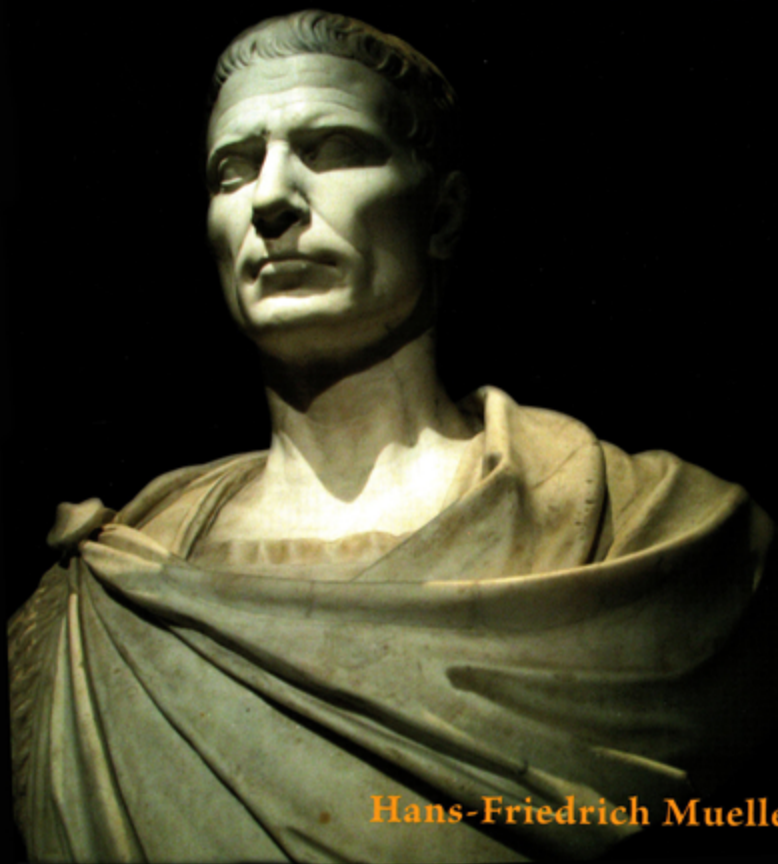


Caesar

Selections from his COMMENTARII
DE BELLO GALLICO

TEXT • NOTES • VOCABULARY



Hans-Friedrich Mueller

Caesar

*Selections from his COMMENTARII
DE BELLO GALLICO*

Hans-Friedrich Mueller
Johannes Fridericus Molinarius



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Contributing Editor: Laurel Draper

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Selections from his *Commentarii De Bello Gallico*

Hans-Friedrich Mueller

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— PREFACE AND INTRODUCTORY NOTES —

This book is designed as a reader for those passages from Julius Caesar's *Dē Bellō Gallicō* that have been adopted by the syllabus of the newly revised Advanced Placement course in Latin literature. As a convenience to teachers and students, we also provide an annotated translation of the required readings in English from Caesar's *Gallic War*, but we offer, above all, a detailed guide to the required selections in Latin. The selections in Latin prescribed by the AP syllabus include readings from Books One, Four, Five, and Six of Caesar's *Gallic War*.

Book One (1.1–7) introduces Gaul, its geography as well as its cultural and political features, and it presents the first conflict of Caesar's campaign, which Caesar describes not as the opening battle in a campaign to conquer all Gaul, but instead merely as an intervention, a sort of police action to safeguard the integrity of the Roman province of which he was governor.

Book Four (4.24–36.1) picks up four years later when Caesar appeared to have brought all Gaul under his effective military control. He felt secure enough to lead an expeditionary force to Britain, and Book Four tells the story of that first "invasion."

Book Five (5.24–48) presents a rather different picture. After Caesar secures his men in winter quarters at the end of a summer of campaigning (ancient armies generally did not fight in the winter), the previously conquered Belgic tribes rise in revolt and destroy one of Caesar's legions. Caesar's tense narrative describes what went wrong and how he repaired the situation.

Book Six (6.13–20) describes the Gauls and their customs in greater detail than did the brief introduction Caesar provided in Book One. Caesar paints a vivid picture of Celtic religious, social, and political institutions.

These selections provide good insight into Caesar's genre (*commentarii*), his style as an author, the issues he faced as the governor of a province, his decision making as a general, and the culture of northern Europe before it was forcibly integrated into Greco-Roman cultural traditions. For each chapter of Book One only, we provide an introductory overview in English to help students find their way into the general flow of Caesar's narrative in Latin. The additional readings in English will help students flesh out their understanding of the more general shape of the war to conquer Gaul, but these Latin passages, which convey Caesar's thinking in his own Latin are well chosen to illustrate many of the crucial issues that defined Roman war and politics in Caesar's day, and which are truly comprehensible only if we understand the words and concepts used by the historical actors themselves.

How to Use This Reader

This book has been designed as a Latin reader. With this book in hand, students should be able to read efficiently, and then review intensively and with minimal wasted time, the selections from Caesar's *Gallic War* that appear on the new AP Latin syllabus. Those who know Clyde Pharr's magisterial edition of the first six books of Vergil's *Aeneid*, a continuing treasure for all students and teachers of Vergil, will recognize the model. Like its model, this reader is designed to guide students through the Latin text with minimal time lost to searching for vocabulary or through Latin grammars (not that such activities are a bad way to spend time—but students' time is limited, so we must use what time we have as effectively as possible). For students in search of additional information, we provide a complete vocabulary at the end of the volume. In addition, we offer this complete vocabulary as well as a grammatical and syntactical appendix online (www.bolchazy.com/extras/caesarappendix.pdf) so that students can have these resources available on their computers while reading the text. *The primary aim of this reader, however, is to supply enough information on each page to permit students to spend almost all the time that they devote to Caesar's Latin on those same pages where Caesar's Latin text appears.* How do we accomplish this?

Like Gaul, each page has been divided into three parts. Caesar's Latin text appears first. Words that appear in *italics* are familiar words and those that Caesar uses frequently. Because he uses them so frequently, these words have been printed on an extensible vocabulary sheet, "Familiar Words Frequently Used by Caesar," which students may pull out and

keep open for every page (or until they have memorized these frequently appearing words). In the glossary, a dagger † follows the entry for these words on the pullout vocabulary list.

All vocabulary not italicized is provided immediately below the Latin passage. Below this list of vocabulary, students will find a running commentary on the text. The primary aim of the commentary is to help students understand the Latin text. We supply succinct, but relatively detailed, information about how the syntax of Caesar's sentences works. References to further grammatical and syntactical particulars (which can be found in the Online Appendix) also appear, but these references are made for the convenience of teachers and students. The references to this Online Appendix are not essential for following the text itself. What syntactical guidance is needed is supplied below the passage and on the same page. Finally, background information, notes on Caesarian style, and other relevant issues receive brief treatment, insofar as such commentary will help students understand and properly appreciate the Latin text. And, when students and/or teachers feel that students have adequately prepared the text, students may test their mettle with the unadorned and unannotated Latin text that we also provide on pp. 177–197.

A proper balance between too much and too little information in the confined space of a printed page is a delicate one. We have aimed for an *aurea mediocritās* (golden mean), but students and teachers will be the ultimate judges of whether we have hit or missed that mark. What we can say is that our only goal has been to provide a book that is useful, instructive, and pleasurable for all who care to become better acquainted with a pivotal historical figure and a classic of Roman prose—not to mention prepare effectively for the AP Latin exam.

A Note on the Same-page Vocabulary

In the same-page (or running) vocabulary on each page, the numbers 1, 2, and 4 indicate for regular verbs the conjugation to which the verb belongs, and that their principal parts are formed according to the patterns of the model verbs **laudō**, **moneō**, and **audiō**, respectively; or, if the verb is deponent, according to the patterns of **hortor**, **vereor**, and **partior** (see App. §73).

Words in *italics* in the entry are explanatory and are not part of the definition. Words in square brackets are the root(s) from which a word is derived or another closely related word.

The symbol • follows the last letter of the base or stem of the word. To this base, subsequent syllables are added, e.g., **abic•iō**, **-ere** = **abiciō**, **abicere** or **āc•er**, **-ris**, **-re** = **ācer**, **ācris**, **ācre**. (NB: In Caesar's day, nouns that ended in **-ius** and **-ium** regularly had a genitive **-ī**, rather than **-īi**, e.g., **auxil•ium**, **-ī**. For details, see App. §16, c.)

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book stands on the shoulders of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century textbooks.

The Latin text that appears in this edition has been prepared in close consultation with the following editions.

Renatus Du Pontet, ed. *C. Iulii Caesaris Commentariorum Pars Prior qua Continentur Libri VII De Bello Gallico cum A. Hirtii Supplemento*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1900.

Friedrich Kraner, ed. *C. Iulii Caesaris Commentarii De Bello Gallico*. 15th ed. rev. by W. Dittenberger. Berlin: Weidmann, 1890.

Carolus Nipperdeius [Karl Nipperdey], ed. *C. Iulii Caesaris Commentarii cum Supplementis A. Hirtii et Aliorum*. Leipzig: Breitkopfius et Haertelius, 1847.

T. Rice Holmes, ed. *C. Iulii Caesaris Commentarii Rerum in Gallia Gestarum VII; A. Hirti Commentarius VIII*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1914.

Macrons have been added in close consultation with the following editions.

Francis W. Kelsey, ed. *C. Iulii Caesaris Commentarii Rerum Gestarum: Caesar's Commentaries: The Gallic War, Books I-IV, with Selections from Books V-VII and from the Civil War: With an Introduction, Notes, a Companion to Caesar and a Vocabulary*. Boston, New York, & Chicago: Allyn and Bacon, 1918.

Arthur Tappan Walker, ed. *Caesar's Gallic War with Introduction, Notes, Vocabulary and Grammatical Appendix*. Chicago & New York: Scott, Foresman, and Company, 1907.

Grammatical irregularities that appear in some, but not all, editions of Caesar have been regularized. This text prints, for example, *eis* (rather than *iis*) for the dative plural of *is, ea, id*, and the accusative plural of *finis* appears as *finēs* (rather than *finis*).

The vocabulary and grammatical Online Appendix were taken with revisions from the edition of Arthur Tappan Walker cited above.

The Appendix: Figures of Speech containing grammatical and rhetorical figures was taken with revisions from the edition of Francis W. Kelsey cited above.

The English translation of Books One, Six, and Seven of the *Gallic War* is a revised version of

W. A. McDevitte and W. S. Bohn (translators). *Caesar's Commentaries*. Harper's Classical Library. Harper & Brothers: New York, 1869.

In revising this literal translation, I aimed primarily to replace archaic diction (e.g., "cavalry" for "horse") and to clarify sentence structure (e.g., by breaking up overly long sentences and by repeating explicitly the subjects and objects of many verbs—this may be clear enough in Latin, but frequently becomes opaque in a literal English translation). Our revised translation also uses Caesar's Latin names for the Gallic tribes rather than our own more colloquial English equivalents (e.g., "Helvetii" rather than "Helvetians," although I generally prefer the latter in my own commentary, which, of course, represents a modern voice rather than Caesar's, hence the discrepancy).

The commentary itself also owes numerous debts of gratitude to these as well as many other still informative and useful school editions of Caesar that survive in print and online.

I offer my public and sincere thanks to Lou and Marie Bolchazy, Don Sprague, Bridget Buchholz, Jody Cull, Adam Velez, and Laurel De Vries of Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers; two anonymous and helpful referees; Christopher D. C. Choquette, my undergraduate research assistant at Union College; and, above all, my wife Terri, who suffered many an extended absence as I worked to complete the manuscript. Any errors that

remain belong by right to me. I hope that readers will find the pages that follow useful, and perhaps even pleurably instructive. And, if they do, they will have Caesar, his commentators, and the people I have just mentioned to thank for that useful pleasure and instruction.

HANS-FRIEDRICH MUELLER
Johannes Fridericus Molinarius
Union College
Schenectady, New York

INTRODUCTION

GAIUS IULIUS CAESAR: *Politician, General, Author*

Gaius Julius Caesar was born in 100 BCE, rising to become one of Rome's leading politicians and most successful generals as well as an accomplished orator and author of the first rank. After defeating his political opponents in a bitter civil war, Caesar reigned briefly as dictator before he was assassinated in 44 BCE. After his murder, the Roman Senate passed legislation declaring that Caesar had become a god. His impact on Rome's political and religious institutions was decisive and long lasting, and today his career still inspires both emulation and loathing, and we may trace the influence of Caesar's career in such founding documents of our own society as the Constitution of the United States.



This famous bust of Caesar presents an idealized portrait of the Roman leader. While portraits in the Republican period presented realistic representations, most of the portraits of Caesar present an idealized image.

CAESAR'S LIFE

Caesar was born in troubled times. Two names from this period are important: Marius (157–86 BCE) and Sulla (138–79 BCE). Marius reformed the Roman army to include the lower classes, he held an unprecedented seven consulships, his politics tended to support politicians opposed to the interests of the conservative aristocracy, and he was married to Caesar's aunt, Julia. Sulla was Marius's former lieutenant, a great general in his own right, and dictator in Rome when Caesar was in his teens. After Sulla won supreme authority in Rome (by twice marching his army on the city), he reorganized the Roman constitution to restore, as he saw it, the Roman Senate (which was populated by the conservative aristocracy) to its rightful and dominant place and to suppress the tribunes of the people, who often rallied Rome's common people to support legislation opposed by the aristocracy. Politicians who worked to achieve consensus in the Senate were called *optimātēs* ("the best men"). Those willing to bypass the Senate to pass legislation in the people's assemblies were called *populārēs* ("men of the people"). These were not political parties but represented a style of politics and a loose set of alliances with like-minded colleagues. In many ways, it would be best to avoid these overused terms altogether, but the Romans themselves used these terms, as do many older accounts of Roman history. According to this traditional (and now disfavored) scheme, Sulla was *optimās*; Marius *populāris*, as was Caesar. We might also simply describe Sulla and Marius as political enemies, and Caesar was related to the Marian faction.

Another element in Sulla's initial plan for political renewal was "proscriptions." Proscriptions entailed writing the names of political enemies on lists that would be posted in public. Proscribed men could be hunted down and killed. Those who did the hunting and killing earned a right to a portion of the proscribed man's estate. Pompey the Great (although he had not yet earned the title) was, like Caesar, young at the time, and he profited from Sulla's proscriptions, earning



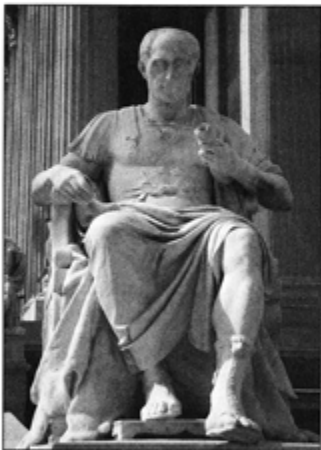
This bust of Pompey displayed in the Louvre Museum in Paris shows us Pompey the statesman rather than the teenage butcher, *adulescentulus carnifex*.

the nickname “teenage butcher” (*adulēscētulus carnifex*). Caesar, on the other hand, because of his connection to Marius as well as his refusal to divorce—yes, he was already married in his teens—a wife whose family had been hostile to Sulla, barely escaped proscription, and eventually had to travel to the East until things became safer in Rome.

While in the East, Caesar, like many upper-class Roman youths, served in the entourage of a Roman official and participated in battle where he earned the “civic crown.” The *corōna cīvica* was awarded to men who saved the lives of fellow citizens in battle. His biographers report that Caesar was also kidnapped by pirates, and that, after the ransom was collected and paid, he led an expedition to catch his former captors, personally overseeing their crucifixion. This episode illustrates the privileged status that upper-class Roman men—even very young ones—held across the Mediterranean world. After this adventure, Caesar went to Rhodes to study rhetoric (in Greek—upper-class Romans were generally bilingual) with Apollonius,

who was at the time a star teacher. Cicero studied with Apollonius too, and Caesar, like Cicero, became by all accounts one of Rome’s most accomplished orators.

In addition to military experience and work as a prosecutor in Rome’s courts, Caesar’s early career included numerous official posts, both military and civil. His elective posts included an aedileship in 65 BCE, notable for the games he put on (necessary for winning the favor of the voting public), as well as a somewhat scandalous election to Rome’s chief priesthood in 63 BCE. Caesar’s election as *pontifex maximus* was scandalous because Caesar was relatively young; because older, more established candidates, who had held the consulship, lost; and because Caesar had borrowed huge sums of money for the purpose of bribery. Politics at Rome were at this



The seated Caesar is portrayed as an author holding a papyrus manuscript in his left hand. The nineteenth-century Parliament building in Vienna, Austria is a grand tribute to the classical tradition. On the two large ramps at the front of the building, this statue of Julius Caesar joins fellow Roman historians Tacitus, Titus, Livy, and Sallust as well as the Greek historians Thucydides, Polybius, Xenophon, and Herodotus.

CAESAR'S LIFE

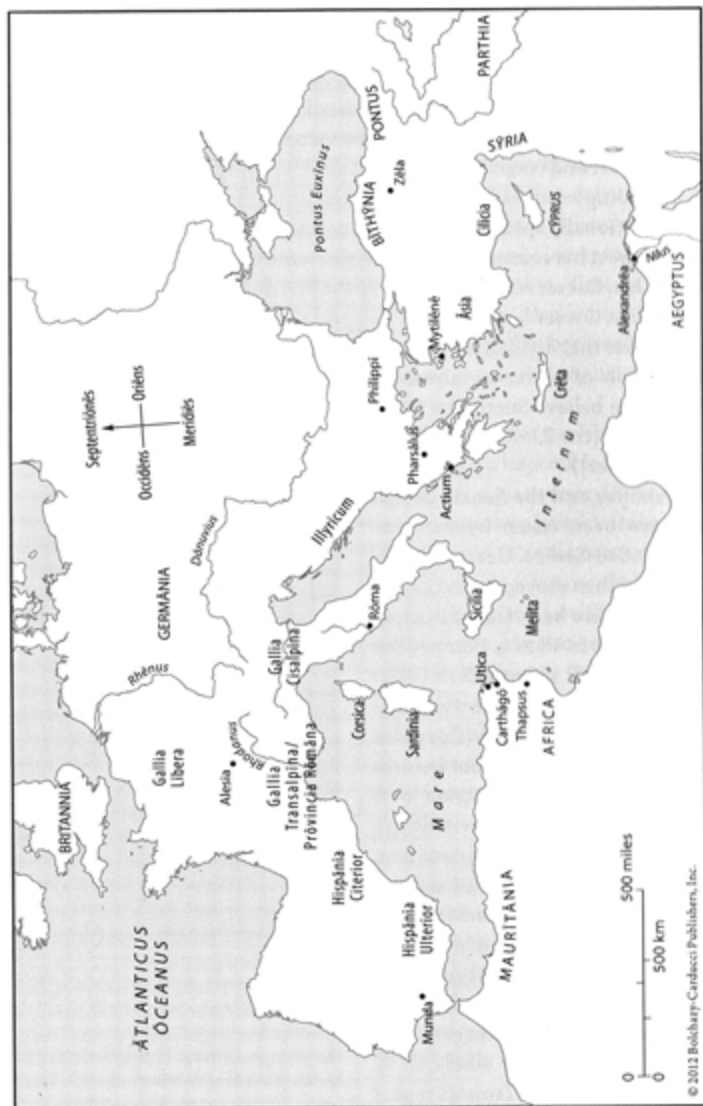
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This bust of Pompey displayed in the Louvre Museum in Paris shows us Pompey the statesman rather than the teenage butcher, *adulescentulus carnifex*.

ROMAN WORLD IN CAESAR'S DAY



other) died in childbirth in 54 BCE. Crassus was defeated in Parthia in 53 BCE and died in battle. Parthia ruled a territory roughly corresponding to what is now Iraq and Iran. The defeat was humiliating for Rome. After these events, Pompey began drifting into a closer alliance with leaders in the Roman Senate who were opposed to Caesar. Before his political alliance with Pompey fell apart, Caesar had been led to believe that he could celebrate a triumph (or military victory parade) in Rome as well as run for a second consulship. Instead, after winning Pompey over to their side, leading senators felt powerful enough to ruin Caesar's career, which, constitutionally speaking, they were entitled to do. They ordered Caesar to lay down his command, while, at the same time, allowing Pompey to retain his. Caesar refused to obey, so the Senate declared that Caesar was an outlaw. Caesar hesitated for a day, and then, crossing the Rubicon, the small river that divided his province from Italy proper, he invaded Italy in the middle of winter on January 10th, having uttered the famous words (if we can believe Suetonius *Divus Iulius* 32): *iacta ālea est* ("the die has been cast" [the Romans played with one *die*; we generally play with two or more *dice*]).

Pompey and the Senate appear to have been taken by surprise. They fled to Greece. Caesar secured Italy and then moved operations to Greece where he defeated Pompey at Pharsalus in 48 BCE. Pompey fled to Egypt (still independent under the Ptolemies), where he was assassinated. Caesar arrived in Egypt too late to engage Pompey but became involved in a local dispute over who had the right to rule in Egypt. Caesar supported Cleopatra over her brother. Because he arrived with so few soldiers, Caesar was at times in real danger, but he eventually prevailed. After settling affairs in Egypt (and allegedly fathering a child with Cleopatra), Caesar moved on to the East where, in 47 BCE, he penned his famous report



One of the best preserved temples in Egypt, the Ptolemaic Temple dedicated to Hathor and Horus the Elder in Abydos contains relief sculptures completed after Cleopatra's suicide. This panel shows Cleopatra flanked by her son Caesarion. Symbolically, they stand before the Egyptian gods Isis and Osiris.

from Zela: *vēni, vidi, vici* ("I came, I saw, I conquered"). But the civil war was not yet over. He had to fight senatorial armies in North Africa (46 BCE) and then in Spain (45 BCE).

After a bitter civil war, Caesar was faced with the task of reestablishing constitutional government. He had in the interim been named dictator, and, in 44 BCE, he was named dictator for life. On the other hand, Caesar originally invaded Italy on the grounds that he was defending elected leaders (tribunes) who had supported him, but had, along with himself, been declared outlaws by the Senate. He also argued that he was defending his soldiers' interests as well as the honors that he had been promised and that he had earned. Dictatorship was convenient. It allowed Caesar to hold office continuously without the necessity of annual election. The rest of the machinery of government ran as usual, but Caesar controlled who could have what post. There is some evidence that he wished to become king, to establish his rule on the basis of his own divinity, or both, but this remains far from settled.



During his short rule in Rome, Caesar began urban improvements that included a renovation of the Curia, the Roman Senate house (Domitian's restoration depicted). Coinage from the period shows acroteria celebrating the victory over Gaul mounted on the building's roof. Behind the Curia, he began the forum of Julius Caesar whose temple to Venus Genetrix celebrated his divine origin traced back to Aeneas, son of Venus and legendary ancestor of Romulus, the founder of Rome.

Caesar did not possess sole rule for long, so it is impossible to say what his long-term plans were. During his short-lived administration, however, he attempted to settle economic affairs by relieving, but not abolishing, debt. This satisfied neither debtors nor creditors. He also reformed the calendar. With only modest adjustments, we still use Caesar's calendar today, including an interesting anomaly. Logic dictated that the new year should begin on the day after the winter solstice (the shortest day of the year), but Roman religion required delay. We live with that delay to this day as well as with a month that still bears Caesar's name: July.

Another political policy contributed to Caesar's early demise. After his victory in the civil war, Caesar, unlike Sulla, preferred to forgive, rather than proscribe, his enemies,

reckoning that people who owed their very lives to him would demonstrate future gratitude. He was wrong in this calculation, as many of those whom he forgave joined the successful conspiracy to assassinate him. The conspirators struck during a meeting of the Senate on March 15 (the Ides), 44 BCE—the eve of Caesar's planned departure for Parthia where he hoped to avenge Crassus's humiliating defeat.



Shakespeare's play *Julius Caesar* made the phrase "Beware the Ides of March" a well-known admonition. As Caesar heads to the Theater of Pompey where the Senate was meeting on the Ides of March, a soothsayer tries to warn him.

CAESAR'S LEGACY

After Caesar's murder, another round of civil war erupted, but not before the Senate declared that Caesar was a god. In his will, Caesar had adopted his great-nephew, Gaius Octavius (the son of his sister's daughter), who adopted Caesar's name, as did every subsequent Roman emperor. Caesar's name eventually passed into other languages too with the meaning of "emperor," such as *Kaiser* in German and *czar* in Russian. Caesar worship was transformed into emperor worship, and this worship of the emperors after they died and while they lived became an important element of

Roman administrative policy during the empire. This element of Roman religion eventually involved the Roman government in conflict with Jews and early Christians.

But Caesar's legacy goes beyond his calendar, his supposed divinity, and his name. The people of Gaul became Roman, and their descendants speak a form of Latin to this day. Caesar's example has also attracted imitators for thousands of years, and, in North America, fear of such would-be imitators haunted the framers of the U.S. Constitution. Whether or not Caesar had the moral right to attack Pompey and the Senate, from a legal perspective, Caesar trampled on Rome's constitution, which, as the framers of our constitution correctly diagnosed, had allowed him to acquire vast and virtually unchecked military power. Partly in reaction to this case study, a complex system of checks and balances was established in the United States to prevent any single individual from usurping supreme constitutional authority on Caesar's model.

Caesar is in every respect truly a pivotal historical figure. His career marks the final ruin of the Roman Republic, and his dictatorship served as the prelude to a constitutional reorganization that inaugurated the Roman Empire under his adoptive great-nephew Octavius (who became Augustus). We still reckon time by Caesar's reformed calendar, and our constitution continues to protect us from those who might otherwise try to imitate him. But why should we read Caesar's prose in Latin?

CAESAR AS AN AUTHOR

Caesar wrote many works that do not survive, apart from some fragments, including a work on Latin grammar, *Dē analogiā*, which is an especially bitter loss for Latin teachers, but Latin students too—because Caesar did not like exceptions to grammatical rules.

Caesar's literary fame rests on his surviving "commentaries" on the Gallic and Civil Wars: *Commentārii dē bellō Gallicō* and *Commentārii dē bellō cīvili* (most likely not the original title). The first seven books of the *Gallic War* were composed by Caesar. Aulus Hirtius supplemented the work after Caesar's death, contributing an eighth book. Caesar also wrote the three books of the *Civil War*. These books were supplemented as well with books (authorship uncertain) on events in Egypt (the *Alexandrian War*), North Africa (the *African War*), and Spain (the *Spanish War*).

What were *commentārii*? Roman governors and generals wrote official reports, which they sent to the Senate. Caesar's actual reports to the Senate are not what we read today. We read reports modeled on the genre of

those reports. Why would Caesar have chosen a genre that imitated such reports? Caesar was the politician who, during his consulship, first published "minutes" or "proceedings of the Senate" (*acta Senātūs*), much to the resentment of the conservative aristocracy, who preferred to settle matters among themselves without public scrutiny. When Caesar departed for Gaul, he probably chose *commentārii* as a genre to publicize his accomplishments among as wide a public as possible in a format that made it appear as if he were sharing his official reports to the Senate with all Roman citizens. Caesar was also absent from Rome for nine years. His "dispatches" on the Gallic War would have been devoured by a public eager for news, and would have been promoted by Caesar's political allies. Similarly, Caesar's "reports" on the civil war were likely crucial in presenting Caesar's side in this bitterly divisive conflict. When were these books published? How were they published? Did they appear serially or as a complete work? Were there revisions along the way? The answers to all these questions remain disputed. We do have testimony, however, that, although the genre was in general conceived of as providing the raw materials for historians, Caesar's *commentārii* were considered so polished that they dissuaded competitors from attempting to rewrite his accounts, especially of his Gallic campaigns.

Caesar's style has often been praised for its distinctive qualities. He tells his stories logically, clearly, and without obscure Latin vocabulary. If readers compare his prose to his contemporary Cicero or to the later historian Livy, they will soon perceive why Caesar's style is called "plain." His sentences, artfully constructed though they are, do not become involved in the complex syntax of subordinate and relative clauses (a style called "periodic"). His use of rhetorical devices is more subtle. He writes as a dispassionate observer, as opposed to the outraged orator or the emotional and moralizing historian.

Caesar also demotes himself to the third person. Much has been written on this topic, but one must consider his original audience at Rome: a public eagerly listening to reports about the progress of the Gallic war. Texts were often read aloud to larger groups who gathered to listen. If we compare, "When Caesar was informed of this, he decided to . . ." to "When I heard this, I reckoned I should . . .," we can observe that the third person would seem more natural in reporting the great general's accomplishments in the wilds of Gaul to a larger audience. Even upper-class "readers" frequently employed slaves to read texts to them out loud. If Caesar were not writing letters to people personally, the first person would have been jarring. Why would Caesar be speaking to them directly, especially if they were in a

group, and he was so far away in Gaul? With the help of the third person, the focus of the reports was more squarely on Caesar's actions rather than his authorship, and their plain and unemotional style lent them a seeming objectivity. How could they not be true? And Caesar does use the first person from time to time, but when he speaks as an author, not when he is telling a story in which he is another character, even though we know that he is the most important character in his own story!

Caesar's *commentarii* have seduced many readers over thousands of years with their seemingly objective authority. A cursory glance, however, at the bitterly partisan times in which they appeared quickly reveals what was at stake for Caesar: his reputation, his public career, and even his life, as the subsequent civil war and Caesar's murder amply demonstrate.

Caesar's view of the world is a pleasure to read, and his prose is convincing. *Caveat lector* (reader beware). Critically aware study of his texts will reap even richer harvests.

THE CHAIN OF COMMAND: CAESAR AS GENERAL AND THE ROMAN ARMY

Commander-in-Chief

Caesar, who had been consul in 59 BCE, arrived in his province as a proconsul, that is, a magistrate who came in place of (*prō*) a consul. A proconsul enjoyed the executive power of a Roman consul within his assigned sphere of operation, his *prōvincia* or province. Roman Gaul, however, was at the edge of the Roman world, and Caesar's province was protected by the Roman army. As governor, Caesar also served as commander-in-chief or leader (*dux*) or—after he won a victory, and was hailed as such—commander (*imperātor*) of the army. Who served in this army? Whole books are written on this topic, but we can sketch the basic principles here, and we will begin with the chain of command, and work our way from Caesar to subordinate officers to infantry and beyond.

Caesar enjoyed almost unlimited authority as a general. His power to punish enemies, for example, included execution, selling them into slavery, or, as his general Aulus Hirtius in his supplementary book on the Gallic War writes, chopping off the hands of those who had rebelled. Roman citizens had the right to appeal and were not supposed to be put to death without trial. The rules were different in the army. There was no appeal, and Caesar had the right, as general, to order the execution of deserters, thieves, and other criminals. Although the power of life and death dramatically

illustrates Caesar's authority, it does not offer a comprehensive or representative view. Generals do not lead by killing their men. Caesar exercised his authority judiciously, and he lets us know throughout his narrative how important the health and safety of his men were to him. Almost like the CEO of a large corporation, the *dux* had to build cities (camps), supply that city with food and other necessities, find new markets to fund profit-sharing (plunder), make travel arrangements (e.g., invade), manage hostile takeovers (battle), and negotiate contracts (treaties), as well as supervise and direct operations in the heat of battle.

The job was a difficult one, and Caesar's men depended on Caesar to look out for their interests. For Rome too, of course, Caesar also protected the safety and integrity of his province in a hostile and brutal world (as cruel as the Romans may seem to us—and they were—their enemies were no less cruel, rapacious, and violent). How did he manage these operations that involved thousands? We have touched on one key component, Caesar's authority or *imperium*, i.e., his right to give orders. The other key is obedience to authority and clear chains of command. *Fidēs* (loyalty or trust) was a key Roman virtue, and one that Caesar prized and rewarded. Just as soldiers require a general they can trust and in whom they have confidence, so also a general requires men who are loyal and upon whom he could rely. Hierarchy—and the Roman army raised hierarchy to the level of an art—was a two-way street, and we will be able to observe the important role trust and loyalty play in Caesar's narrative: from foreign allies (who frequently lack the quality) and Roman infantry (who possess it in abundance) to officers. (For other moral and military qualities of the Roman army, see the section below on centurions.)

Lieutenants

Let us review the ranks. Caesar, the commander-in-chief, relied heavily on his subordinate commanders or generals. Traditionally, we call them "lieutenants" in English, but the term in Latin is *lēgātus* or legate, that is, someone to whom Caesar delegates authority, and, when Caesar is not present, these legates represent the highest authority over whatever legion Caesar has placed them. Caesar mentions them frequently, as the legions were generally not all in one place or even close to each other, and communications were slow. These legates were powerful and important men in their own right, and some were better than others. Caesar blames his lieutenants for disasters (as he does in the selections from Book Five), but he singles them out for praise too. Caesar's most famous lieutenant (who would later

turn against Caesar and fight on Pompey's side during the Civil War that began immediately after the Gallic War) was Labienus. Caesar frequently relies on him, and he is generous with his praise. Also mentioned frequently are Cicero (the brother of the more famous orator) and the sons of Crassus (Caesar's great patron and political ally).

The Officer Class

These names will serve to illustrate another important point about the officer class. Elite officers were from the highest social, political, and economic classes at Rome. Roman politics followed generals wherever they went, and Roman generals were, of course, also politicians. Politicians have favors to confer and favors to repay, and the Roman army was full of posts not just for relatives of men as famous and powerful as Crassus and Cicero, but also for younger men and other hangers-on of the upper classes more generally, who joined the armies of powerful politician-generals in search of training, political connections, and profit. These lesser officers were not always particularly helpful, as they were not infrequently liable to panic. Caesar mentions such men from time to time, but generally as a group or class.

Another important officer was the *quaestor* or quartermaster, who was in charge of money and supplies. Generals had to bring large amounts of cash (which they carried in chests) to pay troops and purchase supplies. Maintaining a sufficient supply of grain (Romans preferred bread to meat) was a constant concern. It is perhaps not surprising that, like the general himself, the *quaestor* was accompanied by a bodyguard (*cohors praetoria*) of elite soldiers, generally from the upper classes (yet another job opportunity for aspiring young men as well as political patronage for the general).

Each legion had six military tribunes (*tribuni militum*) who could be put in charge of groups or detachments of various sizes. This rank offered Caesar an additional opportunity for political appointments and personal favors.

Despite the political nature of many appointments, it would be a mistake to conclude that Rome's officer class lacked competent and dedicated men. Motivations, experience, talent, and luck varied from individual to individual. Caesar looked for competence, and he put many men to efficient use. He also used them as a sounding board. It was standard Roman practice for generals to seek advice from their advisory council (*consilium*) on important decisions or major points of strategy. Although Caesar does not talk about his own discussions, he does share discussions that took place in the councils of his legates.

Centurions

Below the elite officer class, we find the men and leaders who did most of the fighting, and the men on whom Caesar frequently relied, especially in the heat of battle. Men of the lowest social classes could aspire to this rank, as one earned one's post by meritorious service. There was a hierarchy among this rank of officers as well, but, in general, centurions (something like a captain) or *centuriōnēs* (also *ordinēs*) commanded the basic unit of the Roman legion, the century (*ordō*) or company. (See the discussion below for the organization of the legion.) Centurions were veteran soldiers who had proven their qualities in battle. The word in Latin for character and moral quality is *virtūs*—literally, “manliness”—and centurions embodied that value in its most elemental sense. They tended to be brave, loyal, self-sacrificing, disciplined leaders of the common soldiers. They were the heart—the core—of the Roman army, and Caesar frequently singles them out for praise. He depended on them.

The Infantry

In Caesar's day, Roman legions were staffed entirely by Roman citizens. Common enlisted men (*militēs*) served in the Roman infantry. They fought on foot, hence also the term foot soldiers (*peditēs* and *peditātus*). These men were either volunteers or conscripts. Volunteers signed up for a term of twenty years. In return, they received a steady job, an income, a pension, and profit-sharing (plunder). All male Roman citizens, however, between the ages of 17 and 45 were also subject to the draft or conscription at any time, and, as you will read, when Caesar needed more troops, he conducted a levy (*dilectus*). Caesar was an industrious recruiter, and he increased the size of his army dramatically over the ten years of the Gallic campaign. This would enable him to take on Pompey and the Roman Senate in the subsequent Civil War.

The Legion

How many men were there and how were they organized? Numbers varied over time, but during the Gallic War, one legion (*legiō*) had about 3,600 troops. Each legion was divided into ten cohorts (*cohortēs*). Each cohort had three maniples (*manipulī*). Each maniple had two centuries or companies (*ordinēs*). These subsets within the legion allowed the general to control the movement of formations with some precision, even in the heat of battle, through the chain of command.

If we do the math:

1 legion = 3,600 men

10 cohorts of 360 men

30 maniples of 120 men

60 centuries of 60 men

Looking at it another way:

1 legion = 10 cohorts

1 cohort = 3 maniples

1 maniple = 2 centuries

1 century = 60 men

Each legion was called by a number, and Caesar's favorite legion was the tenth. When Caesar arrived in his province, there were four experienced legions (*legiōnēs veterānae*). He immediately conscripted two more legions, and would continue to levy troops as the war dragged on. If you have kept up with the math, you will realize that Caesar had over twenty thousand legionary soldiers at his disposal soon after he arrived in Gaul. He had other fighting men too, but, before we turn to them, let us return to organization.

Communications

Each legion had an eagle (*aquila*), which was carried on a long pole by an eagle-bearer (*aquilifer*). A legion also had standards (*signa*), carried by a standard-bearer (*signifer*), for each maniple. These standards were an important element in military communications as well as important for maintaining spirit and discipline within the legion and its individual units. A legion followed its eagle and treated its eagle, which was stored in a shrine, with religious reverence. It was beyond shameful to lose an eagle. Eagles were, moreover, Jupiter's special bird, and Jupiter was the chief god of the Roman state. And, if we imagine the noise and confusion of battle, we quickly grasp one of the principal practical purposes of standards. They too involved emblems carried atop long poles. Soldiers could see the standard above people's heads, and, by following their assigned standards, would know in what direction to proceed, even if they could not hear commands. Other means of nonverbal communication included flags (*vexillae*) and trumpets (*tubae*). Communication was a challenge.



This statue of Claudius, the fifth of Caesar's successors in the Julio-Claudian dynasty of emperors, depicts several important Roman symbols—the crown of laurel leaves, the fasces in his left hand and the libation plate in his right, and the *aquila*. The eagle was associated with Jupiter and as a symbol came to represent the imperial power of Rome and subsequently the Holy Roman Empire. One tradition states that Caesar wore the laurel crown so as to hide his baldness. Roman emperors were regularly hailed as "Caesar."

Non-Combatants

The army would not have been complete without a large support staff. These included camp slaves (*cālōnēs*), muleteers (*mūliōnēs*), traders (*mercātōrēs*), who sold goods to the soldiers and purchased plunder from them, and engineers (*fabri*), who helped build siegeworks, ships, bridges, and more.

Baggage

Caesar frequently mentions baggage (*impedimenta*). The army had to bring tents, weapons, food, cash (which was heavy), building materials, cooking utensils, supplies, and an entourage that included a menagerie of animals.

To keep up more complex lines of communication, Caesar employed a variety of messengers and letters, sometimes written in code. Patrols on horseback (*explōrātōrēs*) were sent out to keep a close watch on local surroundings. Scouts and spies (*speculātōrēs*) were employed where less conspicuous observation was required.

Non-Roman Troops

Caesar also employed foreign soldiers. Auxiliary troops (*auxilia*) were trained in the same fashion as the Roman infantry. They were often placed at the end of the battle lines or wings (*alae*). More specialized troops included light-armed soldiers, slingers (*funditōrēs*), who used slingshots, archers (*sagittārii*), and, more spectacularly, cavalry (*equitēs* or *equitātus*). Each legion had a cavalry contingent of about two to three hundred. These foreign mercenaries hailed primarily from Spain and Germany, but Caesar also employed Gallic cavalry.

Soldiers carried their own equipment. The army also had wagons and mules. After taking a city by storm, the army would acquire plunder, which could consist of things, but also people, whom they could sell as slaves to the traders for cash, but then they would have to carry the cash. You will frequently read, however, about measures taken to protect the baggage as well as how enemy troops aimed at plundering the Romans' baggage. Baggage also could hinder the effectiveness of a legion. It slowed them down, and they worried about losing it.

A Male Microcosm of Rome

A Roman army was a highly complex operation, and was much like a Roman city (if Roman cities had been populated only by adult men). A knowledge of its basic outlines will help readers appreciate the challenges, successes, and failures of Caesar's campaigns.

An Overview of the Gallic War

Rome rose over centuries from a small city-state to an imperial power that dominated an area larger than the continental United States—all of the Mediterranean and much of Northern Europe. Caesar's conquest of Gaul represents a part toward the conclusion of that larger story of conquest. This addition to Rome's empire is, however, especially fascinating for several reasons. We have the public professions of the man who decided on the invasion, and who found the means to pursue the war for almost nine years until the job was finished. This war also played a crucial role in the development of Caesar's career, and thus, in a sense, in the revolution that would soon overwhelm the Roman Republic. Let us review briefly this war both as it is described by Caesar and in the context of Caesar's larger career.

As we outlined above, Caesar arrived in his "Gallic provinces" (i.e., northern Italy and the Mediterranean coast along what is now the south of France) in 58 BCE, the year after his consulship of 59 BCE. By some reports, his first inclination was to win further military glory in Illyricum (territory along the Adriatic coast opposite Italy and corresponding to northern Albania and parts of the former Yugoslavia). Why? Military glory provided immense political capital in Roman politics, and Caesar's goal was to remain a powerful political force at Rome. For this reason, he required military glory to match his son-in-law Pompey's, and he also needed a great deal more cash. This is not an element of Roman politics that receives as much discussion,

but, even if it is tawdry, it was essential. Roman politics for reasons we cannot describe in detail here required enormous sums of money (suffice it to say that political support could be purchased), and, for the ancient entrepreneur, war could be extremely profitable as well as a source of publicity and glory. Conquered cities and villages could be plundered for their material goods, of course, but another rich source of wealth was the local population, who could be sold into slavery. Soldiers and generals shared in the profits. In the modern world, plundering is a war crime and slavery is a crime against humanity, and rightly so, but the ancient world had very different and much harsher rules. Wherever the Roman army went, slave traders followed. These traders would buy and sell other goods too, of course, but the slave trade was an immense source of profit. The Roman army was in many respects a mercantile operation. Caesar, because he was ambitious, needed a war, if not in Illyricum, then in Gaul.

Were there no constraints on ambitious generals? There were, in fact, many: legal, religious, and moral. Romans attributed their military success to their devotion to the gods, to their moral code (the *mōs maiōrum* or “customs of their ancestors”), and their laws. The Romans did not fight aggressive wars, as that would be unjust. They did not aim to conquer and enslave their neighbors. That would violate the “law of nations” (*ius gentium*; a primitive equivalent of international law).

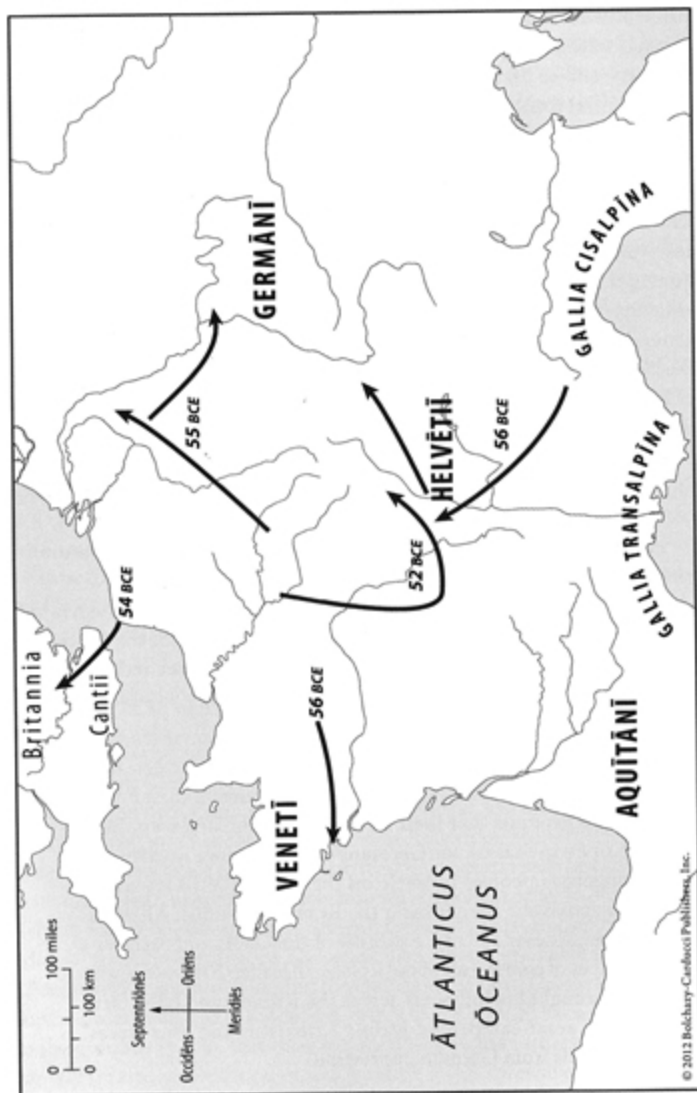
How in the world then did Rome end up with an empire? That is the age-old question, and it has many answers. Historians disagree. By way of partial answer, we can look at the situation at the beginning of Caesar’s governorship of Roman Gaul. In Book One of his *Dē Bellō Gallicō*, Caesar tells us that the Helvetii wished to move from their homes in a territory that corresponds to what is now Switzerland to other Gallic territories that were outside Roman territory. How did that affect Rome? At first the Helvetii asked whether Caesar would permit them to pass through Roman territory on their way to non-Roman territory. Caesar said no. The Helvetii then tried to emigrate by another route through non-Roman territory. Even though these events took place on non-Roman territory, Caesar used them to justify an incursion with his army into non-Roman territory in order to prevent the Helvetii from emigrating. Why? The migration of the Helvetii represented a danger for Roman territory. Caesar explains this at greater length in the AP selections from Book One, but the main point is clear. Caesar first enters Gaul in order to deal with a relatively minor local threat to Roman territory on the grounds that he was thereby protecting Roman interests. Caesar’s war was (in this presentation) not aggressive; it was defensive.

All Roman wars were justified in similar terms, and this is why historians disagree. Some historians agree with the Roman point of view while others sympathize with the people the Romans conquered. Caesar himself tells us nothing of politics in Rome or Rome's larger strategic interests, and he certainly does not tell us that he aims to enrich himself and his allies for the sake of his future political career. That would have been crass, morally offensive, and illegal. Did Caesar perhaps protect Rome from a real threat? Indeed, Rome's neighbors were hardly pacifists devoted to peace, love, and harmony. Gauls as well as the Germanic tribes who were continually infiltrating Gaul from across the Rhine were fierce and warlike people. What does all this say about Caesar's character? The question is well worth discussing, as few people are entirely good or entirely evil, and Caesar was, it is safe to assume, no exception to this general rule. Caesar likely combined Rome's interests with his own on the basis of traditional Roman thinking about defense and in the context of Roman politics as it existed in Caesar's day. Leaders who can combine their own interests with the interests of larger groups generally stand a better chance of success than those who are purely self-seeking. In the final analysis, however, the burden of accounting for Caesar's motivations falls on his modern readers because Caesar presents the war in his *commentarii* as a simple series of events. Each campaign leads naturally from the previous campaign.

Let us turn then to that series of events, as Caesar describes them in the *Dē Bellō Gallicō*. After our survey, we can place this war in the context of Caesar's subsequent career and assess its impact for Caesar and for Rome.

I. In Book One, Caesar arrives in his province in 58 BCE to discover that the Helvetii are on the move. Caesar leads his army into non-Roman Gallic territory and, after defeating the Helvetii in battle, compels them to return to their homes on the grounds that their otherwise vacant lands would be an open invitation for Germans (an even more warlike and dangerous people) to settle on the vacated territory that is just across the border from the Roman Province. After this action, Caesar calls an assembly of the Gauls and receives a number of complaints about a German leader, Ariovistus, who has brought his followers across the Rhine into Gallic territory. Caesar campaigns against Ariovistus and thus "frees" the Gauls from German oppression.

CAESAR'S CAMPAIGNS



Here we observe another common method the Romans used to justify intervention. Rome defended friends against their friends' enemies. Caesar thus becomes a significant force in the politics of non-Roman Gaul. Moreover, he does not leave Gaul but instead establishes winter quarters (ancient armies generally did not fight in winter when it was difficult to secure supplies) in Gallic territory. The invasion of Gaul has thus been launched and the military occupation of Gaul has begun. The next seven books will describe what it took to finish the job.

II. In Book Two, which relates the events of 57 BCE, Caesar campaigns against Belgic tribes in northern Gaul, thus extending his military power and political sway. At Rome, the Senate decrees fifteen days of prayers and sacrifices to the immortal gods in thanks for Caesar's successes.

III. Book Three covers events from 57 through 56 BCE. Various campaigns throughout Gaul continue to extend and solidify Caesar's effective military control over the whole territory.



Ehrenbreitstein, the Prussian castle-fortress, at Koblenz, the confluence of the Rhine and the Moselle rivers, hosts the local museum of history. Depicted is a faithful reconstruction of a Roman pile driver, one of the tools the Romans used to build bridges. In building a bridge across the Rhine, Caesar knew the psychological impact of demonstrating Rome's superior technology.

IV. By 55 BCE, military affairs seem fairly secure throughout Gaul, so, as Book Four describes, Caesar moves his military operations across the Rhine into German territory. This expedition is designed as a lesson to German leaders that Roman armies can hurt them in their own territory. The bridge that Romans built across the Rhine was another demonstration of their superior abilities. After this demonstration of Roman strength against the Germans, Caesar decides to sail to Britain and has a fleet built for this purpose. The fleet is damaged by a storm, but, after inflicting some defeats on local Britons, Caesar manages to repair the loss of his ships and to transport his troops safely back to the mainland. These expeditions against Germans and Britons were more spectacular than practical from a local military point of view, but they were effective in building Caesar's political popularity at Rome. The Senate this time decreed twenty days of prayers and sacrifices to the immortal gods in thanks for Caesar's military successes.

V. In Book Five, which describes the events of 54 BCE, Caesar begins to experience setbacks. His second expedition to Britain is again marred by trouble with storms as well as some difficult fighting. The troops acquit themselves well, however, and Caesar manages to transport them to the mainland for winter. But, after the troops have been dispersed to widely separated winter quarters, Belgic tribes rise in revolt and manage to destroy one Roman legion before Caesar can come to the relief of others.

VI. In Book Six, which describes the events of 53 BCE, there are continued revolts among the Gauls. Caesar also describes the customs, political organization, and religion of Gauls and Germans.

VII. Troubles continue in Book Seven, which describes the events of 52 BCE. Caesar calls it a "conspiracy," but the Gauls gather as a people and select Vercingetorix as the leader of their united effort to drive the Romans, their camps, and their armies from Gallic territory. The Gauls fight desperately for freedom. Even Caesar recognizes this, and respects them as he fights to conquer them. This struggle culminates in the siege of a city called Alesia. Eventually, Alesia and Vercingetorix

submit to Caesar. At Rome, the Senate decrees another twenty days of prayers and sacrifices to the immortal gods in thanks for Caesar's military successes.

VIII. The capitulation of Alesia represents the dramatic turning point of the war, but the work of conquest was not entirely done. Book Eight describes the military operations that continue in 51 and 50 BCE to suppress the revolt finally and completely. This book was not written by Caesar, however, but by one of his lieutenants, Aulus Hirtius.



The bronze statue of Caesar in military dress stands in front of the first-century Porta Palatina in Turin, Italy. Caesar is joined by a similar statue of his grand-nephew Caesar Augustus. Ancient Turin, *Augusta Taurinorum*, was part of Cisalpine Gaul.

We have surveyed in a few short paragraphs a difficult war that lasted almost nine years. Caesar won that war and, immediately after completing it, marched his armies on Rome in January 49 BCE, thus beginning the war against his own government that would eventually lead to his dictatorship. We have already sketched this chronology in the paragraphs above. A question that we may ask after our brief survey of the Gallic War is how Caesar's conquest of Gaul fits into the larger context of his life and career. The conquest of Gaul was crucial and the consequences are difficult to overstate. Caesar emerged from this war with a loyal, well-trained, and substantially larger army. Caesar also emerged from this war a fabulously wealthy man who had throughout its duration used the wealth that he had acquired to purchase friends, allies, and influence in Roman politics. Caesar's well-publicized victories had also bought tremendous political capital among the people of Rome and Italy. Romans liked winners,



Caesar

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Hans-Friedrich Mueller, PhD, a.k.a. *Molinarius*, serves as the William D. Williams Professor and Chair of Classics at Union College in Schenectady, New York. He is a recipient of a Lifetime Achievement Award from Eta Sigma Phi and the Society for Classical Studies Award for Excellence in the Teaching of Classics as well as two awards for excellence in teaching at Florida State University. He developed a graduate distance program in classics for high school teachers and was himself a high school Latin teacher for six years. Mueller is the author of *Roman Religion in Valerius Maximus* (Routledge, 2002), the editor of an abridgment of Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (Modern Library, 2003), and the translator of Mehl's *Roman Historiography* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2011). *Molinarius's* high school teaching experience (combined with insights gained from raising four daughters) has served him well as author of this text and as coauthor (with Rose Williams) of *Caesar: A LEGAMUS Transitional Reader* (Bolchazy-Carducci, 2012).

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