CICERO BEFORE LUCA
(September 57 – April 56 B.C.)

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In the middle of April, 56 B.C., Caesar, who was spending the winter in his province of Cisalpine Gaul, had a meeting with Pompey and Crassus at Luca. The details of what was determined at this conference are unknown, but the certain and most important result of it was an agreement between these three men to cooperate in a close political alliance to secure certain political ends.

This agreement had immediate and far-reaching effects, and historians have accordingly concentrated a lot of effort on analyzing the events and circumstances responsible for the timing and decisions of the meeting.

But there is no more baffling period in Roman politics than the years immediately preceding the conference at Luca. Politically, the society was badly fragmented and on the fringe of anarchy. Its various factions confronted one another in a spirit of open hostility and there was a constant threat of violence. Private animosities and ambitions directed much of the political activity, and the frequent sudden changes in personal relationships and political alignments seldom reveal a logical pattern. The interrelationships between Pompey, Caesar, Crassus, Cicero, the conservative elements in the senate, and various popular figures such as Clodius, and the political goals of each faction, continue to be debated without agreement.

Cicero's account of the period is reasonably full, and its value cannot be overemphasized, but he was not writing history and in many places he does not provide the answers to important questions. His testimony has the shortcomings inherent in political and forensic speeches and private correspondence. His speeches naturally contain a measure of

distortion and exaggeration to meet the special needs of the occasion. His letters are understandably self-centered, often elliptical, allusive, or deliberately ambiguous, fully intelligible only to one familiar with the people and events.

These shortcomings are less serious in evaluating Cicero's own rôle in events, because his willingness to talk about himself, both publicly and privately, results in repetition of information to different people at different times, and this often eliminates obscurities and reveals the hard core of truth beneath the dressing. Unquestionably, there can be greater certainty about Cicero's political goals and activity at this time than about any other aspect of the period, and a proper understanding of his rôle therefore remains the most valuable and reliable clue in any attempt to unravel the course of politics before Luca.

His most elaborate exposition of his political and forensic life after his return from exile is contained in a long letter of 54 B.C. to Lentulus Spinther, governor of Cilicia.[1] In it he describes the joy of restoration and his determination, on his return, to continue working for the *respublica* and to adhere to his old policies. He then tells how he carried out that resolution:

> Quamquam et Pompeio plurimum . . . debebam, et eum non solum beneficio, sed amore etiam et perpetuo quodam iudicio meo diligebam, tamen non reputans quid ille vellet in omnibus meis sententiis de republica pristinis permanebam. Ego, sedente Cn. Pompeio, cum, ut laudaret P. Sextium, introisset in urbem dixissetque testis Vatinius me fortuna et felicitate C. Caesaris commotum illi amicum esse coepisse, dixi me eam Bibuli fortunam, quam ille afflictam putaret, omnium triumphis victoriisque anteferre, dixique eodem teste alio loco eosdem esse, qui Bibulum exire domo prohibuissent et qui me coegissent: tota vero interrogatio mea nihil habuit nisi reprehensionem illius tribunatus: in quo omnia dicta sunt libertate animoque maximo de vi, de auspiciis, de donatione regnorum. Neque vero hac in causa modo, sed constanter saepe in senatu. Quin etiam Marcellino et Philippo consulibus nonis Aprilibus mihi est senatus adsensus, ut de agro Campano frequenti senatu Idibus Maiis referretur. Num potui magis in arcem illius causae invadere aut magis oblivisci temporum meorum, meminisse actionum? Hac a me sententia dicta magnus animorum motus est factus cum eorum, quorum oportuit, tum illorum etiam, quorum nunquam putaram.

[1] *Fam.* 1.9.4–10.

He goes on to say that Pompey, though he had shown no sign of displeasure at these activities, stopped on his way to Sardinia to see Caesar at Luca. Caesar complained about Cicero, and, on his arrival in Sardinia, Pompey warned Quintus that his brother must cease to attack Caesar; and at the same time he sent his own envoy, Vibullius, to tell Cicero not to take a position on the Campanian land issue until he himself would return to Rome.

The testimony of this letter has, to a large degree, been accepted literally by many modern historians, and, mainly on the basis of it and of the speeches delivered at the trial of Sestius, the events leading to the conference at Luca and Cicero's rôle in them have been reconstructed.

Cicero's political activity in the months before Luca was treated in detail early in the century in articles by Cary and Pocock, and particularly in the latter's commentary on the *In Vatinium*.[2] More recently a very lucid restatement of their views has been presented by David Stockton, and the latest articles to appear on this period continue to accept their reconstruction.[3]

According to these historians, by the beginning of 56 B.C. the alliance between Pompey, Caesar, and Crassus was on the verge of collapse. Cicero, still working to establish his concept of *respublica* with which such alliances were incompatible, and believing that the only way to overthrow the triumvirate was to split it, was encouraged by the obvious signs of dissension to try to dissolve whatever bonds remained. His strategy was to expose the breach in the alliance and to widen it by subjecting the partnership to tests of loyalty that he believed it would not stand.

[2] M. Cary, "Asinus germanus," *CQ* 17 (1923) 103. L. G. Pocock, "Pompeiusve parem," *CP* 22 (1927) 301; *A Commentary on Cicero in Vatinium* (1926). Cary expresses the same ideas in *CAH* IX, ch. 12. Most of the biographies of Cicero contain similar views of his political activity in this period. Cf. J. L. Strachan-Davidson, *Cicero* (1894); H. J. Haskell, *This was Cicero* (1942); G. C. Richards, *Cicero, a Study* (1935); M. Gelzer, "Cicero als Politiker," *RE* 7A 1, 827–1092; R. E. Smith, *Cicero the Statesman* (1966). Smith does not regard Cicero's activity as designed to separate Pompey from Caesar so much as to discredit all that Caesar had done and all that he stood for. Other advocates of the same ideas are T. Rice-Holmes, *The Roman Republic* 2 (1923) 65; W. W. How, *Cicero, Select Letters* 2 (1926) 148; T. A. Dorey, *Studies in Latin Literature: Cicero* (1964).

[3] D. Stockton, "Cicero and the *Ager Campanus*," *TAPA* 93 (1962) 471; R. E. Smith, "The Significance of Caesar's Consulship in 59," *Phoenix* 18 (1964) 303; E. S. Gruen, "Pompey, the Roman Aristocracy and the Conference at Luca," *Historia* 18 (1969) 71.

He took his first major step in March at the trial of Sestius, when, in Pompey's presence, he attacked Vatinius, Caesar's old tribune of 59, and freely denounced the activities of that year. He followed this with similar denunciations in the senate. Finally, as his masterstroke, on April 5 he made a motion that Caesar's legislation concerning the Campanian land should be reviewed.

The sequel is reconstructed as follows. As Cicero had hoped and expected, Pompey failed to come to the aid of his beleaguered partner, not, however, with the results that Cicero wanted. Pompey, made desperate by his worsening political situation, was happy to ignore and even to encourage attacks on Caesar, but for the purpose of putting pressure on the latter who was vulnerable because of the illegalities committed in his consulship and in need of Pompey's support to help keep his enemies in check at Rome. Cicero had therefore misread Pompey's apparent willingness to break with his ally, and had become the unwitting instrument of his artful scheme. He had launched his attacks on Caesar in the belief that he was giving Pompey a final push away from him, whereas in reality he was being used to compel Caesar to come up with some benefits for Pompey if their alliance was to continue. Caesar, alarmed by his partner's threatened defection at a time when he especially needed him, responded as Pompey had hoped and made the necessary concessions at Luca. Cicero was ordered by Pompey to abandon his opposition to Caesar, and, disillusioned and again betrayed, he yielded to the pressure.

The most serious challenge to this analysis has come from Balsdon, who, struck by Cicero's silence in contemporary letters to Quintus about any rôle played by himself in the Campanian land debate, and by the failure of any ancient historian of Rome to mention any action of Cicero as a reason for the conference at Luca, concluded that Cicero probably never spoke at all in the discussion of April 5, and that his statements in the letters to Lentulus are a feeble effort to pretend that his capitulation to the triumvirate was preceded by a gallant last stand for the *respublica*.[4]

[4] J. P. V. D. Balsdon, "Roman History 58–56 B.C.: Three Ciceronian Problems," *JRS* 47 (1957) 15; U. Albini ("L'Orazione contro Vatinio," *PP* 14 [1959] 172) argues that the *In Vatinium* contains no attack on Caesar.

Balsdon's flat rejection of Cicero's statements, tantamount to saying that Cicero was attempting to fool his well-informed friend with clumsy lies, exposes him to easy refutation. But, however untenable his conclusion, his *argumentum ex silentio* represents a strong warning against ready acceptance of the statements in the letter to Lentulus at their face value. There is other, and more positive, testimony from Cicero pointing in the same direction, and, in the light of it, the common explanation of Cicero's political activity before Luca must be revised.

It is clear from the foregoing analyses that the nature of the debate on the Campanian land is a central issue in reconstructing that activity and the whole course of politics in this period. The debate somehow concerned Caesar's second agrarian law of 59, which had earmarked for distribution the public domains of Campania. The issue was first raised in the senate in December 57 by the tribune Rutilius Lupus, a supporter of Pompey. There was very little discussion on that occasion. The matter came up again on April 5, and there was a heated debate. On Cicero's motion, it was decided to refer the question to the *frequens senatus* scheduled for May 15.[5]

According to the traditional view, the whole affair was a political maneuver, designed to attack and threaten Caesar. It was initiated at Pompey's instigation or with his approval, and Cicero boldly jumped to the fore, planning to use the debate for a major political play. All of these contentions are open to serious question, and the rôle devised for Cicero must be totally rejected.

The degree to which this discussion of one of Caesar's laws represented an attack on Caesar or threatened his interests can easily be exaggerated. Cary has shown convincingly that cancellation of the *Lex Campana* was not being proposed, nor was the law being attacked on grounds of illegal passage, portending further attacks on the whole program of 59.[6] Implementation of the law had certainly proceeded by 56, and some of Pompey's veterans were among the recipients of land.[7] Cancellation would therefore mean not only evicting the new

[5] Information on the discussion is confined to sketchy accounts in two contemporary letters to Quintus (*Q.F.* 2.1, 2.5), and the remarks in the letter to Lentulus (Fam. 1.9).

[6] Cary (above, note 2).

[7] The evidence of Caesar, *B.C.* 1.14 and of Cicero, *Phil.* 2.101 makes it certain that

settlers but it would also directly and seriously affect Pompey's interests, and clearly no such obvious threat to Pompey was involved in this debate.[8] Besides, other laws of 59 were more suitable targets for attack on grounds of illegality.

Cary's conclusions are supported by many additional indications from Cicero that, by 56, there was no longer any real threat to the legislation of Caesar's consulship. Early in 58 such a threat had existed, and had been a source of real concern to the triumvirate as a whole.[9] There continued to be mumblings about the shamefulness of it all, and some of the conservatives refused to use the term *leges* with regard to the enactments of 59.[10] But, while making these face-saving noises, they were careful to observe the terms of the laws. Even in the debate on the consular provinces in 56, when Caesar was under heavy attack, no one proposed depriving him of his province of Cisalpine Gaul before the expiry date of the *Lex Vatinia*.[11] Nor did the *Optimates* have any objection to the substance of Caesar's laws, and more than once they expressed full willingness to accept them if somehow it could be made to appear that due respect had been paid to the auspices.[12]

Cicero's own attitude is typical. He expresses his horror at the methods employed in 59 and at the disregard of constitutional procedure, but he is content to live with the legislation and he explicitly states in a speech after Luca that he had never attacked its validity.[13]

Annulment of legislation on technical grounds such as violation of the auspices was a dangerous move for the senate. The people's will had been expressed regardless of who had been watching the skies, and to rescind a decision of the people by means of devices which

some of Pompey's veterans were settled in Campania under Caesar's law. By the time the *Lex Campana* was passed, they had already been kept waiting a long time for land. Surely they had received it by 56.

[8] Some historians have held that the debate was aimed at both Pompey and Caesar, e.g. F. B. Marsh, "The policy of Clodius from 58–56 B.C.," *CQ* 21 (1927) 30. Others have argued that cancellation was being proposed, e.g. G. Ferrero, *Greatness and Decline of Rome* 2 (1908) 42; E. Meyer, *Caesars Monarchie und das Principat des Pompeius* (1922) 136.

[9] *Pis.* 79, *Prov. Cons.* 43, *Sest.* 40–41.

[10] *Prov. Cons.* 37, 45; *Sest.* 135.

[11] *Prov. Cons.* 36–37.

[12] *Prov. Cons.* 46.

[13] Cicero's main attack on 59 occurs in *Vat.* 16–18, 21–23, 29. Cf. *Dom.* 39. For his willingness to accept the legislation of 59, cf. *Dom.* 39; *Vat.* 15, 37; *Prov. Cons.* 44.

were transparent curbs on the democratic process was most impolitic. The difficulties obviously increased with the passage of time and implementation of the laws. It should also be remembered that the irregularities of 59 had been more than matched by the coercive tactics of Clodius in 58. But not even Cicero had serious thoughts of quashing that legislation, and leading senators had actually defended its validity.[14]

Caesar can no longer have had reason to fear for his laws by 56, and the debate on the *Lex Campana* cannot have worried him on that score. It is argued, however, that interference with even the future operation of the law would be a matter of serious concern to Caesar, in that it could deprive him of a source of land for his veterans. But according to Cicero, Caesar's second agrarian law concerned only the fertile plain around Capua, an area of about 30,000 acres, commonly designated by the special term *Ager Campanus*. It could settle not more than 5,000 people.[15]

Suetonius and Velleius might seem to indicate that a far greater amount of land was involved, for they state that, as a result of Caesar's legislation, 20,000 citizens were eventually settled in Campania, in the *Campus Stellatis* and in the *Ager Campanus*. On the basis of these statements, it is commonly assumed that Cicero, whose calculations were based on second-hand information from Atticus, misunderstood the scope of the *Lex Campana*.[16]

Neither Suetonius nor Velleius, however, explicitly states that all the settlements in Campania were the result of Caesar's second agrarian law. In fact, if one had to rely on the evidence of these two authors alone, there would be no reason to believe that Caesar's agrarian legislation involved two statutes at all. Nothing in their testimony precludes the possibility that the *Campus Stellatis* had been earmarked for distribution in Caesar's first agrarian proposal.[17]

[14] *Dom.* 42, *Prov. Cons.* 45. Plutarch tells how Cato defended the validity of Clodius' legislation, *Cicero* 34, *Cato* 40.

[15] *Att.* 2.16.1.

[16] Suetonius, *Divus Julius* 20.3; Velleius 2.44.4. Velleius does not mention the areas of Campania involved. Cf. Cary, "Land Legislation of Julius Caesar," *JPh* 35 (1920) 174; L. R. Taylor, "Caesar's agrarian legislation and his municipal policy," *Studies in Honor of Allan Chester Johnson* (1951).

[17] Dio (38.1.4, 7.3) distinguishes two laws and describes their scope. He says that the first bill involved *τὴν δὲ χώραν τήν τε κοινὴν ἅπασαν πλὴν τῆς Καμπανίδος*, and

Further, since Atticus had been reporting to Cicero even rumors and speculations about Caesars' land legislation, it is hard to believe that, after an actual bill had been promulgated, his account of it was so casual, vague, and misleading that Cicero made a massive miscalculation about its dimensions.

But even if the law did concern the *Campus Stellatis* as well as the *Ager Campanus*, I submit that it was only its application to the latter area that was being challenged. Caesar's interference with this special region was the only factor which made his second agrarian law more objectionable than his first. Cicero and the senate as a whole wanted to preserve this fertile plain as state property, because distribution would involve serious loss of revenue and the disturbance of long-time and industrious tenants.[18] The term *Ager Campanus* is consistently applied by Cicero to the subject of the debate, clearly an inappropriate title if the discussion concerned a much wider area. There is not a single reference to the *Campus Stellatis*. Finally, the arguments used by Lupus when he raised the issue were the same as those used by Cicero in the speeches against Rullus. These arguments concerned loss of revenue and tenant rights, and they were relevant only to the *Ager Campanus*.[19]

It would appear, therefore, that only a small amount of land was in question, and part of it had already been distributed.[20] Since Caesar was not due back from Gaul for at least two years, and since during that time more of this land would presumably be allotted, it is difficult

that later ἡ τῶν Καμπανῶν γῆ was distributed. Such general expressions are of little use, however, in determining exactly how much of Campania was excluded from the first bill or included in the second. It is very possible that they represent Dio's translations of *Ager Campanus*, and this is strongly suggested by the fact that the only result of Caesar's second distribution of land mentioned by Dio is the establishment of a Roman colony at Capua.

[18] *Rull.* 2.76 ff. He mentions here again that the area could settle about 5000 people. Cf. *Att.* 2.16, *Pis.* 4.

[19] *Q.F.* 2.1, 2.5.1, 2.6.2; *Fam.* 1.9.8. It is significant that Cicero uses none of these arguments with regard to the *Campus Stellatis* when he discusses distribution of that area in *Rull.* 2.86.

[20] Capua was colonized by 56: *Post Red. in Sen.* 29; Caesar, *B.C.* 1.14. From *Fam.* 8.10.4 it appears that not all the Campanian land had been distributed by 51, and that Caesar was interested in what remained, but he cannot have foreseen in 56 that the process of distribution would be so slow, and his natural interest in what remained does not indicate that the land of this area had great importance for him.

to see how he could, at any stage, have been counting on the *Ager Campanus* as an important source of land for his veterans.

It may still be argued that, even if the discussion did not directly threaten Caesar's interests, any interference with one of his laws was an affront to his *dignitas*, and such an affront, unchecked by Pompey, was a warning of more serious problems to come and sufficient to accomplish the political goals ascribed to Pompey and Cicero.

It is certain that the debate involved criticism of Caesar, and if his law was modified or suspended it would represent something of a political defeat. At the December meeting there were *aculei in Caesarem* from the tribune Lupus, and doubtless many longtime foes of Caesar were eager for an opportunity to deliver tirades against the author of what they considered a pernicious piece of legislation. But there was nothing new or significant in any of this. Caesar had always had numerous and powerful enemies in the senate, and his *Lex Campana* had been particularly unpopular and had already been a subject of bitter debate.[21]

Even so, when Lupus brought up the issue once more, there was an obvious reluctance to go over old ground, and it was only several months later under the pressure of a financial crisis that the senate was willing to consider interfering with the law.[22]

The Senate's willingness on April 5 to reopen this question, impelled by concern over the state of the treasury, was undoubtedly unwelcome to Caesar, but could hardly have seemed to him, surely used to attacks on this law for lesser reasons, an event of unusual significance or likely to portend the collapse of his position at Rome; nor could Pompey's failure to rush to his aid be interpreted as disloyalty or desertion, whatever their relationship at this time. Caesar's interests were not involved in any serious way, and even if one goes so far as to assume that it was Pompey's task actively to defend Caesar's *dignitas*, there was no way in which he could be expected to stem a senatorial debate.[23]

[21] *Att.* 2.16. Speaking of the *Lex Campana*, Cicero says: "si ulla res est, quae bonorum animos . . . vehementius possit incendere, haec certe est." Lupus indicates that the question was an old one when he says the sentiments of the senate were well known "ex superiorum temporum conviciis" (*Q.F.* 2.1).

[22] Lupus was heard in silence; there was no eagerness to follow his lead (*Q.F.* 2.1).

[23] The fact that the debate was stemmed after Luca should not be explained as Pompey doing now what he could and should have done before. Caesar met with many

There had been a resurgence of senatorial independence since the beginning of 57, and that body was certainly in no mood to listen to Pompey. Besides, he was a holder of *imperium* at this time and therefore not ordinarily in the city or at meetings of the senate.[24] He was not present at the December meeting nor do we know that he attended the April 5 session. It is also unlikely that there was advance notice that the Campanian land question would come up for discussion on either occasion.

It would be naive, however, to consider that he was not well informed about all political moods and currents in the city or that there were no pressures he could bring to bear in a serious crisis. But the gravity of this situation hardly called for exceptional action. The issue was not new; it had no critical implications for him or Caesar, and there is no evidence that action was imminent. Every discussion of this question was vehement and acrimonious, and expected to be so, indicating sharp division within the senate with little chance of agreement.[25]

If the names of Lupus and Cicero, friends of Pompey and therefore presumably subject to his influence, had not become associated with initiation and promotion of this debate, there would be no reason whatever to connect Pompey with it or to assert that his conduct in the affair could be seen by Caesar as a threat to back away from any commitment that may have existed between them. But in the complicated political world of this period, with its numerous factions and constantly shifting alignments, the evidence of personal relationships is a tenuous basis for argument.

Lupus supported Pompey more than once, and it is perhaps unlikely that he would act contrary to his interests, but that is not to say his

prominent politicians at this time. His agreement with Pompey was only part of a major drive to bolster his position at Rome. Cf. Plutarch, *Caesar* 21, *Pompey* 51, *Crassus* 14; Appian, *B.C.* 2.17.

[24] He held *imperium* as a result of the grain commission (*Fam.* 1.1.3). His unpopularity with the leading senators cannot be doubted, and has been ably demonstrated by Gruen (above, note 3).

[25] Lupus terms former discussions *convicia*, and anticipates *simultas* if the matter is debated again (*Q.F.* 2.1). Cicero, describing the debate of April 5, says *vehementer actum est* (*Q.F.* 2.5.1). The likelihood of action may have increased after April 5 with the senate's willingness to continue the debate, but the question at issue is whether Pompey's reaction up to that time could have been a source of alarm to Caesar.

every move was dictated by Pompey. The fact that a politician is seen in one or more instances to be acting in the interests of another, is no proof that he is doing so in all instances. Consistent application of such reasoning would turn the politics of this period into a maze of contradictions. The degree to which tribunes, in particular, were lackeys of some more powerful political figure has surely been exaggerated. Men like P. Clodius, C. Cato, C. Curio, although they appeared at times as ardent supporters of particular individuals, had minds of their own, and there is every indication that Lupus had also. Apparently he was the figure of greatest interest among the tribunes for 56. His first performance in the senate after entering office was eagerly anticipated and brought an unusually large turnout. Cicero describes it: *frequentes fuimus; omnino ad ducentos. Commorat expectationem Lupus.*[26] He responded to their expectations with his speech on the Campanian land; that he needed prompting for his spirited attack on Caesar's law has neither proof nor probability.[27]

The connection between Cicero's friendship for Pompey and his political activity is usually difficult to assess, but it is not important here, since his rôle in the Campanian land controversy cannot have had any real importance. At the December meeting he was a silent listener, though undoubtedly he approved the sentiments of Lupus, since they were a restatement of his own well-known arguments. There is no information on how the debate began on April 5, or on who started it. It was not Cicero, and there is no sign that it was Lupus or any partisan of Pompey, or that the reappearance of the issue was a follow-up to the alleged kite-flying of more than three months before. It seems far more likely that it arose spontaneously and was inspired by the mood and pressures of the moment than that it represented a prearranged and carefully calculated political maneuver.

[26] *Q.F.* 2.1.1.

[27] Lupus apparently made no specific proposal and sought no discussion or action from the senate. Such expressions of one's feelings, leading nowhere in particular, were not uncommon in the senate, but if Lupus were flying a kite to get senatorial reaction, surely he would have desired some form of debate. December 57 seems a most unlikely time for Pompey to initiate a political move of this kind. He had recently received the important grain commission, and was busy carrying out his task with great energy and enthusiasm. He had little reason to be unhappy with his situation at this time.

It was preceded by a vote to give Pompey a large sum of money for the management of the grain supply, and since the doleful state of the public finances figured largely in the debate and was a cause of its bitterness, it is very probable that this substantial disbursement from a depleted treasury gave rise to an impromptu renewal of criticism by the conservatives of a measure which they had long before predicted would produce financial embarrassment for the state.

In any case, the discussion was heated; the senate was as noisy as a public meeting. Cicero's contribution to this imbroglio was to move that consideration of the question be referred to a *frequens senatus* to be held more than a month later. This is the only involvement that he ever claimed for himself, even in the letter to Lentulus.[28] There is no way to be certain about the purpose and exact significance of his motion, but, taken at its face value, it would appear to represent no more than an effort to have further discussion of the question, before a decision was reached, at a meeting where more people would be present—in other words, a recognition that the issue was important and should not be dealt with until everyone had the opportunity to have his say. It did amount to a public expression of Cicero's desire to see the matter debated, and to that extent it put him on the side of Caesar's detractors as far as this issue was concerned. There is no reason to assume, however, that his motion significantly increased the likelihood of interference with Caesar's law. It could do no more than insure another, though perhaps a more thorough, airing of an issue already many times discussed without result.[29]

In view of the fact that Cicero's rôle in this affair has been built into a major political coup, it must be emphasized again that the *Ager*

[28] "Mihi est senatus assensus, ut de agro Campano frequenti senatu Idibus Maiis referretur" (*Fam.* 1.9.8). In Dec. 57, Marcellinus, consul-elect, had expressed his desire to delay discussion. Strangely, his action is sometimes regarded as an effort to frustrate Pompey's plan, while Cicero's action, not essentially different, is regarded as playing into Pompey's hands. Cf. E. S. Gruen (above, note 3).

[29] This does not mean that Cicero's rhetorical question in *Fam.* 1.9.8, *Num potui magis in arcem illius causae invadere*, was a clumsy attempt to inflate his rôle to ludicrous proportions. These words must be taken to apply not merely to the Campanian land affair, but to the whole list of examples of Cicero's independent line presented in the preceding section. Collectively, and without careful consideration of the circumstances surrounding each, these examples could be plausibly argued to indicate a policy of outspoken opposition to the triumvirate.

Campanus was a matter of continuing and heated debate in which the senate had deeply involved itself before Cicero played any rôle, big or small. He did not initiate the discussion; he does not claim to have advocated a particular line of action; he never framed a substantive proposal concerning the Campanian land. His participation was limited to a procedural motion that a discussion, already under way, be postponed to a later occasion for the consideration of a full senate.

That his action had little significance is strongly attested by his failure to mention it to Quintus in a description of the proceedings written three days later (*Q.F.* 2.5). The silence of that letter, noticed by Balsdon, has not been satisfactorily explained. It is argued that there is a gap in the correspondence at this time which invalidates the *argumentum ex silentio*, and that *Q.F.* 2.5 was written and dispatched hastily and was therefore an unsuitable vehicle for delicate political news.[30] It is true that Cicero's last letter to Quintus before *Q.F.* 2.5 is lost, but it is almost certain that it contained no reference to what had transpired on April 5. Cicero mentions the lost letter which told of Tullia's betrothal, *ceteraque de re publica privataque*. He goes on: *postea sunt haec acta*. In other words, what follows—the debate of April 5—is fresh news, what has happened since he wrote last. Further, the description of the senate meeting gives the essential features of what happened, precisely what would be included in a first telling.

The letter was written before dawn, though not necessarily in great haste. It is not short and has many details, some of which Quintus could surely have waited to hear. That Cicero would not, however, entrust confidential information to a letter which he might want to dispatch without waiting for a messenger of proven reliability is very probable; but why, if he attributed any importance to it, should he hesitate to tell his brother what was public knowledge at Rome and could be read by anyone in the published accounts of the proceedings of the senate?

[30] Stockton (above, note 3) 476–77. An additional argument of T. A. Dorey (*CR* 9 [1959] 13) that, since Quintus had given a pledge that his brother would behave himself, Cicero was unwilling to tell him that his pledge was being broken, has been rightly rejected by Stockton on the grounds that Quintus was bound to hear such news very quickly.

In summary, the Campanian land debate of 57–56 was not the stuff of political coups.[31] It was an old issue, come to life again for economic rather than political reasons. Since it did not seriously concern vital interests of Caesar, and action was, besides, unlikely, it called for no unusual preventive measures by any adherent of Caesar, and was not therefore an effective weapon with which to accomplish the alleged goals of either Pompey or Cicero. But regardless of the political implications of the affair, Cicero's modest rôle in it provides no basis whatever for the idea that he was involved in a serious political gamble at this time.

There is a similar lack of solid evidence for the contention that Cicero turned the trial of Sestius into an event of major political significance by using it to expose, in the presence of Pompey, the evils of Caesarism and to attack Caesar's most noted instrument, Vatinius. The prosecution of Sestius on a charge of violence did have political overtones, as did many of the prosecutions at this time. The argument of the defense was that the use of force was justified in checking the violent, lawless course of Clodius, and the unanimous acceptance of this plea by the jury amounted to a public expression of disapproval of Clodius and his activities by the court, and Cicero regarded the verdict not only as a forensic triumph but as an important political victory for himself and for the champions of constitutionalism.[32]

Wider political implications, however, are suggested only by the statements of the letter to Lentulus. But, as in the case of the debate on the Campanian land, a letter from Cicero to his brother, written soon after the trial and containing what is surely a more trustworthy account of the proceedings, fails to substantiate in any way the claims made two years later to the governor of Cilicia, and brings up once more the *argumentum ex silentio*. Cicero tells Quintus (*Q.F.* 2.4.1):

> in defendendo moroso homini cumulatissime satisfecimus, et, id quod ille maxime cupiebat, Vatinium, a quo palam oppugnabatur, arbitratu nostro concidimus, dis hominibusque plaudentibus.

There is not the slightest hint in this account that he was concerned

[31] Surely the fact that not a single ancient historian of Rome makes any allusion to the *Ager Campanus* debate in connection with the conference at Luca is another strong indication that its political significance has been exaggerated by modern scholars.

[32] *Q.F.* 2.4.1.

in the trial with anything other than the discharge of his duties as an advocate and grateful friend. In fact, this very letter indicates that Cicero was particularly discouraged by the political situation at this time, and, towards the end of it, he explicitly states his intention of retiring from political activity altogether. If Cicero was planning a political move when he wrote this letter to his brother, he is not only silent about it, but he seeks to mislead by conveying precisely the opposite impression.

The evidence of the speeches delivered at the trial is often adduced to support the testimony of the letter to Lentulus. The *Pro Sestio* is sometimes presented as a denunciation of Caesarism and a plea for Ciceronianism, and the *In Vatinium* as a still more open attack on Caesar and the work of his consulship.[33]

The charge against Sestius concerned the turbulent events of 58 and 57, and Cicero's defense was to show the justice of forceful resistance to the lawlessness of Clodius. The trial therefore provided him with another welcome opportunity to put forward his pet analysis of the events of these years, namely that an unfortunate combination of circumstances had unleashed the villainous elements in the state, resulting in his banishment and the destruction of the *respublica* and all that was good, decent, and desirable in Roman life. The suppression of these anarchic forces through the efforts of men like Sestius had ended this unhappy situation, achieving his restoration and with it the re-establishment of law and orderly government.

The first part of the *Pro Sestio* presents these points and is another indictment of Clodius and of all who supported him, especially the consuls of 58. The rôle of the triumvirs is left vague and shadowy, and apologies are found for their failure to act. The whole section is merely an elaborate restatement of the theme developed in the three speeches delivered after his return from exile, and is no more an effort to denounce Caesar and whatever he was thought to represent than is any of the earlier orations.

The long digression on the *Optimates*, which comprises most of the second half of the speech and was occasioned by a derogatory remark about the term from Vatinius, is only another form of attack on

[33] Cf. Smith (above, note 2) 172; Pocock, *Commentary on Cicero in Vatinium* 5 ff.

Clodius and his kind, and a continuation of the purpose of the defense to discredit him and justify Sestius. It enabled Cicero to portray Clodius and his followers as a prime example of a dangerous and ever-threatening political disease—the coming to power, through the apathy and carelessness of decent citizens, of that small band of vicious politicians who, because they are criminals or mad revolutionaries, are always intent on destroying all that good men want to preserve. It was Cicero's practice to portray his political foes in this light, and to contrast their world of unrest and revolution with the peace, stability, and security which he claimed traditional republicanism alone could bring. He had used this technique to great advantage in his consulship to quash the land bill of Rullus and the prosecution of Rabirius, and to offset the lure of Catiline's promises to the masses, and there is nothing surprising or significant about his use of it here again.

On this occasion, because he had more reason to hate the objects of his attack and to be concerned at the attitude of some of the so-called *Optimates* towards them, he goes to greater lengths than usual to illustrate their criminal and despicable character and their unpopularity with the public. He becomes wordy and repetitious in his zeal to show the people's detestation of Clodius and their regard for himself and for all lovers of the *respublica*, and in much of the digression he is doing little more than indulging his personal hatred for his enemy and his penchant for self-glorification. In general, it is unlikely that his listeners were surprised by a single statement of the *Pro Sestio*, or that they detected in it any unusually significant political overtones. It had all been heard many times before.[34]

The attack on Vatinius hardly came as a surprise either. Vatinius was an important prosecution witness, a bitter enemy of Sestius, and in giving his testimony he had ruffled a sensitive Cicero with taunts of political inconsistency and cowardice.[35] Cicero's speech was therefore not only an attempt to discredit a prosecution witness but a reply to an abusive attack on himself. Cicero was fond of vilifying the public life of his enemies, especially if they had dared to attack his

[34] Caesar is seldom mentioned in this speech, and Smith's contention that it represents a denunciation of Caesarism is based on the unproven and highly unlikely assumption that Clodius was Caesar's tool and recognized as such.

[35] *Vat.* 5–6.

own, and it was to be expected that he would apply his satiric powers to the tribuneship of Vatinius, which was the latter's only claim to political distinction and which had been marked by violence and disregard for legal procedure.

I do not believe that such an attack, in such circumstances, would appear to the Romans to be directed against Caesar, though he had undeniably stood behind and benefited from the tactics being denounced.

In the first place, in spite of the close connection between the two men, the tribuneship of Vatinius had an existence separate from the interests of Caesar. Vatinius had an extensive legislative program, and most of it and the illegalities which attended its passage had nothing in particular to do with Caesar.[36] But, aside from that, if no separation is allowed between Vatinius and the beneficiaries and supporters of his actions, Pompey must also be included among Cicero's targets, since his gain from and contribution to the power politics of 59 was only slightly less than Caesar's.[37]

Further, in all his denunciations of the men and events which led to his exile, Cicero came close to criticizing Caesar and sometimes Pompey too, since, in the final analysis, they were mainly responsible for creating the conditions which prevailed in 58 and for placing the

[36] Pocock (Appendix IV of his commentary) contends that all the legislation of 59 may have been passed by Vatinius. Only the law giving Caesar command of Cisalpine Gaul can, however, be shown to be his. Cf. L. R. Taylor, "On the chronology of Caesar's first consulship," *AJP* 72 (1951) 254.

[37] Such a separation could, I think, be made in the political world of this period. Cf. Pompey's sophistry, as reported in *Att.* 2.16, in trying to shirk responsibility for the activities of 59, and Cicero's statement that Vatinius' actions involved no risk for Caesar (*Vat.* 39). But if separation is denied in the case of Caesar, it must be denied also in the case of Pompey; and in fact when later (*Fam.* 1.9.6–7) Cicero is trying to make the most of his attack on Vatinius and to deny a separation between the former tribune and his backers, he implies that his action was likely to be displeasing to Pompey as well as to Caesar. After emphasizing that he was disregarding Pompey's wishes in his political activity, he goes on to say, almost by way of example, that in Pompey's presence he attacked the doings of 59. Nowhere in this letter does he indicate that he sought to split the triumvirate. The words *in arcem illius causae invadere* carry no such meaning. All he is claiming is that he criticized the activities of Caesar's consulship, in which all members of the alliance were involved, though, of course, principally Caesar. The point he wishes to make most clearly is that he pursued an independent line in politics before Luca without regard for the wishes of anyone, including Pompey. The idea of an undermining strategy is a modern theory which lacks even the support of the evidence of this letter. (As for the notion that Cicero was led on by Pompey, and believed that the latter favored his actions, see below, note 58).

prime villains, Piso, Gabinius, and Clodius, in power. In particular, Cicero's outspoken condemnation of the adoption of Clodius in the *De domo*, and his challenge to its legality, was a far more explicit rebuke of Caesar than anything in the *In Vatinium*.[38]

This kind of implied or indirect criticism, incidental to an attack on someone else, apparently gave no offense, for it was a Roman's acknowledged right to defend his *dignitas* and abuse his enemies, regardless of whose friends they happened to be, and in the many invectives which he delivered in the years after his exile, Cicero was merely exercising that right.[39]

The whole tenor of Cicero's political life in the seven months between his return from exile and the conference at Luca is against the notion that he had any grand political designs in this period or visions of undermining Caesarism by returning an errant Pompey to the cause of strong senatorial government.[40] He may have had some such dream after his consulship, but a lot of things had happened since then. Above all, Cicero had endured the pain of exile and the shame of banishment. He had not borne the ordeal well, nor was his sensitive nature likely to forget it.

His exile had demonstrated particularly that political success and security were not achieved at Rome by winning the respect of decent citizens, or by standing forth in splendid isolation as an independent statesman striving for selfless political goals. Before Clodius' onslaught, Cicero exuded confidence in his political strength; he was the savior of his country, and was confident that all Italy would rally to his support.[41] In his optimism he refused any form of protection which might involve compromising his non-partisan stand in Roman politics.[42] When the blow came, he quickly discovered that, in a world where *vis* and *potentia* were the real determinants of events, a

[38] *Dom.* 39–41. Cf. *Har. Resp.* 45.

[39] Cf. *Att.* 4.18.1, where Pompey admits that Cicero's *dignitas* was a just reason for his refusal to defend his enemy, Gabinius. A man was permitted to go to great lengths at Rome to defend his *dignitas*. Cf. Caesar, *B.C.* 1.9. Even after the civil war, Cicero felt free to attack friends of Caesar, if they happened to be enemies of himself. Cf. *Fam.* 7.24.1.

[40] This theory is most fully developed by Smith (above, note 2) 164 ff.

[41] *Q.F.* 1.2.16.

[42] The offers from Caesar were many; they are summarized in *Prov. Cons.* 40–44. Cicero never really blamed any member of the triumvirate for his exile. He had

good cause was no substitute for raw power. He was left standing alone; the conservative *nobiles* with whom he had most closely identified himself made public displays of grief at his misfortune, but did nothing. Cicero was not a stupid man and the lesson was not lost on him; more than twelve years were to elapse before he would again make the *respublica* his primary concern, or gamble with his personal safety in pursuit of his political ideals.

He was elated initially by the warmth and enthusiasm with which he was welcomed back from exile. He found that his forensic *splendor*, his *auctoritas* in the senate, and *gratia* with decent citizens were undiminished. He planned to ease himself back into public life and to enhance his *dignitas* by adding the censorship to his list of *honores*.[43]

But despite this customary exuberance in moments of triumph, and ready optimism in assessing his political strength, his isolation in Roman politics was greater than ever, and his every move shows caution, nervous indecision, and preoccupation with personal security and self-interest. His domestic affairs were a shambles, and he would be dependent on the *boni* for restoration of his property and compensation for the damage inflicted by Clodius. His political course lay clearly with the *boni* also, if he was to regain the position he desired—*dignitatem illam consularem fortis et constantis senatoris*.[44] He could not afford to alienate these powerful *nobiles*, neither could he attach himself unreservedly to their cause. He was never comfortable in his relationship with Rome's exclusive oligarchy, and his slender confidence in their *fides* and political honesty had been shattered completely by his firm belief that his exile was the result of their treachery and jealousy.[45]

His relationship with Pompey was equally complicated. He had a personal liking for him; he was grateful for Pompey's rôle in his restoration, and he did not dare to risk the loss of his help and protection. But a close political association with the man whom the oligarchs were intent on opposing at every turn meant certain alienation

chosen not to ally himself with them and had therefore no right to expect their protection. The *boni* were the real betrayers, for they were his political allies. Cf. *Fam.* 1.7.2, *Att.* 4.8b.2, *Prov. Cons.* 43.

[43] *Att.* 4.1.3, 4.2.6.

[44] *Fam.* 1.8.4.

[45] This belief, understandable while in exile, persisted after his return. *Att.* 4.3.5; *Fam.* 1.6.2, 5.12.4; *Att.* 4.5.1; *Fam.* 1.7.2; *Att.* 4.8b.2; *Fam.* 1.9.14.

of that group, and, besides, Cicero had no great confidence in Pompey's own political constancy and trustworthiness.[46]

The food crisis which coincided with his return from exile illustrates the delicacy of his position and the cautious rôle which his feeling of insecurity and aloneness was urging on him. As the man of the moment, he found thrust upon him the task of giving expression in the senate to the common desire of both *plebs* and *boni* that Pompey's administrative talents be employed to deal with a severe grain shortage. Aware that the leading senators, most of whom stayed away, were bitterly opposed to any such power for Pompey, Cicero made the proposal with moderation and care. When an alternative proposal was put forward advocating sweeping powers for Pompey, he kept silent altogether, though he suspected that Pompey wanted the wider commission.[47] Cicero was clearly anxious to sidestep controversy and to avoid offending anyone, and the measure of his anxiety may be seen in his elaborate efforts throughout the first thirty sections of his speech, *De domo*, to defend even his limited support of Pompey.

His feelings of isolation and insecurity can only have increased in the succeeding months as he came to realize more fully the superficial quality of his homecoming welcome. The *boni* lived up to his worst expectations. Within a month he was complaining to Atticus of fresh signs of hostility and jealousy, and the compensation decreed for the property which Clodius had destroyed was so low that it did little to relieve his financial embarrassment.[48] By the end of November he was more concerned than ever about his domestic affairs and unable to determine what political course he should pursue.[49]

Another serious cause of concern was the realization that Clodius still represented a real threat and that his power was far from gone. Clodius had been unable to stop the surge of feeling against Cicero's continued exile, which was intolerable to most Romans, but his failure in this did not mean that he was a spent force. In the final months

[46] Cicero felt that he needed Pompey's help and could not afford to antagonize him: *Fam.* 1.9.21, *Q.F.* 3.4.2. His uncertainty about Pompey's political plans and desires, and distrust of what he said, is repeated over and over: *Att.* 4.1.7; *Fam.* 1.1.3, 1.2.3; *Q.F.* 2.2.3; *Fam.* 1.5b.2; *Att.* 4.9.1, 4.15.7; *Q.F.* 3.4.2, 3.8.4.

[47] *Att.* 4.1.7.

[48] *Att.* 4.1.8, 4.2.5; *Fam.* 1.9.15.

[49] *Att.* 4.3.6.

of 57 he repeatedly engaged in flagrant acts of violence and terrorism against Cicero and others and yet managed to thwart the best efforts of his enemies to bring him to trial. He had the firm backing of one consul, of his brother Appius who was a praetor, and of several militant tribunes. The Claudian family was old and respected and Clodius had not lost the benefits of high birth by any irreconcilable break with the oligarchs as a whole. His political affiliations and much of his activity remain a mystery, but it may be said that he was never a declared foe of the senate or the personal enemy of its leading members. Even as tribune he had enjoyed the good will of many of the *Optimates*, and they consistently defended the validity of his adoption and of his legislation.[50] At the end of 57, prominent *boni* were actively backing him again, and it was through their efforts that he was able finally to avoid prosecution and gain the aedileship.[51] His power with the people cannot be questioned. None of his enemies considered trying to bring about his defeat at the polls; it was a foregone conclusion that he would be elected aedile, if allowed to stand.

Cicero was slow to recognize the extent of Clodius' power. He liked to portray his arch-enemy's success as the evil but temporary consequence of unusual division between worthier politicians, and he seldom did justice publicly to Clodius' wide popularity. But after the beginning of 56, when, contrary to the expectations of many, Clodius was again in public office, Cicero's distress at the continuing support for his adversary, especially from those who claimed to share his own political beliefs, became acute, and for reasons of fear as well as hatred. There is no clearer indication of Cicero's general uneasiness and sense of insecurity at this time than his ever-present dread that Clodius might strike a second time. It was this fear more than any other consideration which drove him to commit himself after Luca to a course which was contrary to all his instincts and desires and which brought him frustration and unhappiness and forced him to admit that his political life had been a failure.[52] Even after he had

[50] *Har. Resp.* 48, 50; *Prov. Cons.* 45–46; *Dom.* 42.

[51] *Har. Resp.* 50; *Sest.* 85, 89, 95; *Fam.* 1.9.15.

[52] *Q.F.* 2.2.2. When Clodius' election seems assured he says, "omne genus a nobis cautionis adhibebitur." Cf. *Fam.* 1.9.21; *Har. Resp.* 38–39, 47–50; *Att.* 4.7.3; *Fam.* 1.7.7, 1.9.10–15. His dissatisfaction with his rôle as a supporter of the triumvirate

purchased by his support the protection of the triumvirate, he continued to count his defenses against Clodius, and he was still seeking to strengthen them as late as 54.[53]

The other developments in the beginning of 56 did little to relieve his anxieties or to simplify his political situation and shape his plans. In January he found himself in the middle of another tussle between the many interest groups in this splintered society. The issue was who should restore Ptolemy Auletes to the throne of Egypt. In line with an earlier resolution of the senate, the job belonged to Lentulus Spinther, governor of Cilicia. But most of the conservatives were opposed to Lentulus, who, though one of themselves, was out of favor, having sinned by his support of Pompey for the post of grain supervisor. They were proposing a commission of three, to be chosen from those not then holding *imperium*. Pompey's followers were proposing him for the job, and, while pretending to support Lentulus, he did nothing to discourage their efforts. Crassus added to the confusion by advocating a commission of three but extending the choice to those holding *imperium*. The issue developed into a lengthy tug-of-war which lasted through January and resulted only in aggravating the growing friction between the various factions.[54]

Cicero found once again that, in these internal squabbles dominated by considerations of narrow factionalism and individual interests, he did not really belong anywhere, and could not happily take an unequivocal position. He felt obliged to support the just claims of his friend and benefactor, Lentulus, but this put him out of step with the great majority of his fellow *consulares* and brought him dangerously close to offending his friend and benefactor, Pompey. He believed that he handled this delicate dilemma with great success, but it cannot have been a comfortable experience, and he did not enjoy these strains on his diplomatic powers.[55]

may be seen in *Fam.* 1.7.10, 1.8.3; *Att.* 4.5.1, 4.18.2, 4.6.2; *Q.F.* 3.5 and 6.4; *Balb.* 60–61, "Voluimus quaedam, obtenta non sunt, nos luctum maeroremque suscepimus."

[53] *Q.F.* 2.14 (15b).2. For other more general signs of caution cf. *Q.F.* 2.13(15a), 2.15(16).2, 3.1.16; *Att.* 4.17.4.

[54] The story is told in *Fam.* 1.1–5 and *Q.F.* 2.2.

[55] Writing to Quintus he says: "officio erga Lentulum mirifice, et voluntati Pompei praeclare satisfecimus" (*Q.F.* 2.2.3). His distaste for factional wrangling may be seen in *Q.F.* 2.3.2, 2.4.5; *Att.* 4.12, 4.13.1.

In February Clodius prosecuted Milo and provided a fresh opportunity for confrontation. Pompey and Cicero were Milo's leading supporters; opposed were Clodius and Crassus. Clodius used the occasion to attack Pompey and to sow dissension between him and Crassus. Violence erupted and the conservatives and the tribune C. Cato blamed Pompey for it and sharply attacked him in the senate. Alarmed by the hostility of his enemies, among whom he now included Crassus, and by his general unpopularity, Pompey confided to Cicero that he was planning to call in armed supporters from Picenum and Gaul to protect himself and to repel the violence which seemed inevitable when Milo's trial was resumed. Another explosive situation was developing in connection with the proposed legislation of the tribune, C. Cato, which was directed against Milo and Lentulus. Cicero's comment is: *Magnae mihi res iam moveri videbantur* (*Q.F.* 1.3.4). This statement is sometimes interpreted as a gleeful announcement that the dissolution of the triumvirate was imminent. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Cicero's picture is one of mounting hostility between numerous factions in a rapidly heating political atmosphere. What was imminent was the grim prospect of gang warfare on a major scale, and Pompey's relations with Caesar, or even with Crassus, do not appear to have had any special importance in this many-sided situation in which several different cliques were maneuvering and clashing.[56]

Cicero's reaction to this ugly crisis was not gleeful nor did he see in it an opportunity to strike a blow for his political ideals. His response was to stay away from the senate in order to escape another altercation in which he was not prepared to take sides, obviously determined, whatever the cause, to avoid, when possible, involvements which were likely to cost him political friends. A few weeks later, tired of the continuing animosity and division, he told his brother that

[56] It is true that Pompey believed that Crassus was now his enemy, but the evidence of hostility between them is slight enough. The fact that Crassus was opposed to Milo does not mean he was Clodius' helper or Pompey's opponent. A month later he supported Sestius, who was Pompey's friend and Clodius' enemy. The shouts of Clodius' followers to send Crassus to Egypt mean very little either. This was an old technique for dividing friends or allies, to which Crassus himself was no stranger (cf. *Att.* 1.14), and a few days later C. Cato used the same device in an attempt to separate Pompey and Cicero (*Q.F.* 2.3.3). But whatever Crassus' attitude towards Pompey, he was only one small part in a very complex political scene, and there is no justification for giving him a controlling rôle in the incidents of early 56.

he was withdrawing not only from the senate but *ab omni parte reipublicae*.[57]

Despite this explicit statement of his intention to abandon political activity altogether, despite his overall uneasiness, indecision, and caution in public life since his return from exile, and despite his unhappiness and perplexity amid the hopeless dissensions which then permeated Roman politics, it is at this very time that he is represented as launching at the trial of Sestius, and continuing by his proposal on the Campanian land, a bold scheme to revive his ideals of *consensus* and *concordia* and to undermine the power of Caesar. Cicero has been given a prominence in the course of politics before Luca which he clearly does not deserve, and he had been credited with a boldness and initiative which he did not possess in this period.

His response to the renewed alliance between Pompey, Caesar, and Crassus, and to the pressure on himself to support it, again belies the image of a determined Cicero masterminding a restoration of senatorial supremacy. There is no indication whatever from him that Luca dealt a shattering and unexpected blow to a cherished goal which had just seemed within his reach, or that it brought a sudden disillusionment which catapulted him, in an abrupt volte-face, into the arms of the late targets of all his efforts. Above all, there is no sign that Pompey had deceived or betrayed him or behaved reprehensibly in any way.[58]

He describes in a series of contemporary letters to Atticus and Lentulus Spinther how the political scene looked to him after Luca,

[57] *Q.F.* 2.4.5. It might be argued that Cicero was prone to impulsive outbursts of this kind, reflecting only a passing mood. There is truth in this, but his indecision and frustration with politics in this period is not intermittent, and he seems most discouraged precisely at the moment when he is commonly represented as optimistically engineering a revival of traditional republicanism and composing stirring manifestos to rally its champions.

[58] There is no reason to say that Pompey led Cicero on in the period before Luca. Cicero never suggests that he had the approval of Pompey for anything he did. He mentions Pompey's attitude only with regard to the Campanian land motion and then only to make the negative remark that Pompey showed no displeasure (*Fam.* 1.9.9). He never implies, however, that he had positive assurance that Pompey was not displeased. When they met soon after the April 5 debate, it seems clear that they did not discuss the affair at all, which fact is itself an indication that neither was deeply concerned with it (*Q.F.* 2.5.4). But aside from that, it is doubtful if Cicero would draw any firm conclusion from the silence of a man to whom he ascribed the qualities of *tarditas* and *taciturnitas* (*Fam.* 1.5b.2), and whom he was reluctant to take literally

when he felt compelled to end his non-partisan stand in Roman politics.[59] On one side he saw the *boni* who epitomized *perfidia*, *perversitas*, and *invidia*, and who would give him neither the friendship which he desired nor the protection which he felt he must have. Their behavior had slowly demolished the hopes for a life of quiet eminence as a distinguished senator which he had been foolish enough to entertain on his return from exile. On the other side he saw Pompey to whom he felt linked by affection and gratitude, and whose protection would relieve him of all his anxieties about the future. Support of Pompey meant support of Caesar and compromise of his political principles, but friendship with Caesar was a pleasing prospect, and his exile had taught him that *dignitas* must not be allowed to stand in the way of *salus*.[60] The choice was clear, and he admits to Atticus that he was *asinus germanus* not to have made it sooner.[61]

These sentiments do not represent new thinking inspired by a fresh disappointment of his political hopes. They are merely a further expression of the concerns and motivations which had guided his

even when he spoke (*Att.* 4.9.1), or that he would feel deceived when it turned out that Pompey was not in favor of continuing the debate.

[59] The letters are *Att.* 4.5, 4.6; *Fam.* 1.7, 1.8. They are surprising in their frank admission that it was *utilitas* which guided his decision. It is probable that concern for Quintus was a factor in his decision, as well as concern for himself. Quintus was ambitious and stood little chance of further political success without powerful allies, which his brother alone could win him. Many times he urged Cicero to build his political strength, especially by friendship with Caesar. Cf. *Q.F.* 2.11(13).1, 2.12(14).2, 2.13(15a).2. Cf. T. P. Wiseman, "The Ambitions of Quintus Cicero," *JRS* 56 (1966) 108.

[60] *Fam.* 1.7.10. Cf. *Fam.* 1.9.12 for his feelings about the prospect of friendship with Caesar. In general, Cicero had not been a supporter of Caesar before Luca. He had been opposed, for instance, early in 56 to certain proposals favorable to Caesar, which he termed *monstra* to Quintus (2.4.5) and may have done the same in the senate. His procedural motion on the Campanian land, however unimportant, aligned him with those who wanted to interfere with Caesar's law. It is probable that there is truth in the claims of *Fam.* 1.9.9 that Caesar complained to Pompey about him, and urged the latter to pass the complaints along. But he was far from being a declared enemy of Caesar. He had supported the 15-day Thanksgiving (*Balb.* 61, *Prov. Cons.* 27); he seems to have believed that the relations between Caesar and the senate could be improved (*Vat.* 15, *Fam.* 1.9.14), and Vatinius had actually accused him, at the trial of Sestius, of trying to win the friendship of Caesar (*Fam.* 1.9.7).

[61] *Att.* 4.5. It is generally accepted that he calls himself *asinus germanus* because of his alleged political coup early in 56, but this letter is almost entirely concerned with his foolishness in thinking, on his return from exile, that he could resume his old position as a political ally of the *Optimates*.

actions since his restoration; and his decision after Luca openly to support the triumvirate and finally to belong somewhere in Roman politics was not a sudden turnabout, but the natural culmination of his mounting frustration with the *boni*, his preoccupation with his personal security, and his desire after the emotional strains of the previous two years for simple peace and quiet.

Since the decision was made for reasons of self-interest and involved abandonment of *honesta consilia*, it is not surprising that Cicero, ever concerned about the judgment of posterity, gradually developed certain selfless rationales for his change of policy, and tried to present his support of the triumvirate as a capitulation after gallant resistance and when further conflict seemed vain and against the public interest.

And so he evolved his doctrine of the need for compromise in public life, and began to exaggerate the degree to which he had stood with opponents of the triumvirate on his return from exile, and to magnify the importance of certain actions which, if isolated from the circumstances surrounding them, could be made to appear as bold attacks on that alliance.

He gave expression to his *apologia* in a number of public speeches, but most elaborately in the letter to Lentulus which was composed with all the skill and ingenuity of Rome's most talented advocate and propagandist.[62] It tells no lies, but its ambiguities, subtle distortions, omissions, and skill in suggesting false conclusions convey the wrong impression if it is considered separately from the fuller and more honest contemporary accounts to Atticus and Quintus. The letter has had an undue influence, which is a tribute to the persuasive powers of its author, and it has been allowed to cloud other testimony which is incontestably more reliable. The result has been to make Cicero a central figure in the complex, strife-ridden political world of late 57 and early 56, in which he was, in reality, more observer and commentator than actor.

[62] The compromise doctrine, and the wheel and ship similes which he used to demonstrate it, occur in *Planc.* 91–94, *Fam.* 1.9.21; cf. *Balb.* 60–61. For Cicero's attitude towards the distortion of history in favor of oneself, cf. *Fam.* 5.12. It must be stated, however, that even in the letter to Lentulus, Cicero is honest enough to give some importance to private considerations in the making of his decision, and he does not come close to claiming for himself a rôle in events of the dimensions devised for him by some modern historians.