

Classical Civilisation 1B

Seminar 3: Cicero's *Pro Caelio*

This week we will consider, in some depth, one of the speeches of the renowned orator of the Late Republican period, M. Tullius Cicero, namely his speech the *pro Caelio* ('in Defence of Caelius'). In this speech, Cicero defends his young client, the socialite M. Caelius Rufus, who had been accused of a litany of crimes, including that of perpetuating violence in Rome. The speech was delivered on 4 April 56 BCE, and Caelius was eventually acquitted of all crimes. One of our principal interests in this speech is in the way Cicero uses gendered language to refer both to his client, Caelius, but also to Clodia Metelli, a powerful, rich and influential Roman woman of distinguished birth. As you will discover, Cicero uses such language in order to destroy the reputation of Clodia, as one of the prosecution's chief witnesses in this case. We will use this seminar also to discuss the importance and prevalence of wealth and luxury in the Late Republican period.

Preparation for the Seminar:

- 1) Read through the PDF with selections from **Cicero's *Pro Caelio*** available on the Moodle.
- 2) Read the following modern scholarly work:
 - Anne Leen (2000–2001) Clodia oppugnatrix: the domus motif in Cicero's *pro Caelio*. *Classical Journal*. 96: 142–161.
 - **Available via the Library Search engine.**
 - Marilyn B. Skinner (2011) *Clodia Metelli: The Tribune's Sister*. Oxford.
Read at least pages 96–120.
 - **Available via the Library Search engine.**
- 3) Using the work of Leen and Skinner (above), **identify and bring to class the names and titles of three other modern scholarly works that you think would be useful to find out more about Clodia Metelli or Cicero's speech. One of these should be a scholarly book/monograph, another should be a journal article, and the final one should be a chapter of an edited volume.**

Be prepared to discuss the following questions in the seminar:

- What sorts of language does Cicero use to exonerate Caelius, and to eviscerate Clodia? Does Cicero express double standards in these descriptions, and if so, why?
- Must we believe Cicero's picture of Clodia? If not, how can we recover the 'real' Clodia?
- How important was wealth and luxury in Roman society of the Late Republican period?