

**Will the Real Catiline Please Stand Up?  
Framing Intimidation in the National Assembly of 1789.**

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A major historiographical question in studies of the French Revolution is whether or not the Revolution itself was fundamentally the same in 1789 as it was in 1793–94. Scholars have long argued both sides of the issue. The *circumstances* were certainly different.<sup>1</sup> In the summer of 1789, an ancient monarchy imploded in the midst of an economic crisis and widespread popular unrest. In 1793–94, the King was dead and a new republic was struggling to find its way in the midst of war and civil war. Scholars like François Furet, Keith Michael Baker, Dan Edelstein, and Paul Friedland have claimed that the *intellectual* climate, the *discourse* of revolution was fundamentally the same in 1793–94 as it had been in 1789: exclusive, intolerant, eliminationist, and violent.<sup>2</sup> Marisa Linton and Timothy Tackett have argued that 1789 and 1793–94 were quite different. They have tended to locate the motor of radicalization in the Revolution in the experience of the Revolution itself, most recently in the emotional state of the deputies as they faced well-founded fears of conspiracy and betrayal.<sup>3</sup> Annie Jourdan has argued along these lines that the rhetorical violence of the early Revolution only turned into physical violence with the war against Austria and Prussia, taking the stand that violent rhetoric led to violent action only when the circumstances in which the deputies' violent words were uttered had changed.<sup>4</sup>

To evaluate the claims of both groups, we have devised a kind of natural experiment using Stanford University's French Revolution Digital Archive to see whether or not the way in which

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<sup>1</sup> See Walton, "The French Revolution: A Matter of Circumstances?"

<sup>2</sup> Furet, *Interpreting the French Revolution*; Baker, *Inventing the French Revolution*; Edelstein, *Terror of Natural Right*; Friedland, *Political Actors*. For a spirited critique of the discourse school, see Harvey Chisick, "Public Opinion and Political Culture in France." On the history of "terror" in France, see Schechter, *Genealogy of Terror*. On whether or not the period 1793–94 ought to be referred to as "the Terror," see Martin, *Violence et révolution*; Biard, "Réflexions autour de 'la Terreur'"; Biard and Linton, *Terreur!*; Linton, "Rethinking the French Revolutionary Terror."

<sup>3</sup> Linton, *Choosing Terror*; Tackett, *Coming of the Terror*. See also Andress, *Experiencing the French Revolution*. On conspiracy, see Campbell, Kaiser, and Linton, *Conspiracy in the French Revolution*; Tackett, "Conspiracy Obsession in a Time of Revolution."

<sup>4</sup> Jourdan, *Nouvelle histoire de la Révolution*, especially 82, 534–35.

examples taken from classical republican sources were deployed in the National Assembly changed due to the deputies' experiences during the early months of the French Revolution. Keith Baker argued in a landmark 2001 article that the discourse of classical republicanism transformed during the early Revolution from a kind of oppositional political language to a politics of Terror. He chose as exemplars for his study three deputies to the National Convention, Jean-Paul Marat, Maximilien Robespierre, and Louis-Antoine de Saint-Just, radical Jacobins all, men who had the most impact in the period after war had begun with Austria and Prussia in April 1792. For Baker, the transformation of classical republicanism to Terrorism was a three-step process, with classical republicanism metastasizing, then becoming moralized, then finally transforming into a discourse of revolution proper. This process that played out as two already existing discourses, classical republicanism and Enlightenment optimism, mixed in new ways.<sup>5</sup> In Baker's view the lived circumstances in which the mixing took place were of much less relevance than the ideas themselves. We wish here to explore how the discourse of classical republicanism changed as the circumstances around it shifted, looking for ways in which circumstance and discourse are interdependent.<sup>6</sup>

In order to keep this study to a manageable length, we here examine the use of a specific reference to classical antiquity during the National Assembly of 1789. Tackett identifies several words with conspiracy in the late Old Regime and early Revolution: "*conspirations, complots, intrigues, conjurations, manœuvres, cabales, trames, brigues, etc.*"<sup>7</sup> To this list we may add "Catiline," whose very name evoked in the minds of educated French men and women conspiracy and the threat of massacre. We will examine references to the Catiline conspiracy of 63 BCE in Rome, where classical republicanism and fears of conspiracy most fruitfully overlap, charting first how frequently it came up during debates in the Revolutionary assemblies between 1789 and early 1794, then looking closely at how the example was used in the National Assembly during the latter half of 1789.<sup>8</sup> Peter Campbell, Thomas Kaiser, and Marisa Linton have argued that conspiratorial thinking "was integral to every phase of the Revolution," already widespread in 1789–90, and Kaiser argues that belief in an aristocratic plot against the Revolution had merged with the discourse of classical republicanism in the minds of elites by mid-1789, shown by their references to Catiline in and after July 1789 in newspapers and pamphlets. Tackett has argued to the contrary that there was little overlap between different registers of conspiracy thinking, that the deputies to the National Assembly did not engage much in the paranoid style, at least not until after the flight of Louis XVI to Varennes in 1791. Our examination of references to Catiline in 1789 will help us evaluate whether or not the deputies to the National Assembly had begun to mix the "more literary"

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<sup>5</sup> Baker, "Transformations of Classical Republicanism."

<sup>6</sup> On finding a middle path between circumstance and discourse, see Edelstein, "What Was the Terror?"

<sup>7</sup> Tackett, "Conspiracy Obsession in a Time of Revolution," n. 43, 700. Peter Campbell provides a similar list. Campbell, "Perceptions of Conspiracy," 16–18.

<sup>8</sup> On the Catiline conspiracy, see Berry, *Cicero's Catilinarians*. For an explanation of the importance of the Catiline conspiracy and of references to antiquity in the assemblies of the French Revolution, see Blackman, "Did Cicero Swear the Tennis Court Oath?"; Parker, *Cult of Antiquity*; Bouineau, *Les Toges du pouvoir*; Grell, *Le Dix-huitième Siècle et l'antiquité en France*; Linton, *Politics of Virtue*; Hammersley, *English Republicans and the French Revolution*; Kaiser, "Conclusion: Catilina's Revenge"; Baker, "Transformations of Classical Republicanism."

register of conspiracy derived from classical republican sources with Old Regime fears that small groups of ministers were manipulating events from behind closed doors.<sup>9</sup>

In order to understand the way in which deputies deployed the Catiline conspiracy, we first have to know something about it. The Catiline conspiracy had been a key event in the late Roman Republic, as the state wobbled its way from vibrant republican rule to civil war and then sham republic under the Emperor Augustus. Cicero's speeches denouncing Catiline and the account of the conspiracy by Sallust were staples of education in early modern France, and Plutarch's version, available in translation, was quite popular at the end of the Old Regime.<sup>10</sup> According to the classical sources, Lucius Sergius Catilina was a senator and former Consul who had failed in his attempts to attain fortune and glory by legitimate means and so decided to overthrow the Republic to gain what he desired. He and his fellow plotters planned to seize control of the state in 63 BCE through internal subversion and military force. If they succeeded, they planned to massacre their enemies. When Cicero, one of the sitting consuls of that year, got wind of the conspiracy he made four elegant and forceful speeches in which he denounced Catiline and his circle and demanded that the Senate and people take immediate action to defend Rome from the conspirators. In the end, Cicero uncovered evidence of the plot sufficient to convince the Senate to act. Conspirators in Rome were rounded up and because of the grave threat to the Republic they represented, executed without a full trial. Catiline had already fled the city, and he died at the head of an army meant to storm Rome and overthrow the Republic. Only through the persistence, clear thinking, brilliant oratory, and unswerving patriotism of Cicero was the Republic saved.<sup>11</sup>

A search for "Catilina" in the *Archives parlementaires* at the French Revolution Digital Archive hosted by Stanford University combined with my own research on 1789 and 1790 reveals seventy references to Catiline between the opening of the Estates General in May 1789 and the beginning of January 1794, when the digitized portion ends (see Table 1). As a source, the *Archives parlementaires* must be used with caution. What we have in the *Archives parlementaires* for 1789 and 1790 is an edited mix of newspaper sources from the time and printed editions of speeches that deputies published, presented in the form of a record of the event. It is not a verbatim report of what happened in the assemblies of the Revolution, but a mid- to late nineteenth-century attempt to create a parliamentary record. To supplement the *Archives parlementaires* and capture something more of what happened in the Assembly as events unfolded, I have consulted many more sources, including additional contemporary newspapers and accounts left to us in memoirs and personal letters of those present at the debates.

In Table 1 we can see that there is indeed a large change in the frequency of references to the Catiline conspiracy in the National Assembly's debates. Sixty references (or 86 per cent) come from 1792 and 1793, with only four instances in 1789, one in 1790, and five in 1791. Despite popular violence and public disorder of 1789–91, despite references to conspiracies and plots in deputies' speeches at the time, the premier conspiracy of antiquity did not come up frequently in

<sup>9</sup> Campbell, Kaiser, and Linton, *Conspiracy in the French Revolution*, 11; Kaiser, "Conclusion: Catilina's Revenge," 194–95. Tackett, "Conspiracy Obsession in a Time of Revolution." For different registers of conspiratorial discourse, see Linton, *Choosing Terror*, 45–46.

<sup>10</sup> See Grell, *Le Dix-huitième siècle et l'antiquité en France*; Bouineau, *Les Toges du pouvoir*; Hammersley, *English Republicans and the French Revolution*; Baker, "Transformations of Classical Republicanism;" Parker, *Cult of Antiquity*.

<sup>11</sup> For a less compact description of the conspiracy, see Blackman, "Did Cicero Swear the Tennis Court Oath?," 481–83.

the records of debate until 1792.<sup>12</sup> References picked up with the move to war in early 1792 (four over a period of two months) and in the run-up to the overthrow of the monarchy that summer (nine over four months). References became even more frequent around the time of Louis XVI's trial, from November to January of 1793 (ten over three months), with the largest spike from April to July of that year (twenty-three over four months) as the struggle between Jacobins and Girondins took off and the various civil wars began. Finally, another cluster of references appeared in October 1793, when the Girondins went on trial (five in one month). Harold Parker argued that the increasing frequency of references to classical antiquity could be explained by changed circumstances, as a republican form of government after 1792 made such references more germane.<sup>13</sup> Parker's claim leaves us, though, with the question of why such references were made at all before 1792. In order to answer it, we need to find out what drove changes in both the quantity and quality of how Catiline was used in debate. To that end, we will examine how Catiline was invoked during the early, formative months of the National Assembly in order to give us a baseline against which to eventually compare later references. We will examine how the reference worked in the rhetorical ecosystem at hand and see how its use was linked to the circumstances which surrounded the assembly hall at the time.

Deputies' use of the Catiline conspiracy varied a bit in 1789, but three key themes stand out. First, the deputies brought up Catiline when there was a perceived existential threat to the National Assembly. Second, they mentioned him when they wished for immediate action to be taken by the Assembly. Third, they invoked him when the deputies were threatened with harm, individually or collectively. The first mention of Catiline in the National Assembly occurred on June 23, immediately after Louis XVI had ended a Royal Session in which he had declared the National Assembly quashed and its actions void. Though the deputies of the Noble order and most of the Clerical deputies had left when the King dismissed them, deputies from the Third Estate had refused to leave the hall and met to discuss their options. Honoré Gabriel Riqueti, Count of Mirabeau, sitting as a representative to the Third Estate from Aix, spoke first and rallied the deputies to defy Louis XVI. He claimed that the deliberations of the Assembly were constrained by the troops that surrounded their hall. He wanted to know why the troops were there. "Where are the enemies of the nation?" he asked. "Is Catiline at our gates?" He drew their attention to the many soldiers filling the streets of Versailles and asked if Catiline was at the gates of the city, that they needed so many armed men nearby to protect them. This was a brilliant rhetorical move, as he referred to the belief common among Third Estate deputies that the King's advisors were conspiring against the National Assembly without accusing the monarch of being part of that conspiracy. Mirabeau used the reference to demand action by the Assembly, much in line with the intent of Cicero's original speeches. Did Mirabeau ask that the conspirators be brought to trial or killed outright? Not at all. He asked the deputies to again swear the Tennis Court Oath, declaring that they would not be intimidated by soldiers or by royal orders into abandoning their mission to write a constitution for France.<sup>14</sup>

The next mention of Catiline did not come for more than two months. As August came to an end, the deputies turned to discussion of how the powers of government would be organized in

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<sup>12</sup> The French Revolution Digital Archive, Stanford University, ATILF-CNRS, *Archives parlementaires*, <https://sul-philologic.stanford.edu/philologic/archpar/> (accessed June 12, 2019). I have added two references that come from my own reading of the *Archives parlementaires* and which were missed by the FRDA search engine. Madival and Laurent, *Archives parlementaires*. Henceforth "AP."

<sup>13</sup> Parker does not quantify individual references. Parker, *Cult of Antiquity*, 80–83.

<sup>14</sup> AP 8: 146. For analysis of the Royal Session and its aftermath, see Blackman, *1789*, 126–35. On Mirabeau, see Luttrell, *Mirabeau*; Chaussinand-Nogaret, *Mirabeau*.

the French constitution. Deputies of the far left wanted the King to have no veto at all over legislation. Deputies of the right wanted a veto that could not be overridden, an “absolute” veto. In the center, a group of deputies supported a suspensive veto, one that could be overridden by the legislature itself, as in the United States, or through a referendum of some kind. On the night of August 30 vigorous discussions of the veto held in the cafés of the Palais Royal, a hotbed of political activism in Paris during the early Revolution, turned into an attempted march on Versailles.<sup>15</sup>

The Third Estate deputy Antoine Thibaudeau was there. In his memoirs he wrote that activists at the Café de Foy demanded something be done to prevent reactionaries in the Assembly from violating the people’s will by giving the King an absolute veto. They worried that the veto could be used on the Revolution itself, undoing all that had been accomplished. After much debate, an impromptu assembly of activists commissioned the Marquis of Saint-Huruge to lead a delegation to the National Assembly in Versailles that would deliver a petition demanding all the supporters of an absolute veto be purged from the Assembly, amounting to about half of the Noble and Clerical deputies along with one hundred members of the Third Estate.<sup>16</sup> Sources disagree as to how many people actually marched, and in any event the activists were blocked by the National Guard on the way to Versailles. Speakers in the Palais Royal had claimed 15,000 men were ready to march. Contemporary reports claim as many as 6,000 or as few as fifty actually did.<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, the number 15,000 got reported to the Assembly the next day. Regardless of how many *actually* marched on the night of August 30, the number 15,000 stuck in the minds of the deputies and informed their discussion. They seemed to agree that the absolute number of marchers made a difference in how seriously the event should be taken.

When the Assembly came to order on August 31, Trophime-Gérard, Count of Lally-Tollendal, a Noble deputy for Paris, informed the deputies of what had happened the night before, reading letters he had been given by men who had evaded the Guard and reached Versailles. He recounted demands in the petition given to him and the accompanying letters that the Assembly be purged of its conservative members as well as threats to burn the châteaux of those who voted for a royal veto. Individual deputies had been named, he said, and their lives threatened.<sup>18</sup> Stanislas-Marie, Count of Clermont-Tonnerre, then stood up and asked that something be done to guarantee the safety of the deputies. He did not doubt the courage of the deputies, he said, but he insisted that a constitution could only be written during a period of calm, when the deputies could

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<sup>15</sup> On the Palais Royal, see McMahon, “The Birthplace of the Revolution.”

<sup>16</sup> Thibaudeau, *Biographie-Mémoires*, 97–98; *Journal des débats et des décrets*, no.3; *Révolutions de Paris*, no. 8; Toulougeon, *Histoire de la France*, 1: 115-16; Ferrières, *Mémoires*, 1: 223–24. Gottschalk and Maddox, *Lafayette in the French Revolution*, 231–32; Alpaugh, *Nonviolence and the French Revolution*, 67–69; Rouff, “Le peuple ouvrier de Paris.”

<sup>17</sup> Alpaugh and Gottshalk and Maddox estimate 1,500. Gottschalk and Maddox, *Lafayette*, 232; Alpaugh, *Nonviolence*, 67. Roux estimated only 200. Roux, “Le peuple ouvrier,” 496. Contemporary sources suggest from fifty to 20,000 marched and disagree as to whether or not they were armed. Mounier, *Exposé*, 44; Mousset, *Témoign ignoré*, 72–73; Ferrières, *Mémoires*, 1: 223; Boniface-Louis-André Castellane, Manuscript notes, BFN Nouv. acq. fr. 4121, 136. *Révolutions de Paris* declared that although only fifty men marched, couriers took news to Versailles that 15,000 men were on the way. *Révolutions de Paris*, no. 8. Thibaudeau, who briefly if involuntarily took part in the march, said the marchers were unarmed. Thibaudeau, *Biographie-Mémoires*, 98. Nuñez agreed that the march led by Saint-Huruge was unarmed, but also noted that they had brought along cannon. Mousset, *Témoign ignoré*, 72.

<sup>18</sup> Lally-Tollendal, *Mémoire*, 129–31; Castellane, “Journal,” 135; Ferrières, *Mémoires*, 1: 224–25. Clermont-Tonnerre, *Receuil des opinions*, 1: xxxiv. Mounier’s name was reputedly at the top of the list. Delauney, “Vieux médecins Mayennais,” 155.

debate issues freely. He suggested that if Parisian authorities were unable to guarantee their safety, the Assembly ought to relocate to a new place farther away from the city.<sup>19</sup>

After Clermont-Tonnerre spoke, other deputies asked that the Assembly not take up his motion and that the body return to the order of the day. Third Estate deputy Guillaume-François Goupil-Préfelne wanted discussion to continue. He said that if they could not discuss a motion to ensure their own safety now, with threats to individual deputies and their property, with news that 15,000 men had hoped to purge the Assembly of hundreds of members, when could they? He made his point in as compact a way possible by invoking the Catiline conspiracy. He said that since “Catiline is at the gates of Rome... threatening to slit the throats of Senators” there was no question that it was important to discuss how to keep the deputies safe.<sup>20</sup> The main point to be taken from the Catiline conspiracy, one would think, was not that elected assemblies should keep discussing things when faced with danger. Cicero had wanted the Senate to stop dithering and do something. Perhaps this is why Goupil-Préfelne’s intervention had little immediate impact. While Clermont-Tonnerre’s speech appeared in many contemporary newspapers and in deputies’ letters and memoirs, Goupil-Préfelne’s only appears in a few. Despite his gory imagery, Goupil-Préfelne’s speech did not make a splash. It was not, however, entirely ignored.

The third invocation of the Catiline affair came in late September as the Assembly worked through countless details concerning the new constitution. When Mirabeau brought up the Catiline conspiracy on September 26, he used Catiline to foreground an existential threat to the Revolution, but he did not claim that there was a conspiracy against it or any immediate danger to the Assembly itself. Mirabeau spoke urging the deputies to move forward with attempts to solve the financial problems the state faced. His denial that there was a popular threat to the Assembly marked a change from how he had portrayed the events of August 30–31 in his newspaper, the *Courrier de Provence*. When Mirabeau had analyzed the attempt by Palais Royal activists to purge the National Assembly in his newspaper, he had lambasted them for nearly inflicting worse harm to the Assembly than Louis XVI ever could have. If Louis had sent troops to disperse the Assembly, Mirabeau had argued, the nation would have rallied behind the deputies. But if the people of the Palais Royal were to purge the Assembly, he had continued, no province would continue to recognize the Assembly as legitimate, and a civil war would be the inevitable result.<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, on September 26 Mirabeau made fun of Goupil-Préfelne’s claim that Catiline had been at the gates. He deplored Goupil-Préfelne’s attempt to pose what Mirabeau now claimed had been a “minor” disturbance in the Palais Royal as an existential threat to the National Assembly. As of September 26, 1789, Mirabeau stated, there was no conspiracy, no Catiline at the gates, no

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<sup>19</sup> Lally-Tollendal, *Mémoire*, 132; AP 8: 513; Ferrières, *Mémoires*, 225–26. Clermont-Tonnerre, *Recueil des opinions*, 1: xxxiv, 2: 51. Clermont-Tonnerre was no recalcitrant conservative who denied the sovereignty of the National Assembly. He was a center-right Noble deputy elected by Paris. Though his *cahier* had enjoined him to support a vote by order in the Estates General, it had also instructed him not to take actions that would halt the activity of the body. Along with Lally-Tollendal, he had led forty-seven Noble deputies to the *salle des menu plaisirs* on June 25 to verify their credentials in common, and he had been an active speaker thereafter. As a member of the Constitutional Committee, he had put together the summary of the *cahiers de doléances* and was a prominent supporter of an absolute veto for the King. See Lemay, *Dictionnaire des Constituants*, 1: 220–223. Third Estate deputy Laurent de Visme gives a good account of the debate that catches some details missed in the AP. Laurent de Visme, *Journal des États généraux*, BNF Nouv. acq. fr. 12938, 137r–138v. Visme also reports that Lally-Tollendal announced he had seen a list of the deputies who were to be purged.

<sup>20</sup> AP 8: 513; *Journal des États Généraux*, 3: 189; *Journal des débats et des décrets*, Aug. 31, 1789; *Courrier de Provence* XV (Aug. 28–31, 1789). On Goupil-Préfelne, see Lemay, *Dictionnaire des Constituants*, 1: 418–19.

<sup>21</sup> *Courrier de Provence*, XV (Aug. 28–31, 1789).

pressing threat to the safety and autonomy of the Assembly. There was, however, an existential threat to the Revolution, and that was the threat of bankruptcy.<sup>22</sup> It was not public disorder that would topple the Revolution, Mirabeau argued, but the collapse of public finance. In a remarkable rhetorical performance, Mirabeau used a reference to Catiline as both a call to action, demanding that the deputies take up matters of state finance, and as a way to claim that there was no conspiracy to harm the deputies or shut down the National Assembly.

The final reference in the National Assembly to Catiline during 1789 came two weeks later, shortly after the October Days. On October 5, a crowd mainly made up of women invaded the National Assembly hall, demanding that the deputies act to alleviate a shortage of bread in Paris, to punish soldiers who had trampled on the national cockade, and to prevent aristocrats from misleading the King. That night, many more men and women arrived in Versailles and early in the morning of October 6, the King agreed to return with the crowd to Paris with his family, taking up residence there. The deputies themselves had been taunted and mocked, though none had come to harm. Still, the invasion of the hall by protestors changed the way in which the deputies viewed at least some of the good people of Paris.<sup>23</sup> On October 10, Nicolas-Robert, Marquis of Cocherel, a deputy to the Third Estate from Saint-Domingue, recounted a shocking story. On October 6, while making his way to Paris ahead of the King's carriage, Cocherel had been forced to stop by a group of ordinary people. They recognized Cocherel and his traveling companion as deputies and asked if one of them happened to be the Count of Virieu, a prominent supporter of the absolute veto.<sup>24</sup> Assured that neither of them was, a man from the crowd said that they were looking for deputies whose names appeared on a list. In particular, this man was hoping to find Virieu, as he wanted to kill him himself. Cocherel brought this exchange to the Assembly and demanded that something be done to ensure the safety of the deputies. He asked, "What, does there exist among the French another Catiline who designates here his victims, who wishes an infamous death to those among us who, faithful to our oaths, have the noble firmness to develop our thoughts and speak the language of our hearts?" He worried that the deputies might legislate out of fear and wished for action to be taken immediately to protect their freedom of discussion, very much echoing Clermont-Tonnerre's speech of August 31.<sup>25</sup> As Goupil-Préfelne had done, Cocherel used the example of Catiline to argue that the deputies were imperiled and that the Assembly itself was in danger. He used Catiline to argue that the deputies had to take immediate action.

Cocherel's speech had great impact, a reflection of the dramatically different context in which it was given. Few deputies had been even indirectly impacted by the attempted march on Versailles of August 30. When center-right deputies had spoken of the threat from the people of the Palais Royal, the suggestion that the National Assembly was in danger had been literally laughed off of the floor: In response to demands that the threatened deputies be honorably

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<sup>22</sup> Visme, *Journal*, 176v; Ferrières, *Mémoires*, 1:257; AP 9: 196. Adolphe Thiers gave a slightly different version in his history, claiming that Goupil-Préfelne had quoted Cicero accurately, saying that Catiline was at the gates of Rome and yet they continued to talk, not act. Thiers, *Histoire de la Révolution*, 1: 173.

<sup>23</sup> On the impact of the October Days on the National Assembly, see Blackman, 1789, 230–40; Desan, "Gender, Radicalization, and the October Days."

<sup>24</sup> Virieu had made himself notorious during the debate over the veto power to be granted the King. In defending the absolute veto, he had mocked ordinary Parisians and country folk, claiming that they did not understand what the word "veto" meant and should have no influence on decisions made by their representatives. AP 8: 590.

<sup>25</sup> Cocherel, *Motion*; AP 9: 397. Visme, *Journal*, 196v. On Cocherel, see Lemay, *Dictionnaire des Constituants*, 1: 224–25. According to other witnesses, some women had tried to find Virieu on Oct. 5 at the Assembly hall, noting that he was a deputy who needed to be killed. Desan, "Gender, Radicalization, and the October Days," 377.

mentioned in the Assembly's minutes, Third Estate deputy Charles-Antoine Chasset had playfully claimed that he found himself in a bind. He had been threatened in an anonymous note for supporting the Revolution, and he feared that if he changed his ways he would end up on the same list as the conservative deputies condemned by the Palais Royal. A roar of laughter had erupted from the deputies, and Clermont-Tonnerre's motion had been dropped.<sup>26</sup> On October 10, all of the deputies remembered the terrifying events of October 5–6. No one could dispute Cocherel's claim that at least some deputies were in real danger. No one tried to laugh off his demand that the Assembly take action to protect them. Cocherel's suggestion that something be done was taken up, and within two weeks the Assembly had passed a decree on martial law, a law that gave civic authorities the power to regulate popular assemblies and to disperse them with violence if necessary.

We should take note that it was not radical deputies like Robespierre who spoke about Catiline in 1789. Those who referred to Catiline in debate came from the more moderate center of the Assembly, from the center-left Mirabeau to the center-right Cocherel. If Mirabeau had emphasized the right of the Assembly to meet without fear of intimidation on June 23, using Catiline, so had Goupil-Préfélne on August 31, and Cocherel on October 10. What had changed between their speeches was the conditions surrounding the Assembly itself. On June 23, Mirabeau had spoken out against attempts by the King's ministers to prevent the deputies from fulfilling their mission to write a constitution for France. If the threat to the Assembly from royal troops had vanished with the taking of the Bastille on July 14, the threat from Parisians to individuals who too visibly supported the King had only increased. Goupil-Préfélne used a reference to Catiline to indicate that the threat to the Assembly no longer came from royal troops, but from armed Parisian commoners. The basic problem was the same: some person or persons outside the Assembly sought to control it, to prevent it from writing a constitution according to the wishes of the nation as expressed in the *cahiers de doléances*. Mirabeau had disputed this claim on September 26, arguing that the only remaining threat to the Assembly was that of national bankruptcy.

The October Days had shown the deputies that Mirabeau was wrong. When Cocherel spoke on October 10, he did little more than reiterate what Clermont-Tonnerre had said on August 31 and add to it the dramatic threat Goupil-Préfélne had identified, that the deputies might have their throats slit. The threat to all of the deputies had been made palpable by the invasion of the Assembly hall by women and men who had marched from Paris. The threat to the deputy Virieu by a person ready to kill him *at that moment, in that place* had been made credible by the deaths of the governor of the Bastille, the *prévôt des marchands* of Paris, a former royal controller general of finance, and the *intendant* of Paris in mid-July, and of members of the Royal Bodyguard the night of October 5. Did Cocherel ask that the deputies round up conspirators and execute them without trial, as Cicero had done? No. He asked that the Assembly take appropriate action to protect the deputies so that they could debate without restriction and freely write the constitution asked for in the *cahiers*. In seeking to uncover the conspiracy behind the events of 5–6 October, the deputies did not expel members of the Assembly, nor did they execute suspected conspirators without a proper trial. Instead, the man suspected to have been behind the invasion of Versailles, Louis-Philippe Joseph, the Duke of Orléans, a deputy to the Noble order and a prince of the blood, was gently encouraged to go into temporary exile in London until the situation in Paris had calmed.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>26</sup> *Courrier de Provence* XV (28–31 Aug. 1789); Ferrières, *Mémoires*, 1: 226–27; *Suite des nouvelles de Versailles*, Sept. 1, 1789. On Chasset, see Lemay, *Dictionnaire des Constituants*, 1: 197–98.

<sup>27</sup> Shapiro, *Revolutionary Justice in Paris*, 84, 95–98.



While we cannot definitively state that the transformation between June 23 and October 10 in how Catiline was referred to in the Assembly was due to changing circumstances, we do think the evidence we have considered here points in that direction. We have found no evidence in the deputies' speeches that shows a merging of the fear of an aristocratic plot with the literary model of Catiline, as Kaiser has proposed.<sup>28</sup> Instead, what we see is a shift in emphasis as deputies realized that whether or not there was a plot they faced a new threat, that of violence against them by ordinary people. What had changed between June and October was the identity of the most salient threat to the Assembly. By mid-October, the King seemed less of a threat than the women and men who had invaded the Assembly hall. As the deputies readied themselves for a move to Paris, the safety of the deputies became a major issue. Creating in the deputies the fear of a new Catiline was a useful way to push the body to believe that the Assembly needed to be protected from the very people it served. Classical republicanism, in the hands of less-radical deputies, led to less-radical solutions. This gives us hope that as we broaden our inquiry into the use of classical republican tropes during the early Revolution, we will be able to modify Keith Baker's characterization of the nature of classical republicanism to include less radical voices, to see how the classics could be used in many different ways, and to chart how events could and did drive change in the use of classical references by deputies to the Revolutionary assemblies of 1789–94.

**Table 1.** Mentions of “Catilina” in the *Archives parlementaires*, 1789–94

	1789	1790	1791	1792	1793	1794
January	0	0	0	3	4	0
February	0	0	0	1	1	—*
March	0	0	0	0	1	—
April	0	[1]	1	0	7	—
May	0	0	0	2	6	—
June	1	0	1	2	5	—
July	0	0	0	3	5	—
August	1	0	0	2	2	—
September	[1]	0	0	1	1	—
October	1	0	1	0	5	—
November	0	0	1	4	2	—
December	0	0	1	2	1	—
<b>Total</b>	4	1	5	20	40	—

\* Data runs out in early January 1794

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<sup>28</sup> Kaiser, “Conclusion: Catiline’s Revenge,” 194–95.

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