

XIV.—The "Vettius Affair" Once More

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The obscure "Vettius affair" of 59 B.C. has recently been the object of renewed scholarly explanation and illumination. The intention of the present paper is, in the light of these new interpretations, to consider Cicero's relation to the whole affair. The conclusions are: that Caesar instigated Vettius for a variety of purposes, one of them being to alienate Pompey from Cicero; and that one reason why Caesar aimed to discredit the younger Curio (Curio filius) was because Curio, as the leader of the young nobles, was in communication with Cicero and possibly acting under his influence.

The Roman Empire produced the literary type of the *exitus illustrium virorum*. In our concern with some minor figures of the Ciceronian period modern scholarship is writing of the *exitus obscurorum hominum*, but such trifling persons as Vettius must be studied when their lives and deaths impinge on the careers of the great personages. In the last volume of the *Transactions and Proceedings* there appeared two interesting and significant studies of the Vettius affair,¹ of which summaries are in order before we proceed further, even though the brief statements hardly do justice to the scope and soundness of the authors' scholarship.

Dr. McDermott's article is excellent and complete, and I thoroughly agree with his thesis that Caesar was behind Vettius' activities in 59. Dr. Taylor's conclusions are, as ever, acute and perspicacious, and I am fully in agreement with her main points: that Cic. *Att.* 2.24 "should be dated about July 17, before Bibulus postponed the consular election,"² that Caesar's chief aim was to discredit the younger Curio (Curio filius) with the electorate, and that the pertinent letters of the second book *Ad Atticum* should be read in the order 18, 19, 23, 24, 20, 21, 22, 25.

¹ W. C. McDermott, "Vettius ille, ille noster index," *TAPA* 80 (1949) 351-367; L. R. Taylor, "The Date and the Meaning of the Vettius Affair," *ibid.*, 431 f. Miss Taylor's article is published in full in *Historia* 1 (1950) 45-51. Page references in the rest of my paper will be to Dr. McDermott's article in *TAPA* and to Dr. Taylor's article in *Historia*. Dr. McDermott has kindly looked over my paper and offered useful suggestions. I have also used several suggestions which were the more graciously made by Dr. Taylor as our points of view on this period differ so considerably.

² *TAPA* 80 (1949) 432.

Both scholars are correct in thinking that the Vettius affair was intended at a variety of targets,³ since in this sort of campaign a politician would use a shotgun rather than a rifle. It is often difficult to perceive just a single purpose behind an action of Caesar, the paradigm of the opportunist. On this occasion, according to Cicero,⁴ Caesar was gunning for any Optimates he might hit, but particularly for Curio because he was politically dangerous to the cabal we describe as the Triumvirate.

My paper is not contentious. What I wish to do is to employ the conclusions reached by Professors Taylor and McDermott in order to explore a further possibility which they were not interested in considering. The purpose of my paper is to add a few bits of evidence, and in particular to undertake a general consideration of the importance of Cicero in this episode, for both scholars indicated, just in passing, their opinion that Cicero was concerned in it in only a minor way.⁵ I do not think that Caesar believed Cicero to be of slight importance in 59, since in December of 60 Caesar had been anxious to have Cicero become a fourth member of the cabal,⁶ and since in 58 Caesar was determined to silence Cato and Cicero before his own departure to face the Helvetians.⁷

My interest in Vettius' revelation of a plot to murder Pompey is connected with my interest in the causes of Pompey's separation from Cicero in 59 and his desertion of Cicero in 58. Cicero explicitly stated in *Phil.* 2.23 that Pompey was alienated from him by Caesar in 59, and I assumed from the letters of that year that it was the Vettius episode which effected the alienation.⁸ The publication of these two articles on the topic of the Vettius affair, both of which relegated Cicero to a minor role, caused me to recon-

³ McDermott, 366 f.; L. R. Taylor, *Party Politics in the Age of Caesar* (Sather Classical Lectures XXII, Berkeley & Los Angeles 1949) 137; 227, note 68.

⁴ Cic. *Att.* 2.24.4, *Sest.* 132 f. Cf. Suet. *Iul.* 20.5, where it is noteworthy that Vettius' efforts were aimed "in universos diversae factionis."

⁵ Taylor 48, 50; but McDermott 363 f. makes him somewhat more important.

⁶ Cic. *Att.* 2.3.3, *Prov. cons.* 41, *Pis.* 79.

⁷ Caesar and his army were at the gates of Rome when Cicero was driven into exile: Cic. *P. red. in sen.* 32, *Har. resp.* 47; M. Gelzer in *RE* s.v. "Tullius 29" col. 915; Tyrrell and Purser, *The Correspondence of Cicero* 1³.430.

⁸ This train of thought was developed in connection with the writing of a book on *Cicero and the Roman Aristocrats* while on a Guggenheim fellowship in 1947-48. Reasons of brevity have led to the omission from my manuscript of the importance of the Vettius affair in the relations between Cicero and Pompey, but my general statements at that point still assume, because of the passage in the *Second Philippic*, that Caesar actively produced, by means of Vettius, the friction between Cicero and Pompey which made possible Cicero's exile in 58.

sider my own views. Neither of these articles dealt with the results and repercussions of the affair, and it is that aspect of the episode which I especially wish to treat.

The passage from *Phil.* 2.23, not mentioned by either of these scholars, is of the greatest value in suggesting to us one of the results of the Vettius episode:

Ego M. Bibulo, praestantissimo civi, consule nihil praetermisi, quantum facere enique potui, quin Pompeium a Caesaris coniunctione avocarem. In quo Caesar felicior fuit. Ipse enim Pompeium a mea familiaritate diiunxit. Postea vero quam se totum Pompeius Caesari tradidit, quid ego illum ab eo distrahere conarer? Stulti erat sperare, suadere impudentis.⁹

In the Addendum to this paper I have presented some reasons for believing that in this passage Cicero used "Bibulo consule" as a colloquial phrase which might be specifically understood to mean July of 59; but my discussion in the main portion of the paper is not affected by whether or not I have demonstrated that point.

Before we proceed, it is necessary to emphasize that the above passage refers not so much to three individuals as to the chiefs of three political factions. I shall try presently to indicate the immediate basis of Cicero's political importance, but it is perhaps not out of place to allude to the fact that he considered his exile in 58-57 an attack on the conservative and traditionalist element in

⁹ There are some interesting comments on this section of the *Second Philippic* in J. D. Denniston, *M. Tulli Ciceronis in M. Antonium Orationes Philippicae Prima et Secunda* (Oxford 1926). Denniston complains on 106 f. of the vagueness of Cicero's chronology in this paragraph of the *Second Philippic*, but he leaves the events of July of 59 out of consideration. On 108 he is annoyed at Cicero's deliberate vagueness in assigning a cause to Caesar's success in winning Pompey away from Cicero, as well as to his vagueness in even assigning the success to Caesar: "In *Sest.* 133 Cicero attributes Pompey's alienation to the designs of Vatinius; in *Pis.* 76 he blames Piso and Gabinius. But no doubt Caesar's hidden hand was the moving force. Crassus also threw his weight into the scale (*A. ii.*22.5, Crassus putting pressure on Pompey)." Denniston's remarks are eminently sane, although he might have written differently if he could have foreseen the two articles of last year on Vettius. I quite agree with Denniston, however, that in *Sest.* 133 and *Pis.* 76 Cicero really means Caesar but that he uses the other names to avoid using that of Caesar, although everyone would understand that Caesar himself was meant rather than his agents (cf. McDermott 358). It is curious, however, that in both passages one gains the impression that Cicero is saying that Pompey was made to fear him *after* the Vettius episode. At this point we must remind ourselves that Cicero was capable of rearranging, not facts, but the descriptive material surrounding those facts, in order to produce a narrative which would be more suitable to conditions which had subsequently developed. I therefore stress *Phil.* 2.23 only as it can be confirmed by the correspondence of the year 59, and I do not use *Cic. Fam.* 6.6.4 because it is phrased in broad terms and because it is without the chronological indications we find in *Phil.* 2.24 as well as in 2.23.

Rome, the element which was for him the only valuable one in Rome — in fact, he said there was no *res publica* in the *urbs* when he was away.¹⁰ This same passage from the *Second Philippic* brings to mind the importance of Pompey.

It has been said so often that it may seem repetitious to mention once more that in the 60's and early 50's Pompey was the leading political figure in Rome, a Titan who completely overshadowed Caesar even after the formation of the First Triumvirate.¹¹ Although in modern times we are inclined to take the view that Caesar's contemporaries were in those years mistaken as to Caesar's true importance, we must also remember that the key to Caesar's politics was his juncture with Pompey. The person who could separate Pompey from Caesar was Cicero, who sometimes was thought to influence Pompey's politics¹² and who normally was believed to be a close friend of Pompey. In addition, I believe we may confidently assume, on the evidence of the demonstrations in Cicero's behalf in 58, that Cicero still retained at least some of the glamor of his great deeds of 63. If Pompey's political discomfort in July of 59 altered his rapprochement with Caesar and brought him closer to Cicero, Caesar was faced with political ruin. Consequently one of Caesar's purposes in the Vettius affair was to keep Pompey from withdrawing from the cabal. The person whom Pompey would join, if he left Caesar, was Cicero. Yet Cicero was not conspicuously named by Vettius, whereas Curio was.

I therefore wish to pursue Professor Taylor's lead in investigating the younger Curio, but I wish to do it in a somewhat different manner in order to find his connection with Cicero. Professor Taylor (49, note 12) quite properly referred to Cic. *Fam.* 2.6 and

¹⁰ *P. red. in sen.* 34, 36; *P. red. ad Quir.* 14; *Dom.* 96. Cf. *P. red. in sen.* 25; *P. red. ad Quir.* 25; *Har. resp.* 3, 17.

¹¹ M. Gelzer, *Pompeius*² (München 1949) 149 f.; Tyrrell and Purser (above, note 7) 13, 22, 317.

¹² E.g., Cic. *Att.* 1.16.11. On the topic of Cicero's influence over Pompey in the years 61–59, see the full and circumstantial narrative of Richard Johannemann, *Cicero und Pompeius in ihren wechselseitigen Beziehungen bis zum Jahre 51 vor Christi Geburt* (Emsdetten [Westf.] 1935) 27–45, 86 f. Cicero himself has expounded the high import of a political union between Pompey and himself: Quod me quodam modo molli brachcio de Pompei familiaritate obiurgas, nolim ita existimes, me mei praesidii causa cum illo coniunctum esse, sed ita res erat instituta, ut, si inter nos esset aliqua forte dissensio, maximas in re publica discordias versari esset necesse. Etc. (*Att.* 2.1.6; June, 60). And one of the things which was most inviting about Balbus' famous offer of December, 60, was that Cicero would thereby have "coniunctio mihi summa cum Pompeio" (*Att.* 2.3.4).

Phil. 2.4 to show Curio's significance, and to *Q. Cic. Com. Pet.* 6 and 33 to show the importance of the young nobles in the elections.¹³

Since I was using a different approach, I was struck by Cicero's arrangement of names in *Vatin.* 24. There Cicero stated that one consul of 59 (Bibulus) and two ex-consuls (L. Lucullus, C. Curio) were mentioned by Vettius as implicated in the proposed assassination. Then, passing by other prominent men accused by Vettius, Cicero next mentioned the younger Curio: . . . cum filio, principe iuventutis, cum re publica coniunctiore etiam, quam ab illa aetate postulandum fuit. . . . We should stress that Curio is here called *princeps iuventutis*,¹⁴ which implied recognized distinction, and in which the *iuentus* is the young *equites* who were the nobles' sons who had not yet entered the senate. We may thus conclude that the younger Curio already enjoyed in 59 the same influence which we find referred to in 53 (*Fam.* 2.6), and that his influence was a menace to Caesar because Curio in 59 was more inclined to conservative politics than one would expect a young man to be (. . . cum re publica coniunctiore etiam, quam ab illa aetate postulandum fuit . . .).

Since it could properly be objected that the passage from the *In Vatinius* is perhaps of minor value because it is several years later than the Vettius episode, we must at once seek confirmation from Cicero's letters of 59. We shall find not only confirmation of Curio's political importance in 59, but also indications of his association with Cicero at that time.

In *Att.* 1.14.5 (Feb., 61) Cicero called the younger Curio "filiola Curionis," speaking of him libelously because he favored Clodius in the Bona Dea affair. But Curio, although he remained friendly with Clodius, changed his political allegiance between 61 and 59, and by April of 59 (*Att.* 2.7.3) we find that the whole political world had also undergone a realignment. Possibly further changes were in prospect, since Cicero, then at Antium, learned from this Curio that Clodius, Caesar, and Pompey were disagreeing among themselves. In a later letter of that same month (*Att.* 2.8.1) we

¹³ A few additional references can be found in my note "On the Importance of Young Men in Ciceronian Politics," *CJ* 33 (1937/38) 357-359.

¹⁴ The same title is used of M. Brutus in 50 B.C. in *Cic. Fam.* 3.11.3; cf. the note in Tyrrell and Purser (above, note 7) 3^a.237, and Mommsen, *Römisches Staatsrecht*³ 2.826-828; 3.497, 523. Gelzer (above, note 11) 149 simply called Curio the leader of the young nobles but he did not undertake to show the basis of his importance. It would be natural to call Curio the leader on the strength of *Cic. Att.* 2.19.3, 2.24.2; but I think these other passages show that his status was possibly quasi-formal.

hear that Curio attended Cicero's *salutatio* at Antium, and among other things spoke out against the cabal of political tyrants, assuring Cicero that the young nobles were also aroused.¹⁵ Thus we find *Vatin.* 24 to be confirmed, and we discover that Curio already enjoyed political power because of his influence with the centuries of knights, i.e., the young nobles.¹⁶ It is also noteworthy that Curio reported the attitude of the *iuventus* to Cicero, as to a prominent partisan, perhaps trying to rouse Cicero from the apathy we see described in his letters to Atticus in April (2.5.2, 2.6.1 f., 2.7.4, 2.8.1, 2.9.3, 2.13.2, 2.14.1). Still in the same month of April (*Att.* 2.12.2), Curio, whom Cicero now called "Curio meus," told Cicero that he, Memmius, and Metellus Nepos hated the Triumvirs.

About the beginning of July of 59 (*Att.* 2.18.1) Curio was enjoying the greatest popularity because he, and he alone, was taking the lead against Pompey and Caesar. In § 3 of the same letter we may note that Caesar was anxious by some means to get Cicero out of Rome. Pompey was very unpopular in that month (*Att.* 2.19.2 f.) while Caesar was exceedingly angry because of Curio's popularity, especially his popularity with the *equites*. The Triumvirs, i.e., Caesar, were trying to enmesh Cicero in their policy (*Att.* 2.19.4 f.). Pompey was distinctly irked by Bibulus' edicts (*Att.* 2.19.5).

In *Att.* 2.23.2 (in mid-July of 59, according to Professor Taylor's dating) we learn that Pompey strongly regretted his present political involvements, longed to recover his position of honor, and frankly (*aperte*) sought a remedy from Cicero, who claimed to Atticus that he had no remedy to propose. It is much more significant that Cicero also wrote that he believed the cabal was automatically collapsing. He further remarked in § 3 of that letter that he was devoting himself entirely to *forensis labor*, in the course of which he referred frequently to the good old days when he guided the state; he refrained from open political activity (. . . publicis consiliis nullis intersumus . . .).

Att. 2.24 contains the account of the Vettius episode itself, which has already been adequately discussed by Professors McDermott and Taylor. I should note only that § 3 may well be correct in leaving Cicero in the background of the alleged plot, for it would have lent verisimilitude to the exposé to have accused

¹⁵ Peraeque narrabat incensam esse iuventutem neque ferre haec posse.

¹⁶ Taylor (above, note 3) 37; 203 f.; 209, note 86, on the subject of these *equites equo publico*.

Cicero of what he was actually doing, of privately inciting the young nobles to conservative politics. In § 4 Cicero mentioned that he enjoyed a certain popularity, but he was markedly depressed by the turn of events. In § 5 he noted that Pompey signified that he was well disposed towards him [Cicero].

Cicero, in *Att.* 2.20.1, takes pains to say: Pompeius amat nos carosque habet. Then he anticipates Atticus' question as to whether he believes Pompey's protestations of friendship, and he replies that he will be cautious in believing Pompey.¹⁷ We may safely conclude that at this time, right after the Vettius affair, Pompey clearly did not fear personal violence from Cicero, although there seem to have been no private conversations between them on subjects other than Clodius for the remainder of the year. Hence we might well conclude that the Vettius affair separated the Pompeian faction from the Optimates, and that Cicero and Pompey remained "friends" (*Att.* 2.20.1), a condition which in Rome could imply many degrees of warmth or coolness. It is in this letter (§ 5), moreover, as is aptly remarked upon in the edition by Tyrrell and Purser, that Cicero first expressed "a desire to avoid the struggle with Clodius."

In the latter part of July (*Att.* 2.21.3), after Vettius had gone to his ignoble end, Cicero commented that Pompey was a sad spectacle, thoroughly discontented with his situation but "quo se conferat nescit." In this letter (e.g., § 4) Cicero seems to write of Pompey, not exactly as from a distance, but certainly with much less intimacy than he had in *Att.* 2.23.2. He is nevertheless certain that Pompey was so distressed that he was ill, and also that Pompey now had no thought of reversing his course of political action. The only event of which we know which would have been capable of thus binding Pompey to Caesar was the Vettius episode. It may also be noted that, whereas before the Vettius episode Pompey had talked politics with Cicero, now we hear only of Pompey's assurances that Cicero was safe from Clodius, assurances in which Cicero lacked complete confidence (*Att.* 2.21.6).

In the next letter (*Att.* 2.22) we find that Cicero was now really frightened of Clodius, and that he continued to feel a certain dis-

¹⁷ In view of Professor Taylor's clarification of the proper order of the letters, it is interesting to observe verbal similarities in the letter written before, and the letter written after, *Att.* 2.24: *Att.* 2.23.2. . . . Sampsiceramum, nostrum amicum, vehementer sui status paenitere . . . doloremque suum impertire nobis et medicinam interdum aperte quaerere . . . ; *Att.* 2.20.3. . . . omnes . . . aperteque loquantur et iam clare gemant, tamen medicina nulla adferatur. . . .

trust of Pompey's pledges of safety (§§ 1-2). He also observed that Crassus was trying to influence Pompey against him (§ 5). Just after Cicero made his usual comment that the trio was the object of hatred, he went on to write (§ 6):

Mutationis tamen spes nulla. Sed, quod facile sentias, taedet ipsum Pompeium vehementerque paenitet. Non provideo satis quem exitum futurum putem. Sed certe videntur haec aliquo eruptura.

It is to be noted that Cicero was no longer in Pompey's confidence; and that Cicero no longer hoped, as before, that Pompey might break with Caesar.

I therefore suggest that, in the light of *Phil.* 2.23, we should assume that Cicero had tried and failed to detach Pompey from the cabal, and that in some way the Vettius affair was the cause of Cicero's failure,¹⁸ for it at least dimmed any hope Cicero might have had of remaining in the background while inciting Curio to opposition against the Triumvirate. Certainly Cicero's letters in the latter half of 59 present a new note in that Cicero is then sure that Pompey would not break with Caesar, however discontented he may have been.

It is next necessary to consider why and how a threat of assassination could have had such an influence on a great general like Pompey.

We are probably being excessively Anglo-Saxon when we refuse to give serious consideration to the importance of threats of assassination in Roman politics. Certainly such threats arise suspiciously often in connection with Pompey. McDermott and Pocock mention three occasions,¹⁹ in addition to the Vettius episode, when Pompey's life was supposed to have been threatened: twice in 58, once by Cicero and once by Clodius; and by Crassus in 56. They are willing to grant a degree of seriousness only to the threat by Clodius in 58, although the maneuver seems to have enjoyed some

¹⁸ Professor Taylor (48) accurately gives August as a new date for the oration *Pro Flacco*. She writes, however, of Cicero's "vague involvement" in the episode, whereas it seems possible, if my suggestions be correct, to take more seriously what Cicero said in § 96 about danger to himself from Vettius' charges: *Nos iam ab indicibus nominamur, in nos crimina finguntur, nobis pericula comparantur.*

¹⁹ McDermott 364, note 29; L. G. Pocock, *A Commentary on Cicero In Valinium* (London 1926) 184. McDermott (354, note 9) is probably right in accepting Constans' conjecture for the date in *Att.* 2.24.2, which makes the date of Bibulus' warning to Pompey about assassination to be so near that of the Vettius revelations that we cannot count it as another threat.

success on each occasion. It is true that in 58 Pompey's fear of Clodius was manifest, since Pompey temporarily withdrew from the political arena. Yet even Cicero admitted that, ridiculous as the charge was, his enemies managed to make Pompey fearful of him in 58 by portraying him as a dangerous man.

To these three threats should be added a fourth, since in 52 it was believed that Pompey helped to encompass Milo's ruin because he feared violence at Milo's hands.²⁰ A fifth incident should be considered, for in 48 Pompey feared that the "cavalry" (i.e., the young nobles) and Cato were determined to remove him from power once he had defeated Caesar.²¹ It seems unlikely to me that any such removal of Pompey from power could have been regarded as possible of accomplishment by peaceful means.

There seem to be too many threats against Pompey to be coincidental. I see no reason why, given the Roman habit of political violence in those years, the great general might not have been capable of being influenced by fear of assassins. And Caesar was just the man to understand and to work upon another man's weakness.

At this time in 59 Caesar, if my suggestion be correct, did not make Pompey fearful of Cicero personally. The passage in Cicero's letter after the Vettius affair (*Att.* 2.20.1) shows that Pompey met with Cicero, obviously did not fear him, and was even careful to proclaim his regard for Cicero: *Pompeius amat nos carosque habet. Credis? inquires. Credo; prorsus mihi persuadet; sed quia volo.* What Caesar had accomplished by this exceedingly devious maneuver and among various other purposes was to warn Pompey away from the Optimates in general and to show Pompey, even though he was physically ill because he was so sick of the cabal, that he could not leave it.

Finally it may be observed that my general conclusions have been anticipated by Gelzer, although he presented them as opinions and without proof of the sort I have tried to adduce:

"Wir wissen nicht, wie weit Caesar ernstlich gesonnen war, seine Gegner auf diese Weise zu vernichten; sein eines Ziel, Pompejus miss-trauisch zu machen und dadurch bei sich festzuhalten, hat er auf diesem krummen Wege jedenfalls erreicht."²²

²⁰ Cic. *Mil.* 67-71, with Asconius on § 67 (43 f., Stangl).

²¹ Plu. *Cato Min.* 54.4, 55.1; *Pomp.* 67.1-3.

²² M. Gelzer, *Caesar der Politiker und Staatsmann*³ (München 1941) 104.

"Jedenfalls sieht man daran, wie die Angriffe der jungen Optimaten sich vornehmlich gegen Pompeius richteten, da man ihnen sogar ein Attentat glaubte zuschieben zu können. Wenn Ciceros Verdacht hinsichtlich Caesars richtig ist, so haben wir anzunehmen, dass er die Kluft zwischen Pompejus und den Optimaten verbreitern wollte."²³

The factor which has enabled us to advance beyond Gelzer's opinions is the acumen with which Professor Taylor called attention to Curio's specific importance in the affair, thus suggesting a study of the relations between Curio and Cicero. The study indicated that Cicero had expectations that the Triumvirate would collapse because Pompey was so disturbed by the opposition led by Curio, and also that Curio may have been guided by Cicero. Cicero's hopes were dashed when Caesar made it clear to Pompey that he was not free to withdraw from the Triumvirate.

ADDENDUM ON THE MEANING OF "*Bibulo consule*"

I first suspected the possible significance of this phrase in Cic. *Phil.* 2.23 as a result of reading footnote 5 on page 506 of F. B. Marsh's article "The Chronology of Caesar's Consulship," *CJ* 22 (1926/27). In that footnote Professor Marsh was at pains to note that Caesar had the fasces in April and that Bibulus had them in May. It would then seem to follow that Cicero, in specifying that Bibulus was consul in the passage in *Phil.* 2.23, was not only indicating the year in which the event occurred, but he was also specifying that it was in a month in which Bibulus had the fasces. That month I take to be July, for there were not too many other months in 59 in which Bibulus was prominent.

It seems to me to be possible to derive proof for the above paragraph from an interpretation of Suet. *Iul.* 20. In 20.1 we learn that the consuls were holding the fasces in alternate months: *Antiquum etiam rettulit morem, ut quo mense fasces non haberet, accensus ante eum iret, lictores pone sequerentur.* In 20.2 Suetonius records for us two distinct items of humor, although both refer to the fact that Bibulus was reduced to a nonentity. The first item refers to some wits: . . . *ut nonnulli urbanorum, cum quid per iocum testandi gratia signarent, non Caesare et Bibulo, sed Iulio et Caesare consulibus actum scriberent bis eundem praeponentes nomine atque cognomine.* . . .

The second item of humor in 20.2 arises from a different level of society (*vulgo*) and refers to a different system of dating:

Non Bibulo quiddam nuper sed Caesare factum est:
Nam Bibulo fieri consule nil memini.

The distich seems to me to refer to what was done month by month and to date events by which consul held the fasces that month, the same system as I think Cicero used in *Phil.* 2.23. At any rate it must be granted that in the distich the consuls are carefully named separately.

²³ Gelzer (above, note 11) 150.

In the first item of humor in 20.2, however, the *urbani* were making a different joke, referring to the whole year rather than to the individual months.

One other matter must come into consideration. It has troubled me to think why, since Bibulus is generally considered to have been totally ignored in the last eight months of 59, his edict in July (Cic. *Att.* 2.20.6) should have been effective in postponing the consular election to October 18. The answer would seem to be that July was a month in which he held the fasces and that his edict was regarded as a valid executive instrument which Caesar felt that he had to respect. Caesar disliked the postponement (Cic. *Att.* 2.21.5), even though October was a month in which he would hold the fasces. A careful reading of Chapter III ("Delivering the Vote") in Professor Taylor's *Party Politics in the Age of Caesar* will readily suggest that Bibulus, by thus suddenly shifting the date of the consular election, had doubtless seriously disturbed some plans which Caesar had carefully arranged for July. Then Caesar, when he found it impossible to arouse public indignation against Bibulus on this score, went to work again to produce the happy result which occurred with the election of Piso and Gabinius in October.

The above suggestion seems reasonable but, since I am unable to adduce really adequate proof, I shall conclude with some bibliography which may lead the way for someone else. The notion of the monthly "alternation" of the fasces (and the power?) appears to be widely accepted for this period on the strength of Suet. *Iul.* 20: Mommsen, *Römisches Staatsrecht*³ 1.37-41, 378; Kübler in *RE* s.v. "Consul" col. 1118 and s.v. "Lictor" coll. 511 f.; although it is disregarded by P. Willems, *Le sénat de la république Romaine* (Louvain & Paris 1878/83) 2.127 f. Yet it is interesting to note, in Willems' discussion of procedure in the senate, that only one consul normally presided (2.125 f.) and that consequently his name alone appeared in the preambles of *senatus consulta* (2.209 f.); cf. O'Brien-Moore in *RE*, Supplbd. 6, s.v. "Senatus consultum" coll. 802 f. The next step would then be to speak colloquially of only one consul at a time. *TLL* s.v. "consul" coll. 567-569 shows comparative rarity in the citation of consuls singly; and we could hardly expect universal exactness in regard to the meaning of the use of a single consul's name.

It has, on the other hand, been convincingly argued that Caesar held the fasces in January of 59: L. R. Taylor and T. R. S. Broughton, "The Order of the Two Consuls' Names in the Yearly Lists," *MAAR* 19 (1949) 1-14, especially 5. Their evidence, which appears to be best for the first few months of the various years they discuss in the Ciceronian period, is quite reasonably interpreted to indicate that the consul named first in the lists had been elected first and would hold the fasces in January and in the odd-numbered months of his year of office. The evidence does not seem to be extensive enough to demonstrate a rigidly regular alternation of the fasces throughout the year even when both consuls remained in Rome; we cannot exclude the possibility of a *tertium quid* in that respect, whether it is agreed that Caesar held the fasces in January (as may be likely) or that Bibulus held the fasces in January.