



<https://publications.dainst.org>

iDAI.publications

ELEKTRONISCHE PUBLIKATIONEN DES
DEUTSCHEN ARCHÄOLOGISCHEN INSTITUTS

Dies ist ein digitaler Sonderdruck des Beitrags / This is a digital offprint of the article

Kathryn E. Welch

The Office of Praefectus Fabrum in the Late Republic

aus / from

Chiron

Ausgabe / Issue **25 • 1995**

Seite / Page **131–146**

<https://publications.dainst.org/journals/chiron/1050/5417> • urn:nbn:de:0048-chiron-1995-25-p131-146-v5417.2

Verantwortliche Redaktion / Publishing editor

Redaktion Chiron | Kommission für Alte Geschichte und Epigraphik des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Amalienstr. 73 b, 80799 München

Weitere Informationen unter / For further information see <https://publications.dainst.org/journals/chiron>

ISSN der Online-Ausgabe / ISSN of the online edition **2510-5396**

Verlag / Publisher **Verlag C. H. Beck, München**

©2017 Deutsches Archäologisches Institut

Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Zentrale, Podbielskiallee 69–71, 14195 Berlin, Tel: +49 30 187711-0

Email: info@dainst.de / Web: dainst.org

Nutzungsbedingungen: Mit dem Herunterladen erkennen Sie die Nutzungsbedingungen (<https://publications.dainst.org/terms-of-use>) von iDAI.publications an. Die Nutzung der Inhalte ist ausschließlich privaten Nutzerinnen / Nutzern für den eigenen wissenschaftlichen und sonstigen privaten Gebrauch gestattet. Sämtliche Texte, Bilder und sonstige Inhalte in diesem Dokument unterliegen dem Schutz des Urheberrechts gemäß dem Urheberrechtsgesetz der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Die Inhalte können von Ihnen nur dann genutzt und vervielfältigt werden, wenn Ihnen dies im Einzelfall durch den Rechteinhaber oder die Schrankenregelungen des Urheberrechts gestattet ist. Jede Art der Nutzung zu gewerblichen Zwecken ist untersagt. Zu den Möglichkeiten einer Lizenzierung von Nutzungsrechten wenden Sie sich bitte direkt an die verantwortlichen Herausgeberinnen/Herausgeber der entsprechenden Publikationsorgane oder an die Online-Redaktion des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts (info@dainst.de).

Terms of use: By downloading you accept the terms of use (<https://publications.dainst.org/terms-of-use>) of iDAI.publications. All materials including texts, articles, images and other content contained in this document are subject to the German copyright. The contents are for personal use only and may only be reproduced or made accessible to third parties if you have gained permission from the copyright owner. Any form of commercial use is expressly prohibited. When seeking the granting of licenses of use or permission to reproduce any kind of material please contact the responsible editors of the publications or contact the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut (info@dainst.de).

KATHRYN E. WELCH

The Office of Praefectus Fabrum in the Late Republic¹

In the Imperial period at Rome, the *praefectus fabrum* was appointed directly by a general either to carry out an ambassadorial function, to assist the quaestor in organising finances, to perform whatever other tasks which might be assigned to him or even as an honour to which very few duties were attached.² The evidence which survives the Republican era, however, reveals an office still at the point of developing into what it was later to become. In the past, this period of development has led scholars into arguing for one or other of two distinct functions for the *praefectus fabrum*.³ Rather than distinguishing crudely, we should note the fact that the late Republic was a period of experimentation and change in this as in many other respects. From a survey of the material from this period, such as we have it, it is possible to see how politicians of the last years of the Republic used its flexibility to attain the services of a personal adjutant at the same time as some generals who actually had need of a commander of builders, engineers or even troops still used it for what must have been its original purpose.

¹ My thanks to the friends and colleagues, especially A. M. STONE and J. BARLOW, who helped me assemble the information in this article and to the reader for Chiron who corrected some errors and suggested many improvements. Thanks too are extended to the Leverhulme Trust and to Exeter University who made possible the time necessary to revise it.

² For recent discussion of the *praefectura fabrum* see B. DOBSON, The Praefectus Fabrum in the Early Principate, in: B. DOBSON and M. G. JARRETT (edd), Britain and Rome: Studies in Honour of E. Birley, Kendal 1966, 72–73; J. HARMAND, L'armée et le soldat à Rome de 107 à 50 avant notre ère, Paris 1967, 362–366; G. MOLISANI, L. Cornelius Quinti Catuli architectus, RAL 26, 1971, 41–50 (AE 1971, 61); R. E. A. PALMER, On the Track of the Ignoble, Athenaeum 61, 1983, 343–361; N. PURCELL, The Apparitores: A Study in Social Mobility, PBSR 51, 1983, 125–173; P. A. BRUNT, The Administrators of Roman Egypt, in: Roman Imperial Themes, Oxford 1990, 245. Earlier studies include H. C. MAUÉ, Der Praefectus Fabrum, Halle 1887; TH. MOMMSEN, Römisches Staatsrecht, Leipzig 1887; J. REID, Some Questions of Roman Public Law, JRS 1, 1911, 77–79; A. BLOCH, Le Praefectus Fabrum, MB 7, 1903, 106–131; MB 9, 1905, 352–378; E. KORNEMANN, RE 6.2, 1909, 1920–1925; E. BIRLEY, The Equestrian Officers of the Roman Army, DUJ 42, 1949–50, 11–12; J. SUOLAHTI, The Junior Officers of the Roman Army in the Republican Period: A Study in Social Structure, Helsinki 1955. References to Republican *praefecti* in the text will include the number assigned them (in chronological order of appointment) in the subsequent catalogue.

³ J. HARMAND, op. cit. (note 2) 363.

Almost all the rich epigraphical references to the office are confined to the Imperial era and the majority of those to the second century. We lack such evidence for the late Republic. Only two inscriptions mention the office, those of L. Cornelius (ii) and C. Cornelius Gallus (xvi). L. Cornelius Balbus (vi) held the office twice, but does not record the fact in an inscription found in Capua.⁴ We thus rely on brief mention in Cicero's speeches and correspondence, Plutarch's biographies and other stray references, none of which lend themselves to detailed description. Attested holders of the office in the Republic are listed below:

i. T. Turpilius Silanus (Q. Metellus Numidicus, 108)

Turpilius Silanus is named as *praefectus fabrum* by Plutarch.⁵ He served under Q. Metellus Numidicus and was placed by him in charge of the town of Vaga in 108. His tenure of office allows several observations. First we should note the close relationship between Turpilius and his patron, Metellus Numidicus.⁶ According to Plutarch, Marius' point in having Turpilius convicted of treason was to bring disgrace and bad fortune on Metellus for betraying a client.⁷ Turpilius' status is also of interest: he was probably a Latin citizen and, as such, was ineligible for magistracies and army commands restricted to those holding Roman citizenship.⁸ Most significantly, Turpilius is in command of the troops in the city

⁴ CIL X 3854 = ILS 888.

⁵ Plut. Marius 8.1; Sall. Jug. 66.3; 60.4 (*praefectus oppidi*). Plutarch's sources for this section of his biography of Marius were probably P. Rutilius Rufus and Sulla (H. PETER, *Die Quellen Plutarchs*, Amsterdam 1865, 102; B. SCARDIGLI, *Die Römerbiographien Plutarchs*, München 1979, 79–80) and if so the military title should be accurate. Plutarch was familiar with the term. He is the only author to name Vibius (v) and Flavius (xv) as *praefecti fabrum* (ἐπαρχοὶ τεκτόνων). The description of Turpilius' command is very similar to that given of Theophanes of Mytilene (xiii) at Plut. Cic. 38.4.

⁶ Plut. Marius 8.1: ἐκ πατέρων ξένος τῷ Μετέλλῳ.

⁷ Marius 8.2.

⁸ SUOLAHTI, op. cit. (note 2) 200–1, 274. Sallust states *nam is civis ex Latio erat* (Jug. 69.4). If the corrupt text indeed states this, he should be preferred to Appian (Num. 3) who describes him as a Roman citizen but is infamous for mistakes of this nature (REID, JRS 1, 1911, 79). The large literature on this subject usually attempts to deal with the question of criminal law and the status of *provocatio* at this time and each author's view on Turpilius' status reflects his position on whether or not he believes that the Latins had rights different from (or even superior to) Roman citizens. I accept the argument of REID (l.c. 77–79) on this point, though not his description of the functions of the *praefectus fabrum* at this time. He interprets the text in Sallust, whether corrupt or not, as showing Turpilius as a Latin citizen and with inferior rights to Roman citizens and that any argument which suggests that Latins could have been in a better position than Roman *civies* untenable. H. LAST (CAH IX, Cambridge 1932, 124) acknowledges REID but disagrees with his thesis while presenting no argument to the contrary; E. BADIEN also regards Turpilius as an Equestrian (Foreign Clientelae, Oxford 1958, 196) on the grounds that only such a Roman citizen could be a *praefectus fabrum*, a thesis which SUOLAHTI (272) by presenting seven other prefects of allied origin before the period of the Social War enables us to refute. J. L. STRACHAN-DAVIDSON (Problems of Roman Criminal Law, Oxford 1912, Amsterdam 1969, vol. 1, 116) and

and is court-martialled because he fails to hold it in the face of Jugurtha's advance. Thus, while Turpilius did not necessarily command engineers or builders, neither was he necessarily an adjutant or adviser. The *praefectura fabrum* is known here as a means by which official status and the right to command troops can be given by a Roman patron to an outsider. The dependence of the *praefectus* on the patronage of a Roman commander and the implausibility of the post leading to a senatorial career are two characteristics of the *praefectus fabrum* which recur in the Republican period. So too is the flexibility of function which has so often confused commentators on this issue.

ii. L. Cornelius (Q. Lutatius Catulus, 78)

According to his funerary inscription, L. Cornelius acted as architect for Lutatius Catulus in 65 after he had been his *praefectus fabrum* in 78.⁹ PALMER argues that the publication of this inscription overturns the theory that the *praefectus fabrum* had from an early period been separated from any command over engineers or troops.¹⁰ He is right to stress the importance of the find, but caution is needed before employing this piece of late Republican evidence to cover the Imperial *praefecti*. The development towards transforming the officer into a chief-of-staff (or licenced political crony) is already observable in the sixties and fifties. By the turn of the era, the original purpose was still employed, as the case of Cornelius Gallus (xvi) shows, but it is not surprising that this aspect eventually became obsolete. It is of interest that the transformation of the office appears to be happening in the late Republic, when political turbulence forced magistrates who served in both a military or civil capacity to look for new ways to utilise their supporters.

We should again take note that even when the *praefectus* was employed as a military or civil architect, he appears to have been closely linked to the commander who appointed him. The tradition of patronage and close association which attached to the *praefectus fabrum* made it more attractive to those men who had the fertile imaginations necessary for developing it into something quite different.¹¹

A. H. M. JONES (Studies in Roman Government and Law, Oxford 1968, 53–54) hold positions in general agreement with REID against A. H. J. GREENIDGE, Class. Rev. 10, 1896, 226f., who believed that the law of Livius Drusus the Elder in 122 had given rights of *provocatio* to the Latins even in a military situation which even Roman citizens did not possess. Whether in any case such rights would have existed in a case of treasonous activity is a moot point. Because of the dispute, we must regard Turpilius' status as being somewhat uncertain, but probably Latin.

⁹ MOLISANI, RAL 26, 1971, 41–50, pl. 1 (= AE, 1971, 61): *L. Cornelius L. f. Vot. Q. Catulicos praef. fabr. censoris architectus*. The inscription, currently located in Isola Tiberina at Rome, is clear and well preserved.

¹⁰ PALMER, Athenaeum 61, 1983, 344.

¹¹ On this tradition, see PURCELL, PBSR 51, 1983, 127–128, 138–142.

iii. Marcius Libo (M. Terentius Varro, date uncertain)

The *praefectus fabrum* of M. Terentius Varro is attested in one surviving reference.¹² T. R. S. BROUGHTON suggests that Libo was *praefectus* in 66 when Varro possibly served as Pompeius' legate *pro praetore* in Asia.¹³ This is to clutch at straws, for he could as easily have been appointed while Varro was praetor sometime in the seventies.¹⁴ As we have no details of either Varro's praetorship or his pro-praetorian duties under Pompeius' command, we cannot begin to guess at those of his *praefectus fabrum*. It is possible to surmise that Libo was wealthy, for he owned rich estates at Faventia, and that he gained his position because of his friendship with Varro.

iv. Name Uncertain (L. Licinius Murena, 64)

Cicero speaks of a *praefectus fabrum* appointed by L. Licinius Murena during his pro-praetorship.¹⁵ An unfortunate lacuna prevents us from knowing who this man was or any details about his activities. This is a sad loss because from the accusations and Cicero's reply it is apparent that the man was accused of engaging in political chicanery on behalf of his appointing magistrate. As Murena was certainly guilty of bribery (even though he was acquitted), the charges against him in relation to his *praefectus* are also likely to be true.

v. (Vibius) Sicca (M. Tullius Cicero, 63)

Plutarch tells us that Cicero appointed a Vibius as his *praefectus fabrum* in 63.¹⁶ According to this account, Vibius refused to receive Cicero into his home when the latter had been exiled. It would appear, however, that this account is less than fair to Vibius. From a letter written to Atticus in 58 while Cicero was actually staying at the house of his former *praefectus*, one learns that he felt that Sicca had treated him very well.¹⁷ Concern for Sicca, rather than any rejection, compelled Cicero

¹² Varro, *de re rustica* 1.2.7: *certe, inquit (Fundanius), Libo Marcius praefectus fabrum tuos, in fundo suo Faventiae hanc multitudinem dicebat suas reddere vites*. Also DOBSON, *op. cit.* (note 2) 63.

¹³ T. R. S. BROUGHTON, *MRR* 2.156.

¹⁴ *MRR* 2.466.

¹⁵ Mur. 73: *praefectum fabrum semel locum tribulibus suis dedisse, quid statuent in viros primarios qui in circo totas tabernas tribulium causa compararunt?* An even sadder loss is the actual speech by the prosecution which would have given the details (as they saw them) of the prefect's activities.

¹⁶ Plut. Cic. 32.2. Plutarch refers to Οὐίβιος, Σικελὸς ἀνὴρ, but this is nearly definitely the Sicca who figures in Cicero's correspondence. The *praefectus* lived in southern Italy, as Plutarch's own anecdote shows. Other aspects of the story are jumbled as well as the name. D. R. Shackleton Bailey describes the account as 'garbled' and suggests 'Sicca of Vibo' should be read instead (Cicero's Letters to Atticus, Cambridge 1966 [afterwards CLA], 2.140). A Vibius who sent books to Cicero in 59 is mentioned at Att. 2.20[40].6. If Plutarch's *nomen* is correct, and this Vibius is the same man, one could suppose a common interest in literature formed at least one bond between the two men.

¹⁷ Att. 3.2[48]: *quod non habebam locum ubi pro meo iure diutius esse possem quam fundum Siccae*.

to leave for Brundisium once he knew the terms of the law passed against him.¹⁸ Sicca accompanied him to Brundisium and was to have gone to Dyrrachium but did not.¹⁹ The friendship continued, although we do not hear of Sicca again until Cicero's return from Greece in 47. At this later stage he was entrusted with the delicate and important task of carrying information to Terentia.²⁰ Later, he played an intermediary role in one of the many proposed deals of 45.²¹ Cicero continued to visit Sicca into the forties²² and was even prepared to mitigate his comments about Fadius, the former father-in-law of Antony, in the Second Philippic because of some connection between him and Sicca, or perhaps Sicca's wife.²³

Sicca was obviously a wealthy man. He was a friend not only of Cicero but also of L. Aurelius Cotta and P. Silius.²⁴ There is no record of any other military career, or any hint of the duties he performed as *praefectus fabrum* in 63.²⁵ One could speculate about the possibilities which the Catilinarian conspiracy provided for a *praefectus fabrum* in his role as personal assistant to the consul, but, apart from the fact that he 'had received many benefits', no details of his tenure of office have survived.²⁶ Sicca, as a Roman citizen from the south of Italy, was legally able to hold office and command by this date (unlike Turpilius) but the sources give no indication that he became a senator or advanced in status from this point.

vi. L. Cornelius Balbus (C. Julius Caesar, 61, c. 58)

L. Cornelius Balbus was unique among attested *praefecti fabrum* in that he not only gained entry to the Senate, but became suffect consul in 40. For him, the *praefectura fabrum* marked the beginning of a long and unusual career in Roman politics, whereas for others we know of, it was their highest known achievement or the reward for many years of service.

In his speech on behalf of Balbus, delivered in 56, Cicero informs us that Balbus served twice as Caesar's *praefectus fabrum*, first during his praetorship and then his consulship.²⁷ It is probable that Cicero actually refers to Caesar's pro-praetorship, served in Nearer Spain in 61, rather than the praetorship of 62. Spain is, after

¹⁸ Att. 3.4[49]: *statim iter Brundisium uersus contuli ante diem rogationis, ne et Sicca, apud quem eram, periret*...

¹⁹ Fam. 14.4[6].6. In this passage, Sicca is mentioned along with three others who have been of great help to Cicero. He does not make his attitude to Sicca clear at this point but that may be because it was so well known to Terentia that he did not need to.

²⁰ Fam. 14.15[167].

²¹ Att. 12.23[262].3; 12.25[264].1; 12.26[265].1; 12.27[266].1; 12.28[267].1; 12.30[270].1; 12.31[272].1.

²² Att. 12.34[273].1; 14.19[372].4; 15.17[394].1; 16.6[414].1 (written by Cicero at the same property at which he had taken refuge in 58).

²³ Att. 16.11[420].1; CLA 6.299.

²⁴ Aurelius Cotta: Att. 13.23[262].3; Silius: Att. 13.25[264].1.

²⁵ HARMAND, op. cit. (note 2) 364.

²⁶ This is point of Plutarch's story (Cic. 32.2).

²⁷ Cic. pro Balbo 63.

all, a likely place for Caesar to find Balbus and Balbus would have been of great assistance in the context of his *patria*. The two men had very possibly met during Caesar's quaestorship in 69²⁸ but it is unlikely that Balbus was in Rome before 60.²⁹ Balbus had many opportunities to make himself useful to Caesar in 61 even though he was in a different province. For example, at one point, Gades was especially responsible for supplying Caesar with ships³⁰ and Balbus, as a leading member of the community and a Roman citizen, was in a good position to ensure that they were sent.³¹ Caesar's first appointment of Balbus as *praefectus fabrum* was possibly to repay such assistance or to facilitate it. The second appointment could have been anywhere between the years 59, during Caesar's consulship, and 57, when he was campaigning in Gaul. If it were in 59, as is most likely, Caesar might well have wished to make formal his use of Balbus' political skills during his tumultuous tenure of office. The case of Sicca (v) in 63 demonstrates the fact that a *praefectus fabrum* could be appointed to serve in the city. There is also the unnamed *praefectus fabrum* of L. Licinius Murena (iv) who was charged with performing unspecified political dirty tricks for his commander.³² Certainly Balbus acted as a confidential agent for Caesar both before and after 59 and there is every likelihood that this was his role during that year. If we had more detail of both appointments, it might be possible to see that both the military and political functions of the *praefectus fabrum* could be exercised by the same man and for the same commander and that the duties of the office depended very much upon circumstance.

Caesar's action is an indication of his attitude towards a man who had not been born a citizen and was a Phoenician Gaditane to boot. It demonstrates the close friendship and confidence which had grown between them, but because *praefectus fabrum* under ordinary circumstances did not progress to the Senate, the award of this distinction indicates that Caesar expected him to remain *privatus*. The *praefectura fabrum* was not perceived (by the Romans at any rate, whatever Balbus thought) as a stepping stone to the *cursus honorum*.

²⁸ Caesar's visit to Gades: Suet. Iul. 7; Dio 37.52.2, 41.24.2. On the date of Caesar's quaestorship, BROUGHTON, MRR 2.136 n. 7; 3.106.

²⁹ The full name and specification with which Cicero describes Balbus to Atticus (Att. 2.3[23].3) has the air of an introduction. REID (Ciceronis pro L. Cornelio Balbo oratio, Cambridge 1879, 6) places him in Rome from 70, as part of Pompeius' entourage. However, he also has Theophanes of Mytilene (xiii) in Spain during the war against Sertorius, which cannot be the case. Theophanes was in Mytilene until 61. Even if Balbus had come to Rome with Pompeius, which cannot be proved or disproved, Caesar's need for him as *praefectus fabrum* would have been far greater in Spain in 61 than in Rome in 62. For fuller treatment of this question, K. E. WELCH, The *praefectura urbis* of 45 B.C. and the ambitions of L. Cornelius Balbus, Antichthon 24, 1990, 53–69.

³⁰ Dio 37.53.4.

³¹ J. WEINRIE, Spaniards in Rome from Marius to Domitian, New York 1990, 65–66.

³² Cic. Mur. 73.

vii. (Vitruvius) Mamurra (C. Julius Caesar, c. 58-2)

The difficulties of identifying Vitruvius, the author of *de Architectura*, with Mamurra, the object of derision in so many of Catullus' poems, are widely recognised.³³ PALMER posits the existence of two men, both with the nomen Vitruvius and probably closely related.³⁴ They were both associated with building, as were many members of their family; Mamurra, perhaps, was heavily involved with Caesar's plans for adorning the city with memorials of himself. The author was *praefectus fabrum* under Augustus; Mamurra was similarly commissioned under Caesar.³⁵ Both Vitruvii came from areas other than Rome. Mamurra was associated with great wealth and the ostentatious display of it.³⁶ Whether or not the association between Mamurra and Caesar was as close as Catullus wished his readers to believe, we might at least read his criticisms as evidence of a personal link of friendship between the two. If PALMER's arguments are correct, we can see in Mamurra someone who combined the role of adviser and personal friend with a talent for and interest in building and engineering.

viii. C. Velleius (Cn. Pompeius Magnus, ?; M. Iunius Brutus, 42; Ti. Claudius Nero, 41)

One reference only survives of C. Velleius' appointment by three different commanders, and that only because his grandson recorded the fact in his history.³⁷ Velleius demonstrated that he was a close friend of at least one of them when he committed suicide rather than desert his patron Nero after the failure of the Perusine uprising.³⁸ He held the rank of *eques* or *tribunus aerarii* where he was placed on the roll of *iudices* by Pompeius and appears to have remained outside the senate.

ix. L. Clodius (Ap. Claudius Pulcher, 52)

L. Clodius' activities on behalf of Ap. Claudius in 51 provide the opportunity to see the *praefectus fabrum* acting as a military attaché.³⁹ On leaving his province, Appius sent Clodius to negotiate with Cicero on where they were to meet and what they were to talk about. In the course of one conversation, Cicero answered a charge of bad manners by saying he had only done what Appius' closest associate (Clodius) had requested.⁴⁰

³³ PALMER, *Athenaeum* 61, 1983, 343-354; PURCELL, *PBSR* 51, 1983, 156; also, E. RAWSON, *Intellectual Life in the Late Roman Republic*, London 1985, 87.

³⁴ PALMER, *l.c.* 351.

³⁵ Vitruvius: *Arch.* 1.2; Mamurra: Pliny, *NH* 34.48.

³⁶ Catull. 29; 57; Martial 9.59.1-3; PALMER, *l.c.* 345-347.

³⁷ Vell. Pat. 2.76.1: *quippe C. Velleius, honoratissimo inter illos trecentos et sexaginta iudices loco a Cn. Pompeio lectus, eiusdem Marcique Bruti ac Ti. Neronis praefectus fabrum.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ Fam. 3.4[67].1; 3.5[68].3; 3.6[69].2; 3.8[70].5; D. R. SHACKLETON BAILEY, *Cicero: epistulae ad familiares*, Cambridge 1977 (afterwards CEF), 1.362; 368.

⁴⁰ Fam. 3.6[69].2: *hominem ita tibi coniunctum ut mihi cum illo cum loquerer tecum loqui viderer.*

Clodius' name may in fact indicate that he was perhaps descended from a freed slave of the Claudii Pulchri.⁴¹ This is an interesting and yet unlikely suggestion. This particular branch of patrician Claudian gens did not use the praenomen Lucius by common consent,⁴² and there is no sign of a distinguishing cognomen. Even without this link, the Ciceronian evidence points to close association with and patronage on the part of Appius. We hear nothing certain of his later. MÜNZER identifies him with the tribune designate mentioned by Cicero in 43.⁴³ While the evidence is slight,⁴⁴ if the identification is correct, Clodius would become the only other attested *praefectus fabrum* besides Balbus (vi) to enter the Senate, and he also did this in a period of civil disturbance.

x. Q. (Paconius) Lepta (M. Tullius Cicero, 51)

Lepta's nomen is uncertain. The suggested 'Paconius' is based on an inscription honouring a Q. Paconius Lepta of Cales⁴⁵ whom DESSAU and MÜNZER⁴⁶ identify as Cicero's friend's son. Lepta's *praefectura* is one of the best attested in the Republican period in that it is possible to learn more about his status and personality than others. Even so, knowledge of his duties under Cicero's command in Cilicia is restricted. These duties included acting as ambassador to Ap. Claudius Pulcher in Cilicia,⁴⁷ carrying letters to Pompeius after the outbreak of civil war,⁴⁸ and reporting on events in Capua.⁴⁹ With his experience of finance and business, we could reasonably expect that he was of great assistance to Cicero in managing finances while he was in the province. We can again perceive close personal friendship between the *praefectus fabrum* and his commander.⁵⁰ He might have been even more closely associated with, and useful to, Cicero's equestrian friend, the businessman Atticus, who appears either to have recommended or endorsed his appointment.⁵¹ The frequent references to Lepta throughout Cicero's letters show him to be a wealthy man and an active businessman, concerned for his *municipium* of Cales⁵² and for

⁴¹ CEF 1.368.

⁴² Suet. Tib. 1.2.

⁴³ F. MÜNZER, RE 4.1.65, 'Clodius' (9).

⁴⁴ SHACKLETON BAILEY, Cicero: epistulae ad Quintem Fratrem et Marcum Brutum, Cambridge 1980 (afterwards CQFMB), 238.

⁴⁵ CIL X 4654 = ILS 5779.

⁴⁶ MÜNZER, RE 12.2.2071, 'Lepta'.

⁴⁷ Fam. 3.7[71].4.

⁴⁸ Att. 8.3[153].7.

⁴⁹ Att. 9.12[179].1; 9.14[182].3; 9.15[183].1.

⁵⁰ Fam. 9.13[311].1-3; 6.18[218]; 14.17[162]; 6.19[262]; Att. 13.48[345].1. The friendship may have soured temporarily in 44 (Fam. 16.23[330].2).

⁵¹ Att. 5.17[110].2; 6.1[115].22: *Lepta tua epistula gaudio exultat; etenim scripta belle est meque apud eum magna in gratia posuit*. Also Att. 6.8[122].2, especially if the Batonius mentioned were one of Atticus' own couriers.

⁵² Fam. 9.13[311].1-3; 6.18[218].

his own social standing.⁵³ He was equestrian in 51 and remained so for as long as we have any information about him.

xi. L. Vibullius Rufus (Cn. Pompeius Magnus, 49)

Vibullius was one of three *praefecti fabrum* appointed by Pompeius in 49.⁵⁴ For some years he had acted as Pompeius' confidential agent and ambassador.⁵⁵ After the outbreak of civil war, Vibullius, as *praefectus fabrum*, was sent to recruit troops for Pompeius in Picenum,⁵⁶ and was very successful in his efforts up until he and they were captured by Caesar at Corfinium along with L. Domitius Ahenobarbus. One cannot but speculate that he was in Corfinium precisely to attempt to persuade Ahenobarbus to move his troops in accordance with Pompeius' instructions. Caesar suggests that his real task was to 'confirm the loyalty of the inhabitants'.⁵⁷ Whether he was actually meant to command the troops he recruited is in doubt. P. Lentulus Spinther was in the area and seems to have taken charge of them immediately. Once Vibullius had been set free by Caesar, he was sent by Pompeius to Spain on another confidential mission to apprise L. Afranius and M. Petreius of events,⁵⁸ and was captured again. Because he was a diplomat, and perhaps because of his close personal association with Pompeius, Vibullius was released a second time, in breach of Caesar's expressed policy to allow one escape only, so that he could carry messages to Pompeius.⁵⁹

Both as *praefectus fabrum* and as a private representative, Vibullius, along with Theophanes, L. Lucceius and L. Scribonius Libo, formed what Caesar and Cicero recognised as Pompeius' inner council.⁶⁰ Later in 48, Vibullius' involvement with the returned exile Milo was used to prove Pompeius' support for the attempt of Caelius and Milo to cause trouble for Caesar by marshalling those in Italy who were in debt.⁶¹

⁵³ Fam. 6.19[262]; Att. 13.48[345].1.

⁵⁴ Att. 9.7c[174c].2.

⁵⁵ Fam. 1.9[20].10; QFr. 3.1[21].18. In the first instance, Vibullius was sent to Cicero to prevent him from offering an opinion about the Campanian land in 56; in the second, Vibullius was responsible for an important deal between Balbus, Oppius and himself.

⁵⁶ B. Civ. 1.15; Att. 8.2[152].4.

⁵⁷ B. Civ. 1.15: *in agrum Picenum confirmandorum hominum causa*. Caesar implies, of course, that this task was impossible.

⁵⁸ B. Civ. 1.34; 3.10; 3.11.

⁵⁹ B. Civ. 3.10: *demonstrauimus L. Vibullium Rufum, Pompei praefectum, bis in potestatem peruenisse Caesaris atque ab eo esse dimissum, semel ad Corfinium, iterum in Hispania. hunc pro suis beneficiis Caesar idoneum indicauerat, quem cum mandatis ad Cn. Pompeium mitteret, eundemque apud Cn. Pompeium auctoritatem habere intellegebat*.

⁶⁰ Caesar: B. Civ. 3.18; Cicero: Att. 9.11[178].3.

⁶¹ B. Civ. 3.22: *interim Milo dimissis circum municipia litteris, se ea, quae faceret, iussu atque imperio facere Pompei, quae mandata ad se per Vibullium delata essent, quos ex aere alieno laborare arbitrabatur, sollicitabat*.

Vibullius' appointment as *praefectus fabrum* gave official recognition to a job he had been doing for at least five years and to a position of influence which he maintained for as long as Pompeius held power. Of significance is the fact that in 49 he progresses from personal adviser to commander of troops, however nominal that command might have been. There appear still to be aspects of both military and staff (advisory) activity involved in the *praefectura*.

xii. Numerius Magius (Cn. Pompeius Magnus, 49)

Numerius Magius was another envoy for Pompeius in 49.⁶² His family was from Cremona. He too was captured by Caesar in 49 and sent to persuade Pompeius to meet with Caesar in order to discuss some kind of settlement between them. Plutarch names Magius as a friend of Pompeius.⁶³ His duties, as far as we know them, involved acting as ambassador in the negotiations for peace in which both Pompeius and Caesar were engaged in the first part of the year.

xiii. Cn. Pompeius Theophanes (Cn. Pompeius Magnus, 49)

Theophanes of Mytilene was a politician in his own city before he attached himself to Pompeius in the late sixties.⁶⁴ He had survived several turbulent years of Mytilenean politics during the period when the city had supported Mithridates VI against the Romans and had suffered the consequences. He may also have been an experienced military commander. Once he had joined Pompeius, Theophanes was useful first because of his knowledge of Eastern affairs.⁶⁵ His value to Pompeius and the extent of his achievements in his home territory in these years is evi-

⁶² MÜNZER, RE 14.1.440, 'Magius'. Reference to his office: Att. 9.7c[174c].

⁶³ Plut. Pomp. 63.2: Νομέριον Πομπηίου φίλον. Some manuscripts read Ουβούλλιον.

⁶⁴ Strabo 13.2.3: οὗτος δὲ καὶ πολιτικός ἀνὴρ ὑπῆρξε; also 13.2.3. This and other evidence, especially recent epigraphic finds, disproves both A. ALFÖLDI's statement (Oktavians Aufstieg zur Macht, Bonn 1976, 42) that Theophanes had no political role and M. H. CRAWFORD's assumption (in: P. GARNSEY – C. R. WHITTAKER, edd, Imperialism in the Ancient World, Cambridge 1978, 204) that he was important only after 51. CRAWFORD bases his argument on the lack of reference to Theophanes in the pro Archia. However it was not in Cicero's interests to use this case as a forum to discuss the power of Greek advisers over Roman politicians. Cicero's letters from 59 provide better literary evidence. L. ROBERT (Théophraste de Mytilène à Constantinople, CRAI 1969, 42) reflects Strabo in referring to Theophanes as 'un homme politique'. Also on Theophanes, D. SALZMANN, Cn. Pompeius Theophanes: Ein Benennungsvorschlag zu einem Porträt in Mytilene, MDAI(R) 92, 1985, 245–260, and, more recently, V. I. ANASTASIADIS – G. A. SOURIS, Theophanes of Mytilene: A New Inscription Relating to his Early Career, Chiron 22, 1992, 377–383, use convincing epigraphical data to establish Theophanes' importance in Mytilene both before and after 63. Also useful is B. GOLD, Pompey and Theophanes of Mytilene, AJPh 106, 1985, 312–327.

⁶⁵ Strabo 13.2.3; also W. S. ANDERSON, Pompey and his Friends and the Literature of the First Century B. C., Berkeley – Los Angeles, 1968, 35; GOLD, l.c. 321; A. W. SHERWIN-WHITE, Roman Foreign Policy in the East, Oklahoma 1984, 254. SHERWIN-WHITE also cites Archelaus as adviser to Aulus Gabinius and the relationship of Mithridates of Pergamon and possibly Theopompus of Cnidos with Caesar as examples of the same phenomenon.

denced by the return of freedom to Mytilene in response to his request.⁶⁶ Theophanes is rarely found acting as a long distance ambassador to Romans, although after the outbreak of the civil war, he was occasionally used to great effect in Pompeius' efforts to liaise with Eastern states and peoples.⁶⁷ In this, he was essentially different from his adopted son, Balbus (vi), who 'networked' with other Romans in the capital while Caesar was out of Rome. His influence in Roman, as opposed to Mytilenean, politics was always based on Pompeius and so he could not hope to survive Pompeius' collapse in 48. After this time, a change in fortune for Sextus Pompeius was the only way Theophanes could hope to return in good standing.⁶⁸

In the eyes of Roman observers, Theophanes made it possible to 'fish out' what the Great Man was thinking.⁶⁹ His influence as an adviser arguably made him responsible, in part at least, for one of Pompeius' most important decisions, to retreat from Italy to the East⁷⁰ where his reputation had very probably been widely publicised by Theophanes' writings.⁷¹ Cicero could remark that it was Theophanes who was most influential with Pompeius.⁷² However, a word of caution is needed in this regard. Because Theophanes was perceived as an adviser to Pompeius, he became a whipping boy for anyone who disagreed with Pompeius' policies. At the outbreak of the civil war, Caesar drew useful material for adverse propaganda from the relationship. Because he was less than wholehearted about joining the Optimates in Greece, Cicero had persuaded himself that if he did go, he would merely be carrying out the wishes of Theophanes and Lucceius.⁷³ The terms Graecus⁷⁴ and Mytilenaeus⁷⁵ conjured up deep seated Roman

⁶⁶ That is, the status of *civitas libera*. Plut. Pomp. 42.4: καὶ γὰρ εἰς Μιτυλήνην ἀφικόμενος τὴν τε πόλιν ἡλευθέρωσε διὰ Θεοφάνη. ROBERT (CRAI 1969, 54) argues that he obtained similar freedom for Byzantium.

⁶⁷ Plut. Cic. 38.4.

⁶⁸ Theophanes attempted to make contact with Cicero on behalf of Sextus in 44 (Att. 15.19[396].1; 15.20[397].3).

⁶⁹ Att. 2.17[37].3. Cicero actually uses the delightfully apt verb, *expiscere*. Theophanes was the means by which Cicero expected to hear of a legation to Egypt in 59 (Att. 2.5[25].1). Atticus chose him to convey advice which he knew Cicero would find unpalatable (Att. 8.12[162].5; also CLA 1.17–18).

⁷⁰ ANDERSON, op. cit. (note 65) 39, examines the strengths of the arguments attributing credit to Theophanes for this strategy.

⁷¹ This was certainly the case in Rome (pro Archia 24) and more probably so in the Greek-speaking East. Theophanes was arguably an important source for Plutarch's life (Pomp. 42.2; PETER, op. cit. [note 5] 114–117). RAWSON, op. cit. (note 33) 93, 107–108, suggests that Theophanes was involved in the development of the image of Pompeius as the new Alexander.

⁷² Att. 5.11[104].3: *ergo Graecus incumbet; valet autem auctoritas eius apud illum (Pompeium) plurimum*.

⁷³ Att. 9.1[167].3.

⁷⁴ Att. 5.11[104].3.

⁷⁵ Att. 7.7[130].6.

prejudice.⁷⁶ Cicero uses such epithets when apportioning responsibility for Pompeius' more violent policies,⁷⁷ and was scathing of Theophanes' actions within the camp.⁷⁸ In his account of the civil war, Caesar carefully refers to Pompeius' reliance upon Theophanes, Lucceius and Libo, but carefully passes over the role of his own personal advisers.⁷⁹ This device served to highlight Pompeius' weaknesses which (publicly) Caesar did not share. On the other hand, Lucan suppresses the role of Theophanes in Pompeius' counsels because he would prefer his readers to believe he took his advice from the Roman consul, L. Lentulus Crus.⁸⁰ Such tendentious evidence makes the task of assessing the extent of Theophanes' influence at the very point where he held office very difficult.

Even so, while the extent of Theophanes' efficacy and the details of his power are irrecoverable, the general outline is clear. He, like Vibullius, had served on Pompeius' inner council for some years before the office of *praefectus fabrum* was bestowed upon him. The opprobrium found in our sources may explain why Pompeius found it necessary to give Theophanes and his other advisers a formal title. He chose what had become the most versatile commission a general could find to give legal status to what was already a reality.

The recognition given to Theophanes was the only official reward which he received from the Romans. We cannot know what might have eventuated later had Pompeius beaten Caesar, but unless loyalties and alliances changes dramatically, it is reasonably safe to assume that if Pompeius' optimate associates had had any say in the matter, further official progress for a Greek would have been severely limited. The *praefectura fabrum* represents the high point of Theophanes' influence in Roman circles. He returned to a position of high honour in his native city of Mytilene.⁸¹

xiv. P. Volumnius (Eutrapelus) (M. Antonius, 42)

Volumnius was appointed Antony's *praefectus fabrum* in early 42.⁸² The relationship between the two men was close enough for Volumnius to have L. Julius Calidus placed on and then removed from the proscription lists in 42. GUNDEL⁸³

⁷⁶ Shown particularly at pro Flacco 9 where Cicero can discredit witnesses on the general grounds that they were untrustworthy Asian Greeks; also J. V. P. D. BALSDON, *Romans and Aliens*, London 1979, 31–32.

⁷⁷ Att. 9.11[178].3.

⁷⁸ See also Plut. Cic. 38.4: ἐπαινούντων δέ τινων Θεοφάνην τὸν Λέσβιον, ὃς ἦν ἐν τῷ στρατοπέδῳ τεκτόνων ἑπαρχος ... ᾠκλίκον, εἶπεν, ἀγαθὸν ἐστὶ τὸ Γραικὸν ἔχειν ἑπαρχόν. According to Plutarch's source, Theophanes was to blame for Pompeius' plan to remove Ptolemy from Alexandria in order to create a new command. Pompeius' φύσις was too noble to suggest such a thing of its own accord (Plut. Pomp. 49.7).

⁷⁹ B. Civ. 3.18. Note, in contrast, Caesar's reply to Pothinus in 47 at Plut. Caes. 48.9.

⁸⁰ Lucan, B. Civ. 8.327 f.; ANDERSON, op. cit. (note 65) 40.

⁸¹ Theophanes received divine honours at Mytilene (ROBERT, CRAI 1969, 42–64; SALZMANN, MDAI(R) 92, 1985, 245–260; ANASTASIADIS – SOURIS, Chiron 22, 1992, 377–383).

⁸² Nep. Att. 9.4; 12.4.

⁸³ H. GUNDEL, RE 9A.1.876, <Volumnius>.

has suggested that this man should be identified as P. Volumnius Eutrapelus because both Volumnii were friends of Antony. Eutrapelus is known from his letters to and from Cicero.⁸⁴ If, as is very likely, GUNDEL's identification is correct, the *praefectus fabrum* of Nepos' account had much in common with Antony himself. Eutrapelus was known as a wit whose parties gave to Cicero occasion for mock horror. Antony and Volumnius may have shared the same mistress.⁸⁵ The two men were close enough for Cicero to depend upon Eutrapelus to deliver his requests to an otherwise inaccessible Antony in 44.⁸⁶

What we know of Volumnius would lead one to believe that he had little interest in or experience of *res militaris*. Even in 43, when Antony was proconsul of Cisalpine Gaul and battling with Decimus Brutus, Volumnius was in Rome, where he found himself in need of Atticus' help. He was also in the city in 42, when he had the chance to return Atticus' favours.⁸⁷ According to the evidence we have, Volumnius had no military duties, but spent his time engaged in political activity on behalf of Antony. Volumnius was wealthy and was able to increase that wealth during the proscriptions.⁸⁸

xv. C. Flavius (M. Iunius Brutus, 42)

Almost nothing is known of Flavius, who is called Brutus' *praefectus fabrum* by Plutarch.⁸⁹ The little we have shows clearly that Brutus was attached to him and that he was prepared to back Brutus to his fullest capacity. On the two occasions when Brutus himself mentions Flavius, he calls him *Flavius noster*;⁹⁰ he begs Cicero to assist him in his dispute with the city of Dyrrachium over a will.⁹¹ This affair would allow us to assume that Flavius was rich. This impression is confirmed by Nepos, who, in relating Atticus' careful political neutrality, reveals that Flavius was behind the move to raise money from a consortium of equestrians (to be led by Atticus) on Brutus' behalf in 44.⁹² Atticus refused to participate, and the attempt failed. When Flavius died at the battle of Philippi, his death caused Brutus particular grief.⁹³

xvi. C. Cornelius Gallus (Octavian, c. 30)

A reused stone provides evidence that the later famous prefect of Egypt had

⁸⁴ Fam. 7.32[113]; 9.26[197].

⁸⁵ Att. 15.22[399]; Fam. 9.26[197].2.

⁸⁶ Att. 15.8[385].1.

⁸⁷ Nep. Att. 9.4; 12.4.

⁸⁸ This was Nepos' alleged reason for Volumnius' wish to place Calidus on the proscription list (Att. 9.4).

⁸⁹ Plut. Brut. 51.2.

⁹⁰ MBr. 1.6[12].4. Flavius is referred to in similar terms at MBr, ad Att. 1.17[17].3, but this letter is probably a forgery (CQFMB 11).

⁹¹ MBr. 1.6[12].4.

⁹² Nep. Att. 8.4.

⁹³ Plut. Brut. 51.2.

previously been Octavian's *praefectus fabrum*.⁹⁴ In this case we find again that the *praefectus fabrum* was a person outside the senatorial order who was a close friend of his commander. It is likely that even as *praefectus fabrum*, Gallus was in command of troops; he commanded an army in Cyrenaica and later rose to the important post of *praefectus Aegypti*.⁹⁵ As in the case of Cornelius (ii) and Mamurra (vii), this friend of the *imperator* was concerned with a building programme. Once again, we should note the fact that the prefecture could be turned in whichever direction the commander (in this case Octavian) wished.

Gallus' involvement with construction is significant. VOLKMANN⁹⁶ comments on the fact that his overly enthusiastic approach to building and self-glorification perhaps aroused a suspicion in Octavian which eventually grew to the belief that Gallus was dangerous. This is possibly to read later events into an earlier situation. If Octavian's mistrust had been aroused in this early stage, it is highly unlikely that Gallus would have progressed to the far more powerful (and innovative) prefecture of Egypt. Without further evidence, it would be better to see Gallus acting within what was still considered to be the job description of the *praefectus fabrum*. He is thus the last in the line which includes Cornelius, Mamurra and Vitruvius, all late Republican *praefecti fabrum* who were connected with building to a greater or lesser degree.

We have a sample of sixteen *praefecti fabrum* (with one holding office twice and another three times). Three, Cornelius (ii), Mamurra (vii) and Gallus (xvi), were connected with building in some way; a possible seven command troops in some capacity; a possible thirteen act as advisers or ambassadors as part of their duties; eight are known to have possessed considerable wealth; all, with the probable exception of Turpilius (i), are members of the Equestrian order at the time of office and only one definitely progresses to the Senate; each is linked in some way to his appointing magistrate and gained his position through patronage.

These are the bare statistics – what may we conclude from them? In the first place: every *praefectus* known from the late Republican period is linked by friendship to his commander. This fact reinforces the belief in the importance of patronage in all appointments of this nature⁹⁷ and explains much of the subsequent development of the office. Following from this is our second point: the magistrate decided not only who got the position, but increasingly what any *praefectus fabrum* did once it was granted. Thus while we find various magistrates still using the prefect for military

⁹⁴ AE 1964, 255: *iussu imp. Caesaris divi f. C. Cornelius Cn. f. Gallus praef. fabr. Caesaris divi f. forum Iulium fecit*. Also H. VOLKMANN, *Zur Gallusinschrift auf dem Vatikanischen Obelisken*, *Gymnasium* 72, 1965, 328–30; J.-P. BOUCHER, *Caius Cornelius Gallus*, Paris 1966, 33–36.

⁹⁵ BRUNT, *op. cit.* (note 2) 245.

⁹⁶ VOLKMANN, *l.c.* (note 94) 330.

⁹⁷ For example, PURCELL, *PBSR* 51, 1983, 138–142.

and engineering duties, there was a growing tendency for others who required more official status for the Equestrian members of their *consilia* in both civil and military situations to employ this adaptable *praefectura*. The use made of the office by Pompeius in 49 demonstrates this most clearly. Particularly by his multiple use of the title of *praefectus fabrum*, Pompeius shows how flexible the office had become. Previous to this, however, other senators of very different status and objective, such as Caesar, Cicero and Murena, had used their *praefecti fabrum* to various purposes.

Nevertheless, the survey shows that even in the last years of the Republic the office had not quite lost its association with building or engineers. Neither had it become the mere sinecure which observers of a much later period believe it to be. However diverse the duties of the *praefectus fabrum* were in this period, in so far as we can ascertain from individual cases, they were certainly arduous and men of talent were employed to perform them.

Yet another observation might be made. This office is restricted to men of the Equestrian order who showed little sign that they expected to progress to the Senate. Of the sixteen examples, only one, Balbus (vi) can be later placed in the Senate with any certainty and his achievement was surrounded by circumstances so unusual that he cannot be taken as being representative of the rest. Thus, a study of the Republican *praefecti fabrum* provides a glimpse of the manner in which a separate and honourable Equestrian career which depended on the patronage of an important senator was evolving in the period before Augustus came to power, although his singular position forced the phenomenon to develop in a certain way and at a much faster rate.⁹⁸

As with so much, a study of the Republican *praefecti fabrum* reveals how different such an office was from what it subsequently became at the same time as it enables us to see the framework in which it was later to develop. The uses to which it was put by the majority of late Republican generals left their mark, and all trace of its original connection to construction eventually disappeared. The transition occurs in the last years of the Republic when its flexibility was exploited by men with particular concerns relevant to a period of civil war. It was only one of the experiments carried out by men of the calibre of Caesar and Pompeius which were eventually to be taken up by their political successors and served to change the fibre of Roman political life.

School of Archaeology
Classics and Ancient History A 17
University of Sydney
Sydney NSW 2006
Australia

⁹⁸ As previously, the office of *praefectus fabrum* had served the same purpose for patrons who wished to advance their friends among the allies (SUOLAHTI, op. cit. [note 2] 274–5).

