

Cicero's account of the year 63 BCE from consul popularis to pater patriae

Prof. Catherine Steel (Glasgow)

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Ágnes-Heller-Haus, 1. Stock, Seminarraum 8

Cicero documented his year as consul in great detail. He disseminated a collection of twelve 'consular orations' and he returned frequently to the events of his consulship, particularly those at its end, in his writing during the rest of his life. In this paper I trace Cicero's evolving narrative of his consulship. I argue that its apparent coherence is misleading, a framework that Cicero imposed on a series of positions and arguments that changed substantially between January and December of this year. If we are prepared to acknowledge these differences we can better understand the role of policies in Republican politics, the constraints on magistrates who held office for only a year, and the remarkable decision which Cicero, and the Senate, took on December 5th 63 BCE.

