Reconsidering “The Conspiracy of Catiline”:
Participants, Concepts, and Terminology in Cicero and Sallust

Submitted by Claude Henry Embleton Kananack
to the University of Exeter as a thesis for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Classics
In September 2012

This thesis is available for Library use on the understanding that it is copyright material and that no quotation from the thesis may be published without proper acknowledgement.

I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own work has been identified and that no material has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other University.

Signature: .................................................................
Abstract

My thesis will reconsider the failed attempt by a number of Roman citizens to gain power in Rome in 63 B.C., commonly labeled “The Conspiracy of Catiline.” Two Roman authors, M. Tullius Cicero and C. Sallustius Crispus, were eyewitnesses to the events occurring that year and both wrote lengthy accounts about the discovery and suppression of the affair and its participants, who were planning to gain power in Rome through violent means. The participants planned murder and arson inside of Rome and threatened the city with an army in northern Etruria. Our sources tend to ascribe the leadership of these hostile activities to L. Sergius Catilina, presented as a debauched, and indebted, scion of a noble family. However, our sources discuss many other Roman citizens who participated with the affair. My thesis provides a comprehensive study of the terminology Cicero and Sallust used and the lexical choices they made to describe the affair and its participants. I examine the terminology that both these authors used to identify the affair’s context, primarily focusing on the terms coniuratio (“conspiracy”) and bellum (“war”), with the aim of showing how these terms and concepts become crystallized in this period. In addition, I examine the portrayal of the reported disturbances occurring inside and outside of Rome and the representation of the Roman citizens who were involved in them. By scrutinizing the terminology found in Cicero and Sallust’s accounts of the affair of 63, my thesis demonstrates that its common appellation as “The Conspiracy of Catiline” and all that it means – in terms of a single event with one leader – needs to be reconsidered due to the interpretations of its multifarious aspects.
**Table of Contents**

**Acknowledgements** 5  
**Notes and Abbreviations** 7  

**Introduction** 12  

**Chapter 1: Describing a coniuratio: The terminology Cicero and Sallust used to identify the conspiratorial context of the affair of 63** 23  
1.1 The clandestine aspects 29  
1.2 The criminal aspects 36  
1.3 The immoral aspects 46  
1.4 The plural aspects 51  
1.5 Chapter conclusions 55  

**Chapter 2: The disturbances inside of Rome: Identifying the threat, examining the representation of the supporters, and reevaluating the influence of P. Cornelius Lentulus Sura** 56  
Part A  
2.1 The threat remaining in Rome 58  
2.2 The common debt crisis 67  
2.3 The representation of the reliqua coniuratorum 70  
Part B  
2.4 Evaluating P. Cornelius Lentulus Sura’s influence on the affair 74  
  2.4.1 Lentulus’ political career 91  
  2.4.2 The evidence against Lentulus 100  
  2.4.3 Lentulus’ letter to Catiline and epistolary comparisons 106  
  2.4.4 Lentulus’ mandata to Catiline 118  
  2.4.5 The prophecy of 63 121  
2.5 Chapter conclusions 143  

**Chapter 3: The disturbances outside of Rome: An examination of C. Manlius, the army in northern Etruria, and the disturbances throughout Italy** 146  
3.1 The consular elections of 63 148  
3.2 The historical evidence of Catiline’s connection with C. Manlius, the Sullan veterans, and the disturbances outside of Rome 153  
3.3 The SCU and the hostis declarations of 63 162  
3.4 The disturbances outside of Rome 168  
3.5 The mandata of C. Manlius’ army 180  
3.6 Chapter conclusions 186  

**Chapter 4: Cicero and Sallust’s usage of the term bellum: Examining the terminology identifying the affair of 63 as a ‘war’** 189  
4.1 The occurrences of bellum in Cicero’s Orations and its qualifying adjectives 191  
4.2 The use of the term bellum in Sallust’s Catilina 201  
4.3 Sallust and the implied bellum civile of 63 207  
4.4 Cicero’s avoidance of the expression bellum civile 210  
4.5 dissensio civilis and Cicero’s representation of armed conflict 214  
4.6 Sallust’s various expressions to identify conflicts between cives 219