

## Milo and Clodius

In the Late Republic, violence had gotten out of control. Two main reasons for much of the violence in the second half of the 50's were Milo and Clodius.

Publius Clodius Pulcher was formerly of the Patrician Claudii, but renounced his name in order to move through the political system as a champion of the plebs (Clodius was a plebeian name). Undoubtedly crafty, this politician was suspect as well (much gossip about him concerned an incestuous affair with his sister). With Caesar's backing, Clodius became a tribune of the plebs in 58. Immediately, he made his presence known by exiling Cicero for acting as judge, jury, and executioner of the Catilinarian conspirators, and also getting rid of Caesar's nemesis Cato by giving him the province of Cyprus. Of these acts, Pompey liked the Cicero's exile the least.

Titus Annius Milo was from a prominent family from Lanuvium. We don't see him take part in politics until he was brought up by Pompey to oppose Clodius. Pompey had lost favor in the Senate and was basically ineffective around this time. He had tried to gain control of the streets, but short of the *Senatus Consultum Ultimum*, there was no procedure for this. Milo gave himself to the struggle when Pompey's life became in danger.

Although the two looked one in the same, Milo and Clodius were somewhat different. Clodius preferred to amplify the anger of the populace by anger; Milo orchestrated violence to achieve specific goals at specific times. Milo's task force was better trained and avoided the sort of anarchical force that Clodius employed (almost like a large scale temper tantrum).

They opposed each other in the courts and through politics as well. Each tried the other several times *de vi*, but failed on most accounts. As it has already been stated, Clodius used his tribunate to exile Cicero, but in the very next year (57), Milo became tribune and worked for Cicero's return.

This all finally came to an end on January 18<sup>th</sup> 52 BC on the Appian Way. The two henchmen, heading opposite ways along the main road linking Rome and Brundisium, clashed. Supposedly, one of Milo's bodyguards had started the fray by whispering an obscenity into the ear of one of the last member's of Clodius' train to go by. That one then threw a spear at Milo's man and then chaos ensued. The battle was bloody and fierce. Clodius managed to run from the massacre of his men and was hunted down by Milo in a nearby hotel and tavern not far from the city of Bovillae. His body was carried into the forum by two blood-covered tribunes and burned. The accompanying rioting and the fire got out of control and the Curia Hostilia burned along with Clodius. "The Senate served as a funeral pyre for the popular leader" (Meier *Caesar* 298).

Pompey was made sole consul in the rioting that came after and passed legislation *de vi*, under which Milo was prosecuted. Cicero defended Milo in the ensuing trial, but his speech was immediately drowned out by the members of Clodius' remaining supporters. The trial was reset for the next day and armed guards (brought by Pompey) were stationed in the courthouse, but Cicero was so shaken by the atmosphere that he gave the worst, most rambling orations of his career. Milo was convicted and sent to Massalia where he stayed until he tried to join an uprising in Italy and was killed in battle.

Possible Discussion Topics:

Magnus

the courts (Sullan reforms, procedure)

violence

*Pro Milone* (why Pompey's switch from Milo to Clodius???)

### Scene I: Court Room 58 BC

*Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus* is addressing the jurors in a trial.

Pompey: And so, distinguished jurors....

Everybody: Booooo! Booooo! You stink! Go back to Picenum, you moron!!

Judge: *Tacete omnes! Tacete!*

Everybody: Booooo! Booooo!

Judge: Very well – we must postpone the verdict. This trial will conclude tomorrow morning.

Pompey (*to his defendant*): That Clodius! This is the third time this month! Something must be done about him and his mob! I have no choice – fight fire with fire...

*Pompey and his defendant leave the court room, all of the mobsters laugh*

## **Scene II:** The streets of Rome (a la scene from the Holy Grail)

Milo and his band and Clodius and his are shouting at each other in the streets. Make it clear who is on whose side

## **Scene III:** Comitia

Clodius: Don't you see, citizens? Cicero has already fled!! He knows that he is guilty! A Roman cannot carry out his own execution! He must go through the proper legal procedures – even if the case is so simple as it was with Catiline! Even if the Senate already agrees! Even if Cicero is given the power of *Senatus Consultum Ultimum*! It does not matter – we must validate the guidelines handed down by our forefathers concerning men like Cicero who take the law into their own hands!

Crowd: Yea!! Yea!!

One member of the crowd: That Cicero is going to get what's coming to him! Come on everybody, let's go trash his house!

Crowd: Yeah! Alright!!

*Everyone leaves the stage in a rage*

## **Scene IV:** One year later; Comitia

Milo: Citizens, we all know Cicero acted a little rash in his actions against Catiline – but who deserved their death more than that rabble?! Cicero did us all a favor! True, he committed a crime, but don't you think that one year is long enough for an offense that is certainly understandable?

Crowd: He's right!

One in the crowd: Bring back Cicero!!

Crowd: Yea!!!

Clodius (*standing off to the side, talking to one of his men*): That guy is going down! This will be the last time he messes with me!

## **Scene V:** The Appian Way near the shrine of the Bona Dea; 52 BC

*Milo and his men head left to right across the stage; Clodius and his come the opposite way. They pass each other in silence until Milo's last man reaches Clodius' last man.*

Milo's man: Wuss!!

Clodius' man: What'd you say?

Milo's man: You heard me!

Clodius' man: Let's fight!

Milo's man: Them's fightin' words!

*The two groups break into a fight briefly, Clodius flees offstage to the right; Milo goes after him*

## **Scene VI:** Courtroom

*Cicero is standing in front of the jurors with Milo at his side. Armed guards are stationed in the room and a crowd of people are standing around*

Cicero: My client, Milo, is innocent of killing the infamous mobster Publius Clodius...

Everybody (*loudly drowning out Cicero*): Boooo! Boooo!

Cicero (*looking flustered, tries to start again*): Your honor, my client is innocent of all charges....

Everybody: Boooo!! Boooo!!

*They continue to boo until Pompey calls for order*

Pompey: Order, order! We have seen and heard enough. Milo is guilty, he is to be banished from Rome as an exile and stripped of his citizenship. Take him away!

*Milo is led away by one of the guards and everyone then exits to the left*

End Play