

# More than Roman Salt: Sallust, Caesar and Cato in Twelfth- and Early Thirteenth-Century Moral Thought



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*Abstract: This paper examines one of the ways in which the classical historian Sallust was read in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and what this reveals about medieval moral thought. In this period, Sallust's discussion of the character and virtues of Julius Caesar and Cato the Younger became a focus for annotation and commentary. Caesar and Cato were read as the embodiment of contrasting, even opposed, ideas of moral virtue – one liberal and forgiving, the other just and unbending. As medieval commentators recognised, both men embodied Roman virtue, but neither could be straightforwardly imitated. Medieval authors who considered the deeds of these two great Romans were obliged to address how the exercise of virtue was conditioned by circumstance and emphasised the importance of heeding counsel and engaging in debate before taking action. As a result, moral thought in this period can be seen as more contingent and pragmatic and less absolutist than it is sometimes supposed to have been.*

## INTRODUCTION: JUDGEMENT IN ATHENS

John of Salisbury's *Policraticus* (c.1159), a text written for the instruction of educated men who launched themselves into the dangerous and morally murky world of the court, constructs much of its advice from the material of the classical past (both historical and invented). In book 4, John discusses the nature of justice, and relates an *exemplum* taken from Valerius Maximus' early first-century collection of moral stories, *Factorum ac dicta memorabilia*. During the time when the Roman general Dolabella was imperial proconsul in Asia, he referred a difficult legal case to the Athenian Aeropagus, the highest Greek court. The facts of the matter were

undisputed: the accused was a woman who had killed both her husband and son by poisoning them. The woman freely admitted to the crime, yet argued she should escape punishment, for she had only killed the two men because they had killed another of her sons, an innocent boy. She believed that the law should not impose any punishment for the poisoning, for she had only acted to avenge an injury done to her. The question of how much regard the law should give to this 'defence' caused considerable difficulty. The Athenian judges examined the case at length, then summoned the woman. They pronounced their decision: the offender was to be punished, and she should return for sentencing – one hundred years from that day.<sup>1</sup>

In John's view, the decision the Athenian judges arrived at was the only viable moral choice. He explained that he had chosen this story to illustrate the conflicting demands of public duties, familial loyalty, and the necessity of punishing crimes. There was, he suggested, something to admire in a woman who pursued justice even when it meant punishing her own family members, but nonetheless she had exceeded reasonable limits by responding to a crime with another crime. The case served to illustrate a broader moral point: princes, and those who serve them, should not merely love justice, but be mindful that the choices on offer might not always be straightforward ones.

The substance of this paper is how authors writing between c.1050 and c.1250 ('the long twelfth century') addressed classical Roman virtue – virtue of the senatorial and imperial variety – not Greek jurisprudence. Yet John of Salisbury's borrowing from Valerius Maximus is a useful place to begin, because, to say the least, the story John presents is not necessarily what we expect from a medieval *exemplum*: it invites ambivalence rather than containing a straightforward moral message, and it strikes a resounding note of uncertainty. There were compelling

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<sup>1</sup> John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, ed. K. S. B. Keats-Rohan (Turnholt: Brepols, 1993), iv.11, pp. 268–9.

moral arguments *both* for permitting the woman to go unpunished, *and* for imposing a punishment for her actions.

Some scholars – Cary Nederman, for example – have explained the ambiguities of *Policraticus* as particular to John of Salisbury's intellectual formation. Nederman casts John as reviving a Ciceronian tradition of academic scepticism, a philosophical framework which recognised that some matters are arguable, some cases disputable, and not every matter can be resolved by the application of a moral absolute.<sup>2</sup> This places John in deliberate imitation of Ciceronian scepticism, one of the few twelfth-century scholastic authors who picked up on this current of thought. The argument of this paper, however, is that this type of ambiguity concerning the moral course of action – particularly the morally virtuous course of action when punishing an offender – was far from limited to John of Salisbury, and one did not need to look to scepticism to find warrant for it. It is evident in the ways in which twelfth- and thirteenth-century readers and authors engaged with the late Roman historian Sallust, and his *Bellum Catilinae*. It is particularly evident when one traces the ways in which one section of the text was read, received and redeployed. The models of Roman virtue to be found in Sallust provided twelfth-century readers with an ambivalent and debatable legacy. The sections of *Catiline* which focused on a senatorial argument over the punishment of offenders offered medieval readers a frame through which they could conceptualise a political and moral debate about the nature of justice, judgment and punishment. Sallust could be (and was) used by twelfth-century authors to argue the need for prudence and prudent counsel to guide the application of punishment. As such, the way in which the twelfth-century read *Catiline* demonstrates how classical 'historical' texts could provide frameworks for ethical discussion about the limits of virtue.

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<sup>2</sup> Cary J. Nederman, 'Beyond Stoicism and Aristotelianism: John of Salisbury's Skepticism and Twelfth-Century Moral Philosophy', in *Virtue and Ethics in the Twelfth Century*, ed. by István Bejczy and Richard Newhauser (Leiden: Brill, 2005), pp. 175–95.

## THE TWELFTH-CENTURY SALLUSTIAN REVIVAL

Sallust (86–35BC) is one of the authors most closely associated with the revival of interest in classical antiquity during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. While there had been interest in Sallust's writing in the earlier Middle Ages, there was an evident increase in copying of both *Jugurtha* and the *Bellum Catilinae* from the eleventh century on, particularly in the areas of modern England, France and the Netherlands.<sup>3</sup> *Jugurtha* relates the story of the war between the eponymous King of Numidia and Rome between 111BC and 105BC, while *Catiline* describes the conspiracy of Lucius Sergius Catilina against Rome in 63BC and his eventual defeat. The two works were often regarded as two parts of the same text and copied together, which explains why they survive today in similar (and similarly striking) numbers. Over 80 copies of *Catiline* and 90 copies of *Jugurtha* survive from the twelfth century.<sup>4</sup> A third Sallustian text, the *Historiae*, was only known in fragments in the Middle Ages, as it is today.

Beryl Smalley categorised the use of Sallust in this period as falling into three distinct categories: he was primarily valued as a moralist, secondarily as a stylistic model for authorial emulation, and finally – in a much more limited fashion – Sallust's writings were treated as a store of historical information.<sup>5</sup> Sallust's account of the growth of corruption and the fall of once virtuous polities had obvious resonances with Christian readings of the Roman Empire, and was more generally compatible with a medieval Christian vision of the universe. Although Sallust *could*

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<sup>3</sup> See Birger Munk Olsen, 'La diffusion et l'étude des historiens antiques au XIIe siècle', in *Medieval Antiquity*, ed. by Andries Welkenhuysen et al. (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1995) pp. 21–43.

<sup>4</sup> Olsen, 'La diffusion', p. 22.

<sup>5</sup> Beryl Smalley, 'Sallust in the Middle Ages', in *Classical Influences on European Culture A.D. 500 to 1500*, ed. by R. R. Bolgar (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), pp. 165–76. See also Patricia J. Osmond and Robert W. Ulery, 'Sallustius', in *Catalogus translationum et commentariorum: Medieval and Renaissance Latin Translations and Commentaries*, vol. 8 (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2003), pp. 183–326.

provide valuable historical evidence about the late republic – potentially providing an alternative tradition to later 'imperial' writers – his significance as a historian was more limited. Two (complementary) explanations for this have been advanced. First, *Catiline* and *Jugurtha* did not look the way which medieval readers expected their histories to look. Both concentrated on relatively short spans of time, a far cry from the *longue durée* vision of medieval Christian historiography exemplified in annals, chronicles and universal histories. Secondly, in the twelfth-century revival of historical writing, medieval authors preferred to turn to late antique Christian writers as their source material. These were often authors who had themselves read or borrowed from Sallust. Thus Roman material was taken up through a Christian synthesis, through works like Eutropius' *Breviarium*. In this sense, the 'historical' Sallust was rarely received directly, and there are few – if any – histories which directly model themselves on *Catiline* or *Jugurtha*.

It would be a mistake, however, to underestimate the reach of Sallust. He was the only historian studied as part of the high medieval school curriculum, alongside a host of Latin poets: Statius, Virgil, Lucan and Homer in translation.<sup>6</sup> Of Sallust's authority in the minds of twelfth-century readers, there should be no doubt.

The best demonstration of this state of affairs – Sallust as a valued moral source, but not a preeminent historical model – is found in William of Malmesbury's historical writing. William is widely reckoned to be among the most accomplished of twelfth-century historians, a writer who took a great degree of trouble over the sources for his histories. William reaches for Sallust as a source of pithy quotations and statements about morality, rather than historical *res gestae*. In that sense, Sallust belongs to the process of 'sprinkling with Roman salt'; i.e. drawing on antique writers to furnish quotations, models for competitive stylistic emulation, and as a

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<sup>6</sup> Olsen, 'La diffusion', pp. 31–3.

nod to the educated amongst one's audience, who would recognise the Sallustian shape of a passage.<sup>7</sup>

This narrative of Sallustian reception is essentially convincing in its outlines. The challenge it presents, however, is that very little has been said about the specifics of how Sallust was read and used. Too often the label of 'moralist' is applied rather vaguely, used to suggest that Sallust provided a general narrative of decline which could be fitted to almost any polity, but with relatively little content attached. Much more can in fact be done to fill in the specifics of Sallustian usage.

The need to consider the shape of the twelfth-century Sallust is thrown into sharper relief, moreover, when one considers the work done on the later history of Sallustian reception. We have a much clearer picture of how Sallust was read, received and repackaged in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and, in particular, a developed account of the significance of Sallust in northern Italy. In Italian communes, Sallust could be used to bolster arguments about civic government and civic liberties: invoking the early parts of the text (especially the rhetoric of *Catiline* 7.1–3 which describes the glory which free states are capable of attaining) could be used to make a call for the defence of the city and the common good. These passages were borrowed by writers including Ptolemy of Lucca and Coluccio Salutati.<sup>8</sup> Like the owl of Minerva, Sallust took flight in the fourteenth century – providing a classical endorsement of political life.<sup>9</sup> But no similar survey for the twelfth-century Sallust has been made. Were there particular parts of his writing which generated particular attention? And, if so, what might that tell us about those readers and their

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<sup>7</sup> See Lars Boje Mortensen, 'The Texts and Contexts of Ancient Roman History in Twelfth-Century Western Scholarship', in *Perceptions of the Past in Twelfth-Century Europe*, ed. by Paul Magdalino (London: Hambledon Press, 1992), pp. 99–116, esp. 103–4; and Michael Winterbottom, 'The Gesta regum of William of Malmesbury', *Journal of Medieval Latin* 5 (1995), 158–73, esp. 169.

<sup>8</sup> See Patricia J. Osmond, "'Princeps Historiae Romanae': Sallust in Renaissance Political Thought", *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* (1995), 101–43; and Osmond, 'Catiline in Fiesole and Florence: The After-Life of a Roman Conspirator', *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 7 (2000), 3–38.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Smalley, 'Sallust', p. 165.

interest in the political (or moral) uses of Sallust? This article is an attempt to offer some tentative conclusions about how certain parts of Sallust were used in the twelfth century, and the political and moral ideas he might be made to speak to. It makes no claim to cover all the possible uses of Sallust, nor even all the possible uses of *Catiline*, but instead attempts to highlight a single, significant political usage of a single passage, and to connect his history-writing to broader moral discourses.

The section of Sallust's writing on which this article focuses is chapters 51–4 of *Catiline*. This section is close to the end of the work. It does not strictly concern the conspirator Catiline himself, but events in Rome. Catiline remains at large outside Rome, but his co-conspirator Lentulus and some of his followers have been captured, and their fate awaits determination by the Roman senate. The Roman senate meets to discuss the matter at the instigation of Cicero, who, as consul, has led the initiative against Catiline. The question put to the senators is how Rome should deal with the captured conspirators. It is important to note that at this point in the text, their guilt is not in doubt: it has already been determined that Catiline's followers have acted against the state.

Sallust's text then narrates these senatorial orations in detail, although Sallust is here constructing the speeches, not recording them verbatim.<sup>10</sup> First, Julius Caesar (then praetor designate) stands to speak (*Catiline* 51). The oration is too lengthy to quote in full, and so I summarise only its main themes: Caesar begins by insisting that the matter be discussed calmly and without passion intruding, asserting that 'all men who deliberate upon difficult questions ought to be free from hatred and friendship, anger and pity' (*qui de rebus dubiis consultant, ab odio, amicitia, ira atque misericordia vacuos esse decet*).<sup>11</sup> Caesar invokes several historical examples to make the case that Lentulus and the conspirators ought not to be put to death. To do so

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<sup>10</sup> For other references to Caesar's speech, see Suetonius, *Life of the Caesars*: Julius Caesar, 14; Appian, *The Civil Wars* 2.6.

<sup>11</sup> *Catiline*, 51.1. Translations are taken from the edition of J. C. Rolfe (London: Heinemann, 1931).

would be a reaction from passion, and wise decisions are only made when men set aside their wrath or pity. The danger, Caesar argues, is that the senators will let their anger overcome all other considerations, and be tempted to step beyond the penalties permitted under the law. It is particularly lamentable when men of high status and office give way to anger; restraint should be expected in leaders of a polity. Caesar argues that 'in the highest portion there is the least freedom of action... for what in others is called wrath, this in a ruler is termed insolence and cruelty'.<sup>12</sup>

Caesar's speech calls for moderation, and for the senators to consider how their actions today may set a bad precedent for punishment in future cases. He presents a series of historical examples which demonstrate how divergence from established legal standards may initially seem appropriate, but quickly pave the way to tyranny. Allowing excessive punishment in the present may in future lead to the state becoming vicious. More particularly, Caesar points to the fact that those under whose leadership the empire grew great were content to exile the condemned, not to put them to death – and this is the example to be imitated. Caesar's oration concludes with the recommendation that the prisoners' goods be confiscated and the prisoners themselves imprisoned – to protect the common safety – but that their lives be spared.

Caesar's speech is followed by that of Cato of Utica, also known as Cato the Younger (52). His oration is a direct challenge to the premises which Caesar has laid down. Exceptional punishment is necessary, Cato contends, because of the exceptional nature of the danger posed by the Catilinian conspiracy: the state itself is at stake – not merely individual goods or personal property. Generosity and gentleness towards conspirators is no virtue when it will endanger the republic itself. More importantly, any decision reached by the senate will send a message to

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<sup>12</sup> *Catiline*, 51.14.



Catiline's army (as yet uncaptured, and beyond Rome). Any weakness will strengthen their resolve, and encourage them to advance on the city. Where Caesar appeals to an ideal of Rome as a mature city which can stay its hand, Cato advances an argument about corruption and weakness: the city is vulnerable precisely because it is too idle and lazy to defend itself, because, through kindness to wrong-doers, it has fallen away from higher historical standards. Conspiracy to destroy the republic is not a crime which Cato believes should be tolerated – and the dire circumstances are such that a city beset by foes from without and within has only one course of action. Cato concludes by arguing that death is the only punishment appropriate to those who are caught red-handed in the commission of a capital offence.

While these two speeches are stirring (and lengthy), they would have proved less interesting to medieval readers but for what follows. Sallust then introduces his own reflections on what these two speeches revealed of the respective characters of Julius Caesar and Cato. He notes that 'within my own memory there have appeared two men of towering merit, though of diverse character'.<sup>13</sup> Sallust then offers a comparison of the two men, built around the contention that Julius Caesar and Cato represent opposed, but equally admirable virtues which relate to how public justice and public life is conducted: clemency and severity; generosity and austerity.

In birth then, in years and in eloquence, they were about equal; in greatness of soul they were evenly matched, and likewise in renown, although the renown of each was different. Caesar was held great because of his benefactions and lavish generosity, Cato for the uprightness of his life. The former became famous for his gentleness and compassion, the austerity of the latter had brought him prestige. Caesar gained glory by giving, helping, and forgiving; Cato by never stooping to bribery. One was a refuge for the unfortunate, the other a scourge for the wicked. The good nature of the one was applauded, the steadfastness of the other. Finally, Caesar had schooled

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<sup>13</sup> *Catiline*, 53.6.

himself to work hard and sleep little, to devote himself to the welfare of his friends and neglect his own, to refuse nothing which was worth the giving. He longed for great power, an army, a new war to give scope for his brilliant merit. Cato, on the contrary, cultivated self-control, propriety, but above all austerity. He did not vie with the rich in riches nor in intrigue with the intriguer, but with the active in good works, with the self-restrained in moderation, with the blameless in integrity. He preferred to be, rather than to seem, virtuous; hence the less he sought fame, the more it pursued him.

In the event, it is Cato's advice which is followed by the senate – but the two orations and the character comparisons stand on their own.

## JULIUS CAESAR AND CATO THE YOUNGER IN THE TWELFTH-CENTURY SCHOOLS

Sallust was not the only author who provided medieval authors with information about Julius Caesar and Cato. Sallust's portrayal of the two figures sat alongside other traditions and other sources of information. Although Caesar's own writings were relatively little known, he made a considerable impression as a historical figure.<sup>14</sup> Caesar would ultimately be memorialised as one of the 'Nine Worthies' – a virtuous pagan to stand alongside the Trojan Hector and Alexander of Macedon. Nonetheless, Sallust was a key source for Caesar: far better known than Caesar's own *De bello Gallico*. Cato was perhaps less celebrated. Cato of Utica – the Cato of *Catiline* – should not be confused with Cato the Elder, Cato the Stoic, the grandfather of the younger Cato. Medieval tradition recognised that there had been two Catos: it

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<sup>14</sup> For fuller discussion of this, see Almut Suerbaum, 'The Middle Ages', in *A Companion to Julius Caesar*, ed. by Miriam Griffin (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), esp. pp. 317–18. This is not to suggest that the verdict on Caesar was universally positive – as Suerbaum discusses, certain authors, including Lucan, put a more negative spin on Caesar's desire for popular acclaim. For one twelfth-century account of Caesar's life, see Ralph Diceto, *Abbreviationes chronicorum*, ed. W. Stubbs (Rolls Series 58, London: Longmans, 1876), pp. 51–2.

was the elder, for example, who was recognised as the author of the *Disticha Catonis* – the elementary work of moral introduction for school students.<sup>15</sup> The younger Cato, of *Catiline*, underwent a slow process of 'Christianisation', his stoic sensibilities providing material that could be readily worked into Christian virtues, and as a famously virtuous non-Christian he ultimately became one of Dante's guides through the *Commedia*. At times the two men – grandfather and grandson – may have become elided, but those who had read the *accessus* tradition were aware that there were two figures of this name. That said, one might speculate that the reputation of the elder Cato served to burnish that of his grandson, as a guardian of senatorial propriety and virtue.

Though Julius Caesar and Cato might be encountered in other places, their appearance in *Catiline* received considerable attention. Indeed, 51–4 seems to have been one of the most frequently and closely read parts of the text. Where we have 'full' copies in the manuscript tradition, both the speeches of Caesar and Cato and Sallust's comparison of the two men are often marked by (short) marginal notes.<sup>16</sup> Interest in the speeches in fact began long before the twelfth century, as ninth-century manuscripts which extract only the orations from *Catiline* and *Jugurtha* attest.<sup>17</sup> The speeches were also excerpted as core components in twelfth century florilegia, and hence were transmitted even more broadly – even among those who had not made a detailed study of Sallust. Most important in demonstrating

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<sup>15</sup> Richard Hazelton, 'The Christianization of "Cato": the *Disticha Catonis* in the Light of Late Medieval Commentaries', *Mediaeval Studies* 19 (1957), 157–73; Filippo Gianferrari, 'Pro patria mori: From the *Disticha Catonis* to Dante's Cato', *Dante Studies* 135 (2017), 1–30.

<sup>16</sup> For this study, I have consulted Bodleian Library MS Barlow 45 (an early thirteenth-century English manuscript), and MS Rawlinson G. 43 (an early twelfth-century manuscript from southern France). For a discussion of commentaries in Sallust in Germany, see Carmen Cardelle de Hartmann, 'Sallust im St. Emmeram: Handschriften und Kommentare in der Bibliothek des Klosters St. Emmeram (Regensburg)', *Journal of Medieval Latin* 18 (2008), 1–23, esp. 11–12, which highlights the attention paid to the orations in marginal annotations and notes the most glossed passages. For Flanders, see Andrew J. Turner, 'Reading Sallust in Twelfth-Century Flanders', *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 21 (2014), 198–222, which emphasises that twelfth-century glosses on Sallust were particularly interested how classical terminology could be translated and explained for twelfth-century readers.

<sup>17</sup> For example, Vatican Lat 3864; cf. Smalley, 'Sallust', p. 169.

increasing knowledge of *Catiline* 51–4 is the *Florilegium Gallicum* – a text originally compiled in Orleans in the later twelfth century, and the most copied florilegium of the thirteenth century.<sup>18</sup> It presents a series of extracts from twenty classical authors, including Aulus Gellius, Horace, Juvenal, and Cicero, the speeches of Caesar and Cato in *Catiline*, and Sallust’s comparison of the two, which is provided under the heading ‘De moribus Cesaris et Catonis mixtim’.<sup>19</sup> In short: Sallust was widely available throughout this period; and chapters 51–4 of *Catiline* particularly so.

Alongside the *Florilegium Gallicum*, another florilegium contributed to the way in which Sallust was read and received: the *Moralium dogma philosophorum* (possibly composed c. 1150).<sup>20</sup> The text is mainly a composite of Cicero’s *De officiis* and Seneca’s *De beneficiis*, but has relevance here for two reasons. The first is that its treatment of justice (*iustitia*) recognises that the virtue has a dual aspect: it can be divided into severity (*severitas*) and liberality (*liberalitas*). This approach could serve to support the distinction that Sallust discovered into the characters of Cato and Caesar – one severe, one more lenient. Indeed, the discussion in the *Moralium dogma philosophorum* includes several cautions about the application of *severitas*, lest it become excessive, and emphasising the need to steer a course between excess and absence.<sup>21</sup> The second is that the *Moralium dogma philosophorum*, although reliant on Cicero’s *De officiis* (in particular, II.14–15) for much of the structure of its discussion of justice, also includes a number of quotations from Sallust, who is described as a

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<sup>18</sup> Richard H. Rouse, ‘“Florilegia” and Latin Classical Authors in Twelfth and Thirteenth Century Orleans’, *Viator* 10 (1979) 131–160; see also B. L. Ullmann, ‘Classical Authors in Certain Medieval Florilegia’, *Classical Philology* 27 (1932), 1–42 and Birger Munk Olsen, ‘Les classiques latins dans les florilèges médiévaux antérieurs au XIIIe siècle’, *Revue d’histoire des textes* 9 (1979), 47–121; which also discusses the role of Sallust in the *Florilegium Duacense*. The text has been edited by Johannes Hamacher, *Florilegium Gallicum* (Bern: Herbert Lang, 1975).

<sup>19</sup> Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Lat. 17903; the comparison is found at f.77r.

<sup>20</sup> Philippe Delhaye, ‘Une adaptation du “De officiis” au XIIe siècle: Le “Moralium dogma philosophorum”’, *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 16 (1949), 227–58. For arguments over the authorship of the text, see the outline provided in John R. Williams, ‘The Quest for the Author of the *Moralium Dogma Philosophorum*, 1931–1956’, *Speculum* 32 (1957), 736–47. For the text, *Das Moraliun dogma philosophorum des Guillaume de Conches, lateinisch, altfranzösisch und mittelniederfränkisch, herausgegeben*, ed. John Holmberg (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksells boktryckeri, 1929).

<sup>21</sup> *Moralium Dogma Philosophorum*, ed. Holmberg, pp. 12–13.

*poeta* to rank alongside Horace and Lucan. The quotations from *Catiline* – although not more than a handful – are almost exclusively short extracts from the speeches of Cato and Caesar.<sup>22</sup>

The *accessus ad auctores* tradition also provided medieval readers with instructions on how to read Sallust as an author, and how to understand the main themes of his works.<sup>23</sup> Within this tradition, Sallust was not considered to be an elementary text, but as part of a curriculum of more advanced instruction in Latin grammar.<sup>24</sup> The *accessus* writing emphasised the moral qualities of texts; but what is significant is the ideas drawn out in relation to Sallust in particular.<sup>25</sup> This is evident from the *Dialogus super auctores* (somewhere between 1100 and 1150), attributed to Conrad of Hirsau.<sup>26</sup> Conrad's *accessus* to Sallust places him (as an author) between Cicero and Boethius. The *accessus* emphasises the value of reading Sallust with Cicero (thus burnishing the reputation of the text further) – not least because the events Sallust describes in *Catiline* relate to Cicero's personal *providentia et prudentia* in acting to save the Roman state from Catiline's conspiracy. Sallust thus also provides a means of learning about the historical Cicero. When Conrad addresses the 'materia' of Sallust's text, he emphasises that this is a text which discusses the preservation or downfall of the *res publica*. It discusses how the perversity of the citizens threatens proper order. As such, Sallust's intention (*intentio*) was to teach (*docere*) readers about how the senators and rectors of the republic considered this

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<sup>22</sup> Extracts from the speeches: 'de beneficentia operae et pecuniae', quoting *Catiline* 51.1–2 (Holmberg, p. 21); 'De religione', quoting *Catiline* 52.29 (p. 24); *Pudicitia* is discussed with reference to *Catiline* 51.3; and 'de bonis corporis' quotes from *Catiline* 51.12. (p. 54). 'De magnificentia' (p. 38), reproduces the famous first line of the text, on the distinction between humans and beasts.

<sup>23</sup> For an introduction to the *accessus* tradition in this period, see Alastair Minnis, and A. B. Scott, *Medieval Literary Theory and Criticism c. 1100–c. 1375* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), esp. p. 13, for the influence of the 'type C' prologue. Conrad's *accessus* is discussed at 37–64. See also Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship* (London: Scholar Press, 1984). For a general overview of the commentary genre, see Paul G. Schmidt, 'The Commentator Knows Better than the Author', *Journal of Medieval Latin* 18 (2009), 117–29.

<sup>24</sup> Rita Copeland, 'The Curricular Classics in the Middle Ages', in *The Oxford History of Classical Reception in English Literature, Volume 1, 800–1558*, ed. by Copeland (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), p. 26.

<sup>25</sup> For the *accessus* tradition, see *Accessus ad auctores*, ed. R. B. C. Huygens (Leiden: Brill, 1970).

<sup>26</sup> cf. Leslie G. Whitbread, 'Conrad of Hirsau as Literary Critic', *Speculum* 47 (1972), 234–45.

matter, and acted to prevent ruin – to understand what is *honestum* (worthy) and what is *iustum* (just).

The *accessus* tradition was intended only to provide a brief introduction to key themes of a text. Those who read its introduction to Sallust would find not only an emphasis on the dangers of a corrupt citizenry, but would also have their attention drawn to the senatorial response to public danger. Taken together, manuscript annotations, florilegia and the *accessus* all point in the same direction: suggesting to medieval readers that the final chapters of *Catiline* – the senatorial debate – represented the most important part of the text. It was there Sallust set out an account of two contrasting characters or natures, and an account of two polarised forms of moral virtue.

The speeches of *Catiline* 51–4 were borrowed by twelfth-century writers and placed in the mouths of other figures. Such examples are numerous. John of Salisbury, for example, in a discussion of judges and judicial office, invoked Julius Caesar (*ut Iulius Caesar ait*), warning that the mind cannot easily perceive truth when anger and hate, fear and friendship stand in the way.<sup>27</sup> The same passage was adapted in Cosmas of Prague's *Historia Boemorum* in an address which advises those in power to very carefully listen to counsel: they 'ought to be free of anger and hatred, of mercy and friendship. For where those things stand in the way, human opinion deceives the mind'.<sup>28</sup>

Borrowing from *Catiline* 51–4, however, went far beyond such brief quotations. To see this demonstrated, one can consider how Sallust's Caesar and Cato were borrowed and rewritten in two texts: the continuation of the *Gesta Frederici* by Rahewin of Freising, and Gerald of Wales' *Expugnatio Hibernica*. The part

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<sup>27</sup> *Policraticus*, v.12, quoting *Catiline* 51.2.

<sup>28</sup> *The Chronicle of the Czechs*, trans. Lisa Wolverton (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2009) iii.7, p. 189. See Lisa Wolverton, *Cosmas of Prague: Narrative, Classicism, Politics* (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2015), pp. 21–3, for the considerable influence of Sallust on the *Historia*.

of the *Gesta Frederici* written first by Otto of Freising also contains some echoes of Sallust.<sup>29</sup> More striking, however, is the work of his continuator Rahewin, c.1158–60, who borrows from Sallust much more heavily. Amongst these borrowings, Rahewin takes Sallust's c.54 – the comparison of Caesar and Cato – and rewrites it to describe two figures of the politics of his own day: Duke Welf VI and Henry the Lion, whom he describes as 'diversis moribus'. The comparison is a lengthy one, but what is more striking is the equivalence which Rahewin draws between their virtues. Duke Welf, like Caesar, is full of *clementia*; Henry the Lion, like Cato, is severe.<sup>30</sup> There is nothing to choose between them – both operate on a political stage in different ways – but both embody virtue.

The same is true of Gerald of Wales, the scholar and courtier to Angevin rulers, who had received his education first with Benedictines in Gloucester and subsequently in the schools of Paris. Gerald's use of the Sallustian model of Catiline 51–4 is even more extensive than that of Otto. In his *Expugnatio Hibernica* (a work written in 1189, describing the Angevin conquest of Ireland), Gerald effectively restages the senatorial debate.<sup>31</sup> In this context, however, the partisans of Catiline are transformed into Irish prisoners captured at the battle of Waterford. There is a lengthy set of orations in which first the case for clemency, then the case for capital punishment is made. This effectively rehearses the argument of *Catiline*, making the same series of points. The speaker who argues for clemency towards the prisoners makes the case that this is a mark of the development and maturity of a civilisation; the speaker who plays the part of Cato emphasises that clemency is dangerous so long as the Irish still present a risk to the conquerors, and would only strengthen the will of their enemies.

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<sup>29</sup> e.g. *Otonis Et Rahewini Gesta Friderici I. Imperatoris*, ed. G. Waitz (Hannover: Impensis Bibliopolii Hahniani, 1884), i.6, p. 19.

<sup>30</sup> *Gesta Friderici*, iv.46, pp. 227–8.

<sup>31</sup> *The Conquest of Ireland*, ed. A. B. Scott and Francis X. Martin (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1978), i.14–15.

There are two points to draw out of this discussion. The first is why Rahewin of Freising and Gerald of Wales bothered with such staging. These extended comparisons cannot, I think, be explained as arising from admiration for Sallust's Latin prose *alone*. They are too detailed and too lengthy to simply be a 'nod' to Sallust. Instead they take a Sallustian structure and use it to say something revealing and important about the politics of their own day, and its parallels with the classical world.<sup>32</sup> The second is what their usage meant, and how we should read it. Fundamentally, these are extremely ambiguous; they speak to a situation in which two opposed courses might both plausibly be the correct one to take. The speeches of Caesar and Cato – the characters of Caesar and Cato – both had much to recommend them.

It is here I return to John of Salisbury and the *exemplum* with which I began. John took from Valerius Maximus the example of a case which was so difficult to decide that no decision could be made – or, rather, where there were two 'right' courses of action. Twelfth-century readings of Sallust's Cato and Caesar did the same: clemency and severity were equally admirable virtues in the abstract; the challenge was to understand whether Cato or Caesar should be heeded in the particular case of Catiline. The Sallustian debate also set out a further series of connections, between punishment, counsel and deliberation. The appeal of this pairing lay in its connection to twelfth-century scholastic understandings of moral virtue, and, indeed, scholastic understandings of the ordering of the universe. As John made clear in his commentary, while both of those qualities were virtuous, neither was a good on its own—they required regulation, by counsel, and through prudence, to determine which attitude was most appropriate to the situation.

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<sup>32</sup> Indeed, this was not the only occasion on which Gerald of Wales reached for such a comparison – he borrowed it too to discuss the sons of Henry II. I discuss this further in Philippa Byrne, *Justice and Mercy: Moral Theology and the Exercise of Law in Twelfth-Century England* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2018), chapter 4.



## HISTORICAL AND MORAL OPPOSITES

To understand exactly how the historical example of Caesar's clemency and Cato's severity could be transformed into a set of moral arguments, one can look to Vincent of Beauvais's *Speculum maius*. Vincent (d. c.1264) was a Dominican friar: his great *speculum* a *compilatio* (compilation) which took over three decades to assemble. Collated from other sources, the works of encyclopaedists before him, making particular use of the *Florilegium Gallicum*,<sup>33</sup> Vincent presented a work which covered matters of nature, doctrine and history.<sup>34</sup> In one sense, the *Speculum* might be said to lack a distinct authorial voice – Vincent adds little to his material, selecting and compiling from other texts, in the manner of a florilegium. However, the choices made by Vincent in terms of inclusion, exclusion and organisation are revealing. Even though the work is vast, principles of selection still apply. Vincent selects the useful knowledge which it is most essential that one should have access to: the knowledge of greatest use to preachers, moralists, students. As such, the *Speculum maius* offers a particularly useful insight into the ideas in circulation in thirteenth-century moral theology.<sup>35</sup>

Among the four books of the *Speculum maius* is the *Speculum historiale*: a history which ran from the Fall to 1244. Book six of the *Speculum historiale* relates the last years of the Roman republic; it is in fact entitled 'tempora Iulii Caesaris'. This book begins with Cicero, and extracts a great deal from Ciceronian texts. It then moves on to consider the work of Sallust. Cicero and Sallust had exchanged

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<sup>33</sup> James Willoughby, 'The Transmission and Circulation of Classical Literature', *Oxford History of Classical Reception*, p. 106.

<sup>34</sup> The text used here is the 1964–5 facsimile of the 1624 edition: *Speculum quadruplex, sive, Speculum maius: naturale, doctrinale, morale, historiale* (4 vols., Duaci: ex officina typographica Baltazaris Belleri).

<sup>35</sup> More generally on Vincent, see Robert J. Schneider, 'Vincent of Beauvais, Dominican Author: From Compilatio to Tractatus', in *Lector et compilator: Vincent de Beauvais, frère prêcheur, un intellectuel et son milieu au XIIIe siècle*, ed. by Marie-Christine Duchenne et al., (Grâne: Editions Créaphis, 1997), pp. 97–111.

invectives (as the *Speculum* explains); and Cicero had played an important role in the history of Catiline which Sallust narrated.<sup>36</sup> Vincent then provides ‘flosculi Salustii in Catelinario’ – a selection of quotations from *Catiline* which attempts to summarise its moral theme. While beginning with brief mentions of fortune and the dangers of luxury and avarice, the chapter includes a lengthy quotation from Caesar’s oration to the Senate. The passage in question is that discussing clemency – Caesar’s warning to those who hold high office that punishment can quickly give way to cruelty (51.12–14).

On one hand, Vincent was only adding to the *Speculum* a passage which was found in florilegia collections, and which was admired as a compelling piece of oratory. On the other, the choice to include part of Caesar’s oration on clemency appears all the more significant when one considers what else is included in this book of the *Speculum*. Considerable attention is paid to the ‘historical’ person of Caesar, fleshing out his moral character by providing a series of one ‘dictum morale Julii Caesaris’ after another, taken from *De bello Gallico*.<sup>37</sup> This is in turn followed by a series of moral extracts from Cicero’s *De officiis* which pay particular attention to the nature of clemency (and which attract the marginal note ‘clementia mixta cum severitate’).<sup>38</sup>

Rather than setting out a straightforwardly ‘historical’ sequence of events, Vincent’s selections repeatedly bring the reader back to a series of moral discussions. His discussion of Caesar is set after quotations from one of the more famous passages of *De officiis*, praising the value of clemency: ‘for nothing is more commendable, nothing more becoming in a pre-eminently great man than placability and clemency (*placabilitate atque clementia*)’, and which concludes ‘it is to be desired

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<sup>36</sup> *Speculum historiale*, 6.32–3.

<sup>37</sup> *Speculum historiale*, 6.5.

<sup>38</sup> In the regard, the significance of Seneca’s *De clementia* should also be mentioned; the text was mined by twelfth-century authors to provide a more detailed account of the parts of clemency than could be found in Cicero or florilegia.

that they who administer the government should be like the laws, which are led to inflict punishment not by wrath but by justice'.<sup>39</sup> Book 6 of the *Speculum historiale* provides a great deal of discussion of virtue and its place in history. The key author is certainly Cicero: his works provide the structure, he is the figure who looms largest; but having paid due attention to Cicero, the *Speculum* moves on to the life of Caesar, whose personal and public life is reconstructed both from Sallust and from Caesar's own writings.<sup>40</sup> The overarching theme of the treatment of Caesar is to emphasise the nature of his character: *natura lenissimus*. It suggests, at the very least, that the Sallustian oration provided a key component in building up a picture of Caesar as particularly associated with clemency, gentleness and leniency as a judge.

The *Speculum maius*, however, allows us to go one step further than this. It provides an opportunity to consider the broader moral significance of both the tying of Caesar to clemency, and the comparison between Caesar and Cato. Why was that distinction – between clemency and severity – worth remarking on; why was it seen as a feature of character (or *natura*)? One of the reasons for this lies in the complexity of scholastic and moral thought on virtue and punishment. To appreciate this we can turn to another part of the *Speculum maius*, the *Speculum morale*. Although transmitted under Vincent's name and as part of the overarching scheme of the *Speculum maius*, it was in fact composed after Vincent's death, between c.1310 and c.1320, probably with material which had been left over from assembling the *Speculum naturale* and *historiale*.<sup>41</sup> The *Speculum morale* – as a summary of key teachings on morality – naturally includes a discussion of the cardinal virtues of prudence, temperance, fortitude and justice.

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<sup>39</sup> *Speculum historiale*, 6.7–8, quoting *De officiis*, i.25 (trans. Walter Miller (London: Heinemann, 1913), slightly adapted).

<sup>40</sup> *Speculum historiale*, 6.39.

<sup>41</sup> For further discussion, see Stefan Schuler, 'Exerptoris morum genere. Zur Kompilation und Rezeption klassisch-lateinischer Dichter im *Speculum historiale* des Vinzenz von Beauvais', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 29 (1995), 312–48.

*Distinctio* 60 of the first book discusses justice and its associated virtues. These include *religio*, *devotio et contemplatio*, *adoratio*, *obedientia*, *gratitudo*, and, importantly, *vindicatio* – the virtue (or part of justice) which is responsible for punishment. As elsewhere, the *Speculum* compresses and abridges the kinds of discussions one could find in the schools and more advanced moral literature. Here, as well as providing an overview of how virtue is ordered (cardinal virtues, naturally, subordinate to the spiritual), the author of the *Speculum* runs through several questions. Those are: whether *vindicatio* is licit – lawful or permissible; whether it is a spiritual virtue; how it should be used; and, finally, who it may be exercised against. The verdict of the *Speculum* – repeating common understandings of moral theology – is that *vindicatio* is permissible. It must necessarily be so as a part of justice. This is not the case when it exceeds measure (*excedit mensuram*) in punishment, such as when it becomes cruelty or savagery (*crudelitas vel saevitiae*). Those are a defect. But otherwise, it can be recognised as having purpose – as Proverbs xiii recommends, it is sometimes necessary: the father who loves his son will discipline him when it is needed. This, then, returns us to the essence of Cato’s argument in the senate: sometimes punishment is necessary in order to restore order; severity in the right context is a part of the virtue of justice.

Just as *vindicatio* is a virtue (or sub-species of the greater virtue of justice), so too is *clementia*, though it is a part of temperance, rather than justice. The *Speculum morale* goes on to discuss temperance and its parts,<sup>42</sup> before then examining the relationship between *clementia* and *mansuetudo* (gentleness) in a subsequent *distinctio*.<sup>43</sup> This discussion is revealing: the text defines *clementia* as curbing punishments (i.e. exterior actions), whereas *mansuetudo* combats *internal* anger. The purpose of *clementia* is thus to mitigate punishment. More importantly, however, the

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<sup>42</sup> *Speculum morale*, i.97.

<sup>43</sup> *Speculum morale*, i.98.

*Speculum* then moves on to examine the relationship between *severitas* and *clementia*: i.e. severity in punishment and relaxation of punishment. Ostensibly, the *Speculum* explains, the two would seem to be opposed; but that is not the case when one further considers their relation. *Severitas* is inflexible concerning the infliction of punishment when such punishment is necessary; *clementia* diminishes punishment according to right reason.

The conclusion of the anonymous author of the *Speculum morale* is that the application of virtue depends on the circumstances. Both severe punishment and mitigation of punishment may be considered acts of virtue. This serves to underline a more basic point. What Caesar (and Cato) demonstrate is a question of the interaction between different kinds of virtues – i.e. justice and temperance, and their constituent parts, and which should take priority. This was not merely a moral question, but a political one – as both Rahewin of Freising and Gerald of Wales had demonstrated. Choice of strategy – punitive action or clemency – could have serious consequences. Given this moral framework, it is perhaps unsurprising that Sallust's comparison of Caesar and Cato proved valuable. It could be used to put this contradiction into a superior stylistic form: a summary of complex doctrine crystallised in a memorable historical episode.

Constance Bouchard has suggested that medieval thought was characterised by a 'discourse of opposites' – a desire to understand the world through pairings and reversals, the kind of thinking embodied by the idea that 'the last shall be first and the first shall be last'.<sup>44</sup> One part of Bouchard's argument is that this engagement with a model of opposition admitted no room for middle positions in twelfth-century thought. She argues that it was not until the full reception of Aristotle's *Organon* in the later twelfth century, and the development of an Aristotelian moral

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<sup>44</sup> Constance Bouchard, *"Every Valley Shall Be Exalted": The Discourse of Opposites in Twelfth-Century Thought* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003).

philosophy in the following century, that serious thought was given to a 'middle term'<sup>45</sup> – the possibility that virtue might not be solely defined by its contraries. This was supported by a shift in approach to moral and philosophical thinking which was no longer categorised according to binary categories of opposition, but which instead sought a single 'correct' answer.<sup>46</sup> Similarly, the reception of the *Organon* and, later still, the *Ethics*, has long been seen as providing the stimulus for the increasing importance of 'regulation' in thirteenth-century moral thought, creating a model where prudence held the other cardinal virtues in check.<sup>47</sup> Aristotelian categorisation and conceptual clarity destabilised a twelfth-century mode of thinking where little emphasis had been placed on prudential regulation.

Ostensibly, the twelfth-century utilisation of Caesar and Cato might seem to fit this narrative: the relationship between clemency and severity accords with that model of oppositional thinking, supposedly characteristic of the period. But, as this article has attempted to demonstrate, late eleventh- and twelfth-century writers were reading Sallust with an emphasis on conditions and circumstance. *Catiline* was used to express an argument for prudential regulation of justice. Cato and Caesar could demonstrate that the course of justice had necessarily to be the subject of counsel and examination; the 'correct' application of virtue might change with the prevailing local conditions. One did not necessarily require an Aristotelian vocabulary to make this point: one could derive this principle from the classical texts which made up the standard texts of the grammatical curriculum, and, most particularly, from Sallust.<sup>48</sup> This Sallustian model was available in the late eleventh century; it continued to appeal to authors of moral philosophy in the early fourteenth century.

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<sup>45</sup> Bouchard, "Every Valley Shall be Exalted", p. 50.

<sup>46</sup> Bouchard, "Every Valley Shall be Exalted", pp. 148–9.

<sup>47</sup> For an outline of this, see Christopher A. Franks, 'Aristotelian Doctrines in Aquinas's Treatment of Justice', in *Aristotle in Aquinas's Theology*, ed. by Gilles Emery and Matthew Levering (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 139–66.

<sup>48</sup> I am most grateful to the journal's anonymous reviewer for helping me clarify my thoughts and refine my arguments on this point.

## DEBATABLE VIRTUES AND THE VIRTUE OF DEBATE

Across the 'long twelfth century' and beyond, Sallust was used as a way into a discussion about just punishment and the appropriateness of showing clemency to offenders. Both strategies could be morally virtuous, but – crucially – not in every circumstance. Some judgment was required in order to determine how punitive power should be wielded. That was the essence of the debate in *Catiline*: who had rightly diagnosed the situation – Julius Caesar or Cato the Younger? Sallust, of course, was not the only classical author who might provide material for such discussions, but the senatorial setting, in which virtue was open to debate, seems to have made the text all the more compelling. Sallust staged a debate which explicitly addressed the connection between virtue, debate and political strategy – connecting the cardinal virtues to politics. Caesar and Cato provided a clear way of illuminating a difficult moral debate, even if there was no singular answer to the questions posed in the Roman senate. Small wonder, then, that this passage of Sallust captured the attention of a number of medieval chroniclers.

First and foremost, one must conclude that Sallust, as a 'moralist', offered something much more than a narrative of the corruption and decline of Roman virtue. The usage of *Catiline* also reveals something about medieval interest in Roman deliberative oratory, and how deliberation might fit into twelfth-century politics. This is not to suggest that every author of this period who quoted from or echoed Sallust was interested in the nature of rhetorical argument. Several texts, however, which display a deep engagement with Sallust also place a consistent emphasis on oratory and the nature of argument.

The *Gesta Chonradi II imperatori*, a history of the deeds of the Holy Roman Emperor Conrad II, written c.1046 by Wipo, Conrad's chaplain, is packed with

quotations from both *Catiline* and *Jugurtha* – quotations which suggest much more than a passing familiarity with Sallust's works. Throughout the *Gesta*, one finds an emphasis on themes of counsel and deliberation. Wipo repeatedly implies that what holds back a polity from anarchy and disorder is the wise decision-making of the men who counsel an emperor: 'there would have been massacres, arson and plundering in many places, if the violence had not been held back by the struggles of eminent men (*illustrium virorum*)'.<sup>49</sup> Wipo exhorts his readers to understand that political deeds were achieved not by chance, but through the advice of the most prudent men (*prudentissimorum virorum consulto*), who suggested action which was 'useful, morally worthy and the right course'.<sup>50</sup> One cannot assume that this idea was straightforwardly 'taken' from Sallust – after all, counsel was a key part of medieval politics. However, given Wipo's engagement with the nature of decision-making and the relationship between prudent choice and prosperity, one is tempted to suggest that finding these themes in Sallust may have further reinforced his interest in the classical historian.

The same is true of the *Gesta Guillelmi* of William of Poitiers (1071–7), another text which borrows heavily from Sallust, and which is marked throughout by its emphasis on counsel. This text makes direct comparisons between William, Duke of Normandy (the future William I of England) and Julius Caesar, going as far as to suggest that William's deeds were more impressive than those of Caesar.<sup>51</sup> One of the key claims made in the text is the rightfulness of William's claim to the throne of England; Edward the Confessor recognises that William is the right man to rule

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<sup>49</sup> *Gesta Chonradi II. Imperatoris*, in *Wiponis Opera*, ed. by H. Bresslau (Hannover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1915), p. 8.

<sup>50</sup> *Gesta Chonradi*, p. 8.

<sup>51</sup> John Gillingham has read the references to Julius Caesar in William of Poitiers as suggesting a new model of battlefield conduct, in which courtesy and restraint are emphasised. While he makes a persuasive case for the importance of cultural change, his account does not address the significance of classical rhetoric and the deliberative dimension of William's models. Cf. John Gillingham, 'Conquering the Barbarians: War and Chivalry in Twelfth-Century Britain and Ireland', in his *The English in the Twelfth Century* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2000), pp. 41–58.



when he observes William's display of 'support and counsel' (*viribus et consilio*).<sup>52</sup> What moves political change, William of Poitiers implies, are the decisions taken by the wise – political action consists of listening to counsel and taking decisions. Even the succession to the English throne is presented as a debatable matter: 'for the English, when they had discussed the question, agreed that William's arguments were the best' (*disceptantes etenim Angli deliberatione suis rationibus utilissima consenserunt*).<sup>53</sup>

Counsel also has an important bearing on the military aspects of the conquest of England; it is William's careful and conditional political judgment that makes him a leader of men. William of Poitiers sets up William's Norman counsellors as a contemporary equivalent of the Roman senate. He describes the arrangement of men, both secular and religious, assembled to give counsel as 'shining luminaries who were the pride of that assembly' (*quorum in collegio splendidiora quaedam eius lumina atque ornamenta emicuere*).<sup>54</sup> William subsequently makes the classical parallel even more explicit: 'it was thanks to their wisdom and their efforts that Normandy could be kept in safety; supported by these the Roman republic would not have needed two hundred senators, if she had preserved her ancient power in our own time'. In every debate, this great assembly is led by the opinions of the then-Duke William and his *prudencia*.<sup>55</sup> Likewise, the reader's attention is drawn to the power of William's *elocutio*; the tool which allows him to convince men to follow the most appropriate course of action.<sup>56</sup> Under the pen of William of Poitiers, Hastings becomes less a battle than sequence of consultations and arguments in which Duke William triumphs through the brilliance of his deliberative oratory. Those oratorical

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<sup>52</sup> *The Gesta Guillelmi of William of Poitiers*, trans. R. H. C. Davis (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), i.14.

<sup>53</sup> *Gesta Guillelmi*, i.14.

<sup>54</sup> *Gesta Guillelmi*, ii.1. Cf. Emily A. Winkler, 'The Norman Conquest of the Classical Past: William of Poitiers, Language and History', *Journal of Medieval History* 42 (2016), 456–78.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Roger D. Ray, 'Orderic Vitalis and William of Poitiers: A Monastic Reinterpretation of William the Conqueror', *Revue belge de Philologie et d'Histoire* 50 (1972), 1116–27, esp. 1112.

<sup>56</sup> *Gesta Guillelmi*, ii.5.

battles prefigure the fighting itself. William the Conqueror, merciful on the battlefield, is like Caesar too in his counsel.<sup>57</sup>

The aim of this article has not been to suggest that there was only one idea which could be drawn out from Sallust in the twelfth century. There were other, important, Sallustian themes, and other aspects of the text which struck a chord with readers. Not the least of those was the exhortation which began *Catiline* – that history should not be passed over in silence, and that history writing was the duty of all men. Sallust's admonishment was read, heeded and repeated by his medieval successors.<sup>58</sup> When it came to Sallust's treatment of Caesar and Cato, however, his text provided an *exemplum* for medieval readers that was moral, political and historical. It provided the material (and to some extent, the framework) for a debate about the connection between judgment, virtue and political action. Sallust's memorialisation of Rome at one of its most politically uncertain moments offered a vision of difficult decision making, where two contrary ideas might be held, even admired, at the same time. It also invited medieval readers to think about how a moral choice should be made. Far from providing a sprinkling of salt to make the dish more delicious, Sallust offered something more difficult to swallow – a problem which stuck in the throat.



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<sup>57</sup> Cf. *Gesta Guillelmi*, ii.39.

<sup>58</sup> e.g. Wipo's *Gesta Chonradi*, prologue, p. 4; Geoffrey Malaterra's *De rebus gestis Rogerii* (prefatory letter), ed. Ernesto Pontieri (Bologna: N. Zanichelli, 1927–8).