

THE SIEGE OF ROME IN 87 B.C.

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IN THE year 88 B.C. Sulla had regained the coveted command against Mithridates by leading four legions to Rome and capturing the city by armed force¹—a first in Roman history, surprising even to old Marius. This march aroused hostility to Sulla among all classes, even the many senators who shared the political profits of the march: the elimination of Marius and Sulpicius, the denial of equal suffrage to the Italians who had secured citizenship through the Social War, and the re-establishment of the ancient senatorial probouleutic power (App. *BC* 1. 59. 265–66). After Sulla's departure for the eastern war in early 87, one of the consuls of the year, Cinna, revived the Sulpician bill to distribute the *novi cives* among all the tribes, instead of restricting them to a limited number of tribes which voted last (in *comitia* with consecutive voting).

Cinna perceived that bearing the banner of the irate *novi cives* as well as proposing recall of the exiles, including Marius himself, could pay high political dividends. His colleague, Octavius, however, took a staunch optimat line in defense of Sulla's arrangements, protecting the extremely oligarchic status quo. A bloody clash occurred between the followers of the two. Seeing the defeat, indeed, the slaughter of his partisans, Cinna fled the city. Soon afterward, the senate deposed Cinna from office (an unprecedented and illegal act) and his place was taken by Cornelius Merula, the *flamen dialis*. Cinna assumed the role of (live) martyr for the *novi cives* and champion of the people's rights (as a consul deposed without a vote of the people [App. *BC* 1. 65. 296–66. 300]). He easily collected money and men, including even the legion left behind by Sulla. The exiled Marius, long awaiting an opportunity for action (App. *BC* 1. 62. 281), joined Cinna in the attempt to repeat Sulla's military coup.

Meanwhile, the regime in Rome, threatened by these activities, had been compelled to appeal to Pompeius Strabo,² the only commander in Italy with a large regular army; for, in general, the *plebs urbana* was an infrequent and unsatisfactory source of soldiers.³ Strabo had resumed control of his army in late 88, following the murder of the consul Pompeius Rufus, who had briefly superseded the proconsul. Although Strabo and the regime viewed each other with suspicion and distaste,⁴ he nevertheless brought his formi-

1. On the number of legions, see A. K. E. Wiehn, *Die illegalen Heereskommanden in Rom bis auf Caesar* (Diss. Marburg, 1926), p. 5, a persuasive discussion of this minor point.

2. Sources which specify the summons are Gran. Licin. p. 18 Fl. (= edition of M. Flemisch [Leipzig, 1904; repr. Stuttgart, 1967]); App. *BC* 1. 66. 303; Oros. 5. 19. 10.

3. See P. A. Brunt, "The Army and the Land in the Roman Revolution," *JRS* 52 (1962): 74 and 85; idem, *Italian Manpower: 225 B.C.–A.D. 14* (Oxford, 1971), p. 95. Cf. J. Harmand, *L'Armée et le soldat à Rome de 107 à 50 avant notre ère* (Paris, 1967), pp. 250–52.

4. Gran. Licin. p. 18 Fl.; Val. Max. 9. 7 *Mil. Rom.* 2; Oros. 5. 19. 10.

dable force slowly to the vicinity of Rome. His attitude, however, left much to be desired.

Strabo had observed, surely with the greatest interest, Sulla's march and subsequent activities. He had parried Sulla's thrust (to transfer control of his army to Sulla's loyal *adfinis* Pompeius Rufus), but that was all. In fact, it deserves emphasis that Pompeius Strabo avoided *overt* illegality; his son was to follow this example.⁵ Now, with Sulla's main force (five legions) in the east, and with Cinna openly opposing the regime and assembling a substantial army, Strabo was in a very powerful bargaining position—and he knew it.

While he had probably desired one of the consulships of 88,⁶ he surely desired the office for 86.⁷ He was not particular as to the identity of his colleague. The optimates had their chance first; as Livy *Periocha* 79 no doubt correctly observed, the Cinnan buildup "opprimi inter initia potuisset." Julius Obsequens 56*a* expressed the same point. Strabo's veteran army

5. Cf., e.g., A. N. Sherwin-White, "Violence in Roman Politics," *JRS* 46 (1956): 8–9 = *The Crisis of the Roman Republic*, ed. R. Seager (Cambridge, 1969), pp. 158–59; E. S. Gruen, "Pompey, the Roman Aristocracy, and the Conference of Luca," *Historia* 18 (1969): 72, 100, 108.

6. Vell. Pat. 2. 21. 2 "frustratus spe continuandi consulatus"—a problematical passage. Some have accepted it at face value, i.e., that Strabo had sought the consulship of 88: Wiehn, *Die illegalen Heereskommanden*, pp. 26, 62; F. Miltner, s.v. "Pompeius (45)," *RE* 42 (1952): 2257; M. Gelzer, "Cn. Pompeius Strabo und der Aufstieg seines Sohnes Magnus," *Kleine Schriften*, vol. 2 (Wiesbaden, 1964), p. 117 and n. 69 (with further bibliography). (This article first appeared in *Abhand. d. preuss. Akad. d. Wiss., Phil.-Hist. Klasse*, 14 [1941], and was reprinted in Gelzer's *Vom römischen Staat* [Leipzig, 1943], vol. 2.) Others have rejected it as an erroneous reference to Strabo's seeking the consulship of 86: O. Dieckmann, "De Granii Liciniani fontibus et auctoritate," *Berliner Studien für klassische Philologie* 16 (1896): 57; W. Drumann–P. Groebe, *Geschichte Roms*, vol. 4² (Berlin, 1910), p. 330 and n. 7 (favoring 87); E. Badian, *Foreign Clientelae* (264–70 B.C.) (Oxford, 1958), p. 230. E. Gruen, "The Lex Varia," *JRS* 55 (1965): 70, is undecided.

Perhaps my proposed reconstruction in *Cinna and Sulla: The Politics of Civil War* (Diss. Harvard, 1972), pp. 71–72, may help to resolve this difficulty. I argue that Strabo, as presiding consul, agreed not to obstruct Sulla's election to the consulship at the very end of 89, while Sulla for his part would smooth the path of senatorial approval for Strabo's triumph (celebrated 25 December 89). Such a hypothesis would contradict Badian's assertion that the fact of Strabo's triumph is an argument against his having sought re-election for 88 ("Quaestiones Variae," *Historia* 18 [1969]: 471, n. 70). Velleius, it should be noted, does not state that Strabo *campaigned* for the consulship. Some political "deal" between Strabo and the dominant group in the senate, then headed by, or associated with, Sulla, would be compatible with Velleius' report. Originally desirous of the consulship, Strabo finally recognized political reality and settled for a triumph, the only one, indeed, celebrated for the Social War. The arguments of T. N. Mitchell, "The Volte-Face of P. Sulpicius Rufus in 88 B.C.," *CP* 70 (1975): 201–2, against the postponement of the consular elections in 89, do not appear convincing.

7. Gran. Licin. p. 19 Fl., cf. p. 21 Fl.; Vell. Pat. 2. 21. 2; Liv. *Per.* 79; Oros. 5. 19. 10.

Strabo's double-dealing is not equivalent to Gelzer's "Friedensvermittler" interpretation (*Kleine Schriften*, 2: 122, with reference to C. Lanzani, *Mario e Silla* [Catania, 1915], p. 81; repeated by Gelzer, *Pompeius*² [Munich, 1959], p. 31). See also n. 14. Strabo, in fact, was not unwilling to fight, nor was he overly concerned about the identity of his opponent; what did matter to him very much was the result, attaining a second consulship. I find H. H. Scullard's claim, that Strabo "had shown a certain moderation and willingness to compromise," unsatisfactory (*From the Gracchi to Nero*³ [London, 1970], p. 73). Strabo was "willing to compromise" with anyone who would meet his terms. "Moderation" is scarcely the word to describe such a posture. Similarly, A. Heuss, *Römische Geschichte*² (Braunschweig, 1964), p. 174, exaggerates the influence of his soldiers' attitude on Strabo's posture, as Chr. Meier, *Res publica amissa* (Wiesbaden, 1966), pp. 238–39 and n. 190, perceives. (I regret not having seen the third edition of Heuss's work, published in 1971.) H. Last, *CAH*, vol. 9 (Cambridge, 1932), p. 263, is even more inaccurate as regards Strabo. Cf. H. Zehnacker, "Le Monnayage de L. Rubrius Dossenus et la Victoire d'Esculape," *Homages à Jean Bayet*, Collection Latomus 70 (Brussels, 1964), p. 746; E. H. Erdmann, *Die Rolle des Heeres in der Zeit von Marius bis Caesar: Militärische und politische Probleme einer Berufsarmee* (Neustadt–Aisch, 1972), p. 80.

could have overwhelmed and dispersed the numerous but (except for the ex-Sullan force) newly recruited troops of Cinna. Strabo clearly refused to act until he was assured of his desired (second) consulship.

Hewing to optimate principle, the regime refused to grant Strabo's demand. Octavius was not noted for compromise. Besides, the optimates very probably had a candidate of their own in mind, Metellus Pius.⁸ Metellus was an able military man with a small force. He had been praetor in 89;⁹ hence he was eligible for the consulship of 86. Moreover, he apparently did not look with approval on Sulla's march; he did not join Sulla until after the latter's return to Italy. Still later, even though Sulla chose Metellus to be his colleague in the consulship of 80 (for Sulla had become Pius' *adfinis* by marrying the Caecilia Metella widowed by the passing of old M. Aemilius Scaurus in approximately 89), Sulla expected him to cause trouble (Plut. *Sull.* 6. 9). The bearer of the honorific *agnomen* Pius and head of the powerful Metellan family needed no rigged triumph (like that of Servilius Vatia, staged by Sulla in 88) in order to secure election. His name alone would ensure it, no doubt *suo anno*.

This aspect of the political context, namely the troublesome surplus of prospective candidates for the consulships of 86, merits attention. In addition to Cinna, Marius, Pompeius Strabo, and Metellus Pius, L. Valerius Flaccus, the subsequent suffect consul of 86 (not to be confused with his homonymous relative,¹⁰ the Marian consul of 100 and censor of 97/96), was presumably eligible for election. Apparently, though, he was not satisfied with his prospects under the regime in power;¹¹ for he may well have been the Valerius who, reactivating his Marian ties,¹² played a decisive role during the siege by betraying Ostia to Marius and thereby helping Marius to cut Rome off from supplies by sea.¹³

8. Cf. Gelzer, *Kleine Schriften*, 2:123–24; Badian, *Foreign Clientelae*, p. 239; J. C. Silverberg, *A Commentary to the Roman History of Velleius Paterculus (Book II, 1–28)* (Diss. Harvard, 1967), p. 239. Note especially Gran. Licin. pp. 19–20 Fl. “ut eum magistratum ipse [i.e., Pompeius] invaderet, qui timebatur. nam et Metelli castra in propinquo erant. . . .” Gelzer is surely correct in rejecting Lanzani's incredible idea (*Mario e Silla*, pp. 88–89) of a second joint consulship for Octavius and Merula.

9. Badian, *Studies in Greek and Roman History* (Oxford, 1964), pp. 75 ff., argued that Metellus was more likely to have been praetor in 88 than in 89. However, his subsequent rejection of the prosecution of Pompeius Strabo and the related arguments (“*Quaestiones Variae*,” pp. 456–75) would appear to re-establish 89 as the probable date for Metellus' praetorship.

10. As by E. Valgiglio, *Plutarch: “Vita di Silla”*² (Turin, 1967), pp. 95 (ad *Sull.* 20. 1); R. Flacelière and É. Chambry, *Plutarque: “Vies,”* vol. 6 (Paris, 1971), p. 310 (ad *Mar.* 28. 8); D. G. Glew, *The Outbreak of the First Mithridatic War* (Diss. Princeton, 1971), p. 73.

11. The *cos. suff.* of 86 had clearly experienced significant career retardation, for as *aed. cur.* 98 (or 99?) (Cic. *Flac.* 77) he would have been eligible, by age at any rate, for a consulship of 92! This factor must have weighed heavily upon his mind. Cf. G. V. Sumner, *The Orators in Cicero's “Brutus”*: *Prosopography and Chronology* (Toronto, 1973), pp. 81–83.

12. The suffect consul of 86 was apparently brother of C. Valerius C. f. Flaccus, *cos.* 93, who had been an ally of Marius and was to show himself a friend to the Cinna regime (Badian, *Studies*, pp. 94–95). The *cos.* 100, a loyal *Marianus* (Plut. *Mar.* 28. 8), presumably helped his younger relative to secure his curule aedileship; cf. F. Münzer, s.v. “Valerius (178),” *RE*, 2. Reihe 15 (1955): 25–26 (an article published more than a decade after Münzer's death).

13. Gran. Licin. p. 18 Fl. Cf. Plut. *Mar.* 42. 3. Harold Bennett, *Cinna and His Times* (Diss. U. of Chicago, 1921; Menasha, Wis., 1923), p. 14, n. 69, considered the idea “very doubtful” (cf. p. 40; “perhaps”). Münzer, however, s.v. “Valerius (178),” *RE*, 2. Reihe 15 (1955): 28, reports the participation of L. Valerius Flaccus, *cos. suff.* 86, in the Ostia affair as a fact. Curiously, Lanzani, *Mario e*

Appius Claudius, as well as the above-mentioned Servilius Vatia, must also be taken into account. Praetor in 89 (probably) and close associate (in fact, *adfinis*) of Sulla, Claudius would also, most likely, be seeking to gain his virtually inevitable consulship. As a patrician Claudius, he would presumably be a formidable candidate, but, as a *Sullanus*, he was clearly a diehard opponent of Cinna, since Cinna had appropriated the force left under his command by Sulla, and was to take action to strip Claudius of his *imperium* upon his return to power.¹⁴

To return to Strabo, he did not confine his efforts to the regime in power. He was definitely in contact, public and private, with the other side.¹⁵ Cinna, however, as Orosius 5. 19. 10 in particular stresses, wanted no part of him. No doubt the passage of time had meant the growth of Cinna's forces and their consolidation into an effective military instrument. He came to feel that he had no need to make concessions to Strabo, or to the regime (Gran. Licin. p. 18 Fl.). Furthermore, Marius, yearning for his seventh consulship and unsurpassed in *auctoritas*—and military ability—was his ally. Since

Silla, pp. 82–83, does not discuss the identity of the Valerius who betrayed Ostia. Cf. B. W. Frier "Sulla's Propaganda: The Collapse of the Cinnan Republic," *AJP* 92 (1971): 587, n. 19; and H. Aigner, *Die Soldaten als Machtfaktor in der ausgehenden römischen Republik* (Innsbruck, 1974), p. 15 and n. 25. See also n. 11.

That the regime would allow a member of a Marian family to hold a crucial assignment against Marius does, at first, appear improbable, but it is not a decisive argument. Valerius may have changed sides for a variety of reasons (cf. n. 11): because he came to recognize that the besiegers would triumph and simply wanted to be on the winning side; because he felt longstanding loyalty to Marius and was in his debt politically (cf. App. *BC* 1. 68. 311, regarding an Appius Claudius, surely not the *cos.* 79); or because, in fact, the besiegers made certain promises. Valerius' suffect consulship was, no doubt, their fruition, though, with his *auctoritas* in the east and influential relatives nearer home, he was a logical choice. Cf. C. M. Bulst, "Cinnanum Tempus: A Reassessment of the *Dominatio Cinnae*," *Historia* 13 (1964): 319–20.

14. Cic. *Dom.* 83–84. Cf. App. *BC* 1. 73. 339. See also Bennett, *Cinna and His Times*, p. 29; E. J. Weinrib, "The Prosecution of Roman Magistrates," *Phoenix* 22 (1968): 42. Note that this latter action against Claudius is misdated by R. A. Bauman, "The *Hostis* Declarations of 88 and 87 B.C.," *Athenaeum* 51 (1973): 289, an article to be consulted with caution. To judge from Sumner's discussion (*The Orators in Cicero's "Brutus"*, pp. 62–63, 100) of the careers of Ap. Claudius (*cos.* 79) and C. Claudius (*cos.* 92), sons of Ap. Claudius (*cos.* 143), both experienced significant career retardation. Appius was quaestor ca. 112 and praetor in 89 or 88; Gaius was (perhaps) quaestor ca. 113 and consul in 92. One is inclined to suggest some common cause, perhaps lingering aristocratic ill will from the Claudian-Gracchan alliance. However, according to M. H. Crawford, *Roman Republican Coinage* (Cambridge, 1974), pp. 312–13, Appius was *monetalis*, not quaestor, in 111 or 110. Thus, the delay in Appius' career is considerably reduced. Crawford also lowers the date for Gaius' money-ership to 110 or 109 (*Roman Republican Coinage*, p. 313), thus removing some of the retardation in his career.

15. Oros. 5. 19. 10; Gran. Licin. pp. 18 and 21 Fl.; cf. Vell. Pat. 2. 21. 2. The fact that young Pompey, Strabo's son, was to receive help at his trial (in 86) from Cn. Papirius Carbo, a close ally of Cinna, also reveals Strabo's contacts (Val. Max. 6. 2. 8, 5. 3. 5). Similarly, L. Marcus Philippus, *cos.* 91, *ces.* 86, and one of the most influential *principes* during the Cinnan regime, had ties with Strabo. Philippus' elder son Quintus had served under Strabo at Asculum (no. 38 in the famous inscription): cf. C. Cichorius, "Das Offizierkorps eines römischen Heeres aus dem Bundesgenossenkrieg," *Römische Studien* (Leipzig and Berlin, 1922), pp. 168–69; N. Criniti, *L'Epigrafe di Asculum di Gn. Pompeo Strabone* (Milan, 1970), pp. 146–48; E. Badian, "Two More Roman Non-Entities, Appendix: Q. Marcus L. f. Pap.," *Phoenix* 25 (1971): 142–43; H. B. Mattingly, "The *Consilium* of Cn. Pompeius Strabo in 89 B.C.," *Athenaeum* 53 (1975): 262. For all we know, Quintus might still have been in Strabo's army during 87, at the time of the siege. In early 86, moreover, Philippus Senior spoke for the defense at the trial of young Pompey (Plut. *Pomp.* 2; Cic. *Brut.* 230). Philippus, indeed, was just the opportunist to be willing to deal with Strabo. See also B. R. Katz, "Studies on the Period of Cinna and Sulla," *AC* (forthcoming), for a possible further link between Cinna and Strabo.

Cinna himself probably already intended to secure a second consulship for himself (as political self-defense, not to mention ambition, would seem to require), he could scarcely agree to Strabo's request. What is more, Strabo was even more ambitious than Marius and appeared likely to live a great deal longer.

"Contemptus a Mario vel Cinna" (Orosius 5. 19. 10), Strabo engaged the Cinna forces under Sertorius' command. Results were indecisive. In another engagement, troops of the regime, under the immediate command of P. Crassus, apparently inflicted a defeat upon the besiegers. Strabo, however, as we are explicitly told, prevented Octavius, who had been "lent" some of Strabo's troops, from pursuing the enemy (Gran. Licin. p. 19 Fl.). C. M. Bulst takes a revisionist approach to this passage, but his argument that Strabo acted from military necessity, in order to prevent Crassus from being cut off, is not convincing.¹⁶ Bulst may be correct, but in the present, extremely limited, state of our knowledge, the strong probability is, in my judgment, that Strabo acted mainly from political, not military, motivation, as, indeed, Granius indicates.

Apparently before this second battle,¹⁷ Cinna employed treachery against his most formidable opponent. Plutarch (alone) reports that Cinna subverted a *contubernalis* of young Pompey, L. Terentius by name, to kill that young man of approximately nineteen, while others were to kill Strabo (*Pomp.* 3). We know from the Asculum decree that a L. and a T. Terentius, two brothers, probably young *domi nobiles* from Firmum in Picenum, had served in Strabo's army in November of 89.¹⁸ Opinions as to the historicity and significance of this conspiracy and mutiny—for eight hundred men are said to have deserted—are divided.¹⁹ I must side with Gelzer against Badian

16. "Cinnanum Tempus," p. 313 and n. 34. T. F. Carney, *A Biography of C. Marius*, PACA, suppl. 1 (Assen, 1961), pp. 63–64 and n. 280, correctly accepts the political motivation. A. Passerini, *Caio Mario* (Rome, 1941), p. 129 (= corr. repr. [Milan, 1971], p. 111), tentatively views Strabo as acting from political motives not unlike those suggested by Gelzer (see n. 7). Cf. Lanzani, *Mario e Silla*, pp. 88–90, 108; Last, *CAH*, 9:264.

17. Such, at least, is the plausible chronology of Bennett, *Cinna and His Times*, p. 15 and n. 74.

18. C. Cichorius, "Das Offizierkorps," pp. 158, 160–61; N. Criniti, *L'Epigrafe di Asculum*, pp. 126–28.

19. Bennett, *Cinna and His Times*, p. 15, incorrectly (not to say illogically) states that, according to Plutarch, "the primary object" was the elimination of young Pompey. Badian, *Foreign Clientelae*, p. 239, n. 6, believes that the tale "need not be taken very seriously." Gelzer, however, *Kleine Schriften*, 2: 122–23, while admitting an element of exaggeration, believes the desertion item. Recalling Badian's cogent argument concerning Pompey's resentment at criticism of his father ("Quaestiones Variae," pp. 473–74, arguing from Plut. *Pomp.* 37. 4), I cannot believe that the story as a whole originated with the flatterers of Pompey the Great, for Strabo's hiding in his tent and his unpopularity with the army are scarcely flattering. Note Cichorius' claim that the portion of Plutarch's *Pompey* in which the tale appears derives from a "sehr gute Quelle" ("Das Offizierkorps," p. 161). The malice implicit in the account of Strabo's hiding in his tent may in part derive from Sallust's *Historiae*, but there is more than malice involved. What source for the period would have sought to blacken Strabo's memory, while also praising his son's performance (and probably exaggerating his role)? Both Sulla and Rutilius Rufus surely hated Strabo: Sulla's attitude was due to Strabo's political opposition and his responsibility for the death of Sulla's colleague and *adfinis*, Q. Pompeius Rufus (note also App. *BC* 1. 80. 366: the feeling was apparently [and not surprisingly] mutual); for Rutilius' attitude, see the clear report of Plut. *Pomp.* 37. Neither writer, however, had reason to praise the younger Pompey; Sulla, in fact, came to feel dislike and distrust for him (Plut. *Pomp.* 13–15). I would conclude that Plutarch has apparently blended strands from Rutilius (perhaps) and an admirer of Pompey the Great (e.g., L. Voltacilius Plotus, on whom see Gelzer, *Kleine*

(see n. 19) and conclude that there was some disaffection in Strabo's army. Strabo was surely not a man to hide in his tent, however, and just how large a role his son played in suppressing the mutiny is uncertain. Clearly, Strabo was not the only schemer in the area. Cinna too was shrewd and ruthless.

A plague made matters worse. Many thousands of soldiers died, especially the defenders, confined in and about the city. Pompeius Strabo himself caught the disease and, after lingering for a time, succumbed.²⁰ The loss of this most capable commander, together with the blow to the manpower of the defense, was fatal to the cause of the regime. Plague thus played no small part in Roman Republican history, for, as Bulst perceptively noted, "The *dominatio Cinnae* might well have been a *dominatio Strabonis* instead."²¹

Indeed, unlike Cinna, who apparently lacked an adult son at his death, Strabo possessed a nineteen-year-old son of great promise. What might Pompeius Magnus have achieved if he had received a far greater political inheritance? (A limited parallel with that youth's alleged look-alike and his father comes to mind.)

In any event, Strabo, an extremely ambitious man who was endowed with great military ability, might eventually have secured—or, perhaps, compelled—election to his cherished second consulship if the plague had not intervened. Technically not a *nobilis* (direct descendant of a consul) Strabo, like his son, was outside the inner circle of the oligarchy and, though desirous of admission, was, again like his son, a victim of its *invidia*—in both cases self-destructive. Still less than Cinna or Pompey the Great can Pompeius Strabo be judged in the light of his failure. He died before his final test.

The mistreatment of Strabo's body at the hands of the citizenry also

Schriften, 2:110), very possibly making his own contribution to Pompey's heroization. Wiehn, *Die illegalen Heereskommanden*, p. 67; Drumann-Groebe, *Geschichte Roms*, 4²:331; F. Miltner, s.v. "Pompeius (45)," *RE* 42 (1952): 2259; J. Harmand, *L'Armée et le soldat*, p. 277 (cf. p. 279 and n. 256, and p. 411, n. 21); and H. B. Mattingly, "The *Consilium* of Cn. Pompeius Strabo," p. 263, have all, in my judgment, accepted the story too literally. J. van Ooteghem, *Pompée le Grand: Bâtitteur d'Empire* (Brussels, 1954), p. 47, at least expressed some hesitation. Cf. Gelzer, *Pompeius*², p. 31.

20. That Strabo most probably died of the plague rather than from a lightning bolt should, by now, be accepted. See T. Mommsen, *History of Rome*, trans. W. P. Dickson (London, 1895), 4:64 and n. 1; H. Last, *CAH*, 9:264 and n. 1; T. F. Carney, *Biography of C. Marius*, p. 64, n. 281; F. Miltner, s.v. "Pompeius (45)," *RE* 42 (1952): 2260. Curiously, E. Gabba in his edition of Appian *BC* 1 (Florence, 1958; 2d ed., 1967), p. 191 (ad 1. 68. 312), fails to note the correct interpretation.

J. Carcopino, *Sylla ou la monarchie manquée* (Paris, 1931), pp. 121–22 and n. 1, has a typically ingenious theory that Strabo was murdered by Cinna's agents. (This notion is seriously considered by F. B. Marsh, *A History of the Roman World, 146–30 B.C.*³ [London, 1963], p. 104 [cf. A. Passerini, *Caio Mario*, p. 129 = p. 111 of reprint].) Such a theory lacks attestation and is, consequently, to be rejected, as J. van Ooteghem, *Pompée le Grand*, pp. 48–49, correctly observes, though he fails to perceive that Cinna did indeed benefit and might well have expected to benefit from Strabo's demise. Note that Lanzani, *Mario e Sylla*, pp. 102–8, in a powerful presentation, argued that the regime (i.e., Octavius) may well have brought about Strabo's death! Though she makes a strong effort, Lanzani, too, simply lacks explicit evidence (the suspicious "Pompeius mira tabe obit" of Gran. Licin. p. 22 Fl. notwithstanding) for her not entirely implausible thesis.

21. "Cinnanum Tempus," p. 312; cf. Badian, *Foreign Clientelae*, p. 240. The assertion of M. Cary—H. H. Scullard, *A History of Rome down to the Reign of Constantine*³ (New York, 1975), p. 228, that by the time Strabo "came to the rescue of Rome, the issue had . . . been settled," is very dubious.

merits attention.²² A. K. E. Wiehn believed that the fact that Strabo's soldiers did not intervene was a sign of the hatred felt toward him by his men.²³ This view is not convincing. First, Strabo's army had suffered substantial losses through the plague and recent warfare. Second, the bulk of the troops may well have been on duty elsewhere, not present at the funeral itself. Precisely who, if anyone, induced the *plebs urbana* to attack Strabo's corpse is quite uncertain. In my judgment, no higher force need be postulated. After the suffering from war, hunger, and disease, the *plebs* no doubt leapt at the opportunity to take out its frustration upon the body of its self-serving defender.

As a final point regarding Strabo, this incident must inevitably have had an enormous impact upon his young son. Indeed, this youthful experience may have contributed to Pompey's later determination to ensure that Sulla's body be accorded due honor (Plut. *Sull.* 38. 2). Political considerations should not be minimized, much less overlooked; but even Roman politicians were human and had human feelings—a factor which should not be neglected either.

Following Strabo's death, Metellus Pius was, we are told, approached by the troops defending the city and asked to take command.²⁴ The men considered Metellus a far better general than Octavius. Metellus, however, was a strict optimiate and refused to interfere with the consul's prerogatives. Many men, it appears, deserted. Even Metellus, Plutarch tells us, left Rome, ἀπογνοὺς τὴν πόλιν (*Mar.* 42. 7). Plutarch has compressed his account, distorting in the process. Other events occurred before Metellus' departure, which is presented by Plutarch in a suspiciously excusable light.

Octavius, after all, had been in overall command of the troops which were victorious at the Janiculum. True, Diodorus 38/39. 2. 1–2 stresses that Octavius' accusations against Metellus Pius came only after the latter's agreement to recognize Cinna as consul (a significant point, that). However, since Metellus was surely eager to ensure his own prospective consulship (as

22. Plut. *Pomp.* 1; Gran. Licin. pp. 22–23 Fl.; Vell. Pat. 2. 21. 4; Jul. Obs. 56. Bulst, "Cinnanum Tempus," p. 313, appears to me unclear on this point. Cf. Lanzani, *Mario e Silla*, pp. 105–7.

23. *Die illegalen Heereskommanden*, p. 67. The report at Gran. Licin. pp. 22–23 Fl., that, *omnibus consentientibus*, the treatment of the corpse was deserved, need not be taken at face value. The motif of universal approbation for a particular view or action (somewhat malicious, one may say, in the case of mistreating a corpse) may derive from Sallust, whom Granicus did read (p. 33 Fl.); cf., concerning the *Lex Valeria de aere alieno* of 86, Sall. *Cat.* 33. 2 *volentibus omnibus bonis* and Vell. Pat. 2. 23. 2 *turpissima lex!* I do not mean to imply that, in either case, Sallust was entirely (or even predominantly) incorrect, rather that he may well not have been entirely correct, and was prone to exaggeration. Though I do not propose to discuss the *Lex Valeria* itself, I do wish to point out that I. Shatzman, *Senatorial Wealth and Roman Politics*, Collection Latomus 142 (Brussels, 1975), p. 207, is not necessarily correct when he asserts that this law, which cancelled three-quarters of outstanding debts, "cannot accord with the view that the Equites, equated with the creditors, came to power with the victory of the Cinnani." Aside from the regrettable phraseology, one may note the obvious point that twenty-five percent is better than nothing. Sallust's phrase, *volentibus omnibus bonis*, is likely to be nearer the mark than Shatzman's interpretation. Cf. Asconius p. 89 C.; also, e.g., Z. Yavetz, "Fluctuations monétaires et condition de la plèbe à la fin de la République," in *Recherches sur les structures sociales dans l'antiquité classique* (Paris, 1970), pp. 141, 143, and 155; and E. Badian, "The Testament of Ptolemy Alexander," *RhM* 110 (1967): 189.

24. Plut. *Mar.* 42. 5–6. Plutarch does not specify that this event followed Strabo's death, but that appears a logical deduction. Cf., e.g., Bennett, *Cinna and His Times*, pp. 19–20.

discussed on p. 330), Octavius' charges may have been justified. On the other hand, it must be granted that Metellus *was* in a difficult position. Neither fanatical nor unaware of Marius' feelings (he was the son of Marius' late bitter *inimicus*, Metellus Numidicus), Metellus Pius was not about to mark time—and lose his life.²⁵ Moreover, voluntary exile was, one might argue, a family tradition.

It may also be pertinent to note a possible connection between Metellus Pius and Cinna. Metellus Numidicus was a good friend of L. and Cn. Domitius Ahenobarbus, uncle and father, respectively, of the Cn. Domitius Ahenobarbus who is known to have been son-in-law of Cinna in the late 80s.²⁶ We do not know when the marriage in question occurred, or even when the betrothal, which may have considerably preceded it, was arranged. The marriage (or, at least, the betrothal) might have occurred before the siege. If so, Cinna and Metellus Pius would have had family ties. All the more need for Octavius to worry at the two men's meeting. Very tentative, to be sure, but still worth the mention.

The remaining troops of the regime evinced manifest disloyalty—or, rather, loyalty to Cinna (Gran. Licin. p. 23 Fl.). Metellus thereupon undertook negotiations with Cinna and apparently, as Diodorus reports, agreed to recognize him as consul. Octavius, however, verbally abused Metellus upon his return. A consulship of Cinna and Metellus was scarcely Octavius' goal. What would happen to him? Perhaps he would be prosecuted for his important part in unconstitutionally deposing Cinna. Octavius had gone too far for compromise.²⁷ Cinna, too, encountered trouble. Marius did not intend to be cast aside. His military ability and *auctoritas* were largely or ultimately responsible for the great improvement in the besiegers' position.²⁸

What is more, who appeared to be supplanting Marius? Metellus Pius, the very man whose father was associated with a grave insult to Marius.²⁹

25. See Lanzani, *Mario e Silla*, pp. 113–15, though she does not sufficiently emphasize Metellus' self-interest and underestimates Octavius'; after all, for Octavius, compromise meant death, as he surely realized. Cf. H. Aigner, *Die Soldaten als Machtfaktor*, p. 14 (not penetrating).

26. Gell. *NA* 15. 13. 6 (cf. 17. 2. 7). Cf. I. Shatzman, "Scaurus, Marius and the Metelli," *Ancient Society* 5 (1974): 217, regarding relations between Numidicus and the Ahenobarbi; Katz, "Studies on the Period of Cinna and Sulla," *AC* (forthcoming), concerning Cinna and his family.

27. So, Diod. 38/39. 2. 2, with interpretive note by F. R. Walton (trans.), *Diodorus of Sicily*, Loeb Classical Library, vol. 12 (Cambridge, Mass., 1967), p. 243 and n. 4.

28. Cf., e.g., Vell. Pat. 2. 20. 5, specifying Cinna's earlier perception of the need for Marius' *auctoritas*. The assertion of Sertorius, according to Plut. *Sert.* 5. 2, that Cinna did not need Marius because Cinna's forces were already winning, with little left to do, in fact clashes with Plut. *Mar.* 42. 1 (most explicitly) and App. *BC* 1. 67. 306–8, as well as with the overall impression of the sources for the siege; Plutarch's report of Sertorius' claim is to be rejected. In fact, this inaccuracy (not, to my knowledge, previously noted) is yet another reason to regard the tête-à-tête involving Cinna and Sertorius in Plut. *Sert.* 5. 1–4 with serious suspicion. I attempted an extended discussion in *Cinna and Sulla: The Politics of Civil War*, pp. 129–32, with bibliographical notes. See also n. 30.

29. Sall. *Jug.* 64. 4–5 (note *fertur*); Plut. *Mar.* 8. 3 (λέγεται); Dio 26. 89. 3 (ἐλογουμένη—a campaign slogan). I consider the gibe an obvious insult and a refusal of cooperation and support by the elder Metellus, most emphatically not an offer of future support, as D. C. Earl, *The Political Thought of Sallust* (London, 1961), p. 73, suggests (cf. K. D. Matthews, *Cicero and the Age of Marius* [Diss. U. of Penn., 1961], p. 55, n. 49). Even J. van Ooteghem, *Caius Marius* (Namur, 1964), p. 131, n. 2, is unwilling to accept Earl's interpretation. Carney, *Biography of Marius*, p. 26, n. 139, following Passerini, "Caius Mario come uomo politico," *Athenaeum* 12 (1934): 30–32 (= *Studi su Caio Mario* [Milan, 1971], pp. 37–39), regards the insult "as an item of Marian propaganda." However, Metellus

If that insult has survived in the historical tradition, it must certainly have survived in Marius' memory. How eager was Cinna to dump Marius? One cannot be certain. In view of the often overlooked unreliability of the tale in Plutarch *Sertorius* 5. 1–4, in which Cinna agreed with Sertorius' negative appraisal of Marius, and in view of the unimportance in this regard, as I believe, of Cinna's annihilation of Marius' Bardyaei, caution is advisable.³⁰ Marius was an ally of Cinna. He was clearly capable of raising vast forces and was willing and (seemingly) able to lead them against Sulla and Mithridates. The probable result (the foolish tale in Plut. *Mar.* 45. 4–5 notwithstanding) would have been Sulla's (and, of course, Mithridates') elimination. Cinna would not have objected to that.

In any case, no such compromise—if that is the correct term—was reached. Metellus departed, but not to Sulla. Marius' *auctoritas* met the test. For the moment, the cause of Cinna prevailed.

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very probably did oppose and try to impede Marius' campaign. That Metellus should insult Marius, and that Marius should proceed to turn this rebuff to his own advantage, is surely in accord with what we know of the two men. Cf. Carney, "Cicero's Picture of Marius," *WS* 73 (1960): 90; A. H. J. Greenidge, *A History of Rome during the Later Republic and Early Principate*, vol. 1 (London, 1904), p. 411.

30. See Katz, "Studies on the Period of Cinna and Sulla," *AC* (forthcoming); E. S. Gruen, *Roman Politics and the Criminal Courts, 149–78 B.C.* (Cambridge, Mass., 1968), p. 230, n. 73, like most writers, accepts the tale in Plutarch's *Sertorius* without query.