

THE LANDMARK JULIUS CAESAR Web Essays



For the Complete Works

Gallic War · Civil War · Alexandrian War

African War · Spanish War

Edited by Kurt A. Raaflaub

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THE LANDMARK
JULIUS
CAESAR

WEB ESSAYS
FOR THE COMPLETE WORKS

*Gallic War, Civil War, Alexandrian War,
African War, and Spanish War*

IN ONE VOLUME, WITH MAPS, ANNOTATIONS,
APPENDICES, AND ENCYCLOPEDIC INDEX

Edited and translated by Kurt A. Raaflaub
Series Editor Robert B. Strassler

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EDITORS' PREFACE TO THE WEB ESSAYS

Kurt A. Raaflaub and Robert B. Strassler

The Web essays collected and published on our website, www.landmarkcaesar.com, are an integral part of *The Landmark Julius Caesar*. The Contents section shows how these essays fit into the plan of the entire work. The printed volume, published in December 2017, contains an Introduction on Caesar's life and works; a detailed chronological summary of the events covered in the complete corpus of Caesar's works; a new translation of these works with brief chapter summaries and explanatory notes; four appendices that offer brief biographies of persons who recur frequently in these works and explain elementary matters such as Roman time and date counting, Roman units of currency and measurements, and the organization of the Roman army; a list of ancient authors cited in the volume, a glossary, bibliography, and a detailed index.

The corpus of Caesar's works comprises eight books of the *Gallic War*, three books of the *Civil War*, and three individual war narratives by unknown authors who were probably officers in Caesar's army and thus participated in the events and provide a different perspective on Caesar the general and leader. To emphasize the coherence of the entire corpus, we have numbered the books in sequence, with the Gallic war of 58–50 B.C.E. covered by Books 1–8 of *The Landmark Julius Caesar*, the civil war of 49 and 48 by Books 9–11, wars in Egypt, Anatolia and other parts of the Roman empire in 47 by Book 12 (*Alexandrian War*), the second round of the civil wars in 46 by Book 13 (*African War*), and the last round of the civil wars in 45 by Book 14 (*Spanish War*).

We have taken advantage of the opportunities offered by the Internet which, unlike printed books, knows no page limitations. We asked experts in various fields to write compact essays on issues that we hope will help the readers gain a deeper understanding of the world in which Caesar lived and acted, of his life and career, of the structure of the Roman state and government, of multiple aspects of Roman warfare, of various aspects of Caesar's writings, and of defining episodes described in his works. These essays, we repeat, form an integral part of *The Landmark Julius Caesar* and, as such, are cited throughout the footnotes in the printed volume and the Web essays. Their publication on the website makes them available to all readers who are interested; they can be downloaded and printed for personal use. We hope that many readers will take advantage of this opportunity.



John Forasté

KURT A. RAAFLAUB completed his PhD in Switzerland, served eight years as co-director of the Center for Hellenic Studies in Washington, DC, and is now professor emeritus of classics and history at Brown University. His main fields of study are the social and political history of the Roman republic and archaic and classical Greece and comparative history of the ancient world.



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WEB ESSAY E

Caesar, Man of Letters

Debra L. Nousek

§1. Caesar was a man of many talents, and capable of accomplishing several tasks at once. Marcus Cornelius Fronto (second century C.E.) reports that Caesar calmly worked on his linguistic treatise *De Analogia* (*On Analogy*), “writing about the declensions of nouns in the midst of flying weapons and about the aspiration and systems of words amidst the call of the military trumpets.”^a Plutarch says that Caesar was capable of dictating letters while on horseback, to more than one secretary. Pliny the Elder makes even grander claims: Caesar possessed not only the most outstanding mental vigor of all men, but could also “write or read and at the same time dictate and listen, and he could dictate to his secretaries four letters at once, or even seven, if he was otherwise unoccupied.”^b These anecdotes are surely exaggerated, but it is clear that Caesar’s intellectual acuity and energy were rare and considered remarkable by his contemporaries. In any other man, such talents and accomplishments would form the centerpiece of his legacy to posterity, but in Caesar’s case, they are overshadowed by his achievements in military and political life.

§2. Caesar’s education and rhetorical training differed little from that of other elite Romans. Although his biographers Suetonius and Plutarch do not report on his childhood and youth, we know that celebrated teachers of oratory were among his tutors.^a Skill in public speaking was essential for success in public life, since a young man’s first foray into

NOTE: All dates are B.C.E. (Before the Common Era) unless otherwise indicated. The dates given in the Web essays are those of the traditional Roman civil calendar up to January 45, when the Julian calendar was instated. For more on the Roman system of time-counting, see Appendix C: Roman Calendars, Dates, and Time. For all Web essays, go to landmarkcaesar.com. Source references without indication of title or author name refer to the texts in *The Landmark Julius Caesar*. Modern works are listed fully in the Bibliography. The books of the corpus of Caesar’s works are counted in chronological sequence from 1 to 14: *Gallia War*, 1–8; *Civil War*, 9–11; *Alexandrian War*, 12; *African War*, 13; *Spanish War*, 14. All Web essays are copyright © 2017 by Robert B. Strassler and Kurt A. Raaflaub. They may be downloaded and printed for noncommercial use only. Any other use requires written permission of the copyright holders.

Grillo and Krebs 2018 contains several chapters on various aspects of the topic discussed in this essay. For further reading, see, for example, Adcock 1956, Eden 1962, and Fantham 2009.

- E.1a Fronto, *Parthian War* 9 (pp. 209–10 in Van den Hout’s edition of Fronto’s letters). Suetonius, *Caesar* 56.5, says, more modestly, that Caesar dictated *De Analogia* “while coming back over the Alps” from Cisalpine Gaul. On *De Analogia*, see §§5–6.
- E.1b Plutarch, *Caesar* 17; Pliny, *Natural History* 7.91. Parts of Caesar’s correspondence are preserved in the corpora of Cicero’s letters (direct correspondence between the two and letters copied to Cicero by others).
- E.2a Such as the well-known grammarian and rhetorician M. Antonius Gniphos and later Apollonius Molon of Rhodes, with whom Cicero too had studied.

politics, before he was of age to enter the junior magistracies, was often as a prosecutor or defense advocate in legal cases. Caesar's talent for oratory was prodigious—the first-century C.E. critic Quintilian, for example, ranks him second to Cicero, and second only because for many years Caesar's career kept him away from the Forum, the center of Roman politics.^b Cicero himself expressed extravagant praise for Caesar's rhetorical skills, writing that he at least equaled the greatest Roman orators.^c But of Caesar's many speeches only fragments survive; of these, the most substantial comes from the funeral oration for his aunt Julia (the wife of Gaius Marius).^d The brilliant speech the historian Sallust attributes to Caesar during the senate debate about the fate of the Catilinarian conspirators in 63, though clearly Sallust's creation, probably reflects the content and techniques of the original.^e

§3. Aside from oratory, Caesar is known to have been engaged in a number of activities that fall under the rubric of literature, from the composition of poetic works in his youth to the more mature treatise on linguistic principles and Latin style (*On Analogy*) and of course the commentaries. Among the early works were a poem in praise of Hercules and a tragedy on the theme of Oedipus. Another poem, *The Journey* (*Iter*), was composed in 46 during Caesar's long journey to Spain.^a All of these, however, were kept from publication by Caesar's heir Augustus, presumably because they reflected poorly on both men. Still, scattered references in the extant sources often credit Caesar with writing poetry. According to Plutarch, he entertained pirates who had captured him by composing and reciting poetry and speeches, while Pliny the Younger lists Caesar among a number of prominent men who were known for their salacious poems. Tacitus remarks, with typical sarcasm, that Caesar was not a better poet than Cicero, only more fortunate, since fewer people were aware that he wrote verses.^b

§4. Modern readers can only judge by one surviving example, a short poem in dactylic hexameters on the merits of the comic playwright Terence (c. 190–159 B.C.E.), which Caesar probably composed as a student:^a

You too, O half-Menander, you are numbered among the greatest poets
and deservedly, (you), a lover of pure diction.
Would that there was added to your smooth writings the force
of comedy so that your excellence would flourish in honor equal
with the Greeks, and that you not lie neglected, scorned in this regard!
That you lack this one thing sorrows and grieves me, Terence.

By the time of the late republic, Terence was much admired for the purity of his Latin, as Caesar indicates in this poem. This praise is mixed with criticism, however, as Caesar demonstrates his own skill as a literary critic, in a clever and ambiguous manner. Caesar uses the poem's structure and features of poetic Latin (alliteration, enjambment, word placement) to both mimic features that Terence was famous for and to comment on areas in which, in his view, the playwright fell short. In Caesar's single extant poem, then, we find a witty literary assessment of an earlier poet, a youthful composition, to be sure, but also indicative of his interests in literature and language. As it happens, four hexameter lines of a similar poem on the same topic survive as well, composed by

E.2b Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* (*The Orator's Education*) 10.1.114.

E.2c Cicero, *Brutus* 261–63; see also Cicero's letter to the biographer Cornelius Nepos, quoted by Suetonius (*Caesar* 55).

E.2d Suetonius, *Caesar* 6.

E.2e Sallust, *Catilinarian Conspiracy* 51.

E.3a Suetonius, *Caesar* 56.

E.3b Plutarch, *Caesar* 2; Pliny the Younger, *Letters* 5.3.5; Tacitus, *Dialogue on Orators* 21.6.

E.4a Suetonius, *Lives of the Poets: Terence* 5.

Cicero.^b The two poems show remarkable similarities, including the direct address to Terence at the beginning and a focus on the poet's pure and eloquent Latin. This has prompted some scholars to claim that both poems were products of a set exercise in the rhetorical school that both Cicero and Caesar attended in Rhodes. However this may be, the close similarity between the two youthful compositions does suggest that Caesar knew Cicero's epigram and reacted to it with his own.

§5. Even while fighting his wars, Caesar did not abandon intellectual matters altogether. His greatest literary works were, of course, the commentaries, discussed elsewhere in other Web essays,^a but even in the midst of his campaigns in Gaul he found time to engage in other literary pursuits. In the winter of 55/54, he composed a grammatical treatise in two books called *On Analogy*, which Fronto cited to encourage the emperor Marcus Aurelius not to neglect intellectual stimulation even while he was beset by military anxieties.^b By Caesar's time, Latin had been in use as a literary language for two centuries, but its linguistic rules were not yet fixed, and there was considerable debate among intellectuals as to how one should speak "correct" Latin (*Latinitas*). Caesar was not the only prominent Roman interested in this topic: Cicero discussed it in his treatise *On the Orator*, and the prolific scholar Marcus Terentius Varro contributed substantial portions of his twenty-five-book treatise, *On the Latin Language*, to this debate.^c The issues at stake were not unlike modern controversies over whether grammar should be prescriptive (rule-based) or descriptive (usage-based), although the terms of the debate were centered more on word formation than on syntax. Caesar argued in favor of imposing regularity (known as the principle of "analogy") over its opposite, known as "anomaly," which considered exceptions to regularity as acceptable.^d

§6. Roughly thirty fragments of Caesar's treatise have survived, mostly in quotations and oblique references in later grammarians.^a From these we can surmise that the treatise was highly technical, dealing with such topics as the properties of vowels and consonants and combinations thereof, the formation of word stems, and grammatical gender and number. But it also touched on larger issues, such as word choice more generally, as the most famous fragment shows: "as you would a rock, so should you avoid the unaccustomed and unusual word."^b The principle underlying this statement has been much discussed, particularly in the context of the diction appropriate for oratory,^c but studies of the commentaries have shown that Caesar's lexical choices do indeed adhere to this principle. He avoids unnecessary variation in vocabulary, choosing, for example, to stick with a common or familiar word such as *flumen* to signify "river" where another author might have used different words to describe different kinds of rivers (for instance, *amnis*, *fluvius*).

§7. Caesar dedicated *On Analogy* to Cicero, almost certainly in response to the latter's statements about correct diction in *On the Orator*, published in the previous year. Caesar did so in highly flattering terms, and Cicero's excitement about this compliment reflects his high regard for Caesar's literary expertise.^a Despite the ups and downs of

E.4b Quoted in the same passage by Suetonius.

E.5a See Web Essays GG: The *Gallic War* as a Work of Literature, II: The Literary Art of the *Civil War*, and CC: The Roman *Commentarius* and Caesar's Commentaries.

E.5b Fronto is quoted in §1.

E.5c Cicero, *On the Orator* 3.37.148–3.55.209; Varro, *On the Latin Language*, Books 8–13.

E.5d For the political implications of Caesar's literary activities, see Osgood 2009; the intellectual con-

text is discussed in Rawson 1985, 117–31. The linguistic and ideological stances of Caesar and Cicero are discussed in Garcea 2012, 13–18, 49–102.

E.6a See Garcea 2012.

E.6b Aulus Gellius, *Attic Nights* 1.10.3–4.

E.6c See, for example, Garcea 2012, 49–97.

E.7a Cicero, *Brutus* 253. For further discussion of these mutual compliments, see Raaflaub 2018.

their political relationship over the last two decades of their lives, these two men, who shared many similar interests, were often engaged in debates on scholarly and intellectual matters. Literature, in fact, could serve as a “safe” topic in times of political conflict. Late in 45, for example, in the tense aftermath of the civil wars, Caesar—along with his army—visited Cicero in one of his country estates. Cicero reports to Atticus—with surprise: “Strange that so onerous a guest should leave a memory not disagreeable! It was really very pleasant.” The dining experience was enjoyable because the two men carried on a pleasant conversation about “nothing serious, but a good deal on literary matters.”^b

§8. Whether in the midst of a fierce Gallic insurgency or in the tense political climate of Rome, Caesar’s interest in literature, language, and other intellectual topics remained a constant throughout his life. His literary pursuits may have inspired similar activities among members of his circle, too, though their literary activities were probably influenced as much by a general environment in which elite Roman men took up literary or scholarly projects as part of their leisure activities. Still, it is reasonable to conjecture that Caesar would have surrounded himself with like-minded men. Cicero’s brother Quintus served as Caesar’s legate from 55 to 52, and the letters he exchanged with Marcus offer glimpses into the cultural activities among the officers in Caesar’s camp. We learn, for instance, that Quintus himself wrote four tragedies in the space of sixteen days, and that the large poem of Lucretius (c. 99–55), *On the Nature of Things*, was known to Caesar in Gaul, which is confirmed by two allusions to that poem in the commentaries.^a An obvious reference to the poem’s title is in Caesar’s description of the activities of the Druids (“They discuss and hand down to the youth, moreover, many things about the stars and their movements, about the size of the world and the lands, about the nature of things, and about the strength and power of the immortal gods”), and another in Caesar’s praise of Lucius Aurunculeius Cotta, the ill-fated legate who fell in combat against the Eburones in 54.^b The same Cotta is known to have written a treatise on the Roman constitution; the legate Aulus Hirtius, who served in Gaul from 54, completed Caesar’s *Gallic War*, and Asinius Pollio, who campaigned with Caesar in the civil wars, later wrote *Histories* that covered the period from 60 to the battle of Philippi in 42.^c

§9. In his own scholarly work, Caesar shows a tendency toward systematization and rationalization. From the grammatical precepts set forth in *On Analogy* to the carefully crafted eloquence (*elegantia*) of the commentaries, Caesar’s main focus was on clarity and ease of communication, making his thoughts accessible to a broad range of readers.^a This inclination extends to other areas as well: as consul in 59, Caesar instituted the regular publication of the proceedings of the Senate; to some extent, his reports to the Senate from Gaul are likely to have anticipated the qualities of his commentaries (although, not having any of them, we can only guess); he is also hailed as the founder of cryptography, implementing a simple substitution cipher for encoding sensitive information sent by courier.^b Perhaps the most lasting of his intellectual achievements

E.7b Cicero, *Letters to Atticus* 13.52 (trans. Shackleton Bailey).

E.8a Cicero, *Letters to Quintus*, 2.12.4; 2.10.

E.8b 6.14: *de rerum natura*. In 5.33.2, Caesar emphasizes that Cotta “proved resourceful in every respect in fighting for the common survival” (5.33.2: *nulla in re communi deerat*), closely echoing Lucretius 1.45: “nor was there any deficiency for the common safety in such circum-

stances” (*nec talibus in rebus communi deesse salutis*); see Dale 1958; Krebs 2013.

E.8c Cotta: Athenaeus, *Philosophers at Dinner* 6.273b; Hirtius: see his preface to Book 8; Asinius Pollio: see Horace, *Odes* 2.1; the few fragments of his work are collected and commented upon by Drummond 2013.

E.9a Garcea 2012, especially 3–10.

E.9b Suetonius, *Caesar* 20, 56.

was the calendar reform that brought the months and seasons back into alignment, as summed up by Plutarch: “this was extremely useful as well as subtle. He had worked it out with learning and elegance, and he took it through to its conclusion and brought it into effect.”^c Had Caesar’s career been only in the field of scholarship and literature, it would have been remarkable in its own right; in fact, his intellectual and literary works, achieved, as Fronto suggests, “amid flying weapons,” are nothing short of extraordinary.

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E.9c Plutarch, *Caesar* 59 (trans. Pelling 2011).

WEB ESSAY F

Caesar the Politician

Martin Jehne

§1. On his way to the top, a member of Rome’s governing class, doomed to a life in politics, usually had to win at the polls at least four times, and competition grew tougher with every step on the career ladder. A candidate had friends and sometimes a well-known family name that might recommend him to the voting crowd, but he had no party to support him, no program he promised to realize, not even—literally!—a platform to explain to the electorate why he was preferable to any other candidate. He could only try to find support among influential elder statesmen and the upper classes in general, and to impress the city populace by showing up with a great retinue, pressing the flesh, and conveying the message that he cared and was deserving. Moreover, the candidate was expected to distribute some money to the voters, which was illegal but by the late republic nearly standard procedure.^a In the end, despite all these stressful activities and expensive investments, the candidates rarely made much of a difference to the people. Many voters do not seem to have developed stronger commitments and often followed random indications of future victory. Hence republican elections were unpredictable, and even brilliant competitors were liable to fail.^b In this chancy system Caesar won six times, every time he ran.

§2. Caesar’s success rate was neither unparalleled nor self-evident in late republican politics. Nor is it explained by his family tree. As a patrician,^a he claimed a long pedigree that reached back to Rome’s foundation and even beyond, but the laurels of his family, the Julii, were neither numerous nor glamorous. During the civil war in the 80s, family

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other use requires written permission of the copyright holders.

For further readings on the topic of this essay, see Gruen 1974, 2009; Goldsworthy 2006, Jehne 2005, 2008, 2009b; Tatum 2008.

F.1a Marcus Cicero’s brother, Quintus (see Appendix A: Who’s Who in Caesar, §15), wrote an informative pamphlet on electioneering when the orator ran for consul; see Henderson 1989; Freeman 2012.

F.1b See, generally, Mouritsen 2001; Jehne 2009a. F.2a On patricians and plebeians, see Web Essay I: The Fall of the Republic, §3.

relations placed the young Caesar near the center of power, but, since his side lost, his fate turned from heaven to hell. The victorious dictator Sulla persecuted his personal enemies and did not spare the daughter of his former rival Cinna, who was married to Caesar. Told to divorce his wife, Caesar stubbornly refused. Such resistance to an autocrat was neither politically wise nor required by social rules: Roman elite marriages were family arrangements that were made and broken as circumstances demanded. So this early story reveals something about Caesar's character: he did not like to follow orders, was willing to take great risks to defend his honor, and was highly self-confident, trusting that he could get himself out of trouble. In fact, he escaped Sulla's anger and henchmen, was pardoned thanks to the efforts of well-connected relatives, and then made a new start in Rome in the early 70s, when he was co-opted into the honorable priestly body of *pontifices*.

§3. In due time, Caesar was elected military tribune, quaestor, and aedile. As an aedile he was obliged to stage games, which traditionally offered junior politicians an opportunity to gain popularity through generous expenditure of their own funds. Caesar and his colleague Bibulus spent lavishly, though apparently the money was contributed mostly by Bibulus while Caesar claimed most of the popularity.^a This is another feature of Caesar's personality that was most helpful in furthering his career: he was a charming man who adjusted easily to different groups and individuals, and was able to win over nearly everybody. Caesar was a genius in communication and especially in electioneering; modern parallels come readily to mind.

§4. In 63, Caesar ran for the praetorship, the first office that allowed him to command troops, convene the Senate, and bring his own proposals before the people's assemblies. But another campaign intervened because the *pontifex maximus* had died. Being a *pontifex*, Caesar was qualified to compete, and he did so against two leading elder statesmen and former consuls—a move by a lowly former aedile that was perfectly legal but unusual and surprising. Nor was his success guaranteed. In the morning of election day, when he kissed his mother good-bye, he supposedly told her: I will return as *pontifex maximus* or not at all.^a Having gone into huge debt to finance his campaign, he feared that in case of failure his creditors would force him to pay and drive him into bankruptcy and, as a consequence, into exile. Even without a financial breakdown, the reputation of a loser would have been a terrible handicap in the race for the praetorship. Moreover, the *pontifex maximus* had prestige but hardly a position of power in Roman politics. Caesar's decision to invest so much in this office thus tells us more about him: he did take enormous risks, and he knew it. In fact, for nearly all his life his reliance on good luck was reinforced by the outcome of his actions.

§5. After the triumph in the pontifical election, Caesar's win in the praetorian vote seemed easy. Even before he took office, his first major action in the Senate marked his transition from a gifted if rebellious junior politician to a potentially major but unconventional player who refused to toe the line and whom the establishment soon viewed with a mixture of disgust, hatred, and anxiety. His candidacy for the high pontificate, together with several other initiatives he took in 63, had made his break with mainstream politics obvious;^a with his speech in the Senate debate about the fate of the Catilinarian

F.3a Suetonius, *Caesar* 10.1.

F.4a Ibid., *Caesar* 13; Plutarch, *Caesar* 7.3; *Moralia* 206A.

F.5a For details, see relevant chapters in Gelzer 1968; Meier 1995.

conspirators he demonstrated that he did not want to be a mere follower of the leading men.^b In supporting the tribune Metellus Nepos, who wanted Pompey recalled to suppress the military wing of the Catilinarian movement, Caesar sided with Pompey and against a powerful group of conservative senators. In the end, Nepos failed and Caesar was in need of popular demonstrations to avoid the loss of his praetorian office. More alarmingly, only a guarantee offered by the rich and powerful former consul Marcus Licinius Crassus broke the resistance of his creditors and allowed him to depart for Spain to assume his provincial governorship at the end of 62.^c By now, Caesar was definitely at odds with the political establishment.

§6. Caesar's governorship in Spain was a stunning success. He managed to win his first military campaigns as a commander and to rebalance his personal funds. A triumph, the traditional and eagerly desired reward for the victorious general, was in sight, and afterward the consulship, the highest regular office and goal of all ambitious politicians. Unfortunately for Caesar, it did not work out that way. His request for a triumph, to be granted by senatorial decree, was well founded but, like his aspiration to the consulship, strongly opposed by his enemies in the Senate. Since the debate about the triumph took place on the last day on which candidacies for the consulship could be declared, Caesar's foes exploited a conflict posed by rules and manipulated procedures, forcing him to choose between triumph and consulate. Against expectations, he sacrificed the triumph, entered the city, and announced his candidacy—one of his most important and striking decisions and proof of his political genius.

§7. Caesar's move was exceptional. The average Roman politician, facing this unpleasant choice, would probably have gone for the triumph—with good reasons: to get a triumph, one had to win a significant battle or war as a commander-in-chief. The career scheme normally offered only two or three opportunities to command an army, and often the area assigned a commander proved uneventful; hence it was highly doubtful whether another chance to earn a triumph would ever arrive. In contrast, every senator of appropriate rank and age was free to apply for the consulship every year. Hence Caesar could easily have taken the triumph and postponed his candidacy. He did the opposite. His decision was presumably based on a careful assessment of a promising and probably unique political opportunity: Pompey the Great, back from his brilliant achievements in the eastern Mediterranean, was still waiting for a breakthrough in Senate debates about bills, opposed by his enemies, to assign land to his veterans and ratify numerous measures he had enacted in the East. Caesar realized that helping Pompey realize his primary objectives was the way to gain forceful support for his own projects. So Caesar chose the consulship.

§8. Not surprisingly, with the support of Crassus and perhaps already Pompey, Caesar, who was popular among the people and the wider upper class, and an irresistible campaigner, won the election. Yet his enemies succeeded in getting his long-standing rival Bibulus elected as the second consul, with the potential of thwarting Caesar's plans. Knowing that nothing was thus going to be easy, Caesar aimed at reconciling Pompey and Crassus, who were not on friendly terms, and formed the triple alliance that is often

F.5b Sallust, *Catilinarian Conspiracy* 51.

F.5c Plutarch, *Caesar* II.2; Crassus 7.6.

called the First Triumvirate. His first project as consul was a law distributing land to Pompey's veterans and other Roman citizens. The law's need was obvious, its draft blameless. None of the senators, usually opposed to settlement programs for the poor, including Caesar's enemies, were able to find substantial objections. Still, the Senate refused to cooperate. Caesar's colleague Bibulus continued this policy of outright refusal in the assembly despite Caesar's insistence that he ought to yield to the people begging for the law. For all his brilliance, the consul Caesar was blocked.

§9. Of course, he did not accept this. The law was submitted to a vote without a supporting Senate decree, the opposing consul Bibulus and those tribunes who backed him were violently driven from the Forum, and the assembly passed the law. Such use of force was not new but still illegal, and offered a potential argument to later annul the law. Bibulus retreated to his house and henceforth made his opposition known only through publicly posted decrees. This was unpleasant for Caesar, but freed him to propose additional laws that were well-considered and focused on real problems of the Roman state. Overall, then, Caesar's consulship of 59 was one of those rare occasions when a Roman politician used his one year in office to implement necessary reforms to improve the general condition of the people and of public administration. Here Caesar offered a glimpse of his potential as a statesman.^a Needless to say, he also amply advanced the personal ambitions of Pompey, Crassus, and—himself. A law was carried ratifying Pompey's eastern provisions, another to help the tax farmers of Asia (Crassus' priority), and the cooperative tribune Vatinius took care of assigning the provinces Cisalpine Gaul and Illyricum to Caesar for five years. Later, Transalpine Gaul was added to Caesar's command by senatorial decree. Yet personal gain does not invalidate reform measures. In no political system can we expect politicians to act in ways that advance public welfare but damage their own interests. The best we should hope for is that they help the state while helping themselves. This is what Caesar tried to do—but with grave consequences.

§10. When his consulship ended, Caesar had got everything he wanted but alienated many senators who disliked being bullied by a consul. Politically, he had shown both his ability to recognize what needed to be done in the public sphere and unusual ruthlessness in breaking all resistance. According to the traditional model of Roman politics, one did not insist too much on a project and gave it up when confronted with serious resistance by important senators. This model did not apply to Caesar. He presented his carefully considered measures in a friendly way and was honestly willing to change smaller points, but refused to give up the whole scheme only because influential people disliked it. Some twenty years later, he behaved in the same way when he was dictator and sole ruler. In the late 50s, the uncompromising fight of Caesar's enemies to prevent his second consulship was motivated largely by their experience of 59: they knew that he was unwilling to compromise very much and preferred to stick to his convictions; the Senate could not expect to influence this consul in the usual way.

§11. In 58, Caesar hastened to Gaul to cope with the problem of the Helvetian migration. Turning a minor crisis into a major war, he demonstrated his political and

F.9a For similar suggestions, see Raaflaub 2010.

military skills in a way that had lasting impact. For him, this was necessary because he had to win glory, money, and personal followers to compensate for his breaches of law and the hostility accumulated during his consulship. The Roman state could have done without the conquest of Gaul, but Caesar could not. So the Gallic war, like so much else at the time, was essentially a consequence of internal politics.

§12. At the end of his governorship, his political skills were needed more than ever. By now his enemies and Pompey were closely allied, and his wish to avoid all potential hazards by being elected to a second consulship while still in command was not going to be accepted lightly. In the political maneuvering of 51 and 50, Caesar made some brilliant moves, although ultimately he was not able to get his way. Once again, Caesar's negotiating tactics were extremely flexible. He produced a continuous flow of new proposals, always forcing the other side to fight them off, often without convincing arguments. Combined with the pressure his huge army exerted by its sheer existence, Caesar's political efforts had considerable impact on the Senate majority that did not side consistently with his enemies. Caesar could hope to reach his final aim—a safe return to Rome into a second consulship—but his flexibility had limits: all his compromise offers were predicated on the guarantee that he would get the second consulship which would provide immunity and opportunities to push through his program of allotments to his veterans and other bills. His opponents were deeply convinced that his return to power in Rome would seriously damage the political system and the Senate's—and their own—control. Hence they did not draw back, but continued to defend their republic. In the end, no compromise was possible, and Caesar crossed the Rubicon.^a

§13. During the war, Caesar paradoxically offered more compelling arguments than did his opponents. He presented the war as a conflict between himself and his personal enemies, while the “Pompeians”—as they are called for mere convenience—fought to defend the republic against a rebel who, they said, wanted to destroy it. Hence it was the duty of every righteous Roman citizen and inhabitant of the empire to side with the Pompeians, and those who failed to do so were punished as traitors. In contrast, Caesar encouraged the Roman upper classes to keep out of the conflict, enjoy their country estates, and wait for the dispute to be settled. Many senators followed this comfortable line, and Caesar's famous clemency further contributed to making his position credible. His political strategy was a masterstroke in the contest for the approval of those in the middle, transforming his awkward position as a rebellious proconsul marching against his country into a political advantage. Conversely, it was one of the bitter ironies of this period that the republic broke down in a struggle that, according to Caesar, had nothing to do with it.

§14. In 46, after successful campaigns in Spain, Greece, Egypt, Asia Minor, and Northern Africa, Caesar had won the civil war even if one more dangerous uprising needed to be put down in Spain in 45. While in Rome, Caesar introduced a huge number of measures concerning every part of government.^a To give just a few examples, he reformed judicial procedures, distributed land to veterans and civilians in many parts of

F.12a For debates and political maneuvering before and during the civil war, see also Web Essay J: The Legitimacy of Caesar's Wars; further, above all, Raafalaub 1974; for a brief summary of Caesar's political strategy in the civil war, see Raafalaub 2003, 59–61, and, in *The Landmark Julius Cae-*

sar, the Introduction, §§18–22, 59–64; Web Essay JJ: The Civil War as a Work of Propaganda, §§10–15.

F.14a For a convenient collection of all of Caesar's laws and for reasonable interpretations, see Yavetz 1983.

the empire, made important changes in the organization of grain distributions in the city, reorganized old provinces and formed new ones, tried to reduce economic pressure by valuing property at prewar prices and fixing a temporary maximum for rents, and pursued a generous policy of enfranchisement. Many other interventions could be added to this list, but this suffices to give an impression of the wide range of Caesar's governing activities. As far as it is possible to investigate their impact and success, most of them seem to have been reasonable, attesting to a good grasp of problems and possible solutions, and even to well-focused techniques of governance. If it is a politician's main responsibility to identify what needs to be done in the state to improve political order and the citizens' living conditions, then Caesar was a great politician. If, however, it is also essential to respect rights of participation and rules of procedure, then Caesar was a failure.

§15. Criticism of Caesar's performance does not depend on the fact that he was a sole ruler and we do not like sole rulers anymore. Rather it is based on the observation that even autocrats could act more "politically"—as Augustus later demonstrated. Caesar, as sole ruler, did not have to worry that his reform proposals would be voted down; hence, for example, it was an unnecessary insult that he did not take the time to get the Senate to pass regular decrees. Cicero, a former consul and high-ranking senator, received letters from kings at the end of the world who warmly thanked him for proposing Senate decrees in their favor. Unfortunately, Cicero did not know anything either of the decrees or the kings.^a Caesar's team had written down the privilege in the standard form of a Senate decree and invented the necessary list of senators present at the occasion. Caesar approved, and that was enough. The fictional decrees were sent to the beneficiaries without bothering the real Senate with such petty questions. That Caesar so often ignored regular procedure was one of the most damaging aspects of his rule. The restless dictator did not want to wait for the sluggish proceedings of law-making.

§16. On March 15, 44, the proverbial Ides of March, Caesar was murdered in the Senate. The conspirators made perfectly clear why they killed the dictator: they considered him a tyrant, and it was every citizen's obligation not to tolerate tyranny. Now, Caesar had been made dictator for ten years in the spring of 46, and nobody could overlook the fact that he ruled autocratically. Nevertheless, his opponents formed the decisive conspiracy almost two years later, only a month before his assassination. The event that pushed them into action is easily identified. In the middle of February 44, Caesar officially took office as dictator for life. Since his previous appointment still had eight years left, there was no practical need for a change at this moment. Hence the new office could only be understood as making a statement: Caesar's rule was no longer intended as a temporary emergency measure but as a permanent transformation of the political system. That many senators would not like this was predictable. Why then did he do it? Perhaps he wanted to force the senators to assess the situation realistically and abandon their romanticized ideal of a republic that Caesar considered dysfunctional and called a

F.15a Cicero, *Letters to Friends* 9.15.4.

F.16a Suetonius, *Caesar* 77.

mere word without form or substance.^a Unfortunately, such honesty cost him his life. The bitter irony in his death is that he could have avoided it by obscuring his final aims—but also by keeping his bodyguard, which he had only recently dissolved. To the Romans, bodyguards were emblems of tyranny. Because Caesar did not want to be seen as a tyrant he dismissed his guard—to no avail: four weeks later he was assassinated precisely because he was seen as a tyrant.

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WEB ESSAY G

Caesar and Pompey

Dominic Machado

§1. When Caesar arrived in Egypt in 48 B.C.E., searching for Pompey, who had fled after the battle of Pharsalus, he was greeted by the news of Pompey’s murder. A few days later envoys arrived bearing Pompey’s head and signet ring. They expected to earn Caesar’s gratitude for having eliminated his enemy. Caesar’s alleged reaction must have baffled them: it illustrates the complexity and emotionality of his relationship with Pompey. “From the man who brought him Pompey’s head, he turned away with loathing, as from an assassin; and on receiving Pompey’s seal-ring, he burst into tears.”^a Such was the culmination of a long, complicated relationship that had produced both symbiotic alliance and civil war.

§2. The presentation of Pompey in Caesar’s works is similarly ambivalent. It is very positive in the *Gallic War*, when Caesar writes about his efforts to replace the loss of one and a half legions that the rebellion of Ambiorix of the Eburones had inflicted on him in the winter of 54–53: he “put a request to Gnaeus Pompey . . . [and] asked him now to order the men from Cisalpine Gaul, whom he had sworn in during his consulship, to assemble and report to his headquarters in Gaul. . . . Pompey granted this both as a duty to the state and as a favor to their friendship.”^a By contrast, at the beginning of the *Civil War* Caesar complains bitterly about Pompey, who, “urged on by Caesar’s enemies—and by the fact that he did not wish anyone to be his equal in *dignitas*—had completely turned away from his friendship with Caesar and reconciled himself with men who had earlier been their common enemies; indeed, he had turned most of these against Caesar at the time when the two of them were in-laws.”^b Although Caesar goes on to recognize Pompey’s military qualities in most of the ensuing civil war and reserves his most acerbic comments for some

NOTE: All dates are B.C.E. (Before the Common Era) unless otherwise indicated. The dates given in the Web essays are those of the traditional Roman civil calendar up to January 45, when the Julian calendar was instated. For more on the Roman system of time-counting, see Appendix C: Roman Calendars, Dates, and Time. For all Web essays, go to landmarkcaesar.com. Source references without indication of title or author name refer to the texts in *The Landmark Julius Caesar*. Modern works are listed fully in the Bibliography both. All Web

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- G.1a Plutarch, *Pompey* 80.5. For the Egyptian leaders’ motives, see *The Landmark Julius Caesar* 11.104.
G.2a 6.1.2–4; see n. 6.1h. On the rebellion of Ambiorix and Caesar’s losses in Gaul: 5.26–37.
G.2b 9.4.4; *dignitas* means standing, reputation See the Glossary.

of his supporters, he assesses Pompey's leadership in the final phase of the Greek campaign and at the decisive battle of Pharsalus rather critically if not sarcastically.^c This stark contrast in Caesar's assessment of Pompey raises the question of how the relationship between the two men had developed and why it eventually soured as much as it did.

§3. By the late 60s, outstanding military accomplishments had propelled Pompey to the peak of renown and influence. Already in the 70s, before he held any normal office, his military skills had been indispensable in suppressing the revolt of Aemilius Lepidus (78), destroying Sertorius' "separatist domain" in Spain (72), and even quashing the remains of Spartacus' slave army fleeing from Crassus' pursuit (71). Camping with their armies outside of Rome, Crassus and Pompey then forced the Senate and people to grant them the consulships of 70. In 67, with the Mediterranean beset by piracy, Rome again turned to Pompey for help. A tribune of the plebs, Aulus Gabinius, proposed a bill that would grant Pompey an extraordinary command against the pirates. The Senate, however, dominated by the *optimates*, who vigorously defended their political leadership in the state, had been reluctant to grant extraordinary commands to any individual since the end of Sulla's dictatorship, and now opposed this proposal almost unanimously.^a The only senator to support the bill was a newcomer, Julius Caesar, a *popularis*^b who championed the bill of Gabinius to make a positive impression on Pompey and gain his support—a policy that he continued over the next few years. In 66, Caesar supported another extraordinary command for Pompey in the war against Mithridates, in 63 an agrarian law promoted by a tribune named Rullus that, had it been successful, would have provided land for Pompey's veterans, and in 62 a bill of the tribune Metellus Nepos that would have allowed Pompey to stand for the consulship in absentia. In 62, when Caesar was praetor, he had become a major force in Roman politics. Still, Pompey had more powerful backers, and the relationship between the two men remained one-sided for the moment.^c

§4. Pompey's return to Rome in 61, following his successful campaigns against the pirates and Mithridates, proved to be the catalyst for change in his relationship with Caesar. Pompey had two short-term goals: to realize a land grant program to settle his veterans and to have his arrangements in the East (including the creation of several new provinces) ratified by the Senate. He had made powerful enemies among the *optimates*, however, and these made certain that his proposals were turned down. At the same time, in the summer of 60, Caesar was running for the consulship of 59. As consul he would be in a strong position to help realize Pompey's goals, and he too had much to gain from Pompey's support.

§5. Since his youth during the dictatorship of Sulla, Caesar had repeatedly butted heads with the *optimates* and demonstrated his preference for the cause of the *populares*.^a These tensions evolved into outright animosity in 63 and 62, when Caesar bribed his way to victory in an election for the highest priesthood (*ponifex maximus*) and strongly clashed with Cato the Younger, now leader of the *optimates*, over the question of the punishment of the Catilinarian conspirators who had been caught red-handed, and the proposal to recall Pompey with his army to suppress Catiline's rebel army in Etruria.^b As a result, in the summer of 60, Cato attempted to block Caesar's candidacy for the con-

G.2c 11.86, 11.94.5–6.

G.3a Meier 1995, 144. On *optimates* and *populares*, see the Introduction, §1, and Meier, 40–43.

G.3b Plutarch, *Pompey* 25.4.

G.3c Goldsworthy 2006, 105; on the issues discussed here and in the following paragraphs, see also the

Introduction, §§8–13.

G.5a Suetonius, *Caesar* 1; Plutarch, *Caesar* 1.

G.5b For the former, see Sallust, *Catilinarian Conspiracy* 51–52; for the latter, Plutarch, *Cato the Younger* 27–28.

sulship of 59 by filibustering in the senatorial debate about his request to be granted a triumph for his military achievements in Spain. He expected Caesar to choose the triumph and postpone his run for a consulship, but, to everyone's surprise, Caesar decided differently.^c Hence Caesar clearly needed a powerful ally to withstand optimate obstruction during his consulship.

§6. Yet an alliance with Pompey was not without its challenges. Caesar had long been collaborating with Marcus Licinius Crassus, the richest man in Rome and Pompey's bitter rival. The last thing Caesar needed was to alienate this powerful man. Using his best political skills, Caesar convinced Pompey and Crassus that an alliance among the three of them would be in their best interest.^a And indeed, the three men secretly came to a private agreement, often, though wrongly, called the First Triumvirate, to collaborate, pool resources, and not to oppose each other's proposals. They used their money and influence to secure Caesar's election to the consulship and to fill magistracies with their supporters, thus assuring the success of their agenda in the coming year.

§7. As consul in 59, Caesar led the way in securing passage of bills that satisfied Crassus' interests, ratified Pompey's arrangements in the East, and, with the "hands-on" support of Pompey's veterans in the assembly, realized agrarian legislation that provided land for these veterans. Pompey, in turn, supported a bill granting Caesar his own extraordinary command, a five-year proconsulship in Cisalpine Gaul and Illyricum, to which Transalpine Gaul was added later.

§8. The two men grew even closer when Caesar gave his daughter, Julia, in marriage to Pompey—a "dynastic marriage" that was surprisingly happy and successful. Although we have few details, the sources suggest that Pompey and his young wife were genuinely in love and Pompey was able to show her his most charming self. When he was splattered with blood during a brawl in the period before his reelection to consul, the sight of his bloodied clothes caused her to miscarry, and after a second pregnancy she died in childbirth.^a Pompey's grief again was genuine but he was not ready to enter into another marriage alliance with Caesar. Instead, he eventually married the daughter of Scipio, one of Caesar's archenemies.

§9. For despite their political successes, their political alliance had had negative repercussions, dating from events in Caesar's consulship in 59. The violent suppression, tolerated by Caesar, of his consular colleague Bibulus' veto in the assembly, and the questionable constitutionality of several laws passed later in that year, deeply angered the *optimates*. They responded by severely criticizing the triumvirs in pamphlets and public orations.^a After Caesar's departure for Gaul in 58, Pompey, who was by nature averse to controversy, had to bear the brunt of this criticism and felt increasingly uncomfortable, especially since his support of Caesar involved him in conflicts with the tribune Publius Clodius, a highly skilled demagogue whose tactics more than once succeeded in humiliating Pompey.^b To add insult to injury, Caesar's impressive achievements in Gaul could not but make Pompey nervous; although his popularity remained high, he must have felt his reputation as the most accomplished military leader threatened. Pompey's discomfiture manifested itself in a series of slights against Caesar: in 57, he advocated, against Caesar's

G.5c On this decision, see Web Essay F: Caesar the Politician, §§6–7.

G.6a Goldsworthy 2006, 165. On Crassus, see Appendix A: Who's Who in Caesar, §18.

G.8a Plutarch, *Pompey* 53.

G.9a Gelzer 1968, 88.

G.9b Leach 1986, 129. See also the careful discussion of Seager 1979, 103–13.

wishes, the return of Cicero from exile, and he was notably absent at several Senate meetings when Caesar's laws came under scrutiny.^c Although it was becoming clear that the triumvirate was no longer as tightly united as it had been, the bonds between Pompey and Caesar were far from completely severed: Pompey refused to divorce Julia and supported a vote granting Caesar a fifteen-day thanksgiving celebration for his victories in Gaul.^d

§10. Still, the weakening of the triumvirate resulted in a resurgence of the *optimates*, who looked poised to claim both consular positions in 55. Their control of Rome's two most important magistracies would likely result in the Senate's refusal to renew Caesar's proconsulship and perhaps also, as Cato had threatened, in a trial for his unconstitutional actions as consul and for having broken the law during his war in Gaul.^a Caesar countered by persuading Pompey and Crassus, at separate meetings in Ravenna and Lucca (in modern Tuscany) in the spring of 56, to renew their alliance.^b The goals agreed upon were to secure for Pompey and Crassus the consulships of 55, the renewal of Caesar's proconsulship for another five years, and corresponding five-year proconsulships with equal power for Pompey (in Spain) and Crassus (in Syria).

§11. These plans were realized successfully in 55, cementing the *optimates'* resentment of Caesar. All this clearly showed that the three men still considered their alliance vital for achieving their political goals. Pompey was particularly active, enlisting Cicero's support of the agreements and eventually lending one of his legions to Caesar after the destruction of fifteen of the latter's cohorts by the Eburones mentioned above.^a With Caesar's approval, Pompey administered his Spanish provinces through legates and stayed near Rome himself to keep an eye on political developments there. The prospects for continued close collaboration seemed positive.

§12. However, a series of unforeseen events disrupted this delicate balance. As was mentioned above, in 54 Julia, who had often been successful in smoothing over differences between her father and husband, passed away. In 53, Crassus died during a disastrous defeat in an ill-advised campaign against Parthia.^a Additionally, turmoil at Rome allowed Pompey to come to the fore once again—a development that was facilitated also by a change of political strategy on the part of Caesar's opponents: they realized that they could not prevail in fighting both Pompey and Caesar at the same time and decided to find an accommodation with Pompey in order to defeat Caesar. Hence, in the midst of a severe famine, Pompey was placed in charge of Rome's grain supply, and when the murder of the tribune Clodius caused widespread riots in 52, the Senate entrusted Pompey with restoring order.^b In order to avoid granting him a detested dictatorship, the Senate leaders eventually decided to offer him a consulship "without a colleague." Caesar agreed to this arrangement with one stipulation: that in accordance with a bill carried by all ten tribunes, he be granted the right to apply for his second consulship in *absentia*.^c This bill gave Caesar the opportunity to keep his command until the very day he would enter Rome to assume this office, to celebrate a long-awaited triumph before he did so, and to avoid any prosecution by maintaining uninterrupted immunity.

§13. Certainly, Pompey's newfound popularity among the people and Senate had reduced his dependence on Caesar. However, he was reluctant to completely sever ties

G.9c Meier 1995, 268.

G.9d 2.35.

G.10a The latter accusation is uncertain, though. See §12 and Web Essay J: The Legitimacy of Caesar's Wars for the legal issues involved.

G.10b Cicero, *Letters to Friends* 1.9.9.

G.11a 6.1; see §2.

G.12a Ward 1977, 10.

G.12b Cassius Dio 40.48–50. Caesar mentions Clodius' murder and the Senate's reaction at 7.1.1. News of these developments encouraged the Gauls to launch their great rebellion of 52 (7.1.2).

G.12c 9.32.2–3.

with him, not least because his relationship with Caesar strengthened his own hand in dealing with the Senate. Though he passed a law forcing all candidates for the consulship to canvass at Rome, he exempted Caesar.^a Further, when one of the consuls in 51, and again in 50, pushed for Caesar's immediate recall, claiming that the war in Gaul was over, Pompey ensured that Caesar's return would not be discussed until March 1, 50. This date came and went, and complicated political maneuvers ensued which are described elsewhere in this volume.^b Suffice it to say that eventually Caesar's opponents outflanked him and in December 50 virtually forced Pompey to accept the charge to defend the state. Despite last-minute negotiations sponsored by Cicero and a compromise offer by Caesar to which even Pompey agreed, Cato's stubborn resistance to any deal caused all peace efforts to fail.^c In early January 49 the Senate passed an emergency decree which in fact declared Caesar a public enemy.^d

§14. Caesar led his army across the Rubicon and marched into Italy, forcing Pompey and the Senate's leaders to evacuate Rome. After another round of failed negotiations in late January and early February, Caesar attempted to open personal talks at Brundisium.^a His agents crisscrossed Italy, trying to reestablish contact. Cicero's extant correspondence testifies to these frantic efforts. In a letter to two of his supporters, Caesar emphasized how crucial it was to him to reconcile Pompey.^b But Pompey had gone too far in staking his own future on his alliance with Caesar's opponents, and rejected Caesar's overtures. He managed to escape to Greece with his army, the consuls of 49, and a substantial part of the Senate.^c Unable to pursue him immediately because he lacked ships, Caesar went to Spain in the summer of 49 to fight and defeat Pompey's legates before making his way to Greece in the winter to confront the general himself. Again, his proposals for peace talks were categorically rejected. Eventually, after some serious setbacks, he scored a decisive victory over Pompey at Pharsalus in August 48. Pompey fled to Egypt, where, as a benefactor of the pharaoh's father, he hoped to find support, but he was killed treacherously by the cunning advisors of the young king. His tragic end and the mourning of his wife, Cornelia, and of Caesar over his severed head have inspired biography, drama, and opera from Plutarch to our day.^d

§15. For Pompey and Caesar, the civil war represented a friendship, political alliance, and marital bond gone wrong. However, the human drama of the civil war was not confined to these two men. As the Greek historian Appian states before describing the battle of Pharsalus, Caesar and Pompey led to "the same impiety those serving under them, men of the same city, of the same tribe, blood relations, and in some cases brothers against brothers."^a In the civil war, choosing between these two men was inevitable, and the wrong choice potentially meant death. In these highest of stakes, that choice often overturned political arrangements and precipitated the most unlikely of alliances. Caesar's most accomplished and trusted legate during the Gallic war, Titus Labienus, had been supported by Pompey before he went to Gaul. Although Caesar had done all he could to advance his career, he honored this earlier obligation and defected to Pompey

G.13a Morstein-Marx 2007, 171.

G.13b For these political maneuvers, see the section on Caesar's life in the Introduction, §§18–20.

G.13c For a detailed, if polemical, account of the end of these negotiations, see 9.1–4; for an overall discussion, Raflaub 1974, part I. See also relevant chapters in Gelzer 1968; Meier 1995.

G.13d 9.5.

G.14a For details on these peace efforts, see 9.9–11, 9.24.4–5, 9.26.2–5.

G.14b Cicero, *Letters to Atticus* 9.7C.2. See Gelzer 1968, 206–7.

G.14c 9.24–26. See Web Essay Y: Civil War Strategies.

G.14d Plutarch, *Pompey* 77–80; for example, Robert Garnier, *Cornelia* (1594–95); Corneille, *The Death of Pompey* (1642); Alessandro Scarlatti, *Il Pompeo*; John Masefield, *The Tragedy of Pompey the Great* (1910).

G.15a Appian, *Civil Wars* 2.77.

in early 49. Caesar's bitter disappointment and resentment reverberates throughout the *Civil War*.^b Scribonius Curio, a formerly staunch optimate and opponent of Caesar, was bribed to switch sides and fight for Caesar's cause at Rome and as a general in the civil war.^c Taking sides in the civil war also caused estrangement from men whom one held in high regard, and association with men for whom one had little respect. Cicero, who eventually sided with Pompey during the war, praised the quality of the Caesarians stationed at Rome, claiming, "I should not be ashamed to be in the company with Manius Lepidus, Lucius Vulcatius and Servius Sulpicius."^d In the very same letter, he lamented the lack of character of some of the Pompeians, declaring that none of the Caesarians were "more stupid than Lucius Domitius or more fickle than Appius Claudius."

§16. The civil war thrust families, too, into challenging situations. Cicero's daughter, Tullia, found herself with a Pompeian father and Caesarian husband, Dolabella.^a Throughout the war, the twice-pregnant Tullia was buffeted from place to place (Cumae, Formiae, Dyrrachium, and so on) while under the care of both these men. The war even tore apart the most prominent and well-connected of Roman families, as demonstrated by the plight of the Claudi Marcelli. The brothers Marcus and Gaius, the consuls of 51 and 50, and their cousin, Gaius, the consul of 49, had all worked assiduously to strip Caesar of his command in the lead-up to the civil war. In spite of their previously concordant political agenda, the Marcelli were then driven apart by the conflict. Gaius, the consul of 49, allied himself with Pompey and served as a commanding officer in his fleet during the war.^b His cousin Gaius, the consul of 50, did not follow Pompey to Greece and instead remained at Rome.^c Through careful political maneuvering, he was successful in begging Caesar for his own pardon. His brother Marcus, the consul of 51, however, was more defiant, refusing to ally himself with either side. He opposed an all-out declaration of war against Caesar in early 49^d and, though he initially fled to Greece with the other Pompeians, he was never fully on board with their cause, as Cicero relates in their correspondence: "You were not satisfied with the policy of the civil war, nor with Pompey's forces, nor the nature of his army, and were always deeply distrustful of it."^e After the disaster at Pharsalus, Marcus withdrew into voluntary exile at Mytilene. Even after his brother Gaius in 46 threw himself at the feet of Caesar in front of the entire Senate on Marcus' behalf and won him pardon, he refused to return to Rome until Cicero convinced him otherwise.^f His return to Rome, however, never materialized, as he was assassinated by his own attendants in the Piraeus in 45. Ultimately, the personal conflict between Pompey and Caesar not only overturned the Roman political landscape but also permeated and upset all types of societal relations.^g

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G.15b See Appendix A: Who's Who in Caesar, §27;
Syme 1938.

G.15c See Appendix A, §20.

G.15d Cicero, *Letters to Atticus* 8.1.3.

G.16a Cicero, *Letters to Friends* 16.12.

G.16b 11.5.

G.16c Cicero, *Letters to Atticus* 10.15.

G.16d 9.2.2

G.16e Cicero to Marcellus, *Letters to Friends* 4.7.

G.16f Servius Sulpicius to Cicero, *Letters to Friends* 4.4; Marcellus to Cicero, 4.11.

G.16g For a detailed study of such relations, see Bruhns 1978.

WEB ESSAY H

The Legacy of Rome's Wars

Kurt A. Raaflaub

§1. References to some earlier wars of the Roman republic, to the enemies involved in them, and to the great generals who fought them are frequent throughout the corpus of Caesar's works. So are allusions to Caesar's popularity, and that of his opponents, in various parts of the Roman empire, and to the role obligations based on past favors played in various persons' or peoples' decisions to support one or the other of the contenders. Such remarks require explanations. The essential information is briefly summarized here.^a The period covered in this essay, from Marius to Pompey, dates from c. 115 to 60.

§2. Caesar was related to Gaius Marius (157–86) through his aunt Julia, Marius' wife. Marius had been a “new man” (that is, none of his ancestors had reached the consulship) but came from a wealthy family in Arpinum,^a near Rome. He was thus an outsider, and the established Roman nobility did not make it easy for newcomers to reach the top. Since this nobility at the time was struggling with a run of failures, Marius embraced a populist (*popularis*) approach to politics—an approach that Caesar came to pursue as well, since his family, though of ancient nobility, had long lacked political success. Both for family and political reasons, Caesar thus aligned himself strongly with the Marian tradition, which brought him into conflict with Sulla and his political heirs.

§3. In his military career, Marius distinguished himself in Spain, where he served under Publius Cornelius Scipio Aemilianus in the Numantine war.^a In the long and difficult war (112–105) against the Numidian king Jugurtha in North Africa, he initially served as a staff officer (legate) under Quintus Caecilius Metellus.^b After a surprising vic-

NOTE: All dates are B.C.E. (Before the Common Era) unless otherwise indicated. The dates given in the Web essays are those of the traditional Roman civil calendar up to January 45, when the Julian calendar was instated. For more on the Roman system of time-counting, see Appendix C: Roman Calendars, Dates, and Time. For all Web essays, go to landmarkcaesar.com. Source references without indication of title or author name refer to the texts in *The Landmark Julius Caesar*. Modern works are listed fully in the Bibliography. All Web essays are copyright © 2017 by Robert B. Strassler and Kurt A. Raaflaub. They may be downloaded and printed for noncommercial use only. Any other use requires written permission of the copyright holders.

H.1a For a succinct yet thorough discussion of the entire period, see Crook, Lintott, and Rawson 1994.

H.2a Arpinum, approximately sixty-two miles southeast of Rome, was also the birthplace of Marcus Tullius Cicero.

H.3a Scipio had conquered and destroyed Carthage in 146. Numantia was the last stand of the Celtiberians in their long-lasting war against Rome (154–133), in which Roman armies had suffered several defeats and which only Rome's greatest general was able to bring to a successful end. See Astin 1967.

H.3b Quintus Caecilius Metellus Numidicus, consul 109, censor 102.

tory in consular elections for the year 107 (in which Marius presented himself as an alternative to the corrupt and failure-prone hereditary nobility), he became commander-in-chief and now conducted the war with determination and increasing success. Although in 105 it was his quaestor, Lucius Cornelius Sulla, who managed to capture Jugurtha and thus to end the war, it was naturally Marius, his commander, who claimed the success as his own and was awarded a triumph.^c Here lie the seeds of the later unrelenting hostility between the two men. During the campaign against Jugurtha, Marius collaborated closely with the king's enemies in North Africa and supported them politically and materially. These included a line of the Numidian royal family that had been oppressed by Jugurtha, and native tribes (especially the Gaetulians) that lived in the south of and outside the province of Africa (essentially modern Tunisia). After his great victories, Marius had rewarded the Gaetulians with land and left them largely independent of Roman control. He also arranged the distribution of land to some of his veterans in the province and encouraged the settlement of Roman and Italian merchants in various towns. The patron-client relationship based on such mutual services, and the obligations it entailed, were inherited by descendants on both sides. Considerable segments of the population (native and Roman) therefore felt obliged to Marius and, by extension, to his political heirs. Later power shifts in Rome put them at a disadvantage.^d Curio, whom Caesar delegated to this province in 49 to fight the Pompeians who had taken it over after the outbreak of the civil war, and Caesar himself, who was forced to fight a second round of the civil war in Africa, could count on the support of these "clients of Marius"—a political factor that is mentioned several times in the *African War*.^e

§4. While Marius was still in Africa, the Roman empire was threatened by a much more serious danger in the north. The Cimbri and Teutoni, Germanic nations that were possibly driven from their home area in the Jutland peninsula and northern Germany by significant climate changes, had migrated south and in 112 defeated some native tribes and a consular Roman army in Noricum, south of the Danube (roughly modern Bavaria). After attaching various allies to themselves, they invaded the Roman province of Transalpine Gaul^a and in 109 crushed two Roman armies. Two years later, with the assistance of the Celtic-Helvetian Tigurini, they annihilated yet another Roman army, killing the consul Lucius Cassius and his legate Lucius Piso, to whom Caesar was related through marriage. Fifty years later, in 58, this provided Caesar with an excuse to launch a surprise attack on the Tigurini and massacre them at the Arar (modern Saône) River.^b In 105 near Arausio (modern Orange), the Cimbri and Teutoni took advantage of the unwillingness of the two Roman consuls to collaborate and defeated them in sequence. In this disaster, one of the worst in republican history, supposedly eighty thousand Romans and allies lost their lives. The way to Italy lay open but, inexplicably, the invaders turned to Spain first, then returned to Gaul, and, crossing the Alps only a few years later, offered the Romans the time needed to restore their defenses. In the state's dire emergency, the Senate turned to Marius and had him reelected consul before the legal interval of ten years between consulships had expired. His consulship was then renewed several years in a row (104–100) to enable him to prepare his army for the expected decisive confrontation with the Germans. Marius introduced important military reforms: his legions, now com-

H.3c This war is described, not without a strong bias against the nobility, in Sallust's *Jugurthine War* and Plutarch, *Marius* 7–10. For a bust of Marius, see Figure 1.40.

H.3d See §8.

H.3e See n. H.8d. Curio in Africa: 10.23–44.

H.4a Transalpine Gaul, the Province (roughly modern Provence) from which Caesar later conquered Gaul: see Ref. Map 3, BY.

H.4b 1.12.

posed not primarily of maniples but of cohorts, were formed mostly from citizen volunteers, who did not need to meet the traditional census requirements, instead of drafted citizen militias.^c In 102 the Germans returned—but separately. Marius destroyed the Teutoni in a battle near Aquae Sextiae (modern Aix-en-Provence), and in the following year, hurrying over the Alps to assist his fellow consul Quintus Lutatius Catulus, he routed the Cimbri at Vercellae, in western Cisalpine Gaul.^d The German threat was thus eliminated but the “fear of the Cimbri” left an indelible mark on the Romans’ collective psyche. It is in this sense that the memory of the victories and defeats of the Cimbri and Teutoni is conjured up several times in Caesar’s *Gallic War*.^e In Rome, the need to secure the empire’s northern frontier was uncontested. It offered Caesar much of the justification he needed to prevent the migration of the Helvetii from their seats in modern Switzerland to western Gaul (possibly through the Roman province), to check the expansion in eastern Gaul of the power of the German warlord Ariovistus,^f and also to continue aggressive warfare in Gaul in order to solidify Roman control and, eventually, establish Roman rule.^g

§5. Marius’ later career was much less distinguished, his role in domestic politics at times even disastrous. In particular, in 88, when King Mithridates VI of Pontus^a invaded Roman territories and fomented a large anti-Roman rebellion in the Roman province of Asia, Marius competed with Sulla for the army command in the inevitable war. Refusing to accept the Senate’s appointment of Sulla, who was consul at the time, he incited a tribune of the plebs to have him appointed instead by the vote of a popular assembly. This prompted Sulla to appeal with the promise of rich booty to an army that was still under arms after the recent “Social War” (90–88), which had been fought against Rome’s Italian allies. He led these troops to Rome, expelled Marius and his supporters, and departed immediately for the war against Mithridates. Meanwhile, Marius returned from exile, violently occupied Rome, and had himself elected to a seventh consulship, but died soon afterward (in 86).^b His supporters, initially led by Lucius Cornelius Cinna, continued the domination of the Marian faction in Rome and Italy but were unable to gain full legitimacy and eventually had to confront Sulla and his army when they returned victorious from the East in 83.^c In a bloody civil war Sulla crushed his opponents and had himself appointed dictator. His proscriptions, in which scores of senators and equestrians were killed with impunity, left a deep mark on the Romans’ memory and prompted fears that whoever won the second civil war in 49/48, Pompey or Caesar, would imitate Sulla’s cruel victory.^d Furthermore, some of Sulla’s reforms, intended to stabilize the power of the Senate and to weaken tools of opposition, deprived the tribunes of the plebs of some of their power and made the office unattractive, which cre-

- H.4c See Appendix D: The Roman Military, §§1–2 and, for the impact of the volunteer-based army on late republican politics, Web Essay I: The Fall of the Republic, §12.
- H.4d For detailed descriptions of Marius’ victories, see Plutarch, *Marius* 11–27.
- H.4e See especially 1.12.4–14, 1.33.4, 1.40.5, 2.4.2, 2.29.4–5, 2.77.12–14.
- H.4f These are the actions of the first year of the war; see especially 1.7.4–5, 1.33.3–4.
- H.4g The topic of the security of Rome’s northern frontier was emphasized by Cicero in Roman debates in 56, when the provincial assignments of the consuls to be elected for 55 needed to be determined, in which an extension of Caesar’s five-year command in Gaul played a role as well; see Cicero’s speech *On the Consular Provinces*.

- H.5a Pharnaces II, whom Caesar defeated in 47 at Zela (12.72–77), was a son of Mithridates VI. Pontus lies on the southern shore of the Black Sea (see Ref. Map 8, BZ).
- H.5b On Marius, see Carney 1970.
- H.5c On Marius’ successors and “the age of Cinna,” see Lovano 2002.
- H.5d This fear is mentioned frequently in Cicero’s letters of the time; see, for example, concerning Pompey and his followers, *Letters to Atticus* 8.11.2; 9.7.3; 9.10.2, 6; 9.11.3–4; concerning Caesar and his entourage, 7.7; it is emphatically refuted in a letter disseminated in Italy after Caesar’s act of leniency at Corfinium (9.23; Cicero, *Letters to Atticus* 9.7C). See Web Essay JJ: The *Civil War* as a Work of Propaganda, §14, and, for a detailed study, Raafraub 1974, 293–307.

ated enormous difficulties for Sulla's political heirs in the senatorial nobility. Not least, it offered propagandistic fodder to Caesar, who, in an address to his soldiers at the outbreak of the civil war in 49, portrayed the violation of the tribunes' rights by his opponents, led by the consuls and Pompey, as even worse than Sulla's measures.^c

§6. Sulla stepped down from his dictatorship at the end of 81, held the consulship in 80, then retired from public life, and died in 78.^a Several consequences of Sulla's domination affected Caesar directly. First, his first wife, Cornelia, was a daughter of Sulla's enemy Cinna. Sulla thus saw in Caesar an opponent. He deprived him of his inheritance, his wife's dowry, and his priesthood, and tried to force him to divorce Cornelia, but Caesar refused and found himself in serious danger. This was one of several reasons that intensified his allegiance to Marius' legacy and opposition to Sulla's political heirs.^b

§7. Second, one of the leaders of Sulla's opponents in Italy had been Quintus Sertorius (c. 123–72). Upon Sulla's return he withdrew to Spain and, after several changes of fortune, rallied native resistance against oppressive Roman governors in the farther province (modern Portugal and western Spain), establishing in the 70s a rebel state with a Senate, schools for elite children, and his own well-trained army. He defeated various generals of Sulla, defended himself successfully against Quintus Caecilius Metellus Pius, the governor whom the Senate next sent against him, and even caused major problems for Pompey, who was finally charged by the Senate to destroy that rebel state. When Sertorius was assassinated by one of his own allies in 72, Pompey and Metellus won an easy victory in the end.^a But Sertorius' popularity survived among many Spaniards who therefore also welcomed Caesar, when he was appointed governor of Farther Spain for 61, and the way he conducted himself in this office reinforced such allegiances. Caesar thus found much support in that province when he campaigned there during the civil war, first in 49, then again in 46/45. Still, Pompey was popular there as well, and even more so in Nearer Spain, not only because of his campaigns against Sertorius but also because he was governor of all Spanish provinces from 54 onward (although for specific political reasons he stayed in Italy and administered the provinces through his legates).^b These conflicting allegiances are mentioned several times in Caesar's corpus: they played a major role in the strategic calculations of the civil war generals and in the attitudes of the provincial population as well as the Roman citizens living there.^c

§8. Third, when Sulla returned from the East in 83, Pompey, then only twenty-three years old, recruited three legions among the herdsmen and retainers on his family's huge estates in central Italy and joined Sulla with this private army. He performed so well in the civil war that Sulla, greatly impressed, saluted him as *imperator*^a (although Pompey was still too young to even hold office). In 82, charged by Sulla to extinguish centers of Marian resistance, Pompey went to Sicily, secured it, and crossed over to the province of Africa, where he defeated the Marian commander and the Numidian king Hiarbas in a major battle. Returning to Rome, he was saluted as "the Great" (Magnus)—an allusion to his emulation of Alexander the Great.^b Back in Africa, the defeat of Hiarbas and the Marians signaled a switch in fortunes for Marius' clients. Pompey restored Hiempsal to

H.5e See 9.7.2–4.

H.6a On Sulla, see Plutarch, *Sulla*; Keaveney 1982; Christ 2002.

H.6b See Web Essay F: Caesar the Politician, §2.

H.7a On Sertorius, see Plutarch's *Sertorius*, Konrad 1994; Spann 1987.

H.7b See 1.85.8.

H.7c See, for example, 9.61.3–4, 10.18.6–7, 10.20.1, 12.58.1–3.

H.8a Imperator acclamation: see the Glossary under *imperator*.

H.8b On Pompey's early career, see Seager 1979; Greenhalgh 1981.

the throne of Numidia. He was Jugurtha's grandson, who had taken Sulla's side in the Roman civil war and whom Hiarbas and the Marian commander Gnaeus Domitius Ahenobarbus had deposed and exiled. Hiempasal subjected the Gaetulians, who had supported Marius, to a harsh rule. Hence a large amount of hostility and dissatisfaction with those placed in power by Pompey just waited to be exploited by Caesar when he arrived in the province in 47, especially since the oppressive rule of the Pompeians who controlled the province at that time and collaborated closely with the Numidian king Juba, Hiempasal's son and successor, made them highly unpopular. Caesar himself had demonstrated open hostility toward Juba during the latter's visit to Rome in 63, and in 50 Caesar's ally, the tribune Gaius Scribonius Curio, had proposed a Senate bill to annex Numidia and turn it into a new Roman province.^c Juba thus had every reason to support (and seek the support of) the Pompeians. Not surprisingly, the author of the *African War* often refers to pro-Marian sentiments as a motive of those who were willing to join Caesar in his African campaign.^d This author as well as Caesar himself do not tire of castigating the Pompeian leaders for humiliating themselves as lackeys of Juba, a foreign king.^e

§9. Finally, the 60s were the decade of Pompey's great military accomplishments. Endowed in 67 with a large military command and extraordinary powers, he organized a brilliant forty-day campaign and crushed the pirates who had terrorized the eastern Mediterranean and blocked trade and food supplies for Italy. Then, in 66, he was given an even larger command to defeat Mithridates VI, who was waging war against Rome in the East for the third time. Pompey inflicted a major defeat on Mithridates, who first sought protection at the court of King Tigranes of Armenia, then fled north to Colchis and the Cimmerian Bosporus.^a His harsh rule prompted a rebellion, his son Pharnaces was declared king, and Mithridates committed suicide.^b Pompey spent some time settling affairs in the East: he established Tigranes as client king in Armenia and various other dynasts as minor client kings in central Anatolia, recognized Pharnaces as king of Bosporus, and organized vast territories (Syria, Bithynia and Pontus, Cilicia, and Crete) as new Roman provinces.^c In 62 he returned to Rome and celebrated a huge triumph. All these developments had a major impact on the civil war that was fought in 48 in Greece. On the one hand, through his campaigns and victories, Pompey had assembled an enormous number of clients in the East, whom he relentlessly pressured into sending troops and naval contingents for his campaign against Caesar.^d Caesar's victory forced some of these client kings to justify themselves and seek Caesar's pardon when he appeared in Syria and Anatolia in person in 47 to fight Mithridates' son Pharnaces; also as a result of his victory, Caesar had to reorganize the system of dependent states and adjudicate conflicts among dynasts who aspired to the leading positions.^e

§10. On the other hand, when fighting against Mithridates and trying to establish at least indirect control over Armenia, Pompey had negotiated with the Parthian king and concluded various agreements. Despite ups and downs, Pompey thus had a well-established relationship with the Parthian king. The ill-advised campaign that Crassus launched against the Parthian empire in 54, and that ended with his disastrous defeat and

H.8c See 10.25.4. On Curio, see Appendix A: Who's Who in Caesar, §20. On Caesar's hostility toward Juba, see Gelzer 1968, 45.

H.8d See 13.32.3, 13.35.4–6, 13.55.1–2, 13.56.3.

H.8e 10.44, 13.57.

H.9a Cimmerian Bosporus/the Bosporus (modern Kerch Strait): Map 12.67, locator.

H.9b On Mithridates, see Mayor 2009.

H.9c On Ref. Map 8: Armenia, BZ, Syria, CZ, Pontus, BZ, Cilicia, CY, Bithynia, BX, Crete, CX.

H.9d 11.3–4.

H.9e Such meetings are described at 12.65.4, 12.66.4–5, 12.67–68, 12.78.

death at Carrhae in 53, for the first time stirred up direct hostilities between the two empires and emboldened the Parthian king to launch raids into Anatolia and Syria. One of Crassus' legates had led survivors back from the defeat and resisted valiantly for two years, but the next governor, Marcus Calpurnius Bibulus (Caesar's archenemy), apparently shut himself into his fortresses and hardly dared to set a foot outside.^a At any rate, all this raised in Rome fears of a serious Parthian war. As a result, the Senate demanded one legion each from Pompey and Caesar and, because Pompey had lent Caesar one of his legions for the *Gallic War*,^b Caesar was forced to return two of his legions to Rome. They arrived in Italy shortly before the tensions leading to the civil war peaked and were handed over to Pompey for the defense of the state against Caesar rather than sent to the East for the Parthian war—one of the great injuries about which Caesar complains in the *Civil War*.^c Worse still, in 48, when Caesar had crossed the Adriatic and landed in Greece, Pompey summoned his father-in-law, Quintus Caecilius Metellus Scipio, then governor of Syria, to Greece. Scipio led his entire army out of his province, thus depriving it of any protection against a possible Parthian attack—a fact that Caesar does not fail to emphasize.^d And worst of all, Pompey, desperate to gather as much support as possible against Caesar, did not hesitate to make overtures to the Parthian king, sending an envoy to conclude an alliance. Apparently the king demanded as his price the cession of Syria, which Pompey's envoy declined—he was promptly thrown into jail but freed soon after. Caesar only alludes to this embassy, and in a highly sarcastic context, but the reader cannot fail to think that his opponents were willing to enlist the aid of a powerful Roman enemy while the ghosts of Crassus and twenty thousand dead Roman soldiers remained unavenged.^e

§11. Wherever Caesar's wars carried him, from end to end of the vast Roman empire, he thus was confronted with the consequences of earlier wars, with friendships and enmities created by others, and with the networks of clients and relationships his predecessors had established when they were fighting the wars of the late Roman republic. From some of these networks (especially those of Sertorius in Spain and Marius in Africa) Caesar profited greatly; others (especially those of Pompey in Spain, Africa, and the East) worked against him. And wherever he fought his own wars, he set up his own networks of patronage that imposed obligations on local elites on whom he could rely for support. In his armies, too, we find, for example, Spanish and German horsemen helping him win victories in Gaul, while Gallic and German cavalry fought in the civil war, often hand-picked by the general on the basis of personal acquaintance and trust established in years of common service and generous rewards. Most of these client troops remained loyal throughout; defections were rare but in one case had disastrous consequences.^a

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H.10a On Crassus, see Appendix A: Who's Who in Caesar, §18; Plutarch, *Crassus*; Marshall 1976; Ward 1977; on Bibulus, Appendix A, §8.

H.10b 6.1.

H.10c 9.4.5, 9.9.4, 9.32.6; also 8.54.1–2; see further Cicero, *Letters to Friends* 2.17.5; Appian, *Civil Wars* 2.114–15; Plutarch, *Caesar* 29; Cassius Dio 40.65. For discussion, see Raafaub 1974, 141–42.

H.10d 11.31.3–4. On Scipio, see Appendix A, §40.

H.10e 11.82.4. In 44, Caesar himself was planning a Parthian war to avenge Crassus' defeat, but was assassinated before he could depart for this campaign.

H.11a See, for example, 9.39.2, 9.51.1. Betrayal with disastrous consequences: 11.59–65.

WEB ESSAY I

The Fall of the Republic

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§1. Gaius Julius Caesar was instrumental in the Roman republic's demise, but the collapse of the republic and the rise of monarchy did not come about as a result of one man's actions. This momentous transition was the ultimate consequence of strains on the republican system of government caused, ironically, by the success of Roman conquests that resulted in the creation of a territorial empire spanning the Mediterranean basin and beyond. The republican system buckled under the weight of this vast territory for two main and interrelated reasons: 1) the system itself had developed in a way that resisted change, and 2) politics could not be disconnected from personal ambitions and relationships. Ultimately, these two factors prevented the Roman elite from fully adjusting to the task of managing their ever-increasing territorial empire and resolving the major problems this caused. This essay first addresses the nature of the republican political system and then looks at the pressures exerted on that system by the empire. These pressures include a dramatic change in the wealth of Rome and greater autonomy, riches, and glory attainable by Roman generals and governors abroad.^a

The Functioning of the *Res Publica*

§2. Modern scholars refer to the period from 509 to 31 as the “republic.” This is a Roman word but the Romans used it simply to characterize their political system as *res publica*, literally the “public thing” (or “public matter, affair”). The *res publica* was not a republic in the modern sense of the word, although the concept had been created in contrast to monarchy, and the main political institutions of the *res publica* consisted of assemblies, magistrates (elected officials), and the Senate. Study of the functions, interactions, and relative power of these institutions reveals a government resistant to change.

§3. Originally, the Romans had three main assemblies: two were accessible to all adult

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I.1a See generally on the problems and fall of the late republic: Gruen 1974; Brunt 1988, ch. 1; Crook et al. 1994; Holland 2004; Shotter 2004.

male Roman citizens, whether patrician or plebeian (Centuriate Assembly, Tribal Assembly), while the third was limited to the plebeians only (plebs, hence Plebeian Assembly). The distinction between patricians and plebeians went back to the early history of Rome, when the patricians formed a tightly knit hereditary aristocracy and the plebs comprised all nonpatrician citizens. By the third century, the number of patrician families (including Caesar's own) had shrunk drastically, and a new patrician-plebeian aristocracy had established itself (often called the "nobility"). The Plebeian Assembly's decisions (plebiscites), representing the will of the vast majority of citizens, now bound the entire community, and by Caesar's time the difference between Tribal and Plebeian Assembly had vanished for virtually all practical purposes (except the election of plebeian officials such as the tribunes of the plebs). The Centuriate Assembly, grown out of an army assembly, dealt with matters of war and peace; it thus elected magistrates with *imperium* (the power of military command), that is, the consuls, praetors, and censors decided about war, and could be convened only by holders of *imperium*. The Tribal Assembly, by contrast, could be led also by the tribunes of the plebs; it was less formal, elected lower officials, and passed legislation. Although only the assembled people could pass laws (*leges*), the people's power was limited by voting procedures in the assemblies; for instance, the people could vote only on proposals that a magistrate brought before an assembly. Without the leadership of an official, the people were incapable of bringing about political change.^a

§4. Higher magistrates, those with *imperium* (consuls and praetors), presided over assemblies and the Senate, governed provinces, and commanded armies, usually assisted by lesser magistrates (without *imperium*, especially quaestors). Two structural principles help explain the built-in resistance to change. According to the principle of collegiality, all magistrates shared office with one or more colleagues (two consuls, eight praetors, ten plebeian tribunes). The principle of annuity limited each official (with the exception of the censors) to a one-year term (reelection was rare and possible only after a long interval). Finally, each magistrate had veto power (*intercessio*) over his colleagues, that is, each could stop procedures at any stage of the decision-making process: if a co-magistrate imposed his *intercessio*, any further action was supposed to end. A similar tool, religious obstruction (*obnuntiatio*), had the same effect. Magistrates regularly read the auspices (signs indicating the gods' will) to see if it was propitious to conduct political business. If the signs were negative an *obnuntiatio* was pronounced and no political action took place on that day. Thus the *obnuntiatio*, like the *intercessio*, could be used as a tool for preventing decisions in favor of change. (The only magistrate exempt from the limitations of shared office and veto was the dictator, appointed in rare emergency situations that required authoritative action. The dictator had absolute power but was limited to only six months of office; he was assisted by a "Master of the Horse"—a title that reflects the military origin of both offices.) The veto and term limits were intended to maintain an equilibrium among those governing (preventing anyone from acquiring too much power). This system required a high degree of consensus for any major action and ensured that a magistrate trying to bring about change faced an uphill battle if he failed to establish such consensus. This made adaptation to new situations difficult.

I.3a On the republican constitution: Lintott 1999;
assemblies: Taylor 1966.

§5. One other elected office requires explanation. The ten tribunes of the plebs did not hold *imperium* but each could preside over meetings of the Tribal (and Plebeian) Assembly. The tribunes were seen as the voice of the people, and by the late republic the position was preferred by ambitious demagogues. Nevertheless, the tribunate was also an instrument to resist change, since it held the right of veto over any other magistrate; any one of the ten could thus intercede to stop attempts at legislation, so that even if all the other nine agreed, political action could not move forward.

§6. Finally, magisterial power was limited by senatorial “advice,” probably the strongest constraint on political change. A man became a senator by being elected quaestor, and then remained a senator for life. Because office was considered an honor and thus unpaid, a political career required high financial capacity; magistracies and Senate were filled by members of the social and economic elite, which formed a small and tight oligarchy. This elite consisted of two groups that were interconnected by family relations: the senatorial families that traditionally specialized in political careers and leadership, and the equestrian families (*equites*, so called because their wealth allowed them to serve on horse in war), much more numerous, from which “new men” entered senatorial careers and in rare cases even reached the consulship (Marius and Cicero are famous examples). Both groups formed a landed aristocracy; the senators were prohibited by law from engaging in large-scale trade, while many equestrians did so, forming, for example, corporations that collected taxes in the provinces, operated state-owned mines, and supplied the armies. Politically, the Senate provided continuity and was the real governing body, but formally its decisions (*senatus consulta*) had no binding or legal power; they expressed only the Senate’s opinion. Yet such decisions were backed by the Senate’s collective authority (*senatus auctoritas*). A magistrate thus rejected the Senate’s advice at great risk to his political career, especially because political success depended so much on personal relationships.

§7. The system discussed here was idealized (somewhat anachronistically) by the second-century Greek historian Polybius, who recognized that the three major institutions (magistracy, Senate, assemblies) each had enormous power but could not achieve anything without cooperating with the others.^a The system was constructed to maintain this balance and prevent any agency from accumulating too much power, and it functioned well as long as everyone involved knew and accepted the unwritten traditional rules (not laws) that regulated its operation. This body of conventional know-how was called *mos maiorum* (“ancestral custom”). It included seeking consensus, respecting tradition, seniority, and the Senate’s authority, and pulling back when opposition proved too strong. The classic case of a politician who exploited the weaknesses inherent in the lack of strict legal regulation was Tiberius Gracchus, in the year 133. For both honorable political as well as personal reasons he pushed the system’s limits by sidestepping the Senate and using the assembly for political decision-making, and thus moved dangerously close to populist rule—so much so that responsible senators felt forced to restore the balance by eliminating him and his followers, which for the first time introduced violence into the political process.^b At any rate, opportunities offered by war and empire weakened general willingness to submit to *mos maiorum*. To understand this fully, we need to look at the nature of Roman politics.

I.7a Polybius, *History* 6.11–18.

I.7b On Tiberius Gracchus, see Stockton 1979.

The Personal Nature of Roman Politics

§8. For people at every level of the political process (and, indirectly, even women), complex interpersonal relationships colored political functions. Beyond the family, two kinds of relationships were crucial: those among socio-political equals (friendship, *amicitia*), and those among people of different status (the patron-client relationship). In both cases, mutual benefaction was key: friends assisted friends, and patrons and clients assisted each other in political as well as personal endeavors. For example, a client could help get out the vote for a patron, and the patron could represent the client in court or might pay the dowry for the client's daughter. Furthermore, *amicitia* corresponded to its opposite, *inimicitia* ("enmityship"). While friends had the obligation to help one another, enemies were obligated to hinder and damage one another.^a

§9. These relationships played out in a world of fervent ambition. A good Roman always sought greater glory, greater honor, and higher status (*dignitas*). For members of the governing class, these goals involved higher magistracies, more impressive military commands, and more glorious triumphs; by Caesar's time such commands tended to comprise several provinces for several years. For most of the republic, the constant fierce competition among rivals had served, surprisingly, as a stabilizing force: if one person or family grew too powerful, their rivals would make sure to cut them down to size (most conspicuously, this happened to the Scipios, the conquerors of Carthage, long Rome's most successful and wealthiest family). This system of personal politics enabled the Romans to maintain for centuries domestic discipline and stability and to concentrate their energies on the expansion of their territory. The value system the aristocracy developed early on was focused entirely on achievement in public service and war.^a As territorial conquests and consequently the number of provinces increased, however, and the prizes grew richer yet harder to obtain (Rome's enemies were stronger, more distant, and wealthier), the competition became increasingly intense and violent, eventually sweeping away the barriers erected by *mos maiorum*.

The System's Failure

§10. During the last century of the republic, from 133 on,^a the Roman government system became increasingly unstable and unsustainable. Its conservative nature and the predominance of personal relationships and ambitions in politics had not hindered the Romans from building a territorial empire that eventually spanned the entire Mediterranean. The very success of their policies probably would have made them reluctant to change their system even if they had realized the need to do so. Regardless, their success put so much pressure on this system that it broke. The power of *mos maiorum* ultimately proved insufficient to contain the impact of fundamentally changed conditions. Simply put, the two major factors causing the breakdown were that 1) territorial expansion brought unheard-of wealth into Rome that affected all levels and aspects of Roman society, and 2) territorial conquest changed the dynamics of warfare and the administration of provinces and rapidly raised the ambitions of those who administered them. Some examples from Caesar's lifetime will illustrate how the system traditionally worked and why it broke down.

§11. The influx of great wealth changed Roman society. Traditionally, the wealthy

I.8a On *amicitia*: Brunt 1988, ch. 7; on *clientela*: ch. 8.

I.9a See Raaflaub 1996; Rosenstein 2006.

I.10a This is the year of Tiberius Gracchus' tribunate, connected above with the introduction of violence into politics mentioned in §7 above.

upper class was Rome's driving force. As usual, the elite profited most from the increasing territorial empire, exploiting it most ruthlessly. One of the wealthiest was Marcus Licinius Crassus, who, it was said, could afford his own army.^a His loans launched Caesar's political career, enabling Caesar to stage such lavish games that he won election to aedile in 65. Later the loans protected him from other creditors. Wealth, ironically, also brought with it poverty for many ordinary Roman citizens. As the result of the Roman empire's expansion to distant territories (in Spain, Greece, and Anatolia), further wars needed to be fought to contain resistance and extend control. Hence by the second century farmers, who in earlier centuries would have been mobilized as soldiers only for part of the year, were forced to serve in campaigns abroad that lasted for several years, making their families and farms vulnerable to elite predatory neighbors. To add insult to injury, these elite opportunists used the slaves acquired in these wars, who poured into Italy in unprecedented numbers, to work their estates, and they used the wealth they gained in wars of conquest and in governorships to extend their landholdings at the expense of citizen farmers. As a result, many of the old citizen farmers lost or sold their land and moved to Rome in hope of obtaining employment and support. The masses of urban poor increased enormously, forming a volatile proletariat of voting citizens who followed those who promised most.^b

§12. Moreover, in a long process the composition of the Roman army changed from landowning farmers to mostly landless proletarians; this development culminated in the late second century when Gaius Marius enlisted an army of proletarian volunteers for wars in North Africa and on Italy's northern frontier against migrating German tribes.^a Marius was also the first who provided his veterans, on their retirement, with land, which soon became a standard promise of generals to their soldiers. As a consequence, the soldiers no longer fought only for the *res publica* but also for their own goals. In the generation before Julius Caesar this was illustrated by Lucius Cornelius Sulla, who was able to convince his soldiers to march on the city of Rome when his command in Asia had been revoked; their loss of a chance at a lucrative military campaign in the East was sufficient to overcome the reluctance they may have felt as citizens to attack their own capital. Thus Roman generals ceased to be only military commanders who might occasionally distribute some booty to the soldiers; now they became providers of revenue the soldiers considered indispensable.^b

§13. In the same way that opportunities for wealth became greater and caused shifts in allegiances, opportunities for glory also grew, and the traditional means of limiting the power of individuals (the Senate's authority and personal "enemyship") proved insufficient. In 62, when Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus returned to Rome after a successful military campaign in the East, his soldiers naturally expected land. Pompey's personal and political enemies, in typical Roman fashion, tried to bring Pompey down a notch by preventing passage of bills granting land to his veterans and blocking the ratification of his administrative decisions in the field. Thus they not only offended Pompey himself but thwarted the justified expectations of his soldiers. Soon many of these veterans crowded the assembly and suppressed any opposition to proposals favored by their former general. Army and general had become interdependent not only in war but also in politics.

I.11a On Crassus, see Appendix A: Who's Who in Caesar, §18; Plutarch, *Crassus*; Ward 1977.

I.11b For a critical new assessment of this process, see Rosenstein 2004.

I.12a See Web Essay H: The Legacy of Rome's Wars, §4.

I.12b Brunt 1988, ch. 5. On Marius, see Plutarch, *Marius*; Sallust, *Jugurthine War*; Evans 1994. On Sulla, see Plutarch, *Sulla*; Keaveney 2005.

Pompey himself took recourse in a political alliance with Julius Caesar and Crassus—the so-called First Triumvirate. The mob of former soldiers helped the triumvirate achieve its aims.^a

§14. The First Triumvirate (known in its own day as “the beast with three heads”) that joined the richest man in Rome (Crassus) with the most successful general (Pompey) and—arguably—the most ambitious politician (Caesar) merely continued in extreme form the tradition of personal politics. In the face of uncompromising opposition by their personal enemies, these men formed a friendship that was to achieve each man’s political goals. Pompey wanted to receive land for his veterans, Crassus to obtain concessions for his allies among the equestrian tax farmers, and Caesar to gain an election to the consulship and an extended military command. Caesar’s consulship in 59 might be described as traditional Roman politics on steroids, with the violence that accompanies such drugs. Veterans of Pompey’s eastern wars participated in mob violence if it assured realization of their demands, and they were far from the only thugs in the city. The traditional elements of conservative Roman politics were trampled in the process. For example, Bibulus, Caesar’s co-consul, pronounced *obnuntiatio* every day of his consulship after the mob forced him out of the Forum when he attempted to interpose his veto.

§15. Pompey was surprised by the Senate’s unwillingness to approve all the decisions he made in settling affairs in the East. This highlights another late-republican problem. As the empire grew, it became customary for the highest magistrates after their year in office to take command in a province and wage Rome’s wars. These pro-magistrates were spending more time abroad, at great distance from Rome, and while abroad they had far more autonomy than they ever had at home. None of them had a colleague in office and many of them remained in office longer than the traditional annual term.^a They must have experienced something of a shock when they returned to Rome and were expected to step back into the ranks, participate in shared decision-making, and face opposition with equanimity.

§16. The issues surrounding Caesar’s return from Gaul offer a magnified illustration of this problem, aggravated by his activities during his consulship in Rome, his military choices, and his emphasis on his own *dignitas*.^a From a strictly legal perspective, because of Bibulus’ persistent *obnuntiatio*, most decisions passed during Caesar’s consulship—including his command in Gaul—were illegal. In addition, in violation of a law of Sulla, he had waged war outside of his own province without Senate authorization. Had he returned to Rome as a private citizen, he could have been put on trial by his personal enemies.^b So long as he was consul or proconsul he remained immune to prosecution. The particular emphasis Caesar placed on his *dignitas* (based on his merits as conqueror of Gaul) meant that simply being brought to trial, even if it ended in acquittal, would have been a severe insult.^c

§17. *Dignitas* mattered very much to every elite Roman and even more to Caesar. *Dignitas* has far more weight than its English derivative, dignity. It describes status based on achievement (the person’s own and that of his ancestors), corresponding authority, and the expectation of appropriate recognition, respect, and honor. Because Romans always strove to raise their status, an insult to *dignitas* was more than an insult to dignity:

I.13a See Web Essay G: Caesar and Pompey, §§6–7; Plutarch, *Pompey*; Seager 1979.

I.15a Lintott 1999, 113–15.

I.16a See also Web Essay JJ: The *Civil War* as a Work of Propaganda, §12.

I.16b But see Web Essay J: The Legitimacy of Caesar’s Wars, §§2–9.

I.16c Caesar’s emphasis on his *dignitas*: 9.7.7, 8.3, 9.2, 32.4; see also Cicero, *Letters to Atticus* 7.11.1; *On Behalf of Ligarius* 18; Suetonius, *Caesar* 30.3–4.

it actually diminished the person's status. This applied even to foreign policy decisions: Caesar claimed to wage war against the Helvetii not least because one of their tribes, participating in the attacks of the Cimbri and Teutoni in the late second century, had insulted the honor of Rome and of himself (one of his ancestors had been among the defeated commanders). Moreover, in an argument that is puzzling to us but was perfectly understandable to his contemporaries, Caesar even justified starting the civil war by the need to defend his *dignitas* against the persistent insults of his personal enemies, whose policies, he insisted, were also detrimental to Rome.^a

§18. This conflation of personal with public enmities illustrates one final point that illuminates the demise of the republic. The stresses suffered by the late republic were not simply a matter of every man going after his own interests, power, and glory. They were also a matter of ideology, reflecting a deep division about what was good for the *res publica*. When Caesar called upon his army to march with him into Italy, he mentioned not only personal aspects (the need to defend his *dignitas* and to secure the rewards the soldiers had earned through their long service for the *res publica*) but also public interests: the obligation to defend the tribunes of the plebs, Antonius and Cassius, against the abuses inflicted upon them when the Senate threatened to break their veto. What was at stake in Caesar's version was respect for the liberty and will of the Senate and people.^a His opponents, meanwhile, had their own version of affairs, considering these tribunes, like Curio before them, not as spokespersons for the people but as demagogues and puppets of Caesar; in their view, Caesar was using these tribunes to challenge the Senate's traditional authority by refusing to bend to its will.

§19. The personal and conservative system was unable to handle all these pressures. Largesse, successful reform legislation, or victories and measures that benefited veterans or the urban or rural population inevitably added massive numbers to a politician's client base and thus potentially his voting power. This provoked resistance, accusations of aiming for monarchic power (*regnum*), and efforts to restore the balance by any means available. So, for example, the tribune of the plebs, Clodius, was vilified for arranging for the distribution of free grain to the urban plebs although they were starving. The pirates in the Mediterranean were causing havoc for Rome's trade but their defeat brought Pompey too much personal glory; hence he needed to be resisted. The range of problems that required resolution was too wide, and these problems were too complex and big to be tackled in the traditional ways without creating huge imbalances in the governing class. As a result, obstruction prevailed and little was done.

§20. Simultaneously, a wide gap opened up between the traditional ideology of the *res publica*, the agendas of ambitious men, and the interests of soldiers and lower classes. In traditional aristocratic fashion, Pompey, Caesar, and their contemporaries sought to increase their own *dignitas*. Earlier, such ambitions had resulted in expanding Roman power but that expansion was so successful that aristocratic ambitions increased in size right along with the empire. Pompey conquered vast territories in the East, Caesar in Gaul. To reintegrate such giants into the Senate proved almost impossible. Meanwhile, the Roman plebs that by Caesar's day included citizens of the entire Italian peninsula, had their own needs that the senatorial government was not able to meet. Hence, at

I.17a Helvetii: 1.12; Caesar's *dignitas* in the *Civil War*:
see n. I.16c.

I.18a 9.9.5, 9.22.5.

least in the city itself, many engaged in violence to support any politician who promised to meet those needs. What used to be more or less agreed upon, that Romans acted according to *mos maiorum* and that the Senate was the guardian of those customs, now became a matter of great dispute. Who was the defender of *mos maiorum* and *res publica*? Was it the Senate, trying desperately to maintain its own power and traditional authority, or the tribunes, claiming to represent the people, or the generals, who fought with their armies to protect Rome against outside threats and to increase Roman power and prestige? Whatever common ground had existed earlier disintegrated under the pressures of imperial conquest and its impact on the state. Peace and the republic faltered under the relentless competition among senators, a small number of whom had the audacity and the means to operate as warlords.

Epilogue

§21. Caesar prevailed in the civil wars and met an untimely end because he failed to see the importance of preserving the *res publica*: although dysfunctional, it still proved to be strong enough to resist monarchy. His great-nephew and adopted son Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus, the later Augustus, did not make the same mistake. He promised to restore the republic and, in the final phase of the civil war, led a united Roman West against the evil queen of the East and her Roman lackey, Cleopatra and Antony. After his victory in 31, he returned all his powers to the Senate and the people, and received clearly defined republican-style offices and republican-labeled powers. Henceforth, officially, he did not rule as a monarch but led as the “first man” (*princeps*). The final demise of the republic came in republican disguise.

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WEB ESSAY J

The Legitimacy of Caesar's Wars

Erich S. Gruen

§1. Caesar fought for nine years in Gaul. At the conclusion of those campaigns, the whole of the land (roughly modern France) from the Rhine to the Pyrenees, from the North Sea to the Mediterranean, had fallen under Rome's sway. The feat dazzled Caesar's contemporaries. Unlike Roman expansion in the east, which had proceeded in slow and halting steps over the course of a century and a half, the conquest of Gaul came with stunning swiftness under the direction of a single commander.

§2. It should cause no surprise that Caesar anticipated gaining a command after his consulship of 59 with the hope of adding military laurels to his political stature. But nothing suggests that the addition of Gaul to Rome's imperial holdings was part of Caesar's scheme from the start. Under a law sponsored by the pro-Caesarian tribune Publius Vatinius in 59, the popular assembly awarded to Caesar a five-year command (*imperium*) over the provinces of Cisalpine Gaul (essentially northern Italy up to the Alps) and Illyricum (roughly equivalent to modern Croatia). Caesar might well have expected some fighting and the possibility of a triumph in Illyricum—but certainly not in Cisalpine Gaul. The potential launching pad for expansion would be the province of Transalpine Gaul (the region around modern Provence). But that was not included in Caesar's package. The area had been converted into a Roman province six decades earlier, and the Romans had shown little interest in extending its boundaries in the interim. As it happened, trouble had recently arisen there. In 60, reports arrived of incursions by Gallic tribes into the Roman province, and it was assigned to Quintus Metellus Celer, consul of that year. Only when Celer died unexpectedly did the Senate (not the people)

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Readers interested in pursuing some of the issues discussed in this essay will find the following titles useful: Gelzer 1968; Collins 1972; Gruen 1974; Raaflaub 1974; Meier 1995; Goldsworthy 2006; Riggsby 2006; Morstein-Marx 2008; Tatum 2008.

add Transalpine Gaul to Caesar's charge—and at a time when matters had settled down once more in the province.^a In short, there was no obvious prospect for a major push into the vast stretches of Gaul when Caesar took up his command in 58.

§3. Was such a push legitimate, and how did Caesar go about legitimizing it? These are two separate questions, but closely linked and overlapping. Word reached Caesar in late winter 58 that the tribe of the Helvetii, located in the area around what is now Lake Geneva, had determined to abandon their homes and villages and move westward. The most convenient route for this migration would lead the Helvetii to cross the Roman province—a prospect that Caesar would not countenance. The Helvetii thus took a different itinerary, skirted the province, and entered territory occupied by other Gallic tribes. From Caesar's vantage point, they were too close for comfort, and were wreaking havoc upon peoples allied with Rome. This incursion prompted the governor to mobilize his forces, move outside the province, and clash openly with the Helvetii. Thus began the long series of Gallic wars.^a The governor of any Roman province would be expected to protect its borders. Crossing those borders, however, required a bit more justification. Assaults on Roman allies outside the frontiers provided a form of legitimation, since, it could be argued, they menaced the stability of the province itself. Caesar pointed to delegations and requests for assistance from the Aedui just beyond the border and from the Allobroges inside it.^b

§4. The initial Roman thrust, however, proved to be only the start. After defeating the Helvetii, Caesar heeded the call of the Aedui and other Gallic leaders to halt the advance of Ariovistus, a leader of the Suebi, a German tribe, who threatened the sovereignty of Gallic peoples. His aggressions recalled the dire days when Cimbri and Teutoni had burst into the province of Transalpine Gaul and menaced Italy more than four decades earlier. This was enough to motivate Caesar to open hostilities against Ariovistus, culminating in a decisive Roman victory over the Germans near Vesontio (modern Besançon).^a Caesar could hardly have planned this in advance. The year before, during his consulship of 59, he had been instrumental in having Ariovistus officially hailed by the Senate as a king and a friend of Rome.^b The victories of 58 over the Helvetii and over Ariovistus and his German troops that triggered the eventual conquest of Gaul took place outside the Roman province of Transalpine Gaul, thus technically beyond the jurisdiction of the Roman governor.

§5. Were Caesar's actions therefore illegitimate, wanton aggression to inaugurate Roman territorial expansion in Gaul? Caesar himself had promulgated a measure as consul, expanding a law of Sulla that prohibited provincial governors from leaving their provinces, leading an army beyond their borders, and waging war on their own initiative.^a Did Caesar indeed violate his own law in the very following year, without being held to account for it—and without hesitating to record the fact in his own commentaries? Not a very plausible idea. One must suppose that the law had some flexibility and that an *imperator* (commanding general) had the leeway to act in accord with circumstances. In the case of Transalpine Gaul in fact, the Senate had declared back in 61 that its governor had the responsibility not only of protecting the province but of defending the Aedui and all other friends of the Roman people.^b Caesar had done nothing less.

J.2a Cicero, *Letters to Atticus* 1.19.2, 1.20.5, 8.3.3;
On the Consular Provinces 36; *On Behalf of
Caelius* 59; Suetonius, *Caesar* 22.1; Cassius Dio
38.8.5.

J.3a 1.5–15; see also 1.31.14.
J.3b 1.10–11.

J.4a 1.31–53.
J.4b 1.35.2. See also Appian, *Celtic Wars* 16.
J.5a Cicero, *Against Piso* 50.
J.5b 1.35.4.

§6. How to present legitimacy here? Caesar took the line that he went to war with the Helvetii because their march westward, even while avoiding the province, brought potential danger to it.^a And he made comparable claims to account for his war on Ariovistus and the Germans: they had crossed the Rhine to plunder the wealth of the Gauls and occupy their territory; if allowed to go unchecked, they might absorb the whole of Gaul and, like the Cimbri and Teutoni, would have a springboard for the invasion of Italy.^b Commanders of Roman armies charged with safeguarding the provincial holdings of the Roman republic could readily find justifications to authorize “preventive warfare.” That should not surprise us. What is surprising, however, is how little space Caesar actually devotes to such legitimization. He first moved his troops beyond the frontiers of his province in the spring of 58 against the Helvetii. He presents the event without fanfare: “he led his army from the territory of the Allobroges to that of the Segusiavi—the first people beyond the province, across the Rhône.”^c This evidently required no justification. At least Caesar offered none.

§7. Nor is there any hint of a bad conscience. After the conclusion of the first campaigning season, with Helvetii defeated and Germans driven back across the Rhine, one might have anticipated that Caesar would bring his forces back inside the borders of the province of Transalpine Gaul. What he did instead, however, was to send the army into winter quarters in the heart of the territory of the Sequani in central Gaul and well beyond the frontiers of the Roman province. That act signaled Roman intention to expand influence and extend hegemony. Understandably, it triggered uprisings the following year, the repercussions of which would eventually issue in the conquest of Gaul.^a Caesar, however, did not bother to offer explanation: no claim that the Sequani asked for protection or that a German invasion was imminent. He reports only that he took his army to winter quarters in the land of the Sequani, as if this were obvious, natural, and unobjectionable.^b

§8. Caesar engaged neither in *apologia* nor in deception to conjure up legitimacy for his actions. Rome's cause was his cause. He makes the point unabashedly more than once. The fact that the Aedui, often referred to by the Senate as Rome's brothers and kinsmen, had been enslaved by the Germans was regarded by Caesar as “utterly disgraceful both for himself and for the republic.”^a There is no false modesty here—and nothing to be modest about. To be sure, Caesar's political enemies, led by Cato the Younger, would attack him in the Senate for atrocities committed in the war.^b But it is noteworthy that the criticism of Caesar, even by his fiercest enemies, did not express any reservations about bringing troops outside the bounds of his assigned province, conducting offensive and preemptive warfare, and adding relentlessly to the territorial holdings of the Roman empire. On the contrary. Those achievements had earned Caesar the senatorial vote of a fifteen-day thanksgiving to the gods, a distinction previously accorded to no man.^c Romans did not usually argue with success on the battlefield.

§9. True, there were laws to restrain commanders from exceeding their assigned responsibilities or engaging in misconduct that could bring discredit upon the republic.^a But the rules contained ambiguity, and enforcement was fluid. Caesar's successes muted

J.6a 1.10.1–2.

J.6b 1.31.5, 1.33.3–4.

J.6c 1.10.5.

J.7a See 2.1.3.

J.7b 1.54.2.

J.8a 1.33.2; see also 1.45.1, 4.17.1.

J.8b Plutarch, *Cato the Younger* 51.1–2; *Caesar* 22.1–3;

Suetonius, *Caesar* 24.3; Appian, *Celtic Wars* 18.

J.8c 2.35.4; Cicero, *On the Consular Provinces* 25–26;

Plutarch, *Caesar* 21.1; Cassius Dio 39.5.1.

J.9a Cicero, *Against Piso* 50.

objections. He could refrain from tortured justifications. In his report in the *Gallic War* he spoke freely of ignoring provincial boundaries, conducting aggressive warfare, extending imperial holdings, violating truces, and even cutting down women and children. Indeed Caesar regularly credited Gauls with resisting Romans because they fought for their liberty and sought to avoid Roman slavery.^b Caesar, the victorious general, did not need to suppress facts, let alone apologize for them. The *Gallic War* served to proclaim achievements rather than to rationalize them.

§10. Foreign wars did not, on the whole, require much soul-searching. Civil war, however, was a very different matter. The opening chapters of Caesar's *Civil War* possess a character quite distinct from the *Gallic War*. Armed conflict with fellow citizens demanded justification, especially from a proconsul who had marched a Roman army across provincial borders into Italy itself. Legitimacy here was especially fraught. And the impulse for legitimization was inescapable.

§11. Caesar crossed the Rubicon, the small stream that officially separated Cisalpine Gaul from Italy, on the 10th or 11th of January 49.^a Later sources made much of the event, in order to underscore the drama and heighten the intensity of the moment when "the die was cast."^b Caesar's own account makes no mention of that moment. He naturally avoided calling attention to the act that could label him a rebel against the state.

§12. Did Caesar, in fact, shatter legal and constitutional norms by marching on Italy? Or did his enemies provoke conflict by violating conventional expectations and depriving Caesar of appropriately earned offices and honors? Or did the exercise of power simply overwhelm issues of legitimacy? The constitutional matters were, in fact, complex and entangled. Interpretations of the proprieties engendered dispute at the time and have fueled scholarly debates to this very day. Caesar's command in Gaul under Vatinius' law of 59 was to last five years. When expiry was imminent, another law, promoted by Pompey and Crassus in their consulship of 55, renewed the commission for another five years.^a Caesar's enemies proposed his supersession on several occasions from 51 to 49.^b The fact that they nowhere cited a clause in the law specifying a terminal date suggests that the measure did not contain one. That gave ample scope for political wrangling. Repeated proposals in the Senate that Caesar be recalled or his provinces be reassigned, and corresponding resistance to such proposals by Caesarian supporters, indicate that constitutional matters were at best ambiguous.

§13. Caesar, even in late 50, preferred to stay in Gaul rather than to return home, even though fighting had ceased some time ago. He could claim that administrative, organizational, and financial structures still needed to be put in place for the new province. His senatorial foes preferred to terminate his command (*imperium*) and appoint one of their own to take charge of the Gallic provinces. The legal question, however, had been complicated in 52 when the ten plebeian tribunes of that year unanimously promulgated a bill to allow Caesar to offer his candidacy for a second consulship while in absentia, that is, in Gaul, thus waiving the normal requirement that a candidate present himself in person.^a In Caesar's interpretation, the law of the ten tribunes gave

J.9b 1.174, 3.8.4, 3.10.3, 5.7.8, 5.27.6, 7.1.5–8, 7.4, 7.37.4, 7.64.3, 7.76, 7.77.9, 7.77.14–16, 7.89.1. See the Introduction, §40.

J.11a This date corresponds to November 23 or 24, 50, of a calendar based on the solar year.

J.11b For instance, Suetonius, *Caesar* 31–32; Appian, *Civil Wars* 2.35.

J.12a Cicero, *Letters to Atticus* 7.6.2; Velleius Paterculus 2.46.2; Plutarch, *Crassus* 15.5; Pompey 52.3.

J.12b 8.53.1; Cicero, *Letters to Friends* 8.1.2, 8.2.2, 8.5.3, 8.8.4–8; *Letters to Atticus* 5.2.3, 8.3.3; Suetonius, *Caesar* 28.2.

J.13a 9.32.3; Cicero, *Letters to Atticus* 7.3.4, 7.6.2, 8.3.3; *Letters to Friends* 6.6.5.

him the right, at least implicitly, to remain in Gaul through the consular elections of 49. Hence, when senatorial foes pressed for his recall in 51 and 50, this could be described as “premature,” even as violating the law that extended his command for five years in 55.^b And Caesar himself subsequently labeled the senatorial decree of January 49 to end his command as robbing him of six months of *imperium* that had been granted by the Roman people—an obvious reference to the right of standing in *absentia* and his own expectation that he could exercise it in July 49.^c

§14. His opponents did not see it the same way. They claimed already in 51 that the task of subduing the Gauls was complete, that the victorious army could be disbanded, and that Caesar should be superseded.^a The arguments were not so much legalistic as pragmatic, though the motivation was purely political. They repeated their efforts in various forms and on several occasions in the next year and a half, with opinions in the Senate sharply divided, and without tangible effect. Caesar’s partisans persisted in postponing action for many months. Pompey stayed aloof. His public pronouncements were studiously vague, but he kept faith with his ally Caesar in resisting precipitate supersession, in advocating delay on the matter of the Gallic provinces until March 50, and in scoffing at the idea that Caesar might violate the constitution by expecting to retain his army and hold the consulship simultaneously.^b The debates reflect ad hoc maneuvers, not technical or legal arguments.

§15. March of 50 came and went without decision. Tensions then began to rise. Other political matters intervened to complicate the situation, including a whole battery of legislative proposals by the energetic tribune of 50, Gaius Scribonius Curio.^a Enemies of Caesar put increasing pressure on Pompey to break with his political partner. And Curio’s frenetic activities promoted further discord between them. Pompey hoped to evade the fissure by proposing that Caesar have several more months in Gaul until November 50—yet another ad hoc suggestion rather than a constitutional pronouncement. But Curio, professing to act for Caesar, rejected any designated dates, increasing both tensions and uncertainties.^b Political machinations effected an ever more perilous polarization. Legitimacy seemed, at best, an afterthought. By the late summer of 50, some considered civil war a real possibility.^c

§16. No postponement of decision could be tolerated after November 50. But in December Curio proposed an escape from the brink of calamity. He moved in the Senate that both Caesar and Pompey discharge their armies—a motion passed overwhelmingly by a vote of 370 to 22.^a That vote provided a good index of senatorial opinion. Unfortunately, the political stakes for Caesar’s enemies, who had now drawn Pompey into their ranks, had become too high to allow them to back down. Matters would soon come to a head.

§17. Caesar, to his credit, in December 50 made various efforts, through agents or spokesmen, to engage in negotiations and head off conflict. He offered a number of compromises, including even a willingness to yield up his provinces and armies, save only for Illyricum and one legion.^a The offer, whether serious or not, was never put to the

J.13b 8.53; Suetonius, *Caesar* 28.2.

J.13c 9.9.

J.14a Suetonius, *Caesar* 28.2.

J.14b Cicero, *Letters to Friends* 8.8.5–9, 8.9.2.

J.15a On Curio, see Appendix A: Who’s Who in Caesar, §20.

J.15b Cicero, *Letters to Friends* 8.11.3.

J.15c Ibid., 8.14.4.

J.16a Appian, *Civil Wars* 2.30.

J.17a 8.55.2; Cicero, *Letters to Atticus* 7.4.2; Suetonius, *Caesar* 29.2; Appian, *Civil Wars* 2.32; Plutarch, *Caesar* 31.1.

test. Those pressing for a showdown would not be deterred. The two new consuls for 49, Lucius Lentulus Crus and Gaius Marcellus, were determined to push matters to a conclusion, as were other enemies of Caesar, such as Metellus Scipio and Cato. They fixed a date by which Caesar had to disband his army. They overbore the objections of the tribunes Marcus Antonius and Quintus Cassius, ignored their vetoes, short-circuited efforts to continue negotiations, and engineered a vote for the emergency decree of the Senate (*senatus consultum ultimum*) authorizing all magistrates to take whatever steps were needed to preserve the safety of the state. Pompey declared himself ready to mobilize forces, including two legions that had been handed over by Caesar.^b New provincial assignments were announced, among them the official award of Gaul to Domitius Ahenobarbus. All this transpired in the first week of January 49. The consuls left the city, and the tribunes whose vetoes were discounted fled to Caesar's camp. The general shortly thereafter crossed the Rubicon.^c This rapid-fire sequence of events—Caesar's unhesitating move to the border of Cisalpine Gaul and Italy, and the uncompromising belligerence of anti-Caesarian elements in the Senate, who had won Pompey to their side, crushed any hope for reconciliation.

§18. Legalities, then, decidedly took a back seat. Whatever the law that extended Caesar's command for five years in 55 may have said, the Senate decided to fix its own terminal date in January 49. However vague the law passed upon the proposal of the ten tribunes in 52 may have been about a time when Caesar could exercise his right to stand for the consulship in absentia, he insisted that it allowed him to remain in Gaul in 49 and that a senatorial vote stripped him of the privilege. However hallowed was the tribunician prerogative to veto acts of the Senate, it was peremptorily overridden by senatorial insistence on the *senatus consultum ultimum*. Despite laws on the books, including one of Caesar's own, prohibiting provincial governors from overstepping the bounds of their provinces, Caesar had not only done this in Gaul, but he did it again when he traversed the Rubicon into Italy.

§19. Legitimacy was questionable on all fronts. What about legitimization? Caesar, who felt little need to justify incursions against the Gauls, was not so cavalier about representing motives for a civil war. He naturally felt obliged to offer explanations, and, not surprisingly, he provides them in the opening chapters of the *Civil War*. What does cause surprise, however, is that legal or constitutional rationalization plays so small a role. Caesar does, to be sure, make allusion to it. He protests that the most basic prerogative of tribunes, the exercise of their veto, was overridden, that the Senate chose to direct the *senatus consultum ultimum* against him, whereas it had been used in the past only in the direst of emergencies, that governors went off to their provinces without waiting for the customary authorization by the people, that consuls abandoned the city, leaving private citizens with emblems of authority. Such behavior had no precedents in the past, and he had been prematurely recalled from his post in Gaul in violation of the law of the ten tribunes.^a But this list of grievances, some of which are tendentious or exaggerated, pale by comparison with Caesar's personal and political attacks on the senatorial leaders who (in his view) had compelled him to engage in armed conflict. He asserts that the consul

J.17b See 8.54.1–3.

J.17c 9.1–9.

J.19a 9.5–7, 9.9, 9.22.5, 9.32.3.

Lentulus and his ally Metellus Scipio browbeat and bullied the Senate into taking action against him, even intimidating and silencing those who offered moderate proposals. In Caesar's description, the more ferocious and cruel the speech, the more applause it received from his enemies.^b All the friends of the consuls and the supporters of Pompey were dragooned into attending the Senate, where they terrified the waverers and deprived the majority of the ability to speak freely.^c He ascribes Cato's opposition to inveterate enmity and disappointment at political defeat, Lentulus' hostility to indebtedness and the hope of recouping losses through a military command, and Metellus Scipio's motives to aspiration for a provincial governorship and fear of prosecution. And he accounts for Pompey's volte-face as persuasion by Caesar's enemies and reluctance to have anyone placed on a level of eminence equal to his own.^d He depicts his own posture, of course, as one of sweet reasonableness: he had sought no extraordinary office, he had observed the proper interval between consulships, he had proposed compromises, sacrificing his own standing and reputation,^e whereas his foes, in seeking to snatch his legions from him, had acted with insolence, ferocity, and cruelty; he wanted only to surpass others in justice and equity.^f The tendentiousness is plain. Lest there be any doubt, a letter of Cicero exactly contemporary to the events described (but not without its own tendentiousness) offers an altogether different picture.^g

§20. A determination of which side had the better claim on legitimacy would be a fruitless endeavor. Contemporaries themselves had vastly divergent views. As Cicero put it later, they differed in their opinions and aims, beliefs and commitments, as they did in their choice of sides in the conflict; all was obscure; many had doubts about the best policy, about what was expedient, what was appropriate, indeed what was permitted.^a But they do not appear to have agonized much over legitimacy. Caesar declared his principal concern unabashedly: the defense of his own *dignitas*.^b

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J.19b 9.1–2.

J.19c 9.1.3.

J.19d 9.1.4.

J.19e The word Caesar uses is *dignitas*; see the Glossary.

J.19f 9.32.

J.19g Cicero, *Letters to Friends* 16.11.2–3.

J.20a Cicero, *On Behalf of Marcellus* 30.

J.20b 9.7.7, 9.9.2, 9.22.5; see Cicero, *Letters to Atticus* 7.11.1.

WEB ESSAY K

Gaul in Caesar's Time

Olivier Büchsenschütz

§1. The text of Julius Caesar constitutes a unique and fundamental source on the history of France, Belgium, Switzerland, and southern Germany. Except for Greece and Rome, there are few countries that possess such precise and coherent testimony about their remote origins. However, the primary aim of Caesar's account was not to describe Gaul and its inhabitants. Among the fifteen most frequent words in the text are the following: enemy, camp, legion, war, army, soldier, and walled town.

§2. Caesar's narrative is above all that of a general describing and justifying his actions: why he decided to launch an operation, how he deployed his troops, how he avoided taking any unjustified risk, what difficulties he encountered, and what advantages he achieved for Rome in his campaigns. Since the Gauls passed down no written literature of their own, it is particularly important to look at the archaeological evidence to balance Caesar's account.

§3. According to Caesar, certain regions (principally the Romanized province of Transalpine Gaul, now known as Provence, in southern France) deserve to be integrated into the Roman world. Others are occupied by aggressive peoples whom it is necessary to control, whereas the remote regions of Germany and Britain are too savage and too poor to justify extensive intervention. To develop these descriptions, Caesar used the writings (now lost) of Posidonius of Apamea, a Greek geographer and historian (c. 135–51), who had traveled in the south of Gaul.

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Readers are encouraged to consult also the following Web essays: L: *Oppida: Towns in Caesar's World*; M: Romans, Germans, and Germania; FF: Caesar the Ethnographer; and GG: The *Gallic War* as a Work of Propaganda. The arguments presented in this essay are based on the following titles, which are also recommended as further readings: Büchsenschütz 2004, 2007; Büchsenschütz, Charde-noux, Gruel, et al. 2015; Drinkwater 1983; Ebel 1976; Ferris 2000; Goudineau 1990, 2006; Holmes 1911; James 1993; Megaw and Megaw 1989; Napoleon III 1865–1866; Ralston 2006; Rambaud 1966; Wells 2001; Woolf 1998. See also the five-volume series *Celtes et gaulois: L'archéologie face à l'histoire* (2005).

§4. But how savage were even the more remote lands in which Caesar campaigned? Starting in the nineteenth century, extensive research concerning the battle sites of Caesar's wars gradually led authors to an interest in Gallic culture and allowed them to progress beyond the widespread notion that the people concerned were merely barbarians in whom there could be no great interest. Excavations have brought to light not only fortifications but also villages remarkable for their size—often comprising several dozen hectares—and the nature of settlement. The houses were often grouped in blocks, and genuine roads assured orderly traffic. Large estates point to the presence of aristocrats or wealthy families. Craft and commercial activities were numerous and specialized: blacksmiths, workers in bronze, and jewelers produced numerous objects attesting to great skill and an established concern for productivity. Mediterranean products were imported, especially wine, in great variety and abundance, as large quantities of amphora fragments found in excavations attest.

§5. It is the development of fortifications that best manifests the urban character of the walled towns, or *oppida*. Hilltop fortifications, numerous for millennia and particularly so during the Iron Age, had only rarely served as permanent habitations from the fourth to the second century. They covered no more than several hectares of ground, and their fortifications were generally limited to a barricade at the place where natural defenses were the weakest. The *oppida* of the second and first centuries, by contrast, covered between twenty and several hundred hectares and tended to be surrounded by a continuous rampart with several monumental gates. These battlements sheltered a permanent town population that represented a cross-section of all of Celtic society. We mentioned the development, at the beginning of the second century, of villages of artisans and traders on the plain, located at crossroads or watercourses, forming the center of scattered farms in a rural area. But by the end of the second century, there is every appearance of the establishment of true cities, with their boundaries clearly set off by a rampart, that brought together every category of the population on hilltop sites that had until then played only a secondary role as places of refuge and protection.

§6. Excavations of developed *oppida* provide evidence of quite dense occupation and a way of life very much like that of a city, even if the buildings were constructed of wood and roofed with thatch. Artisans and traders formed the most innovative and dynamic segment, but a population of rural origin, peasants and aristocrats, was represented as well. And, in fact, Caesar's descriptions of the sieges his army carried out suggest that sophisticated populations, with many resources at their disposal, lived within the walls.

§7. Despite the impressive development of these settlements, the main energies of the population actually remained focused on and dispersed in the countryside. In this connection, we come across certain descriptions by Caesar of the residences of the nobility (*aedificia*). Enclosures for farm animals, fields bordered off by hedges, and roads for the carts that moved across the Celtic countryside: these have been identified by aerial surveys, confirming in the actual landscape the allusions in remarks scattered throughout the commentaries. This broad and well-developed countryside must also have influenced the methods and course of Roman warfare in Gaul: for example, Caesar's frequent long cross-country marches would not have been possible at all without serviceable roads,

and he often comments on his dependence on wide availability of grain and the difficulties of plundering it from remote farms.

§8. The majority of evidence points to an advanced civilization. The idea has long prevailed that the Celts carried out their rituals at striking natural places such as springs or mountain summits. But today we know of built-up sanctuaries, on the plain or in towns. They are in general carefully demarcated by an enclosure with a monumental gate, behind which there are buildings and altars. The remains of offerings, bones, weapons, and coins have been found, either exposed or buried carefully in the “sacred” ground of the sanctuary. The conviviality of Gallic society is also manifest from its banquets, of which archaeologists have found plentiful evidence: several hundred amphorae and thousands of bones.

§9. The analysis of burials completes our view of daily life in Gallic society. Clothes, jewelry, and weapons show the status of both children and adults. Workmanship and decoration of the objects categorize the dead, indicating tribe and age. The richest people were entitled to be buried in a funerary chamber in which they were accompanied by a cart, a hearth equipped with spits and andirons, and pots full of food and quarter cuts of meat. We receive the impression of a veritable staging, whether connected to the funerals themselves or to the commemorative offerings at tombs that foreign texts describe.

§10. Gallic territories were politically very divided, which must also have exerted a strong influence on wars’ strategies and outcomes. Caesar describes a complex situation, a mosaic of *pagi* (“districts” or “cantons,” and of *civitates*, “communities” or “nations” that correspond to modern French provinces). The situation may have been even more complicated than that, as is visible when Caesar envisages groups of people rather than territories, the former being subject to movements according to conflicts and the vagaries of climate; when he describes a divided society, particularly under the pressures of the Germans on one side and the Romans on the other; when he contrasts the fierce and warlike Germans with the Gauls, who are more open to Mediterranean ways and influences; and when he places the Belgae in an intermediate category. We must keep in mind that Caesar deliberately constructs an image that serves his politics: the Gauls who are closest to the Roman province of Transalpine Gaul are most docile, the Belgae are more remote and warlike but can be subdued thanks to his (Caesar’s) superior efforts, and the Germans, whom he comprehensively situates beyond the Rhine, are too uncouth and scattered to constitute an exploitable province. This simplistic scheme did not always convince even his own contemporaries, who knew, for example, that some Gauls were settled in southern Germany, while Germanic groups occupied some regions west of the Rhine. Archaeological explorations and excavations do not offer any support for Caesar’s rigid schemes of Celtic and Germanic ethnicity.

§11. Finally, archaeology provides a decisive refutation both of Caesar’s own depiction of the cataclysmic subjugation of the Gauls and of anachronistic notions of colonialism and cultural imperialism that many modern thinkers have read into his account. The Romans sought *political* control of outlying territories, but, with a few exceptions, they had no real interest in reducing or crippling peoples—who would then have been useless

as military buffers or trade partners. Before Caesar's arrival, the infrastructure of Gaul could already support a population as dense as in the centuries that followed. Caesar's counting of the Helvetian population and his lists of the contingents that came to the relief of Alesia can be seen in the same light. The large numbers given for those killed and for populations reduced to slavery are impressive, but any changes wrought by the Romans did not prevent the spectacular development of the Gallo-Roman territory and society in the decades following the war. In spite of the sometimes anti-Celtic assertions of Roman propaganda (which, in particular, served Caesar's need to present himself as a scourge needed to tame a difficult foe), it was, again, not a matter of colonizing a new or exotic country, but rather of creating an empire by seizing political control of neighboring populations; these were certainly different, but already well known to the Romans and ready to adopt a Mediterranean model of society.

§12. The archaeological evidence clearly shows a rapidly progressing Roman influence on ceramics, clothing, and accessories, and, soon, on architecture. But the episode of conquest is not plainly visible in the material culture. The walled towns evolved progressively, without a break, through the whole of the first century B.C.E., with the Gauls borrowing from the Romans elements that they combined with their own, or else transformed into their own modes. Only under Augustus, in the late first century B.C.E. and the early first century C.E., were imperial models imposed.

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WEB ESSAY L

Oppida: *Towns in Caesar's World*

Ian Ralston

§1. *Oppida* (usually translated as “walled towns,” but sometimes as “towns” or “forts”) were the key category of native settlement in Gaul in the first century B.C.E., and they are frequently mentioned by Caesar (in excess of 130 times) in connection with the Gallic war. They represent the top of a settlement hierarchy, which includes *vici* (villages or hamlets) and *aedificia* (isolated buildings or farmsteads, some of which would have been aristocratic or kingly holdings). *Oppida* are usually considered to be towns or proto-urban places, although not all were, to judge from the archaeological evidence; exceptionally, in the difficult military circumstances of the year 52 (described in Book 7 of the *Gallic War*), Caesar also uses the word for city, *urbs* (otherwise reserved in his account for Rome), to describe certain examples.

§2. Considerable historical, place-name, and archaeological research has gone into identifying sites of Gallic *oppida* named in the *Gallic War*, particularly those at which significant events during the war occurred. Important places thus identified include Alise-Sainte-Reine (in Burgundy), Alesia of the Mandubii tribe, the scene of Vercingetorix’ capitulation in 52,^a and the Plateau of Merdogne, near Clermont-Ferrand in the Auvergne, renamed Gergovie by Emperor Napoleon III, whose researches there, combined with subsequent fieldwork, have confirmed it as the Gergovia figuring in the conflict earlier in that same year.^b In some cases, *oppida* were subsequently taken over by the Roman administration and continued as important centers of activity, some still being key cities two millennia later: thus Lutetia of the Parisii (another site of combat

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For further comments on *oppida*, see Web Essay K: Gaul in Caesar’s Time. For further readings, see Collis 1984; Rieckhoff and Fichtl 2011 (plans and aerial photos of key sites); Poux 2012 (a well-illustrated study of one *oppidum*); Ralston 2013 (on fortifications); Fernández-Gótz 1984, and Büchsenschütz 2015 (ch. 4, 295–371, discusses the civilization of the *oppida*).

L.2a 7.89.

L.2b 7.34–45.

in 52)^c is now within Paris, and Avaricum of the Bituriges (the capture of which is also recounted in Book 7),^d considered to be the “most beautiful city in Gaul,”^e lies beneath Bourges in central France.

§3. Some *oppida* have a claim to being the earliest continuously used towns in temperate Europe; but few of them would have existed for even four generations by Caesar’s time. Long-term urban development, however, makes accessing the early archaeological stratification within such sites problematic, and the most is known archaeologically about *oppida* that were rapidly abandoned during the early Roman empire and whose remains are now located in rural settings.

§4. On the evidence of textual descriptions by Caesar and others, together with the results of archaeological excavation, Gallic *oppida* generally displayed several characteristics. These include a substantial defensive circuit comprising a wall or rampart and a ditch fronting it, the whole being monumental in scale. Such enclosures were pierced by one or more major gateways (allowing vehicular and livestock access) and are usually set on naturally defensive positions, such as hill summits or plateaus, or steep-sided promontories, or, as at Lutetia (modern Paris), on river islands. While it is hard to get agreement on the minimum size for such sites, most range between some tens to hundreds of acres in extent. Estimating their permanent populations is difficult, but a few thousand people is considered likely; much higher figures quoted by Caesar (for instance, forty thousand at Avaricum)^a reflect exceptional wartime circumstances. *Oppida* were more common in some tribal territories (*civitates*) than in others, a fact alerting us that all of Gaul was not at the same level of political and economic development in the 50s.

§5. Where extensive archaeological excavation has occurred, notably at Manching in southern Germany and Mount Beuvray in Burgundy (Bibracte, the chief town of the Aedui, who had generally been pro-Roman since the second century), evidence of mortarless stone and, much more usually, timber structures has been recovered. Obviously planned layouts, with internal streets, are recognizable, but not universal. Workshops and houses, sometimes with cellars, are common; public or religious buildings are rare or absent, but small enclosures with evidence of ritual and sacrifice have been identified. Caesar describes open spaces and marketplaces within certain *oppida*.^a

§6. *Oppida* were often located so as to be convenient for long-distance commercial exchanges along major river or overland routes, frequently with ultimate connections to the Mediterranean basin. They could have appropriate facilities for handling goods. The wooden quay of the river port of Geneva (Genava of the Allobroges, near the site of a confrontation between the Romans and the Helvetii during the beginning of the latter’s migration),^a or the major bridge across the Liger (modern Loire) at Orléans (Cenabum of the Carnutes, where Roman citizens were massacred in 52, at the beginning of Vercingetorix’ campaign),^b are cases in point. The combination of siting preferences (near the intersection of major river basins, for trade; and on hilltops, for defense) means that *oppida* can seem eccentrically placed. Bibracte is a classic example. Set on an isolated high hill not far from a tributary of the Liger (draining into the Atlantic), and near the source of a tributary of the Sequana (modern Seine; flowing into the English Channel), it is also not many miles from the Arar (modern Saône) and the main navigable river

L.2c 7.57–58.

L.2d 7.14–28.

L.2e 7.15.

L.4a 7.28.

L.5a For instance, at 7.28.

L.6a 1.6–8.

L.6b 7.3, 7.11.

flowing southward, the Rhône. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Bibracte was progressively abandoned from the late first century in favor of a new city on the plain some fifteen miles away, Augustodunum, “the fortress of Augustus,” now Autun.

§7. More recent excavations have added much to the evidence for religious and related activities preceding the establishment of certain *oppida*, or as practiced during their use. At Corent, in the Auvergne, for example, a rectilinear enclosure, initially constructed around the mid-second century, was substantially reconfigured two generations later. Evidence within it included successively the emplacement of trophies of weapons, the slaughter in particular of domestic animals, much evidence for feasting, and the pouring of libations of wine into the ground. In particular in northeast Gaul, and notably among the Treveri, there are now plentiful indications that *oppida* developed around earlier cult- and meeting-places; and it has even been suggested that the conspicuous consumption of iron nails in the construction of the *murus Gallicus*-style defenses considered below (§10) may have had a ritual dimension.

§8. Artifacts from excavations furnish indications that some *oppida* had become genuine urban places, with typical urban activities. The production of long series of standardized copper alloy, iron, and bone items, and pottery vessels made on the fast potter’s wheel, are key evidence of steps toward industrialization. Rare instances of “quarters” given over to particular trades, such as enamel working at Beuvray, bolster this impression. Large quantities of low-value coinage, some dropped around market-places, highlight local commercial transactions. The discovery of locks and latch lifters makes plain that doors could be locked and that inhabitants did not fully trust their neighbors.

§9. The most obvious remains from long-distance trade are heavy ceramic containers (*amphorae*), primarily from Italy, and principally used to import wine (at this time the vine in Gaul was restricted to the Mediterranean littoral). On some sites it was drunk in copious quantities in feasting, but elsewhere, notably in northern France, the supply of wine seems to have been much more restricted. Other foodstuffs (for example, olives) and herbs were also coming north, along with improved, bigger livestock, both cattle and especially horses, the latter much loved by the Gauls.^a Luxury imports, particularly of wine, were considered by Caesar to be major cultural influences, or potential influences, within Gaul.^b Exports south are harder to discern archaeologically, with only a few chains betokening the export of slaves, for example; but such exports were certainly taking place during the Gallic war, since Caesar records that after the capture of the *oppidum* of the Atuatuci, fifty-three thousand captives were auctioned as slaves.^c

§10. *Oppida* were also places in which food and other surpluses were stored.^a They therefore attracted the attention of Roman officials keen to requisition such commodities^b and were convenient for Roman legions to overwinter in between campaigns.^c Although standing armies seem not to have been a feature of Gallic societies, substantial military forces could be assembled and deployed at short notice; *oppida* were the locations of numerous significant attacks and sieges during the Gallic war. Their enclosing structures served as symbolic and legal limits but were also capable of being defended, including against Roman siege machinery, a new technology introduced into temperate

L.9a 4.2.

L.9b See notable comments at 1.1 and 2.15.

L.9c 2.33. See Web Essay U: The Commercialization of War, §4.

L.10a For instance, 7.32.

L.10b For example, 7.3.

L.10c For example, 7.90.

European warfare during Caesar's campaigns. Traditional timber-laced dry-stone-fronted walls—the *murus Gallicus*, or “Gallic wall,” detailed by Caesar in his account of the siege in 52 of Avaricum (Bourges)^d—were described as capable of withstanding assault by both fire and battering rams, but were increasingly replaced or overlain before or during the war by substantial earthen ramparts, often fronted by wide ditches, which must have been more effective defensive configurations. In 57, Noviodunum, an *oppidum* of the Suessiones, held out against Caesar’s assault “on account of the height of its rampart and the breadth of its ditch.”^e Wooden gates were often set in long corridor entrances, again to assist defense.

§11. Actual events detailed in the *Gallic War* can be recognized archaeologically around certain *oppida*. The siege of Alesia at the culmination of the campaign in 52 is the best known.^a Here, the double enclosure ordered by Caesar to envelop the *oppidum*, along with towers and ancillary camps in which the besieging army was housed, have all been identified in excavation, as has military equipment used by both sides and discarded after the conflict. In another case, discarded weaponry, coupled with evidence of tunneling associated with the capture of the external water source at the Puy d’Issolud in the modern district of Lot, identifies Uxellodunum of the Cadurci. This site was besieged during the “mopping up” operations of 51, as recounted by Hirtius.^b For such events, archaeology and the historical accounts can sometimes match closely.

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L.10d 7.23.
L.10e 2.12.
L.11a 7.64–74, 7.77–88.

L.11b 8.24–44. See further Web Essay RR: The Conquest of Uxellodunum.

WEB ESSAY M

Romans, Germans, and Germania

Maureen Carroll

§1. At the time of Caesar's wars in Gaul (58–51), numerous territorial groups inhabited Gaul and Germany. The ethnic and cultural geography of central and northern Europe in the late Iron Age and early Roman period was complex, yet at the beginning of his *Gallic War* Caesar simplistically divided the tribes in northwest Europe into two main groups: Celts or Gauls (*Galli* in Latin) and Germans (*Germani*). In reality, however, the idea of a Gallic and a German nation is a Roman political and ideological construct, and there is no evidence to suggest that these tribes used such labels.

§2. Moreover, Caesar perceived (or at least presented) the Rhine River as an ethno-cultural barrier that separated the Gauls in the west from the Germans beyond the river in the east. In actual fact, the Rhine had never been a deterrent for contacts, trade, or population movement. Both Gauls and Germans lived on either side of the river. Some of the Gauls claimed to have migrated in the distant past from regions east of the Rhine into Gaul, a claim that the Roman historian Tacitus again relayed over a century later.^a Conversely, the Volcae Tectosages in Germany supposedly were descendants of Gauls who had moved east.^b There were also groups on the western bank of the lower Rhine to which Caesar refers as *Germani cisrhennani* (Germans on *this* side of the Rhine).^c

§3. However, although Caesar oversimplified, the Gauls and Germans were indeed different peoples, as the Romans realized rather late.^a Although earlier authors had distinguished between Celts and Germans,^b and although Rome had fought against

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ers.
For further readings, see Carroll 2001, 2002; Collis 1984; Roymans 1990; von Schnurbein 2003; Todd 2004; Wells 1999; Whittaker 2004; Wigg 1999.

- M.2a Tacitus, *Germania* 2, 28.
M.2b 6.24.
M.2c 2.3, 6.32. For the *Germani cisrhennani*, see Map 6.12.
M.3a Todd 2004, 1–9.
M.3b For example, the fourth-century explorer Pytheas of Massilia (Strabo 1.4.3; see Cunliffe 2002) or the late second-century philosopher, geographer, and historian Posidonius of Apamea (Strabo 7.2.2–3; Athenaeus 4.39).

marauding bands of Germanic Cimbri and Teutoni in the late second century, Roman historians as late as the second half of the first century still referred to these invaders as Gauls.^c Caesar is the first extant author to differentiate between Gallic and Germanic peoples in ethnographic terms. He also was the first to convey some of the history of these peoples, reporting, for example, that the Atuatuci in northern Gaul considered themselves descendants of the Cimbri and Teutoni,^d and that the Tigurini on the upper Rhine, whom he encountered as part of the Helvetian migration, had participated in that of the Cimbri in the late second century.^e

§4. Until Caesar recorded a few details about these preliterate peoples in Latin for a Roman audience, their origins and movements had been preserved only in their own oral traditions. It was not until the Romans came into contact with the populations of northern Gaul and Germany that the various groups in those regions had their names recorded in written records; their histories “began” through the mediation of the Roman empire.^a

§5. In a geographically based depiction typical of Roman ethnographic studies, the Germans, according to Caesar, were more primitive, simpler, more warlike, and thus less civilized than the Gauls because they were more remote from Rome—which naturally was the embodiment of civilization.^a Caesar portrayed the Germans east of the Rhine as savage, hostile, and a threat to stability in Gaul and Italy alike. He was particularly wary of the Germanic confederation living between the Rhine and the Albis (modern Elbe) Rivers known as the Suebi.^b This group had been making incursions into Gaul since about 70 and putting extreme pressure on peoples on either side of the Rhine. Numerous artifacts of a cultural group now referred to as “Elbe-Germanic” attest to a Suebian presence at this time not only in regions between the Rhine and the Elbe, but also in the territories of the Gallic Aedui, Sequani, and Treveri west of the Rhine, confirming Caesar’s report and suggesting that they were very much on the move and occupying an increasingly large area.^c

§6. Caesar was able to observe the customs and manners of the Suebi only because he was engaged in conflict with them along the Rhine, the western fringe of Suebian influence. His knowledge of more remote German tribes, however, beyond the Rhine up to the Baltic, is far less exact and profound than his familiarity with Gallic peoples, whom he observed longer and at closer proximity during his campaigns. The farther away from the Rhine Caesar ventures in his comments on the Germans, the denser the forests become and the more bizarre the creatures that inhabit those forests—such as the unicorn and the elk without leg joints.^a

§7. Germanic society, according to Caesar, was organized along roughly egalitarian lines rather than having a developed hierarchy, and he describes it as living in small communities with frequently shifting locations.^a Archaeological research in northern Gaul and Germany suggests that the peoples in these regions did indeed live in scattered and unfortified agrarian settlements of very modest size, usually with timber longhouses and granaries elevated on posts.^b Evidence for large regional centers specializing in trade and crafts is lacking. Neither is much status differentiation visible in the

M.3c Sallust, *Jugurthine War* 114.

also Web Essay FF: Caesar the Ethnographer.

M.3d 2.29.

M.5b 4.1–2.

M.3e 1.12. Much of what Caesar wrote about the Germans was used as source material half a century later by Strabo (4.4.3, 7.2.4).

M.5c Wigg 1999, 36–38.

M.4a Carroll 2002.

M.6a 6.26–27.

M.5a 4.1–3. On some of the issues discussed here, see

M.7a 4.1, 6.22.

M.7b Roymans 1990, 169–215; Carroll 2001, 20–23.

dwellings of excavated rural hamlets in the Netherlands, in northern Belgium, on both sides of the lower Rhine in Germany, and in northern Germany beyond the Rhine.

§8. When Caesar writes about central and southern Gaul, on the other hand, he describes settlements with distinct nuclei, and fortified hilltop towns (*oppida*) as regional power centers in which trade and craft activities were concentrated and tribal elites controlled social, economic, and religious life and possessed a large following of clients and retainers. Archaeology confirms the existence of such *oppida* throughout central and southern Gaul and east of the Rhine in the regions along the Danube.^a The distinction between Gallic and Germanic societies, then, appears to have been rooted in the different socio-cultural organization of a northern and a southern group rather than in the existence of (western) Gallic and (eastern) Germanic groups with the Rhine as a boundary.

§9. Archaeological research focusing on the later first century is increasingly demonstrating that the east bank and barbaric regions across the Rhine were not left as untouched by Caesar as his report might suggest. He made only two forays beyond the Rhine, in 55 and 53, to engage the Sugambri and Suebi, but, as he writes, a confrontation never really took place because the Germans abandoned their settlements and concealed themselves in the forests.^a Nevertheless, damage was inflicted on the Sugambri: he burned all their villages and cut down their grain.^b Archaeological excavations reveal that many of the *oppida* east of the Rhine were abandoned during the Gallic wars as a result of the interruption of trade and commerce between communities in Gaul and other parts of Europe.^c Smaller communities with simpler economies became common.

§10. But the societies of temperate Europe had been undergoing economic, social, and political changes even before Caesar's campaigns in Gaul. For example, Roman imports in settlements and graves indicate that since the late second and early first centuries there was a regular and dynamic economic exchange between Roman Italy and northwest Europe, particularly involving areas such as southern Germany and Luxembourg.^a Although regional cultural distinctions remained, ideas, goods, and people were on the move, contributing to social change and greater awareness of, and contact between, various cultures. A particularly significant effect of these changes was the migration southward and westward of several peoples.

§11. The Gallic Helvetii, for example, who originally lived in southern Germany, between the upper Rhine and the Main Rivers, had by the late second century been pressured by their northeastern neighbors, the Germanic Suebi, to move southward to occupy the Swiss plateau. The Suebi's continued threat to the Helvetii resulted in 58 in a renewed migration effort farther south and west into the territories of other Gallic tribes and the Roman province of Transalpine Gaul. Here they clashed with the forces of Caesar. Caesar tells us that the Helvetii destroyed their *oppida* when they left them and that he forced them after their defeat to return to their homeland to rebuild their settlements and fill an otherwise dangerous vacuum in which German tribes might gain a foothold.^a Archaeology offers fascinating insight into this chain of events, especially at Aventicum (modern Avenches) in Switzerland. Here, on a hill above Lake Morat, a late Iron Age *oppidum* of the Helvetii at Mount Vully was abandoned around the time of

M.8a Collis 1984; see also Web Essays K: Gaul in Caesar's Time, and L: *Oppida*: Towns in Caesar's World.
M.9a 4.17–19, 6.9–10.

M.9b 6.19.
M.9c Wells 1999, 77–85.
M.10a Wells 1999, 60–63.
M.11a 1.5, 1.28.

their reported migration into Gaul, and another hilltop *oppidum* at Bois de Châtel on the other side of the lake was founded around or shortly after the middle of the first century, when they returned.^b

§12. Despite Caesar's claims, recorded by his continuator Hirtius, that he left north-west Europe subjugated and its populations pacified when he departed for Rome at the conclusion of his Gallic campaigns,^a repeated incursions of Suebi into the lands between the Rhine and Mosella (modern Moselle) Rivers prompted Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa, the Roman governor of Gaul from 39 to 37, to cross the Rhine eastward as a demonstration of Roman power. Archaeological evidence attests to Germanic migrations, voluntary or forced, that were influenced by Caesar's Gallic wars and the continuing instability in the region.^b

§13. Caesar never planned to conquer Germanic regions beyond the Rhine, but his successor did. His adopted son and heir, Octavian, later known as the emperor Augustus, waged wars against the Germanic peoples between the Rhine and Albis (modern Elbe) Rivers in the years following 12 B.C.E., and by the late first century it appeared that his conquest had been a success. Recent excavations east of the Rhine have demonstrated clearly that the "pacification" of Germanic territory also entailed the establishment of new Roman towns, as well as the consolidation of Roman power in military strongholds. A Roman town located near modern Waldgirmes on the Lahn River, for example, was laid out around 4–3 on a new site where no towns or even villages had existed before, and military bases such as Haltern, built around 7 on the Augustan transport line on the Lippe River, now assumed at least some of the administrative duties for the newly planned province of Germania. Germania ceased to exist as Roman territory, however, when in 9 C.E. a confederation of Germanic groups east of the Rhine, led by the Cherusci who lived along the Weser River, slaughtered in an ambush thousands of Roman troops along with the new Roman governor, Publius Quintilius Varus. Several Roman historians sketch the chronology and outcome of this momentous event. After a few punitive but largely inconclusive skirmishes with the Germans, the Roman emperor Tiberius in 16 C.E. withdrew all troops from territories east of the Rhine. This river, Caesar's presumed ethnocultural barrier between the Gauls and the Germans, became the physical and ideological boundary between the Roman empire in the west and the "unconquerable" lands of northeastern Europe, at least until several decades later, when Roman expansion and exchange in the southern Rhine region again opened up contact with Germanic groups living beyond it.

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M.11b Carroll 2001, 22, 42.

M.12a 8.1, 8.46, 8.49.

M.12b Carroll 2001, 26–32.

WEB ESSAY N

Caesar on Britain

Tom Moore

§1. Caesar invaded Britain twice, in 55 and 54 B.C.E., both times for brief campaigns.^a In his description of the campaigns, he briefly discusses the geography of the island and the nature of its communities. Caesar's account can be evaluated against the large amount of archaeological information available on Britain of the first century B.C.E. (Late Iron Age).

§2. The British Isles were known to the Graeco-Roman world for some time before Caesar's account. Fragmentary remnants that survive in later geographers (such as Strabo in the time of Augustus) of the works of earlier geographers and explorers (such as Pytheas of Massilia, modern Marseille, in the late fourth century B.C.E.) show that its general shape and climate were relatively well known.^a Many of these earlier writers also appear to have recognized the island's potential as a source of desirable products, so that by Caesar's time there was probably trade from Britain in grain, hunting dogs, slaves, and metals, especially tin.^b

§3. Certain social changes were already under way prior to Caesar's invasions. Larger social entities in southeastern England were emerging into proto-states. Caesar encountered a number of such groups on his second visit, most notably the powerful Trinovantes,^a who were located around modern-day Essex. Other groups he mentions—the Segontiaci, Ancalites, Bibroci, and Cassi^b—disappear from the record and are not found in later sources on the geography of Britain (such as Ptolemy's *Geography* in the late first century C.E.).^c These “tribes” were almost certainly ruled by individuals who were beginning to use the title “kings.”

§4. Archaeologists have found coins that bear the names of individuals in Caesar's

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For ancient places and peoples mentioned in this Web essay, see Map 5.19. See also Web Essay PP: Caesar's Invasions of Britain.

N.1a 4.23–36, 5.8–23.

N.2a On Pytheas, see Cunliffe 2002.

N.2b See, for example, Diodorus Siculus 5.22.1; Strabo 4.5.2.

N.3a 5.20.

N.3b 5.21.

N.3c The Cenimagni (also listed at 5.21) may be the Iceni of East Anglia mentioned by later sources.

story (or perhaps their relatives or descendants). Coins of Commius,^a for example, have been excavated in central southern Britain. The inscribed coins, which largely date from after Caesar's invasion, were distributed regionally, indicating the geographic influence of many of the groups Caesar mentions (such as the Trinovantes), although it is clear that the distribution of such coins represents a relatively complex and fluid political situation rather than nation-state-like entities with fixed borders. The description Caesar gives of his second invasion provides many clues about the nature of political authority in Late Iron Age Britain. Cassivellaunus, the powerful ruler whom Caesar defeated in order to reinstate Mandubracius,^b appears to have won power through force, which suggests that control over these new "states" was fluid and unstable.

§5. The archaeological record attests to the emergence at this time, and slightly later, of new strongholds known as *oppida* (§§14–17); they appear to have been centers of these new rulers and their elites. Some, for instance Verlamion (later the Roman town of Verulamium, modern St. Albans), are named on coins of the rulers (such as Tasciovanus)^c, that date from the decades after Caesar's incursions. The extent to which Rome played a part—through trade and political power-plays—in bringing these new kings to power remains a hotly debated topic among scholars,^d but we can glimpse Caesar's involvement in such disputes over kingship when he describes how Commius, king of the Atrebates in Gaul, acted as his go-between with British groups.^e Later sources indicate how such internecine conflicts in Britain facilitated Rome's invasion of the island.^f Caesar was clearly keen to back certain contenders for rule, such as Mandubracius of the Trinovantes, who had appealed for his assistance.^e Apparently close links between elites on both sides of the channel and the reported involvement of British troops in campaigns in Gaul^f also meant that Caesar wanted to bring Britain within Rome's sphere of influence, if only by helping to install friendly kings.

§6. Caesar's ethnographic description of Britain should be treated with caution, however. It likely includes information from a range of sources beyond his firsthand experience, since he himself did not venture out of southeast England. Furthermore, Caesar's discussion of Britain was influenced by his desire to highlight his courage and enterprise in this remote region; nowhere, in fact, in the *Galllic War* does he give an ethnographic account that is free from propaganda or accurate by modern standards.^a

§7. Certain parts of his account are clearly incorrect. Most significantly, he indicates that in the interior of Britain people did not plant crops and instead lived on milk and meat and wore animal skins.^a In contrast to this rather barbaric characterization, archaeological evidence shows that most areas of Britain were growing wheat at this time and had been doing so for many centuries. Even in northern Britain, where some early archaeologists assumed a primarily pastoralist economy, suggesting that Caesar's depiction might be accurate, more recent work has revealed that Iron Age communities had been intensively growing wheat long before Caesar reached British shores.^b

§8. Caesar writes that the people living along the south coast of Britain were not indigenous but had migrated from the area of modern-day Belgium, retaining the names of the peoples from which they came (the Belgae and Atrebates).^a The discovery of cre-

N.4a Commius is mentioned at 4.21. See Figure 8.47. On his coins, see Creighton 2000. See further §§9, 17.

N.4b 5.20.

N.5a For a coin of Tasciovanus, see Figure 5.21.

N.5b Creighton 2000.

N.5c 4.21, 5.22.

N.5d See, for example, Cassius Dio 60.19.

N.5e 5.20.

N.5f 4.20.

N.6a See Web Essay FF: Caesar the Ethnographer.

N.7a 5.14.

N.7b Van der Veen 1992.

N.8a 5.12.

mation burials in southern Britain that are in part similar to those in northern France and date from the first century B.C.E. onward has led many archaeologists to credit Caesar's claim of a migration prior to his arrival.^b However, most of these cemeteries were created after Caesar's invasion, which suggests that the picture may be more complex. True, cemeteries like that at Westhampnett, in Hampshire,^c attest to the early appearance of a new burial rite. But the lack of similarities in other aspects of society between the regions in question would seem to indicate that, contrary to Caesar's claim, there had been no mass movement of populations. On the other hand, there are site similarities that reveal close links between northern France and southern Britain. These links came about through trade and are manifest at coastal sites like Hengistbury Head, in Hampshire, where ceramics, coins, and foodstuffs came from Armorica (modern Brittany) and included goods (such as wine amphorae) from as far as Italy. Similarities in high-status burial rites in northern France and southeastern England add weight to Caesar's inference that elites on both sides of the Channel were closely connected.^d

§9. Other parts of Caesar's account are more easily verified by archaeological evidence. He is correct that communities in Late Iron Age Britain were using coinage at this time, both of bronze (in the form of cast "potin" coinage) and stamped gold "Gallo-Belgic" coins.^a The former imitated coins from Marseille that had arrived in Britain along trade routes on the western coast of France, while the latter imitated Gallic coinage that was originally modeled on coins of Philip II of Macedon. Following Caesar's visits, regional coinage types appeared bearing the names of individual rulers and occasionally of the places (*oppida*) where they were minted. Caesar's description of "iron rods of a fixed weight,"^b made in various forms (spit-, sword-, and plowshare-shaped), is also supported by archaeological evidence; these "currency bars" were in use across southern Britain from the third century B.C.E. until the first century C.E. They were often symbolically deposited in boundary ditches in settlements, symbolizing economic value and perhaps the importance of metalworking within Iron Age communities.^c Caesar's awareness of Iron Age mining and the location of resources, however, seems somewhat muddled: tin, iron, and copper were all mined in Britain rather than imported, as Caesar implies,^d although in many of the communities he encountered, these resources came from elsewhere in Britain.^e Tin, for example, is likely to have derived from Cornwall rather than the Midlands, as Caesar claims.^f

§10. Sheep appear to have been the main meat source for Late Iron Age communities in southern Britain. A number of settlements saw an increase in pork and beef consumption in the late first century B.C.E., and the drinking of wine was adopted as communities became increasingly influenced by lifestyles from northern Gaul. Caesar's claim that hare and fowl were not consumed but kept as pets seems unlikely,^a but there is little archaeological evidence to suggest that they formed key dietary components. His assertion, however, that the inhabitants used woad to dye themselves blue^b is supported by finds of woad on at least one Late Iron Age site and what may be depictions of tattooing on some Late Iron Age coinage, although the evidence is by no means clear on this point.^c

§11. Archaeology also offers both confirmation and challenges to Caesar's picture of

N.8b Hawkes 1959, 14.

N.9d 5.12.

N.8c Cunliffe 2005, 559.

N.9e Cunliffe 2005, 501–2.

N.8d 4.21.

N.9f 5.12.

N.9a Creighton 2000, 64. See Figure 1.2 for a coin of the Helvetii.

N.10a 5.12.

N.9b 5.12.

N.10b 5.14.

N.9c Cunliffe 2005, 496.

N.10c Carr 2005.

the Britons and warfare. He suggests that they had been fighting one another continually prior to uniting against Rome's forces, but this is contradicted by Diodorus Siculus' claim that they were largely at peace.^a Caesar describes a number of battles with chariots that were used alongside cavalry and infantry, a tactic he had not encountered on the continent. Iron Age chariots have been found in burials in East Yorkshire in northern England, accompanied by other grave goods such as swords and mirrors. The majority of these burials, however, date to between the fifth and second centuries B.C.E., and only a few to the time of Caesar's invasions. It is likely that this merely reflects a difference in burial customs, for, indeed, formal burial rites were rare across most of Britain until the first century C.E. But there is other evidence for the widespread use of chariots: many vehicle fittings, such as linchpins and yoke terminals, and a range of horse trappings were discovered in metalwork hoards and on settlement sites. At Gussage-All-Saints, in Dorset, a site dating from the first century B.C.E., molds were discovered that were used in the production of bridle bits and chariot mounts that testify to the existence of fittings and harnesses for at least fifty chariots.^b The importance of chariot warfare in Iron Age Britain is also confirmed by later Roman writers.^c

§12. Other martial equipment used by the Britons has been found in burials, votive deposits of metalwork (often in rivers and other wet places), and depictions on coins. Despite the rareness of formal burials during most of the British Iron Age, a number of so-called warrior burials do provide a rough idea of a warrior's equipment at the time of Caesar's incursions. Besides the chariot burials of Yorkshire (§11), individual burials contain long swords, spears, and rectangular and oxhide-shaped shields. Small chalk figurines from East Yorkshire, dating from this period, depict warriors with swords strapped to their backs, to be drawn from behind. Discoveries from major rivers, such as the elaborately decorated bronze shields from the Thames at Battersea and from the Witham River, were probably symbolic objects for ritual deposition, but indicate the types of shields in use at the time. The war trumpet (*carnyx*), seen elsewhere in Europe, was also used in Britain and is depicted on some Late Iron Age coins; a well-preserved example of an actual *carnyx* has been found in a votive deposit at Deskford, Aberdeenshire. The noise from such instruments appears to have been used to frighten and confuse the enemy in battle.^a

§13. By the time Caesar was encountering Britons at war, the hill forts that had dominated Iron Age society in previous centuries had largely been abandoned and were no longer significant military focuses in most of southern Britain. It seems too that the tribal centers or *oppida* he encountered were, as he suggests,^a places to muster troops rather than places to defend; the archaeological record indicates that the sloped ramparts of *oppida* such as Camulodunum (modern Colchester) and Verlamion were unsuitable for defense compared to the "Gallic wall" (*murus Gallicus*) fortifications encountered in Gaul.^b Instead, as Caesar narrates, war was fought in the open, using chariots and cavalry.

§14. Caesar's description of a stronghold "protected by woods and marshes"^a points toward these new sites that appeared in Britain during the first century B.C.E., mostly after Caesar's visit, but he may have encountered some early examples. The *oppida* varied in form but were usually surrounded by complex dike and rampart systems covering

N.11a 5.11; Diodorus Siculus 5.21.6.
N.11b Wainwright 1979.

N.11c Strabo 4.5.2; Tacitus, *Agricola* 12, 36.
N.12a 5.37. See also Figure 3.27a. For images of
carnyxes, see Figures 3.27b and c.

N.13a 5.21.

N.13b On the *murus Gallicus*, see Web Essay L: *Opp-*

ida: Towns in Caesar's World, §10. See also Figures 7.23a and b.

N.14a 5.21.

large areas of landscape: Camulodunum, for example, comprised around five thousand acres. Many do not have well-defined enclosures but rather consist of a loose collection of industrial areas (with evidence for coin minting), high-status settlements and burials, perhaps ritual areas, and so on. Some sites, like Calleva Atrebatum (modern Silchester), seem to have had a more organized layout.

§15. Caesar's description of the stronghold he encountered (§14) is reminiscent of the *oppidum* at Verlamion. It was situated to the north of the Thames, in the area dominated by the Catuvellauni. A range of discontinuous ditch and bank systems was focused around a marshy area. Archaeological investigation of a number of such *oppida* (Camulodunum, Bagendon, and Verlamion) supports Caesar's assertion that they largely comprised woods and marsh; large areas within the dykes were empty and probably used for corralling cattle.^a In some cases, the focus around marshy areas (as seen at Verlamion) may relate to ritual practices involving bodies of water, places that had particular importance to Iron Age communities.

§16. Unlike Caesar but like later classical writers, modern archaeologists have named these sites in Britain *oppida*, which has prompted some confusion; British “*oppida*” were very different from many of the sites Caesar identified as *oppida* elsewhere. They lacked, for example, evidence of urbanism that may be found at sites in Gaul.^a Caesar is correct, therefore, in recognizing that *oppida* in Britain had different functions from those (like Avaricum and Alesia) he encountered in Gaul.^b

§17. The extent to which Caesar's invasion of Britain led to major local political and social transformations remains open to question. Many have argued that his incursions had little impact, with Britain being largely ignored by Rome after his departure, until the decisive conquest by Claudius in 43 C.E. More recently, however, scholars have recognized that Strabo's claim that Britain was “virtually Roman property” in succeeding decades may be closer to the truth.^a The appearance within *oppida* of burials furnished with Roman tableware and other high-status Roman gifts, such as the Augustan medallion at Lexden (a suburb of Colchester; ancient Camulodunum), suggest that some important individuals had close connections to the Roman elite. Those who were minting coinage with classical imagery did so too to emphasize their connections to Rome.^b Hostages (*obsides*), a key instrument of Augustus' diplomacy in Britain, had also been used by Caesar.^c Some of these individuals appear to have become the client kings of southern Britain in later decades, and it is possible that Commius, the king of the Gallic Atrebates, was installed as such in southern Britain after his rebellion against Caesar in 52 B.C.E.^d Coins with the legend *COMMIO*S are among the few in Britain with named inscriptions that date from the period of the Gallic wars. Caesar's invasions, therefore, while not making Britain a province, had certainly brought many of its rulers into the sphere of patronage and power brokering of Rome, a relationship that paved the way for its incorporation into the empire a few decades later.

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N.15a Haselgrave 2000.

N.16a Haselgrave 1995; Woolf 1993.

N.16b 7.28, 68. See also, on Gallic *oppida*, Web Essays K: Gaul in Caesar's Time and L: *Oppida*: Towns in Caesar's World.

N.17a Strabo 4.5.3.

N.17b Creighton 2000.

N.17c 4.21, 4.37. On Augustus' diplomacy, see Strabo 4.5.3.

N.17d Commius' rebellion is mentioned by Hirtius at 8.48.

WEB ESSAY O

The Mediterranean State System

Arthur M. Eckstein

§1. In the 220s B.C.E., five great powers existed in the Mediterranean. Rome and Carthage contended in the West, and three powerful successor-dynasties to Alexander the Great in the East: the Antigonids based in Macedon, the Seleucids in Syria and Mesopotamia, and the Ptolemies in Egypt. Important second-rank states included the kingdom of Pergamum in western Asia Minor, the republic of Rhodes in the Aegean, the Aetolian League in northwest Greece, the Achaean League in southern Greece, the kingdom of Syracuse in Sicily, and Massilia (modern Marseille) on the coast of Gaul. An enormous expansion of Roman power put an end to this complex multipolar system of states; this startling process was chronicled and analyzed by the Greek historian Polybius.^a By 168 Rome was the sole remaining super power, preeminent from Spain to Syria—although most states still remained legally independent.^b By 100 Roman domination had tightened: wars with Rome had destroyed Carthage, the Aetolian League, the Achaean League, and Antigonid Macedon; Africa (modern Tunisia) and Macedonia had become Roman provinces; the last king of Pergamum had willed Rome his territory, which became the Roman province of Asia; and the Seleucid kingdom had dissolved in civil war.^c But the situation still left Rome with powerful neighbors, notably King Mithridates VI of Pontus and his son-in-law King Tigranes the Great of Armenia. Indeed, Mithridates took the offensive against Rome in the late 90s and 80s, during the first round of Roman civil war, and gained most of Asia Minor and parts of European Greece. Lucius Cornelius Sulla drove him back (87–85), but Mithridates' second expansion in the mid-70s brought him to the northern Aegean again. The campaigns of Lucullus and Pompey in 74–63 finally removed both Mithridates and Tigranes as threats to Roman hegemony; the frontiers of Roman power were extended to the Euphrates; and Seleucid Syria

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- O.1a On Polybius, see §9.
- O.1b Among a vast literature, see Eckstein 2006, 2008; Baronowski 2011. Conquered Syracuse had been the capital of the Roman province of Sicily since 210.
- O.1c For discussion, see Kallet-Marx 1995.

became another Roman province.^d

§2. Thus the Mediterranean state system was different in structure during the first round of Roman civil wars (91–83, the age of Sulla), than it was during the later war between Caesar and Pompey.^a In the earlier period, there still remained viable large powers in addition to Rome. By 50, however, of the previous great non-Roman powers only a weakened Ptolemaic state remained in Egypt. Almost all the Mediterranean outside of Roman control now consisted of small and subordinate polities. Only one external threat existed—beyond the Euphrates: the expansionist Parthian state based in Iran and Mesopotamia, but there was no major threat along the Mediterranean littoral.

§3. Nevertheless, the sophisticated states of the eastern Mediterranean still had the potential to challenge Roman dominance if they could unite, or find themselves a leader; that was true in the 80s and still theoretically true in the 40s. In the West in this period the tribal polities in Spain and Transalpine Gaul were in good part already under Roman military control and, even if free, too weak and disorganized to form a long-lasting geopolitical threat. But if they, too, could find a leader to unify them, this could change—as demonstrated by the powerful domain created among the Spanish peoples in the 70s by Quintus Sertorius, a man still fighting the civil war of the 80s.^a The remnants of the Pompeian cause would accomplish this again in Spain in 47–45, during the second round of Roman civil wars, resisting the regime of Caesar.^b

§4. Still, one would have thought that two rounds of savage civil war among the Romans themselves (91–83 and then 49–45) would have shaken the Roman system of hegemony over the peoples and states beyond Italy far more than they did. During this period the republican imperial government sometimes proved incompetent (for instance, in its inability to suppress widespread piracy) or even destructive (when Roman armies, spreading devastation, marched through the Greek world during Roman civil wars). Indeed, more than once the republican empire had to respond to significant external attacks provoked by its own weakness (Mithridates in the late 90s and 80s; the Parthians in the 40s and 30s). The question then is: why did Mediterranean elites, especially the governments in the eastern Mediterranean with their long history of power politics and political analysis, not attempt more forcefully to sunder themselves from Roman domination during a period when it appeared increasingly dysfunctional?

§5. Fergus Millar in particular has offered important answers to this question.^a War between polities had been endemic in both the Classical and Hellenistic political worlds, among major, medium-sized, and even small and unimportant states.^b Greek elites, then, were used to the prevailing chaos—while habitual quarrels with their neighbors meant that forging unity against Rome was difficult.^c Meanwhile, the continuation of Greek military traditions helped provide basic stability, and even sustained Rome in times of crisis. For example, in 130 the tiny town of Metropolis, on the coast of Ionia, honored its leading general, Apollonius, with a monument commemorating his heroic death in a recent battle against an enemy of the Romans;^d the Greek city of Berenice, on the Libyan coast (modern Benghazi), organized its own competent self-defense when Ptolemaic rule in the region collapsed in the 90s; and in the crisis of 88, Aphrodisias, in

O.1d See also Web Essay H: The Legacy of Rome's Wars, §5.

O.2a On Pompey's career, see Appendix A: Who's Who in Caesar, §34.

O.3a See Web Essay H, §7.

O.3b See 12.48–64 and Book 14.

O.5a Millar 2002, 215–37.

O.5b On war and violent domination far down the political scale, see Ma 2000.

O.5c Eckstein 2008, 361–72.

O.5d See Dreyer and Engelmann 2003.

southwest Asia Minor, provided an army for the hard-pressed Roman governor Quintus Oppius against King Mithridates, and honored the local aristocrats who commanded that army. Overall, then, the Greek elites were no idealists about peace.^c

§6. To be sure, the Roman civil wars and/or the invasions by external powers resulting from those wars sometimes confronted local elites in the East with difficult political choices. Some Greek governments chose wisely. Thus the republic of Rhodes withstood a siege by Mithridates in 88 and was reconfirmed afterward as a formal ally of Rome with many new privileges; large parts of Caria (southwest Asia Minor), whose cities loyally supported Rome against Mithridates, too (in part because Rome protected them from local Rhodian imperialism), were treated well. But those polities that had gone over to Mithridates suffered. The list included most of the large cities on the coast of Asia Minor north of Caria as well as Achaea, Athens, and Boeotia in European Greece. Sulla punished the Asian cities with loss of legal independence, along with heavy fines and taxes that drove them into debt and bankruptcy. As for Athens, it was besieged and savagely looted by Sulla's army in 86; the destruction layer at Athens is clear in the archaeological record, and it took until the age of Augustus before the major public buildings were fully repaired.^a Massilia supported Pompey against Caesar in 49, and was similarly punished: besieged by Caesarian forces, it suffered heavy casualties, was deprived of important revenues, and (like cities in Asia) lost its status as an independent city-state.^b

§7. But hard choices, again, were not unusual for the governing elites of small states in the ancient Mediterranean. The dilemmas they faced during periods of chaos or when great powers clashed were set forth already by Thucydides, the historian of the fifth-century Peloponnesian war; it was simply the way of the world.^a In any case, small states in this period were not choosing between acceptance of (disorderly) Roman overlordship and breaking away to full independence. Local aristocracies may not have been happy with conditions under Roman hegemony, but chaos in Rome often meant that weakness on the frontiers attracted the destructive expansion of the imperialists beyond them: Mithridates in the 90s and 80s; and again (with Tigranes) in the 70s, or King Orodes II of Parthia in the 40s and 30s, who from Iran and Mesopotamia sent his armies to plunder as far as the Aegean. Submission to such powers, rather than true independence, was the alternative to the domination of Rome, and it did not look attractive to most Greeks. Mithridates, the six-foot-tall Iranian, made an odd champion of Hellenism (though his propaganda emphasized his Greek culture)—until the campaigns of Lucullus and then Pompey (74–63) finally removed him; everyone understood that this dramatically changed the balance of power in Asia Minor in favor of Rome. As for the external alternative later posed by the Parthians, they soon acquired a dreadful reputation among the Greeks—for example, by savagely destroying the city of Mylasa, in Caria, in 40.^b Yet another factor figured in the political decisions: by the middle of the first century, the Greek aristocracies had been dealing with Rome for 150 years; they read history and knew that whatever Rome's momentary weakness or defeat, it always had the resources to come back, and its revenge against disloyal friends and allies could be terrible. Those states

O.5e Millar 2002, 224–25.

O.6a On Sulla's punishment of disloyal Asian polities in 85 see Santangelo 2007, 30–31, 41–44, 50–56. In c. 70 Lucullus, in command against Mithridates, finally reduced the Sullan fines and taxes, and sought to limit the debts of Asian

cities to Roman money lenders.

O.6b On Massilia see 9.35–36, 10.1–16, 10.22, with Ebel 1976, 101–2.

O.7a See, for example, Thucydides 4.85–88.

O.7b Strabo 14.2.14, with Millar 2002, 225–26.

that had supported Mithridates in the late 90s and 80s found this out only too well.^c

§8. Being forced to make difficult political choices in situations of civil war or external invasion exacerbated the factional rivalry among the elite that was rife in most ancient polities.^a Those magnates who chose wisely, or corrected their political mistakes quickly enough, profited, often at the expense of local rivals. Sulla in the 80s enriched his non-Roman supporters and punished his and their enemies; Caesar during his war with Pompey in the 40s hugely increased the wealth of his supporters from Gaul to Judaea. Certain families thus gained enormous economic and political advantages over their local rivals, and hence had every reason to support the status quo with Rome.^b This helps explain the basic imperial stability in the East between the first two rounds of Roman civil war, in 85–50. From this perspective, the ultimate victory of Caesar's grand-nephew Octavian (Caesar Augustus) in 31—after further rounds of civil war—also meant the local victory everywhere of those factions that had made wise choices. Their local rule was the social basis of the stability of Rome's empire from Augustus onward.^c

§9. A final element conducive to the stability of the empire, even during the civil wars that wrecked the republic, was that for most of the population the empire and its troubles did not really exist. The prosperous and literate magnates, about whom we know most, sat on top of a vast poverty-stricken population. A substantial proportion of people lived at a bare subsistence level, and imperial politics were too far removed to matter for them; they focused simply on getting enough to eat. For instance, the historian Polybius owned large estates in the Peloponnese; the labor of his tenants and serfs gave him the leisure to finish his history of the rise of Roman power.^a Polybius' descendants became Roman citizens, and imperial politics mattered to them (the Roman name of the family, Flavius, demonstrates that they wisely sided with Vespasian in the Roman civil war of 68–69 C.E.). But for the descendants of Polybius' serfs and tenants, people living on the edge of destitution, the difference between chaos and order at the imperial center meant little. The only impact the Roman civil wars of the first century B.C.E. might have had on them would have been if a Roman army marching to fight other Romans happened to make its destructive way through their subsistence farms—foraging, if not looting and raping, and adding enormous misery to their already difficult lives. Statistically, though, such local catastrophes were rare, requiring true bad luck. For most of what we call the imperial population, life went on pretty much as it always had, with horrible stability.^b

§10. As we saw, most first-century polities were small and lacked strategic resources (as the Roman Senate clearly intended); they were thus faced with violent domination and exaction of tribute from *some* external direction (Rome, Mithridates, or Parthia), and their political choices were limited by their weakness.^a But there was one exception: the Ptolemaic kingdom based in Egypt. In the third and second centuries, its power had waxed and waned depending on the talent of the rulers in Alexandria, the abilities of the royal government, and the international environment they confronted. In the first century, Egypt's years of glory under the first three Ptolemies and later Ptolemy VI (r. 170–146) seemed over and the regime in irreversible decline, riddled with factional-

O.7c On the fate of Athens and the Asian cities in 86–85, see §6.

O.8a As Caesar noted: Plutarch, *Caesar* 11.

O.8b Millar 2002, 221 (with a good collection of ancient evidence).

O.8c Syme 1939, ch. 24; Bowersock 1965.

O.9a See Macrobius, *Saturnalia* 22.

O.9b Millar 2002, 218. For example, the struggle of the fishermen in Plutarch, *Sulla* 26, to earn a living from the sea was not much affected even by Sulla's destruction of their hometown of Halae, whose government had supported Mithridates.

O.10a Millar 2002, 226.

ism, civil war, and weak rulers. But its potential for great military power and political influence remained, founded on the fertility of the Nile valley and hence the rich taxes the government could exact from the peasantry. It required only a talented ruler to realize this potential. In Cleopatra VII that ruler was found.

§11. She was not beautiful—the irresistible seductress is mostly Roman propaganda, disproved by her images on her own coinage—but she was marvelously intelligent, talented, and rich. Caesar fell for her in 48, while trying to mediate a civil war between Cleopatra and her younger brother Ptolemy XIII. Caesar was fifty-two years old, the victor over Pompey at Pharsalus, well on his way to being ruler of the Mediterranean; she was twenty-one. The romance was typically impulsive on Caesar's part, and soon there was a child, said to be Caesar's son: Ptolemy Caesar, called Caesarion. Caesar had no living children, and the prospects for the son of Caesar and Cleopatra VII were obviously great. Cleopatra's golden statue as the goddess Isis, placed at Rome in the temple of Venus Genetrix, the goddess Caesar claimed as his divine ancestress, offers ample testimony to his affection and her influence.^a She was in Rome when Caesar was assassinated in March 44, and Cicero was rightly suspicious of her ambitions.^b To be sure, Caesar's testament as it stood in March 44 named his grandnephew Gaius Octavius (Octavian, the future Augustus) as his heir and adopted son. But Caesarion was of Caesar's blood and had a royal heritage on his mother's side. Caesar's plans could change; who knows what would have happened if the Ides of March had not intervened?^c

§12. And, of course, Caesar's death was not the end of this story. Caesar's assassins, led by Marcus Junius Brutus, were eventually destroyed by the Caesarians in the war of Philippi in 42; the Caesarian leaders were young Octavian and Marcus Antonius (consul 44), who had been Caesar's chief lieutenant in the civil war of 49–45.^a After the victory, won by Antony far more than Octavian, it was natural that Antony took for himself the task of dealing with the chief geopolitical threat to Roman power, the Parthians in the East—for his military reputation was at its height. Cleopatra came from Egypt to greet him in 41; at that point she was able, as Ronald Syme put it, “to demonstrate her loyalty to the Caesarian party”: the result were twin children, Cleopatra Selene and Alexander Helios.^b Antony's relationship with Cleopatra was complicated, both by his own interests and his need to maintain his alliance with the dynast in the West, an alliance sealed by Antony's marriage in 40 to Octavian's sister Octavia—a marriage that apparently was successful and productive (two daughters).

§13. The major task Antony faced in the East, as just said, was to defuse the threat to Roman hegemony that had developed from Parthia. This needs discussion. Pompey in 63 had created a system of Roman-ruled provinces extending from Syria along the coasts of Anatolia around to Bithynia-Pontus in the north, guarded by a cushion of client kings extending eastward. This system provided security for the inhabitants after years of wars with Mithridates, and it increased the annual tax revenue to Rome while lessening the tax burden of the cities along the coast of Asia. The system came under pressure from the Parthians after they defeated Marcus Crassus' reckless invasion of Mesopotamia at Carrhae in 53.^a Yet it is striking that in 49–48 the eastern Mediterranean polities were united in supporting Pompey, as their benefactor, against Caesar. Caesar intended to

O.11a Appian, *Civil Wars* 2.202; Cassius Dio 51.22.

Who in Caesar, §16.

O.11b Cicero, *Letters to Atticus* 14.8.1.

O.12a On Antonius' career, see Appendix A, §5.

O.11c For Cleopatra's career and ambitions down to Caesar's assassination, see Roller 2010, chs. 1–5.

O.12b Syme 1939, 214, see also 261.

For more on Cleopatra, see Appendix A: Who's

O.13a On Crassus, see Appendix A, §18.

avenge Crassus by a massive invasion of Parthia, a plan cut short by his assassination. Instead, King Orodes in 40 launched a two-pronged offensive: his son Pacurus devastated much of Syria, advancing as far south as Jerusalem, while his ally, the Pompeian Quintus Labienus (son of Caesar's legate Titus Labienus, who had defected to Pompey in 49^b) raided throughout Asia Minor. In 39 there was a similar Parthian invasion—which shows their ambitions to take over the region—but this time it was defeated. In 36, Antony in response launched a massive invasion of Parthian territory—Caesar's project. Success would have brought Antony's military reputation to new heights, but the invasion was a disaster, and a third of the army was lost. Yet by invading Armenia successfully in 34, Antony retrieved the balance of power along the Euphrates, and the Parthian regime was ready to settle for a stalemate. But Carrhae remained unavenged, and Antony had not assumed the mantle of Caesar.

§14. During this period Antony distanced himself increasingly from Octavia and returned to Cleopatra. This political change probably occurred because Antony felt that his wife's brother Octavian had betrayed him in 36—failing to send him the crucial troops for the Parthian war that Octavian had promised in exchange for warships Antony had sent to the West. Cleopatra was soon exercising increasing influence over Antony—who now acknowledged his paternity of Cleopatra's twins (and soon there was a third child, his son Ptolemy Philadelphus). The queen gained Lebanon and the Jordan valley for herself and eventually Syria, Armenia, and Cilicia—a vast domain—for her children. The Ptolemaic family now ruled almost the entire Near East, while Caesarion (now a teenager) joined his mother as coruler of Egypt (Ptolemy XV Caesar). Antony divorced Octavia in 32 and married Cleopatra in an Egyptian (or Macedonian) ceremony. This symbolized the final rupture with Octavian and led to the last Roman civil war of the first century. The decisive naval battle was fought in 31 at Actium, on the west coast of Greece, where Antony and Cleopatra were gathering forces for what must have appeared an invasion of Italy.

§15. Had Antony and Cleopatra been victorious at Actium, one can only surmise the scale of power that would have come into the hands of Cleopatra's children by Antony—and into the hands of her son by Caesar. The queen's complex but brilliant maneuvers had transformed the Ptolemaic state into the last and most dangerous challenger of Roman power in the Mediterranean; but the cost of failure was death: for Cleopatra, for Antony, and—since there was political room for only one “son of Caesar”—for Caesarion as well. Octavian the victor (soon to be Caesar Augustus) recognized the danger to Rome inherent in the wealth and potential power of Egypt, which Cleopatra's career had made overt. His solution was typically ruthless: he took personal control of Egypt, allowing himself to be treated as pharaoh by the Egyptians. This solution was maintained under succeeding Roman emperors.^a No powerful states were now left in the Mediterranean except Rome itself.

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O.13b On Titus Labienus, see Appendix A: Who's Who in Caesar, §27.

O.15a On the break between Antony and Octavian and the final civil war, see Syme 1939, chs. 19–21; Carter 1970. On the stele of 29, set up by Gaius

Cornelius Gallus, Octavian's personal governor of Egypt, proclaiming the end of the Ptolemaic dynasty and acknowledging Octavian as pharaoh, see Minas-Nerpel et al. 2009.

WEB ESSAY P

Late Republican Provincial Administration

Nathan Rosenstein

§1. *Provincia* in the late republic was not a geographically bounded territory but a task assigned to an official who had obtained it through election to public office. A praetor's *provincia* could be to act as judge in one of the law courts at Rome; an aedile's to supervise the public markets and streets and to take charge of some of the annual religious festivals. The *provinciae* that gained—and eventually became—Rome's dominions abroad, however, were the wars usually assigned to the consuls in the third and second centuries. These *provinciae* were geographic in nature only inasmuch as the enemies they fought were in specific places: the Samnites in central Italy or the kings of Macedon in Greece.

§2. Certain *provinciae* only began to acquire a more pronounced geographical character as Rome's conquests prompted it to bring some areas outside of Italy under the permanent control of a magistrate. The acquisition of Sicily after the defeat of Carthage in 241 and the subsequent seizure of Sardinia and Corsica in 238 led the Senate to increase the number of praetors elected annually from two to four in c. 228, the additional praetors' *provinciae* to be governance of these islands. Establishment of control over parts of Spain in the course of the Hannibalic war similarly brought about the creation of two new praetorships in 197 charged with the task of administering these new territories. These last cases well illustrate the absence of firm geographical boundaries to *provinciae* at this stage, for although one praetor's assignment was the western part of the peninsula and the other's the east, at times one or the other is found in the wrong part. Even as other areas fell under Roman sway in the years that followed and required the regular presence of a magistrate, the term *provincia* never lost the sense of a task or

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Readers who wish to pursue some of the issues discussed in this essay will find the following titles useful: Maggie 1950; Badian 1968, 1972; Drinkwater 1983; Lintott 1993; Richardson 1986, 2008; Brennan 2000.

P.2a So even as late as 60, the Senate could designate the suppression of banditry in the “forests and cattle tracks of Italy” as *provinciae* for the consuls of the following year in a transparent attempt to deprive Caesar of a proconsular province that would provide him with an opportunity for war, conquest, and glory.

assignment in those places rather than the place itself.^a The Romans at this point had not yet developed the concept of a territorial empire. What they possessed was an *imperium*, which in this sense meant their dominion or sway over other peoples, their power to make them bend to the Roman will by virtue of superior military might.

§3. The magistrate who embodied such might also possessed *imperium*. A magistrate's *imperium* was the power to issue command and to compel obedience, by force if necessary—even death. This power was embodied in the *fasces*,^a bundles of rods bound around an ax carried by the magistrate's servants called lictors, who used the former to flog an insubordinate subject and the latter to execute him. Such power was virtually untrammeled during the magistrate's tenure in his *provincia* and had been created not to manage conquered peoples but to enable a general to wage war. By the time of Caesar, however, few overseas *provinciae* required their holder of *imperium* to conduct military operations, although fighting sometimes took place. Caesar gained his first military laurels when he governed western Spain in 61–60, and his achievements even prompted the Senate to grant him a triumph; even peace-loving Cicero, as governor of Cilicia in 51, prided himself on his capture of a hostile tribe's mountain stronghold. Governors of thoroughly pacified regions possessed the same *imperium* that Caesar had in Gaul, which was all too often an invitation to abuse.

§4. In the late republic, the magistrates who governed overseas *provinciae* were former consuls or praetors who typically left Rome after their year in office invested with proconsular or propraetorian *imperium*, meaning that they possessed *imperium* “in the place of” a consul or praetor. Their administrative footprint was quite small. They did not preside over a cadre of permanent officials stationed in the province who managed the day-to-day governance. Instead, each promagistrate brought his own staff with him from Rome. Some were simple functionaries like his lictors, scribes, and slaves. Others were members of the political elite. The governor's *legati* generally were four or five older senators, men of some experience, who acted as his deputies. In Caesar's case these were his lieutenant commanders, men like Quintus Tullius Cicero and Titus Labienus.^a The position of others was less well defined. They belonged to his “group of friends” (*cohors amicorum*), a heterogeneous body of younger and older wellborn men who along with the *legati* formed the promagistrate's council (*consilium*), with whom he might deliberate or to whom he sometimes, as Caesar on occasion did, simply announced his plans.^b Many came out of friendship or to gain experience abroad, and especially in military matters—an indispensable preparation for future office and commands; nearly all, however, expected to profit financially, as the poet Catullus hoped to do and Caesar's *amici* certainly did.^c Every promagistrate also had a quaestor, an elected junior magistrate without *imperium*, who kept his financial records and could be employed as a deputy commander (as Marcus Antonius was).^d All in all, a governor brought with him no more than a few dozen helpers, enough certainly to conduct a major military campaign but far too few to keep track of what went on among tens of thousands of inhabitants across a vast territory.

§5. The real work of administration was done by the provincials themselves. Rome

P.3a For two illustrations of *fasces*, see Figure 11.106.

P.4a 3.1.1–6, 7.57.1–62. On Cicero, see Appendix A: Who's Who in Caesar, §15, on Labienus, §27.

P.4b For example, 1.40.1, 8.8.3.

P.4c For instance, Mamurra (Catullus 29); for the poet

P.4d himself, see Catullus 10, 28.

See, for example, 8.24, 8.38, 8.46–50. On the military personnel, see also Appendix D: The Roman Military, §10. On Marcus Antonius/Mark Antony, see Appendix A, §5.

never devised a detailed template for how a territory within its *imperium* ought to be managed. Instead the Romans whenever possible used what they found already in place. Many areas had well-developed institutions of government when Rome conquered them, like the kingdom of Syracuse, in eastern Sicily. The *lex Hieronica*, the regulations Hiero II (ruler of Syracuse c. 271–216) established for tax collection, were still in force in Cicero's day (104–43). Here and elsewhere in the empire, city governments within a province managed not only their own populations but also those in the surrounding countryside. The rules and regulations for lawsuits, tax collection, and the discharge of civic obligations that had existed before the Roman conquest generally remained in place, enforced for the most part by local town officials drawn from the city's political elite. In areas like Gaul, where urban life was much less well developed, existing structures of tribal governance, with similar people in charge, were put to the task of controlling the region. Thus the secret to Roman provincial administration was creating strong working relationships with local elites, who, in exchange for keeping things running smoothly in their parts of the *imperium*, obtained Roman support for their rule within their communities. Thus Caesar time and again intervened in the internal politics of various Gallic tribes to put his supporters in power and remove those chiefs who opposed him.^a

§6. For this reason, the governor's responsibilities could be limited to a few basic tasks: keeping the peace, defending the province, protecting Rome's friends and interests (and indeed Rome itself), hearing lawsuits, and overseeing tax collection. The first was fundamental. It supplied Caesar's justification for embarking on the wars that eventually subjugated Gaul,^a and at one point forced him to chase raiders out of Illyricum.^b Even the very unwarlike Cicero found himself preparing to defend Cilicia against the threat of a Parthian invasion during his tenure as governor there in 51–50. However, the second task in most cases occupied the bulk of a promagistrate's attention. Cicero was constantly on the move, holding court in various places in his province. Even Caesar whenever possible traveled back in the winter to his other provinces, northern Italy (Cisalpine Gaul) and Illyricum, to hear lawsuits,^c and at the end of his tenure he did so even in newly conquered Gaul, treating it as if it were already a formal province.^d This was one prerogative the Romans arrogated to themselves—not to impose Roman law upon their subjects, but because such lawsuits tended to involve powerful figures within a province. And since these men were essential to its administration, control of their contests with one another gave the governor and thus Rome a powerful tool for ensuring their compliance.

§7. Such cooperation in turn was essential for tax collection, which at the local level was generally done by local governments. Corporations of private businessmen, the *publicani*, bid for the right to collect these taxes from the local governments. In some cases, as in Sicily, the governor auctioned off the contracts to provincials, but for most of Asia Minor and the Near East, Romans bid for the contracts at Rome. The difference between what they bid and what they collected represented their profit, which encouraged abuses and often violence. Governors should have protected provincials against the depredations of the *publicani*. Some like Cicero did, but as aristocrats with political careers to worry about, many did not. Roman *publicani* belonged to the class of wealthy citizens whose votes weighed heavily in electoral assemblies, and they served as jurors on the criminal courts at Rome that had jurisdiction over the actions of provincial gover-

P.5a See, for instance, 5.25.1–4, 5.54.2, 7.32.1–33.3,
7.39.1–3.

P.6a 1.7.4, 1.10.2, 1.33.1–4.

P.6b 5.1.5–9.
P.6c 1.54.3, 5.1.5, 5.2.1, 6.44.3.

P.6d 8.4.2.

nors. Those who failed to play ball could find themselves tried, convicted, and exiled on their return to the capital.

§8. This was a serious threat because many governors themselves looked upon their tenures as an opportunity to extort from the natives as much money as possible. When running for election to the offices that opened the door to their promagistracies, senators often borrowed heavily to entertain the voters or to pay bribes, intending to repay the loans from their profits abroad. The absolute power the *imperium* conferred, along with his control over the local law courts, provided a governor with innumerable ways to extort money from the provincials. Grounds for a charge against him were rarely hard to find. Little reason therefore to alienate the *publicani* by taking the provincials' side when they were squeezed for more than they owed or forced to repay loans made at usurious rates of interest. Collusion with the *publicani* on the other hand could be financially rewarding as well as politically expedient.

§9. The really big money, however, came from those *provinciae* entailing command of great wars. The Senate traditionally designated the provinces for magistrates and pro-magistrates each year, but as the military challenges Rome faced grew increasingly formidable and the public at times became dissatisfied with the Senate's control over military operations, ambitious politicians saw an opening to use tribunes of the plebs and the plebeian assembly to pass bills to gain these assignments for themselves.^a Such occasions were rare, but that made competition over them all the more intense. Pompey gained his command against the pirates in 68 and then again against Mithridates in 67 in this way, and popular legislation in 55 gave him the province of Spain and Crassus that of Syria (and with it the opportunity to start a war against Parthia that ended in total disaster and his death).^b And a similar bill awarded Caesar his promagistracy in 59. Such *provinciae* could last for years and involve very large forces. The spoils of victory and, perhaps more important, the unchecked power a commander had over the fates of the natives—putting some in power and removing others; awarding, confirming, or taking away privileges and lands; making law; and establishing the subjects' relations with Rome—all meant opportunities to profit. Even more important was the glory and renown, and hence the political clout, that military laurels bestowed. Pompey's conquests had set a very high bar for glory and wealth; only a vast war would enable Caesar to match or surpass him. Hence, as the historian Sallust put it, “Caesar longed for a great command, an army, a new war where his *virtus* could shine.”^c

§10. Even after his tenure ended, a former governor still derived benefit from his province. His former subjects became clients, attached to their patron by favors he had done them during his governorship. They were obliged to respond in kind since ex-governors, as former consuls or praetors, ranked high in the Senate's hierarchy and so could exert or withhold influence on their clients' behalf. The larger his *clientela*, the greater a senator's influence and power. Hence a sizeable range of foreign *clientelae* boosted a senator's standing at Rome, both because of the social prestige it bestowed and especially through the material resources it offered to his political ambitions, as lavish entertainments and outright bribery became increasingly important in competition for offices and influence. Aid from the republic's provincial subjects became crucial once

P.9a On plebeian tribunes and assemblies, see Web Essay I: The Fall of the Republic, §§3–5.

P.9b On Crassus and Pompey, see Appendix A: Who's

Who in Caesar, §§18 and 36, respectively. Sallust, *Catinarian Conspiracy* 54.4.

civil war erupted in 49, as both Pompey and Caesar called upon their foreign *clientelae* to supply them with cash and soldiers.

§11. Exploitation of the provincial population was widespread and much resented by its victims, who would only gradually find relief when Augustus established a monarchy at Rome. Augustus ended free political competition among the elite and monopolized opportunities for major military commands. He thereby limited the financial incentives and imperatives that caused so much of the malfeasance and abuse that marred late republican provincial administration.

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WEB ESSAY Q

The Roman Army Camp

Duncan B. Campbell

§1. In the ancient world, armies on the march were accustomed to building fortified camps as temporary accommodation. There was an ancient tradition that the Romans had learned this from the Greeks, and specifically from King Pyrrhus of Epirus, who invaded Italy in the early third century B.C.E.^a The tradition persisted into the first century C.E., when Frontinus, author of a work on Rome's water supply and a collection of stratagems, wrote that "in ancient times, the Romans and other peoples were accustomed to set up camp with groups of cohorts here and there like huts, since it was only in cities that the ancients knew walls. Pyrrhus, king of the Epirotes, first established the custom of securing the entire army within the same rampart."^b

§2. Caesar never describes in any detail the camps used by his army. But it is fairly clear that a defended enclosure was marked out in which the soldiers' tents, erected row upon row, defined a regular grid of pathways. Soldiers could thus move easily around the camp, which was laid out in a logical fashion. Flavius Josephus, author of a history of the Jewish war and an eyewitness to Roman military operations of the 60s C.E., writes that "they also create four entrances, one facing each direction on the perimeter, convenient for draft animals to enter and wide enough for sorties in emergencies. They divide the inside of the camp carefully, and they place the tents of the officers in the middle, with the general's own in the very centre, like a temple." He observes that the whole enterprise was accomplished "quicker than thought, thanks to the great number and skill of the workers."^a

§3. Other writers confirm that the interior was highly organized. For example, the

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Q.1a Livy 35.14. Pyrrhus defeated the Romans twice but suffered such great losses that he could not sustain his attack; hence we speak of "Pyrrhic victories."

Q.1b Frontinus, *Stratagems* 4.1.14.

Q.2a Josephus, *Jewish War* 3.81–82, 84.

historian Livy records how Philip V of Macedon, in his first encounter with a Roman army in 200 B.C.E., came upon their encampment and “was said to be amazed at the overall appearance of the camp, with its various sections divided by the rows of tents and the lanes in between.” Polybius, author of a history of Rome’s rise to world power, was familiar with the Roman camp in his own day (around 150 B.C.E.); he was also struck by the image of order: “the whole camp forms a square, with streets and other constructions laid out to give the appearance of a town.”^a

§4. The camp’s internal organization was highly regulated. Polybius indicates that the centrally placed “commander’s tent” (*praetorium*) occupied a plot measuring two hundred feet square.^a The streets running in from the four entrances met at this point. Most importantly, this gave the commander an uninterrupted view up the street known as the “commander’s road” (*via praetoria*) to the main entrance of the camp, the “commander’s gate” (*porta praetoria*). To the left and right of the commander’s tent, along the main avenue of the camp (*via principalis*), lay the *forum*, a broad open space for assembly of the troops, and the *quaestorium*, a storage place for the quartermaster’s (quaestor’s) stores and for collecting any plunder.^b The superstitious Romans appear to have invested a certain amount of ritual significance in the commander’s tent. A source of the late first or second century C.E. entitled *On Fortifying a Camp*, attributed, perhaps falsely, to Hyginus, a specialist in land surveying, claims that altars were set up inside, while a facility for the taking of auspices (*auguratorium*) was located outside, at the edge of the main avenue, with a nearby tribunal “so that, having received the augury, the commander may ascend and announce the favourable omens to the army.”^c

§5. Josephus’ four entrances (§2), one on each side, were linked by the main thoroughfares through the camp. Besides the main avenue, running across the width of the camp and linking the side gates, the commander’s road ran from the front gate up to the commander’s tent, with a rearward extension (*via decumana*) running up to the rear gate (*porta decumana*). Caesar refers to this rear gate in his description of the Battle of the Sambre (57 B.C.E.).^a It is interesting to note how Caesar’s camp conforms to the recommendations of Hyginus, who says that “primarily they choose a site that rises gently from the plain to a height, in such a position that the rear gate is established at the highest point, so that all the regions in the camp lie beneath. The commander’s gate should always look towards the enemy.” Besides the four main roads and the myriad of lanes between the rows of tents, Hyginus emphasizes that a sixty-foot gap (the so-called *intervallum*) should be left, running around the inside perimeter of the camp, which was occupied by another roadway, known as “the cloaked way” (*via sagularis*).^b

§6. The defenses of the camp varied with the location and level of perceived threat. The late writer Vegetius (c. 400 C.E.), author of a handbook on military science, who drew his information from earlier sources, thought that, as a minimum, there should be a rampart of

Q.3a Livy 31.34; Polybius 6.31.10. Polybius 6.26–42 provides an extended description of the second-century B.C.E. Roman practice of camp building, including the system of guard duty, awards, and punishments; see the comments by Walbank 1957, 709–23, and the illustration in Connolly 1981, 136–37.

Q.4a Polybius 6.27.1–2.

Q.4b Ibid., 6.31.1. By the time of Hyginus (n. Q.4c), the function of the *forum* had been subsumed into the area of the *praetorium* and the *quaestorium* came to be relocated behind it.

Q.4c Hyginus, *On Fortifying a Camp* 11. For a text and French translation, see Lenoir 1979; for an English translation and discussion, Gilliver 1993a.

Q.5a 2.24 in *The Landmark Julius Caesar*. See further 11.69, 11.76, 11.96, 13.66.

Q.5b In sequence, Hyginus, *On Fortifying a Camp* 56, 14, 20.

Q.6a Vegetius 3.8. Alternatively, Vegetius’ “wooden thorns” (*tribuli lignei*) have been interpreted as giant caltrops (Gilliver 1993b). For a translation of Vegetius, see Milner 1996.

stacked turf blocks, with “palisade stakes, which is to say wooden thorns,” planted on top.^a Elsewhere he recommends a three-foot-high rampart, crowned by “stout wooden stakes, which the soldiers are accustomed to carrying.”^b If the ground did not permit the extraction of turf blocks, an “improvised” ditch could be dug, five feet wide by three feet deep; the earthen material produced could then be piled up to form a rampart running along behind the ditch. By comparison, the camp built by Caesar’s legate, Quintus Titurius Sabinus, at the beginning of the Belgic campaign, was strongly fortified “with a twelve-foot-high rampart and an eighteen-foot ditch.”^c

§7. Hyginus is in broad agreement with Vegetius. He recommends that a ditch be provided “for the sake of discipline,” at least five feet wide and three feet deep.^a Other sources make it clear that many commanders dispensed with defenses in friendly territory; but “in less trustworthy places” it was advisable to build a rampart of turf or stones (either rocks or rubble), eight feet thick and six feet high. On ground where turf could not be extracted or a ditch properly excavated for soil, or where a stable enough rampart could not be constructed, Hyginus recommends resorting to the use of “little stags (*cervoli*), which are trunks with their branches.”^b Indeed, Polybius claims that every Roman soldier carried a bundle of three or four stakes, each “with two or three prongs, or four at the most.” The prongs were intended to bind the stakes together, so that the resulting palisade was difficult to break through.^c

§8. As temporary works normally had no gate structures, Hyginus recommends that a ditch should be dug sixty feet outside the entrance, covering the full width of the gap.^a This device, which he calls a *titulus*, was intended to prevent a direct charge on the gate by forcing any incomers to divert their path around it.^b And where the camp had a rampart, the *titulus* also could have one. As an alternative, Hyginus suggests the *clavicula*, an extension of the rampart that curves outwards in a quarter-circle, and is matched by a similar device on the interior, “so that those entering will always be exposed and those approaching in a straight line are kept out.”^c And, of course, guards were posted at the entrances at all times.^d

§9. In friendly territory, camps could clearly be very lightly defended, particularly when only the briefest occupation was envisaged. When danger threatened, the army sorted out to meet the enemy in the field.^a By contrast, Vegetius includes recommendations for a *castra stativa*, or “standing camp, fortified with greater care and effort, in summer or winter, when the enemy is nearby.”^b A ditch of greater proportions was dug (Vegetius suggests widths of nine, eleven, thirteen, or even seventeen feet), in order to produce material for a rampart, which was stabilized with a timber revetment at front and back. In 51, when Caesar encamped near an enemy force of the Bellovaci, he ordered the construction of a twelve-foot rampart with a wicker parapet. But, unusually, “a double ditch was dug, fifteen feet wide, with steep sides; numerous towers were erected, three storeys in height . . . , [and] at the gates, he placed doorways and higher towers.”^c In fact, in the face of the enemy, defenses could be built up in an ad hoc manner. For example, in 54, when Caesar sent a legion to winter among the Nervii, its commander, Quintus Tullius

Q.6b Vegetius 1.24.

derson and Keppie 1987.

Q.6c 2.5.

Q.8c Hyginus, *On Fortifying a Camp* 55.

Q.7a Hyginus, *On Fortifying a Camp* 49.

Q.8d Caesar mentions these guards at 4.32, 6.37, 11.94.

Q.7b *Ibid.*, 50–51.

Q.9a For example, 5.22.

Q.7c Polybius 18.18.7–8, 12–16; see also Livy 33.5.

Q.9b Vegetius 3.8.

Q.8a Hyginus, *On Fortifying a Camp* 49.

Q.9c 8.9.

Q.8b The etymology of the word is obscure: see Hen-

Cicero, began to construct this type of standing camp, in which tents were replaced by thatched huts.^d When the camp was attacked, Cicero ordered the strengthening of the defenses: “towers were erected with astonishing speed; . . . the towers were boarded in, and battlements and parapets of wickerwork were attached”; the gateways were no doubt closed with doors or simply barricaded.^e We hear of such a barricade—a spiked beam called a hedgehog (*ericius*)—in 48, when Pompey’s men occupied and refurbished a camp that Caesar’s men had abandoned near Dyrrachium.^f

§10. Security was obviously the main factor. Vegetius points out that “if a camp is properly built, the soldiers spend days and nights safely behind the rampart, even if the enemy is besieging them.”^a But a well-organized camp could also be psychologically beneficial in providing familiar surroundings amid the uncertainties of a military campaign. Caesar, too, placed a high value on fortifying a camp, forbidding his officers to leave the task incomplete.^b

§11. Finally, it was important to select the best possible location. Both Vegetius and Hyginus emphasize the benefits of a good site near water, fodder, and firewood. In addition, Vegetius warns that “soldiers should remain neither in pestilential regions close to unhealthy marshes, nor in arid plains or hills without the shade of trees, and not without tents in summer.”^a Hyginus, on the other hand, reminds us that “a hill over which the enemy could arrive or view what is going on in the camp should not dominate the camp; nor should a forest that provides concealment lie nearby, nor gullies or valleys by which the enemy may creep up on the camp unseen.”^b Although the task could be delegated to scouts and centurions,^c one of the “many great and extraordinary virtues” that the orator Cicero saw in Caesar was his expertise in selecting a suitable place to camp.^d Nevertheless, even Caesar could err. At the close of his third season in Gaul, when he hoped to overwhelm the Morini and Menapii swiftly, he encamped too near a wood, from which the enemy rushed out to disrupt his camp building.^e And while Sabinus’ camp among the Venelli proved impregnable because it was “suitably sited in all respects,” Galba’s camp at Octodurus was overlooked by a ring of hills, giving the enemy an advantage.^f

§12. Of the dozen or so Roman marching camps identified in France and Spain, none can definitely be linked with Caesar.^a However, a good argument can be made for the camp at Mauchamp, near Berry-au-Bac in the Aisne department of Picardy, whose defenses were excavated in 1861–62 by Colonel Eugène Stoffel, on behalf of Napoléon III. He found a squarish 104-acre enclosure with rounded corners, surrounded by a rampart and single ditch, seven feet deep. Unusually, there were five gateways, one in the middle of the northwest, northeast, and southeast sides, and two on the southwest side, each defended by an internal *clavicula* (§8). The situation of the camp has led to its identification as Caesar’s camp on the Axona (modern Aisne) River.^b

§13. The clear association of the camps at Gergovie (ancient Gergovia) and Alise-

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|-------|---|-------|---|
| Q.9d | 5.39, 5.43; compare 8.5, where Caesar’s troops winter in “tents covered over with hastily piled thatch,” and the “straw huts” of 14.16. | Q.11e | 3.26. |
| Q.9e | Towers: 5.40; barricaded gates: 5.50, 7.41. | Q.11f | Sabinus: 3.17 (compare 3.19); Galba: 3.2–4. |
| Q.9f | 11.67–69. | Q.12a | In France, Reddé 1996, 37–40, lists camps at Mauchamp, Liercourt-Eronnelle, Folleville, and La Chaussée-Tirancourt. Rectilinear enclosures have also been identified at Beauregard (Estissac) and Bréviaire (Neuville-sur-Vannes), both undated but probably Roman. In Spain, Morillo 1991 lists no camps that are even tentatively associated with Caesar. |
| Q.10a | Vegetius 1.21. | Q.12b | 2.5; Reddé 1996, 35–36. |
| Q.10b | 2.20. | | |
| Q.11a | Vegetius 3.2; compare 1.22. | | |
| Q.11b | Hyginus, <i>On Fortifying a Camp</i> 57. | | |
| Q.11c | As at 2.17. | | |
| Q.11d | Cicero, <i>In Defense of Rabirius Postumus</i> 42. | | |

Sainte-Reine (ancient Alesia) with Caesarian siege works makes their provenance virtually certain.^a At the latter site, Colonel Stoffel identified camps on the surrounding hills, one of which in particular, Camp C on the Mount de Bussy, has been further elucidated by more recent aerial photography and excavation.^b A rampart and a ditch, the latter fourteen feet wide and cut to the bedrock with depths of up to three feet, enclosed an area of almost twenty acres; the irregular oval shape was dictated by the hilltop location. Interestingly, of the two gates, the north gate, twenty feet wide, employs both of Hyginus' defensive structures, with a *titulus* (§8) in the form of a double ditch, one hundred feet long, set twenty-eight feet outside the entrance, and an internal *clavicula*.

§14. Although it is clear that Rome's enemies were also accustomed to entrenching camps (for example, Caesar repeatedly refers to the Helvetii's camp),^a the difference was in the level of sophistication. The reaction of Philip V to the sight of a Roman camp (§3) suggests that it was the overall orderliness that impressed the onlooker. And although Roman generals could err on occasion (§11), Roman camps were generally sited with greater care and attention. The Gauls, by contrast, were largely oblivious to the advantage of selecting favorable ground.^b But the main difference perhaps lay in the strength of the defenses. In 56, when the Aquitanian Gauls enlisted the aid of Calabrian Spaniards who had served with the Roman army, they were able to fortify a camp "in the tradition of the Roman people." But even then, Publius Licinius Crassus' army was able to find and exploit a weak spot in the defenses,^c whereas throughout the entire Gallic war no Roman camp was ever taken.^d

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Q.13a See Web Essay S: Military Engineering and Sieges, for Caesar's siege works.
Q.13b Reddé 1996, 118–22. See further Web Essay QQ: The Siege of Alesia.
Q.14a 1.15, 1.21–22.

Q.14b 8.36.
Q.14c 3.23, 3.25–26.
Q.14d For a detailed examination of Roman camps in the Spanish campaigns of the late second century B.C.E., see Dobson 2008.

WEB ESSAY R

The Rules of War

Josh Levithan

§1. To understand the Roman way of war, three modern assumptions need to be abandoned at the outset. The first is that peace is the default setting for international relations and war an aberration.^a For hundreds of years, the annual arrival of warm, dry weather had seen Roman magistrates raise armies and march out to war, even if there was little or no threat to Rome. Excuses for hostilities were not hard to find, and there were very few years when no legions fought. War and peace were not two different ways of life but simply two modes of operation within a single warlike culture. As Rome's war habit won it an empire, its aristocrats ruled provinces as military governors, with no clear distinction between military and civil authority.

§2. The second assumption to be discarded is that state-sanctioned violence is motivated by lofty principles and not personal ambition or greed. Though Roman military leaders paid lip service to the idea that war should be morally justifiable, the gap between words and actions was much larger than it is today, and there was almost no check on a general's dealings in his province. Julius Caesar was governor of Gaul and the supreme military commander there at the same time, and he made it his business to profit from his province. All plunder, including salable captives, belonged to him, and he took every opportunity to enlarge the war and win not only renown but also the wealth without which no Roman could turn renown into real political power.^a His pragmatism would have been shared by his soldiers, since commanders kept their troops loyal by liberally sharing out the booty.

§3. The third modern assumption is that war's violence should be visited upon armed forces, but never on civilians. The concept of "civilian" is an anachronism here: all men

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R.1a See Eckstein 2006. For comparable societies, see Howard et. al. 1994 and France 2008.

R.2a See Web Essay T: The Economics of War.

of military age could be treated as combatants, and when a war grew bitter, women and children were directly targeted. Caesar writes matter-of-factly about brutal punishments meted out to entire nations when they did not quickly submit to his rule. But this is not to say that there were no rules. Traditionally, Roman war-making had been limited by the principle of nonaggression, which was ritualized by a group of priests—the *fetiales*—responsible for formally declaring war. Technically, envoys, truces, and the oaths that sealed treaties were sacred.^a But as the Roman empire grew, the rules became mere tools, to be manipulated rather than to enforce any self-control. Caesar's handling of the rules of conduct was casual and ruthlessly practical. His depredations differed from his contemporaries' only in degree, and he was truly unique only in having left a written account in which many of his calculations can be read or inferred.

§4. Caesar emphasizes his adherence to convention in three areas—the opening of new hostilities, the rights of envoys, and the rules of truce and parley. But this emphasis is deceptive: Caesar frequently turns diplomatic encounters into ploys that benefit his own operational goals, which were generally aggressive. While envoys were not really ambassadors (there were no permanent or professional diplomats), they were persons protected by convention and religion who should have been immune from violence or other coercion. But Caesar plays fast and loose with the term “envoy”: he calls the men he sends into the territory of the Veneti “sacred envoys” even though they are there only to demand “contributions” of grain from a people who seem to have had no such arrangement with Rome. Caesar could probably have predicted the angry Gallic response to this action, and the subsequent mistreatment of these “envoys” becomes the excuse he needs to invade and conquer a powerful and troublesome ethnic group.^a Conversely, when Caesar has already invaded new territory on a questionable pretext, he sends “messengers” to make abrupt demands,^b rather than “envoys” to whom there is a traditional right to reply. It appears that when he could not hope to exploit the show of a diplomatic process, he preferred to skip it.

§5. When the potential for hostility was uncertain, envoys might arrange a formal parley, in which each side agreed to certain conditions for the meeting, which usually included the absence of weapons and the affirmation of any agreements with oaths. If there was insufficient mutual trust for such a meeting, as between Caesar and Ariovistus at the beginning of the Gallic war,^a envoys might attempt negotiations at a distance—or at least buy time for military movement. Envoys often appear when a siege is in the offing,^b a narrow window of time when last-ditch negotiations might spare one side time and effort and the other potential annihilation. Caesar uses this traffic in envoys for propagandistic purposes, as when the negotiations with the garrison of Corfinium showcase his argument that he is blamelessly protecting his own interests and the freedom of all rather than making a bid for ultimate power at Rome.^c More generally, the continual references to envoys in the negotiations with Pompey or with erstwhile Roman allies^d help convey the sense that Caesar was acting properly and that many communities were eager to take his side.^e

§6. There is an extensive cat-and-mouse game involving envoys and parleys near the

R.3a See Watson 1993.

R.4a 3.9, 3.16.

R.4b 4.16, 6.34.

R.5a 1.34–37.

R.5b See, for example, 9.35, 11.12, 11.97, 14.2–3.

R.5c See also 14.19, where Caesar is made to refer to his clemency in granting the request of a group of envoys.

R.5d See, for example, 9.32–33, 11.90, 12.69–70.

R.5e 11.34, 11.56, 13.33, 13.36, 13.74, 14.36.

beginning of Book 4, when the Usipetes and Tencteri cross the Rhine and Caesar marches to meet them, plainly looking to fight. To attain this end, he refuses to meet their envoys and makes impossible demands, until at last skirmishing breaks out during another attempt by the Germans to parley with the oncoming Romans. Caesar eventually introduces the technical term for “truce”—used in the *Gallic War* only in this incident^a—to describe retroactively the agreement that these Germans are alleged to have broken,^b and, crying treachery, completes his conquest of the two tribes without any further nod to the rules. When the leaders of the tribe come to him after the skirmish he takes them prisoners, although they clearly should have been considered envoys.^c A much later parley arranged by Roman officers as a ruse to attempt the assassination of the chieftain of the Atrebates, Commius, saw swords quickly drawn on *both* sides.^d

§7. Even when it was not being used to intensify conflict, Roman diplomacy was utterly unlike modern diplomacy in that it made no formal presumption of equality. Such a nicety would have baffled the ancients, who thought first in terms of power, not fairness. The more powerful group making contact with another group expected to be immediately acknowledged as dominant and demanded hostages as proof of this fact. Caesar mentions taking hostages from no fewer than thirty-seven Gallic tribes.^a “Hostages” could denote foreign potentates’ children who were being educated at Rome, something like exchange students—a traditional arrangement. But other roles came to predominate: political prisoner, human security deposit, hostage in the fraught and violent modern sense, or some combination thereof. They were never “prisoners of war,” a term that implies, to our ears, certain rights based on international agreements. But there were no such agreements or laws in the Roman world, and hostages, however well treated they might be in some circumstances, were subject to the whims of their captors.^b They could be tortured, mutilated, or killed out of hand in order to coerce or punish the people whose good behavior they were intended to guarantee.

§8. As the wars in Gaul dragged on, Caesar clearly overused and abused the institution of hostages, and several revolts were motivated by the very fact that hostages had been taken.^a In one instance, it appears that many or all of a village’s children had been rounded up merely to compel the parents to allow a Roman legion to quarter there for the winter.^b

§9. Increasingly, Caesar designated large groups of leading men as hostages, holding them more to prevent their becoming leaders of a revolt than to deter the remaining tribesmen. This seems to have hardened their resistance to Roman hegemony, whereas holding (and Romanizing) some of their children under humane conditions would not have. Moreover, Caesar’s sketchy logistics and the relatively small number of dependably

R.6a The only other uses of the term by Caesar himself—the rather slighting references to “some sort of truce,” negotiated, and broken, at Massilia, in Caesar’s absence (10.13, 10.15)—also hint that Caesar is less interested in making midconflict truces than in winning wars and dictating post-conflict settlements.

R.6b 4.12, 4.13.

R.6c Cato the Younger was said to have called for Caesar to be handed over to these tribes in expiation of his sin against the laws of war (Plutarch, *Caesar* 22). But Cato knew he would not be heeded: Rome—even more, perhaps, than modern societies with explicitly codified laws of war—would never have seriously considered prosecuting a

powerful and popular politician for illegal acts committed against a feared external enemy.

R.6d 8.23. There is also a confusing report of fighting breaking out during or after an exchange of envoys at 14.18.

R.7a Moscovitch 1979, 122.

R.7b When the Pompeian commander Otacilius Crassus treacherously kills Caesarian soldiers who had surrendered to him after he swore not to harm them, his conduct is described as “cruel,” but it is criminal only in the sense that he has violated his oath (11.28).

R.8a See, for example, 3.2, 3.3.7, 3.5.4.

R.8b 3.2.

loyal troops allowed the hostage system to collapse during the great revolt. When the Aedui defected, they held many of Caesar's hostages from other Gallic tribes and could thus swing the loyalty of many tribes against Rome.^a

§10. But how did the rules of war influence Caesar's actual operations? It might help to see the conventions as an unfolding narrative, a developing sequence of expectations for the course of a "normal" campaign against a foreign enemy.

§11. War began with an invasion. The invaders provoked the locals to march out to battle by pillaging and burning fields, farms, and unfortified settlements. Shorthand descriptions of Roman standard operating procedure occur in several passages,^a and it is clear that the Gallic and German tribes operated in much the same way.^b Pillaging went hand in hand with foraging. Roman armies carried some provisions with them, but they expected to live off the land to a large degree, feeding their own men and beasts while depriving the enemy of food and fodder.^c Depending on forage increased mobility but also posed risks wherever local forces might concentrate quickly against Roman foraging parties. While all this was going on, envoys might be sent to and fro, hoping for some sort of accommodation between Rome and the shifting alliances of Celtic and Germanic tribes.

§12. If diplomatic maneuvering often failed to prevent a battle, it may be because this was not the point. "Peace" was merely an enforceable status quo with which the more powerful partner was temporarily content. Battle represented the belief of one group that the balance of power needed an adjustment, as well as the willingness of the other group to meet that challenge. Two armies made their way to a suitable open area and engaged. Although there was usually a good deal of jockeying for position and topographical advantage, both sides essentially chose to fight, which generally meant that one, at least, had overestimated its chances.

§13. Battles were normally brief, intense clashes that left one side relatively unscathed and the other fleeing in disorder, and once an army lost cohesion it was easily dispersed and could not readily continue the campaign. During such a rout, wholesale slaughter of the defeated was permissible and usually encouraged, since succumbing to the lure of plunder and stopping to strip the dead or capture salable slaves might allow more fighters to escape.

§14. At such a point, surrender became a wise option. "Submission" might be a better term, since our idea of surrender implies an attempt at achieving a lasting peace, and there is no convincing depiction of this in Caesar's *Gallia War*. Putting down new tribes only marked stages of the augmentation of Roman power. The Gauls, for their part, considered surrender terms to be temporary and strategic rather than sacrosanct: groups of defeated Gauls might march furtively away after a formal surrender or break out of a city once it had been turned over.^a During the civil war, Caesar generally allowed defeated Romans to surrender, and either absorbed them into his victorious army or sent them home,^b but this was exceptional; the opposing party followed the exactly opposite principle, executing prisoners of war mercilessly,^c as Sulla had done in the civil war of the late 80s.^d

R.9a 7.63.

R.11a 3.28, 4.38, 6.3, 6.6, 6.43.

R.11b See, for example, 8.3.

R.11c See Web Essay V: Military Logistics.

R.14a As at 1.27, 3.22, respectively.

R.14b As at 9.23.5, 9.85.5, 9.86–87.

R.14c 10.44.2, 11.28.4, 11.71.4. For a discussion of the

divergent strategies of the two sides, see Web
Essay JJ: The *Civil War* as a Work of Propa-
ganda, §14.

R.14d Plutarch, *Sulla* 30.

§15. The two basic conditions of surrender were the handing over of arms and the giving up of large numbers of hostages.^a In principle, those who submitted surrendered themselves into the complete control of the conqueror.^b The terms decided upon by the conqueror could be lenient—political submission and the payment of indemnities, with liberty for all but the hostages—or they could be very harsh indeed, especially if a drastic example needed to be set. A major criterion for Caesar was whether the tribe had previously either surrendered to Rome or concluded an alliance, but he is strikingly inconsistent when it comes to “rebellion,” sometimes playing up “treacherous” behavior and sometimes smoothing it over.^c In all likelihood, he was knowingly manipulating the distinction between Roman expectations (that a first war against Rome was only sporting, but that fighting again after surrender was criminal) and the more casual Gallo-German way of fighting, making truces, and fighting again. When this fluidity suits him (usually because he has overreached and needs to secure his retreat or march to another hot spot), he takes advantage of it;^d when it does not, he soberly calls for the defense of international law.^e

§16. Caesar was not above refusing to accept a preemptive offer of surrender, preferring to wait until he could march against the town to threaten it directly and then extort harsher terms, such as large numbers of hostages.^a When six thousand Gauls fled a surrender arranged only indirectly, by their allies, Caesar ordered *his* allies to apprehend them and then, treating them as outlaws, to put them to death.^b In the wake of the great revolt, Caesar allowed gruesome punishments to stand in contrast to his much-touted reputation for clemency, presiding over the lynching of a leader of the revolt and cutting off the hands of the defenders of Uxellodunum.^c There is no apology for this action: such horror was within the rules that applied in the wake of a “revolt” and a siege.

§17. While many campaigns found their climax in battle, it was the siege, not battle, that revealed the extreme brutality lurking beneath the rules of war. The unrestrained violence of the siege represented the failure of the traditional rules to force the issue through a quick decision. In general, if a group continued to resist even after losing a battle, the invaders then attacked their principal settlements, and the resulting siege warfare took on a punitive character. After all, to refuse to acknowledge the “fair” decision of battle was stubborn, even irrational, therefore easy terms of surrender were taken off the table. And whereas “proper” warfare in the open field was contested between men of military age, in a siege there was no protection for noncombatants of any sort; old men, women, and children were made to pay for the failures or intransigence of their

R.15a See, for example, 1.28, 2.13, 3.22, 6.3. In other passages, the surrender of arms is not mentioned but should probably be assumed. In the civil war, no hostages were taken from Roman citizens but the surrender of arms was crucial: 9.84, 11.98.

R.15b See the summary of Roman surrender terms (*deditio*) in Polybius 36.4; Livy 1.38.

R.15c Good examples of the former include the presentation of the former Roman ally Ariovistus as an archetypically cruel barbarian (1.31–33) or the emphasis on the criminal duplicity of Ambiorix in 5.26–29, 5.37, which is offered as a specious excuse for his disastrous annihilation of Sabinus’ legion. An interesting example of Caesar’s variable interpretation of Gallic inclination toward rebellion is his handling of the chief of the Atrebates, Commius, who had been a valued ally

(4.21, 4.35, 5.22) until he joined the great rebellion. Caesar appears to forgive him his revolt—attributing it to noble ideals and tribal loyalty rather than the usual cruel perfidy—but he may also have endorsed an undeniably underhanded assassination attempt (during a formal parley) and then, perhaps because of that treachery, approved the special concessions afforded him at his next surrender (7.75–76; the details of the assassination plot [at 8.23] and the surrender terms [at 8.48] are reported by Hirtius rather than Caesar himself).

R.15d 7.12.

R.15e 3.16.

R.16a For example, 2.14–15.

R.16b 1.28.

R.16c 8.38 and 8.44, respectively.

leadership. The level of violence was calibrated against the “unfair” persistence of the defenders, and each successive stage of the siege meant greater destruction.^a Such escalating violence involved practical calculation, too: far more time, blood, and treasure must be spent assaulting fortifications than fighting a battle, and terrorizing the defenders into a quick capitulation would speed the campaign. The one explicit “rule” of siege warfare stated that after the battering ram touched the wall, the lives of all within were forfeited.^b When Avaricum fell, the Roman assault troops—having endured weeks of heavy labor on the assault works, in the rain and under fire—went on a rampage. Caesar tells us that they killed nearly forty thousand inhabitants—men of military age, old men, women, and children alike—while a mere eight hundred escaped.^c

§18. Even insofar as “rules” could work to limit violence, they recognized no practical right to peace or independence, only the mechanisms of force. Nor were the “laws” necessarily respected: there was in the end no power greater than Rome that might enforce them. Caesar cannot conceal—or does not choose to conceal—the inconsistencies in his application of the “rules” of war, or, rather, his consistent subordination of principle to the exigencies of the campaign, the interest of the state, and his own ambition.

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R.17a Polybius, a Greek who spent a long time as hostage in Rome in the first half of the second century B.C.E., reflects both Greek and earlier Roman views on the rules of war, with few significant differences from Caesar’s time, although he is concerned about the violence perpetrated against temples and other wanton destruction after conquest (for example, 5.9–11).

R.17b 2.32; see also Cicero, *Concerning Duties* 1.35. The medieval rules of warfare were similar, both generally in terms of being loose but broadly understood conventions and specifically in terms of linking the treatment of captives to the breaching of the city walls; see France 1994.

R.17c 7.28.

WEB ESSAY S

Military Engineering and Sieges

Duncan B. Campbell

§1. On several occasions during the Gallic war and the ensuing civil war, Caesar engaged in siege warfare. In this he was not unique. From earliest times, conquering armies consolidated their battlefield successes by capturing the strongholds of their enemies. Broadly speaking, the Romans knew two methods of capturing a fortified position. The first, and most common, was the “assault” (*oppugnatio*). Such a strategy normally involved an attempt to scale the enemy wall or to force open a gate. More robust defenses called for the application of siege machinery, of which Roman engineers knew several types (§7). The second method of capturing a fortified position was the “blockade” (*obsidio*), which involved the complete isolation of the enemy and the interception of supplies in order to induce submission. Roman commanders resorted to this strategy less often. On the one hand, a favorable outcome was guaranteed, provided the siege was prosecuted methodically and maintained long enough to starve the besieged. But on the other hand, the besieger also had to deal with a series of problems concerning supply, hygiene, and discipline that beset any army sitting idly in the same spot for any length of time. Out of seventeen siege operations conducted by Caesar himself, only four can be categorized as pure blockades.^a Quite commonly, though, in preparing for a city to be taken by assault, Caesar also built blockading walls to cut off the enemy from supplies and outside support.^b

§2. Caesar’s contemporaries would have been familiar with both methods of capture

NOTE: All dates are B.C.E. (Before the Common Era) unless otherwise indicated. The dates given in the Web essays are those of the traditional Roman civil calendar up to January 45, when the Julian calendar was instated. For more on the Roman system of time-counting, see Appendix C: Roman Calendars, Dates, and Time. For all Web essays, go to landmarkcaesar.com. Source references without indication of title or author name are to the texts in *The Landmark Julius Caesar*. Modern works are listed fully in the Bibliography. All Web essays are copyright © 2017 by Robert B. Strassler and Kurt A. Raflaub. They may be downloaded and printed for noncommercial use only. Any other use requires written permission of the copyright holders.

S.1a Blockades: Alesia (7.69–74, 78–89), Uxellodunum

(8.33–37, 40–43), Dyrrachium (11.41–73), and Thapsus (13.79–80). Assaults: Noviodunum (2.12–13), the unnamed town of the Atuatuci (2.30–33), the coastal towns of the Veneti (3.12), the unnamed town of the Sotiates (3.21–22), a British stronghold (5.9), the stronghold of Cassivellaunus (5.21), Vellaunodunum (7.11), Cenabum (7.11), Avaricum (7.17, 7.22–28), Gergovia (7.36, 7.41, 7.44–51), Corfinium (9.16–23), Gomphi (11.80), Ategua (14.6–19). In addition, Vitruvius describes Caesar’s assault on a town named Larignum (*On Architecture* 2.9.15), and the decision to employ an assaulting strategy at Massilia may safely be attributed to Caesar (9.36). Interestingly, Frontinus classified Ategua as a blockade (*Strategems* 3.14.1).

S.1b For example, at Corfinium (9.18). See §4.

from their employment by the previous generation of army commanders, in particular the dictator Sulla. Sulla's sieges of Athens and Piraeus in 87–86 provide ideal illustrations. At Piraeus, having failed to capture the sixty-foot walls by escalade, he unleashed a full-scale assault involving battering rams and siege towers, which required the construction of an embankment.^a Simultaneously, Sulla prosecuted a blockade at Athens by dotting forts all around the city and encircling the place with a ditch.^b Both towns were captured, though the starving Athenians were in any event on the point of surrender.

§3. The Roman besieger's first precaution was always to establish a base camp, similar to the standard marching camp.^a However, when a blockade was deemed necessary, a pair of camps was usually established, permitting observation of the besieged from opposite sides, often supplemented by intermediate garrison posts designated as "forts." Caesar adopted this scheme at Corfinium.^b

§4. Roman army commanders occasionally threw a line of pickets or a cordon of troops around a besieged town. Sometimes this cordon was replaced by an encircling barrier to which modern scholars have applied the term "circumvallation." The late first-/early-second-century C.E. biographer Plutarch observed that building such a barrier had a twofold purpose: "to keep the soldiers busy, and to deprive the enemy of supplies."^a The second-century B.C.E. historian Polybius certainly thought it of paramount importance never to allow an army to remain inactive for long, while Frontinus, a successful general and author of a collection of stratagems around 100 C.E., claims that the tiring labor of building siege works at Piraeus made Sulla's men more eager for battle.^b Indeed, Sulla foreshadowed Caesar in making imaginative use of his army's entrenching skills; for example, he employed the tactic of circumvallation at Athens (§2) and Praeneste (82 B.C.E.).^c

§5. Roman circumvallations took various forms, but the most common was the ditch and palisade. Vegetius (c. 400 C.E., author of handbooks on military science and veterinary medicine) describes how "the besiegers make a ditch beyond the range of missiles and furnish it not only with a rampart and a palisade, but also with turrets, so that they can withstand sorties from the town."^a It is important to note that the use of a circumvallation could accompany either an assaulting or a blockading strategy.

§6. Caesar built a circumvallation on eight occasions.^a For example, in 57, the stronghold of the Atuatuci was "surrounded by a palisade fifteen thousand feet [almost three miles] in circumference, with closely-spaced forts."^b Similarly, in 52, prior to his attack on Vellaunodunum, Caesar "surrounded it with a palisade in two days."^c Most famously of all, the hilltop town of Alesia was surrounded by an elaborate system of fortifications comprising an eleven-mile inward-facing ring and a fourteen-mile outward-facing ring.^d

§7. Roman commanders often utilized siege machinery to assault an enemy town. Vegetius lists various machines, including the shelter (*vinea*, or "vineyard"), wheeled shed (*testudo*, or "tortoise"), gallery (*musculus*, or "little mouse"),^a and siege tower (*turris ambulatoria*, or "mobile tower"). Each was designed for a particular purpose, and because they were all used in close proximity to the enemy wall, robust construction was very important. Vegetius explains that "the wheeled shed is made out of timbers and boards, and

S.2a Appian, *Mithridatic Wars* 30–37, 40.

S.2b Ibid., 35, 38.

S.3a See Web Essay Q: The Roman Army Camp.

S.3b 9.16, 9.18. See Web Essay QQ: The Siege of Alesia for a more elaborate version at Alesia.

S.4a Plutarch, *Crassus* 10.4.

S.4b Polybius 11.25.7; Frontinus, *Stratagems* 1.11.20.

S.4c Appian, *Civil Wars* 1.88.

S.5a Vegetius 4.28.

S.6a A circumvallation was used at the unnamed town of the Atuatuci, and at Vellaunodunum, Alesia, Uxellodunum, Corfinium, Dyrrachium, Thapsus, and Ategua.

S.6b 2.30. See n. 2.30c for doubts about this distance.

S.6c 7.11.

S.6d See Web Essay QQ.

covered with hides or goat-hair cloth or quilted rags, so that it is not destroyed by fire.” It was intended to protect a battering ram (*aries*), and took the name “tortoise” from its similarity to the animal, “because, just as the latter draws back and thrusts out its head, so the machine withdraws its beam and thrusts it forward, in order to strike more powerfully.”^b

§8. The legionnaires engaged in demolishing the town wall at Massilia were protected by a robustly built gallery (“little mouse”).^a It was four feet wide, five feet tall, and sixty feet long, and its pitched roof, built from two-foot-thick timbers, was tiled, sealed with clay, covered with hides, and enveloped in quilting.^b This was clearly a version of the machine usually known as the “digging tortoise” that was protected by a similar combination of measures.^c

§9. Heavy wheeled machinery required a smooth runway leading up to the wall of the besieged town. Instead of simply clearing the ground, Roman armies often piled up earth and rubble into an embankment, which was driven forward to create a raised roadway. Although a gentle gradient and a modest height were preferred, the terrain dictated the structure’s design. At Avaricum, for example, Caesar’s embankment reached eighty feet in height in order to create a level runway by filling the deep gully that protected the town.^a A similarly-sized embankment at Massilia was no doubt occasioned by the same ground conditions.^b By contrast, when Caesar attacked the stronghold of the Atuatuci, his embankment seems to have been intended to reach the wall top, while creating a runway for the advance of his siege tower.^c

§10. Building an embankment soon brought the working legionnaires within range of enemy weapons and other objects thrown from the walls. For safety, they worked under the protection of the flat-roofed shelters called vineyards from their purported resemblance to rows of trellised vines. According to Vegetius, “the device is assembled out of lightweight timbers . . . ; its roof is strengthened with double boards and wicker-work; and the sides are also fenced in with woven screens, so that rocks and missiles cannot crash through. Moreover, the outside is covered with raw and fresh hides or quilting, to prevent destruction by fire arrows.” He further explains that “when several have been made, they are joined together in a line,” creating the illusion of a long corridor snaking back along the embankment.^a Caesar mentions these shelters on several occasions, almost always in connection with the construction of an embankment.^b And when he describes the Gauls besieged in Avaricum attempting to delay his “open-air tunnels” and prevent them reaching the town wall,^c he is probably referring to a series of shelters lined up in the way Vegetius describes.^d

§11. Even while an embankment was under construction, siege towers could be deployed on it and gradually maneuvered toward the town walls, as happened on the

S.7a Unlike the improvised “tortoise” formed with shields held above their heads by the soldiers (see Figure 2.6), tortoises used in longer siege operations were very sturdy huts with steeply sloping and heavily reinforced roofs, intended to protect those who attacked the walls with battering rams and sledgehammers. “Galleries” (such as the *musculus* described at 10.10) were longer versions of tortoises, intended to protect the access to the enemy walls (10.10.7) or those building a siege ramp (10.2.3–4) from missiles, rocks, and burning materials shot or thrown from the walls.

S.7b Vegetius 4.14. For a detailed description of elaborate siege equipment, see Caesar’s narrative of the siege of Massilia (10.1–2, 10.8–10).

S.8a Vegetius 4.16 presents a confused etymology, whereby the *musculus* is named after the mussel,

“for they, though quite small, give continuous support and assistance to whales.”

S.8b 10.10.

S.8c Vitruvius 10.15; Athenaeus, *On Machines* 19–20.

S.9a 7.24.

S.9b 10.1.

S.9c 2.30–31. See n. 2.32c for discussion of this ramp.

S.10a Vegetius 4.15.

S.10b Noviodunum: 2.12; town of the Atuatuci: 2.30; town of the Sotiates: 3.21; Avaricum: 7.17, 7.27; Labienus prepares to fill in a marsh: 7.58; Uxellodunum: 8.41; Massilia: 9.36, 10.1–2, 9; Dyrrachium: 11.54; Alexandria: 12.1; Ategua: 14.7; Urso: 14.41.

S.10c 7.22.

S.10d The defenders also dug a tunnel under their wall and under the siege ramp, setting it on fire from below (7.24). See Warry 1980, 166, for an illustration.

330-foot-wide embankment at Avaricum, where the host of legionnaires labored under the protection of two of these machines.^a Vegetius describes the siege tower as “machinery fastened together from beams and boards like a building, and completely protected with raw hides or quilting, so that such a large undertaking is not destroyed by enemy fire, and to which height is added in line with its width. For sometimes they are thirty feet, and sometimes forty feet or fifty feet square.”^b Their extreme height gave a vantage point from which the besieged could be observed and shot at by archers, slingers, and catapult operators, and forced to abandon the defense of their walls. The ten-story mobile tower that Caesar deployed at Uxellodunum, for example, probably rose to around sixty feet in height.^c It is not certain how such machines were moved, but the author of the *Alexandrian War* records that similar towers in Alexandria were hauled by draft animals.^d

§12. Caesar also employed catapults (*tormenta*), which were useful for their range and accuracy, and for the psychological effect they had on the enemy.^a He never explicitly mentions the large “stone-projector” (*ballista*),^b but the arrow-shooting “scorpion” (*scorpio*) played an important role in protecting the siege works at Avaricum.^c Previous generations of Roman commanders had requisitioned artillery from their Hellenistic allies on an ad hoc basis. For example, Sulla demanded catapults from the town of Thebes for his attack on the Piraeus.^d By contrast, Caesar’s legions seem to have been routinely equipped with these weapons. The architect-engineer Vitruvius, who claims to have been assigned “to the construction of stone-projectors and scorpions and the rest of the artillery” by the emperor Augustus, preserves detailed instructions for their assembly.^e

§13. Two of Caesar’s sieges have produced archaeological evidence. In 1862, excavations were conducted at Gergovie (ancient Gergovia) near Clermont-Ferrand (Puy-de-Dôme department) by Napoléon III’s aide-de-camp, Colonel Eugène Stoffel. He was able to confirm the existence of a large (eighty-six-acre) camp near the town, linked by a long defensive earthwork to a small (seventeen-acre) camp two miles to the west, closely matching Caesar’s description.^a Further work by French archaeologists in 1995–1999 largely confirmed Stoffel’s findings, while correcting points of detail.^b Similarly, Colonel Stoffel’s excavations at Alise-Sainte-Reine (Côte-d’Or department in Burgundy), which revealed traces of siege works surrounding the plateau of Mount Auxois (ancient Alesia), were supplemented by the work of French and German archaeologists in 1991–1994.^c

§14. The legionnaires’ technical skills naturally extended to constructing bridges, of which two distinct forms were known.^a The first was the pontoon-style bridge, adopted by Labienus when he made a lightning strike on Lutetia (modern Paris) in 52, “seizing around fifty boats and quickly fastening them together and hurling his soldiers across

S.10c 7.22.

S.10d The defenders also dug a tunnel under their wall and under the siege ramp, setting it on fire from below (7.24). See Warry 1980, 166, for an illustration.

S.11a 7.24.

S.11b Vegetius 4.17.

S.11c For slingers, see Figure 2.7a, for sling bullets, Figures 2.7b and 14.12.

S.11c 8.41.

S.11d 12.2.

S.12a 13.56.

S.12b Although the author of the *Spanish War* does (14.13.7).

S.12c 7.25. For illustrations, see Figures 2.7a, 6.5, 7.25.

See also Warry 1980, 178–79.

S.12d Appian, *Mithridatic Wars* 30.

S.12e Vitruvius 1 pref. 2; 10.10.1–12.2.

S.13a 7.36.

S.13b Deberge and Guichard 2000.

S.13c See Web Essay QQ: The Siege of Alesia.

S.14a The two forms are depicted on the sculptured frieze of Trajan’s Column: Cichorius 1896: plate

VII (scene 4, pontoon bridge); plate XV (scene

19, timber-framed bridge); plate XXXV (scene

48, pontoon bridge); plate XLI (scene 58, tim-

ber-framed bridge); in *The Landmark Julius Cae-*

sar, see Figures 4.17c and 5.37 right. See also

Cichorius 1900, plate LXXII (scene 99) for Apol-

lodorus of Damascus’ bridge over the Danube.

there.”^b The second was the rather more robust timber-framed bridge, built by Caesar when he decided to cross the Rhine in force in 55 and again in 53.^c The general design of this latter type is clear from Caesar’s description, although some of the technical details remain obscure.^d Many have been content to accept the reconstruction offered by Napoléon III in his *History of Julius Caesar*, despite the fact that it ignores Caesar’s stipulation that “the greater the force of the current, the more firmly were all the timbers held together.”^e This statement implies that the structure of the bridge owed its rigidity partly to the constant pressure of the river current, indicating some sophistication in its design.^f Nevertheless, the task took only ten days to complete.

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S.14b 7.58.

S.14c 4.16–18, 6.9. See Figure 4.17.

S.14d See Holmes 1911, 711–24 for a full discussion.

S.14e 4.17.

S.14f Kitson Clark 1908 presents a plausible reconstruction.

WEB ESSAY T

The Economics of War

Nathan Rosenstein

§1. The acquisition of an empire enriched Rome, but beyond that simple generalization it is impossible to go. We lack the evidence to understand in detail the economics of the republic's wars or draw up anything remotely resembling a balance sheet for its conquests.

§2. From about 350 to 167, the republic paid for its wars through a type of forced loan collected from most citizens who possessed a minimum of wealth. The *tributum*, as it was known, was not a true tax since it could be repaid to the citizens when spoils from victories permitted. Repayment is occasionally mentioned in the sources,^a but whether and how Rome's conquests paid for themselves in this way is unknown. Scholars often assume this was usually the case, but recent research has raised doubts. However, a series of spectacularly rich victories over wealthy Hellenistic kingdoms in the first third of the second century (200–167), particularly the conquest of Macedon in 168, allowed the Senate in that year to suspend collection of *tributum* indefinitely. In the same period, taxes and other revenue from the provinces, especially mines in Spain and Macedon, began to furnish a steady income to the treasury out of which it could finance Rome's wars. Occasional windfalls from rich conquests, such as the sack of Carthage and Corinth in 146 or the victory over Jugurtha in 105, added to this bounty. Finally, Pompey's conquests in the 60s both brought enormous spoils into the treasury and increased Rome's annual income from provincial taxation by more than sixty percent.^b

§3. War was expensive, and the Senate allotted substantial funds to generals setting

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Web Essay U: The Commercialization of War adds important insights to the present topic. The following titles provide in-depth discussions of some of the issues covered in this essay: Frank 1933; Shatzman 1975; Harris 1979; Will 1992; Ziolkowski 1993; Churchill 1999; Coudry 2009; Rosenstein 2011.

T.2a For example, Livy 39.74–5.
T.2b Plutarch, *Pompey* 45.3.

off on their campaigns to meet their expenses. Calpurnius Piso left for Macedon and the army of four legions stationed there in 57 with four and a half million *denarii*. Pompey received an annual stipend of one thousand talents for his six legions in Spain after 55^a—this in a set of three provinces at peace.^b Domitius Ahenobarbus got six million *sesterces* for the single legion he commanded at Corfinium.^c In round numbers, then, one might suppose that the Senate assumed a standard operating cost for a legion of between a million and a million and a half *denarii* a year.^d These funds covered the cost of the legion's pay, food, transportation, and support personnel as well as equipment and any expenses for allied forces.^e

§4. Caesar presumably received similar funding in 58 at the beginning of his Gallic command. However, he enlisted two additional legions on his own authority in Cisalpine Gaul early in 58 and two more in the following winter.^a He bore their cost himself until 56, when the Senate authorized funding for them.^b Even so, Caesar apparently had to furnish pay for legions raised after that date.^c And it is unclear whether the Gallic and German auxiliary forces he commanded received support from the treasury at Rome or from money Caesar raised in his province. Once Caesar took control of Rome in 49 he had the public treasury at his disposal.^d

§5. Caesar extracted vast amounts of money from Gaul to fund his military operations as well as fill his coffers and those of his supporters. His profits from war began even earlier, during his tenure as governor of Farther Spain in 61–60, following his praetorship. He departed Rome heavily in debt (indeed, his creditors very nearly prevented him from leaving until Crassus offered sureties for him),^a but he returned enriched from his victories there.^b Income from his conquest of Gaul was incomparably greater, although it is impossible to quantify. The ancient sources provide only impressions, and it is difficult to know what to make of them. Plutarch and Appian^c claim that he took a million captives; Velleius Paterculus^d puts the figure at four hundred thousand, and scholars, assuming that he sold them all as slaves, and using a notional price per slave, have come up with estimated profits of fifty to one hundred million *denarii*. Suetonius writes that Caesar plundered countless shrines and temples and sacked cities purely for their wealth. He acquired so much gold, he asserts, that its value fell below its normal price when Caesar sold it for silver coin.^e Yet Caesar was a controversial figure in the decades following his death, and it is not clear to what extent such reports are factual or mere slander.

§6. In his *Gallic War*, Caesar himself is surprisingly reticent about the profits from his conquests. Rome typically imposed taxes on its provincial subjects, but Caesar mentions doing so only once, when he imposed an annual tribute payment on the British tribes he defeated.^a He must have done so regularly, however, to judge by his remark that he

T.3a Cicero, *Against Piso* 86. For comparative currency values, here and throughout, see Appendix B: Roman Currency and Units of Measurement.

T.3b Plutarch, *Pompey* 55.7. The provinces are Nearer Spain, Farther Spain, and Lusitania.

T.3c 9.23.4.

T.3d One talent equals roughly 26 kilograms of silver or about 6,750 *denarii*; 1 *denarius* equals about 3.85 grams of silver; 1 *sesterce* (*sestertius*) equals .25 *denarius*. See Appendix B.

T.3e See Web Essay V: Military Logistics.

T.4a 1.10.3, 2.2.1.

T.4b Cicero, *Letters to Friends* 1.7.10; *On the Consular*

Provinces 28; *For Balbus* 61.

T.4c Suetonius, *Caesar* 25.2.

T.4d Cassius Dio 41.17.1–2.

T.5a Plutarch, *Caesar* 11.1.

T.5b Ibid., 12.2; Suetonius, *Caesar* 54.2.

T.5c Plutarch, *Caesar* 15.3; Appian, *Celtic Wars* 2.

T.5d Velleius Paterculus 2.47.1.

T.5e Suetonius, *Caesar* 54.2. See, generally, Web Essay U: The Commercialization of War.

T.6a 5.22.4; Suetonius, *Caesar* 25.1.

granted the Atrebates, a Gallic tribe, exemption from tribute in reward for its services to him.^b Such a privilege would have meant little if few other tribes paid tribute. Toward the end of his tenure as governor, Hirtius states, Caesar tried to establish solid and constructive relations with the Gallic nations: “he used complimentary language in addressing himself to the various nations, bestowed lavish presents on their leaders, and added no further burdens.”^c Again, no precise information is forthcoming about the nature of these “burdens” but they must have included tribute or taxes. In principle, these annual taxes would have furnished Caesar with funds to support his army, but it is not certain how regularly he was able to collect them once the tribes grew restive and began to try to throw off the Roman yoke. Certainly the British are unlikely to have paid *tributum* once Roman forces left the island. Caesar also seems regularly to have commanded tribes to provide food for his army; Gallic leaders explicitly criticized this as a heavy burden, and it is likely that this, too, was a form of tribute and offset the expense of feeding his soldiers.^d

§7. Somewhat surprisingly, the capture of booty and slaves does not figure prominently in Caesar’s account of his operations in Gaul;^a interestingly, booty gets much more attention in Hirtius’ continuation of the *Gallic War*.^b Its disposal receives even less notice. The practice seems to have been for generals to grant the movable booty to the soldiers and to reserve the profits realized from the sale of slaves to the state.^c Traders accompanied Roman armies, ready to purchase slaves as well as whatever the soldiers wished to sell. It was a profitable line of business. Slaves had to be fed and guarded, livestock attended to likewise, and objects, unless they had intrinsic value like jewelry or coins, were simply a burden to soldiers on the march. So it was likely a buyer’s market after a battle or the sacking of a town.

§8. Still, Caesar’s legionnaires seem to have done well out of his wars. Their general was extraordinarily generous in the allocation of spoils to them. On at least one occasion he gave a slave to each man from among the captives;^a whenever the grain supply was plentiful he distributed it lavishly and free of charge (legionnaires ordinarily had the cost of a fixed ration deducted from their pay); after an especially arduous winter campaign, he handed out a large sum to each soldier, and at some point, probably in 52, he doubled their pay.^b Their arms were inlaid with silver and gold, and Caesar liked to boast that they could fight well “even stinking of perfume.”^c By the time the civil war broke out in 49, he had so enriched his centurions that each could volunteer to fund the cost of a cavalryman, and the entire army offered to serve without pay and to purchase their own rations.^d His officers did even better. Senators such as C. Trebatius Testa flocked to his banner in hopes of riches,^e and his lieutenants Labienus and Mamurra, and probably others, became obscenely rich in the eyes of contemporaries like the orator Cicero and the poet Catullus.^f Even many who remained in Rome were the beneficiaries of Caesar’s bounty as Gallic gold traveled south to buy political support from those in a position to aid Caesar in the Senate or the assemblies.^g Even Cicero did not scruple to accept a large loan from the proconsul.^h In addition, Caesar

T.6b 7.76.1.

T.8c Suetonius, *Caesar* 26.3, 67.1–2; Plutarch, *Caesar* 171.

T.6c 8.49.3.

T.8d Suetonius, *Caesar* 68.1.

T.6d For example, 1.16.1, 7.17.2; see also 5.24.1–6 and Web Essay U: The Commercialization of War.

T.8e Cicero, *Letters to Friends* 7.16.3.

T.7a 2.33.6–7; 6.43.1–4, 6.3.2, 7.11.9.

T.8f Cicero, *Letters to Atticus* 7.7.6; Catullus 114.

T.7b 8.5.3–4, 8.27.5, 8.36.6.

T.8g Plutarch, *Caesar* 29.2–3; Velleius Paterculus 2.48.5; Appian, *Civil Wars* 2.17.

T.7c An exception is 2.33.6–7.

T.8h Cicero, *Letters to Atticus* 5.2.1; see also 7.3.11.

T.8a 7.89.5.

T.8b 8.4.1; Suetonius, *Caesar* 26.

spent freely on public works, especially in Rome, where he planned public banquets and games, and began construction of the *Forum Julium* in 54, spending sixty million *sesterces* just to acquire the necessary land.ⁱ

§9. How much was left to Caesar himself after all this is uncertain. At one point scholars believed he was broke when the civil war began, but this was certainly not the case. A portion of the spoils, the *manubiae*, was long thought to have been set aside as the general's share, but this theory has lately been challenged. Yet the historian Polybius, a century earlier, knew of plenty of tricks a commander could use to divert booty to his own purse;^a so it is difficult to believe that generals did not find ways to profit personally from their victories. What is beyond dispute, however, is that Caesar's victory in the civil war brought him staggering riches. When he triumphed in 46, he displayed in the procession 65,000 talents of silver and 2,822 gold crowns, in total weighing 20,414 Roman pounds, out of which he provided lavish donatives to his soldiers and gifts to the citizens of Rome.^b And at that point, all the wealth of the republic was at his disposal.

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T.8i Cicero, *Letters to Atticus* 4.14.8; Suetonius, *Cæsar* 26.2.
T.9a Polybius 18.35.9–11.
T.9b Appian, *Civil Wars* 2.102.

WEB ESSAY U

The Commercialization of War

Clare Rowan

§1. Although it is often acknowledged that war produced wealth for the Romans, the practicalities of transforming military victories into money are less commonly discussed. Booty was a significant concern in republican Rome, as witnessed by the frequency with which it is discussed in ancient authors. When a campaign failed to capture riches, like Caesar's activities in Britain, it was cause for comment.^a This focus on booty was partly a result of the Roman military mind-set and conditioning for war, but also, no doubt, of the professionalization of Roman armies and the very real wealth that booty produced.^b

§2. The surviving textual evidence indicates that any booty or plunder gained by a Roman army in war could be treated in several different ways: it might be given to the troops, sold by the general for the profit of the Roman state, or taken back to Rome. Apparently there were no strict guidelines for how war booty was to be divided, though some general tendencies can be discerned. Spectacular pieces of plunder, important captives, gold or silver objects, and precious metal coinage were probably brought back to Rome. Captives were generally sold by the general for the profit of the state, and other booty could be given to the soldiers.^a Caesar records the sale of the Atuatuci people after their treachery and defeat during his Gallic campaign; on this occasion fifty-three thousand individuals were sold “in one lot,” which offers some idea of the scale on which such transactions could occur.^b But the final division of spoils may have differed from victory to victory according to circumstances; for example, after the surrender of

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Further bibliography on the topics discussed in this essay is cited in Web Essay T: The Economics of War.

- U.1a Plutarch, *Caesar* 23.2; Cicero, *Letters to Atticus* 4.16.7, 18.5.
- U.1b Conditioning: for example, Raafaub 1996; profit as motive: Rich 1993; generally on Roman profits of war: Ducrey 1977.
- U.2a 12.42, 12.48, 12.77.
- U.2b 2.33; see also 3.16; Cicero, *Letters to Atticus* 5.20.5. On slavery in this context, see generally Bradley 1994; Bodel 2011.

Vercingetorix at Alesia, Caesar distributed the captives as plunder among his soldiers rather than selling them on behalf of the state.^c

§3. The need to sell booty after a military victory added a commercial aspect to Roman war. For both the soldiers and the successful general the profit to be made from war booty depended on their ability to negotiate a good price with traders. The sale of these items was likely subject to market forces (for example, supply and demand). For example, Polybius records that during the Second Punic War, Scipio's soldiers sold their booty for much less than it was worth, since they were convinced that more spoils would be forthcoming.^a Livy indicates that an army might have had an initial sale of booty in order to lure merchants to follow it.^b This suggests that traders may have accompanied a particular army for significant periods of time, which perhaps resulted in ongoing relationships between particular soldiers and merchants. Communication between merchants and soldiers underlies Caesar's casual comment that the "remarks uttered by Gauls and traders" regarding the strength of the German people sparked panic among the army.^c Apparently the Germans, too, sold their booty to traders; in fact, Caesar says, this was the only purpose for which traders were admitted into German society.^d Naturally, the selling of war booty was a common phenomenon, well-known also in the Greek and Hellenistic worlds.^e

§4. It is unclear what precise form of compensation the merchants offered in return for booty. For sales on behalf of the Roman state, one imagines payment in precious metal (Roman *denarii*, bullion, or foreign currency)—presumably converted into Roman money at a later date. In smaller transactions made by soldiers, objects may have been bartered for other consumables (like wine).^a As the scale of Roman warfare increased, the sale of booty could have a very real impact on the economy. After Gracchus' campaigns in Sardinia in 175, for example, the large number of captives brought back to Rome created a glut in the slave market.^b Caesar's sale of the more than ninety thousand slaves reportedly captured during his campaigns in Gaul is likely to have caused another glut.^c Moreover, Caesar obtained so much gold in Gaul that he sold it cheaply in Italy: here, too, oversupply may have driven prices down.^d

The conversion of unwieldy booty into metals made it easier to transport the wealth back to Rome. Once in Rome, these metals (bullion, Roman and foreign currencies) were carried in a general's triumph. Thus, rather than the actual booty from the battlefield, it was these metals and coins, together with valuable objects and cultural goods (such as art) plundered from conquered cities, as well as prominent or exotic persons captured in the war, that represented to the Roman viewer the conquest of foreign lands and the achievements of the victorious general. Ancient authors, in particular Livy, often stress the amount of gold, silver, and foreign currency carried in a Roman triumph, a ceremonial aspect of coinage and bullion in the republic that has often been overlooked.^e The *African War* mentions one Salienus, who had withheld some money and ornaments belonging to Caesar's triumph, thus suggesting that goods and wealth intended to be carried in a triumph were set aside long in advance.^f

U.2c 7.89.

of supply over demand (Festus 428; Cicero, *Letters to Friends* 7.24.4).

U.3a Polybius 14.7.2–3.

U.4c Scheidel 2011, 296.

U.3b Livy 10.17.5–6.

U.4d Suetonius, *Caesar* 54.1.

U.3c 1.39.

U.4e See, for example, Livy 28.38.4–5, 33.23.4–9, 33.37.11, 34.10.4, 34.46.2, 34.52.6–7, 37.59.3–4, 45.43.5.

U.3d 4.2.

U.4f 13.28.

U.3e Juhel 2002; Trundle 2010, 248–49.

U.4a Sallust, *Jugurthine War* 44.5.

U.4b This resulted in the phrase "Sardinians for sale, each as worthless as the other," meaning an excess

§5. After the civil wars, Caesar held several triumphs celebrating victories over Gaul, Alexandria, the kingdom of Pontus, Africa, and Spain.^a Appian observes the potential awkwardness of Caesar's situation: one could not triumph over fellow Romans, so the civil war victories were presented as the defeat of foreign enemies.^b The scale of his conquests was communicated through the sheer mass of precious metal—according to Appian, 60,500 silver talents and 2,822 golden crowns—he was able to parade through the streets of Rome.^c Placards, images, other significant items, and captives, including Vercingetorix and the young king Juba of Numidia, further enhanced the effect.^d Caesar used the occasion of his triumphs to present donatives and land to his soldiers, as well as money, grain, and oil to the people of Rome.^e Rents on the cheapest Roman houses were remitted.^f A large amount of cash was thus injected into the Roman economy, which may have affected prices. The quantity theory of money states that increased money supply often results in an increase in prices; likewise a shortage of money can lead to a drop in prices. The Roman economy was not exempt from such forces: thus Cicero observes that the price of property had dropped during the civil war due to the scarcity of money.^g

§6. What happened to the precious metals, money, and valuables after they had reached Rome and been paraded in triumph? The victorious general appears to have had some control over the spending of at least a portion of any war gains.^a There was a general expectation, however, that the proceeds of war were to be used “for the public good,” not least because most wars were paid for by public funds allocated by the Senate.^b Appian reports that Caesar used the proceeds paraded in his triumph, apart from the distributions mentioned in §5, to hold spectacles and feasts, and to erect the Julian Forum with its temple to Venus.^c The building of public monuments like the Julian Forum would have created employment while ensuring that Caesar's achievements were immortalized, and the celebration of games and feasts would have created immediate goodwill and support for Caesar among the people. Thus the use of booty proceeds for the “public good” could also have a very real impact on the popularity of the general concerned.

§7. But Caesar also used the wealth won in his military campaigns to finance his own political career and buy political support.^a Appian comments on the importance of military campaigns in raising the funds to sustain Caesar's political ambitions: when he went as praetor to Spain he was heavily in debt, but once in the region he ignored administrative and judicial matters “because he considered them of no use to his purpose,” and instead raised an army and waged war against the Spanish tribes.^b Such military activity, and the resulting booty, enabled him to repay his creditors, finance his political cam-

- U.5a Appian, *Civil Wars* 2.101 (Africa, Gaul, Pontus, Egypt); Plutarch, *Caesar*, 55.2 (Egypt, Pontus, Spain); Suetonius *Caesar* 37.1 (Africa, Gaul, Pontus, Egypt, Spain); Velleius Paterculus 56.2.
- U.5b Appian, *Civil Wars* 2.101.
- U.5c Ibid., 2.102; Velleius Paterculus 56.2 gives the total value as more than six hundred million *sesterces*. For the value of a silver talent, see Web Essay T: The Economics of War, §3, and, for Roman currency, Appendix B: Roman Currency and Units of Measurement, §§8–10. See, for a description of Pompey's triumph, Plutarch, *Pompey* 45; Pliny, *Natural History* 37.13–14.
- U.5d Appian, *Civil Wars* 2.101.
- U.5e Ibid., 2.102; Plutarch, *Caesar* 55.2; Suetonius,

- Caesar* 38.1. For more on the enrichment of Caesar's soldiers, see Web Essay T, §§7–8.
- U.5f Suetonius, *Caesar* 38.1.
- U.5g Cicero, *Letters to Atticus* 9.10.
- U.6a Churchill 1999.
- U.6b Livy 28.23.10; Rowan 2013. Plutarch, *Caesar* 29.3 perhaps also hints at this. See further Web Essay T, §3.
- U.6c Appian, *Civil War* 2.102; see also Suetonius, *Caesar* 26. On the Forum Iulium, see Richardson 1992, 165–67.
- U.7a Plutarch, *Pompey* 51.1–3, *Caesar* 20.2.
- U.7b Appian, *Civil Wars* 2.8. See also Plutarch, *Caesar* 12.1–2.

paigns, and win the military recognition that was all-important in Roman politics. Ten years later, in the political fights leading up to the civil war, Caesar's "generosity" secured the services of consuls and tribunes, and helped him gain crucial advantages.^c

§8. It has been demonstrated that in many cases the riches extracted from communities are presented in ancient texts as "taxes," though in reality they were the proceeds of war.^a Thus the labels given by Romans to their booty may at times obscure the role war played in generating wealth for the Roman state. The situation of civil war, when conflict took place within Roman territory rather than against a hostile outside enemy, may also have led to some creative representations of war plunder. Caesar's treatment of the elite of Utica after the defeat of Scipio in 46 is one example: he offered the Uticans the opportunity to buy back their confiscated property and record this transaction as a "fine."^b The problems associated with civil war, when there were fewer foreign enemies to plunder or captives to sell,^c sometimes forced the generals to rely instead on proscriptions and the sale of property in regions under their control.^d For example, Pompey's defeated Roman soldiers could not be sold as booty to raise funds; instead they were incorporated into Caesar's army^e or dismissed under the condition that they did not resume fighting against him.^f

§9. The problems associated with financing a civil war, rather than the traditional foreign variety, may have compelled Caesar to break into the Roman treasury in 49, a store of wealth that had been earmarked for emergencies.^a Woytek notes that it was probably the riches of this treasury that provided the metal for two of the largest *denarii* issues the republic had ever seen: Caesar's famous elephant issue in 49,^b and another coin type struck in Rome during the same year.^c The size of these issues provides some idea of the resources consumed by the civil war, and may provide some background to Cicero's observation that money became scarce in this period. But the enormous expenditure was matched by enormous gain, and Caesar returned from the war not only victorious but wealthy—from booty obtained and sold under various guises.

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U.7c See Gelzer 1968, 178–79.

U.8a Naco del Hoyo 2003.

U.8b 13.90; see 13.97 for similar representation of exactions from Thapsus and Hadrumetum.

U.8c For an exception, see 11.80.

U.8d 13.2, 14.1.

U.8e 9.23; Plutarch, *Caesar* 46.4.

U.8f 9.85–86; see also 11.98–99.

U.9a Appian, *Civil Wars* 2.41.

U.9b For two examples of these coins, each depicting an elephant trampling a snake (or perhaps a Gallic war trumpet) and the legend CAESAR, see Figures 3.27, top, and 9.32, bottom.

U.9c Woytek 2003, 127. See *Roman Republican Coinage* RRC 443/1, also available online at

<http://numismatics.org/crro/>. For more information on the coinage of Julius Caesar see <http://www.humanities.mq.edu.au/acans/caesar/Home.htm> (accessed October 13, 2017).

WEB ESSAY V

Military Logistics

Nathan Rosenstein

§1. In the oft-misquoted aphorism of Napoleon, an army “marches on its stomach,” and this was as true in the first century B.C.E. as it was nineteen hundred years later. Ensuring that his soldiers were fed was among any Roman general’s principal responsibilities, along with securing the other necessary material means of war. The magnitude of the task was enormous, given the size of Roman armies and the constraints that time and distance imposed in a preindustrial world. The challenges Caesar faced can stand for those that any general confronted.

§2. Most critical was the sheer number of bodies that needed to be fed, clothed, armed, and sheltered. Caesar steadily enlarged his army over the course of his time in Gaul from four legions, which he found in his provinces at the outset, to six already in 58, eight in 57, and eventually ten. On paper a legion comprised 6,000 soldiers plus several officers, but it rarely ever possessed its full complement of men. The two legions in camp with Caesar during the winter of 54/53 contained only about 3,500 men each.^a The eight legions that fought at Pharsalus in 48 were even smaller, averaging a mere 2,750.^b Deaths in battle or from accident or disease, as well as serious wounds and illnesses and at times just sheer physical exhaustion, steadily depleted a legion’s numbers.^c For that reason, Caesar regularly recruited from his province of Cisalpine Gaul additional troops to reinforce his legions during the winter.^d Since he never informs us of the size of these *supplementa* and only very occasionally of the strength of his legions, any estimate of the size of Caesar’s or any other legions inevitably represents a moving target.

§3. Still, for purposes of illustration we can suppose that Caesar’s Gallic legions might ordinarily have contained about four thousand men. To these must be added the large con-

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The following titles deal more comprehensively with the issues of logistics in war: Harmand 1967; Labisch 1975; Austin and Rankov 1995; Erdkamp 1998; Roth 1999; Rosenstein 2004; Keaveney 2007; Gabriel 2011.

V.2a 5.49.7; see also 5.48.1.

V.2b 11.89.1.

V.2c 11.2.3.

V.2d 1.7.2, 1.10.3, 6.1, 6.4, 7.5, 7.57.1.

tingents of Gallic and later German cavalry and light infantry auxiliary forces that often accompanied the legions. In 58 Caesar's Gallic cavalry numbered four thousand, and he took the same number with him to Britain in 54.^a Ten thousand Aedui were summoned to the siege of Gergovia.^b An unknowable number of noncombatants increased the army's size still further—sutlers (*lixae*), military servants (*calones*) and other camp followers, hostages, and slaves.^c The army also required large numbers of animals. A mule transported the tent, grain mill, tools, and other common equipment of each eight-man group of tentmates (*contubernium*). Eight legions required four thousand mules plus more for officers and centurions, and several hundred muleteers.^d Allies, too, needed pack animals. And officers and other aristocrats, reenlisted veterans,^e and of course the cavalrymen all rode horses.

§4. The amounts of food required by an army of 20,000–40,000 men, its entourage, and animals quickly reached staggering totals. Roman (and presumably allied) soldiers, being shorter and lighter than their modern counterparts, needed somewhat less food. One estimate puts their daily caloric needs at around 3,300, supplied by about 2.64 pounds/1,200 grams of various foodstuffs. At that rate, 32,000 legionnaires needed about 42.43 U.S. tons (38.5 metric tons) of food daily, 15,066 tons (13,677.5 metric tons) each 355-day year. A pack mule might eat 4.4 pounds (2 kilograms) of grain and 12.12 pounds (5.5 kilograms) of green fodder or hay daily, so that these legionnaires' 4,000 or more mules would require at least 33 tons (30 metric tons) a day, 11,740 (10,650 metric) per year. Horses ate even more. If 4,000 cavalrymen each had a pair of mounts, these would need 84 tons (76 metric tons) of grain and hay daily, 29,740 (26,980 metric) in a year. Add the food requirements of other personnel and animals, and the total might easily exceed 66,000–77,000 tons (60,000–70,000 metric tons) annually.

§5. Nor does this exhaust the list of what an army needed. Water was critical both for men and animals. If an encampment near a river could not be located, water had to be brought from whatever sources were available. Pompey's army in Spain in 49 was brought to its knees not least by being cut off from food supplies and easy access to water,^a while, conversely, Caesar was unable to put decisive pressure on Pompey himself near Dyrrachium in the winter of 48 because his massive siege works could not prevent Pompey from supplying his army from the sea.^b Firewood was likewise essential. One of the things that contributed to Caesar's famous rapidity of movement was the fact that each squad of legionary *contubernales* cooked their own food, thus eliminating the army's need for portable ovens and cooks to man them. This meant, however, that wood for cooking fires had to be gathered daily. And although horses and mules can feed themselves, unless they spend most of the day grazing, they must be supplied not only with grain but hay and green fodder as well. The army servants had to gather the latter regularly.^c

§6. Obtaining a steady supply of food and other essentials on this scale presented a formidable challenge and called forth a variety of strategies. Wheat supplied about two-thirds of calories a Roman soldier consumed, ground by each squad and prepared as porridge or flatbread. Part of what the army needed could be obtained by soldiers and servants dispatched to forage.^a However, no army could "live off the land" for any length of time. Grain is edible only during the few days or weeks before the harvest, when it is ripe—hence Caesar's army came near to starving when he began his siege of Pompey at

V.3a 1.15.1, 5.5.3.

V.3c 7.35.5.

V.3b 7.37.7.

V.5a 9.71–84, especially 9.81–84.

V.3c For example, 1.27.3, 2.24.2, 5.47.1, 7.20.9; see
also 12.73.2–3, 12.74.3.

V.5b 11.42, 11.47–48.

V.3d 7.45.2.

V.5c 7.20.9, 8.10.1

V.6a For instance, 6.36.2–4..

Dyrrachium too early in the year.^b After the harvest, farmers either stored their crops in fortified towns or cities or hid them, making it difficult or impossible for foragers to obtain them. For most of the year other sources of supply had to be found.

§7. Part of what was needed came in the form of taxes in kind or through purchase from the great grain-producing provinces (Sicily, North Africa, and Egypt). Sea transport conveyed the grain to ports near an army, and from there it was brought by wagons, mule trains, or where possible by river, either to the army itself or to depots where it was aggregated and then moved by mule train up to the troops. Alternately, grain could be requisitioned in a general's province, and this seems to have been Caesar's preferred method. Friendly tribes were expected to gather sufficient supplies to meet his army's needs.^a Caesar then either brought the army to the grain^b or had the latter conveyed to the troops. Finally, supplies seized when a town was captured might suffice where other methods failed.^c The great crisis caused by heavy rains and flooding that made it impossible to cross rivers and "imprisoned" Caesar's army in a narrow area in Spain in the summer of 49 is illustrative:

The tribes which had established friendly relations with Caesar could not reach them with supplies of corn, while foraging parties which had gone too far afield were cut off by the rivers and unable to return, and the large stocks of provision which were on their way from Italy and Gaul could not get through to the camp. Besides, it was the most awkward time of the year, when there was none of last year's grain in the winter stores and this year's was not quite ripe....The local cattle might have served as an alternative source of food in need; but they had been taken to a distance by the neighboring tribes because of the fighting....^d

Wine or vinegar, meat, olive oil, vegetables, spices, fish sauce, and salt rounded out the soldiers' diet. The host of traders (*lixæ, mercatores*) who accompanied the army^e offered some of these items for sale to the troops who, because they were paid and often enriched by plunder, possessed the means to buy them. These traders transported their wares by means of carts or pack mules at their own expense and risk.^f However, they represented only a supplement to the army's food supply and remained outside the army's camp.^g Most of what the soldiers ate, the army itself provided; depending on merchants for a substantial part of the food supply would have made the army vulnerable.

§8. An army's baggage train was therefore extensive, consisting of two parts. One comprised the mules carrying each squad's equipment and, probably, that part of their near-term grain rations not carried by the soldiers themselves.^a A different train, consisting of mules and wagons for those many items too large or bulky for mules' packs, carried the bulk of the provisions along with a variety of other material: siege equipment that could not be manufactured on the spot; artillery and ammunition; army records; headquarters and officers' tents and furnishings; medical supplies and wounded soldiers, and so on. Their numbers cannot be determined, since these will have varied with the types and amounts of additional equipment carried. But unquestionably, an army like Caesar's will have required hundreds of wagons and thousands of additional mules along with muleteers and drivers, further magnifying the challenge of providing food and fod-

V.6b 11.47.4–49.1.

V.7e 1.39.1; see also 6.37.2.

V.7a 7.17.2, 7.38.9.

V.7f 13.75.3.

V.7b 1.23.1.

V.7g 6.37.2.

V.7c For example, 7.32.1; see also 7.17.3.

V.8a 2.17.2, 2.19.2.

V.7d 9.48.

der, and limiting any movement over larger distances to roads suitable for wagons.

§9. The organization and administration of an army's logistics was the ultimate responsibility of its commander, and Caesar regularly presents himself as concerned with securing the supplies his soldiers needed.^a Subordinates managed many of the day-to-day logistics. When fodder or food needed to be gathered, Caesar and other generals issued the orders to do so, but an officer (*praefectus*, or military tribune) commanded the detachment that actually did the job.^b Scribes dealt with many of the details, and a junior magistrate, the quaestor, kept the army's financial records, including those concerning food.^c Administration of the system that brought supplies from their sources to the army had long been the responsibility of the Senate, and this continued into the first century.^d Caesar, however, employed a private businessman (*negotiator*), C. Fufius Cita, to manage his food supply during his Gallic campaign,^e and he placed another, P. Ventidius Bassus, in charge of organizing and maintaining his supply lines in Gaul.^f The precise relationship between the government in Rome and individuals like Cita and Bassus is unclear. While ordinarily much of the supply for armies was dispatched at senatorial direction and under the supervision of magistrates at Rome, it may well be that generals like Caesar had considerable leeway to take whatever ad hoc steps they believed were necessary to maintain their armies. Conditions for supplying Caesar's army may also have been unusual, since the legions that he raised in his early years in Gaul had not been authorized by the Senate, which only in 56 voted to provide their pay.^g The vote may also have included funds for their supplies, so that Caesar would have been making his own logistical arrangements prior to that date. Such measures became essential as the government in Rome collapsed during the civil wars and generals on both sides were forced to improvise their logistical systems.^h

§10. Wounds and death were inevitably frequent among soldiers who engaged in hand-to-hand combat as Caesar's legionnaires did, but only rarely does Caesar provide specifics as to their extent.^a One would naturally assume that after a major engagement both were widespread. Following his victory over the Helvetii in 58, Caesar had to delay his pursuit of the fleeing enemy for three days while the army saw to its wounded and buried its dead.^b The latter is Caesar's sole reference to what was certainly a grim and regular practice during his conquest of Gaul and the civil war that followed. Wounds figure much more commonly in his accounts of fighting. How deadly they were is uncertain. Roman armies contained no medical corps; soldiers and officers treated their wounds themselves as best they could, and the effectiveness of their methods must have varied considerably. Herbs and poultices are unlikely to have done much good, and in the absence of modern antibiotics, infected wounds frequently meant that sepsis or gangrene set in, resulting in a very painful death. Yet one should be cautious about assuming that this outcome would have been usual. The kinds of wounds a legionary sustained greatly affected how likely he was to survive them. Roman soldiers wore chain mail armor and a metal helmet, and carried heavy wooden shields. They were much better equipped than modern infantrymen to protect themselves from the most deadly types of injuries, deep puncture wounds from sword or spear thrusts. Gashes, contusions from blows or projec-

V.9a For example, 1.37.5, 1.40.10, 4.71, 7.17.2.

V.9b 3.7.10.

V.9c Cicero, *Against Verres* 2.1.36.

V.9d Polybius 6.15.4; Sallust, *Histories* 2.98.3–10.

V.9e 7.3.1.

V.9f Gellius, *Attic Nights* 15.4.3; see further Pliny,

Natural History 7.135.

Cicero, *Letters to Friends* 1.7.10; *On the Consular Provinces* 28; *For Balbus* 61.

V.9h For instance, 9.5.1–4, 13.8.3, 13.34.1–3.

V.10a 9.46.4–5, 10.35.5, 11.53.3, 14.31.10.

V.10b 1.26.5.

tiles, and shallow arrow wounds likely were much more common,^c and survival in these cases was probably much more frequent. In ancient medical literature, washing wounds in vinegar or wine is frequently recommended. These are powerful bactericides, and soldiers had ready access to them. In addition, winter forced an annual halt to campaigning, affording time for the seriously wounded to recuperate in the army's cantonments.^d

§11. Those cantonments, however, limited opportunities for home leave. Only in extraordinary circumstances did Caesar significantly reduce the strength of his legions by allowing them to return to Rome during the winter. In early 55, when his political allies Pompey and Crassus were fighting desperately to win the consular elections of that year in accordance with the agreement they and Caesar had made at Lucca the year before, Caesar sent a contingent of legionnaires under the command of a legate (in fact, Crassus' son) to cast their votes in the election.^a Otherwise, it seems unlikely that many soldiers routinely saw their homes during their time in Gaul, since the distances from their encampments and the heavy snows made rapid, easy access to the peninsula difficult in winter.

§12. Instead, to the extent that literacy was common among both the legionnaires and their families, they will have relied on letters to and from home to keep in touch. The great majority of such communications, however, will have passed between Caesar and his officers in Gaul and their friends, families, and associates in Rome and Italy. Cicero's brother Quintus served as Caesar's legate in 54–52, and letters passed regularly between the two brothers. A number of Marcus' letters to Quintus survive.^a Caesar, too, was an assiduous correspondent. Letters came informing him of developments in Gaul when he was in Northern Italy;^b letters carried his orders to his lieutenants^c and their reports to him^d or reports of Gallic leaders to his staff.^e All this required an efficient system of letter carriers, the organization of which, no doubt, was the quaestor's responsibility. The near-disaster of Quintus Cicero, besieged in 54 in his winter quarters by rebellious Gauls, was precipitated not least by the enemies' ability to intercept all communications between the legate and Caesar; it was averted by a last-minute success in getting a message through.^f Caesar also regularly wrote dispatches to the Senate describing his exploits on the basis of which the senators decreed thanksgivings for his victories.^g Equally crucial were the letters that passed between Caesar and Cornelius Balbus, his principal agent in Rome,^h and his various allies and supporters in the capital, especially Pompey and Crassus. These enabled Caesar to wage what was in essence a two-front struggle: the conquest of Gaul in the north and the fight to protect his political position at Rome. Every setback, however, was immediately reported to Rome, as happened, Caesar reports sarcastically, during the flood crisis in Spain in 49 (§7): Afranius and Petreius, the Pompeian commanders, “and their friends kept writing to their connections in Rome, describing these developments even more fully and dramatically than the facts warranted. Rumors added much that was purely invented, so that the war seemed to be almost over. When these messages and letters reached Rome, masses of people congregated in the Forum in huge celebrations and congratulations. Many men now left Italy to join Gnaeus Pompey....”ⁱ Yet such celebrations were premature!

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V.10c 11.44.3.

V.10d 6.38.1.

V.11a Cassius Dio 39.31.2; Plutarch, *Crassus* 14.6.

V.12a These letters are collected in Cicero, *Letters to Brother Quintus*.

V.12b 2.1.2, 5.11.2, 5.40.1.

V.12c 5.46.4, 8.6.3.

V.12d For example, 8.39.

V.12e 8.26.

V.12f 5.40.1, 5.45, 5.48.3–9.

V.12g 2.35.5, 4.38.5, 7.90.8.

V.12h For example, Cicero, *Letters to Atticus* 9.7C; 13A.1.

WEB ESSAY W

War and Geographical Knowledge

Richard J. A. Talbert

§1. Today's readers typically struggle to comprehend the nature of Caesar's geographical grasp during his campaigns. So much that we take for granted must be set aside: in particular, Caesar gains no assistance from technology, digital or otherwise. Moreover, for him the several categories into which we routinely divide the acquisition and processing of geographical information—cartography of various types and scales, including ethnography and intelligence gathering—remain undifferentiated. What we are prone to underestimate above all today is the depth of his geographical ignorance when he proceeds into Gaul and from there to Britain. It seems beyond belief that any leader in command of thousands of men could have been so rash and irresponsible. The fact is, however, that Caesar's plunge into vast territories of which he knew next to nothing was regular behavior on the part of Roman commanders—and indeed of their successors across much of the globe to the end of the nineteenth century C.E. They had no practical alternative.

§2. Gaul—the landmass beyond “the province” that Rome had annexed in the late second century^a—was not totally unknown to Romans. Envoys from such Gallic peoples as the Aedui and Allobroges had visited Rome^b during the years immediately prior to the start of Caesar's governorship in 58, and it must have been possible to glean geographical impressions from them. Caesar also evidently consulted some (now lost) Greek

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Readers interested in pursuing some of the issues discussed in this essay might also look at Web Essay FF: Caesar the Ethnographer and find the following titles useful: Rambaud 1974; Austin and Rankov 1995; Bertrand 1997; Riggsby 2006; Talbert 2010a. For a slightly later period, see also Nicolet 1991. For ancient maps, see Dilke 1985; Harley and Woodward 1987.

W.2a This province (roughly corresponding to the modern Provence) had various names; in *The Landmark Julius Caesar* it is called the Province of Transalpine Gaul (Gaul beyond the Alps), as opposed to Cisalpine Gaul (Gaul on this side of the Alps: Northern Italy, the Po valley).

W.2b Gaul, Rome: Map 1.8, locator. Aedui, Allobroges: Map 1.8.

ethnographic writings, because he once cites the third-century polymath Eratosthenes;^c the likelihood is that he had also read the much more recent work of Posidonius.^d Caesar shows keen awareness, too, of the notorious defeats inflicted upon Roman armies in Gaul near the end of the second century by migrant peoples, the fearsome, long-remembered Cimbri and Teutoni.^e It is natural enough for him to begin his *Gallic War* by formulating a geographic and ethnographic overview of the whole of Gaul. In the absence of cities and highways (characteristically Roman features), the two main markers used for the purpose are those that Caesar in fact continues to employ throughout the work, namely *civitates*—peoples or nations, whose territories he juxtaposes one to the other—in relation especially to principal rivers that act as boundaries, for example, the Garumna (modern Garonne), Matrona (modern Marne), Sequana (modern Seine), or Rhine.^f Thus he immediately identifies three main peoples—the Belgae, Aquitani, Celts/Gauls^g—and further among the latter the Sequani and Helvetii;^h the neighboring Germansⁱ are also mentioned. Rivers aside, the elements of physical landscape that Caesar references in this opening description as (presumably) familiar to his readers are the (Atlantic) Ocean, Spain, and the Pyrenees mountains.^j The Roman Province of Transalpine Gaul/Gallia Transalpina is mentioned, too, although, strikingly, its relation neither to Italy nor to Gaul is clarified beyond repeated indication that Gaul lies to its north.^k

§3. To draw a reliable map on the basis of Caesar's overview—as we might wish to do nowadays—would hardly be feasible, but this limitation is made irrelevant by the fact that he never indicates awareness of maps, and in all likelihood there were hardly any; his readers' outlook we can reckon to have been the same. Generally speaking, the outlook reflected even in such handbooks on generalship as survive from classical antiquity is no different. It is true that we learn of maps displaying the Roman world or regions of it, and a medieval copy of one survives (the so-called Peutinger Map);^a but all are of later date than Caesar's time, when the regions controlled by Rome were still very scattered. It is also true that Romans made accurate maps at large scales of their cultivable land, although in this familiar territory the purpose was only to create a legal record of who owned what.^b

§4. So Caesar's readers, having digested his opening overview, were then content—we may imagine—with the supplementary information on the local level that he continues to furnish as his narrative unfolds. Accordingly, for example, when the Raurici, Tulingi, Latovici, and Boii are first mentioned,^a their location in relation to the Helvetii is explained. The nature of the physical landscape in which notable events take place may be sketched—the mountains, rivers, and lake that hem in the Helvetii, for example,^b or the contrasting character of the only two routes by which they might migrate;^c equally,

W.2c 6.24.

W.2d See Web Essay FF: Caesar the Ethnographer, §2.

W.2e Note especially 1.12. See further Web Essay H: The Legacy of Rome's Wars, §4.

W.2f See 4.10. Garumna, Matrona, Sequana, Rhine Rivers: Map 1.8.

W.2g Belgae, Aquitani, Celts/Gauls, approximate territories of: Map 1.8.

W.2h Sequani, Helvetii, approximate territories of: Map 1.8.

W.2i Germans: Map 1.23, locator.

W.2j Atlantic Ocean: Map 1.8, locator; Spain, Pyrenees Mountains: Map 1.8 and locator.

W.2k 1.16; see further 4.20.

W.3a On the Peutinger Map, see Talbert 2010b with Web materials: www.cambridge.org/us/talbert, accessed April 1, 2016.

W.3b On Roman cadastral maps, see “centuriation,” “gromatici” in *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 4th ed. (2012) or “Classics, Land-Surveyors” in Oxford Bibliographies Online.

W.4a Mentioned at 1.5. Raurici, Tulingi, Boii, approximate territories of: Map 1.23; Latovici/Latobrigi, location unknown.

W.4b 1.2.

W.4c 1.6.

the border between the Sequani and Helvetii running along the Jura Mountains,^d and the flow of the Arar (modern Saône) River.^e A forest of immense size, the Bacenis,^f extended far into the territory of the Suebi, “and formed a natural barrier preventing the Cherusci and Suebi^g from raiding and inflicting damage on one another.”^h The random inclusion of figures for area and distance creates an air of precision and geographical mastery. Caesar is somehow able to state, for example, that the territory of the Helvetii extended 220 miles from north to south and 165 from east to west;ⁱ that Britain is almost 2,000 miles in circumference;^j and that the Ardennes Forest stretches for more than 460 miles.^k His record may specify how far he found himself at this juncture or that—from the enemy’s forces, for example (“just over seven miles”),^l or from an important location such as Bibracte^m (“no more than sixteen and a half miles”).ⁿ Time may be substituted for distance in instances where the former’s precision is unattainable. Thus the remote Hercynian Forest^o in central Europe, which Caesar read of in Eratosthenes, is said to take nine days for a man traveling light to traverse, and its full length would not be reached even after a sixty-day journey through it. Its size, Caesar adds, “cannot be described more accurately, for the Germans have no means of measuring units of distance.”^p

§5. Throughout the Gallic and British campaigns Caesar is tireless in seeking to acquire reliable local geographical knowledge by sending out his own scouts as well as by interrogating whatever local individuals, envoys, traders, deserters, or captives he may encounter. As a result, the Aeduan chief Diviciacus tells Caesar of an advantageous route,^a and envoys from the Ubii advise him on how best to approach the territory of the Suebi.^b He sends Gaius Volusenus Quadratus to reconnoiter Britain from the sea, while at the same time summoning traders from all over Gaul to tell him what they know: “at that point he was unable to ascertain either the size of the island, the nature and numbers of the peoples living there, their skill in warfare, their established customs, or which harbors were suitable for a fleet of fairly large ships.”^c Caesar is aware of comparable zeal to acquire intelligence of every kind on the part of the Gauls, although in his opinion their leaders are prone to evaluate what they learn with insufficient caution.^d He at least is shrewd enough to be more critical: thus in the light of reports that he has received from elsewhere, he already knows that German envoys have failed to furnish him with fully accurate information.^e

§6. Caesar has the self-assurance not to panic at the unexpected, as when he has been advancing with his army for three days into the territory of the Nervii, only then to learn that the enemy’s forces are massed in wait across the Sabis River,^a a mere nine miles or so away.^b He is alert, too, to the risks run by Roman forces when they penetrate country that is rugged, wooded, and marshy, where hostile local peoples can exploit the environment in ways quite beyond the capacity of strangers.^c As Caesar realizes, the worst

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|------|---|------|--|
| W.4d | 1.8; Jura Mountains: Map 1.8. | W.4o | Hercynian Forest: precise location unknown; see n. 6.24c. |
| W.4e | 1.12; Arar (modern Saône) River: Map 1.8. | W.4p | 6.25. |
| W.4f | Bacenis Forest: location uncertain; see n. 6.10c. | W.5a | 1.41. |
| W.4g | Cherusci, approximate territory of: Map 6.12, AY. | W.5b | 6.9. |
| | Suebi, approximate territory of: Map 6.32, locator. | W.5c | 4.20–21. |
| W.4h | 6.10. | W.5d | 4.5; see further 7.20–21. |
| W.4i | 1.2. | W.5e | 4.9. |
| W.4j | 5.13. Britain: Map 5.6, locator. | W.6a | Sabis (modern Sambre/Selle) River: Map 2.18. See n. 2.16c. |
| W.4k | 6.29. Ardennes Forest: Ref. Map 6.12. | W.6b | 2.16. |
| W.4l | 1.21. | W.6c | 6.34. |
| W.4m | Bibracte: Map 1.23. | | |
| W.4n | 1.23. | | |

predicament for any commander in such an isolated and vulnerable situation is for his men to dwell upon the potential consequences of such ignorance and thereby lose their nerve. This type of crisis—fed by rumor and panic—he must overcome at an early stage of the war, when he wishes to advance against Ariovistus. The men, he records, “declared that it was not the enemy they feared, but the restricted, narrow route of the march, the depths of forest between themselves and Ariovistus, or the arrangement of satisfactory transport for the corn supply.”^d In reaction, Caesar severely reprimands the centurions “primarily for thinking that it was their business to inquire or think about either the direction or the strategy of the march.”^e Ironically, in the case of Britain, Caesar is proud to present the Romans’ total ignorance (shared by almost all Gauls, he adds)^f as a sound justification for his landing there and thus gaining glory as the first Roman to report on its geography and ethnography. He evaluates his crossing of the Rhine River in the same terms.^g

§7. In short, successful campaigning in largely unknown territory demanded a mix of bravado, circumspection, and quick thinking, with constant improvisation, risk taking, and spur-of-the-moment decisions. Disaster could occur all too quickly, but time and again Caesar shows himself displaying the skill and energy to avoid it.^a The siege of Uxellodunum^b—a crucially important episode narrated by Hirtius^c—is a characteristic instance of how Caesar excelled in this environment. His very arrival here is unexpected. He finds the Romans confronted by a well-fortified and -supplied town in an impregnable position. So he determines to cut off its water supply, and does so by using archers to prevent access to the river, while commissioning extraordinary siege works that prevent the townspeople from accessing their spring below the walls; the Romans even tunnel under the spring to divert its channels.

§8. Caesar’s *Civil War* presents a marked contrast to the *Gallic War* narrative in the degree of geographical knowledge expected of readers. In this work the campaigns are fought for the most part within Roman territory. Thus the brief remarks made about, say, the geography of Pelusium and the Nile delta,^a or the mountain range linking Pontus with Lesser Armenia,^b are the exception. A concise review of omens favoring Caesar’s victory at Pharsalus^c refers matter-of-factly to happenings at Ephesus, Elis, Antioch in Syria, Ptolemais, Pergamum, and Tralles.^d To be sure, their locations are not integral to a grasp of campaigns in this instance, but such awareness is called for earlier in the same book when the run-up to the battle of Pharsalus is narrated. Consider the accounts of how Caesar’s generals obstruct Scipio in Macedonia and Thessaly,^e or of the movements of both Caesar and Pompey immediately prior to the battle.^f These demand an informed grasp of the geography of Greece. Such explanatory asides as “the Haliac-

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|------|---|------|--|
| W.6d | 1.39. | W.7b | Uxellodunum: Map 8.31, BX. |
| W.6e | 1.40. | W.7c | 8.33–43. |
| W.6f | 4.20. | W.8a | 12.26, 27; Pelusium, Nile delta: Map 12.26, Egypt inset. |
| W.6g | 4.19. | W.8b | 12.35; Pontus, Lesser Armenia: Map 12.36, Asia inset. |
| W.7a | One exception, when Caesar was surprised by an enemy attack with almost disastrous results—the only time this happened in all his campaigns—seems to have been mostly his own fault. When campaigning in Nervian territory, he was informed by captives about the location of the enemy but relied too much on the terrain and the protection of his cavalry, neglecting to take the usual precautions when building his camp in the proximity of enemy troops; see 2.19–20 and n. 2.19g. | W.8c | Pharsalus: Map 11.78. |
| | | W.8d | 11.105. Ephesus, Elis, Antioch in Syria, Pergamum, Tralles: Map 11.105. Ptolemais: location uncertain because the author does not indicate which of multiple places called Ptolemais is meant here. Especially 3.34–36; Macedonia, Thessaly: Map 11.3. |
| | | W.8e | 11.78–80. On these movements, see Map 11.78. |

mon River^g which divides Macedonia from Thessaly,” or “Gomphi, which is the first town in Thessaly as you come from Epirus,”^h are conspicuously rare. It is no less exceptional for two brief reflections on landscape to be offered in a chapter of the *Spanish War*: “Throughout almost the whole of Farther Spainⁱ the fertility of the soil and the equally plentiful supplies of water blunt the effect of sieges and make them difficult”; “the majority of the towns of the province are given a fair degree of protection by hills and are built on naturally elevated sites, so that it is not easy to approach or climb up to them.”^j

§9. Overall, there is no question that the *Civil War* narratives are written by authors who command an impressive grasp of the geography of Rome’s territories and assume the same of their readers. Where and how in the course of their upbringing Romans acquired and retained such insight remains a puzzle, however. Again, as with the *Gallic War*, the use of maps is not even hinted at. Meanwhile, at the local level a strong chance of going astray in the course of a journey persisted. By altogether omitting from his *Civil War* the famous episode of his crossing the Rubicon in January 49, Caesar need not mention how he lost his way for hours (granted, during the night) in trying to reach the river by back roads.^a

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- W.8g Haliacmon River: Map 11.78.
W.8h 3.36, 3.80, respectively; Gomphi, Epirus: Map 11.78.
W.8i Farther Spain: Map 14.5 and locator.
W.8j 14.8.
W.9a Suetonius, *Caesar* 31. Rubicon River, approximate location: Map 9.12, AX.

WEB ESSAY X

Caesar the General and Leader

Lukas de Blois

§1. Caesar is generally considered one of the best leaders and generals in history. This judgment is based on his campaigns in the Gallic and civil wars, about which his own commentaries offer rich information. During the first four decades of his life, until the year 61, however, Caesar had done the required military service but not been especially active in war. He had followed the standard political career scheme (*cursus honorum*) and received the usual military training by holding positions on the staff of army commanders or provincial governors. In 61, while governor in Spain, Caesar had the first opportunity to wage a successful war on his own, against the last free tribes in the northwest of the peninsula, which boosted his military reputation, although his claim for a triumph was thwarted by his opponents' machinations.^a

§2. As consul in 59, Caesar procured for himself a promising provincial governorship that comprised three provinces covering the entire northern frontier of Italy for an exceptional term of five years, which was later prolonged by five more. To strengthen his own political position and compete with the overwhelming prestige and influence Pompey had gained through his victories and conquests in the East, Caesar needed military successes. The Helvetii (in modern Switzerland) offered him the opportunity he sought by threatening to march through the Roman Province of Transalpine Gaul.^a

§3. During the great Gallic war that followed (58–50), Caesar turned out to be a superb general. He excelled in all the routine matters that were a general's responsibility: he showed appropriate concern for the necessary food and other supplies, paid much attention to reconnoitering and gathering information, carefully chose the places where to camp or fight, and cleverly organized the long marches of his armed forces so as to avoid traps or ambushes.^a One of his most important characteristics was his speed;

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X.1a See Web Essay F: Caesar the Politician, §§4–8.
X.2a 1.2–8.
X.3a See Web Essays V: Military Logistics, W: War and Geographical Knowledge, and Q: The Roman Army Camp.

as he himself often remarks, the *celeritas* with which he was able to operate was decisive in securing many of his successes.^b Caesar was also a good tactician who on and off the battlefield adroitly used all maneuvers Roman forces were able to execute.^c

§4. Sometimes, though, the best plans went wrong. In 57, campaigning against the Belgae in northern Gaul, Caesar managed to beat one of his enemies after the other, never permitting them to unite their entire army. On the eve of the second great battle of this campaign, against the Nervii, Caesar sent scouts and centurions ahead to select a secure place for the camp. They opted for an apparently well-protected hill on the Sabis River,^a but failed to notice that forests on the other side of this fordable river gave the enemy an opportunity to draw near without being sighted. The Nervii promptly took positions within these forests. Roman cavalry, with bowmen and slingers, skirmished with Gallic horsemen near the river but failed to detect the main force hidden in the woods. When the Romans were busy building their camp, the Nervii suddenly attacked in full force across the river. Blowing alarm signals, Caesar got together a barely sufficient force and quickly organized a makeshift battle order. He was greatly helped, as he himself admits, by the initiative of his officers and experienced soldiers, who did not panic but went into action without waiting for orders. During the ensuing battle Caesar moved from one corner of the battlefield to the other, intervening in places where the enemy was pressing hard or Roman troops were in confusion and, as he tells it, effectively organizing Roman resistance. He even reversed a partial setback by personally joining the soldiers of the 12th Legion and ordering them to spread out into a more efficient formation. Some of Caesar's supreme leadership qualities—demonstration of courage and determination, the ability to keep a cool head in critical situations, and his superb training of officers and soldiers—enabled him to turn threatening disaster into a complete victory.^b

§5. By contrast, during the siege of Alesia, the decisive fight of the Gallic campaign, Caesar's careful planning paid off. He built a double siege wall around the well-protected town into which his opponent Vercingetorix had withdrawn. This fortification kept Vercingetorix in and a large Gallic relief army out. The fighting culminated in a decisive battle that Caesar won by obtaining good intelligence about what was going on where, and by sending reserve units that had been skillfully stationed so that they could quickly support what were anticipated to be critical locations where the enemy might and did threaten to break through.^a Again Caesar showed great foresight and demonstrated outstanding courage and leadership, but credit is also due to his officers, who completely trusted him and were not afraid to act on their own initiative, and to his soldiers, who toiled day and night to complete the extensive and complex works in time and who fought bravely to ward off the enemies' attacks from both sides.

§6. Even so, there were occasions when Caesar failed. We already mentioned the near disaster in the battle against the Nervii in 57 (§4). In 52, during the rebellion of Vercingetorix, Caesar laid siege to Gergovia and launched a surprise attack, but lost control of his troops and was unable to stop their advance. After heavy losses he had to abandon the siege.^a At Dyrrachium in 48, trying to contain Pompey within an extended system of fortifications, he had not yet completed a key part of the fortifications when Pompey launched a brilliant multipronged breakthrough attack and forced Caesar to

X.3b See, for example, 7.12.

X.4b 2.18–28, especially 2.20, 2.25.

X.3c See Goldsworthy 1998.

X.5a 7.80–89; see Web Essay QQ: The Siege of Alesia.

X.4a For recent debates about the identification of this river, see n. 2.16c.

X.6a 7.36–53.

abandon his project, which had consumed many weeks of hard work. Moreover, on the same day a hastily planned counterattack in confusing terrain also ended in failure and panic, and caused more heavy losses.^b In both cases, Caesar does not explicitly take the blame himself, which is understandable given the purposes of his text, but, while criticizing his soldiers, he goes out of his way to list mitigating circumstances.^c Overall, though, a long string of victories, culminating at Alesia in the defeat of a massive pan-Gallic relief army and the capitulation of Vercingetorix, and at Pharsalus in an overwhelming victory over Pompey's much larger army, lent Caesar an almost charismatic authority among his soldiers and followers, and even filled his opponents with awe about his superior generalship, which intimidated, paralyzed, and discouraged them from confronting him in open-field battle.

§7. In December 50 and January 49 political tensions in Rome escalated into civil war. Caesar won this war in a series of campaigns that between 49 and 45 took him to Massilia, in southern France; Spain (49); Greece (48); Egypt (48–47); the province of Africa (46); and Spain again (45). In passing, he restored order in Egypt in 47, which was torn by succession struggles, and put down the threat posed by a new king of Pontus on the Black Sea (Pharnaces)—a victory that prompted him to coin the famous phrase *veni vidi vici* (I came, saw, and conquered).^a In most of these wars Caesar had to fight opponents who were more professional and sophisticated than his Gallic enemies had been. Pompey and his successors were his equals in strategy, tactics, logistics, reconnoitering, and choosing advantageous places and terrain for camps or battles. Yet they did not have as the core of their forces an army comparable to Caesar's, which had been seasoned and welded together by eight years of tough warfare.

§8. Even more than in the Gallic war, Caesar owed much of his success in the civil wars to his speed and daring. He often took enormous risks, not least when he crossed the Adriatic from Italy to Epirus, in late fall, outside the sailing season,^a with only half of his army (because he was short of troop transports) and against a vastly superior enemy navy commanded by his archenemy Bibulus.^b Nonetheless Caesar surprised his opponents, made a safe landing, eventually brought over most of the rest of his army, and challenged Pompey in an unusual and extensive campaign of siege-and-trench warfare near Dyrrachium.^c Although this particular campaign ended with a severe setback and heavy losses for Caesar, he extricated himself brilliantly by stealth and forced marches, despite supply shortages, and finally defeated Pompey at the battle of Pharsalus. There he employed an unusual tactical maneuver that thwarted Pompey's battle plan, which had relied on his vast superiority in cavalry.^d

§9. Sometimes, however, Caesar won by improvising effective responses to a new and threatening situation. In 46 at Ruspina, on an expedition in the countryside to secure urgently needed food supplies, he was attacked by a force vastly superior in cavalry that proceeded to surround his troops and employ swift and damaging hit-and-run attacks. It

X.6b 11.62–72.

X.6c 7.52.1–53.1, 11.73.4–5.

X.7a Plutarch, *Caesar* 50; Suetonius, *Caesar* 37.

X.8a The date in the Roman civil calendar was January 4, 48, but this calendar was about two months ahead of the solar year; see Web Essay BB: The Chronology of Caesar's Campaigns, §11, entry of January 4, 48; on the calendrical discrepancies, Appendix C: Roman Calendars, Dates, and Time, §4.

X.8b 11.6–8, 11.15, 11.24.

X.8c 11.42–72; see Web Essay SS: Trench Warfare at Dyrrachium. The African campaign in 46 (described in Book 13) shows many of the same characteristics.

X.8d Setbacks at Dyrrachium: 11.62–72; separation from Pompey's army: 11.75–79; victory at Pharsalus: §§10–13. See Web Essays TT: From Defeat at Dyrrachium to Victory at Pharsalus, and Y: Civil War Strategies, §§10–11; Goldsworthy 2004, 182–83.

was only by personally exhorting his men and improvising new tactics and changes in troop formation (most difficult to enact in the middle of battle) that he succeeded in dividing the enemy army and eventually repelling it.^a

§10. A remarkable characteristic of Caesar's leadership was the way in which he used his cadre of midlevel officers.^a Before 58, Caesar had been one of the most adroit manipulators of popular favor in Rome, relying on numerous assistants from the higher orders as well as lower strata in urban Roman society, who helped stir up and organize the Roman masses. All these assistants were rewarded generously.^b Thus, knowing the value of dedicated middle cadres, Caesar paid much attention to his military tribunes, prefects, and the centurions who formed the backbone of every Roman army.^c He rewarded his officers generously and honored them, not least by seating them at separate tables at the banquets he organized in his provinces.^d

§11. Caesar's relationship to his centurions is perhaps most remarkable. He often explicitly mentions them as a separate category in reports of consultations, accounts of courageous acts in battle, or lists of casualties.^a Although a legion counted more than 60 centurions and Caesar at the time commanded eight legions, he was able, in a critical situation during the battle against the Nervii in 57, to appeal to the centurions of two faltering legions by calling on them by name. The centurions, selected and promoted for their personal qualities and courage, bore the brunt of the fighting and, accordingly, suffered the heaviest losses. To give but two examples, at Pharsalus in 48 Caesar lost 200 men, among them 30 centurions, and at Dyrrachium 960 men, including 32 centurions and military tribunes.^b The men Caesar singles out for their exceptional bravery are almost all centurions: men like Scaeva, whose shield showed 120 perforations after he led his single cohort in holding its camp against four Pompeian legions at Dyrrachium.^c No senior officer was ever singled out like this. Not surprisingly, the centurions were fiercely loyal to Caesar.^d

§12. The army's middle cadre also had the important function of maintaining the connection between the supreme command and the rank and file. Caesar exploited this role purposefully not only to convey information but also to influence the soldiers. In a tense situation on the eve of the campaign against Ariovistus in 58, he talked to his officers and centurions, not to his troops;^a in a war council, he carefully explained the situation and censured the officers for their weakness in the face of the enemy. When the officers passed this along to the troops, the atmosphere changed quickly and dramatically: the soldiers approached their tribunes and the highest-ranking centurions, asking them to convey their apologies to Caesar.^b Later crises, for example during the fighting at Dyrrachium in 48 and a mutiny at Placentia in 47, were settled in similar ways: on both occasions officers expressed the collective apology of their troops to Caesar.^c In the civil war, attempts to use officers with personal connections to influence the enemy's troops were frequently made on both sides.^d

§13. Caesar made sure to reward the officers of his middle cadre generously, both

X.9a 13.13–18. See Diagram 13.17. Similarities with the way Caesar saved the day in the battle against the Nervii in 57 (2.25–26) are obvious.

X.10a De Blois 2007, 174.

X.10b De Blois 2011, 84.

X.10c See Appendix D: The Roman Military, §§9–18.

X.10d Suetonius, *Caesar* 48. On rewards, see §15.

X.11a For example, 1.40.1, 2.17.1, 2.25.1, 7.51.1, 11.53, 11.71.1, 11.91 with 11.99.2.

X.11b 11.71.1, 11.99.1.

X.11c 11.51.1, 11.53.3–4.

X.11d 13.44–46.

X.12a Cassius Dio 38.35.3, followed by a long speech that massively expands and embellishes what Caesar himself says in his commentaries (see n. X.12b).

X.12b 1.40–41.

X.12c Appian, *Civil Wars* 2.47, 2.63.

X.12d For instance, 10.28, 11.19; Appian, *Civil Wars* 2.43.

with money and promotions. When shown Scaeva's shield with its 120 perforations and being told "that the fort had been saved largely through his efforts," Caesar writes, he thanked him for the services he had rendered to himself and the state, "gave him a prize of 200,000 *sesterces* and announced his promotion from centurion of the 8th cohort to chief centurion of the legion. Afterwards, Caesar very generously awarded the cohort double pay, grain, clothing, and military decorations."^a Knowing what to expect from Caesar's generosity, and depending on his victory to receive their promised rewards, a number of centurions volunteered, at the beginning of the civil war against Pompey, each to equip a cavalryman with his own savings,^b and Caesar was able to borrow enough money from his staff officers and centurions to grant his soldiers a bonus,^c thus placing a lien on the centurions' loyalty and purchasing the goodwill of the troops. After Caesar's dictatorship and the civil war victories of his political heirs, some of Caesar's officers were able to build expensive funerary monuments and bestow lavish benefactions on their communities.^d Overall, the way in which Caesar treated his middle cadres should be seen as one of the main reasons for his successes.

§14. Of course, Caesar also had in his army officers, assistants, and personal followers (*comites*) from the higher orders in society: senators and sons of senators, equestrians, and local notables from towns in Italy. Remarkably, though, his staff counted fewer scions of old aristocratic families than Pompey's, and more members of the lower-ranking Roman and Italian aristocracies, and Roman citizens from regions such as Spain and the Po valley.^a If Caesar deliberately selected his higher cadre from these social layers he showed keen political insight, for these men depended on their general for their success and career prospects much more than members of old, rich, and independent senatorial clans. This is perhaps an additional reason for the remarkable loyalty most of his higher officers displayed toward Caesar. Most, though not all. Titus Labienus, Caesar's best and most reliable legate in Gaul, changed sides at the beginning of the civil war because he wished to remain loyal perhaps to the state, certainly to his former patron Pompey, and perhaps because toward the end tensions had emerged in his relationship with Caesar.^b He was not the only one to opt for this course, but remarkably few others did.

§15. As supreme commander, Caesar insisted on absolute discipline, obedience, and trust in his authority and capacity as a leader. This affected his subordinates on all levels. Although he valued the independence and initiative of his senior officers, and sometimes crucially depended on them, he also instilled in them a clear understanding of the differences between their and his own responsibilities. At Dyrrachium in 48, a legate who was in charge during Caesar's absence saved a camp from a severe attack by Pompey's legions and repulsed these legions, but kept his troops from pursuing them too far. Caesar comments: "Many people did think that, if he had been willing to pursue the enemy more keenly, the war could have been concluded that day. But his decision does not seem blameworthy. For the responsibilities of a legate differ from those of a general: the former

X.13a 11.53.5; due to a textual corruption, the monetary figure may be too high. See also, for example, 7.89.5, 8.4. See Appendix D: The Roman Military, §13 for the ranks of the centurions, and §17 for military decorations and rewards.

X.13b Suetonius, *Caesar* 68.1.

X.13c See 9.39.3–4. The claim of McDonnell 1990 that not Caesar but his opponent Petreius did this has no solid support; see De Blois 2011, 86–87.

X.13d Two inscriptions in *Année épigraphique* 1982,

395, and *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* X: 3903 offer examples. Book 13.54, by contrast, offers an example of how Caesar punished officers who abused his trust and proved disloyal. Gruen 1995, 115–19.

X.14a X.14b 11.13.3; Cicero, *Letters to Atticus* 7.12.5; see Gruen 1995, 63, 174; Appendix A: Who's Who in Caesar, §27.

has to act entirely according to his orders, while the latter has to consider his decisions independently, taking all factors into account.” The legate’s decision, Caesar concludes, was correct: he did not want to fight a risky decisive battle and thereby give the impression of arrogating the general’s prerogatives.^a Caesar’s rare combination of insistence on discipline, criticism of failure, and understanding of the soldiers’ psychological needs enabled him time and time again to help his troops leave setbacks behind, focus on future tasks, and restore their morale.^b In an episode of the *African War*, the author describes the almost magical authority Caesar enjoyed and the unconditional trust his soldiers had in their general. At that time, they felt overwhelmed by fear and the pressure of unfamiliar circumstances. “All they could do was look to their general’s face, which was full of heartiness and unbelievably good spirits. His courage was like a standard he carried straight up high, right in front of him. This calmed the men down, and trusting his expertise and planning, they all hoped that everything would turn out well and easy for them.”^c

§16. The soldiers’ trust in their general had many good reasons, quite apart from his strategic and tactical abilities. Caesar treated them with respect as Roman citizens,^a shared their exertions, and cared for their well-being. He trained them with great personal involvement, showing them carefully and patiently how to adjust to an enemy’s unconventional fighting methods.^b More than once, both in Gaul and during the civil war, he decided to forgo opportunities for almost certain victories because they would have caused too many casualties among his men. He explained this to them when they bitterly complained about the missed opportunity, and stood his ground.^c On other occasions, too, he hesitated to expose his men to grave risks, even if his caution was likely to give the enemy an advantage.^d At Avaricum in 52, when the army had to deal with miserable weather and serious food shortages while building an enormous ramp and towers to attack the town, Caesar camped out with them and offered to abandon the siege if conditions became intolerable for them; although they proudly refused, it was his concern that mattered.^e His style of leadership, personal and from the front, and his willingness, when necessary, to expose himself to danger must have impressed them.^f

§17. Even Caesar, the successful, charismatic leader who cared for the needs of his officers and soldiers, had to cope with mutinies when he placed too heavy a burden on his troops or failed to meet the expectations he had raised. In 49, he faced a mutiny at Placentia in the Po valley (which he fails to mention in his *Civil War*), and in 47 his lieutenant Mark Antony could hardly keep Caesarian soldiers from pillaging friendly towns in Campania, where they were encamped.^a The soldiers involved had numerous grievances: shortages of food and other supplies, arrears in pay, the delay in receiving their promised rewards, and, in the civil war, a strict prohibition from plundering. They had served continuously for years and suffered heavy losses. In addition to demanding back pay and the promised rewards, some soldiers wanted to be discharged. Years of continuous fighting had clearly given these soldiers a strong sense of unity and a keen understanding of their

X.15a 11.51.1–5; see also 3.17.7; dependence on the officers’ independent initiative: for example, 2.20.3–4.

X.15b See especially 6.42, 7.52–53.1, 11.73. See also 1.39–40 and §12 for another aspect of the same episode.

X.15c 13.10–11.1.

X.16a This is especially visible in the civil war, where several speeches explicitly address the soldiers in their function as citizens; see Web Essay EE: Caesar’s Portrait of “Caesar,” §6.

X.16b 13.71.1, 13.72.4–5.

X.16c 7.19, 9.71–72 (see 9.74.7 for Caesar’s vindication). Caesar was also reluctant to kill Roman citizen opponents when he could obtain victory by other means.

X.16d See especially 9.62–64.

X.16e 7.17.

X.16f 2.25, 7.88.

X.17a On both mutinies, see Appian, *Civil Wars* 2.47, 2.92–94; Cassius Dio 41.26, 42.52–3; Plutarch, *Caesar* 51.

own interests. They had become well aware of their value to Caesar, especially in a civil war, and were not afraid to express their feelings and insist on their demands. Despite the brave front Caesar put up, addressing the mutineers as *quirites* (citizens) and offering to discharge them on the spot, he essentially had to give in and compromise with the soldiers, falling back temporarily from a charismatic, transforming type of leadership to a transactional one that obliged him to negotiate instead of giving orders.^b These events anticipated developments in the civil wars of the triumviral period (43–42), when the armies came to dictate policies and impose compromises on their generals.^c

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X.17b This leadership terminology was borrowed from MacGregor Burns 1978.

X.17c See Brunt 1988, 240–80; Keaveney 2007.

WEB ESSAY Y

Civil War Strategies

Arthur M. Eckstein

§1. When civil wars begin, political problems are overtaken by military ones.^a I shall focus first on the specific military problems that confronted Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus and Gaius Julius Caesar in early January 49, when the Senate declared Caesar a public enemy; then we will discuss the broader strategic problems that characterized the subsequent world war.

§2. No ancient writer is critical of the generalship of Caesar, either in Gaul or in the civil war; the ancients ranked him with Alexander the Great.^a One aspect of that greatness was preparedness: when the crisis with the Senate struck, Caesar already had one veteran legion (the 13th) present at Ravenna in the eastern Po valley, near the boundary with Italy proper, and two additional veteran legions (the 12th and 8th) were crossing the Alps or were already in the western Po valley, along with twenty-two cohorts newly raised in Gaul (the equivalent of a further two legions).^b One must remember that, although we follow here the ancient sources in referring to December and January, the Roman calendar was running several weeks ahead of the solar calendar; thus when the crisis came, it was solar November,^c and the Alps were not yet completely closed, cutting Caesar off from Gaul.

§3. Still, Theodor Mommsen (a famous nineteenth-century German historian of Rome) was correct that the odds against Caesar in January 49 appeared daunting.^a Pompey and the *optimates*^b controlled all the provinces except the Gauls and Illyricum, had all the client states at their disposal, had the backing of a large part of the senatorial aristocracy—along with two veteran legions in Italy and seven more under the command of Pompey's

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Y.1a See Web Essay J: The Legitimacy of Caesar's Wars.

- Y.2a See, for example, Appian, *Civil Wars* 2.149–54.
- Y.2b Caesar in the *Civil War* fails to mention the movements of these other four legions directly, but their location in early January can be deduced from when they caught up with Caesar's advance: the 12th joined him at Cingulum, near Ancona, in early February (9.15); the 8th and the twenty-two newly levied cohorts joined him at Corfinium about February 15 (9.18). See Adcock 1932, 634–39 and Web Essays BB: The Chronology of Caesar's Campaigns, §9, and JJ: The *Civil War* as a Work of Propaganda, §7.
- Y.2c See Appendix C: Roman Calendars, Dates, and Time, §7.
- Y.3a Mommsen 1895, 175, 182, 187.
- Y.3b On *optimates*, see the Introduction, §1.

legates in Spain. The two legions in Italy had served with Caesar in Gaul, but in fact these soldiers fought loyally for Pompey and the republic.^c Moreover, buoyed by a great outpouring of popular concern during his serious illness in the summer of 50, Pompey had boasted that he only needed to stamp his foot in Italy and thousands of veterans would rise to his support.^d This was not an idle boast: Pompey began recruiting soldiers in Italy in early December 50,^e and by middle or late January he had fifty-four newly raised cohorts, forty-three of them in eastern Italy, where they could be used to block Caesar's advance down the eastern coast. With the two veteran legions, this gave Pompey the equivalent of seven legions to Caesar's five.^f

§4. This was not a large local superiority, but, clearly, Pompey was neither completely unprepared nor did he lack energy in recruiting troops for the war.^a At the beginning of January Pompey seemed ready to fight for Italy. He may have calculated that with his legions in Spain, which potentially posed a serious threat to Caesar, and given rumors of disaffection among Caesar's own soldiers in Gaul,^b Caesar might not dare to invade Italy proper but would remain on the defensive.^c Still, it seems that Pompey had always thought he might abandon Italy and retreat across the Adriatic, to fight a war against Caesar from his strongholds in the East.^d When Caesar, instead of waiting, launched his spectacular attack southward through Italy, and local resistance failed to materialize even in Pompey's home region of Picenum, Pompey hesitated and then decided that leaving Italy was the best course. He has been condemned for this ever since—not least because of his previous self-confident statements.^e

§5. By contrast, while Caesar's immediately available forces were not as small as some ancient and modern writers imply,^a he chose to advance against larger enemy forces when winter was about to cut him off from Gallic reinforcements and his own army in the Po valley was not yet united. The operation was very risky, but we should realize that it was not foreign either to Caesar's style of generalship or even to Roman strategy in general.

§6. Daring advances with whatever troops were available, prepared as far as possible but not necessarily well, were typical of Caesar. He followed this strategy in winter 55/54 to put down Gallic attacks on his garrisons, pouncing on the enemy with whatever troops were available, not waiting to gather a large or well-supplied army, and he did the same when facing Gallic rebellions in 52 and 51.^a Behind this sort of aggressive, risky advance—the famous “Caesarian speed” (*celeritas*)—lay the confidence that he and his troops could handle whatever situation developed out of it. Moreover, such behavior was not unusual for Roman commanders; the Roman army was not always a slow and inexorable mincing machine. Roman generals often responded to strategic dilemmas by going right at the enemy, no matter what the circumstances or the state of their own preparation, hoping that a sharp punch would protect their own flanks and carry far more than its weight both militarily and psychologically. Scipio Africanus' startling advance in 210 B.C.E. from the

Y.3c 11.94.5.

Y.3d Plutarch, *Pompey* 61; Appian, *Civil Wars* 2.37.

Y.3e Cicero, *Letters to Atticus* 7.3.2; 7.4.2.

Y.3f Ridley 2004, 149–50 (calculation with sources).

Y.4a As many scholars claim: for example, Syme 1939, 49; Gruen 1984, 482–83.

Y.4b See 9.6.2; see also Plutarch, *Pompey* 57.

Y.4c See, for instance, Greenhalgh 1981, 114–18.

Y.4d Cicero, *Letters to Atticus* 8.11.2, 9.10.6. See especially von Fritz 1942.

Y.4e The condemnations start with Cicero, *Letters to Atticus* 7.13.1–2 (January 22, 49) and 7.21.1 (February 8); see Plutarch, *Pompey* 60–61 and, for a modern example, Burns 1966. But some modern scholars consider the abandonment of Italy a brilliant plan: thus von Fritz 1942.

Y.5a Orosius (6.15) asserts that he had five cohorts.

Y.6a See discussion in Goldsworthy 1998, 196–98; Ridley 2004, 134.

Hiberus (modern Ebro) River to seize New Carthage, in Spain, offers one successful example, but there are many others—though some turned out disastrously.^b

§7. In the event, although Caesar's lightning advance faced larger forces, these were widely separated, and he could take them one by one—while his legions caught up with him and each success in turn yielded more recruits from the local populace.^a It is hard to believe that Caesar's offensive was in itself a total surprise: a more cautious commander would not have done it, but Pompey and his associates knew Caesar far better than we do, and were familiar with his decisiveness, ruthlessness, and the way he conducted military operations. Perhaps it was the scale and rapidity of Caesar's successes—which surely were unexpected—that led a distraught Pompey to abandon first Rome (on January 17) and then Italy (in mid-March). He need not have intended this from the beginning (though he had this option in reserve); however, no strategic plan can explain the state treasury being left at Rome to fall into Caesar's hands.^b But Pompey eventually led his forces and much of the Senate across the Adriatic to recoup in the East and fight a longer war. Indeed, perhaps one reason behind Caesar's risky blitzkrieg strategy was to prevent exactly this, to bring Pompey to battle in Italy before he could go off to his eastern strongholds—to have a short war. Hence Caesar's anger when large Pompeian forces under L. Domitius Ahenobarbus (consul 54) delayed him by forcing a siege of their blocking position at Corfinium, in central Italy.^c

§8. Still, Caesar's gamble had brought him large dividends, including control of Italy and an even larger military reputation. But he then faced the strategic problem of being caught in Italy between large Pompeian forces in Spain and Greece. He dealt with this danger with typical energy. Why Pompey's generals in Spain did not take advantage of Caesar's absence to invade Gaul along the Mediterranean coast is mysterious, but in the early summer of 49 Caesar—leaving forces to guard Italy—returned to Gaul and then took his main army over the Pyrenees into Spain. The Pompeians, led by the experienced Lucius Afranius (consul 60), may have hoped to draw out the fighting until winter, forcing Caesar to face serious strategic threats both in Spain and from the East. But Caesar outmaneuvered them and within a few weeks compelled the Pompeian legions to surrender rather than starve.^a

§9. Having secured Spain, Caesar could turn to what was now his main problem: Pompey and the *optimates* in Greece. It is striking that Pompey in summer 49 did not take advantage of Caesar's absence to reinvade Italy. The Caesarians periodically feared this would happen,^a but Pompey may have felt he did not yet have a large enough army, although he had nine legions.^b His passivity here stands in stark contrast to Caesar's next and again boldly (almost recklessly) aggressive move: with forces that turned out to be inadequate, he crossed the Adriatic in winter—although the Pompeian navy controlled the sea and it was the season of storms—and then advanced north up the coast on Pompey's main Adriatic base at Dyrrachium (Greek Epidamnus).

§10. Here the danger that was always inherent in Caesar's strategic boldness revealed itself: like the German World War II general Rommel at El Alamein in Egypt, Caesar found

Y.6b Goldsworthy 1998, 193–204. Disasters as an occasional result of such aggressive tactics: Varus in Germany in 9 C.E., Cerialis against Boudicca in Britain in 60, Florus and then Gallus in Judaea in 66. On the dangers to which Caesar's aggressiveness exposed his troops, see Keppie 1984, 101.

Y.7a See 9.18.

Y.7b Ridley 2004, 134, 138–39.

Y.7c Editor's note (Raaflaub): see Caesar's nasty depiction of Domitius at 9.19.

Y.8a See Gelzer 1968, 214–17.

Y.9a See 11.29.

Y.9b Note that 11.11.2 has Pompey in winter 49/48 still busily recruiting in Macedonia.

himself at the end of a long supply line conducting a hopeless siege against larger forces.^a Pompey then attacked and defeated Caesar outright and forced him to retreat. Though Caesar's army in Greece received reinforcements in the spring, it was always short of supplies. Caesar was forced to retreat eastward into Thessaly; Pompey and the *optimates* pursued him. They were rightly confident of victory when they caught up with Caesar's bedraggled army at Pharsalus (summer 48): as always, Pompey's infantry forces were larger and he massively outnumbered Caesar in cavalry. Although Caesar claims his army was still in good physical condition and ready to wear Pompey's forces down because the latter were unused to hard labor, Appian offers the opposite view:^b Pompey's supplies were abundant and coming in from all quarters, whereas Caesar's forces were having to scrounge for food as best they could in the immediate area of Pharsalus, after a campaign at Dyrrachium that had been haunted by lack of supplies. This is why in Appian's version, it is *Pompey* who wanted to delay the final confrontation, in order to wear out Caesar's army before attacking; but he was pressured into attacking by his overeager senatorial colleagues. Appian and Caesar may well be stressing different aspects of the situation: this was not the first time that Caesar's aggressiveness had led his army into logistical difficulties, but his hardy men had always come through, and he had confidence they would again.

§11. Pompey's plan at Pharsalus was to overwhelm Caesar's right wing with his massively superior cavalry, backed by light infantry, which would then sweep round and push Caesar's infantry against the Enipeus River, or take it from the rear. It was a good plan, taking advantage of Pompey's superior numbers. But Caesar foresaw it, and counteracted it by moving one cohort from several of his legions into a reserve attack force behind his right wing. At the proper moment this force charged Pompey's advancing cavalry in the flank, drove them from the field, slaughtered the light infantry, and itself outflanked Pompey's left while Caesar's center charged. To take units from several separate legions, units that had never cooperated before, and create a devastating ad hoc counterattacking force: this is a striking military achievement. It speaks to the training, experience, and cohesion these men had—and for this, too, Caesar was responsible.^a

§12. After the catastrophic defeat at Pharsalus, the Pompeian army dissolved; Pompey himself fled to Egypt, where he was assassinated. But the war would drag on for almost three more years, and it was more than a mopping-up operation; Caesar's enemies fought fiercely both in North Africa^a and again in raising large forces in Spain, and he came close to disaster more than once. But Pharsalus was the decisive victory.

§13. Here a final point should be made. The praise of Caesar's cleverness and *celeritas* by both ancient and modern commentators, and the criticism of Pompey's failure to defend Italy, are largely based on hindsight: we know that Caesar ultimately won at

Y.10a See 11.47.

Y.10b 11.85.2; Appian, *Civil Wars* 2.66; see also 2.73.

Appian may have drawn on a different source (Asinius Pollio?).

Y.11a On the battle of Pharsalus, see 11.85–95 with footnotes, especially n. 11.94g; Rosenstein 2009, 94–97; Web Essay TT: From Defeat at Dyrrachium to Victory at Pharsalus. Editors' note (Strassler, Raafaub): Caesar's achievement here is so amazing that it raises the possibility that his army practiced such maneuvers among an inventory of drilled tactical responses to military emergencies—in this case a flank endangered by superior num-

bers. Other evidence, too, suggests that Caesar's army engaged in intensive formation training that enabled it to execute complex maneuvers in the middle of intensive battles (see, for example, 2.26.1–2, 13.17).

Y.12a In North Africa Caesar's opponents were aided by the fact that, after defeating the Egyptians, Caesar wasted valuable time enjoying himself with Cleopatra, which gave his foes an opportunity to reorganize their forces. See, however, Web Essay BB: The Chronology of Caesar's Campaigns, §12, for the time Caesar spent in Egypt after his victory.

Pharsalus. But the balance of military forces at Pharsalus pointed to a Pompeian victory. And this was because Caesar's celebrated dash had brought his army into a terribly perilous situation—the kind of peril that this sort of strategy often created.^a And if Pompey had won at Pharsalus, as he could and perhaps should have done, our understanding of generalship in the civil war would be different. Pompey would then appear in the history books as the genius, the master of strategy, the man who—ignoring traditional Roman (and Mediterranean-wide) codes of honor—tricked Caesar into recklessly pursuing a “fleeing” general—Pompey who had abandoned Italy—until Pompey turned on him at the right moment and destroyed him. The campaign that led to Pharsalus would then be seen as the equivalent of Hannibal’s tricking the consul Gaius Flamininus into pursuing him to Lake Trasimene in 217; discussion of the strategy of the civil war would take an entirely different tone, and posterity’s praise and criticism would be reversed. But Caesar at Pharsalus not only had *celeritas* and dash; he had trained his troops superbly, he had great tactical skill, a coup d’oeil honed by a decade of fighting in Gaul—and luck.

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Y13a For examples, see n. Y.6b.

WEB ESSAY Z

Patterns of Roman Land Warfare

Jonathan P. Roth

§1. The writings of Julius Caesar are the only complete narrative account by a great general of his own wars to have survived from antiquity. They inform us not only about his tactical and strategic moves, and those of his opponents, but also about Caesar's thinking and military methods. There is no question that Caesar was a superb commander, one of the greatest in history, and that he understood that war, as noted by the military theorist Carl von Clausewitz (1780–1831), was, and is, "politics carried out by other [that is, violent] means."^a In addition to his strategic skills, Caesar was a master tactician, having what Clausewitz terms the coup d'oeil—the "stroke of an eye"—a great general's ability to quickly understand a rapidly changing and confusing military situation.^b Accordingly, in some cases Caesar advanced his forces quickly, even recklessly, while in others he showed caution or even crept forward, feeling out the enemy. Indeed, Suetonius writes, "It is hard to say if he showed more caution or more daring in his campaigns."^c Caesar's ability to instinctively choose one course or the other is a sign of his military genius. He also exhibited personal courage and fighting skill, often placing himself at risk in battle. In his writing, Caesar emphasizes the importance of unit commanders leading by example and from the front, frequently mentioning centurions doing so, and the relatively heavy losses they consequently suffered. While he clearly thought leadership was important, Caesar emphasizes that the common soldiers' courage (*virtus*) could turn the tide of battle. This essay, though, is less concerned with Caesar the general and the personal traits that enabled him to excel as a leader^d than with his methods of warfare and how these fit into, or deviate from, common patterns of Roman warfare.^e Issues I merely touch upon are discussed in greater detail by other essays in this volume.^e

NOTE: All dates are B.C.E. (Before the Common Era) unless otherwise indicated. The dates given in the Web essays are those of the traditional Roman civil calendar up to January 45, when the Julian calendar was instated. For more on the Roman system of time-counting, see Appendix C: Roman Calendars, Dates, and Time. For all Web essays, go to landmarkcaesar.com. Source references without indication of title or author name refer to the texts in *The Landmark Julius Caesar*. Modern works are listed fully in the Bibliography. All Web essays are copyright © 2017 by Robert B. Strassler and Kurt

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Z.1a Clausewitz 1982, 119.

Z.1b Ibid., 141–42.

Z.1c Suetonius, *Caesar* 78.

Z.1d On these aspects, see Web Essay X: Caesar the General and Leader.

Z.1e See, in particular, Appendix D: The Roman Military, and Web Essays S: Military Engineering and Sieges, and Y: Civil War Strategies.

§2. Romans usually conducted their wars during a campaigning season, which began in late spring or early summer and ended in the fall. This was largely due to the need to ensure the supply of fodder for horses and draft animals.^a From a military perspective, the year had only two seasons: one (warm, summer) suitable for campaigning, the other (cold, winter) not. During the latter, the army went into winter quarters, whenever possible in cities or towns; in Gaul, the legions usually constructed their own fortified camps, and in some cases, when the usual pattern was disrupted, they were forced to use improvised quarters.^b Of course, in all seasons, bad weather or the lack of food and fodder affected movement and combat.^c Fighting during the winter was generally avoided, but Caesar did not hesitate to break this pattern and surprise the enemy with attacks in harsh winter conditions.^d Although he was aware of (and often comments on) the crucial dependence of military success on proper logistical planning, and criticizes his Gallic opponents for neglecting such planning,^e his own strategic decisions frequently caused serious supply shortages. His soldiers were sometimes forced to endure great hardship and, in extreme circumstances, to improvise by using unusual edible plants.^f Access to drinking water was also decisive and influenced Caesar's own decisions as well as his sometimes dramatic and extensive efforts to cut the enemy off from their water sources.^g

§3. Unlike in campaigns conducted within the Roman empire, in those beyond the borders Roman generals were usually faced with a critical lack of information.^a Thorough intelligence was thus crucial, and Caesar offers rich evidence on this topic.^b The Romans did not organize their scouts, used for tactical reconnaissance, into specialized units; in fact, even slaves could serve in that role. Scouts were usually mounted and led by experienced officers. At times, the general even undertook his own reconnaissance. Clouds of dust and smoke also yielded information on the movement of troops, and fires were avoided lest the enemy be alerted.^c Naturally, the quality of the information gathered depended on many circumstances, not least the quality of the scouts themselves. In Caesar's first campaign in Gaul, for example, an experienced officer mistook Romans for Gauls, which cost a likely early victory over the Helvetii.^d Most strategic information came from interrogating political leaders, locals, traders, captives, and deserters.^e As was the case until modern times, the general personally analyzed military intelligence that he received, though he might call a council to aid in the process. His ability to filter reliable from unreliable information was crucial,^f not least since methods of disinformation, carried by spurious deserters and false rumors, were commonly used. Success often depended on cunning and the use of stratagems.^g The Romans used simple codes (or as

Z.2a For Caesar's ongoing concern with this aspect, see, for example, 5.22, 8.26, 8.39, 8.46; see also Web Essay V: Military Logistics.

Z.2b Cities, towns, or villages: 3.1, 7.90, 11.31. Improvised quarters: 8.5.

Z.2c 12.43, 13.67; Gilliver 1999, 47, 94.

Z.2d 3.2, 3.7, 7.8, 8.4, 11.6, 12.59, 13.3, 13.7.

Z.2e See Web Essay V: Military Logistics; Gauls: for example 2.10; conversely, Caesar mentions Gallic efforts to cut Caesar's army off from supplies: 1.48, 3.23, 4.30, 7.14, 7.55, 7.64, 8.30, 8.47. See Goldsworthy 1996, 104–5; 2007, 102–4; Erdkamp 1998, 141–55; Roth 1999, 279–325; Gilliver 1999, 55–62.

Z.2f 7.17, 11.47–48, 13.24. The supply crisis described at 9.48–52 was caused by unusually severe storms and flooding.

Z.2g See especially 8.40–44, 9.73, 9.78, 9.81–84, 11.15, 11.49, 11.97, 11.100, 12.5–9.

Z.3a See Web Essay W: War and Geographical Knowledge.

Z.3b Goldsworthy 1996, 125–31; Goldsworthy 2007, 98–101; Sheldon 2007, 100–140.

Z.3c 4.32, 5.48, 13.12. Avoiding fires: 6.29.

Z.3d 1.21–22. The commander's own reconnaissance: 13.12.2.

Z.3e The evidence for the issues discussed here can be found in the Index under “intelligence.”

Z.3f The destruction of Sabinus' winter camp in 54 and Curio's failure in his African campaign of 49 were caused by the leaders' inability to do so: 5.28–31, 10.36–38.

Z.3g For example, 3.18, 5.49, 6.7. See further §14 on stratagems.

Caesar did in Gaul, the Greek language) but normally wrote messages, even if they could be intercepted, “in the clear.”^h

§4. Command and control were key elements in Roman land warfare.^a Communication between dispersed units usually took the form of letters, mostly carried by mounted messengers, although these were vulnerable to interception.^b Communication on the battlefield was difficult but no less crucial. Some tribunes and senior centurions stayed close to the commander during the battle and might be sent out with orders or to take over tactical command. Conversely, officers stationed with their units might be called to the commander to receive orders.^c Occasionally, generals gave orders directly to certain units.^d Combat circumstances changed rapidly, and Caesar emphasizes the importance of subordinates staying close to their troops and making decisions on their own.^e Like all ancient armies, Caesar used standards, especially the legionary eagles (*aquilae*), to provide orientation on the march and in battle. Trumpets and flags gave tactical signals for the call to arms, the beginning of battle, or retreat. Smoke and fire signals were used to raise an alarm.^f The high level of training and discipline Caesar’s legions had achieved is indicated by their ability to maneuver and change formation in the midst of battle on command, to retreat in good order, and even to feign flight, in response to signals or commands passed orally through the ranks.^g Musical instruments and battle cries enhanced the troops’ fighting spirit. In an interesting authorial comment, Caesar criticizes Pompey for suppressing, at Pharsalus, his army’s running attack and ordering it to absorb the attack of Caesar’s troops in order to preserve its orderly ranks. Part of Caesar’s genius was his ability to know when to encourage his troops’ enthusiasm, and when it needed to be restrained for tactical advantage.^h

§5. Religion was important to the Romans and other ancient peoples, especially in war, although it is not always clear when it was being used out of superstition or convention, and when simply as a morale booster.^a Of course, these categories are not mutually exclusive. Caesar carried out traditional rituals, such as the lustration (the cleansing of the army after a war) and prebattle sacrifice,^b but he does not seem to have been particularly superstitious and never allowed religion or omens to interfere with strategic or tactical planning. An extreme example is Caesar’s decision, in 53, to place his army’s entire baggage train in the very camp that in the previous year had seen the destruction of fifteen cohorts by rebellious Eburones. When raiding Germans launched a surprise attack on this camp, many soldiers panicked, not least because they tied this attack to the place’s “bad luck.”^c Caesar refers occasionally to the importance of the favor of the gods, more often to that of fortune;^d both certainly were important to the soldiers and affected their performance. Caesar was not above manipulating the meaning of omens for the purpose of improving morale.^e

§6. Political ideology also played a role in Caesar’s campaigns, especially during the

Z.3h See, for example, 14.26. Greek language; 5.48.

Z.4a Peddie 1994, 19–41; Goldsworthy 1999, 146–62; Anglim et al. 2002, 135–45; Gilliver 2007, 136–38.

Z.4b See especially 5.45–46, 8.39, 9.17, 9.19, 10.36–37, 11.78, 12.38.

Z.4c 3.4–5, 3.26, 5.37.

Z.4d 2.26, 13.31.

Z.4e 2.20.

Z.4f Signals: 1.52, 2.20, 7.47, 11.65, 11.89.

Z.4g 2.26, 3.4, 7.48, 13.15, 13.17; Goldsworthy 1996, 279–82; Gilliver 1999, 161.

Z.4h 11.92.4–5.

Z.5a See, on this topic, Rüpke 1990 and Rich 2013 (with ample bibliography).

Z.5b Caesar hardly talks about the latter; for a *lustratio*, see 8.52.1 with n. 8.52d.

Z.5c 6.37.8.

Z.5d See the Index under “gods” and “Fortune.”

Z.5e A famous example, though not mentioned in the *African War*, is the story that Caesar, upon disembarking in Africa in 47, slipped and fell “but turned an unfavorable omen into a favorable one by clasping the ground and shouting: ‘Africa, I hold you’” (Suetonius, *Caesar* 59).

civil wars, conveyed in the form of speeches, pamphlets, and other types of propaganda.^a During the conflict with Pompey and his followers, individuals, units, and, at times, entire armies changed sides.^b In cases in which troops were incorporated into the victor's army after they capitulated, a potential for later conflicts of loyalty remained.^c Soldiers sometimes took the initiative in communicating, and negotiating, with those on the opposing side.^d Opportunism clearly played a role during the civil wars, and land and money were offered to troops as incentives. One should not, however, cynically dismiss the soldiers' political sentiments: some soldiers stayed loyal to their side in the civil war even when faced with torture and death.^e

§7. Romans generally moved their armies by day, though night marches or departures during the third or fourth night watch (that is, between midnight and daybreak) were fairly common and occur frequently in Caesar's wars. The Roman military distinguished between a regular march rate (*iustum iter*) and one for forced marches (*magnum iter*). Legionaries carried personal items and supplies in a pack (*sarcina*) and were said to be *impediti* (encumbered). Soldiers traveling without such packs were called *expediti* (unencumbered) and in a forced march could cover distances much more rapidly.^a If an army was attacked in a march, soldiers piled up their packs and concentrated the baggage train in one location, guarded by a designated unit, and went right into battle.^b In enemy territory Caesar's army sometimes marched in "triple line formation," that is, in three parallel columns, each consisting of one of the three lines, which allowed it to achieve battle readiness by a simple ninety-degree turn. Cavalry forces were sometimes sent ahead for raids or sudden attacks.

§8. Caesar's forces followed the Roman tradition of building a daily marching camp. The site was carefully surveyed beforehand, and at a signal, soldiers erected their tents, put up fortifications, and went out to forage for fodder and firewood, all of which was done according to predetermined and routine assignments.^a Camps were fortified with a rampart (*vallum*) and a trench (*fossa*), and constantly guarded by a rotating watch. Eight soldiers normally shared a tent, but the tents might be left behind to lighten an army's load, in which case the soldiers slept in the open.^b

§9. Caesar could rely on experienced senior officers (legates and military tribunes), mainly drawn from the Roman aristocracy. He treasured skill and loyalty above noble birth, however, and promoted not only commoners but also non-Romans into his senior

- Z.6a Speeches: naturally we hear almost exclusively those of Caesar (9.7, 9.85, 11.90). Importantly, in his addresses to the army Caesar presents himself as treating his soldiers as Roman citizens, discussing political, legal, and ideological issues with them. Curio's army address, by contrast, although also written by Caesar, is apolitical and, probably more typically, focuses on aspects of discipline, loyalty, and leadership (10.32). Pamphlets: Cassius Dio 43.5.1–4. See also Web Essay JJ: The *Civil War* as a Work of Propaganda.
- Z.6b See the Index under "deserter(s)/desertion."
- Z.6c Incorporation: for example after the capitulation of Corfinium (9.23.5) or the surrender of the survivors of the battle of Pharsalus (11.107.1). Later conflict of loyalty: 10.27–29.
- Z.6d The standout example here is the fraternization between Pompeian and Caesarian troops in the Spanish campaign of 49: 9.74. The Pompeian commander Petreius used violence to restore discipline

(9.75–76), as was his duty, but Caesar criticized him for having killed Roman citizens (9.85.3). See also 13.56–57.

- Z.6e See, for example, 13.44–46.
- Z.7a For more detailed discussion of these issues, see Appendix D: The Roman Military and, for marching speeds and distances, Web Essay BB: The Chronology of Caesar's Campaigns, §§BB.Intro.7–9.
- Z.7b On the baggage train, see Appendix D, §7. At 2.17–19, Caesar describes his change of marching order when approaching an enemy.
- Z.8a See, for example, 2.17.1, 2.19.5, 2.20.1. For more details, see the second-century historian Polybius' description of the Roman armies' organization (6.26–31) and Web Essay Q: The Roman Army Camp.
- Z.8b See 13.47 for a severe hailstorm that ruined the soldiers' improvised tents and made conditions in Caesar's temporary camp miserable.

leadership. The centurions were especially important to Roman success, and were usually promoted from the ranks, based on their intelligence, charisma, and courage.^a

§10. Military historians divide Caesar's soldiers, and the troops of his enemies, into several categories based on their armament. Heavy infantry (the legionnaires) were armed with a large shield, a sword or spear (or both), and generally wore a helmet and some body armor. These soldiers usually fought hand to hand, though before clashing they often hurled a javelin or two to disrupt the enemy line. Light infantry were generally un- or lightly armored and used a small shield (or none); some fought with spears, but most used missile weapons, such as javelins, bows, or slings. Torsion artillery pieces, such as catapults and ballistas (stone throwers), used mechanical means to hurl bolts and stones. They were used both in sieges and in field battles.^a

§11. Cavalry fought with spears, swords, and javelins and, more rarely in the West than the East, with bows. What scholars call the Celtic saddle, used by most horsemen (except some Numidians, who rode bareback), enabled horsemen to fight effectively hand to hand without stirrups.^a Caesar relied primarily on auxiliaries and allies—from Gaul, Spain, and Numidia—to provide his cavalry. Horsemen accompanied virtually all armies of the time, though the Britons still used chariots as “battle taxis” in battle.^b Already in the Gallic campaigns, and again in the civil wars, Caesar adopted the custom of interspersing cavalry with light infantry.^c Horsemen sometimes dismounted to fight; the Gauls especially were highly effective in both forms of fighting. Although we sometimes hear of mounted troops fighting infantry, cavalry could generally not stand up to heavy infantry. For example, at Pharsalus, Pompey's massive cavalry force panicked and fled when unexpectedly met by a fourth line of Caesar's infantry. For the same reason, Caesar had no qualms in placing soldiers of his 10th Legion on horses to form an improvised cavalry unit that protected him during his negotiations with the German warlord Ariovistus; he was confident that, if fighting erupted, they would dismount and prevail against the enemy's cavalry.^d In their campaigns in Africa, Curio's and Caesar's armies were also confronted with the use of elephants, provided by King Juba of Numidia. Although they mainly served as elevated platforms for archers, the soldiers dreaded them; Caesar imported some elephants to get both his soldiers and his cavalry horses accustomed to these beasts and to give them some practice in fighting them.^e

§12. The Roman armies that Caesar faced in the civil wars were essentially identical to his own. Organization, logistical sophistication, and an excellent system of command and control made the Roman army the best in the Western world at the time. Legions were entirely made up of heavy infantry, and at full strength were supposed to have some 5,000 to 6,000 men, though they often were smaller due to wartime conditions. Caesar's legions comprised hardly more than 4,000–4,500 men to begin with; some of them shrank considerably due to heavy losses. For example, the 9th Legion had suffered so badly at Dyrrachium that Caesar virtually combined it with the 8th into one unit at Pharsalus, where the average size of his legions was 2,750 (as opposed to Pompey's

Z.9a On officers, see Appendix D: The Roman Military, §§9–14. An example of a non-Roman trusted with an independent command is Commius of the Atrebates (6.6.4).

Z.10a On the soldiers' arms and equipment, see, for example, Campbell 2013. On catapults, see Web Essay S: Military Engineering and Sieges.

Z.11a Dixon and Southern 1992, 74.

Z.11b 4.33, 5.16.

Z.11c For example, 8.13, 8.19, 11.84.3. A different type of such combined units was used by Germans and is described at 1.48.4–7.

Z.11d 11.93.3–6, 1.42.5–6, 1.46.3. See generally 14.4.2, 14.15.1–3.

Z.11e 10.40, 13.30, 13.41, 13.72, 13.81, 13.83–84; Peddie 1994, 84–88; Anglim et al. 2002, 125–32.

4,000). At Munda in 45, the 10th, which had been with Caesar from the beginning of the wars in Gaul, was down to “a few men.”^a Moreover, Caesar apparently valued unit cohesion more than numbers, and thus used newly recruited soldiers to form new legions rather than to fill gaps in older ones. In addition, a considerable number of his soldiers were unable to keep up with Caesar’s pace in covering long distances; they eventually caught up with him, but at Brundisium in 48 literally missed the boat; they sat out the campaign in Greece and were used for actions in the Adriatic and then in the African war.^b Auxiliary and allied units were not standard in size, as they were later in the empire, and were usually led by tribal chiefs or other traditional leaders. They comprised mostly cavalry, but Caesar’s narrative makes clear that he used auxiliary infantry units as well. In crisis situations or lawless conditions, freed or fugitive slaves might be enrolled as soldiers; Caesar met these among his opponents. Military slaves (*calones*) led baggage animals, cared for the horses, drove wagons, prepared meals, and helped with foraging.^c Personal slaves, especially those of officers, also accompanied the army; if space was limited on ships, they might be left behind and catch up later. During battles, slaves assisted in guarding the army’s camp. They might find themselves compelled to help defend it and eagerly participated in plundering the battlefield; quite often, they defected and provided the other side with valuable information.^d

§13. The Gallic, German, and British forces that Caesar met were raised on a tribal basis. Warriors fought in kinship groups, led by hereditary nobles and chieftains. On occasion, an individual leader might propose a campaign or raid and call for volunteers to follow him. Among the Gauls, a leader could call an “armed assembly.” “This is the custom of the Gauls to mark the start of a war: according to a law shared by all of them, all men of military age are compelled to assemble in their fighting gear. Whoever arrives last is, in front of the crowd, subjected to every kind of torture and then killed.” This form of “national mobilization” was used, for example, to rally the nation of the Treveri against Caesar.^a Each individual provided his own arms, so naturally, wealthier individuals were better equipped. Comparative evidence suggests that poor Celts and Germans might have been coerced into fighting, and were not necessarily enthusiastic volunteers. While the Gauls and Germans had an abundance of courage, they initially lacked discipline and perseverance. As the war went on and many of their leaders and warriors gained experience by serving as auxiliaries in Caesar’s army, they adapted. In the winter of 54, Ambiorix, king of the Eburones, for example, was able to maintain a disciplined and focused attack on the fifteen Roman cohorts he had trapped in an ambush, keeping his men from turning prematurely to plunder and passing commands through the ranks to initiate various moves. In attacking Quintus Cicero’s camp in the same winter, the Nervii and their allies applied the Roman siege techniques they had observed, forcing Roman captives to instruct them. In 56, the Aquitani, led by Spaniards, who had experience in fighting with and against the Romans, conducted

Z.12a The 9th at Dyrrachium: 11.67.3; Pharsalus: 11.89.1–2 (Pompey’s army: 11.88.4–5); the 10th at Munda: 14.31.4.

Z.12b Brundisium: 11.2.3, 11.87.1–2; Adriatic: 12.44.4; African war: 13.10.1 with n. 13.10b.

Z.12c See index under “slaves” and “servants.” Enlisted former slaves: for instance 9.34.2, 11.110.4, 12.2.2, 14.34.2. At Zela in 47, Caesar used the army slaves in a way that misled the enemy commander, Pharnaces, to think that they were soldiers and thus to underestimate the size

Z.12d of Caesar’s fighting force (12.73–74). Slaves left behind (together with the soldiers’ heavier luggage): 11.6.1, 13.47.3. Slaves in battle: 13.85.2; plundering: 2.24.2; defecting and informing the enemy: 1.23.2, 1.27.3. The author of the *Spanish War* (Book 14 of *The Landmark Julius Caesar*) mentions various ways in which slaves were involved in the war (for instance, 14.12.1–2, 14.20.5, 14.22.7, 14.26.2, 14.27.2). Germans: 6.23.7–8; Treveri: 5.56.

Z.13a

their war against Caesar's legate Crassus "in Roman style," from a fortified camp. In the "great national war" of 52, Vercingetorix convinced his council to apply a "scorched earth strategy" against the Romans. Other refined tactics included the use of a smoke screen to cover a withdrawal.^b

§14. The strategic goal both of Caesar and of his enemies was typically to seek out the opponent's army and eliminate it as a fighting force. In addition to field battles and sieges, however, ancient commanders, including Caesar, used strategies of attrition, interfering with or trying to cut their opponents' supply systems.^a The Romans and their enemies used stratagems and tricks (*doli, insidia, artificia*); in fact, Caesar's commentaries are a treasure trove for information about cunning in military operations.^b For example, both Caesar and his legates, withdrawing into their camps, feigned fear and hesitation, sometimes also spreading false information, to lure the enemy into ill-considered and overconfident attacks they then quashed by massive surprise sorties from superior positions.^c Both sides laid ambushes and counterambushes opportunistically^d and engaged in plundering and devastation, both strategically and tactically.^e Cavalry carried out surprise attacks on enemy positions.^f The Gauls at times undertook a sort of guerrilla war, but, Caesar notes, this was not their usual custom; he responded with a strategy of deforestation and walling in the enemy forces.^g

§15. The Romans usually sought a decisive battle, if possible on flat ground, but they also fought on rough or marshy ground.^a All armies attempted to hold the higher ground, which gave them an advantage with both missiles and bladed weapons. Romans tried to first build a fortified camp near the enemy, normally within a distance of a few miles, to prepare or wait for battle and protect the soldiers' packs and the legions' and army's heavy baggage as well as the draft animals; usually one cohort per legion remained behind as guard. While we know more about Caesar's battles than about most others, their exact nature remains a matter of conjecture.^b It is clear, though, that Roman commanders carefully arranged the initial formation of their armies, varying the number of lines, the position of units, and the combination of different types of troops according to terrain, other conditions, and especially the enemy's forces and formation.^c Usually, the heavily armed legions were stationed in the center, with cavalry deployed on the flanks, while light infantry, mostly archers and slingers, were stationed on the flanks or along the front, showering the attacking enemy troops with missiles and then slipping to the back. Dispositions were often adjusted, according to circumstances. Unlike the Romans, the Gauls sat in battle line before action; they fought in a dense column, in wedge-shaped formations (*cunea*) or in a massed phalanx.^d

§16. In Gaul, dealing with opponents who did not follow Roman standards, who fought in unconventional ways and barricaded themselves in fortified towns, and eventually avoided a clash of infantry forces altogether, Caesar fought few "regular" battles. This changed in the civil wars, with Romans on both sides. Caesar liked to follow a certain pat-

Z.13b Courage: for example, 1.26.1–2, 2.27.3–5.

Ambiorix: 5.34.1. Nervii: 5.42.1–2. Aquitani: 3.23.1–6. Vercingetorix: 7.14–15, 7.64.1–3.

Smoke screen: 8.15.4–8.16.4.

Z.14a See §2.

Z.14b See, for example, 7.35, 7.45, 7.60, 10.35, 11.30, 13.73.

Z.14c Good examples are at 3.17–19, 5.50–51, 6.7–8.

Z.14d For instance, 5.25, 7.34, 8.18, 9.55, 11.37, 11.92, 13.7, 13.65–66, 13.95, 14.21, 14.40.

Z.14e 6.3, 6.43, 7.8, 8.24–25, 12.59, 13.3, 13.7, 13.74.

Z.14f 10.38.

Z.14g 3.28.

Z.15a On this and the next sections, see in particular relevant chapters in Dixon and Southern 1992; Goldsworthy 1996; Gilliver 1999, 2007; Anglim et al. 2002.

Z.15b Goldsworthy 1996, 171–75, 220–26.

Z.15c See also Appendix D: The Roman Military, §6.

Z.15d Sitting: 8.15. Dense formation: 1.24–25, 2.23, 7.28; Gilliver 2002, 23–29.

tern in arranging his battle formation. His most trusted legions, the 10th and 9th, usually fought on the wings; for them, this was a matter of pride: they knew what was expected of them, and they consistently fought with utmost bravery. Veteran legions bore the brunt of the fighting; more recently recruited units were initially used for guard duty or to protect the baggage train. It took surprisingly long for them to earn “veteran status.” Like every Roman army since Marius’ time, Caesar’s was usually arranged in three lines.^a The first line engaged the enemy immediately, the second entered the fray to substitute for units exhausted by a long fight or for casualties. The third was kept in reserve. In the battle against Ariovistus in 58, it was the cavalry commander who ordered the third line to move forward to assist those struggling in front; at Pharsalus in 48, Caesar himself gave that command. In both cases, the immersion of fresh cohorts into the battle broke the enemy’s resistance, just as in other cases the arrival of fresh troops could turn the tide of the battle.^b Caesar’s battle tactics were characterized by flexible use of the three lines. At Pharsalus, recognizing the concentration of all of Pompey’s cavalry, greatly superior in numbers, on his left wing, Caesar innovated by pulling a few cohorts out of the third line and forming with them a fourth line that was intended to prevent Pompey’s cavalry from flanking Caesar’s right wing and attacking from the rear; the success of this line, which went on to flank Pompey’s army in turn, decided the battle.^c At Bibracte, attacked on his flank and back by allies of the Helvetians while fighting uphill against the Helvetian main force, Caesar had to turn the third line around to push back against the enemy. When building a camp in the enemy’s presence, Caesar usually stationed the first two lines in front, armed and ready to fight, while the third line constructed the camp’s fortifications. The fact that he neglected this principle in his campaign against the Nervii, although he was informed that the enemy was close by, almost cost him the battle.^d Thanks to intensive formation training, Caesar’s legions were capable of changing formations even in the midst of battle and thus to support each other in unforeseen circumstances.^e

§17. Armies usually marched into battle and in the final stretch attacked on the run, discharging javelins before clashing. Both the running attack (called the *impetus* or *concursus*) and the exchange of missile weapons had the purpose of disrupting an enemy’s formation. This fierce attack was sometimes sufficient to cause an inexperienced or demoralized opponent to break and run. As Caesar emphasizes, the running attack, like the battle cry, was psychologically important.^a Caesar’s legionnaires carried two javelins (*pila*). Having thrown these, they fought with their swords. In the battle against Ariovistus, Caesar’s army had approached so close to the enemy’s camp and both armies attacked so fiercely that there was neither space nor time to throw the javelins; these were discarded, and the swords did their work.^b While the missile exchange was significant, battles were almost always won or lost by the sword or (occasionally) the spear. The exact mechanism of such hand-to-hand combat is unclear, but the Romans seem to have relied more heavily on swordplay and thus left more room between soldiers than was the case in Greek hoplite warfare.^c This sort of fighting is

Z.16a See Appendix D: The Roman Military, §6.

Z.16b Third line: 1.52.7, 11.94.1–2. Arrival of fresh troops: 2.27.11.69.

Z.16c 11.89.4, 11.93.3–8.

Z.16d 1.25.6–7 (see Diagram 1.25); camp: for example, 9.41.3–42.1; Nervii: 2.16–22.

Z.16e For examples, see Web Essay X: Caesar the General and Leader, §9.

Z.17a 11.92.4–5.

Z.17b 1.52.3.

Z.17c The mechanics of battle have only recently begun to elicit intense scholarly scrutiny. See, for example, Goldsworthy 1996, 191–201; chapters by A. D. Lee and C. M. Gilliver in Lloyd 1996; Sabin 2000; Lendon 2005; Gilliver 2007. On the literary art of Caesar’s battle descriptions, see Lendon 1999.

exhausting, and could not have been maintained by the same soldiers for hours. Thus, fresh troops must have replaced tired ones in some way.^d We should note, in any case, that Caesar specifically comments on battles that lasted as long as six or eight Roman hours (which varied in length according to the season).^e

§18. Many factors affected the outcome of a battle. Numbers obviously mattered, but Caesar won several battles against numerically superior armies. Luck and chance played a major role in military success or failure—as Caesar notes frequently.^a Training, experience, discipline, and unit cohesion were decisive. Caesar emphasizes the importance of maintaining ranks; armies that clustered together in fear, with the standards bunched up closely, lost their ability to fight successfully and betrayed their loss of morale.^b Hence the tremendous importance of standard-bearers: at Dyrrachium in 48, Caesar singled out several of them and demoted them as responsible for failing to stop their panicking comrades.^c In all Roman armies the centurions were both the backbone and the cutting edge of the fighting force. In Caesar’s legions, this was perhaps even more true (or at least we are best informed about it): they bore the brunt of the fighting and suffered the heaviest losses.^d Other factors contributed. For example, troops tired after a long march were at a disadvantage against fresh troops. Caesar always took this into account, though in exceptional cases he led his troops right from a long march into an attack on a fortified town; Curio ignored this principle and hastened his troops into disaster.^e Nor did Caesar fight a battle when his soldiers had not eaten.^f The side that was better able to substitute fresh fighters for tired ones clearly had an advantage.^g Especially in dry weather, a battle kicked up enormous clouds of dust that hampered vision and could affect the course of the battle.^h Finally, a crucial factor obviously was the general’s ability to influence the course of the battle through timely interventions: his presence in the battle inspired his soldiers. In the battle against the Nervii in 57 the personal courage Caesar displayed in rallying his soldiers was one of the main factors that saved his army from defeat, while at Pharsalus in 48 Pompey’s decision to leave the battle when it was still going on, and his lame excuse for returning to the camp, must have demoralized those who witnessed it.ⁱ

§19. The main goal of ancient combat was to force the enemy to flee while holding one’s own ground.^a The defeat of one wing of the army, exposure to novel tactics, rumor, the sudden appearance of the enemy or of enemy reinforcements, the sight of fleeing troops (or even noncombatants), or the death of a unit’s officer or the army’s commander could cause a rout. Panic could spread rapidly through an army, especially when it lacked discipline and experience.^b Even troops making an orderly withdrawal were vulnerable to sudden panic. While defeated troops generally turned their backs, on rare occasions a force refused to yield and was wiped out.^c Indeed, most of Caesar’s field battles ended not with the annihilation of an enemy but with the losing side turning and running, in the event

Z.17d For an especially complicated process of replacing exhausted soldiers, see the battle described at 9.45–47 with Lendon 2005, 222–24.

Z.17e 1.26, 3.5, 5.35, 7.80, 9.46.

Z.18a See the Index under “Fortune.” See §5 about religion.

Z.18b See, for example, 2.25, 9.71.

Z.18c 11.69.4, 11.74.1.

Z.18d For examples and discussion of Caesar’s special relationship with his centurions, see Web Essay X: Caesar the General and Leader, §§11–13.

Z.18e Curio: 10.39–41; Caesar: for example, 12.30; immediate attack: 2.12.1–2; Gilliver 2007, 126–27.

Z.18f 12.42.

Z.18g 3.4, 7.48, 9.45.

Z.18h 13.52.

Z.18i See 11.95.5–6.

Z.19a For retreat and pursuit see Goldsworthy 1996, 163–67; Gilliver 1999, 117–20; 2007, 138–41.

Z.19b Heidenreich and Roth forthcoming.

Z.19c 7.62, 13.40. Helvetian casualties probably were so high because they refused to turn their backs, and the survivors left the battle site only when the fighting died down in the middle of the night (1.26).

often throwing away their heavy equipment, which allowed them to run faster but made them even more vulnerable. The pursuit of retreating forces was important, not only to deprive the enemy of fighting men but to prevent them from regrouping. Cavalry was vital in this role: fleeing foot soldiers had no chance against horsemen.^d It was at that point that most of the casualties occurred: many of these pursuits developed into horrendous slaughter. All this in turn explains why victors often suffered a surprisingly low death rate.^e

§20. Caesar's battles and victories did not differ in this respect from those of other Roman generals, except perhaps in two ways. One is that we find concentrated in the commentaries much more (and much more detailed) evidence on the bloody aspects of war than we do in other sources. The accumulation and repetition of such evidence tends to create the impression of unusual brutality, especially since Caesar describes such events—culminating in the massacre of entire populations, the sale of tens of thousands of war captives into slavery, or the mutilation of all male survivors^a—as a matter of fact and without emotion: such was the reality of war. But, and this is the second difference, Caesar resorted to battle only if he was unable to conquer by other means, that is, when negotiation or intimidation failed or he was attacked,^b and, with very few exceptions, he chose harsh punishment and slaughter of the defeated only if they had broken previous agreements and oaths. Although he clearly aimed at victory, submission, and conquest—aims that modern Western cultural values have accustomed us to consider less than admirable if not outright contemptible and damnable—he did not fight for the sake of fighting, and his victories did not depend on the destruction of the enemy. Those who surrendered before a missile was fired or a battering ram touched the wall had a good chance to be treated with clemency; since this principle became well known across Gaul in a very short time, his opponents had a choice. This is more than can be said of many other Roman generals.^c

§21. As suggested above, a very large part of Caesar's fighting took place not in field battles but rather, apart from a fair number of sea battles, in sieges of fortified towns or, as in Alexandria, in an urban context. These other forms of fighting are discussed elsewhere in this volume,^a but it seems important at least to remind the reader, on the one hand, of the sophistication with which Caesar and his officers handled the complex challenges posed by these other kinds of warfare, and, on the other hand, a fact that cannot be emphasized enough, that like all Roman legionnaires from the middle republic far into the imperial period, Caesar's soldiers were not only highly accomplished fighters but also highly skilled builders. Upon orders of their general, and instructed by a few

Z.19d Dixon and Southern 1992, 147.

Z.19e Slaughter of fleeing enemies: for example, 1.53, 2.11, 3.19, 3.26. Disproportionate losses on the winner and loser's side: 11.99, 13.86.1 (though in the latter battle, at Thapsus in 46, Caesar's exasperated and angry soldiers massacred the survivors on the other side, despite their readiness to submit). In some battles, however, Caesar's army, too, suffered heavy losses: 1.26.5, 2.25, 7.46–51, 11.71.

Z.20a Examples are at 2.33, 7.28, 7.89, 8.44.

Z.20b Again typically for Roman attitudes, Caesar, too, operated with a very broad and loose concept of “attack” and did not hesitate to pose demands that maneuvered his opponents into positions from which the only tolerable and honorable way out was war and battle (for example, 1.13–14,

1.34–36, 1.43–45, 4.7).

Z.20c In numerous cases, for example, in order to prevent abuses by his troops, Caesar posted guards and kept his army outside a town that had capitulated (9.21, 13.7.1–2). Such protection of the enemy or refusal to seek battle and outright victory was likely to be opposed by the troops who were eager to end the war and gain booty (9.72). For discussion, see Web Essay EE: Caesar's Portrait of “Caesar,” §8. For a different perspective, see Web Essay R: The Rules of War. For Caesar's pursuit of clemency in the civil wars, see Web Essay JJ: The Civil War as a Work of Propaganda, §14.

Z.21a See Web Essays S: Military Engineering and Sieges, and AA: Caesar at Sea.

specialists, they constructed elaborate and extensive fortifications, siege engines, catapults, ramps, and towers of breathtaking height, trench systems (*fossae*), strongpoints (*castella*), and extended fieldworks (called “arms,” *bracchia*) to channel battles and secure their flanks, bridges, and even entire fleets, with remarkable efficiency and in amazingly short amounts of time. In fact, fighting consumed a small portion of their time; most of their days they spent marching, securing supplies, building camps, and moving earth. Some of their accomplishments are simply astonishing: they built a bridge over the rapidly flowing Rhine River (about 437 yards wide at that site) in ten days, surrounded Corfinium in central Italy with a circumvallation in six days, constructed around Alesia a massive double fortification, 10 and 14 miles long, with elaborate obstacle fields and death traps in front of it, in about a month, created at Avaricum, under most exacting conditions, a siege ramp 330 feet wide and 80 feet high in twenty-nine days, and built in one winter six hundred troop transports and twenty-eight warships.^b Caesar writes mostly about the labors of his men and of the successes they helped him achieve; he mentions the praise and rewards he generously handed out to them after a victory^c and less frequently punishments, after a defeat;^d but he barely mentions the celebrations he allowed after a success. For this we turn to Suetonius: in such cases, he writes, Caesar “relieved the troops of all military duties and let them carry on as wildly as they pleased. One of his boasts was: ‘My men fight just as well when they are stinking of perfume.’”^e

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Z.21b Rhine bridge: 4.17–18; Corfinium: 9.18.4–6; Alcisia: 7.69.6, 7.73–74; Avaricum: 7.24.1; fleet: 5.2.

Z.21e

Z.21c 3.26, 13.86, 14.26.

Z.21d Rewards: 3.26, 8.4, 13.86, 14.26; see Appendix D: The Roman Military, §17. Punishment: for

example, 11.74; see also 13.54.

Suetonius, *Caesar* 67. At 11.96.2 Caesar alludes to the licentiousness for which his soldiers were criticized.

WEB ESSAY AA

Caesar at Sea

Nicolle Hirschfeld

§1. In the *Gallic War* and the *Civil War*, actions take place upon the sea, but more often they happen at its edges. This is not to say that control of sea-lanes was not important. But in Caesar's wars, that control was won more often by securing the coasts—the points of embarkation, landing, or resupply—than by battle on the high seas. This at least is the story told by the narrators of these books.

Warfare on the Seas

§2. The authors do tell of some spectacular sea battles, that against the Veneti foremost among them.^a This was a clash of naval cultures: the sturdily built Atlantic fleet of the Veneti, reliant on sails alone, versus the rowing- and ramming-based tactics of Caesar's flotilla, based on Mediterranean models. Caesar's description of the physical features of the Gallic ships is now essentially corroborated by archaeological evidence for Romano-Celtic ship construction (coin iconography and about two dozen excavated wrecks).^b Naval historians have assessed Caesar's description of the action, taking into account also the other ancient sources for this event.^c Discussion revolves around the number and composition of the Roman fleet, the order of battle events, and how to understand the cutting of the lines (which ones, exactly?) by the *dorudrepanon* (what, exactly?). Brice Erickson differs in his approach from all previous scholarship in that he considers the literary features (vocabulary and structure) of Caesar's account. He demonstrates convincingly that Caesar has fashioned his narrative of this battle to communicate yet another clash: the (unsuccessful) native use of technology versus Roman valor (*virtus*).^d Similar close literary analyses of other naval events in the *Gallic War* and the *Civil War* are still needed.

NOTE: All dates are B.C.E. (Before the Common Era) unless otherwise indicated. The dates given in the Web essays are those of the traditional Roman civil calendar up to January 45, when the Julian calendar was instated. For more on the Roman system of time-counting, see Appendix C: Roman Calendars, Dates, and Time. For all Web essays, go to landmarkcaesar.com. Source references without indication of title or author name refer to the texts in *The Landmark Julius Caesar*. Modern works are listed fully in the Bibliography. All Web essays are copyright © 2017 by Robert B. Strassler and Kurt A. Raafaub. They may be downloaded and printed

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In addition to the titles cited in the notes, readers might be interested in Casson 1971; Cunliffe 2001; Roller 2006; and Fabre and Goddio 2010.

AA.2a 3.14–15.
AA.2b 3.13; McGrail 2001, 196–207; Jones 2009, 12–16.
AA.2c Morrison 1996 most fully, Mason 2003 most recently.
AA.2d Erickson 2002.

§3. Only five other battles on open water are recounted in any detail: two actions outside the harbor of Massilia,^a the rescue of the 37th Legion along the Egyptian coast,^b the confrontations in the great expanse of the western (Eunostus) harbor of Alexandria,^c and at Tauris.^d Details are sparse: often (not always) the names of the (Roman) commanders, the number and types of ships captured (though rarely the numbers or compositions of fleets entering into action), a single significant moment of battle action (but never again the unfolding of a sustained chain of events as in the Venetic account). For the student of ancient Mediterranean naval warfare, these battles are almost a yawn, displaying neither the brilliant rowing and ramming maneuvers of the fifth-century Persian and Peloponnesian wars nor the staggering size and awesome armaments of the great Hellenistic armadas. Almost a yawn! For even a run-of-the-mill skirmish among a dozen warships would have involved hundreds of oarsmen rowing in unison to maneuver big, creaking hulls through currents and waves, attempting to ram or evade or board, and bombarding the enemy with arrows or sometimes stones.

§4. The battle at Tauris is the single instance in which ramming is explicitly mentioned as an effective battle tactic,^a though there are glimpses of excellence in this classical technique of fighting at sea in the abbreviated descriptions of the maneuvers of the Massilians and the Rhodians under their commander, Euphranor.^b But sooner or later all of the sea battles described in this narrative degenerate into close quarters and hand-to-hand combat, and it is Roman spirit (*animus*) and bravery (*virtus*), not skill on the water, that wins the day.

§5. The warships of the civil wars are specified only in passing, if at all. There were two shorthand ways to classify warships: by the size of their rowing units and/or their decking structure. The terms quinquereme, quadrireme, trireme, and bireme, and so on, refer to the rowing units.^a Rowing trials of a reconstructed Athenian trireme, the *Olympias*, demonstrated that rowers effectively kept cadence when organized to work in vertical groups of three; it was this triad—rather than the three decks—that informed the ship’s technical nomenclature.^b Thus, a quinquereme was a ship whose basic rowing component consisted of five men, a quadrireme was pulled by groups of four men, et cetera. The rowing unit could be variously configured among a maximum of three banks of oars. In biremes and triremes one rower operated each oar on two or three levels, respectively. A quadrireme might, for example, have three levels of oars, with two men rowing on the top levels and single rowers on the lower levels, or two levels of two rowers, a single level of oars manned by four rowers each. These arrangements would have required ships quite different in design—the first much taller and with a projecting oar box, the last low and wide in section—but both were still classified as quadriremes. (For the modern reader, these differences seem rather significant, and many scholars now prefer to use the term “four” rather than the anglicized “quadrireme” to avoid the specificity that the technical terms seem to imply).^c The other essential way of classifying a warship was by the extent of its decking. A warship designated as *tecta* or *constrata*

AA.3a Massilia (modern Marseille): 9.56–58, 10.3–7; Diagram 10.7.

meaning “oars,” which is in turn based on the Greek root *–eres*, which should mean something like “fitted”; the most commonly accepted explanation is that it refers to a subunit of a rowing crew.

AA.3b Rescue of the the 37th Legion: 12.9.3–11.

Nomenclature: Rankov 2009, 45. The *Olympias*: Morrison, Coates, and Rankov 2000. See Figure 12.77a.

AA.3c Battle in the Eunostus harbor, 12.14–16, Diagram 12.14.

“Four”: for detailed discussion, see Murray 2012, 6–9.

AA.3d Battle off Taurus Island, 12.45–47, Map 12.44.

AA.4a Battle tactic of ramming: 12.46.2. See Figure 12.77b for examples of ship’s rams or “beaks.”

AA.4b 9.58.1, 10.6.2, 12.15.6, 12.25.5.

AA.5a “–reme” is the anglicized version of Latin *–remi*,

(“covered”) would have had a reinforced deck and sometimes also permanent wooden screens protecting the rowers, especially those sitting on the topmost level.^d The deck not only protected rowers from missiles and sun, but also added to the latitudinal strength of the vessel and served as a platform for marines and offensive weaponry. A warship described as *aperta*, “open,” had minimal decking and no protection for the rowers. This distinction was important primarily in referring to triremes and biremes; quinqueremes and quadriremes were necessarily decked. By the first century, all these ship types had a long history and, except in the Atlantic, their use and appearance was no cause for remark. The only vestige of Hellenistic grandeur was Pompey’s fleet, and that because of the size of the fleet rather than the ships in it.

§6. In addition to rams, warship armament could include towers,^a catapults,^b and iron claws or grappling hooks.^c Skilled helmsmen and experienced veterans were prized crew members.^d

The Crossings

§7. What Caesar was really good at, insofar as water is concerned, was crossing it. Book 4 of the *Gallic War* tells a tale of two crossings, by bridge over the Rhine and with ships across the English Channel. In the first, Roman engineering and ingenuity successfully challenge the might of the river and trump the native reliance on traditional watercraft.^a In the second, the Romans meet their objectives, but only just, in the face of greater forces of nature.^b (The Britons had no war fleet, apparently relying upon those same forces of nature as sufficient defense.) The following year, Caesar launched an expedition much larger in scale and scope, including six hundred purpose-built transports.^c

§8. Caesar countered the unpredictability of nature with careful planning (including a reconnaissance mission,^a superior logistics, energetic and willing troops, and technological innovation such as oared transports).^b And he admits to occasional strokes of luck.^c

§9. There are some incongruous notes. For all his meticulous planning of his second expedition to Britain, Caesar apparently omitted to factor in the seasonal winds when setting the timetable for the departure of the main fleet.^a And despite his innovative approach to naval design, he neglected to adopt from the Veneti the iron chains whose weight kept their anchors from dragging in strong tides.^b Caesar eventually resorted instead to the labor- and time-intensive process of hauling his ships entirely out of the water.^c Finally, if Grainge is correct in arguing that Caesar timed his departures to take advantage of the tides,^d the fact that Caesar stresses the unpredictability of the crossings suggests again his careful fashioning of the narrative, here to emphasize the wildness of the world into which he had dared to trespass.

§10. In total, the *Gallic War* describes seven attempts by Roman fleets to cross the Channel.^a Of the three for which sufficient information is provided, the fastest took just over seven hours in fair weather and with favorable winds; the longest, in which the fleet

AA.5d Wooden screens: 11.24.1.

5.8–9, Map 5.19.

AA.6a Rams, towers: 9.26.1, 11.40.1. See Figure 3.14.

AA.7c Transports: 5.1.1–4, 5.2.2–3, 5.8.2–6.

AA.6b Catapults: 4.25.1, 10.4.2, 12.19.3, perhaps 13.20.1.

AA.8a Reconnaissance: 4.21.

AA.6c Iron claws or grappling hooks: 9.58.4, 10.6.2.

AA.8b Oared transports: 5.1.2, 5.2.2, 5.11.6.

For an image, see Figure 3.13.

AA.8c Luck: 5.23.5.

AA.6d Experienced crew members: 9.57.1, 11.28.5;
negative examples, 9.58.3, 11.28.4; helmsman:
see Figure 10.5b.

AA.9a Seasonal winds: 5.7.3.

AA.7a Rhine bridge: 4.17–18.2. See Figures 4.17a–b and
Web Essay S: Military Engineering and Sieges, §14.

AA.9b Anchor chains: 3.13.5, 5.10.3.

AA.7b English Channel crossing: 4.23–26, Map 4.23,

AA.9c Haul out of the water: 5.11.5–7.

AA.9d Tides: Grainge 2002, 22–25 and his Appendix III.

AA.10a Channel crossings: in addition to the four listed

in §§11–12, 4.36.3–4, 5.23.1–3, 5.23.5.

was becalmed and then swept off course by unfavorable tides, took sixteen hours.^b Twice, many of the ships never reached their intended destination.^c

§11. Crossing the Adriatic presented no exotic challenges.^a Winds were a significant factor in the planning, success, or disaster of a crossing,^b but the narrative gives equal weight to logistical challenges (the lack of a sufficiently large fleet)^c and enemy tactics.^d

§12. Most of the maritime action in the *African War* revolves around the transportation of men and supplies from Sicily to Caesar on the African coast (or, from the Pompeian perspective, preventing a successful crossing or landing). Four separate convoys reached Africa in succession, transporting in total ten legions and another four thousand troops, two thousand slingers and archers, and thirty-two hundred cavalry.^a In good weather and with favorable winds, the journey from Sicily to Africa took three days.^b But Caesar launched the African campaign in the middle of winter; not surprisingly, the narrative thus frequently refers to adverse wind or weather.^c Human factors further challenged Caesar's fleets at arrival and during coastal operations: most significantly, lack of familiarity with the African coastline,^d but also uncertainty about Caesar's location, mistaken identification of distant fleets, and deficient instructions from the commander.^e So, for example, although in the initial crossing Caesar managed to reach Hadrumetum on the fourth day, he arrived with only half of his troops and less than a tenth of his cavalry. Winds had scattered the rest of the convoy, and it was not until about two weeks after departure that the entire fleet finally reunited at Ruspina.^f The hardships of the crossing are underlined by references to exhaustion and nausea resulting from seasickness—even affecting horses!—an affliction that is mentioned only one other time (in reference to new recruits) in the entirety of the *Gallic War* and the *Civil War* narratives.^g

§13. The ships used for transporting men, horses, and equipment are referred to generically as *naves onerariae*, the term used generally for any ship carrying troops or supplies. Their wide, deep hulls were designed for capacity, and they were propelled by sails alone, for rowing benches took up space. Transports composed the bulk of the fleets crossing the Channel, the Adriatic, and the Strait of Sicily, and it was their sailing ability rather than that of the rowed warship escorts that were the essential determinants in when and how crossings were made.

§14. What is most surprising—and often Caesar's strategy was exactly based on surprise—is that so many of these crossings were launched in the winter months. Throughout classical antiquity, overseas communication and commerce shut down during the stormy months of November through March. As dangerous as the waves and winds were the clouds that obscured the sky and especially the coastal landmarks by which the pilots steered.

The Edges

§15. It was of no use to control or cross the seas if there was no place to land, either to resupply or unload.^a Both Pompey and Caesar sought to control the Adriatic by occupying its shoreline and harbors,^b forcing the enemy to find footholds in spaces left unpro-

AA.10b 4.23.1–2, 5.8.1–5.

AA.10c 4.28, 5.23.4.

AA.11a 11.6.2–3, 11.23.1, 11.100.

AA.11b In the same sequence, 11.25.1–2, 11.26–27
(a happy surprise), 11.8.2.

AA.11c 9.25.3, 9.29.1, 11.2.2.

AA.11d Enemy tactics: see §15.

AA.12a 13.1–2, 13.34.4, 13.53, 13.77.3.

AA.12b 13.2.5, 13.34.5.

AA.12c Weather: 13.1.1, 13.2.5, 13.24.3, 13.26.3,
13.44.1–2, 13.62.3.

AA.12d 13.3.4, 13.7.3, 13.11.4, 13.21.3, 13.28.1.

AA.12e 13.3.4, 13.21.3, 13.53.

AA.12f 13.2.1, 13.3.1, 13.11.1.

AA.12g Seasickness: 13.18.4, 13.34.5, 13.53; see also
11.28.4.

AA.15a Access to land: 9.25.3, 11.5.2, 11.8.4, 11.14.1,
11.15.2–3, 11.17.3, 11.34.1, 11.42.3, 11.73.3.

tected.^c Both sides also turned this strategy on its head in their attempts, at various times, to blockade the enemy within the harbor of Brundisium, Caesar by closing the harbor's mouth and Libo by traditional tactics of naval warfare.^d The same strategies are the backdrop, too, for the skirmishes along the African coast.

§16. It is in the harbors above all that the maritime spectacles of Caesar's wars took place: Brundisium, Oricum, and Alexandria. War on the water at Alexandria included burning the entire Alexandrian fleet at dock, the open-water battle in the western harbor mentioned above,^a and, finally, the amphibious assault against Pharos Island, the causeway that linked the island to the city, and the bridges that provided access for ship traffic between the western and eastern harbors of Alexandria.^b For the last, the author reports only the combat on land and amphibious actions by the Roman navy, although parenthetical remarks indicate that the Alexandrians had not deserted their ships altogether.^c In the battle for the island, the Roman offense included decked warships and smaller boats loaded with troops and cavalry;^d exactly how these were coordinated topographically and chronologically is unclear. In the battle for the causeway, Caesar's tactics included a barrage of missiles from his ships, obstruction of the channel under the bridge to prevent passage of vessels, and an attack by marines; sailors and rowers jumped into the fray on their own.^e When things went awry for the Romans, the panicked soldiers overcrowded and swamped the few ships that had not already pulled away,^f illustrating the difficulties of retreating from an amphibious action and, generally, of embarking quickly, whether directly onto shallow-draft warships or via boats onto deeper-hulled ships.^g

§17. At Oricum, the spectacle was offered by feats of engineering: above all, Pompey the Younger somehow managed—with a winch, a mass of ropes, and great difficulty—to drag away the ship deliberately sunk to obstruct the entrance into the inner harbor. At the same time, using rollers and crowbars, he dragged four biremes overland and into the inner harbor, thus putting himself into position to attack the empty warships moored there from both sides.^a Caesar's blockade of Pompey at Brindisi provides a most impressive display of maritime and naval engineering: Caesar built a barricade consisting of moles and anchored rafts upon which he erected towers and defensive shields; as a countermeasure, Pompey outfitted large transports with towers and catapults to attack the building operations. Building and fighting continued for nine days, until Pompey was rescued in the nick of time by his fleet returning from Dyrrachium.^b

Resourcefulness

§18. Caesar was unable to pursue Pompey due to a lack of ships. He frequently mentions the need to scrounge for ships, to build new ones or repair old ones; in Gaul, his legions twice built entire fleets in the course of a winter.^a The ships that sailed the first-century-Mediterranean were built shell-first: a keel was laid, the planks were fastened to it and then built up and joined to one another by means of intricate carpentry. Frames were inserted only late in the construction process. It was a process that demanded much

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|--------|--|--------|---|
| AA.15b | Control of harbors and shores: 9.25.3, 11.5.2,
11.8.4, 11.14.1, 11.15.2–3, 11.17.3, 11.34.1,
11.42.3, 11.73.3. | AA.16c | 11.111.6, 12.14–16, 12.17–21 (see Map 12.3
and Diagram 12.19). |
| AA.15c | 11.6.3, 11.25.3–4. | AA.16d | 12.20.3. |
| AA.15d | Actions at Brundisium (modern Brindisi):
9.25.4–10 (see §17), 11.23–24. See Diagram
9.26, the siege of Brundisium. | AA.16e | 12.19.3–4, 12.20.1. |
| AA.16a | See §3. | AA.16f | 12.20.6, 12.21.3. |
| AA.16b | Battle on Pharos Island and the causeway: | AA.16g | See also 10.43. |
| | | AA.17a | Oricum: 11.40.1–3. |
| | | AA.17b | 9.25.5–27.2; see Map 9.26. |

more labor, time, and material than the modern method of nailing planks to a framework. It also made repairing hulls an intricate process, for the viability of the joinery needed to be maintained in order to preserve the integrity of the hull. For the same reason, keeping the hulls watertight was a challenge; simply caulking was impossible, as this would damage the joints holding the planks together. Finally, building ships was a process that could be hurried only so much. Pine was the primary wood used, in part to facilitate the cutting of the hundreds of mortises required for each hull. Softwoods need seasoning after felling, a step omitted by Caesar at Arelate (modern Arles) under pressure of time; as a result, the sap-heavy Roman hulls dragged in the water.^b Hence behind the many seemingly mundane statements referring to the building or repairing of fleets we have to imagine logistical feats and the Alexandrian rebuilding of their navy is justly celebrated.^c

§19. As on land, warfare on the seas catalyzed technological innovation. For the fleet built specifically for the expedition to Britain, Caesar mandated fundamental changes in ship design to suit the expedition's objectives and local conditions.^a Five years later, in a desperate situation in Spain, Caesar remembered the willow-and-hide boats he had observed during his British campaigns and adapted that native design to cross the Sicoris (modern Segre) River.^b More often, commanders altered existing vessels. A recurring concern was to add protection against projectiles.^c Modifications for the purpose of increasing offensive capabilities are rarely mentioned but more intriguing: Pompey the Younger added towers to his ships in order to attack Marcus Acilius at Oricum;^d one wonders how this affected the center of buoyancy and thus the performance of the vessels. Most puzzling is Vatinius' attachment of rams to *naves actuariae* (rowed merchant ships).^e The author reporting this is concerned with the size of the ships—"not proper for use in battle"—but the reader would like to know how rams could be retrofitted onto hulls and perform effectively. Would they break off immediately upon impact, no matter how well braced? The thirteen ancient rams thus far recovered were all individually form-fitted to the bow timbers of their respective warships. These bow timbers were not separate or added, but rather were integral features of the hull, a construction necessary both to deliver and absorb effectively the forces of impact.^f The Alexandrian sailors' cautious reaction to their jury-rigged fleet is one indication that the creative solutions forced by the exigencies of war were, necessarily, gambles.^g

§20. The account of Caesar's sea actions presented in the *Gallic War* and the *Civil War* emphasizes the maritime savvy of the Veneti, Massilians, and Alexandrians, and the greater resources available to Pompey.^a Caesar countered with logistics, technology, personal audacity, and charisma that inspired the men who sailed with him.^b

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|--------|--|--------|--|
| AA.18a | Scramble for ships: 9.29, 9.30.4, 9.36.2, 10.4.1–2, 10.5.1, 10.18.1, 10.21.4; construction of fleets: 3.9.1, 5.1; see also 5.11. | AA.19d | 11.40.1; Pompey had done the same at Brundisium: 9.26.1. |
| AA.18b | 9.36.4–5, 9.58.3. | AA.19e | 12.44.3. |
| AA.18c | 12.13. | AA.19f | Murray 2012, 31–34; Tusa and Royal 2012, 12–25, 36–38. |
| AA.19a | Caesar's specifications: 5.1; see also 9.54.2–3 for another adaptation of local boat design. | AA.19g | 12.13.4. |
| AA.19b | 9.54.2–3. | AA.20a | Maritime experience: 3.8.1, 9.58.1–3, 12.12.4; Pompey's resources: 11.3.3–5. |
| AA.19c | Thus the Massilians (10.4.2), Mark Antony (11.24.1), and Vatinius (11.100). | AA.20b | See, for example, 13.1.1–2, 13.10.2–3. |

WEB ESSAY BB

The Chronology of Caesar's Campaigns

Kurt A. Raaflaub and John T. Ramsey

INTRODUCTION

Creating a Timeline

§Intro.1. In the middle of the nineteenth century, German scholars wrote monumental commentaries on Caesar's works.^a That on the *Civil War* and more modest commentaries on the *Alexandrian* and *African Wars* include detailed chronological tables^b but that on the *Gallic War* does not. The reason is that both the *Civil War* and the later *Wars* contain a larger number of time markers, and contemporary or later evidence, including especially Cicero's corpus of letters, helps date many events.^c By contrast, in the seven books of the *Gallic War* written by Caesar himself, and the eighth book authored by Hirtius, fixed dates are given only at the very beginning.^d Scholars have,

NOTE: All dates are B.C.E. (Before the Common Era) unless otherwise indicated. The dates given in the Web essays are those of the traditional Roman civil calendar up to January 45, when the Julian (JUL.) calendar was instated. For more on the Roman system of time-counting, see Appendix C: Roman Calendars, Dates, and Time. For all Web essays, go to landmarkcaesar.com. Source references without indication of title or author name refer to the texts in *The Landmark Julius Caesar*. Modern works are listed fully in the Bibliography. All Web essays are copyright © 2017 by Robert B. Strassler and Kurt A. Raaflaub. They may be downloaded and printed for noncommercial use only. Any other use requires written permission of the copyright holders.

GENERAL ASSUMPTIONS AND PRINCIPLES:

Solar year dates used in *The Landmark Julius Caesar* are identical to extrapolated Julian dates. They are given according to the calculations of Holzapfel 1885, as presented in Drummann and Groebe 1906, 812–23 and Marinone 2004, 431–61, with corrections to intercalation in four years (in 58, not 59, and in 55, not 54); see <http://www.tulliana.eu/ephemerides/calendario/cal070agJuliano.htm> (accessed November 5, 2016). This widely accepted system is based on the calculation that January 1, 45 (the first day of the reformed civil calendar) is equivalent to January 2, 45 JUL. Julian equivalents

for Roman civil calendar dates given by T. Rice Holmes, who regarded January 1, 45 in the Roman civil calendar as equal to January 1, 45 JUL., will be one day earlier than ours, whereas those in Bennett 2004, who reckoned January 1, 45 of the Roman civil calendar as equal to December 31, 46 JUL., will be two days earlier. See the chronological tables in this essay and in Ramsey and Raaflaub 2017 for correlations between dates according to the Roman civil calendar and those of the reformed Julian calendar. Raaflaub and Ramsey 2017 offers a more comprehensive and detailed study of the years 58–50 at <http://research.ncl.ac.uk/histos/documents/2017AA01RaaflaubRamsey.pdf> (published March 15, 2017).

- BB.Intro.1a Kraner, Dittenberger, and Meusel 1960a, 1960b, 1961; Kraner, Hofmann, and Meusel 1963.
BB.Intro.1b Kraner et al. 1963, 367–74; Schneider 1905, 1962.
BB.Intro.1c As our reexamination of the evidence has revealed, though, the tables for the civil war books, too, needed to be updated and significantly revised; see our chronological tables (§§BB.9–14) for Books 9–14.
BB.Intro.1d 1.6.4, 1.7.6, 8.2.1.

therefore, been reduced to relying on occasional specific temporal clues (such as the mention of astronomical events or passing references to seasonal events), on rough estimates of distances covered and marching times consumed, and on otherwise educated guesswork. The results, necessarily, were rather imprecise.

§Intro.2. We have found that it is possible to achieve a greater degree of reliability and completeness if, on the one hand, we exploit every available clue in Caesar's text and in contemporary sources,^a and determine, as precisely as possible, 1) the routes Caesar is likely to have chosen for his movements and the distances involved, 2) average traveling and marching speeds (based primarily on data in Caesar's own works but also on comments by contemporaries and later authors), and 3) the days required to cover these distances, including rest days. On the other hand, thanks to modern, digital maps based upon a geographic information system (GIS) interface (see §BB.Intro.4), we can measure distances much more accurately than earlier scholars could. The first sections of this essay, §§BB.Intro.3–19, gives an overview of the data we have collected and the averages we use. Most of the supporting evidence has been integrated into these tables, but we explain our methodology and discuss especially complex or contested cases in more detail in §§BB1.1–8.11.^b

Climate Conditions

§Intro.3. According to research on climate fluctuations over long periods of time, the time of the Gallic wars roughly coincided with a peak in a warming period in central Europe that caused glaciers to recede to levels comparable to today and made it possible to cross some Alpine passes earlier than usual.^a We thus assume that Caesar was able to cross the Alps by early May on the most direct route from Cisalpine to Transalpine Gaul without being forced to take time-consuming detours.^b

Distances and Place Names

§Intro.4. We measure distances along the Roman roads drawn in the *Barrington Atlas of the Greek and Roman World*.^a These measurements are often likely to be too short. Obviously, Roman roads had not yet been constructed in independent Gaul in Caesar's time, and even elsewhere many Roman roads were built later. Except in flat terrain, ancient roads wound their way along the contours of the landscape, while Roman and modern roads tend to cut across on a more direct line. Assuming, therefore, that distances on pre-Roman roads (especially in independent Gaul) were substantially longer than those on later Roman roads,^b we augment distances measured along later Roman roads by twenty-five percent. Having been assured that distances measured along the Roman roads drawn in the *Barrington Atlas* take the terrain into account,^c we consider these reliable for travel

BB.Intro.2a In particular, Cicero's correspondence (not least with his brother Quintus who for a while was Caesar's legate in Gaul) offers important help on a few crucial occasions.

BB.Intro.2b See the chronological tables in this essay and in Ramsey and Raeflaub 2017 for calculations of travel and marching distances and times consumed to cover those distances.

BB.Intro.3a Lamb 1977, 424; Holzhauser et al. 2005.

BB.Intro.3b This does not apply to the Great St. Bernard Pass because its northern access was at the time not under Roman control (see 3.1–6).

BB.Intro.4a Talbert 2000. We use the "Antiquity À-la-carte" application of the Ancient World Mapping Center to measure distances, available at awmc.unc.edu/wordpress/alacarte/ (accessed April 27, 2016); see also "ORBIS: The Stanford Geospatial Network Model of the Roman World" at orbis.stanford.edu (accessed May 5, 2016).

BB.Intro.4b Olivier Büchsenschütz in Web Essay K: Gaul in Caesar's Time, §7, rightly points out that Caesar's long cross-country marches would not have been possible without serviceable roads. But "serviceable" does not mean straight.

in Italy and in Roman provinces where Roman roads already existed at the time. We compensate for travel in rugged terrain by reducing the traveling speed.—In most territories covered by the *Gallic War*, Roman towns did not yet exist. We thus use the names given by Caesar, those of modern cities, or those of their (later) Roman predecessors.^d

Time Requirements

§Intro.5. We assume that in uncomplicated conditions preparations for a formal siege (constructing covered sheds, at least one siege tower, and preparing a siege ramp) consumed at least two days. In some cases, though, the army was able to attack a walled town directly out of its march or, after minimal preparation, on the day of its arrival.^a We assume further that normally the formal procedures involved in accepting the surrender of a town (assembling and handing over hostages and arms), resupplying the army, and preparing for the next stage of operations took at least two days.

Dates

§Intro.6. With very few exceptions, all dates presented in the chronology we propose are estimates, based on reasonable calculations. Deviations of up to plus or minus three to five days are thus inevitable, unless clues in Caesar's text (such as a moon phase or equinox) allow us to gain occasional fixed points. The dates given here and any precise dates found in the side notes to Caesar's text correspond to the Roman civil calendar.^a Throughout the *Gallic War*, the difference between these dates, based on a lunar year of 355 days (corrected by insertion of additional intercalary months), and those of the solar year (on which the reformed Julian calendar was based) was relatively small. For example, March 28, 58, when the Helvetii were to assemble near Genava (modern Geneva; 1.6.8), corresponds to March 25 SOLAR YR. It is only toward the end of this war and in the civil wars, when political disorder caused adjustments to the calendar between the years 51 and 47 to be omitted, that the gap between calendar and solar year widened and eventually comprised more than two months.^b

Travel and Marching Speeds

§Intro.7. We collect here relevant parts of the information available in Caesar's works and other sources on times consumed to cover certain distances and, generally, travel and marching speeds, and use it to establish average speeds that will help us determine the chronology of Caesar's campaigns.^a

INFORMATION GATHERED FROM CAESAR'S OWN TEXT

§Intro.8. Caesar uses the expression “a day's normal march” to describe a distance of about 16 Roman miles (less than 15 miles/24 km.), covered in roughly five hours.^a In 57, Caesar covered the distance between Vesontio (modern Besançon) and the Matrona (modern Marne, perhaps at Epernay) in fifteen days (2.2.6), probably including two rest days. The average daily distance covered was 14.2 miles/22.7 km.^b

BB.Intro.4c Email communication by Gabe Moss at the Ancient World Mapping Center.

BB.Intro.4d For example, Lugdunum (modern Lyon).

BB.Intro.5a See, for example, 11.80. The sequence of events at 7.10–13 seems to be fairly typical.

BB.Intro.6a See Appendix C: Roman Calendars, Dates, and Time, §4. These traditional dates are correlated to those of the solar year in our chronological tables.

BB.Intro.6b For details and explanations, see Appendix C, §4.

BB.Intro.7a Again, a more comprehensive collection of data can be found in Raaflaub and Ramsey 2017. Riepl 1913 (not always reliable) gives a survey of travel speeds and times, Kolb 2000 of the transmission of official correspondence, state support for traveling officials, and state-sponsored transportation. For Roman distance measurements, see Appendix B: Roman Currency and Units of Measurement, §3.

§Intro.9. Distances covered in a day's march increased substantially if Caesar was in a hurry. In 57, he traversed the distance from the battle site at the Axona (modern Aisne, near Berry-au-Bac) River to Noviodunum (near modern Soissons)—about 31 miles/50 km., augmented 39 miles/62.5 km.—in a forced march and attacked the town directly from the march but failed to take it (2.12.1–2). In the late fall of 54, in a great emergency (5.38–45), Caesar's quaestor, Marcus Crassus,^a covered the distance of 25 Roman miles (23 miles/37 km.) between his camp and Caesar's headquarters at Samarobriva (modern Amiens) with a legion and its baggage train in a night march of eight to nine hours, traveling at a speed of slightly more than 3 Roman miles (2.7 miles/4.4 km.) per hour (5.46.1–47.1). Setting out with one legion immediately (at about 9:30 a.m.) and in a hurry, Caesar covered 20 Roman miles (18.5 miles/about 30 km.) on that same day (5.47.1). In June of 52, at Gergovia, marching with unencumbered legions and clearly in a great hurry, Caesar was able to cover 50 Roman miles (46.25 miles/74 km.) in twenty-four hours with a break of only three to four hours (7.40–41).

§Intro.10. In May 58, while occasionally battling mountain tribes, Caesar marched with five legions in seven days from Ocelum across the Mt. Genèvre Pass to the territory of the Vocontii (1.10.4–5). We estimate the distance at 122 miles/195 km. Caesar's army thus covered 17.5 miles/28 km. per day even in the mountains and under aggravated circumstances, although most likely only with pack animals, no wagons.

INFORMATION PROVIDED BY OTHER SOURCES ON CAESAR'S TRAVELING SPEEDS

§Intro.11. In March 58, traveling from Rome to the Rhône, probably at Arelate (modern Arles),^a Caesar covered a distance of about 549 miles/878 km. at an average daily rate of 73 miles/117 km.—probably an upper limit of speed over a long distance. The much shorter distance, 220 miles/350 km. from Rome to Ravenna, was covered in three days more than once, averaging the same speed.^b In the late fall of 46, Caesar covered the roughly 1,323 miles/2,116 km. from Rome to Obulco (modern Porcuna) in Farther Spain in twenty-seven days (at an average of about 49 miles/78 km. per day).^c

§Intro.12. For travel in Italy we have precise information. On February 19, 49, Pompey hurried from Luceria to Canusium, covering the 50 miles/80 km. in one day.^a In no great urgency, Caesar traversed the about 340 miles/540 km. from Brundisium to Rome on the Via Appia at an average rate of about 28–31 miles/45–50 km. per day.^b

§Intro.13. The speed with which Caesar and his armies moved was proverbial.^a Plutarch writes that “he took most of his sleep while travelling in his litters or carriages;

BB.Intro.8a Caesar: 11.76.1; see also, for example, Hir-tius 8.39.4 for “normal daily marches,” but without specific length.

BB.Intro.8b The distance by later Roman roads is 147 miles/235 km., augmented by twenty-five percent to 184 miles/295 km.

BB.Intro.9a For more on Marcus Crassus, see Appendix A: Who's Who in Caesar, §18.

BB.Intro.11a Plutarch, *Caesar* 17.5; see 1.7.1–2. The location correctly in Riepl 1913, 198, who, like Walser 1998, 51, logically concludes that Caesar took the coastal road. Gelzer 1968, 102; Walser 1998, 51, wrongly assume that Caesar reached his ultimate destination, the Rhône at Genava (modern Geneva), on the eighth day, but the distance (770 miles/1,240 km.) is too

long, impossibly requiring travel at roughly 103 miles/165 km. per day.

BB.Intro.11b 9.9.6; Appian, *Civil Wars* 2.32.

BB.Intro.11c Twenty-seven days: Strabo 3.4.9 (160C); Appian, *Civil Wars* 2.103. Suetonius, *Cae-sar* 56.5, has twenty-four days, which should probably be explained as a corruption (III instead of VII).

BB.Intro.12a See §BB.9, entries for February 19–20.

BB.Intro.12b See the firm dates and distances in §BB.9, entry for March 25–28, 49. See also the entry for October 1, 47, in §BB.12, on Cicero's travel in 47; Ovid, *Poems from the Black Sea (Ex Ponto)* 4.5.7–8; Horace *Satires* 1.5; Plutarch, *Cato the Elder* 14.3.

BB.Intro.13a Cicero, *Letters to Atticus* 7.22.1, 16.10.1; also Suetonius, *Caesar* 57.

even his hours of rest had to be used in the service of action. Then at daybreak he would drive to the garrisons and cities and camps; at his side would sit one slave boy, trained to take dictation, while Caesar was driving.”^b Although such travel, in carriages without rubber on the rims of the wheels, without springs or suspensions, and on rough roads paved with stones that provided a less than flat surface, must have been uncomfortable, enough testimonia survive that people did cover long distances in this way.^c Even so, on long trips Caesar probably alternated carriage travel with riding.

OTHER INFORMATION ON TRAVEL DISTANCES AND SPEEDS

§Intro.14. The late antique military manual of Vegetius,^a places great emphasis on exercising the “military step” at which “20 [Roman miles] should be covered in five hours, at least in summer time. At the full step, . . . 24 [Roman miles] should be covered in the same time” (1.9). The “military step” appears to correspond to the term “modest step” used by republican authors, while the term “full step” (“at a quick march”) is commonly employed by other writers.^b The military step in turn corresponds “to the speed of the ‘standard march’ known from Caesar” (11.76; see §BB.Intro.8). It is “defined as a normal route-march on good roads, in good weather, between camps, leaving time to build the camp and [care for the body], and leave in good time the next day.”^c

§Intro.15. This helps determine the speed of the march. Vegetius explicitly mentions “summer hours.” Five summer hours roughly equal six equinoctial hours. Twenty Roman miles in six hours equals 3.33 Roman miles (3.06 miles/4.93 km.) per hour in normal speed, while 24 Roman miles in six hours equals 4 Roman miles (3.7 miles/5.9 km.) in accelerated speed, which seems plausible. To complete the “standard march” of 16 Roman miles with his army (§BB.Intro.8), Caesar thus would have been on the road for four to five hours, depending on the season, although, given the length of the marching column with the baggage train, it would easily have taken six hours for the entire army to reach the site of the new camp.

Speed of Pack Animals and Wagons

§Intro.16. Pack-mules were capable of matching the speed of a fast-moving army.^a They were able to travel at a speed of 4.5–5 miles/7.2–8 km. per hour and to do so for ten to twelve hours. “Estimates of daily travel rate vary from 25–50 miles/40–80 km. per day.”^b Apart from mules (and, rarely, horses), wagons for the transportation of the legions’ heavy baggage were drawn by oxen.^c Under good conditions, a young bull could pull 400 pounds/180 kg. at a speed of 2.5 miles/4 km. an hour, but only for seven to eight hours a day (because of the time needed for grazing and resting). Thus, “even on the best roads, a single oxcart could travel for a maximum of 17.5–20 miles/28–32 km. in a day. In a long column, and crossing uneven terrain on imperfect roads, this total was drastically reduced.”^d Hence Caesar used wagons as little as possible.^e

- BB.Intro.13b Plutarch, *Caesar* 17.4, trans. Pelling 2011, 89.
- BB.Intro.13c See Riepl 1913, 152–57.
- BB.Intro.14a On Vegetius’ work, see the introduction and translation of Milner 1996.
- BB.Intro.14b See, for example, Sallust, *Jugurthine War* 98.4; Livy 9.45.15, 30.5.4.
- BB.Intro.14c Milner 1996, 11 n.1, with reference to Kromayer and Veith 1928, 352.
- BB.Intro.16a See Suetonius, *Caligula* 43.

- BB.Intro.16b Roth 1999, 206; see his section on pack animals, 202–7.
- BB.Intro.16c Mules and oxen appear as draft animals on Trajan’s and Marcus Aurelius’ columns. On the use of wagons by Roman armies, see Roth 1999, 208–14.
- BB.Intro.16d Goldsworthy 1996, 110.
- BB.Intro.16e Roth 1999, 210, with references to bibliography.

Traveling Speed of Messengers

§Intro.17. Messengers and letter carriers on foot could cover up to 37.5–44 miles/60–70 km. per day on long trips, on shorter ones and in emergencies 50–62.5 miles/80–100 km. per day.^a In the field, Caesar normally employed mounted messengers. On two occasions in 54, Caesar's letter carriers reached Rome from the coast of Britain in twenty-seven days.^b One day may be allowed for crossing the Channel. The distance from Portus Itius (modern Boulogne) to Rome (augmented by twenty-five percent for the approximately 440 miles/700 km. outside the Roman Province) is about 1,125 miles/1,800 km. Hence the letter carriers covered about 43 miles/70 km. per day over the course of twenty-six days. The maximum speed mounted messengers were capable of achieving was even higher. In the winter of 54/53, a messenger sent by Caesar to inform Labienus^c of his plans covered more than 250 miles/400 km. and back (shorter because Caesar had been moving east) in perhaps four days, thus traveling up to 110 miles/175 km. per day.^d

Rest Days

§Intro.18. We are not aware of any specific evidence on this issue. Decisions about when to schedule a rest day must have depended on the length of the march, the terrain, the urgency of the mission, and so on. At one point, Caesar explicitly mentions that he marched six-plus days (arrival on the seventh day) without interruption (1.41.5); hence presumably this was an exception.^a If so, a rest day would normally have been scheduled after every fourth or fifth day of marching.

Conclusion

§Intro.19. All this information leads us to base our calculations for the marching speed of Caesar's army on 15.5 miles/25 km. per day, unless Caesar expressly indicates that he was moving in forced marches (25 miles/40 km.) or with extreme urgency (31.25 miles/50 km.), or that his march was impeded by obstacles or enemy interference (12.5 miles/20 km.). Under normal circumstances, we include one rest day per five days of marching.

GALLIC WAR 1 • THE LANDMARK JULIUS CAESAR BOOK 1 FIRST YEAR OF WAR, 58

The Helvetian War, 58

§1.1. In the entire seven books written by Caesar himself we find only two precise dates, both at the very beginning.^a The Helvetii, living in the area of modern Switzerland, had decided to emigrate to southwestern Gaul (1.2–6). They set a date for all to assemble on the banks of the Rhône near Genava (modern Geneva; 1.6.4). That date, Caesar tells us, was the fifth day before the Kalends of April, that is, March 28, 58/March 25 SOLAR YR.^b Informed of those plans, Caesar traveled at great speed to Genava (1.7.1–2)—presumably

BB.Intro.17a Riepl 1913, 143, 147–51; see Kolb 2000, 20–27.

BB.Intro.17b Cicero, *Letters to Brother Quintus* 3.1.17, 3.1.25.

BB.Intro.17c On Labienus, see Appendix A: Who's Who in Caesar, §27.

BB.Intro.17d See 5.47.4–48.1 with the comment by Kraner et al. 1960a, 107.

BB.Intro.18a Exception: so, too, Kromayer and Veith 1928, 422–23.

BB.1.1a For an explanation of this striking feature, see Web Essay CC: The Roman *Commentarius* and Caesar's Commentaries, §§8.

BB.1.1b Henceforth, with few exceptions, we give only the dates of the Roman civil calendar. For correlation of the two calendars, see §BB.1.10 and Ramsey and Raeflaub 2017. See also the note on general assumptions and principles at the beginning of this essay.

arriving a few days before March 28. The Helvetii now requested his permission to cross the province. Caesar stalled to gain time and prepare (1.7.3–8.2). On April 13, he rejected the Helvetii's request (1.8.4). Eventually receiving permission to migrate through the territory of their neighbors, the Sequani (1.9), the Helvetii probably began their westward trek almost two weeks later, on about April 26.

§1.2. Caesar now rushed to Cisalpine Gaul, enrolled two additional legions,^a summoned three others from their winter quarters around Aquileia at the top of the Adriatic, and with those five legions hurried back to Transalpine Gaul. Calculating routes, distances, and days required to cover them, we conclude that a mounted messenger delivered marching orders to the legions in Aquileia by about May 10, that the legions' march from Aquileia took at least twenty-eight days, and that Caesar entered independent Gaul near later Lugdunum (modern Lyon) on June 8, at the earliest.^b

§1.3. Two days later, on June 10, Caesar attacked and massacred one of the four tribes of the Helvetii, the only that had not yet crossed the Arar (modern Saône; 1.12). He then had a bridge built (1.13.1), crossed the river on June 11, and was met by Divico, a Helvetian leader, in an unsuccessful parley (1.13.2–14). On the next day, the Helvetii resumed their march, followed by Caesar and his army, skirmishing intermittently (1.15.1–4). This went on for about fifteen days (1.15.5). At the end of this period, Caesar faced supply problems because grain and fodder were not yet ripe in the fields (1.16.1–2).^a This crisis prompted Caesar, on June 26, to hold an emergency meeting with the leaders of the Aedui on whose support he depended (1.16.4–20).

§1.4. By June 28, only two days were left before the monthly distribution of grain rations to the army was due (1.23.1). If this distribution was normally scheduled for the first of the month (a big *if*, but not implausible) our calculation would fit the calendar exactly. Caesar turned away to resupply in the Aeduan town of Bibracte. He was followed and harassed by the Helvetii (1.23) and, unexpectedly, a battle developed on the same day, ending long after nightfall with a disastrous defeat of the Helvetii (1.24–26.4). Their survivors marched for almost four days into the territory of the Lingones, roughly north-east of Bibracte (June 29–July 3).^a Forced to bury his own dead and take care of the wounded (whom he presumably left in Bibracte), Caesar was unable to pursue them for three days (1.26.5–6). On July 3, he resumed the pursuit, while the Helvetii, deprived of support and supplies, sent an embassy to offer their surrender. On July 6, Caesar reached their camp and ordered them to return to their country (1.27–28). Dealing with the war's aftermath would have consumed at least a week, say, to July 14.

§1.5. So far, thanks to the firm dates Caesar gives at the beginning, the details he offers about the route he took through the Alps and the time this march consumed, his almost day-by-day account of the campaign once he started his pursuit of the Helvetii, and the likelihood that grain rations were distributed on the first of the month, our chronology must be fairly accurate. Without such details and "anchors," uncertainties and errors might accumulate quickly.

BB.1.2a Caesar must have ordered these levies on his earlier trip (1.7.1–2).

BB.1.2b Holmes 1911, 49, assumes June 7. The legion so far operating near Genava (1.8) must have joined Caesar there, bringing the total to six. We assume that on this march, when time was of the essence, the legions transported the essential minimum of baggage by pack mules (see §BB.Intro.16).

BB.1.3a The availability of grain and fodder is one of the keys for checking our calculations of dates.

According to 1.40.11, the grain was ripe in late August; see also 4.19.1 (perhaps late July); 7.56.5 (mid-August).

BB.1.4a Napoleon III 1866, 76, 87, assumes that they ended up around Tonnerre (between Auxerre and Châtillon-sur Seine). But see the discussion in Holmes 1911, 631–33.

The Campaign against the German Warlord Ariovistus, 58

§1.6. Such uncertainties prevail in the first part of the second campaign Caesar undertook in 58, against Ariovistus.^a We know neither when and where exactly Caesar was informed by Gallic leaders of the threat Ariovistus posed to stability in southeastern Gaul (1.30–33.1)—perhaps at Bibracte, if not much earlier than Caesar indicates)^b—nor where Ariovistus had his base when Caesar began to negotiate with him—perhaps among the Triboci in the area of later Argentorate (modern Strasbourg)—nor when Caesar started to move against him. Caesar says only that, once he knew the details, he considered the danger very serious (1.33.2–5), that he sent two embassies to conduct unsuccessful long-distance negotiations with Ariovistus (1.34–36), that he then decided to take action (1.37), moved in three long days' marches and then in a great hurry (1.38) to the capital of the Sequani, Vesontio (modern Besançon), where he stayed a few days (1.39–40), and from there marched for six-plus days without a rest day, until he found himself 24 Roman miles from Ariovistus' camp (1.41.4–5).

§1.7. Even if Caesar took a detour (1.41.4) and moved cautiously once he reached the Dubis (modern Doubs) valley, in almost seven days of forced marches he clearly was able to get to the foothills of the Vosges Mountains between Belfort and Mulhouse. Ariovistus, leaving soon after he dismissed Caesar's second embassy (on about August 13), would easily have reached, say, the area of Belfort, where the final confrontation probably took place,^a even if he was encumbered by bringing along the entire wagon train with the families of his soldiers (1.51.3). The precise distances do not matter here, since we only need to establish that both opponents were able to reach the area in the time available.

§1.8. Given all the other uncertainties, Caesar's occasional indication of precise marching times does not help. But things get better. By the time Caesar left Vesontio, the crops in the fields were ripe (1.40.11), which suggests the first half of August, at the earliest.^a Of his personal confrontation with Ariovistus, Caesar offers a day-by-day account. And a fixed date is established by an astronomical event that figures prominently in the narrative: the German matrons, casting “the sacred lots,” had determined that the Germans could not win a battle before the new moon (1.50.5). This anchors the events and endows the chronology of the entire campaign with a fair amount of certainty.

§1.9. The new moon fitting the events was on September 25.^a Having learned the reason for Ariovistus' hesitation, Caesar forced his opponent to accept a battle before the new moon (1.51.2). It probably took place two to three days earlier, say, on September 22. The last negotiations, skirmishes, and maneuvers after Caesar had arrived in the area, listed in detail (1.42–50), consumed sixteen days. Hence we can count backwards: Caesar must have arrived in the area of the final confrontation on September 6, left Vesontio on August 29, arrived in Vesontio on August 25, and set out from Bibracte on August 21. This leaves just enough time for two consecutive embassies to travel from Bibracte to the area of Strasbourg, after Caesar received a detailed report on Ariovistus from his Gallic allies on July 17, and decided to act soon after the end of the Helvetian campaign.

BB.1.6a For more on Ariovistus, see Appendix A: Who's Who in Caesar, §6.

BB.1.6b Bibracte: see also Holmes 1911, 633–34. For literary and political reasons, Caesar completes his account of the Helvetian war before mentioning Ariovistus at all, thus dividing the first book neatly into two campaigns and using the request of the Gallic leaders, building on their gratitude for his elimination of the Helvetian

threat, to legitimize the war against Ariovistus. Almost certainly, however, he had been aware of this threat much earlier.

BB.1.7a For detailed discussion, see Pelling 1981, 751–66. On pre-Roman roads, Belfort was more than 125 miles/200 km. from Strasbourg.

BB.1.8a Krämer et al. 1961, 164; Pennacini 1993, 191.

BB.1.9a September 18 SOLAR YR.: Drummann-Groebke 1906, 795.

§1.10. Chronological Table: *Gallic War 1 · Landmark Book 1 Year 58*

Roman civil cal./ solar year date	Event
61	The Helvetii decide to emigrate to southwestern Gaul (1.2).
60–59	The Helvetii prepare for their trek (1.3–4).
696 A.U.C./58 B.C.E.	
Early spring	The Helvetii burn their towns and villages and make their final preparations (1.5).
<i>Mid-March</i>	Caesar, in Rome, learns about these developments and hurries to the province of Transalpine Gaul, orders levies, and continues to Genava (1.7.1–2).
March 28	Helvetii gather on banks of Rhone, near Genava (1.6.4). They request passage through the Roman Province.
<i>March 25</i>	Caesar stalls and fortifies banks of Rhone to prevent Helvetii from crossing against his will (1.7.3–8.2).
April 13	On this date (1.7.6), Caesar rejects the petition of the Helvetii to enter Roman territory (1.8.3).
<i>April 10</i>	
April 26	The Helvetii, having gained permission of the Sequani to migrate through their territory, begin their trek (1.9).
<i>April 23–June 4</i>	Caesar dashes to Cisalpine Gaul to enroll two new legions, summons three more from Aquileia, and hurries back to Transalpine Gaul (1.10.3–5). The legions from Aquileia, leaving on May 11, reach Ocelum at the entrance to the Mt. Genèvre Pass on May 21 (covering 319 miles/510 km. on good roads, without a baggage train, in eleven days at 31 miles/50 km. per day including a rest day). From there to the territory of the Vocontii they need seven days (1.10.5) and another seven to the confluence of Rhône and Arar (modern Saône), covering about 220 miles/350 km. at the same speed. Including two more rest days and one more day into the territory of the Segusiavi (1.10.5), the entire march from Aquileia consumes at least twenty-eight days.
June 8	Caesar, joined by the legion previously operating near Genava, crosses into independent Gaul with six legions (1.11.6).
<i>June 4</i>	
June 10	Caesar massacres the Tigurini east of the Arar River (1.12); builds bridge (1.13.1).
<i>June 6</i>	
June 11	Caesar crosses the Arar River (1.13.1); holds unsuccessful parley with Helvetian leader Divico (1.13.2–1.14.7).
<i>June 7</i>	
June 12–26	The Helvetii continue their march; Caesar follows them, skirmishing intermittently, for fifteen days (1.15.1–5).
<i>June 8–22</i>	
June 26	Caesar holds an emergency meeting with the Aedui when supplies run short (1.16.4–1.20).
<i>June 22</i>	
June 27	Surprise attack on the camp of the Helvetii fails because of faulty intelligence (1.21–22).
<i>June 23</i>	
June 28	Decisive battle with the Helvetii near Bibracte (1.24–1.26.4).
<i>June 24</i>	

Dates in boldface are firmly established. The rest are calculated to suit estimated distances and estimated speeds of movement by Caesar; they are close approximations, leaving room for a correction of plus or minus a few days. A.U.C. stands for *Ab urbe*

condita, “from the founding of the city” (Rome; supposedly in 753), the way scholars of the time would have counted the years. On measuring distances and augmenting them outside of the Roman territory, see §BB.Intro.4.

Roman civil cal./ solar year date	Event
June 29–July 3	The surviving Helvetii march north for three-plus days. Caesar needs three days to bury the dead and care for the wounded, which keeps him from pursuing the Helvetii immediately (1.26.5–6).
June 25–28	
July 3	Caesar sets out in pursuit of the fleeing Helvetii (1.26.6).
July 28	
July 6–16	
July 1–11	Caesar accepts the surrender of the Helvetii, sends them back to their country, and deals with the aftermath of his campaign (1.27–29), then spends three days returning to Bibracte (?) where, most likely, he has left his wounded soldiers. Gallic leaders arrive to congratulate Caesar and ask permission to hold a meeting (1.30).
July 17	
July 12	At Bibracte(?), Gallic leaders appeal to Caesar to curb Ariovistus (1.31–33).
July 19–Aug. 20	
July 14–Aug. 15	Two rounds of diplomatic exchanges between Caesar and Ariovistus (1.34–36), who perhaps is in the area of later Argentorate (modern Strasbourg), about 249 miles/400 km. (augmented more than 310 miles/500 km.) from Bibracte. Traveling at an average speed of about 44 miles/70 km. per day, and spending one day for rest and deliberation at the end of each leg, the two embassies consume thirty-three days.
August 21	
August 16	Caesar sets out from Bibracte (?) (1.37.4–5).
August 25	
August 20	On the fifth day after setting out (covering the roughly 132 miles/210 km. in three days of accelerated marches of 25 miles/40 km. each and two of even greater hurry), Caesar reaches Vesontio (1.38.1, 1.38.7).
August 29	
August 24	Caesar leaves Vesontio after a stay of about four to five (?) days (1.41.1).
September 6	
August 30	After six-plus days of forced marches, Caesar is within 24 Roman miles of Ariovistus (1.41.5), probably in the area of modern Belfort.
September 13	
September 6	After further negotiations, and having moved closer, Caesar and Ariovistus meet, but the meeting is broken off (1.43–46).
September 14	
September 7	Ariovistus requests a second meeting (1.47), moves his camp to 6 Roman miles from Caesar's.
September 15	
September 8	Ariovistus establishes his camp two Roman miles west of Caesar's camp (1.48.2).
Sept. 15–19	
Sept. 8–12	Caesar offers battle each day, but Ariovistus declines; cavalry skirmishes (1.48.3–7).
September 20	
September 13	Caesar establishes a second, smaller camp west of Ariovistus (1.49).
September 21	
September 14	Caesar offers battle; Ariovistus declines and attacks the smaller camp (1.50).
September 22	
September 15	Caesar decisively defeats Ariovistus (1.51–53).
September 27	
September 20	Caesar leads his troops into winter quarters among the Sequani (1.54.2), then leaves for Cisalpine Gaul (1.54.3).

GALLIC WAR 2 • THE LANDMARK JULIUS CAESAR BOOK 2 SECOND YEAR OF WAR, 57**Introduction and First Part of the Campaign, 57**

§2.1. Book 2 features as highlights a victory over a combined army of the Belgae, a dramatic battle against the Nervii in which Caesar snatched victory from the jaws of defeat, and the conquest of the town of the Atuatuci. Yet for this book we have no fixed dates, and the locations of both the battle with the Nervii and the town of the Atuatuci remain contested. Even the beginning of the campaign can be dated only roughly.

§2.2. Alarmed by reports about preparations for war among the Belgae, Caesar traveled from Cisalpine to independent Gaul “when the warm [the campaign] season was beginning” (2.2.1). Around the middle of June/early June SOLAR YR., “as soon as fodder began to be available in sufficient quantities” (2.2.2), Caesar arrived at the army’s winter quarters in the territory of the Sequani (1.54.2), probably around Vesontio (modern Besançon). Such seasonal markers will recur in later books, and it is important to be able to place them in the year. Leaving Vesontio, after the necessary preparations, by the end of June, and marching for “about fifteen days” (2.2.6), Caesar arrived at the Matrona (modern Marne) River, the border of the Remi, a Belgic nation (1.1.2). From this point onward, we have to rely entirely on assumptions about routes taken, distances covered, and time consumed. Even so, we are confident that our results are close to the mark—at least until Caesar’s confrontation with the Nervii.

The Defeat of the Nervii, 57

§2.3. Having defeated the Belgae at the Axona River and accepted the submission of the Suessiones, Bellovaci, and Ambiani, Caesar left the latter (from Samarobriva?) on about August 22 for the territory of the Nervii. At some point he entered Nervian lands and continued for three days (2.16.1) until he camped 10 Roman miles (9.25 miles/14.8 km.) from the Sabis River, across which, he learned, the Nervii and their allies were hiding (2.16). He sent an advance party to reconnoiter a camp site and on the next day arrived on a hill above the river (2.17–19). Thus Caesar’s own account. Much is debated here. We do not know where the territory of the Nervii and thus Caesar’s three-day march through Nervian territory began (2.16.1). Scholars think of some point along the 18.7 miles/30 km. between Bapaume and Cambrai (Roman Camaracum);^a we choose the halfway point, 9.3 miles/15 km. before Camaracum and 44 miles/70 km. from Samarobriva.^b

§2.4. Worse than that, the battle site is also uncertain. Scholars have long located it at the Sambre (probably the ancient Sabis) River south of Bagacum (later the capital of the Nervii; modern Bavay) where the distance to the Sabis is about correct. Yet, because of inconsistencies between Caesar’s description of the battle and the proposed site, recently another site, at the Selle River (a tributary of the Scaldis [modern Scheldt]), near Saulzoir, has gained more support.^a Inconsistencies are not lacking at this site either, however, and Saulzoir lies only 10.5 miles/17 km. beyond Camaracum, a little more than 22 miles/35 km. augmented from where we place the Nervian border. Caesar cannot have needed three days to cover that distance. On the other hand, the distance

BB.2.3a Kraner et al. 1961, 212.

BB.2.3b The distance between Samarobriva and Camaracum is 47–50 miles (75–80 km.). This is fairly flat country and the road must have been one of the main throughways and pretty straight even before the Roman road was constructed. Hence we augment the distance by only ten

percent to 53 miles/85 km.

BB.2.4a See Arnould 1941; Turquin 1975; Herbillon 1977, and the summary in Pelling 1981, 747–49, who emphasizes Caesar’s tendency to omit topographical details that would only have confused his readers.

between our assumed Nervian border and Bagacum is about 42 miles/67 km. augmented: a comfortable march of three days in Nervii territory. We thus assume that the battle site was on the Sabis River.

§2.5. On August 29, Caesar arrived at the camp site above the Sabis River. The battle with the Nervii was fought on the same day (2.17–27). Caesar's narrative leaves no doubt that his army suffered heavy casualties. They presumably equalled or surpassed those of the battle at Bibracte against the Helvetii, where he had been forced to pause for three days to bury the dead and take care of the wounded (1.26.5). We assume the same delay here (September 1–3), which also gave the envoys of the noncombatant Nervii time to offer their surrender (2.28).

The Defeat of the Atuatuci (57)

§2.6. On September 4, ready to resume his campaign, Caesar sent Publius Crassus^a off with one legion to deal with the maritime nations along the Atlantic (2.34). Caesar himself departed in pursuit of the Atuatuci who were allied with the Nervii (2.16.4). The town where the Atuatuci concentrated their population and defense (2.29) is still debated. For our calculations we randomly choose one of the candidates, modern Namur, which Caesar, in no hurry and perhaps slowed down further by the great number of wounded soldiers he had to take along, would have reached in six days, on about September 9.^b The conquest of the town, after a difficult siege (2.30–33), roughly coincided, at the end of September or beginning of October, with the arrival of Crassus' report about the success of his mission (2.34).^c In the first half of October, the legions were brought to their winter quarters among nations (the Carnutes, Turones, Andes) living along the middle and lower Liger (modern Loire) valley. Probably in mid- to late October, Caesar departed for Cisalpine Gaul.^d When the senators in Rome received his report, they decreed a thanksgiving celebration of unprecedented length (2.35.4).^e

BB.2.6a For more on Publius Crassus, see Appendix A: Who's Who in Caesar, §19.

BB.2.6b Namur lies at the confluence of the Sabis (modern Sambre) and Mosa (modern Meuse). Other sites proposed by scholars for the town of the Atuatuci lie farther down the Mosa, except for Thuin that lies about halfway between Bavay and Namur (see n. 2.29b).

BB.2.6c Depending on where Crassus accepted the submission of the maritime nations, he had to cover between 250 and 312 miles/400–500 km. by later roads, which would easily have consumed

close to three weeks; a messenger would have needed another five to seven days to bring the news to the town of the Atuatuci.

BB.2.6d Caesar was in a hurry to get back to his provinces south of the Alps not least because momentous decisions were coming up in Rome, and he wanted to be close enough to influence those. Still, he probably waited until he received reports from all legions that they had settled into their winter camps (see, for a parallel, 5.24).

BB.2.6e See n. 2.35e.

§2.7. Chronological Table: *Gallic War 2 • Landmark Book 2 Year 57*

Roman civil cal./
solar year date Event

697 A.U.C./57 B.C.E.

Mid-June <i>Early June</i>	Caesar arrives at troops' winter quarters near Vesontio (2.2.2), organizes his campaign.
End of June <i>Mid-June</i>	Anticipating an attack by the Belgae, Caesar departs for their territory (2.2.6).
Mid-July <i>Late June</i>	Caesar arrives at the Matrona (Marne) River, after fifteen days of marching (2.2.6), accepts the submission of the Remi (2.3), gathers information about the Belgae and their preparations, perhaps progressing in two days to the Remi's capital, Durocortorum, about 31 miles/50 km., augmented about 39 miles/63 km. away.
July 21 <i>July 5</i>	After spending about two days at Durocortorum and learning about the approach of the Belgae's army, Caesar hurries to the Axona (modern Aisne) River, a mere 11.25 miles/18 km. away, crosses it, and establishes his camp (2.5.4).
July 23–24 <i>July 7–8</i>	Bibrax, 8 Roman miles (7.4 miles/12 km.) north of the Axona River, is attacked by the Belgae and relieved by Caesar (2.6–7).
July 26 <i>July 10</i>	The Belgae encamp about 2 Roman miles from Caesar (2.7.3, 2.9.1). Stalemate and skirmishes for several days (2.8.1–2.9.2)
August 2 <i>July 17</i>	Battle at the Axona River, the Belgae are defeated (2.9.4–2.10.3).
August 3 <i>July 18</i>	Caesar's troops pursue and massacre the fleeing Belgae (2.11.2–6).
August 4 <i>July 19</i>	Caesar reaches Noviodunum (covering about 31 miles/50 km., augmented 39 miles/62.5 km., along the valley of the Axona in one day's forced march) and attacks but fails to capture the town (2.12.1–2).
August 5 <i>July 20</i>	Caesar fortifies a camp, builds siege equipment (2.12.3).
August 8 <i>July 23</i>	Caesar accepts the surrender of the Suessiones at Noviodunum (2.13.1).
August 10 <i>July 25</i>	Caesar moves against the Bellovaci at Bratuspantium (Caesaromagus, modern Beauvais [?]; 2.13.1), 65 miles/105 km. (augmented 82 miles/131 km.) away, reaching it in five days.
August 15 <i>July 30</i>	Caesar accepts the surrender of the Bellovaci at Bratuspantium (2.13.2–2.15.2).
August 17 <i>August 1</i>	Caesar leaves for Samarobriva (Amiens)?, against the Ambiani (2.15.2), covering the distance of 34 miles/55 km. (augmented 43 miles/69 km.) in three days.
August 20 <i>August 4</i>	Caesar accepts the surrender of the Ambiani at Samarobriva? (2.15.2).

NOTE: By the beginning of the campaign season in June of 57, the Roman civil calendar was a little more than two weeks ahead of the solar year. Dates in boldface are firmly established. The rest are calculated to suit estimated distances and estimated speeds of movement by Caesar; they are close approximations, leaving

room for a correction of plus or minus a few days. A.U.C. stands for *Ab urbe condita*, "from the founding of the city" (Rome; supposedly in 753), the way scholars of the time would have counted the years. On measuring distances and augmenting them outside of the Roman territory, see §BB.Intro.4.

Roman civil cal./ solar year date	Event
August 22–29 <i>August 6–13</i>	Caesar leaves Samarobriva for the territory of the Nervii (2.16.1), marching about 44 miles/70 km. in three days before reaching Nervian territory, about 9 miles/15 km. before Camaracum (modern Cambrai), and 42 miles/67 km. in three more days (2.16.1) from there through Nervian territory to Bagacum (modern Bavay), with one rest day, before turning south for 10 Roman miles and reaching his campsite above the Sabis River, somewhere beyond which, he has been told, the Nervii are waiting (2.16.1).
August 29 <i>August 13</i>	Battle at Sabis River, defeat of the Nervii (2.19–27).
September 1–3 <i>August 14–16</i>	Caesar presumably needs three days to bury the dead, care for the wounded, and accept the submission of the surviving Nervii (2.28).
September 4 <i>August 17</i>	Caesar sends Publius Crassus to secure the submission of maritime nations living along the Atlantic Ocean (2.34), and departs in pursuit of the Atuatuci (2.29).
September 9 <i>August 22</i>	Caesar arrives at the town of the Atuatuci (location still debated but presumably not too far from the confluence of Sabis (modern Sambre) and Mosa (modern Meuse), about 62 miles/100 km. (augmented) from Bagacum (modern Bavay) and thus reached from the battle site in five to six days). He begins the siege (2.30).
Late Sept.–early Oct. <i>Mid-September</i>	After its surrender and betrayal, Caesar enters the town of the Atuatuci and enslaves the population (2.33.3–6); Crassus reports submission of maritime nations (2.34).
First half Oct. <i>Second half Sept.</i>	Troops are brought to winter quarters among nations in western Gaul (2.35.3).
Mid- to late Oct. <i>First half of Oct.</i>	Caesar sends his report to the Senate and departs for Cisalpine Gaul (2.35.3).
Late November <i>November</i>	The Senate decrees thanksgiving period in honor of Caesar's victories (2.35.4).

GALLIC WAR 3 • THE LANDMARK JULIUS CAESAR BOOK 3 THIRD YEAR OF WAR, 57–56**Introduction**

§3.1. This book, most memorable for Caesar's naval victory over the Veneti, features, in addition, three campaigns by Caesar's legates. The book is devoid of any precise time markers. Caesar's involvement in negotiations with his political partners in Rome and Italy allows us at least to estimate with some precision the date of his departure from Cisalpine Gaul to join his army, and thus the beginning of this year's campaigns in Gaul. Otherwise we can sketch the course of these campaigns only roughly, determining in what month or season events took place.

A Failed Effort to Secure a Direct Route to Italy (57)

§3.2. The campaign of Caesar's legate, Servius Sulpicius Galba, to secure the northern access to the Summus Poeninus (modern Great St. Bernard Pass), took place in November 57 but is reported here (3.1–6), for Caesar's own good reasons, rather than at the end of Book 2.^a After initial successes, Galba was fiercely attacked by several mountain tribes. Although he eventually won a resounding victory, he withdrew from the area and wintered in the Roman Province.

Roman Politics and Caesar's Departure for Gaul (56)

§3.3. Caesar's legate Publius Crassus, who was wintering among the Andes, sent information about recent developments that Caesar interpreted as rebellious (3.7–8). Since he was compelled to remain in Italy longer than he would have preferred, he instructed his legates to construct a fleet of warships in the Liger (modern Loire) River (3.9.1). The only time indication he offers is that he departed to join his legions "as soon as the season allowed" (3.9.1–2)—that is, as soon as the roads became passable and enough forage was available, which was usually around early- to mid-June of the solar year (§BB.2.2). The question is how long political negotiations detained Caesar in Cisalpine Gaul.

§3.4. The spring of 56 was crucial for Caesar's plans. His enemies in the Senate were hoping to gain one or both of the consulships of the succeeding year (55) with the aim of replacing him as governor of Gaul, since, as he had claimed himself, Gaul was pacified (2.35, 3.7.1). In addition, with Cicero's support, those same enemies were planning to renew debate about a law on land distribution in Campania, one of Caesar's achievements in his consulship in 59 and of vital interest to Pompey.^a In order to prevent his opponents' success, Caesar needed to renew his alliance with Crassus and Pompey. He achieved this in private negotiations that took place c. April 13 at Ravenna

BB.3.2a See n. 3.1a.

BB.3.4a For more on Pompey the Great, see Appendix A: Who's Who in Caesar, §36.

(with Crassus)^b and c. April 18 at Lucca (with Pompey),^c out of which the famous agreement of Lucca emerged.^d Caesar could not leave Cisalpine Gaul before these agreements were sealed and other influential persons were supporting them. Pompey thus pressured Cicero into missing a Senate debate on the Campanian issue that had been called, upon his own proposal, for May 15.^e The news that this debate ended without any action being taken would have reached Caesar in Ravenna at most four days later (§BB.Intro.11), on May 19. Although the agreements worked out among the three men were held secret, it is likely that considerable numbers of senators sought a meeting with Caesar nevertheless.^f Caesar thus probably remained involved in hectic diplomacy for, say, two additional weeks, before he was satisfied that he had brought affairs in Rome sufficiently under control to be able to leave for Gaul, perhaps in the first days of June.^g

The Campaigns of 56

§3.5. Caesar hurried to join his army, presumably in the area of the lower Liger (modern Loire), where his soldiers had been constructing a fleet, perhaps assembling it near the town of the Namnetes (later called Portus Namnetum; modern Nantes). He could have arrived there after a journey of twenty-six days by June 29.^a This is the last date we consider reasonably reliable.

§3.6. Caesar first dispatched three of his legates to other areas of Gaul and to Aquitania to cut off potential support for the “rebels” (3.11).^a After mostly futile efforts to attack the towns of the Veneti from land, Caesar himself had to wait until his fleet was able to sail (3.11.5–14.1). Toward the end of the summer (say, in late September),^b a big

- BB.3.4b Cicero, *Letters to Friends* 1.9.9 (without date). Ward 1977, 262 n.1 plausibly suggests that Crassus visited Caesar later than usually assumed, after the Senate meeting on April 5, in which the Campanian issue was hotly debated (Cicero, *Letters to Brother Quintus* 2.6.1) and Cicero proposed to schedule another debate for May 15. If Crassus left Rome on April 6 he could easily have reached Ravenna for a consultation with Caesar c. April 13 (covering the approximately 220 miles/350 km. from Rome in seven days). This, in turn, allowed Caesar enough time to arrive in Lucca for his meeting with Pompey c. April 18 (covering the almost 165 miles/265 km. in four to five days).
- BB.3.4c Cicero, *Letters to Friends* 1.9.9. On April 8, Cicero met Pompey, who was expected to leave on April 11 for state business in Sardinia (*Letters to Brother Quintus* 2.6.3). Instead, Pompey turned up a few days later in Lucca to consult with Caesar. Presumably he arrived there on about the 17th if he left Rome, as planned, on the 11th (covering 202 miles/325 km. in seven days). For the political issues, see the Introduction, §16; Gelzer 1968, 116–25; Ward 1977, 259–66.
- BB.3.4d This agreement confirmed the alliance and gave Pompey and Crassus equal power with Caesar in terms of provinces and legions after their second consulship, which was planned for 55.
- BB.3.4e Cicero, *Letters to Friends* 1.9.8–12. Plutarch, *Caesar* 51; Appian, *Civil Wars* 2.3 give exaggerated numbers and perhaps the wrong place. Still, the prospects of Caesar's opponents began to look less promising, and many senators may have wanted to be sure not to be identified as supporters of the wrong side.
- BB.3.4f Crucial additional Senate decrees concerning the financing of Caesar's legions and the number of his legates were passed soon after the May 15 Senate meeting (Cicero, *Letters to Friends* 1.7.10; *On the Consular Provinces* 28; *On Behalf of Balbus* 61). We do not know the date, but if Caesar expected this debate to come up soon, this could have prompted him to stay longer and continue lobbying.
- BB.3.5a For the distances, here and in the remaining sections of Book 3, see §BB.3.10, and Ramsey and Raaflaub 2017.
- BB.3.6a We do not hear anything more about the mission of Labienus, who was sent with a cavalry contingent to eastern Gaul (3.11.1–2).
- BB.3.6b Late August SOLAR YR.; by then, the Roman civil calendar was almost a month ahead of the solar year.

naval battle resulted in an overwhelming Roman victory (3.14.2–3.15) and the war was over (3.16).

§3.7. Meanwhile, Caesar's legate, Quintus Titurius Sabinus, was campaigning against the Venelli in modern Normandy. This campaign ended in a wild enemy attack on Sabinus' camp, induced by a stratagem, and a total rout of the enemy (3.18–19), which prompted all nations involved to capitulate (3.19.5–6). Sabinus' victory roughly coincided with Caesar's, because each heard at the same time about the other's success (3.19.5).

§3.8. Publius Licinius Crassus^a was sent to Aquitania to prevent the formation of an alliance that might assist the rebellious Gauls (3.11.3). Leaving Nantes at the same time as Sabinus and Caesar, he might have arrived in Tolosa (modern Toulouse) on August 7 and begun his invasion around August 17. His operations in Aquitania, resulting in the surrender of Sotium (3.21.3–3.22) and eventually in a resounding victory over a large alliance of nations that was even supported by Spanish tribes (3.23.1–3.27.1), hardly ended before late September. Crassus then marched north again, arriving in late October in the area between Liger (modern Loire) and Sequana (modern Seine), where Caesar was placing his army's winter quarters (3.29.3).

§3.9. Quite likely, therefore, the three campaigns all began in early July and ended with decisive battles in late September. In October, Caesar himself conducted a punitive expedition against the Morini who had so far refused to submit. His advance soon became mired in the forests and swamps into which the Morini withdrew, and the onset of the rainy season forced him to withdraw (3.28.1–3.29.2). In the first half of November, his legions built their winter quarters (3.29.3).

BB.3.8a For more on Publius Crassus, see Appendix A: Who's Who in Caesar, §19.

3.10. Chronological Table: *Gallic War 3 · Landmark Book 3* Years 57–56

Roman civil cal./ solar year date	Event
697 A.U.C./57 B.C.E.	
Late Sept./early Oct. <i>Mid-Sept.</i>	Caesar's legate Servius Sulpicius Galba departs with the 12th Legion from the town of the Atuatuci (3.1.1).
November 6 <i>October 18</i>	Galba and the 12th Legion arrive at Octodurus (modern Martigny) in the upper Rhône valley, allowing thirty-two days of marching and five of rest to cover about 404 miles/650 km. (augmented 510 miles/820 km.).
Nov. 7–13 <i>Oct. 19–24</i>	Galba battles tribes in vicinity of the entrance to the Summus Poeninus (modern Great St. Bernard Pass; 3.1.4).
November 23 <i>November 3</i>	The enemy attacks Galba's camp and is routed by his legion (3.2–3.6.3).
Late November <i>Mid-November</i>	Galba withdraws to Transalpine Gaul, to winter in the territory of the Allobroges (3.6.5).
698 A.U.C./56 B.C.E.	
Winter-spring <i>Winter-spring</i>	Caesar orders his legate Publius Crassus to prepare a fleet in the Liger (modern Loire) River (3.9.1).
April 13 <i>March 20</i>	Caesar meets with Marcus Crassus at Ravenna to renew their political alliance (Cicero, <i>Letters to Friends</i> 1.9.9).
April 18 <i>March 25</i>	Caesar meets with Pompey at Lucca to renew their political alliance (Cicero, <i>Letters to Friends</i> 1.9.9).
June 4 <i>May 10</i>	Caesar sets out from Cisalpine Gaul (3.9.2).
June 29 <i>June 4</i>	Caesar joins his army, perhaps at the town of the Namnetes (modern Nantes), allowing twenty-six days, including at least three rest days, for the journey with a cavalry escort from Ravenna via Ocelum and the Mt. Genève Pass to Valentia (modern Valence), Lugdunum (modern Lyon), Avaricum (modern Bourges), Caesaroenum (modern Tours), covering about 1,070 miles/1,710 km. (augmented for the part outside the Roman Province, with about 180 miles/285 km. through mountains) at an average speed of 50 miles/80 km. per day (37 miles/60 km. per day over the Alpine passes).

Three Roughly Simultaneous Campaigns

1. Caesar's War against the Veneti and their Allies (3.9.3–16)

July 8 <i>June 12</i>	Caesar begins an unsuccessful campaign by land (3.11.5–3.14.1).
Late September <i>Late August</i>	Caesar's fleet arrives and the Veneti are crushed (3.14.2–3.16).

NOTE: Dates in boldface are firmly established. The rest are calculated to suit estimated distances and estimated speeds of movement by Caesar; they are close approximations, leaving room for a correction of plus or minus a few days. A.U.C. stands for *Abr*

urbe condita, “from the founding of the city” (Rome; supposedly in 753), the way scholars of the time would have counted the years. On measuring distances and augmenting them outside of the Roman territory, see §BB.Intro.4.

Roman civil cal./
solar year date

Event

2. Sabinus' War against the Venelli and their Allies (3.17–19)

July 8 <i>June 12</i>	Caesar's legate Quintus Titurius Sabinus leaves, probably from the town of the Namnetes (modern Nantes), for a separate campaign.
July 22 <i>June 26</i>	Sabinus arrives in the territory of the Venelli (3.17.1., covering 165 miles/about 265 km. (enhanced 207 miles/330 km.) in two weeks, including two rest days.
Late September <i>Late August</i>	Enemy attack on Sabinus' camp fails; the enemy are overwhelmed (3.18–19).

3. Crassus' War against the Aquitani (3.20–27)

July 8 <i>June 12</i>	Caesar's legate Publius Licinius Crassus leaves, probably from the town of the Namnetes, for a campaign against the Aquitani.
August 7 <i>July 12</i>	Crassus arrives at Tolosa (modern Toulouse), on the border of Aquitania (3.20.1), allowing thirty-one days (including four rest days) for his journey of about 336 miles/540 km. (augmented about 422 miles/675 km.).
August 17 <i>July 22</i>	Crassus begins the invasion of Aquitania (3.20.2).
August 24 <i>July 29</i>	Crassus' troops attacked near Sotium (3.20.3–3.21.2).
August 25 <i>July 30</i>	Crassus tries to take Sotium but fails (3.21.2).
September 4 <i>August 7</i>	Sotium surrenders after siege of about one week (3.21.3–3.22).
September 6 <i>August 9</i>	Crassus moves to the southwest, against Vocates and Tarusates (3.23.1–6).
Late September <i>Late August</i>	Crassus attacks the enemy camp and achieves a decisive victory (3.23.7–3.26.6). Most Aquitani surrender (3.27.1).

Caesar's End-of-Year Campaign

October <i>September</i>	Caesar conducts an inconclusive campaign against the Morini (3.28–3.29.2).
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Late October <i>Late September</i>	Publius Crassus rejoins Caesar in the region between the Liger and Sequana Rivers.
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Early November <i>Early October</i>	Caesar places his troops in winter quarters (3.29.3).
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GALLIC WAR 4 • THE LANDMARK JULIUS CAESAR BOOK 4 FOURTH YEAR OF WAR, 55**Introduction**

§4.1. This book, which recounts such momentous events as Caesar's victory over German invaders of Gaul, the first crossing of the Rhine into German territory, and the first invasion of Britain, is almost devoid of precise chronological markers. Exceptions are 1) a comment that Caesar spent a total of eighteen days east of the Rhine (4.19.4), 2) a report on a storm linked with a full moon and spring tide that wreaked havoc on his fleet in Britain (4.29.1), and 3) a remark on the closeness of the fall equinox that prompted Caesar to hasten his return from Britain to Gaul (4.36.2). We know neither when he began his campaign in the spring nor where exactly the battle with the Germans took place. The latter gap in our knowledge is especially troublesome because the location of this battle determines how much time was consumed by Caesar's first march across Gaul and whether or not an additional fairly long march to the site of the Rhine crossing was required. We thus have to rely on a series of inferences and assumptions and must test their plausibility by ultimately calculating back from the single fixed date, the full moon on the night of September 15/16.^a

The Defeat of the Germans (55)

§4.2. Alarmed by a large-scale invasion of the territory of the Menapii along the lower Rhine by two German nations, the Usipetes and Tencteri, and its possible impact on the recently subjected Gauls (4.1–5), Caesar left Ravenna earlier than usual (4.6.1). Scholars commonly assume that this means early April: say, April 19/April 7 SOLAR YR., about six weeks earlier than in the previous year. This was too early to cross the Alpine passes. We assume that Caesar ordered his army to meet him not in the area of the lower Sequana (modern Seine) where they had wintered but at a convenient starting place for a campaign to the Rhine, perhaps at Samarobriva (modern Amiens). Traveling with a body-guard of cavalry, he would have been able to maintain a high daily average (§BB.Intro.11) and reach his army twenty-five days after his departure from Ravenna, by May 15.

§4.3. At Samarobriva, Caesar held a meeting with Gallic leaders (4.6.5). Having organized his grain supply and selected cavalry from the contingents sent him by the allies (4.7.1), Caesar could have departed on May 29, at the earliest, for the area where the Germans were. But where were they, and what route did Caesar take to meet them? We hear only that, when Caesar was a few days' march from their location, he was met en route by their envoys (4.7.2). Caesar refused to allow them to stay in Gaul but discussed with them the possibility of relocating them across the Rhine into the territory of the Ubii who would welcome a reinforcement against their overpowering neighbors, the Suebi. When the envoys were later willing to consider this possibility, they asked for three days to negotiate with the leaders and council of the Ubii (4.11.2–3). They must, therefore, have been close enough to the territory of the Ubii to cross the Rhine, negotiate, and return in a three-day span. Since the Ubii at that time lived roughly across from the Treveri,^a this rules out the area settled by the Menapii on the lower Rhine, lower Meuse, and Waal, where the German invaders had spent the winter (4.4.7). Indeed, encouraged by some

BB.4.1a For distances and travel times, see §BB.4.9, which takes into account the fact that we now know, thanks to an inscription (published in *Année épigraphique* 1992, 177), that 55, not 54 (as Drumann-Groebel 1906 surmised) was intercalary. Hence, the tables in Drumann-Groebel III, 800–1, must be adjusted. For details, see

§BB.4.9 and Ramsey and Raaflaub 2017; for the principles involved, Appendix C: Roman Calendars, Dates, and Time, §4.

BB.4.3a Decades later, Marcus Agrippa transferred the Ubii to the west bank of the Rhine and down-river, where the town at the site of later Cologne became their capital.

Gallic nations, the Germans had long left that area and moved south, into the territories of the Eburones and Condrusi, neighbors and dependents of the Treveri (4.6.2–4).

§4.4. Within a few days, Caesar attacked and massacred many of the Germans in their camp and drove the rest in headlong flight to the confluence of the Rhine and another river (4.14.1–15.2). The manuscripts of Caesar's text identify this river as the Mosa (modern Meuse),^a but for the reason just mentioned this is more likely to have been the Mosella (modern Moselle) near later Confluentes (modern Koblenz).^b Two additional arguments support this conclusion, although neither on its own is compelling. One is that the Germans had sent most of their cavalry across the Mosa to plunder and collect grain (4.9.3, 4.11.4). That force was not back on the fourth day when the rest of the German cavalry attacked Caesar's (4.12); hence the Germans whose envoys Caesar met must have been south of the Mosa by a distance in excess of what could be covered by cavalry in two days. This is compatible with our reconstruction.^c The other reason is that we are fairly certain about the area where Caesar crossed the Rhine (near Neuwied, a few miles north of Koblenz); the direct distance from the confluence of the Waal and Meuse to Neuwied by later Roman roads is at least 150 miles/240 km., 188 miles/300 km. augmented. To cover this distance with his army, marching at normal speed, with two rest days, Caesar would have consumed two weeks. Yet in his narrative (4.16.1) he moves right from the battle to the Rhine crossing.^d Moreover, according to our calculations it would be difficult to include in the time frame of this summer an additional march of two weeks from the site of the battle to the site of the bridge. We conclude that Caesar reached the area of Koblenz c. June 22 (twenty-five days after leaving Samarobriva), the area of the first meeting with the German envoys (4.7.2) four days earlier, on June 19. On June 23, the two German nations were massacred (4.13–15).

The First Crossing of the Rhine and Excursion into Germany (55)

§4.5. Caesar's engineers had to reconnoiter the best site for building a bridge and prepare the logistics. We assume that almost a week elapsed before Caesar had all the information he needed, and plans were ready to build the bridge. The actual construction thus began c. July 1 and took ten days, “counting from the time when the wood began to be hauled in” (4.18.1). About July 11, Caesar's army crossed the Rhine and then spent eighteen days on

- BB.4.4a The Mosa does not flow into the Rhine but into the Waal; for discussion of the ancient situation see Pennacini 1993, 1039.
- BB.4.4b The mistake can be explained by a scribal error early in the manuscript tradition.
- BB.4.4c We do not know the location of the territory of the Ambivariti (mentioned only by Caesar and only here), to which the German cavalry supposedly went. We think that Caesar met the German envoys for the first time when he was four day's march from the Koblenz area, that is, shortly before he reached the Rhine in the area of modern Cologne and then turned south.
- BB.4.4d Whichever site we choose, Caesar clearly omitted much topographical and other detail. As Pelling (1981, 750) points out, this is typical of Caesar's battle descriptions in general. The problems his narrative poses “rest on Caesar's silence; they rest on topographical difficulties which we, with the aid of autopsy and detailed maps, can expose.” Caesar's immediate readers, however, would only be confused by too many details. Pelling decides

in favor of a northern site. We decide differently. We should add here that finds on a battle site discovered near Kessel in the southern Netherlands can be dated to the first century B.C.E. The finds include skeletons (including those of women and children) with cutting and stabbing marks, spearheads, swords, and a Gallic helmet. Virtually all these objects were found in an ancient river bed. The Dutch archaeologist Nico Roymans, who has reexamined these finds, suggests that this is the site of Caesar's massacre of the two German nations (2017). This suggestion certainly must be taken seriously, although very few items link the finds directly to Romans, other explanations seem possible—Caesar's armies operated in these areas in campaigns against the Menapii and Eburones as well—and the main objections against locating the battle site so far north remain valid. The debate, marked a century ago by Holmes 1911, 691–706 and Walker 1921, remains alive; the full publication of the finds at Kessel (currently in preparation) is eagerly awaited.

the German side (4.19.4). He thus returned over the bridge c. July 29, tore it down (4.19.4), and prepared his army for the return march that presumably began around August 1.^a

Caesar's First Expedition to Britain (55)

§4.6. Although by that time, Caesar writes, “very little of the summer remained,” which seems slightly exaggerated,^a he still decided to make an expedition to Britain (4.20). Around August 1, he departed for the territory of the Morini on the Atlantic coast opposite Britain. The harbor he chose most likely was at Boulogne-sur-mer,^b which he reached thirty-two days after leaving Koblenz, c. September 3. A reconnoitering team had been sent ahead, and orders given to assemble the required fleet of warships and troop transports (4.21.1, 4.21.4). After arrival, Caesar must have devoted a few days to diplomatic and organizational matters (4.21.3–22.6). With his setting sail (4.23.1) and landing on the same day (4.23.2–6), we finally gain firm chronological footing, thanks to an astronomical marker.

§4.7. The Britons who resisted Caesar's landing (4.24–26) submitted on the next day (4.27). On the eighth day after Caesar's arrival (by Roman inclusive counting—that is, seven days later),^a his cavalry transports approached but were driven back by a sudden storm (4.28). On the night following that day was a full moon, causing a spring tide (4.29.1). This tide, combined with the storm, battered Caesar's fleet and incapacitated most ships (4.29.2–4). This provides a fixed date: the full moon was on the night of September 15/16 (August 30/31 SOLAR YR.). Hence the cavalry failed to land on September 15 and Caesar departed from Gaul and landed in Britain on September 8/August 23 SOLAR YR.^b This indirectly confirms that our calculations of dates earlier in this campaign season must be roughly correct. The events that followed—the renewal of resistance by the Britons, an attack on one of Caesar's legions that was warded off by his timely arrival, the Britons' defeat in a battle in front of Caesar's camp, and their final submission (4.30–36.1)—can be dated only very roughly. Realizing that the equinox was close, and fearing worsening weather conditions, Caesar sailed back to Gaul (4.36.2–3). The fall equinox in that year was on October 13/September 26 SOLAR YR.^c We may thus guess that Caesar returned around the beginning of October.

§4.8. Presumably by the middle of October, Caesar settled his troops in winter quarters among the Belgae (4.38.4). Unlike in previous years, he delayed his departure for Cisalpine Gaul until after the first of the new year, leaving probably in early January 54 (5.1.1).^a Previously, towards the end of October 55, the Senate in Rome decreed a thanksgiving celebration of twenty days (4.38.5).^b

BB.4.5a East of the Rhine, Caesar's army cut the grain in the fields of the Sugambri; hence the grain was presumably ripe or almost so, which would suggest mid- to late July (see n. 4.19a).

BB.4.6a 4.20.1 with n. 4.20a. “Summer” here means the season suitable for campaigning, which would suggest at least mid-September/mid- to late August SOLAR YR. In the next year (fall of 54), a similar remark (5.22.4) concerns a date around September 29.

BB.4.6b See n. 4.21b.

BB.4.7a This date is based on an emendation of IIII in the manuscripts to VIII, as we explain in n. BB.4.7b.

BB.4.7b We base the new date for Caesar's landing on the fact that the tidal conditions described by Caesar at 4.23.6 are incompatible with those reconstructed by modern hydrographers for the date indicated by the manuscripts (September 12/ August 27 SOLAR YR.), while tidal conditions four days earlier

fit Caesar's description of his experience perfectly. See Holmes 1907, 605–11, and Olson and Doescher 2008, 20–22, who propose the new date.

BB.4.7c The explanation of why the fall equinox was on September 26, instead of 21 or 22 as we would expect, lies in the “precession of the equinoxes,” a phenomenon resulting from the earth's slight wobble on its axis. The axis marks off a small circle around the poles over the course of nearly twenty-six thousand years. Hence the need to use tables or a computer program to reconstruct the sky of more than two thousand years ago for the period we are considering.

BB.4.8a Part of the reason for his late departure may have been his concern with planning the second expedition to Britain and his desire to supervise the design of the ships that his legions were ordered to build over the winter (5.1.1–4).

BB.4.8b See n. 4.38f.

4.9. Chronological Table: *Gallic War 4 • Landmark Book 4 Year 55*

Roman civil cal./ solar year date	Event
698 A.U.C./56 B.C.E.	
Dec.56–Jan. 55 <i>Nov.–Dec. 56</i>	Caesar sends troops on furlough to Rome to insure the election of Pompey and Crassus to the consulships of 55 (Plutarch, <i>Pompey</i> 51.4, <i>Crassus</i> 14.6; Cassius Dio 39.31.2).
699 A.U.C./55 B.C.E.	
Winter/early spring <i>Winter/early spring</i>	Caesar is alarmed by the report of a massive invasion of Gaul by the German Usipetes and Tencteri (4.1.1–2, 4.4.1–4.5.1).
April 19 <i>April 7</i>	Caesar leaves Ravenna, “earlier than usual” (4.6.1), too early to use any Alpine pass. The distance from Ravenna through the Po Valley to the coast at modern Genua, along the coast to the Rhône, and up to the site of Lugdunum (modern Lyon) is about 700 miles/1,120 km. from there to Samarobriva (modern Amiens) 357 miles/575 km. (augmented 450 miles/720 km.), to be covered with a body-guard of cavalry at an average of 50 miles/80 km. per day in twenty-five days, including two rest days.
May 15 <i>May 2</i>	Caesar joins his army (4.6.2), perhaps at Samarobriva.
May 18–19 <i>May 5–6</i>	Caesar meets in Samarobriva (?) with the leaders of Gallic nations (4.6.5).
May 29 <i>May 16</i>	Having assembled supplies and cavalry, Caesar starts his march to the Rhine (4.7.1).
June 19 <i>June 6</i>	Having advanced about 290 miles/465 km. (augmented) toward the Rhine (near Cologne) in twenty-one days (including three rest days), Caesar meets German envoys (4.7.2) and refuses their request that he not advance for three days (4.7.3–4.9.3).
June 22 <i>June 9</i>	German envoys meet again with Caesar, who in three days has advanced about 47 miles/75 km. along the Rhine toward the south and is now only 12 Roman miles from the Germans' camp (4.11.1); he grants a one-day truce, but the German cavalry attacks and defeats Caesar's (4.11–12).
June 23 <i>June 10</i>	Caesar detains German envoys, attacks the German camp 8 Roman miles (7.4 miles/almost 12 km.) away, defeats and massacres the Germans (4.13–14), and pursues them to the confluence of the Mosella (modern Moselle) and Rhine, where most of them perish (4.15.1–2). He returns to his camp (4.15.3).
June 24–29 <i>June 11–16</i>	Caesar decides to cross the Rhine, moves to a site nearby (about 9 miles/14.5 km. north of Confluentes; modern Koblenz), where the bridge is to be built, and has his army prepare the bridge's construction (4.16.1–4.17.2).
July 1 <i>June 17</i>	Construction of the bridge over the Rhine begins and is completed in ten days (4.17–4.18.1).
July 11 <i>June 27</i>	Caesar crosses the Rhine and spends eighteen days in German territory (4.18.2–4.19.4).
July 29 <i>July 15</i>	Having achieved his purpose, Caesar returns to Gaul, dismantles the bridge, and gets ready for the return march (4.19.4).

NOTE: Dates in boldface are firmly established. The rest are calculated to suit estimated distances and estimated speeds of movement by Caesar; they are close approximations, leaving room for a correction of plus or minus a few days. A.U.C. stands for *Ab*

urbe condita, “from the founding of the city” (Rome; supposedly in 753), the way scholars of the time would have counted the years. On measuring distances and augmenting them outside of the Roman territory, see §BB.Intro.4.

Roman civil cal./ solar year date	Event
August 1 <i>July 18</i>	Having decided to undertake an exploratory expedition to Britain, Caesar departs from the Rhine (4.20), covering the longer distance of 68 miles/about 110 km. (augmented 86 miles/140 km.) beyond Samarobriva in seven more days (including a rest day) than on the way out (in thirty-two days). Gaius Volusenus is sent ahead on a mission to reconnoiter (4.21.1–2).
September 3 <i>August 18</i>	Caesar arrives at the harbor—probably Portus Itius (modern Boulogne).
Sept. 4–7 <i>Aug. 19–22</i>	Caesar spends a few days in Portus Itius, receives envoys from British nations, accepts the submission of the Morini, prepares the expedition, and sends a large force under Sabinus and Cotta against the Menapii (4.21.3–4.22.6).
September 8 <i>August 23</i>	Caesar sets sail, crosses the Channel, and lands in Britain despite fierce native resistance (4.23–26).
September 9 <i>August 24</i>	Britons submit (4.27).
September 15 <i>August 30</i>	Owing to a storm, Caesar's cavalry fails to land on the British coast (4.28).
Night of Sept. 15/16 <i>Night of Aug. 30/31</i>	Storm and spring tide at full moon combine to inflict severe damage on the fleet (4.29).
September 16 <i>August 31</i>	Britons resume their resistance (4.30).
September 22 <i>September 6</i>	Caesar's 7th Legion is attacked but saved by Caesar's intervention (4.32, 4.34.1–3).
September 28 <i>September 12</i>	Caesar defeats Britons in a battle in front of his camp (4.35).
September 29 <i>September 13</i>	Britons submit again (4.36.1).
October 1 <i>September 14</i>	Caesar sails back to Boulogne (4.36.2–3). Crews of two ships are attacked by Morini (4.36.4–4.37.4).
October 2 <i>September 15</i>	Labienus is sent on a punitive expedition; the Morini surrender soon thereafter (4.38.1–2).
Early October <i>Mid-September</i>	Sabinus and Cotta return from their expedition against the Menapii (4.38.3).
Mid-October <i>Late September</i>	Caesar settles his troops in winter quarters among the Belgae (4.38.4).
End of October <i>Mid-October</i>	The Senate in Rome decrees a thanksgiving festival of twenty days (4.38.5).

GALLIC WAR 5 • THE LANDMARK JULIUS CAESAR BOOK 5 FIFTH YEAR OF WAR, 54**Introduction**

§5.1. This book contains a reference to an astronomical event (the fall equinox, at 5.23.5) that gives us a firm date (October 23/September 26 SOLAR YR.) before which Caesar returned from his second expedition to Britain. In addition, the correspondence of the orator Marcus Cicero, whose brother Quintus^a joined Caesar as a legate in this year and sent news from the front, helps us date Caesar's departure from Ravenna in the spring and both his landing in and departure from Britain. Our efforts to determine distances and marching times are complicated by the fact that we do not know the precise location of the winter camps that are the centers of dramatic action in the second part of the book.^b

Caesar's Departure from Ravenna, 54

§5.2. At the end of the previous campaign year, Caesar had left his troops in Belgic territory, on or near the Atlantic coast, with the order to build ships. Departing late for Cisalpine Gaul,^a he probably arrived in Ravenna in early February. After completing routine business in Cisalpine Gaul and spending time in the neighboring province of Illyricum, he set out from Cisalpine Gaul to rejoin his army (5.1.5–5.2.1). In the vicinity of Placentia (modern Piacenza), he met up with his new legate Quintus Cicero. This we learn from the fact that on June 2, Marcus Cicero received in Rome a letter dispatched from Placentia by Quintus, who was on his way to join Caesar's staff,^b and on the same or the next day another letter from Quintus together with one from Caesar.^c Both of those letters were most likely dictated en route, about 31 miles/50 km. north of Placentia, between the town of Laus Pompeia and an attested station for changing horses located at the ninth milestone farther along the road from Placentia to Mediolanum (modern Milan).^d Since a letter carrier could easily have covered the distance from that locale to Rome (about 380 miles/610 km.) in eight to nine days, the letters must have been dispatched on May 24 or 25. This information allows us to determine that Caesar, needing five days to reach the locale in question, must have left Ravenna on May 20 or 21.

Caesar's Activities before the Second Expedition to Britain, 54

§5.3. About May 24, Caesar thus was en route in the Po valley, about 50 km. north of Placentia. About July 2 (§BB.5.6), he arrived at Portus Itius (modern Boulogne). It is impossible to determine precise dates within the thirty-nine days comprising that period,^a but we calculate that Caesar arrived at the closest of his winter camps, in the territory of the Meldi (5.5.2) along the Matrona (modern Marne) River, near its confluence

BB.5.1a On Quintus Tullius Cicero, see Appendix A: Who's Who in Caesar, §15.

BB.5.1b For distances and required travel times, see §§BB.5.11 and Ramsey and Raaflaub 2017.

BB.5.2a See n. BB.4.8a.

BB.5.2b Cicero, *Letters to Brother Quintus* 2.14.1.

BB.5.2c Mentioned in the same letter.

BB.5.2d This is Linderski's (2015, 293–94) brilliant explanation of the puzzling statement that Caesar's and Quintus' letters were "sent from Blandeno" (*datas Blandenone*). No town with

BB.5.3a that name can be found in the vicinity of Placentia. Linderski unravels what presumably is a corruption by positing that Quintus described the letters as having been "sent en route from Laus to the ninth milestone" (*datas ab Laude ad nonum*). We cannot tell why Caesar chose the slightly longer route by way of Mediolanum. Our estimate of the length of this period (May 1 to June 8 SOLAR YR.) closely agrees with the calculation made by Holmes 1907, 727 (forty-two days, from May 1 to June 11 SOLAR YR.).

with the Sequana (modern Seine), by about June 5. This is where he would have begun his inspection tour of all winter quarters and the work done over the winter (5.2.2–3).^b In view of the subsequent march to the Treveri and back, Caesar cannot have spent more than eight days on this tour.^c We assume, therefore, that around June 13 he arrived at Samarobriva and that this is the place where the troops for the trip to the east had been ordered to assemble. This trip (5.2.4–5.1), necessitated by the failure of the Treveri to attend meetings of Gallic leaders, must have consumed at least eighteen days, beginning on June 14. Although our calculation is extremely tight, it seems just possible that Caesar could have arrived at Portus Itius around July 2.^d

Caesar's Second Expedition to Britain, 54

§5.4. Three letters in Marcus Cicero's correspondence shed light on the chronology of Caesar's second invasion of Britain. They require a closer look. 1) In a letter written on July 27 in Rome, Marcus surmised, based on a letter he had received from Quintus, that his brother was already in Britain.^a Since a letter carrier seems to have needed a minimum of twenty-six days (see §BB.Intro.17) to travel to Rome from Portus Itius (modern Boulogne), Quintus' letter informing his brother of his imminent departure can have been written no later than July 2. This gives us a date by which all preparations for sailing must have been completed.^b 2) In another letter, written in August,^c Marcus expresses relief at having received a letter sent by Quintus announcing his safe arrival in Britain. Since Marcus mentions how anxious he had previously been about the dangers of the crossing,^d that letter must be the first Marcus received confirming a safe landing. Furthermore, in order for that letter to have arrived in Rome before the last day of August (the 29th), it had to have been dispatched from Britain no later than twenty-seven days earlier, on August 2.^e Hence August 2 is the latest possible date for Caesar's landing. 3) On September 13, Marcus received in the town of Arpinum (about 72 miles /115 km. south-southeast of Rome) a letter that Quintus had sent from Britain on August 10.^f It thereby confirms the conclusion based upon letter no. 2 that Quintus had arrived there in early August. The date of August 10 also happens to fit the account of activities that occurred during the days soon after the landing.^g

§5.5. In his own account of the crossing, Caesar states that his forces reached the coast of Britain at about noon after he set sail at sunset on the previous evening, and that after making landfall the troops established a camp (5.8.2–9.1). After midnight, Caesar

BB.5.3b See Map 5.6.

BB.5.3c Napoleon III 1866, 199, allows only six days.

BB.5.3d Krane et al. 1960a, 9, adopting the view of Holmes 1907, 727–30, place Caesar's arrival a mere three days later.

BB.5.4a *Letters to Atticus* 4.15.10. On Quintus Cicero, see Appendix A: Who's Who in Caesar, §15.

BB.5.4b See §BB.Intro.17 for travel times of letter carriers. Quintus' departure was, in fact, delayed by adverse weather for more than three weeks (5.7.3), but when Marcus wrote to Atticus on July 27 he had no way of knowing that his brother's expectations had not been fulfilled.

BB.5.4c *Letters to Brother Quintus* 2.16. This letter must have been written in August (after July 27 and before September 2) as revealed by the statement in 2.16.3 that Cicero expected to be defending Scaurus "straight away" (*statim*), in a trial that ended in an acquittal on September 2 (Asconius 18.3C). The further details that

anchor this date cannot be discussed here.

Letters to Brother Quintus 2.16.4: "Oh how welcome your letter from Britain has been! I had been worrying about the ocean and the island's coast. What is coming now is not negligible but offers more hope than fear, and I am agitated more by expectations than by worry" (our trans.).

BB.5.4e Of course Quintus' letter is likely to have been composed some days earlier than August 2 since a date as late as August 29 for *Letters to Brother Quintus* 2.16 will not allow enough time for Scaurus' trial to be completed by September 2 when a verdict was reached (see n. BB.5.4c). *Letters to Brother Quintus* 3.1.13.

BB.5.4f During the days immediately preceding August 10, Caesar's army was frantically repairing the storm-damaged fleet. We can only speculate about why Quintus did not mention the setback caused by the storm.

advanced 12 Roman miles (about 11 miles/18 km.), inflicted several setbacks on the enemy, and constructed a camp (5.9). On the morning of the next day, the second after landing, Caesar was informed that a huge storm during the previous night had done massive damage on his ships (5.10). He returned immediately to the coast (5.11.1). It is tempting to attribute the extreme violence of this storm to its coincidence with a spring tide at either a new or full moon, as in the previous year.^a This would provide a fixed date. Since Caesar reports that some time after daybreak on the day of his landing the tide turned westward after having previously carried him off course toward the east when the wind dropped around midnight (5.8.2–3), he must have crossed shortly before a new or full moon.^b In his account of the storm that affected his fleet in the previous year (55), Caesar explicitly makes a connection between full moon, spring tide, and the storm's intensity (4.29; see §BB.4.7). Clearly, however, in 54 the date of the full moon on August 14/July 21 SOLAR YR. was nearly two weeks too late to have had this impact because Caesar's forces must have landed by August 2, at the latest.^c Rather, the evidence assembled here allows us to date the landing on roughly July 29, shortly before the night of the new moon on July 30/31 (July 6/7 SOLAR YR.).^d

§5.6. If Caesar landed on July 29,^a he sailed from Portus Itius at sunset on July 28 (5.8.2). His departure had been temporarily delayed (on July 26 and 27) by the flight of Dumnorix, an Aeduan chieftain, who was pursued and killed by Caesar's cavalry (5.7). Prior to July 26, adverse winds prevented Caesar from sailing for "approximately (*circiter*) twenty-five days" (5.5.4). The addition of "approximately" suggests that twenty-five is a rounded number. Hence we regard twenty-three days as a reasonable estimate of the actual time of Caesar's delay by unfavorable weather (roughly July 3–25). In that case, as suggested earlier, we can place his arrival at Portus Itius on about July 2, at the latest.^b

- BB.5.5a This is the view of Kraner et al. 1960a, 23, already proposed by Napoleon III, 1866, 198.
- BB.5.5b Holmes 1907, 729, remarks that the tidal conditions described by Caesar point to the coincidence of his landing with either a new or full moon. Colin Bell of the UK National Oceanography Centre, Liverpool, confirmed by email that tides would have been nearly identical in the days preceding those phases of the moon, and modeled the tides at Dover at 1:00 a.m., 5:00 a.m., and 10:00 a.m. on a recent date corresponding to the lunar phase cycles of July 4, 54 SOLAR YR. The chart for 5:00 a.m. reveals that the tide had reversed direction from the early morning hours, and at approximately 1.5 hours after sunrise the current would have been moving at maximum force, in a southerly direction, parallel with the coast. This is in accord with the Caesar's description that after sunrise his ships were carried back in the direction of their intended landing place to the south, but they had to be rowed vigorously to make land in the absence of a wind.
- BB.5.5c A firm date established by the letter attested by Cicero's *Letters to Brother Quintus* 2.16.3 and discussed in §BB.5.4. This fact invalidates the conclusion of Brodersen 2003, 90–93, who, recognizing the significance of Caesar's description of the tides, puts the landing shortly before the full moon of August 14. Brodersen's further contention that Caesar's march on the night after his landing (5.9.1) required the light of a full moon (see also Napoleon III 1866, 198)
- BB.5.5d was long ago refuted by Holmes 1907, 730. Caesar quite routinely set out from camp during the third or fourth watch (quarter) of the night; moreover, the nights are exceptionally short in early July in the British Isles. Specifically, at the latitude of Dover on July 6, 54 SOLAR YR., darkness ended with the commencement of nautical twilight at 1:40 (SkyMap Pro 11). Hence soon after Caesar set out in the third watch (sometime between roughly midnight and 1:45 a.m.), he would have been marching in ambient light leading up to sunrise at 3:38 a.m.
- BB.5.5e Conditions on the date of the new moon in July 54 were especially favorable for a spring tide because the moon was at perigee on that day, standing at its third closest distance to earth for the whole of the year (222,342 miles/357,825 km.). Times of new moon (19:41 UT) and perigee (05:49 UT) on July 6 SOLAR YR. calculated by SkyMap Pro 11.
- BB.5.6a Rauschen 1886, 16, 56 n. 87, gives this same date. Holmes 1907, 730 placed Caesar's landing on the day of the new moon, which he erroneously assigned to July 7 SOLAR YR., one day late.
- BB.5.6b See §BB.5.3. Thus Quintus' letter written at Portus Itius no later than July 2, which is attested by *Letters to Atticus* 4.15.10 of July 27 (no. 1 in §BB.5.4), must have been composed at about the time Caesar arrived, and this explains why Quintus gave his brother the impression that sailing would take place within days.

§5.7. Before Caesar set out for the interior of Britain a second time, his army spent ten days (July 31–August 9) repairing the ships (5.11.6). Hence the letter written by Quintus on August 10 (no. 3 in §BB.5.4) falls precisely at the end of that period. Unfortunately Caesar's narrative of his campaign against Cassivellaunus provides no indications of time and distance.^a There are only two signposts during this whole campaign: 1) a victory won on the day after Caesar resumed his expedition, so c. August 11 (5.17), and 2) a visit that Caesar paid to the coast on September 1 without bringing his whole army back with him.^b Having brought about Cassivellaunus' capitulation, Caesar decided to end the expedition and return to the coast and continent because little of the season suitable for warfare was left (5.22.4) and “the equinox was near at hand” (5.23.5). While the fall equinox was on October 23/September 26 SOLAR YR., Caesar must have sailed back several weeks earlier because on September 25 both Quintus Cicero and Caesar had already returned to the coast of Britain and provided a summation of the outcome of the British campaign in their letters sent from there to Marcus Cicero on that date. As Marcus, who received those letters on October 24, wrote to Atticus, “They [Caesar and Quintus] had settled Britain, taken hostages but no booty (tribute, however, imposed), and were about to bring the army back from the island.”^c Caesar must have sailed in the late evening of c. September 29, at the latest, landing at Portus Itius on the next day, October 1 (5.23.6).^d It was during this final phase of the British expedition, after Caesar returned to the coast by September 25, that he learned the sad news of his daughter’s death.^e

Revolts among the Belgae: Attacks on Two of Caesar's Winter Camps, 54

§5.8. Owing to supply problems resulting from bad harvests, the winter camps needed to be spread more widely than usual (5.24.1).^a Leaving by c. October 7 and moving at

BB.5.7a There are only two letters sent from Britain whose dates can be worked out within the approximately six weeks during which Caesar campaigned in the interior (c. August 10 until shortly before September 25): 1) a letter received from Quintus Cicero by Marcus, in Rome, on September 20, 27 days after its dispatch, so sent on August 23 (*Letters to Brother Quintus* 3.1.17); and (2) a letter dispatched by Caesar from the coast on September 1 and received by Cicero in Rome on September 27 (3.1.25).

BB.5.7b Caesar's presence on the coast is attested by *Letters to Brother Quintus* 3.1.25, where it is specifically mentioned that Quintus Cicero was not with Caesar and so, presumably, was still with the army pursuing Cassivellaunus. Possibly, as Holmes 1907, 733, speculates, Caesar made this hasty return to the coast to insure the failure of a surprise attack planned by the kings in the region on Caesar's naval camp (5.22.1–3).

BB.5.7c *Letters to Atrius* 4.18.5 (trans. Shackleton Bailey, modified).

BB.5.7d Holmes 1907, 735, places the return of Caesar's last detachment later, about a week ahead of the equinox.

BB.5.7e Plutarch, *Caesar* 23. This interpretation of Plutarch's text is confirmed by Seneca, *On Consolation to Marcia* 14.3, and adopted by Pelling

2011. Julia, Caesar's only child and wife of Pompey, died while giving birth, and the child died a few days later (Plutarch, *Pompey* 53). See Map 5.24. We do not know the precise location of the three camps that were soon to figure prominently in events during the last two months of 54. 1) The camp of Cicero was probably somewhere around modern Charleroi (see discussion in Pennacini 1993, 1066). 2) The camp of Sabinus and Cotta was at Atuatua (6.32.3–5), but it is unlikely that the place later called Atuatua had this name already in Caesar's time; see discussion by Pennacini 1993, 1065–66, who opts for a site near modern Tongeren. 3) The camp of Labienus is placed by some scholars in the area of Mouzon (ancient Mosomagus) on the Mosa (Kraner et al. 1960a, 107–8). A parallel road leading from Durocoritum (modern Reims) toward the Ardennes Forest crosses the Mosa some 18.6 miles/30 km. to the northwest at modern Charleville-Mézière. A location in that area would make the distances Caesar gives from Labienus' to Sabinus' and Cicero's camps (5.27.9) more plausible, but we do not know whether topographical conditions there fit Caesar's description. See also n. BB.5.9e.

normal speed with all their gear, the legions would have reached their farthest destinations two weeks later and completed basic fortification of their camps after another week (c. October 28).^b A few days later, Caesar received his legates' reports (5.25.5). At that juncture, he had planned to depart for Cisalpine Gaul (5.24.8), but he probably never left.^c

§5.9. The subsequent events can be summarized briefly. About two weeks after the legions had arrived in their winter quarters (5.26.1), around November 4, Ambiorix^a and the Eburones assaulted the camp of Sabinus and Cotta and, on the next morning (November 5), ambushed and destroyed their fifteen cohorts (5.26–5.37). Ambiorix then stirred the Nervii into rebellion (5.38). Their attack on Quintus Cicero's^b camp (5.39) began perhaps on November 14 and lasted without interruption for almost three weeks, bringing the defenders to the brink of exhaustion (5.40–42). Perhaps on November 22, a messenger finally got through the tight ring of the attackers (5.45), reaching Caesar in Samarobriva after two to three days (say, on November 24). Caesar ordered his quaestor, Marcus Crassus,^c to take over for him in Samarobriva (5.46) and marched as fast as possible toward Cicero's camp (5.47.1–5.48.3), arriving in the area c. November 29. The Nervii abandoned the siege of Cicero's camp and hurried to face Caesar who, perhaps on December 4, utterly defeated them (5.49–5.51). Before midnight, the news of the victory reached Labienus^d in his camp, 60 Roman miles (55.5 miles/almost 90 km.) away (5.53.1),^e prompting the Treveri to abandon the attack they had planned (5.53.2). On the afternoon of the battle day, Caesar reached Cicero's camp and on December 5 held an assembly (5.52). Over the next week, he marched back to Samarobriva with Cicero's legion and established winter quarters for three legions in separate camps around that town (5.53.3).

§5.10. Caesar decided to spend the winter with his army, incessantly coping with news of attempted insurrections (5.53.4–5.54). Later in the winter, Labienus repelled an attack of the Treveri on his camp and succeeded in having their leader, Indutiomarus, killed (5.55–5.58). This had a dampening effect on further disturbances.

- BB.5.8b By late November, Marcus Cicero had heard from Quintus that Caesar treated him with special favor, even allowing him to choose his legion for the winter (*Letters to Atticus* 4.19.2), and that Quintus was among the Nervii (*Letters to Brother Quintus* 3.6.1–2). Caesar was at Samarobriva, two days closer to Italy than Portus Itius. Hence letters from there would have taken twenty-four days, from Quintus' camp perhaps twenty-eight days. Therefore, Quintus' letter to Marcus was sent off at the very beginning of November.
- BB.5.8c See n. 5.25d.
- BB.5.9a On Ambiorix, see Appendix A: Who's Who in Caesar, §3.
- BB.5.9b On Quintus Cicero, see Appendix A, §15.

- BB.5.9c On Marcus Crassus, see Appendix A, §18.
- BB.5.9d On Labienus, see Appendix A, §27.
- BB.5.9e This distance seems roughly accurate if Labienus' camp was near the Mosa (modern Meuse) in the far northeastern corner of the Remi's territory (n. BB.5.8a; see Map 5.24), and Cicero's in the southeastern part of that of the Nervii. If Sabinus and Cotta's camp among the Eburones really was 50 Roman miles from Cicero's and "a little more" from Labienus' (5.27.9), the Atuatua given as the location of their camp cannot have been identical with Atuatua known from later sources. The quandaries posed by this information and by the figure of 100 Roman miles at 5.24.7 have defied compelling resolutions.

§5.11. Chronological Table: *Gallic War 5* • Landmark Book 5 Year 54

Roman civil cal./
solar year date Event

700 A.U.C./54 B.C.E.

Early January 54 Caesar departs for Cisalpine Gaul (5.1.1).

Mid-December 55

Early February 54 Caesar arrives in Cisalpine Gaul, attends the judicial circuits (5.1.1).

Mid-January 54

Late March–April Caesar moves to the province of Illyricum, deals with security issues, holds assizes (5.1.5–5.2.1).

March

Mid-May Caesar returns to Cisalpine Gaul and Ravenna (5.2.1).

Mid-April

May 20 or 21 Caesar departs from Ravenna to join his army north of the Alps (5.2.1).

April 27 or 28

May 24 Traveling with a light escort at about 50 miles/80 km. per day, Caesar requires five days to cover the
May 1 225 miles/ 360 km. from Ravenna to the locale about 31 miles/50 km. north of Placentia, where he
 catches up with his new legate, Quintus Cicero (Cicero, *Letters to Brother Quintus* 2.14.1).

June 5 Having continued at the same speed from that meeting point on the shortest available route through
May 13 the Alps (the Little St. Bernard Pass) to Lugdunum (modern Lyon), covering about 280 miles/450 km.
 in six days, and from there to the closest winter camp in the territory of the Meldi on the lower Matrona
 (modern Marne), covering about 280 miles/450 km. (augmented 350 miles/565 km.) in another
 seven days, Caesar begins an inspection tour of his army and the ships they built over the winter (5.2.2–3).

June 13 Completing this tour, Caesar arrives perhaps at Samarobriva (modern Amiens), where four legions and
May 21 eight hundred cavalry have been ordered to assemble.

June 14 Caesar leaves Samarobriva (?) for the territory of the Treveri (5.2.4), just beyond the Mosa (modern
May 22 Meuse), with lightly equipped troops, covering about 146 miles/235 km. (augmented about 180 miles/
 290 km.) in six days, at an average of 31 miles/50 km. per day, stays there for three days to consolidate
 affairs, and returns via Samarobriva to Portus Itius in nine days, including a rest day (5.3.1–5.5.1).

July 2 Caesar arrives at Portus Itius (modern Boulogne) and finds everything ready for the expedition to
June 8 Britain (5.5.1–3).

July 3–25 Adverse winds prevent the fleet's sailing for approx. twenty-five days (5.7.3).
June 9–July 1

July 26 Caesar embarks his army, but the sudden flight of the Aeduan chieftain Dumnorix further delays
July 2 departure. Dumnorix is hunted down and killed (5.6.1–5.7.9).

July 28 Caesar sets sail from Portus Itius toward sunset (5.8.2).
July 4

July 29 Caesar lands successfully on coast of Britain at about noon (5.8.5), builds camp (5.9.1).
July 5

NOTE: Dates in boldface are firmly established. The rest are calculated
 to suit estimated distances and estimated speeds of movement
 by Caesar; they are close approximations, leaving room for a
 correction of plus or minus a few days. A.U.C. stands for *Ab*

urbe condita, “from the founding of the city” (Rome; supposedly in 753), the way scholars of the time would have counted the years. On measuring distances and augmenting them outside of the Roman territory, see §BB.Intro.4.

Roman civil cal./ solar year date	Event
July 30	Caesar makes a foray into the interior, leaving camp soon after midnight on the night of July 29/30 (5.9).
July 6	
July 30/31	A storm during the night causes heavy damage to the fleet (5.10.2–3).
July 6/7	
July 31	Caesar returns to the coast to inspect the damage (5.11.1).
July 7	
July 31–Aug. 9 July 7–16	The army works day and night over the course of ten days to repair the ships (5.11.5–6).
August 2 July 9	Latest date for the dispatch of Quintus Cicero's first letter written from Britain to his brother Marcus in Rome in order for it to be received before the end of August (the 29th), after twenty-seven days of travel (Cicero, <i>Letters to Brother Quintus</i> 2.16.4).
August 10 July 17	Letter dispatched by Quintus Cicero from Britain (Cicero, <i>Letters to Brother Quintus</i> 3.1.13).
Aug. 10–Sept. 25 July 17–Aug. 30	Caesar campaigns against Cassivellaunus, commander-in-chief of an alliance of Britons, and eventually achieves his submission (5.11.7–9, 5.15–22), then returns to the fleet.
August 11 July 18	Three legions under Trebonius win a decisive victory (5.17).
September 1 August 6	Letter to Marcus Cicero dispatched by Caesar from the British coast, mentioning that Quintus is not present (<i>Letters to Brother Quintus</i> 3.1.25). Possibly Caesar returned briefly to his naval camp to ward off an impending enemy attack (5.22.1–3).
September 25 August 30	Letters dispatched by Caesar and Quintus Cicero from the British coast, announcing their imminent return to the continent (Cicero, <i>Letters to Atticus</i> 4.18.5).
September 29 September 3	After waiting in vain for additional ships, Caesar sails back to Portus Itius, before the fall equinox on October 23/September 26 SOLAR YR. (5.22.4–5.23.5).
October 3–4 Sept. 6–7	Caesar meets in Samarobriva (modern Amiens) with Gallic leaders and organizes the distribution of winter camps (5.24.1).
October 7–21 Sept. 10–24	Legions move into the regions of their winter camps (5.24.2–5). The most distant, among the Eburones, about 155 miles/250 km. (augmented 195 miles/315 km.) from Samarobriva, would have been reached in about two weeks.
October 15 September 18	Troubles among the Carnutes cause Caesar to move one legion into their territory (5.25.1–4).
October 22–28 Sept. 25–Oct. 1	Approximately one week is devoted to fortifying the camps.
October 31 October 4	Having received success reports from all winter quarters, Caesar intends to leave for Cisalpine Gaul (5.24.8, 5.25.5). He probably never does so.
Nov. 4–5 Oct. 8–9	Approximately two weeks after the legions reached their winter camps, the Eburones under king Ambiorix attack the winter camp of Sabinus and Cotta, trick them into leaving the camp, and destroy the entire army of fifteen cohorts in an ambush (5.26–5.37).

Roman civil cal./ solar year date	Event
November 7 <i>October 11</i>	Ambiorix arrives among the Nervii and stirs them into revolt (5.38).
Nov. 14–Dec. 4 <i>Oct. 18–Nov. 6</i>	The Nervii and their allies attack Quintus Cicero's winter camp and begin a siege that lasts for almost three weeks (5.39–45).
Nov. 22–24 <i>Oct. 26–28</i>	A messenger sent by Quintus Cicero finally slips through the enemy lines and reaches Caesar at Samarobriva (modern Amiens; 5.45).
November 25–29 <i>Oct. 29–Nov. 2</i>	In forced marches, Caesar reaches the area of Cicero's camp (5.46–5.48.3), covering roughly 112–124 miles/180–200 km. (augmented 125–138 miles/200–220 km.) from Samarobriva in four and a half days.
Dec. 2–4 <i>Nov. 4–6</i>	The Nervii abandon the siege and turn against Caesar, who tricks them into fighting on unfavorable ground and gains an overwhelming victory (5.49–5.51).
Dec. 4–5 <i>Nov. 6–7</i>	Caesar reaches Cicero's camp and praises the legion and its officers (5.52). Indutiomarus and the Treveri desist from attacking Labienus' camp (5.53.2).
Mid-December <i>Mid-November</i>	Caesar returns to Samarobriva with Cicero and his legion; he stations three legions in winter quarters around that town (5.53.3).
700–701 A.U.C./54–53 B.C.E.	
Winter 54/53 <i>Winter 54/53</i>	Caesar stays with his army, dealing with the constant threat of new insurrections (5.53.4–5.54). Labienus thwarts an attack on his camp by the Treveri; in the ensuing battle, the Treveri's leader Indutiomarus is killed (5.55–58).

GALLIC WAR 6 • THE LANDMARK JULIUS CAESAR BOOK 6 SIXTH YEAR OF WAR, 53**Introduction and Spring Campaigns, 53**

§6.1. This book contains no precise dates, only a few vague clues, including a possible hint at a fixed date (October 1) in a reference to the date for the distribution of monthly rations to the legions (6.33.4).^a “Before the winter was over,” Caesar conducted a surprise campaign against the Nervii (6.3.1–3). “At the very start of spring,” presumably soon after the equinox (say, on April 27),^b Caesar announced a meeting of Gallic leaders, probably at Samarobriva (modern Amiens; 6.3.4). At the meeting (perhaps on May 8–9), Caesar took the absence of the Senones, Carnutes, and Treveri as proof of rebellion and moved the meeting to Lutetia (modern Paris), where he arrived on May 16 and immediately launched a campaign against the Senones (6.3.4–6). The final installment of the Gallic leaders’ meeting, at which the campaign ended with the submission of the Senones and soon also the Carnutes (6.4), was probably held at the capital of the Senones, Agedincum, perhaps on May 22.

§6.2. Caesar now planned a campaign against the Treveri and Ambiorix (6.5.3–5). Perhaps on June 1, he sent the baggage train of the entire army, protected by two legions, to join Labienus^a in his camp near the territory of the Treveri (6.5.6). In order to cut Ambiorix off from possible support by neighboring nations, Caesar moved first against the Menapii (6.5.6), whose territory he reached with seven unencumbered legions in about sixteen days. The ensuing campaign, taking place in very difficult terrain (6.6.1–3), consumed at least another two weeks, to around July 2. Caesar was now free to move against the Treveri (6.6.4), but by that time Labienus had already tricked them into defeat (perhaps on June 27) and forced them to surrender (6.7–8).

Caesar’s Second Expedition into German Territory, 53

§6.3. Caesar now decided to cross the Rhine again in order to discourage the Germans from offering any further support to the Treveri or Ambiorix (6.9.1–2). Most likely, he summoned Labienus with his three legions and the baggage train (with some of the equipment required to build a big bridge) to meet him on the Rhine near Koblenz. The exchange of messengers consumed about five to six days, and Labienus’ march across the Treveri’s territory at least nineteen days. He thus could have joined Caesar on the Rhine around July 23, while Caesar could easily have reached the meeting place a few days earlier. Caesar’s army then constructed another bridge (a little upriver)^a in a shorter time than the last (6.9.1–4), say, in eight days. Having crossed it, Caesar spent a few days among the Ubii (6.9.5–8), then considered conducting a campaign against the Suebi, the source of all troubles originating east of the Rhine (6.10.1–3). Learning that they had withdrawn (6.10.3–5, 6.29.1), and reluctant to engage in an uncertain campaign far into German territory, he returned to Gaul. By then, “the grain began to ripen” (6.29.4): it probably was early September.^b

BB.6.1a For distances and times required to cover them, see §BB.6.5 and Ramsey and Raaflaub 2017.

BB.6.1b The spring equinox was on April 25/March 23 SOLAR YR. Kraner et al. 1960a, 134 assume that Caesar convened the meeting at the equinox, which is not required by the text.

BB.6.2a On Labienus, see Appendix A: Who’s Who in Caesar, §27.

BB.6.3a That is, a little closer to Koblenz than the first one; see n. 6.9c, Map 6.12.

BB.6.3b Late July SOLAR YR. See 1.40.11 and §BB.1.8 for the time when the grain was ripe.

Caesar's Campaign against Ambiorix, 53

§6.4. Caesar was now free to focus on Ambiorix.^a His cavalry, surprising Ambiorix in his hiding place in the Ardennes Forest, failed to prevent his last-minute escape (6.29–30). Caesar then concentrated his army's baggage in a fort at Atuatuca (the site of Sabinus' disaster in the previous winter) under Quintus Cicero's^b command (6.32.3–6). This Atuatuca is probably not identical with the later Roman town of the same name; hence we do not know its precise location.^c Even so, given the distances involved, and despite delays caused by negotiations with local nations and the search for Ambiorix, Caesar could easily have arrived there in two to three weeks. Dividing his army into three task forces that were to scour regions to the north and west (6.33.1–3), he promised to return after seven days when the grain rations were to be distributed (6.33.4). If our assumption is correct that this distribution usually happened on the first of the month, we have here a firm date for Caesar's expected return:^d October 1. Caesar thus left for the seven-day foray on September 24 and arrived in Atuatuca on September 22, at the latest. On the day of his planned return (October 1), raiders from the German Sugambri almost succeeded in taking Cicero's camp and caused heavy losses (6.35–41). Caesar then set out again to chase Ambiorix (6.43.1). Aided by cavalry from many nations, his army conducted a thorough (but in the end unsuccessful) search and ravaged the territory of the Eburones. The onset of seasonal rains (6.43.2–6) suggests that these efforts lasted to the end of October.^e Returning to Durocortorum (6.44.1), Caesar convened a council of Gaul (6.44.1–2) and distributed his army in winter quarters, placing two legions on the borders of the Treveri, two among the Lingones, and six in the territory of the Senones around Agedincum. Once these were established, he left for Cisalpine Gaul (6.44.3), probably in mid- to late December.

BB.6.4a On Ambiorix, see Appendix A: Who's Who in Caesar, §3.

BB.6.4b On Quintus Cicero, see Appendix A, §15.

BB.6.4c See nn. BB.5.8a, BB.5.9e.

BB.6.4d See 1.23.1 and §BB.1.4.

BB.6.4e See §BB.3.9 for an analogy.

§6.5. Chronological Table: *Gallic War 6 • Landmark Book 6 Year 53*

Roman civil cal./ solar year date	Event
701 A.U.C./53 B.C.E.	
Jan.–March 53 <i>Winter 54/53</i>	Caesar levies two legions and borrows one from Pompey (6.1).
March–April <i>Late Feb.–March</i>	Caesar conducts a surprise raid into the territory of the Nervii (6.3.1–3).
May 8–9 <i>April 4–5</i>	Caesar convenes a meeting of Gallic leaders at Samarobriva (modern Amiens; 6.3.4).
May 16 <i>April 12</i>	Caesar continues at Lutetia (modern Paris) the meeting with Gallic leaders begun roughly a week earlier (6.3.4–6), covering the distance of about 78 miles/125 km. (augmented about 98 miles/155 km.) in six days.
May 17–19 <i>April 13–15</i>	Caesar immediately launches a campaign against the Senones, reaching their capital Agedincum 69 miles/110 km. away in two days of forced marches, and receives their submission (6.3.6–6.4.4).
May 22 <i>April 18</i>	Caesar receives the submission of the Carnutes, dismisses the meeting of Gallic leaders, orders up Gallic cavalry (6.4.5).
June 1 <i>April 28</i>	Caesar sends two legions with the army's entire baggage train from Samarobriva to join Labienus (6.5.6) in the territory of the Remi, close to the border of the Treveri. Moving at 12 miles/20 km. per day, they need sixteen days (including two rest days) to cover 140 miles/225 km. (augmented 175 miles/280 km.). Caesar himself departs for the territory of the Menapii (6.5.6), consuming some sixteen days of long marches (25 miles/40 km. per day, including two rest days) to cover about 270 miles/435 km. (augmented about 340 miles/545 km.).
June 27 <i>May 24</i>	Labienus defeats the Treveri and accepts their submission (6.7–8).
July 1–2 <i>May 27–28</i>	Caesar accepts the surrender of the Menapii (6.6.1–3) and receives news of Labienus' victory over the Treveri (6.6.9), which obviates his plans to proceed against them. Caesar decides to cross the Rhine again (6.9.1–2).
July 23 <i>June 18</i>	Labienus, receiving Caesar's orders c. July 4 and setting out c. July 6, marches about 168 miles/270 km. (augmented about 210 miles/340 km.) in seventeen days across the territory of the Treveri to meet Caesar on the Rhine near modern Koblenz. Caesar and his unencumbered legions cover the about 200 miles/320 km. (augmented 250 miles/400 km.) from the territory of the Menapii to the intended meeting place in less time.
Late July–early Sept. <i>Late June–late July</i>	Caesar again builds a bridge across the Rhine, plans a campaign against the Suebi, but decides against it and returns to Gaul (6.9–10; 6.29).
Early September <i>Early August</i>	Caesar begins his revenge campaign against Ambiorix. His cavalry almost catches Ambiorix in his hiding place. Caesar crosses the Ardennes Forest searching for Ambiorix (6.30–31), a distance of about 112 miles/180 km. (augmented about 140 miles/225 km.).

NOTE: Dates in boldface are firmly established. The rest are calculated to suit estimated distances and estimated speeds of movement by Caesar; they are close approximations, leaving room for a correction of plus or minus a few days. A.U.C. stands for *Ab*

urbe condita, “from the founding of the city” (Rome; supposedly in 753), the way scholars of the time would have counted the years. On measuring distances and augmenting them outside of the Roman territory, see §BB.Intro.4.

Roman civil cal./ solar year date	Event
September 22 <i>August 16</i>	Caesar leaves the baggage train with one legion at Atuatuca under Quintus Cicero's command and divides the army into three task forces (6.32.3–6).
Sept. 24–Oct. 1 <i>August 18–24</i>	The task forces scour areas to the north and west, searching unsuccessfully for Ambiorix (6.33–34).
October 1 <i>August 24</i>	The date set for Caesar's return to the camp at Atuatuca. Raiders from the German Sugambri almost capture the camp and cause the loss of two cohorts (6.35–41). Caesar's cavalry returns during the night.
Oct. 2–late Oct. <i>Aug. 25–mid-Sept.</i>	Caesar returns, holds an assembly with the legion at Atuatuca (6.42), then resumes his campaign, devastating the territory of the Eburones (6.43).
Late October <i>Second half of Sept.</i>	Caesar marches his army to Durocortorum (modern Reims; 6.44.1).
Early November <i>Late September</i>	Caesar holds a meeting of Gallic leaders, passes judgment on ringleaders of the uprisings in the spring (6.44.1–2).
Late Nov.–mid-Dec. <i>Second half of Oct.–early Nov.</i>	Legions settled in winter quarters; Caesar leaves for Cisalpine Gaul (6.44.3).

GALLIC WAR 7 • THE LANDMARK JULIUS CAESAR Book 7 SEVENTH YEAR OF WAR, 52**Introduction**

§7.1. This was the year in which the Arverni leader Vercingetorix^a formed a pan-Gallic coalition that challenged everything Caesar had accomplished so far. Caesar's victory at Alesia late in the year appeared to seal his conquest of Gaul. Momentous events in Rome in January and their political repercussions allow us to determine the probable date of Caesar's departure from Ravenna to Gaul. Indications of changes in the season make it possible to trace the early phases of Caesar's campaign against Vercingetorix. Later in the year, time markers are lacking entirely.^b

Caesar's Departure from Ravenna, 52

§7.2. On January 18, the populist politician and gang leader Publius Clodius Pulcher was murdered.^a This exacerbated an ongoing political crisis in Rome that had so far prevented the election of consuls. On the next day (January 19), riots broke out; the Senate building, in which the mob cremated Clodius' body, burned down, and the Senate initiated procedures to fill the consulship.^b On about February 1, after several attempts to hold elections had failed, the Senate declared an emergency and authorized Pompey to levy troops in order to restore order in Rome.^c

§7.3. Caesar at the time was in Cisalpine Gaul (where he had probably arrived only recently, around January 11), holding the assizes (7.1.1).^a News of the recent events in Rome could have reached him in Ravenna after three days, on January 21.^b Intense negotiations ensued, between Pompey,^c the Senate, and Caesar. Ultimately, Caesar acquiesced to Pompey's election as sole consul,^d after receiving a guarantee that Pompey would support a bill that exempted Caesar from the requirement that he appear in Rome in person to submit his candidacy for a second consulship (in 49 for 48).^e On the twenty-fourth day of an intercalary month/February 5 SOLAR YR., Pompey was elected consul.^f Presumably within a few days he had things under control in Rome, and by the twenty-seventh/February 8 SOLAR YR., news of the resolution of the impasse must have reached Ravenna. In principle, Caesar was now free to leave for Gaul (7.6.2), from where his legates had been sending him increasingly alarming news (§BB.7.4). The tribunes' bill about his candidacy in absentia was passed during Pompey's consulship, though we do not know the date.^g But Caesar did not need to wait for its passage, since Cicero had visited him in Ravenna and yielded to his urgent request to persuade his protégé Marcus

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|---------|---|---------|---|
| BB.7.1a | On Vercingetorix, see Appendix A: Who's Who in Caesar, §47. | BB.7.3a | See §BB.6.4, end. We calculate eighteen to nineteen days for Caesar's travel from Gaul to Ravenna. |
| BB.7.1b | In this year, an intercalary month of twenty-seven days was inserted into the calendar after February 24/January 12 SOLAR YR., corresponding to January 13/February 8 SOLAR YR. On intercalary months, see Appendix C: Roman Calendars, Dates, and Time, §4. During this period, which can be confusing to the modern reader, we give the corresponding solar year dates as well. For distances and required travel and marching times, see §BB.7.13 and Ramsey and Raafaub 2017. | BB.7.3b | See §BB.Intro.11. Florus (1.45.22) attests that Ravenna was Caesar's headquarters for a levy of troops in early 52. |
| BB.7.2a | Dated by Asconius 31C. | BB.7.3c | On Pompey, see Appendix A, §36. |
| BB.7.2b | Dated by Asconius 32C (funeral and riots) and Cassius Dio 40.49.5 (meeting of Senate). | BB.7.3d | A highly irregular measure in lieu of a dictatorship and designed to maintain a semblance of constitutional propriety; see Ramsey 2016, 308–18. |
| BB.7.2c | For the likely date, see Ramsey 2016, 301–2. Cassius Dio 40.49.5 incorrectly places the emergency decree on the day after Clodius' murder (January 19). | BB.7.3e | For discussion of why this was important to Caesar, see the Introduction, §17. |
| | | BB.7.3f | Dated by Asconius 36C. For the calendar in this period, see n. BB.7.1b. |
| | | BB.7.3g | During the debate on this bill in the Senate Cato filibustered to try to prevent its endorsement (mentioned angrily by Caesar at 9.32.3); for the earliest possible date of its passage, see Ramsey 2016, 311 n.50. |

Caelius Rufus, one of the plebeian tribunes, to refrain from vetoing this bill.^h Hence we assume that Caesar left for Transalpine Gaul on March 1/February 9 SOLAR YR., almost immediately after receiving news of Pompey's election.

The Outbreak of the Gallic Revolt, 52

§7.4. Gallic leaders had been contemplating and attempting rebellion ever since the previous winter (54/53; see §§BB.5.9–10). News about the eruption of a severe political crisis in Rome on January 19 could have reached them about twenty days later, around February 9, at the earliest.^a They were convinced that this crisis would prevent Caesar from reacting quickly to a major uprising (7.1.2–3). Their preparations (7.1.4–8), culminating in a central meeting among the Carnutes (7.2), might have taken just under two weeks. Perhaps on February 21, the rebellion began with a massacre of Romans at Cenabum (7.3), followed immediately by an uprising led by Vercingetorix among the Arverni, his consolidation of leadership (7.4), and an attack on the Bituriges (7.5). These events will have consumed at least two more weeks (February 21–intercalary 10/January 9–22 SOLAR YR.). Caesar's legates in Gaul had their ears to the ground and were in constant touch by messengers with Caesar in Ravenna. News of the massacre at Cenabum on about February 21 must have reached Agedincum, where six legions were stationed (§BB.6.4), by February 23.^b If a messenger left Agedincum immediately, Caesar in Ravenna could have learned about the massacre by intercalary 17/January 29 SOLAR YR., nineteen days later.^c Ten days later still, by intercalary 27/February 8 SOLAR YR., after receiving further reports, he must have fully understood the seriousness of the situation—just when he could afford to leave Ravenna (§BB.7.3).

Caesar Organizes the Defense of the Province/Transalpine Gaul, 52

§7.5. Leaving Ravenna on about March 1 (§BB.7.3), Caesar hurried with a small cavalry escort via Arelate (modern Arles) to Narbo Martius (modern Narbonne), the capital of the Province of Transalpine Gaul, using the same route as in the spring of 55^a and arriving on about March 13. In a few days, he organized the defense of the Province and ordered forces to the territory of the Helvii to counter a possible invasion by Gallic forces (7.7.3–5, 7.8.1). He then rushed to a place from where he could invade the territory of the Arverni himself (most likely, Alba Helviorum near modern Alba-la-Romaine and the confluence of the Ardèche and Rhône). Leaving from there around March 25, Caesar undertook a daring winter march across the Cevennes, catching the Arverni completely off guard and forcing Vercingetorix to break off his campaign farther north to protect his own country (7.8.4). Leaving troops to raid the area, Caesar himself returned to the Rhône valley after two days, most likely by the route he had already opened,^b and reached Vienna (modern Vienne) two days later. We do not know how long the excursion

BB.7.3h Mentioned by Cicero, *Letters to Atticus* 7.1.4. For the likely date of this meeting (sometime toward the middle of the intercalary month), see Ramsey 2016, 312 n.51, 321.

BB.7.4a The distance from Rome to Agedincum (the winter quarters of six legions) is about 965 miles/1,545 km., including augmentation for the segment outside the province). A messenger traveling at an average speed of 50 miles/ 80 km. per day could have covered the distance in 19.4 days (see also §BB.Intro.17). It is possible—perhaps almost required by time constraints—and even suggested

by some of Caesar's formulations (especially 7.1.3) that Gallie leaders began deliberations about a great revolt long before they received news from Rome about the repercussions of Clodius' death; if so, Caesar deliberately shaped his narrative to support his claim (7.1.1–2) that Gaul had really quieted down and that only troubles in Rome had caused renewed troubles abroad (written comment by Christopher Krebs; the argument will be substantiated in his forthcoming Commentary on Book 7). The distance from Cenabum to Agedincum is about 122 miles/195 km., augmented.

sion across the Cevennes took but assume that Caesar was ready to leave Vienna on about April 15 to penetrate into hostile Gaul (7.9.3–4).

§7.6. This date is based upon the following considerations. The first even vague suggestion of a date in the entire seventh book is Caesar's comment that after the conquest of Avaricum, where he remained for several days, the winter (that is, the season unsuitable for campaigning) was nearly over, and “the time of the year in itself called for the opening of a new campaign” (7.32.1–2). In other words, fodder could now be found in fields and woods. This probably was around late June/early June SOLAR YR. Assuming that it was June 1 of the solar year/June 22 of the Roman civil calendar, we can calculate back from that date.^a Considering all the marches and sieges Caesar undertook until he conquered Avaricum (detailed in §BB.7.7), we conclude that he must indeed have left Vienna by about April 15.

The First Part of Caesar's Campaign (52)

§7.7. Caesar left Vienna with cavalry and, traveling at top speed (about 50 miles/80 km. per day) and with only short interruptions, reached his two legions in the territory of the Lingones (7.9.3; we assume somewhere around Andematumnum (later the capital of the Lingones; modern Langres) in four days, c. April 18. He alerted his other legions and by April 29, at the earliest, assembled his entire army at Agedincum (7.9.5).^a By then Caesar had devised his strategy (7.9.6–10.3). He left the entire army's baggage in Agedincum under the protection of two legions (7.10.4) and, by May 3, left Agedincum. Distances and Caesar's precise indications of time allow us to conclude that within fifteen days, by May 17, he secured the submission of Vellaunodunum of the Senones, Cenabum of the Carnutes (which he sacked and plundered),^b and Noviodunum of the Bituriges, and reached Avaricum (7.11.1–13.3). Now began one of the most difficult sieges in the entire war (7.17–28). Still no fodder was available (7.14.3–4; compare 7.10.1); the army was dealing with major supply problems, and it took twenty-five days to build an enormous siege ramp (7.24.1). Yet around June 15, Avaricum was taken (7.27–28). Caesar stayed there for several days, drawing on the supplies of the captured town, and giving his soldiers time to recover (7.32.1). And now “the winter was nearly over” (7.32.2). Around June 22/June 1 SOLAR YR., Caesar departed from Avaricum.

Failure at Gergovia (52)

§7.8. Just then the Aedui asked for Caesar's mediation in a serious internal conflict (7.32.1–34.1). This detour will have cost him six days. Upon returning, Caesar divided his army, perhaps on June 28. He sent Labienus^a to the territories of the Senones and Parisii (§BB.7.9), while he himself took his campaign to Gergovia, the center of the Arverni (7.34.2–3), reaching the site (near later Augustometum, modern Clermont-Ferrand) c. July 10. Perhaps on July 14, Caesar ejected an enemy garrison and occupied a hill near the town with a smaller camp (7.36.5–6). By about the end of July, informed of Aeduan lead-

BB.7.4c The distance from Agedincum to Ravenna is about 895 miles/1,440 km. A messenger traveling 50 miles/80 km. per day could have covered the distance even in eighteen days.

BB.7.5a See §BB.4.9, entry for April 19, 55.

BB.7.5b This route is also suggested by the reason he gave (and made sure the enemy heard) for his departure—namely, to fetch additional troops, which were stationed in the territory of the Helvii (7.7.5, 79.1).

BB.7.6a See §BB.1.2 for earlier references of this type. This date (June 1) may be too early by several days. If it is, additional days could be assigned

to Caesar's movements and measures in the Province (with a correspondingly later departure date from Vienna) and/or to the march of Caesar's legions from the territory of the Treveri to Agedincum (see n. BB.7.7a).

BB.7.7a These moves by the legions which had to take their baggage train along, may have taken a few days longer. If so, Caesar must have left Vienna correspondingly earlier (which is not impossible; see §BB.7.5).

BB.7.7b See n. 7.11f.

BB.7.8a On Labienus, see Appendix A: Who's Who in Caesar, §27.

ers' efforts to join Vercingetorix, he countered the threat that ten thousand Aeduan infantry might defect (7.37–38) in a lightning-fast action, returning just in time to save the legions left behind from a fierce attack by Vercingetorix' army (7.40–41). Receiving more bad news from the Aedui, Caesar began planning to withdraw from Gergovia (7.43.5–6). Before he did so, he seized an opportunity for a demonstrative but limited action against the town which, however, ended in disaster and serious losses (7.44–51).

§7.9. Perhaps on August 11, Caesar departed from Gergovia. Evading the Aedui, who by then had actually defected, and marching day and night, Caesar reached and forded the Liger (modern Loire) (7.53–56), perhaps on August 17. At this point, he found grain in the fields (7.56.5).^a Continuing into the territory of the Senones, he stopped after about five days, three days shy of Agedincum, waiting for Labienus, who had successfully operated in the area between Metiosedium (modern Melun) and Lutetia (modern Paris), twice outmaneuvered his opponents, and finally defeated them in a battle, perhaps on August 19 or 20 (7.57–62), then returned to Agedincum and picked up the baggage train and guard. He met Caesar three days later (7.62.10), c. August 27.

The Siege of Alesia and the Collapse of the Gallic Revolt (52)

§7.10. For this part of the campaign we have only one time marker: the slightly more than thirty-day time span between the evacuation of Vercingetorix' cavalry from Alesia and the arrival of a Gallic relief army. Everything else is vague. Vercingetorix' preparations (7.63–64) must have taken several weeks, beyond the middle of September. Meanwhile, Caesar organized countermeasures to protect the Roman Province/Transalpine Gaul and hired German cavalry and light infantry (7.65). By the time Vercingetorix' army had assembled, he was marching from the Lingones toward the Sequani. Vercingetorix launched a cavalry attack on Caesar's marching column but was defeated with great losses (7.66.1–7.67.7). Demoralized, he withdrew to Alesia (7.68), probably in the second half of September. Caesar followed him and started to build a circumvallation. A major cavalry battle in the plain below Alesia again ended in a Gallic disaster (7.70). Before Caesar closed the ring, Vercingetorix evacuated his cavalry and called for a general mobilization of all Gauls. At that time, perhaps around October 5, he had supplies for around thirty days (7.71).

§7.11. While Caesar was completing and refining his fortifications (7.72–74), a huge Gallic relief army assembled (7.75–76). It arrived just after the defenders of Alesia had used up most of their supplies (7.77–79), perhaps around November 7. After a cavalry battle that was again won by Caesar's German horsemen (7.80), and a night attack on the plain that faltered in Caesar's fields of hidden obstacles (7.81–82), the Gauls picked the most exposed of Caesar's camps for an attack by a large elite force. This attack, on about November 12, was seconded by a massive sortie of the Alesian defenders and developed into a dramatic battle that brought Caesar's army to the brink of defeat but in the end was won by his army's discipline and experience (7.83–88). On the next day (c. November 13), Alesia capitulated and Vercingetorix handed himself over to Caesar (7.89).

§7.12. Caesar then marched to the territory of the Aedui and there accepted the surrender of the Aedui and Arverni (7.90.1–3). He distributed his legions in several camps (7.90.4–7) and himself spent the winter at Bibracte (7.90.7). When his report arrived in Rome, the Senate decreed another extended thanksgiving celebration (7.90.8).

BB.79a August 17 corresponds to July 26 SOLAR YR.
The grain was ripe around the same time in ear-

lier years (see §§BB.1.3, 6.3). Our chronology thus seems roughly correct.

§7.13. Chronological Table: *Gallic War 7 · Landmark Book 7 Year 52*

Roman civil cal./
solar year date Event

702 A.U.C./52 B.C.E.

January 11, 52 <i>December 1, 53</i>	Caesar arrives in Cisalpine Gaul (Ravenna) shortly before the murder of Clodius (7.1.1).
January 18, 52 <i>December 8, 53</i>	Murder of Clodius near Rome (7.1.1; Asconius 31C).
January 19, 52 <i>December 9, 53</i>	Riot at Clodius' funeral; the mob burns the Senate house (Asconius 33C).
January 21, 52 <i>December 11, 53</i>	Caesar at Ravenna learns of turmoil in Rome (7.1.1).
February 1, 52 <i>December 20, 53</i>	The Senate passes an emergency decree, authorizes Pompey to levy troops to restore order (Asconius 34C).
February 5, 52 <i>December 24, 53</i>	Caesar begins levying troops soon after learning of the Senate's emergency decree (7.1.1).
February 9, 52 <i>December 28, 53</i>	News of the turmoil in Rome reaches Gaul, triggers plans for an uprising and meetings to launch a revolt (7.1.2–7.2.2).
February 21, 52 <i>January 9, 52</i>	Outbreak of the rebellion with a massacre of Romans at Cenabum (7.3), followed by the uprising of Vercingetorix among the Arverni and his attack on the Bituriges (7.4–5).
Intercalary 14 <i>January 26</i>	Cicero meets with Caesar at Ravenna and agrees to win the support of the plebeian tribune Marcus Caelius Rufus for Caesar's future consular candidacy in absence (<i>Letters to Atticus</i> 7.1.4)
Intercalary 17 <i>January 29</i>	Caesar in Ravenna learns of the massacre of Romans at Cenabum (via a messenger dispatched from Agedincum approximately nineteen days earlier on February 23/January 11 SOLAR YR.).
Intercalary 20 <i>February 1</i>	News reaches Rome of the massacre of Romans at Cenabum.
Intercalary 24 <i>February 5</i>	Pompey elected sole consul (Asconius 36C).
Intercalary 27 <i>February 8</i>	Caesar learns of Pompey's election.
March 1 <i>February 9</i>	Caesar leaves Ravenna for Narbo Martius (modern Narbonne) in Transalpine Gaul (7.7.3). Traveling with a light escort and along the coastal road via Arelate (modern Arles), he covers about 645 miles/1,030 km. in thirteen days.
March 13 <i>February 21</i>	Caesar arrives at Narbo Martius and organizes the defense of the Province (7.7.3–5, 7.8.1), then marches with available troops possibly to Alba Helviorum (near Alba-la-Romaine), a good starting point for an invasion of Arverni territory, covering 147 miles/235 km. in six days.

NOTE: Dates in boldface are firmly established. The rest are calculated to suit estimated distances and estimated speeds of movement by Caesar; they are close approximations, leaving room for a correction of plus or minus a few days. A.U.C. stands for *Ab*

urbe condita, "from the founding of the city" (Rome; supposedly in 753), the way scholars of the time would have counted the years. On measuring distances and augmenting them outside of the Roman territory, see §BB.Intro.4.

Roman civil cal./ solar year date	Event
March 25, 52 <i>March 5</i>	Caesar crosses the Cevennes mountains in winter conditions, invades Arverni territory (7.8.2–3). He then returns to Alba and reaches Vienna (modern Vienne), 81 miles/130 km. away, in two days, spending about three weeks on this expedition.
April 15 <i>March 26</i>	Caesar leaves Vienna with cavalry, travels day and night (7.9.3–4).
April 18 <i>March 29</i>	Covering 153 miles/245 km., of which 130 miles/210 km. lie outside the Province (hence augmented about 185 miles/300 km.), in four days, Caesar arrives in the winter quarters of two legions in the territory of the Lingones (7.9.4–5) perhaps around Andematumnum (modern Langres).
April 29 <i>April 9</i>	Caesar unites his army at Agedincum, 127 miles/205 km. (augmented about 160 miles/255 km.) from Andematumnum; about 162 miles/260 km. (augmented 203 miles/325 km.) from the most distant camp at the borders of the Treveri. He leaves the baggage train at Agedincum with two legions (7.9.5, 7.10.4).
May 2 <i>April 11</i>	Caesar leaves Agedincum, arrives at Vellaunodunum on the next day, builds a circumvallation over the course of two days (7.11.1).
May 6 <i>April 15</i>	Caesar accepts the surrender of Vellaunodunum (7.11.2).
May 9 <i>April 18</i>	Caesar reaches Cenabum in two days, captures, and plunders the town on the third (7.11.5–9).
May 14 <i>April 23</i>	Noviodunum of the Bituriges, 28 miles/45 km. (augmented 35 miles/56 km.) away and reached in two days, surrenders, resumes resistance, and surrenders again (7.12.2–13.2).
May 17 <i>April 26</i>	The Roman army, covering 56 miles/90 km. (augmented about 70 miles/112 km.) in three days, reaches Avaricum (7.13.3), begins a difficult siege (7.17–28).
June 15 <i>May 25</i>	Avaricum taken (7.27–28). Caesar stays at Avaricum for a few days to let his army recover.
June 22–27 <i>June 1–6</i>	Caesar travels to Decetia, 59 miles/95 km. (augmented almost 74 miles/120 km.) away, mediates in a conflict among Aeduan leaders (7.32.1–34.1) and returns to Avaricum on the sixth day.
June 28 <i>June 7</i>	Labienus departs for a campaign against the Senones and Parisii, Caesar against Gergovia (7.34.2–3).
July 10 <i>June 18</i>	Caesar, after first reaching the Elaver (modern Allier) River, about 35 miles/55 km. (augmented almost 43 miles/70 km.) away, in two days and crossing it by deception after four more days (7.35), covers the distance to Gergovia in five days (7.36.1).
Late July–Aug. <i>Late June–July</i>	Labienus campaigns in the area between Metiosedium (modern Melun) and Lutetia (modern Paris) (7.57–59).
July <i>June</i>	Aeduan leaders conspire to bring their nation into the war (7.37–38).
August 8 <i>July 17</i>	A failed action against Gergovia causes seven hundred casualties (7.44–51).

Roman civil cal./ <i>solar year date</i>	Event
August 11, 52 <i>July 20</i>	Caesar leaves Gergovia (7.53).
August 19 or 20 <i>July 28 or 29</i>	Labienus defeats the enemy in a battle near Lutetia, then returns to Agedincum and picks up the baggage train and guard (7.60–62).
August 27 <i>August 5</i>	Caesar and Labienus meet near Agedincum (7.62.10).
Second half Aug.–Sept. <i>Late July–August</i>	Vercingetorix reasserts his leadership, prepares comprehensively for a new round of the war (7.63–64).
Mid- to late Sept. <i>Late August</i>	Vercingetorix' cavalry attacks Caesar's marching column but is defeated (7.66.2–7.67.7). Vercingetorix withdraws into Alesia (7.68). Caesar follows and begins constructing a circumvallation (7.69).
Late September <i>Early September</i>	Cavalry battle at Alesia; Vercingetorix again defeated (7.70).
October 5 <i>September 10</i>	Vercingetorix evacuates his cavalry, calls for a general mobilization of Gaul (7.71).
Oct.–early Nov. <i>Sept.–early Oct.</i>	Caesar completes a double ring of fortifications and obstacles (7.72–74). The Gauls assemble a huge relief army (7.75–76).
November 6 <i>October 12</i>	The defenders have used up most supplies and eject the Mandubii from Alesia (7.77–78).
November 7 <i>October 13</i>	The relief army arrives at Alesia (7.79).
November 8 <i>October 14</i>	The Gauls lose a cavalry battle at Alesia (7.80).
November 9–10 <i>October 15–16</i>	The Gauls launch a night attack against Caesar's outer fortifications but fail (7.81–82).
November 12 <i>October 18</i>	Final battle about Alesia; attacks from the outside and inside bring Caesar's army to the brink of defeat, but in the end it prevails. The Gauls suffer disastrous losses; the rest of their army flees (7.83–88).
November 13 <i>October 19</i>	Vercingetorix hands himself over to Caesar; most defenders of Alesia are distributed to Roman soldiers as war booty (7.89).
Mid-November <i>Second half Oct.</i>	Caesar marches into Aeduan territory, accepts the surrender of Aedui and Arverni and returns twenty thousand captives to them (7.90.1–3).
Late November <i>End of October</i>	Roman troops settle into their winter quarters. Caesar decides to spend the winter at Bibracte (7.90.4–7).
December <i>November</i>	The Senate in Rome decrees a thanksgiving festival of twenty days (7.90.8).

**GALLIC WAR 8 • THE LANDMARK JULIUS CAESAR Book 8
EIGHTH AND NINTH YEARS OF WAR, 51–50**

Introduction

§8.1. This book, covering two years, was written by Caesar's legate and trusted aide, Aulus Hirtius. It begins with a precise date for the beginning of a winter campaign against the Bituriges (8.2.1) and gives the duration of that campaign (8.4.1), as well as the interval before the next expedition (8.4.3), but no precise date is offered in all the rest of the book. Nor does Hirtius indicate the seasonal changes that serve as helpful time markers in earlier books. The chronology we are able to reconstruct for this book is therefore even more uncertain than those of earlier books.^a

Winter Campaigns against the Bituriges, Carnutes, and Bellovacis, 51

§8.2. On December 29, 52, the last day of the year, Caesar started a surprise campaign of deterrence and devastation against the Bituriges (8.2.1–3.4). He achieved their renewed submission (8.3.5), brought the legions back to their winter quarters, and returned to Bibracte on the fortieth day after setting out (8.4.1), on February 10, 51. After only eighteen days, on February 28, he launched another campaign, against the Carnutes (8.4.2–3), inflicting great losses on them, then stationed the two legions involved at Cenabum (8.5.1–6.1). This campaign may have ended on March 31.

§8.3. Next, still in the winter season (8.6.3–4, 8.7.7), Caesar assembled a strike force of four legions against the Bellovacis, who were reported to be preparing an attack on the Suessones and possibly the Remi (8.6.2–4). Since one of these legions was stationed among the Sequani,^a Caesar could hardly be ready to march before c. April 21. By the time Caesar found the enemy,^b perhaps another week had passed (8.7–8). Hence it was late April when Caesar placed his camp opposite that of the Bellovacis. So far, our chronology is likely to be at least roughly correct.^c From now on, we can only guess. Finding out soon that he needed more troops, Caesar summoned three additional legions, two stationed in Cenabum and one among the Bituriges (8.11.1). Their arrival after perhaps another two weeks prompted the enemy to withdraw to another camp site 10 Roman miles (9.25 miles/14.8 km.) away (8.14–16). From there they set ambushes for foragers and caused the Romans considerable losses. Eventually, a large-scale ambush ended in a Gallic disaster because Caesar, informed by a captive, had taken adequate countermeasures: thousands of elite Gallic troops were killed together with their leader (8.17–19). The Bellovacis and their allies now surrendered (8.20–23.2). It probably was early June.

Campaign against Dumnaeus of the Andes and Siege of Uxelodunum, 51

§8.4. Caesar now divided his army (8.24.1): Caninius Rebilus,^a who was already in the territory of the Ruteni near the Roman Province of Transalpine Gaul, and Gaius Fabius were to protect the Province and watch the nations along the Atlantic Ocean (8.24.2),

BB.8.1a For marching distances and times consumed, see §BB.8.11 and Ramsey and Raaflaub 2017.

BB.8.3a On the distribution of the winter camps, see 7.90.4–7.

BB.8.3b See Kraner et al. 1960b, 11, based on the detailed discussion of Holmes 1911, 826–30.

BB.8.3c A letter written by Marcus Caelius Rufus in

Rome to Cicero c. May 26 (*Letters to Friends* 8.1.4) confirms that by that date Caesar was reported to be in serious trouble caused by the Bellovacis. Such news from Gaul would have taken almost three weeks to reach Rome.

BB.8.4a On Caninius Rebilus, see Appendix A: Who's Who in Caesar, §12.

while Caesar himself resumed the war against Ambiorix (see 6.30–6.43). Upon completion of that campaign, he sent Labienus with two legions into the territory of the Treveri (8.24.4–25). Rebilus first responded to a call for support by Duratius, leader of the Pictones, who was under siege at Lemonum (modern Poitiers) by Dumnaeus, leader of the Andes (8.26). Rebilus arrived there from the south in about twelve days, probably in the last week of June, while Fabius, anticipating Dumnaeus' moves, caught him in late June before he reached the bridge over the Liger (modern Loire), probably at Caesarodunum (modern Tours), and inflicted a massive defeat on him (8.27–29).

§8.5. Rebilus then pursued with his two legions Drappes of the Senones who was taking a substantial force southward to join Lucterius of the Cadurci in an attack on the Province (8.30). Realizing that Rebilus was approaching (8.31), Drappes and Lucterius occupied Uxellodunum, bringing the townspeople to their side (8.32). Arriving around July 10, Rebilus eliminated the enemies' supply base and built a circumvallation, assisted soon by Fabius and his legions (8.33–37). Probably in early August, Caesar, who, after devastating the territory of the Eburones (8.24.4–25), had engaged in a goodwill tour among the defeated nations (8.38.2), joined his legates as well (8.39). Since Uxellodunum was in a superbly defensible position and well-supplied, he decided to cut it off of its water supply. He had his army build a huge ramp (that eventually reached sixty feet in elevation) and placed on it a ten-story-high tower from which his soldiers showered the area of the only existing spring with missiles. His soldiers also dug tunnels to reach the spring and divert it (8.41).^b Despite the “immense labor” required and the townspeople’s brave resistance, the spring eventually dried up and the townspeople capitulated (8.42–43). At Avaricum, the construction of an even larger siege ramp had consumed twenty-five days but under much less constrained topographical conditions (§BB.7.7). We estimate that the town surrendered by the end of August (8.44.1).

The End of the Campaign Season, 51

§8.6. In the meantime, Labienus had once more defeated the Treveri (8.45). This sealed Caesar’s success on all fronts: the country was “defeated and subdued” (8.46.1). He spent the final part of the campaign season (perhaps September) in Aquitania, receiving envoys and hostages from all the nations (8.46.2). He then sent his legions north, distributing them in a way that “every single part of Gaul should be secured by the presence of an army” (8.46.3–4). He himself made the judicial circuit of the Transalpine Province and distributed rewards for faithful service, before returning to the territory of the Belgae and spending the winter in Nemetocenna (modern Arras; 8.46.5–6).

The “Parthian Legions,” 50

§8.7. Caesar spent the winter and spring of the last year of his governorship establishing good relations with the subjected nations and laying foundations for lasting peace (8.49). In the spring, probably around April 15, the Senate passed a decree requiring Caesar and Pompey^a to contribute one legion each to reinforce the troops in Syria which was under attack by the neighboring Parthians. Hirtius reports this decree at 8.54.1,

BB.8.4b On Labienus, see Appendix A: Who’s Who in Caesar, §27.

BB.8.5a In the previous year, Lucterius, sent by Vercingetorix to invade Transalpine Gaul, had failed miserably (7.5.1, 7.7.1–7.8.1).

BB.8.5b For details, see Web Essay RR: Uxellodunum.

BB.8.7a On Pompey, see Appendix A: Who’s Who in Caesar, §36.

after Caesar's review of his forces which most likely took place in October (8.52.1–2), but in a digression (8.53.1–54.3) that summarizes hostile actions by Caesar's enemies in 51 and 50. The decree is thus usually dated in the fall of 50, but several pieces of information and various considerations (not least of time required for messages from Italy to reach Caesar's headquarters in Gaul and the winter quarters of the legions involved, and for a legion to march from Gaul to Brundisium) make it clear that the decree must indeed have been passed in the spring.^b Since at that time the Parthian danger was real and Pompey was still unwilling to commit himself against Caesar, this date raises doubts about the decree's intent to harm Caesar that Hirtius strongly implies by the arrangement of his narrative (8.54.1–3). Still, Pompey now recalled the legion he had lent Caesar in the winter of 54/53 (6.1.2–4). Without any hesitation, Caesar sent two legions to Italy, as required, and stationed one other in Cisalpine Gaul (8.54.3).

Caesar's Travels and Troop Movements, 50

§8.8. Early in the campaign season,^a Caesar hurried to Cisalpine Gaul (8.50), ostensibly to support Antonius^b bid for election as augur. Before he reached the province, hence much earlier than expected, he heard of Antonius' success. However, contrary to the impression given by Hirtius, Antonius' journey to Rome was motivated not by his decision to stand for the augurate but by his intention of running for election to the plebeian tribunate (a detail not mentioned by Hirtius).^c In order to arrive in Rome in time to announce his candidacy (thus c. June 22),^d he had to leave Caesar's headquarters at Nemetocenna by c. May 16. Upon his arrival in Rome, Antonius will have learned of the vacancy on the Board of Augurs resulting from the death of the orator Quintus Hortensius Hortulus in the first half of June. Assuming that on the day after his arrival Antonius sent a fast messenger to Caesar to summon his aid, Caesar could have received Antonius' message by July 15. If Caesar set out from Nemetocenna the next day (July 16), traveling "by the longest travel stages" (8.50.1), at about 50 miles/80 km. per day, he could have reached Cisalpine Gaul c. July 28. The fact that even before he reached the province a messenger from Rome brought him news of Antonius' success in the augural election (8.50.3) makes it possible to place the election c. July 17.^e

§8.9. Probably soon after his arrival, Caesar learned the results of the consular and praetorian elections, which doubtless took place a few days after Antonius' election to the augurate.^a Those elections resulted in a near-total success of Caesar's opponents (8.50.4). Caesar thus had good reason to canvass the townships in Cisalpine Gaul to seek support for his prospective candidacy in 49 for the consulship of 48 (8.51). This triumphant tour must have consumed the whole month of August. Caesar then hurried back to Nemetocenna (8.52.1), which he reached by the middle of September. Probably by messengers sent in advance, he had ordered all legions to the territory of the Treveri. There he conducted a formal review (*lustratio*) of the army (8.52.1) as a demonstration of success, power, and unity intended to impress both the Gauls and his enemies at

BB.8.7b See the detailed arguments of Sanford 1911 and the relevant section of Raflaub and Ramsey 2017.

BB.8.8a "When the time in the winter quarters was over" (*hibernis peractis*, 8.50.1).

BB.8.8b On Marcus Antonius/Mark Antony, see Appendix A, §5.

BB.8.8c Plutarch, *Antonius* 5.1 confirms Antonius' election to the tribunate before he successfully

stood for the augurate.

BB.8.8d June 24 was the first of three market days before July 14, the earliest date on which tribunician elections were likely to be held.

BB.8.8e For calculations of travel distances and times, see §BB.8.11.

BB.8.9a For the sequence of the elections, see now Ryan 2003.

Rome. This review can hardly have taken place earlier than mid-October.^b Subsequently, Caesar changed the locations of some winter camps (8.52.3).^c At last he assigned winter quarters to his legions north of the Alps, stationing four under Gaius Trebonius^d in the territory of the Belgae and four under Gaius Fabius among the Aedui (8.54.3–4).^e

Caesar's Final Return to Cisalpine Gaul, 50

§8.10. Caesar then returned to Cisalpine Gaul (8.54.5–55.1), prepared for all eventualities. Since achieving their success in the elections to the higher magistracies in the summer, his enemies in Rome had been intensifying their efforts to thwart his plans and draw Pompey to their side. Fears of an impending civil war increased and prompted hectic maneuvering in the Senate (8.52.2–5). We assume that on the day after his arrival in Cisalpine Gaul (at Augusta Praetoria) Caesar dispatched Hirtius to Rome to explore the possibility of resolving the escalating crisis. Since Hirtius reached Rome on the evening of December 6,^a and it would have taken him approximately ten days to cover the distance, he must have set out from Augusta Praetoria on November 26. Hence Caesar probably arrived in the province on November 25. Hirtius however, unexpectedly abandoned his mission and left Rome on the same night he arrived (after midnight on December 7) to rejoin Caesar, failing to attend a meeting scheduled with Pompey's father-in-law Metellus Scipio.^b The most likely explanation for the abrupt change in plans is that upon his arrival in Rome Hirtius learned that the consul Gaius Marcellus had charged Pompey with assuming command of the two legions withdrawn from Caesar in the spring and retained in Italy—an action that profoundly changed the political situation.^c The likely date of Marcellus' action is c. December 2, a mere four days before Hirtius' arrival.^d Traveling from Augusta Praetoria to Ravenna, while holding the assizes along the way,^e Caesar probably arrived there shortly before he received this bad news on December 7, at the latest. Hirtius could have rejoined him c. December 11, having left Rome in the early morning hours of December 7. Then, c. December 14, the ex-tribune Gaius Curio arrived at Ravenna,^f having left Rome on December 10, the day after the term of his office expired, which he had employed in defense of Caesar's interests (8.52.4). The remaining two weeks of December were filled with intensive negotiations before two declared enemies of Caesar assumed the consulship on January 1, 49 (9.1).

BB.8.9b See 8.46.3–4: the legions had been in the territories of Belgae, Aedui, Turoni, and Lemovices.

BB.8.9c Hirtius' text suggests that conditions in some earlier locations had been unhealthy; see discussion in Kraner et al. 1960b, 77–78.

BB.8.9d On Gaius Trebonius, see Appendix A: Who's Who in Caesar, §44.

BB.8.9e Perhaps at Matisco. One other legion, the 13th had earlier (probably in late May) been sent to Cisalpine Gaul to replace the 15th, which was one of the two legions called up by the Senate's decree to reinforce troops in Syria. Rumors about major and potentially threatening troop movements on Caesar's part had circulated in Rome already in September (Cicero, *Letters to Atticus* 6.9.5, 71.1); see Gelzer 1968, 184–85.

BB.8.10a Cicero, *Letters to Atticus* 7.4.2.

BB.8.10b Ibid., 7.4.2. On Scipio, see Appendix A, §40.

BB.8.10c News that greeted Caesar after his return to Italy (8.55.1); compare Appian, *Civil Wars* 2.31; Plutarch, *Pompey* 59.1; Cassius Dio

40.65–66. For an interpretation of Marcellus' act, see Raaflaub 1974, 33–55.

BB.8.10d Most probably, it is the news of this hostile act that triggered Caesar's summons of the 8th and 12th Legions to Cisalpine Gaul (see 9.7.8–9.8.1 which is less than clear). They caught up with Caesar during his advance through Italy in February 49 (9.16.1, 9.18.5). Times required for a messenger from Ravenna to reach the legions' quarters in Gaul (perhaps at Matisco; see n.

BB.8.9e) and for the legions to arrive in Italy reveal that the marching orders for those two legions must have been dispatched from Ravenna no later than December 8. The messenger from Rome, bringing the news by December 7, at the latest, must have departed from Rome no later than December 3.

Suetonius, *Caesar* 30.1.

Appian, *Civil Wars* 2.32. On Gaius Curio, see Appendix A, §20.

§8.11. Chronological Table: *Gallic War 8* • Landmark Book 8 Years 51–50

Roman civil cal./ solar year date	Event
702 A.U.C./52 B.C.E.	
December 29, 52	Caesar launches a surprise campaign of deterrence against the Bituriges (8.2.1–8.3.5).
<i>December 3, 52</i>	
703 A.U.C./51 B.C.E.	
February 10, 51	Caesar returns to Bibracte on the fortieth day after setting out (8.4.1).
<i>January 11, 51</i>	
February 28	After spending eighteen days at Bibracte, Caesar leads another winter campaign against the Carnutes
<i>January 29</i>	and, at its conclusion, stations two legions at Cenabum (8.5.1–8.6.1).
March 31	Caesar returns to Bibracte.
<i>March 1</i>	
April 21	Caesar assembles four legions against the Bellovaci (8.6.3–4).
<i>March 22</i>	
Late April–early June	Campaign against the Bellovaci, ending with their defeat and surrender (8.8–8.23).
<i>Late March–early May</i>	
June 10	Caesar leaves for the territory of the Eburones, devastates it (8.24.4–8.25), then sends Labienus
<i>May 10</i>	into the territory of the Treveri (8.25.1–2). Gaius Fabius is sent off to campaign along the Atlantic
	coast (8.24.2) and to support Caninius Rebilus who has been stationed in the south; they both
	respond to a call for help by Duratius of the Pictones at Lemonum (modern Poitiers; 8.26–8.27.1).
	Covering about 208 miles/335 km. (augmented about 260 miles/420 km.) in about twelve days,
	Caninius arrives first and brings Duratius temporary relief.
Late June	Fabius, marching about 205 miles/330 km. (augmented 258 miles/415 km.) from the area of the
<i>Late May</i>	war against the Bellovaci to the bridge over the Liger (modern Loire), probably at Caesarodunum
	(modern Tours), defeats Dumnaeus of the Andes (8.27–29), relieves Duratius, then accepts the
	submission of the Carnutes and Armorican nations (8.31).
July 1	Caninius Rebilus takes up the pursuit of Drappes and Lucterius to prevent them from invading the
<i>May 30</i>	Province/Transalpine Gaul (8.30).
Early July	Drappes and Lucterius occupy Uxellodunum, plan to bring in additional supplies (8.32).
<i>Early June</i>	
July 10	Having covered about 180 miles/290 km. (augmented 227 miles/365 km.) in ten days, Rebilus
<i>June 8</i>	arrives at Uxellodunum and begins construction of a circumvallation (8.33).
Second half of July	Rebilus thwarts the enemies' plans to resupply Uxellodunum, destroys their supply base, then
<i>Second half of June</i>	completes the circumvallation (8.34–8.37.2).
Late July–early August	Fabius joins Rebilus (8.37.3); Caesar follows (8.38–39), after stationing Antonius with fifteen
<i>Late June–early July</i>	cohorts in the territory of the Bellovaci (8.38.1).

NOTE: Dates in boldface are firmly established. The rest are calculated to suit estimated distances and estimated speeds of movement by Caesar; they are close approximations, leaving room for a correction of plus or minus a few days. A.U.C. stands for *Ab*

urbe condita, “from the founding of the city” (Rome; supposedly in 753), the way scholars of the time would have counted the years. On measuring distances and augmenting them outside of the Roman territory, see §BB.Intro.4.

Roman civil cal./ solar year date	Event
August <i>July</i>	Caesar's army builds a ramp and high tower and digs tunnels to cut off the water supply of Uxellodunum (8.40–43).
End of August <i>End of July</i>	Uxellodunum capitulates (8.43.5); the defenders are punished severely to deter emulation by others (8.44.1).
August? <i>July?</i>	Labienus defeats the Treveri in a cavalry battle and forces their leaders to submit (8.45).
Early September <i>Early August</i>	Caesar considers Gaul entirely defeated and subdued (8.46.1).
September <i>August</i>	Caesar enters Aquitania, receives envoys and hostages from all nations (8.46.2).
October <i>September</i>	Legions march to their winter quarters in five strategically chosen locations (8.46.3–4), while Caesar makes the judicial circuit in Transalpine Gaul, rewards those who have served him faithfully, then returns to the Belgae to spend the winter at Nemetocenna (modern Arras) (8.46.5–6).
January–June 50 <i>Late Nov. 51–May 50</i>	Diplomatic efforts to establish positive relations with the subjected Gallic nations (8.49).

704 A.U.C./50 B.C.E.

April 15 <i>March 6</i>	A Senate decree orders Pompey and Caesar to send one legion each to Italy for an impending war against the Parthians (8.54.1). Pompey offers the legion he had earlier lent Caesar (see §BB.6.5, January–March 53 entry). Caesar sends two legions to Italy and stations a third in Cisalpine Gaul (8.54.2–3).
July 16 <i>June 4</i>	Caesar leaves Nemetocenna and hurries to Cisalpine Gaul to support the candidacy of Marcus Antonius for the augurate (8.50.1).
July 26–27 <i>June 14–15</i>	Before Caesar reaches Cisalpine Gaul, he learns of Antonius' election as augur on about July 17 (8.50.3).
August <i>End June–first half July</i>	Caesar canvasses the townships of Cisalpine Gaul for support for his prospective consular candidacy in 49 (8.50.4–51).
First half September <i>Late July</i>	Caesar returns to Nemetocenna (8.52.1).
Mid-October <i>Early September</i>	Caesar conducts in the territory of the Treveri a formal review of all legions (8.52.1), then relocates some legionary camps as circumstances dictate (8.52.2).
Late Oct.–early Nov. <i>Mid-September</i>	Caesar rearranges the distribution of his legions, stationing four among the Belgae and four among the Aedui (8.54.3–4).
Mid-Nov.–Dec. 8 <i>Early Oct.–Oct. 23</i>	Caesar returns to Ravenna, arriving by c. December 7 at the latest (8.55.1). He is informed that the consul Marcellus has ordered the two Caesarian legions (originally designated for a war against the Parthians) to be handed over to Pompey on about December 2 (8.55.1). He sends orders on December 8 to two legions stationed among the Aedui to join him in Cisalpine Gaul (9.7.8).

§9. Chronological Table: *Civil War* 1 • Landmark Book 9 Year 49

Roman civil cal./ solar year date	Event
704 A.U.C./50 B.C.E.	
December 8 <i>October 23</i>	Caesar summons the 8th and 12th Legions from their winter quarters among the Aedui (9.7.8–9.8.1), perhaps at Matisco, allowing fifteen days (December 8–22) for a fast messenger to cover about 730 miles/1,175 km. from Ravenna, at an average speed of 50 miles/80 km. per day, and departure of 12th Legion on December 23 (see the entry of February 8). Caesar orders Gaius Fabius to move from Matisco to Narbo (9.37.1) with his two remaining legions, to which one is added from Gaius Trebonius' four, while Trebonius moves from among the Belgae to Matisco with his three remaining legions.
December 21 <i>November 5</i>	Marcus Antonius' speech at a public meeting (<i>contio</i>) viciously attacking Pompey (Cicero, <i>Letters to Atticus</i> 7.8.5, giving the date).
December 24 <i>November 8</i>	Curio visits Caesar at Ravenna, leaving Rome on the day after Antonius' speech on December 21 and taking about three days to travel about 218 miles/350 km. (Appian, <i>Civil Wars</i> 2.32; for the time needed, see 9.3.6).
December 27 <i>November 11</i>	Curio sets out before dawn from Ravenna so as to arrive in Rome in time for the Senate meeting on January 1.
705 A.U.C./49 B.C.E.	
January 1–2, 49 <i>Nov. 14–15, 50</i>	Caesar's dispatch, brought from Ravenna by Curio (Appian, <i>Civil Wars</i> 2.32; Cassius Dio 41.1.1), is read in the Senate (9.1.1). The consuls refuse to have Caesar's proposals discussed. The Senate's adoption of Scipio's motion calling for Caesar to dismiss his army by a certain date is vetoed by the plebeian tribunes Marcus Antonius and Quintus Cassius (9.1.2–9.2.8).
January 3–4, 49 <i>Nov. 16–17, 50</i>	Days reserved for assembly meetings on which the Senate does not meet (9.5.4); Pompey meets the senators outside the city, urging them to take decisive action against Caesar (9.3.1).
January 5–7, 49 <i>Nov. 18–20, 50</i>	Second period of deliberation by the Senate (9.3.4–9.5.4).
January 7, 49 <i>November 20, 50</i>	The Senate passes an emergency decree (9.5.3–4). This is one of only two specific dates given by Caesar in the <i>Civil War</i> ; compare 11.6.1.
Night of Jan. 7/8, 49 Night of Nov. 20/21, 50	Two plebeian tribunes, Marcus Antonius and Quintus Cassius (9.5.5), together with Marcus Caelius Rufus (Cicero, <i>Letters to Friends</i> 8.17.1) and Gaius Curio (<i>Letters to Friends</i> 16.11.2) flee from Rome to Ariminum, where they arrive on January 10 or 11 (covering the approximately 186 miles/300 km. in either three or four days) and meet with Caesar on January 12.
January 8, 49 and following days <i>November 21, 50</i> and following days	Third period of deliberation by the Senate, held outside the sacred city boundaries (<i>pomerium</i>) so that Pompey can attend (9.6).
January 10–11, 49 <i>November 23–24, 50</i>	After receiving on January 10 news of the passing of the emergency decree on the seventh (three days for a fast courier to cover the approximately 218 miles/350 km. to Ravenna), Caesar holds an army assembly (9.7), then sets out on January 11 for Ariminum with the 13th Legion (9.8.1). He needs one day (January 11), to cover the approximately 25 miles/40 km. from Ravenna to the border of his province and crosses the Rubicon River at night (Plutarch, <i>Caesar</i> 32; Suetonius, <i>Caesar</i> 31.2–32).

Roman civil cal./ solar year date	Event
January 12, 49 <i>November 25, 50</i>	Occupation of Ariminum, where Caesar meets with the two plebeian tribunes (9.8.1), and Pisaurum (9.11.4).
January 13, 49 <i>November 26, 50</i>	Fanum is occupied (9.11.4).
January 14, 49 <i>November 27, 50</i>	Ancona is occupied (9.11.4), about 31 miles/50 km. south of Fanum. News of the occupation of Ariminum arrives in Rome (Plutarch, <i>Caesar</i> 33; see Appian, <i>Civil Wars</i> 2.36), allowing three days for a fast courier to cover about 186 miles/300 km.
January 15, 49 <i>November 28, 50</i>	Arretium is occupied by Antonius with five cohorts (9.11.4).
January 16, 49 <i>November 29, 50</i>	Lucius Caesar and Lucius Roscius arrive at Ariminum, bringing Caesar a message from Pompey (9.8.2, 9.8.4); four days are needed to cover about 186 miles/300 km. from Rome to Ariminum at an average speed of about 47 miles/75 km. per day, so their departure was about January 13.
January 17, 49 <i>November 30, 50</i>	Pompey leaves Rome to join his legions in Apulia (9.14.3); date given by Cicero, <i>Letters to Atticus</i> 9.10.2, 9.10.4.
January 18, 49 <i>December 1, 50</i>	News of Caesar's advance causes the consuls and many members of the Senate favoring Pompey to flee Rome to Capua (9.14.1–4). Cicero is among those leaving Rome (Cicero, <i>Letters to Atticus</i> 7.10, 7.11.4).
January 20, 49 <i>December 3, 50</i>	Curio sent to occupy Iguvium with three cohorts (9.12.2).
January 23, 49 <i>December 6, 50</i>	Lucius Caesar and Lucius Roscius bring Caesar's peace proposals to Pompey and the consuls at Teanum in Campania (according to 9.10.1, at Capua; date given by Cicero, <i>Letters to Atticus</i> 7.14.1): six-plus days are needed to cover about 290 miles/475 km. from Ariminum at an average speed of 47 miles/75 km. per day, so their departure was about January 17.
January 25, 49 <i>December 8, 50</i>	The consuls submit Caesar's proposals to the senators at Capua (9.10.1; date given by Cicero, <i>Letters to Atticus</i> 7.15.2).
February 3, 49 <i>December 15, 50</i>	Lucius Caesar and Lucius Roscius bring to Caesar at Ariminum the reply of the consuls and Pompey (9.10.2–9.11.3): seven days are needed to cover about 310 miles/500 km. from Capua at an average speed of 47 miles/75 km. per day, so their departure was January 26, as soon as decision of Senate on January 25 was reduced to writing. See Cicero, <i>Letters to Atticus</i> 7.15.2–3, 7.16.1–2, 7.17.2. Caesar rejects the counterproposals (9.11.1–3).
February 4, 49 <i>December 16, 50</i>	Caesar sets out from Ariminum for Auximum (9.12.3), about 68 miles/110 km. to the southwest.
February 6, 49 <i>December 18, 50</i>	Caesar takes possession of Auximum (9.13.5), then sets out from Auximum for Firmum, about 37 miles/60 km. to the southwest, at speed (9.15.1).
February 8, 49 <i>December 20, 50</i>	Caesar gains possession of Firmum (9.16.1), where he is joined by the 12th Legion, while Publius Lentulus Spinther evacuates Asculum to the south (9.15.3). The arrival date of the 12th Legion makes it possible to estimate December 23, 50, as the date of its departure from its winter quarters among the Aedui in Gaul (see the entry for December 8, 50): thirty-seven days of fast march averaging 22 miles/35 km. per day plus seven days of rest, to cover about 798 miles/1,285 km. down the Arar (modern Saône) and Rhône valleys to Arelate (modern Arles), along the coastal road to Genua (modern Genoa; the mountain passes being unpassable in December) and from there to Ariminum, and so on.

Roman civil cal./ solar year date	Event
February 9, 49 <i>December 21, 50</i>	Caesar sets out from Firmum for Asculum (9.15.3), about 40 miles/65 km. to the southwest. Lucius Domitius Ahenobarbus is expected to withdraw his forces from Corfinium on this date and join Pompey (date is given in Pompey's letter in Cicero, <i>Letters to Atticus</i> 8.11A).
February 10, 49 <i>December 22, 50</i>	Caesar arrives at Asculum and remains there for one day (9.16.1).
February 12, 49 <i>December 24, 50</i>	Caesar hastens from Asculum to Corfinium (9.16.1), about 87 miles/140 km. to the south, requiring about four days of marching at an average speed of 22 miles/35 km. per day.
February 15, 49 <i>December 27, 50</i>	Caesar reaches Corfinium with the 12th and 13th Legions (9.16.2), seven days before he takes possession of the town (9.23.5) on February 21. For the date, see the entry of February 21.
February 16, 49 <i>December 28, 50</i>	Domitius Ahenobarbus urgently requests Pompey to come to his aid (9.17.1). Sulmo near Corfinium is occupied by Antonius with five cohorts of the 13th Legion (9.18.2).
February 17, 49 <i>December 29, 50</i>	The 8th Legion plus twenty-two cohorts of recruits and three hundred cavalry join Caesar at Corfinium on day three of his stay (9.18.5). The legion's arrival date makes it possible to estimate December 27 (just four days later than the 12th Legion; see the entry of February 8) as date of its departure from Matisco in the territory of the Aedui in Gaul: forty-one days of fast march averaging 22 miles/35 km. per day plus eight days of rest, to cover about 890 miles/1,425 km.
February 19, 49 <i>December 31, 50</i>	Pompey's refusal to bring aid reaches Corfinium (9.18.6), allowing four days for the round trip to Luceria of about 250 miles/400 km. by a fast messenger setting out on February 16.
February 19, 49 <i>December 31, 50</i>	Pompey at Luceria learns of the impending capitulation of Corfinium and leaves for Canusium (9.24.1). Date of departure given by Cicero, <i>Letters to Atticus</i> 8.9a.2.
49	
February 20, 49 <i>January 1, 49</i>	Pompey is at Canusium (9.24.1; the date is established by the preceding and following entries). The speed of his travel over the approximately 50 miles/80 km. from Luceria indicates that Pompey was traveling apart from the fourteen cohorts that he had with him at Luceria (Cicero, <i>Letters to Atticus</i> 8.12A.1, 8.12C.2) and now sent on to Brundisium.
February 21 <i>January 2</i>	Caesar occupies Corfinium on the seventh day from his arrival (9.23.1–4). He integrates Domitius' troops into his own army (9.23.5) and sends them to Sicily under Asinius Pollio's command (9.25.1; Appian, <i>Civil Wars</i> 2.40). He departs the same day for Brundisium, completing a march of about 12 miles/20 km. (9.23.5). Pompey sets out at dawn from Canusium for Brundisium. The date for both departures is given by Cicero, <i>Letters to Atticus</i> 8.14.1; compare <i>Letters to Atticus</i> 9.1.1.
February 25 <i>January 6</i>	Pompey arrives in Brundisium (Cicero, <i>Letters to Atticus</i> 9.10.8 identifies March 1 as Pompey's fifth day in Brundisium).
March 4 <i>January 13</i>	The consuls sail from Brundisium for Dyrrachium (9.25.2), with thirty cohorts (Plutarch, <i>Pompey</i> 62.2); date given by Cicero, <i>Letters to Atticus</i> 9.6.3.
March 9 <i>January 18</i>	Caesar arrives at Brundisium by midday with six legions (9.25.1; the date is given by Cicero, <i>Letters to Atticus</i> 9.13A.1, quoting dispatch of Caesar). The distance covered from Corfinium (about 285 miles/460 km.) in sixteen and a half days (including two days of rest, leaving on the afternoon of February 21) translates into an average speed of about 20 miles/32 km. per day. Caesar begins to block the harbor's exit (9.25.2–9.27.1).

Roman civil cal./ solar year date	Event
March 17 January 26	Pompey sails from Brundisium at nightfall (9.28.3), with twenty cohorts (9.25.2), on day nine of Caesar's stay at Brundisium (9.27.1–2). Date given by Cicero, <i>Letters to Atticus</i> 9.15.6, also 9.15a (the same day as battle of Munda in 45; Plutarch, <i>Caesar</i> 56.3; Orosius 6.16.8). Caesar master of Italy in sixty days (Plutarch, <i>Caesar</i> 35.2), a rounding of sixty-three by inclusive reckoning (January 12–March 17).
March 18 January 27	Caesar enters Brundisium (9.28.3–4). Unable to pursue Pompey because no ships are available, he decides to confront the Pompeian army in Spain first (9.29.1–9.30.1) and leaves for Rome (9.32.1), with the aim of arriving before April 1; both dates supplied by Cicero, <i>Letters to Atticus</i> 9.15.6, also 9.15a. To allow his soldiers some rest, he temporarily quarters them in Brundisium and nearby towns (9.32.1; Tarentum and Spoletem [Cicero, <i>Letters to Atticus</i> 9.15.1] and Hydrus [Appian, <i>Civil Wars</i> 2.40]).
March 25–27 February 3–5	Caesar's progress from Brundisium, through Beneventum on March 25, Capua on March 26, and Sinuessa on March 27, is mentioned with dates by Cicero, <i>Letters to Atticus</i> 9.15.6, also 9.15a; Caesar thus covered about 239 miles/383 km. in eight-plus days at an average speed of 28–31 miles/45–50 km. per day.
March 28 February 6	Caesar visits Cicero at Formiae (attested by Cicero, <i>Letters to Atticus</i> 9.18), traveling about 19 miles/30 km. in one day.
March 31 February 9	Caesar arrives at Rome (9.32.1), covering a distance of about 80 miles/130 km. from Formiae in three days at an average speed of 27 miles/43 km. per day.
April 1–3 February 10–12	Caesar meets with the Senate (9.32.2; the date of April 1 is given by Cicero, <i>Letters to Atticus</i> 9.17.1), convened by the plebeian tribunes Marcus Antonius and Quintus Cassius (Cassius Dio 41.15.2), for three days (9.33.3) outside the city boundaries. The plebeian tribune Lucius Metellus tries to hinder Caesar (9.33.3), blocking access to the treasury (Plutarch, <i>Caesar</i> 35.2–4).
April 6 February 15	Caesar departs from Rome for Spain (9.33.4), after spending about seven days in Rome (Cicero, <i>Letters to Atticus</i> 10.8.6), leaving the praetor Marcus Lepidus in charge of Rome and the plebeian tribune Marcus Antonius in charge of Italy (Appian, <i>Civil Wars</i> 2.41). He issues marching orders for Spain to the three veteran legions stationed around Brundisium (see the entry of June 21).
April 19 February 28	Caesar arrives at Massilia (modern Marseille; 9.34.1), covering about 522 miles/840 km. by the coastal route in about fourteen days at about 38 miles/60 km. per day. (The date was worked out by Schmidt 1893, 176, on the basis of news of resistance at Massilia in Cicero, <i>Letters to Atticus</i> 10.12a.3 [May 6]). Caesar was still en route on April 16: <i>Letters to Atticus</i> 10.8B.
April 21 March 1	Upon learning that Massilia has chosen Pompey's side (9.34–36), Caesar orders twelve warships to be built at Arelate (modern Arles) and sends orders to Trebonius to move his three legions to Massilia (9.36.4–5); see the entry of December 8, 50.
April 22 March 2	Curio embarks for Sicily (9.30.5).
April 23 March 3	Cato leaves Sicily (9.30.5; date given by Cicero, <i>Letters to Atticus</i> 10.16.3) after Asinius Pollio arrives in Sicily as Caesar's representative with troops from Corfinium (see the entry of February 21); Cato sails to Corcyra and goes on to join Pompey (Appian, <i>Civil Wars</i> 2.40).
May 1 March 10	Caesar orders Gaius Fabius to advance from Narbo with his three legions (see the entry of December 8, 50) and seize passes in the Pyrenees (9.37.1). He orders the three legions stationed near Brundisium to set out for Spain (9.37.2; actually this order must have been given much earlier, about April 6, to allow the legions to reach Spain in time; see the entry of June 21).

Roman civil cal./ solar year date	Event
May 4–20 <i>March 13–29</i>	Fabius departs from Narbo with three legions and occupies passes in the Pyrenees, as ordered (see the entry of May 1): assuming three days for the march of about 50 miles/80 km. to reach the passes and fourteen days for clearing passes along a stretch of about 140 miles/225 km. of road.
May 16 <i>March 25</i>	Trebonius arrives at Massilia (modern Marseille) with three legions and begins the siege (9.36.5), having received Caesar's summons at his winter quarters among the Aedui (entry of April 21) on about April 26, via a fast messenger traveling about 250 miles/400 km. from Massilia in five days), and leaving c. April 27, covering the distance in nineteen days (seventeen days of march at 15 miles/24 km. per day plus two days of rest).
May 20 <i>March 29</i>	Caralis on Sardinia occupied by Quintus Valerius (9.30.3; Appian, <i>Civil Wars</i> 2.40).
May 21 <i>March 30</i>	Completion of the construction of twelve warships at Arelate (modern Arles) after thirty days (9.36.5).
May 22 <i>March 31</i>	Fabius with three legions arrives at Ilerda (modern Lérida) after clearing the mountain passes, covering the last about 31 miles/50 km. in two days (9.37.3).
June 13	Caesar leaves Massilia for Ilerda (modern Lérida; 9.36.5) with a cavalry escort: the <i>April 22</i> presumed date of arrival (June 23) allows the calculation of the date of departure by allowing ten-plus days to cover about 385 miles/620 km. at 38 miles/60 km. per day.
June 21 <i>April 30</i>	On this date at the latest, the three legions stationed on March 18 near Brundisium (modern Brindisi) arrive at Ilerda (modern Lérida; their presence is confirmed by 9.40.3, 9.40.7), assuming that marching orders were sent from Rome about April 6, that orders were received three days later, and that the legions set out about April 11, covering about 1,270 miles/2,045 km. at a quick march of about 22 miles/35 km. per day in seventy-one days (fifty-nine of marching and twelve of rest). These three legions plus Fabius' three (see the entry of May 1) form Caesar's complement of six (9.39.2). One of Fabius' two bridges over the Sicoris River north of Ilerda is shattered by storm and high water (9.40.3).
June 23 <i>May 2</i>	Two days after the collapse of the bridge, Caesar arrives at Ilerda with nine hundred cavalry (9.41.1). The date is provided by the statement at 10.32.5 that the surrender of the Pompeian forces, firmly dated to August 2 (Dessau 1892, no. 8744; Degrassi 1963, 491), occurred forty days after Caesar's arrival (although this may be a rounded number; see n. 9.41a).
June 24 <i>May 3</i>	Caesar offers Afranius an opportunity for battle; he begins constructing a new camp closer to Ilerda (9.41.2–6).
June 26 <i>May 5</i>	Caesar completes the camp on the third day (9.42.4).
June 27 <i>May 6</i>	A fight over a hill lying between Ilerda and Afranius' camp (9.43–47) leads to a difficult battle on the slope of the hill of Ilerda.
June 29 <i>May 8</i>	Two days after this battle, storms and floodwater destroy both of Caesar's bridges (9.48).
June 30–July 11 <i>May 9–19</i>	Caesar's army, lacking supplies, is in dire straits (9.48–53).

Roman civil cal./ solar year date	Event
July 5 <i>May 13</i>	First sea battle at Massilia (modern Marseille; 9.56–58), news of which reaches Caesar at Ilerda (modern Lérida) around July 12, allowing about eight days for a fast messenger to cover about 385 miles/620 km. from Massilia at about 50 miles/80 km. per day.
July 11/12 <i>May 19/20</i>	Caesar constructs a new bridge over the Sicoris (modern Segre) River about 22 Roman miles (20.4 miles/32.5 km.) upstream and fortifies a hill on the east bank (9.54).
July 18 <i>May 26</i>	Work begins to construct a ford on the Sicoris (9.61.1).
July 22 <i>May 30</i>	The Pompeian generals, having decided to withdraw to Celtiberia, order construction of a pontoon bridge over the Hiberus (modern Ebro) River and transfer two of their legions across the Sicoris. There they fortify a camp (9.61.6).
July 24–25 <i>June 1–2</i>	Afranius leads his army across the Sicoris River into the new camp and sets out after midnight for Octogesa, 20-plus Roman miles or about 18.5 miles/30 km. south of Ilerda on the Hiberus River (9.63.3). Caesar crosses the ford and pursues and harasses Afranius' troops (9.64), forcing them to make camp before they reach their goal (9.65). Caesar's day-by-day account permits this date and those immediately following to be determined with reference to the known date of surrender of the Pompeian forces (see the entry of August 2).
July 26–27 <i>June 3–4</i>	Caesar prevents Afranius' forces from a breakthrough at night and circumvents them, cutting them off en route to the Hiberus (9.66–70), but then refuses to fight a battle, preferring to win a bloodless victory (9.71–72).
July 28 <i>June 5</i>	Large-scale fraternization between both armies is brutally suppressed by Petreius (9.73–77).
July 29 <i>June 6</i>	Afranius begins march back to Ilerda (9.78.3) but is forced to make camp (9.80.3). Moving forward only by building continuous fortifications, his army is essentially immobilized (9.81–83).
August 2 <i>June 10</i>	On the fourth day of being confined to these fortifications (9.84.1), and almost completely blockaded by Caesar (9.84.4), Afranius surrenders (9.84–86); the date is attested by the <i>fasti</i> (religious calendars; see the entry of June 23).
August 3–4 <i>June 11–12</i>	Roughly one-third of Afranius' forces is released from service over the course of two days (9.87.4).
September 16 <i>July 23</i>	The remainder of Afranius' army is discharged at the Varus (modern Var) River (9.87.5): allowing forty days (thirty-four of marching about 16 miles/25 km. per day, plus six days of rest) to cover about 528 miles/850 km. from Ilerda to the river forming the southeast boundary of the province of Transalpine Gaul.

§10. Chronological Table: *Civil War 2 · Landmark Book 10 Year 49*

705 A.U.C./49 B.C.E.

May 16 <i>March 25</i>	Trebonius with three legions begins the siege of Massilia (9.36.5).
Mid-May–late July <i>Late March–early June</i>	The siege works, with ramp, towers, and siege engines, are set up (10.1–2).

Roman civil cal./ solar year date	Event
Late July–mid-Aug. <i>First half of June</i>	Second sea battle at Massilia (modern Marseille; 10.4–7), won by Caesar's fleet, as was the first battle (see §BB.9, entry of July 5). The date can be no later than c. August 20, since the Pompeian admiral Lucius Nasidius must have arrived at Massilia by c. August 19 at the latest, given that he landed at Messana (modern Messina) in Sicily before Curio sailed for Africa c. August 8, and the voyage from Messana to Massilia would have taken about eleven days (10.3).
Early Aug.–early Oct. <i>Mid-June–mid-Aug.</i>	After the battle, the siege continues with Roman successes and setbacks that cannot be dated precisely (10.8–15). After several weeks, Massilia capitulates and is sealed off, awaiting Caesar's arrival and judgment (10.16).
August 3 <i>June 11</i>	Quintus Cassius sets out from Ilerda (modern Lérida) for Gades (modern Cádiz) in Farther Spain with two legions (10.19.1).
August 6 <i>June 14</i>	Caesar departs from Ilerda for Farther Spain (see the entry of August 24 below).
August 8 <i>June 16</i>	Curio leaves Sicily for Africa, departing late in the day (10.23.1) from Lilybaeum (Lucan 4.583).
August 11 <i>June 19</i>	After a voyage of two days and three nights, Curio lands at Anquillaria (10.23.1) and sets out for Utica (10.24.1).
August 13 <i>June 21</i>	Curio reaches the Bagradas River after a march of three days (see n. 10.23e) and visits the Cornelian Camp (10.24.1–2).
August 14 <i>June 22</i>	Curio encamps before Utica (10.26.1); he receives news of Afranius' surrender to Caesar on August 2 at Ilerda (10.32.5; Appian, <i>Civil Wars</i> 2.44).
August 17 <i>June 25</i>	Skirmish at Utica (10.33.4–10.35).
August 18 <i>June 26</i>	Curio begins the siege of Utica (10.36.1).
August 19 <i>June 27</i>	Informed of the approach of a Numidian army, Curio withdraws to the Cornelian Camp (10.37.3).
August 22 <i>June 30</i>	Curio falls in battle together with most of his army (10.39–42). The fortification of the camp (10.37.4–10.38.1) suggests an interval of two days after Curio's withdrawal before false rumors arrive, prompting Curio to send off his cavalry in the evening of the third day (10.38.2–4) and rush off to the final battle himself early on the fourth day (10.39.1).
August 23 <i>July 1</i>	Efforts fail to evacuate the survivors and guard from the Cornelian Camp by sea (10.43).
August 24 <i>July 2</i>	The survivors of Curio's expedition surrender to Attius Varus; most are subsequently executed by King Juba (10.44).
August 24 <i>July 2</i>	Caesar arrives by forced marches at Corduba (modern Córdoba) with six hundred cavalry (10.19.1, 10.21.1), assuming a departure from Ilerda about August 6 and seventeen days of travel at about 31 miles/50 km. per day plus two days of rest, to cover about 525 miles/845 km.

Roman civil cal./ solar year date	Event
August 25 <i>July 3</i>	Varro surrenders Farther Spain and meets with Caesar at Corduba (10.20.7–8).
August 26 <i>July 4</i>	Caesar sets out for Gades, after a stay of two days at Corduba (10.21.3).
September 2 <i>July 9</i>	Caesar arrives at Gades (10.21.3), allowing six days from his departure on August 26 to cover 175 miles/280 km. at about 31 miles/50 km. per day.
September 10 <i>July 17</i>	Quintus Cassius arrives at Gades with two legions, having set out on about August 3 and covered about 700 miles/1,125 km. from the vicinity of Ilerda in thirty-seven days (thirty-two of marching at about 22 miles/35 km. per day plus five days of rest). He is established as governor of Farther Spain with four legions (10.21.4)
September 11–17 <i>July 18–24</i>	Caesar sails from Gades and reaches Tarraco (modern Tarragona) in a few days (10.21.4), covering about 570 nautical miles. (656 miles/1,055 km.) in seven days at an average speed of about 3.5 knots.
October 10 <i>August 15</i>	Domitius Ahenobarbus escapes from Massilia (modern Marseille; 10.22.2–4).
October 15 <i>August 20</i>	Caesar arrives at Massilia, having departed from Tarraco on about September 21 and having covered about 375 miles/600 km. by land, by way of Narbo (10.21.5), in twenty-four days (twenty of marching at about 19 miles/30 km. per day, plus four days of rest); Massilia surrenders unconditionally (10.22.1, 10.22.5–6).
Late October <i>Early September</i>	Caesar departs for Rome (10.22.6). At Placentia (modern Piacenza) in Cisalpine Gaul he suppresses the mutiny of the 9th Legion (Suetonius, <i>Caesar</i> 69; Appian, <i>Civil Wars</i> 2.47; Cassius Dio 41.26.1; Lucan 5.246). He probably arrives in Rome at the end of November.

§11. Chronological Table: *Civil War* 3 • Landmark Book 11 Year 48

705 A.U.C./49 B.C.E.

December 1–11 <i>October 5–15</i>	Caesar, in Rome as dictator, is elected consul for 48 (11.1.1–11.2.1); in the last days of his tribunate (ending on December 9), Marcus Antonius passes legislation for Caesar (11.1.4; Plutarch, <i>Caesar</i> 37.1).
December 12 <i>October 16</i>	After eleven days in Rome, Caesar resigns from the dictatorship, sets out for Brundisium (modern Brindisi; 11.2.1).
December 20 <i>October 24</i>	Caesar arrives at Brundisium (11.2.1), near the time of the winter solstice by the civil calendar, and is prevented by stormy weather from sailing until after January 1 (Appian, <i>Civil Wars</i> 2.48, 54; compare Cassius Dio 41.44.2); he covers about 335 miles/540 km. from Rome in nine days, at an average speed of about 38 miles/60 km. per day.

706 A.U.C./48 B.C.E.

January 4, 48 <i>November 6, 49</i>	Caesar sets sail from Brundisium with seven of twelve legions (11.6.1–2): the second of only two specific dates given in this work (see 9.5.3–4).
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Roman civil cal./ solar year date	Event
January 5, 48 <i>November 7, 49</i>	Caesar lands at Palaeste on the day after his departure (11.6.3), sends Vibullius to Pompey (11.10–11.11.1), sets out for Oricum (11.11.3), almost 14 miles/22 km. to the northwest as the crow flies.
January 6, 48 <i>November 8, 49</i>	Caesar arrives at Oricum (11.11.3); Bibulus destroys thirty of Caesar's empty ships (11.8.3).
January 7, 48 <i>November 9, 49</i>	While marching to Apollonia on the Via Egnatia, Pompey learns of Caesar's landing (11.11.1–2).
January 8, 48 <i>November 10, 49</i>	Caesar occupies Apollonia (11.12.3), lying about 35 miles/55 km. to the north of Oricum.
January 9–10, 48 <i>Nov. 11–12, 49</i>	Caesar sets out from Apollonia for Dyrrachium, about 53 miles/85 km. to the north, by a forced march (11.13.2), but Pompey, coming from Macedonia, arrives at Dyrrachium first (11.13.3).
Jan. 11–12, 48 <i>Nov. 13–14, 49</i>	Caesar pulls back to the Apsus River, about 10.5 miles/17 km. north of Apollonia and establishes a camp south of the river (11.13.5).
Mid-Jan.–late March 48 <i>Mid-Nov. 49–late Jan. 48</i>	Caesar and Pompey face off on either side of the Apsus River (11.13.6, 11.19).
February 12, 48 <i>December 13, 49</i>	Scipio at Ephesus (11.33.1–2) receives summons from Pompey to bring to Macedonia his two legions withdrawn from Syria and wintering in Asia (11.31.3–4). (A messenger sent by Pompey about January 19 would have required about twenty-three days to cover about 845 miles/1,350 km. at an average speed of about 37 miles/60 km. per day.)
February–March <i>Early Dec. 49–late Jan. 48</i>	Failure of the praetor Marcus Caelius Rufus' challenge to Caesar's legislation regulating debt; Caelius leaves Rome late in January (Cicero, <i>Letters to Friends</i> 8.17.2) and summons Titus Milo from exile in Massilia to raise a rebellion in Campania and southern Italy; both are killed (11.20–22).
February–mid-March 48 <i>Dec. 49–mid-Jan. 48</i>	Death of the Pompeian admiral and Caesar's archenemy Marcus Bibulus (11.18.1–2).
March 27 <i>January 25</i>	Marcus Antonius lands at Nymphaeum (11.26.4) with four legions and eight hundred cavalry (11.29.2).
April 3 <i>February 1</i>	Caesar joins forces with Antonius (11.30.6).
April 5 <i>February 3</i>	Pompey establishes his camp at Asparagium at the Genusus River (11.30.7).
April 6 <i>February 4</i>	Caesar dispatches troops to Macedonia, Thessaly, and Aetolia (11.34.2–11.36.1).
April 8–15 <i>February 6–13</i>	Pompey's son Gnaeus destroys Caesar's ships at Oricum (11.40.4) and three days later at Lissus (11.40.5), but fails to take the towns.
April 9 <i>February 7</i>	Caesar also establishes his camp at the Genusus River, across from Pompey's (11.41.1).

Roman civil cal./ solar year date	Event
April 10 <i>February 8</i>	Scipio arrives in Macedonia with the two legions withdrawn from Syria (11.36.1). Orders sent from Ephesus on about February 12 would have taken about two days to travel about 106 miles/170 km. to Pergamum, one of the winter quarters (11.31.4). Legions would have needed about five days to assemble. Upon departure about February 20 from Pergamum, Scipio's legions would have required about fifty days to cover the about 638 miles/1,020 km. to camp on the Haliacmon River (11.36.3): forty-one of marching at about 16 miles/25 km. per day plus eight days of rest.
April 11 <i>February 9</i>	Caesar sets out for Dyrrachium, cuts Pompey off from this town (11.41.3–11.42.1).
April 12 <i>February 10</i>	Pompey pitches his camp at Petra, Caesar between Petra and Dyrrachium (11.41.5–6).
Mid-April–early July <i>Mid-Feb.–early May</i>	Pompey is gradually hemmed in by Caesar's fortifications (11.42–74).
Late April–early May Late Feb.–early March	Caesar's legate Domitius Calvinus and Scipio confront each other on the border of Macedonia and Thessaly (11.36–38).
June <i>April</i>	Failed attempt of Caesar on Dyrrachium (11.53.1); failed attempt of Pompey to break through Caesar's lines (11.51–52): six fights on a single day (11.53.1).
July 9 <i>May 7</i>	Pompey succeeds in breaking through Caesar's fortifications. Caesar suffers a double defeat (11.62–70) on a single day, with heavy losses (11.71.1).
July 10 <i>May 8</i>	Caesar abandons the siege, pulls his army together, addresses his troops on the day after the battle (11.73–74).
July 11–15 <i>May 9–13</i>	Caesar outmaneuvers Pompey, evades his pursuit, and reaches Apollonia (11.75.2–11.78.1).
July 17 <i>May 15</i>	Caesar sets out for Thessaly (11.78.2).
July 27 <i>May 25</i>	Caesar joins forces with Domitius at Aeginium (11.79.7).
July 29–30 <i>May 27–28</i>	Caesar takes Gomphi in Thessaly and sets an example; Metropolis surrenders without a fight (11.80–81.1).
August 1 <i>May 30</i>	Caesar establishes his camp near Pharsalus (11.81.3).
August 2–5 <i>May 31–June 3</i>	Pompey joins forces with Scipio at Larissa and establishes his camp near Pharsalus (11.82–83).
August 9 <i>June 7</i>	Caesar defeats Pompey at Pharsalus (11.88–97). The date is attested by sacred calendars (<i>fasti</i> : Degrassi 1963, 493; Dessau 1892, no. 8744). Pompey flees to Larissa and from there to the coast, at the mouth of the Peneios River (11.96.3–4), about 60 miles/95 km. to the northeast.

Roman civil cal./ solar year date	Event
August 10 June 8	Pompey sets sail for Amphipolis (Plutarch, <i>Pompey</i> 73.8–74.1). Near Pharsalus, the Pompeian survivors of the battle surrender (11.98.1–2). By evening, starting his pursuit of Pompey, Caesar reaches Larissa (11.98.3).
August 11 June 9	In the morning, Caesar sets out from Larissa for Amphipolis with eight hundred cavalry and orders the 6th Legion to follow (11.102.1).
August 12 June 10	Pompey arrives at Amphipolis and stays one night (11.102.4): his date of arrival must have preceded Caesar's by approximately twenty-four hours (see the entry of August 13).
August 13 June 11	In the morning, at news of Caesar's approach, Pompey sets sail from Amphipolis for Mytilene (11.102.4) to take his wife Cornelia and son Sextus on board (Plutarch, <i>Pompey</i> 74–76).
August 14 June 12	By midday, Caesar arrives at Amphipolis with eight hundred cavalry, assuming that he left Larissa in the morning of August 11 and covered the distance of about 155 miles/250 km. at an average speed of 44 miles/70 km. per day.
August 16 June 14	Pompey reaches Mytilene on Lesbos "within a few days" (11.102.4): at an average speed of 2.5 knots, it would have taken about four days to cover the approximately 243 nautical miles (280 miles/450 km.).
August 18 June 16	After two days at Mytilene, Pompey sets sail for Cilicia and Cyprus (11.102.5), reaching the Pamphylian and Cilician coasts about August 28 and, after beginning to rebuild his forces, crossing over to Cyprus about September 20.
September 3 June 30	Caesar arrives with his 6th Legion at Sestos on the Hellespont (the legion having joined him at Amphipolis): this allows twenty-two days (nineteen of marching at about 19–22 miles/30–35 km. per day plus three of rest) to cover the about 388 miles/625 km. from Larissa, if the troops set out on August 11, the same day as Caesar with his cavalry.
September 4 July 1	While crossing the Hellespont, Caesar encounters the Pompeian naval commander Lucius Cassius, who surrenders (Suetonius, <i>Caesar</i> 63; Cassius Dio 42.6.2; Appian, <i>Civil Wars</i> 2.88).
Sept. 4–24 July 1–21	Caesar arrives in the province of Asia (11.105.1) and stays a "few days" (11.106.1), spending time at Troy (Lucan 9.961–99; see also Strabo 13.1.27 [595C]) and Ephesus (11.105.1).
September 24 July 21	Pompey departs from Paphos, Cyprus (Cicero, <i>Philippic</i> 2.39) for Egypt: counting back from Pompey's murder on September 28, this allows four days of sailing (three days according to Plutarch, <i>Pompey</i> 76.7) at about 2.5 knots to cover about 230 nautical miles (267 miles/430 km.) to Pelusium.
September 27 July 24	Caesar sets sail from Rhodes, arriving at Alexandria, Egypt three days later (Appian, <i>Civil Wars</i> 2.89) or, more likely, closer to four days (compare Diodorus Siculus 3.34.7); the latter assumes an average speed of 3.5 knots to cover the about 350 nautical miles. (404 miles/650 km.). According to Lucan (9.1001–5), Caesar's journey from the mainland, by way of Rhodes, took seven days in all, and the wind was favorable.
September 28 July 25	Murder of Pompey at Pelusium in Egypt (11.104.3); the date is supplied by Velleius Paterculus 2.53.3 with Pliny, <i>Natural History</i> 37.13; slightly different dates (September 29 or October 1) are given by Plutarch, <i>Camillus</i> 19.11; <i>Moralia</i> 717c; <i>Pompey</i> 79.5.
September 29 July 26	Lucius Lentulus Crus (consul 49) arrives at Pelusium from Cyprus on the day after Pompey's murder and is put to death (11.104.3; Plutarch, <i>Pompey</i> 80.6).

Roman civil cal./ solar year date	Event
October 2 <i>July 28</i>	On the third day after the murder of Pompey (Livy, <i>Periocha</i> 112), Caesar arrives at Alexandria with two legions and eight hundred cavalry (11.106.1–2). He hears of Pompey's murder. (Three days are sufficient for news of the murder to be brought the approximately 186 miles/300 km. from Pelusium.)
October 7 <i>August 3</i>	Caesar is presented with the head and signet ring of Pompey (Plutarch, <i>Pompey</i> 80.5, <i>Caesar</i> 48.2). (Six days are sufficient for news of Caesar's arrival to be brought the approximately 186 miles/300 km. to Pelusium, causing tokens of Pompey's death to be sent to Alexandria.) The Etesian winds, which normally blow from the northwest in late July SOLAR YR., prevent Caesar from departing (11.107.1).
October 8 <i>August 3</i>	Caesar requests from Domitius Calvinus in Asia the dispatch of two legions (11.107.1): the 37th will arrive by sea about December 10 (12.9.3), the other, sent by land, will be delayed (12.34.3). Caesar's message was probably conveyed by Caesar's freedman Diochares, who journeyed to Rome with Pompey's ring, by way of Asia (Cicero, <i>Letters to Atticus</i> 11.6.7).
October 9 <i>August 4</i>	Caesar summons Ptolemy and Cleopatra to Alexandria to resolve their conflict by arbitration rather than war (11.107.2).
October 14 <i>August 9</i>	Ptolemy arrives in Alexandria in response to summons (11.107.2, see 11.109.3).
October 21 <i>August 16</i>	Cleopatra arrives in Alexandria in response to summons (11.107.2), having been smuggled into the palace (Plutarch, <i>Caesar</i> 49.1; Cassius Dio 42.34.3–6).
October 23 <i>August 18</i>	Pothinus summons Achillas and his army to Alexandria (11.108.2).
November 4 <i>August 30</i>	Achillas orders ambassadors of the king to be put to death (11.109.3–5).
November 6 <i>September 1</i>	Caesar takes custody of the king (11.109.6).
November 7 <i>September 2</i>	Achillas occupies Alexandria (11.111.1), assuming that Pothinus' message, sent on October 23, took one to two days to reach Pelusium by sea (about 160 nautical miles, or 184 miles/296 km.) or three to four days by land (about 186 miles/300 km.), and that, departing on October 27, fourteen days were needed to march twenty thousand soldiers (11.110.2) over this distance at an average speed of 16 miles/25 km. per day, with two days of rest.
November 8–9 <i>September 3–4</i>	Achillas attacks the royal palace and tries to gain mastery of the fleet; Caesar burns the Egyptian fleet (11.111).
Mid-November <i>Mid-September</i>	Caesar's freedman Diochares arrives in Rome with Pompey's ring as proof of his death (Cicero, <i>Letters to Atticus</i> 11.6.7), having left Alexandria in early October and journeyed by way of the province of Asia. Shortly afterwards, Caesar is named dictator for twelve months (Broughton 1951–1986, 2.272).
Mid- to late Nov. <i>Mid-September</i>	Cleopatra's younger sister, Arsinoë, escapes from the palace and joins Achillas (11.112.10). Caesar has Pothinus executed (11.112.11).

§12. Chronological Table: *Alexandrian War* • Landmark Book 12 Years 48–47

Roman civil cal./
solar year date Event

706 A.U.C./48 B.C.E.

Summer <i>May–June</i>	Failed attempt to assassinate Quintus Cassius Longinus, Caesar's governor of Farther Spain (12.52.2–55).
Fall <i>July–August</i>	Rebellion against Quintus Cassius Longinus, Caesar's governor of Farther Spain (12.57–63).
November 29 <i>September 24</i>	Domitius Calvinus sets out with four legions from Comana in Pontus (12.34.3–5) to expel Pharnaces from Lesser Armenia (12.35.3): about five and a half days are needed to march about 84 miles/135 km. to Nicopolis, and one or two days of maneuvering before the battle c. December 8 (see below).
December 2 <i>September 26</i>	Arsinoë has the general Achillas killed and the troops placed under the command of Ganymede (12.4.1).
December 3 <i>September 27</i>	Ganymede commences work on spoiling the fresh water supply to the district of Alexandria where Caesar and his forces are quartered (12.6.1–3).
December 7–8 <i>October 1–2</i>	Caesar gains access to fresh water by digging wells (12.9.1–2).
December 8 <i>October 2</i>	Gnaeus Domitius Calvinus is defeated by Pharnaces in a battle at Nicopolis (12.39–40). Cassius Dio (42.46.3) puts Domitius' retreat after the battle shortly before the onset of winter. Elsewhere (41.44.2; 42.56.1), Cassius Dio reckons this season according to the time of the year in the Roman civil calendar. Hence, Judeich (1885, 63) places the battle in early December versus Stoffel's date of December 28.
December 10 <i>October 4</i>	The 37th Legion (formerly Pompeian), one of two dispatched from Asia Minor by Domitius Calvinus (12.34.3), informs Caesar that it has landed west of Alexandria but cannot proceed because of adverse winds (12.9.3–4).
December 11 <i>October 5</i>	Caesar attacked at sea while trying to join the 37th Legion (12.10–11).
December 20 <i>October 14</i>	Caesar fights a successful sea battle for control of the Eunostus Harbor (12.14–16).
December 29 <i>October 23</i>	Gabinius arrives in Illyricum with a force to support the Caesarian governor (12.43.1).
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707 A.U.C./47 B.C.E.	
January 6, 47 <i>October 29, 48</i>	Caesar gains control of the town on Pharos Island (12.17–18).
January 7, 47 <i>October 30, 48</i>	Caesar's attempt to occupy the causeway bridge near the city fails: attacks by Alexandrian forces compel Caesar to withdraw, with losses, from the causeway, barely saving his life by swimming to ships farther out in the harbor (12.19–21).
January 17, 47 <i>November 9, 48</i>	Caesar releases King Ptolemy from his custody (12.23–24).

Roman civil cal./ solar year date	Event
January 20, 47 <i>November 12, 48</i>	Gabinius, defeated in Illyricum, dies from disease at Salona (12.43.3).
February 6, 47 <i>November 27, 48</i>	Caesar's fleet under Tiberius Nero wins a sea battle off Canopus but loses the Rhodian commander Euphranor (12.25.2–6).
February 23, 47 <i>December 14, 48</i>	Vatinius arrives in Illyricum with a fleet (12.44.3–5).
Late February, 47 <i>Mid-December 48</i>	Quintus Cassius Longinus dies in a shipwreck on his way from his province of Farther Spain to Rome (12.64.3).
March 6, 47 <i>December 25, 48</i>	Caesar's ally Mithridates of Pergamum, arriving with reinforcements from Syria and Cilicia, takes Pelusium (12.26.2).
March 15, 47 <i>January 3, 47</i>	Ptolemy's forces fight a battle against Mithridates' troops to prevent him from joining Caesar, suffering defeat (12.27.4–7) at a locale known as "Camp of the Jews" (<i>Josephus, Jewish War</i> 1.191).
March 16 <i>January 4</i>	Vatinius wins a sea battle off the island of Tauris in the Adriatic by defeating the fleet of the Pompeian admiral Marcus Octavius (12.46.4–7).
March 24 <i>January 12</i>	In response to news of the battle on March 15, the king and Caesar sail from Alexandria late in the day, or during the night, to rendezvous with their respective forces (12.28.1).
March 26 <i>January 14</i>	Ptolemy perishes in the battle of the Nile while trying to escape by ship from his camp that is being sacked by Caesar's forces (12.31.6).
March 27 <i>January 15</i>	Alexandria surrenders to Caesar (12.32.4). The date is attested by the <i>fasti</i> (official calendars listing festivals and anniversaries: Dessau 1892, no. 8744).
March 31 <i>January 19</i>	Caesar places the younger Ptolemy (XIV Philopator) on the throne as joint-ruler with his sister Cleopatra; Arsinoë is exiled (12.33.2).
April <i>Jan. 20–Feb. 17</i>	Caesar and Cleopatra spend time together and cruise the Nile (Appian, <i>Civil Wars</i> 2.90; Suetonius, <i>Caesar</i> 52.1).
May 1 <i>February 18</i>	Caesar sets out by land for Syria from Alexandria (12.33.5) with the 6th Legion (12.33.3), marching perhaps as far as Ake Ptolemais (modern Akko), where he boards ships (12.66.1). Approximately sixty-five days later, by July 5, rumors of his departure that had arrived earlier (taking about one and a half months to reach Rome [compare Book 11, entry of mid-November]), were confirmed (Cicero, <i>Letters to Atticus</i> 11.25.2). The length of Caesar's stay in Egypt, therefore, was seven months, from October 1, 48, not nine months, as Appian claims (<i>Civil Wars</i> 2.90).
June 5 <i>March 25</i>	Caesar arrives in Syria (12.65.1), perhaps at Ake Ptolemais, after covering about 430 miles/690 km. in twenty-eight days of marching (at about 16 miles/25 km. per day) plus five rest days and perhaps one day each at Gaza, Ioppe, and Caesarea.
June 13 <i>April 2</i>	Caesar arrives at Seleucia Pieria (the seaport of Antioch), leaving Ake Ptolemais by ship c. June 8 after a stay of about two days (June 6–7); he covers the approximate 210 nautical miles (242 miles/390 km.) in three and a half days at 2.5 knots, with perhaps one day each in Tyre and Sidon (12.65.4–12.66.1).

Roman civil cal./ solar year date	Event
June 14 <i>April 3</i>	Caesar arrives at Antioch (modern Antakya), which he makes his headquarters (Cicero, <i>Letters to Atticus</i> 11.20.1)
June 27 <i>April 16</i>	Caesar leaves Antioch, after a stay of about twelve days (June 15–26), for the overland journey of 17 miles/about 28 km. to the port of Seleucia Pieria (the port of Antioch), whence he sails to Tarsus.
July 1 <i>April 19</i>	Caesar arrives at Tarsus (12.66.1), having sailed from Seleucia Pieria at about noon on June 28, covering in two days the approximate 80 nautical miles (87 miles/140 km.) to the coast of Cilicia at an average speed of about 2.5 knots, and the distance from the mouth of the Cydnus River to the town. Possibly during his stay at Tarsus, Caesar wrote a letter to Cicero (<i>Letters to Friends</i> 14.23, received by August 11 in Brundisium, modern Brindisi), announcing that his return to Italy was imminent. (<i>Letters to Atticus</i> 11.20.1 attests an exceptionally fast journey of twenty-seven days [in good sailing conditions] from the nearby port of Seleucia Pieria to Brundisium.)
July 6 <i>April 24</i>	Caesar leaves Tarsus for Mazaka (modern Kayseri, Turkey) after a stay of about four days (July 2–5) to settle provincial affairs (12.66.3).
July 16 <i>May 4</i>	Caesar reaches Mazaka, the capital of Cappadocia, by long marches (12.66.3) of about 19 miles/30 km. per day, covering the distance from Tarsus (about 183 miles/295 km. by road), in eleven days of marching plus one of rest.
July 19 <i>May 7</i>	Caesar leaves Mazaka for Pontus, after a stay of two days (July 17–18) to settle affairs (12.66.3). On the supposed trip to Cappadocian Comana that is also, but falsely, reported in 12.66.3, see n. 12.66d.
July 25 <i>May 13</i>	Caesar arrives at Sebasteia, having covered the approximately 125 miles/200 km. from Mazaka in seven days of marching at about 19 miles/30 km. per day and musters his four legions (12.69.1), one of which is brought by Deiotarus (12.67.1).
August 1 <i>May 20</i>	Caesar arrives at Zela (12.73.1), having covered the about 103 miles/165 km. from Sebasteia, which he left c. July 27, in five and a half days of marching. These may be the roughly five days that Suetonius (<i>Caesar</i> 35.2) refers to, preceding the battle on August 2.
August 2 <i>May 21</i>	Battle of Zela, in which Caesar defeats Mithridates' son Pharnaces (12.74–76). The date is attested by the <i>fasti</i> (official calendars [see March 27]: Dessau 1892, no. 8744).
August 3 <i>May 22</i>	Caesar rewards his troops and on the day after the battle sets out from Zela with lightly equipped cavalry (12.77).
August 9 <i>May 28</i>	Caesar arrives at Blucium/Bloukion in Galatia, the royal fortress of King Deiotarus (Cicero, <i>On Behalf of Deiotarus</i> 17, 21, 42; Strabo 12.5.2, 567C), having covered by road a distance of about 217 miles/350 km. in seven days of travel, at an average speed of about 31 miles/50 km. per day.
August 12 <i>May 31</i>	After a stay of about two days (August 10–11) Caesar leaves Blucium/Bloukion.
August 17 <i>June 5</i>	Caesar arrives in Bithynia (12.78.1; Cicero, <i>Letters to Friends</i> 13.29.4), making his headquarters at Nicaea, where Marcus Brutus, the future tyrannicide, defends King Deiotarus (Cicero, <i>Letters to Atticus</i> 14.1.2; see also Cicero, <i>Brutus</i> 21; Tacitus, <i>Dialogue on Oratory</i> 21). The distance covered from Blucium/Bloukion is about 193 miles/310 km., requiring six days of travel, at an average speed of about 31 miles/50 km. per day.

Roman civil cal./ solar year date	Event
August 25 <i>June 13</i>	After a stay of perhaps seven days (c. August 18–24) to settle affairs in Asia (12.78.1), Caesar leaves Nicaea for the Aegean coast.
September 2 <i>June 19</i>	Caesar arrives on the northwest coast of Asia Minor, having traveled overland about 205 miles/330 km. from Nicaea in seven days, at an average speed of about 31 miles/50 km. per day.
September 3 <i>June 20</i>	Caesar sets sail from the northwest coast of Asia Minor, perhaps from Adramyttium, for Athens, by way of Mytilene (Cicero, <i>Brutus</i> 250; Seneca, <i>To Helvia On Consolation</i> 9.4–6), Samos (Cicero, <i>Brutus</i> 156), and possibly Ceos (<i>Inscriptiones Graecae</i> 1 ² .5.557).
September 9 <i>June 26</i>	Caesar arrives at Athens, having covered the 325 nautical miles (378 miles/600 km.) from Asia in seven days, during daylight hours, at an average speed of 2.5–3 knots. (On his expected arrival at Athens, see Cicero, <i>Letters to Atticus</i> 11.21.2 of August 25).
September 14 <i>July 1</i>	After a stay of a few days (c. September 10–13), Caesar leaves Athens for Patrae by way of Corinth (Diodorus Siculus 32.27.1).
September 17 <i>July 4</i>	Caesar arrives at Patrae (modern Patras) his anticipated point of departure from Greece: Cicero, <i>Letters to Atticus</i> 11.20.2, 11.21.2), having traveled the approximately 130 miles/210 km. from Athens in four days, at an average speed of about 31 miles/50 km. per day.
September 18 <i>July 5</i>	Caesar sets sail from Patrae.
September 24 <i>July 11</i>	Caesar lands at Tarentum (modern Taranto) in Italy (Plutarch, <i>Cicero</i> 39.3–4), having covered the distance of about 300 nautical miles. (342 miles/550 km.) from Patrae in seven days, during daylight hours, at an average speed of 2.5–3 knots. This date is calculated in relation to the meeting with Cicero and Cicero's subsequent travels (see the following entry).
September 25 <i>July 12</i>	Cicero leaves Brundisium and meets Caesar on the road from Tarentum, presumably traveling back to Brundisium with him (Plutarch, <i>Cicero</i> 39.3–4). [The date is estimated as follows: On October 1, Cicero was at Venusia and expected to arrive in Tusculum, about 196 miles/320 km. away, on October 7 or 8 (Cicero, <i>Letters to Friends</i> 14.20). Hence his intended speed of travel was about 28–31 miles/45–50 km. per day. Since Venusia is about 124 miles/200 km. away from Brundisium, it would have taken Cicero approximately four to five days to reach that town by October 1. Hence we can place his departure from Brundisium on September 26, presumably the day after his meeting with Caesar.]
October 5 <i>July 21</i>	Caesar arrives in Rome, assuming September 26 was the date of his departure from Brundisium and allowing nine days of travel (an unhurried pace [Ovid, <i>From Pontus</i> 4.5.7–8]) to cover about 336 miles/540 km. at an average speed of about 37 miles/60 km. per day.

§13. Chronological Table: *African War* • Landmark Book 13 Year 46

707 A.U.C./47 B.C.E.

November 29 <i>September 14</i>	Caesar departs from Rome. The date is estimated by allowing about eighteen days to reach Lilybaeum, Sicily, on December 17 (below): the journey by road from Rome to Rhegium required three to four days more than that to Brundisium (Strabo 6.3.7 [283C]), for which nine days was average (Ovid, <i>From Pontus</i> 4.5.7–8), so about twelve days; six additional days were needed to cover about 215 miles/345 km. by road from Messana (Appian, <i>Civil Wars</i> 2.95) to Lilybaeum, at an average speed of 37 miles/60 km. per day.
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Roman civil cal./ solar year date	Event
December 17 <i>October 1</i>	Caesar arrives at Lilybaeum (modern Marsala) on Sicily (13.1.1, giving precise date).
December 25 <i>October 9</i>	Caesar embarks with six legions and two thousand cavalry from Lilybaeum, sailing via the island of Aponiana, about 10 miles/16 km. northwest of Lilybaeum (13.2.1–4; the precise date is given at 13.2.4).
December 28 <i>October 12</i>	Caesar reaches the coast of Africa ("on the fourth day" [after his departure, by inclusive reckoning], 13.2.5), covering about 150 nautical miles (171 miles/275 km.) at an average speed of about 2 knots; lands with only 3,000 infantry and 150 cavalry and makes camp near Hadrumetum (13.3.1). The date is confirmed by 13.19.7 (January 4 is the sixth day after Caesar's arrival).
December 29 <i>October 13</i>	Caesar moves camp from outside Hadrumetum after spending "one night and part of a day" (13.5.1) and establishes a camp to the south, near Ruspina "on the same day" (13.6.7).
708 A.U.C./46 B.C.E.	
January 1, 46 <i>October 14, 47</i>	Caesar moves camp about 8 miles/12 km. from Ruspina to Leptis (13.7.1, precise date) and is joined there by some transports (13.7.3). By about this date, news of Caesar's landing reaches Scipio in Utica (a fast messenger, traveling about 50 miles/80 km. per day, requires two-plus days for about 119 miles/190 km. by road).
January 2, 46 <i>October 15, 47</i>	Caesar leaves a garrison at Leptis and marches back to Ruspina (date given as January 3 in the manuscripts at 13.9.1, corrected to January 2 on the basis of "whence [from Ruspina] he had come the day before" [on January 1]) where he fortifies his camp and boards ships with seven veteran cohorts "toward evening" (13.10.2), planning to launch a search for the missing ships in the morning (13.11.4).
January 3, 46 <i>October 16, 47</i>	At dawn of next day (13.11.1–2) the missing troop transports sail into the harbor; Caesar reinforces his camp at Ruspina (13.11.3).
January 4, 46 <i>October 17, 47</i>	Caesar sets out with thirty cohorts on an expedition to collect grain (13.11.3). He is attacked by a superior enemy force under the command of Labienus and Petreius. The battle of Ruspina (13.12–19) lasts from about the fifth hour (10:15 a.m.) until sunset (5:45 p.m.) and is finally won by Caesar. The date is given at 13.19.7 and identified as the sixth day (by inclusive reckoning) after Caesar's arrival in Africa on December 28.
January 6, 46 <i>October 19, 47</i>	Caesar learns "on the third day after the battle of Ruspina" (January 4) that Scipio is drawing near, bringing reinforcements comprising eight legions and three thousand cavalry (13.20.2).
January 9, 46 <i>October 22, 47</i>	Scipio arrives at Hadrumetum and joins forces with Labienus and Petreius at Ruspina (13.24.1). The date is estimated by allowing six-plus days of marching and one of rest (January 2–9), covering about 120 miles/190 km. by road from Utica, at an average of 19 miles/30 km. per day. A stalemate between the two camps ensues (13.24.2–13.36).
January 21, 46 <i>November 3, 47</i>	A second convoy carrying the 13th and 14th Legions departs from Lilybaeum, Sicily (13.34.4).
January 23, 46 <i>November 5, 47</i>	On the island of Cercina, the praetor Sallust (the future historian) secures for Caesar a good supply of grain (13.34.3).
January 24–25, 46 <i>November 6–7, 47</i>	The 13th and 14th Legions arrive at Ruspina on the fourth day after their departure (13.34.5). Caesar dispatches the unloaded transports back to Lilybaeum to fetch the remainder of his troops (13.37.1).

Roman civil cal./ solar year date	Event
Night of Jan. 25/26, 46 <i>November 7/8, 47</i>	Caesar sets out from Ruspina, occupies and fortifies a range of hills, and establishes his camp near Uzita (13.37–38; precise date given at 13.37.1).
January 26, 46 <i>November 8, 47</i>	Scipio suffers heavy cavalry losses (13.38.3–13.40).
January 27, 46 <i>November 9, 47</i>	On “the next day” (13.41.1), Caesar tries unsuccessfully to draw Scipio into battle on the plain near Uzita (13.41–42).
January 28, 46 <i>November 10, 47</i>	By about this date, news of Scipio’s cavalry losses (on January 26) reaches Juba (13.48.1) by fast messenger, traveling about 50 miles/80 km. per day, having covered the about 93 miles/150 km. from Uzita to Juba’s capital Zama in about two days.
February 8, 46 <i>November 19, 47</i>	Juba joins Scipio with three legions, eight hundred cavalry, thirty elephants and other troops near Uzita (13.48.2), after about eight days, comprising two days of preparation (February 1–2) and about six days of march (February 3–8), covering the distance of 93 miles/about 150 km. at an average speed of about 16 miles/25 km. per day.
February 13, 46 <i>November 24, 47</i>	After several days of skirmishing near Uzita (13.49–52), a third convoy carrying the 9th and 10th Legions comes within sight of Ruspina and Thapsus (13.53.1). The legions disembark several days later, after spending “many days” (possibly four) in stormy waters off the coast (13.53).
February 18, 46 <i>November 29, 47</i>	An uprising of Gaetulians, initiated by Caesar (13.32.3–4, 13.35.2–5), compels Juba to send six cohorts back to his kingdom (13.55.2).
February 22, 46 <i>December 3, 47</i>	Scipio’s admiral Varus, learning c. February 19 of the arrival of the 9th and 10th Legions, brings his fleet from Utica to Hadrumetum (after three days of preparations and sailing, covering about 135 nautical miles [155 miles/250 km.] at 3.5 knots), and attacks Caesar’s ships anchored at Leptis. He destroys many of those ships and captures two (13.62). Caesar daringly pursues the retreating enemy fleet and captures two of its ships (13.63).
Intercalary 7, 46 <i>December 12, 47</i>	After a long stalemate at Uzita, Caesar moves camp to Aggar (13.67.1), about 22 miles/35 km. away.
Intercalary 17, 46 <i>December 22, 47</i>	Caesar seizes the town of Zeta lying 10 Roman miles (9 miles/15 km.) northwest of Scipio’s camp, 18 Roman miles (17 miles/27 km.) northwest of his camp at Aggar (13.68) but pulls back to his camp at Aggar in the early evening (13.69–70).
March 21, 46 <i>January 22, 46</i>	Caesar performs a ritual purification (<i>lustratio</i>) of his army at Aggar (13.75.1, giving the precise date).
March 22 <i>January 23</i>	Caesar offers battle (“the next day,” 13.75.1).
March 23 <i>January 24</i>	Caesar breaks camp at Aggar and sets out for Sarsura (“the next day,” 13.75.2), about 19 miles/30 km. away from Aggar.
March 24 <i>January 25</i>	Caesar takes Sarsura and executes Scipio’s garrison (13.76.1).
March 25 <i>January 26</i>	Caesar arrives at the town of Thysdra (“the next day” [after his arrival at Sarsura], 13.76.1), about 10 miles/16 km. distant from Sarsura. Given the town’s location and the lack of access to water, he decides not to attack it (13.76.2).

Roman civil cal./ solar year date	Event
March 26 <i>January 27</i>	Caesar leaves Thysdra before sunrise and returns to his former camp at Aggar (13.76.2), about 19 miles/30 km. away.
March 27 <i>January 28</i>	A fourth convoy with Caesarian troops—four thousand legionnaires, four hundred horsemen, one thousand slingers—arrives (“at about the same time” [as Caesar’s return to Aggar], 13.77.3).
April 4 <i>February 5</i>	Caesar leaves Aggar shortly after midnight and moves camp to Thapsus, covering the distance of 16 Roman miles (15 miles/24 km.) during the night (13.79.1, giving the date and distance). Along the way, he builds a fort to block the southern entrance of the land corridor leading to Thapsus (13.80.2). He begins to wall off the town (13.79.1, 13.80.2). Scipio follows and builds two camps near the southern entrance (13.79.2). He fails to break through Caesar’s southern barrier (13.80.1–3).
April 5 <i>February 6</i>	During the next day and night (April 5/6), Scipio marches around the marsh and establishes a camp to the north, rather close to Caesar’s (13.80.3).
April 6 <i>February 7</i>	The battle of Thapsus results in an overwhelming victory of Caesar and ends with a massacre of enemy survivors (13.80–85). The date is supplied by Ovid, <i>Fasti</i> 4.379–80 and the <i>fasti</i> (official calendars listing festivals and anniversaries): Degrassi 1963, 437.
April 7 <i>February 8</i>	After distributing rewards and prizes in an army assembly (“on the next day,” 13.86.2–3), Caesar departs for Utica, sending Marcus Messalla ahead with cavalry and leaving Caninius Rebilus and Domitius Calvinus behind to besiege Thapsus and Thysdra, respectively (13.86.3).
April 8 <i>February 9</i>	News of the defeat reaches Cato in Utica (“late in the evening, on the third day” [Plutarch, <i>Cato the Younger</i> 58.7; Appian, <i>Civil Wars</i> 2.98]) by a fast messenger covering about 140 miles/225 km. by road at about 50 miles/80 km. per day.
April 9 <i>February 10</i>	Scipio’s cavalry in flight from Thapsus destroys Parada and arrives at Utica (13.87.4–8; Plutarch, <i>Cato the Younger</i> 62–64.1). Cato tries to organize the defense of Utica but finds no support (13.88.1–2).
Night of April 10/11 <i>February 11/12</i>	Cato commits suicide (13.78.3–4; Plutarch, <i>Cato the Younger</i> 70.2, 70.4–6).
April 11 <i>February 12</i>	Early in the day, Messalla arrives at Utica with cavalry (13.88.7), having required about four days (April 7–10) to cover 140 miles/about 225 km. from Thapsus, at an average speed of about 37 miles/60 km. per day.
April 13 <i>February 14</i>	King Juba and Petreius, after remaining in hiding near Utica to await word from Cato (Plutarch, <i>Cato the Younger</i> 60.3) and learning of his suicide, travel in secret at night and arrive at Zama (13.91), having covered about 94 miles/150 km. at about 37 miles/60 km. per night in two-plus days. The citizens bar them from entering the town.
April 16 <i>February 17</i>	Caesar reaches Utica with his infantry at nightfall (13.89.5, date estimated by allowing nine days [eight of marching, one of rest] to cover about 140 miles/225 km. by road, at an average speed of about 16 miles/25 km. per day).
April 17 <i>February 18</i>	Caesar enters Utica (“early the next day”) and settles local affairs (13.90). Envoys from Zama, dispatched c. April 15 (having traveled 105 miles/about 170 km. at an average speed of 50 miles/80 km. per day) report their action against Juba and request Caesar’s help (13.92.1).

Roman civil cal./ solar year date	Event
April 18 <i>February 19</i>	Caesar sets out from Utica for Zama (“next day,” 13.92.2).
April 19 <i>February 20</i>	Vergilius surrenders Thapsus after learning of Juba’s exclusion from his capital city and of Cato’s suicide (13.93.3; date estimated by allowing three days for news to travel from Zama to Utica [see the entry of April 17] and three from Utica to Thapsus).
April 20 <i>February 21</i>	Caesar arrives at Zama (13.92.4) after three days of riding, covering about 105 miles/170 km. by road (at about 37 miles/60 km. per day). News of Caesar’s victory at Thapsus on April 6 arrives in Rome (Cicero, <i>Letters to Friends</i> 9.2.1–2, 9.2.4, written c. April 22). The date is estimated by allowing about twelve days for a fast messenger, leaving Utica on April 8, to sail to Lilybaeum in two days (about 120 nautical miles at 2.5 knots) and ten days by land, by way of Messana and the Straits, to cover about 620 miles/1,000 km. to Rome.
April 22 <i>February 23</i>	Juba and Petreius perish in a suicide pact (13.94; see also Livy, <i>Periocha</i> 114; Cassius Dio 43.8.4; Appian, <i>Civil Wars</i> 2.100), probably soon after Caesar’s arrival at Zama.
April 28 <i>March 1</i>	Afranius and Faustus Sulla, while making their way westward along the coast, are captured by Caesar’s ally Sittius and put to death (13.95; see also Suetonius, <i>Caesar</i> 75.3; Cassius Dio 43.12.2).
April 29 <i>March 2</i>	While trying to escape by sea to Spain, Scipio is cut off by the fleet of Sittius near Hippo Regius and perishes (13.96.2; see also Livy, <i>Periocha</i> 114; Cassius Dio 43.9.5; Appian, <i>Civil Wars</i> 2.100).
May 23 <i>March 25</i>	Caesar arrives back at Utica (13.97.1), after spending about one month (c. April 20–May 20) to settle affairs of Numidia at Zama, including the creation of a new province, Africa Nova, and three days (May 21–23) on the return journey to Utica.
June 13 <i>April 15</i>	Caesar sets sail from Utica (13.98.1, giving precise date), after taking about three weeks to settle affairs of the African province (13.97.2–4).
June 15 <i>April 17</i>	Caesar arrives at Caralis, Sardinia “on the third day” (after leaving Utica, by inclusive reckoning, 13.98.1).
June 27 <i>April 29</i>	Caesar sails from Caralis, Sardinia (13.98.2, giving precise date).
July 25 <i>May 26</i>	Caesar reaches Rome (“on the twenty-eighth day” [after setting sail from Sardinia], 13.98.2).

§14. Chronological Table: *Spanish War* • Landmark Book 14 Year 45

708 A.U.C./46 B.C.E.

Early intercalary II Caesar leaves Rome for Spain, traveling by the coastal roads.
c. November 5

Late intercalary II Caesar arrives in Nearer Spain, reaching Saguntum on the seventeenth day after his departure (Orosius 6.16.6), covering a distance of about 1,025 miles/1,650 km. at an average speed of about 60 miles/97 km. per day. While traveling, he composes a poem entitled *The Journey* (Suetonius, *Caesar* 56.5).

Roman civil cal./ solar year date	Event
Late intercalary II <i>c. December 2</i>	Caesar arrives in Farther Spain (14.2.1), at Obulco, after a journey from Rome of twenty-seven days (Strabo 3.4.9 [160C]; Appian, <i>Civil Wars</i> 2.103), twenty-four days according to Suetonius, <i>Caesar</i> 56.5). The slower pace from Saguntum to Obulco, about 290 miles/466 km., in ten days at about 29 miles/47 km. per day, is to be explained perhaps by an ankle injury Caesar suffered at the Sucro River (Seneca, <i>On Benefits</i> 5.24.1) south of Saguntum, or perhaps by poor health (Cassius Dio 43.32.6). The extended stay at Obulco presumably is to be explained by the need to assemble his army (14.2.2).

December <i>December</i>	Caesar elected sole consul for 45, at election presided over by his consular colleague Marcus Lepidus (Cassius Dio 43.33.1; compare Plutarch, <i>Caesar</i> 56.1 and Eutropius 6.24.1, both of whom mistakenly put the election before Caesar's departure).
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JULIAN CALENDAR* 709 A.U.C./45 B.C.E.

Julian date	Event
Early January	Uncertain and unverified rumors of military operations begin arriving in Rome (Cicero, <i>Letters to Friends</i> 15.17.3), presumably about thirty days after Caesar's arrival in Spain.
January 8	Caesar sends reinforcements to Ulia (14.3.3–9), which is under siege by Gnaeus Pompey the Younger, and sets out from Obulco for Corduba (modern Córdoba; 14.4.1).
January 10	Caesar reaches Corduba, crosses the Baetis (modern Guadalquivir) River, and camps to the north (14.5.1–2), covering the about 32 miles/52 km. from Obulco in two days.
January 12	Pompey lifts the siege of Ulia (about 16 miles/26 km. south of Corduba), encamps before Corduba, south of the Baetis River (14.5.2).
January 13–20	Battles to gain control over the bridge at Corduba (14.5.3–7).
January 20–21	During the night, Caesar departs for Ategua (about 14 miles/22 km. southwest of his camp near Corduba), where Pompey has a strong garrison (14.6.1).
January 21	Caesar begins the siege of Ategua (14.6.3).
January 27	Pompey places his camp between Ategua and Ucubis (14.7.1), situated about 4 miles/7 km. southwest of Ategua.
February 4	Pompey attacks Caesar's fort at Castra Postumiana in the vicinity of Ategua and is routed (14.9).
February 5	Caesar acquires cavalry reinforcements (14.10.1–2).
February 5–6	Pompey burns his camp at Ategua and withdraws in the direction of Corduba (14.10.2).
February 15	Suspecting betrayal, Pompeian defenders of Ategua massacre some of the townspeople (14.15.6).
February 16	Attempted surrender of Ategua to Caesar fails (14.17–14.18.2).
February 19	Ategua surrenders to Caesar, who is hailed imperator by his troops (14.19.6, giving precise date).
February 20	Caesar and Pompey move their camps toward Ucubis (14.20.1), situated about 4 miles/7 km. southwest of Ategua.
February 23	Pompey beheads in his camp seventy-four citizens of Ucubis suspected to be Caesar's partisans (14.21.3).

*The introduction of the Julian calendar on January 1, 45 brought the Roman calendar into harmony with the solar year. For more on the

Roman system of time-counting, see Appendix C: Roman Calendars, Dates, and Time.

Julian date	Event
February 25	Murder of Caesar's emissaries sent to the town of Bursao (14.22.1–3).
March 2	Caesar moves his camp closer to Pompey's (14.23.1).
March 4	On the day preceding the defeat at Soricaria (14.24.1), two Caesarian centurions die heroically in repelling an attack on Caesar's forces who are engaged in building defensive works (14.23.2–8).
March 5	Defeat of Pompeian forces at Soricaria near Ucubis (14.24; the date is given at 14.27.2).
March 6	On the day after the defeat at Soricaria (25.1), further fighting takes place, including a single combat between Antistius Turpion, a Pompeian, and Pompeius Niger, a Caesarian, which is interrupted by cavalry (14.25).
March 10–14	After burning Ucubis, Pompey moves his camp to Spalis, not far distant, and Caesar follows (14.27.3–4). Caesar besieges and takes Ventipo (about 37 miles/60 km. southeast of Ucubis by road) and moves on to Carruca that is burned by Pompey (14.27.5–6).
March 16	Pompey encamps next to the town of Munda, faced by Caesar on the plain (14.27.6).
March 17	Battle of Munda (14.28–14.31.8) on the festival day of the Liberalia (31.8) on March 17 (Degrassi 1963, 425–26). Caesar's troops, fighting uphill, gain a difficult victory. After the battle, the town of Munda is placed under siege. Defeated and wounded, Pompey flees in the direction of Carteia (14.32.6), about 96 miles/155 km. away from Munda. Hearing of the defeat, his brother Sextus Pompey flees from Corduba (modern Córdoba; 14.32.4–5).
March 21	Caesar encamps before Corduba (14.33.1); Scapula, ringleader of the rebellion against Caesar's provincial governor, commits suicide (14.33.3–4).
March 22	Caesar takes Corduba (14.34.1–5).
March 23	Caesar sets off for Hispalis (14.35.1); see March 28.
March 24	Gnaeus Pompey arrives at Carteia (14.32.8). The date is predicated on allowing six days for his journey of about 96 miles/155 km. from Munda, under difficult conditions, at a rate of about 17 miles/27 km. per day, partly by road and partly across country.
March 28	Caesar encamps before Hispalis (14.35.1). The date is predicated on allowing five-plus days for a journey of about 81 miles/130 km. by road down the Baetis River valley, at about 16 miles/25 km. per day.
April 2	Envoy from Carteia meet with Caesar outside Hispalis, claiming to have Gnaeus Pompey in their power (14.36.1). The Pompeians temporarily regain control of Hispalis (14.35.4).
April 3	Caesar takes Hispalis (14.36.2–4).
April 4	Pompey flees from Carteia with 20 ships; Didius, commander of Caesar's fleet, pursues him from Gades (modern Cádiz), while infantry and cavalry detachments pursue him on land (14.37.2).
April 5	Caesar sets off for Hasta (14.36.4), covering the about 53 miles/85 km. by road from Hispalis in three-plus days.
April 7	On the fourth day after setting sail from Gades, Didius catches up with Gnaeus Pompey and burns his ships, capturing some (14.37.3). Possibly the site was the mouth of the Salduba River south of Malaca, about 68 nautical miles. (78 miles/125 km.) from Carteia. Pompey flees inland (14.38.1).

Julian date	Event
April 8	Caesar accepts the surrender of Hasta (14.36.4).
April 9	Pompey, hunted down by Caesar's cavalry and land forces sent in pursuit, and abandoned by his soldiers, is killed (14.38–39) near Lauro (modern Iluro?), a town in the Salduba valley about 17 miles/28 km. from the coast, at the hands of Caesennius Lento (Florus 2.13.86; Cassius Dio 43.40.2; see also Cicero, <i>Philippic</i> 12.23), later known as a land commissioner under Marcus Antonius. The date is predicated on an estimate of about 47 miles/75 km. per day for a fast messenger to cover about 146 miles/235 km. to Hispalis (see the entry of April 12).
April 10	Caesar arrives at Gades (modern Cádiz; 14.39.3).
April 12	The head of Pompey is displayed at Hispalis, while Caesar is still at Gades (14.39.2, giving the precise date).
April 12–13	Didius is killed while fighting rebels (14.40.6).
April 15	Munda is captured (14.41.2). Caesar's legate Fabius Maximus marches against Urso (14.41.3).
April 18	Caesar leaves Gades for Hispalis (14.40.7).
April 20	News of Caesar's victory at Munda reaches Rome on the eve of the annual celebration of Rome's foundation, the Parilia festival on April 21 (Cassius Dio 43.42.3). The siege of Urso continues (14.41.3–6).
April 21	Games are added to the Parilia in honor of Caesar's victory at Munda (Cicero, <i>Letters to Atticus</i> 14.14.1, 14.19.3; Cassius Dio 45.6.4).
April 22 or 23	Capture of Urso.
April 23	Caesar arrives at Hispalis (14.42.1). The date is predicated on a speed of about 16 miles/25 km. per day to cover about 90 miles/145 km. from Gades (April 18–23).
April 24	On the day after his arrival (14.42.1), Caesar holds a provincial assembly at Hispalis (14.42).
April 30	Caesar writes to Cicero from Hispalis (Cicero, <i>Letters to Atticus</i> 13.20.1).
First half of May	Letters in Cicero's corpus reflect the arrival in Rome of news about the flight of Sextus and Gnaeus Pompey (<i>Letters to Atticus</i> 12.37a) and the claim being made by some diehards at Rome that Gnaeus Pompey is still at large and not cornered at Carteia (<i>Letters to Atticus</i> 12.44.3).
June	Caesar is still in Spain (the campaign lasted seven months: Nicolaus of Damascus, <i>Life of Augustus</i> 10.22). According to Nicolaus (ibid. 11.23), Octavian Caesar, the future emperor Augustus, arrives at Calpe (Carteia or a little town near it?) to join Caesar after the major fighting has been completed.
September 13	Caesar is back in Italy: he makes a new will on his estate near Labicum, slightly northeast of Tusculum (Suetonius, <i>Caesar</i> 83.1).
Late September	Caesar returns to Rome, possibly in time for the Roman Games (September 4–18) or by the date of the games to Venus Genetrix (culminating or commencing on September 26). Velleius Paterculus 2.56.3 places Caesar's return to Rome in October.
Early October	Caesar celebrates a triumph over Spain, a few days before the triumph of Fabius Maximus (Quintilian 6.3.61), which was held on October 13 (Degrassi 1947, 87).

WEB ESSAY CC

The Roman Commentarius and Caesar's Commentaries

Kurt A. Raaflaub

§1. Ancient authors and medieval manuscripts give various titles for Caesar's works but the original title most likely was *commentarii rerum gestarum* ("notes on achievements"). As Christopher Krebs points out, neither of Caesar's *Wars* has a proem (an indispensable part of a history) but both deal with wars (the primary subject matter of histories).^a In various ways, as Krebs shows, Caesar's works are ambiguous, "inviting the reader to look" at them "not as history but with history in mind." This essay takes this further, placing the commentaries in their literary and historical context, explaining their purpose, and showing in how many ways Caesar aimed at transforming a traditional genre into something close to history.

§2. But first, what did the Romans mean by *commentarius*?^a The answer is simply a wide range of things. For example, the late republican polymath Marcus Terentius Varro (who opposed Caesar in Farther Spain in 49)^b wrote for Pompey (who had neither held office nor been a senator when he entered his first consulship in 70 B.C.E., and thus lacked political experience) a handbook or guide (a *commentarius*) to Senate procedures.^c Similarly, Quintus Cicero (Caesar's legate in Gaul) put together a "little guide to electioneering" (*commentariolum petitionis*) when in 64 his brother Marcus was running for the consulship.^d More generally, records of contracts and other documents kept by heads of household, or records of rituals kept by priests and of actions and transactions maintained by magistrates, could be called *commentarii*; they all served as documentation or aide-mémoire for later use. Thus, for example, the archive of records and state acts the consul Antonius received from Caesar's widow Calpurnia in the night after her husband's murder was called *commentarii*.^e Finally, autobiographies or memoirs of important per-

NOTE: All dates are B.C.E. (Before the Common Era) unless otherwise indicated. The dates given in the Web essays are those of the traditional Roman civil calendar up to January 45, when the Julian calendar was instated. For more on the Roman system of time-counting, see Appendix C: Roman Calendars, Dates, and Time. For all Web essays, go to landmarkcaesar.com. Source references without indication of title or author name refer to the texts in *The Landmark Julius Caesar*. Modern works are listed fully in the Bibliography. All Web essays are copyright © 2017 by Robert B. Strassler and Kurt A. Raaflaub. They may be downloaded and printed for non-

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CC.1a See Web Essay DD: Caesar the Historian, §§2–3.
CC.2a See discussions by Rüpke 1992; Riggsby 2006, 133–55; see also Batstone and Damon 2006, 8–11; Grillo 2012, 178–81.
CC.2b 10.17–20.
CC.2c Gellius, *Attic Nights* 14.7.1–2.
CC.2d The *Commentariolum* is available in a bilingual edition in vol. 28 of Cicero's works in the Loeb Classical Library.
CC.2e Cicero, *Philippics* 2.95, 5.10–11; Velleius Paterculus 2.60.4.

sonalities (such as Sulla) could be entitled *commentarii* ("acts, deeds"); their purpose, whatever the title, was to justify and glorify the author's achievements, present them from his perspective, and correct unfavorable propaganda or misrepresentations. Except for Augustus' *Achievements* (*Res gestae*), which consist of a mere list of facts, we have only the slightest fragments of the richly attested late republican memoir literature; we thus cannot tell to what extent Caesar accommodated an already existing literary genre.

§3. What we do know is that Caesar wrote (and as general and governor had to write) reports to the Senate. Caesar himself tells us about this in the *Gallic War*, always when his report (letter, *litterae*) prompted the Senate to decree a thanksgiving celebration of unprecedented length.^a Whether such dispatches were sent not only at the end of a campaign season but also more frequently during a campaign is unknown. Since only two short "in-between-reports" by Cicero survive, we do not really know what such dispatches looked like and how detailed they were. But we have plenty of evidence that a steady flow of all kinds of information (mostly private letters) from Caesar's camps in Gaul (and in the civil war from the camps of both Caesar and his opponents) reached people in Rome (from senators to relatives and friends of officers and soldiers).^b Caesar thus wrote his general's reports to people who had already heard a lot (and not all of it favorable). We should therefore expect him to have described his accomplishments in some detail within a fairly precise framework of time and space.^c Even so, it is certain that what we read in the commentaries, although ultimately based on the general's reports (*litterae*) and reports of Caesar's legates to their general as well as other documentary evidence (that formed Caesar's personal archive, *commentarii*), is greatly elaborated dramatically, stylistically, and rhetorically, and thus something very different from any kind of "record" or "notes" designated by the word *commentarius*—except that by extension the word could also be applied to a narrative based on such records. But what exactly were Caesar's *commentarii*? To answer this question, we need to look at his contemporaries' reactions to Caesar's works, at analogous efforts of contemporary authors, at Caesar's own literary ambitions, and at the situation in which, and the purpose for which, Caesar wrote his commentaries.

§4. Batstone and Damon write that *commentarii* "were by Caesar's day an established form of apologetic history, history written and published by (or for) a public figure to affirm his achievement and defend his actions."^a They base this statement on the comments of three contemporaries who knew Caesar and his commentaries well, and on Cicero's own case.^b To explain, both Hirtius and Cicero praise the elegant style and high literary quality of Caesar's *commentarii*, which, they think, deterred others from elaborating them into historical works, although they were written precisely with this intention.

CC.3a "For these accomplishments [reported in a dispatch, "ex litteris," of Caesar], a public thanksgiving to last fifteen days was decreed, which had never been done for anyone before": 2.35.4. See also 4.38.5, 7.90.8.

CC.3b The corpus of Cicero's letters is full of such correspondence; see, for example, the letters to and from his brother Quintus and his friend Gaius Trebatius (who both served on Caesar's staff in Gaul), or Cicero's letters to Atticus in the civil war period of 49/48, in which Cicero proves well informed about what was going on in Pompey's camp; Caesar himself alludes to triumphant letters sent to Rome by his opponents when they expected to achieve or had achieved

victory: 9.53, 11.72. Cicero's "in-between-reports" from Cilicia: *Letters to Friends* 15.1–2. The report of a Greek mercenary general about a campaign deep into the Persian empire and back (Xenophon's *Anabasis*, "The March Upland"), although dramatically and rhetorically embellished in its second part, in which Xenophon himself played a leading role, gives us an idea in the first part about what such a report might have looked like, with precise information about main events, routes, distances covered, and time needed.

CC.4a Batstone and Damon 2006, 10.

CC.4b See also Web Essay DD: Caesar the Historian, §§5–6.

tion.^c Asinius Pollio (author of a history of the civil wars) observes that the works show signs of haste and inaccuracy; he too believes that they had not reached their final form, and suggests that Caesar would have intended to rewrite and correct them.^d This assumption is quite plausible. The reason for Hirtius' and Cicero's puzzling idea, that Caesar wrote his commentaries to provide historians with material for historical elaboration, must be that, in general understanding, a *commentarius*, though possibly containing a complete and quite elaborate narrative, was not expected to be a finished product. This can be corroborated by Cicero's own experience. He had tried to convince the historian Lucius Lucceius (and perhaps others) to write a history of his great achievements in his consulship of 63 (culminating in his defeat of the Catilinarian conspiracy), and offered to provide him with *commentarii* "on the whole affair" (that is, notes or a sketch upon which he could elaborate artistically). When he was rebuffed, he wrote a *commentarius* (in Greek, a *hypomnēma*) on his consulship himself and sent it to a famous scholar "with the idea that he might compose something more elaborate on the same theme," but "so far from being stimulated to composition he was effectively frightened away."^e Although Cicero's work was a polished historical work, ready for publication, he still expected a professional historian to take it to a yet higher level. Obviously, he applied the same standard to Caesar's work: excellent in its own way (he said) but still improvable (he thought).

§5. Why, then, did Caesar, in the middle of a demanding war, spend the time and effort to write works that gained high acclaim for their literary quality? Two answers suggest themselves. One is that Caesar was in his time a leading intellectual and an acknowledged literary talent, according to Cicero one of the greatest Rome ever produced: a master in rhetoric, a brilliant expert in Latin style, and no mean poet.^a He clearly had literary ambitions and was endowed with an unusual facility in formulating his ideas: he dictated his highly acclaimed books on Latin style (*De analogia*) while crossing the Alps to join his army in Gaul, and a poem entitled *The Journey* on his way to the Spanish war, wrote pamphlets, commented on other people's poetry, and maintained an intense and varied correspondence, able to dictate several letters simultaneously.^b All this also made Caesar a presence in Rome both politically and intellectually, while he was actually absent for a very long time. It is thus hardly astonishing that these interests and needs also compelled him to write up his achievements in war in a form that was attractive and accessible to a wide range of readers.^c Moreover, as his work on Latin style suggests, Caesar also felt a deep-seated need for clarity, in thought and expression and, probably, in action; his commentaries may have helped him to clarify what he had achieved and to conceptualize his plans and intentions as they developed during his campaigns in Gaul.^d

§6. More importantly, though, the *commentarii* served urgent and immediate purposes. When Caesar assumed his governorship in the Gallic provinces in the spring of 58,

CC.4c Hirtius, 8.Pref.1–6: They were published to make sure that future writers would not lack knowledge of such enormous achievements, but they have been received with such unanimous approval that future writers would seem to have been deprived of an opportunity rather than been offered one (8.Pref.5); Cicero, *Brutus* 262.

CC.4d Suetonius, *Caesar* 56; see Lossmann 1957, 55–58. Pollio probably had his own agenda. He served as Caesar's legate in the civil war and was consul in 40 B.C.E. The few fragments surviving from his work are collected and commented upon in Cornell 2013, no. 56 (with bibliography).

CC.4e Cicero, *Letters to Friends* 5.12; *Letters to Atticus* 2.1.1–2 (trans. Shackleton Bailey).

CC.5a Cicero, *Brutus* 251–53; Quintilian, *Textbook on Oratory* 10.114; Suetonius, *Caesar* 55.

CC.5b See, for example, Pliny, *Natural History* 7.91; Plutarch, *Caesar* 17; Suetonius, *Caesar* 56; Cicero, *Letters to Brother Quintus* 2.16.5. See Web Essay E: Caesar, Man of Letters; Osgood 2009; Raaflaub 2018 as well as other chapters in Grillo and Krebs 2018.

CC.5c See §7.

CC.5d See Gelzer 1968, 139; Garcea 2012, 5–7. See further, §9.

he was in deep political trouble. During his consulship in 59 he had condoned various acts of violence and questionable legality in order to achieve his own goals and those of his allies, Pompey and Crassus, against the fierce opposition of their enemies in the Senate. This made him vulnerable to prosecution as soon as he left office. Moreover, in his province he had seized the first opportunity he saw to launch a war outside his province—and thus eventually to acquire the military prestige needed to match Pompey's reputation. He had done so without Senate authorization, thus again violating the law and risking prosecution.^a From the moment he began his campaigns in Gaul, he thus needed to justify himself and to organize his defenses. In this political campaign, the commentaries played a major role. Each book essentially covers one campaigning season.^b The question of whether they were published in single books at the end of each campaign season or as a whole at the end of the war, before Caesar expected to return to Rome and assume his second consulship, is much debated, and arguments supporting both views can be found in the text.^c But in view of Caesar's political needs, individual production and publication is much more likely.^d

§7. In view of these same political needs, Caesar's commentaries were probably intended to reach a very broad public that comprised all those who were not among his irreconcilable opponents: senators and equestrians, elites in the townships of Italy and the municipalities in the Roman provinces, officers in the armies, and even the urban populations in Rome and Italy (to whom Caesar's achievements and arguments were familiar by word of mouth, speeches in assemblies, and soldiers' letters) and the soldiers (who had witnessed them or heard about them); Peter Wiseman even suggests that selections from Caesar's commentaries were read publicly.^a Caesar was able to reach such a diverse public because of his simple and elegant style—in his work on style (*De analogia*) he had made a conscious effort to popularize the Latin language and make it usable for all those who did not have access to a privileged education^b—and his capacity of knowing “how most exactly to convey what his intentions were.”^c

§8. In elaborating his *commentarii* for publication, Caesar used a large number of literary devices that most likely were not part of a general's report to the Senate and that attentive readers would have recognized immediately as being typical of historical literature.^a These include the third-person narrative; the careful selection of episodes to be elaborated in the narrative and the omission of others, thus sacrificing completeness to monumentality and clarity; the arrangement of the narrative in blocs that trace one strand of development to a logical stopping point and only then pick up another, thus sacrificing chronology to logic; the omission of precise dates and exact geographical indications of routes and distances;^b balance in assessment and respect paid to deserving

CC.6a But see Web Essay J: The Legitimacy of Caesar's Wars, §§2–9.

CC.6b With two exceptions: Book 3 (events of 56) begins with a campaign dating to the late fall of 57, but with good reasons (see n. 3.1a); Book 8 covers two seasons, for which Hirtius, the author, apologizes explicitly (8.48.10–11).

CC.6c Some of these indications are identified in the footnotes throughout the *Gallic War*. On the debate about serial or unitary publication, see, for example, chapters by Peter Wiseman and Kathryn Welch in Welch and Powell 1998; Kraus 2009, 159–65; Krebs 2013.

CC.6d The question of the publication of the *Civil War* is more complex; for discussion, see §11 and the Introduction, §§64–67.

CC.7a See Wiseman (as cited in n. CC.6c).

CC.7b See Dugan 2005, 179–80; Garcea 2012, 3–10. CC.7c Hirtius, 8.Pref.7.

CC.8a Some of these devices and additional ones are mentioned by Krebs in Web Essay DD: Caesar the Historian, §3. Some echoes of Thucydides add to that impression; for example, a decisive battle observed with rapt attention by all those not directly involved (3.14.8–9, 7.80.2), even if true, is a literary trope made famous by Thucydides' description of the naval battle in the harbor of Syracuse (*History* 7.71).

CC.8b This too is typical of histories; like Thucydides (2.2.1), Caesar chronologically anchors only the beginning of his war through precise dates (1.6.4, 1.7.6).

enemies;^c an abundance of speeches (mostly indirect but in some remarkable cases direct);^d digressions on geography and customs;^e the use of “strong” examples to convey didactic messages;^f a focus on overarching themes that are pursued throughout the war;^g the application of complex causality and the acknowledgment of contingency;^h skillful enhancement of narrative tension by retardation and surprising turns of events;ⁱ and, finally, dramatization, factual elaboration, and even fiction.^j The use of all these typological markers suggests strongly that in composing his *commentarii* Caesar was indeed thinking of history.

§9. I mentioned above Caesar’s own intellectual effort to conceptualize, structure, contextualize, and understand his wars.^a This effort also made it easier for him to explain his wars to his readers. As far as the *Gallic War* is concerned, this intellectual process created an increasingly clear and compelling vision that transformed multiple stories of scattered campaigns into a coherent narrative of transforming a vast barbarian territory into a civilized province of the Roman empire. This unified vision emerged only gradually. Victory in specific campaigns against distinctive nations or small-scale alliances eventually turned into the defeat of a pan-Gallic coalition: the seventh book, Caesar’s last, features his war as representative of the Roman state (*res publica Romana*) against Gaul united under the leadership of Vercingetorix. After this victory, the “pacification” and “calmness” Caesar pronounced in summing up his earlier successes became “conquest of all Gaul” in the opening sentence of Hirtius’ eighth book.^b Caesar’s interventions in Gaul initially were reactive, responding to specific challenges and threats. We do not know when he determined that his goal had to be the subjection of all of Gaul, but we can guess. In June of 56, Cicero, pressured by Caesar and his allies, advocated in a programmatic political speech a five-year extension of Caesar’s provincial command. The justification he offered was that Caesar was involved in Gaul in a project which, like that of Pompey in the East in the late 60s, aimed at establishing secure boundaries for Rome. Pompey had achieved this through victories and vast conquests; by analogy, we conclude, Caesar aimed at security for Rome through conquest in Gaul.^c Although Caesar did not meet personally with Cicero in the spring of 56, before he departed for his next campaign in Gaul, I consider it not implausible that Caesar himself or one of his agents

CC.8c For example, Helvetii: 1.26.2; Nervii: 2.27.3–5.

CC.8d See Web Essay II: The Literary Art of the *Civil War*, §§6–8.

CC.8e See Web Essay FF: Caesar the Ethnographer.

CC.8f Krebs, Web Essay DD: Caesar the Historian, §3, refers here to Cicero’s formula of “history as teacher for life” (*On the Orator* 2.36: *historia... magistra vitae*). An obvious example is the contrast between the negative example of leadership provided by Sabinus in yielding to the rebellious Ambiorix and the positive example offered by Quintus Cicero in his uncompromising defense of his winter camp (5.26–52).

CC.8g Such as Caesar’s tendency to demonstrate leniency whenever possible, in contrast to the cruelty typical of the Gauls or his Roman enemies, or his determination to replace the chaos of the barbarian Gallic world with a peaceful, secure, and well-ordered world, even at the price of Gallic liberty (see the Introduction, §40; see further Web Essays HH: The *Gallic War* as a Work of Propaganda, and JJ: The *Civil War* as a Work of Propaganda).

CC.8h Contingency is visible especially in the impor-

tant role that Fortune plays in war (for example, 6.42; 11.26.4–27.2).

Superbly visible in 9.48–59 (especially 53–59).

For dramatization, see the battle against the Nervii at 2.15–28. I see fiction, for instance, in the dramatic elaboration through multiple speeches, intense debates, and narrative details in the story of the demise of Sabinus’ winter camp (5.24–37), most of which could hardly have been known to the few soldiers who escaped the disaster and the enemy captives who were interrogated later.

See the end of §5. In this paragraph, I rely on the important insights of Osgood 2009.

“With all Gaul pacified by these successes”: 2.35.1; “after this success Caesar experienced a good deal more calm in Gaul”: 5.58.7; “With Gaul finally calm”: 7.1.1; “All of Gaul had now been conquered”: 8.1.1.

On Pompey’s wars in the East, see Web Essay H: The Legacy of Rome’s Wars, §§9–10. The programmatic definition of the purpose of Caesar’s war in Gaul is found in Cicero, *On the Consular Provinces*, especially 12.29–13.33.

suggested to Cicero the outline of his programmatic argument.^d As Caesar's thinking developed, his focus in writing the annual publishable *commentarii* shifted from "Caesar's campaigns in Gaul" to "Caesar's war to conquer Gaul for Rome."

§10. Hints supporting this shift are frequent throughout the work. I do not consider it unlikely, therefore, that Caesar, had he had the time later on and had the civil war that ended up changing all plans and perspectives not intervened, might have taken up his work again, completed and revised it, and converted it into a unified whole: a history of the Roman conquest of Gaul. This is speculation, of course, but we might allow ourselves to speculate a little more. Perhaps we can define the extant *Gallic War* as positioned halfway between a *commentarius* and a *historia*—arrested there because of the specific circumstances of its origin and the conditions in which its author worked and which forced upon him serial publication in annual installments. This may explain why Hirtius and Cicero judged that, despite its excellence, this work could still be improved by a professional historian^a—or, as I suggest, by Caesar himself. In its final version, the books with their annual campaigns might still have been the basic units but they would have been integrated more firmly under the unifying and overarching themes and visions that are now mentioned only in scattered references. This would have made the work more monumental and compelling than it ended up being, and it would have served one constituency even better—one of which Caesar certainly was aware and of which Cicero reminded him powerfully in a speech in 46: posterity!^b

§11. The *Civil War*, long completely overshadowed by the *Gallic War*, has recently received well-deserved attention.^a It poses a number of significant questions. All we know for certain is that Caesar himself wrote three books of *commentarii* on the civil war and that what we have of these is incomplete^b and even less finished than the much longer *Gallic War*. Moreover, as almost every page attests, Caesar clearly intended this work to present the justice of his cause, his justification for having started and fought a civil war and, despite this fact, being a more competent, compassionate, and responsible leader of the Roman state than his opponents. The literary and propagandistic aspects of this work are discussed in other appendices. Here it suffices to say that what was written above about Caesar's literary and stylistic methods and efforts, his transformation of the Roman *commentarius* into something entirely his own, and his urgent need to explain himself clearly to a broad readership is equally true for the *Civil War*. Yet, because the conditions under which he composed this work changed greatly in the course of this war and, consequently, his ultimate goals changed as well, it is quite possible that his intentions for the extant books no longer met his goals or matched political reality when the originally intended time of publication arrived. The books of the *Gallic War* were produced to improve Caesar's standing and reputation, to help resolve political problems connected with his consulship and conduct of the war, and, ultimately, to facilitate his return to Rome and reentry into domestic politics after his long absence in Gaul. So too, and even more so, the books of the *Civil War* were written to make it possible for their author to ease his way back into Roman politics after the even greater disruption of the

CC.9d A hint that Caesar's thinking had developed to this point can be found in 2.1.1 (probably composed in the late fall of 57); see n. 2.1e.

CC.10a See §4.

CC.10b Cicero, *On Behalf of Marcellus* 29: "Consider those judges who will pass judgment on you many centuries from now."

CC.11a See Batstone and Damon 2006; Raaflaub 2009;

Grillo 2012; Grillo and Krebs 2018; see also Web Essays II: The Literary Art of the *Civil War*, and JJ: The *Civil War* as a Work of Propaganda.

CC.11b The latter is established by the end of the work itself (see below), in addition to Hirtius' preface to Book 8 and Pollio's comments cited in §4..

civil war. It is thus logical to assume that Caesar planned to publish these books, in whatever form, before his return to Rome after the end of the civil war. But his return was delayed by the Alexandrian war, his entanglement with Cleopatra, and his war against Pharnaces. When he finally arrived in Rome in the fall of 47, he faced a political crisis there and formidable opponents in Africa, who in the interim had gained sufficient time to reorganize and prepare themselves. After only a few weeks in the capital, Caesar departed for another war, and he had to do so again in late 46, again after only a few months in Rome, to face another round of civil war in Spain. How did all these unforeseen developments affect the manuscript of the *Civil War*? Did Caesar himself ever publish it? Not surprisingly, the questions about the composition and publication of this work remain intensely debated.

§12. The third book of the *Civil War* breaks off abruptly and not where we would expect it to (after the victory of Pharsalus or Pompey's death) but with the causes of the Alexandrian war.^a It is thus likely that Caesar intended to add one more book on this war, and possible that parts of the *Alexandrian War* are based on notes or sketches left by Caesar and integrated, with other pieces, into the narrative composed by the unknown author.^b The question of how this book and the two others on the later civil wars that were clearly composed by yet other authors became attached to Caesar's original works, and how this can be reconciled with Hirtius' statements in his preface to Book 8 of the *Gallic War*, can be left aside here.^c What matters is only that Caesar was planning to extend his work beyond its extant conclusion and never realized this intention. Other clues help us answer our questions. On the one hand, Cicero, who showed a lively interest in Caesar's works and comments on the *Gallic War*,^d never mentions the *Civil War*, although he had ample opportunity and it might even have been useful for him to do so.^e On the other hand, various indications suggest that the extant books were composed soon after the events they describe.^f But composition is not the same as publication. Some scholars still think that Caesar, in dire need of improving his political standing and convincing the Roman elite of his political credibility and good "republican" intentions, actually published the work in 47, at the time of his return from the East.^g Overall, though, the conclusion seems more plausible that Caesar, finding the emphasis he had placed on republican principles and values in his commentaries increasingly incompatible with political reality and the challenges that confronted him in Rome,^h chose not to publish the *Civil War*. In that case, the work, published perhaps by Hirtius, would have become available to the Roman public only after Caesar's death.ⁱ

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CC.12a See 11.109–12.

CC.12b See Web Essay LL: The Origins of the Corpus of Caesar's Works, §8.

CC.12c See Web Essays LL, and MM: The Non-Caesarian War Books.

CC.12d See §4.

CC.12e In the "Caesarian" speeches of 46 and 45, Cicero praised Caesar's qualities as a statesman and (especially in *On Behalf of Marcellus* of 46) appealed to him to restore the traditional republic; here references to the republican credentials Caesar emphasizes in the *Civil War*

would have been very helpful.

CC.12f See, for example, Boatwright 1988; Macfarlane 1996.

CC.12g Thus, for example, Jehne 2000.

CC.12h On these challenges, see Web Essay F: Caesar the Politician, §14–15, and the Introduction, §§31–32.

CC.12i See Web Essay LL, especially §8. For a more detailed discussion of the issues covered here, see Collins 1959; Rüpke 1992; a more extensive summary is in Raafaub 2009, 180–82.

WEB ESSAY DD

Caesar the Historian

Christopher B. Krebs

§1. Caesar's commentaries, it must be stated up front, do not qualify as history according to either ancient or modern ideas of history. How come, then, this essay's title? En route to an answer, we shall look at how Caesar's works appeared to their contemporaries, how they measure up to the modern idea of history, and how their author morphed into a historian.

§2. With title and "preface" (proem) ancient authors often guided their readers' expectations. Caesar's case is complicated. First, both the *Gallic War* and the *Civil War* lack a proem. This in itself would have signaled to those in the know not to expect proper history, for proper history deemed the proem an indispensable part.^a Second, both works have titles rather than a title: ancient authors refer to them variously, as do the medieval manuscripts that contain them. Yet for good reasons the original title is believed to have been at its core *commentarii rerum gestarum*.^b Now, whatever the exact significance of *commentarius* ("notes" of any kind seems most likely), the term in ancient times did not apply to historical works; on the contrary, it repeatedly applied to writings either preparatory or contrasting to history.^c So far, then, the message to the reader is consistent: this work is not a history. But the second element of the title, the genitive of *res gestae*, introduces an ambiguity. For *res gestae* may signify "deeds, events" or, generically, "history." Consequently, both "notes on events" and "notes for a (future) history" are equally possible, and the *commentarii* stand next to what they aspire to become: *res gestae*. These two terms, in unison, alert readers to a generic ambiguity and invite them to look at Caesar's works not as history but with history in mind.

§3. This ambiguity seeps into the text too; several textual features, thematic and stylistic, blur the generic line. Both the *Bellum Gallicum* and the *Bellum Civile* (the descrip-

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DD.2a Kelsey 1905. On the meaning(s) of "commentarius" see Riggsby 2006, 133–50 and Web Essay CC: The Roman *Commentarius* and Caesar's Commentaries, §2.

DD.2b To the three examples discussed below, add Tacitus, *Annals* 4.53.2.

tive titles popular since late antiquity) deal with war and thus the theme regarded integral to historiography ever since Herodotus.^a Similarly, their ethnographic and geographic digressions, most elaborately in *Gallic War* 4 and 6, were a staple of the genre.^b Then there is the occasional authorial interjection in the historian's guise: as when, in the battle over Avaricum, Caesar's narrator brings to his readers' attention a sight "worthy of memory," thus acknowledging a cardinal function of *historia*: remembrance.^c Or when, during a sea battle, he asserts that "what happened then constitutes a good lesson in how much protection men find in resolute courage," thereby underlining the other cardinal function of history, as a "teacher for life."^d Other noticeable historiographic features include Caesar's analytical accounting not only for the "what" but also for the "why and how" (on display as soon as Caesar enters the scene in the *Gallic War*);^e and then there is the omnipresent and omniscient narrator, who gives the impression of having witnessed all events with his own eyes (even though Caesar himself had not). Such "autopsy," especially prominent in the episode of Gauls sacrificing themselves, was a standard device used by ancient historians to vouch for the authenticity of what they reported.^f Stylistically, entire passages ring with the historiographical register, to which are also owed the direct speeches, most famously by Critognatus during the siege of Alesia and by Curio in a critical situation in his African campaign.^g But the greatest facilitator of misreading the commentaries is the third-person narrator; no one would have categorized them as history if they had been written in the first person, such as: "When these developments were reported to me, *I decided....*"^h

§4. Caesar may have pursued literary ambitions with the makeup of his works. But the decision to narrate in the third person, in particular, points to another design. If, as is commonly accepted, his accounts were politically motivated and intended to present their author in a favorable light, their affinity to history endows them with greater credibility. Their historical guise is a rhetorical ploy to lift them above the factional fray.

§5. The three coeval critics of the commentaries, Cicero, Hirtius, and Asinius Pollio, were attuned to their kinship with history proper. Cicero, in a much-discussed passage, states that the "commentaries . . . on his [Caesar's] deeds" are commendable, stripped of all trinketry, as they are; and that they would merely seem to serve future historians as source material when in truth they would deter all but the clueless from even trying to improve on them, since they ranked in a class of their own.^a Three points merit emphasis. Given how extraordinary Cicero deems Caesar's *commentarii*, it is safe to assume that he would not have discussed them as such, had he not been prompted by their title. Second, when he compares them to history, he may respond to the other generic component of the title (that is, *res gestae*); or he may voice his independently formed impression that these *commentarii* really read like history (secretly remembering his own so-called *commentarius* on his consulship, which was of such dazzling quality that it dis-

DD.3a Herodotus 1.1; see further Tacitus, *Annals* 4.32.2.

DD.3b See Herodotus 1.1; Cicero, *On the Orator* 2.62. On Caesar as ethnographer, see Web Essay FF: Caesar the Ethnographer.

DD.3c See 7.25.1 and, less prominently, 6.25.5, 7.77.2, 11.17.1. See also Cicero, *On the Orator* 2.36.

DD.3d 11.28.4. Cicero, *On the Orator* 2.36: *historia ... magistra vitae.*

DD.3e See Asellio, *History* fragments 1 and 2 in Cornell 2013, along with Krebs 2015. Cicero, *On the Orator* 2.63.

DD.3f On autopsy in Caesar, see Grillo 2011, and in historiography generally, Marincola 1997, 63–86.

DD.3g See 7.77, 10.32. On speeches, see Web Essay II: The Literary Art of the *Civil War*, §§6–8.

DD.3h 1.7.1, modified. In their translation, Anne and Peter Wiseman (1980) have transferred the entire narrative from third to first person.

Cicero, *Brutus* 262: *commentarios...rurum suarum.*

couraged other men of letters from obliging Cicero in his request to turn them into history).^b Whatever his motives, he clearly likens but does not equate *commentarii* and *historia*, as the former are still considered an albeit problematic source for the latter. He hints at his reason, to turn to my third point, in his reference to Caesar's work: *rerum suarum*, "his (own) deeds," instead of *rerum gestarum*, writes Cicero with what seems a sleight rather than a slip of the pen. For the possessive pronoun sneaked into the misquoted title with great economy reminds the audience of the autobiographical character of these *commentarii*, which, for all their brilliance, cannot be anything but *commentarii*.

§6. Both Hirtius and Pollio follow Cicero in that they also compare but do not identify the commentaries with history. But two points in their discussions merit mention. When Hirtius lauds Caesar's "expertise in expounding his intentions" and when he apologizes for having to report in part what he himself had not seen, he explicitly reacts to two of the more conspicuous historiographical features discussed above.^a One wonders whether Hirtius did not regard them as history after all—he certainly provides no reason for why one should not. Asinius Pollio differs: he denies the commentaries the rank of history, as they are written "with too little diligence and too little concern for the 'truth' . . . and he thinks that [Caesar] would have rewritten and corrected them."^b In other words, only if these "notes" were to be reviewed and revised with an eye to what Cicero styled "the first law in history"^c could they be considered history. Finally, it seems, we have here a veritable criterion for the disqualification of the *commentarii*.

§7. Pollio's criticism would seem to anticipate modern criticisms of Caesar. But it is important to remember that Roman historians were not held to the standard of what we would call the "objective truth."^a Rather, they were expected to form a coherent and verisimilar account of the past that, while subjectively true, might well fall short of the modern standard. However, they were not free to indulge their personal biases, as ancient historians and their critics for the most part agree that partiality be considered incompatible with history. Thus, when Sallust developed his highly idiosyncratic version of the *Catilinarian Conspiracy*, he could still pledge to present his account "as truthfully as possible"; for he was "free from hope, fear, and partisanship."^b But Caesar was not, and Pollio points to this circumstance in his criticism (which may well be doubly motivated, since Pollio also wanted to advertise his own history of the civil war).

§8. Held up against the modern idea of history, the commentaries fall short of it variously. They have been found inadequate for their narrow range of interests, for their lack of any real detail, and above all for their tendentiousness as effected by distortion, omission, and falsification.^a (One may here wonder whether these criticisms, often quite tendentious in themselves, had been raised if not for the often unspoken premise that Caesar's works were historical.) But whatever the particulars, to modern eyes they disqualify as history first and foremost in that they do not reflect the historian's search for an objective truth.

DD.5b Cicero, *Letters to Atticus* 2.1.1–2, 4.6.4, 4.11.2, and *Letters to Friends* 5.12.10.

DD.6a 8.Pref.4–8.

DD.6b Pollio is quoted in Suetonius, *Caesar* 56.4.

DD.6c Cicero, *On the Orator* 2.62: history's first law is "that an author must not dare to tell anything but the truth," and the second "that he must dare not to omit anything that is true." And there must be no suggestion of partiality or malice in his writings.

DD.7a See Knoche 1951, 151–54 on Caesar, and Heldmann 2011 on the fundamental difference between modern and ancient history.

DD.7b Sallust, *Catilinarian Conspiracy* 4.2–3. On "bias" see Luce 1988.

DD.8a Barwick 1951 and Rambaud 1966 are the most penetrating deconstructions of Caesar's rhetorical rather than realistic accounts. See Web Essay JJ: The *Civil War* as a Work of Propaganda.

§9. Why, and how, then, did Caesar come to be ranked among the historians? Although the *commentarii* were not history in the “strict” sense of the ancient definition, they could, of course, still have been read as history—in much the same way as Cornelius Nepos suggested Cicero’s letters to Atticus might be read as history.^a Such a reading was facilitated by two circumstances: on the one hand, the lack of a criterion of objective truth and the acceptance of tendentiousness in ancient theory of history, and on the other hand, Caesar’s skillful assimilation of his “notes” into the higher genre. And it was facilitated further in the course of time and textual transmission. The contemporaneous reader responses discussed above show how crucial were the title and the knowledge of the authorship for the commentaries’ overall appreciation. A study of their manuscripts reveals three interesting details.^b First, “*commentarii*” all but vanished from all titles. This means that, for medieval and early modern readers, a crucial guideline for assessing the text’s nature was missing. Second, to add insult to injury, some titles contain *historia* or something akin to it. In other words, whereas the original title playfully restrained readers from viewing the work as out-and-out history, medieval and later titles encouraged such a view. Third, as early as in late antiquity, there was great uncertainty over the authorship of the commentaries, and occasionally the imperial biographer Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus is credited as author.^c In this situation, with the identity of Caesar the author and Caesar the actor out of sight and the qualifying generic title “*commentarius*” erased, how could readers of “Suetonius’ *History of the Gallic (or Civil) War*” not read it as a historical work on Caesar’s campaigns, especially given its focus on *res gestae*, historical deeds? Just as the original title had guided readers’ expectations, so did the corrupted titles; and later readers followed the lead of earlier ones.

§10. What, to conclude, does “Caesar the historian” refer to? It offers a title to a chapter in the hefty book of misreadings of ancient texts, which details the history of an interpretive error provoked by Caesar and abetted by circumstances of textual transmission but ultimately committed by readers too ready to take a historical text for a historical work. It should help us remember the equivocal nature of history and the distance between its ancient and modern practices.

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DD.9a Cornelius Nepos, *Life of Atticus* 16.3.

DD.9b See *De Titulo Commentariorum Testimonia* in Seel 1977 for the super- and subscriptions, and Brown 1976, especially 89–91, for medieval and Renaissance references.

DD.9c See, for instance, Orosius, *History Against the Pagans* 6.7.2.

WEB ESSAY EE

Caesar's Portrait of "Caesar"

Keith Fairbank

§1. Caesar's commentaries^a are among very few cases in antiquity in which an author does not merely mention his own role in one or a few episodes of a larger event^b but plays the leading role throughout. Caesar the author of war narratives is also "Caesar" the main actor in these narratives.^c This raises the question of how the author manages to reconcile these two roles and how he represents himself in his works. Other appendices in this volume discuss a wide range of issues pertaining to the literary and military aspects of Caesar's works; this focuses entirely on the ways Caesar describes himself and wants himself to be seen. Caesar's image of "Caesar" is illuminated further, by contrast and analogy, in the books written by his loyal officers:^d they provide a window into how Caesar was seen by others.

§2. Caesar first appears in action in the spring of 58, preventing the Helvetii from marching through his province to a new homeland in the west of Gaul.^a His narrative describing the resulting campaign (his first in Gaul) emphasizes many elements that are typical of his self-portrait; in this sense, this opening segment is almost programmatic. Caesar's forethought in fortifying the Rhône allows his soldiers to beat back the Helvetii; his decisiveness and quick movements enable him to gather sufficient forces and surprise the Helvetii early in their migration; his measures to keep his army supplied

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Readers interested in pursuing the issues discussed here will find the following titles useful: on Caesar's overall character, Meier 1995; Goldswor-

thy 2006; Paterson 2009. Caesar's self-presentation, Yavetz 1983; Batstone and Damon 2006; Kraus 2009; Raaflaub 2009, 2016; Grillo 2012. Caesar's image of himself as general, Goldsworthy 1998; Welch 1998. Caesar's virtues, Weinstock 1971; Griffin 2003; Konstan 2005. Caesar's portrayal of massacre, Powell 1998.

EE.1a On the works' titles, see Web Essay DD: Caesar the Historian, §2.

EE.1b As does Thucydides, *History* 5.26.4–5.

EE.1c An analogy is Xenophon's *Anabasis*, in which Xenophon plays the leading role at least throughout the work's second part. On the tension between Caesar and "Caesar," see also the Introduction, §§42–48.

EE.1d Book 8 of the *Gallic War* and the *Alexandrian, African, and Spanish Wars* (Books 12–14 of *The Landmark Julius Caesar*).

demonstrate his care and organizational capacity; his personal courage compels him to share the danger with his troops; his judgment of characters when dealing with proud persons and delicate issues reveals sensitivity and firmness; his policies and decisions are well-informed, rational, and just, balancing his responsibilities as a representative of the Roman state and people, governor and protector of a province, and defender of personal honor; his treatment of the defeated shows both firmness and clemency.^b This cool, collected leader who moves quickly and deliberately, deals decisively with political and military challenges, is concerned for and close to his troops, and has things firmly under control: this is the public image Caesar projects through his commentaries.

§3. This Caesar seizes control of every situation and remains in charge. He firmly manages regional problems, navigates complex tribal relationships, negotiates the capture, return, and execution of escaped enemies, resettles the defeated, and convinces his allies to supply them with food: all within two weeks!^a Learning about an even greater threat posed by the German warlord Ariovistus, Caesar again acts quickly: he arranges for supplies—always planning ahead^b—and then marches speedily^c to anticipate Ariovistus and prepare his campaign at Vesontio (modern Besançon).^d But at the thought of facing the fearsome Germans in battle, the troops panic; they might even refuse orders to move.^e Caesar reacts firmly. He calls a meeting of all his officers, chastises them for doubting his leadership, patiently addresses the main concerns that have surfaced, demonstrating that he has thought of everything and there is nothing they cannot handle, and concludes with a note of personal bravado: if all refuse, he will march—with only the 10th Legion. This speech (one of the longest) dramatically changes the army's mood.^f In all these episodes, Caesar is thoughtful, decisive, competent, and firmly in control—as he is, of course, in military emergencies, too. Landing in Britain in 55, Caesar's heavily armed infantrymen have to jump into deep water and struggle against enemy attacks from the beach. Seeing his men very vulnerable, Caesar keeps his head and quickly finds an effective solution: he uses small boats with a shallow draft to send strike teams to support his men wherever they are in greatest trouble. This helps his troops reach the beach, form up, and push the enemies back.^g As in the battle against the Nervii,^h in chaotic conditions and facing defeat, Caesar portrays himself as refusing to panic and able to read the situation, react to the challenge, and ensure success.ⁱ

§4. Demonstrating his courage, Caesar sends his horse away before the battle against the Helvetii and, when the Nervii launch a massive surprise attack in 57 at the Sabis (modern Sambre) River, catching his soldiers unprepared, he jumps into the thick of the fighting. Having given the most urgent orders, Caesar finds one legion in especially dire circumstances: many of the centurions are dead or wounded, the men demoralized. In this desperate moment, Caesar describes himself as virtually filling the role of the missing centurions. He grabs a shield from a soldier, dashes to the front line, appeals to the remaining centurions by name (he knows them all), shouts encouragement, and, quickly assessing the situation, gives specific commands to improve his troops' fighting ability,

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| EE.2b | On fortifications: 1.8; speed, decisiveness: 1.10–13;
supplies: 1.16, 1.23; sharing: 1.25; judgment:
1.17–20, 1.27–28; dealing with the defeated:
1.27–28. | EE.3d | 7.56.1–3; also see the Introduction, §35.
1.30.1–38.7. |
| EE.3a | See 1.26.5–28.5. | EE.3e | 1.39.1–7. |
| EE.3b | See, for example, 1.16.1–6, 4.29.4–32.1,
5.24.1–6, 6.29.1; Web Essay V: Military Logistics. | EE.3f | 1.40.1–41.3; in a similar episode at 10.28–33,
Caesar's legate Curio plays a very similar role. |
| EE.3c | Speed (<i>celeritas</i>) is one of Caesar's hallmarks: see,
for example, 1.13.1–2, 1.37.4–38.7, 2.12.1, | EE.3g | 4.24.1–26.5. |
| | | EE.3h | 2.19.6–27.5. |
| | | EE.3i | See also 7.84.1–88.7. |

restoring their morale and stopping their retreat.^a Similarly, at Alesia in 52, when the Gauls attack his fortifications from both sides and threaten to break through, Caesar personally encourages his men where the fighting is fiercest and leads reinforcements to relieve his troops. His scarlet cloak announces his arrival both to his troops and the enemy; it exposes him to danger but gives a decisive impulse to the battle. This is the turning point: his presence rallies and excites his men, mobilizes new energies, and helps break the Gauls' attack.^b In both battles, along with the centurions' bravery and the soldiers' perseverance, it is Caesar's personal courage that makes the decisive difference. In fact, he feels especially close to the centurions, leaders of men like himself, and he singles them out for bravery and leadership.^c Thus the praise he heaps on others reflects on himself, while allowing him to maintain the narrator's distance.

§5. Caesar seems consciously to highlight his own attributes by praising others who lead as he does. For example, when Quintus Sabinus and Lucius Cotta lead their troops into a disastrous ambush late in 54, Caesar shows in Cotta the traits of a good officer and in Sabinus those of one who fails in the face of adversity. Sabinus lacks the ability to assess the situation rationally, to give appropriate orders to support his men, and to foresee the ambush and make the necessary preparations; he overreacts, is emotionally stressed, and panics, depriving his troops of the leadership they need to survive. Cotta, by contrast, acts and reacts as Caesar would expect him to: he warns against making a hasty decision and abandoning a safe position, foresees the possibility of an ambush and prepares for it, leads his men personally, refuses to surrender, and dies fighting with his soldiers.^d When the enemies attack another winter camp, its commander, Quintus Cicero, too, reflects Caesar's leadership qualities. He tirelessly works alongside his men, risking his own health for their safety, upholds Roman honor by refusing even to listen to conditions offered by an armed enemy, motivates his men to feats of remarkable heroism, and knows exactly whom to command to Caesar for exceptional bravery.^b Likewise, when the legate Curio faces a crisis of morale in Africa in 49, Caesar models Curio's reaction and even his speech to the army to emphasize the qualities and principles with which Caesar himself had overcome the crisis at Vesontio.^c Although subordinate officers have different responsibilities,^d in terms of leadership Caesar offers the best example they can aspire to emulate.

§6. Especially in a civil war, the ties of loyalty between commander and troops are decisive. While maintaining his authority, Caesar shows respect for his men and, explaining his reasons to them in assembly, treats them demonstratively as citizens capable of understanding political issues. Pointing out what is at stake for them no less than for himself, he asks for their support.^a Later, when the Pompeian generals in Spain are forced to surrender, Caesar explains the relevant political issues to both armies, as if he were speaking to a popular assembly in Rome.^b Moreover, he engages the enemy troops in the political process, negotiating their discharge with them and sitting in judgment on the soldiers' pay and property disputes.^c Before the decisive battle in 48, Caesar explicitly calls his troops as witnesses for his tireless efforts to avoid and end the war.^d The support of his soldiers as citizens thus contributes to legitimizing his actions. In fact, Caesar's

EE.4a 2.15.3–26.2. See Web Essay X: Caesar the General and Leader, §5.

7.24.1–2.

EE.4b 7.87.1–88.7.

EE.5c Curio: 10.27–34. Caesar: §3.

EE.4c See Web Essay X, §§12–13.

EE.5d 3.17.7; 11.51.3–4.

EE.5a 5.26–37. See Caesar's explicit comment at 5.52.4–6.

EE.6a 9.7.1–7.

EE.5b 5.38–48, 5.52. Caesar sleeps in the field with the soldiers during the siege of Avaricum:

EE.6b 9.85.

EE.6c 9.86.1–87.3.

EE.6d 11.90.1–2.

deeds speak as loudly as his words. At Avaricum in 52 he refuses to yield to the soldiers' urging to attack the enemy because he would start from an unfavorable position and risk substantial losses.^e In Spain in 49 he equally declines to fight a battle, although victory against a demoralized enemy seems certain, because he would lose some of his men who had served him well, and he "was moved by pity for his fellow citizens on the other side . . . [preferring] to achieve his objective while they were safe and unharmed."^f It is the citizen's duty, he declares after the opponents' capitulation, to avoid bloodshed among citizens. At Pharsalus he appeals to his soldiers as witnesses that "he had never wished to waste soldiers' blood."^g

§7. Knowing Caesar's care for them, the soldiers in turn respect and emulate their commander. Just his presence—especially his watchful gaze—motivates them to fight more fiercely. His legate Labienus, operating separately, urges his soldiers to fight as if Caesar were there.^a Such admiration manifests itself in the difficulties they are willing to endure for their common cause. When conditions at Avaricum in 52 become nearly unbearable, Caesar offers to abandon the siege but his men refuse to do so: "they had served for many years under his command, they said, and their record was such that they had never brought any shame on themselves nor ever walked away from a task before it was completed." Moreover, they prefer "to endure every kind of hardship than to forgo taking bloody revenge for the Roman citizens who had perished" in a recent massacre by the treacherous Gauls.^b When Caesar hesitates to pursue the Pompeian army in Spain in 49 because it would require fording a dangerously deep and swift river, his troops insist on accepting this danger rather than allowing the enemy to escape.^c Caesar's men never give up because they have been trained by a general who never gives up: the soldiers' character reflects the general's character.

§8. In Gaul, Caesar can be harsh, even brutal, in his treatment of defeated enemies, either as a punishment for treachery or as a deterrent.^a But he prefers to show clemency and generosity. In the battle at the Sabis River, the Nervii's fighting men are virtually annihilated.^b In response to the entreaties of the nation's elders, Caesar demonstrates that he is "merciful in dealing with miserable people and suppliants," taking care for their safety.^c After only one campaign year, a Gallic leader pleads "that Caesar show his usual mercy and kindness" toward the defeated. Caesar's continuator, Hirtius, explains Caesar's exceptionally cruel punishment of the defenders of Uxellodunum in 51: "Caesar was aware that his merciful disposition was known to everyone, and he did not need to be afraid that, if he acted more harshly than usual, it would be ascribed to his cruel character."^d Indeed, pervasive emphasis on his clemency in the *Gallic War* suggests that it was both a character trait and the result of political calculation. The generosity and leniency with which he treated neutrals and enemies in the civil war were the logical continuation of this policy. Although some contemporaries, even among his own partisans, interpreted these principles, which were soon, sensationaly, declared the main pillars of his political strategy in the civil war, as mere calculation, they were probably based on a natural disposition.^e

§9. Caesar can be emotional, too. He is overjoyed in 58 when, in pursuit of the flee-

EE.6e 7.19.

EE.8b 2.28.1 and §5.

EE.6f 9.72.1–3.

EE.8c 2.28.2–3; see also 2.14.4, 2.31.3.

EE.6g 9.85.2–3, 11.90.2.

EE.8d 2.14.5; 8.44.1.

EE.7a 2.25.3, 6.8.4, 7.62.2; see also 1.52.1, 3.14.8.

EE.8e See Web Essay JJ: The *Civil War* as a Work of Propaganda.

EE.7b 7.17.1–8.

EE.7c 9.64.

EE.8a Punishment: 2.31–33; deterrent: 8.44.1; both: 3.16.4.

ing Germans, he is personally able to free a friend from his chains (three sets of them), after the dice of his guards have saved him three times from being burned alive.^a His passion is reflected in his writing style when, at the beginning of the *Civil War*, he describes the wrongs his enemies have committed against him.^b He frequently displays anxiety and concern for the well-being of his men.^c In 54, having rescued Quintus Cicero's legion from its long siege,^d Caesar inspects the scene and in assembly expresses amazement, concern, joy, sorrow, and admiration.^e But there are no tears. Caesar is occasionally stressed to his capacity but he is never overwhelmed. Excessive displays are clearly discouraged. At Vesontio, it is the young officers who cannot hide their tears when thinking of the Germans. Caesar sarcastically links their tears to fear and inexperience in war.^f Experienced commanders do not express those emotions but must be able to comfort and inspire their troops with a different sort of display, applying criticism where necessary yet putting events in perspective and focusing on positive aspects.^g

§10. Indeed, Caesar's portrayal of mistakes and failures is revealing. When in 58 an officer botches an assignment, causing a perfectly planned surprise attack to fail, Caesar places all the blame on him, asserting that, overcome by fear, he made a glaring mistake—despite his stellar experience and reputation. Thus Caesar was justified in appointing him to the task: no fault rests with himself.^a Similarly, when Caesar's troops suffer defeat at Gergovia in 52,^b Caesar holds the soldiers responsible. In assembly, he criticizes “their recklessness and greed, chastising them for using their own judgment as to . . . what action to take. . . . As much as he admired the enormous courage of his men . . . as much did he have to condemn their lack of discipline and, yes, arrogance—that they had thought they understood better than their commander how a victory could be won. . . . From his soldiers he needed discipline and self-control as much as courage and greatness of spirit.” Typically, though, he ends by reassuring the soldiers, encouraging them not to dwell on this setback, which was caused not by the enemy's bravery but by circumstances beyond their control.^c At Dyrrachium in 48, having suffered two defeats in one day, Caesar plays down the failures and wants the soldiers to focus on their past successes. “The setback . . . should be attributed to anything or anyone rather than his own responsibility”: error, confusion, Fortune, and a few cowardly standard-bearers; “they all should now devote themselves to overcome with their bravery the damage that had been suffered.”^d Throughout the commentaries, Caesar consistently assigns blame for failures to others and never to himself.^e In most cases, this was probably correct, but at least at Gergovia we can see that Caesar bore some responsibility for the setback.^f

§11. In many respects, the image Caesar draws of himself finds close correspondences in the commentaries written by his officers.^a The *African War* opens with Caesar on the westernmost tip of Sicily, with as yet few troops present and Pompey's resurgent heirs awaiting him in Africa with strong forces. To demonstrate his resolve, Caesar pitches his tent right on the water's edge.^b When he does make the crossing, his fleet is scattered,

EE.9a 1.53.5–7.

EE.9b 9.71–7.

EE.9c For example, 7.56.2, 9.64.3, 11.46.1.

EE.9d §5.

EE.9e 5.52.2–6.

EE.9f 1.39.2–4.

EE.9g See Caesar's addresses to his troops after setbacks: 6.42, 7.52.1–53.1 (see further §10), 11.73 (also §10). See also §3.

EE.10a 1.21.1–22.5; see n. 1.21g.

EE.10b 7.44–51.

EE.10c 7.52.1–53.1. We note, though, that at another occasion precisely the troops' ability to act independently helped save the day (2.20.3).

EE.10d 11.73.2–74.1.

EE.10e Compare 4.26.5.

EE.10f See n. 7.52b.

EE.11a On questions of authorship, see Web Essay LL: The Origins of the Corpus of Caesar's Works.

stranding him with few men in hostile territory. Critics point out that he should have given instructions to the ships' captains about where to land or, as he had done elsewhere, "given them sealed tablets that they could read at the proper time" to reach a specific place. The author defends Caesar: he did not know where it was safe to land.^c As he scrambles to find enough supplies and gather in his missing transports, one evening he takes seven veteran cohorts and places them on ships without revealing his plans.

No one in this contingent knew anything. . . . Great fear and despondence troubled them. . . . They could not find any kind of comfort in their present circumstances nor any help in their fellow soldiers' deliberations. All they could do was look to their general's face, which was full of heartiness and unbelievably good spirits. His courage was like a standard he carried straight up high, right in front of him. This calmed his men down, and trusting his expertise and planning, they all hoped that everything would turn out well.^d

In the morning, by coincidence, the missing transports sail into the harbor, and the soldiers understand Caesar's intention. We are reminded of the Caesar who calmly overcomes the panic at Vesontio, the supply crisis at Ilerda, and the enemy's efforts to spoil his freshwater sources at Alexandria.^e

§12. In the African war, Caesar must continually adapt to challenging conditions. Near Ruspina, he is surprised by his former officer Titus Labienus, greatly outnumbered, and with a force of untried recruits. Applying unusual cavalry tactics, Labienus pushes Caesar's army into a circle, attacking it from all sides. Even so, Caesar gets his men to change formation, break through the encircling army, and retreat toward Ruspina. When Labienus receives significant reinforcements, Caesar's cool head and superior tactical ability prevail again. He rallies his exhausted troops for one last big push and routs Labienus'.^a In ways familiar from his own commentaries, this Caesar can squeeze every last ounce of effort from veterans and raw recruits alike. But unlike Caesar himself, this author pays attention to many small details that mark Caesar as a great general. Facing an unconventional enemy, Caesar trains his troops "like a trainer drilling novice gladiators."

He kept instructing them in how many feet they should retreat from the enemy, how they should turn and face their adversaries, and how they should do so in a very restricted space, how to run forward one moment and retreat the next, how they should feint a charge, and he almost had to show them where and exactly how they should throw their spears.

Caesar also has elephants shipped to his camp to show his men how to fight these unfamiliar beasts.^b

§13. While Caesar himself never leaves any doubt about the loyalty of his troops and officers, it usually is their bravery and perseverance he highlights. Even in the *Civil War*, he rarely depicts conflicts of loyalty.^a Defectors move in Caesar's direction, constantly

EE.11b 13.1.

EE.11c 13.3.4–5.

EE.11d 13.10.3–4.

EE.11e 1.39–40 (§3 above); 9.52, 9.54, 12.5–9.

EE.12a 13.12.1–18.5.

EE.12b 13.72.1, 72.4.

EE.13a One example is at 11.59–61, but it concerns Gallic cavalry officers who have committed crimes and defect to save their skins. Caesar does not mention the defection of Labienus, his trusted second-in-command in Gaul, to Pompey's side at the outbreak of the civil war.

and in great numbers, not the other way around.^b Yet in a civil war loyalty can be put to the test in unusual ways. The author of the *African War* describes one case in which the soldiers' respect and love for Caesar trump any concern for their lives. The enemy capture troops on an errand ship and take them to their commander. In boastful arrogance, Scipio assumes that the men must be under duress to serve a "criminal general" and offers them their lives and rewards if they do their duty, like every good citizen, and help fight him. A centurion refuses proudly, declaring his loyalty to Caesar, his general, for whom he has fought for many years. He further challenges any cohort of Scipio's army to fight ten picked Caesarian veterans. Scipio punishes his boldness with death and orders the execution of the other veterans.^c These men, who know Caesar best, would rather die than betray him, the author asserts, noting that Caesar, deeply disturbed, severely punishes the captains of the guard ships who had failed to protect the convoy.^d

§14. Caesar's officers are not as subtle in their portrayal of Caesar as he is himself, both in depicting his exploits and in letting less flattering descriptions slip into their works. Comparing Caesar's own self-image with that drawn by his officers thus helps identify aspects of Caesar he did not wish to reveal and illuminates the process of his self-presentation. Caesar rarely dwells on his own exploits. The battles at the Sabis River and Alesia are exceptional in that Caesar himself explicitly emphasizes his decisive role in pulling victory from the jaws of defeat.^a The author of the *African War* offers another example. Hearing that the enemy has attacked his ships, burned many, and abducted some, Caesar drops everything, jumps on his horse, gallops to the harbor, urges all the ships' crews to follow him, embarks on a tiny skiff himself, takes over the ships of his naval legate who has been hiding for fear, pursues the enemy at top speed, recovers one of his warships, captures one of the enemy's, and sends the enemy fleet flying in panic to find shelter.^b

§15. By contrast, in the later *Wars* mistakes, failures, and criticism do not receive the careful varnish that covers them in Caesar's writings. Hirtius mentions two events that throw a negative light on Caesar's handling of affairs that do not appear in Caesar's own account.^a When in 48 Caesar's forces are pinned down in Alexandria and the enemy pours saltwater into their channels of drinking water, the men are close to panic and blame Caesar directly.^b This kind of blame is absent in Caesar's own record of the near mutiny at Vesontio, where fear and worries offer pretenses,^c but in Spain in 49 the soldiers vigorously protest against Caesar's decision to forgo an easy battle victory and seek a bloodless success: they "were in fact . . . openly . . . threatening that, since such a good opportunity for victory was now being wasted, they were not going to fight even when Caesar wanted them to."^d In both cases it stands to reason that Caesar deliberately gives voice to dissatisfaction, because it throws his masterful handling of the situation into higher relief and shows him in full control through word and action.^e But when the

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| EE.13b 11.61.1–2: the defection [of the Gauls, see
n. EE.13a] "was an unusual, even unprece-
dented event. . . . For before this day, no one . . .
had gone over from Caesar to Pompey, whereas
almost daily men were deserting the opposite
way." This is amply confirmed in the <i>African</i>
and <i>Spanish Wars</i> . | EE.14b 13.63.
EE.15a 8.23.2–6, 8.24.3.
EE.15b 12.6–7.
EE.15c 1.39.
EE.15d 9.72.4.
EE.15e 1.40–41, 9.72.4–74.7; the same is true for the
Alexandrian episode (which perhaps is based on
Caesar's own draft; see Web Essay LL: The Ori-
gin of the Corpus of Caesar's Works, §§8;
12.8.1–9.2). |
| EE.13c 13.44.2–46.4. | |
| EE.13d 13.46.4. | |
| EE.14a See §4. | |

young king of Egypt apparently hoodwinks Caesar into freeing him, officers, soldiers, and friends rejoice that Caesar has been tricked by a boy, and the author must carefully justify his decision.^f Likewise, the author of the *African War* points out that many criticized Caesar's handling of the crossing from Sicily to Africa—quite wrongly, he insists.^g These authors thus allow us to see criticism that Caesar apparently prefers to suppress, unless he can turn it in his favor.

§16. Nor is Caesar as completely in control as he appears to be in his own commentaries. Disobedience and lack of discipline among his troops, though not fully absent from Caesar's record,^a play a more ominous role here. At the battle of Thapsus in 46, the officers and veterans, noticing confusion among the enemy, try to pressure Caesar into attacking immediately; while he keeps refusing before he fully understands the situation, the troops force an attack without his approval, pushing aside the centurions who try to stop them.^b And after the battle, when the surviving enemies show their willingness to surrender, Caesar's troops, carried away by anger and resentment, slaughter them mercilessly while Caesar looks on helplessly, imploring them in vain to spare the defeated.^c In Spain in 49, Caesar had prevailed, over his soldiers' angry threats, in forcing them to accept his policy of clemency;^d now, two difficult campaigns later, they are not to be denied their revenge.

§17. Indeed, even Caesar's clemency comes under fire. Hirtius describes the punishment of Cotuatus, ringleader of the great Gallic revolt of 52.^a He insists that the death penalty was not what Caesar was naturally inclined to impose but that the angry troops forced his hand, beating Cotuatus to death and then beheading his corpse.^b The narrative reflects Hirtius' attempt to distance Caesar from the deed. How credibly, we do not know, but we notice that Caesar seems to have difficulties controlling the troops' anger precisely when he needs to be exculpated from acts of excessive brutality.^c It is also Hirtius who tells of Caesar's punishment of the defenders of Uxellodunum: he has the hands of everyone who bore arms against him cut off; and again, Hirtius provides an elaborate justification.^d Caesar in the *Civil War* and the author of the *African War* ascribe this kind of cruelty to the opponents, frequently narrating their torture and execution of Caesar's captured officers and troops,^e while Caesar treats captured prisoners mercifully.^f Hirtius and the author of the *Spanish War* show, however, that the record perhaps was less totally one-sided.^g

§18. Moreover, Hirtius offers Caesar's concern for prestige (*dignitas*)—one of his principal motives in the *Civil War*—as a main reason for waging war with the Bellovacii, a reason never put forward by Caesar himself in the *Gallic War* except in the context of the impropriety of crossing the Rhine in a boat.^a While the author of the *African War* squarely blames Caesar's troops for the slaughter of Scipio's survivors at Thapsus, he goes on to portray Caesar, right after this supposed tragedy, as praising his troops and offering them bonuses.^b Thus the consistent rhetoric of reluctance and generosity that

EE.15f 12.24.

EE.15g §11.

EE.16a §10.

EE.16b 13.82.1–83.1.

EE.16c 13.85.6–9.

EE.16d §15.

EE.17a 7.2–3.

EE.17b 8.38.1–5. See 6.44.1–2 for a similar punishment of a rebel leader.

EE.17c See 7.28.4–5 and §16.

EE.17d 8.44.1–2. Compare 14.12.3.

EE.17e 11.8.3, 11.14.3, 11.28.4, 11.71.4, 13.28.1–4, 13.46.1.

EE.17f 13.46.4; examples of leniency: 13.32.3–4, 13.35.1–6, 13.89.1–90.3. See §§8.

EE.17g For example, 14.12.1–3, 14.13.3, 14.20.5.

EE.18a Hirtius: 8.6.2; crossing the Rhine: 4.17.1; compare 9.71–9.1.

EE.18b 13.85.6–86.3.

Caesar presents in his works appears slightly less compelling in these non-Caesarian books: here Caesar seems readier to attack, maim, and kill. Despite these “lapses,” however, Caesar’s officers largely present the same Caesar we find described by himself: a man of action, well informed, sharp in his assessments and decisions, ready to seize control of the situation, caring for his men and admired by them, and always bringing his plans firmly but justly to the desired end.

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WEB ESSAY FF

Caesar the Ethnographer

Hester Schadee

§1. Caesar's *Gallic War* describe several campaigns of conquest against largely unknown tribes, while his *Civil War* is nominally devoted to a Roman conflict. Whereas the ethnographies in the *Gallic War* are among the best-known passages of the Caesarian corpus, the *Civil War* includes no formal ethnographical excursus. Nonetheless, ethnography is important in the latter text, too, since Caesar's opponent Pompey associates with foreigners, and Caesar also identifies certain Pompeian features as barbaric. In doing so, he employs characterizations familiar from the earlier work. This continuity in part reflects the ethnographical tradition shared by Caesar, his anonymous continuators, and their readership. At its inception in Greece around 500 B.C.E., ethnography was indivisible from geography and the study of climate. It saw people, just like flora and fauna, as shaped by their environments, which grew more extreme toward the edges of the earth. The effects on people were deemed both physical and psychological, producing combinations of barbarian traits ubiquitous in Greco-Roman literature. In the *Gallic War*, Caesar's Germans embody the stereotype of the northwestern barbarian who is tall and bellicose but coarse, freedom-loving but undisciplined. The southeastern stereotype underlying the portrayal of the Egyptians in both the *Civil War* and the *Alexandrian War* is that they are clever yet duplicitous.

§2. In the *Gallic War*, however, Caesar also transcends stereotypes and proves an innovator. Of the Greek ethnographers immediately succeeding Caesar, Diodorus Siculus (late first century B.C.E.) never refers to so-called Germans, while Strabo (early first century C.E.) claims they differ significantly from their neighbors on the near side of the

NOTE: All dates are B.C.E. (Before the Common Era) unless otherwise indicated. The dates given in the Web essays are those of the traditional Roman civil calendar up to January 45, when the Julian calendar was instated. For more on the Roman system of time-counting, see Appendix C: Roman Calendars, Dates, and Time. For all Web essays, go to landmarkcaesar.com. Source references without indication of title or author name refer to the texts in *The Landmark Julius Caesar*. Modern works are listed fully in the Bibliography. All Web essays are copyright © 2017 by Robert B. Strassler and

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Readers interested in pursuing some of the issues discussed in this essay might profit from reading the following titles (they are cited with full bibliographical information in this volume's bibliography): Rawson 1985; Nicolet 1991; Williams 2001; Burns 2003; Batstone and Damon 2006; Krebs 2006; Riggsby 2006; Schadee 2008; Grillo 2012.

Rhine, yet describes no features that might distinguish one group from the other. This makes it likely that Posidonius, a Greek geographer who traveled in and wrote about Gaul in the early first century B.C.E., was a shared source for all three of these authors. We know from surviving fragments of his work that he used the word “Germans” but classed them as a subgroup of the Celts (*Galli* in Latin) rather than as a separate people. Hence Caesar seems responsible for having identified the Germans as an independent ethnic entity, and the Rhine River as a structural element in Europe—two innovations that persist to the present day. Why would he do so—especially if, as Maureen Carroll demonstrates, the Rhine in his time was not in fact an ethnic or cultural divide?^a Certainly, by making the Rhine a boundary between Gauls and Germans, Caesar facilitated and validated his claim to have completed the conquest of Gaul. To subjugate Gaul by the contemporary Greek definition would have required him to conquer a huge extent of Europe from Spain, where Herodotus (c. 430 B.C.E.) first located the Celts, eastward to Thrace. By thus creating “Germany,” Caesar the author used malleable ethnographic and geographic concepts to mold the geographic description of Europe to suit Caesar the general’s needs.

§3. Similar reconfigurations occur on a smaller scale. Caesar famously begins the first book of the *Galllic War* by dividing Gaul into three parts, inhabited by the Belgians, Aquitanians, and Gauls.^a For all its apparent clarity, this geography distorts the extent of Caesar’s initial victory: when he claims to have liberated “Gaul” from the German king Ariovistus,^b it seems as though he has placed the whole of Gaul under his obligation, rather than only the “Gallic” section of the tripartition. In the second season, the subjugation of the Belgae again provides a picture not only of a completed task, but also of a novelty. Caesar’s show of gathering intelligence about his opponents places them beyond Rome’s mental map. Meanwhile, the outcome of his inquiries fully accords with the ethnographic stereotype: the Belgae are more savage than their Gallic neighbors and shun effeminating luxuries from the Roman Province^c—as they should, being located north of the Gauls, that is, farther from the center. When Caesar repeats this procedure to introduce the Nervii, they appear to be the quintessential, and northernmost, Belgian tribe, and thus their defeat signals the complete subjection of that nation.^d In the third season, Caesar finds himself forced to deal with the revolt of the tribes of Brittany, who had been pacified the year before. Nonetheless, he manages to salvage the novelty factor through extensive ethnographic description of these maritime peoples, who live semi-amphibiously in their liminal habitat.^e In the fourth season, Caesar unequivocally breaches the boundaries of the known world by bridging the Rhine and crossing the Channel to Britain. This book also introduces a third entity in northern Europe in addition to Gaul and Germany, namely Britain. Caesar returned to Britain during the next season, and to Germany the year after. On each occasion, he provides quite abundant ethnographical detail. The tantalizing images that result show the two peoples as diametrically opposed.

§4. The depiction of Germany consistently confirms the impression that it marks the terminus of Caesar’s continental ambitions. The German people—especially the Suebi—

FF.2a See Web Essay M: Romans, Germans, and Germania.

FF.3e 2.34; see also 3.7–9, 3.12–13.

FF.3a 1.1.

FF.3b 1.43–44.

FF.3c 2.4.

FF.3d 2.15.

are described as men of great stature, due both to their diet of meat, milk, and grain, and to their freedom, since they do nothing against their will.^a Moreover, Caesar's description elaborates characteristics previously applied to the Belgae, especially the Nervii: the Suebi strive to preserve their lifestyle by limiting their contacts with merchants and prohibiting the import of wine.^b

§5. In one important respect, however, the Suebi are not only more extreme, but different from other barbarians. While Caesar successfully obtained intelligence regarding the Belgae, the Suebi's willful isolation causes his lack of definite knowledge about them. Twice he indicates that his information derives from hearsay.^a Nor can he place them on the map, since they are nomads whose boundaries are defined by wasteland. Furthermore, the territory of the Germans at least partly includes the immense Hercynian Forest, which, like its people, cannot be defined: a nine-days' journey in breadth, its length is unknown even to the natives, though it certainly exceeds sixty days.^b This primeval forest is home to several exceptional animals: the one-horned ox shaped like a stag, the ferocious ur-ox almost the size of an elephant, and the elk without knee joints that sleeps leaning against a tree and can be captured by sabotaging this support so that both tree and elk topple over.^c When the Suebi withdraw into the woods, Caesar's decision not to pursue them and not to try to bring them under Roman control can only be called prudent—until the reader realizes that, when Caesar left them to embark on his ethnographic digression, the Suebi were stationed at the edge of the Bacenis, not the Hercynian, Forest.^d This is another manipulation by the author, unless, as some think, the Bacenis (whose exact location is debated but certainly within the boundaries of today's Germany) was thought to be part of the Hercynian Forest. At any rate, compared to the interest of their fauna, Caesar's picture of German society is meager: they have a common magistrate only in war, and any leading figure can proclaim himself commander and be followed by those who approve. They have no druids, and worship only Sun, Vulcan, and Moon.^e

§6. Caesar's Britons—at least those living in coastal areas—present a different aspect. Although they are partial to some barbarian customs—they dye themselves blue with woad, and practice a peculiar type of polygamy^a—an image of civilization prevails: they use coined money and keep geese for pleasure;^b they live closely together in farmhouses similar to those of the Gauls, with whom they are in contact through traders.^c The Britons' gentleness is confirmed by their climate, which is more temperate and less cold than that of Gaul.^d This perhaps breaks the stereotype, because Britain, like the Belgian territory, lies north of Gaul and toward the world's periphery, hence should produce people with more extreme characteristics.

§7. While Britain is circumscribed by ocean, Caesar also provides abstract measurements of the island's boundaries. He compares its shape with a triangle, plots its corners, and, measuring its sides in miles, calculates Britain's circumference. He also locates Ireland and the Isle of Man. His knowledge clearly benefits from his eyewitness presence, for instance when he uses a water clock (*clepsydra*) to ascertain that nights in Britain are shorter than on the continent.^a Caesar's incorporation of Britain into Roman knowledge

FF.4a 4.1.9.
FF.4b 4.2.
FF.5a 4.1, 4.3.
FF.5b 6.25.
FF.5c 6.26–28.
FF.5d 6.10, compare 6.29.

FF.5e 6.21.
FF.6a 5.14.
FF.6b 5.12.
FF.6c 4.20.
FF.6d 5.12.
FF.7a 5.13.

is an achievement in itself, and we are left to ponder whether this intellectual conquest—in contrast to his lack of knowledge regarding Germany—intimates a belief that Rome can also control the island militarily.

§8. Compared to these fixed images of Germany and Britain, Caesar's representation of Gaul is flexible. Remarkably, the Gauls are not, initially, given an ethnography: the opening of Caesar's first book is concerned mainly with the lay of the land. Scant references to the bodily prowess of the Gallic peoples primarily serve to indicate the danger they pose as foes and—through the ethnographic stereotype—the location of their territories.^a A contrasting mental weakness is suggested throughout the narrative, as Caesar repeatedly shows them crying.^b At the beginning of the *Gallic War*, Rome is the standard of comparison against whose civilization Gaul inevitably falls short. Over time, however, new nations are characterized in relation to Gaul, which now sets a relatively civilized benchmark. By the sixth book, Gaul's advanced social structures are a foil to German backwardness—and it is only now that we learn of a class of equestrians^c and a class of druids, in addition to commoners who are almost slaves. The druids arbitrate disputes, use Greek script for accounting purposes, and study the subjects of ancient philosophy.^d Devoted to religion, the Gauls worship a pantheon of deities much like that of the Romans. If Caesar feels dismay at their practice of human sacrifice, he does not say so.^e

§9. Once, Caesar claims—in stark contrast to all preceding information—that the Gauls initially were stronger than the Germans and settled across the Rhine.^a However, proximity to luxuries from the Roman Province brought about their decline, and their habit of forcing travelers to trade gossip on any subject enslaved the Gauls to vacillating rumors.^b The origins of the final Gallic revolt in 52 reveal the dangers of improved communications between previously antagonistic Gallic tribes—dangers to Rome, but most of all to Gaul itself. Exaggerated rumors that Caesar is detained by troubles in Rome provoke a Gallic slaughter of Roman businessmen, reports of which pass from village to village.^c Before the end of the day, the news travels 160 miles south and reaches Vercingetorix among the Arverni. Under his leadership, the whole of Gaul unites and rises in revolt—precipitating Caesar's greatest challenge in Gaul and leading to their own joint undoing.

§10. In the *Gallic War*, the identity of Caesar and Rome was uncontested, as the work emphasizes throughout. This could not be the case during the civil war, when Caesar fought his compatriots. His problem was particularly acute since the Pompeian faction was initially based in Rome, while Caesar—like previous Gallic and German invaders, or indeed like Hannibal—descended on Italy and the city from the north.^a Pompey's decision to leave Rome, and eventually the peninsula, was catastrophic from a public relations perspective. In the *Civil War*, Caesar successfully capitalizes on this by presenting himself as the liberator of Italy, welcomed by the Italian towns on his triumphant march south.^b Indeed, when he negotiates with the pro-Pompeian Massilians and their barbarian allies, Caesar claims the support of the whole of Italy.^c As he tells it, Pompey essentially agreed with this assessment, stating in the Senate before departing

FF.8a 1.1.

FF.8b For example, 1.20, 1.27, 1.31, 1.32.

FF.8c In analogy to Rome, this class of *equites*, often translated as “knights” (which prompts misleading medieval associations), comprised a horse-owning military aristocracy.

FF.8d 6.13–14.

FF.8e 6.16–17.

FF.9a 6.24.

FF.9b 4.5, 6.20.

FF.9c 7.3–4.

FF.10a Hannibal: Cicero, *Letters to Atticus* 7.11.1.

FF.10b 9.12–13, 9.15–16, 9.20.

FF.10c 9.35.

that he viewed those who stayed in Rome as Caesar's supporters.^d

§11. Caesar's army comprised many foreign auxiliaries, including Gauls from the recently pacified area. They are presented as thoroughly Romanized, their barbarian nature resurfacing only when they abandon his cause. The story of the defection of two Allobroges is emblematic. When Caesar first introduces these Gallic brothers, he emphasizes their nobility, prowess, and long service with him in Gaul, and notes that he had secured for them political positions and seats in the council of their own tribe.^a As they begin to appropriate communal plunder, Caesar describes this as a relapse into barbarian arrogance. The event paves the way for their dramatic but shortsighted defection to Pompey, who gleefully parades them around his camp.^b

§12. Throughout the *Civil War*, Caesar reserves the term "barbarian" for Pompey's foreign troops and allies. Indeed, Caesar tends to focus on the supposedly most primitive of his opponent's associates, exaggerating the impression of the non-Roman ethnographic makeup of Pompey's army as a whole. When Caesar prepares to follow Pompey into Greece, the catalogue of the latter's forces reads like the composition of an eastern empire.^a Furthermore, Pompey himself is barbarized by association. He and his commanders display the cruelty and war lust of barbarians along with their arrogance and vanity. When Caesar inspects their camp after the battle of Pharsalus, it is plain to see that the Pompeians were corrupted by luxury;^b the informed reader will think immediately, as Caesar intends him to, of Herodotus' description of the camp of the Persian King Xerxes conquered by the Greeks at Plataea in 479 B.C.E.^c

§13. Caesar's anonymous continuators are both more explicit and more categorical in their characterization of barbarians in contrast to Romans. The *Alexandrian War* emphasizes the quick wit of the cosmopolitan Egyptians, who are a match for Caesar's men in their war preparations, which evolve as each side reacts to the tactical moves of the other.^a But the Egyptians' native cleverness is marred by an innate treachery that is a foil to the valor of the Caesarians.^b Their commander is aware that the Alexandrians are a deceitful nation, and the author proudly notes that Caesar takes due precautions in his dealings with the young Egyptian king, as he does again in an exchange with King Pharnaces of Pontus.^c The possible implications of Caesar outsmarting these wily eastern potentates remain unaddressed.

§14. The cunning but devious southeastern stereotype similarly emerges from the *African War*, this time in comparison to northern barbarians. Physically, the large and comely bodies of Gallic and Germanic auxiliaries killed in Africa and strewn out over the theater-shaped plain offer a strange sight.^a Furthermore, Caesar needs to retrain his troops. They have been accustomed to fighting the guileless and valorous Gauls, but must now engage with the trickery of the Numidians.^b Nonetheless, Caesar's army is unimpressed with the Numidian troops, and the author expresses outrage over the attitude of the Pompeians, who are content to take orders from King Juba.^c In this regard, the *African War* offers an interesting contrast to Caesar's own presentation of Curio's African campaign in his *Civil War*. There, the strategizing of the Numidians, for

FF.10d	1.33. See Web Essay JJ: The <i>Civil War</i> as a Work of Propaganda.	FF.13a	12.2–3.
FF.11a	11.59.	FF.13b	12.7, 12.13, 12.16.
FF.11b	3.61.	FF.13c	12.24, 12.71.
FF.12a	11.3.	FF.14a	13.37, 13.40.
FF.12b	11.69.	FF.14b	13.73.
FF.12c	Herodotus 9.80, 9.82.	FF.14c	13.57.

instance their feigned retreat,^d is portrayed as sound military tactics by which Curio, in his youthful audacity, is fooled. Yet Caesar agrees with his continuator on the shamefulness of his Pompeian opponent, along with a number of Roman senators, paying court to the Numidian king.^e

§15. The author of the *Spanish War* demonstrates, inadvertently no doubt, the level of barbarism to which Caesar's own army was capable of descending, when he describes the siege works at Munda, fashioned from enemy corpses.^a These were executed by Caesar's Gallic forces, whom the author in no way distinguishes from Roman soldiers. However, the author lets Caesar himself make distinctions between Romans and barbarians. In a speech, he chastises provincials who, knowing Roman laws, have nonetheless behaved like barbarians in making war against him. Did they not know, he asks, that even if he were destroyed, the Roman legions would continue his work?^b Here the *Spanish War* breaks off—but the identification of Caesar with Rome is complete.

§16. Did ethnographical description advance Caesar's cause? Regarding Gaul, it undoubtedly did, as Cicero's rhetoric shows when he pleads for an extension of Caesar's command in 55.^a During the civil war, Caesar's views were echoed in the letters of Cicero, who had initially sided with Pompey. After the latter's defeat at Pharsalus, he laments the cruelty of the Pompeians, alongside their intimate association with barbarians.^b Referring to Juba's Numidians, Cicero justifies his own decision not to continue the fight against Caesar, as it is not right to defend the state by using barbarian auxiliaries from a treacherous nation.^c This is not to say that Caesar's commentaries necessarily made converts. But they provided ammunition for his supporters and facilitated the self-exculpation of his erstwhile opponents.

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FF.14d 10.40.

FF.14e 14.32.

FF.15a Ibid.

FF.15b 14.42.

FF.16a See Cicero's speech, *On the Consular Provinces*.

FF.16b Cicero, *Letters to Atticus* 11.6.2.

FF.16c Ibid., 11.7.3.

WEB ESSAY GG

The Gallic War as a Work of Literature

Debra L. Nousek

§1. Caesar's commentaries on the Gallic war are more than simply a historical account of the events of their author's campaigns during his proconsulship. Together with Caesar's other historical work, the *Civil War*, they have long been recognized as literary creations in their own right.^a As Caesar's contemporaries saw, although the commentaries superficially resemble administrative or military reports, they—and especially those of the *Gallic War*—are polished and artistically complex historical narratives that merit interpretation from a literary as well as a historical perspective.^b

Influences

MILITARY DISPATCHES

§2. As representatives of the Roman state, magistrates on campaign were expected to send reports back to the Senate concerning their and their army's activities. Caesar's dispatches were regularly received in Rome, as is clear from his statements regarding official thanksgivings decreed in recognition of his victories.^a Although we do not know details, it is reasonable to think that copies of the reports sent to the Senate will have aided Caesar in composing the commentaries.^b Typical examples of military dispatches survive among Cicero's letters, sent to the Senate from his province of Cilicia in 51–50.^c Their style is not unlike Caesar's: succinct, informative, and straightforward. Cicero records his own and his army's movements, the activities of the enemy, the state of his resources,

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Readers interested in the issues discussed here might find the following titles useful: Eden 1962; Riggby 2006; Osgood 2009; Kraus 2009.

GG.1a Caesar's *Gallic War* comprises Books 1–7 of *The Landmark Julius Caesar*, the *Civil War* Books 9–11. On the author of Book 8 (Hirtius), see Web Essay LL: The Origins of the Corpus of Caesar's Works.

GG.1b Some of the points Luca Grillo makes in Web Essay II: The Literary Art of the *Civil War* apply to the *Gallic War* as well.

2,35, 4,38, 790.

GG.2a See also Web Essay CC: The Roman *Commentarius* and Caesar's Commentaries.

GG.2c Cicero, *Letters to Friends* 15.1, 15.2.

and his interactions with provincials and Roman client kings. As the Senate's representative in his province, a governor was responsible (and held accountable) for maintaining foreign policy as determined by senatorial decree.^d

§3. Caesar's *Gallic War* shares many features of these contemporary reports from the field. Like Cicero's dispatches, the commentaries are designed to emphasize the glorious achievements of its author in the course of doing his official duty. But even if each book of the *Gallic War* ultimately derives from Caesar's dispatches to the Senate, the narrative is greatly expanded and elaborated to include, for example, the reports of his subordinates, ethnographic digressions, or highly technical descriptions such as the construction of the Rhine bridge.^a In addition, Caesar's characteristic third-person narrator finds no parallel in Cicero's reports.^b In sum, the skeleton of the *Gallic War* might have been based on Caesar's dispatches, but the extant narrative has been given substance, as it were, through added content and literary embellishment.

HISTORIOGRAPHY^a

§4. Apart from practical needs that probably encouraged annual publication,^b Caesar's decision to organize the narrative by campaign season (each book of the *Gallic War* covers one year of Caesar's command)^c may have been influenced by the "annalistic tradition" in Roman historiography. This type of writing took its name from the priestly *annales*—brief year-by-year lists of wars, office holders, and important religious events preserved by the chief priest of Roman public religion. The political memoirs of prominent statesmen, written from the early part of the first century B.C.E., may have offered another precedent for Caesar's historical writing. Though no longer extant, such memoirs recounted careers and accomplishments, often polemically and with a strong purpose of self-justification.^d Some scholars have detected in Caesar's commentaries a similarly defensive self-presentation.

§5. Although the *Gallic War* shares many characteristics with both of these traditions, Caesar has created a literary work that goes beyond them, reflecting his interests in contemporary aesthetic controversies in language and literature.^a His commentaries also differ from these historiographical traditions in dealing only with a limited range of contemporary history. In this, Caesar may have been influenced by a tradition of war monographs (works focusing on single military events) that ultimately goes back to Thucydides' history of the Peloponnesian war (with which Caesar clearly was familiar, and which is organized by years divided into summers and winters) and includes Xenophon's *Anabasis* (*The March Upland*—a general's report written in third-person narrative), the history of the Second Punic War by Coelius Antipater (now lost), and, after Caesar, Sallust's *War with Catiline*^b and *War with Jugurtha*.

GG.2d See Web Essay P: Late Republican Provincial Administration.

GG.3a 4.17–18. A parallel is in the *Civil War* at 10.9–10: the detailed description of the construction of a siege tower and gallery.

GG.3b On the third-person narrator, see the Introduction, §54.

GG.4a See also Web Essay DD: Caesar the Historian.

GG.4b On the issue of the commentaries' publication, see the Introduction, §§55–56.

GG.4c The only exception, Book 8 (covering the years

51 and 50), is specifically justified by Hirtius (8.48.10–11).

GG.4d For a discussion of these historical genres, see Mehl 2011. Titles cited in the notes are listed with full references in this volume's bibliography. See Web Essay E: Caesar, Man of Letters, and various contributions in Grillo and Krebs 2016.

GG.5a GG.5b This work is often referred to as *The Catilinarian Conspiracy*.

The Literary Structure of the *Gallic War*

§6. Authors of historical works face a challenge in creating a suspenseful, entertaining narrative, since by the time of writing, readers will already know the outcome of events. This is all the more true for works of contemporary or recent history. To achieve suspense within the narrative thus requires special effort, and Caesar accomplishes this by using various structural devices. One favorite tactic is to postpone the end of one episode by switching to another that takes place simultaneously elsewhere, and then back. These “parallel narratives” are usually signaled in the text—by phrases such as “while this was happening there” or “at the same time”—and often occur just as the reader’s interest in the outcome has been piqued.^a The reader is thus left temporarily with a “cliff-hanger” while another episode is introduced and recounted as an embedded narrative.

§7. Caesar also uses technical passages and digressions to create similar effects. Here the text itself diverts the reader’s attention from the outcome of the narrated event and thus poses an obstacle to forward progression. Perhaps the most famous example is the detailed description of the Rhine bridge.^a Caesar opens this account by announcing his decision to cross the Rhine and the purpose of this expedition.^b It takes nearly three full chapters until the army actually completes the crossing, and it returns to the Gallic bank soon thereafter. It is not the military action but the construction process itself that is the focus of this episode, and the specialized engineering vocabulary, relatively difficult to read, delays both the reader and the progress of the action. In other words, Caesar builds the bridge in the text to take not just the army but also the reader across the Rhine.^c Thereby he distracts the reader from the excursion’s original purpose and makes him overlook that Caesar actually accomplishes very little with it. This is just one example; throughout the *Gallic War*, Caesar incorporates descriptive or digressive passages on various topics, from ethnography and geography^d to military technology (such as the nature of British chariot warfare or the structure of Gallic defensive walls^e), in order to control the pace and effect of the narrative.

§8. In terms of overall structure, Caesar uses the historical events of his campaigns to shape a narrative in which the reader eagerly follows the ups and downs of his fortunes. Naturally, the text is designed to highlight Caesar’s victories, but these would be hollow without the counterbalance of setback and struggle. It was well recognized in antiquity that the “varieties of circumstance and vicissitudes of Fortune”^a were essential for the reader’s enjoyment of a historical work. Indeed, the narrative structure of the *Gallic War* follows a literary pattern familiar also to modern readers, in which the “hero” achieves some early success, then faces increased challenges from his enemies—often suffering near disaster—only to rise up from those challenges and be victorious in the end. Here, of course, the “hero” is Caesar (and his army), and the foes the Gallic and Germanic nations who resist the Roman conquest.

§9. The narrative of the *Gallic War* falls into three distinct segments. In the first three books, Caesar campaigns against individual nations, such as the Helvetii and Ariovistus’

GG.6a Examples: 2.34, 3.17, 3.28, 5.53, 6.7, 7.37, 7.42, 7.57, 7.66. See also 9.56–58 within the episode GG.7c 4.33, 7.23. Caesar the Ethnographer, §5.
at 9.48–59. GG.8a Cicero, *Letters to Friends* 5.12.4.

GG.7a 4.17.
GG.7b 4.16.
GG.7c See also Brown 2013.
GG.7d 4.1–4, 5.12–14, 6.11–28; see also Web Essay FF:

Germans, or conducts a series of brief campaigns that are brought to a quick resolution.^a By contrast, in Books 5–7 the Romans fight more and more against pan-Gallic efforts to prevent the Roman annexation of Gaul.^b Book 4 forms the center of the seven-book work as a whole, with three books on either side. Indeed, Book 4 is a special case and is particularly rich in structural symbolism. The first half of the book focuses on the suppression of a German invasion along the Rhine, culminating in the construction of the Rhine bridge and the first expedition into Germany.^c The second half of this book, comprising exactly the same number of chapters, concentrates on Caesar's first expedition to Britain—also a major water-crossing episode.^d In terms of narrative structure, then, this middle book of the *Gallic War*, which emphasizes the actual crossing of waterways, itself serves as a “bridging” narrative. Not only does it form the center of the work from a textual perspective, but it geographically bridges the two regions in which Caesar was the first Roman commander to campaign.

§10. If the first half of the *Gallic War* concentrates on establishing Caesar's early successes as a capable general and creating the framework for his conquest of Gaul, the second half provides the vicissitudes that propel him and his army to even greater victories. The narrative first recounts the setbacks faced by the Romans and their eventual rise to victory over the united Gallic resistance. Caesar enhances the reader's experience of both these extremes through various narrative devices. When in Books 5 and 6 the Romans are in trouble and face threats from several different enemy forces at once, the narrative pace quickens, through frequent shifts from one territory to another, and through parallel narratives,^a to create suspense. Similarly, Caesar the general largely disappears from the text for long stretches, with emphasis placed instead on the vicissitudes of his legates.^b

§11. In the final book of Caesar's war account, the Gallic nations gradually coalesce into a unified enemy with a capable, charismatic leader in Vercingetorix.^a After overcoming further obstacles,^b Caesar's forces once more join together under his command in preparation for the final episode, the siege of Alesia. The narrative of Book 7^c emphasizes the parallelism between Caesar and Vercingetorix through rapid shifts in perspective: in one segment, for example, the shift takes place in almost every chapter, and in the final confrontation the two commanders are portrayed as occupying opposing positions on the high ground, and the narrative switches back and forth between them.^d At the crucial height of the ensuing battle, however, it becomes clear who the real hero of the narrative is: just as the Romans are at the point of breaking under the pressure of the Gallic forces, Caesar's arrival at the fray, described in a splendid periodic sentence in Latin, turns the tide:

The color of the cloak that Caesar habitually wore in battle to mark him out as commander made his arrival known to the enemy. They also spotted the cavalry squadrons and cohorts Caesar had ordered to follow him, since the lower slopes

- GG.9a 1.5–29, 1.30–55; seven distinct campaigns are reported in Books 2–3.
- GG.9b See also Web Essay CC: The Roman *Commentarius* and Caesar's *Commentaries*, §9.
- GG.9c 4.1–19; see §7 above.
- GG.9d 4.20–38. On Caesar's water crossings, see Web Essay AA: Caesar at Sea, §§7–14.
- GG.10a See §6.
- GG.10b For example, 5.26–37, 5.38–52.

- GG.11a 7.63; compare with the description of Gallic troop numbers at 7.75.
- GG.11b Notably the treachery of the Aedui (7.37–44), a serious setback at Gergovia (7.45–53), and Labienus' narrow escape from the mission to Lutetia (7.57–62).
- GG.11c For further analysis of the structure of Book 7, see Kraus 2010.
- GG.11d 7.10–14, 7.82–87.

and depressions they passed through were visible from the higher ground. Their appearance prompted the enemy to renew their efforts in the battle.^e

In vain. This moment of near-Gallic victory is followed by a fast-paced description of the successful Roman countermeasures, conveyed in a series of short, staccato sentences. The Gauls turn to flight, the victory of the Romans is decisive, and Vercingetorix' surrender the following day symbolizes the end of the Gallic rebellion.^f The work that began with victories over a single nation and an individual challenger (the Helvetii and Ariovistus) concludes with a triumph over all nations under one leader. In another way, too, the end of the work is linked to its beginning: in the opening chapter, Caesar uses geographical description to create Gaul in the minds of his readers; in the final segment, he brings that vision to fruition, in a practical sense, by creating a united but defeated Gaul that will now become a part of the Roman empire.^g

Caesar's Dramatic Style

§12. Caesar's literary achievement is apparent, therefore, in the larger narrative structure of the *Gallic War*, which conveys to the reader the dangers faced by the Roman troops in their gradual conquest of Gaul and their triumphant victory at the end. His literary talent is likewise apparent on a smaller scale in dramatic highlights that showcase both his stylistic ability and his impressive generalship. Two types of literary feature may serve as examples: the creation of dramatic scenes and the exploration of a theme through interwoven examples of character development. Caesar sets these near-cinematic scenes apart by opening them with formal linguistic features that soon become readily recognizable to the reader.^a In fact, the opening words of these chapters create a temporary pause in the narrative, emphasizing that a crucial episode is to come.^b

§13. Consider the battle against the Nervii in 57. Here Caesar first creates a verbal map of the topographical features that will affect the outcome of the battle, followed by the disposition of his troops on the march.^a The enormous danger posed by the enemy is revealed when they appropriate Caesar's famous recipe for success, his speed (*celeritas*), in their sudden attack on the Romans:

... they swooped out *suddenly* with all their forces and attacked our cavalry. . . .
 [They then] ran down to the river *with incredible speed*, so that *almost at the same moment* they seemed to be coming out of the woods *and* crossing the river [*and* clashing] with our troops. *With the same speed*, they rushed up the hill on our side toward our camp. . . .^b

Even as the situation looks dire for the Romans, Caesar's military *and* literary genius take over in the next chapter, where the pace of the narrative quickens and the general's swift understanding of the situation and the superior training of the Roman soldiers swing the momentum back to Caesar:

GG.11e 7.88.1.

ple, in 1.12, "There is a river called Arar . . ."; 1.43.

GG.11f 7.88.2–89.

GG.12b Similar examples occur at 2.18, 3.12, 4.10, 5.6, 5.25, 6.34, 6.38, 7.19, 7.23, 7.55, 7.69.

GG.11g Hirtius explicitly draws that conclusion: "All of Gaul had now been conquered" (8.1.1).

GG.13a 2.18–28; Map 2.18; troop disposition: 2.19.

GG.12a In Latin, these sentences often prominently feature the verb "to be," rendered in an impersonal construction in English: for exam-

GG.13b 2.19.6–7.

Caesar had to do everything at once: raise the flag to give the signal that the soldiers must rush to arms; have the trumpet blow the battle signal; summon the troops from their work; fetch back those who had gone out some distance to seek building materials for the camp's fortification; deploy the battle line; urge on the troops; and give the signal to attack. *The lack of time and the swiftness with which the enemy came on* largely hindered these preparations.^c

Caesar here lists six commands that had to be given “at one time” if the Romans were to recover the momentum in this battle, and all six actions are contained in a single Latin sentence, stressing the need for near-simultaneity of action. He also stresses that the sudden onslaught of the enemy and the extremely short time left to act nearly prevent his success. Two factors intervene: the soldiers’ training and experience enable them to perform the required actions without prompting; and Caesar’s own tactical foresight has given his legates the responsibility to act independently and prudently.^d These thematic elements—the topography, the knowledge of the soldiers and officers, and the skill of Caesar—are further developed in the episode, all the while retaining the sense of urgency introduced at the outset. The narrative emphasizes the losses and demoralization caused by the enemy attack in crucial parts of the battlefield, while in others the enemy are driven back and defeated. In all the confusion, however, Caesar’s actions stand out as both the guiding strength of the whole army and the impetus to victory. It seems “impossible for one man to coordinate all commands,”^e and yet it is Caesar whose interventions propel the troops to victory: he first issues the appropriate orders, then delivers an ad hoc battle exhortation, and finally takes a position on the front line in a virtuoso display of bravery and bravado, restoring order and morale.^f The combined impact of Caesar’s acts as general and soldier thus transforms an almost certain defeat into a decisive victory; the episode ends with a tally of enemy casualties,^g and the narrative advances to the next episode.

§14. A second literary feature of the *Gallic War* is Caesar’s sustained interest in exploring the nature of good leadership through episodes that are similarly extended and elaborated as that of the battle against the Nervii, where Caesar’s own leadership skill is on display. These episodes highlight supreme skills and achievements of officers and troops, the absence of such skills, or even the same officer’s success in one and failure in another episode.^a In the account of Cotta and Sabinus’ disastrous quarreling in their camp and during the subsequent enemy attack, Sabinus appears as a quintessential example of the gullibility and rash judgment that result in bad decisions and the annihilation of the troops under his command, while Cotta, though unable to prevail, is portrayed as able, smart, and sensible in judgment and action. The two legates are thus depicted in counterpoint throughout the entire episode.^b But Caesar also sketches brief scenes of heroic bravery, often featuring centurions, memorializing their bravery and offering pos-

GG.13c 2.20.1–2.

GG.13d 2.20.3–4.

GG.13e 2.22.1.

GG.13f In the same sequence: 2.21, 2.22, 2.25–26.

Even so, as noted in n. GG.13d, Caesar recognizes the independent leadership of his legates, and he does so again at 2.26.4–5, acknowledging Labienus’ crucial contribution to the victory by observing from the other side of the river the dire emergency prevailing elsewhere and sending one of his two legions to bring

assistance. For a similar acknowledgment, see 1.52.6–7.

GG.13g 2.28.

GG.14a Success: Sabinus (3.17–19), Crassus (3.20–27),

or Labienus (6.7–8); failure: Sabinus and / versus Cotta (5.26–37); success followed by failure: Sabinus (3.17–19, 5.26–37), Quintus Cicero (5.39–52; 6.35–42). On Caesar’s portrayal of his subordinates, see Web Essay X: Caesar the General and Leader, §11; Welch 1998; Grillo 2016.

GG.14b 5.26–37.

itive *exempla* for the reader.^c In a sense, all these episodes evoke the narrative of an individual's outstanding deeds (called an *aristeia*, a "best performance," familiar to readers of epic poetry) that are highlighted as emblematic of his character. One such example occurs in the midst of the battle against the Nervii: Caesar singles out a centurion, Publius Sextius Baculus, for his immense courage and perseverance, although he is so severely wounded that he can barely stand.^d Baculus appears twice more in the *Gallic War*, first when he and another officer conceive of a successful plan to save their camp from the enemy, and later amid the desperate chaos of the siege of Quintus Cicero's camp by German raiders:^e though ill and undernourished, he rushes to the gate of the camp, snatches up some weapons, and single-handedly inspires his fellow centurions to resist the enemy's onslaught.

§15. Finally, tying all these themes together, we have the joint *aristeia* narrative of the centurions Titus Pullo and Lucius Vorenus.^a This short episode takes place amid the *exempla* of leadership, both good and bad, that occupy Book 5 and highlights the actions of the two men in one brief encounter with the Nervii as Quintus Cicero's camp is under attack. Pullo and Vorenus are engaged in a long-standing rivalry. Pullo challenges Vorenus to a contest of bravery and rushes into the fray. Predictably, he is surrounded and Vorenus comes to his rescue, only to become surrounded in turn and requiring Pullo's assistance for his safe recovery. Caesar sums up the episode with a moralizing gnomic statement: "Fortune thus brought it about for the two in their fighting and competition that while each was the other's rival he also helped and saved him, and there was no way to judge between them as to who should be thought to rank above the other in bravery."^b Hard on the heels of the disastrous rivalry of Cotta and Sabinus, in which one man's stubbornness overcomes the more laudable caution and wisdom of the other, the two centurions engage in a more productive strife that serves the greater good of their unit, and thus the army, and thus ultimately the Roman state.

§16. At many levels, then, Caesar's literary skills are evident throughout the *Gallic War*. From intricately crafted sentences that highlight critical situations through their very word order and grammatical structure, to the exploration of larger literary themes through the use of *exempla* and *aristeia* narratives to fill the narrative with meaning, Caesar's account is far from the dry, repetitive text it was once thought to be. Caesar was interested in breaking new ground in Latin historical prose, even as we recognize the account's roots in official military dispatches to the Senate and traditions of both Greek and Roman historical writing. The skills Caesar highlights in his actions on the battlefield are just as evident in his report of those battles: he creates a work of remarkable complexity and narrates it with characteristic clarity. In what at first glance might appear to be a purely self-glorifying narrative of the conquest of Gaul, Caesar develops the supporting characters in a way that comments on the nature of leadership and moral character, in keeping with Roman historiographical traditions.^a

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GG.14c To provide good examples to be emulated and bad ones to be avoided: this is one of the central purposes of traditional Roman historiography: see Livy, Preface 10; Mehl 2013.

GG.14d 2.25.

GG.14e 3.5, 6.38.

GG.15a 5.44. Brown 2004 provides context for the episode and additional examples.

GG.15b 5.44.14.

GG.16a See also Web Essay E: Caesar, Man of Letters, and Raaflaub 2016.

WEB ESSAY HH

The Gallic War as a Work of Propaganda

Alexa Jervis

§1. For many decades, the central question asked of Caesar’s writings was: Are they an accurate historical account of his activities? If not, has Caesar willfully distorted the record, and why? Was Caesar a flagrant liar, embellishing his own achievements at every opportunity, or was he a plainspoken truth-teller? The adherents of the “Caesar-as-liar camp” exhaustively catalogued what they perceived to be his exaggerations and outright untruths. Their attitude often seems hostile to the author—perhaps in reaction to an earlier school of near hagiography: “[The commentaries] were written [,] with a purpose no doubt, but still in the main honestly, by the greatest man of the world who has ever lived.”^a Most critics take a position that lies between these two extremes. We can assume that the *Gallic War*, like any memoir of a great personality, is self-serving, intended to aid Caesar’s massive political ambition and enhance his achievement. It was written in large part to advance and solidify Caesar’s position amid the shifting alliances of the 50s. Hence, of course, the *Gallic War* is propaganda—rich, complex, and absorbing. As a record of Caesar’s *dignitas* (stature based on achievements) and *virtus* (literally, manliness, hence bravery and quality of leadership), it is designed to show its hero in the best possible light. What surprises is not that Caesar used any means at his disposal to enhance his reputation, but how difficult it is, in fact, to prove lie and falsification, how subtle his methods of propaganda and distortion mostly are, and how much, in the process, he innovated in the spheres of style, rhetoric, and ethnography in order

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HH.1a Rice–Homes 1911, 238. The most strenuous arguments that Caesar was no more than a liar can be found in the work of Michel Rambaud (1966). For a more restrained (but still vigorous) criticism of Caesar’s partisan slant, see Stevens 1972; Walser 1998. Raditsa 1973, 431 comments that many “of the criticisms of Caesar’s writing stem from fear of being duped.” For a recent balanced assessment of these issues, see Riggsby 2006, 207–14. See also relevant chapters in Welch and Powell 1998.

to construct his politically powerful persona.^b This is a big topic; I can discuss only a small selection of important aspects here.

§2. The *Gallic War* indeed contains distortions of the historical record. Caesar takes pains to emphasize that his was a defensive war, undertaken solely to protect the Roman people, interests, and Gallic allies, rather than a war of conquest—a claim that is almost certainly an exaggeration. Over nearly a decade, Caesar took his campaign from the Alps to Britain, west toward Spain, and east into Germany, a development unforeseen in 59 by anyone (probably even by Caesar himself). Yet in the *Gallic War*, the trajectory of the campaign is made to seem natural, an outgrowth of Caesar's duty to protect the Roman Province, Roman allies, and himself against hostile tribes on the offensive. In his own accounting, Caesar is forced to take action against the Helvetii in Book 1 because the Aedui, stalwart friends of Rome, are in serious danger from this belligerent tribe on its march through Gaul.^a The campaigns against the Belgic tribes in Book 2 begin when Caesar learns that the Belgae are planning an attack.^b And although Book 2 ends with the declaration that Gaul is pacified (*pacata*),^c still in the same winter other tribes are attacking or planning an attack, and Caesar and his legates have no choice but to respond.^d Throughout the *Gallic War*, Caesar's narrative repeats this pattern of Gallic conspiracy and aggression followed by a judicious yet decisive Roman response. Caesar makes clear that all his military maneuvers are instigated by Gallic hostility, and that he is merely doing what any good Roman governor would do—defend Roman interests and safeguard Gallic friends and allies.

§3. The *Gallic War* also contains surprising omissions. For example, Caesar's account rarely mentions what was well known to his Roman readers: that his campaign was extraordinarily lucrative.^a Catullus mocked the greed of Caesar's lieutenants, while Cicero tells us that those who were close to Caesar in Gaul usually ended up richer for it.^b Caesar's enormously expensive plan in 54 to build his own forum in Rome (the Forum Julium), which Cicero estimated at sixty million *sesterces*, gives us a hint of his financial capabilities.^c Yet Caesar alludes to spoils of war very rarely in the *Gallic War*. On one occasion, he sells 53,000 inhabitants of a treacherous Belgic town into slavery without saying where the proceeds went.^d On another occasion he suggests that war spoils were not always important to the Roman soldiers: they killed almost all of the 40,000 men, women, and children they had besieged at Avaricum because they were, he says, so intent on avenging the Gallic massacre of Roman merchants at Cenabum earlier in the year that they no longer cared about the profit they might make from enslaving the survivors.^e Such profits they did make eventually, when Caesar distributed the survivors of the siege of Alesia among his soldiers.^f At any rate, Caesar's *Gallic War* was clearly not intended to complicate the readers' assessment of Caesar's motives for his campaigns.

§4. Interwoven with the *Gallic War*'s main narrative of the Gallic conquest are a number of lengthy digressions on a range of topics, including ethnography and engi-

HH.1b On these aspects, see also Web Essays CC: The Roman *Commentarius* and Caesar's Commentaries, DD: Caesar the Historian, FF: Caesar the Ethnographer, and GG: The *Gallic War* as a Work of Literature. On Caesar's self-presentation as a "perfect Roman," see Raaflaub 2018.

HH.2a See 1.10–11.

HH.2b 2.1–4.

HH.2c 2.35.1, reiterated at 3.7.1.

HH.2d 3.2, 3.7–8.

HH.3a On this aspect, see also Web Essays T: The

Economics of War, and U: The Commercialization of War.

HH.3b See Catullus 29; Cicero, *Letters to Atticus* 7.7.6.

HH.3c *Letters to Atticus* 4.16.8. For Roman currency and monetary values, see Appendix B: Roman Currency and Units of Measurement. On the Forum Julium, see Richardson 1992, 165–67.

HH.3d 2.33.

HH.3e 7.28.3–4.

HH.3f 7.89.5.

neering. The inclusion of these types of digressions was fairly typical of late republican writers. Nonetheless, Caesar's excurses seem carefully placed to distract the reader from noticing potential problems in his campaign. For example, the technical account of bridging the Rhine in Book 4 occurs just before Caesar explains his decision to retreat back to the Roman side.^a He inserts his extended ethnography of Gaul and Germany into the text just as he approaches the Suebi, a German tribe known for its ferocity.^b He has told us that he decided to cross the Rhine to punish the Germans for sending reinforcements to a Gallic enemy and to prevent one of his most persistent foes, Ambiorix, from finding refuge among this tribe.^c When the narrative proper resumes after the digression, Caesar has decided not to engage the Suebi because they have withdrawn far into the inaccessible interior of their country and because he is concerned about the grain supply.^d Ambiorix, we later learn, is cornered, but escapes because of his luck (*fortuna*).^e Caesar's handling of the events immediately preceding and following his long ethnographic digression demonstrates the skill and light hand with which he shapes his narrative. Clearly, the lengthy gap caused by this digression smooths out the difference between his statement of his goals and a reader's realization that these goals were not achieved. Yet we should note that Caesar did not feel compelled to excise his reasoning for approaching the Suebi, even if the clear statement of his ambitions makes the shortcomings of this excursion apparent.

§5. Within his narrative of overwhelming conquest, Caesar does indeed experience defeat. But he takes pains to ensure that these defeats do not disrupt his readers' conception of his own valor and prowess. For example, during Vercingetorix' revolt, Caesar decides to withdraw from his position outside the Gallic stronghold of Gergovia. He plans an elaborate ruse by feinting an attack to disguise his decision from the enemy, avoiding the impression of fear and flight, and cautions his officers not to proceed too far or to attempt full-scale fighting.^a Caesar's troops capture a few enemy camps, and he gives the signal to withdraw. However, most of his men cannot hear the signal and, driven by excessive confidence, attempt to storm Gergovia itself. In the ensuing debacle, the Romans lose almost seven hundred men.^b In an assembly, Caesar praises his men's courage, but chastises them for their lack of restraint.^c Now, after Caesar tells us of the successful storming of the outlying camps, but before we learn of his soldiers' ill-fated decision to carry the attack all the way to the walls of Gergovia, he comments that he "had achieved what he had wanted to do."^d What exactly he intended to do before disaster struck is left unclear, and that ambiguity is surely not accidental. By this comment (which echoes what he writes after retreating back over the Rhine in Book 4),^e Caesar suggests that the maneuver so far had gone as planned: what happened next was out of his control. He certainly blames the defeat on his men rather than on any strategic mistake on his own part. Yet by attributing the defeat to an excess of Roman courage, as opposed to cowardice or lack of skill, he preserves Roman *virtus*. Caesar does not lose the aims of the *Gallic War* as a whole out of sight, despite the necessary inclusion of this account of a failure.

HH.4a 4.17–18; on this bridge, see Web Essay S: Military Engineering and Sieges, §14.

HH.4b 6.11–28; on this digression, see Web Essay FF: Caesar the Ethnographer, §§4–5.

HH.4c 6.9.1–2.

HH.4d 6.29.1.

HH.4e 6.30.4.

HH.5a 7.43.5–6, 745.

HH.5b 7.47–51.

HH.5c 7.52–53.1.

HH.5d 7.47.1.

HH.5e 4.19.

§6. When Caesar wrote the *Gallic War*, there were available to him a number of ethnographic traditions about the Gauls, primarily from sources such as Polybius, Posidonius, and the early Latin annalists.^a The Gauls are certainly represented as a terrifying and ever-present threat, responsible for a number of near disasters for the Roman state.^b But the sources also stress that the Gauls are notorious for their lack of endurance. They make a frightening first impression but can rarely sustain their initial burst of energy. They are prone to exhaustion, overeating, and drunkenness. At the first sign of adversity in battle, the Gauls give up. Caesar builds on the Gauls' long-standing reputation for deceit, fickleness, and lack of discipline, attributing these qualities to his enemies at a number of points in the *Gallic War*. They are quickly persuaded to wage war, and they make decisions without any forethought.^c The narrator comments that "just as the spirit of the Gauls is ready and quick to take up arms, so their minds are soft and little resistant to the disasters that must be endured."^d Worse, the Gauls are deceitful and untrustworthy.^e Given the Gauls' reputation for such failings, these harsh depictions of the Gallic character are not unexpected. Caesar was surely interested in convincing his readers of the necessity to control them and, more important, the inevitability of Roman rule over them.

§7. But Caesar's Gallic opponents also display bravery in battle and steadfastness in defeat, traits they almost never have in sources written prior to the *Gallic War*. They often push Caesar and his men to the brink of their abilities. For example, the Helvetii are thoroughly beaten, but Caesar takes pains to show that they demanded a major effort from his army: "throughout the whole battle . . . no one could see an enemy with his back turned."^a Caesar here emphasizes Gallic persistence (in contrast to fickleness and lack of discipline). Later, the last of the defeated Nervii fight while standing on a heap of their fallen tribesmen. Caesar comments: "not without good reason were they judged to be men of enormous *virtus*. For they had dared to cross a very wide river, climb its steep banks, and advance on extremely difficult ground: the Nervii's courage had made light of these obstacles."^b Victory in the specific circumstances of that battle took an almost superhuman effort anyway;^c it was further enhanced by the positive description of these enemies.

§8. In Book 7, Caesar comments on the near-suicidal bravery of some Gauls at Avaricum who kept throwing clods of tallow and pitch into a fire threatening a Roman siege tower. As soon as a warrior was killed, another stepped over his body to continue the work until he himself was killed.^a Caesar's most daunting adversary, Vercingetorix, a skilled strategist and charismatic general, commands an especially large and powerful army that comes very close to defeating the Roman soldiers, though ultimately in vain.^b Even (or perhaps especially) in defeat, Vercingetorix is imbued with dignity. He explains to his war council that the preservation of Gallic freedom has been his only goal throughout, and then offers his companions the choice of giving him up to the Romans dead or alive.^c The *Gallic War*, unsurprisingly, is a record of Gaul's failings and Caesar's

HH.6a See Williams 2001 and Web Essay FF: Caesar the Ethnographer, §§1–2. On the annalists (authors who wrote Roman history in year-by-year segments), see Mehl 2011.

HH.6b Most famously, the Gauls sacked Rome in the early fourth century B.C.E.

HH.6c 2.1, 3.8, 4.5.

HH.6d 3.19.6.

HH.6e 2.32, 4.33, 5.27–41.

HH.7a 1.25–26.

HH.7b 2.27.5.

HH.7c See Web Essay EE: Caesar's Portrait of "Cæsar," §4.

HH.8a 7.25.2–4.

HH.8b See especially 7.80–88. Needless to say, as is typical in ancient historiography, the numbers of the defeated enemies here, too, are exaggerated: the larger the defeated armies, the greater the victor's glory.

HH.8c Vercingetorix: 7.89.

strength, but it also offers evidence of Caesar's admiration for great opponents in whose defeat he and his men had to rise to the highest levels of bravery, persistence, and achievement.

§9. Livy, writing a generation after Caesar, opens the thirty-seventh book of his *History of Rome* with a description of three Roman campaigns in the early second century B.C.E. Livy explains that the victorious army in Asia had been weakened because of its exposure to the easy living and feeble enemies found there; the Romans in northern Greece, on the other hand, were destroyed by the much fiercer Thracians. Only a third force, in Liguria, was having what Livy considered a successful experience—the soldiers were neither winning nor losing, but instead waging a seemingly endless series of skirmishes with a difficult enemy. This campaign sharpened the Romans' discipline and *virtus*. The idea that the right kind of enemy could increase Roman *virtus*, articulated so clearly by Livy and found in multiple sources from the middle and late republic, is central to Caesar's narrative of his conquest of Gaul.^a To burnish his image, Caesar needs to do more than represent his own march to victory—he needs to represent that victory as arduous and hard won. If Caesar's defeat of the Gauls were too quick and easy, his readers might wonder whether Caesar had faced any challenge at all. The author of the *Gallic War* must strike a careful balance, emphasizing his own astonishing talent while making clear that his Gallic enemies were worthy opponents. Caesar and his enemies must be near equals. Caesar's skill as a propagandist is as evident in his elevation of the Gauls as it is in his portrayal of himself and his own men.

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HH.9a For examples of how a luxurious environment could corrupt an army, see Polybius 9.10 on the sack of Syracuse; Livy (dependent on second-century B.C.E. annalistic sources) 39.6 on Manlius Vulso's Asian campaigns in 187; Sallust's *Catinianarian Conspiracy* 11 on Sulla's corruption of his army in Asia.

WEB ESSAY II

The Literary Art of the Civil War

Luca Grillo

§1. When we think of Caesar, we usually think more of his military and political achievements than of his literary talents. His contemporaries, however, regarded him also as an engaged intellectual, brilliant stylist, and successful orator and writer. Cicero, who knew Caesar personally, famously praised the style of his commentaries,^a and about 150 years later a prominent teacher of rhetoric, Quintilian, found no less positive words for his orations: “Such force dwells in him, such sharpness and such passion, that it seems that he spoke with the same vigor with which he fought.”^b Of course, Caesar put these talents at the service of his literary ambitions, and as a result, the *Civil War* cannot simply be dismissed as a work of propaganda (though it certainly is that too),^c but must be appreciated also as a piece of literature, still worth reading more than two thousand years after its composition. A recent revival of interest in the *Civil War* and in Caesar as an author and literary artist has yielded new perspectives and discoveries: this essay focuses on a small selection of these.^d

§2. Caesar’s narrative choices provide a good starting point for uncovering his art. Both in the *Gallic War* and the *Civil War*, Caesar avoids the first person (though there are some exceptions)^e and instead refers to himself as “Caesar,” following the example of the fourth-century Greek general and historian Xenophon, who used the third person in speaking of himself in his *Anabasis*.^b As has long been noted, this choice creates a sense of objectivity, as if Caesar-the-narrator had managed to detach himself from Caesar-the-character or -actor, providing readers with an impartial report. Also similar to Xenophon’s

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- II.1a Cicero, *Brutus* 262.
- II.1b Quintilian 10.1.114. See also Web Essay CC: The Roman *Commentarius* and Caesar’s Commentaries.
- II.1c See Web Essay JJ: The *Civil War* as a Work of Propaganda.
- II.1d See Batstone and Damon 2006; Kraus 2007; Grillo 2012.
- II.2a For instance, 1.46, 3.44.
- II.2b Literally, *The March Upland*; the work is often called *The Persian Expedition* or *The Expedition of Cyrus*, and is available in various translations (for example, in the Penguin series). For a recent discussion of this work, see Flower 2012.

Anabasis, the personality of this narrator (as opposed to the character who, of course, dominates the action) is unintrusive, which further strengthens our sense of his impartiality: compared to the works of other ancient historians, moralizing comments or precepts are scarce, and this helps produce a matter-of-fact tone that seems to favor “facts” over comments. It goes without saying that these are literary devices and that Caesar further deploys the possibilities they offer. For instance, in contrast to the character Caesar, the omnipresent narrator can smoothly take different points of view: during the siege of Corfinium the perspective switches in quick and dramatic succession from the Caesarians attacking the walls to the people enclosed inside and the dissent dividing citizens, commander, soldiers, and their officers, reporting each group’s sentiments.^c

§3. The description of the secret plans of Domitius, the defender of Corfinium,^a shows that the narrator is also omniscient and can read his characters’ minds. This becomes clear in the very opening of the *Civil War*, when the narrator reports the ambitions that motivate Cato, Lentulus, and Scipio,^b and remains true in the rest of the work. At the battle of Pharsalus, the narrator reveals the thoughts of Pompey and Labienus, and at Utica he does the same with Curio.^c The few exceptions demonstrate just how well Caesar has mastered the art of narrative: at Pharsalus, the omniscient narrator confesses that he is unsure whether Triarius or someone else was responsible for suggesting that the Pompeian soldiers await the charge of the Caesarians—a serious tactical mistake.^d This admission of doubt (in fact, about an insignificant detail) corroborates both the narrator’s authority in the rest of his account and the reader’s sense that Pompey’s plan, which remains inexplicable even to the narrator, was disturbingly irrational. Similarly, the narrator admits that he can only guess why two brothers, both officers of the Gallic Allobroges, decided to desert to the enemy after they had served under Caesar for a long time, thereby implying that there is no rational cause for such a defection.^e

§4. The narrator’s ability to read people’s minds suggests another mark of Caesar’s art: his skill in characterization.^a According to ancient manuals of rhetoric, a person’s character and deeds are closely connected: character accounts for one’s deeds, and in turn deeds make one’s character manifest. Accordingly, Roman orators worked hard at characterizing their clients in order to demonstrate that a certain conduct did or did not fit this particular person. Thus Cicero portrays Catiline as a corrupted corrupter of youth (suggestively, Sallust’s Catiline is different), Caelius as an elegant but innocent libertine, Sestius and Milo as courageous opponents of the potential tyrant Clodius, and so forth. As one would expect, Caesar, who according to Quintilian was the only orator of his time capable of standing up to Cicero,^b in the *Civil War* uses all his skills in characterizing individuals and groups: from the start,^c Caesar is presented as a victim of unfair senators, who act upon personal resentment (Cato) and personal greed and ambition (Lentulus and Scipio). This characterization at the opening of the *Civil War* helps readers to accept (Caesar’s version of) the rest of the story. For instance, an angry Cato complains about Pompey and abandons the position he has been assigned;^d a power-driven

II.2c 9.18–22.

II.3a 9.19–20.

II.3b 9.4.

II.3c 11.86–87, 10.37, respectively.

II.3d 11.92.

II.3e 11.79. This type of narratological analysis of the *Civil War* is explored in more depth in Grillo 2011. On the Allobroges brothers, see Web Essay FF: Caesar the Ethnographer, §11.

II.4a On characterization and its use in the context of civil wars, see Roller 2001.

II.4b Quintilian 10.1.114.

II.4c 9.4.

II.4d 9.30.5. On Cato’s and Pompey’s characterization, see also Yates 2011.

Lentulus enrolls gladiators and behaves like a Hellenistic king;^e and an overambitious and greedy Scipio is allotted the rich province of Syria, which he proceeds to ravage.^f Caesar, instead, is the frustrated promoter of peace: he remains merciful in the face of warmongers who are held responsible for the civil war;^g Pompey is also a victim of machinations,^h but guilty for abandoning Caesar's friendship and refusing negotiations, as well as being arrogant.ⁱ Yet the harshest treatment is reserved for Labienus, against whom Caesar harbors strong personal resentment because he has sided with his earlier patron, Pompey, after having served under Caesar and received his favor, support, and promotion in the Gallic war: Labienus is a traitor and a boastful oath breaker, driven by a visceral hatred of Caesar.^j

§5. Characterization also helps the narrator to portray groups of people: the Roman citizens of Italian and Greek towns manifest their enthusiastic loyalty to Caesar, pointing out that the Roman people sided with him;^a the Massilians are treacherous;^b the Caesarian soldiers display blind trust in their leader and in his motives;^c while the Pompeians in Spain realize their error in fighting Caesar.^d Short, artful characterization helps the narrator to account convincingly for the behavior of individuals and groups, and this advances Caesar's agenda: the *Civil War* blames the war on a few power-hungry and narrow-minded senators, declaring the rest of the Senate, the Roman people, and above all Caesar not guilty for the tragedy they all suffered.^e

§6. Caesar's oratorical skills are on display also in speeches—a regular feature of ancient historiography. At the end of the Spanish campaign in 49, after Caesar has twice cornered his adversaries, managing to defeat them without striking a blow, two indirect speeches recapitulate the salient events of the campaign. One of the Pompeian generals, Afranius, argues that loyalty to Pompey should excuse their enmity toward Caesar, and concludes in a pathetic tone, supplicating for mercy.^a To this speech Caesar responds by refuting Afranius' claim to innocence, listing in anaphora all the unjust actions his opponents have perpetrated “against him,” and arguing that every general has the duty to spare the life of his soldiers and fellow citizens, as he did and Afranius did not.^b Both speeches exemplify Caesar's preference for indirect speech, a choice that affects our experience of the narrative. The narrator, seemingly reluctant to leave the stage completely to his characters, opts for simply reporting salient selections of their words: words and facts are registered without break of continuity and with the same matter-of-fact tone, under the direction of a narrator who declines to explain or justify his selections. These indirect speeches, however, are structured according to the precepts of manuals of rhetoric: Afranius opens with an appeal to goodwill (*captatio benevolentiae*), solemnly offers his army's capitulation, and ends with a proper conclusion (*peroratio*), stirring the emotions as every reader would expect him to do. Similarly, Caesar proceeds by refuting his adversary's assumptions before recapitulating the main events of the war and concluding with his conditions for peace. It is unlikely that at this point Caesar actually delivered this long oration in front of two exhausted armies, but his speech conveniently summarizes the

II.4e 9.14.4–5, 11.96.1, respectively.

II.5a 9.12–28, 11.12.

II.4f 9.6.5, 11.31.1.

II.5b 10.14.

II.4g For example, 9.85–86, 10.22.

II.5c For example, 9.7, 11.6.

II.4h 9.4.

II.5d 9.74, 9.87.

II.4i For instance, 9.26, 11.18, 11.82, 11.86, respectively.

II.5e See Web Essay JJ: The *Civil War* as a Work of Propaganda.

II.4j 11.71, 11.13, 11.87. On Labienus and the other persons characterized by Caesar, see Appendix A: Who's Who in Caesar.

II.6a 9.84.

II.6b 9.85

main events of this phase of the war, reiterates Caesar's main accusations against his opponents, and draws an artistic closure.

§7. The speech Curio gives in front of his mutinous troops in Africa^a similarly follows the conventional structure of orations: it is divided into introduction, argumentation (including many examples and rhetorical questions), and pathetic conclusion; these words are embellished with figures typical of oratory, including, to use the technical terms, antithesis, anaphora, alliteration, and rhythmic clausulae. While Curio (allegedly) pronounced these words in Africa, Caesar was still in Spain, and the enemies later killed virtually everyone who had been in Curio's audience; once again, therefore, one might doubt that Caesar faithfully reports Curio's words, but the omniscient narrator uses them to achieve another artistic effect. Caesar's creation characterizes Curio as loyal (and naive), exculpating Caesar from responsibility for the disaster of Curio's army while upholding other values typical of the *Civil War*: it juxtaposes Caesarian successes and virtues to defeats and vices of his opponents, while identifying the cause of Caesar with that of Rome. Curio's speech stands out also because it is the longest direct oration in the commentaries, comparable only to that of the Gaul Critognatus in a critical phase of the *Gallic War*;^b thus the narrator honors Curio by interrupting the narrative as if "citing" his words verbatim, and in turn such words honor Caesar.

§8. Speeches in the *Civil War*, then, serve multiple functions, most of them typical of classical historiography: Caesar can use speeches for characterization, as the fifth-century B.C.E. Greek historians Herodotus, Thucydides, and Polybius did before him, and as the Roman historians Sallust and Livy will do after him;^a but through speeches Caesar also displays his rhetorical skills, as historiographers typically did. In comparison with other ancient historians, however, Caesar's speeches stand out both for his pronounced preference for indirect speech and for his choice not to explain his methods and goals in reporting them, as Thucydides and Polybius famously do.^b

§9. The structure of the *Civil War* exhibits another trait of Caesar's art. The work opens with a meeting of the Senate in which its leaders refuse to read Caesar's letter out loud, and their oppressive procedures propel Rome toward war.^a This opening both echoes and contrasts with the closure of Caesar's own *Gallic War*, where the news about his victory over Vercingetorix is welcomed by the Senate, which proclaims a thanksgiving in Caesar's honor.^b As Batstone and Damon have noted, this echo suggests that, although the majority of the Senate keeps supporting Caesar, some leading senators of 49 have a completely transformed attitude toward him.^c The structure of the *Civil War*, however, also presents the reader with various possible endings for this war. Book 1^d ends with Caesar's bloodless victory at Ilerda, according to his proclaimed ideal of winning without fighting.^d Book 2 ends with the tragic death of Curio and the destruction of his army, and with the enslavement of the few survivors by Juba, king of Numidia;^e this ending, as opposed to that of Book 1, invites the reader to reflect on the potential consequences of a victory by Pompey, in contrast to that of Caesar. Book 3 and the *Civil War* conclude without a proper ending but with the beginning of a new war at Alexan-

II.7a 10.32.

II.7b 7.77.

II.8a See, for example, Herodotus 1.29–33; Thucydides 2.35–46; Sallust, *Catinarian Conspiracy* 51–52, Livy 21.30.

II.8b Thucydides 1.22; Polybius 12.25a–b.

II.9a 9.1.1.

II.9b 7.90.8.

II.9c Batstone and Damon 2006, 43.

II.9d Books 1–3 of the *Civil War* are Books 9–11 of *The Landmark Julius Caesar*, respectively.

II.9d 9.72.

II.9e 10.42–44.

dria, which Caesar probably planned to describe in another commentary.^f He never realized this plan, but the end of the *Civil War*, as it stands, suggests that the war is not over and that Caesar, in spite of winning at Pharsalus, was forced by the intransigence of his adversaries to renounce his dream of winning without shedding more blood. To achieve this literary effect, Caesar manipulates the sequence of events: he places Curio's campaign in Africa, which concluded just two weeks after Caesar's in Spain, in a separate book and narrates it after events in Spain that postdated those in Africa.

§10. Caesar also artistically employs the genre and style of the *Civil War* to establish many connections with the *Gallic War*, fashioning himself as the bulwark of Rome. For instance, Caesar never refers to foreign soldiers fighting in his army as “barbarians,” but barbarians abound in Pompey’s army;^a similarly, in the *Civil War* Caesar assigns to Pompeians the same qualities he attributes to Gauls in the *Gallic War*—cruelty, treachery, and extravagance.^b In other words, both in the *Gallic War* and the *Civil War*, Caesar claims to fight against threatening, barbarian forces that aim at destroying Rome. Thus key vocabulary, motifs, and the very generic expectations set by the *Gallic War* return in the *Civil War* and cooperate in identifying Caesar with the cause of Rome.

§11. Caesar’s language is one of the best examples of Latin classical prose. The precise choice of vocabulary and the regular construction complex sentences earned the praises of Cicero and Quintilian; observance of Latin syntax made his pure prose a staple for generations of students. As in the *Gallic War*, the style of the *Civil War* is plain and unadorned but polished; hence, although it is less famous (and less read) than the *Gallic War*, the *Civil War* reaches many peaks of artistic brilliance.^a Along with some passages mentioned above, one can find examples of Caesar’s literary genius in his battle descriptions;^b in the dramatic scenes at Corfinium, Ilerda, and Massilia;^c in the sketches of personalities like Otacilius, Juba, and Crastinus;^d and in his overall ability to retain a seemingly factual and “objective” tone while coloring the reader’s experience of his narrative. Thus language, narrative, structure, characterization, and speeches exemplify Caesar’s art; this art helped him to promote his version of the civil war, but it also makes the *Civil War* an eminent piece of literature that is still worth reading.

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II.9f See Web Essays LL: The Origins of the Corpus of Caesar’s Works, §§8, and MM: The Non-Caesarian War Books, §§5–6.

II.10a 9.34, 11.4.

II.10b 9.76, 11.38, 11.19, 11.96.

II.11a Rossi 2000; Batstone and Damon 2006,143–65; Kraus 2007; Grillo 2012, 14–36, 80–94.

II.11b For example, 11.92–94.

II.11c 9.18–22, 9.74–76, 10.13–16, respectively.

II.11d 11.28, 10.44, 11.91, respectively.

WEB ESSAY JJ

The Civil War as a Work of Propaganda

Kurt A. Raaflaub

§1. Caesar's commentaries were written with a strong purpose: to explain and justify the author's actions, to present him, despite his long-standing and continually deepening conflict with a group of leading senators, as a superior Roman general and statesman, and so to facilitate, after his very long absences in war, his reintegration into Roman society and politics.^a Naturally, therefore, the commentaries are anything but objective and disinterested works of history, and no one would have expected them to be.^b This is especially true for the *Civil War*,^c which has the even more difficult task of justifying the author's decision to invade his own country with his army and, after failing in the political arena, to seek victory by means of a civil war. It is thus a priori clear that the *Civil War* is a work of propaganda, aiming at presenting Caesar's view of the events, especially to a world that was saturated by other views, disseminated not only by Caesar's opponents but also by his followers.^d The question is what impact this strong purpose had on Caesar's presentation and explanation of the events he describes, or, to put it more directly, to what extent it prompted him to misrepresent the course of events and distort history. This issue is further complicated by the fact that Caesar also

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JJ.1a For the historical context, see the Introduction, §§15–16, 55–56, and, for the commentaries, Web Essay CC: The Roman *Commentarius* and Caesar's Commentaries.

JJ.1b See also Web Essay HH: The *Gallic War* as a Work of Propaganda.

JJ.1c The *Civil War* comprises Books 9–11 of *The Landmark Julius Caesar*.

JJ.1d To get an impression of this "propaganda war," it suffices to peruse Cicero's correspondence during the initial months of the war. For example, Curio (Appendix A: Who's Who in Caesar, §20), told Cicero after Caesar's ugly confrontation with the tribune Metellus in Rome in the spring of 49 (9.33–34): "Pompey's death constituted [Caesar's] goal.... Caesar had been quite carried away with rage against the tribune Metellus and had wanted to have him killed; in which case there would have been a great massacre. There were any number of people urging him that way, and as for Caesar himself it was not by inclination or nature that he was not cruel but because he reckoned that clemency was the popular line. If he lost favour with the public he would be cruel" (*Letters to Atticus* 10.4.8, trans. Shackleton Bailey). See also 7.19; *Letters to Friends* 8.16.1. This was certainly not what Caesar wanted people to hear: see §12.

was, again, the protagonist in his narrative—although this time in competition with his former ally and now bitter rival Pompey.^e

§2. Efforts to demonstrate that Caesar in his report quite systematically falsified history and to expose him as a habitual liar reached a high point in two learned books published in the mid-twentieth century.^a Such efforts went much too far; they have long been abandoned and replaced by more moderate and convincing assessments. John Collins, in particular, examining the rich evidence preserved in other authors, concludes that only an “almost vanishingly small” amount of factual correction is required and that Caesar’s tendentiousness lies in his tone rather than the facts.^b To be sure, Caesar’s legate in the civil wars, consul in 40, and later author himself of a history of the civil wars, Asinius Pollio,^c wrote that the commentaries show signs of carelessness and inaccuracy. In particular, Pollio says, “Caesar believed too quickly what others reported about their actions and narrated his own deeds often incorrectly, either deliberately or because he did not remember.” The charge of deliberate inaccuracy, however, is balanced by Pollio’s conviction that Caesar would have intended to correct and rewrite the commentaries if he had had the time.^d Among many arguments refuting exaggerated modern claims of systematic historical distortion two seem especially important. One is that there were too many witnesses; the other is that many of the phenomena highlighted by Caesar’s critics can be convincingly explained in other ways. I will begin with these arguments and then discuss more productive ways of assessing propaganda in Caesar’s *Civil War*. Naturally, in this context I have to be brief and confine myself to a few aspects and examples, taken mostly from the beginning of the work.

§3. First, then, witnesses. Especially during the civil wars, Caesar acted, so to speak, under the eyes of all of Rome. From his camps, and from those of his opponents, officers and soldiers sent a steady flow of letters to their families, friends, and allies in Rome and Italy. Caesar himself comments ironically on his enemies’ habit of boasting, often prematurely, to the entire world of their successes and expectations of victory,^a and Cicero’s correspondence offers a treasure trove of information on the issue of how information circulated.^b People thus knew much about what was going on—although what they heard was often distorted by rumor and bias—and Caesar wrote his commentaries for readers who had witnessed some of the events or had at least already absorbed a lot of information. Moreover, he wanted his works to be read widely, by audiences of all classes.^c Stark and obvious distortions would have been exposed easily and would have reduced the work’s impact and the propaganda’s effectiveness.

§4. It suffices to illustrate this with one example. In early January 49, the Senate in Rome passed an emergency decree and the tribunes acting on Caesar’s behalf fled from the capital. As soon as Caesar heard, he writes, that the political defense of his cause had collapsed, he secured in assembly the support of the soldiers of the one legion he had

JJ.1c See Web Essay G: Caesar and Pompey.

JJ.2a Barwick 1951; Rambaud 1966. Predecessors include the eminent German historian Eduard Meyer (1922, 293, nn. 1–2).

JJ.2b Collins 1972; for a brief summary, see Raaflaub 2009, 184–91. Helpful and reasonable assessments are also spread throughout Batstone and Damon 2006; Grillo 2012.

JJ.2c On Pollio, see Drummond 2013 (with a translation of the fragments and commentary); Haller 1967.

JJ.2d Suetonius, *Caesar* 56. Moreover, as an author

describing the same events, Pollio was hardly an unbiased witness and most likely pursued his own agenda.

JJ.3a See especially 9.53, 11.72.4.

JJ.3b It is revealing to peruse from this perspective Cicero’s *Letters to Atticus*, dating January–March 49 (7.10–8.9, nos. 133–88 in Shackleton Bailey’s 1978 translation), from the outbreak of the civil war to Caesar’s return to Rome after Pompey’s departure from Brundisium.

JJ.3c See Web Essay CC: The Roman *Commentarius* and Caesar’s Commentaries, §7.

with him in Ravenna and immediately marched to Ariminum, where he met the tribunes who had fled from Rome.^a At that time, too, two unofficial envoys brought Caesar a private message from Pompey. Caesar used this opportunity to send Pompey his response and a set of proposals intended to stop the development toward war and resolve the conflict peacefully. The two envoys traveled to the area of Capua, where they met Pompey and the consuls, who presented Caesar's proposals to those senators who were around. The same envoys carried their response and counterproposals back to Caesar, who found them unsatisfactory and rejected them. In his commentary, Caesar reports these failed negotiations as a continuing narrative in four consecutive chapters,^b and only then resumes the report on his own actions: the occupation of other towns and the organization of levies among the local population.^c Critics have taken this as evidence for Caesar's deception: in their interpretation, he claims to have waited quietly in Ariminum for the entire three weeks while the negotiations were going on, but since we know from Cicero's correspondence that Caesar began immediately to expand his area of control and to levy troops, it is obvious that Caesar tries to mislead his readers.^d In fact, Cicero's evidence refutes the critics: lots of people in Italy knew that Caesar had not been sitting still until the negotiations failed, and they would have recognized immediately that Caesar was lying if this was indeed the message he wanted to convey. Caesar would have been stupid to ignore this: his presentation of the sequence of events can and must be understood differently.

§5. This is where literary and stylistic arguments become important. During the Gallic wars Caesar had regularly sent reports to the Senate, at least at the end of a campaigning season, perhaps more often. Generals' reports present events in a factual and linear narrative, supported by precise data (such as dates, distances traveled, and time consumed).^a But Caesar's extant commentaries are an entirely different matter. They are literary masterpieces and elaborated with many features that are typically used in the writing of history.^b These features include selection, omission, emphasis, and narration in coherent blocs. In other words, Caesar does not report everything evenly and in linear sequence but selects the most important events, emphasizes the most relevant aspects, and pursues a strand of narrative to its end or to a suitable stopping point before switching to another strand or resuming an earlier one. The latter principle is visible throughout both commentaries and explains Caesar's arrangement of events here. Moreover, the connections between these narrative blocs are remarkably weak and vague: misunderstandings result if they are interpreted too narrowly and strictly. For example, *itaque*, used in the transition from the failed peace negotiations to the start of Caesar's offensive and levies,^c can mean "therefore," which would imply that Caesar started to move only after the negotiations failed; yet it can also indicate that a previous strand of thought or narrative is being resumed after an interruption or digression, which does not imply a strict temporal and causal sequence.^d This is the meaning required here and in countless other passages.

JJ.4a 9.6–9.8.1.

JJ.4b 9.8.2–9.11.3.

JJ.4c 9.11.4–9.13.5.

JJ.4d See, for example, *Letters to Atticus* 7.17.2, 7.18.2.

JJ.5a See Web Essay CC: The Roman *Commentarius* and Caesar's Commentaries, §3, referring to the example of Xenophon's *Anabasis*, and Web Essay GG: The *Gallic War* as a Work of Literature, §§2–4, with reference to Cicero's reports from Cilicia.

JJ.5b See Web Essay CC, §8, and, more generally on Caesar's literary skills, Web Essays GG and II: The Literary Art of the *Civil War*.

JJ.5c 9.11.4.

JJ.5d *Oxford Latin Dictionary* (1982) 974; Oppermann 1933, 21–22. Another frequent connection, *interim* ("meanwhile"), can cover several weeks if not months.

§6. Such loose or formulaic language is also visible in longer phrases. Again, just one example: in the spring of 49, during their hurried march toward Brundisium to catch up with the retreating Pompey, Caesar's troops captured Pompey's chief engineer, Numerius Magius. Caesar sent him ahead to Pompey with an urgent request to resume peace negotiations before it was too late. He received no response. During the siege operations at Brundisium, Caesar used another contact to achieve the same goal. This time a negative response came back. Caesar concludes: "Now that Caesar had broached the matter a number of times without success, he decided finally to give up these efforts and to deal with the war."^a Taken literally, this might imply that Caesar had been holding or at least slowing down his military operations while the peace initiative was going on, and only resumed the siege after their failure. So at least some of Caesar's critics have interpreted the passage, concluding again that he misrepresented his actions; for Cicero's unhappy testimony leaves no doubt that Caesar did pursue war and peace at the same time.^b That Caesar, however, did not intend to mislead is obvious from his own frank statement: "While Caesar was advancing these efforts [that is, the works to close the harbor's mouth and to trap Pompey in Brundisium], he still continued to believe that he should not give up attempts to achieve peace. And although... his frequent attempts at reconciliation impeded his initiatives and further plans, he thought that he should in every way possible persist in these attempts."^c Although Caesar does not explain how exactly the peace efforts hampered what he was doing, we need not doubt that the possibility of a peaceful settlement at least formed a distraction, required careful planning,^d and prevented Caesar from focusing entirely on his military agenda. Abandoning the futile peace efforts, he was now able to do so. Caesar speaks about his thinking, not his actions. "He decided to deal with the war" thus should be understood as "He decided to focus entirely on the war." Similarly, after another breakdown of peace efforts in the next year, when Caesar indeed went out of his way to pursue what initially seemed a promising peace initiative, he writes that he finally "turned his attention back to the other issues pertaining to the conduct of the war."^e

§7. This does not mean that Caesar always was completely truthful. In some cases one cannot but suspect that he omitted or tried to cover up an action that was disgraceful and damaging, or that he used misrepresentation to denigrate an opponent. Hirtius' report on the final two years of the Gallic war permits us to recognize two cases of this type: Labienus' attempt to assassinate Caesar's former friend and ally Commius and a raid of Alpine tribes on Tergeste (modern Trieste), which Caesar as governor of Illyricum should have prevented or punished—events that Caesar apparently preferred to pass over in silence.^a We find omissions in the *Civil War*, too, both of facts and of precision in reporting them. The most glaring omission, though, hardly mattered: Caesar did not need to mention explicitly that during his march from Ravenna to Ariminum in mid-January 49 he actually crossed the boundary of his province and invaded Italy—every reader would have recognized this immediately.^b Omission of precision in reporting is obvious in Caesar's vague references to the movements of his troops before he

JJ.6a 9.24.4–5, 9.26.2–5.

JJ.6b Cicero, *Letters to Atticus* 9.13.8, 13A, 14.1–2.

JJ.6c 9.26.2.

JJ.6d This aspect is rarely taken into account: if Pompey had, after all, agreed to a settlement or if Caesar had succeeded in trapping him in Brundisium (as he almost did) and forcing him to capit-

ulate, countless practical problems would have awaited resolution; they required advance thought and planning.

JJ.6e 11.15–11.17.6.

JJ.7a 8.23, 8.24.3.

JJ.7b 9.8.1. See Cicero's reaction in *Letters to Atticus* 7.11.1.

invaded Italy. He had called up the 13th Legion in the late fall of 50, just when the conflict was getting acute; this is the legion he took into Italy, while “the others had not yet arrived.”^c This implies that he had earlier given orders to two of the legions encamped in Gaul to join him in Cisalpine Gaul. They reached him a few weeks later, during his advance through Italy.^d Once in Ariminum, he “called the remaining legions out of their winter camps and ordered them to follow him.” As it turned out, these legions never joined him in Italy—they were later used in the Spanish campaign and in the siege of Massilia—but they might have done so if the war had developed differently.^e Caesar’s critics accuse him of lying here, dating his summons of the two legions far too late. Caesar’s allusion to an earlier summons does not justify this accusation, but he left things unclear enough to attract suspicion—perhaps trying to avoid a contradiction with the emphasis he placed on his extreme patience and hope for reconciliation.^f

§8. Omission and obfuscation are not the same as outright falsification. We might suspect the latter—or at least malicious acceptance of unverified rumors—when reading that upon a Senate decree the consul Lentulus went to the treasury in Rome to take out the funds that were to be handed over to Pompey for the war, but, seized by panic when hearing rumors of Caesar’s approach, he fled head over heels and even left the doors of the treasury wide open. In ways that remain unclear, this seems to tie in with Caesar’s later efforts, which a tribune tried to prevent by his veto, to take money out of this treasury.^a We might also doubt whether Caesar really returned the commander’s war chest that fell into his hands in Corfinium to his archenemy Domitius Ahenobarbus, who, after all, by having been captured had lost his command and was let go only under the condition that he would not continue to fight against Caesar. What, then, was he supposed to do with this huge sum of public money?^b Yet such cases of historical distortion are extremely rare. Overall, Caesar’s propaganda is more subtle, and his distortion remains within limits that to every Roman of the time would have seemed perfectly understandable and normal. And these limits, we should remember, were pretty wide: exaggeration and mudslinging were features all too familiar from Roman court rhetoric.

§9. Both exaggeration and malicious denigration of opponents are amply in evidence in the opening chapters of the *Civil War*: in stylistic features (an abundance of superlatives and emphasis through reduplication)^a and in the accusation that his opponents pushed their hostile agenda through the Senate with despicable methods like slander, manipulation, and intimidation; did “everything in a great hurry and without order”; and “turned every law, divine and human, upside down.”^b Caesar’s anger and frustration are transparent in the utterly negative characterization of his opponents as mean and venal, driven by ambition, greed, and personal hostility, utterly self-serving, and lacking

JJ.7c 9.7.8; this corresponds to 8.54.3.

JJ.7d 9.15.2, 9.18.5. Hirtius does not mention this order that postdates Caesar’s final arrangement for his troops in Gaul (8.54.4). It must have gone out in early December; see n. 9.8c.

JJ.7e Order from Ariminum: 9.8.1. For a survey of Caesar’s troop movements in late 50, see n. 9.36d.

JJ.7f 9.5.5.

JJ.8a 9.14.1 with n. 9.14b; 9.33.3–4 with n. 9.33b; see also Carter 1961, 170.

JJ.8b 9.23.4; see n. 9.23j. Loss of command: 10.32.9.

JJ.9a In one chapter alone, we find several superlatives: for example, “the most basic right” of the tribunes at 9.5.1, “the extreme and ultimate decree of the

Senate” at 9.5.3, “the harshest and gravest measures . . . concerning . . . most eminent men, the tribunes of the plebs” at 9.5.4, Caesar’s “most moderate demands” at 9.5.5; Cicero called these same demands “threatening and harsh” (*Letters to Friends* 16.11.2); see also superlatives at 9.2.5, 9.7.7. Reduplication enhancing the effect appears in some of the same phrases and at 9.1.2, “boldly and bravely,” at 9.2.6 “against their will and compelled,” and at 9.2.8 “most harshly and brutally.” Vastly exaggerated also is Caesar’s claim to have pacified all of Gaul and Germany at 1.7.7.

JJ.9b Slander and intimidation: frequent in 9.1–6; the quotes are at 9.5.1, 9.6.8; see also 9.32.5.

all respect for traditional procedures or the Senate's dignity and liberty. Later, too, Caesar does not hesitate to depict his enemies and those who betrayed him in the worst possible terms: they are cruel and lack ethical principles, are duplicitous and break oaths and promises, are overconfident and boastful, but lack determination and give up easily.^c

§10. In all this Caesar sets up a stark contrast between his own behavior and principles and those of his opponents: his defense of the Roman Senate's and people's liberty versus his opponents' suppression of such liberty; his generosity and clemency in dealing with defeated and captured citizens versus the other side's brutality in executing them; his concern for the well-being of communities that join him or have capitulated versus his opponents' tendency to exploit and maltreat the population of towns they occupy; his respect for sanctuaries and their treasures versus the other side's willingness to plunder them; his repeated efforts to restore peace versus their consistent refusal to engage in negotiations.^a No doubt: in reporting and emphasizing these contrasts, and thereby presenting himself in the best possible and his opponents in the worst possible light, Caesar selects and enhances the facts, but we have enough contemporaneous and later evidence to know that the facts themselves are essentially correct. Propaganda is most effective if it remains rooted in well-known and verifiable truths.

§11. Moreover, to a large extent the contrasts just mentioned are connected with the political strategy Caesar pursued in the civil war. This strategy was two-pronged and diametrically opposed to that of his opponents. Faced with the enormous challenge of justifying his decision to fight a civil war and maintaining the legitimacy of his cause, Caesar chose, on the one side, to present himself as protector of the liberty of the Roman Senate and people, whose authority and will had been blatantly ignored by a small faction of his opponents, and as defender of the rights of the tribunes of the plebs that had been suppressed by the methods these senators used to prevent them from upholding their veto against anti-Caesarian measures.^a Apart from events in the period leading up to the outbreak of the war, which both Hirtius and Caesar criticize severely in their reports,^b this line of defense was based on Caesar's claim that his demand to run in absentia for a second consulship and to keep at least part of his military and provincial command until he entered this office was absolutely legitimate, based on an appropriately passed bill and other agreements. This claim as such, as Cicero confirms, was unassailable, except that it was objected to by Caesar's determined opponents, who used every means available to prevent its realization. In the end, as so much in Roman politics of the time, this conflict was not about laws and agreements but about politics and power.^c This, in turn, offered Caesar an opportunity to conduct his defense on a second and entirely different level.

§12. On this level, Caesar emphasized his fight for the defense of his *dignitas* (his reputation and standing) and for his political survival. Seen in this way, the political conflict that had erupted in a civil war ultimately was nothing but the continuation of a

- JJ.9c For the negative characterization of Caesar's opponents, see especially: of Labienus, 9.2–4, 9.53, 10.44, 11.19.6–8, 11.71.4, 11.87.1–5; of Pompey, 11.45–46; of Scipio, 11.31–32; of other leaders in Pompey's camp, 11.82–83.
- JJ.10a For the issues of liberty, clemency, and peace efforts, see §§11–12. Caesar's efforts to spare towns that had capitulated or joined his cause: 9.21.1–2, 10.13.3–4, 13.7.2; the opponents' opposite behavior: 9.28.1, 13.26.1. Sanctuaries: 10.18, 10.21, 11.33, 11.105.

- JJ.11a Liberty: 8.52.3, 9.3.5, 9.9.5, 9.22.5; prerogatives of the tribunes: 9.2.7–8, 9.5.1–5, 7.7.2–6, 7.22.5, 7.32.6. For a detailed discussion of these and the arguments presented in subsequent paragraphs, see Raafaub 1974.
- JJ.11b 8.52.3–54.3, 9.1–7, 9.32.5–6, 9.85.9–10.
- JJ.11c 9.2–3, 9.32.2–4; Cicero, *Letters to Atticus* 7.3.4, 7.6.2, 7.9.3, 8.3.3, among many other statements (discussed in Raafaub 1974, 125–36); see also Web Essay J: The Legitimacy of Caesar's Wars, §§12–19.

long-standing personal conflict between Caesar and a small faction of his opponents who were driven by personal enmity and who now, seizing the opportunity offered them by their control of high offices and Pompey's power, used the Senate and the state's resources to take their fight to a new level: they tried not only to deny Caesar the rewards he had earned by conquering Gaul for the Roman state but to destroy his standing and career, if not his life.^a From our modern perspective, it seems absurd to conduct the defense for launching a civil war so emphatically on a personal level. To Romans for whom the political, social, and personal dimensions of their lives and careers were inseparably intertwined, this line of defense was perfectly acceptable, although they might challenge the extremes to which Caesar was ready to go in pursuing his defense: they understood that he fought with teeth and nails to defend his *dignitas* but they decried his willingness to do this by means of a civil war.^b

§13. As the conflict progressed, however, Caesar realized that his political line of defense was, in fact, not very promising: in standing up for the liberty of Senate and people, he simply countered a line of propaganda that his opponents had used against him for many years—that his political goals and methods threatened Roman liberty.^a Although he strongly emphasized the motif of liberty at the very beginning of the war, he simply dropped it after a few weeks.^b His fight for the rights of the tribunes, on the other hand, was tied to the events of the first week of January 49. As these events receded into the background, these arguments lost their urgency, especially after Caesar ran afoul himself of this issue when breaking a tribune's veto by threat of violence in the spring of 49.^c Moreover, on January 1, 48, Caesar became consul by legitimate election in Rome. Henceforth, it was important only to demonstrate that he was acting as a Roman consul should, in the interest of the Roman state and caring for the needs of its citizens. This line of argument is emphasized strongly in Book 3 of the *Civil War*;^d some scholars take this as an indication that Caesar intended to publish the work upon returning to Rome in 47 as a means to facilitate his reentry into Roman politics.^e

§14. By contrast, Caesar soon recognized that the personal line of defense offered him important political advantages, and these he exploited to the fullest. His opponents presented themselves as defenders of the Roman state against a recalcitrant governor who refused to obey the Senate's orders. They passed an emergency decree against him, declared him an outlaw, and treated him and his supporters like public enemies.^a Hence

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| JJ.12a | Caesar's fight for his <i>dignitas</i> and political survival: 9.77–8, 9.8.3, 9.9.2–4, 9.22.5, 9.32.4, 9.85.8–10, 11.91.2; Cicero, <i>Letters to Atticus</i> 7.11.1; <i>On Behalf of Ligarius</i> 18. According to Quintilian (11.1.80), the accuser of Ligarius had characterized the conflict between Pompey and Caesar as a “contention about <i>dignitas</i> ”; see also 9.4.4. | JJ.13d | Book 11 of <i>The Landmark Julius Caesar</i> . |
| | | JJ.13e | See 9.32.2, 11.1.1 on the legitimacy of Caesar's consulship in 48. See Boatwright 1988 on the emphasis Caesar places throughout Book 11 on his responsibility as a consul and representative of Rome. |
| JJ.12b | See Pompey at 9.8.3; Cicero, <i>Letters to Atticus</i> 7.11.1. | JJ.14a | 9.2.6, 9.5.3. When Caesar reminded his soldiers in Ravenna of their successful wars against Gauls and Germans, he implied (and in his real speech probably spelled out) that not only his and the tribunes' reputation and standing were threatened by his opponents but also their hard-earned rewards (9.7.7–8). They had been made outlaws as well, and only their victory could restore their citizen status and entitlement: 11.91.2; Cicero, <i>On Behalf of Ligarius</i> 6.18; Lucan, <i>Pharsalia</i> 1.278–79. |
| JJ.13a | See, with sources, Raaflaub 2003, 48–50. | | |
| JJ.13b | At the beginning of the civil war, mintmasters who supported Caesar even placed the head of Libertas (“Liberty”) on their coins; see Figure 9.22. This motif does not recur in Caesar's later coinage (Raaflaub 2003, 56–57). For an explanation of Caesar's decision to drop his freedom propaganda, see Raaflaub 2003, 56–67. | | |
| JJ.13c | 9.33.3–4; Cicero, <i>Letters to Atticus</i> 10.4.8 (cited at §4). | JJ.14b | For detailed discussion and all source references, see Raaflaub 1974. |

after the failure of initial negotiations they refused to negotiate for peace, they treated those who wanted to stay out of the conflict and did not actively support them as enemies, and they brutally killed all prisoners of war, even if they were Roman citizens.^b In doing so, they continued the argument with which Cato, in particular, had derailed a promising compromise in early January 49 that would have prevented the war: when it came to the state, he said, no compromise was possible.^c Caesar argued in precisely the opposite way. Since he was not fighting against the Roman state, Senate, or people, his argument ran, but was only protecting his standing, career, and life against a small faction of his enemies, he did not need to pursue this war to its military resolution. As he put it, these “civil disagreements” should never have escalated into war.^d As soon as his minimal and perfectly legitimate demands were met,^e peace was immediately possible. Hence he sought to resume negotiations at numerous occasions, offering to discharge his army if the other side agreed, reliably and other oath, to do the same.^f For the same reason, he welcomed neutrality, respecting those who wanted to stay out of the conflict and considering those his allies who did not fight actively against him.^g For the same reason, again, he treated those who fell into his hands with leniency and generosity, letting them return home and demanding only that they not resume their fight against him. Leniency and clemency became his catchwords. In a letter widely circulated after the clemency he had shown at Corfinium, Caesar wrote to two of his followers: “I had already decided on a policy to demonstrate as much leniency as possible and to make every effort to reconcile Pompey. Let us try whether in this way we can regain the good will of all people and achieve lasting victory. . . . Let this be our new way of conquering: to protect ourselves by mercy and generosity.” In response to Cicero’s compliments, Caesar wrote: “You rightly surmise of me (you know me well) that of all things I abhor cruelty. The incident gives me great pleasure in itself, and your approval of my action elates me beyond words. I am not disturbed by the fact that those whom I have released are said to have left the country in order to make war against me once more. Nothing pleases me better than that I should be true to my nature and they to theirs.”^h Given the widespread fear that both civil war generals were going to turn into “second Sullas,” imitating the cruel revenge and proscriptions of the winner of the first Roman civil war in the 80s, Caesar’s unexpected clemency made an immense impression and rapidly turned public opinion in his favor.ⁱ

§15. In highlighting these principles and condemning the opposite principles pursued by Caesar’s opponents, the propaganda offered by the *Civil War* was much more effective than any historical distortion Caesar might have been tempted to use to enhance his self-presentation. It showed Caesar as the statesman and leader of all

JJ.14c See especially Velleius Paterculus 2.49.3; Suetonius, *Caesar* 30.1; Cicero, *Letters to Friends* 16.11.2.

JJ.14d For Caesar’s avoidance of “civil war” (*bellum civile*), except for military contexts, see 9.67.3, 11.1.3; see also 8.Pref.2; Cicero, *Letters to Atticus* 10.8B.2; *Letters to Friends* 11.28.2.

JJ.14e See §9.

JJ.14f See Caesar’s own summary in his address to his soldiers before the final battle at Pharsalus (11.90.1).

JJ.14g Cicero, *On Behalf of Ligarius* 11.33 (addressing Caesar): “We heard you say frequently that we considered as our enemies all who were not with

us, while you considered all who were not against you as on your own side.”

JJ.14h Act of clemency at Corfinium: 9.23. Caesar’s letters: Cicero, *Letters to Atticus* 9.7C; 9.16. A temple of the Deified Julius and Clementia was decreed by the Senate in 44 (Cassius Dio 44.6.4; Plutarch, *Caesar* 57) in which Caesar and the goddess stood clasping hands; it is featured on a posthumous coin with the legend *Clementia Caesaris* (Clemency of Caesar).

JJ.14i Fear: for example, Cicero, *Letters to Atticus* 7.22; change in public opinion: 8.16.2. For a full discussion, see Raaflaub 1974, 293–316.

Romans he wanted to be, even if circumstances had forced him to start and fight a civil war.^a If his “blitzkrieg” strategy in the spring of 49 had succeeded and the war had ended with Pompey’s capitulation at Brundisium, he might have been able to realize these aspirations, and history might have changed its course—at least for a while. As the war dragged on and on, however, attitudes and perspectives changed, the propaganda embedded in the *Civil War* lost its reason and purpose—and the work was never published.^b

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- JJ.15a Caesar thus interpreted the unwillingness of Italian and provincial citizen communities to support his opponents as a popular vote in his favor: 9.12–13, 9.15, 9.35.1, 11.12.2. See, overall, Raaflaub 2010b.
- JJ.15b See Web Essay CC: The Roman *Commentarius* and Caesar’s *Commentaries*, §12.

WEB ESSAY KK

The Cultural Legacy of Caesar's Commentaries

Debra L. Nousek

Gallia est omnis divisa in partes tres.

—*Veni vidi vici.—Et tu, Brute?*

§1. In common parlance, these Caesarian phrases are (or used to be) so familiar that they almost do not need to be translated.^a Even those who know little of ancient Rome still recognize Caesar's name, even to the point of equating "Caesar" with "Rome." There has been enormous interest of late in studying the reception of Caesar in historical and popular culture,^b albeit more in representations of Julius Caesar the general and dictator than the author of the *Gallic* and *Civil War* commentaries. Indeed, the last phrase above owes its fame entirely to Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*; the ancient biographer Suetonius attests that Caesar's final words to Brutus were spoken in Greek, if they were spoken at all.^c From Shakespeare to HBO's *Rome*, Caesar has become a household name, arguably the most famous Roman of all. But the modern fame of Caesar owes at least as much to the history of the classroom, where Caesar's *Gallic War* served for centuries as the pupil's first introduction to unadapted Latin prose, to practical reading experience in the clear and correct Latin for which Caesar's works were known even by their contemporary readers. Soon after the *Gallic War* was written, its first "reviews" praised the pure and concise eloquence of Caesar's expression; Aulus Hirtius, in particular, extolled Caesar's virtues as an author who wrote clearly, quickly, and engagingly.^d Yet even then there were critics: the historian (and former Caesarian officer) Asinius Pollio found fault with the commentaries because they had not been written with sufficient care and accuracy.^e

NOTE: All dates are B.C.E. (Before the Common Era) unless otherwise indicated. The dates given in the Web essays are those of the traditional Roman civil calendar up to January 45, when the Julian calendar was instated. For more on the Roman system of time-counting, see Appendix C: Roman Calendars, Dates, and Time. For all Web essays, go to landmarkcaesar.com. Source references without indication of title or author name refer to the texts in *The Landmark Julius Caesar*. Modern works are listed fully in the Bibliography. All Web essays are copyright © 2017 by Robert B. Strassler and Kurt A. Raaflaub. They may be downloaded and printed for noncommercial use only. Any other use requires written permission of the copyright holders.

KK.1a "All Gaul is divided into three parts" at 1.1.1; "I came, saw, and conquered" (a proverbial phrase coined by Caesar to characterize his victory over Pharnaces in 47; see 12.77.1), Plutarch, *Caesar* 50; Suetonius, *Caesar* 37); "You too, Brutus?" (see n. KK.1c).

KK.1b See, in particular, Wyke 2006, 2012.

KK.1c Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*, Act III.1.77; Suetonius, *Caesar* 82.

KK.1d Cicero, *Brutus* 262; Hirtius, Book 8.Pref.4–7, in *The Landmark Julius Caesar*.

KK.1e Suetonius, *Caesar* 56. On these judgments and Caesar's historical writing, see further Web Essays CC: The Roman *Commentarius* and Caesar's Commentaries, and DD: Caesar the Historian.

§2. From these earliest assessments right up to the twenty-first century, Caesar's works have enjoyed a sustained readership, and it is not difficult to see why. These texts, from the pen of a man who not only wrote but *made* history, might be read in order to gain insight into the man who "brought down the republic" or "founded the empire" (depending on one's perspective on late republican history). In addition, the commentaries are the earliest complete example of Latin historical writing in prose, earlier than Sallust, Livy, or Tacitus, the three best-known Roman historians. The fact that Caesar wrote contemporary history brings a sense of immediacy to the narrative; that these are accounts of military action makes for a close-up look at life in the Roman army—or at least such is the pretense. But, as will be explained below, and as other essays in this volume show in more detail, the commentaries offer important insights into the workings of Roman society, they are guides to Roman values in action, they illustrate the vision of a leading Roman of what constituted true "Romanness," and, not least, they are highly refined and accomplished literary works, produced at a time when Roman literature was still struggling to reach the higher levels that would make it respectable in a world long dominated by Greek literary achievements.^a

§3. The commentaries may not impart detailed, practical information, but they are our best source for Roman military affairs in the late republic, written by a man who was himself an experienced commander.^a For many centuries, readers have thus turned to Caesar for military instruction, for examples of strong and effective leadership, and, most broadly, for instruction in Latin. The surge of interest in classical topics during the Renaissance, as ancient authors were first made available to wider audiences in printed editions, brought the commentaries to the attention of those interested in military history, strategy, and tactics. The prospect of reading a Roman general's own descriptions of the many campaigns he fought was particularly appealing to those educated in the humanistic tradition. Machiavelli, for example, turned to Caesar's works in his quest for ancient examples of successful military stratagems.^b Warfare in the sixteenth century differed considerably from that in Caesar's day, of course, but lessons could still be learned and applied, such as, for example, Caesar's use of fortifications and siege works, and his keen awareness of topography.^c Caesar's success as a general and politician made him an object of study by men who occupied similar positions in their own time and place, as is clear from the example of Napoleon Bonaparte, whose own study of Caesar, dictated in exile on St. Helena, used the commentaries to determine facts and historical details such as battle locations, dates, and troop movements.^d Napoleon III's fascination with Caesar inspired him to sponsor excavations at Caesarian sites and to write a historical work on the Roman general, though more broadly conceived as a history of Rome that culminates in a thorough study of Caesar's political and military acts and legacy.^e

§4. Cumulatively, however, it is as a school text that the commentaries may have had their most enduring impact. From an early period of school curricula in Great Britain,^a and subsequently in North America, Caesar has been the author studied by pupils fol-

KK.2a See Web Essays EE: Caesar's Portrait of "Caesar," GG: The *Gallic War* as a Work of Literature, and II: The Literary Art of the *Civil War*; see further §§8–10 below.

KK.3a See, for example, Le Bohec 2001, 2007.

KK.3b As Krebs explains, though, knowledge of Caesar's authorship was lost in late antiquity, and it took some time in the era of early modern scholarship to reestablish it with certainty; see Web

KK.3c Essay DD: Caesar the Historian, §9.

KK.3d Wintjes 2006, 269–70.

KK.3e Napoleon 1965.

KK.3e Napoleon III 1865–66. The third volume of this work is an atlas with the maps drawn by Colonel Stoffel on the basis of his topographical explorations and excavations in Gaul. See also Stoffel 1987.

KK.4a And presumably also in continental Europe.

lowing their initial instruction in Latin grammar. When Cardinal Wolsey established his school at Ipswich in 1528, for instance, students were expected to read Sallust or Caesar in the upper stages of their grammar school education.^b The commentaries remained on the curriculum of grammar schools and universities all the way up to the middle of the twentieth century. Caesar's style and relatively straightforward syntax provided an excellent model for students to imitate in their own compositions, and at the same time offered an exciting narrative for the pupils—almost exclusively boys in earlier centuries—who would one day engage in their own military campaigns.

§5. Caesar also formed a central part of the Latin curriculum in American high schools. A typical program of high school Latin study in the early twentieth century began with instruction and drills in grammar (vocabulary, morphology paradigms, syntax) in the first year, followed by Caesar's *Gallic War* in the next, while the third and fourth years focused on Cicero and Vergil, respectively. Teachers for the latter two years might substitute or add Sallust, Nepos, and Ovid, but reading Caesar in the second year became so commonplace that it was soon known as “the Caesar year”;^a Book 1 of the *Gallic War*, often with selections from additional books, formed the core of the reading material. In this way, the famous episodes in the opening book of the *Gallic War*—the introductory description of Gaul's geography, the attempted coup of Orgetorix, the march of the brave Helvetii, the fearsome Germans led by Ariovistus, and above all the character of Caesar himself—became the foundation for Latin pedagogy in secondary schools. Moreover, since not all students continued their study of Latin beyond the second year, Caesar's commentaries often were their main experience with Latin literature. Schools may have had additional reasons for focusing on Caesar in second-year Latin, since the curriculum in English literature in the same year often included Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, thus allowing students to compare the character, accomplishments, and fate of two Caesars: one in Gaul, leading Roman legions to victory, and one in the Roman Senate, falling victim to a conspiracy of patriotic citizens.^b The figure of Caesar was in this way given an added dimension.

§6. Over the course of the twentieth century, Caesar's fortunes as a school text were affected by the events occurring on the world stage. During World War I, for example, students were encouraged to use the *Gallic War* text as a means to visualize the terrain and tremendous challenges of infantry combat in France. The rise to power of Hitler and Mussolini—especially the latter, who viewed himself as a modern descendant of the Roman general—brought Caesar back into the spotlight. As the icon of the Fascist movement in Italy, he came to be seen as representing the enemy of the Allies and of liberty. In the classroom, too, Caesar was under attack. Revision of the high school curriculum, combined with dropping enrollments in Latin, meant that less Caesar was being read, and by fewer students.^a In retrospect, this is not surprising, since the cataclysmic events of two world wars profoundly changed American and European culture. Classics journals of the early twentieth century are filled with strongly argued positions for or against curriculum reform and the value of reading the commentaries.^b This is especially true in the wake of the “Classical Investigation” in the 1920s, itself a response to attacks on the usefulness of Latin in the classroom.^c As the Western world emerged from the

KK.4b Clarke 1959, 6.

KK.5a Wyke 2012, 32.

KK.5b *Ibid.*, 47–67.

KK.6a *Ibid.*, 95.

KK.6b See, for example, Coe 1930; Lodge 1930; Harrop 1933; Franklin 1939.

KK.6c Wraga 2009, 79–80.

shock of the first half of the century, Caesar's texts were viewed less as heroic adventure tales and more as sinister falsifications of events designed mainly to further, at any cost, their author's career. As high school and college Latin courses gradually chose less belligerent texts for second-year study, interest in the commentaries declined.

§7. And yet, in the first decades of the new century, Caesar has once more found a place in the Latin classroom, as in the United States the College Board's new Advanced Placement (AP) curriculum mandates the teaching of Caesar's *Gallic War* and Vergil's *Aeneid*.^a What can Caesar's texts offer to students of the modern age? What approaches might a modern Latin teacher use to bring value to reading this most traditional of Latin texts? Compared with the place of the commentaries in the classrooms of a century ago, some similarities still hold true, though the precise circumstances have changed. Now, as then, students read the *Gallic War* soon after they have completed their course of grammatical instruction, though this now often takes place later in the curriculum. The selections prescribed by the AP committee all come from the *Gallic War*, just as students in the early twentieth century spent their time with Caesar in Gaul rather than in the *Civil War* Mediterranean.

§8. Nonetheless, both the *Gallic War* and the *Civil War* are texts that can profitably be used in the classroom to spark discussion on points of comparison with the modern world. The long exchange between Caesar and Ariovistus, for instance,^a raises questions about the extent to which one political entity can legitimately exert pressure on the actions of another. In the ancient context, one might ask whether Caesar had a right to restrict Ariovistus' expansion, and find a similar application in the context of modern interventions by powerful countries or coalitions in conflict zones in other parts of the world. Appeals for Roman mediation in Gallic intertribal and intratribal conflicts, frequent throughout the *Gallic War*, are reflected in contemporary culture by American diplomatic missions that attempt to settle political conflicts among peoples with long-standing grievances. Aspects of the *Civil War*, too, resonate with modern American politics, in that the highly polarized atmosphere of factional opposition that led to civil strife in the Roman world^b is paralleled (though far less violently) in the threats of government shutdown when political parties cannot find a way to work together toward an acceptable compromise. In addition to these few examples, Caesar's texts offer contemporary readers opportunities for developing critical thinking; like all politicized texts, whether campaign ads, policy statements, or public relations documents, the commentaries represent a part of Caesar's personal and political agenda. Their celebrated (and only apparent) "objectivity" invites readers to examine the motives behind presenting his narrative as Caesar does,^c and to recognize his masterful artistry in shaping the text both in content and in style.^d

§9. But much has changed in today's understanding of Caesar. The commentaries have a greater variety of readers than a century ago: no longer schoolboys in training to rule an empire or fight a war, but students, teachers, and scholars of Latin literature, as well as an interested general readership. Indeed, Caesar the author now commands as much interest as Caesar the general—or more. Recently there has been a surge of inter-

KK.7a Mueller 2012 and Williams and Nousek 2012a, 2012b are designed specifically to assist students and teachers of AP Latin courses.

KK.8a 1.34–46.

KK.8b 9.1–6.

KK.8c On these aspects, see also Web Essays HH: The

Gallic War as a Work of Propaganda, and JJ: The *Civil War* as a Work of Propaganda. See also Web Essays GG: The *Gallic War* as a Work of Literature, and II: The Literary Art of the *Civil War*.

est in reading the commentaries not so much as war reports or propaganda, but as literature, applying many of the critical tools of literary analysis that have been used for interpreting other genres and authors. Particularly fruitful has been the study of not just *what* Caesar tells us, but *how*: recent analyses of the commentaries have engaged, for example, in careful scrutiny of the structure of the narrative, analysis of the perspective from which the events are recounted, and development of thematic elements.^a

§10. There is much to be gained from treating Caesar's works in new ways. Rather than focusing primarily on the commentaries as political or military texts, we can consider them as documents of cultural history that illustrate, among other things, a late-republican leader's view of Rome's relation to the outside world, of the cultural justification of Rome's conquests and empire, and of the traits, qualities, and values that mark true "Romanness."^a Or we can examine Caesar's texts in the context of Latin literature more generally. At the time when Caesar was writing, Latin was just beginning to thrive as a literary language. Moreover, despite his long absence from Rome, Caesar remained in the thick of Roman literary culture. Many of the period's authors whose works have survived—Catullus, Lucretius, Cicero, Varro, Sallust—were in some way connected with Caesar. While references to Caesar, for example, in Catullus' poetry undoubtedly aim at his political rather than literary persona, the commentaries and Catullan poetry share common features such as the artificial adoption of a literary persona in the third person.^b Like many authors, Caesar makes an argument in the commentaries for his version of major historical events; he is at once the main character in these narratives and the author shaping them. Here lies perhaps his greatest and lasting appeal, for Caesar's texts are representative of the man himself: capable, powerful, persuasive as well as multifaceted, complex, and not without contradictions. The commentaries bring Caesar to life in the minds of his readers—a legacy that even his assassination could not diminish.^c

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- KK.9a For an overview of recent approaches to the *Gallic War*, see Kraus 2009; for the *Civil War* see Batstone and Damon 2006 and most recently Grillo 2012. Important insights on literary aspects will be offered by Grillo and Krebs 2018.
- KK.10a See, for example, Riggsby 2006; Raaflaub 2018. On cultural constructions in the *Gallic War*, see Krebs 2006 and Schadée 2008.
- KK.10b Most readers of Catullus would not take his self-references in the third person (Poems 6, 8,
- 10, 11, 13, 14, 38, 44, 46, 49, 51, 52, 56, 58, 68, 72, 76, 79, 82) as representative of the historical Catullus; Caesar's literary persona in the commentaries can be interpreted similarly, with allowances for genre. For Catullus, see, for example, Nappa 2001; see also, from a pedagogical point of view, Garrison 2007, 512–13. For Caesar, see Marincola 1997, 197–98; Grillo 2011.
- KK.10c For other aspects of Caesar's impact and legacy, see Web Essay OO: After Caesar.

WEB ESSAY LL

The Origins of the Corpus of Caesar's Works

Jan-Felix Gaertner

§1. The medieval manuscripts that preserved Caesar's accounts of his deeds in Gaul and during the Roman civil war also contain four works that were composed by other authors and intended as supplements to Caesar's narrative: the eighth book of the *Gallic War* that describes Caesar's last two years of office in Gaul (51–50), and the *Alexandrian, African, and Spanish Wars* that deal with the military campaigns conducted by Caesar and his lieutenants from the defeat and death of Pompey the Great in the summer of 49 to the battle of Munda in 45. This ensemble of Caesarian and pseudo-Caesarian works, which seems to have already been read and transmitted as a unit in antiquity, is today commonly referred to as the *Corpus Caesarianum*.

§2. The authorship of the four supplements and the circumstances by which they became attached to the authentic Caesarian works have been a matter of debate for a very long time. The Roman biographer Suetonius, who wrote in the early second century C.E., already mentions various views on the authorship of the *Alexandrian War, African War, and Spanish War*, and does not know which of these is correct.^a Since the rediscovery of Caesar's works in the Renaissance, and especially since the groundbreaking edition of both the Caesarian and pseudo-Caesarian works by Karl Nipperdey in 1847, several attempts have been made to determine the authorship of the supplements and reconstruct the genesis of the *Corpus Caesarianum*. Despite these efforts, many details are still obscure or disputed.

§3. It is best to begin with the eighth book of the *Gallic War*, where we stand on somewhat firmer ground. In his *Life of Caesar*, Suetonius quotes parts of the preface to

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From among the wealth of bibliography on the topic of this Web essay, the following titles seem especially important: Nipperdey 1948; Klotz 1910; Pötter 1932; Barwick 1938; Koestermann 1973; Richter 1977; Patzer 1993; Hall 1996; Gaertner and Hausburg 2013.a. See also Web Essay MM: The Non-Caesarian War Books.

LL.2a Suetonius, *Caesar* 56.1.

this book that takes the form of a letter to Balbus, known as a close friend and assistant of Caesar, and explicitly attributes the passage to Caesar's follower and friend Aulus Hirtius.^a This is corroborated by the *inscriptiones* or *subscriptiones* (notes placed before or after the literary text itself) in medieval manuscripts that also attribute the eighth book of the *Gallic War* to Hirtius.^b Admittedly, some scholars have discounted the epistolary preface of the eighth book as a forgery, without, however, supporting this view by conclusive evidence. Moreover, the biographical information contained in the preface squares well with other ancient testimonies about Hirtius' life, and it seems unlikely that a forger living several centuries later would have undertaken the arduous task of compiling this information from Cicero's correspondence and other primary sources in order to expand the words quoted by Suetonius. Furthermore, there is a "second preface" toward the end of the *Gallic War* in which the author suddenly uses the first person singular ("I") and explains why he deviates from the year-by-year format of Caesar's own books.^c This personal intervention presupposes that the author has already introduced himself to the reader, and thus supports the authenticity of the prefatory *Letter to Balbus*. On the whole, then, the attribution of the eighth book of the *Gallic War* to Aulus Hirtius is corroborated by a number of reliable ancient and medieval sources.

§4. The question of the authorship of the *Alexandrian*, *African*, and *Spanish Wars* is far more complicated. In his *Life of Caesar*, Suetonius says only that some people attributed these three works to Hirtius, while others believed that they were written by Gaius Oppius, another follower of Caesar and friend of Balbus.^a The second of these possibilities was rightly discarded long ago because it is not corroborated by any other ancient evidence and because Oppius is unlikely to have had any firsthand knowledge of the military campaigns described in these works. The first possibility is far more plausible because it seems to be supported by what Hirtius himself writes in his prefatory letter to the eighth book of the *Gallic War*: "I have continued the commentaries of our friend Caesar concerning his achievements in Gaul, because there was no link between these earlier writings and the later ones. I have also completed his most recent work which he left unfinished, from the campaigns in Alexandria to the end—certainly not of these civil conflicts, of which no end is in sight, but of Caesar's life."^b

§5. At first sight, Hirtius' claim to have continued Caesar's account right down to the time of his assassination offers an easy solution, for it seems to indicate that Hirtius wrote all the supplements. Upon closer inspection, however, Hirtius' words pose several problems. First of all, his reference to a continuous narrative, to Caesar's death is at odds with the contents of the *Corpus Caesarianum*, for the transmitted text of the *Corpus* does not end with Caesar's assassination on the Ides of March of 44, but with an assembly at Hispalis in Spain in May 45. Second, the idea that Hirtius wrote the *Alexandrian*, *African*, and *Spanish Wars* is incompatible with the fact that these works differ considerably in their vocabulary, syntax, style, and historical method.^a And third, Hirtius' remarks are rather vague. In particular, it is not clear what he means by Caesar's "most

LL.3a Suetonius, *Caesar* 56.3. On Hirtius, see n. 8.Pref.b.

LL.3b The fact that some manuscripts conflate Hirtius with Vibius Pansa (Hirtius' consular colleague in 43) and attribute the book to "Hirtius Pansa" is only a minor confusion that does not diminish the value of our sources.

LL.3c 8.48.10–11.

LL.4a Suetonius, *Caesar* 56.1.

LL.4b 8.Pref.2.

LL.5a See Web Essay MM: The Non-Caesarian War Books.

LL.5b Book 11 of *The Landmark Julius Caesar*.

recent work“ that “covers events only up to his campaigns in Alexandria.” Do these words point to the narrative known as book three of the *Civil War*^b or do they refer to an account of the subsequent events that was similar to (or even identical with) the early chapters of the *Alexandrian War*?^c Since we do not know exactly what Hirtius found in Caesar’s literary estate, it is hard to say where his continuation of Caesar’s narrative begins.

§6. There is no easy solution to any of these problems. Most modern scholars attribute the entire *Alexandrian War* to Hirtius and explain the discrepancies between the *Letter to Balbus* and the contents and style of the *African* and *Spanish Wars* by one of the following two scenarios: either Hirtius delivered on his promise and wrote a continuous account of Caesar’s deeds right down to March 44, but his treatment of the later events in Africa, Spain, and Rome was lost and at some point replaced by two accounts by other authors (that is, the extant *African* and *Spanish Wars*); or Hirtius was prevented from finishing his account by his death in the battle of Mutina in April 43, and other Caesarians completed his project by adding the *African* and *Spanish Wars*. These scenarios cannot be ruled out completely but they remain highly speculative; there simply is no ancient evidence supporting the hypothesis that parts of Hirtius’ account were lost or that other Caesarians completed Hirtius’ narrative after his death. Furthermore, linguistic and structural analyses of the *Alexandrian War* have demonstrated that the work differs considerably from the eighth book of the *Gallic War* and consists of uneven parts; hence Hirtius himself is unlikely to have written the entire *Alexandrian War*.^a

§7. In view of the linguistic and stylistic differences between the four supplements, many nineteenth- and twentieth-century scholars discarded the view that Hirtius could have written the *Alexandrian War*, and attribute the *Alexandrian War*, *African War*, and *Spanish War* to three unknown authors of the 40s or 30s. The fact that Hirtius explicitly claims to have continued and finished Caesar’s account of the Roman civil war is explained by assuming that the *Letter to Balbus* and the eighth book of the *Gallic War* were written in the order in which they appear in the medieval manuscripts and that Hirtius died before embarking on the continuation of Caesar’s “most recent work.” This view, too, however, is entirely speculative, for no ancient evidence proves that Hirtius died at this particular point in the writing process. Also, most ancient (and, it seems, modern) authors tend to compose their prefaces not before, but rather after writing the main body of their works; hence it hardly appears plausible that Hirtius started by drafting the *Letter to Balbus* and that his statement “I have filled out the whole history, with narration up to Caesar’s death” anticipates the future completion of this literary project.^a Moreover, it is rather surprising that the unknown authors who allegedly continued Hirtius’ project did not insert a further preface in order to explain that, contrary to the expectations raised in the *Letter to Balbus*, there was not going to be a continuous and homogeneous narrative down to the end of Caesar’s life but rather a heterogeneous, multiauthored hotchpotch. And finally, the view that the *Alexandrian War*, *African*

LL.5c The *Alexandrian War* is Book 12, the *African War* Book 13, and the *Spanish War* Book 14 of *The Landmark Julius Caesar*.

LL.6a See Web Essay MM: The Non-Caesarian War Books, §§5–8.

LL.7a There is, however, a parallel for this anticipatory perfect, in Thucydides’ account of the Peloponnesian War (5.26.1); see also Ovid, *Tristia* 2.549.

War, and *Spanish War* were each written by a single author is contradicted by the fact that the first of these three supplements is highly heterogeneous in itself and seems to be the work of several persons.

§8. A more consistent and plausible picture emerges from what might be called the “analytical” approach. Sensitive to the stylistic and other discrepancies within the *Alexandrian War*,^a some scholars have argued that Caesar’s draft, which Hirtius mentions in the *Letter to Balbus* was identical with the first twenty-one chapters of the *Alexandrian War*; according to this view, Hirtius continued Caesar’s account of the Alexandrian campaign in chapters 22–33 and then used a number of further accounts written by other Caesarians to create the book that has come down to us as the *Alexandrian War*. This hypothesis not only accounts for the heterogeneous nature of this book but also provides a parallel to what may have happened on a larger scale in the *Corpus Caesarianum* as a whole. Just as Hirtius may have glued together various reports and drafts when composing the *Alexandrian War*, he may also have incorporated two longer reports, the extant *African* and *Spanish Wars*, in order to accomplish his goal of a continuous account of Caesar’s deeds and do so rather quickly. This reconstruction would offer a plausible explanation for the heterogeneous nature of the *Corpus Caesarianum* and has the great advantage that we no longer need to interpret Hirtius’ words in the *Letter to Balbus* as empty promises or rationalize them by speculating about Hirtius’ premature death and unknown continuators or editors of his literary estate. Also, this rather economical method of composition would square well with the fact that Hirtius played an active role in the political struggles after Caesar’s assassination and may have had other priorities than writing a full account of Caesar’s deeds after Pharsalus. In addition, being an officer rather than a man of letters, Hirtius may have thought that the speedy publication of Caesar’s deeds was more important than the homogeneity of the narrative or questions of authorship. Although notions of intellectual property and “theft” surface here and there in ancient literature, they are primarily a modern concept, and Hirtius’ choice of words—“I have finished” (*confeci*), not “I have written”—may be intentionally vague to describe a mixture of original writing, copying, and editing.

§9. This is as far as our ancient testimonies and the linguistic and literary analysis of the transmitted texts allow us to go. Some scholars have tried to move beyond this point and identify the authors of the *African War* and *Spanish War* and of the later chapters of the *Alexandrian War* (33–78). However, the linguistic evidence for attributing some sections of the *Alexandrian War* to the Roman historians Sallust or Asinius Pollio is very weak, and arguments bearing on the contents are pure speculation. The fact that cavalry maneuvers play a central role in the *Spanish War* and that its author is well informed about the Spanish upper class hardly proves that the work must have been written by a cavalry officer who was a native of the province of Farther Spain. Nor do the nuanced portrayal of Cato and the detailed information on the operations of the 5th Legion establish that the *African War* must have been written by Caesar’s general Lucius

LL.8a See n. LL.5a.

LL.9a See Koestermann 1973.

Munatius Plancus, whose relative Munatius Rufus had composed an influential biography of Cato.^a The fallacy of such arguments is best illustrated by a look at the *Gallic* and *Civil Wars*: if we did not know that these texts were written by Caesar, similar arguments bearing on the contents might lead us to think that the author of these works was an officer of the 10th Legion, simply because this unit is presented in a particularly positive light.

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WEB ESSAY MM

The Non-Caesarian War Books

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§1. The eighth book of the *Gallia War* and the *Alexandrian, African, and Spanish Wars* were all added to the authentic commentaries after Caesar's assassination in 44.^a They are important as historical sources and offer unique evidence for the variety of Latin prose literature at the end of the republic. At that time, a standard of "correct" or "exemplary" Latin did not yet exist. Caesar and Cicero had developed a polished form of Latin that later became canonized as "classical Latin" and is still taught in schools and universities today, but this was just one form of expression among many others. Many of Caesar's and Cicero's contemporaries employed other paradigms of declension, made different uses of cases, tenses, and moods, and chose a more antiquated, slightly poetic, or conversational style and vocabulary. In addition to such linguistic variety, views also varied widely on the form and purpose of historical writing. Some authors (like Caesar) aimed at a rational and rather matter-of-fact presentation that refrained from explicit comments on the historical events; others wanted to captivate and move their readers and therefore placed great emphasis on emotions or garnished their accounts with colorful anecdotes; yet others regarded historiography primarily as a rhetorical exercise and thought that it should contain many speeches in which the historical actors explained their actions and tried to persuade one another.

§2. The four supplements to the *Corpus Caesarianum* differ considerably not only from Caesar's style and historical method but also from each other. Hirtius' account of the last two years of Caesar's proconsulship in Gaul (the eighth book of the *Gallic War*)^a

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For more detailed studies of the later war books, the reader might find the following titles useful: Pöttter 1932; Scholz 1956; Militerni della Morte 1996; Cluett 2003 and 2009; Adams 2005; Melchior 2008–9; Gaertner 2010; Tschiedel 2012; Gaertner and Hausburg 2013.

MM.1a See Web Essay LL: The Origins of the Corpus of Caesar's Works.

MM.2a Book 8 of *The Landmark Julius Caesar*, in which the *Alexandrian War* is Book 12, the *African War* is Book 13, and the *Spanish War* is Book 14.

is closest to Caesar's own books. This is no accident but reflects the author's aims and literary program. In the epistolary preface to his book (the *Letter to Balbus*) and the "second preface" later in the book^b Hirtius praises Caesar's elegant prose style, emphasizes the difficulty of continuing Caesar's narrative, and apologizes for deviating from the year-by-year structure of his commentaries. Clearly, Hirtius thus regarded Caesar's method of presentation as an ideal that transcended his own literary abilities but that he nevertheless tried to imitate as best as he could.

§3. In general, Hirtius' attempt to write in a "Caesarian" fashion was rather successful. Apart from minor differences, he follows the same morphological and syntactical conventions, and he structures his topographical information and battle descriptions in a way that comes close to Caesar's own. When examined more closely, though, several differences emerge. Although the vocabularies of both authors overlap to a large degree, Hirtius employs eighty-one words that are absent from Caesar's oeuvre. Several of these are specialized, technical terms^a such as *lancea* ("long light spear,") or *loricula* ("parapet,"), while others are bulky, abstract nouns^b such as *concitator* ("instigator,"), *salubritas* ("wholesomeness,"), or *vulneratio* ("the act of wounding,"). Also, Hirtius sometimes combines everyday words in a cumbersome fashion that is quite unlike Caesar's simple and elegant style.^c For example, one may contrast Caesar's frequent use of *incolumis* ("safe, unharmed") with Hirtius' expression *sine ullo paene militis vulnere* ("without almost any wound of a soldier"), or compare Caesar's use of *invadere* ("to assault, attack") and *sub brumam* ("at the time of the winter solstice") with *impressionem facere* ("to make an assault") and *diebus brumalibus* ("on the days around winter solstice").

§4. Further differences are visible in the selection and presentation of the historical information. In contrast to Caesar, Hirtius makes no use of direct speech and devotes far less space to expressing the hopes and expectations of the historical actors. Thus, on the whole, his account is more jejune and less captivating than Caesar's. Another important difference concerns the characterization of the historical actors and the evaluation of the events. While Caesar generally abstains from explicit judgments and prefers to characterize people simply through their words and deeds, Hirtius freely comments on events and persons^a and explicitly highlights Caesar's legendary swiftness and clemency.^b He also inserts propagandistic scenes such as the description of the jubilant masses welcoming Caesar after his return to northern Italy.^c Such overt pro-Caesarian bias, however, does not mean that Hirtius is less accurate or truthful. Quite on the contrary, when we can compare Hirtius' account with other ancient sources, it seems free from falsifications or distortions. Moreover, he mentions details that cast doubt on Caesar's self-presentation,^d and even appends information that Caesar may have deliberately omitted in the preceding books of the *Gallia War*.^e Thus Hirtius seems to have been torn: he could not suppress his feelings of loyalty and admiration for Caesar but he also felt that he had to give a truthful and accurate account of the historical events and act like a witness in a court of law.^f

MM.2b 8.48.10–11.

MM.3a Technical terms: *lancea* ("long light spear,"), 8.48.5; *loricula* ("parapet,"), 8.9.3.

MM.3b Abstract terms: *concitator* ("instigator,"), 8.21.4, 8.38.3; *salubritas* ("wholesomeness,"), 8.52.3; *vulneratio* ("the act of wounding"), 8.47.2.

MM.3c Hirtius' style: *sine ullo paene militis vulnere* ("without almost any wound of a soldier"), 8.37.1; *impressionem facere* ("to make an assault") 8.6.2; *diebus brumalibus* ("on the days around winter solstice"), 8.4.1.

MM.4a For example, through a phrase like *re bene gesta*: "after the matter had been done well" at 8.36.1.

MM.4b For instance, at 8.46.2, 8.44.1.

MM.4c 8.51.

MM.4d For example, in the cruel punishment of the male population of Uxellodunum at 8.44.1.

MM.4e Such as the failed attempt to assassinate Commius at 8.23.3–6 and Drappes' attacks on Caesar's supply lines at 8.30.1.

MM.4f See *Letter to Balbus*, §8: "matters of which we are going to give an account as witnesses."

§5. Hirtius' faithful adherence to the model established by Caesar stands in stark contrast to the linguistic diversity and the different historical techniques we encounter in the three supplements to Caesar's *Civil War*. The first of these, which Suetonius, Caesar's biographer writing as early as the early second century C.E. misleadingly called the *Alexandrian War*, does not follow the year-by-year structure of Caesar's books and has no clear geographical focus, but is composed in a symmetrical fashion (*ring composition*): 12.1–33 take up the end of Book 3 of the *Civil War*^a and continue Caesar's account of his operations in Alexandria and the Nile Delta; this section is mirrored by an account of Caesar's campaign against Pharnaces in the last chapters of the book (12.65–78), while the middle section deals with military actions of Caesar's officers in Asia Minor (12.34–41), Illyricum (12.42–47), and Spain (12.48–64).

§6. These parts of the *Alexandrian War* do not add up to a homogeneous whole. The first twenty-one chapters closely resemble Caesar's style and literary technique. Most of the phrases and even some shorter clauses have exact parallels in the authentic commentaries. As in the *Gallic War* and the *Civil War*, the narrator is unobtrusive and refrains from commenting on the events; the historical actors are characterized indirectly through their actions, and the sequence of events is presented as a rational, causally determined process. Furthermore, the narrator frequently switches between the perspective of Caesar's troops and that of their Egyptian enemies; he accentuates their respective hopes and fears, and thereby creates the impression that the outcome of the war is undecided. The best example of this technique is the dramatic account of a sea battle in the western harbor of Alexandria (12.13–16) that resembles a similar episode during the siege of Massilia but has an even closer parallel in the Greek historian Thucydides' account of the defeat of the Athenians in the harbor of Syracuse.^a This is probably no coincidence: Thucydides was very popular in Rome at the time, and his work also provides close parallels for other characteristic traits of the early chapters of the *Alexandrian War* (such as frequent changes of perspective and indirect characterization).^b

§7. Right in the middle of the narrative of the Alexandrian campaign, the language and historical outlook change drastically. From 12.22 onward, the clusters of Caesarian expressions disappear, the events are no longer presented from different perspectives, and the narrator frequently anticipates the outcome of military operations,^a comments on persons or historical events,^b and attributes successes and setbacks not to superior leadership or prowess, but to the influence of Fortune and other gods.^c This kind of presentation has little in common with Thucydides or Caesar's *Gallic* and *Civil Wars*, but reflects the influence of a different literary tradition, the so-called tragic or sensational historiography of Hellenistic writers and Roman historians of the late annalistic tradition.^d

§8. In addition to differences in style and historical technique, we also notice discrepancies in the quality of the information conveyed. Whereas 12.1–21 seem to have been written by an eyewitness who was well informed about the topography of Alexandria and the plans hatched on either side, the narrator of 12.22–33 is fairly vague about the topography of Lower Egypt and the advance of Mithridates of Pergamum^a and sometimes seems to cover for his lack of precise information with empty ranting about the

MM.5a Book 11 of *The Landmark Julius Caesar*.

MM.6a Massilia: 10.4–7; Thucydides 7.69–71.

MM.6b Thucydidean echoes are unmistakable in Caesar's authentic works as well.

MM.7a For example, 12.25.4, 12.42.1, 12.76.1.

MM.7b 12.25.6, 12.26.3.

MM.7c For instance, 12.25.4, 12.43.4, 12.62.3, 12.70.4, 12.75.3–4, 12.76.1.

MM.7d See n. MM.9d.

MM.8a 12.26.3–28.2.

superior morale of the Roman troops or Caesar's foresight.^b The later sections of the *Alexandrian War* (12.34–78) are more accurate again and full of firsthand information but at the same time strongly tinged with the feelings, attitudes, and objectives of those who were personally involved in the events described. For example, the narrator of 12.34–41 emphasizes Domitius' loyalty toward Caesar and tries to divert the reader's attention from his strategic blunders;^c in view of this exculpatory tendency, some scholars have wondered whether these sections are based on a report that was written by Domitius himself or a close friend of his. Similarly, in the narrative of the events in Illyricum the first chapters are fairly vague (12.42–43) but the account becomes much more precise when Vatinius enters the conflict (12.44–47), and the text repeatedly praises him for his leadership and prowess;^d thus the narrative seems to reflect what Vatinius experienced and wanted to pass down to posterity. These different perspectives and the discrepancies in style and narrative technique are best explained by the assumption that the *Alexandrian War* is not the work of a single author but a compilation of several reports, some of which were written by Caesar himself (12.1–21) and others by his generals or officers (12.22–78).^e

§9. The *African* and *Spanish Wars* are far more homogeneous, but also farther removed from the language and historical method of the *Gallic War* and the *Civil War*. The most obvious difference between the *African War* and Caesar's way of writing is the ratio between reading time and historical time: the work is one of the longest books of the whole *Corpus Caesarianum* but covers only the six months of Caesar's campaign in modern Tunisia (December 47–June 46). One reason for the unusual length is the fact that the author is less selective and includes many minor skirmishes that could easily have been omitted. Another important factor is the author's fondness for details, colorful anecdotes, and graphic descriptions; instead of presenting us with a simple and sober account of military operations, he mentions that the waves were almost “beating” against Caesar's tent near Lilybaeum, depicts the heroic fight of a Caesarian veteran against one of Juba's elephants, portrays the unrestrained carnage during the battle of Thapsus, and inserts several dialogues and speeches that characterize the historical actors and illustrate the moral superiority of the Caesarians.^a Caesar, too, occasionally introduces captivating anecdotes that have little bearing on the general course of events,^b but he does so very rarely. Surviving fragments of their work suggest that such tales were more common in the works of early-first-century B.C.E. historians such as Claudius Quadrigarius or Cornelius Sisenna,^c who wrote in the tradition of the Roman year-by-year histories (called annals).^d Perhaps the author of the *African War* deliberately modeled his account on such narratives.

§10. The language and self-presentation of the author of the *African War* are also quite un-Caesarian. One tendency that stands out is the account's informal tone. This

- MM.8b 12.22.1–2, 12.24.6.
 MM.8c On Domitius' loyalty, see 12.34.2, 12.34.3, 12.39.1. Domitius' main strategic blunder was that he accepted battle on Pharnaces' terms and in terrain that his opponent had prepared to his advantage (12.38–40). From hindsight, it also seems that, having just sent two of his three experienced Roman legions to Caesar in Egypt (12.34.2), he should perhaps not have undertaken the campaign against Pharnaces; but judgments from hindsight are always problematic.
 MM.8d For example, 12.44.1, 12.47.5.

- MM.8e See Web Essay LL: The Origins of the Corpus of Caesar's Works.
 MM.9a Lilybaeum: 13.1.1; elephant: 13.84; massacre: 13.85.4–9; speeches: 13.4.3–4, 13.16.1–3, 13.19.3, 13.22.1–23.1, 13.35, 13.44.1–46.2.
 MM.9b For example, 5.44.
 MM.9c Compare, for example, Quadrigarius, fragments 6, 82 in Cornell 2013 (10b, 80 in Peter 1870–1906); Sisenna: fragments 32, 132 Cornell (13, 129 in Peter).
 MM.9d On “annalistic historiography,” see Mehl 2011, chs. 2–3.

narrator is far more obtrusive than those of the other works of the *Corpus*: on several occasions he speaks in the first-person singular (“I”) about his aims and procedure and thus enters into a sort of dialogue with the reader.^a In keeping with this more conversational framework, his vocabulary and syntax include several words or constructions that have a colloquial feel and are avoided in the polished prose of Cicero and Caesar. The author also has a tendency to strive for expressiveness. In order to convey a precise and graphic image of the events, he employs many rare terms and foreign loanwords or coins new expressions.^b He also renders dialogues and speeches more realistic by imitating the tone of everyday conversation. For example, the use of the diminutive *feroculus* (furious in a disdainful sense) and the slightly colloquial anticipation of the subject of the subordinate clause in *iam me quis sim intelleges* (you will immediately recognize me, what kind of a man I am) give us a vivid impression of Labienus’ arrogance and the furious reaction of the unnamed Caesarian veteran responding to his challenge.^c

§11. The *Spanish War*, describing Caesar’s last campaign, in southern Spain (December 46–May 45), strikes us as much less appealing than the other works of the *Corpus Caesarianum*: its contents and form have been compared to a diary, and its language is commonly classified as “colloquial” or “vulgar”; some scholars have even doubted that the author’s mother tongue was Latin. Such verdicts may seem justified after a superficial reading, but a closer look reveals quite a different picture. It is true that the author often uses constructions or expressions that are avoided in Cicero’s and Caesar’s “classical” prose, but many of these features have close parallels in the historians who wrote one or two generations earlier. Hence the author was not necessarily an uneducated soldier; he may simply have followed a literary tradition that was beginning to sound a bit “old-fashioned.”

§12. The selection and presentation of historical information in the *Spanish War* pose a more complex problem. Many chapters (14.10–21) do indeed read like a day-by-day account of minor skirmishes, casualties, desertions, and executions. In other passages, however, the author is clearly concerned about the structure and dramatic effect of his narrative. His account of the battle of Munda has the same tripartite structure as Caesar’s battle descriptions (preparations, fighting, gains/losses),^a and he exploits the religious metaphor of a “sacrifice” or “atonement” in order to connect a Caesarian victory with the deaths of two centurions on the preceding day, thus creating a narrative unit.^b Likewise, his quotations from and allusions to epic poetry heighten the reader’s interest and underscore the importance of the events involved.^c Furthermore, some of the seemingly insignificant occurrences recorded in the “diary-like” 14.10–21 resemble similar interludes in earlier Roman historiography.^d

§13. Since the *Spanish War* ends abruptly in the middle of Caesar’s speech at Hispalis, it is tempting to speculate that the author never finished his work and that this is the reason why some portions seem to have been polished more than others. This hypothesis, however, fails to persuade, because the end of the work could easily have been lost in the process of transmission. Also, one would expect the literary polish to

MM.10a See, for instance, 13.7.4, 13.9.2, 13.59.1, 13.60.1.
 MM.10b Rare terms: for example, *galeari* (“equip oneself with a helmet”) at 13.12.3; a loanword: *hippotoxota* (“mounted archer”) at 13.19.4; an example of a new expression: *praepilatus* (“tipped with a ball”) at 13.72.5.

MM.10c 13.16.1–3.
 MM.12a 14.28.1–31.11.
 MM.12b 14.23.1–24.5 (atonement: 14.24.5).
 MM.12c Epic poetry: 14.23.3, 14.25.4, 14.31.7.
 MM.12d Compare, for example, 14.18.4–5, 14.19.3, 14.20.3, with Claudio Quadrigarius, fragment 82 Cornell (80 in Peter).

fade rather than, as is the case here, to increase toward the end of the text. Moreover, the preface to *Gallic War* 8 presupposes that the narrative of Caesar's deeds was finished (§2: "I have filled out the whole history"), and it would have been odd to publish a work that was incomplete.^a Instead of thinking of an unfinished draft, we should consider alternative explanations: the author of the *Spanish War* may have thought that Hirtius, the redactor and "compiler" of the *Corpus Caesarianum*, would condense and elaborate the day-by-day account at 14.10–21; or he may have attached particular importance to the minor incidents that he reports and wanted to give a detailed and unvarnished account of the daily atrocities occurring in this war. The second possibility seems more plausible, for it squares well with the author's interest in gruesome details,^b and the *African War* also focuses often on executions, massacres, and other acts of cruelty.

§14. By directing our attention toward the cruelty of war and its impact on individual soldiers and civilians, the *African* and *Spanish Wars* render the historical events tangible and shocking. This stands in stark contrast to the much more abstract representation of violence that we find in Caesar's own works and the other two supplements. Another important difference that separates the *African* and the *Spanish Wars* from the rest of the Caesarian *Corpus* is Caesar's involvement in the slaughter. While the *African* and the *Spanish Wars* continue the rhetoric of clemency that is so typical of the *Gallic*, *Civil*, and *Alexandrian Wars*, the *Spanish War* lists the atrocities committed by Pompeians and Caesarians side by side, and the author of the *African War* even underscores Caesar's failure to stop the massacre after the battle of Thapsus.^a Thus, as we read through the supplements of the *Corpus Caesarianum*, we not only move farther away from Caesar's vocabulary, syntax, and narrative technique, but also encounter a representation of Caesar that is contradictory and differs considerably from the image of the humane and conciliatory statesman drawn in the earlier books.

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MM.13a On Hirtius' statement, see Web Essay LL: The Origins of the Corpus of Caesar's Works, §4.

MM.13b See, for example, 14.32.2.

MM.14a 13.85.4–9.

WEB ESSAY NN

Editing Caesar

Cynthia Damon

§1. The historical narratives in the present volume purport to be English translations of narratives that Caesar and his continuators wrote in Latin sometime in the second half of the first century B.C.E. And so they are, broadly speaking. However, the words committed to perishable media such as papyrus or wax tablets in antiquity have been transmitted to us through a series of copies (we do not know how many) in which scribes moved the text from one exemplar to another and from one medium to another; the phase in which the text was transferred from a papyrus scroll to the more durable medium of a parchment codex was a particularly important one. In the case of the Caesarian corpus, the series was never broken; hence the texts survive. However, it was at one point reduced to a very slender chain of no more than a few copies, only one of which successfully transmitted its text to posterity. Furthermore, during the many centuries when each copy was made by hand, a large number of innovations (or changes) accumulated in these texts, both by the scribes' involuntary errors in copying and by their deliberate alterations, when they tried, for example, to correct what they perceived as errors or words or phrases they could not understand. Physical damage, too, caused gaps (lacunae) and made one copy different from another. The editor's job is to undo these innovations, to the extent that it is possible, and to explain—both in general terms and for specific passages—how they might have arisen.

§2. A twenty-first-century editor of the Caesarian corpus has at his or her disposal copies ranging from manuscripts produced by scribes in the ninth century C.E.—earlier copies did not survive—to print editions published by professional scholars in the twentieth. The earliest are nearly a millennium distant from Caesar and his continuators. And every one of these copies is ultimately descended from a single exemplar produced

NOTE: All dates are B.C.E. (Before the Common Era) unless otherwise indicated. The dates given in the Web essays are those of the traditional Roman civil calendar up to January 45, when the Julian calendar was instated. For more on the Roman system of time-counting, see Appendix C: Roman Calendars, Dates, and Time. For all Web essays, go to landmarkcaesar.com. Source references without indication of title or author name refer to the texts in *The Landmark Julius Caesar*. Modern works

are listed fully in the Bibliography. All Web essays are copyright © 2017 by Robert B. Strassler and Kurt A. Raaflaub. They may be downloaded and printed for noncommercial use only. Any other use requires written permission of the copyright holders.

Readers who wish to pursue some of the issues discussed in this essay might profit from turning to Brown 1972; Kenney 1974; Reynolds 2013; Tarrant 2015.

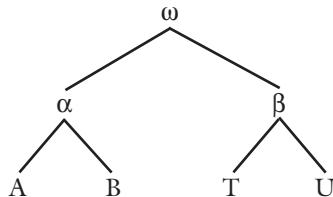
sometime between Caesar and the earliest extant copies, probably closer to the latter terminus than to the former. So while the series of copies made between antiquity and the present is unbroken, it cannot be traced back beyond that single exemplar, which is called the archetype of the tradition.

§3. The innovations present in the archetype, which is now lost but can largely be reconstructed (by methods described below), were transmitted to all of its descendants, each of which added innovations of its own as its scribe strove to produce a new and (perhaps) improved copy of the text. The process can be represented visually as something like a family tree, with the archetype at the top and branches for each direct copy underneath. Similar branching structures emanate from each direct copy, and so on from generation to generation. The editorial process involves discovering the text of the archetype, which is no longer extant, and undoing its innovations. Neither process is an exact science—and the views of editors about what Caesar’s text *should* have looked like differ widely. So modern editions differ from one another at many spots in the text. How many? The answer is different for each ancient text, but for the Caesarian corpus a rough idea can be gleaned from the fact that the four most prominent scholarly editions of the *Civil War*, a text containing about thirty-three thousand Latin words, differ amongst themselves in about seven hundred places. In other words, they agree on roughly ninety-eight percent of the text’s words. For the *Gallic War*, which is better preserved, the rate of agreement is even higher.

§4. This is not quite the same, however, as saying that we have ninety-eight percent of the words the ancient authors who composed the Caesarian corpus wrote. What it means is that editors to date have found no good grounds for doubting the vast majority of the transmitted words. Furthermore, whole stretches of the ancient text were lost in transmission. Most notably, the archetype lacked the end of the *Gallic War* and the contiguous beginning of the *Civil War*, as well as the end of the *Spanish War*—the beginnings and ends of works were especially vulnerable to physical damage in both the scroll and the codex format. The extent of these losses cannot be determined with any precision. There are also gaps within books, some small, some perhaps as long as a page or more. The presence of these internal gaps is revealed by incoherent syntax—if a sentence lacks a subject or verb, for example—or missing information, or both, as is the case at the most substantial gap in the corpus, in the *Civil War* at 11.50.2, where we expect accounts of six conflicts (see 11.53.1) but get only three. Finally, even if the number of passages where editors disagree is low, the significance of particular disagreements can be high. For example, well into the twentieth century editions were printed in which Caesar declares (at 9.9.2) that “the dignity of the state (*res publica*) was of the first importance and dearer to him than life itself.” In other editions of this crucial sentence, as in the present translation, the dignity is Caesar’s own.

§5. In outline, the process of discovering the text of the lost archetype goes as follows. Editors start by sorting its manuscript descendants into two categories, those that are copies of extant copies and those that are not. The former category tends to be much more numerous. In the tradition of the Caesarian corpus, for example, the copies of copies number more than two hundred, whereas the independent copies number

fewer than ten. The independent copies are then compared and further sorted into families going back to the first generation of the archetype's descendants. For the Caesarian corpus there are two such descendants, known as alpha and beta, respectively. The difference between these two is substantial: alpha contained only the text of the *Gallic War*, while beta contained all five *War* books. For the *Gallic War* the “family tree,” or stemma, is relatively simple and looks like this:



§6. The next step is to compare the texts of all the independent copies within each family to determine which words are inherited from the previous generation and which are innovations. This proceeds word by word and starts at the bottom of the stemma but aims for the top, for the word in the archetype, here represented by ω. In the Caesarian tradition depicted above, for example, if A and B agree on a word, that is almost certainly the word that was in their source, α. Likewise, a word that T and U agree upon is almost certainly the word that was in β. If α and β agree, you almost certainly have the word that was in ω. If there are disagreements among the manuscripts, the evidence has to be weighed carefully. If A and B disagree, for example, one or both readings must be innovations. If A simultaneously agrees with both T and U, the likelihood is that the word in B is an innovation and the word that was in the archetype is the one preserved by A, T, and U. If, however, A agrees with T and B agrees with U, it is harder to locate the innovation(s). And so on. There are a number of permutations, and each case has to be judged on its merits. Editorial disagreement about relative probabilities accounts for some of the differences among editions.

§7. One consequence of the alpha/beta split mentioned above is that the text of the *Gallic War* can be constructed one generation earlier than that of the other works in the corpus. That is, we can discover what the archetype read for the *Gallic War*, but only what beta read for the *Civil*, *Alexandrian*, *African*, and *Spanish Wars*, which were not present in the alpha manuscripts A and B. This means that the text of the *Gallic War* has fewer innovations for the editor to undo and fewer gaps in the text.

§8. At the end of this process the editor will have a text that is as close to the author's original as the manuscript evidence supports. But this text will still have innovations in it. Their frequency and types will depend on a variety of factors, including the number of generations that intervene between original and archetype, the accuracy of the copies, the physical condition of the copies, and the degree to which copies have been corrected against one another or by scribal intuition. Some innovations are obvious and easy to fix, some are obvious and difficult or impossible to fix, and some are obvious to one editor

but not to another. These archetypal innovations, which can only be undone by editorial judgment, are the source of most of the differences between editions.

§9. In making their decisions about what to print, editors rely on their knowledge of Latin syntax and style, on the author's specific style and word preferences, on their understanding of manuscripts and the scribes that produced them, and on a long history of scholarly attention to manuscripts of texts from the ancient world, a history that starts in the manuscripts themselves, develops vigorously in the printed editions of the Renaissance and later centuries, and continues in the most recent issues of scholarly journals. For texts like those of the Caesarian corpus a sound grasp of the historical context is also essential to the editorial process. Within the Caesarian corpus, the editor is on progressively more uncertain ground: the *Gallic War* has the best textual source, the *Civil War* can be weighed against parallels from Caesar's own usage, the anonymous *Alexandrian* and *African Wars* likewise to the extent that they emulate the language and style of Caesar (more for the former, much less for the latter), while for the *Spanish War*, which is written in a style all its own and is preserved in fewer and fewer manuscripts as the text approaches the end, the uncertainties are many. Additional editorial criteria reflect the purpose of an edition—is it for classroom use or for scholarly consumption?—and the underlying philosophy: editors differ over how much credence to give the medieval witnesses to the text and in their tolerance for uncertainty. An extreme case of disagreement^a can be seen in the *Civil War* at 9.5.3, which concerns subversive politicians who provoked “the last and final decree of the Senate” (*senatus consultum ultimum*): editors identify them variously as “senators” (*senatorum*), “a small faction” (*pauorum*), “evildoers” (*malorum*), “crooks” (*latronum*), “legislators” (*latorum*—the reading of the archetype), or else mark the spot as an unsolved problem, a crux ($\dagger latorum \dagger$).

§10. After establishing the text to the best of his or her ability, the editor must report the relevant evidence. This is traditionally done in two parts. The history of the text's transmission from the archetype to the extant manuscripts is traced in the introduction, where the manuscripts themselves are also described in general terms (date, script, layout, position in the stemma, current location, and so on). The specific readings of the manuscripts, where they disagree, is presented at the foot of the page in a section called the critical apparatus (in Latin, the *apparatus criticus* or *app. crit.*). Also present in the apparatus are the sources or authors of emendations (improvements) accepted in the text (naturally including earlier editors all the way back to the first printed editions in the Renaissance) and, for particularly difficult passages, other possible emendations. Readers will find here the information they need to evaluate the editor's decision about what to print.

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NN.9a My new edition of the text of Caesar's *Civil War*, on which this volume's translation is essentially based, has recently been published (Damon 2015a), together with a separate book

that discusses and explains my reconstruction of the text in particularly difficult and contested passages (Damon 2015b).

WEB ESSAY OO

After Caesar: The Man and His Text after Two Millennia

Hester Schadee

§1. Caesar's résumé is impressive by any standard: conqueror of Gaul and Rome, consul and perpetual dictator, acclaimed orator and author of a Latin classic. Nonetheless, his lasting reputation is in large part defined by what happened after his death. When his adopted son and heir Augustus transformed Rome's government into a monarchy, Caesar became the founder of a dynasty and his name, soon, an imperial title. Five hundred years after the fall of the Roman empire, its ghost was revived with the investiture of Otto the Great of Germany and Italy as emperor—*kaiser* in German, after his first Roman predecessor. This new so-called Holy Roman Empire remained a major European power until the nineteenth century, and Caesar's nominal successors reigned longer still: the last German emperor abdicated after World War I, while his Russian namesake, the Romanov czar, was shot during the Bolshevik Revolution. Caesar's hold over the European imagination for two millennia owes much, if not most, to these posthumous developments.

§2. Caesar's afterlife started auspiciously, with the appearance of a comet during his funeral games. Deemed to be his ascending soul, it aided the case for Caesar's unprecedented deification, which rendered Augustus the son of a god. Yet, though the official line on Caesar was unequivocally positive, another voice was heard in Rome, at times reduced to whispers but never silenced. The core arguments of these contrasting accounts of Caesar had already been set forth by Cicero. His letters during the civil war

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Readers interested in pursuing some of the issues brought up in this essay might profit from the readings listed here: Christ 1994; Gentili 2008; Griffin 2009 for general surveys; Green 1932; Strasburger 1968 for Caesar's assessment by contemporaries and the Augustan poets; Clarke 1981 for Brutus; Beer 1976; Leeker 1986; Piccolomini 1991; Sol 2005; Méniel and Ribémont 2006–7 on Caesar in medieval traditions and the Renaissance; Yavetz 1971; Chevallier 1985; Zecchini 1991; Roddaz 2009 on Caesar in various modern traditions; Schadee on Caesar's influence on military memoirs in Grillo and Krebs 2018; Wyke 2006, 2008, 2012 on Caesar in the United States and in Western culture.

show him despairing of both opponents in equal measure before reluctantly siding with Pompey. Afterward, pleading with the dictator on behalf of his clients, Cicero extolled the peace Caesar restored to Rome and his clemency toward his enemies. Yet in his philosophical treatise *On Duties*, written when Caesar was dead, he called him a tyrant whose overambition—a deplorable concomitant of his great talents—caused his criminal subjection of the state. Cicero also defended Caesar's assassins Brutus and Cassius, and commended Cato, who killed himself rather than submit to tyranny.

§3. Under not dissimilar circumstances, Cicero's advocacy of peace and clemency was echoed by Seneca, who held up Caesar as a role model to his pupil Nero (d. 68 C.E.). Yet Lucan's grim epic *Civil War* or *Pharsalia*, also dedicated to Nero, agrees with Cicero's estimate of the rights and wrongs of the conflict. Comparing Pompey to an old oak tree, venerable but past his prime, Lucan opposes him to an energetic, charismatic, and dangerous Caesar, who is famished for triumphs but leaves ruin in his trail. The reason, says Lucan, was a clash of egos; in the end, “the winning side was favored by the gods, but the defeated cause pleased Cato.” Caesar's biographers, Plutarch (late first century) and Suetonius (c. 120), preserve this admixture of assessments: they describe in detail Caesar's awe-inspiring achievements, but both, for instance, also report exhortations to Brutus to act as a tyrannicide, as his fifth-century ancestor had done when he avenged the rape of Lucretia and drove the last Roman king and his family into exile. However, both authors focus not on the fate of the republic but rather on Caesar's deeds and personality. Suetonius, in particular, gleefully quotes unseemly puns about Caesar's alleged affair with King Nicomedes of Bithynia.

§4. The options for imagining Caesar, already manifold in the first centuries of the Roman empire, exploded in late antiquity and the Middle Ages, when the historical figure and his time receded into the background, replaced by new frames of interpretation. One of these was Christianity, which required that Rome be assigned a place in a god-willed universal history. This was accomplished through the concepts of *translatio imperii* (“transmission of empire”) and Augustus theology, popularized in Jerome's *Chronicle* (*Chronicon*) (a world history composed c. 380 C.E.) and Orosius' *Histories against the Pagans* (after 418). Drawing on the vision of Daniel in the Old Testament, the former notion viewed Rome as the predestined successor to the empires of Babylon, Macedon, and Carthage. The latter held that universal peace—the Pax Augusta (Augustan Peace) celebrated by Vergil—was a requirement for the birth of Christ. In this way, Caesar, the harbinger of empire, paved the way for the Messiah, and so played an essential part in the history of human salvation. This framework shapes, for instance, Otto of Freising's *Chronicle of Two Cities* (c. 1145), in which Caesar's death marks the end of the first city and the birth of the City of God. Yet, simultaneously, Otto emphasized the continuity between Caesar, Otto the Great, and his own emperor, Frederick Barbarossa. The most memorable proponent of this “theological Caesar” is undoubtedly Dante. In his *Divine Comedy* (c. 1310s), Caesar, “with griffin-like eyes,” is among the virtuous pagans in Limbo. Brutus and Cassius are in the lowest circle of Hell, forever mauled in the three mouths of Satan; in between is Judas, who betrayed the son of God. Remarkably, on account of his personal righteousness, the pagan suicide Cato is granted the guardianship of purgatory. While the

religious importance attached to Caesar faded with the Renaissance, the question of the rightness of Dante's judgment exercised his readers for generations.

§5. From around the turn of the millennium, these theological approaches to Caesar were complemented by secular ones, in which he figured as an idealized, not to say legendary, ruler. This was in large part because of his unvanquished military force, which could, but need not be, tied to his status as imperial founding father. For instance, in representations of the "Nine Worthies"—three triads of classical, Jewish, and Christian warriors popular in the fourteenth century—Caesar was regularly depicted with the heraldic emblems of the Holy Roman Emperor. It is worth noting that celebrations of his universal dominance often held a remarkably local appeal. Thus, the mid-twelfth-century German *Kaiserchronik* (*Chronicle of the Emperors*)—a highly fictional world history—enhanced Caesar's status as first Holy Roman Emperor by focusing on his conquest of Germany. There, his valor and nobility so won over the German peoples that they recognized him as their overlord, and it was with their support that Caesar mastered Rome and the rest of the world. In the contemporaneous *Roman de Brut*, a verse history of Britain in the *chanson de geste* ("songs of heroic deeds") tradition, the Anglo-Norman poet Wace recounts Caesar's invasions of Britain. Wace's Caesar—designated emperor of Rome—was wise, generous, and learned (an ideal ruler) as well as noble, valiant, and strong (the ideal knight). Yet when he defeats the younger brother of the British chief Cassivellaunus, Caesar is forced to leave behind his sword, which bears the name Yellow Death—a setback symbolizing that it will be impossible to absorb Britain permanently into the Roman empire. The early-thirteenth-century *Faits des Romains* (*Deeds of the Romans*) explicitly parallels Caesar and the author's patron, Philip Augustus of France. It partakes in the chivalric tradition, embroiling Caesar in a love story with the African queen Eunoe, but it is written in prose, and draws on classical sources including Lucan, Suetonius, and Caesar's own commentaries, which are not recognized as by his hand. Whether reflecting authorial intention or disagreement among these works—from Caesar's self-glorification to Lucan's bitter criticism—the resulting image is ambivalent, and it is unclear whether Caesar is a positive or negative foil to the French king.

§6. The standards of Renaissance scholarship demanded greater historical accuracy, but the appeal of Caesar as prototype (for princes) or predecessor (for emperors) was undiminished. In the late fifteenth century, Andrea Mantegna drew upon the most up-to-date antiquarian investigations to paint his *Triumphs of Caesar* for the Gonzaga dukes of Mantua. Not long after, the aptly named Cesare Borgia, son of Pope Alexander VI, sought to subjugate Italy, with "Either Caesar or nothing" ominously inscribed upon his sword. It seems likely that Pope Julius II (r. 1503–13), sometimes called "the Warrior Pope," chose his papal name in reference to his Roman forebear—Caesar, too, had been *pontifex maximus*. At the same time, across the Alps, the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian of Habsburg commissioned a history of all the Roman emperors from Caesar to himself, and this project was executed again for his grandson Charles V.

§7. Nor did increasing knowledge lessen the myth of Rome and the cult of Caesar in modern times. During the French Revolution, Rome provided a repertory of examples,

political offices, and iconography for the new regimes. Yet Napoleon, the commander who rose to First Consul of the French republic before crowning himself emperor, and who campaigned in Europe, northern Africa, and the Near East, identified with no single figure more than with Caesar. The Italian Fascists similarly subscribed to a generic ideal of “Romanness” that was expressed through symbolic actions ranging from the excavation of the Roman fora to the invention of a Roman salute. In the 1930s, as Fascism moved from incendiary to establishment, Augustus became the official ideal—however, Mussolini’s personal idol and national hero remained Caesar, whom he called “the greatest figure after Christ,” commenting that, for the Italians, it was “as if he had been stabbed just yesterday.”

§8. Yet side by side with this enthusiasm for Caesar, there were always critical voices. In his *Policraticus* (c. 1160), John of Salisbury followed Cicero in labeling Caesar a tyrant. However, writing in a monarchical era, Salisbury contrasted a usurper with a rightful king, not with republican government, as Cicero intended. Brunetto Latino, Dante’s teacher, suggests that the dilemma of Caesar—hero or traitor to the fatherland—was a common topic of debate in the self-governing Italian communes that frequently fell to usurpers in the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries. By the early fifteenth century, anti-Caesarism was part of the intellectual self-definition of avant-garde Florentine humanists, who denounced Caesar from a republican perspective. One of them, Poggio Bracciolini, argued that along with the Roman republic, Caesar had destroyed Latin eloquence, since free speech is incompatible with single rule. The fortune of this line of thought was tied closely to the grip of the Medici regime on Florentine politics, and it died out in the mid-sixteenth century with the establishment of the Duchy of Tuscany.

§9. By then, however, the debate had moved to the northern stage. Around 1544, Marc Antoine Muret wrote the Latin tragedy *Julius Caesar*, freely translated into French by his pupil Jacques Grévin (1561). It may have been performed by another pupil, Michel Montaigne, who later, again echoing Cicero, called Caesar one of the “miracles of nature” while also decrying his “pestilent ambition” and unjust cause. English versions followed, the most successful of which was Shakespeare’s *Tragedy of Julius Caesar*, first staged in 1599. It was based almost exclusively on Plutarch’s biographies of Caesar, Brutus, and Mark Antony, in the English version of Sir Thomas North (1579), which itself derived from Jacques Amyot’s French translation of the original Greek (1559). This source is followed closely, although Shakespeare compresses or expands the narrative for dramatic effect: for instance, Caesar’s murder and Antony’s incitement of the mob occur on the same day, while Brutus’ and Antony’s famous speeches are entirely Shakespeare’s own—Plutarch merely comments on their respective speaking styles. Shakespeare also maintained, and even enhanced, the conflicted nature of the protagonists: Caesar’s superhuman ambition contrasted with human weakness, Brutus’ idealism marred by self-righteousness, Antony’s love for Caesar feeding manipulation and violence. Indeed, some of the most enduring characterizations are essentially Shakespeare’s inventions. There is no evidence, for instance, either in Plutarch or any other ancient source, that Caesar was a once great man now past his prime (indeed, this is how Lucan portrayed Caesar’s opponent Pompey). We also know little about the historical Brutus’ motivations, even if his

reputation as a republican hero goes back to the Italian humanists and, beyond them, to Cicero. Considering Shakespeare's refashioning of these figures, it is worth recalling that Shakespeare had only just completed his history plays about the English civil wars that gave way to peace under the Tudor monarchy. One of these, *Henry V*—also written in 1599—portrayed an ideal king whose victory nonetheless caused civil war. The parallels between England and Rome are likely to have been on the author's mind, foremost among them the question of the legitimacy of rebellion against an overly rigid autocracy: the Earl of Essex, who rose against Queen Elizabeth in 1601, was already suspect two years earlier. The dramatic form lends itself well to this controversy, as both the conspirators and the Caesarians take turns onstage to make their irreconcilable cases.

§10. Critiques of modern Caesars often take the form of farce rather than tragedy. Exiled from Nazi Germany, Bertold Brecht wrote an (unfinished) satirical novel, *Die Geschäfte des Herrn Julius Caesar* (*The Business Affairs of Mr. Julius Caesar*), which pointed to the corrupting effect of money on politics. In Italy, political commenters likened media mogul Silvio Berlusconi's unwillingness to resign as prime minister for fear of prosecution to Caesar's predicament upon the end of his Gallic command; more grotesquely, a cartoon juxtaposed Caesar with his sword drawn, Mussolini with his arm raised, and Berlusconi with erect member. Cartoonists opposing the war in Iraq have drawn the American Congress as the cowed Roman Senate, with George W. Bush—implausibly—as Caesar. In 2016, online publications from *Politico* to *Reddit* asked whether Donald Trump is America's new Caesar, an idea that both Trump's opponents (tyrant) and supporters (antiestablishment hero of the downtrodden masses) appear willing to entertain. Writing for the *Times Literary Supplement*, the classicist Mary Beard replied that, if nothing else, Caesar's laurel wreath functioned as combover.

§11. In both Italy and the United States, such parallels worked by virtue of a long association with Rome and Caesar. During the American War of Independence, Caesar was easily identified with the English King George III, and Brutus' legendary words as he stabbed Caesar, "Sic semper tyranis" ("Thus [that is, death] ever to tyrants"), are inscribed on the state seal of Virginia. They were also cried out by the would-be avenger of the South, John Wilkes Booth, when he shot President Lincoln. In the early twentieth century, as both the *Gallic War* and especially Shakespeare's *Caesar* became set texts in American school curricula, Caesar's applicability grew beyond questions of republicanism and tyrannicide. A case in point is Orson Welles' 1937 modern-dress rendition of the tragedy, which was intended to denounce Fascism (Caesar) and the masses who desire it (Shakespeare's mob), along with the inability of fumbling liberals (Brutus) to turn the tide. Contemporary critics, however, also detected parallels with a mafioso and his henchmen, labor unionists (the plebs), and racketeers (the conspirators). After the war, Caesar's identification with Fascism briefly eclipsed all others. The introspective, self-sacrificing protagonist of Thornton Wilder's *Ides of March* (1948) was found politically suspect—notwithstanding the book's dedication to the Italian-American anti-Fascist poet Lauro de Bosis.

§12. An American innovation in the second half of the twentieth century was Caesar's reception in mass culture. Comics, films, and television broadcasts complemented the educational curricula, while drawing sales and prestige from association with the clas-

sics. A comic book version of Shakespeare's tragedy was published by *Classics Illustrated* (1950) and quickly followed by *Caesar's Conquests* (1956), based on the *Gallic War*. Both pose as illustrated histories of a heroic Caesar, and were purchased in bulk by American high schools. In 1953, the teleplay *The Assassination of Julius Caesar* was framed as a contemporary news item for the TV series *You Are There*. Here, Brutus (played by Paul Newman) asserted that "anarchy is better than tyranny, liberty better than safety." Voiced by the news anchor Walter Cronkite, the docudrama tied into contemporary politics, in particular the corrosion of civil liberties under McCarthyism. The television journalist Edward Murrow made the link explicit in the famous *See It Now* episode devoted to Senator Joseph McCarthy (1954). He quoted Shakespeare's play, substituting "McCarthy" for "Caesar," and concluded the program with the words "The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, but in ourselves." Interestingly, the 1953 movie *Julius Caesar*, a Shakespeare adaptation that was intended to draw analogies with both Fascist and Communist dictatorships, by the end of its run was understood as a warning against the anti-Communist witch hunt, which was represented by the demagogue Mark Antony (played by Marlon Brando).

§13. While Caesar's many afterlives span two millennia, the impact of his commentaries is chronologically limited. Languishing in the medieval monasteries of northern Europe, the text was rarely read, and, as the case of the *Faits des Romains* (§5) shows, Caesar's authorship was forgotten. Even Petrarch, who based much of his *Life of Caesar* (c. 1360s) on the commentaries, and shrewdly inferred an eyewitness author, did not recognize them as Caesar's. The correct attribution was made shortly afterward, yet by 1438 Pier Candido Decembrio still found the authorship worth arguing in the first vernacular translation. Print runs of the commentaries show their circulation steadily increasing before reaching a peak in the late sixteenth century, when Caesar was Europe's most popular ancient historian.

§14. The influence of the commentaries manifests itself in several genres. Across Europe, authors turned to Caesar for advice on military matters. Machiavelli, who was critical of Caesar in *The Prince*, and hostile in his republican political theory, exalts him as a brilliant strategist in *The Art of War* (1520). In 1575, the Italian architect Andrea Palladio published an edition of the commentaries with accompanying engravings depicting Caesar's battle formations in bird's-eye-view landscapes. The Englishman Clement Edmondson composed a military handbook based exclusively on Caesar (1600). The explicit aim of all these efforts was to raise modern military discipline to the level of that of the Romans. By contrast, Napoleon was alert to the differences between ancient and modern war. When he dictated his comments on Caesar's campaigns from his exile on St. Helena, he did not hesitate to correct what he saw as Caesar's errors and suggest alternative approaches befitting the current state of affairs.

§15. The tendency to assume continuity between past and present meant that the French, in particular, also mined the commentaries to learn about their Gallic ancestors. For instance, Peter Ramus' *On the Customs of the Ancient Gauls* (1559), written in Latin but immediately translated into the vernacular, uses Caesarian evidence to demonstrate the origins of the French way of life. To aid antiquarian ethnographers, editions of the commentaries were equipped with maps and other tools relating Gallic territories to the topography of modern France. Sometimes such prehistories were deemed prescriptive.

Thus, Oronce Finé's 1525 map of Gaul included northern Italy—Gallia Cisalpina—to bolster French claims to Piedmont and Lombardy. Similarly, François Hotman's *Franco-Gallia* (1573) pointed to the customs of the ancient Gauls—as opposed to the invading Franks—to show that the French monarchy ought to be elective and constitutional.

§16. Besides such interest in their contents, the commentaries were studied for their linguistic characteristics. Cicero had famously praised Caesar's style as “stripped of all ornament: upright, naked and delightful,” while Quintilian classed him as a model historian. The neo-Latin writers of the Renaissance followed their judgment. Caesar is often cited as evidence for good Latin usage, and echoes of his prose occur especially in historical writings. He was, for instance, one of the few other authors approved for imitation by the Ciceronian Pietro Bembo, who scoured the commentaries for suitable vocabulary for his *History of Venice* (1551).

§17. Indeed, the commentaries were the main ancient model for a new genre of historiography: eyewitness, sometimes autobiographical, accounts of semicontemporary military history. The foremost reason for Caesar's appeal was his double role as author and actor: as such, the literary parallel suggested a similar equivalence between the protagonist and Caesar as commander. This effect could be enhanced by mimicking Caesarian features such as indirect speech, closure formulas reporting pacifications, winter camps or thanksgivings, and especially the third-person singular to speak about oneself, as in Pope Pius II's *Commentaries* (1458–64). Indeed, Caesar's more attentive students employed his narrative techniques—his seeming objectivity, understated prose, and rational exposition of his point of view—to similar propagandistic effect. A classically educated readership appreciated such niceties: an enthusiastic reader of Giovanni Simonetta's *Commentaries on the Deeds of Sforza* (1470s) told the author that “the similarity of events, commander, and style made me feel I was reading the books of Caesar.” Somewhat paradoxically, however, reference to Caesar could also serve to deny literary aspirations. Misappropriating Cicero's appraisal of the commentaries' simple style, commanders such as Blaise de Monluc (1570s), who had only limited education, claimed that Caesar's example justified a soldier putting pen to paper, presenting eyewitness truth instead of the rhetorical flourishes of armchair historians. Once again, Napoleon has the last word against Caesar. He wrote extensively about his own campaigns, always referring to himself in the third person, in a quick, lean French that is a match for Caesar's Latin. In the ethnography that precedes his conquest of Italy, Napoleon reports, in impeccably Caesarian terms, that Italy is bounded by the Alps and by the sea, and divided in three parts. Thus Napoleon redrew the map of Europe, both militarily and in literary terms, by reversing the footsteps of Caesar.

§18. These days, between bureaucrats questioning the use of the humanities and professors bewailing the loss of Latin, Caesar remains the most famous Roman, and his commentaries are never out of print. It will be interesting to see how the man and his text hold up in their third millennium.

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WEB ESSAY PP

Caesar's Invasions of Britain

Duncan B. Campbell

§1. Caesar made two expeditions to Britain, in 55 and 54.^a It is quite likely that his decision to invade the island had already been made in 56, for in that year he took measures to ensure that his military command, which was due to expire, would be prolonged for a further five years.^b Although Caesar could justify an invasion on military grounds (see §2), his reception of a refugee British prince may have supplied a useful pretext, and in any case his real motive may have been the acquisition of wealth.^c Rumors of the planned invasion had perhaps already spread by 56: when the maritime tribes of Armorica (northwestern Gaul) rebelled in that year, their alleged aim was “to prevent (Caesar’s) voyage to Britain, since they were using the emporium there.”^d Archaeological evidence points to the site of Hengistbury Head (Dorset) as a likely candidate for this emporium (trading post).^e

§2. Strictly speaking, the island lay outside Caesar’s official sphere of influence; hence any involvement there ran the risk of legal repercussions at Rome. However, military action in Britain could be justified on the grounds that “in almost all our wars with the Gauls, reinforcements had been furnished to the enemy from there.”^a Such cross-channel links could explain the transfer of coins from Belgic Gaul to southeastern Britain, where they appear in large quantities in the archaeological record alongside the locally struck coins and may hint at the payment of war bonds or the exchange of gifts. There certainly seem to have been close political ties between Gaul and Britain, to the extent that a former king of the Belgic Suessiones “had exercised power even over Britain.”^b Caesar believed that although the peoples of the interior were indigenous, the maritime region was “inhabited by people who crossed over from Belgium in search of

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- PP.1a These expeditions are described at 4.23–36, 5.8–23.
PP.1b Suetonius, *Caesar* 24.1.
PP.1c Ibid., *Caesar* 47. The British prince is mentioned at 5.17.
PP.1d Strabo 4.4.1; see also Book 3.8.
PP.1e Cunliffe 2005, 476–79.
PP.2a 4.20; compare 3.9.
PP.2b 2.4.

plunder and fighting . . . and, after waging war, remained there and began to farm the land.”^c The distribution of a distinctive type of pottery in Kent, Essex, and Hertfordshire (the so-called Aylesford-Swarling culture) was once thought to indicate this area of Belgic settlement, but more recently a case has been made for Hampshire and Sussex.^d

§3. Britain was a land of mystery beyond the inhabited world.^a Although Caesar questioned traders, “he was able to learn neither the size of the island, nor what peoples and in what numbers lived there, nor their style of warfare and their habits, nor the best harbors for a fleet of large ships.”^b Consequently, he was obliged to send one of his officers to reconnoiter the coastline. At the same time, a number of British tribes sent envoys to offer their submission to him; these he sent home, accompanied by Commius (whom he had earlier installed as chief of the Gallic Atrebates) as his representative.

§4. The expedition of 55 was clearly intended as a reconnaissance; for one thing, Caesar took only two of his eight legions. He explains that although the season was late, he thought it would be advantageous “if he simply visited the island and observed the kind of people and investigated the localities, the harbors and the approaches.”^a In the event, his landing was opposed by a large enemy force that had taken Commius captive. They were defeated only with some difficulty, after which they restored Commius to Caesar as proof of their peaceful intentions. However, some days later, when they observed that the Roman fleet had been damaged in a storm, they reneged on their promises and provoked another battle; when they were bested, they once again sued for peace and supplied hostages.^b The Roman Senate was sufficiently impressed by Caesar’s initial enterprise—not least in crossing the fabled ocean^c—that they arranged an unprecedented twenty days of thanksgiving.^d

§5. It seems that the expedition of 54, by contrast with the previous one, aimed at conquest: Caesar took five legions. This time, the Britons sought shelter in a hill fort, thought to be Bigbury, near Canterbury, Kent,^a but Caesar’s 7th Legion stormed the place “after constructing a shed and piling up a siege embankment.”^b However, a larger hostile force had gathered under the command of a supreme chieftain, Cassivellaunus, to oppose Caesar’s crossing of the Tamesis (modern Thames).^c When their preferred hit-and-run tactics failed, they fell back on Cassivellaunus’ stronghold, thought to be Wheathampstead, near St. Albans (Hertfordshire),^d but the legions again prevailed.^e Cassivellaunus himself surrendered, handed over hostages, and promised to pay tribute.

§6. Modern authorities tend to downplay the success of Caesar’s expeditions to Britain; some have gone so far as to pronounce them a failure. However, it is only with the benefit of hindsight that later writers were able to evaluate Caesar’s achievement in the context of the later Claudian invasion.^a Contemporary witnesses had an entirely different impression, as Cicero confirms in a letter to his friend Atticus; relaying news from his brother Quintus (who accompanied the second expedition), he notes that

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| PP.2c | 5.12. | PP.5a | Holmes 1907, 337. |
| PP.2d | Cunliffe 2005, 126–27. | PP.5b | 5.9. See Web Essay S: Military Engineering and Sieges, §§8–9, for these terms. |
| PP.3a | See Plutarch, <i>Caesar</i> 23.2. See also, throughout, Web Essay K. Gaul in Caesar’s Time. | PP.5c | Tamesis (modern Thames) River: Map 5.19. |
| PP.3b | 4.20. | PP.5d | Wheeler 1933, 30–33. |
| PP.4a | Ibid. | PP.5e | 5.21. |
| PP.4b | 4.24–36. | PP.6a | For example, Tacitus, <i>Agricola</i> 13.1: “It can be seen that [Caesar] pointed Britain out, but did not hand it over, to those who came after him.” |
| PP.4c | Plutarch, <i>Caesar</i> 23.2. “Ocean” here of course means what we call the English Channel. | | |
| PP.4d | 4.38. | | |

"affairs in Britain were settled, hostages taken, and, although there was no booty, tribute was imposed."^b

§7. Caesar mentions few geographical landmarks.^a Both expeditions made landfall in the east of Cantium (modern Kent), where Caesar encountered four kings but records no tribal name, and his exploration extended north into present-day Essex, where he places the tribe of the Trinovantes and four others who are otherwise unknown.^b His impression of the remainder of the island and its relationship to mainland Europe was, like that of his contemporaries, vague in the extreme. In particular, he assumed that, in the west, Britain faced Spain.^c Such geographical misconceptions were only rectified by military exploration 130 years later.

§8. A recent theory suggests that fundamental changes in the coinage of the kingdoms of southeastern Britain (chiefly, the adoption of Belgic motifs and the employment of more refined gold) may be attributed to the emergence of pro-Roman "client kings" in the aftermath of Caesar's visit. In particular, the abrupt disappearance from the *Gallic War* narrative of Commius, onetime king of the Gallic Atrebates, after his break with Caesar and subsequent pardon by Marcus Antonius,^a has been linked with the appearance of a tribe called the Atrebates in southeastern Britain, ruled by a king who issued coins inscribed with the name "Commios" and who was succeeded by rulers who styled themselves "descendants of Commius" (*Commi filii*). This coincidence has prompted the intriguing suggestion that Caesar had established Commius as client king there.^b

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PP.6b Cicero, *Letters to Atticus* 4.18.5; see also Suetonius, *Caesar* 25.2.

PP.7a For Britain in Caesar's time, see Web Essay N: Caesar on Britain.

PP.7b 5.20–22.

PP.7c 5.13; see also Diodorus Siculus 5.21.

PP.8a 7.76, 8.23, 8.47–48.

PP.8b Creighton 2000, 59–64.

WEB ESSAY QQ

The Siege of Alesia

Duncan B. Campbell

§1. The year 52 B.C.E., described in Book 7 of the *Gallia War*, was marked by a large-scale revolt of many Gallic nations that, in Caesar's own words, aimed at restoring their liberty from Roman domination.^a Having been defeated in the field by Caesar, the Gallic chieftain Vercingetorix and his army were forced to take shelter in the hilltop town of Alesia, which the Gauls had fortified and provisioned with thirty days' supplies for just such an eventuality. The town sat on a plateau amid a ring of hills, eleven miles around, with a river to the north and another to the south, and was long ago convincingly identified as Mount Auxois, above modern Alise-Sainte-Reine, in Burgundy. The approaches were so steep "that it appeared impossible to capture except by blockade."^b Thus, the terrain dictated Caesar's strategy.

§2. When Caesar's army arrived at the site, "camps were pitched at favorable locations, and twenty-three forts were built there, in which guards were stationed in the daytime to prevent a sudden breakout; at night, the same stations were held by watchmen and strong garrisons."^a Archaeology has revealed traces of some of these (see §§6, 8).

§3. In order to impose a blockade (*obsidio*), Caesar set his men to work building an unusually complex system of siege works. These consisted of an eleven-mile inward-facing ring of fortifications and a fourteen-mile outward-facing ring,^a each equipped with outlying traps and obstacles (see §4). However, recognizing that his workers would be vulnerable in the western sector, where the siege lines crossed the open ground of what is now called the Plain of Laumes,^b Caesar first ordered a ditch to be dug in an advanced position, twenty feet wide, to hinder any sorties from the town. Next, the inward-facing fortifications comprised double fifteen-foot ditches in front of a twelve-

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QQ.1a 71.5, 71.8.

QQ.1b 7.69.

QQ.2a Ibid.

QQ.3a Ibid., 7.74. For the trench, see Diagram 7.76.

QQ.3b Plain of Laumes: Diagram 7.76.

foot rampart with palisades and battlements, and with turrets at eighty-foot intervals; large pointed stakes nicknamed “stag horns” (*cervi*) projected from the junction between the wicker battlements and the rampart.^c In response to the threat of an attack by a powerful enemy from outside this circumvallation, Caesar ordered his men to build a second set of defenses, broadly similar to the first but facing outward, thus defining a fortified corridor of varying width all around the town.^d

§4. A broad zone of traps and obstacles fronted both siege lines to discourage the enemy from approaching.^a The first sort of obstacle comprised a length of ditch bristling with sharpened branches that had been intertwined and fixed in the ground so that they could not easily be torn up. These were known as “gravestones” (*cippi*, in modern terminology *abatis*), perhaps alluding in macabre fashion to their purpose, which was to impale anyone who tried to negotiate a way through.^b The next sort of obstacle took the form of shallow pits covered with brushwood to conceal the fact that each contained an upright sharpened stake. The pits were arranged in a repeating quincunx pattern, so that there was no straight path through the danger zone. Known as “lilies” (*lilia*), supposedly on account of their resemblance to that flower, in reality this was another macabre nickname for a trap clearly intended to cripple its unsuspecting victims. The final sort of obstacle consisted of foot-long blocks of wood scattered and buried in the ground, each one anchoring an iron hook that protruded above ground level to trip up the unwary. These were known as “spurs” or “stings” (*stimuli*).^c

§5. Caesar’s siege works were put to the test when the Gauls coordinated an attack from both sides. Under cover of darkness, they crept up to the outer fortifications, some with ladders, wicker panels, and grappling hooks, others with slings, arrows, and stones, while Vercingetorix’ men sprang into action against the inner line of fortifications. However, as they advanced, the Gauls fell foul of Caesar’s vicious obstacle field and were caught in the killing zone, where they were targeted by the catapults and heavy javelins (*pila muralia*) of the Romans.^a A further attempt, north of the Plain of Laumes, where the siege works lay below Mount Réa, also failed, despite a bitter struggle.^b Finally, Vercingetorix was forced to surrender.

§6. Excavations conducted during the years 1860–65 by Colonel Eugène Stoffel on behalf of Napoleon III revealed the broad outlines of Caesar’s siege works, though the interpretation placed upon the archaeology was constrained by a desire to confirm Caesar’s own account. Napoleon’s well-known plan of the site shows a regular sequence of eight camps (designated A to D, G to I, and K) and twenty-three numbered redoubts, although many of these were entirely hypothetical.^a More recent archaeological work, conducted during the 1990s by a Franco-German team, added detail to Stoffel’s findings, but demonstrated that his idealized picture of evenly spaced redoubts was illusory. Traces were found of only six irregularly shaped camps, three on Mount Bussy (the features designated 15, 18, and C by Napoleon) and three on Mount Flavigny (A, B, and 11), commanding views over Alesia; but a seventh camp probably lay on what is now

QQ.3c 7.72. It is likely that the interval between towers needs to be corrected from 80 feet to 80 paces; see n. 7.72i.

QQ.3d See Diagram 7.76. See also Goldsworthy 2000, 86–87.

QQ.4a 7.73. A second, probably no less important purpose was to slow down the attackers, thus buying time for the defenders to get ready (Robert B. Strassler).

QQ.4b “Gravestones” (modern reconstruction): see Figure 7.72, bottom.

QQ.4c See Warry 1980, 167.
QQ.5a 7.81–82.

QQ.5b 7.83–88. Mount Réa: Diagram 7.76.

QQ.6a Napoleon III 1866. The plan is often reproduced.

called Mount Réa,^b where the topography matches Caesar's description of the camp occupied by Gaius Caninius Rebilus and Gaius Antistius Reginus.^c

§7. Detailed excavations along the siege lines largely confirmed Caesar's own testimony, but minor differences in detail demonstrate that the siege works were not as uniform as his description suggests. For example, Caesar implies that his obstacle field consisted of three highly organized zones, running around the entire site, whereas the archaeology revealed a more sporadic distribution of variable elements resembling Caesar's "lilies" (*lilia*), "gravestones" (*cippi*), and "spurs" (*stimuli*). Nevertheless, the many and varied components of the siege works at Alesia demonstrate Caesar's ingenuity and his legionaries' capacity for hard work.

§8. Evidence of Caesar's twenty-three "forts" (*castella*) is scarce. However, a sector of the siege works on the Plain of Laumes was found to have been converted, by the addition of twin parallel ramparts and ditches connecting the outer and inner siege lines, into a fortified compartment of around three hundred square feet, which could legitimately be called a fort. Its chief purpose was surely to prevent any assailant who managed to cross one of the siege lines from overrunning the entire siege works. It is possible that other similar compartments await discovery elsewhere around the perimeter.

§9. As Caesar's best-known siege, the action at Alesia is sometimes erroneously taken to be representative of Roman siege craft rather than a spectacular exception, and the complex siege works have unfortunately tended to color our view of Roman sieges in general.^a

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QQ.6b Mount Bussy, Mount Flavigny, Mount Réa:
Diagram 7.76.

QQ.6c 7.83. Reddé et al. 1995; Bénard 1996.

QQ.9a See Web Essay S: Military Engineering and Sieges, §6, for the place of Alesia in the development of Roman siege warfare.

WEB ESSAY RR

The Conquest of Uxellodunum

Kurt A. Raaflaub

§1. The great war of a pan-Gallic coalition under Vercingetorix against Caesar's conquering army had raged over almost the entire year of 52. The struggle for Gallic freedom had reached a climax in October and November in the siege of Alesia, culminating on November 8 in a great battle between a huge Gallic relief army that, supported by a determined sortie of the defenders of Alesia, came very close to breaking through the massive defensive works the Romans had erected over the past month. The failure of this effort, the dispersal of the relief army, and the capitulation of the defenders, who handed Vercingetorix over to Caesar, marked the end of this war and of any promising fight for Gallic freedom.^a Yet this defeat did not bring the end of the fighting. Having failed in a unified effort, various Gallic nations now tried to exhaust the Romans by revolts launched simultaneously or in rapid sequence across the wide expanse of the country.^b Caesar was thus forced to conduct a series of campaigns, in the winter and spring of 51, against the Bituriges, Carnutes, and Bellocaci,^c followed by simultaneous actions by Caesar and several of his legates against the Eburones, Treveri, and various nations in the west and southwest of Gaul.^d None of these revolts was dangerous enough to threaten Caesar's military superiority,^e and, overall, the country was exhausted, but the never-ending unrest exasperated him, especially since he was in the second-to-last year of his governorship and had to begin thinking about the legacy he was going to leave upon departing. Just then, when success had been reached on various fronts and Caesar was embarking on a goodwill mission to regain the trust of the nations' leaders and stabilize the country,^f another revolt broke out in Uxellodunum.

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| RR.1a | The events of 52 are narrated in Book 7 of Caesar's <i>Gallic War</i> (Book 7 of <i>The Landmark Julius Caesar</i>). Final battle: 7.79–88; struggle for Gallic freedom: see especially 7.77.12–16, 7.89.1–2. |
| RR.1b | 8.1. For the campaigns of the year 51, see the Campaign Map at the beginning of Book 8. |
| RR.1c | 8.2–23. |
| RR.1d | 8.24–29. |
| RR.1e | 8.24.1. |
| RR.1f | 8.38. |

§2. Uxellodunum was a town of the Cadurci, located in the south of Gaul, north and west of the Transalpine Province.^a One of this nation's leaders, Lucterius, had in the previous year been charged by Vercingetorix to conduct a diversionary attack from the territory of the Ruteni, neighbors of the Cadurci, against the Province, thereby keeping Caesar busy with defending his Province and preventing him from joining his army and assuming the command in the fight against Vercingetorix.^b Although Lucterius assembled a substantial force and planned to invade the Province, Caesar and the nations within the Province had rather easily deterred him from taking major risks in doing so.^c After Caesar had outwitted his enemies in a series of rapid surprise moves and reached his army, Lucterius had apparently abandoned his enterprise. Now, more than a year later, he joined forces with another adventurer, Drappes of the Senones, who during the great revolt of 52 had conducted a small-scale guerrilla war, raiding Roman supply convoys. Recently he had gathered a band of some two thousand survivors from a disastrous battle against Caesar's legate Fabius and was leading these toward the Province.^d Another legate, Caninius Rebilus, whom Caesar had placed in charge of operations in that area, pursued this band with two legions. Lucterius and Drappes saw their plans thwarted and other opportunities vanishing; they thus occupied the town of Uxellodunum and convinced the townspeople, whose patron Lucterius was, to join their cause.^e The revolt of Uxellodunum was thus not initiated by the townspeople and not an expression of their desire for liberty; it was entirely the result of a desperate action on the part of two unsuccessful leaders who were acting on their own and trying to save their skins. This perhaps helps explain Caesar's cruel punishment of the defeated town.^f

§3. Hirtius, the author of Book 8 of the *Gallic War*, offers a dramatic and detailed report of the siege that ensued. This is what he tells us: Uxellodunum was situated on a hill with very steep slopes^a and defended by strong fortifications. The terrain thus prohibited an outright attack. Hence Rebilus surrounded it with three camps and began to enclose it with a circumvallation. Although, Hirtius writes, the townspeople feared to suffer the fate of Alesia, Lucterius was apparently able to convince them that they had a good chance to prevail if they secured enough supplies.^b He and Drappes set out to collect grain, but then the detachment making the first delivery to the town made too much noise and was wiped out by Rebilus' guards. Lucterius, unforgivably, fled without alerting Drappes, who was protecting the base camp some ten miles away, which enabled Rebilus to launch a surprise attack at dawn and eliminate this part of the operation as well. Rebilus, soon assisted by his fellow legate Fabius with another two and a half legions, now was able to complete the circumvallation.^c

§4. Caesar was kept informed by his legates and eventually decided that he needed to intervene personally and set an example in order to demonstrate his unyielding determination and deter others from imitating Uxellodunum's bid for freedom.^a He traveled with his characteristic speed, arrived on the scene before anyone expected him, took a careful look, and saw that Rebilus' assessment was correct. But starving the well-

RR.2a Uxellodunum, the Cadurci: see Map 8.26, BX; the Province: see Map 8.26, BX-BY.

RR.2b 7.5.1.

RR.2c 7.7.1–8.1.

RR.2d 8.30.

RR.2e 8.30.2, 8.32. On Caninius Rebilus, see Appendix A: Who's Who in Caesar, §12. His command in the south: 8.24.2 with n. 8.24d.

RR.2f 8.44.1. From the outside, though, the revolt of

Uxellodunum could be seen differently: 8.39.2 (§4).

RR.3a See Figure 8.40.

RR.3b 8.33–34.1. Part of their calculation must have been that Caesar was under time pressure; see 8.39.3.

RR.3c 8.34–37. For Fabius' troop strength, see 8.24.2.

RR.4a 8.39.1–3, 8.44.1.

supplied town into submission would take too long; hence he boldly decided to cut it off from its water supply. The town obtained its water from two sources. One was the river that flowed almost around the entire town hill; by stationing archers and slingers and placing catapults in suitable locations, Caesar's men showered the steep path from the town to the river with missiles and made it impossible for the townspeople to use this path.^b The other water source, on which the entire town (people and animals) now had to rely, was a large spring that emerged below the town wall, on the side where the river's circuit around the town hill was interrupted.^c Here, therefore, the river did not need to be crossed and access to the hill was easier.

§5. Caesar decided to use two methods to make it impossible for the townspeople to use this spring. One was to build a huge ramp and tower which, in their combination, would reach an elevation that allowed catapult crews to shoot at those fetching water from the spring. This was difficult and hard labor, because of the steep terrain and because the townspeople bombarded the construction crews with their own missiles. Nevertheless, eventually the ramp "reached sixty feet in elevation, and on it they set a tower ten stories high . . . , high enough to look down on the area of the spring at its highest point."^a The defenders countered by rolling barrels, filled with flammable materials and set on fire, down the hill and against the ramp and tower, at the same time making fierce attacks to keep Caesar's soldiers from putting the erupting fires out. Caesar, in turn, ordered some of his cohorts to climb up the hill at various locations, as if they were going to launch an attack on the walls. This diversionary maneuver sufficed to frighten the town's defenders into calling their men back to man the walls. Caesar's troops now put out the fires, completed their work, and effectively barred the defenders from access to their spring. Even though thirst claimed many victims, the town refused to surrender until Caesar's second method of cutting the water supply succeeded.^b

§6. This method consisted of digging tunnels into the hill and up toward the spring, with the expectation that eventually the water channels feeding the spring could be met and diverted, thus drying up the spring. Caesar's soldiers were careful to hide the openings of their tunnels under protective roofs (which were used for the construction of the ramp anyway). Shortly after the completion of the ramp and tower, they were actually able to reach the underground water channels and cut them off. When this happened, Hirtius writes, the townspeople lost all hope. Since "the spring that had never dried up now suddenly died, . . . they thought that this could not have been contrived by humans but had happened by the will of the gods. Forced by necessity, they therefore surrendered."^a For the sake of the strongest possible deterrence, Caesar inflicted on the male defenders an unusually brutal punishment: he cut off their hands while allowing them to live. Drappes, who had been captured during the raid on his camp, starved himself to death. Lucterius, who had fled, was brought to Caesar in chains; presumably he was either killed immediately or displayed in Caesar's triumph and then killed.^b

§7. This is the dramatic report Hirtius gives on the last major military action of the Gallic war. He credits Caesar with recognizing immediately how the otherwise impregnable town could be defeated, and in a relatively short time: by depriving it of its water supply. The crucial significance of access to water in ancient warfare is well known in principle but not always given sufficient consideration. This concern had a major influ-

RR.4b 8.40.2–5.

RR.4c 8.41.1.

RR.5a 8.41.2–3, 8.41.5–6.

RR.5b 8.42–43.4.

RR.6a 8.41.4, 8.43.4–5 (quote: 5).

RR.6b 8.44.

ence on Caesar's decision making as well, both in protecting his own access to water and in depriving his opponents of it.^a Hence it is not surprising that he quickly realized that this was a sure path to victory. Nor are the methods he applied to achieve his goal unusual. His soldiers had accomplished even more astonishing feats in constructing high ramps and towers, for example at Avaricum. There, too, they had been confronted with efforts of the town's defenders to undermine their works with tunnels that also served as conduits to setting fires under the wooden siege works, and Caesar's soldiers had dug siege tunnels under the town's walls.^b Southern Gaul and Aquitania were mining country.^c Caesar could find experienced sappers (*cunicularii*) in the area—parts of the population did not support what was going on in Uxellodunum^d—and he presumably had some in his army, which certainly carried in its baggage train the necessary tools for this kind of work.^e As with other specialties in technology, only a few skilled professionals were needed, who taught the soldiers what to do and then supervised their work. This is what enabled Caesar's legionnaires to build siege works, bridges, and entire fleets and do so quickly and efficiently.^f At any rate, in his typical fashion, Caesar arrived, assessed the situation, made a plan, and put his soldiers to work. That they would overcome major difficulties of terrain and enemy action was expected.

§8. Naturally, fighting of such intensity and earthworks of such magnitude and depth must have left traces in the ground. Earliest efforts to search and dig for these remains go back to the mid-nineteenth century.^a Among several sites in the area that were considered, favored by some and rejected by others, especially one consistently attracted scholars' attention; in fact, it was identified with Caesar's Uxellodunum already in the Middle Ages and then, with authority, upon recommendation of his archaeologists, by Napoleon III. This is the plateau now called Puy d'Issolud, near Vayrac, on the Tourmente River near its confluence with the Dordogne, which originates in the Massif Central and flows into the Garonne near Bordeaux. The hill is indeed imposing, its sides steep.^b Great numbers of arrow- and spearheads, sling bullets,^c fragments of military equipment, and nails of military boots were found particularly in one limited area on the west side of the hill, just south of the modern hamlet of Loulié, where a little valley cuts into the hill and a spring has been located about halfway up the hill (the Fontaine de Loulié, Spring of Loulié). Naturally, such objects cannot be dated with precision, but several aspects make the identification of this site with Caesar's fights and siege at Uxellodunum almost irresistible. One is that in their enormous quantity these finds come almost entirely from throwing weapons (arrows, javelins, catapult missiles, slings); unlike at Alesia and Gergovia, here there is no evidence for man-to-man fighting, let alone a pitched battle, only for long-distance missile fighting. Second, the finds are perfectly compatible with those found at sites that are securely linked to Caesar's actions (Alesia and Gergovia). And third, excavations have yielded evidence for a complex system of tunnels that, although

RR.7a See Web Essay V: Military Logistics, §5.

RR.7b Avaricum: 7.17.1, 7.24.1, for the enormous siege ramp (330 feet wide and 80 feet high) and towers; 7.22.2, 7.22.5, 7.24.2 for the tunnels dug on both sides. In 49, at Massilia, Caesar's soldiers, having cut the trees far and wide, ran out of lumber when their siege works were burned by enemy action. They innovated by building a new ramp with brick walls (10.15).

RR.7c 3.21.3, 7.22.2.

RR.7d 8.34.3.

RR.7e Vegetius 2.10 (third–fourth century C.E. but

drawing on much earlier sources) assigns responsibility for providing sufficient numbers of suitable tools “for felling timber, opening fosses, building a rampart or an aqueduct” to the prefect of the camp (*praefectus castrorum*), an office created in Augustus’ time.

RR.7f See Web Essay S: Military Engineering and Sieges for siege works and bridges. Fleets: 3.9.1, 5.1, 9.36.5.

RR.8a See Girault 2013, chs. 2–3.

RR.8b See Figure 8.33 for a view of the hill.

RR.8c See Figure 8.42.

not datable with any precision, could certainly have originated in the mid-first century B.C.E., which is also suggested by some of the objects retrieved in them.^d

§9. Even so, until recently the identification was much debated. Early excavations that were not always conducted by trained archaeologists, and treasure hunters with metal detectors searching for ancient objects had done serious damage to the site, which also underwent changes due to varying uses over the centuries. Moreover, the site fits Hirtius' description in some ways but not in others. For example, the hill's slopes are steep but not equally on all sides. The Tourmente does not at all flow almost around the entire town hill but skirts it only on the western side;^a Hirtius does not mention the little valley leading up to the spring, and the path the townspeople had to use to fetch water from the river was steep only at the beginning and much less so at the end. Still, no other site has produced so much evidence that supports its historical identification, and the most plausible explanation for the discrepancies between the site's topography and Hirtius' report is that Hirtius had not been there himself and wrote his narrative based not on what he saw but on what he heard from Caesar—a possibility Hirtius mentions himself, though concerning the Alexandrian and African wars, not this campaign in Gaul.^b

§10. At any rate, a research team comprising specialists in multiple disciplines conducted a thorough reexamination of the site in 1993–2005 that further clarified contested issues.^a Among other findings, hydrological research confirmed that the spring was large enough to serve a fairly large population. Fragments of ceramic vessels and amphorae attest household use and water carrying. The military objects—in enormous quantities and, as said above, virtually all related to distance fighting with missiles—are clearly concentrated in the area of the spring and in that of the Roman ramp and tower. Close analogies with finds at Alesia and Gergovia leave no doubt that the attackers were Roman soldiers of Caesar's time. Coins point to the first century B.C.E. In the lower part of the slope below the spring, where the ramp would have been constructed, parts of several parallel walls were discovered, constructed with mud bricks and preserved by a very strong fire. Abundant evidence of devastating fires was described by earlier excavators since the mid-nineteenth century. Based on the heaviest concentration of missile finds, the Roman ramp and the tower erected on it were placed considerably farther from the spring than earlier excavators and Napoleon III's archaeologists had presumed. Even so, as experiments confirmed, missiles fired from this position could easily reach the area of the spring, and with precision, while the defenders, in turn, were capable of bombarding the attackers from positions higher up on the slope. Together with the evidence of the tunnels (§12), the results of these recent explorations have established beyond reasonable doubt that the Puy d'Issolud is indeed Caesar's Uxellodunum. In 2001, the French Ministry of Culture, with the support of leading scholars, confirmed this in an official declaration.

§11. Accepting, then, that the identification is correct, three final observations are in order. The first concerns the extraordinary quantity of evidence for distance fighting with missiles of all kinds. As always, what has survived to be found by archaeologists and

RR.8d See Figure 8.43. For all this, see the thorough report by Girault 2013 and the brief summary in French ("Recherches récentes à Loulié") at the website of the Association of Friends of Uxellodunum at www.uxellodunum.com.

RR.9a At other locations considered for the identification with Uxellodunum, especially at Impernald-de-Luzech, this detail fits the site which,

however, lacks the spring and the rich archaeological evidence.

RR.9b 8.Pref.8. This explanation is suggested, among others, by Kraner et al. 1960b, 46–47; see further §12.

RR.10a See the very detailed report by Girault 2013, summarized on pp. 147–51.

amateur treasure hunters is only a small part of what was there at the time. This was not a one-day battle, in which either side eventually might run out of weapons, but a type of fighting that extended over several weeks. Neither side is likely to have brought all these missiles along (Caesar's army) or to have stored them for such an emergency in the town; both must have continued producing them throughout the period of the confrontation. This is one of those aspects of warfare that were obvious to the observers and historians and thus hardly ever show up in the literary record: Caesar's army must have comprised a large number of smiths, who continually forged heads for arrows, javelins, and catapult missiles (as well as, in other contexts, swords), and other specialists who kept producing shafts for these weapons as well as sling bullets, while others were busy procuring the necessary raw materials.^a

§12. The second observation concerns the tunnels dug to divert the spring and thus cut off the town's water supply. According to Hirtius, these tunnels were dug by Roman soldiers, unnoticed by the town's defenders, who thus explained the sudden drying up of their spring with divine intervention.^a The excavations show, however, that the townspeople were well aware of what the Romans were trying to do. They dug countertunnels, trying to stop the advance of the Roman galleries, and they did so more than once and in different directions.^b This is visible from the marks of tools used to dig that reveal both the direction in which the tunneling was moving and the general location of its origin, so that Roman tunnel work and Gallic counterwork can easily be distinguished. The above-ground missile war was thus accompanied by an underground competition between the sappers of the two sides, which could well have ended in actual fighting between soldiers. At any rate, it is *a priori* likely that the Romans' digging caused noise and thus had to be noticed by the townspeople while they were still able to use their spring. Conversely, the Romans could hardly remain unaware of the countermeasures initiated by the townspeople. The fact that Hirtius does not mention this at all seems one of the strongest arguments in favor of the thesis that he was not present at Uxellodunum himself and relied on Caesar's oral communication and perhaps rudimentary written reports in composing and dramatizing this final episode of actual fighting in the Gallic war.^c This explanation, at any rate, seems preferable to another, that Hirtius, here caught red-handed, engaged in conscious distortion of facts in order to enhance Caesar's achievement.^d

§13. Third, and finally, as the recent explorers themselves emphasize, the archaeological record of Uxellodunum is far from complete.^a So far, very little has been done to explore the course of Rebilus' circumvallation and the placement of his three camps (which are shown with great confidence on Napoleon III's map). Nor has systematic research been conducted on the surface of the town hill where we would expect to find traces of walls, buildings, and other remains. Surprises may still await us!

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RR.11a Running out of weapons: 3.5.1. Constant production of weapons: see 13.20.3.

RR.12a 8.41.4, 8.43.4–5.

RR.12b Girault 2013, 115–22. See Figure 8.43. I thank Robert Strassler, who visited the site, for valuable information.

RR.12c See §9.

RR.12d Girault 2013, 151.

RR.13a Ibid.

WEB ESSAYS

Trench Warfare at Dyrrachium

Duncan B. Campbell

§1. One of the highlights of Caesar's commentaries is the lengthy account of his sparring match with Pompey at Dyrrachium (modern Durrës, in Albania) in the spring of 48.^a The town's coastal location, on the northern tip of a bay, made it ideal as a stores depot, and Pompey had concentrated all of his military equipment there, before moving approximately twenty miles south to intercept Caesar on the Genusus (modern Shkumbin) River. However, Caesar contrived to outflank him and cut him off from Dyrrachium, by encamping at a spot that modern authorities have located on the hill above the Shimmihl torrent, only three miles from the town. Unable to reach the safety of Dyrrachium, Pompey made camp at Petra, a rocky bluff on the coast south of the torrent, "which had a tolerable anchorage for ships" and could thus be resupplied from the town.^b

§2. Caesar, by contrast, could not import supplies, since Pompey's fleet controlled the sea, and was forced to rely on whatever he could procure from the rugged and hilly surroundings. He claims that it was in order to handicap Pompey's cavalry and to prevent it from interfering with his foraging that he decided upon the following strategy. He first began to plant forts (*castella*) on the hills surrounding Pompey's position; "then, he began to enclose Pompey by building a fortification from fort to fort, as the terrain dictated in each case."^a

§3. Pompey responded by seizing as many of the surrounding hills as possible in order to stretch Caesar's lines, and fortified them with twenty-four forts.^a Like Caesar, he proceeded to link them with continuous earthworks, but Pompey's circuit was naturally shorter than Caesar's, ultimately running for only fifteen miles as against Caesar's seventeen miles.^b In addition, as the siege lines snaked southward, Pompey attempted to force Caesar to adopt an ever wider circuit by harassing his men with archers and

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S.1a	11.41–73.
SS.1b	11.42.
SS.2a	11.43.
SS.3a	11.44.
SS.3b	11.63.

slingers. Caesar calls this “a new and unprecedented type of warfare, on account of the large number of forts, the wide space, the great fortifications, and the whole nature of the siege.”^c In fact, it has often been characterized as “trench warfare.”

§4. During this phase, there were frequent clashes between the two sides. One of these occurred when Pompey’s men seized a hill adjacent to one on which Caesar’s 9th Legion had begun to work. As usual, Pompey deployed light-armed infantry supported by archers, slingers, and catapults to drive Caesar’s men back. They, in turn, in order to obstruct any pursuers as they withdrew from the hill, set up wicker panels (*crates*) behind which they dug a lateral ditch, and began their orderly retreat. However, when the Pompeians continued to harass them, the men of the 9th Legion charged back up the hill and scattered their adversaries before finally withdrawing.^a It is quite likely that this was the hill of Paliama (near Tilaj), from which (we may conjecture) Caesar hoped to complete the blockade by leading his earthworks in a westerly direction down to the coast. By losing the hill to Pompey, he was obliged to continue extending his siege lines much farther south.^b

§5. As the stalemate wore on, the Pompeians suffered from the hygiene problems that inevitably resulted from the confinement of a large army in a small space, but particularly from a lack of fresh water, because Caesar’s men dammed the streams that flowed down to the coast. In fact, it seems that Pompey was obliged to ship his cavalry around to Dyrrachium,^a presumably to alleviate the logistical demands on his army. Caesar’s army, on the other hand, had no shortage of water, and, while lacking grain, nevertheless had plenty of meat.

§6. Caesar records that six battles occurred on a single day, “three at Dyrrachium, three at the fortifications.”^a It seems that Caesar had expected the town to be surrendered to him,^b but he may have fallen for a Pompeian ruse. At any rate, his night march on the town was intercepted, and he extricated his task force only with difficulty.^c Meanwhile, Pompey attempted to break through Caesar’s earthworks at three different points. Four legions were thrown against a fort near the middle of the line, which was held by a single cohort of the 6th Legion;^d their staunch defense, inspired by the centurion Cassius Scaeva, succeeded, and the Pompeian legions were repulsed,^e but Caesar’s deputy, Publius Sulla, failed to capitalize on his victory.^f Attacks at two other locations were likewise repulsed.^g

§7. Finally, Pompey learned from deserters that the last stretch of Caesar’s earthworks, where they ran across the plain of the Lesnikia River and down to the coast,^a remained incomplete. Although two lines of fortifications had been built, one facing north and the other facing south with a wide gap in between (following the same logic as the double investment at Alesia),^b Caesar had not yet linked the two with a transverse rampart facing the sea.^c Consequently, when Pompey launched a dawn attack, he was able to overrun Caesar’s inner and outer lines by ferrying light-armed troops and archers

SS.3c 11.47.

SS.4a 11.45–46.

SS.4b Heuzey 1886, 70–71; Veith 1920, 139–45.

SS.5a See 11.58.

SS.6a 11.53.

SS.6b See Appian, *Civil Wars* 2.60; Cassius Dio 41.50.3–4.

SS.6c There is a lacuna in Caesar’s text that cannot be entirely restored from the less detailed accounts of Appian (*Civil Wars* 2.60, which also suffers from a lacuna) and Cassius Dio (41.50–51).

SS.6d Suetonius, *Caesar* 68.3–4.

SS.6e Appian, *Civil Wars* 2.60.

SS.6f 11.51.

SS.6g 11.52.

SS.7a Lesnikia River: see Diagram 11.47.

SS.7b See Web Essay QQ: The Siege of Alesia.

SS.7c 11.63. See Web Essay TT: From Defeat at Dyrrachium to Victory at Pharsalus, §4.

into the undefended gap in between. The legion responsible for this sector, Caesar's 9th, sustained massive casualties, and only the arrival of reinforcements saved the day.^d

§8. Pompey now began entrenching a camp just beyond Caesar's double line to the south; at the same time, he enlarged and refurbished an abandoned Caesarian camp just to the north, near the Lesnikia River. Caesar attempted to seize this camp, but his men were unfamiliar with its new layout and panicked when Pompeian reinforcements arrived.^a Pompey's successes effectively ruptured the blockade, bolstered his men's morale, and finally forced Caesar to abandon the operation and extricate his army through forced marches. The blockade had lasted almost four months.^b

§9. The two sets of fortifications can be traced in broad outline from a study of the terrain. Explorations were carried out in 1861 by Léon Heuzey on behalf of Napoleon III, and again by Colonel Georg Veith in 1917, in order to clarify the extent of the earthworks, but they have never been subjected to archaeological investigation.^a

§10. Although Caesar ultimately failed, his attempt to paralyze Pompey's army through a massive encircling fortification and extended trench warfare, like his equally unsuccessful last-ditch effort at Brundisium to block the harbor in order to prevent Pompey from evacuating the second half of his army from Italy^a and his brilliant double victory over both Vercingetorix and a huge Gallic relief army at the siege of Alesia,^b stand as monuments to Caesar's ingenuity in complex and multidimensional warfare.

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- SS.7d 11.65.
SS.8a 11.67–69.
SS.8b Suetonius, *Caesar* 35.1. For maps of the fortifications and of Pompey's breakthrough battle, see Diagrams 11.47 and 11.64.
SS.9a See Heuzey 1886; Veith 1920.
SS.10a 9.25–28.
SS.10b 7.68–69.

WEB ESSAY TT

From Defeat at Dyrrachium to Victory at Pharsalus

Gregory S. Bucher

§1. On c. July 9, 48 B.C.E./May 7 SOLAR YR., Caesar suffered the worst defeat of his entire military career. After almost three months of hard labor in the hills around Petra, near Dyrrachium in Epirus,^a his soldiers had almost completed the daunting work of enclosing Pompey's army by a system of continuous fortifications. Pushed to the verge of a humiliating setback, Pompey finally devised and executed a brilliant plan to break through Caesar's lines. In two battles on the same day, Caesar's troops incurred heavy losses, Pompey's breakthrough proved irreversible, and Caesar was forced to abandon his enclosure plan and devise a new strategy.^b At Dyrrachium, Pompey proved the better tactician. Yet almost exactly one month later, on August 9/June 7 SOLAR YR., at Pharsalus in Thessaly,^c Caesar won a resounding victory by designing a battle plan that eliminated the threat of Pompey's vastly superior cavalry and enabled his own forces to crush Pompey's army by attacking it from both the front and rear.^d At Pharsalus—and thus in the final and decisive duel—Caesar proved tactically superior. His victory represents an amazing reversal and comeback. This essay examines the causes of his earlier defeat and of his ultimate success.

§2. Caesar admits that his attempt to enclose Pompey at Petra was unusual, even foolhardy. Such an operation was usually carried out by a superior army to force an already weakened enemy into starvation and submission. In this case, Pompey's army was superior in numbers, undefeated, with access to a fleet that controlled the seas and could ferry in supplies.^a Caesar thus knew that his fortifications, however strong and successful, could not compel Pompey to capitulate. But he had realized that Pompey was

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- TT.1a Petra, Dyrrachium: Diagram 11.47; Epirus: Map 11.3.
TT.1b See 11.42–74, Diagram 11.47, and Web Essay SS: Trench Warfare at Dyrrachium.
TT.1c Pharsalus, Thessaly: Map 11.78.
TT.1d See 11.85–99.
TT.2a 11.47.1–4.

unwilling to seek a quick decision in a field battle against his much more experienced troops.^b Pompey's strategy was to delay, wear Caesar's army out, and to cut it off from supplies. For this strategy his vastly superior cavalry was the decisive weapon.^c Caesar thus had to find a way to take Pompey's cavalry out of the equation. In addition, he knew that, so to speak, the world was watching, and that many of Pompey's supporters were jealous of his power, distrusted his intentions, and wanted this war to be over as quickly as possible. Caesar thus hoped that by immobilizing Pompey's army and exposing his unwillingness to fight, Pompey would be humiliated, lose support, and eventually have to fight against his will and better judgment.^d

§3. Pompey at some point evacuated his cavalry by ship but brought it back when this move did not resolve the shortage of fodder.^a The evacuation of an entire army by the sea, however, was fraught with risks,^b and Pompey never contemplated it. Hence the success of Caesar's plan was predicated on his ability to hem Pompey in so as to make it virtually impossible for him to break out by land. We might consider this goal unrealistic, but Caesar had much experience with circumvallations,^c Pompey's long hesitation improved his chances, and conditions on Pompey's side deteriorated rapidly.^d Still, Caesar failed, and the seed of his failure was sown long before it actually occurred. In an ongoing fierce competition, Caesar had tried to draw his fortification line as narrowly as possible, while Pompey made every effort to build his contravallation as far out as possible.^e In this "battle about hills," Pompey had forced Caesar to yield occupation of a strategically located position that would have allowed him to carry his walls down to the sea on a much shorter line and to deprive Pompey of access to what is now called the Lesnikia River—a significant water source.^f Instead, Caesar had to build the southernmost part of his fortifications on the plain beyond this river. Since in this area he lacked the support of the terrain, and since Pompey had the capacity of landing troops by sea on the coast beyond Caesar's fortification, and to attack from both sides, Caesar was forced to build here a double fortification and to close it off along the sea by a connecting wall.^g

§4. The fact that this connecting wall was not yet complete^a offered Pompey the opportunity he exploited on July 9. The two sides had been skirmishing and probing each other's defenses for weeks. In addition Pompey surely had his scouts explore Caesar's dispositions from land and sea. He hardly needed defectors to inform him of the one gap remaining in Caesar's walls—well visible, as it must have been, from any ship passing close by. Caesar nevertheless places the blame entirely on two Gallic cavalry officers who crossed over to Pompey and offered him all the information he wanted.^b They probably did so, and some of it probably was useful,^c but in Caesar's narrative they mainly serve as convenient scapegoats, not least by allowing him to avoid giving Pompey full credit for his brilliant battle plan and to shield himself from the blame he might well deserve for having left this crucial part of his fortifications incomplete and vulnerable at this late stage. After meticulous preparation,^d at dawn camouflaged infantry attacked the

TT.2b 11.44.1; see also 11.55.

TT.2c According to 11.4.3, Pompey's cavalry numbered 7,000. Caesar had brought along 500 (11.2.2), Antonius later 800 more (11.29.2), for a total of 1,300. Later sources (Appian, *Civil Wars* 2.70; Orosius 6.15.23; Eutropius 6.20.4) mention 1,000.

TT.2d 11.42.3.

TT.3a 11.58.1-2.

TT.3b See 10.43.1-44.1; 12.20-21. It is easy to think of modern examples.

TT.3c See Web Essays S: Military Engineering and Sieges, and QQ: The Siege of Alesia.

TT.3d 11.49.2-4.

TT.3e 11.44.2-45.1.

TT.3f 11.45.2-46.6.

TT.3g 11.63.2; see Diagram 11.47.

TT.4a 11.63.4.

TT.4b 11.59-61.

TT.4c See especially 11.61.3.

TT.4d 11.62.1-3.

inside wall. At the same time, other infantry units landed on the coast beyond Caesar's walls and attacked the outside fortifications, while yet other units went ashore outside the crosswall, poured through the gap, and attacked Caesar's defenders from their rear. Cohorts of the 9th Legion, which so far had held out bravely, turned and fled, suffering heavy losses. Other cohorts, sent to assist them from the legion's camp farther inland, were unable to stem the tide and fled as well. Caesar's legate Marcus Antonius, hurrying down from a more remote camp with twelve cohorts, was finally able to stop the enemy. But the breach had occurred, Pompey immediately started building a new camp in the area, and all Caesar could do at the moment was build a new crosswall about half a mile from the sea.^e

§5. Later the same day, however, Caesar perceived an opportunity to redeem himself by destroying an isolated Pompeian legion that had occupied an old camp of his in a wooded area between his inside wall and the Lesnikia River. He reports, but perhaps did not fully realize at the time, that in the meantime Pompey had built additional fortifications in the area so that the layout of forts and walls was less familiar than Caesar expected.^a Moreover, he uncharacteristically used for the ensuing action troops that included the 9th Legion, which had just suffered serious losses, especially among its centurions.^b Despite initial successes, and although he completely surprised the enemy, half of Caesar's task force lost its way in the maze of walls and trenches, and Pompey was alerted and reacted by counterattacking with superior forces before Caesar had achieved his goal. The ensuing retreat turned into a rout in which Caesar completely lost control over his troops and more men died in a stampede than by enemy weapons.^c As Caesar admits, his entire task force of more than three legions, and perhaps a much larger part of his army, could have perished if Pompey had not feared an ambush and hesitated.^d Even so, on this day Caesar lost almost a thousand men, including thirty-two centurions—the highest number of casualties in his entire career.^e The fact that during another day of multiple battles at Dyrrachium and Petra nearly two thousand of Pompey's men died (against only twenty on Caesar's side)^f puts the casualty count into perspective but hardly mitigates Caesar's complete failure on July 9. Nor does the self-exculpation Caesar offered to his troops on the next day sound convincing.^g The simple fact remains that Caesar had gambled and lost, and that he himself bore a good share of the responsibility for this loss. All he could do was cut his losses and move on. The way he did this, however, is most impressive.

§6. Resisting the temptation to seek another reversal by attacking Pompey again, Caesar decided to evacuate his wounded to Apollonia and move the war to another area, giving his soldiers time to recover and restore their morale.^a His immediate problem was how to extricate his army from Pompey's superior forces, especially the enemy cavalry that now was again able to roam freely. He resolved this problem by brilliantly outwitting and outmaneuvering his opponent. In fact, Pompey lost so much ground in his pursuit during the first two days that he soon had to give up any hope of catching Caesar.^b While Caesar retreated east on a southern route from Apollonia,^c Pompey marched east

TT.4e 11.62–65; see Diagram 11.64.

800 men (6.44.1), and at Gergovia in 52, nearly 700 men, including 46 centurions (7.51).

TT.5a 11.66.1–67.2; see Diagram 11.67.

TT.5f 11.53.1–2.

TT.5b 11.64.4–65.1, 67.3. Usually, Caesar was careful to restore his soldiers' morale or to allow them to rest before leading them into action again.

TT.5g 11.73.4–5.

TT.5c 11.67.4–70.2.

TT.6a 11.74. Apollonia: Map 11.78, AX.

TT.5d 11.70.

TT.6b 11.75–76.

TT.5e 11.71.1; at Atuatuca in 53, Caesar had lost nearly

TT.6c 11.78.4. He explains his strategy lucidly at 11.78.3.

on the northern Via Egnatia in order to join up with Scipio, who was bringing his army across from Asia.^d Caesar's legate Domitius Calvinus, who had temporarily blocked Scipio in southern Macedonia, narrowly avoided running into Pompey coming east.^e He met Caesar, and they proceeded down the valley of the Peneus River, turning aside to Gomphi.^f Scipio, meanwhile, met Pompey at Larissa. Caesar's legates Cassius and Calvinius had secured most of the territory north of the Corinthian isthmus.^g However, the eastern coast of Greece was held by Pompey's legates from a base on Euboea, putting it effectively off limits to Caesar's forces.^h

§7. Caesar thus held lines of communication and supply toward the west and south; Pompey's position was secured from the north and east. The two armies were on a converging course, with Caesar a little ahead and taking a more southern route. Having restored supplies and morale by sacking Gomphi, Caesar headed across the Thessalian plain toward the road that led from north to south, and placed his camp just north of the bridge where that road crossed the Enipeus River. In this way, he controlled all the territory south of the river, held the bridge, and had access to the nearly ripe grain in the surrounding plains.^a When Pompey arrived at Pharsalus, he found the way south blocked. He pitched his camp about 3.5 miles away in an elevated position.^b It was near here, some distance to the west and north of Caesar's camp, that he sought to lure Caesar to fight on uneven terms.^c

§8. The great confrontation between Caesar and Pompey took place on August 9 of the Roman civil calendar, some two months in advance of the seasons: as Caesar remarks, the grain in the fields around Pharsalus was then "nearly ripe," corresponding to the calculated solar year date of June 7.^a Caesar's eyewitness account of the battle is the best that survives. Nothing suggests that his account of the battle is distorted by falsification or egregious error, though it is streamlined for inclusion in the commentaries and artfully presented so as to justify his own position and demonstrate his martial and intellectual superiority over Pompey.^b Of the other sources,^c only Cicero was a contemporary and had been in Pompey's camp. He departed before the battle, which he therefore did not see; but he valuably corroborates Caesar's claims that the Pompeians planned to exploit a victory by carrying out ruthless reprisals and confiscations that were consciously reminiscent of those executed by Sulla.^d The Caesarian legate Asinius Pollio participated in the battle; he later wrote a history of the civil wars that, had it survived in more than the scantiest fragments, would have been a valuable supplement. Even so, Pollio and his work are much-discussed topics;^e he certainly had access to firsthand infor-

TT.6d On Scipio, see Appendix A: Who's Who in Caesar, §40. For the places and troop movements mentioned in this paragraph, see Map 11.79.

TT.6e 11.75.1, 11.79.1–3. On Domitius, see Appendix A, §23.

TT.6f 11.79.7–80.1.

TT.6g 11.56.1.

TT.6h See Mason and Wallace 1972.

TT.7a 11.81.3.

TT.7b Appian, *Civil Wars* 2.65.

TT.7c 11.85.1. For the following analysis, see the Diagram 11.93.

TT.8a 11.81.3. See Web Essay BB: The Chronology of Caesar's Campaigns, §11.

TT.8b Grillo 2011, 260–64; 2012. See §10 for a defense of Pompey's strategy.

TT.8c I mention only those that make substantial contributions: Cicero, *Letters to Atticus* 11.6.2, 11.6.6,

among others; Lucan, *Pharsalia*, especially Book 7; Florus, 2.13.43–51; Frontinus, *Stratagems* 2.7.13; Suetonius, *Caesar* 30.4, 35.1, 53, 75.2–3; Plutarch, *Caesar* 42–46, 62; *Pompey* 68–73; Appian, *Civil Wars* 2.65.272–82.347; Polyenus, *Stratagems* 8.23.14; Cassius Dio 41.51–63; Orosius, *History against the Pagans* 6.15.22–27. 11.83.1–5.

TT.8d For Pollio's presence at the battle: Suetonius, *Caesar* 30.4; Plutarch, *Caesar* 46. On Pollio in general, see now Drummond 2013 with fragments and bibliography. On Pollio as a source and specifically, in conjunction with Plutarch, on the period that includes Pharsalus, see again Drummond 2013; Bucher 1997, 204–49. Pollio's judgment on Caesar's *Civil War* has been discussed in Grillo 2011, 264–67; see also Web Essay DD: Caesar the Historian, §§6–7.

mation even when he did not witness events, and he seems to have written his history more freely than the victors in the civil wars would have wanted. Plutarch and Appian consulted his work, though how extensively and how accurately is not clear. Appian, at any rate (who probably also read Caesar), has distorted his account of the battle for his own literary and programmatic purposes.^f

§9. Doubts about the battle's site left by both Caesar's brief account and the other sources have recently been resolved.^a The battle took place in the plain of Pharsalus north of the Enipeus River, which runs from east to west through the plain. Caesar tells us that on the day of the battle he was prepared to move his camp in order to replenish his grain supply and to tire Pompey's army by making it follow him: he claims that Pompey's army was unaccustomed to daily marches.^b The move, however, never took place. Pompey, persuaded (or bullied, as Caesar claims, based upon testimony gathered after the battle)^c by other powerful men in his camp to give battle rather than to wear Caesar down more safely by attrition, offered Caesar a fair fight by descending into the level portion of the plain, and the two armies joined battle.

§10. The battle line formed by the infantry forces of both armies used the Enipeus River as a natural anchor in the south. Both generals thus concentrated the bulk of their cavalry and light-armed troops on the other side of the battle line. The infantry line's length can be calculated at about 2.2 Roman miles (just over 2 modern miles),^a which left some room for maneuvering at the northern end, between the end of the line and the nearby hills. This agrees well with Caesar's account that Pompey's cavalry fled up a hill after it failed to round Caesar's right flank.^b Caesar's lines were comparatively attenuated: he had only twenty-two thousand men to oppose Pompey's forty-seven thousand.^c Still, Pompey knew that only two of his legions had recent and intensive battle experience, and those had served under Caesar in Gaul.^d Pompey thus devised a battle plan that relied on his massive superiority in cavalry (seven thousand against thirteen hundred)^e and seemed to offer an opportunity to win the fight in a stroke. He instructed his horsemen to put Caesar's cavalry to flight, make a charge around Caesar's right (north) flank, and attack his line from its unprotected (right) side and the rear,^f thus sowing confusion and fear and, it was hoped, quickly breaking the resistance of Caesar's troops. This was by no means an unreasonable expectation, and Pompey's battle plan made perfect sense.^g There were only two problems. First, Pompey was so confident that his plan would succeed that he apparently did not even consider its failure and prepare for the possibility of an ensuing emergency. Second, if we can trust Caesar's report (based on information learned after the battle), Pompey passed his overconfidence on to his officers and even allowed the turncoat Labienus to belittle the quality of Caesar's troops; consciously or unconsciously, this left them mentally unprepared to deal with an adverse outcome.^h

§11. Yet they were dealing with Caesar. While marching to the battlefield and arrang-

TT.8f Bucher 2005.

TT.9a See Morgan 1983 (with earlier bibliography), whose autopsy-based discussion has definitively settled the issue. For a fuller discussion of the battle and its topography keyed to Appian's account, see Bucher 1997, 272–337.

TT.9b 11.85.2–3; Plutarch (*Pompey* 68; *Caesar* 43) specifies that Caesar planned to move north of the river and east.

TT.9c 11.82.2, 11.86.1.

TT.10a See Morgan 1983, 27, for the calculation.

TT.10b 11.93.5. For diagrams of the battle of Pharsalus, see Diagram 11.93.

TT.10c 11.89.2, 11.88.5.

TT.10d 9.2.3, 11.88.2.

TT.10e On the numbers, see n. TT.2c.

TT.10f 11.86.3, 11.93.3.

TT.10g See Appendix Y: Civil War Strategies, §11.

TT.10h 11.86–87.

ing his formation, he perceived the disposition of Pompey's cavalry and, given the lay of the land, deduced Pompey's scheme. Reacting to it at the last minute, he took one cohort each from the third line of six or seven legions (later authors state that he pulled three thousand men from his forces) and stationed them as a reserve fourth line behind the right wing of his formation (thus invisible from Pompey's position) and at an angle to confront just such a flanking attack.^a Caesar implies that this was an improvised maneuver. Perhaps it was, since he displayed a remarkable ability to change formations and maneuver troop units around just before or even during a battle.^b But this was possible only if extensive formation training and an inventory of drilled tactical responses to military emergencies were part of his army's routine exercises; it therefore seems not unlikely that the movement Caesar initiated at Pharsalus, or at least a similar one, had been practiced before, to counter precisely the danger of a flanking attack by superior cavalry.^c

§12. The secondary authors' accounts of the battle's beginning are marred by improbable theatrics (for example, Cassius Dio has the troops "fall into weeping and lamenting" when the signal to engage battle is given).^a At any rate, Pompey appears to have applied another stratagem, ordering his soldiers to receive the charge of Caesar's men instead of attacking in a typical countercharge, hoping that Caesar's men would be exhausted even before they came to close quarters and that his army, preserving its well-ordered formation, would have an easier time dealing with the necessarily disordered ranks of Caesar's charging soldiers. This expectation failed because the experienced Cae-sarian troops, perceiving the lack of reaction on the other side, stopped in the middle and continued their running attack only after they had caught their breath.^b Once battle was joined, Pompey's infantry resisted valiantly. His cavalry, as planned, did indeed push Caesar's horsemen back and, together with vast numbers of archers and slingers, swept around Caesar's right flank. But there it was met by Caesar's fourth line. Various stories were later told about this part of the action. In particular, Florus claims that Caesar ordered his men to strike at the faces of their enemies—a loose factoid that Appian appears to have connected with the encounter of the reserve line with Pompey's cavalry: the cavalry, he claims, was turned due to a failure of nerve or because they could not bear the danger of spears raised toward their faces.^c

§13. Most likely, the Pompeian horsemen were turned because they were completely caught by surprise. They had forced Caesar's vastly outnumbered cavalry to retreat and now assumed that they would have an open way around Caesar's flank. The last thing they expected, as they deployed their squadrons more widely and started to make the turn, was to run into a well-prepared and compact line of infantry that fiercely attacked them as soon as they appeared. When their first squadrons were stopped and pushed back by this unforeseen force, the entire cavalry corps panicked and fled.^a Their flight deprived Pompey of their much-needed support. His now undefended archers and slingers were massacred, and Caesar's fourth line, following either the initiative of its officers or, more likely, the instructions Caesar had given them when he explained his

TT.11a 11.89.3; Plutarch, *Pompey* 69, 71; *Caesar* 44; Appian, *Civil Wars* 2.76; Frontinus, *Stratagems* 2.3.22; see Bueher 1997, 318–19; Web Essay Y: Civil War Strategies, §11.

TT.11b See, for example, 2.26.1–2, 13.17.

TT.11c I thank Robert Strassler and Kurt Raflaub for these suggestions.

TT.12a Cassius Dio 41.58.1–3.

TT.12b 11.92.1–3, 11.93.1.

TT.12c Florus 2.13.50; Appian, *Civil Wars* 2.76.

TT.13a 11.93.5–6. This kind of reaction was not untypical of cavalry forces. In addition, Pompey's cavalry was a polyglot assemblage of Greeks, Syrians, Anatolians, Thessalians, Macedonians, Gauls, and Germans—hardly a united force. Panic in one unit could easily be transmitted to others. I thank Robert Strassler for these particular suggestions and for others adopted below.

battle plan to them, circled around Pompey's left flank and attacked his forces from the rear. At the same time, Caesar sent his fresh third line of infantry to reinforce the frontal attack. The Pompeians were now caught between hammer and anvil. This, according to Caesar, was more than they could sustain, and the battle was decided.^b

§14. Caesar thus won because he anticipated Pompey's strategy, because his army was vastly superior in battle experience, and because his officers and soldiers were able to think and act independently. Pompey's tactical plans and stratagems certainly did not lack merit: he relied on the arm in which he had immense superiority (the cavalry), and he tried thereby to ease the burden on his much less experienced infantry, despite their numerical superiority, by keeping them in formation and avoiding their scattering in a running attack.^a Caesar comments on both aspects—and a third. He faults Pompey explicitly, in his own voice, by giving his expert opinion based on the psychology of warfare, for making a poor choice in holding his infantry back.^b As to Pompey's main strategy, he does not criticize Pompey's battle plan as such but his single-minded reliance on the cavalry and his failure to have a "plan B" in case his primary strategy failed. Most of all, he takes Pompey to task—no doubt somewhat polemically—for failing in his leadership, first by letting others force him to fight a battle when he knew that his better strategy was to continue to avoid battle and wear Caesar down, and by presenting his plan to his officers as foolproof.^c

§15. Moreover—and perhaps, at least from Caesar's perspective, worst of all—Pompey pathetically failed in his personal leadership, even if Caesar may sarcastically have exaggerated this aspect. When Pompey saw his cavalry flee, he appears to have lost his nerve. Instead of trying everything he could to counter Caesar's moves and inspiring his troops by fighting among them—this, we might guess, is what Caesar himself would have done in such a situation^a—he left his troops to fight on and retreated to his camp,^b at the last minute escaping toward Larissa, his rear base.^c Left without a leader, his men, who stoutly defended their camp initially,^d fled into the hills behind it and subsequently retreated along the ridge toward Larissa. When Caesar built a rampart blocking them from access to water, they surrendered.^e

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TT.13b 11.93.7–8, 11.94.1–4.

TT.14a See also Web Essay Y: Civil War Strategies, §13.

TT.14b 11.92.4–5.

TT.14c 11.82.2, 11.86.1–4.

TT.15a If we can judge, for example, from Caesar's role in turning a battle around at 2.20–26 (battle against the Nervii) and 13.12–18 (battle at Ruspin). Moreover, in the battle against the Helvetii in 58, Caesar had reacted to a somewhat comparable attack from the rear by turning his third line around and fighting in both directions (1.25.5–7 and Diagram 1.25).

TT.15b 11.94.5–6.

TT.15c 11.96.3.

TT.15d 11.95.3–4.

TT.15e 11.97.2–98.3. Caesar (11.99.1–2) writes that he lost "no more than 200 soldiers" and "about 30 centurions," numbers repeated by Appian (our only other source for Caesar's casualties), with the notice that others thought he lost 1,200—still an astonishingly low number (*Civil Wars* 2.82). According to Caesar (11.99.4), Pompey's army lost 15,000 men, though Appian (*Civil Wars* 2.82) states that Pollio gave the number as 6,000 (and exaggerated accounts as 25,000), and Orosius (*History against the Pagans* 6.15.27) mentions 15,000 soldiers and 33 centurions.

WEB ESSAY UU

Alexandria

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§1. Alexandria was founded by Alexander the Great in 331 B.C.E. and built by the famous architect Deinocrates with a rectangular street grid. Its site, a few miles west of the Nile delta, was ideal: a deep natural bay, protected by Pharos Island, offered a large harbor, and the terrain gradually rose toward the inland to provide protection from floods. Almost two miles to the south was a large lake, Lake Mareotis, with its own harbor; canals and rivers connected this area in general, and the lake and the city in particular, with the westernmost, Canopic branch of the Nile (§8). A causeway about three-quarters of a mile long (called Heptastadion, “Seven stadia”) connected the city with the island;^a on its easternmost tip, on a small islet, stood the famous Pharos lighthouse, one of the Seven Wonders of the World. The Heptastadion divided the harbor bay into the Great Harbor in the east and the Eunostus Harbor in the west (§8). Alexandria’s streets were wide (about twenty-three feet), its two main streets, intersecting in the city’s center, even much wider; one of these, the Canopic Street, ran east–west from the Canopic to the Western Gate. The circuit of the city walls measured slightly more than eleven miles.^b

§2. In the Hellenistic-Roman period, Alexandria grew to be one of the largest cities in the Mediterranean, famous for its culture and library and the scholars who worked there.^a Its importance as the capital of the Ptolemaic kingdom and then the Roman and Byzantine province of Egypt lasted for almost a millennium, until, after the Arab conquest in 641 C.E., a new capital was founded at the site of modern Cairo. Its decline had started even earlier, though, and during the Middle Ages much of the ancient city was taken over by sand dunes. Destruction by wars and earthquakes took its toll—for instance, Pharos Island, a fortified town, was deserted after the devastations of Caesar’s

NOTE: All dates are B.C.E. (Before the Common Era) unless otherwise indicated. The dates given in the Web essays are those of the traditional Roman civil calendar up to January 45, when the Julian calendar was instated. For more on the Roman system of time-counting, see Appendix C: Roman Calendars, Dates, and Time. For all Web essays, go to landmarkcaesar.com. Source references without indication of title or author name refer to the texts in *The Landmark Julius Caesar*. Modern works are listed fully in

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- UU.1a A stadium was almost 200 yards long.
UU.1b See Figure 11.112 and Map 12.3.
UU.2a Fraser 1972. Diodorus Siculus (17.52) gives the city’s population in Augustus’ time as 300,000.

war, and at some point in late antiquity the entire waterfront toppled into the harbor. Over time, the coast subsided by about thirteen feet, so that much of the ancient city's built-up area along the harbor is now under water (some of the artworks and architectural elements have been retrieved by recent underwater excavations).^b Massive silting along the causeway and elsewhere has further obliterated the topography of Caesar's time (well into the nineteenth century, Alexandria's main settlement was reduced to this now wide area between the former island and mainland). As a result of these changes it is often difficult to locate or understand precisely what the author of the *Alexandrian War* describes.^c

§3. Before we discuss the city's topography as it appears in the *Alexandrian War*, a few words are needed on the historical background to Pompey's and Caesar's involvement with Alexandria and the Egyptian kings. Ever since Rome was dragged into eastern Mediterranean affairs in the Macedonian Wars of the first half of the second century B.C.E., and especially from the time Rome established its first province in Asian territory (Asia, in 133), its presence and military superiority had a powerful, though mostly indirect influence on Egyptian affairs as well. King Ptolemy X had been expelled by the Alexandrians in 88; trying to muster Roman military support to regain his throne, he willed his kingdom to Rome (although the Roman Senate did not act upon this testament). After a chaotic interlude and the very short rule of Ptolemy XI, Ptolemy XII became king in 80, but for various reasons (not least the will of his uncle, Ptolemy X) his rule remained contested both in Egypt and in Rome (where a proposal to annex Egypt was discussed in 65). Ptolemy XII supported Pompey during the latter's war against Mithridates, and in 59 (during Caesar's first consulship), after the promise of huge monetary gifts to Pompey and Caesar (which were in part still outstanding in 48: see §5), he was formally recognized as Friend of the Roman People. But only a year later, in an uproar because of Rome's annexation of Cyprus, he was expelled by the Alexandrians and sought refuge in Rome, where he was Pompey's guest. In 55 (during Pompey's second consulship) Pompey's associate, Aulus Gabinius, restored him to his throne and left some troops in Egypt to support him.^a The pharaoh thus owed his throne to Pompey (although his debt to Caesar was also significant). According to Roman customs and understanding, such obligations were hereditary and bound the son no less than the father. This explains Pompey's decision to seek refuge and support in Egypt after his defeat at Pharsalus.^b

§4. Ptolemy XII had three daughters and two sons. The oldest daughter, Berenice, was proclaimed queen by the Alexandrians in 57 (replacing her father, who had fled to Rome) but was executed when the latter was restored by Gabinius in 55. The second daughter (born c. 69) was Cleopatra VII (soon to be Caesar's lover), the third and youngest, Arsinoë. Both sons were called Ptolemy. After the death of Ptolemy XII in 51, the throne passed by testament to his older son, Ptolemy XIII (b. 61) and his older daughter, Cleopatra, who, according to Egyptian custom, married her brother (after his death in the decisive battle of the Alexandrian war, the latter was replaced by his younger brother, Ptolemy XIV, then a mere boy). A copy of this testament was sent to Rome (which implied recognition of Rome as the will's executor—a fact that Caesar used to

UU.2b See, for example, Goddio 2004; Goddio and Clauss 2006 (2008). Subsiding: Fraser 1972, 8.

UU.2c For the topography of Alexandria at the time, see Mahmoud-Bey 1872; Graindor 1931; Andrieu 1954, LIII–LVIII, and especially

Fraser 1972, 9–37.

UU.3a For details, see Carter 1993, 221–22; Thompson 1994, 316–21. On Gabinius, see Appendix A: Who's Who in Caesar, §25.

UU.3b See 11.103.

justify his intervention in Egypt's internal affairs); another copy was kept in Alexandria. Intrigues among court factions led to the expulsion of Cleopatra, who fled to Syria and was trying to regain the throne with military force, when first Pompey, then Caesar, arrived in Egypt in the fall of 48.^a

§5. Fearing the wrath of the victorious Caesar, the king's advisers (led by the eunuch Pothinus) had Pompey killed upon his landing at Pelusium, where the royal siblings' armies were facing each other. A few days later, Caesar showed up in Alexandria, accompanied only by a small military force. At the end of the *Civil War* (Book 11 of *The Landmark Julius Caesar*), Caesar describes the developments that prompted the outbreak of a new war. But in his report he omits many details. In particular, he never tells us that after his landing in Alexandria, Pothinus and the king returned from Pelusium to Alexandria themselves and assigned part of the royal palace quarter to him and his troops. Instead of showing gratitude for their hospitality and elimination of Pompey, however, Caesar showed disgust when the head of Pompey was presented to him, made huge financial demands (referring to the unpaid part of the gift the king's father had promised him in 59), and on top of this (based on the previous king's testament) assumed the role of judge and arbiter in the conflict between the royal couple. In these proceedings, which promptly unfolded in the palace, presumably Cleopatra was initially represented by her supporters; in view of the personal presence of the king and Pothinus, this put her at a disadvantage. She corrected this by secretly returning to Alexandria and slipping into the palace (according to famous later elaboration, hidden in a rug). This turned things in her favor.^a So much seems probable, but we do not know whether Pothinus summoned the Egyptian army to Alexandria only at this point or earlier. At any rate, the arrival of this army marked the beginning of the Alexandrian war.

§6. The description of the area around the Great Harbor offered by the geographer Strabo (a contemporary of Augustus and thus a near contemporary of Caesar) is helpful:

As you enter the Great Harbour you have Pharos and the lighthouse on the right, and on the other hand are the Hog's Back Rocks and the Lochias promontory on which there is a palace. As you sail in, there are, on the left, in continuation of the buildings on Lochias, the Inner Palaces which contain many and various dwellings and groves; below these is the artifical closed harbour, which is the private harbour of the royal family, and Antirrhodus, a small island in front of the artificial harbour, which has both a palace and a small mole.... The theatre overlooks the island. Next is the Poseidion, which is an arm projecting from the so-called Emporion, on which is a temple of Poseidon.... Next are the Caesareum and the Emporion and the Warehouses; and after them the dockyards, which continue up to the Heptastadion.^a

§7. The area comprising the royal palaces was huge—according to Strabo at least one quarter of the city's area—taking up the entire eastern and part of the southern side of the Great Harbor.^a But we can roughly locate the part occupied by Caesar and his troops

UU.4a See 11.107–8.

UU.5a See Plutarch, *Caesar* 48–49; *Pompey* 80; Appian, *Civil Wars* 84–86, 89–90; Cassius Dio 42.34–38. For modern discussions, especially of Cleopatra's role, see Pomeroy 1984; Burstein

2004; Roller 2010.

UU.6a Strabo 17.1.9 (trans. P. M. Fraser).
UU.7a Ibid., 17.1.8.

because it comprised the theater that, says Strabo, “overlooked the [Antirrhodus] island” and was just east of the Poseidion, two features clearly identifiable in the city’s topography.^b From there, Caesar solidified his connection to the harbor and expanded the area under his control southeastward, toward a broad area of wetlands that reached from the south far into the city; his goal was to gain access to fodder and water, and divide the city, thus disrupting the enemy’s circulation and communications.^c We do not, in fact, know whether Caesar succeeded in achieving the latter aim; as far as water is concerned, the problems were resolved by overcoming the crisis mentioned in §8.

§8. The exact location and extent of this wetland area and its relation to Lake Mareotis (§1) or the canal that connected the city with the Canopic Nile (hence called Canopic Canal) are much debated. According to the *Alexandrian War*, the city’s supply of drinking water was somehow connected with the Nile and channeled through subterranean conduits into the privileged residential areas.^a The lack of a good public water supply system—to a Roman an astonishing shortcoming^b—and the dependence of the palace area occupied by Caesar on this water system offered the enemy an opportunity. They took elaborate measures to pour salt water from the sea into the conduits serving Caesar’s area, while protecting their own. The author of the *Alexandrian War* gives an elaborate description of the panic this caused and of Caesar’s superb ability to restore the morale of his troops and resolve the problem (by digging numerous wells), thus foiling the enemy’s efforts.^c But in other ways the report this author gives is unclear enough to require some discussion.

§9. The author emphasizes that the city’s water supply derived from the Nile and was muddy and unhealthy; only the wealthier inhabitants, living in the eastern section around the palace, could profit from an elaborate system of underground channels that originated at this water source (the “Nile”) and allowed the sediments to settle, thus clearing the water and making it healthier to drink, while the poorer populace had to fetch the water directly at “the Nile.” Since the westernmost branch of the Nile flows several miles east of Alexandria, the author cannot mean the Nile itself but a waterway (*flumen*, river or canal) connected with the Nile and close to or in the city.^a Strabo, writing in the time of Augustus, mentions two canals. One connected the inland Lake Mareotis with an artificial harbor (Cibotus, “the Box,” so named after its square or rectangular shape) within or attached to the Eunostus Harbor (since the lake was a sweetwater lake, the water in this canal flowed north, into the Cibotus Harbor). The other canal was reached east of the city, some distance outside the Canopic Gate, and led from the lake to Canopus, with a southward branch into the Nile at Schedia.^b Strabo does not mention (and thus presumably did not know at the time of his writing) a cross-canal (called *Sebastos*, “Augustan,” and attested by two inscriptions) that Augustus had built in 10/11 C.E., “leading through the entire city,” connecting the Canopus Canal directly with the Cibotus Harbor, and thus making it possible for ships to avoid the open lake. Clearly, then, this cross-canal did not yet exist in Caesar’s time. This has three consequences that are important in our context. One is that the author was only vaguely informed: Nile water did flow through the Schedia–Canopus Canal into Lake Mareotis

UU.7b Strabo 17.1.9 (quoted above); *The Landmark Julius Caesar* 11.112.8.
 UU.7c 12.1.2–5.
 UU.8a 12.1.4–5, 5.1–2.
 UU.8b Apparently it was fixed only in the time of

Augustus.
 UU.8c 12.5.1–9.2.
 UU.9a 12.5.1–2.
 UU.9b Strabo 7.1.10, 16. See Figure 11.112 for an artist’s rendering of Alexandria.

and from there through the Cibotus Canal into the Cibotus and Eunostus Harbor, but the city's supply of drinking water derived directly from the lake and only indirectly from the Nile. Second, the subterranean conduits bringing the water to the palace area must have extended from the Cibotus Canal (*flumen*). The seawater Ganymede had poured into these (apparently clearly identifiable) conduits was extracted from Cibotus Harbor (the closest source of salt water) and brought uphill by the waterwheels and other mechanical means mentioned in the *Alexandrian War*. Third, the wetlands or swamp area that Caesar tried to reach to cut the city in half must have extended from the lake itself and not, as is often assumed, from a (not yet existing) canal running through the city.^c

§10. The walls of Alexandria are well attested but, strangely, Strabo does not mention them. Moreover, although he is not entirely consistent, the author of the *Alexandrian War* seems to distinguish between *oppidum*, a fortified area that comprised Caesar's position, and *urbs*, the city at large.^a It is perhaps possible (though necessarily based on speculation) to explain all this by two features: on the one hand, the city of Alexandria had grown far beyond its walls, and, in Caesar's time at least, these walls had lost much of their significance;^b on the other hand, within the city, the area of the palaces and perhaps the militarily significant harbor with its dockyards was separated off by its own wall, thus creating a fortified town (*oppidum*) within the city (*urbs*).

§11. Once full-blown war broke out in Alexandria, Caesar's primary objectives were to protect and enlarge his part of the city and to secure his supply lines, hence to maintain control of the harbors and the sea.^a Much of the fighting indeed focused on the latter. Right at the beginning, Caesar's troops prevailed in burning the Alexandrian war fleet (a total of 110 ships, including the 50 warships that had supported Pompey's war effort and returned to Egypt after his defeat, and 22 other large warships) and occupying the Pharos tower, thus securing control of the Great Harbor and its entrance.^b Still, the enemy succeeded in restoring some of their naval power and challenged Caesar on two occasions: when he ventured out with his fleet, but without marines, to assist a supply convoy that had been detained by adverse winds farther along the coast,^c and again in a veritable naval battle in the Eunostus Harbor. For the latter, they brought in guard ships stationed elsewhere and refitted old warships that had been moored in "hidden corners of the dockyards."^d Since by that time Caesar controlled the Great Harbor, these dockyards must have been in the Eunostus Harbor.^e Caesar's victories in these two naval engagements sealed his superiority on sea.^f

§12. At the two ends of the causeway, near the city and near Pharos Island, two arched bridges spanned channels through which at least smaller ships could circulate. The Alexandrians used these to send boats from the Eunostus into the Great Harbor to raid and burn some of Caesar's transports.^a In order to eliminate this constant threat, Caesar needed to occupy the causeway and establish control over the bridges and channels. In a big operation, he first attacked the fortified town on Pharos Island, took it and

UU.9c See discussion (with further bibliography) in Fraser 1972, I. 26, II. 79–81 (ch. 1 n. 184), 95–96, n. 213).

UU.10a See especially 12.1.2, 12.2.1–2, 12.17.2.

UU.10b See Fraser 1972, 11–13.

UU.11a 12.8.2, 12.12.4, 12.16.1. For analyses of the war itself, see Veith 1906, 367–83; Kromayer and Veith 1922, maps 20.1–3; and recently Jiménez 2000, 167–86.

UU.11b 11.111.2–112.6, 12.12.3.

UU.11c 12.9.3–11.6.

UU.11d Preparations: 12.12.2–13.4; battle: 12.14–16.

UU.11e Strabo 17.1.10.

UU.11f Although the enemy still had naval forces on the Canopic Nile that Caesar first defeated at 12.25 and later deliberately avoided at 12.28.2.

UU.12a 12.12.4, 12.19.2, 12.19.5.

destroyed it, and built a fort at the nearby bridge, thus securing the channel on that side of the causeway.^b Immediately following up on this success, he landed troops on the causeway near the other bridge, drove the enemy from the causeway, blocked the channel with big boulders, and began building a fort to secure the bridge. Because of the narrow space available and overconfidence and lack of discipline among some of his troops, this engagement ended up in a significant defeat in which Caesar himself narrowly escaped with his life. This allowed the enemy to secure the bridge again and to reopen the channel.^c Further costly fighting on this front, however, was soon made unnecessary when the arrival of reinforcements under Mithridates of Pergamum drew the Egyptian leadership and part of their forces out of Alexandria and allowed Caesar to defeat them in the type of fighting in which he and his soldiers excelled. This victory and the death of the pharaoh prompted the capitulation of Alexandria.^d

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UU.12b 12.17–19.1.
UU.12c 12.19.2–21.5.
UU.12d 12.25–32.

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