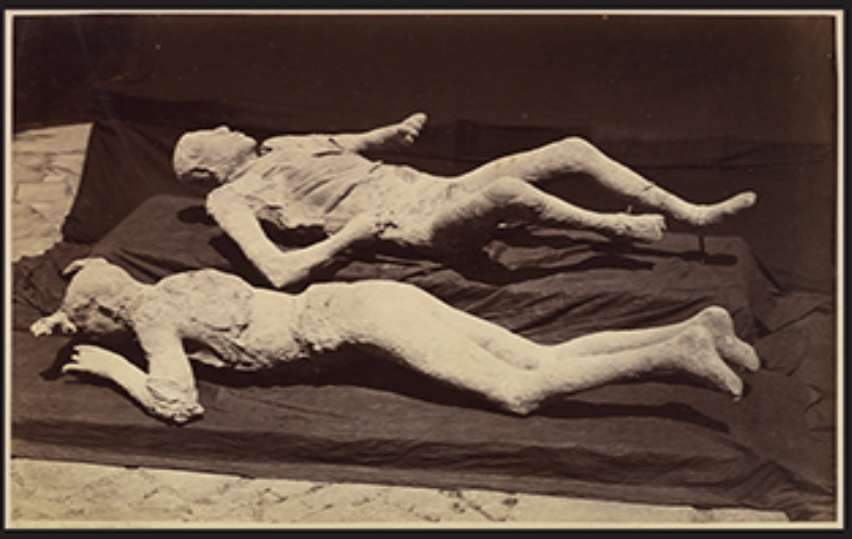

After the Past

Sallust on History and Writing History

Andrew Feldherr

BLACKWELL BRISTOL LECTURES ON GREECE, ROME AND THE CLASSICAL TRADITION

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For my father and in memory of my mother.

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The opportunity to deliver the 2014 Bristol-Blackwell Lectures on which this book is based has been the highpoint of my professional life. The invitation gave me the chance to attempt a sustained reading of an author who has fascinated and frustrated me since I first encountered him. And the too brief weeks I spent in Bristol itself continue to delight and inspire me with memories of the warm hospitality I received, the generosity and responsiveness of the audiences for my lectures, and so many conversations with students and faculty that simply clicked, not to speak of the interest and beauty of the city, if not always of its weather. Among the many friends I made during that visit, I want to single out for particular thanks Bob Fowler, Laura Jansen, Kurt Lampe, Adam Lecznar, Genevieve Lively, and Edwin Shaw. Ellen O'Gorman and Shane Butler fall into a special category, for beyond the kindness of their welcome each also presented a formal response to one of my talks, as did Christopher Pelling and Christopher Whitton. Peter Wiseman generously read the script of my presentations and pointed out several places where, as he put it with even more generous understatement, "the premises of the argument may be vulnerable." Should any of these have the stomach to revisit those lectures in written form, I hope they will recognize how much I have learned from them.

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profoundly it has been shaped by the work of so many of my Latinist colleagues. My use, and occasional abuse, of the scholarship of Yelena Baraz, Ted Champlin, Denis Feeney, Harriet Flower, Bob Kaster, Dan-el Padilla Peralta, and Brent Shaw throughout the chapters to follow shows but the traces of a much larger personal and intellectual debt. (And I hope that my old friend Andrew Riggsby, who visited Princeton during that period, will allow himself to be counted in this number.) Further thanks are due to Princeton's Council of the Humanities, from whom I received an Old Dominion Fellowship, which provided me with leave to write my lectures and allowed me to share the weekly colloquia of its Society of Fellows. Support was also offered by the Loeb Classical Library Foundation.

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During the year I began this project, each day started with a walk in the radiant company of my dog Clio. Her presence made every idea seem brilliant and every problem simple. The rest of those mornings was consumed in pushing her away from the computer as I struggled to reconstruct the fragments of what I thought I had figured out. I consoled myself, and I hope her, with the promise of the unclouded times we would spend together once the book was done. Clio died two months before I sent the manuscript out for

review. In the face of all Sallust's moral precepts, I would delete every word to have her back: nothing matters more than a dog's happiness.

In addition to the lectures I gave at Bristol, I presented earlier versions of Chapter 4 at Pomona College and of Chapter 5 at Cambridge University, the College of Charleston, and at the 2017 Celtic Conference in Classics in Montreal. I am indebted to the questions and suggestions I received on those occasions.

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Introduction

The most important modern treatment of the “revolution” that ended the last Roman Republic concludes as follows: “For power he [sc. Augustus] had sacrificed everything; he had achieved the height of all mortal ambition and in his ambition he had saved and regenerated the Roman People” (Syme 1939, 524). Sallust, the Roman historian whose first experiment in the genre zeroes in on a representative moment in that crisis, stands clearly in the background. The protagonist of Sallust’s work, Catiline, an aristocrat who unsuccessfully tried to seize power in 63 bce, was equally driven on by ambition. Indeed, Sallust identifies such ambition as, with avarice, the cause of revolution, moral and political. But the idea that individual ambition could be a salvific force for the Roman People is unimaginable in his writing, and so the recollection of his contemporary perspective highlights the profound historical irony of the story that Syme has told.

There is an obvious reason why Sallust would have been shocked that ambition could end in social regeneration: he died, most likely, in 35 bce,[1] when the victory that was finally to give Syme’s improbable hero unrivalled power in the Roman world was still unforeseeable, not to speak of the victor’s subsequent 45 years as sole ruler. But my interest lies not so much in the difference between the two historians’ understandings of ambition and revolution as in how Syme positions his historical analysis in relation both to events themselves and to his Roman sources. The pluperfect tenses of his conclusion reinforce the double ending point of his story: not only are Augustus’ accomplishments at an end, but they were complete at the point that Syme draws his own conclusions about them.

The paradox that Augustus remained very much a creature of Sallust's world and yet, while staying "true" to those original motivations, nevertheless saved the Roman state becomes all the more striking when Syme summons up a Roman perception of revolution to contrast with the way things would appear to those writing two millennia after the event. As longevity differentiates an Augustus from a Catiline, so the superiority of Syme's historical judgment over Sallust's derives from his temporal distance from the events he narrates.

Consider by contrast the last sentence of Sallust's *Catiline*, describing the battlefield after the final defeat of Catiline's forces: "and so throughout the whole army, variously, happiness, sorrow, mourning, and rejoicing were being enacted" (*ita varie per omnem exercitum laetitia maeror, luctus atque gaudia agitabantur*, *Cat*. 61.9). Here we find a very different kind of complexity, one that results not from the synthesis of apparently contradictory elements through the alchemy of time (ambition proving salvific) but from the simultaneous cacophony of opposed reactions to the same event (mourning and exaltation). If Syme's verbs portray the trajectory of events as completed before they are viewed, Sallust's use of the imperfect leaves us immersed in the description of an action in process. Where Syme drives home the virtual incomprehensibility of his analysis to those who witnessed events, Sallust's position in relation to those contemporary witnesses remains more uncertain. He too of course had the benefit of hindsight and would have known that the emotions he represents foreshadow and may actually cause the more prolonged and devastating conflicts to come. Moreover, those future conflicts may have been so obvious to anyone in Sallust's audience that the authorial judgment condemning partisanship would be no less clear for being left unsaid.

And yet the suppression of any perspective from after the past accomplishes more than irony by other means. While the view from the authorial present is, as we have seen, easily available to his audience, it does not inevitably displace the experiences described within the narrative. The reader who might have shared Sallust's deep mistrust of the passions stirred by the sight of the battlefield could have been led from his present knowledge back to identification with those contemporary responses to the scene. Corresponding to the invisibility of the historian's point of view in Sallust is the direct presence of these other more immediate reactions to events, which Syme by comparison has left implicit. And as with the temporal separation between actions and their representations, so the conceptual difference between what happened and how it has been perceived is made less distinct in Sallust. In a way that English cannot capture, the onlookers' responses themselves suggest actions (*agitabantur*) and starting points, starting points not only for new acts of violence but perhaps for the responses those new acts will engender, for readings of events like Sallust's own presumably tragic view of where Catiline's defeat would lead.

The contrast between Syme and Sallust that this comparison illustrates cannot therefore simply be boiled down to privileging the surety that comes from viewing events as complete over participating in the uncertainty of direct experience. Rather it is a question of the visibility of these alternatives and the level of scrutiny directed towards the narrative methods of the historian himself. The Sallustian view of ambition arises simply as a foil to the truth revealed by Syme, while the voices of the past combatants at the end of the *Catiline* demand more strongly to be heard. Sallust in 43 bce may indeed understand Catiline's defeat better than the spectators at the time, but, for all that, the relationship between these

perspectives is left more open if only because the effect of the temporal contrast is made so much more explicit. And this in turn creates an awareness of the historicity of history, of the temporal situatedness of the historian in relation to events, that I will argue fundamentally structures Sallust's representation of the past.

The advantage of hindsight upon which modern historians like Syme rely was of course widely recognized by ancient historians as well.[2] One of the genre's founding practitioners, Herodotus, practically begins his narrative with the Greek sage Solon advising a barbarian king not to judge human affairs before they reach their ends (1.32). Three centuries later Polybius would claim for his universal history an ability to depict events in their entirety, temporal as well as spatial (1.4). But the seemingly self-evident superiority of hindsight for understanding history has been challenged on several fronts. The distant perspective necessary to explain why things happened can, perversely, put effects before causes, and construct patterns in actions that were as meaningless and unknowable to those who witnessed or even participated in them as the prospect of salvation through ambition was to Augustus or to Sallust.[3]

These hermeneutic challenges to traditional historiographic narrative have provided an illuminating vantage point for re-examining the practices of ancient historians. Jonas Grethlein (2013) has recently used the opposition between "experience and teleology" to analyze the depiction of time in ancient historians and to complicate the genealogies that connect the ancient genre of history with the modern academic discipline. And his work contains a thought-provoking analysis of the *Catiline*, arguing for the priority of hindsight in the construction of its narrative while also identifying those elements, including the "*tableau vivant*" of the final scene, the historian's use of counterfactuals, and professions of uncertainty, that pull the reader closer

to the experience, rather than analysis, of events.[4] While drawing its impetus from Grethlein's taxonomy of historiography's representational strategies, my attempt to flesh out Sallust's approach to temporality will differ from his in two important respects. First, Grethlein largely treats teleology and experience as "etic" categories. While the opposition between them structures his understanding of Sallust's practices, and certainly the terms would have been comprehensible to Sallust, he does not present Sallust's temporal position in relation to events as something that the historian himself makes an issue for his readers.[5] By contrast, I will assume that the mixture of representational techniques Grethlein finds in Sallust plays a crucial role in shaping the audience's understanding not just of the historian's enterprise but of the terms with which they themselves should engage with the Roman past. Where, for instance, Grethlein treats authorial ambiguity as a feature that Sallust uses to distance the reader from a teleological understanding of events, I see the contrast between an ex post facto understanding of historical crises and a participatory one as generating a fundamental ambiguity about the aims and nature of historiography.

I will also move beyond Grethlein's interest in narrative form per se to ask how the choices with which these strategies confront the reader make sense in relation to the intellectual and political crises of the time when Sallust wrote. The perspectives constructed respectively by teleological and experiential understandings of events position the historian, his text, and his readers "after the past" in two contradictory senses. The assimilation of contemporary experience draws its audience closer to events and highlights also the continuities between actions and representations. The audience is "after the past" because they perceive how their present connects with that past, as for instance in perceiving the passions aroused by

Catiline's defeat as still driving civic discord. Audiences looking back at Sallust's narratives as though completed can translate the analytic distance necessary to make judgments about the past into a separation from the political life of the state that forms history's subject. To select another example from the *Catiline*, Sallust's discussion of the crucial ethical term *virtus* goes together with the recognition that the two figures whose actions make *virtus* visible have passed from the scene (*Cat*. 53.6).

Modern investigations of perspective in historical narratives generally concern the epistemological validity of the representation of the past they offer: this involves both such traditional questions as "Is this narrative impartial enough to be credible?" and more radical ones such as "What is the ontological status of an event like World War I before its representation?"[6] And this emphasis also emerges in Sallust, especially since actors' perspectives on events often take on a rhetorical form that shows them as anything but impartial. Indeed, a crucial methodological passage of the *Catiline* suggests that the very proliferation of self-interested claims about who did what to whom makes the past unknowable (*Cat*. 4.2). But these issues about the credibility of different views of the past form part of a larger debate about the status of the historian and of historiography itself, which Sallust, as we shall see, positions ambiguously between action and leisure. Sallust presents writing history as a turning away from politics, but in almost the same breath presents it as a way of fulfilling the highest function of political action, indeed of all action, to provide scope for demonstrating excellence. These questions about historiography's distance from and proximity to events are enacted in the narrative when the historian appears as alternatively participating in public achievements or as retrospectively translating these achievements into ethical universals. The central debate in

professional scholarship on Sallust may be recognized as a version of the same question: Was Sallust a historian or a pamphleteer? Did he aim to explain and understand the past or to construct a version that would support his allies and defame his enemies?[7] That this portrait of the political Sallust so resembles what he himself imagines hostile readers would say about him, namely that he attacks others' faults out of malevolence, suggests the extent to which this debate itself arises from alternatives put forward in the text (*Cat*. 3.2). Some critics have tried to move beyond the Sallustian "problem" by presenting the conceptions of "historian" and "pamphleteer" it opposes as fundamentally modern conceptions that create a false dichotomy (see below). History, especially in the Roman world, was both more connected to political persuasion and deployed the tools of rhetoric. But if the basic oppositions, if not the particular labels we apply to the alternatives it presents, do emerge from Sallust's own representation of his work then we may come to understand Sallust better by continuing to ask such questions about the ultimate nature of his activity as a writer than by settling them.

If the use I make of Grethlein's mode of analysis accentuates contrasts and inconsistencies within Sallust's text, these characteristics dominate analyses of other formal aspects of Sallust's work. Antithesis, inconcinnity, and unmediated junctures (*asyndeta*) have been since antiquity among the most immediately recognizable features of Sallust's style. Kurt Latte's remarkable 1934 study of the author not only gave a full account of these compositional principles, from the smallest patterns of word arrangement to the structuring of the entire monographs, but made them the basis for a comprehensive interpretation of the historian's work. Rather than treating Sallust's political aims as the explanation of his style, Latte worked backward in constructing an intellectual biography

of the historian based around contradiction. The restless energy of Sallust's style bespeaks the frustration of a man excluded from participation in public life for whom literary activity could never count as an acceptable substitute, another manifestation of the duality between writing and acting with which Sallust confronts his reader. From then on, the Sallust "problem" (politician or historian?) was replaced by efforts at synthesis.[8] Syme's declaration that Sallust must be read as both a historian and a participant in public life would be shared by the two other large-scale monographs that appeared in the generation after Latte's, those of Büchner (1982) and La Penna (1968). For all their different understandings of Sallust's political views, these books combine stylistic and historical analysis to a degree matched in the study of no other Roman historian. Antithesis comes to the fore again in the next great wave of Sallustian scholarship, beginning in the late 1980s. As Woodman and Wiseman's redefinition of historiography brought it closer to rhetoric than reporting and so authorized a new range of literary approaches to works in the genre,[9] Sallust's mode of writing became important as something more than a symptom, as for Latte, or even an indispensable tool for recovering the complexities of his political thought. In the works of such scholars as Batstone, Kraus, Levene, Gunderson, and Sklenář, to mention but a few salient examples, the striking comparisons Sallust's writing exposes without resolving, in different ways, draw attention to representation itself. It is the manifestation of a political climate where the capacity of representing things in words has been compromised and the sense of a clear referent, or even a coherent intellectual connection between opposing terms, is laid open to question.[10] These are the scholars who taught me to read Sallust, and my own emphasis on the experience of his text as itself

fundamentally politicized owes more to their influence than citations to specific arguments can suggest.[11]

The issue of the author's own distance from or proximity to public events also forms part of a larger transformation in the place and status of literary activity that becomes especially acute just in the years when Sallust turns from politics to history writing. The volatility and violence of the last decades of the Roman republic compelled many members of Rome's ruling classes to withdraw from their careers, and often from the capital itself, temporarily or permanently. At the same time the opportunities to construct an alternative presence in the public eye through writing had never been greater. Rhetorical training, amid the trials and debates of these decades, was more obviously than ever a means of gaining influence and power, but this training also made it easier for those out of the spotlight to transfer the voice and persona they had forged in their oratory to the page. The elite networks by which money was made and provinces governed in the growing empire also provided a mechanism for the circulation of letters and treatises. Finally, the new cultural capital acquired through conquest and trade, in the form of books and highly literate slaves, at once opened up new forms of literary expression, contributed to the production and circulation of texts, and perhaps gave a new prestige to literary activity as a vehicle for displaying wealth and status.

No one mastered the new opportunities for self-fashioning thrown up by this cultural revolution more comprehensively and successfully than M. Tullius Cicero. As he had shown how rhetorical brilliance could propel someone from the peripheries of power to the highest office of all, his consulate of 63 bce, so, during the many periods of exile that followed on from his success, he relied on his writings about philosophy and rhetoric, not to speak of the published versions of speeches and likely thousands of

letters, to keep his voice before the public. Indeed, the proliferation of philosophical writings from the last years of Cicero's life constitute, in the words of Yelena Baraz (2012), nothing less than "a written republic," projecting new models of social relations and personal ethics all voiced by Cicero and his circle of friends. These function not only as author, audience, and distribution network for the publications themselves but live also as characters within their fictions.[12] By these means, Cicero turned what would ordinarily have been considered as the products of *otium*, that off-duty time that could only be defined negatively by a public man's not doing his real "work" of exercising power, into multifaceted expressions of the status he had earned in public life.[13]

A pressure to compare Cicero with Sallust arises from the historian's first choice of subject. Cicero had presented the expulsion of Catiline as his greatest deed, and one arguably accomplished by the power of his rhetorical voice. Yet, despite the fact that Cicero's speeches were an inevitable source for, and alternative articulation of, Catiline's conspiracy, the orations as historical events are scarcely mentioned in Sallust's narrative, and, in a work that contains the highest proportion of direct speech of any ancient historical text, the orator hero remains silent. What this treatment of Cicero contributes to Sallust's own self-presentation as a writer will be considered more fully in chapters 2 and 6. But if Cicero's authorial presence obviously shadows Sallust's emergence as a writer, we can gain an important complementary perspective on the historian's literary career by comparing him to another Roman writer who, though some sixteen years younger, began his first major work at almost exactly the same moment as Sallust. Vergil's *Eclogues* predict the strategies of a new generation of writers who faced an entirely different challenge from Cicero. As opposed to statesmen

using literature to extend the presence of an identity forged in the "real world" of politics, Vergil and Horace owed their status and identity to their writings alone. If Cicero, not only in his speeches but in his philosophical writings as well, makes it easy for his audience to imagine a real space and occasion within which the texts before him were once performed, the *Eclogues* frustrate efforts to place them on any map. And yet the fictive speakers inhabiting this imaginary world have also made it possible to construct an identity for their historical author.[14] Although the speaker of the first *Eclogue* is a purely textual creature, whose actions and attitudes are largely structured by the audience's knowledge of earlier bucolic poetry, he nevertheless also becomes a mouthpiece for the author to address topics and figures from the world of the audience's immediate experience. Thus, where the Ciceronian persona moves from reality to text, Vergil's in the *Eclogues* travels in the opposite direction.

As we shall see, Sallust's presence in the *Catiline* stands poised between these two trajectories. Like Cicero, he too had had a multifaceted public career, including the offices of tribune and, after Caesar's victory, of governor of the province of Africa.[15] There was, therefore, a Sallust before there was a *Catiline*. Yet the story he tells about himself in that work is a tissue of literary allusions (*Cat*. 3.3–4.2).[16] We can easily explain why Sallust's self-presentation might require particular artifice: unlike Cicero's, Sallust's career included not only exile but disgrace and featured charges of extortion that would hardly add authority to the historian's attacks on avarice. But a decision to explain Sallust's literary strategy by reference to his historical biography itself begs a question that we would never feel the need to ask when reading Cicero: Is the author of this text to be identified with the Sallust we know from his public actions? And indeed the impulse to explain the text

by reference to the actual misfortunes of the author (Sallust had to write this way because of his disgrace) may be balanced by an opposite tendency to redeem the reputation of the historical Sallust by attributing to him the much more laudable moral perspectives he voices as a historian. Such judgments equally involve the reader in deciding where the author stands in relation to historical reality.

The reason Sallust has not generally figured as he should in the story of how the boundaries of Latin literature were renegotiated in this era is, I suspect, the genre in which he wrote. Historiography has long been considered one of the rare forms of literary expression that were appropriate for members of Rome's political elite to engage in seriously, as opposed to as pastimes for their leisure. Thus the challenge that Cicero faced of reconciling *otium* with public rank might seem not to have existed, at least to the same degree, for a historian.[17] Yet, even within this generic tradition, the defense of history as a product of *otium* had an influential precedent in the opening of Cato's *Origines* (F2 *FRHist*).[18] From this perspective, far from being exempt from cultural pressures to proclaim its public utility, historiography helped establish the imperative of such positioning, and Cato's gesture would become a point of reference in winning favor for other practices associated with leisure (cf. Cic. *Planc*. 66). Even so, it is striking that Sallust seems to exaggerate the dilemma, and indeed the paradox, of construing historiography as distinct from the *res publica* and as a mode of participation. In the *Catiline*, as I shall argue in Chapter 2, his assertions of withdrawal from public life can also be read as mapping a return to the *res publica* through writing. And, in the introduction to his second treatise, the *Jugurtha*, he rejects earlier apologies for the *virtus* of history in favor of confronting hostile readers with the claim that "greater advantage will come to

the state from my leisure (*otio*) than from others' occupations" (*negotiis*, *Jug*. 4.4). Here the very notion that writing history is a "pastime" is subjected to attack by being placed in the mouths of his opponents.[19] Both the ambiguities of the *Catiline* preface and the staged confrontation at the opening of the *Jugurtha* not only make clear that the place of historiography in the hierarchy of occupations was available for debate; they compel readers to judge whether it belongs in the realm of leisure or duty.[20]

Such questions about the social value of history combine with aspects of its reception, and with its intrinsic literary properties, to make it, in fact, a genre ideally suited for scrutinizing the place of literature in Roman public life. While the *Eclogues* offer glimpses of historical figures, and the real situation of wartime Italy fades in and out of view, reality is ideally a constant presence to history's audience, who, unlike readers of poetry, were expected in the words of Cicero to relate everything they read to truth.[21] But if public life formed the subject matter of history and if it could be lent authority by the political distinction of its authors, what we know about its reception make it indistinguishable from philosophical dialogues or most other literary forms. We have no evidence for any officially sanctioned performances of historical works during the republic.[22] The one contemporary glimpse we have of the audience for a reading of history, in fact, specifically notes the genre's appeal precisely to those whose rank or age made it impossible for them to take part in any of the deeds described (Cic. *Fin*. 5.51–2). Indeed Quintilian, writing over a century later, speaks of Sallust's style in particular as unsuitable for actual rhetorical performances because its concision demands too much expertise and attention on the part of the reader, and is so ideal for "ears at leisure" (*aures vacuas*, *Inst*. 10.1.32).[23] In both these respects the

remoteness of the historical text as an artifact exists in tension with the object of its representation. So too in more abstract terms, I suggest, the experience of reading history makes constantly available the contrast between the historical events it conveys and its own status as an artistic representation.[24] Such an approach to reading history explains how the conceptual opposition between history as a vehicle for experiencing the past and as a product of ex post facto reflection translates into a very Roman, and very Sallustian, concern about whether the writer of history was in fact a man of action. The mimetic powers of the text balance its self-evident verbal crafting, especially when the style is as distinctive and as unrhetorical, in Quintilian's sense, as Sallust's.

The six chapters that follow illustrate how various aspects of Sallust's works construct contrasting perspectives on the Roman past and trace out some consequences of these alternatives for the reader. I aim to show how different ways of understanding the continuities and trajectories of Roman history in equal measure create and depend upon readers' perceptions of their own position in relation to the *res publica* and of how the actions of writing and reading history are themselves a part of history. The first chapter continues the work of the introduction by focusing on the depictions of time in the *Catiline*. It correlates divergent ways of locating the conspiracy in time with Sallust's disorienting choice to begin the work by asking questions that seem more philosophical than historical. Because the internal discursive rivalry Sallust sets in motion parallels the prominent alternatives available for the literary self-expression of Sallust's peers and contemporaries, these internal questions about the composition and emphasis within Sallust's narrative lead also to judgments about the author's own political and ethical choices. The topic of the second chapter, which again concentrates on the *Catiline*,

will be Sallust's positioning of historiography in relation to its greatest generic rival of all, rhetoric. The idea that classical historiography was itself a fundamentally rhetorical enterprise has provided the enabling premise for most literary analyses of the genre over the past thirty years, but here I argue for the importance of maintaining the distinction between rhetoric and historiography in Sallust's narrative. A crucial catalyst for the reader's engagement with the experiences depicted in any historical narrative is the historian's representation of and attitude towards emotions such as pity, and, especially important to Sallust, envy, and this will be the topic of the third chapter. Ancient treatments of the role of the emotions in historical writing often include a comparison to tragedy, and Chapter 4 studies the allusions to tragedy in the *Jugurtha* in this light, arguing that tragedy provides an important framework not only for understanding the course of events in the narrative but for dissecting the potential impact of Sallust's own work on its audience. The depiction of space in the same monograph will be the topic of the next chapter, which connects Sallust's techniques of representing both the landscapes of the battlefield and the imagined geography of Africa as a whole with the differing conceptions of historiography set forth in the first chapter. The final chapter considers the status of Sallust's works as textual artifacts by analyzing the representation of writing in both monographs.

As this summary shows, the book as a whole is unified by a way of understanding the political dimensions of how Sallust has constructed his narrative, how an impression of distance from and proximity to the events described prompts reflection on both author and audience's engagement with public life. It also presumes an openness about the interpretability of historiography as a genre that may be surprising, especially in light of the way a modern

historian like Syme might identify the success of his work with the cogency of the final judgment it offers of the past. The antithesis and ellipses that characterize Sallust's style also place a special interpretative burden on his readers. Sallust's antithetical presentation of his subject extends to the inclusion of opposed interpretations of events, like those of the witnesses to Catiline's defeat. Individual audience members will make different assumptions about whether these alternative voices constitute mere foils to Sallust's, rival visions the historian expects to be rejected, or whether they are powerful enough to challenge the historian's own historical representation.

Whether or not such challenges were intended by the author, and whether, if they were not, they can nevertheless be made part of a reader's interpretation of the work, are issues that require further choices on the part of the audience. I consider it axiomatic that each reader will negotiate these possibilities differently, seeing for example Catiline as Sallust's historiographic rival and Caesar as his ally, and for that reason I try to focus my argument on the implications of such decisions rather than treating dissonance and ambiguity as problems to be solved or setting limits to texts' interpretability.

The circumstances that may have encouraged such reflectiveness among Sallust's audience include not only the many and contradictory political positions inspired by the events Sallust describes but an equally revolutionary diversity in the media through which those events were represented.[25] While history had been written in Rome for close to two centuries before Sallust began to write, Cicero's repeated complaints that the genre had not yet reached an adequate literary form give evidence of a contemporary rethinking of what the aims of the genre should be (see Chapter 2). His particular insistence that the author should manifest his oratorical skills reminds us not

only of the literary imperialism of rhetorical training but that history had already been rhetoricized in the public oratory of the period, both as a source of precedent and thanks to the inevitable role of narrative in forensic and deliberative speeches as well as epideictic ones. Changing distributions of power in Rome encouraged monographic treatments focusing on single actions, often, at least to judge from Cicero's plans, on the deeds and experiences of a particular individual.[26] The overlap of public authority and authorship took new forms in the proliferation of memoirs and autobiographies; those of Sulla and Caesar were especially important examples.[27] Varro's writings on Roman institutions and the Latin language also constitute a historiographic project, and several of Cicero's treatises represent history in their richly significant dramatic settings and also take historiography as a foil for their distinctive applications of Roman historical traditions to address general questions about ethics and politics.[28] Beyond the competition among such literary forms of representing the past, and my list could be considerably expanded, public monuments and spectacles, including triumphs and dramatic performances, also offered distinctive ways of experiencing recent events and placing them in history. Each of these media put forth its own claims about the shape of the Roman past, why and to whom it mattered, and related its representations differently to the expression of political authority. The chapters that follow will argue that specific contrasts to competing ways of portraying history play important roles for Sallust and his readers in defining the effect of his own works. My point here is to stress how the proliferation and diversity of historical representation in general made such questions inevitable and necessary.[29]

While I have not set out to offer a general introduction to Sallust or provide an overview of all the important aspects

of his writing, I hope that the variety if not the comprehensiveness of the textual features brought into the orbit of my approach will contribute to a reader's sense of the richness of his work. The topics I have chosen are also ones that have attracted a lot of general attention from scholars of ancient historiography: intertextuality, constructions of space, the role of the emotions in historical narrative, and above all the relationship between history and rhetoric. And, though focused on Sallust, the discussions here aim to contribute to these ongoing debates. One important limitation of the book's scope comes from my decision to leave out of account the fragments of Sallust's *Histories*, his final and most ambitious project as a historian. These fragments are substantial enough to suggest tantalizing connections with the issues I foreground in the monographs, but to attempt to use them to illustrate and advance my approach would have required far too much speculation and supplementation. No reference will be found either to the treatises offering advice to Caesar or the invective against Cicero also attributed to Sallust. This is worth mentioning because, if genuine, these treatises might be thought to give access to the real views of the historical Sallust and so contribute to interpretations of the monographs based on authorial intention. I am, however, sufficiently persuaded that all of these works are later rhetorical exercises not to feel the need to engage with such arguments.[30] My readings also frequently presume an intertextual relationship between the two monographs, so that echoes of the language of the earlier *Catiline* become meaningful as such within the *Jugurtha* and, conversely, allow for it to be reread through the lens of the latter work. It is in the nature of such arguments to be circular in that the meanings discovered by presuming such connections are

the most powerful evidence for their presence, but they are, equally, irrefutable.[31]

Sallust's condemnation of the morality of his time can appear so vehement and comprehensive as to raise the question of why he writes history at all. If people are as bad as he says, who is there to profit from his exhortations to virtue or to take seriously his criticisms of vice? Conversely, the very fact that he does write has sometimes been taken to affirm that his pessimism had its limits. "It is not that Sallust believes that history has no power. He must do, as he continues to write it."[32] However, in addition to emphasizing the premise that to write history at all is a sign of hope, the "must" in this quotation makes clear that finding such a purpose in Sallust's work requires a leap of faith on the part of his reader.

My own engagement with Sallust has from the first been inspired by wanting to understand why he writes. And, indeed, this book represents the answer I have arrived at. Perhaps inevitably I have come to believe that the question itself is not imposed by contemporary academic categories (What kind of a historian is Sallust?), but that the monographs compel their audience to address it by withholding any clear statement of authorial purpose. There are to be sure many good answers available, assumptions about why Sallust writes as he does, that can consistently guide a reading. And yet even where he perhaps comes closest to defining what his work will do for its audience, in his evocation of the example of ancestral images as prompts to virtue, the crucial equation with his own history is never quite stated.[33] As elsewhere, the compression of his writing requires the reader to supply what he has left unsaid, and by doing so invites scrutiny of what might seem obvious and fundamental.

Hence the most important aspects of my understanding of Sallust's aims are at once their openness and the engagement they consequently demand of his audience. It is by no means unparalleled for a contemporary historian to recognize that his work will offer something different to readers with different backgrounds and interests. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, writing a few decades after Sallust, proclaims as much: "Those interested in political speeches will find them, those studying philosophical speculation will find it, and if any seek from historical reading undisturbed diversion, my work will seem sufficient to them as well."[34] Indeed, as we shall see, the alternatives of models for political action, philosophical speculation, and diversion align quite closely with the reading strategies I will be considering for making sense of Sallust. But, again, the absence of a clear invitation to multiple readings, as with the avoidance of an explicit declaration of Sallust's own intentions, means that the choices individual readers make involve a more uncertain negotiation with the author. For in addition to the familiar alternatives of utility and pleasure, Sallust's readers may be drawn by the nature of his material and the account he gives of himself to more oppositional assumptions about the historian. Perhaps he writes to mask his own complicity in the worst vices of his times, avarice and ambition, and to settle scores against those who have condemned him.[35] The kind of decisions we make in reading about the power the author has over our interpretation take on, in his case, a political charge that draws them back to the history his work describes. Note that Kraus' assertion implies already that Sallust had a purpose, and that his purpose matters to us: he believes history has "power." While Latte depicts an author fundamentally condemned to failure by the time in which he lived (a generation later and he could have taken genuine satisfaction from an intellectual career),[36] crucial

to Syme's vindication of Sallust thirty years later is his assertion of the historian's mastery over his material and literary techniques.[37] Such language, as we will see, connects these readers' conception of the author to Sallust's own moral vocabulary. He grounds his description of the virtue that defines worthwhile human activity on the opposition between power and slavery (*Cat*. 1) and opens the *Jugurtha* by resisting the claim that our lives are "ruled" by chance rather than virtue. Thus as our own choices about how to read Sallust condemn or exalt us by revealing an interest in pleasure or virtue so our simultaneous struggle perhaps to evade his judgment, perhaps to identify his own place inside or outside the moral universe he has constructed, link with special urgency our act of reading to the subject of our reading and become a simultaneous ethical evaluation of ourselves and the author. And at a moment when representations of public events provoke such disbelief and suspicion, this reminder of the moral stakes of reading history, whatever the claims made by its authors, seems especially important.

Notes

1 For the dates of Sallust's birth and death, see Syme (1964, 13–14).

2 See, for a fuller introduction and overview, Grethlein (2013, 1–6), and the collection of Powell (2013).

3 Helpful orientations in Batstone (2009) and Grethlein (2013, 4–9).

4 Pp. 268–308. Grethlein's emphasis on the teleological aspects of Sallust's *Catiline* contrasts with Batstone's (1990) descriptions of the work's narrative as aiming at