a comprehensive description and summary of recent work on this problem. Cadoux's slightly variant interpretation will be noted below, as will the suggestion made by K. H. Waters, "Cicero, Sallust and Catiline," *Historia* 19 (1970) 195–215. The most useful and original contribution to the "female counterpart" discussion is undoubtedly that of G. M. Paul, in "Sallust's Sempronia: The Portrait of a Lady," *Papers of the Liverpool Latin Seminar* 5 (1985) 9–22. Although my reading of the *BC* differs from his, Paul rightly emphasizes the *literary* value of the Sempronia-portrait. Hereafter, all of the above works will be referred to by author's name (and, if necessary, abbreviated title) alone.

³ See Syme, *Sallust* 69, 133; Earl, *Sallust* 90; Waters 205–206; and J. P. V. D. Balsdon, *Roman Women* (New York 1962) 48.

⁴ Syme, *Sallust* 133–135; see also 69: "The surprise is the digression about Sempronia . . . That item cannot fail to arouse curiosity or disquiet." Syme's continuing preoccupation with Sempronia is apparent: see "No Son for Caesar?" *Historia* 29 (1980) 428–429 ("A literary and artistic design is patent") and "Princesses and Others in Tacitus," *G&R* 28 (1981) 47 ("The Sempronia to whom [Sallust] devoted a digression is enigmatic"); cf. Vretska 1.347–348 (on 25.1). On the identification of Sempronia, see also Earl, "Early Career" 309. On Fulvia, see C. L. Babcock, "The Early Career of Fulvia," *AJP* 86 (1965) 1–32.

⁵ F. R. D. Goodyear, "Sallust," *CHCL* vol. 2 (1982) 275. Cf. McGushin 303 (at the conclusion of a brief summary of scholarly work on this passage):

To mention typical examples of the females who played a role in the emergence of Catiline . . . was a perfectly proper thing for Sallust to do. But to give a full-scale sketch, comparable with that of Catiline, to a woman who plays no recorded part in the story earlier or later was not proper historical practice. We have here a grave structural fault, indeed far the worst fault in a generally rather clumsy work.

It is the purpose of the present study to suggest an alternative reading of the Sempronia-portrait. Syme has remarked that it is a mistake to treat Sallust purely as literature; he acknowledges, however, the important role played by literary art in Sallust's view of history, and it is in this light that I have undertaken this study.⁶ Historical researches alone have not illuminated Sempronia's presence in the *BC*; hence, she remains both a literary and an historical puzzle.⁷ It is my contention that both literary and historical concerns can be addressed by a consideration of the thematic and structural devices which give the monograph its character. Sempronia's presence in the *BC* is both thematically appropriate to and structurally significant for the greater concerns of Sallust's monograph.

Syme calls Sempronia "a type and model of crime and depravity in the Roman aristocracy."⁸ But neither in this nor in other discussions of Sempronia's portrait is one basic question raised: why in the first place has Sallust deemed a woman an appropriate complement to Catiline? Only Tiffou senses a moral purpose underlying this woman's presence, as a factor that discredits the entire conspiracy.⁹ Tiffou's observation has structural implications to which I shall return below; I shall undertake first to demonstrate that the very fact of Sempronia's femaleness must not be overlooked, since the interplay of male and female is essential to the major theme of the *BC*: Rome's moral and social degeneration as exemplified in the eclipse of *virtus* by *luxuria*. For Sallust, Sempronia is both Catiline's complement and his ironic reverse: both use and abuse the products of *luxuria* to manipulate others, and are themselves its victims; both represent a perversion of the natural order, Catiline by his lack of *virtus* and Sempronia by her possession of its *Ersatz*, *virilis audacia*. In participating in the Catilinarian conspiracy, Sempronia and women like her overstep the bounds of behavior appropriate to females; they do not achieve the glory of men, however, but manage only a grotesque parody of masculine traits. Similarly, if more profoundly, Catiline and his followers have lost their "maleness," and begin unconsciously and desperately to behave

⁶ Syme, *Sallust* 2, 256; see also A. H. McDonald, "Theme and Style in Roman Historiography," *JRS* 65 (1975) 1–10, and Paul, "Portrait" 11, who remarks that "the literary portrait may be more significant than the historical figure it claims to represent, that is to say, not *Erzählung* but *Schilderung*."

⁷ Cadoux provides a fascinating demonstration of the hopelessness of prosopographical investigation, 98–110.

⁸ *Sallust* 134; cf., e.g., Earl, *Sallust* 90, who says that Sempronia is introduced as a "type and pattern of the prevailing *lubido* and *luxuria*," and McGushin 163 (on 25.1), who notes "the extent to which Sempronia conveys Sallust's view of a moral degeneration."

⁹ 366, n. 43: "L'engagement de la mère de Brutus dans la conjuration contribue à la discrediter, puisque celle-ci compte non seulement des ambitieux et des débauchés, mais aussi des femmes." On the identity of Sempronia, see also Syme's various discussions (above, note 4); cf. Paul, "Portrait" 13, on the inclusion of women in the Pisonian conspiracy (Tac. *Ann.* 15.48) as suggesting the conspiracy's "dubious character."

like women. In doing so, they provide Sallust with a literal manifestation of the disappearance of Roman *virtus*.

I. The Theme: *Virtus*, *Luxuria*, and Rome's Decline

The nature of Rome's moral degeneration after the end of *metus hostilis*, dated by Sallust to the destruction of Carthage in 146 B.C., provides our starting-point.¹⁰ In tracing this moral degeneration, Sallust draws on a *topos* which, as R. F. Thomas has recently demonstrated, is inventively adapted by historians and non-historians alike in descriptions of Roman national character: viz., the correlation in ancient ethnographical theory between environment and national character.¹¹ This correlation is typically one of what I shall call, for the sake of brevity, "inversion"; as Thomas puts it, whereas "a harsh environment produces hardy and morally superior inhabitants . . . the ideal and balanced environment theoretically breeds a race lacking in fortitude and with a low moral worth."¹² The Hippocratic *Airs, Waters, Places* develops the distinction in terms of Asians and Europeans (*aer*. 12):

... βούλομαι δὲ περὶ τῆς Ἀσίας καὶ τῆς Εὐρώπης δεῖξαι ὁκόσον διαφέρουσιν ἀλλήλων ἐς τὰ πάντα καὶ περὶ τῶν ἐθνῶν τῆς μορφῆς, ὅτι διαλλάσσει καὶ μηδὲν ἔοικεν ἀλλήλοισιν. . . . τὴν Ἀσίην πλεῖστον διαφέρειν φημὶ τῆς Εὐρώπης ἐς τὰς φύσεις τῶν συμπάντων τῶν τε ἐκ τῆς γῆς φυομένων καὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων. πολὺ γὰρ καλλίονα καὶ μέζονα πάντα γίνεται ἐν τῇ Ἀσίῃ, ἢ τε χώρα τῆς χώρας ἡμερωτέρῃ καὶ τὰ ἥθεα τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἡπιώτερα καὶ εὐοργητότερα. . . . τὸ δὲ ἀνδρεῖον καὶ τὸ ταλαίπωρον καὶ τὸ ἔμπονον καὶ τὸ θυμοειδὲς οὐκ ἂν δύναίτο ἐν τοιαύτῃ φύσει ἐγγίνεσθαι οὔτε ὁμοφύλου οὔτε ἀλλοφύλου, ἀλλὰ τὴν ἡδονὴν ἀνάγκη κρατεῖν. . . .

The people who inhabit the most temperate region of Asia are most lacking in moral and physical fiber (τὸ ἀνδρεῖον, τὸ ταλαίπωρον, τὸ ἔμπονον, τὸ θυμοειδὲς) and are most inclined to indulgence (ἡ ἡδονή). For the ethnographer, τὸ ἀνδρεῖον and ἡ ἡδονή are mutually exclusive.¹³

¹⁰ The bibliography on Sallust's moral analysis is immense: see the classic discussion by Earl, *Sallust, passim*, especially 5–17, 28–59, as well as his book *The Moral and Political Tradition of Rome* (Ithaca 1967) 18–19; now also D. F. Conley, "The Interpretation of Sallust *Catiline* 10.1–11.3," *CP* 76 (1981) 121–125 and "The Stages of Rome's Decline in Sallust's Historical Theory," *Hermes* 109 (1981) 379–382.

¹¹ R. F. Thomas, *Lands and Peoples in Roman Poetry: The Ethnographical Tradition*, Cambridge Philological Society Supp. 7 (Cambridge 1982); in what follows my debt to this book (hereafter, Thomas) will be apparent. See his introduction to the literature on ethnography, 1–7, and especially his concluding chapter on Tacitus' use of ethnographical detail, 124–132. For a good if brief discussion of the role of ethnography in ancient history, see C. Fornara, *The Nature of History in Ancient Greece and Rome* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London 1983) 12–16; and for its general applicability to Roman historical writing, 84–90.

¹² Thomas 129.

¹³ The Hippocratic essayist later reiterates this picture of inversion, associating moral weakness with moderate climate (*aer*. 16):

The best-known and most fully developed adaptation of ethnographical description in Sallust appears in the *Bellum Iugurthinum*, in the excursus on Africa (*BI* 17–19). In fact, however, a pattern analogous to ethnographical inversion also informs Sallust's picture of Rome, although the distinction is now not between two different but contemporaneous environments, but between the two Romes that have existed, the one before and the other after 146 B.C. In his description of this inversion, Sallust is concerned with the moral implications of physical environment and the effect of a changed environment on the Roman character. First, we hear of a people unified by the common goals of liberty, self-defense, and social good-will, and motivated by *virtus*. Sallustian *virtus* is aptly defined by Earl as “the functioning of *ingenium* to achieve *egregia facinora*”;¹⁴ and Sallust describes the early Romans as engaged in unceasing activity, quite the opposite of the ἀνανδρεία and ἀθυμία with which the Hippocratic treatise characterizes the Asians (*BC* 6.5): *Romani domi militiaeque intenti festinare, parare, alius alium hortari, hostibus obviam ire, libertatem patriam parentisque armis tegere*. In Rome before 146 B.C., *virtus omnia domuerat* (*BC* 7.5). With the destruction of Carthage (10.1), however, the inversion begins; its progression is gradual (*haec primo paulatim crescere, interdum vindicari*, 10.6), until the return to Rome of a Sullan army corrupted in Asia (11.4):

sed postquam L. Sulla armis recepta re publica bonis initiis malos eventus habuit, rapere omnes, trahere, domum alius, alius agros cupere, neque modum neque modestiam victores habere, foeda crudeliaque in civis facinora facere.

The cause of this change, Sallust tells us, lies in the fact that Sulla had allowed his army to indulge in the luxury typical of Asia. Sallust is here adapting ethnographic convention to explain Rome's decline: exposure to *loca amoena* and *voluptaria* has bred an inclination to *luxuria*, which in turn has weakened the moral fiber (*animos molliverant*, 11.5) of those citizens previously most devoted to the pursuit of *gloria* through the exercise of *virtus*.¹⁵ It is surely no coincidence that Sallust locates the real beginning of

... περί δὲ τῆς ἀθυμίας τῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ τῆς ἀνανδρείας, ὅτι ἀπολεμώτεροί εἰσι τῶν Εὐρωπαίων οἱ Ἀσιηνοὶ καὶ ἡμερώτεροι τὰ ἡθῆα αἱ ὥραι αἵτιαι μάλιστα, οὐ μεγάλας τὰς μεταβολὰς ποιούμεναι οὔτε ἐπὶ τὸ θερμὸν οὔτε ἐπὶ τὸ ψυχρὸν, ἀλλὰ παραπλησίως.

¹⁴ Earl, *Sallust* 10–11.

¹⁵ See 7.3–6, where the constant activity and striving for excellence is almost palpable:

sed civitas incredibile memoratu est adepta libertate quantum brevi creverit: tanta cupido gloriae incesserat. iam primum iuventus, simul ac belli patiens erat, in castris per laborem usum militiae discebat, magisque in decoris armis et militaribus equis quam in scortis atque conviviis lubricum habebant. igitur talibus viris non labor insolitus, non locus ullus asper aut arduus erat, non armatus hostis formidulosus: virtus omnia domuerat. sed gloriae maximum certamen inter ipsos erat: se quisque hostem ferire, murum ascendere, con-

the end in Asia.¹⁶

Twice shortly thereafter, Sallust again rehearses, but now in more general terms, the corrupting power of *luxuria* and the ease with which it infiltrates Roman society, particularly the *iuventus*. Directly after the description of the Sullan episode we read (12.1–2):

postquam divitiae honori esse coepere et eas gloria imperium potentia sequebatur, hebescere virtus, paupertas probro haberi, innocentia pro malevolentia duci coepit. igitur ex divitiis iuventutem luxuria atque avaritia cum superbia invasere: rapere consumere, sua parvi pendere, aliena cupere, pudorem pudicitiam, divina atque humana promiscua, nihil pensi neque moderati habere.

By following a specific description of Sulla's army (11.4–8) with this generalizing passage, Sallust indicates the universal application of his scheme of inversion. The verb *invasere* suggests the violence of *luxuria*'s assault: the appearance of *divitiae* twice in this passage, together with, in quick succession, its new associates *honor*, *gloria*, *imperium*, and *potentia*, weighs heavily against weakened *virtus*. Whereas *virtus* has once ruled all, *luxuria* now holds sway. In fact, *luxuria* quickly becomes the very heart and motivating force of the new decadence (13.3–4):

sed libido stupri ganeae ceterique cultus non minor incusserat: viri muliebria pati, mulieres pudicitiam in propatulo habere; vescendi causa terra marique omnia exquirere; dormire prius quam somni cupido esset; non famem aut sitim, neque frigus neque lassitudinem opperiri, sed ea omnia luxu antecapere. haec iuventutem, ubi familiares opes defecerant, ad facinora incendebant. . . .

Of particular interest for our discussion here is the emphasis placed by Sallust on one sign of Rome's moral decay, especially as manifested by the *iuventus*: sexual excess and debauchery. Before 146 B.C., the youth were more

spici, dum tale facinus faceret, properabat. eas divitias, eam bonam famam magnamque nobilitatem putabant.

For the conventional nature of Sallust's schematization, cf. Caesar *BG* 1.1.3 (on the Belgae) and 4.1–2 (on the Suebi); see also the passage from Pompeius Trogus quoted by Thomas 129 and note 17 below.

¹⁶ On Sallust's dating of the introduction of *luxuria* see McGushin on 11.4 and 11.5–6; cf. Conley, "Stages" (above, note 10) *passim*. See also the interesting description of the nature of war in Asia in Pompeius Trogus *ap. Justin* 38.7.6 (Mithridates' speech exhorting his men to take up arms against the Romans):

Nunc se diversam belli condicionem ingredi. nam neque caelo Asiae esse temperatius aliud, nec solo fertilius nec urbium multitudine amoenius; magnamque temporis partem non ut militiam, sed ut festum diem acturos bello dubium facili magis an ubere. . . .

Professor G. Paul has reminded me of Cicero's reference to Asia as *tam corruptrice provincia*, *QFr.* 1.1.19; cf. also *Pro Murena* 11–12, in particular reference to Sulla's Asian campaign, and Livy 39.6 on Manlius Vulso's Asian campaign in 187 (see also below, note 57).

concerned with acts of military valor than with sex and other physical pleasures: *iuventus . . . magis . . . in decoris armis et militaribus equis quam in scortis atque conviviis libidinem habebant*, 7.4.¹⁷ Conversely, after 146, particularly after the Sullan episode, debauchery becomes the standard: *sed libido stupri ganeae ceterique cultus non minor incesserat: viri muliebria pati, mulieres pudicitiam in propatulo habere*, 13.3. *Luxuria* leads to a reversal of what had previously been seen as morally depraved into what is now the standard for behavior;¹⁸ nothing could be more indicative of this reversal than the juxtaposition of masculine and feminine in *viri muliebria pati*.¹⁹ Sallust means this expression to be taken quite literally; homosexuality is often included in ancient lists of the signs of moral decline, the passive effeminacy associated with it being particularly damning.²⁰ But two related factors suggest

¹⁷ Cf. the observations by the Hippocratic essayist on the limited sexual impulses and potency of the Scythians, the northernmost and therefore fiercest inhabitants of Europe: *aer*. 21–22. See also Hor. *Od.* 1.8, and R. G. M. Nisbet and M. Hubbard, *A Commentary on Horace: Odes Book 1* (Oxford 1970) 108–110.

¹⁸ Pompeius Trogus *ap.* Justin 1.7.11–13 reports that, after Cyrus' defeat of the second Lydian rebellion, the Lydians were deprived of weapons (*arma et equi adempti*) and forced to undertake frivolous and degenerate activities (*iussique cauponas et ludicras artes et lenocinia exercere*). So, we are told, did a once-noble people become effeminate, lapse into *luxuria*, and lose its former *virtus* (*gens . . . effeminata mollitie luxuriaque virtutem pristinam perdidit . . . in luxuriam lapsos otium ac desidia superavit*). See also Thomas 129 for a discussion of this passage.

It is generally if not universally agreed that there are two schools of thought, as typified by Sallust and Livy, on the reasons for Rome's decline: while Sallust emphasizes the end of *metus hostilis* as the turning-point, Livy emphasizes the erosion of moral character through *luxuria*; cf. T. J. Luce, *Livy: The Composition of His History* (Princeton 1977) 270–275. Clearly, however, these are not mutually exclusive views: see Fornara (above, note 11) 86–88, who observes that “the precondition of each theory was the primary cause of the other.” Discussion of the important effects of the removal of *metus Punicus* (BC 10) *per se* lies outside the range of this paper.

¹⁹ The expression later caught Tacitus' eye: *Ann.* 11.36.4; see J. N. Adams, *The Latin Sexual Vocabulary* (Baltimore 1982) 189–190. Cf. Athen. 12.523c on the people of Massilia: διὰ τρυφήν γυναικοπαθοῦντες.

²⁰ Sallust's likely model for this passage, Theopompus (*FGrH* 115 F 224 and 225), places similar emphasis on the decadence of homosexual effeminacy in his description of Philip's followers:

τί γάρ τῶν αἰσχυρῶν ἢ δεινῶν αὐτοῖς οὐ προσῆν, ἢ τί τῶν καλῶν καὶ σπουδαίων οὐκ ἀπῆν; οὐχ οἱ μὲν ξυρούμενοι καὶ λεαινόμενοι διετέλουν ἄνδρες ὄντες, οἱ δ' ἄλλήλοις ἐτόλμων ἐπανίστασθαι πώγωνας ἔχουσι; καὶ περιήγοντο μὲν δύο καὶ τρεῖς ἐταιρουμένους, αὐτοὶ δὲ τὰς αὐτὰς ἐκείνοις χρήσεις ἐτέροις παρείχον. ὅθεν δικαίως ἂν τις αὐτοὺς οὐχ ἐταίρους ἀλλ' ἐταῖρας ὑπέλαβεν οὐδὲ στρατιώτας ἀλλὰ χαμαιτύπας προσηγόρευσεν· ἄνδροφῶνοι γάρ τὴν φύσιν ὄντες ἀνδρόπορνοι τὸν τρόπον ἦσαν.

The phrasing of *viri muliebria pati*, however, is typically Sallustian in its terseness and juxtaposition of opposites. See also Xen. *Mem.* 2.1.30; Polyb. 31.25.3. On the entire subject, see the excellent discussion of R. MacMullen, “Roman Attitudes to Greek Love,” *Historia* 31 (1982) 485–502 (especially 491–492, 494–495), and S. Lilja, *Homosexuality in Republican and Augustan Rome*, *Commentationes Humanarum Litterarum* 74 (1982) *passim*. In this flawed but useful book, Lilja emphasizes the stigma associated with the passive homosexual role in Latin litera-

that Sallust's choice of words here points directly to the "Asianization," i.e., the moral inversion, of Roman society in general and of Catiline and his followers in particular: first, by using the verb *pati*, Sallust suggests that men have adopted female behavior in assuming a passive homosexual role; and second, by including this phrase in his catalogue of the inversions of nature and morals which appear in post-Sullan Rome, Sallust suggests an association between female behavior and *luxuria*.²¹ As the environment of Rome is infected by *luxuria*, effeminacy becomes more than a metaphor for degeneration. In Sallust's view of Roman history, *virtus* yields place to *luxuria* as the primary motive for human activity; and *luxuria* is characteristic of women and women-like men.

Sallust's association of *luxuria* with women receives its fullest expression at 24.3, in his description of a group of desperate women who were likely to aid Catiline willingly:

ea tempestate plurimos quousque generis homines adscivisse sibi dicitur, mulieres etiam aliquot, quae primo ingentis sumptus stupro corporis toleraverant, post ubi aetas tantummodo quaestui neque luxuriae modum fecerat, aes alienum grande conflaverant.

Several scholars have reacted quite strongly to the dubious historicity of this description. Balsdon believes that there is no basis in fact for either this passage or for the portrait of Sempronia that immediately follows, and describes Sallust as having "an obsession with morality which was all but pathological . . . That there was in Rome a cohort of bankrupt, high-class (married) prostitutes, by this time past their prime; that such women were likely to be good instruments for suborning slaves to make good incendiaries, is the figment of a wildly disordered imagination . . ." ²² Waters, in an ill-conceived attempt to demonstrate that the Catilinarian conspiracy was little more than a Ciceronian fabrication, calls Sallust's description of "certain high-class but superannuated courtesans, no longer able to maintain the luxurious standards of living which their youthful charms had gained them," a Sallustian "flight of fancy," attributable to his "taste for the melodramatic."²³

ture: see in particular 90–91, 122–127; cf. also J. Griffin, "Augustan Poetry and the Life of Luxury," *JRS* 66 (1976) 87–105 (= *Latin Poets and Roman Life* [Chapel Hill 1986] 1–31).

²¹ The appearance at 14.2 of *impudicus* as the first in a long list of desperate types who follow Catiline may reflect this theme as well: *nam quicumque impudicus adulter ganeo manu ventre pene bona patria laceraverat . . . ii Catilinae proximi familiaresque erant*, 14.2–3. The word often denotes passive homosexual behavior: see *ThLL* 7.1, cols. 711–712 (esp. 711 line 37: i.q., *pathicus*), and the use of *impudicus* at Cic. *in Cat.* 2.23 and *Phil.* 3.12 (in the latter, it is used in a list of adjectives that also includes *effeminatus*). G. Paul, "Sallust, Catiline 14.2," *Phoenix* 39 (1985) 158–161 has argued that Sallust rejects homosexual activity as a charge against the Catilinarians, and so emends the text to read *adulter ganeo aleo manu ventre pene*. Paul has not considered, however, the broader implications of this theme for the *BC*. See also below, note 36.

²² Balsdon (above, note 3) 48.

²³ Waters 199–200; at 205–206, he comments that since Sempronia is agreed by many scho-

While entertaining in themselves, these arguments seem to me to miss the mark entirely, since neither is concerned to develop the thematic implications of the passage. As we have already seen, the eruption of *luxuria* and *avaritia* at Rome is associated with the decline of *virtus* and the concomitant spread of effeminacy. In this passage, Sallust produces an embodiment of this pattern in a description of women driven by debt and *luxuria* to prostitute themselves and even to manipulate or kill their husbands (24.4). Sallust had earlier referred to the sexual shamelessness of women (*mulieres pudicitiam in propatulo habere*) as the moral and physical correlative to male effeminacy and passivity (*virī muliebria pati*, 13.3); the women who follow Catiline are specific examples of a general theme.

The association of women and *luxuria* in Roman thought is hardly unique to Sallust, and is in fact to be associated first and foremost with Cato Maior. We find the Catonian position set forth by Livy, who at the opening of Book 34 gives his version of the speeches delivered by Cato Maior and Lucius Valerius in 195 B.C. on the occasion of the proposed repeal of the *lex Oppia*. This law, passed in 215 shortly after the defeat at Cannae, was an austerity measure designed in particular to limit public displays of wealth by women (*ne qua mulier plus semunciam auri haberet neu vestimento versicolori uteretur neu iuncto vehiculo in urbe oppidove aut propius inde mille passus nisi sacrorum publicorum causa veheretur*, 34.1.3). In Livy's narrative, the *matronae* appear *en masse* in support of the repeal, but find a vehement opponent in Cato, who terms their desire for the repeal of the *lex Oppia* a *seditio muliebris* (34.3.8) and accuses them of desiring not simple *libertas* but *licentia* (34.2.14). In paraphrasing the women's demands, he puts the pretext for their *seditio* in the following terms (34.3.9):

"ut auro et purpura fulgamus . . . ut carpentis festis profestisque diebus, velut triumphantes de lege victa et abrogata et captis et ereptis suffragiis vestris per urbem vectemur; ne ullus modus sumptibus, ne luxuriae sit."

Cato goes on to claim that Rome is suffering from *avaritia* and *luxuria*, which have entered the republic through contact with Greece and Asia (34.4.2–3):²⁴

. . . diversis . . . duobus vitiis, avaritia et luxuria, civitatem laborare, quae pestes omnia magna imperia everterunt. haec ego, quo melior laetiorque in dies fortuna rei publicae est imperiumque crescit—et iam in Graeciam Asiamque transcendimus omnibus libidinum illece-

lars to have played no role in the conspiracy, these anonymous women may be disposed with as well. Waters believes that Sallust's account is based almost entirely on Cicero's speeches (196, note 4), and that in fact the so-called conspiracy is a product of Cicero's "elaborate stage management" (214).

²⁴ J. Briscoe, *A Commentary on Livy Books XXXIV–XXXVII* (Oxford 1981) comments *ad loc.*, "the phraseology is remarkably similar to Sallust," and refers to *BC* 5.8 and 2.3–6.

bris repletas et regias etiam attractamus gazas—eo plus horreo, ne illae magis res nos ceperint quam nos illas.

It is generally agreed that there was no lex Oppia speech extant for Livy to imitate closely;²⁵ rather, it is very likely that Livy draws on a wealth of Catonian tradition, and in particular on Cato's well-known hostility towards *luxuria*.²⁶ Of special interest is the relative frequency with which we find examples of Cato's activity against female *licentia* in the extant remains of his writings: he opposed the erection of statues to women (*ORF*² 95 = Pliny *NH* 34.2), condoned the killing without trial of a wife taken in adultery (*ORF*² 221–222 = Gell. *NA* 10.23.4–5), and equated a woman who would commit adultery with a poisoner (*ORF*² 240 = Quint. *Inst.* 5.11.39). Livy himself records elsewhere (39.44.1–2) that, during his censorship, Cato directed that jewels, women's dresses, and vehicles worth more than 15,000 *asses* be assessed at ten times their actual value and that an additional tax then be imposed on this value.²⁷ That Cato linked women, *luxuria*, and moral degeneracy at Rome seems clearly indicated, therefore, by both the extant fragments and by a vivid tradition surrounding Cato's stern morality.

I would suggest that Sallust is indebted to the Catonian tradition in his association of women and *luxuria*. As I shall indicate in the following section, there is good reason to believe that his familiarity with Catonian subject-matter²⁸ shapes Sallust's conception of *virtus*; as we have seen here, Cato's and Sallust's views of *luxuria*, its mode of infiltration (contact with Asia),²⁹ and its enthusiastic audience (women), are strikingly similar. Indeed, even if we read Livy's portrayal of Cato as indebted more to Sallust and to Sallust's "Catonian" interpretation of *luxuria* than to Cato himself, we may conclude that Livy saw in Sallust a most reliable contemporary repository of Catonian thought.

²⁵ See A. E. Astin, *Cato the Censor* (Oxford 1978) 25–27; Briscoe (above, note 24) 39–43. Cf. also P. Johnston, "Poenulus 1.2 and Roman Women," *TAPA* 110 (1980) 143–159 for the suggestion that Plautus' *Poenulus* contains contemporary allusions to the lex Oppia debate, and to Cato's opinion in particular; at 147 note 9 she provides a useful summary of critical opinion concerning Livy's presentation of Cato.

²⁶ Described by Astin (above, note 25) 94 as "a major characteristic of his censorship."

²⁷ See Johnston (above, note 25) 147 and Astin (above, note 25) 83.

²⁸ See Earl, *Sallust* 44–45, and Syme, *Sallust* 242, 267–268.

²⁹ Briscoe (above, note 24) 51 points out that Cato's reference to Asia in this speech is "manifestly anachronistic," since the Roman army first entered Asia in 190; furthermore, this passage is the only source for Cato's antipathy to Asian (as opposed to Greek) influence. We may well have here, then, an instance of creative license on Livy's part, rather than an example of accurate reportage; in fact, Livy's introduction of Asia into the speech may be a direct result of his reading of Sallust. Nonetheless, we may suppose that, in his portrait of Cato, Livy introduces only those details which are at least plausible, if not factual; cf. Astin (above, note 25) 173–174.

II. Definitions of *Virtus*: Catiline, Caesar, and Cato

For Sallust, the association of *luxuria* with women has as its natural complement the association of *virtus* with men. *Virtus* is the quality which characterizes a *vir*, just as *senectus* is the quality which characterizes a *senex*:³⁰ it is literally "manliness," in all senses of the word. *Virtus* is the quality which distinguishes *vir* from *femina* (or *mulier*).³¹ We find the etymology of *virtus* to be of interest to several of Sallust's contemporaries;³² Sallust's own interest in etymology is attested by Aulus Gellius, who comments that Sallust is most observant of precise meanings of his use of words (*Sallustius . . . proprietatum in verbis retinentissimus*, *NA* 10.20.10). We may here detect Cato's influence, since Sallust's interest in language is several times associated with Cato: Suetonius, for example, records that the grammarian Pompeius Lenaeus called Sallust a thief of Cato's language (*priscorum Catonisque verborum ineruditissimum furem*; *de gramm.* 15).³³ In any case, that Sallust sees *virtus* as a distinctly masculine quality, and its decline a result of encroaching effeminacy, is emphasized by his description of *avaritia* at *BC* 11.3: *ea . . . corpus animumque virilem effeminat*. Of particular interest here is the duality of the effeminacy caused by *avaritia*: it affects both the character (*animus*) and the body (*corpus*) of man. Sallust's meaning here has been the source of some puzzlement: Gellius *NA* 3.1 presents a discussion of this line by four men, one of whom, Favorinus *philosophus*, says that he knows how the *animus* is made effeminate, but not the *corpus*.³⁴ Set against the background of ethnographical theory associating physical and moral effeminacy, however, Sallust's point becomes quite straightforward: indulgence in *luxuria* results in physical effeminacy complementing the moral degeneration within, and *virtus* loses its true meaning.³⁵ The catalogue of conspirators set forth by Sallust in *BC* 14 shows the practical implications of this theory; Catiline wins

³⁰ See Earl, *Sallust* 16. *Virtus* is clearly an apt translation for the Hippocratic τὸ ἀνδρεῖον, *aer*. 12 (cf. Asian lack of courage, ἡ ἀνανδρεῖν, *aer*. 16).

³¹ On the difference between *femina* and *mulier*, see R. G. Austin, ed., *M. Tulli Ciceronis Pro Caelio Oratio*³ (Oxford 1960) on 31.5.

³² Varro *LL* 5.75, *virtus ut viritus, a virilitate*; Cic. *Tusc.* 2.43, *appellata est . . . ex viro virtus*; see also the word-play in Cicero's translation of Soph. *Trach.* 1046 ff. at *Tusc.* 2.21: *effeminata virtus*. Cf. P. Hamblenne, "Cura ut vir sis! . . . ou une vir(tus) peu morale," *Latomus* 43 (1984) 369–388.

³³ Cf. also *de gramm.* 10; *Aug.* 86; Quint. *inst.* 8.3.29.

³⁴ Favorinus' conclusion (3.1.14) is singularly inadequate: perhaps Sallust hated *avaritia* "more than was seemly" (*plus quam par fuit*). Cf. Vretska 1.223 (on 11.3).

³⁵ Syme's suggestion that Hor. *Epod.* 16 shows Sallustian influence (*Sallust* 284–286) receives added support from the observation that at 16.39, Horace too emphasizes the etymology of *virtus* by use of emphatic juxtaposition: *vos quibus est virtus muliebrem tollite luctum*. Cf. Kiessling-Heinze³ (Berlin 1958) on 16.18: "dazu soll *virtus* 'Mannheit' als Gegensatz empfunden werden." Horace also thereby improves upon his Archilochean model, 13 West 9–10: ἀλλὰ τάχιστα/τλήτε, γυναικεῖον πένθος ἀπωσάμενοι.

his followers by playing upon their *avaritia* and *luxuria* (*aliis scorta praebere, aliis canes atque equos mercari*, 14.6); ensuing rumors suggest that the youth who associate with Catiline engage in sexual relations with him (*nonnullos qui ita existimarent iuventutem, quae domum Catilinae frequentabat, parum honeste pudicitiam habuisse*, 14.7).³⁶

Distortion of meaning and perversion of political vocabulary are generally recognized to be “constant themes” in the *Bellum Catilinae*.³⁷ The Thucydidean verdict that in civil war, principles of morality give way to sophistic self-interest,³⁸ is dramatically recalled by Cato Uticensis at 52.11: his adaptation of Thucydides 3.82.4, *iam pridem equidem nos vera vocabula rerum amisimus*, is a vehement indictment of the deliberate misuse of language for personal and political advantage. Commentators have noted the applicability of Cato’s judgment on the perversion of language to the speech delivered by Catiline in exhorting his fellow conspirators to action (*BC* 20).³⁹ Of particular interest for this discussion is Catiline’s use, at least according to Sallust, of *virtus* and other vocabulary closely related to it; the rhetorical *topoi* of Catiline’s speech can only be read ironically in the context of effeminate *luxuria*. *Virtus* is Catiline’s rallying-cry; he opens with, “*ni virtus fidesque vostra spectata mihi forent . . .*” (20.2). The call to manliness continues with his exhortation to his fellow conspirators to prefer death with *virtus* to dishonor (*nonne emori per virtutem praestat quam vitam miseram atque inhonestam . . . per dedecus amittere?*, 20.9). Catiline claims that the conspirators have both moral and physical *virtus* on their side (*viget aetas, animus valet*, 20.10); indeed, their *virtus* demands that they take action as appropriate to their manliness (*etenim quis mortalium, quoi virile ingenium est, tolerare potest . . .* 20.11).⁴⁰ Catiline’s call to *virtus* is devoid of honest meaning, however, given his predisposition to *malae artes* and consequent

³⁶ Earl, “Early Career” 307, suggests that the way in which Sallust reports this rumor (*scio fuisse nonnullos qui existimarent*) indicates that Sallust is inclined to dismiss it; but the rest of Sallust’s sentence in fact suggests quite the opposite: *sed ex aliis rebus magis, quam quod quoiqum is conpertum foret, haec fama valebat*. Perhaps of some relevance here is the comment by R. M. Ogilvie, *A Commentary on Livy Books 1–5* (Oxford 1965) 702 (on 5.33.4): “The refusal by an author to commit himself to the solution of a disputed problem is especially characteristic of the ethnographical style.” See also above, note 21.

³⁷ See, e.g., Earl, *Sallust* 93; McGushin 261 (on 52.11); McDonald (above, note 6) 5.

³⁸ See A. W. Gomme, ed., *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides Vol. II (Books 2–3)* (Oxford 1956) 386.

³⁹ McGushin 137 (on 20.2–4); Earl, *Sallust* 93–94.

⁴⁰ Sallust can be seen to exploit the etymology of *virtus* in a similar fashion at *Hist.* 1.55.15: *estne viris relicui aliud quam solvere iniuriam aut mori per virtutem? quoniam quidem unum omnibus finem natura vel ferro saeptis statuit, neque quisquam extremam necessitatem nihil ausus nisi muliebri ingenio expectat.*

The speaker is the revolutionary M. Aemilius Lepidus; as one of the anonymous readers for *TAPA* has suggested, the failed attempts of both Lepidus and Catiline on their governments can be usefully compared.

moral weakness (5.7–8). Sallust has already portrayed Catiline's degeneration as paralleled by the moral corruption of Rome through *luxuria* and *avaritia* (5.8), and so dates the decisive turn of Catiline for the worse to the period following Sulla's dictatorship (5.6). By the time Catiline addresses his fellow conspirators in *BC* 20, *virtus* has become a word without meaning in his vocabulary.

Conversely, both Caesar and Cato are sparing in their use of the word *virtus* as they debate the fate of the conspirators. Caesar recognizes that *virtus* is more characteristic of earlier generations than it is of his own time (*profecto virtus atque sapientia maior illis fuit, qui ex parvis opibus tantum imperium fecere, quam in nobis, qui ea bene parta vix retinemus*, 51.42). Cato himself avoids the word *virtus*, except in one sentence calculated to expose the current perversion in its use: *omnia virtutis praemia ambitio possidet*, 52.22. The rarity of *virtus* in contemporary Rome then receives extensive commentary by Sallust, who, in comparing Caesar and Cato, identifies them both as unusual exemplars of *ingens virtus* (53.5–6); they stand out as exceptions in a Rome corrupted by *luxus* and *desidia*.⁴¹ Together they embody for Sallust the Roman character in its pristine state.

As if to emphasize the association of both Caesar and Cato with an earlier and morally superior Rome, Sallust has each man in his own way evoke some reminiscence of Cato Maior, the possibility of whose influence on Sallust's concept of *virtus* we have already observed. The most fully developed allusion to Cato Maior in Caesar's speech is at 51.5, in a reference to relations between Rome and Rhodes in the Third Macedonian War; Cato's speech *pro Rhodiensibus*, advocating clemency toward the Rhodians, was well-known (cf. Livy 45.25.1–3; *ORF*² 163–171). Two later allusions to a lex Porcia (51.22; 51.40) bring the *nomen* of both the censor and his great-grandson to prominence.⁴² The fact that Caesar in his speech suggests that he himself advocates a policy of leniency closer to that of the elder Cato than does Cato Uticensis is suggestive;⁴³ authentically or not, Sallust here depicts Caesar as an heir to Cato's thought. The association of Cato Uticensis with Cato Maior, on the other hand, is more natural, less contrived. The younger Cato need not refer to his ancestor by name; instead he invokes the censor in the style and content of his speech. He reminds the senate of his vigilance against *luxuria* and *avaritia* in words strongly reminiscent of Cato Maior's speech against repeal of the lex Oppia, as attributed to him by Livy.⁴⁴ Similarly, *BC* 54.6, describing

⁴¹ McGushin 309–311 has a useful appendix on the *synkrisis* of Caesar and Cato; see especially 311 on the importance of *virtus* in this passage.

⁴² On the identification and provisions of the lex Porcia, see McGushin 249–250 (on 51.22) and Ramsey 205 (on 51.22).

⁴³ Syme, *Sallust* 112–113. See also Ramsey 200 (on 51.5) and 205 (on 51.22).

⁴⁴ Compare Livy 34.4.1: *saepe me querentem de . . . sumptibus audistis; diversisque duobus vitiis, avaritia et luxuria, civitatem laborare*; and *BC* 52.7: *saepenumero . . . multa verba in hoc ordine feci, saepe de luxuria atque avaritia nostrorum civium questus sum*.

the younger Cato, parallels a saying ascribed by Plutarch to the elder Cato.⁴⁵ As Earl comments, Cato Uticensis “appears as a man out of his time . . .”;⁴⁶ he is in fact a contemporary reminder of what Rome might have been had its Catonian *virtus* been uncorrupted.⁴⁷

That antique *virtus* can no longer be effectively invoked is made clear by the vain appearance of the concept in Catiline’s second speech, an exhortation to his followers before their disastrous defeat at Pistoria (*BC* 58). Both the character and the language of the speech are conventional, commonplaces suited to the occasion. As Earl has remarked, however, “his appeals to *virtus* and *gloria*, . . . common though they are, appear strangely in the mouth of a debauched conspirator against his country . . . Once more Sallust shows his borrowing from Thucydides to be entirely relevant. The perversion and debasement of noble sentiments to personal and party ends, typical of the age, remain the keynotes of Catiline’s propaganda to the end.”⁴⁸ As in his earlier speech, so here Catiline uses *virtus* as his rallying-cry: he opens with *virtus* (*conpertum ego habeo . . . verba virtutem non addere*, 58.1); he closes with two allusions to his men’s *virtus* (*animus aetas virtus vostra me hortantur*, 58.19; *quod si virtuti vestrae fortuna inviderit*, 58.21); and in the central section he exhorts his followers to be mindful of antique *virtus* (*memores pristinae virtutis*, 58.12). The last of these is especially noteworthy because of the appearance of the epithet *pristinus*. The phrase *pristina virtus* is relatively common in this type of speech;⁴⁹ truly exceptional, however, is the appearance of the epithet *pristinus* not once but three times near the end of the *Bellum Catilinae*: here, in reference to the conspirators; at 60.3, in reference to the veterans in Antonius’s army (*veterani pristinae virtutis memores comminus acriter instare*); and at 60.7, in the description of Catiline’s death (*memor generis atque pristinae suae dignitatis in confertissimos hostis incurrit ibique pugnans confoditur*). *Pristinus* suggests something characteristic of the past, irrevocable in the present; when applied to Antonius’s veterans, it momentarily recalls the antique *virtus* which has been all but lost in contemporary Rome. It is intentional irony on Sallust’s part that, in its other two appearances, *pristi-*

⁴⁵ Compare *BC* 54.6: *non divitiis cum divite neque factione cum factioso, sed cum strenuo virtute, cum modesto pudore, cum innocente abstinentia certabat; esse quam videri bonus malebat: ita, quo minus petebat gloriam, eo magis illum adsequebatur*; and Plut. *Cato Maior* 10.5: βούλομαι μάλλον περί ἀρετῆς τοῖς ἀρίστοις ἢ περί χρημάτων τοῖς πλουσιωτάτοις ἀμιλλᾶσθαι καὶ τοῖς φιλαργυρωτάτοις περί φιλαργυρίας.

⁴⁶ Earl, *Sallust* 101.

⁴⁷ See Syme, *Sallust* 116, 125. Thomas 112–123 discusses Lucan’s use in *de bello civili* 9 of ethnographical terminology to depict Cato Uticensis as the embodiment of Stoic *virtus*, and notes the possibility that Lucan intends to associate Cato Uticensis with his great-grandfather.

⁴⁸ Earl, *Sallust* 95.

⁴⁹ Cf., e.g., Caesar *BG* 2.21.2; Sallust *BI* 49.2 (cf. also 97.5); and Livy 30.13.8, 33.16.8, 39.49.11, 42.18.4 for the contrast between *pristinus* and *praesens/recens*.

nus is used either by or concerning the one character whose behavior in this monograph most vividly embodies the irrevocability of lost Roman *virtus*.⁵⁰

III. Sempronia: Structure and History

It is within this setting—a Rome almost devoid of Catonian *virtus*, and prey to the ravages of *avaritia* and *luxuria*—that the women in Catiline's ranks take on meaning for Sallust. Sempronia is the climactic example of Catiline's female associates, and the only character besides Caesar, Cato, and Catiline himself singled out for elaborate treatment; before turning to her famous portrait, however, I wish to return briefly to the description given by Sallust at 24.3–4 of the entire group of women in Catiline's following.

As we have already seen, this group embodies the profligate *luxuria* so destructive to Rome; it is worth noting as well, however, the very placement of this description in Sallust's narrative. Tiffou, as I noted earlier, observes that Sempronia's involvement in the conspiracy contributes to its discredit, since Catiline's following thus includes *not only* the ambitious and debauched, *but also* women.⁵¹ Two elements in this observation deserve our attention: first, the suggestion that female participation serves to discredit the group as a whole; and second, the ironic anticlimax of Tiffou's list, culminating as it does with women. A comparison of Cicero's catalogue of conspirators (*in Cat.* 2.18–23) with that of Sallust is instructive, since although both include roughly the same categories, the arrangement is somewhat different in each case.⁵² Cicero lists property-owners in debt; debtors seeking political advancement; Sullan *coloni*; more debtors; criminals; and finally, morally corrupt youth. Sallust, on the other hand, both begins and ends his first list (*BC* 14) with the morally corrupt: *omnium flagitiorum atque facinorum circum se tamque stipatorum catervas*, 14.1; and *iuventutem . . . parum honeste pudicitiam habuisse*, 14.7.⁵³ Women are not mentioned in this list; it is not until immediately before the account proper of the activities of 63 B.C. that Sallust describes the presence of women generally and Sempronia in particular among the conspirators. The effect of Sallust's design is twofold: first, the women serve as an ironic indictment of social conditions at Rome; what makes the conspiracy morally weak also makes its threat to the very foundations of Roman society all the stronger. These women are hardly extraneous to Sallust's historical narrative; rather, their very presence is telling. Comparison with the women who participate in the civil war at Corcyra—one of their rare

⁵⁰ Cf. the reference to *pristina virtus* in the passage from Pompeius Trogus quoted above, note 18.

⁵¹ See above, note 9.

⁵² Waters has a useful comparison of the two lists, although his purpose is thereby to question the authenticity of both, 205–206.

⁵³ See also the position of *impudicus* at the head of the list in 14.2 (see above, note 21).

appearances in Thucydides—is instructive: αἱ τε γυναῖκες αὐτοῖς τολμηρῶς ξυνεπελάβοντο βάλλουσαι ἀπὸ τῶν οἰκιῶν τῷ κεράμῳ καὶ παρὰ φύσιν ὑπομένουσαι τὸν θόρυβον, 3.74. Thucydides' phrase παρὰ φύσιν indicates how unusual, indeed unnatural, he finds their presence; as one scholar has recently observed, this unnatural behavior is just one feature of the inversion of norms at Corcyra.⁵⁴ We have seen that Thucydides' narrative on Corcyra also informs the speech given by Cato Uticensis; Sallust's emphasis on Catiline's female following may well be, then, in part an elaboration upon the Thucydidean model of a society which has lost all stability. Second, through a sort of ring-composition, the culminating position of the women emphasizes the criminal depravity, especially in sexual matters, of the conspirators; this appears to be the single most prominent characteristic of Catiline's followers.

Sempronia is an apt conclusion to this list;⁵⁵ given Sallust's scheme of moral inversion, she is, so to speak, naturally unnatural. Society at large has become effeminate, and Catiline typifies the disappearance of true *virtus*; in its place we have a woman capable of *virilis audaciae facinora*. Without *virtus* as a principle of order, morality is topsy-turvy, and Sempronia's physical presence is thus a correlative to Sallust's general view of moral disarray. Catiline stands out as a man whose potential makes his turn to perversity and corruption all the more damning; Sempronia likewise is a person of no mean origins, whose noble status and accomplishments would normally, before the perversion of *virtus*, have made her a Lucretia or Cornelia.⁵⁶ But in the moral climate of Rome after 146 B.C., normalcy—by which I really mean tradition—no longer obtains. In the Sallustian framework of duality and antithesis, Sempronia is an essential complement to Catiline: he exemplifies the disappearance of *virtus*, and she is the embodiment of what has taken its place.

It is in part the very fact of Sempronia's high social status that makes Sallust's portrait of her so striking: instead of a catalogue of the typical virtues of a Roman matron, we find a woman whose education and aggressiveness are characteristic either of a prostitute—or of an urbane man. She is trained in literature, lyre-playing, and dancing (*litteris Graecis Latinis docta, psallere [et] saltare*, 25.2); she can compose poetry, conduct a conversation, and possesses wit and charm (*posse versus facere, iocum movere, sermone uti vel modesto vel molli vel procaci; prorsus multae facetiae multusque*

⁵⁴ T. E. J. Wiedemann, "ἐλάχιστον . . . ἐν τοῖς ἄρσεσι κλέος: Thucydides, Women, and the Limits of Rational Analysis," *G&R* 30 (1983) 169.

⁵⁵ Cadoux 97 summarily dismisses the suggestion that Sempronia's portrait marks the transition from the account of the conspiracy's background to that of the conspiracy proper, on the grounds that it is not until 26.5 that Catiline decides to take extreme action. However, the formula with which *BC* 26 opens, *his rebus comparatis*, marks a strong transition, and indicates that, with the inclusion of the women, all is in readiness for Catiline. See also Vretska 1.272–273.

⁵⁶ Generally on the character and limitations of noble women, see M. R. Lefkowitz, "Influential Women," in *Images of Women in Antiquity*, ed. A. Cameron and A. Kuhrt (London 1983) 49–64; and G. Clark, "Roman Women," *G&R* 28 (1981) 193–212.

lepos inerat, 25.5.). But Sallust himself is quick to point out that these are *instrumenta luxuriae*, and that Sempronia's talents are more than is appropriate for a *matrona* (*elegantius quam necesse est probae*, 25.2).⁵⁷ *Decus* and *pudicitia* are of importance to Sempronia only insofar as they are to be avoided (*ei cariora semper omnia quam decus atque pudicitia fuit*, 25.3);⁵⁸ and she has in fact so devoted herself to the life of *luxuria* that it has come to master her (*luxuria atque inopia praeceps abierat*, 25.4). In describing her sexual *licentia*, Sallust again uses an expression which contradicts the matronly norm: *ut saepius peteret viros quam peteretur*, 25.3. Instead of being a chaste and passive *univira*, she actively pursues sexual partners.⁵⁹ In describing Sempronia's unnatural aggressiveness, Sallust may well intend to recall the passivity associated with homosexual effeminacy at 13.3, *virī muliebria pati*. Whereas the young men at Rome like those in Catiline's following have become almost female in their sexual behavior, the women, as represented by Sempronia, wantonly ape the aggressiveness normally associated with men. In Sallust's delineation of moral inversion, Sempronia brings us full circle.

Sempronia's position last on Sallust's list of conspirators and immediately before his account of the activities of 63 B.C. also tends to emphasize her portrait; for lack of a better term I have dubbed this the "last but not least" device.⁶⁰ An important parallel to this instance of the phenomenon occurs in Herodotus, who takes unusual notice of Artemisia as one of the naval leaders under Xerxes (7.99). Mention of Artemisia comes at the very end of Herodotus' extensive catalogue of the Persian fleet (7.61–99); immediately thereafter he brings the catalogue to a close. Herodotus himself points out that his listing is not complete (τῶν μὲν νῦν ἄλλων οὐ παραμένημαι ταξιάρχων ὥς οὐκ ἀναγκαζόμενος), and thus implicitly emphasizes Artemisia's presence all the more. We might compare Sempronia's *virilis audacia* to the ἀνδρηγή with which Herodotus characterizes Artemisia, saying that she is a great marvel (θῶμα). There is something unnatural about Artemisia, and her placement at the end of the catalogue accentuates the fact that she is out of the ordinary.

⁵⁷ Paul, "Portrait" 15–16 has recently noted the similarity in Livy's description of the *luxuria peregrina* introduced into Rome with the return of Manlius Vulso's army from Asia in 187 B.C.: *luxuriae enim peregrinae origo ab exercitu Asiatico invecita in urbem est . . . tunc psaltriae sambucistriaeque et convivalia alia ludorum oblectamenta addita epulis . . .*, 39.6.7–8; he also compares Sallust's use of *psallere* and Livy's of *psaltria*. I am indebted to Paul's discussion of the *artes meretriciae*; cf. also the comments of G. Clark (above, note 56) 200: "Some girls learnt music and singing . . . but it was not proper for them to aim at a professional standard . . . Sallust's Sempronia was far better than she should be."

⁵⁸ See Büchner 134–135.

⁵⁹ Paul, "Portrait" 16 points out that the same characteristic is applied to Clodia by Cicero at *Pro Caelio* 36, and sees it as a typical type of invective. See M. Skinner, "Clodia Metelli," *TAPA* 113 (1983) 273–287 for a thorough discussion of the creative fiction which has passed for historical characterization of Clodia.

⁶⁰ Observable also with, e.g., the portrait of Camilla at the end of *Aeneid* 7; I intend to develop this observation more fully elsewhere.

It is generally believed that Artemisia earns such an exceptional portrait in the *Histories* because, as Herodotus himself points out, she is from his home town of Halicarnassus; she is a beneficiary, therefore, of his local pride.⁶¹ Although this explanation is in itself unobjectionable, Herodotus' later description of the actual part played by Artemisia in the battle (8.87–88) remains, at the very least, curious: Artemisia exhibits shrewd—and intentionally treacherous—behavior, and ironically succeeds in deceiving all who learn of it. Under pursuit by an Attic ship, she rams the ship of an ally in order to make the Greeks think that she too is a Greek, or a Persian deserter; she not only succeeds in tricking the Attic captain, but actually sinks the ship of her ally, conveniently removing all witnesses. Xerxes himself is deceived; thinking that she has sunk an enemy ship, he comments, “My men have become women and my women men” (οἱ μὲν ἄνδρες γεγόνασι μοι γυναῖκες, αἱ δὲ γυναῖκες ἄνδρες). This comment expresses in physical terms the moral inversion characteristic of the Persian host;⁶² after this, we know that the failure of the Persians is inevitable.

Herodotus draws our attention to Artemisia first by structural design: her description at the very end of the Persian catalogue guarantees that she will be remembered. It is in the anecdote of Book 8, however, that Herodotus suggests a thematic role for Artemisia. Her treachery signifies a form of decay from within among the members of the Asiatic fleet; in misunderstanding Artemisia's treachery, Xerxes glorifies the very character who both physically and morally embodies the impending disintegration of Persian power. Herodotus' schematization of inversion through the characterization of a woman is strongly reminiscent of what we have seen in Sallust; in both historians, furthermore, the presence of a woman seems effectively to insure the failure of the cause to which she is allied.

I do not intend to suggest here that Sallust's Sempronia is directly modelled on Herodotus' Artemisia; the latter is far less enigmatic, far more fully integrated into the narrative, and far more positively portrayed than is the former. Furthermore, although it is possible that Sallust had read Herodotus, direct Herodotean influence is not otherwise detectable in Sallust's work. Rather, I believe it quite likely that in their portrayal of the two women, both historians draw upon a conventional *topos*: when removed from the domestic sphere, woman is treacherous, a perversion of the natural order, a *fatale monstrum*. When this *topos* is conflated with the moral implications

⁶¹ Cf. Cadoux's recent attempt to demonstrate that Sallust's portrait of Sempronia is a result of personal acquaintance: “. . . And why does he so write? Because he has a personal interest in the woman he is describing and is obliged by his tender recollections to make as attractive a picture of her as her undoubted wickedness will permit” (120).

⁶² Cf. 9.107, where Herodotus remarks that it is the greatest of all taunts in Persia to be called worse than a woman: *παρὰ δὲ τοῖσι Πέρησι γυναικὸς κακίω ἀκούσαι δέννος μέγιστός ἐστι*.

of ancient ethnographical theory, the result is an Artemisia, or a Sempronia, or a Cleopatra.⁶³

As we draw to the end of this investigation, it seems appropriate to consider its historical implications. Are we any closer to identifying the real Sempronia or to determining her actual role in the conspiracy? I have not tried to offer a novel interpretation based on prosopographical data, and my discussion may therefore be termed aporetic in this regard. The literary design evident in Sallust's general depiction of women in the conspiracy leads me to suspect, however, that whereas, *pace* Waters, there is no good reason to believe that she is wholly fabricated, there is ample room for the suggestion that Sempronia's conspiratorial aptitude is portrayed by Sallust to a degree far out of proportion with the facts. We may assume that, much like Artemisia, Sempronia did in fact take part in the activities which the historian ascribes to her; but the inordinate attention which she attracts is a result neither of personal reminiscence nor of historical accuracy or inaccuracy, but of the way in which Sallust has arranged the materials for his moral history.⁶⁴

⁶³ Horace's brilliant portrayal of Cleopatra, *Od.* 1.37, is relevant here: see the discussion by S. Commager, *The Odes of Horace* (New Haven/London 1962) 88–94.

In recording Artemisia's part in the battle of Salamis, Pompeius Trogus, writing not long after Sallust, seems to have noted the similarity between the two women (*ap.* Justin 2.12.22–23):

interea rex velut spectator pugnae cum parte navium in litore remanet. Artemisia autem, regina Halicarnasi, quae in auxilium Xerxi venerat, inter primores duces bellum acerrime ciebat, quippe ut in viro muliebrem timorem, in muliere *virilem audaciam* cerneret (italics mine).

The suggestion by Trogus that Xerxes himself is womanish is a striking complement to Sallust's theme.

⁶⁴ Professor R. Starr of Wellesley College has pointed out to me the similar value of Tacitus' description of Epicharis among the Pisonian conspirators, especially at *Ann.* 15.57.1–2:

atque interim Nero . . . ratus . . . muliebri corpus impar dolori tormentis dilacerari iubet . . . clariore exemplo libertina mulier in tanta necessitate alienos ac prope ignotos protegendo, cum ingenui et viri et equites Romani senatoresque intacti tormentis carissima suorum quisque pignorum proderent.

Here, the woman's unnatural heroism is in stark contrast with the moral emasculation of her co-conspirators.