

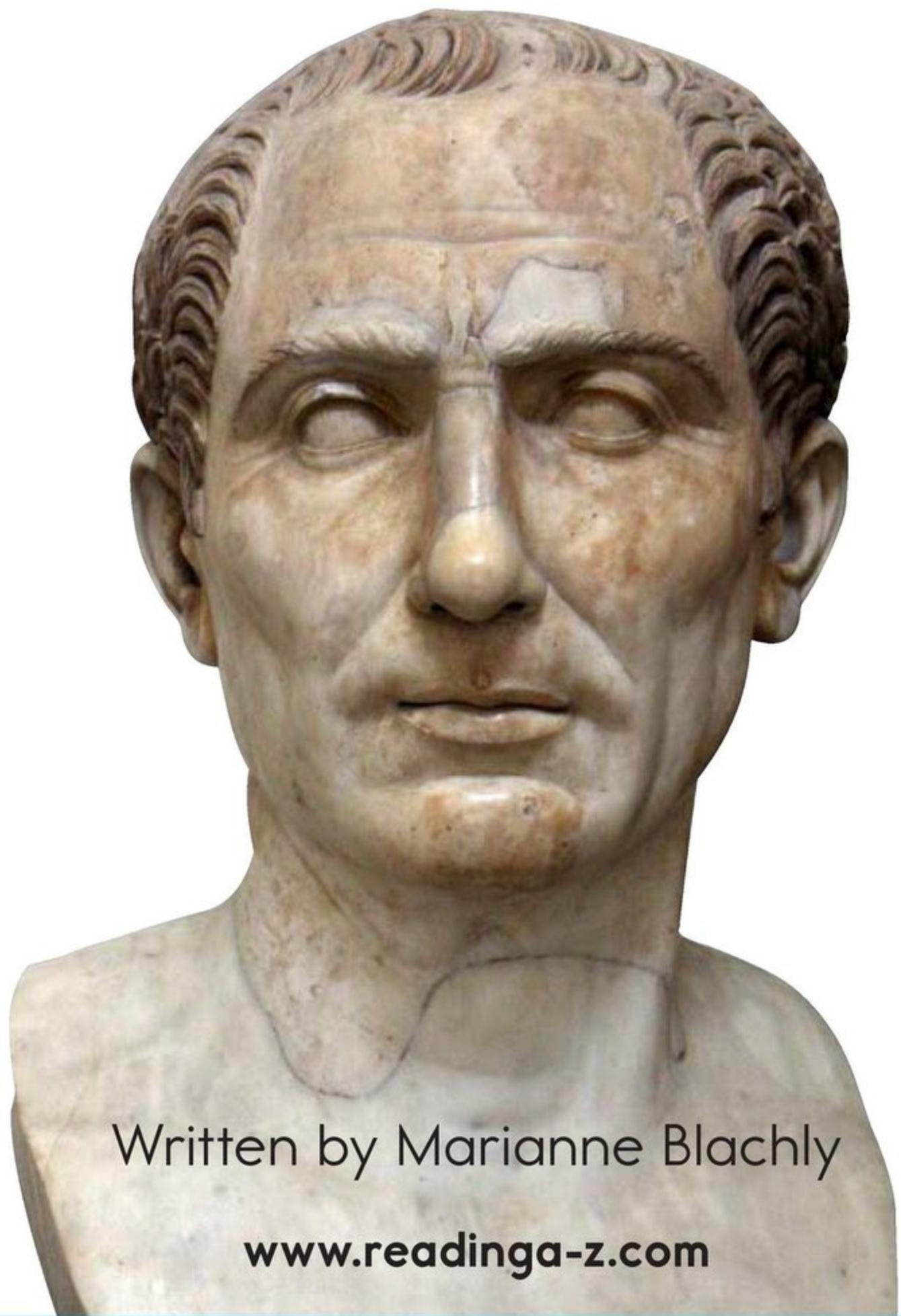
LEVELED Book • S

Julius Caesar



Written by Marianne Blachly

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Focus Question

Why is Julius Caesar known as one of the greatest leaders of ancient Rome?

Words to Know

ancient
civilizations
conquered
corrupt
empires

military
politician
provinces
stable

Front cover: A 1915 painting shows the leader of Gaul (France today) surrendering to Caesar.

Title page: A marble sculpture of Caesar is on display in a museum in Naples, Italy.

Page 3: A painting shows Caesar speaking about his military battles while scribes take notes.

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World Leaders
Level S Leveled Book
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Hail Caesar!

Ancient Rome is one of the great **civilizations** in history. Many of the languages we speak, our cultures, and our ways of government are connected to Rome, and Julius Caesar was one of its greatest leaders.

Caesar became famous because he was a great **military** commander. He was also a very clever and successful **politician**. He was a great public speaker, and the Roman public as well

as Caesar's soldiers loved him. However, many Roman politicians feared and mistrusted Caesar because they believed he wanted to be king. What Caesar really wanted was to fix Rome, which was in great trouble at the time he was born.

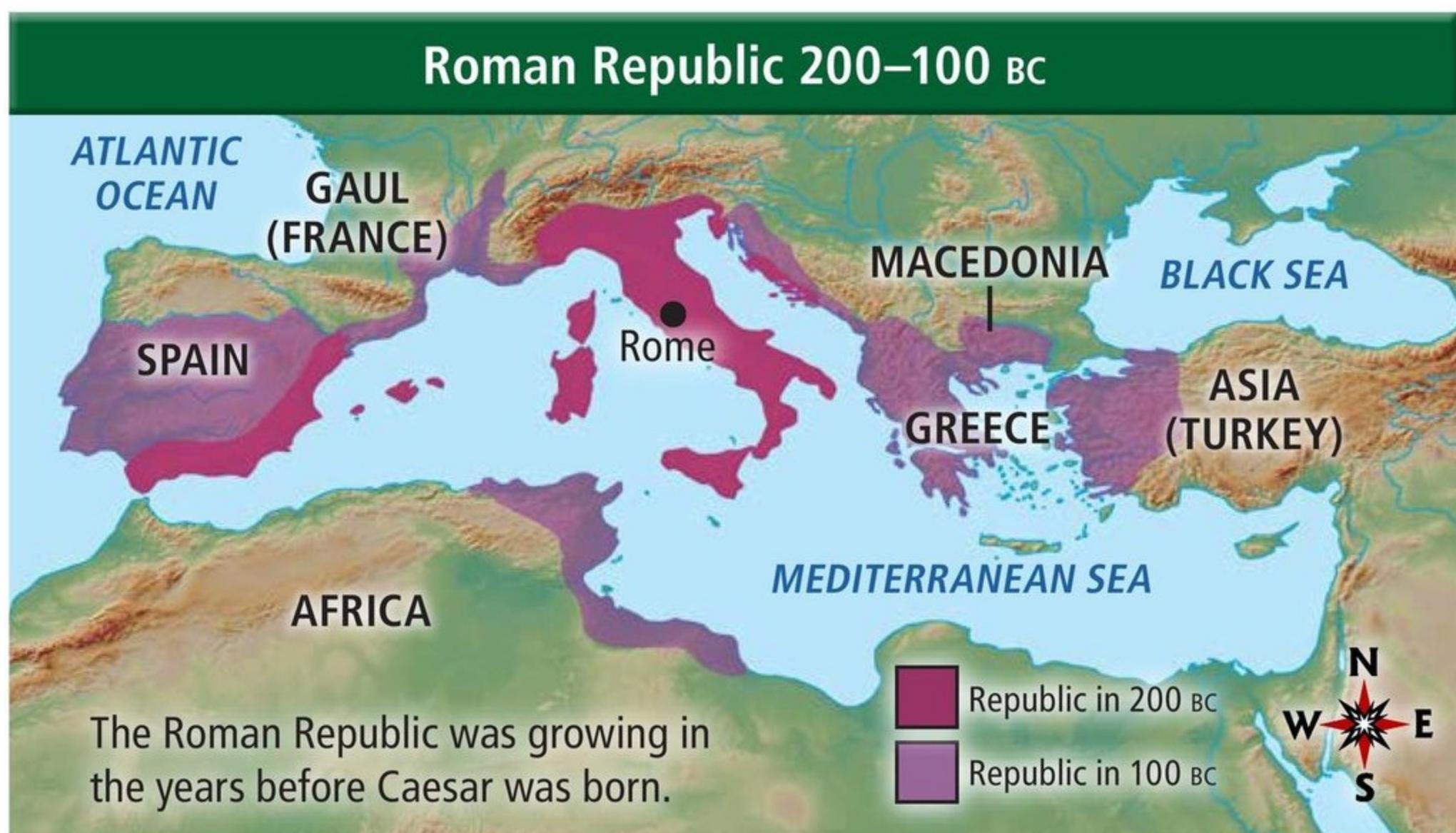


Julius Caesar

The Roman World

Ancient Rome began where the European country of Italy is today. Over more than one thousand years, Rome grew to become one of the greatest **empires** in the world. However, few of those years were **stable** or peaceful. Rome was often at war with its neighbors, faraway people, and even itself.

In the beginning, Rome was a *city-state* ruled by kings. A city-state was a place that included one large city and the countryside around it. The story is that Rome was ruled well by six kings in a row, but the seventh king was cruel. In 509 BC, the people of Rome rose up and drove the terrible king from power.



Romans decided that they didn't want kings, and this was when the Roman Republic began. They began electing two men called *consuls* every year to run the government. The consuls were helped by the Senate—a group of rich men who had great political power. They were called *senators*.

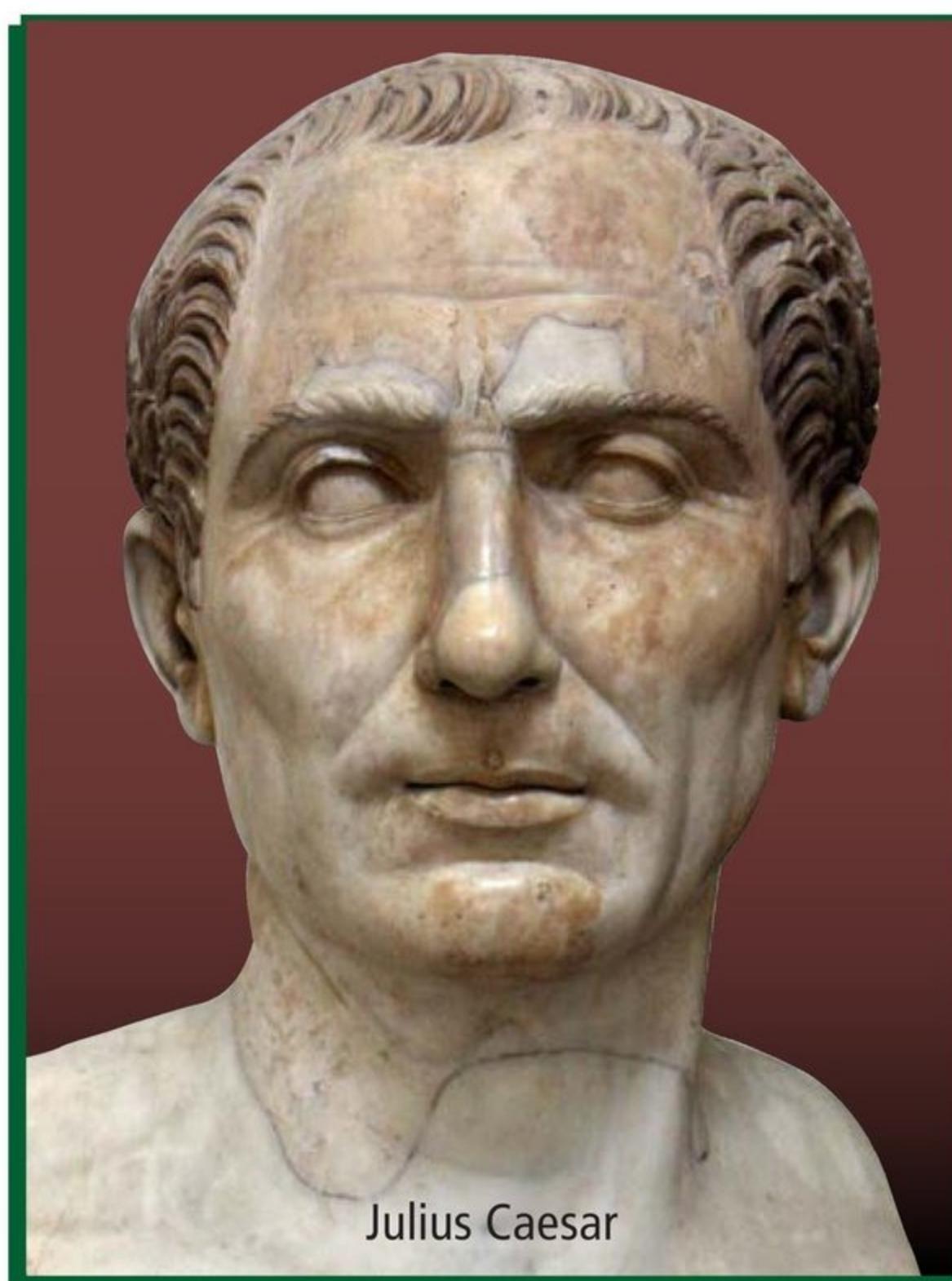
The Roman Republic grew quickly. Over time, it spread to east and south, across the Mediterranean Sea into North Africa. As they **conquered** other regions, Romans created **provinces**. These provinces needed to be governed, and they needed an army to protect them. Romans chose upper-class Roman citizens to rule the provinces. Governing the provinces made the rulers wealthy.

Life was not so good, however, for the common citizens back in Rome. Many of them were poor, and they did not benefit from the new provinces. The Senate had become very **corrupt**. The gap in wealth between the rich and the poor became too big, and civil war broke out. A civil war involves two groups of people from the same country fighting for control.

Caesar's Early Life

Julius Caesar was born in July 100 BC—more than two thousand years ago. Caesar came from an old and known family. They probably expected him to enter politics at a young age.

When his father died, Caesar became the head of his family at age sixteen. In that same year, he married Cornelia, who was from a family that supported the common, or poorer, Roman citizens. At this time, a man named Sulla had control over Rome.



Sulla represented the wealthy class, and he demanded that Caesar leave Cornelia. Caesar refused, which was a very dangerous thing to do. It showed that he would not obey Sulla. To get away from Sulla, Caesar joined the army and served in the provinces far from Rome. Caesar advanced quickly in the military, and his soldiers admired him because he treated them with respect.

When Sulla died in 78 BC, Caesar felt it was safe to return to Rome. He returned to politics and did very well working with a powerful man named Pompey. After Cornelia passed away, Caesar married Pompey's daughter, Pompeia.

Now settled in Rome, Caesar believed he knew how to fix the troubled government. A great orator, or public speaker, Caesar told the people of Rome that he could help them, and they adored him for it.



Caesar leads his troops across a river into Italy.

The Leader

The people elected Caesar to the important government position of consul when he was forty years old. He served as consul for one year and then became the governor of Gaul. Gaul was an important Roman province in what is today northern Italy and France.

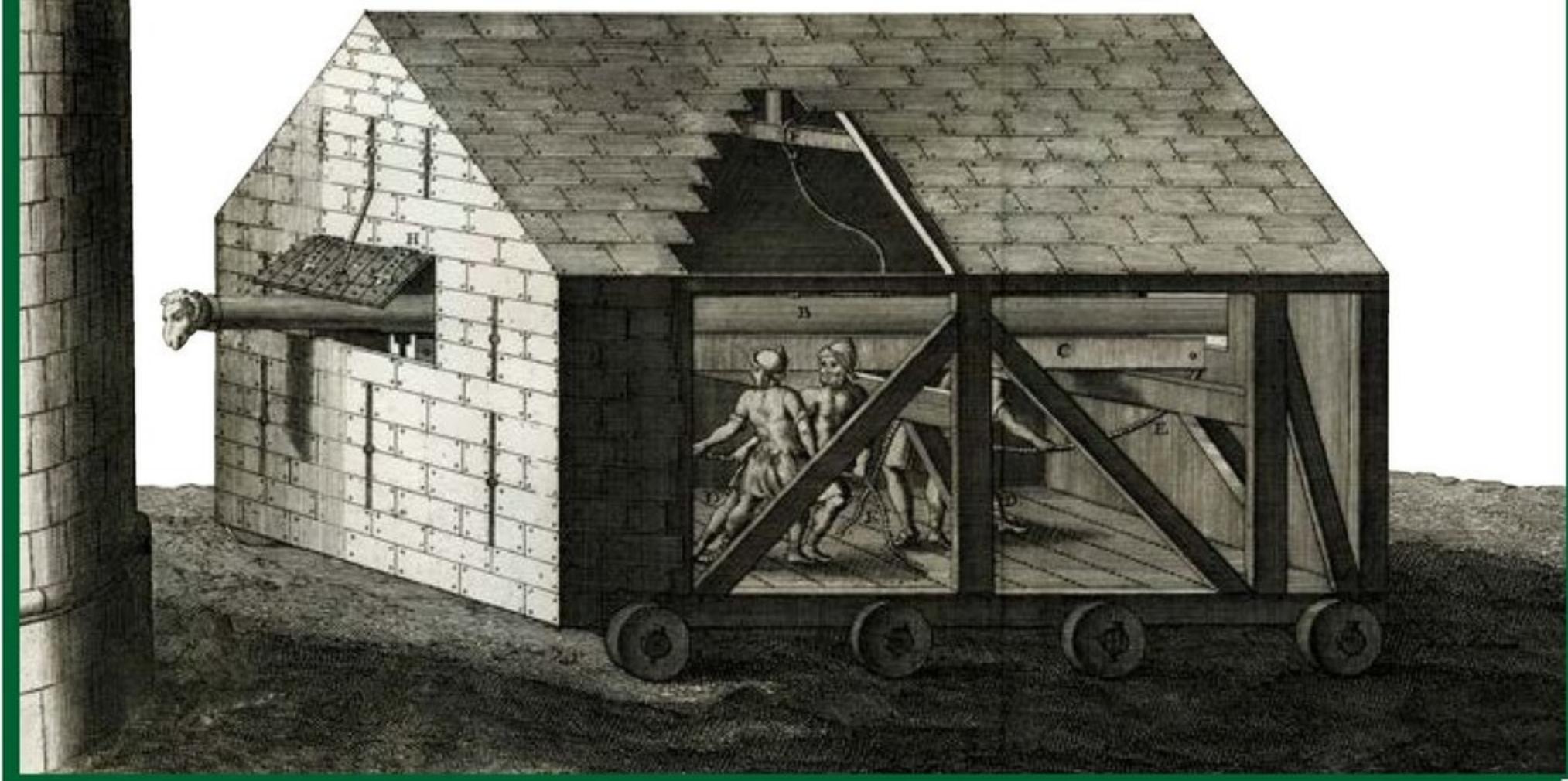
As governor, Caesar commanded powerful Roman legions, or armies. Many different tribes, or groups of people, lived in Gaul at that time. The tribes fought one another and also fought against the Romans. Caesar's armies were outnumbered, and the tribes were fierce. Still, Caesar was a brilliant general. He

treated his soldiers well, he was fearless, and he had amazing military talent. Because of this, his legions respected and loved him.



Caesar wore a crown of laurel leaves in his later years.

One military tool was the battering ram, which was rolled to a wall or building. Protected by the shed, soldiers swung the ram on chains to smash strong gates.



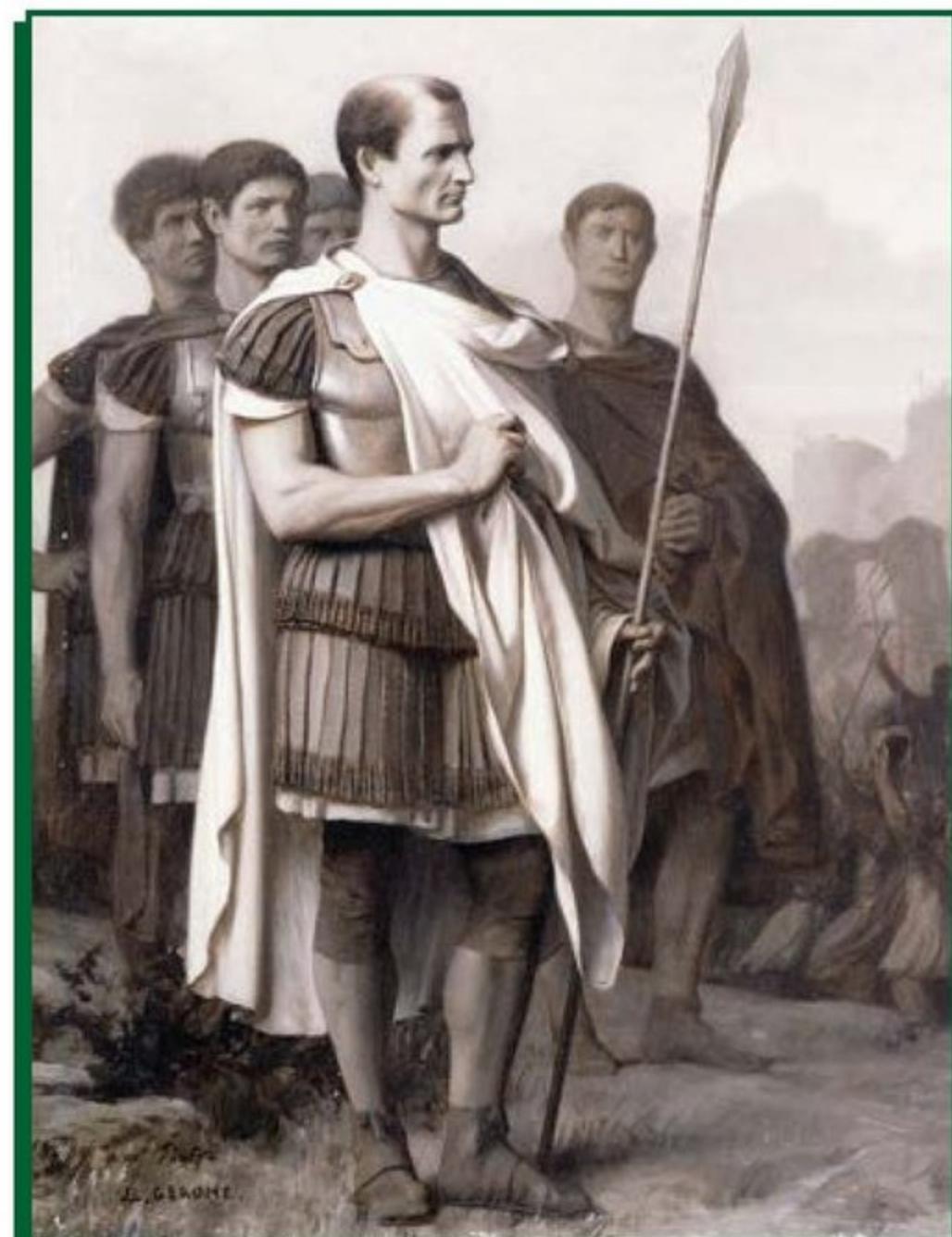
After many years of war, Caesar's legions brought all the tribes of Gaul under Roman control. This forever changed the way these people lived and had a great effect on the way Europe would grow in the future.

Caesar was in Gaul for ten years, and his military success there made him famous back in Rome. All the time he was away, Caesar had political friends working for him at home. He remained connected with Pompey, who married Caesar's daughter, Julia. Pompey, Caesar, and a wealthy politician and general named Crassus formed a group that was very successful and powerful.



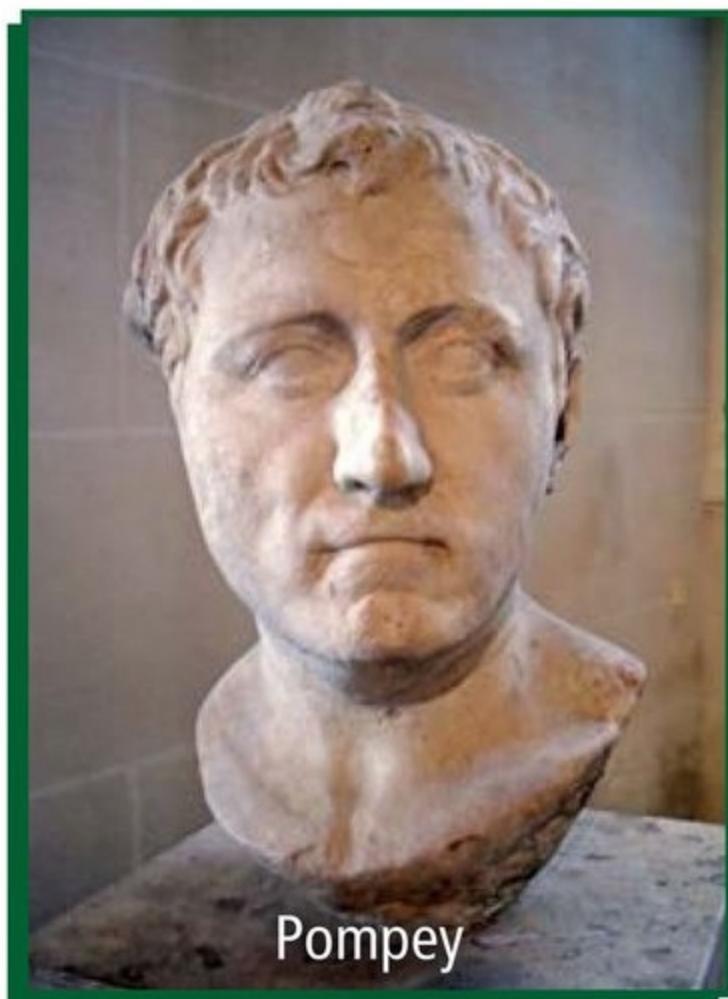
In a painting by Lionel Royer, a northern leader surrenders to Caesar after a battle.

However, in time, Pompey became jealous of Caesar's fame. After both Crassus and Julia died, Pompey and Caesar became bitter enemies. Caesar was popular with the common Romans, but Pompey had the support of the rich senators and some of the legions in Italy. Caesar wanted to go back to Rome. The Senate said he must give up his loyal army.



In this painting by Jean-Léon Gérôme, Caesar is shown as a military commander.

Caesar Returns to Rome



Pompey

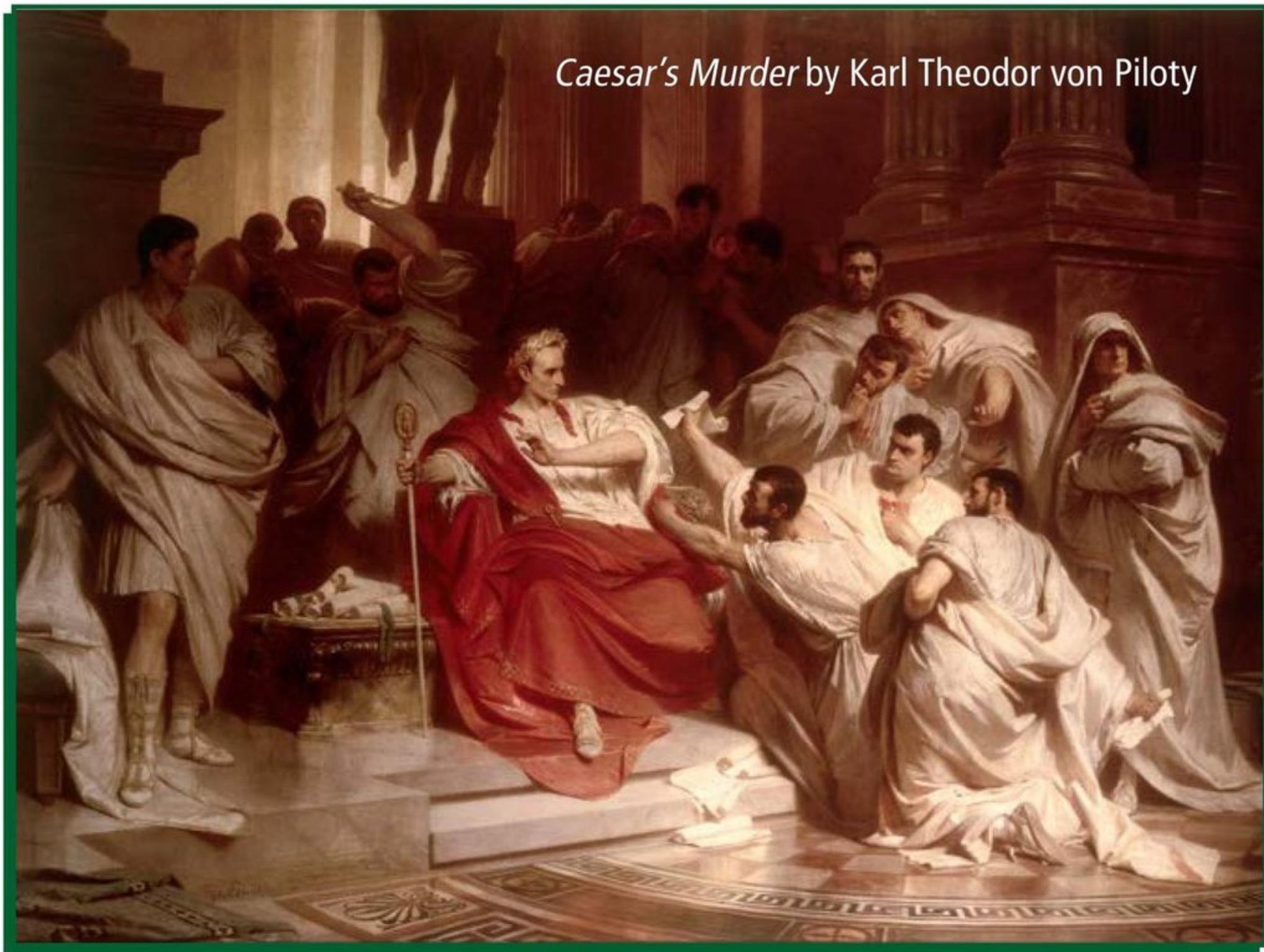
Caesar feared that he might be murdered if he returned alone, so he brought his loyal and mighty army. He was breaking Roman law when he did this, but he believed he had to stand up to Pompey. When Caesar returned, the two armies fought a deadly civil war. Caesar chased Pompey's troops out of Italy and destroyed them. Pompey was killed.

Do You Know?

Caesar changed the calendar. Romans used a calendar based on the positions of the Moon. The calendar was missing ten days. Caesar worked with astronomers to create a new calendar that was based on Earth's movements around the Sun. It was much more accurate.



The month of July is named after Caesar.



When Caesar led his army back to Rome, the Senate welcomed him. Caesar accomplished many great things. He passed new laws, built great buildings, and even changed the calendar.

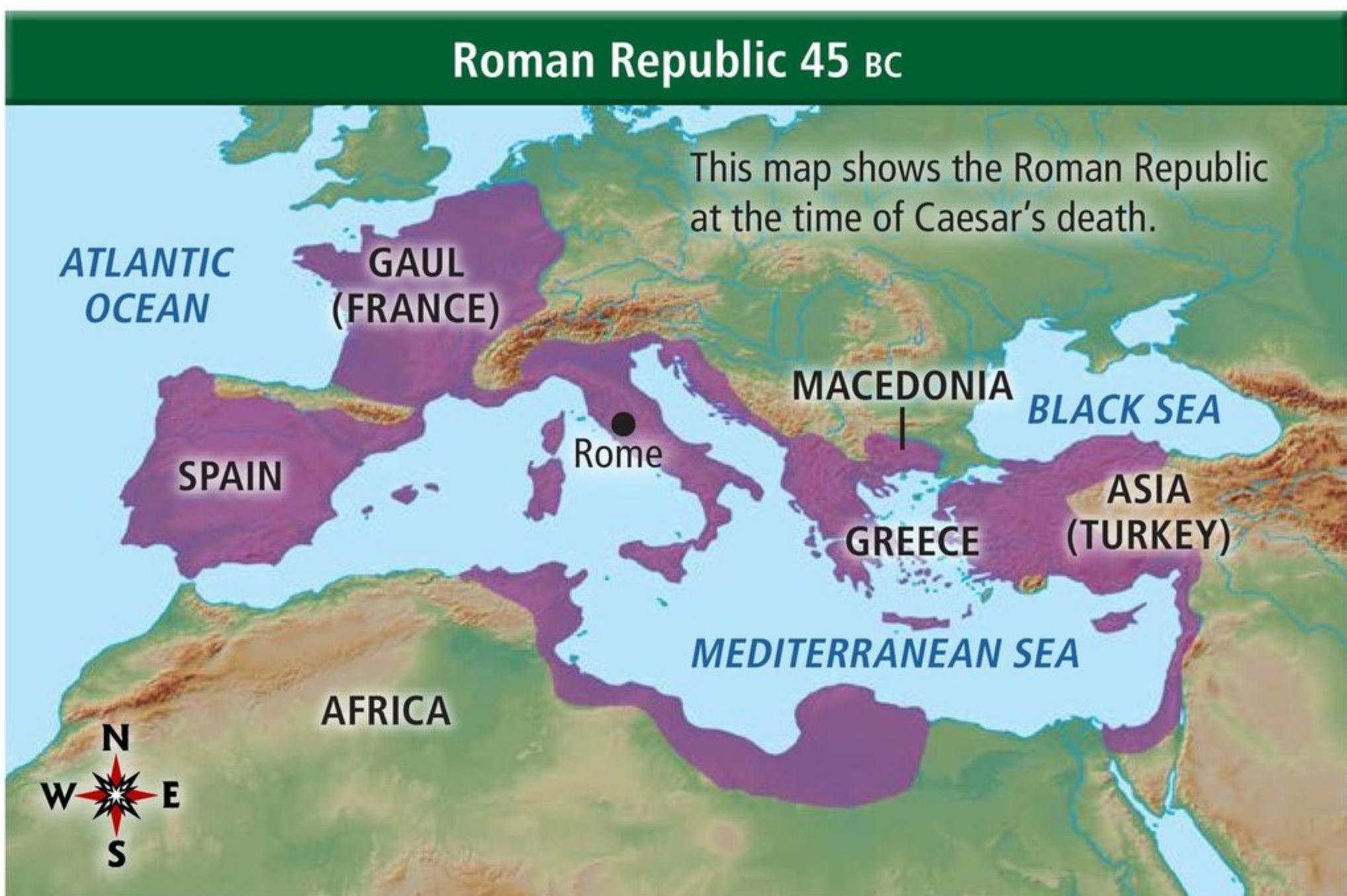
The people loved Caesar. However, many members of the Senate did not. They never wanted a king, and they believed Caesar had become one. They hated that he had total power because it made them less powerful. Two years after his return to Rome, a group of senators planned against Caesar and murdered him.



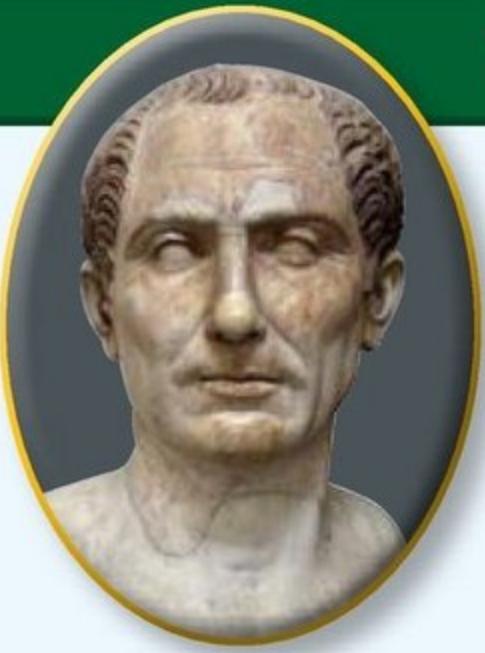
A coin dated 44 BC shows Julius Caesar with Venus on the reverse. Caesar's family claimed to descend from the goddess of love.

We Remember Julius Caesar

Caesar's murder led to an even more terrible civil war. When the war was finally over, the Roman Empire was born. The empire that Caesar created would rule over Europe for centuries and shape the world we live in today.



The Life of Julius Caesar



78 BC: Sulla dies; Caesar returns to Rome

69 BC: Cornelia dies

67 BC: Marries Pompeia, the daughter of Pompey

60–59 BC: Returns to Rome; elected consul; forms powerful group with Crassus and Pompey

49 BC: Civil war begins



100 BC: Julius Caesar is born

84 BC: Father dies; marries Cornelia

83–82 BC: Sulla gains control of Rome

58 BC: Made governor of Gaul; defeats northern tribes

54 BC: Daughter Julia, who was married to Pompey, dies

53 BC: Crassus dies

44 BC: Murdered

Glossary

| | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| ancient (<i>adj.</i>) | from a very long time ago (p. 4) |
| civilizations (<i>n.</i>) | organized societies that have stable food supplies, governments, written languages, and religions (p. 4) |
| conquered (<i>v.</i>) | took control of a person, group, place, or thing, usually by force (p. 6) |
| corrupt (<i>adj.</i>) | dishonest in order to achieve or gain something (p. 6) |
| empires (<i>n.</i>) | collections of nations or people ruled by one person or government (p. 5) |
| military (<i>adj.</i>) | of or relating to the armed forces of a country (p. 4) |
| politician (<i>n.</i>) | a person involved in politics, especially someone who holds or runs for an elected office (p. 4) |
| provinces (<i>n.</i>) | any of the largest areas that some countries are divided into (p. 6) |
| stable (<i>adj.</i>) | balanced or steady; reliable and unlikely to change (p. 5) |

Julius Caesar

A *Reading A-Z Level S Leveled Book*

Word Count: 1,072

Connections

Writing

Was Julius Caesar a courageous leader?

Write an essay evaluating his leadership.

Use examples from the text to support your opinion.

Social Studies

Research Julius Caesar's life and ancient

Rome. Draw your own timeline of his life.

Include at least five events not described in the book.

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