

Gaius Sallustius Crispus

won election as Quaestor in 55 and one of the tribunes of the people in 52. He had hostilities with the famous orator Cicero and was a partisan of Caesar. In 46 he served as a praetor and accompanied Caesar in his African campaign, which ended in the decisive defeat of the remains of the Pompeian war party at Thapsus. As a reward for his services, Sallust gained appointment as governor of the province of Africa Nova.



On his return to Rome he purchased and began laying out in great splendour the famous Horti Sallustiani which would later belong to the emperors. He then devoted himself to historical literature. Sallust's account of the Catiline conspiracy (De coniuratione Catilinae or Bellum Catilinae) contains the history of the memorable year 63. Sallust adopts the usually accepted view of Catiline,

and describes him as the deliberate foe of law, order and morality. He particularly wished to clear his patron (Caesar) of all complicity in the conspiracy.

In writing about the conspiracy of Catiline, Sallust's tone, style, and descriptions of aristocratic behavior show him as deeply troubled by the moral decline of Rome. While he inveighs against Catiline's depraved character and vicious actions, he does not fail to state that the man had many noble traits. In particular, Sallust shows Catiline as deeply courageous in his final battle.

This subject gave Sallust the opportunity of showing off his rhetoric at the expense of the old Roman aristocracy, whose degeneracy he delighted to paint in the blackest colours. On the whole, he does not treat Cicero unfairly. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sallust>)

