Julius Caesar

The Colossus of Rome

RICHARD A. BILLOWS

JULIUS CAESAR:
THE COLOSSUS OF ROME

Julius Caesar offers a lively, engaging, and thoroughly up-to-date account of Caesar's life and times. Richard Billows' dynamic and fast-paced narrative offers an imaginative recounting of actions and events, providing the ideal introduction to Julius Caesar for general readers and students of classics and ancient history.

The book is not just a biography of Caesar, but a historical account and explanation of the decline and fall of the Roman Republican governing system, in which Caesar played a crucial part. To understand Caesar's life and role, it is necessary to grasp the political, social, and economic problems Rome was grappling with, and the deep divisions within Roman society that came from them. Caesar has been seen variously as a mere opportunist, a power-hungry autocrat, an arrogant aristocrat disdaining rivals, a traditional Roman noble politician who stumbled into civil war and autocracy thanks to being misunderstood by his rivals, and even as the ideal man and pattern of all virtues. Billows argues that such portrayals fail to consider adequately the universal testimony of our ancient sources that Roman political life was divided in Caesar's time into two great political tendencies, called 'optimates' and 'populares' in the sources, of which Caesar came to be the leader of one: the 'popularis' faction.

Billows suggests that it is only when we see Caesar as the leader of a great political and social movement, that had been struggling with its rival movement for decades and had been several times violently repressed in the course of that struggle, that we can understand how and why Caesar came to fight and win a civil war, and bring the traditional governing system of Rome to an end.

Richard A. Billows is Professor of Greek and Roman History at Columbia University in New York. His publications include *Antigonos the One-Eyed and the Creation of the Hellenistic State*. Recent research interests include the origins of the Greek city-state, the collapse of the Roman Republic, and the origins of Christianity.

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Brutus
I do believe that these applauses are
For some new honours that are heaped on Caesar.

Cassius
Why, man, he doth bestride the narrow world
Like a Colossus, and we petty men
Walk under his huge legs, and peep about
To find ourselves dishonourable graves.

Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*, Act 1 scene 2, 134–39

DEDICATION

During my career as a professional historian, I have been fortunate to be closely associated with two of the greatest Roman historians of their generation: Erich S. Gruen and William V. Harris. To them I dedicate this book, in the full knowledge that they will both, in different ways, find much to disagree with here, but in the hope that they will find their time reading it well spent all the same.

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Many people besides the author contribute to the production of a book, and it is my pleasant duty here to thank some of the key people who have contributed to making this book the best it can be. In the first place, Richard Stoneman, not only the former Classics Editor at Routledge but also a scholar in his own right, believed in this project at the start and signed me up to write this book. His successor Lalle Pursglove has been extraordinarily patient and always encouraging in the face of my frequent distraction by other matters; and Stacey Carter and the rest of the team at Taylor and Francis Publishing have also been very helpful. Rob Brown and his production team at Saxon Graphics have done a terrific job preparing the text and the front matter (maps and illustrations) for publication, showing enormous patience in dealing with a finicky and at times distracted author. My thanks too to the copy editor Susan Curran and the indexer Jackie Brind for both doing a first rate job. The ideas presented here have been long in gestation. My interest in late Republican Rome was first piqued, and my ideas about it began to develope, some 30 years ago now during Oxford tutorials with the late George Forrest, a remarkable teacher and scholar. I could wish he were still alive to read this book. Finally, my wife Clare and daughters Madeline and Colette deserve recognition for having had to live with this project for too many years. Thank you all!

PREFACE

Caesar is a historical figure who has never failed to fascinate, and the ending of the Roman Republican governing system is likewise a topic that has never failed to fascinate. Many, many historians, both academic professionals and enthusiastic amateurs, have written about one or both of these topics, creating a huge bibliography on the subject. Since it has been my aim to write for a wider audience than just fellow scholars of ancient Rome, I have not in this book followed the scholar's habit of carrying on a running debate with earlier scholars in notes. Instead, I use the notes as a guide to the ancient source material on which our knowledge of Caesar and the later Roman Republic is based. At the end of this book is a bibliography which lists the more interesting and/or important books and articles (in my opinion) relevant to these two related subjects, and anyone sufficiently interested can pursue any of the subjects raised in the course of this book via the works listed there. The works in the bibliography (or most of them) have had some influence on the development of my ideas on these topics. Here, in this Preface, I offer to the reader a brief discussion of the most important ancient writers and texts that form the basis for our knowledge, and of the modern historical works that have to my mind been the most important contributions to our understanding of and ideas about Caesar and the collapse of Rome's traditional governing system: these are certainly the ones that have contributed most to my understanding and ideas.

By far the most important of our sources are those contemporary, or near contemporary, with the events of the period under discussion – primarily 100 to 44 BCE. Of these contemporary sources, the most important by far is Cicero. Marcus Tullius Cicero was the dominant writer and intellectual of his time, perhaps in all of Roman history, as well as being one of the most influential political leaders of his day. We possess a huge collection of his private and public letters, addressed to his close friend Atticus, to his brother Quintus Cicero, and to a host of other friends and associates, which give us a unique insight into almost every aspect of Roman politics and society, and form without doubt our most important source material. In addition, we have many public speeches Cicero delivered, dealing with or referring to a host of

political and social issues. Then there are Cicero's technical treatises, on the theory and practice of oratory and on all aspects of philosophy. Cicero's writings are usually referred to by Latin titles mysterious to most non-academic readers, or even by abbreviations of those titles that are even more mysterious. I have referred to them throughout – and to all other ancient works – by English titles. A list of Cicero's works is given at the end of the book, including two minor works included in Cicero's *corpus*, one by his brother and one by an anonymous writer.

After Cicero, our most important source for Caesar's life is Caesar's own writings: his commentaries on his campaigns in Gaul (France) and in the civil war he fought against his rivals. These commentaries rank among the greatest works of Latin history. Due to pressure of time and business, he did not finish either set of commentaries: his Gallic War commentary was finished by his friend Aulus Hirtius, and Hirtius or other associates of Caesar also wrote accounts of his civil war campaigns in Alexandria, Africa, and Spain in the mid-40s BCE. A younger contemporary of Caesar and Cicero, Quintus Sallustius Crispus – usually known as Sallust – wrote surviving historical essays on the Roman war with Jugurtha of Numidia (113–105 BCE) and on the so-called conspiracy of Catilina (66–63 BCE). His greatest work, the 'Histories', is mostly lost, but large fragments of it, especially a set of speeches by major historical figures, do survive. We also have two letters of political advice to Caesar, written perhaps about 50 BCE, which are attributed to Sallust, rightly in my view. Finally, in terms of contemporary source material, it is worth mentioning the poems of the remarkable Catullus, which throw a fascinating and at times lurid light on Roman high society and culture of the late 60s and 50s BCE.

Of later sources, the most important was Livy, who wrote a massive history of Rome from the foundation of the city down to his own day (the time of Augustus), which subsumed and made obsolete almost all of the historical writing of earlier authors such as the so-called 'annalists' L. Piso, Cn. Gellius, Claudius Quadrigarius, Valerius Antias and others. Unfortunately, the sections of Livy's history covering the late second and first centuries BCE are now lost, but we do have a set of brief summaries giving the content of each 'book' of the history, which are often very informative. A generation after Livy a certain Asconius wrote a set of commentaries on speeches of Cicero: Asconius was an extremely well-informed man, and his surviving commentaries – generally cited in the edition by Clark – are full of useful information. Under the emperor Tiberius a brief history of Rome was composed by Velleius Paterculus. About two generations later (a bit after 100 CE), Caius Suetonius Tranquillus wrote a set of biographies of the 'twelve Caesars', starting with that of Caesar himself by the name *Divus Julius*. Since Suetonius worked high up in the imperial Roman bureaucracy, he had access to various official records and documents that make his work at times uniquely well informed.

The single most useful writer after Cicero, however, was not a Roman but a Greek: Plutarch, who wrote in the late first and early second centuries CE a set of biographies of Greek and Roman leaders. We still possess his biographies of the two Gracchus brothers, of Marius, Sulla, Sertorius, Crassus, Lucullus, Pompeius, Cicero, Caesar, Cato the Younger, Marcus Antonius and Marcus Brutus. Together they tell us an enormous amount about these crucial leaders of late Republican Rome. Plutarch had access to and used an array of writings now lost to us – memoirs by Sulla, Rutilius Rufus and Lucullus; histories by the likes of Asinius Pollio, Ampius Balbus, Tanusius Geminus – who were contemporaries or near contemporaries of Caesar. In the late second and early third centuries two other Greeks wrote historical works that provide a great deal of information about our period. Appian wrote about various Roman wars, and his surviving accounts of the Civil War, from the 130s down to the death of Caesar and beyond, and of the Mithridatic Wars (between the 90s and 63 BCE), are very valuable. Cassius Dio wrote a general history of Rome in the manner of Livy and probably using Livy: books 36–44 cover our period.

Finally, a number of late imperial writers composed brief histories of Rome based on Livy, and at times preserving useful information despite their brevity: Granius Licinianus, Florus, Orosius and Eutropius. Much other useful data is gathered from a variety of writers of not strictly historical works: the polymath Pliny and his 'natural history', collectors of 'stratagems' like Frontinus and Polyaenus, purveyors of interesting anecdotes like Aulus Gellius and Valerius Maximus, the antiquarian lexicographer Festus, and so on. These kinds of sources only provide small additional scraps and details, however: in the main, what we know is derived from the writings listed above. One other kind of source material is worth mentioning: contemporary documents preserved in inscriptions on stone, most of them collected in the great *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* (collection of Latin inscriptions).

As mentioned above, Caesar has proved a fascinating subject to many biographers and historians before myself, who have produced many different versions of Caesar. To perhaps the greatest of all modern Roman historians, Theodor Mommsen in the first volume of his *History of Rome* (1894), Caesar was the ideal man, the summation of all Roman talent and virtue. A generation after Mommsen, Eduard Meyer saw Caesar as driven by an insatiable urge to become king, in his *Caesar's Monarchy and the Principate of Pompeius* (1922). The most important and influential treatment of Caesar was, though, Matthias Gelzer's *Caesar: Politician and Statesman* (originally published in 1921, slightly revised English language version in 1968). Gelzer collected all the available evidence regarding Caesar and analysed it thoroughly, providing the authoritative structure and chronology of Caesar's life and career. One of his virtues was that he imposed no set idea of what Caesar was about. Though that makes his biography a little colourless, my debt to Gelzer throughout this book should be obvious to a reader familiar with Gelzer's work; but my interpretation often differs. In particular, Gelzer covered the first 40 years of

Caesar's life, down to his consulship, in 70 pages, and the last 16 years in over 230. The reader will see that I rate the importance of Caesar's background, life and experiences prior to 59 BCE very differently. Since Gelzer, Helmut Strasburger has substantially revised the traditional view that Caesar aimed for supreme power from his earliest years, in *Caesar's Entry into History* (1938). A. Kahn has studied *The Education of Julius Caesar* (1986). General J. F. C. Fuller has seen Caesar as a flawed commander and would-be tyrant in *Julius Caesar: Man, Soldier, and Tyrant* (1965). Christian Meier's *Caesar: A Biography* (1982), probably the best of the more recent biographies, presents a Caesar who is an outsider, doomed to be misunderstood and unappreciated by his contemporaries, and to break down the system of which he could never fully be a part.

Two very good recent biographies are Adrian Goldsworthy's *Caesar: Life of a Colossus* (2006) and Luigi Canfora's *Julius Caesar: The People's Dictator* (1999). To my mind more interesting, though, is a work by a writer who is not a professional scholar and academic, nor even a professional Roman historian: Michael Parenti. His *The Assassination of Caesar* (2003), though it has errors and misunderstandings, offers much food for thought in Parenti's ability to 'think outside the box' and offer genuinely different interpretations of events and characters. I have read it with great profit. Also worth mentioning is Jeffrey Tatum's recent set of lectures, published as *Always I am Caesar* (2008), which offers numerous intriguing insights, but comes to the unconvincingly deflating conclusion that in the end, Caesar and his rival Pompeius were just 'grumpy old men' who lived abnormally long lives for their class and time, and in refusing to make way for the next generation of Roman leaders brought the system down. We live in an age that has learned to be sceptical about 'great leaders', but that is going far indeed. It seems to me to be dangerously close to a *reductio ad absurdum* of how and why Rome's governing system fell. There was certainly much more to the story than that!

Two studies of special aspects of Caesar have been very influential and deserve mention here. Zvi Yavetz's *Julius Caesar and his Public Image* (1983) examined how Caesar presented himself and was perceived in his own time and later; and Stefan Weinstock's *Divus Julius* (1971) gave an exhaustive account of the divinization of Caesar, partly in the last years of his life but mostly posthumously. Further, most biographies of Caesar either largely overlook, or at best pay scant attention to, the fact that Caesar was not only a great and transformative political leader, and a great and conquering general: he was also one of the leading literary men of his time, and remains one of Rome's greatest historians. The starting point for studying Caesar the writer, for the English-language reader, should be 'Caesar', a short essay by R. M. Ogilvie in *The Cambridge History of Classical Literature: The Late Republic* (1982), which is excellent in spite of its brevity. Serious book-length studies of this aspect of Caesar have been rare until recently, but there are now two

outstanding resources. K. Welch and A. Powell edited a set of essays entitled *Julius Caesar as Artful Reporter* (1998) and A.M. Riggsby studied Caesar's historical and literary methods and tricks in his outstanding *Caesar in Gaul and Rome: War in Words* (2006).

However, my book is not just a biography of Caesar: it also tells the tale, and explains the process, of the collapse of Rome's Republican governing system. In my view the best study of the social and economic background to the profound changes and conflicts of Republican Rome's last century is Arnold Toynbee's under-appreciated masterpiece *Hannibal's Legacy* (1965). The second volume of this great work, on Rome and Italy in the second century BCE and the transformations wrought in the aftermath of Hannibal's war, can still be read (and re-read) with enormous profit and should be required reading for every student of Republican Rome. For the political transformations of the period between the 60s and the 30s BCE, when the Republican governing system was replaced by Augustan autocracy, Sir Ronald Syme's great book *The Roman Revolution* (1939) is foundational. Syme's image of Caesar as a traditional noble politician, seeking political pre-eminence within the traditional system but tragically misunderstood by his peers, has been very influential. Lily Ross Taylor's *Party Politics in the Age of Caesar* (1949) offers an account of Roman political life that, while in some ways applying the 'party model' too schematically, shows a better understanding of the nature of Roman politics (in my view) than more recent accounts that have too radically scrapped the idea of political groupings of any substance: certainly Ross's depiction fits better with the ancient testimony to *Optimates* and *Populares*. Christian Meier's reflection on the loss of Romans' willingness and ability to hold on to their traditions, *Res Publica Amissa* (1966) – written under the influence of post Second World War political pessimism and dislocation – is always thought provoking.

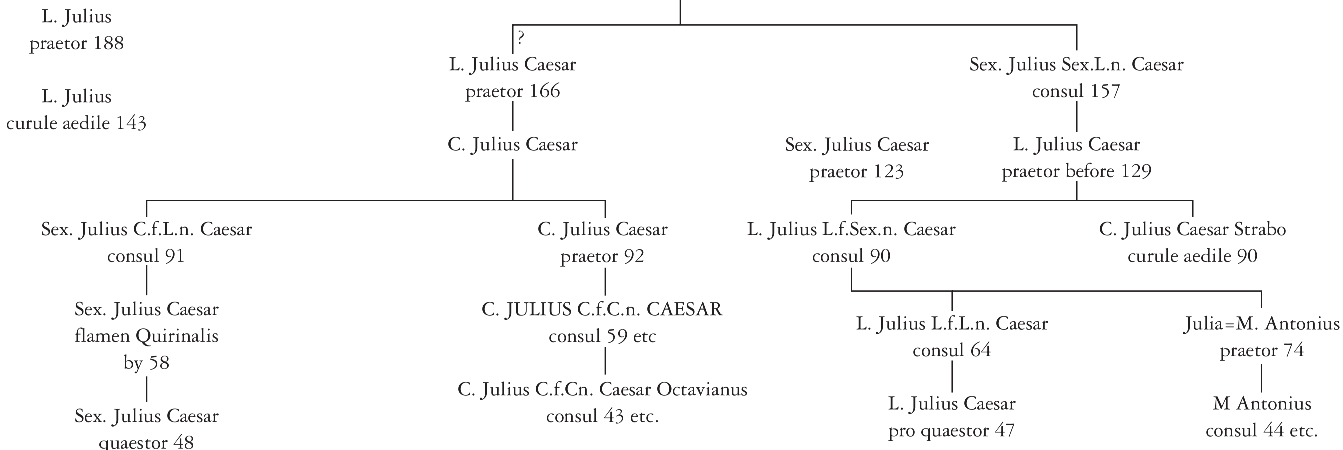
For me, however, the single most influential work of earlier scholarship is probably that with which I have and do disagree the most profoundly: Erich Gruen's *The Last Generation of the Roman Republic* (1974, 2nd edition, slightly revised in 1994). Gruen's knowledge of first century BCE Rome, and especially of political life at that time, is encyclopaedic, and his analysis is at all times thorough, well founded, and impossible to dismiss lightly. I have learned a great amount from my readings of this book, and always learn more each time I re-read it. Yet in the end, Gruen's picture of a society in which nothing was irreparably wrong, that stumbled into civil war and destruction almost inadvertently, and of a Caesar who wanted nothing more than to be accepted by his aristocratic peers as a first among equals, fails to convince. In many ways, this book is a response to Gruen's book, an attempt to put the 'fall' back into the 'fall of the Republic', and to see Caesar as the radical and transforming political leader his contemporaries saw in him and either admired or loathed. Much has been written about Roman politics and society

since the time of Meier's and Gruen's books – some of the more interesting of the recent works are listed in the Bibliography – but nothing that to my mind stands out and demands a response in the way theirs do. This book is my response, one which I hope the reader will find at least entertaining and thought provoking.

NOTES ON ILLUSTRATIONS

While every effort has been made to trace copyright holders and obtain permission, this has not been possible in all cases. Any omissions brought to our attention will be remedied in future editions

The Julii



Key to construction of this family tree are the preserved filiations of the consuls: thus Sex. f.L.n. = Sexti filius, Lucii nepos = son of Sextus, grandson of Lucius.

Caesar's Family

Q. Marcius Rex
praetor 144

L. Aurelius Cotta
consul 144

Q. Marcius Rex
consul 118

C. Julius Caesar=Marcia

L. Aurelius Cotta
consul 119

M. Aurelius Cotta

C. Aurelius Cotta
consul 75

M. Aurelius Cotta
consul 74

L. Aurelius Cotta
consul 65

Julia(†69)=C. Marius
consul 107 etc.

C. Julius Caesar=Aurelia
praetor 92

Q. Marcius Rex
consul 68

C. Marcius
consul 82

L. Cornelius Cinna
consul 87 etc.

Cornelia 1=C. JULIUS CAESAR
consul 59 etc.

Julia=1. Q. Pedius

Julia=M. Atius Balbus

Cn. Pompeius Magnus=Julia(†54)

Q. Pedius
consul 43

=2. Pinarius

L. Pinarius

Atia=1. C. Octavius
praetor 61

Pompeia 2=

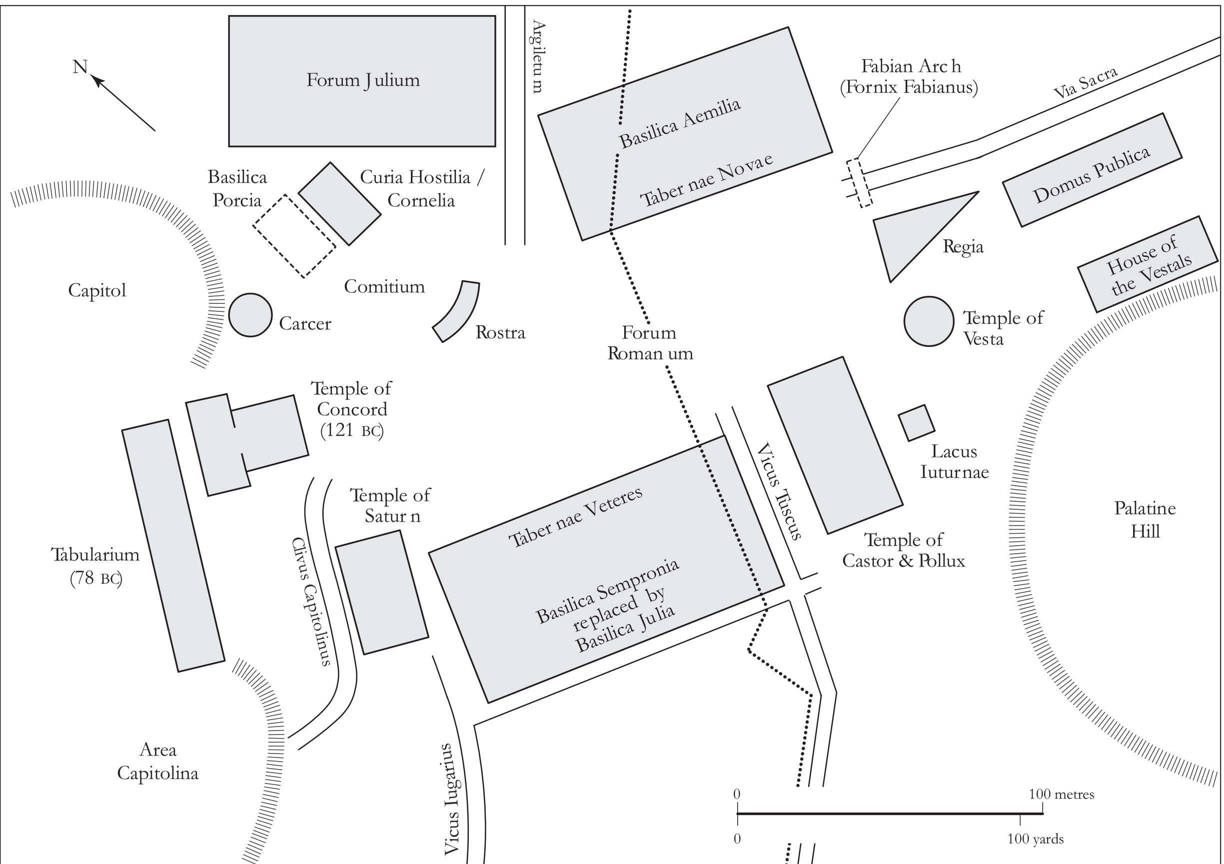
L. Calpurnius Piso
consul 58

=2. L. Marcius Philippus
consul 56

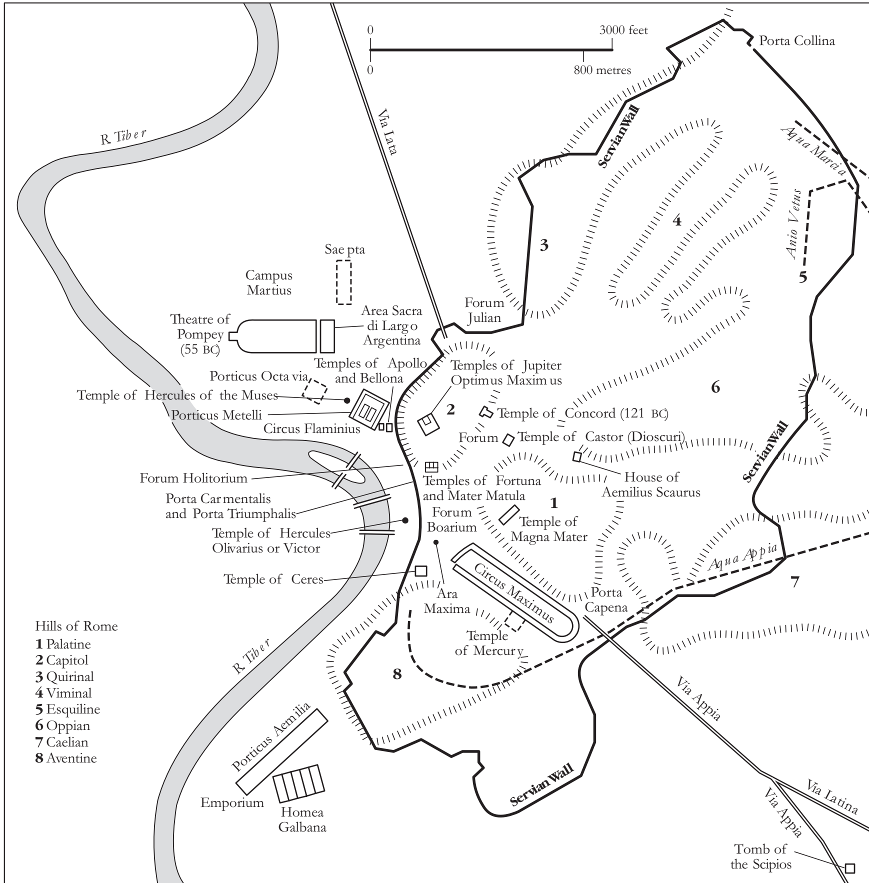
Calpurnia 3=

Octavia=1. C. Claudius Marcellus
consul 50
=2. M. Antonius
consul 44 etc.

C. Octavius
from 44 C. Caesar
from 27 Augustus



The Roman Forum during the republic: Source: Rosenstein, N., and Morstein-Marx, R. (eds.), *A Companion to the Roman Republic* (Oxford, 2006).



Redrawn from “The city of Rome during the Republic” in N. Rosenstein and R. Morstein-Marx, *A Companion to the Roman Republic*, Blackwell Publishing.

The Mediterranean in the time of Caesar from W. J. Tatum "Always I am Caesar" Blackwell 2008.

Redrawn from "Gaul at the Time of Caesar" C. Meier, *Caesar: A Biography*, Basic Books.

PROLOGUE

Winter days in the north-eastern region of peninsular Italy can be quite bitter. It was on an unusually mild and pleasant January day that a group of men gathered on the banks of a small river, not much more than a stream really, near the coastal city of Ravenna. The reason for the clement weather was an odd one, for in spite of it being the middle of January, the season was in fact mid-autumn: the Roman lunar calendar had been allowed by official negligence to fall several months behind the solar year.

The group gathered on the stream's bank was clearly military in character. A few hundred cavalry soldiers formed a protective screen around a group of men of higher status, many of them in the characteristic garb of Roman officers. All eyes, however, were focused on one man, seated in an open carriage at the stream's edge, dressed in the ornate cuirass and scarlet cloak of a Roman general. He was a man of some 50 years, but still trim and athletic despite middle age. Fairly tall and of slender build, his face was handsome: rather narrow, with hollowed cheeks and deep set eyes, below a forehead made broader by the receding hairline which could not be entirely concealed by hair combed forward from the crown. He was deep in thought, the evident gravity of the moment shown by the silence that was broken only by the occasional snort of a horse or stamp of a hoof. Finally the man smiled and looked up, taking in the anxious faces around him, and broke the silence.

'Let the dice fly high!'

With those words the man ordered his carriage forward across the bridge, and the officers, aides and soldiers gathered around him followed.

The stream they were crossing was named the Rubicon. It formed the boundary between Italy proper and the province the Romans called Cisalpine Gaul. Italy – that is, the boot-shaped peninsula of Italy – was governed directly by the magistrates and Senate of Rome, whereas Cisalpine Gaul, like all Roman provinces, was governed by an ex-magistrate sent out with specific powers for a limited period of time. At the time in question, January of the year 49 BCE, the governor of Cisalpine Gaul, as well as Transalpine Gaul (France) and Illyria (Croatia), was Caius Julius Caesar. It was he and his entourage, of course, who crossed the Rubicon as described above, and by that

simple act set in motion a series of events that forever changed western history. For the crossing of the Rubicon was a highly symbolic act. By it, Caesar overstepped the boundaries of his provincial command, ceasing to be an obedient governor of a Roman province and setting himself into conflict with the Senate and magistrates of Rome.

In point of fact, the train of events leading the Roman world into civil war was already well in motion before Caesar ordered his carriage across the Rubicon. The Roman Senate had declared him an outlaw some days earlier and ordered the top magistrates to begin mobilizing troops to attack him; replacement governors had been named for his provinces, with orders to set out and take control of them; and Caesar himself had already, in response to these decisions, sent troops ahead into Italy to seize the key cities of Ariminum (modern-day Rimini) and Arretium (Arezzo). But that moment of decision on the bank of the Rubicon was still fateful: nothing that had been done up until that point could not be undone. Caesar could have recalled his troops, submitted to the Senate's will, and gone into probable political extinction without putting up a military struggle. By crossing the Rubicon he signalled his determination not to let his enemies in the Senate destroy him and his career, choosing to fight a civil war rather than allow that to happen.

How did things come to this pass, by which one of the most successful, popular, and deservedly respected generals and politicians of the Roman Empire unleashed a devastating civil war? To understand this, we have to look far back into the history of Rome to see the causes of internal unrest and dissatisfaction, and into Caesar's own life to see what led him to take up arms against the corrupt clique that really governed Rome in late Republican times.

I

ROME AND ITALY IN THE SECOND CENTURY BCE

Marcus Porcius Cato swept into the Senate house with an almost regal air. The old man was fully aware of the reverence bordering almost on awe with which many of his fellow senators regarded him. He had, after all, held Rome's highest offices of state, the consulship and the censorship, before many of them were even born. And he was one of the last men alive who had actually fought in the great war against the legendary Hannibal of Carthage. The Senate meeting that day, early in the year 149 BCE, was to consider a proposal to set up a special judicial tribunal (*quaestio*) to try the ex-governor of western Spain, Servius Sulpicius Galba, for severe malfeasances while in office. Rome's oldest living senator, a resolute moralist all his life, was firmly in favour of setting up the tribunal, and concluded his speech recommending the measure in the way he had concluded every public utterance for several years now: with the words 'furthermore, it is my opinion that Carthage should be destroyed'. The proposal was passed by the Senate and forwarded for final decision at a popular assembly meeting, where Galba succeeded in having it defeated by shamelessly playing on the people's sympathy for his young sons.[1] As for Carthage, Rome was already at war with her great north African rival, and its ultimate destruction was assured.

Cato did not live to see Carthage's ultimate defeat and destruction, for which he had campaigned so tirelessly, nor to witness the ultimate outcome of the dispute over the *quaestio* for Galba. He died in 149 BCE, in his 85th year of life (he was born in 234), full of honours and having outlived all friends and rivals, of both of which he had had many. His death could be seen as the passing of an era, and certainly Rome was on the cusp of important changes. Later that year, and in response to the Galba fiasco, the tribune Lucius Calpurnius Piso set up a permanent tribunal to try cases of wrongdoing by provincial governors, the so-called *quaestio de rebus repetundis* (extortion tribunal);[2] and in 147 the Roman general Scipio Aemilianus captured Carthage and utterly destroyed the city as Cato had wished, killing or enslaving its inhabitants and laying the site of the city under a curse. Within a generation, in 133, Rome itself succumbed for the first time to internal political violence, entering a long century of repeated political turmoil, violence and civil war,

which culminated in the destruction of the Republican system of government and its replacement by monarchical autocracy. To men looking back from the age of civil wars and patent decay of the traditional Republican system, Cato could seem the embodiment of sound and traditional Roman virtue, and the age he represented seemed an age of safe, healthy, conservative governance during which all at Rome was as it should be. A closer look, however, reveals that it was during Cato's lifetime, and not least by Cato himself, that the seeds of the conflicts and disputes that flowered into the so-called 'Roman revolution' were sown.

The first half of the second century BCE saw a profound change in the way Rome was governed, a change that went so deep it almost amounted to a revolution, yet a change carried out so quietly, with so little fuss, and presented by its proponents so effectively as a mere codification of or return to ancestral custom, that it has gone largely unnoticed to the present day. For Rome was a society much addicted to the principle of following *mos maiorum* (ancestral custom), and to represent an innovation as following or returning to *mos maiorum* was an often effective way both of recommending it to the Roman Senate and people, and of disguising its true innovative nature from them, and even from many modern scholars. The roots of this 'quiet revolution' lay in a great extension of the Roman office-holding class that took place during the Hannibalic War (218–201 BCE), as a result of the heavy losses sustained by the traditional senatorial elite during the opening years of that conflict. In 216, after Rome had met with three disastrous defeats in battle, an elderly senior senator named Marcus Fabius Buteo was commissioned to refill the Senate, which had lost over half of its number. In addition to the normal signing-up of ex-magistrates, Fabius Buteo had to cast his net much wider than usual to include all sorts of men of senatorial family who had not yet held office, members of families formerly of senatorial status, holders of junior military posts, and anyone else who held the requisite wealth and whose war record showed him to be the right sort of man under the circumstances of military disaster. A total of 177 new senators were added to fill up a Senate normally some 300 men strong.

After the Hannibalic War's initial disasters, the need to have in office only men of unquestioned standing and experience had been generally accepted. When that need ended with the war's end in 201, the numerous members of new senatorial families began to compete enthusiastically for high office, resulting in a string of new families reaching the highest offices of state in subsequent decades. They also campaigned for changes in the basic governing system to make their quest for high office and other honours more effective in the face of competition from the more established political families. Marcus Porcius Cato was one of these 'new men' who pushed their way to the forefront of Roman politics in the decades after the Hannibalic War, and helped to transform the way Rome was run. Others came from families once prominent which had lapsed into obscurity for several generations, such as the Aelii

and the Popillii; from families of minor office holders previously below or only on the fringes of the senatorial class, such as the Villii and the Cassii; and from families, like Cato's, that were apparently entirely new to Roman politics, such as the Acilii, the Baebii and the Petillii.[3]

Rome was a society traditionally governed by a narrow elite called the *nobilitas*. Noble standing was acquired by election to one of Rome's annual high magistracies, especially the praetorship and the consulship (the highest office of state), and by consequent membership of the Senate, Rome's true governing council. (See Appendix for a chart of Roman magistracies and their spheres of authority.)[4] In the fourth and third centuries Rome was dominated in each generation by a handful of men of outstanding authority and ability, who each held high office repeatedly and thus served the state as its key military and political leaders. For example, M. Valerius Corvus reputedly held high office on 21 occasions between 348 and 299, including six consulships and five dictatorships. L. Papirius Cursor was five times consul, twice dictator, three times *magister equitum*, and praetor at least once between 340 and 309. Q. Fabius Rullianus held five consulships and was dictator and twice *magister equitum*, as well as holding various other high posts, between 331 and 295. M'. Curius Dentatus was consul in 290, praetor in 283, consul again in 275 and 274, and censor in 272. A. Atilius Caiatinus was consul in 258 and 254, praetor in 257, dictator in 249, and censor in 247. The famous Q. Fabius Maximus the *cunctator* (delayer) held five consulships between 233 and 209 as well as being censor in 230 and dictator in 217.[5] These men, and others like them too many to list here, attained a standing and authority in the Senate and state that enabled them effectively to dominate and guide the political process and conduct of war through the first great era of Rome's expansion to control all of Italy and defeat the mighty Carthaginian Empire. The relatively small size of the nobility meant that competition for high office was not too severe to accommodate these extraordinary men and their careers.

After the final defeat of Carthage in 201, the much more widely based senatorial order of the late Hannibalic War, facing a greatly expanded Roman Empire offering vast new opportunities for glory and enrichment, decided that such men and careers could no longer be tolerated. The new principle was to be one of relative equality of opportunity among all members of the senatorial elite, resulting in a much expanded nobility; and a much greater equality of outcome in the competition for high office and glory, with no room for the careers of repeated high office that had hitherto characterized the very top of Rome's politico-military order. No men were to be permitted to rise to dominant positions in the state, and to symbolize this the man who had brought Rome victory over Hannibal and Carthage, and who most clearly possessed all the hallmarks of one of the great dominant leaders who had hitherto guided Rome – P. Cornelius Scipio Africanus – was subjected to obscure but evidently effective legal and political harassment which limited

his political and military career and eventually drove him into voluntary exile.[6] The senatorial elite instituted a policy requiring a ten-year interval between consulships, and establishing a proper order and age limits for the holding of the more important magistracies. This latter created for the first time a so-called *cursus honorum* (career ladder) that was eventually ratified into law in 180: the Lex Villia Annalis, setting a minimum age limit of 28 for the quaestorship, the first step in a senatorial career, and prescribing that the praetorship must be held next, before the consulship could be sought, with a minimum two-year interval between the holding of the various offices.[7]

A result of this was that after 200 far more individuals than in any previous era attained consulships, and the number of consular families – the elite element of the Roman nobility – was greatly increased over subsequent decades, with clans such as the Villii, the Acilii, the Porcii, the Baebii and many others attaining first consulships: no less than 26 new *gentes* (clans) reached consular status during the course of the second century. This number should be set beside the 32 *gentes* of prior consular status which continued to produce consuls: that is, the number of clans belonging to the consular nobility nearly doubled in the second century! A further effect of the ten-year interval rule was that no one held more than two consulships during this century, with only two notable exceptions. One was M. Claudius Marcellus, whose technically illegal third consulship in 152 (only three years after his second in 155) gave rise in 151 to a law banning the holding of more than one consulship entirely; the other was the great Caius Marius, of whom more later. Competition for high office clearly became ever fiercer, the more so as Roman conservatism prevented the state from raising the number of annual consulships. The desire for high office was to some extent accommodated by a rise in the number of annual quaestorships from eight in 267 to twelve in the 180s and more as new provinces were added to the empire, and a rise in the number of praetorships from four in 227 to six in the early second century. The main driving force behind this, however, was an increase in state business, particularly in the number of overseas provinces requiring governors, rather than any desire to accommodate aristocratic competition for office.[8]

The results of these reforms of office-holding, and of the consequent expansion of the nobility, were dramatic. Rome ceased to value experience and proven ability in its political and military leaders. So far as possible, new praetors and consuls were elected each year, each of whom was given one or (in the case of governors of some overseas provinces) at most two years of command in which to showcase their abilities and acquire glory and (not unimportantly) wealth. One-third of the annual praetors could look forward to a second year of office as consuls, and a handful of the most eminent and popular leaders were able to win second consulships, if they survived the required ten years.

Major wars were not assigned to experienced commanders, but to whoever happened to be the consul of the year, and these commanders were not left in

charge of the war but replaced by new consuls when their year of office was over. Only in rare cases, usually of emergency brought about by mismanagement, was an experienced man appointed to conduct a war, or left in charge long enough to finish the war off. Thus Rome and its empire were governed by a constant stream of new and unproven leaders whose only recommendation for the task of commanding or governing was that they had managed to get themselves elected to office.

The average experience and ability of Rome's leaders thus declined enormously at the very time that the size of Rome's empire, and the consequent demands being placed on Rome's leaders, were dramatically increasing. Not surprisingly, Rome's armies and provinces experienced frequent, and at times disastrous, incompetence and mismanagement as a result of this policy. Provinces were systematically misruled and often shamelessly plundered, giving rise eventually to the perceived need for permanent courts to try the endless complaints of harassed provincials against bad governors. Wars were at times provoked for no reason other than a commander's desire for glory and booty. Wars were almost routinely mismanaged, so that it became almost commonplace for Roman wars to start with a disaster or two, and Roman armies frequently became severely demoralized as a result. The work of good and competent governors and generals was often immediately undone by incompetent and/or corrupt successors.[9] Under these circumstances, 'rebellious' subjects could only with the greatest difficulty be brought to heel, as they distrusted Roman faith in negotiating agreements, and dreaded coming back under Roman governance; and Roman citizens and allies began to resist enlistment into the army, knowing the incompetent leadership and high risk of disaster and death they had to look forward to. It is an extraordinary testament to the inherent strength of Rome's citizenry and its Italian allies that, despite all these difficulties, the Roman Empire continued to flourish and grow during this period, but the strains that were being imposed on the system could not continue indefinitely.

At Rome itself, the profits to be made from office-holding gave rise to a constant increase in competition for office, which in turn led to the rise of electoral bribery and other forms of electoral corruption. Laws were passed, more and more stringent as time went on, to rein in this corruption, and eventually permanent courts were instituted to try cases of electoral corruption, but the problem only grew worse. Meanwhile, the Roman practice of gradually extending citizenship to the Italian allies as they learned the Latin language and Roman political and legal culture, thereby incorporating them into the Roman state and constantly renewing the citizen body and sharing the benefits of empire with the allies, was halted. This was a serious matter, as Rome's great success in unifying the Italian peninsula and winning the wars with Carthage was to a very great extent a result of this generous citizenship policy. The last allied communities to be granted Roman citizenship and made part of the Roman state were the towns of Arpinum, Fundi and Formiae

just to the south-east of Latium in 188; thereafter the Roman citizenship was effectively closed to the allies.[10]

The strains that naturally existed between Rome and her Italian allies were inevitably exacerbated by this policy. Previously allied communities could hope to ascend via the limited *ius Latina* (Latin status, a sort of halfway stage between allies and full Roman citizens), and/or *civitas sine suffragio* (citizenship without right to vote or hold office), to full Roman citizenship, and that naturally encouraged them to have patience with their subordination to Rome. In the last third of the second century Italian dissatisfaction with Rome's refusal to extend the citizenship grew seriously problematic, and it exploded into all-out war in the year 91. That is to say, that just as the attractions of Roman citizenship were growing apace with the development of the empire and its rewards, and as the demands, especially military demands, placed on the Roman citizen body and on the Italian allies to conquer and police this empire were likewise growing, the Roman ruling class closed the citizenship. A likely cause is the fear of the ruling nobility that Romanized Italian elites would compete with them for high office.

The matter of the military demands of the empire raises another highly problematic policy of this period: the progressive lowering of the census qualification for military service. In the third century, the minimum census rating for military service in the legions was 11,000 *asses* worth of property; in the second century, as the value of that property rating declined due to the influx of foreign wealth into Rome, the census rating ought to have been raised progressively to keep the military class at the same level of material well-being. The opposite happened: despite the fact that the men at the bottom of the military census were poorer and poorer due to the depreciation of the value of the *as*, the basic unit of currency by which their property was valued, the minimum census rating was actually lowered in monetary terms, at first to 4,000 and ultimately to just 1,500 *asses*. As a result it was increasingly the case that many of Rome's citizen militia soldiers, who theoretically were self-sufficient men well-to-do enough to be able to equip themselves for military service and bear the costs of absence from their homes and businesses (usually small farms) for extended periods of military service, were in fact too poor to do either. The Roman state had to step in and provide pay for military service (the so-called *stipendium*) and the requisite equipment, the cost of which was at first deducted from the soldiers' pay. When the census minimum was lowered to 1,500 *asses*, probably about 130 BCE, many recruits were so poor that deducting the cost of their equipment from their pay imposed an intolerable strain, alleviated by a law of Caius Gracchus in 123 providing that in future the state should equip its soldiers free of cost.[11] Thus the army was transformed from a middle-class citizen militia serving as a matter of honour, to a predominantly lower-class militia serving under compulsion. It is no accident that we hear of increasing resistance to military levies during the later part of the second century.

A further strain on the military system of Rome, exacerbating the hostility and resistance to conscription among the citizen militia classes, came from the fact that – despite the progressive lowering of the minimum census rating for military service – an ever-increasing proportion of the Roman citizen body was simply too poor to qualify for conscription into the army. This meant that the burdens of military service were carried by an ever-dwindling percentage of the overall adult male citizen body, many of whom were themselves ever poorer. This was despite the fact that Rome's military manpower needs were ever growing during this period as Rome's empire expanded. The increasing mass of citizens who owned little or no property – the so-called *capite censi* (rated in the census as owning only their own persons) or *proletarii* (those who contributed only offspring [*proles*] to the well-being of the state) – played no military role, but formed a serious social problem. They hung about Rome and other Italian towns, severely under-employed due to the developing slave economy, living a hand-to-mouth existence from day-labourer jobs and hand-outs from the rich, and increasingly disaffected towards the state in which they had so little stake. And while they contributed nothing to the conquest and policing of the empire, the strains of military service placed on their slightly more affluent fellow citizens in the military census classes reduced more and more of those fellow citizens to like poverty and the concomitant status of *proletarii*.[12]

The economic system developing during the second century BCE offered little hope or comfort to these proletarians: to the contrary, the Roman economy of this period was a classic illustration of the famous dictum that the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. One of the effects of Rome's growing imperial power was a vast influx of slaves into Rome and Italy, transforming the nature of the Roman/Italian economy. During the fourth and third centuries a great (though unfortunately unquantifiable) part of Italy's population was made up of independent smallholding farmers, or peasants, who formed the backbone in particular of the Roman citizen body and of Rome's citizen militia army. The Hannibalic War, with its widespread and in places devastating ravaging of the Italian countryside, and massive Roman expropriations of land from allied communities that had proved disloyal to Rome, began a process of serious decline and deracination (uprooting) of this peasant class. Many smallholders were ruined by the ravages of war, and forced to sell up their farms to more affluent neighbours able to afford the cost of restoring them. Many allied farmers were dispossessed by the Roman state, their land becoming part of a vast Roman *ager publicus* (publicly owned land). The result of both processes was the concentration of more and more of the land of Italy in the hands of a small class of immensely wealthy landowners mostly drawn from the Roman nobility, those who could afford to buy up the lands of ruined small farmers and/or had the influence to be able to seize control of vast tracts of public land. These landowners took advantage of the influx of cheap slaves brought about by Rome's successful wars of conquest in the early

second century, to turn their lands into slave-run agri-businesses, or *latifundia* to use the Roman name for them. The Italian countryside came to be dominated by large estates growing cash-crops like olives and grapes (for oil and wine) and worked by slaves, and huge ranches raising cattle and flocks of sheep herded by slaves.

At the same time, while the wealth of the empire was stimulating in Italy a growing demand for manufactured goods of all sorts, the ready availability of slaves led to the replacement of small artisan workshops by large 'manufactories' staffed by slaves. These *ergastula* (slave-staffed workshops) came to dominate the manufacturing sector of the economy, displacing the independent craftsmen who had hitherto been the main suppliers of manufactured goods in Italy. All of this is to say, that the vast wealth of empire was concentrated overwhelmingly in the hands of a small elite class of landowners, businessmen and financiers. To the middle classes of Italy, who bore the burden of conquering and policing the empire, the empire paradoxically tended to bring progressive impoverishment: loss of farms and businesses, reduction to proletarian status, economic replacement by slaves and freedmen (ex-slaves manumitted by and still working for their former owners). Neither the impoverished citizens and allies, nor the exploited slaves, were very content with their lot, as can readily be imagined. All in all, it was clear even to intelligent Roman leaders in the second half of the second century that Rome faced huge social and military problems that needed to be addressed by serious and far-reaching reforms: reform of military recruitment and eligibility so as to enable Rome to meet its military burdens, reform of the socio-economic system so as to address the needs and disaffection of the *proletarii*, and a return to the expansion of the citizenship if the allies were to be kept happy and loyal.[13]

This is the situation which brought forth the succession of great popular reformers whose attempts to address Rome's severe problems were met with implacable hostility and violence by the ruling elite, ultimately leading Rome down the path to civil war and destruction of the traditional republican system of governance. The first of these reformers, Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus, came from one of the most influential noble families of Rome, and was backed by a small group of other powerful nobles: his father-in-law Appius Claudius Pulcher, his brother's father-in-law P. Licinius Crassus Mucianus, and the latter's brother Q. Mucius Scaevola, most notably.[14] These men were most concerned with addressing Rome's military needs. They felt that in order to ensure that Rome would have enough soldiers to fill its legions, the traditional peasant class needed to be reconstituted; and that this could be achieved by distributing allotments of publicly owned land to Roman *proletarii*, turning those proletarians into members of the census classes eligible for military recruitment. The idea was not a new one: allotment of public land, whether on an individual basis or in the form of creating colonies, was an old practice of the Roman state only recently abandoned (in

the 180s, around the same time as the cessation of expanding the citizen body by enfranchising allies). Already in 149 a Roman noble, C. Laelius, had proposed again distributing public land to poor citizens, but he had withdrawn the proposal in the face of determined opposition in the Senate from those who controlled most of the public land, the so-called *possessores*.[15] As tribune of the people in 133, Tiberius Gracchus revived Laelius's proposal on a much larger scale, and pressed it in a much more determined fashion.

Tiberius noted that much of Rome's citizen body was unfairly impoverished, that Rome found it harder and harder to recruit sufficient numbers of soldiers from the census classes, and proposed to address both issues by enacting a *lex agraria* (land allotment law) under which the Roman state would recover control of most of its *ager publicus* (public land) from the *possessores* who held it, and distribute it as allotments to tens of thousands of poor citizens who would thereby become independent farmers.[16]

According to laws passed in the 190s and 180s the amount of *ager publicus* a single Roman might hold in his possession and enjoy the use of was limited to 500 *iugera* (about 330 acres), a substantial amount but trifling compared with the vast estates held by the wealthy landowners and *possessores* of the 130s.[17] Under Tiberius's law this legal limit was to be enforced, with the proviso that in addition to the legally permitted 500 *iugera* a *possessor* might also retain an extra 250 *iugera* for each of up to two sons, creating a legal maximum of 1,000 *iugera* for a man with two or more sons. All public land in excess of those limits was to be recovered by the state and divided up for distribution to eligible poor citizens.[18] On the face of it, this seems a simple and fair procedure. In reality, however, it was complicated by the fact that many *possessores* had held the lands they controlled for generations by Tiberius's day, and regarded those lands as their property just as much as lands they legally owned; and in many cases indeed estates of technically public land had been bought and sold – sometimes more than once – over the decades and generations, just as if they were legally owned estates. In any case, however much public land they held and however it had been acquired, the *possessores* regarded Tiberius's proposal as an attack on legitimate property rights and were determined to resist it at all costs.

Thanks to the determined opposition of these *possessores*, Tiberius found the Senate hostile to his proposal despite the strong backing he had. According to the accepted way of doing things, which dictated that the Senate should agree a measure before it be presented to the people for ratification, Tiberius should now have dropped his proposal, as Laelius had done 15 years earlier. But Tiberius was a committed reformer, who was sure that both militarily and socially his measure was needed. Plutarch's biography quotes a speech he is said to have made lamenting the state of Rome's impoverished *proletarii*:

> The wild animals of our Italian countryside have their dens; each of them has a place of rest and refuge; but those who fight and die for Italy have nothing–nothing except the air and the light. Houseless

> and homeless they roam the land with their children and wives .... These so-called masters of the world have not one clod of earth they can call their own.[19]

He refused to accept that the Senate's rejection was the end of the matter, and turned instead directly to the Roman people, presenting his law to them without senatorial authorization. It should be noted that this was a perfectly legitimate step to take: presenting measures to the Senate for its approval before having an assembly of citizens vote on them was a tradition, it was not a legal requirement. The *possessores* found another tribune, Marcus Octavius, to veto Tiberius's measure; and again, that should have been the end of the matter according to traditional practice. But again, Tiberius refused to be put off. After vainly pleading with Octavius that the tribune's proper role was to protect the people's interests, not prevent them from voting on a law they wanted and needed, Tiberius decided to hold a recall election and depose Octavius.[20]

Recall elections were certainly not part of Roman tradition, but in principle the *populus Romanus Quiritium* (body of Roman citizens) was the sovereign element in the state and could do as it pleased. And there certainly were precedents for sitting magistrates being deposed: Tiberius's father, the elder Tiberius Gracchus, had caused the elected consuls for the year 162 to be deposed after they had taken office, claiming that there had been a fault in their election, over which he had presided. Ironically, one of those deposed consuls of 162 was P. Cornelius Scipio Nasica Corculum: it was his son Scipio Nasica Serapio who, as one of the largest of the *possessores*, led the opposition to Tiberius's measure. At any rate, Octavius was deposed, and Tiberius's law was passed by an enthusiastic assembly meeting packed with Roman citizens who had come in from the countryside in the hope of benefiting from the proposed land allotments. Tiberius had proved stubborn to an unprecedented degree in insisting on bringing his law to a vote, and getting it passed; but he had done nothing illegal. However, the big *possessores* were beside themselves, and in their continued virulent opposition to Tiberius's law another new factor in Roman politics began to come into play. Playing on Greek political theory, Tiberius's opponents began to accuse him of aiming at making himself tyrant, a charge which (if true) would justify the use of violence against him, by Greek tradition.

Greek philosophy, including political philosophy, began to make an impact in Roman upper-class circles in the middle of the second century, a generation before Tiberius's time. One theme of Greek political philosophy had to do with a 'revolutionary' programme which had been popular in Greece in the fourth and third centuries, a programme calling for social revitalization in the Greek city-states by means of a cancellation of debts and/or a redistribution of land. Conservative political theorists characterized this programme as demagoguery, and insisted that the politicians who espoused this programme were intent on making themselves tyrants by bribing the

people. Using this theory, Tiberius's opponents could allege that he was disturbing property relations, redistributing land, and therefore a demagogue aiming at tyranny. And in Greek political theory it was not just right but a duty for any citizen to kill a tyrant or would-be tyrant.

Tiberius lent colour to his opponents' charge by establishing a land commission to distribute allotments, made up of himself, his father-in-law and his younger brother, with broad judicial powers to decide questions of land ownership; and by finding funds to pay for the land allotment scheme by interfering in the Senate's traditional control of foreign policy, passing a law making the kingdom of Pergamon in Asia Minor a Roman province and earmarking its revenues for his land allotments.[21] He was certainly assuming a lot of power and responsibility, but it must be emphasized again that he had done nothing illegal, and there is in fact not a shred of evidence to suggest that he intended to establish a tyranny: he seems to have been a sincere, if very stubborn and aggressive, reformer. He realized that he had made himself bitterly disliked by the *possessores*, of course, and decided that to safeguard his reform and his own career, it would be necessary to remain in office as tribune, so he announced his candidacy for the tribunate for the following year. That, like much that he had done before, violated Roman tradition, and was the straw which broke the camel's back as far as his opponents were concerned.

Tiberius's candidacy was strongly opposed. There was confusion over it at the electoral assembly, which led to some rioting, instigated by Tiberius, so his enemies claimed. At a stormy meeting of the Senate, Tiberius's opponents – led by the great *possessor* Scipio Nasica Serapio – argued vehemently that Tiberius's attempt to gain re-election constituted a direct attack on the traditional governing system, and called for him to be suppressed by force. The presiding consul, Q. Mucius Scaevola, stoutly refused to resort to violence, maintaining that Tiberius and his supporters had not done anything illegal and that there was therefore no justification for employing force against them. In the face of Scaevola's refusal to act, Scipio Nasica took the initiative upon himself. Drawing his toga over his head as if for a sacrifice, he called on all who wished the *res publica* well to follow him, and led what can in the last resort only be described as a lynch mob to attack Tiberius and his supporters at the tribunicial election on the Capitol. Tiberius Gracchus and some 300 supporters were bludgeoned to death.[22]

It must be emphasized here that it was a crowd of conservative, land-owning *nobiles* who took the step, without any legal justification or holding any magistracy that gave them appropriate *imperium* (power of command) and authority, of introducing violence into Roman politics as the ultimate arbiter of disputes over policy. This attack on Tiberius and his supporters, whatever one might think of Tiberius's tactics and stubborn insistence on pushing his measures through, set a terrible precedent for the future of Roman political life. The Senate recognized as much after the rioting and slaughter had died down: they

instructed the consuls who took office at the beginning of 132 to conduct an enquiry into these events, and punish those responsible for wrongdoing.

The inquiry was led by the consul M. Popillius Laenas, but proved from the beginning to be in the pocket of the *possessores*. No investigation was made of the massacre of Tiberius and his followers: instead Tiberius's remaining supporters were rounded up, interrogated, and many of them were summarily put to death. Thus the Senate in effect retroactively endorsed the action of Scipio Nasica and his lynch mob, making it clear that they approved of Tiberius's murder.[23] The agrarian law remained on the books, and the commission, with two new members in place of Tiberius Gracchus and Appius Claudius (who died shortly after 133), began to allot lands. But naturally much of the drive and impetus behind the land reform had been lost. The commissioners ran into a great deal of obstruction, it proved to be extremely difficult to sort out land titles and boundaries, and in 129 – at the instigation of Scipio Aemilianus, who approved of Tiberius's murder – the commissioners were stripped of their judicial authority to settle disputes over land titles, bringing the allotment programme effectively to a halt.[24] Meanwhile, Rome's military and social problems festered, for while strongly rejecting Tiberius's reform programme, the conservative nobles who dominated the Senate – optimates, as they came to be called – offered no alternative solution(s) to Rome's problems.

The lasting legacy of Tiberius Gracchus proved to be in his methods, rather than the land reform he proposed. Certainly the issue of land reform continued to play a major role in the struggles and turmoil of the next century, but it never provided the solution to Rome's problems Tiberius had hoped it could. Instead, it continued to be a flashpoint for disputes and violence. But Tiberius's revelation of the willingness of crowds of Roman voters to override the wishes and opposition of the ruling elite, and pass into law popular measures proposed by determined reformers, established the key method whereby major issues of public policy were to be addressed during the subsequent decades of Roman history. The '*popularis*' tribune, scorning the Senate and proposing reforms at people's assemblies, was Tiberius's true legacy. Even more significant, perhaps, was the legacy of his opponents. Nasica basically established the use of deadly force and violence as the ultimate arbiter of Roman political disputes, and through the Popillian enquiry the Senate effectively endorsed Nasica's action.[25] During the 120s, to be sure, it could be hoped that both Tiberius's example and Nasica's reaction would prove to be one-time events that would not alter the basic, peaceful functioning of the Roman state. Any such hopes, however, were laid to rest by the career of Tiberius's brother Caius Gracchus as tribune in 123 and 122, and by the violently hostile reaction to his reforms on the part of the conservative elite.

When the time came for him to enter upon his political career, Caius Gracchus had had ample time to reflect on his brother's reform programme,

and its failure. He had decided that Tiberius's aim had been too narrow. It was not enough to turn proletarians into independent farmers via land allotments: that left the needs and interests of other segments of the population unaddressed, and failed to build a broad enough coalition of support to overcome the fierce resistance of the senatorial elite. Caius identified three major groups in the state who needed to be brought on board the reform movement by having their interests and concerns addressed. First, much of the proletariat of the city of Rome, those most ideally placed to participate in political activity of all sorts up to and including voting at assemblies, had no traditional ties to the land and/or little interest in becoming small farmers. Besides many thousands of men whose families had been uprooted from the land generations ago by the late 120s, there was the fact that an increasing proportion of the urban proletariat was made up of freedmen (ex-slaves) and their descendants, thanks to the Roman rule that a freed slave of a Roman citizen master automatically became a Roman citizen upon manumission. This urban proletariat, without roots or interest in farming and the land, had no desire for land allotments and were hence indifferent to Tiberius's reform proposal. Caius addressed the needs of this urban proletariat by proposing a *lex frumentaria* (grain law) that would make the state responsible for importing, storing and selling, at a slightly below market price, an ample grain supply to feed the urban populace. That law was enormously popular with the urban proletariat, but decried by the senatorial elite as rank demagoguery: bribery of the people, in effect.[26]

Second, Caius was aware that, just below the elite senatorial class, there had grown up over the past century a numerous class of extremely wealthy men – landowners, financiers, bankers, merchants, traders, tax farmers, other public contractors, manufacturers – whose interests to some extent coincided with those of the senators, as part of the wealthy elite, but to some extent differed significantly, since they were not part of the political elite. In the Roman census these men were technically classed as *equites*, literally meaning cavalry, in that they were wealthy enough in principle to be able to afford to keep horses and serve the state in war, when called upon, on horseback. The link between this property rating and actual cavalry service in war had long declined, however, and the *equites* (or equestrian class, as they are usually called in English) formed in reality a new socio-economic class whose role in the Roman state was as yet ill-defined but clearly potentially important. Caius proposed to give to these equestrians an important role in the governance of the state, by transferring to them the duty or privilege of serving as jurors on the permanent tribunals set up to police the governance of the Roman state. The *equites* would thus sit in judgment on magistrates, governors, political candidates of the senatorial elite accused of wrongdoing, and the hope clearly was that they would take it upon themselves as jurors to rein in magisterial wrongdoing to a degree that juries of senators had proved unwilling to do.[27]

Third, there were the allies. Caius recognized that his brother's land law had not paid proper (if any) attention to the needs and interests of the allied communities, and that the relations between the allies and Rome needed to be reformed. Already in 126 and 125 there had been agitation by Italian allies to improve their position. In response Caius Gracchus's ally M. Fulvius Flaccus, consul in 125, had proposed a generous measure making all allies who wished it Roman citizens, and granting greater autonomy and legal protection to those allied communities wishing to remain outside the Roman state. Such an extension of Roman citizenship was entirely in accord with Roman tradition before the cessation of extending citizenship in the 180s; but Flaccus's proposal was not allowed by the Senate to come to a vote.[28] One allied community, Fregellae, rebelled as a result, but the rebellion was brutally suppressed by the praetor L. Opimius.[29] As tribune, Caius Gracchus now proposed a comprehensive law to meet the allies' needs: all allies of Latin status were to be promoted to full Roman citizenship, while all other allies were to be advanced to the intermediate Latin status. Since Latin status was, in this way, clearly understood as a step on the road to full Roman citizenship, this measure both greatly extended the Roman citizen body at once, and promised eventual full citizenship to the rest of the allies once they had accustomed themselves to the Latin language and Latin political/legal culture. The measure was, it must be said, both wise and statesmanlike, and would have alleviated tensions between Rome and the allies once and for all if enacted.[30]

In addition to these three proposals, each of which could be hoped to add a major interest group to the mass of Caius's supporters, there was a measure to revive the land allotment programme, now refined by the addition of proposals to found colonies both within Italy and beyond, at the site of Carthage.[31] Other proposed reforms declared the execution of Roman citizens by magistrates, other than after trial and capital sentence by the people, illegal;[32] simplified the process of raising taxes from the province of Asia by setting up a system of tax-farming whereby Roman financiers and public contractors (*publicani*) could purchase the right to collect the taxes at an auction at Rome;[33] required the Roman state to provide soldiers' clothing and equipment free of charge, and forbade the recruitment of men younger than 17;[34] required the Senate to determine the provinces of future consuls before their election, rather than during their year in office, to prevent favouritism;[35] and made it a specific crime to procure false judicial condemnation of a citizen on a capital charge, a law presumably put forward with the Popillian commission of 132 in mind.[36]

In all, Caius's reform programme was far-reaching and aimed to improve social, economic, military and political conditions in Rome and her empire in a host of ways. Each and every reform separately, and the programme as a whole, aroused bitter opposition, and the cry of aiming at tyranny was revived against Caius by his opponents.

This reform programme was too big and complex to be enacted in a single year, and like his brother, Caius Gracchus stood for re-election to the

tribunate after his first year in office in 123. Unlike Tiberius, Caius was successfully re-elected and served a second term, in 122. The events of his two-year tribunate were highly controversial from the start, and remained so for generations afterwards. Historians espousing one side or the other in the dispute over these reforms had no qualms about distorting the record to suit their political agendas. As a result, it is extremely difficult to reconstruct the details and chronology of Caius's tribunate, nor is it to the purpose here to do so. Most of his laws were passed, several to very good effect, but several had unintended consequences. The *lex frumentaria* regularized Rome's food supply and helped ensure that the poorer citizens could find adequate food at an affordable price. The laws forbidding arbitrary execution and judicial murder became an accepted part of Roman law, and were clearly salutary measures. The land allotment law, however, was not much more successful than Tiberius's had been, and the law on the farming of the Asian taxes led to frightful exploitation of the province of Asia by Roman tax farmers, with the connivance of provincial governors. Moreover, the *equites* proved no more impartial or effective as jurors than the senators had been, but control of the courts did give them a means of browbeating upright governors into looking the other way or outright conniving at the tax farmers' exploitation. Governors who were uncooperative could be threatened with prosecution when they returned to Rome before a jury of men connected by sentiment and/or interest to the equestrian *publicani*.

The greatest and most determined resistance was reserved, ironically, for the wisest and most statesmanlike of Caius's measures: the proposed law extending citizenship or Latin status to the allies. Skilfully and hypocritically exploited by the optimates in the Senate, this issue was used to break up the grand coalition cobbled together by Caius Gracchus, and the law was never passed.

After being unable to prevent passage of most of Caius's proposals, and recognizing that he was certain to win re-election for 122, the optimates put up one of their own to hold the tribunate as Caius's colleague, Marcus Livius Drusus. Drusus proved to be an extremely skilful politician, adept at using Caius's own issues against him and splitting Caius's support. In particular, Drusus proposed land laws purporting to set up twelve colonies of new settlers, among other things; although since these laws, though passed, were never carried out it seems plain that they were never seriously intended. Above all, though, the citizenship issue was used against Caius. Aided and abetted by Caius's former ally C. Fannius, Drusus and the optimates played on the narrow, parochial interests and prejudices of the Roman citizenry, urging them not to allow their privileged status to be diluted by the vast extension of the citizen body Gracchus proposed.[37] The citizenship law was thus defeated, and Caius Gracchus forfeited much of his popularity over this issue, failing to be re-elected tribune for a third term in 121.[38] In the year 121, consequently, with Gracchus and his chief supporters out of office, the

counter-attack against him by the anti-reformists moved into a more active phase. Specifically, a tribune proposed to repeal the law by which Caius Gracchus had founded a colony of Roman citizens at Carthage.

Gracchus and his chief ally Fulvius Flaccus mobilized their supporters against this repeal, which was strongly supported by one of the consuls of the year, L. Opimius. The disputes between Gracchus's supporters and his opponents turned violent, and in the jostling and fighting a client of the consul Opimius was killed. Opimius called a meeting of the Senate to decry this violence, suggesting that Gracchus's supporters were in effect in open rebellion; and the Senate agreed with him, passing a decree declaring a state of emergency in which the traditional functioning of the *res publica* was under attack, and calling on the consul to raise forces to restore public order by any means necessary. Bolstered by this senatorial decree, Opimius raised troops; and fearing for their lives – not unnaturally in view of the fate met by Tiberius and his supporters – Caius Gracchus, Fulvius Flaccus and their supporters, several thousand strong, occupied the Aventine and prepared to defend themselves. That, of course, looked exactly like the open rebellion Opimius had claimed Gracchus's people were perpetrating, and gave him all the excuse he needed to repress the Gracchans by outright force. Caius Gracchus and Fulvius Flaccus met their deaths, along with many of their supporters, Opimius pursuing this action with extreme brutality. Most controversially, several thousand of Gracchus's supporters who laid down arms and were taken captive, were nevertheless summarily executed by Opimius, including Flaccus's son, who had been sent to Opimius to try to negotiate a peaceful settlement.[39]

In 120, an attempt was made to bring Opimius to book for his extreme brutality: a tribune prosecuted him before the people, ironically under Caius Gracchus's own law forbidding execution of Roman citizens without trial. The outcome, however, was an acquittal for Opimius; and that acquittal was understood in Roman law as a vindication by the people of the Senate's emergency decree, a decree that was to become a significant weapon in the Senate's anti-reform arsenal, and which came to be known as the *Senatus consultum ultimum*, literally the 'final' decree of the Senate.[40]

The outcome of Caius's reform attempt was, hence the same as that of Tiberius: massacre of the would-be reformer and his supporters by the forces of optimate reaction. The *Senatus consultum ultimum* in effect institutionalized the use of force as the final deciding factor in Roman politics; and that can be seen as the main legacy of the Gracchan era. Certainly the optimate, anti-reform elements of the Roman nobility had made completely clear their violent opposition to any reform of the Roman governing and social system, and their readiness to use whatever level of force was needed to stifle the reform movement. Interestingly, Caius's reforms were not immediately undone, any more than Tiberius's had been, perhaps indicating that the optimates were not confident of finding legislative majorities for repeal. The

land allotment process was allowed to continue in a desultory way until 111, when a law was passed ending the process and guaranteeing almost all *ager publicus* as the private property of whoever was then in possession.[41] In spite of the law of 121 that provoked Caius's downfall, the Roman colony at Carthage was not in fact eliminated, and most of Caius's other laws remained in effect. His reform of the jury courts, handing them over to the equestrian class, remained a bone of contention in Roman politics for 50 years; the issue of popular sovereignty as against governance by the Senate was the *leitmotif* of late Republican politics; and the matters of allied discontent and military recruitment and efficiency remained to be dealt with in subsequent decades. It is fair to say that the century of Roman history after the Gracchi was played out under the shadow of what the Gracchan reform movement had tried to do: the issues, the methods, the antagonisms, the lines of internal dissension were those laid out and revealed by the Gracchan reform programme and its opponents.

It was completely apparent that the Optimates had no alternative ideas for dealing with Rome's problems, that their position was an entirely negative determination to preserve the status quo, and that as much as any actual reforms, it was the sheer process of reform and the accruing of popularity and hence authority by reformers that they opposed.

After the demise of Caius Gracchus Rome entered an intermediary period of apparent stability, which lasted a little more than a decade. It came to an end with the arising in the years after 113 of two foreign policy crises, of decidedly unequal importance but both of major political impact: the so-called Jugurthine War (111–105), and the migration of the two great Germanic tribes the Cimbri and Teutones (113–101). These two crises highlighted the popular disenchantment with Senatorial leadership at Rome, and the severe problems of military recruitment, efficiency, discipline and leadership Rome was facing in this era.

The Jugurthine War had its origins in the succession arrangements made by king Micipsa of Numidia, a client king of Rome, who died in 118 leaving his kingdom to be divided among his two sons Hiempsal and Adherbal and his nephew Jugurtha.[42] Of the three, Jugurtha was the one with talent and energy, and he also boasted excellent connections at Rome from his time serving on Scipio Aemilianus's Numantia campaign in 134–133. Jugurtha was not satisfied to share his uncle's realm with his mediocre cousins, and by 113 had seized control of the entire kingdom. The Senate, other than admonishing Jugurtha to keep the peace with his cousins, made no move to hinder him, clearly feeling that it mattered little to Roman interests which of Micipsa's successors ruled Numidia. After the death of Hiempsal, a senatorial commission headed by Opimius did divide Numidia between the two surviving heirs, with Adherbal receiving the more flourishing and civilized part of the kingdom near the coast and the Roman province of Africa, and Jugurtha the more rugged and sparsely populated interior; but when Jugurtha broke

this settlement and invaded his cousin's portion, the Senate sent two commissions to remonstrate with him but showed no inclination to intervene more effectively.

Given the senatorial reluctance to be drawn into the affairs of Numidia, Jugurtha might well have been able to consolidate his power over all of Numidia without Roman intervention, but for one major mistake he made. In 113, in the process of rounding off his conquest of Adherbal's realm, Jugurtha besieged his cousin's capital city of Cirta, where Adherbal had taken refuge. Inside the city, as well as Adherbal and a large Numidian population, were many Roman and Italian equestrians, who were engaged in various sorts of business activities in and with Numidia. These Romans and Italians, sympathizing with Adherbal and finding themselves under siege along with him, armed themselves and played a major role in the defence of the city, proving very effective at doing so and delaying Jugurtha's capture of the city considerably. When the city finally surrendered, Jugurtha allowed himself to give way to his anger at having been thwarted for so long, and permitted his troops to plunder and massacre the Romans and Italians along with the native population. When news of this massacre reached Rome, it unleashed a storm of fury not just at Jugurtha, but at the Senate which had proved so reluctant to rein Jugurtha in.

In the face of the popular anger, especially among the business class from among whom most of those killed at Cirta had come, the Senate was forced to act. War against Jugurtha was decided on, and one of the consuls of 111, L. Calpurnius Bestia, was charged with invading Numidia and bringing Jugurtha to book. Bestia raised a substantial army, surrounded himself with an experienced group of advisers including the *Princeps Senatus* M. Aemilius Scaurus, and invaded Numidia from the Roman province of Africa. He bested Jugurtha's forces in a number of minor engagements, and sent envoys to Jugurtha seeking to bring him to terms. After some negotiation, Jugurtha was persuaded to surrender formally to Rome and make some reparations for his 'crimes', and based on that Bestia then made a treaty recognizing him as ruler of Numidia and ending the war. It seems clear that the Senate still had no desire to annex Numidia or engage in any prolonged conflict there, and with good reason as we shall see.

At Rome, however, Bestia's treaty provoked another outpouring of public anger. A tribune named C. Memmius demanded an enquiry into the entire affair, and Jugurtha himself was summoned to Rome to testify, but prevented from doing so by another tribune's veto.[43] He did, however, take the opportunity to arrange the assassination of another rival member of the Numidian royal family who had taken refuge at Rome. Provoked by this outrage, even the Senate realized that Bestia's treaty could not stand, repudiated it, and assigned further warfare against Jugurtha to the consul of 110, Sp. Postumius Albinus. This consul, however, faced by delaying tactics on the part of Jugurtha and serious demoralization in the Roman forces, achieved nothing

before being obliged to return to Rome to supervise the elections, leaving his army under the command of his brother Aulus. Aulus Albinus, scenting a chance of personal glory and enrichment, led the army out against Jugurtha and straight into a trap; he was forced to surrender to Jugurtha, and the army had to endure the humiliation of handing over its weapons and passing 'under the yoke'.

This humiliation was the final straw at Rome. Early in 109 the tribune C. Mamilius enacted a law to set up a commission to look into the Senate's handling of the Jugurtha affair, and a new consul, Q. Caecilius Metellus, was despatched to Africa to settle the war with Jugurtha once and for all, with clear instructions that nothing less than the total defeat and surrender or death of Jugurtha would be acceptable. The Mamilian commission prosecuted vigorously its investigation into Roman leaders who had had dealings with Jugurtha: no less than four ex-consuls, including Bestia and the hated L. Opimius, were found guilty of corruption and exiled.[44] Meanwhile, after spending some months restoring morale and discipline in the army in Africa, Metellus invaded Numidia and defeated Jugurtha in battle at the Muthul river. Metellus was an efficient general, scion of one of the greatest noble clans in Rome, and had surrounded himself with excellent and experienced senior officers, chief among whom were P. Rutilius Rufus and Caius Marius. The most significant outcome of the Jugurthine War, in fact, proved to be the rise to prominence of Marius. His family were clients of the noble Metelli, and he himself had won a reputation as a courageous and efficient military leader, so he had been a natural choice as one of Metellus's top officers; but Marius was not the man to be satisfied with a secondary or supporting role.

Caius Marius, indeed, was to become one of the greatest men in Roman history. Born to a family of local magnates in the small hill town of Arpinum to the south-east of Rome, a political career at Rome was by no means a foregone conclusion for Marius. He was, in Roman parlance, a *novus homo* (lit. new man), a man from a family from outside the traditional nobility, a man with no consular or even senatorial ancestors. Arpinum was, in fact, one of the last allied communities to be granted Roman citizenship, in 188, before the Romans decided to stop granting the citizenship to the Italians; and Marius was therefore only a third generation Roman in all likelihood.

Although stories depicting him growing up the son of a small farmer are exaggerated – since we know from his fellow Arpinate Cicero that the Marii were one of the three leading families of Arpinum – it would certainly have been difficult for Marius to make his way in Roman politics. He made a name for himself initially as a dashing and capable officer serving under Scipio Aemilianus at Numantia, ironically in the same campaign in which Jugurtha distinguished himself commanding an allied contingent from Numidia. Indeed, a story has it that at a dinner in the general's tent, when a flatterer asked where Rome would ever find a general to succeed Scipio, the great man tapped Marius on the shoulder and said, 'Perhaps this man.' Helped by the

connections he had made in Scipio's service, and by his family's patrons the Metelli, Marius won election to the quaestorship – and thus membership of the Senate – and to the tribunate in 119. When he attempted to win the praetorship, however, he was twice rebuffed by the voters, and only squeaked into office at the third attempt in 115, coming last of those elected, and being charged with electoral bribery at that. Though he was acquitted of this charge, it seemed likely that he had reached his political limit with this office, and he did not even attempt to run for the consulship after the statutory two year interval. Yet he was a man of extraordinary ambition, and proved to be a general of quite outstanding ability, fortunately for Rome. Tough, hardy, decisive, tactically inventive, strategically sound, supremely sure of himself, Marius had all the qualities of a great general. His soldiers loved him for his willingness and ability to undergo all the hardships he put them to, even though he was a demanding and disciplinarian commander. And he knew when and how to relax discipline a bit, and let his men have some enjoyment after the hardships he put them through. Eager to make his way to the top, and contemptuous of the Roman nobles who reached it effortlessly thanks to their family names and distinguished ancestry, the Jugurthine War was a godsend to Marius's ambitions, and he was determined not to miss the opportunity it presented for self-promotion and belated political achievement.[45]

In the winter of 109 to 108, Marius suggested to Metellus that he would like to stand for the consulship and hoped for Metellus's backing. Metellus haughtily responded that it would be time enough for Marius to think of that when his (Metellus's) son was ready: an insult, since Metellus's son was a mere stripling while Marius was a man of 50.[46] Stung by this rebuff, Marius set himself to undermine Metellus's authority. Coming from an equestrian background, Marius had numerous associates in the equestrian class, and he began to spread word through them at Rome that Metellus was either unable to finish off the war, or deliberately prolonging it due to a love of being in command. He suggested that most of Metellus's successes were due to his, Marius's, interventions, and promised that if elected consul and put in command, he would finish off the war victoriously in short order. Despite Metellus's reluctance to let him go, Marius finally won his freedom to leave Africa and travel to Rome to stand for the consular elections in 108 for 107; and he was triumphantly elected. Ignoring the tradition that commands were assigned by the Senate, a popular law was passed transferring command against Jugurtha from Metellus to Marius, and the latter began preparations to fulfil his promise to win the war quickly and efficiently. The major issue facing him was military recruitment: none knew better than he that conscripting new soldiers via the census classes would be both difficult and unpopular, and provide him with disaffected and unmotivated soldiers. Yet he needed an influx of effective new soldiers to make good on his promise to end the war.

Marius's solution to this problem initiated a basic change in the Roman military system. Eschewing the traditional and inefficient recruitment system, Marius decided to tap the vast unutilized reservoir of manpower represented by the growing class of *proletarii.* He called for men regardless of census status to volunteer for service, promising that they would be equipped at state expense, well and effectively led, and above all that they would be handsomely rewarded for their service with booty from the enemy and a land allotment to retire to after the victorious conclusion of their service. Thousands of *proletarii* responded to this appeal, and Marius's equestrian allies contributed to equipping his force with everything needed for a successful campaign.[47] It was with justifiably high hopes, therefore, that Marius and his new recruits arrived in Africa to take over the war in 107, and those high hopes were fulfilled by the results. Jugurtha's skilful delaying tactics and elusive hit-and-run strategy made a quick and decisive victory impossible, but Marius resorted to a strategy of occupying the cities and forts of Numidia as bases from which to gradually restrict Jugurtha's movements, control the physical space of Numidia, and so eventually force Jugurtha out of his kingdom. In the end, Jugurtha was obliged to flee to neighbouring Mauritania and seek refuge with its king Bocchus, and Numidia was Rome's. However, as long as Jugurtha was at large, Marius could not consider the war over: the Numidian had shown that he was very capable of mounting a come-back and recovering control of his kingdom once Roman attention was turned elsewhere. The problem of persuading king Bocchus to hand over Jugurtha was taken on by Marius's quaestor L. Cornelius Sulla, who visited the king's court early in 105 at the risk of his own life and returned triumphantly with Jugurtha in chains.[48]

In the middle of 105, Marius was thus able to return to Rome in triumph, and from the perspective of the Roman populace his return was perfectly timed, for another and vastly more dangerous crisis awaited his attention. Turning back to the year 113, a major potential threat to Rome's security had appeared with the news that a great population movement was afoot in the Germanic lands: a confederation of tribes referred to by the Romans as Cimbri and Teutones, originating it seems in south Scandinavia and north Germany, left their homes and began moving southwards looking for new lands to settle. It was unclear what their ultimate destination might be, but whether they moved south-east towards the Balkan lands, directly south towards southern France and Italy, or south-west towards Spain, they would inevitably threaten Roman power.[49] In 113, consequently, one of the Roman consuls, C. Papirius Carbo, engaged the Cimbri in battle at Noreia on the north-eastern side of the Alps, only to be disastrously defeated.[50]

For several years the Germans wandered into areas not directly of concern to the Romans, but in 109 they made their way into Gaul, where they seemed to threaten Rome's relatively newly acquired province along the Mediterranean coast: the consul M. Junius Silanus attacked the Cimbri, and

once again a Roman army was severely defeated.[51] The Germans did not, in the event, make any move towards Provence (the Roman province), but lingered in central Gaul. In 107, however, they returned to southern Gaul, and again a Roman consul sought to drive them off. This time it was L. Cassius Longinus, Marius's colleague in the consulship, who was disastrously defeated, by the Tigurini, one of the tribes allied to the Cimbri and Teutones.[52] A consul of 106, Q. Servilius Caepio was dispatched with a large army to southern Gaul to protect the province, and campaigned effectively. He was retained in command therefore in the year 105, but a new army was sent under a consul of that year, Cn. Mallius Maximus, to cooperate with him against the now more looming threat of the Germanic tribes.

In the event, Caepio and Mallius, the former a noble of ancient patrician ancestry, the latter a 'new man', failed to cooperate effectively, and suffered disastrous defeat in battle at Arausio (Orange) with near total loss of their armies: as many as 80,000 men are said to have perished.[53] The route not only into Rome's Gallic province, but from there into Italy was now wide open to the Cimbri and Teutones, and Rome was in a panic, with memories of the terrible Gallic sack of Rome in 383 rife. The Roman people were convinced that only one man was up to the job of saving Rome in this crisis: the victorious Caius Marius. In a display of utter lack of confidence in the leadership of the Senate, and the military skills of the traditional nobility, the people ignored the rule that forbade Marius to hold a second consulship – especially so soon after his first – and re-elected him consul for 104 to take charge of the Germanic war. In view of the four successive defeats suffered by inexpert Roman generals, it is certainly understandable that the people insisted on having an expert general finally take charge. At the beginning of 104, Marius celebrated a triumph over Jugurtha, and began serious preparation to fight the Cimbri and Teutones. He only had part of his African army available, as part had necessarily to be left behind to settle the situation in Numidia and consolidate Roman control. Consequently, Marius again called for volunteers from among the *proletarii,* raising a grand new army for his new war. Fortunately, instead of heading towards Italy the Germans had moved off westwards to invade Spain, giving Marius a respite to recruit and train this new army.

Marius spent the years 104 and 103 training his army, before engaging the Teutones and Cimbri in battle in 102 and 101. In order to ensure that Marius would remain firmly in charge of dealing with the German threat, the people – against all precedent – re-elected him to successive consulships for each of these years. He reformed the combat training of the Roman soldiery, using experts from the gladiatorial schools to impart greater skill with weapons and hand-to-hand combat. He changed the tactical formation of the legion, using the 600-strong cohort as the basis for intra-legionary organization in place of the old 200-strong maniple. The cohort was a more efficient tactical unit, strong enough to operate independently within the

legion formation. He reformed the transportation system of his army, requiring the legionaries to carry most of their smaller equipment on their bodies – giving rise to the term *muli Mariani* or 'Marius's mules' for his soldiers – and allowing them only one servant for every six men, and strictly limited pack animals for their larger equipment (tents and such), all of which toughened the men and made his army more mobile. He instilled rigid discipline by punishing infractions harshly, and improved the soldiers' physical conditioning by hard marching and public works projects: draining marshes in southern Gaul and digging a canal to channel the mouth of the Rhone more navigably.[54] In this way, he formed an army that by 102, when the Cimbri and Teutones finally decided to invade the Roman province and Italy, was ready to meet these fearsome Germans.

The Cimbri and Teutones decided to divide: the Teutones advanced to confront Marius and his army near Aquae Sextiae (Aix en Provence), while the Cimbri took a more northerly route to cross the Alps and invade Italy. Marius's colleague as consul in 102, Q. Lutatius Catulus, was sent with an army to north Italy to confront them; having no military expertise, Catulus took Marius's former quaestor Sulla with him as second in command. The fortunes of the two armies were very different. In two great battles near Aix, Marius annihilated the forces of the Teutones and their allies, killing most of the men of military age and capturing thousands of their dependants; Catulus's relatively untrained army, however, lost its nerve as the Cimbri approached, and Catulus was forced to lead them in retreat to take up position south of the Po, leaving Gallia Cisalpina to the Cimbri. Marius, re-elected consul for 101, quickly marched his victorious army back into Italy to link up with Catulus, who had been continued in command, and the two jointly confronted the Cimbri at Vercellae, winning an overwhelming victory which ended the Germanic threat. Marius, to the chagrin of Catulus and Sulla, got most of the credit for this final victory.[55]

His triumphant success against these German tribes that had disastrously defeated so many other Roman generals and armies made Marius, in the eyes of the adoring Roman populace, the saviour of Rome. He celebrated a glorious second triumph for his German victories, graciously sharing the triumph with the frankly undeserving and certainly ungrateful Catulus. Monuments for his victories were erected in Rome to serve as timeless reminders of his feats. And despite the fact that the military crisis was over, Marius was once again elected, in summer of 101, to the consulship for the year 100, his fifth consulship in succession and sixth overall.

His main concern, now that the wars were over, was the suitable rewarding of his soldiers for their sterling service. Already in 103 an allied tribune, L. Appuleius Saturninus, had passed a law providing large land allotments in the province of Africa for those of Marius's veterans who had remained behind in Africa to settle things after Jugurtha's defeat.[56] The same Saturninus was again tribune for the year 100, and in addition Marius could count on the

support of the praetor Servilius Glaucia. In many ways, we can see the opening of the year 100 as a crossroad moment for the traditional Roman senatorial elite: would they accept Marius's reforms and successes graciously, learn the lessons of the past few years, and cooperate with him in suitably rewarding his proletarian army? Or would they dig their heels in and resist, as they had resisted the Gracchi?

The optimates decided to resist. Led by Metellus Numidicus – as he came to be styled – they did everything in their power to stymie Marius and his allies. Saturninus began by passing a law lowering the price of public grain, a measure designed to bolster his popularity;[57] and then he proposed bills that would create colonies for Marius's veterans in Sicily, Achaea, Macedonia and Africa, and also one that would distribute land captured in Gallia Cisalpina. The latter law included a provision requiring all senators to swear to abide by it on pain of exile, and the stiff-necked Metellus preferred to go into exile rather than swear.[58]

It is worth noting what an opportunity the optimate elite squandered here to heal the divisions in Rome. A responsible Senate could have recognized that Rome's empire needed to be able to draw on the proletarians for its military needs, and endorsed Marius's action in recruiting them. A responsible Senate might have recognized the crying need for expert leadership in the German crisis, and sponsored a law clearly appointing Marius to that command, thereby making unnecessary the unprecedented and invidious string of successive consulships. A responsible Senate, finally, could have taken the lead in sponsoring legislation to provide suitable rewards in land for the proletarian soldiers who had saved Rome. A Senate that had done all that would have made itself the focus of gratitude and loyalty from the proletarian soldiery, and made it clear that Rome's generals were subordinate to the Senate. Instead, by determinedly resisting at every turn, the Senate told the proletarian soldiery that they could expect nothing from it and should focus all their hopes and loyalty on the general who had recruited them; and made it clear to the people and its generals that effective military leadership was not to be expected if the Senate could prevent it, except by the mere luck of the normal electoral process; that the generals who would inevitably be needed to handle crises would never be beholden to the Senate.

Marius's career and reforms could not be undone, of course, any more than the issues raised by the Gracchan reform efforts could be taken out of Roman politics again. Once again, therefore, it was the determinedly negative stance of the Roman optimate elite that set the table for further conflict.

It was in the middle of the year 100, on 13 July, that Caius Julius Caesar was born, and his life was lived under the shadow of the issues and conflicts raised in the decades we have just reviewed. His career was spent trying to find solutions to the problems Rome's imperial success and concomitant social, economic and political changes brought about.

II

CAESAR'S CHILDHOOD: THE SOCIAL WAR AND THE SULLAN CIVIL WAR

When the consul Caius Marius was informed on the 13th of the month Quintilis in the year 100 BCE that his brother-in-law's wife had given birth to a healthy baby boy, he had no way of knowing – in the midst of his many and serious official preoccupations during that summer – that this was by far the most important event of the year, indeed one of the most important in all of Roman history. It certainly couldn't have entered his mind that even his own unprecedentedly glorious career was to be so eclipsed by the newborn baby, that today he is largely forgotten, while his nephew remains one of the most famous men in history. How famous is illustrated by a simple fact: some 55 years later, the month Quintilis was renamed in honour of the baby born that day, and continues to bear its new name to the present time – July, in honour of Caius Julius Caesar.

In 100, as consul for the sixth time, Marius was at the very height of his fame and power. His victory in the war against Jugurtha in North Africa was still quite recent, and he was acknowledged as the saviour of Rome for his defeat of the attempted invasion of Italy by the hosts of the two fearsome Germanic tribes, the Cimbri and Teutones. His magnificent triumphal procession for the Germanic victories was fresh in people's memories; monuments commemorating those victories were being built to provide a constant visual reminder; his associate, the tribune L. Appuleius Saturninus, was passing legislation establishing colonies to take care of his veterans; it seemed that nothing could go wrong for him.[1] Naturally, his close relations and allies, among whom his relatives by marriage, the Caesars, certainly took a prominent place, were also riding high on the wave of Marius's political fortune. But all of that was to change in the course of a dramatic year.

Marius's unparalleled power in the Roman state had been achieved thanks to the skilful exploitation of military crises – the Jugurthine War in Africa, the migration of the Cimbri and Teutones – and especially by the successful overcoming of those crises. But with those crises solved, and no further great military crisis on the horizon, there was no excuse for a continuation of Marius's extraordinary string of successive consulships, and the time was in sight when he would no longer hold executive office, but become merely one

of the most authoritative senators, with no direct power of action. Naturally, Marius's chief political agents, the tribune Saturninus and the praetor C. Servilius Glaucia, who were by no means the sort of men to rest content with having played the role of helping the 'great man', began to consider independent political futures for themselves: Glaucia wanted to win the consulship, while Saturninus sought and won a third term as tribune. We can certainly speculate about the motives of these men. Glaucia gives the impression of being interested mostly in power, but Saturninus had passed some useful and well-thought-out laws, and may well have been a genuine reformer rather than just a careerist. Whatever their motives, however, they aroused opposition, as all reformers in late Republican Rome did, and the fate of the Gracchi served as a warning that opposition was likely to take violent forms. Glaucia and Saturninus were very well aware of that likelihood, and didn't wait for their opponents to resort to violence, adopting violent means themselves in their quests for continued political office.

Glaucia's candidacy for the consulship while he was still in office as praetor was technically illegal: the Lex Villia Annalis of 180 prescribed a two-year interval between the holding of praetorship and consulship. However, Marius's repeated consulships, which violated both that law and the later law forbidding the holding of second and subsequent consulships at all, had seriously undermined the Lex Villia. Basically, a Roman electoral assembly was not different from a law-giving assembly: the election was technically a law conferring office on the chosen candidate. Since Roman legal theory held that a law that violated provisions of earlier laws superseded, and in effect repealed, those laws, it is questionable whether and to what degree the Lex Villia could still be said to be valid in 100. It would fall to the presiding officer at the consular elections to decide whether the Lex Villia was still in force and Marius's career just an exception, and so to reject Glaucia's candidacy; or whether the Lex Villia had been effectively repealed, and so to admit Glaucia as a legitimate candidate. Glaucia was determined to apply what pressure he could to influence the decision. After various disturbances that postponed the election until early December, it appears that he was able to influence the consul L. Valerius Flaccus, who had been designated to conduct the consular election for 99, to accept him as candidate. Nevertheless, Glaucia became afraid of the strength of a rival candidate, the popular C. Memmius. Since the widely respected and influential orator Marcus Antonius was more or less of a shoo-in for one of the consular posts, Glaucia and Memmius were in effect vying for the remaining spot as consul. Glaucia's response to the danger he perceived from Memmius's candidacy was eminently clear: Memmius was assassinated by an associate of Glaucia and Saturninus, sparking a fatal political storm.[2]

The murder of a popular consular candidate, in which Saturninus was implicated along with Glaucia, provided the optimate faction in the Senate with all the justification they needed to mobilize the power of the state. The

Senatus Consultum Ultimum was passed, calling on the consul Caius Marius to suppress the dangerous sedition.[3] This placed Marius in a very awkward position, in which he had either to ignore the Senate's pronouncement of a state of emergency, or take forceful action against his own political allies. In truth, the choice was not that hard. Though he had, as an outsider trying to break into the circle of political power and privilege, adopted the stance of a political radical, Marius was really a conservative and law-abiding man. He had been uncomfortable with the violent tactics of Saturninus and Glaucia, though he recognized their necessity and efficacy; but he was not about to condone Memmius's murder, nor ignore such a powerful and urgent appeal from the Senate. He mobilized troops on 10 December, and the supporters of Saturninus and Glaucia, who had seized the Capitol hoping to make a stand, were quickly forced to surrender by the cutting-off of their water supply. Glaucia, who had fled to a nearby house, was hunted out and killed; Saturninus and a band of associates were taken alive after being given a guarantee that they would not be summarily executed.[4]

So far, so good. Saturninus and his friends were imprisoned by Marius in the Senate house, until he and the Senate could decide what to do with them; but he neglected to provide adequate security. As with the Gracchi, Saturninus had opponents who were not satisfied with a peaceful and legal end to the conflict. A band of senators and other nobles and hangers-on attacked the Senate house, scaling the roof, removing the tiles, and pelting the cowering detainees to death. The scene is described quite vividly, though very tendentiously, by Cicero in his speech defending Rabirius, the alleged slayer of Saturninus himself.[5] As Cicero has it, the nobility of Rome joined ranks to collectively dispose of the despicable rebels, and he takes the trouble to provide quite a few specific names to back up his claim. There is no way, of course, to verify the accuracy of his list, but it is notable that he mentions 'the Julii' as being among the attackers. Who exactly is meant by this (Cicero certainly implies that all of the Julii then alive participated) and what exactly they did, is not specified: Cicero tendentiously conflates the initial attack on the men occupying the Capitol and the later, and much less easily justifiable, attack on the detainees in the Senate house. It is certainly likely that Caesar's father, uncle and cousins played some role in support of Marius and the majority of the Senate to suppress Saturninus's uprising. It is very uncertain whether any of them played any role in the final massacre. And though it has sometimes been proposed, there is no reason to see in these events any suggestion of a split between Marius and some, or all, of the young Caesars, his relatives by marriage.

The outcome of this episode was unquestionably an embarrassment to Marius, to say the least: his former allies had been massacred despite his personal guarantee, as consul, that their lives would be spared. It was also, and more importantly, a disgrace to the Roman state, another few steps down on its descent into violence and lawlessness. Whatever we might think of the violent tactics employed by Saturninus and Glaucia, of the murder of

Memmius, of the occupation of the Capitol, once the men occupying the Capitol had surrendered and been confined under arrest, the crisis had passed and there was no more danger to the state, no more justification for using violence. Saturninus and his confederates could and should have been dealt with by legal means: trial, condemnation, and if necessary judicial execution. Tiberius Gracchus had been killed in a riot; Caius Gracchus had been killed, so it could be argued at least, in the course of putting down an illegal insurrection; but Saturninus and his friends were massacred after any sort of rioting or uprising was over, after they had surrendered and been placed under arrest, after all legitimate reason or excuse for public violence was past. And as in the cases of the Gracchi, it was the conservative optimate faction that ratcheted up the use of violence in Roman political life: after this, what would-be reformer could possibly hope to achieve his goals by any but the most extreme and persistent use of force and violence?

It was, then, in the midst of such crisis and violence that Caesar was born, and into a family right in the midst of the events. It should be made clear that Caesar was born and grew up in the very heart of the Roman nobility. This is actually seldom recognized: instead there is a common but mistaken view of Caesar as something of an outsider, trying to restore his family to political prominence. It's interesting to note that Caesar himself did not share this view: in his famous speech at his aunt's funeral in 69, he spoke very complacently of his family's antiquity and nobility on both sides, paternal and maternal.[6]

Noble status in ancient Rome was conferred by the holding of high public office: at the very least the aedileship or praetorship, but the highest degree of nobility was only won (and sustained over generations) by election to the consulship. To a degree not often recognized by historians, the Roman nobility during the middle and late Republic was fluid, with families rising to the consulship, maintaining consular status for two or three generations, and then fading from view. There are lots of examples of such clans: the Decii, the Baebii, the Sextii and the Fannii, to name a few. But alongside these rising and falling families – whose fortunes can be scanned in the index of Broughton's great work *The Magistrates of the Roman Republic* – there was also a long-term nobility consisting of twenty-five to thirty clans whose members held office for many generations in succession over the course of centuries. Some of these clans, the patrician Cornelii and Claudii and the plebeian Aurelii and Caecilii for example, managed to win consulships in generation after generation without a break, often even several consulships within a generation. Others might miss the consulship for a generation or two and maintain their prominence and noble status by holding praetorships, aedileships and priesthoods, before once again claiming consular standing. The Julii were a clan of this latter type.

Belonging to Rome's original aristocracy, the patriciate, the Julii were unquestionably one of the oldest noble clans. They had been prominent

during the first 150 years of the Roman Republic, and claimed to go back much further even than that, to before the founding of Rome. After the year 350, no Julius appears in our sources for some 80 years; but that the clan remained politically active is shown by the fact that one of them, L. Julius Libo, was elected consul for the year 267. Most likely members of the clan continued to be elected to high office in the interim between 350 and 267: every year a praetor and two curule aediles were elected, and we know the names of very few of them. After 267 it was a little over 100 years before another Julius became consul – Sextus Julius Caesar in 157 – but that the family remained prominent is shown by numerous other magistracies held by its members: at least six praetorships and two curule aedileships that we know of between 208 and 100. That, together with the consulship of 157, is an impressive record of political prominence in itself; but it was the generation of Caesar's father that really put the Julii back at the very forefront of Roman political life.[7]

Caesar's father, who according to Roman custom had exactly the same name (Caius Julius Caesar) as his much more famous son, was one of four men of the Caesar family who were close contemporaries, apparently two sets of brothers. Sextus Julius Caesar and his brother Caius, Caesar's uncle and father, were the grandsons of L. Julius Caesar the praetor of 166; Caius Julius Caesar Strabo and his older brother Lucius were the grandsons of the consul of 157, Sextus Julius Caesar, the younger brother of the praetor of 166. The two pairs of brothers were thus related as second cousins (see the family tree provided on page xvii).

Between them, these four men brought the Julius Caesar family back to the very peak of political prominence in the 90s and early 80s, when Caesar was a child. Three praetorships, two consulships, a censorship and at least one curule aedileship, all held between about 95 and 89, made the Caesars one of the three or four most important political families of this generation.

Growing up in the midst of this political success guaranteed for the young Caesar a notable political career, so long as he lived long enough and proved to be of just average intelligence and ability. Thus his cousin and contemporary Lucius Caesar, son of L. Julius Caesar the consul of 90, easily won election to every major office up to and including the consulship of 64, without displaying any notable talent or ability apart from some antiquarian interests. And this expectation of a successful political career was strengthened by Caesar's other family connections. Like most small and powerful aristocracies, the Roman nobility was extensively intermarried and interrelated. Any given Roman noble could point to relationships of kinship or marriage with many other Roman nobles, and Caesar was no exception. His paternal grandmother, for example, was a Marcia of the Rex family, meaning that Q. Marcius Rex, consul in 118, and his son Q. Marcius Rex, consul in 68, were Caesar's cousins. Via his mother Aurelia, of the noble Cotta family, Caesar was related to her three cousins Caius, Marcus and Lucius Aurelius Cotta, consuls in 75,

74 and 65 respectively. Another close relative was Mamercus Aemilius Lepidus Livianus, consul in 77, through whom Caesar was connected to two noble clans: the patrician Aemilii and the plebeian Livii. Ironically, Mamercus's sister Livia was the mother of Caesar's famous and bitter adversary Cato, meaning that those two rivals were cousins of some sort. Through his father's cousins L. Caesar and C. Caesar Strabo, moreover, Caesar was related to their half-brother Q. Lutatius Catulus, the consul of 102, and to his like-named son, the consul of 78. And of course through his aunt Julia, Caesar was related by marriage to the great Caius Marius, the most famous and successful general and politician of his day, six times consul between 107 and 100, and again in 86.[8] To say that Caesar grew up in the very heart of the Roman nobility is clearly no exaggeration.

After the turbulence of 100 and the preceding years, the decade of the 90s was a time of relative calm, though unresolved problems seethed below the surface of Roman life. Those problems were to erupt in the 80s, but Caesar's experience during the first ten years of his life, at any rate, was of relative normalcy. We have very little detailed information about Caesar's childhood, though some important general outlines are known or can be conjectured. He was not an only child: he had two sisters, both called Julia after the normal Roman practice of naming women just with the feminine form of the clan name. They will have had family nicknames to distinguish them from each other, but these are not known. There were also several cousins: we know of a Sextus Julius Caesar, perhaps the son of Caesar's uncle Sextus, the consul of 91; and though Caius Caesar Strabo is not known to have had any children, his older bother Lucius had at least two – a son named Lucius Julius Caesar after himself, and a daughter named (again) Julia. There were thus at least six children in this generation of the Julius Caesar family, all fairly close contemporaries (see the family trees on pages xvii–xviii). It would be the responsibility of the three boys to maintain, and if possible enhance, the political standing of the clan.

The family home in which Caesar grew up was, in Suetonius's words, 'a modest house in the Subura quarter'.[9] Before making too much of the word 'modest', we should bear in mind the standard of comparison: what was modest for one of the leading patrician families of the Roman nobility might not be very modest by normal standards. Evidently Caesar's family did not have one of those palatial townhouses that some of the wealthiest and most ostentatious nobles went in for, but given Caesar's own taste for extravagance as a young man, it is a fair surmise that a house he was content to live in through his twenties and thirties was sufficiently commodious. The Subura, situated between the Forum and the Quirinal and Viminal Hills, was a crowded region of Rome, with many tenement blocks (*insulae*) inhabited by the less well-off of Rome's population. Ancient cities, however, were not so neatly divided into regions inhabited by the wealthy and poor quarters as modern cities tend to be. Mansions of the wealthy often stood like fortresses

of privilege in a sea of tenement blocks, and Rome was no exception to this. It was none so unusual, therefore, for Caesar's family to inhabit a primarily 'popular' region of the city.

The Julii seem to have been a fairly close-knit clan. As already mentioned, they claimed to be of very great antiquity. The legend was that the ancestor of the clan, Iullus, was no less than a son of the mythical Trojan hero Aeneas, known from Homer's *Iliad,* and thereby a grandson of the goddess Venus. Caesar himself made this claim overtly in his funeral speech for his aunt Julia in 69 (Suetonius *Divus Julius* 6), though the best-known version of the legend is of course in Vergil's *Aeneid* (esp. bk 6). The legend certainly goes back at least a generation or two before Caesar: several Julii who served as mint-masters, including L. Caesar, the consul of 90, placed portraits of Venus on the coins they issued, to advertise the clan's descent from that goddess.[10] Another family legend had it that the clan originally belonged to Rome's early rival city, Alba Longa, and moved to Rome only after that city's absorption by Rome in the early regal period. In the second and first centuries, the clan did have a cult centre near the village of Bovillae in the old territory of Alba Longa, where the *genteiles Iuliei* (clansmen of the Julii) would gather annually to sacrifice to their clan deity Vediovis, as a dedication from (most probably) the 90s records.[11] Such annual clan get-togethers will have fostered a sense of common identity, and served as one of the means of teaching the young Caesar to take pride in the family's traditions, as he certainly did.

Two other factors seem likely to have fostered a sense of closeness among the Julii during the 90s and 80s, as Caesar was growing up. First there was the political success of the 90s, achieved at least to some degree by mutual cooperation. Both Caesar's father and Caesar Strabo served on the commissions settling Marius's veteran soldiers in colonies, for example, posts that offered opportunity for patronage and were normally given to close allies of the person behind the colonies, in this case Marius.[12] Further, it will be no coincidence that L. Caesar's consulship in 90 followed directly after Sextus Caesar's in 91, for the favour of a presiding consul could be a powerful electoral advantage. This success, however, came at a political price. When the Social War broke out in Italy in late 91, Caesar's uncle Sextus Caesar, one of the consuls of the year, died during the course of the campaigning; and when civil war broke out in the aftermath of the Social War, Lucius Caesar and Caius Caesar Strabo both fell victim to the strife, assassinated in late 87 on Marius's orders because he felt they had not been properly loyal to him when he was driven into exile in 88.[13] That left Caesar's father as the only surviving adult member of the extended family, and it is very likely that he was the one to provide a refuge for his brother's and cousin's children, becoming their guardian. Most probably, then, the younger Lucius Caesar and his sister Julia, and perhaps the younger Sextus Caesar too, will have lived for part of the 80s, years of civil strife, in Caesar's family home under the protection of Caesar's father. That could help to explain, for example, the fact that in later life

Lucius Caesar consistently supported and on several occasions served under his more dynamic cousin. For what it's worth too, Caesar's right-hand man during the last six or seven years of his life was the son of Lucius Caesar's sister Julia: Marcus Antonius.

The main concern in a child's life is, of course, education; and though again we don't have very much specific detail on Caesar's education, the outline is clear enough. For the first seven or eight years of his life, a Roman boy was raised by his mother. Caesar's mother Aurelia was renowned for her intelligence and virtue, and for the excellent job she did raising Caesar, not only during those early years, but in continued interactions through his adolescence and young manhood. We know that Aurelia, widowed by the death of Caesar's father around 85 or 84, never remarried but continued to live with her beloved son for the remainder of her life, a prominent figure in his household until her death in 54. When the upper-class Roman boy emerged from his mother's protection in the family home, he faced a two-part education. The formal side of his education consisted of being taught to read and write both Latin and Greek, given a grounding in the classic poets of Rome (Ennius, Naevius, Terence and others) and Greece (Homer, some of the lyric poets, the Athenian dramatists and others), and then taught a smattering of Greek philosophy, but above all the art of rhetoric.

Rome, like the Greek city-states of old, was a society of 'face-to-face' politics in which the ability to speak fluently, effectively, persuasively to gatherings of peers in the Senate house, and to crowds of citizens at informal or formal assembly meetings in the Forum or the Campus Martius, was absolutely vital to a successful political career. In addition, during Caesar's lifetime more and more permanent law courts were being set up at Rome, at which many trials involving members of the Roman nobility had a very strong political cast to them. The prosecutors and defence advocates at such trials were Roman politicians, members of the nobility. Rhetoric therefore, the art of effective and persuasive public speech developed by the Greek educators Gorgias and Isokrates, was the lynchpin of the Roman noble's formal education. The other part of the noble's education consisted of a sort of informal apprenticeship in the rules and procedures, the ins and outs, of Roman public life, Roman politics and Roman law, which the young noble served first with his father and/or close male relatives (uncles, older brothers and cousins), and then often with prominent politicians with whom his family had ties.

The formal part of the Roman noble's education was usually the province of tutors employed by the family, sometimes slaves who had appropriate training and skills, but also – and particularly for the more advanced stages of education – intellectuals (especially Greek intellectuals) invited to stay in the noble's house and at his expense, and educating the noble's son(s), and often the sons of some of his relatives and friends as well, as a *quid pro quo*. Caesar's tutor was the freedman M. Antonius Gnipho, a noted grammarian and master

of rhetoric, from whom he received the best education available in his day and place.[14] As a young man and throughout his life, he showed a thorough familiarity with Greek and Roman high culture. In his youth, he was not only an avid reader of poetry, but also tried his own hand at poetic composition, with quite creditable results we are told, though Caesar's youthful poetry was suppressed by his heir Augustus so that we can no longer judge it for ourselves. All that survives is a short poem (six lines) praising the comic playwright Terence, but in a way that shows a greater appreciation of Terence's Greek model Menandros.[15] It is also clear that he had a more than average acquaintance with Greek philosophy; and he certainly acquired a thorough familiarity with Greek rhetoric; while his knowledge of and feel for the Latin language and its possibilities were only surpassed by Cicero.

As a Roman noble, whose only proper aspiration in life was to a great political and/or military career, the most important part of Caesar's education was his political apprenticeship, which will have started around 91 and 90, when he was nine or ten years old. As it happened, this was exactly the time when Caesar's father, uncle and their two cousins were running for and holding high office, and it is obviously highly likely that Caesar learned about Roman politics and political life from observing them. Roman senators and magistrates did not move around alone: wherever they went, they were surrounded by an entourage. For magistrates, there were the official attendants (*lictores*); but for magistrates and senators alike the majority of those accompanying them daily wherever they went were undoubtedly slaves with various tasks: secretaries, *nomenclatores* (slaves whose duty it was to remember citizens' names and prompt their masters when a citizen approached), fetchers and carriers of various sorts, and so on. In addition there would be freedmen, clients and other associates of various sorts. We know that young sons, his own and/or those of his close relatives and friends, formed part of a senator's or magistrate's entourage too. In this way, young nobles were able to observe and learn the business of the magistrate and senator: standing by the door of the Senate house, they could watch and listen to meetings and debates; standing by the rostra at assemblies, they heard and saw how political meetings were convened and addressed, and how voting was carried out; and accompanying the magistrate about his daily round, they saw what public business had to be conducted (not least, religious business) and how.

It was Caesar's fortune that during these crucial years of his life, first his uncle and then his father's cousin held the consulship in turn, and surely Caesar must have watched from their entourages and seen Roman political and public life at the very top. These two years, 91 and 90, must have been crucial to Caesar's education in that regard; and watching from his relatives' sides, he will have witnessed very dramatic events. For 91 was the year of another of the periodic failed reform attempts in Roman life: this one emanating, unusually, from optimate circles and centring on a noble young tribune named Marcus Livius Drusus, the son of the Drusus who had

successfully outmanoeuvred Caius Gracchus (and incidentally a relative of Caesar).[16] Livius Drusus had two major issues he wished to resolve: the staffing of the juries at the permanent tribunals, and the issue of citizenship for the Italian allies.

As an optimate noble and senator, Drusus believed strongly that the juries should be staffed by senators, sitting in judgment on their peers; and he was strengthened in this belief by a notorious trial that occurred in 92. A distant relative of both Drusus and Caesar, P. Rutilius Rufus, was falsely accused of extortion in the province of Asia, found guilty by a jury of equestrians, and obliged (being unable to pay the fines imposed) to go into exile. The truth was that Rutilius had been part of a rigidly correct governance of the province, and had deeply annoyed the equestrian *publicani* (tax farmers) who were unable to practise their usual extortion. Rutilius's trial was intended to send a message to provincial governors to be compliant in future; but it was so notoriously unjust that it led to a backlash against the equestrian jurors.[17]

As to the Italian allies, they had been unhappy since at least Caius Gracchus's failed citizenship law. In the years after that, it seems, more and more Italians took things into their own hands by simply moving to Rome and trying to usurp citizenship by getting themselves enrolled in a census, or simply acting as if they were citizens. That created difficulties for the authorities in the Italian communities, who already found it hard to raise the troop numbers required from them by the Romans, even without large-scale unofficial migration. This situation led the consuls of 95, Lucius Crassus and Quintus Scaevola, to pass a law repatriating illegal Italian migrants in Rome, and setting up a *quaestio* (tribunal) to enforce the law.[18] Consequent anger and unrest brought the issue of Roman citizenship for the Italian allies back to the forefront of Roman politics.

Drusus planned to settle the jury issue by putting the senators back in control of the juries, while giving a sop to the equestrians by doubling the size of the Senate to 600, enrolling 300 leading equestrians as senators.[19] Not surprisingly, that pleased neither senators nor equestrians: the latter were angered by their projected loss of control of the juries; the former by the enormous expansion of the senatorial order Drusus proposed. The Italian question was to be settled once and for all by extending Roman citizenship to all free inhabitants of peninsular Italy.[20] That proposal, while popular with most of the allies to be sure, was deeply unpopular among the Romans of all classes, who disliked the idea of sharing their privileges with the Italians.

In typically cynical fashion, Drusus's opponents, led by the consul L. Marcius Philippus, played on the jealousy the Roman populace had of their privileged position to arouse hostility to Drusus and his reforms. Drusus had powerful backers, however, chief among whom were the Princeps Senatus Aemilius Scaurus and ironically, the consuls of 95 who had done so much to arouse allied ire by their repatriation measure. Evidently L. Crassus and Q. Scaevola had given serious thought to the question of allied grievances and

concluded that, as much as they opposed the assumption of citizen privileges by allies via extra-legal means, the allied communities did have a strong case for seeking to have the policy of extension of the citizenship restored. Crassus was by Roman standards rather elderly (in his mid-fifties) and unwell, but he remained the greatest orator of his time, and in a great speech in the Senate during a debate on Drusus's programme, he shored up support for Drusus at a crucial juncture. The effort, however, was too much for him, and he fell seriously ill and died a few days later.[21]

Deprived of Crassus's authority and uniquely persuasive support, Drusus found his case for extension of citizenship to the allies hard to make in the face of Philippus's relentless criticisms. Allied leaders from around Italy flocked to Rome to attend Drusus's morning *levees* and show their support for him; but this show of support backfired. Philippus and his cronies began to suggest that there was a conspiracy afoot by the Italians against Rome, and that Drusus was planning to make himself ruler of Rome with Italian support. They worked on popular prejudices and fears to such effect that eventually they succeeded in preventing the citizenship bill from being passed, and even got all of Drusus's legislation annulled.[22] Drusus retreated to his home where, while greeting his morning callers one day, he was stabbed to death by an unknown assassin.[23] The Senate ordered an inquiry into the whole Drusus affair, and a judicial commission was set up under a law passed by a tribune named Varius. But again in typical fashion, the Varian commission acted in a determinedly partisan way. Taking seriously the charges of conspiracy by Drusus's opponents, the commission went after Drusus's supporters, and indeed after everyone who had expressed support for citizenship for the allies.[24]

The assassination of Drusus and the Varian commission were the last straws for the allied communities. Realizing that the Romans would not willingly extend the citizenship to them in any foreseeable future, they decided to take matters into their own hands by seceding from alliance to Rome and setting up their own counter-state. Led by the Samnites, the Marsi, the Picentes and other mostly Appenine tribes, the leaders of the allies at a great meeting at Corfinium in north central Italy agreed together to form a new state named Italia, opposed to Rome. News of this allied secession of course lent colour at Rome to the charges of anti-Roman conspiracy spread by Philippus and his supporters, and the work of the Varian commission was therefore boosted. However, it seems clear that these Roman leaders seriously underestimated the determination, leadership and fighting qualities of the allies who had joined to create Italia.

Hostilities began when a Roman praetor named Servilius, sent to investigate reports of allied disaffection in Picenum, was killed at the city of Asculum together with his entourage, and the Picentes then rose up against Rome and massacred all Roman citizens they could lay their hands on.[25] As news of this massacre spread, more and more Italian communities openly

aligned themselves with the new state Italia, and the Romans came to realize that they had a major war on their hands: the so-called Social War, from the Latin word *socius*, meaning ally. The Social War was a desperate affair for the Romans, who suffered several major reverses in its opening stages; and it exposed again the fissures in Roman society that had grown since Tiberius Gracchus's first attempt at reform. The Social War thus led almost seamlessly into outright civil war between the reform and anti-reform factions of the Romans. Caesar's family, as leading nobles and politicians, were deeply involved in and affected by the Social and civil wars; and it is reasonable to suggest that Caesar's whole character and outlook will have been fundamentally shaped by the events of these two wars, which filled the years of his late childhood and teens with bloodshed and strife.

The outbreak of the Social War at the end of 91 clearly came as a shock to most Romans, though the warning signs had long been there to read. As evidenced by the rigid policy they chose to pursue with regard to the allies, most Romans of all classes clearly assumed that the allies would remain quiet under Roman rule, that the calls for the extension of Roman citizenship came merely from a small group of trouble makers. Consequently, the Romans were in no way prepared for the way in which, within an astonishingly short time, the revolt begun in Picenum spread to many allied communities, the Appenine peoples being the most affected. The Romans were even less prepared for the way the rebellious allies organized themselves, not just into a military alliance against Rome, but into the new state of Italia, framed on a confederate model and clearly intended as a sort of anti-Rome.[26] The revolt threatened Rome's predominance in Italy in a way it had not been threatened since the darkest days of the Hannibalic War, and this time the Romans could clearly see that they had no one to blame but themselves: their refusal to take allied grievances seriously had pushed the allies to this extreme.

One of the most difficult aspects of the war for the Romans was that they found themselves fighting against men and armies trained and organized in the same way as they were themselves. These were men and armies who shared the same experience of imperial military success over the past decades; armies officered and commanded by men drawn from very similar elite backgrounds as were Roman officers and commanders; and crucially officers and commanders who had extensive experience of fighting and leading troops in Roman wars under Roman generals. The commanders of the former allies were able to raise troops in numbers equivalent to those Rome could raise, and they understood as no other recent opponent of the Romans did how to fight successfully against Roman armies and generals. Within a few months, it appears, the former allies had raised and trained an army in excess of 100,000 men, divided between two commands – a southern command and a northern command – and led by two generals who proved to be very capable: the Samnite C. Papius Mutilus in the south, and the Marsian Q. Poppaedius Silo in the north.

To face this great threat, the Senate designated both consuls of the year 90 to commands in Italy – Caesar's relative L. Julius Caesar in the south, and P. Rutilius Lupus in the north – instructing each to raise great armies and appoint experienced and capable sub-commanders. Rutilius, in the north, relied upon four major sub-commanders: the ex-consul Sex. Julius Caesar was given a pro-consular command in Picenum, while C. Marius, the ex-praetor Q. Servilius Caepio and Cn. Pompeius Strabo were the consul's most important legates (subordinate generals). In the south, Lucius Caesar was assisted most importantly by L. Cornelius Sulla, the experienced ex-consul T. Didius and P. Licinius Crassus.[27] Both sides in the war were clearly making a supreme effort, but in the opening stages it was the former allies who were the more successful.

Sex. Caesar, it is true, after an initial setback, won a victory in battle over the Paeligni and was able to set about besieging Asculum, where the uprising had begun. But he then died of illness at an early stage in the siege, having apparently over-exerted himself. The consul Rutilius Lupus, ignoring Marius's sound advice to take his time and train his troops properly before risking battle, was routed and himself killed in battle in the Tolenus valley. Marius and Caepio were able to save most of the army, and were given command over separate parts of it by the Senate, but Caepio himself was then drawn into an ambush and killed. Only when the Senate granted command of the entire consular army in the north to Marius was the situation in northern Italy stabilized. Marius, with his old energy and determination, set about training his men properly, not allowing himself to be distracted from this crucial task by the enemy. Reputedly, the Italian general Poppaedius, finding that Marius refused to be drawn into battle, sent him a challenge to the effect that, if Marius was truly a great general, he would come out and fight; to which Marius imperturbably replied that if Poppaedius was such a great general he should be able to force Marius to come out and fight even though he didn't want to.[28] When Marius felt his troops were ready, he advanced into Marsian territory from the north while Sulla marched up in coordination from the south, and they jointly inflicted a great defeat on the Marsi – the only occasion since the Jugurthine war these two implacable enemies, Sulla and Marius, were seen to cooperate. Moreover, after some initial setbacks near Firmum, the other northern commander Pompeius Strabo took over the siege of Asculum from the deceased Sex. Caesar and prosecuted it successfully.

On the southern front, the course of the war was similar. Initially the Romans met setbacks. The consul L. Caesar suffered several reverses near Aesernia, and his legate P. Crassus was defeated in Lucania. Later, however, L. Caesar recovered and inflicted a serious defeat on the Samnites at Acerrae, and as we have seen his legate Sulla assisted in Marius's defeat of the Marsi.[29]

Although the tide of war was turning in Rome's favour in both theatres, the Romans had learned from the scale of the forces opposing them, the skill of the enemy leaders, and the early defeats they suffered at their former allies'

hands, that their policy towards their allies had been mistaken and that they faced a long and very difficult war if they did not change that policy. It was Caesar's relative L. Caesar who took the initiative in changing Roman policy, and secured passage of a law that altered the course of this disastrous Social War decisively and for the better. The Lex Julia of 90 bestowed Roman citizenship on all Latins and other Italian allies who had either not yet rebelled against Rome, or were willing to lay down arms and return to their allegiance to Rome. In addition it authorized Rome's generals to make special grants of citizenship in consultation with their military councils.[30] The Social War dragged on for a while, but the Lex Julia had deprived it of its main impetus, and made Roman victory inevitable as it secured the uncommitted allies for Rome, and encouraged many of the rebellious allies to return to allegiance to Rome now that their original demand – the granting of Roman citizenship – was being met.

Cn. Pompeius Strabo was rewarded for his achievements in war against the Picentes by being elected consul for the year 89, along with the much less experienced L. Porcius Cato. L. Julius Caesar capped his consulship of the previous year by being elected censor, with P. Licinius Crassus. The censors had the task every five years, among other things, of revising the list of citizens, and it may have been thought that L. Caesar was particularly suited for this task at this time, as the author of the law enfranchising the allies. As it turned out, however, Caesar and Crassus failed to review the citizen list, perhaps because the Social War still dragged on and made the task impossible.[31]

As to the war, Pompeius Strabo received the northern command, and continued his siege of Asculum in Picenum, eventually reducing the city late in the year and being awarded a triumph for his success. He also extended Rome's newly generous policy by a law establishing Roman citizenship for towns in Cisalpine Gaul south of the Po, and Latin rights for towns north of the Po.[32] Cato, campaigning in south-central Italy, attacked the Marsi with disastrous results, illustrating that the war was indeed far from over. Cato himself died in this defeat, but as unfortunate as this was for the Romans, it did have one beneficial effect for them: Sulla was now placed in full command of the southern sphere of the war, and proved to be by far Rome's most capable and effective general of this period, not to mention the most ruthless. He quickly won control of Campania, capturing Stabiae and Pompeii, and after resoundingly defeating the Samnites at Nola he carried the war into the Samnite territory itself.[33] Such successes in both theatres of the war, along with the acceptance by more and more allies of the Lex Julia's offer of Roman citizenship, made it clear that Rome was the victor, though the embers of the conflict dragged on until 80. Sulla was rewarded for his achievements by election to the consulship for 88 along with a close friend, Q. Pompeius Rufus – a distant cousin of Pompeius Strabo.

Lucius Cornelius Sulla, who was to adopt the added surname (or *agnomen*) 'Felix' – the fortunate – was another in the string of truly remarkable men

and leaders Rome produced in this era. Born into the greatest and most successful of Rome's noble patrician *gentes*, the Cornelii, but in a family of the clan that had declined into utter obscurity and poverty during the late third and second centuries, Sulla combined the typical patrician pride of ancestry and status with a 'new man's' disadvantages of obscurity and paucity of contacts. That may perhaps help to account for one of Sulla's most marked traits: his utterly ruthless determination to get ahead and make a name for himself.

Plutarch tells us in his biography of Sulla that his inheritance from his father was tiny; and that in his youth he was obliged to live in rented accommodations, owning no property of his own, and rather inexpensive accommodations at that. Despite his patrician status, Sulla was eventually able to embark on a political career only thanks to a fortunate inheritance from a wealthy woman who had fallen in love with him. Elected quaestor in 107, he was assigned to the consul Marius and impressed his commander with his energy, daring and efficiency. He made a name for himself by successfully undertaking the dangerous mission to persuade the Mauretanian king Bocchus to hand over his son-in-law Jugurtha to the Romans; but his frequent advertisement of that achievement led to hostility between Sulla and Marius, who felt that Sulla was stealing his (Marius's) proper glory. To his contemporaries Sulla seemed an enigmatically inconsistent figure: he was notorious for his love of the pleasures of the table and the bedroom, for his liking for the society of actors and prostitutes and other members of the fringes of society, and for the way he would throw himself into leisure to the complete neglect of matters of public business; yet he was also a man of driven and ruthless ambition, supremely active, energetic and efficient once he put his mind to business, a man who allowed nothing and no one to stand in his way on his march to the top in Roman politics. We can perhaps explain this by saying that he was wholehearted and unscrupulous in everything he did. In his leisure and in his public career, whether pursuing pleasure or dealing with public affairs, he gave himself completely to what he was doing or engaged in, and allowed no considerations to prevent him from being and doing what he at that moment chose to be and do. And it certainly cannot be doubted that he was a man gifted with enormous talents for both military and political leadership and action.

After his break with Marius, Sulla had naturally drifted towards cooperation with the faction of the optimates, Marius's bitter enemies. He was brought into the optimate fold via marriage to an heiress of the great Metellus clan,[34] and held a successful praetorian command in the mid-90s in southern Asia Minor, where he helped to rein in the expansionist policies of the great king Mithridates of Pontus.[35] As consul in 88, this experience in dealing with Mithridates turned out to be of importance. Relations between Rome and Mithridates had long been strained, as the king resented Roman interference with his ambitious plans to strengthen and expand his kingdom,

and this resentment led Mithridates to declare war on Rome at this time. Sulla's achievements as commander in the Social War and experience of dealing with Mithridates obviously qualified him to take charge of the war with Mithridates, and the Senate accordingly appointed him to do so as governor of Asia. Before he could travel east to undertake this command, however, a crucial political dispute at home needed to be resolved, around the issue of the enfranchisement of the Italians; and this dispute broke into open civil war at Rome in great part because of the way Sulla himself dealt with it.

Passage of the Lex Julia in 90 had promised the allies who remained loyal, or returned to loyalty to Rome, enfranchisement as Roman citizens; and that promise was strengthened and refined by a further law passed in 89, the Lex Plautia Papiria, named after two tribunes of that year who sponsored it.[36] However, those laws at best gave to the Italians a passive form of the citizenship, in which they might enjoy some of the legal protections and immunities of the *civis Romanus* in virtue of being acknowledged as Romans. In order to be active citizens however, in the sense of being able to participate in Roman political life as voters, electors and/or candidates for office, the Italians would need to be registered formally as citizens on an individual basis, including being enrolled in the voting blocks through which the Roman citizen exercised his political voice: the tribes that made up the *comitia tributa* and the centuries that constituted the *comitia centuriata*. It was through this issue of enrolment in tribes and centuries that the conservative opponents of Italian enfranchisement now chose to make their stand, displaying a quite astonishing refusal to learn the lesson of the Social War.

In order to render the Italians' Roman citizenship politically ineffective, they proposed that only a minority of the tribes be designated to receive the newly enfranchised Italians: either ten new tribes were to be created for the new citizens, or all the new citizens were to be restricted to only eight of the existing thirty-five tribes.[37] In this way, the pre-Social War Romans would always be able to outvote the new citizens, since it was not a majority of votes cast that decided Roman legislative or electoral assemblies, but a majority of the tribes (or centuries). Naturally the newly enfranchised Italians protested vehemently against this political marginalization, and they had the support of those Roman politicians who recognized the unfairness and/or impracticality of thus limiting them. A reformist tribune named P. Sulpicius Rufus came forward with a law proposing that the new citizens be enrolled in all thirty-five tribes, and was met with strong opposition from the optimates, led by the consuls Sulla and Pompeius Rufus. Sulpicius was supported by Marius, who had always had strong ties among the Italian upper classes, and in order to strengthen Marius's support and perhaps gain needed military backing, Sulpicius also proposed to transfer command of the war against Mithridates from Sulla to Marius. This led to rioting in the streets between supporters of Sulpicius and Marius, and the consuls and their backers. Initially, Sulpicius and Marius gained the upper hand, driving Sulla from

Rome, passing the laws enrolling the Italians in all thirty-five tribes and transferring the Mithridatic command to Marius, and sending representatives to take control of the army encamped in Campania.[38]

This army was, however, the army raised, trained and commanded during the Social War by Sulla himself; and having fled from Rome, Sulla had taken refuge precisely with this army. Sulla was not the man to accept political defeat and humiliation gracefully, or to allow the prospects of glory and enrichment the Mithridatic War promised to pass him by. He realized that the loyalty of the new type of proletarian volunteer army, ironically pioneered by Marius, lay not with the state, in which the soldiers had so little stake, but with their commander, who had enrolled them with promises of booty during active service and rewards afterwards. He played on his soldiers' loyalty to himself, on the perceived wrongs done to him in being driven from Rome and deprived of his command, and above all on their fear that if Marius took the Mithridatic command he would enrol a new army of his own to fight that war and win the spoils of Asia Minor's riches. Thus enflamed, when Sulla called upon his soldiers to follow him to Rome to enforce his and their 'rights' by military force, they obeyed enthusiastically. The descent of Roman politics into decision by violence reached its nadir in the outbreak of full-scale civil war: for what else could it be called when a Roman general led a Roman army to attack the city of Rome itself to break the power of a rival political faction? It is worth pausing to notice that once again, as in the attacks on Tiberius Gracchus, on Caius Gracchus and on Saturninus, it was a representative of the conservative optimate faction who escalated the level of violence in Roman politics to a new extreme.

Sulla's army captured Rome with ease, Sulpicius and Marius being caught quite unprepared for hostilities on this scale. Once in control of Rome, Sulla passed a package of reform measures meant to ensure optimate predominance while he himself was away in the east fighting Mithridates, for command in the Mithridatic War was of course transferred back to him. Sulpicius and Marius were declared outlaws and hunted down: Sulpicius was betrayed and killed, but Marius managed, with great difficulty and suffering, to escape, and sought refuge among his veterans settled in Africa. Many supporters of Sulpicius and Marius were killed or exiled, and Sulpicius's laws were annulled.[39]

The reform measures Sulla passed, with the cooperation of his colleague Pompeius Rufus, included laws requiring the Senate to approve proposed laws before they were submitted to popular vote, establishing the more conservative *comitia centuriata* (as opposed to the *comitia tributa*) as the legislative assembly, limiting the powers of the tribunes in certain respects, and expanding the Senate by inclusion of 300 equestrians. The aim, as indicated above, was clearly to establish senatorial – and especially optimate – predominance in the governance of Rome, turning the clock back as it were to before the time of Tiberius Gracchus.[40] To further secure the stability of his hastily

constructed new (or rather old) order, Sulla required the two successful candidates elected consuls for 87 – Cn. Octavius and L. Cornelius Cinna – to swear to abide by his reforms. He also transferred command over the other veteran army in Italy besides his own, the army of Cn. Pompeius Strabo in the north, to his friend and colleague Pompeius Rufus, who could use this army to exercise a watching brief over affairs in Rome and Italy. This was a miscalculation, however. Strabo's army was just as loyal to its general as Sulla's army was to him: though Strabo nominally ceded command, within a short time Pompeius Rufus was killed by the soldiers and Pompeius Strabo returned to take back control over his army while protesting his innocence in Rufus's death.[41] Faced with the reality that he would have to fight to dislodge Strabo, Sulla – in a hurry to get to grips with Mithridates – accepted Strabo's position, and hurried off with his army to the east.

The situation Sulla left behind him in Italy was confused, even chaotic. In northern Italy, Pompeius Strabo controlled what was, since his entirely unauthorized resumption of command, essentially a private army, and his intentions were unknown – perhaps even to himself. In southern Italy, a second army led by the ex-praetor Q. Metellus Pius continued operations against holdout rebel allies from the Social War, particularly the Samnites. Another legion was busy besieging Nola in Campania, under the command of Appius Claudius Pulcher, a former praetor. Since Sulla's repeal of Sulpicius's laws, the newly enfranchised Italian citizens found themselves in political limbo, not knowing how or when their citizenship would be activated by enrolment into tribes and centuries: naturally that was a situation generating the necessary discontent and unrest. Finally, there were the two new consuls. One, Cn. Octavius, was a true optimate who approved of Sulla's hasty and reactionary reforms and was committed to maintaining them. However the other consul, Cinna, was not. Instead he revived Sulpicius Rufus's call to enrol the former allies in all thirty-five tribes, and added to that a proposal to recall Marius and the other *populares* exiled by Sulla. Cinna's agitation on behalf of the new citizens was firmly resisted by Octavius, who had the majority of the Senate behind him. The result was renewed political violence in which the optimates under Octavius initially gained the upper hand, ejecting Cinna from Rome and then stripping him of the consulship.[42]

Since the enrolment of the former allies was the flashpoint, it is worth considering this issue in more detail. The argument in favour of enrolling the new citizens in all thirty-five tribes is obvious: it would be unfair to restrict artificially the input of the new citizens into the political process, and even leaving fairness aside, the anger such a restriction generated among former allies suspicious of the Roman governing class's motives was liable to prove dangerous to the state's peace. On the other hand, it could be argued that accommodating such a vast mass of new citizens was likely to have a deforming and unpredictable effect on political life if the new citizens' influence were not limited in some way, and there were ample precedents for assigning

large groups of new citizens to just one or a handful of the tribes – though there had of course never been such a vast influx of new citizens all at once.

In light of the anger and smouldering distrust left over from the – still not completely finished – Social War, it is hard not to agree with Sulpicius Rufus and Cinna that the new citizens needed to be treated in a way that removed any appearance of unfairness, and that enrolment in all thirty-five tribes was the only completely fair and politically sound option. The readiness of the optimates to resort to violence and even civil war to prevent it is typical of this period, and suggests that their true motivation was the selfish one of preserving the voting power of their own blocs of clients.

Ejecting Cinna from Rome was, predictably, not the end of the matter. Cinna had before him the example of another consul very recently defeated in the political infighting of Rome and driven from the city: Sulla. Just as Sulla had sought refuge with his army and returned to Rome with triumphant military force, so Cinna looked around for a military force that could vindicate him and his cause. The army of Strabo in north Italy was not an option: it had demonstrated its loyalty to Strabo very effectively, and Cinna was not about to put himself in Strabo's hands. Metellus Pius was a known optimate and an efficient general, too dangerous to approach. But the legion under Ap. Claudius seemed vulnerable. Cinna appeared at the legion's camp around Nola and appealed to the soldiers to stand up for a wronged consul, promising rich rewards for doing so. In this way, he was soon at the head of a formidable military force, and he sent to Marius in Africa urging him to raise troops, return to Italy, and join in an attack on the optimates in Rome. Marius was, of course, very ready to do just that: he raised about a thousand men from his veteran colonies, and sailed to Etruria where he rapidly increased his force by enrolling anyone willing from among the disgruntled, even slaves. He then marched on Rome from the north while Cinna and his army approached the city from the south.[43]

In Rome, Cn. Octavius had taken advantage of his apparent victory by arranging to have a new and more compliant colleague elected consul in the place of Cinna: one L. Cornelius Merula. This man was the incumbent of Rome's oldest and most sacred priesthood – the *Flamen Dialis* or priest of Jupiter – and as such was hemmed in by a host of religious restrictions and taboos that made it impossible for him to engage in violent politicking or warfare. However, Octavius lacked any significant military force and had no time to make up for that defect. Hearing of the approach of Cinna and Marius with their forces, he did his best to put the city in a state of defence, and sent messengers to Strabo in the north and Metellus Pius in Samnium imploring them to come to his – or as he put it, to the state's – aid. Both came, but in the event neither proved of much help. Pompeius Strabo played in effect a waiting game on the outskirts of Rome, evidently seeking his own benefit. Before anyone could discover what his real plans or intentions were, he died unexpectedly and mysteriously, according to one report from being struck by

lightning. Metellus Pius proved indecisive and ineffective: unwilling to take charge of the situation himself, he attempted to act as an intermediary between Cinna and the Senate, to no avail. The upshot was that Cinna and Marius took the city by force. Octavius was killed, Cinna resumed his consulship, and Merula paid the price of assuming Cinna's consulship by being forced to commit suicide.[44] Sulla's laws were repealed, and Sulpicius's laws were re-enacted. To put the franchise law into effect, censors were elected for the year 86 – L. Marcius Philippus and M. Perperna – who did in fact enrol over 100,000 new citizens, distributed among all thirty-five tribes as Sulpicius's law required, and that effectively settled the citizenship issue with regard to the former Italian allies.[45] This outcome could have been achieved amicably and without any violence or bloodshed had the optimates been willing to accept Sulpicius's original proposal. Instead they had brought Rome to outright civil war and yet found themselves obliged to accept this fair and equal enfranchisement all the same.

At the capture of Rome, Marius played a strange and grim game, pretending to observe the legal niceties by refusing to enter Rome so long as the law exiling him still formally stood.[46] In reality, a changed man after the great sufferings and humiliations he had undergone in escaping from Rome, he was thirsting for vengeance on all who had wronged or betrayed him. He soon stalked into the city, surrounded by an armed guard, and initiated a brief reign of terror. He had executed, or forced to commit suicide, many men who had always been his enemies, like Lutatius Catulus, but also many former allies who he felt had betrayed him by not openly and effectively supporting him when Sulla chased him out of Rome. These included – besides other noted leaders like the great orator Marcus Antonius and P. Licinius Crassus – Caesar's relatives L. Julius Caesar and his brother C. Caesar Strabo.[47]

The terror of this time thus touched Caesar rather closely, leaving his father as the only surviving adult male of the Julian *gens*. Caesar and his father, closely linked to Marius by the fact that Caesar's aunt Julia was Marius's wife and the mother of his son, were safe from harm and presumably able to provide protection to L. Caesar's son and daughter. Caesar himself was honoured, if that is the right term, by being nominated to replace Merula as *Flamen Dialis*. This ancient priesthood certainly was an honourable post. Only members of the ancient patrician *gentes* were eligible to hold it, and since the *Flaminica*, the *Flamen's* wife, also had to be patrician, Caesar's nomination to the role required the abandonment of an engagement that had been arranged between the thirteen-year-old youth and a girl named Cossutia from a wealthy equestrian family, and his engagement instead to the daughter of the consul Cinna, Cornelia.[48] Caesar was thereby tied by marriage links to both great leaders of the new regime, and yet the position of *Flamen Dialis*, with its many rigid limitations and taboos, hardly promised him a very prominent role in the future governance of Rome. Historians have often speculated as to what career Caesar might have been able to achieve had he really

been inaugurated as *Flamen Dialis*. Such inauguration would have to wait until Caesar attained adulthood, by Roman notions at least, and never actually took place as other events derailed the nomination. His marriage to Cornelia did occur, however, and it proved a success as Cornelia remained his wife until her death, and was the mother of his only child, Julia.

Marius's 'reign of terror' was mercifully brief, as Cinna and some of his leading supporters, most notably his influential military lieutenant Sertorius, objected to continued violence and brought it to an end.[49] The year 86 opened with Cinna and Marius as consuls, Cinna's second and Marius's unprecedented seventh consulship, but Marius died on 13 January, leaving Cinna as the master of Rome.

Cinna arranged for an important ally, L. Valerius Flaccus, to be elected consul in Marius's place, and took thought for the future governance of Rome.[50] There were two major issues. The first was settlement of the numerous dislocations within Rome and Italy caused by the Social War and the two civil wars already fought in its aftermath. The second was the matter of Sulla, a bitter enemy with a large and powerful army, engaged in fighting the war against Mithridates on Rome's behalf. Besides the death and destruction wrought by the fighting itself, the wars of the past couple of years had caused great economic upheaval and distress. Indebtedness was rife, there was a massive squeeze on credit, and a consequent rise in interest rates caused widespread loan defaults. The consul Flaccus addressed this problem, attempting to restore the credit market and ease indebtedness, by passing a law reducing debts by three-fourths.[51] This rough and ready remedy eased the immediate problem of defaults, and over the next year or two of relatively peaceful governance the economic situation in Italy apparently stabilized. This and the fair enrolment of the new citizens may be set to the credit of the Cinnan regime as real achievements. As to the problem posed by Sulla, the intention had been for Marius to take over the Mithridatic War, and in doing so, deal with Sulla. His death put paid to that idea, and Valerius Flaccus was selected to replace him not just as consul, but also as Sulla's replacement in command of the war with Mithridates. Flaccus proved not to be a very happy choice for this role.

The Mithridatic War represented the last great challenge to Roman domination over the Mediterranean basin and its hinterlands until the advent of Germanic and Hunnic invasions in the third and subsequent centuries CE. King Mithridates VI Eupator was a remarkable and resilient ruler, who deeply resented Rome's interference in what he regarded as his proper sphere of influence – Asia Minor – and especially Roman attempts to limit expansion of his ancestral kingdom. The kingdom of Pontus, situated in the north-eastern quadrant of Asia Minor, was the farthest from the Mediterranean and hence the last of that region's kingdoms and dynasties – the Attalids, the Bithynians, the Galatians, the Cappadocians – to feel Roman interference. In order to bolster his strength, both for competition against his regional rivals in Asia Minor and to strengthen his hand against the encroaching Romans,

Mithridates had extended his power along the eastern, Caucasian shore of the Black Sea, and more importantly along the northern shore of the Black Sea and especially in the Crimean peninsula. The increased strength this brought him, especially economic strength, enabled him to build up a military power stronger by far than any of the other Asia Minor kingdoms, and able to mount a real challenge to Rome's influence in the region.

In the 90s, Mithridates had attempted to expand his influence/power in Asia Minor, notably in an attempt to take over Cappadocia, only to be stymied by Roman intervention. As already mentioned, it was Sulla as governor of Cilicia who specifically reined him in on that occasion. Mithridates' anger and frustration at Roman interference increased in 90 and 89 when a Roman embassy headed by Manius Aquillius, sent to scotch Mithridates' interference in a succession dispute in the kingdom of Bithynia, treated him with extraordinary arrogance and encouraged the new Bithynian king, Nikomedes III, to attack him. Seeing that the Romans were embroiled in the Social War and consequent internal disputes, Mithridates decided that the time was ripe to rid himself of Roman interference once and for all, and went to war with Rome. There were few Roman troops in Asia Minor, and the predations of Roman tax farmers had made Rome extremely unpopular in her province of Asia (that is, the former Attalid kingdom in the west of Asia Minor), so that Mithridates was easily able to overrun Bithynia and Asia, and persuade the financially oppressed people of Asia in particular to rise up and massacre their Roman exploiters. Tens of thousands of Italians reputedly died in this massacre, and Mithridates found himself in full control of Asia Minor.[52] That was the situation Sulla had been sent to deal with.

Mithridates had built up a large fleet in the Black Sea in connection with his operations there, and with this fleet he took control of the Aegean and decided to employ a forward defence strategy against the Romans, by taking control of as much of Greece as he could. Since Sulla was held up in Italy by the conflict with Sulpicius and Marius, Mithridates' forces were indeed able to seize most of eastern Greece from Macedonia down to Attica, and when Sulla arrived on the eastern side of the Adriatic, it was therefore in Greece that he was obliged to campaign, rather than in Asia Minor. Marching south eastwards from Epirus, he met the Pontic army led by Mithridates' general Archelaos in Boiotia and defeated it. Sulla then marched into Attica and besieged Athens, which was ruled by the pro-Mithridates tyrant Aristion. The siege dragged on for some time, as Archelaos with his Pontic forces occupied the Peiraeus and brought in supplies via the Pontic fleet. Sulla sent out his top subordinate Lucullus to try to round up a fleet to contest control of the sea, while pressing the siege of Athens closely. The siege dragged through 87, but early in 86 Sulla's forces finally captured and sacked Athens, though Sulla spared the city and its people total destruction in recognition of Athens' glorious past.

The timing was fortunate, as a large Pontic relief army was approaching from northern Greece. Sulla marched his army into Boiotia to meet this force and inflicted a crushing defeat at the battle of Chaironeia.[53] That victory gave Sulla control of southern Greece, and persuaded Flaccus, who was at this time advancing across northern Greece, that he would do better not to try to come to grips with Sulla's victorious army. Instead, he marched on along the northern Aegean coast to the Hellespont, intending to cross to Asia Minor and engage Mithridates directly. Clearly Flaccus felt that it would be better to blood his army, hopefully victoriously, against Mithridates' forces before confronting Sulla's veterans, and that was perhaps a wise choice as far as it went. Unfortunately, however, Flaccus's grip on his soldiers was insecure even so, and after crossing the Hellespont he was killed by his own troops in a mutiny instigated by his legate C. Flavius Fimbria, who took over command of Flaccus's army. Fimbria operated successfully against Mithridates, capturing the king's western capital at Pergamon and forcing Mithridates to flee back to Pontus.[54]

Meanwhile Sulla continued consolidating his control over Greece and building up the fleet Lucullus had gathered, largely by winning the cooperation of the Rhodians. Archelaos had left the Peiraeus and joined up with the remnants of the army defeated at Chaironeia, which had taken refuge at Chalkis. When large reinforcements reached him from Asia Minor in early 85, he crossed back into Boiotia and tried the fortune of battle against Sulla once more, at Orchomenos. The resulting battle was a very close-run contest, in which reportedly Sulla himself was forced to enter the front lines to prevent defeat. The end result, however, was another decisive victory for Sulla, ending Mithridates' power west of the Aegean.[55]

Lucullus's fleet was now strong enough to enable Sulla to cross to Asia, and it was clear to Mithridates that the war was lost. He still had one ace in his hand, however: the hostility between the two Roman armies confronting him. He took the obvious step of playing them off against each other, and decided that Sulla was the stronger of the two and therefore the one to make a deal with. Sulla was now anxious in any case to end the war in the east so as to be free to turn back to affairs in Italy, and reached a peace agreement with Mithridates which required the king to give up all of his Anatolian conquests, but left him in undisturbed possession of his own kingdom of Pontus and the Crimea. As part of this deal, Mithridates paid Sulla a large indemnity: Sulla needed plenty of money to maintain the loyalty of his troops.[56] With the peace and the money in hand, however, Sulla was ready to confront Fimbria's army, which promptly defected to him, leaving its general Fimbria to commit suicide.

After a brief reorganization of Asia Minor, which essentially consisted of nothing more than restoring the pre-war conditions and extracting as much money as possible by way of punishment from the wretched Greek cities, at the beginning of 84 Sulla turned back towards Italy. He sent the Senate a

letter, announcing his achievements in the east, and his intention to return to Italy to punish those who had wronged him and the state. Leaving his subordinate Licinius Murena as governor of Asia, with the former army of Fimbria as a garrison, he crossed back to Greece and set out for the Adriatic.[57]

In Italy, Cinna had ensured a peaceful three years by the simple expedient of keeping power in his own hands. Following his consulships of 87 and 86, he had himself re-elected consul for 85, and again for 84, in both cases with a leading supporter named C. Papirius Carbo as his colleague. There was considerable resentment of this among the nobility, but cowed by the events of 87, the Senate remained quiet and cooperative. When Sulla's letter arrived, Cinna proposed to the Senate an attempt to negotiate a peaceful settlement between his party and Sulla. The Senate willingly concurred with this proposal, but when Cinna sought senators willing to travel to Sulla as negotiators, none could be found. Sulla's reputation for ruthlessness was too well known, and no one relied on his receiving ambassadors from Cinna amicably. Since Cinna and his supporters were not about to surrender to Sulla, that left renewed civil war as the only option, and Cinna decided it would be better to fight the war in Greece rather than Italy. He concentrated an army at Brundisium, but the men were essentially ill-trained recruits who had little appetite for a confrontation with Sulla's seasoned veterans. They resisted being shipped to Greece, and when Cinna tried to force them to embark, they rioted and killed the consul.[58] With Cinna's death, any thought of transporting an army to Greece was given up, and it was clear as a result that Italy would once again be devastated by internecine warfare.

It was in this civil war that Caesar first stepped into the political arena. As the nephew by marriage of Marius and the son-in-law of Cinna, Caesar was closely tied to the party of Marius and Cinna, but he was by no means destined to be its leader. Both Marius and Cinna had sons – the younger Caius Marius and the younger L. Cornelius Cinna – who seemed destined to provide the next generation of popular leadership, along with Cinna's colleague Carbo. Caesar had by now assumed the *toga virilis* (or man's toga), the formal acknowledgment that a Roman youth was a man, and his father's death by some illness in either 85 or 84 had left him, along with his two cousins Lucius and Sextus, at the head of the Julian clan. It might have been expected that Caesar would have been inaugurated as *Flamen Dialis*, the priesthood to which he had been nominated late in 87; but the looming civil war put off any such inauguration.

It was early in 83 that Sulla finally crossed with his army from Greece to Brundisium, beginning the great civil war that is usually called after him.[59] Carbo, after seeing out the year 84 as sole consul, had stepped aside, allowing the new man C. Norbanus and the aristocratic L. Cornelius Scipio Asiaticus to be elected consuls for 83. As events were to prove, neither was a capable military leader. Scipio's grip on his soldiers' loyalty was so tenuous that when Sulla camped near him, his army simply joined Sulla, leaving Scipio to Sulla's

mercy. For once, Sulla was in fact merciful, allowing Scipio to leave unmolested. Norbanus at least did manage to fight a battle, but was defeated and fled to Capua, where he was besieged. But this record of abject military failure masks an important fact: most Italians did in fact side with the Cinnan regime in this civil war, however little they might trust the military capabilities of the leaders put over them, and however little they might relish the prospect of fighting Sulla's veteran army. It is only the support of the new Italian citizens, in fact, that explains the ability of the Cinnans to continue fighting through 83 and 82, despite the war's disastrous opening.

In light of the abject performance of Scipio and Norbanus, it was clear that new and better leadership was needed.[60] The Cinnans did have an outstanding general on their side in Quintus Sertorius, who held the praetorship in 83. Unfortunately for their cause, the leaders chose not to use Sertorius's abilities, sending him to govern Spain instead. Carbo came back to the fore, assuming the consulship for 82 and raising new troops; and along with him the younger Caius Marius, only twenty-six years old at this time, was elected consul in the hope that his name would rally the Roman people to the Cinnan cause, and that he might have some of his great father's military genius.

He did not. Other than Sertorius, it seems that all of the leadership ability was on the Sullan side. Though Sulla had left his very capable long-time lieutenant Lucullus in Asia, the ex-praetor Metellus Pius, who had taken refuge in Africa when Cinna triumphed in 87, returned to Italy and joined Sulla with several thousand soldiers. The young Marcus Crassus, whose father and older brother had been killed on Marius's orders and who had gone into hiding in Spain, also joined Sulla with a small force he had personally raised, and proved to be an effective leader. But undoubtedly the younger leader of the hour was Pompeius Strabo's son Cnaeus Pompeius. He had been living quietly on his father's estates in Picenum since 87, and had strong ties to neither side in this war. He calculated, however, that his interest would be served by being on the winning side, and that Sulla would be the winner. He therefore raised an army of four legions from Picenum, many of them no doubt his father's veterans, and marched south across Italy to join Sulla, defeating several Cinnan generals, including Papirius Carbo himself, along the way. Sulla was sufficiently impressed to hail the young Pompeius, who was only twenty-three years old at this time, with the sobriquet '*Magnus*' ('the great'), suggesting that he was another Alexander. Pompeius was delighted, and used this term as part of his name hereafter: Cnaeus Pompeius Magnus.

The fighting was mostly very straightforward from here on. Carbo was repeatedly defeated, by Metellus and Pompeius in Picenum and by Sulla himself in Etruria, and eventually ignominiously abandoned his army and fled to Sicily. Young Marius was defeated by Sulla at Sacriportus and took refuge in Praeneste, where he died after a lengthy siege. As a result of these victories, Sulla was able to take control of Rome itself, and had himself installed as dictator, reviving that authoritarian office after a lapse of more

than 130 years, with the brief to 'restore the state' (*rei publicae constituendae causa*).

The last serious act of the civil war was also, in a way, the last act of the Social War: Samnite leaders who had never fully accepted defeat in the Social War, and who bitterly resented the optimates and Roman power generally, raised a large army and marched on Rome with the intention of destroying the hated city. Sulla was warned just in time to throw his army between the Samnites and the city, and a desperate battle was fought at the Colline Gate of Rome. Sulla himself was initially defeated and forced to take refuge behind the city walls, but Marcus Crassus, commanding the right wing of Sulla's army, defeated the forces opposed to him, drove them back, and was thereby chiefly responsible for Sulla's final victory.[61]

This victory ended the civil war in Italy, except for small mopping-up operations, and left Sulla in total command of the Roman state. Sulla sent Pompeius, with the title of pro-praetor, to Sicily to fight the Cinnan forces in the island, and when Pompeius rapidly succeeded in winning control of Sicily for Sulla, capturing and killing the consul Papirius Carbo in the process, he was sent on to Africa where a Cinnan army had been gathered under the command of Cn. Domitius Ahenobarbus. Here again, Pompeius was swiftly and bloodily victorious, executing Ahenobarbus and other leaders.[62] Meanwhile Sulla reorganized the Roman governing system, essentially along the lines of his hurried and reactionary reforms of 88. The Senate was increased from 300 to 600 by the addition of wealthy equestrians, many of them doubtless Italian *domi nobiles*, and membership of the juries in the permanent law courts (*quaestiones*) was returned exclusively to the senators. The number of these permanent law courts was increased to seven (on extortion: *de repetundis*; on murder: *de sicariis et veneficis*; on corruption: *de peculatu*; on violence: *de vi*; on treason: *de maiestate*; on electoral bribery: *de ambitu*; and on fraud: *de falsis*), and their roles and procedures were regulated. The number of annual quaestors was raised to 20, and admission to the Senate made automatic upon election to the quaestorship, thus regulating the maintenance of the Senate's number and making the Senate an essentially elective body for the future.

Since the Lex Villia Annalis regulating the age limits and intervals of office holding had been effectively repealed since Marius's numerous consulships, Sulla regulated office holding anew, prescribing the order of offices and proper age limits. The quaestorship came first at age thirty, then a man needed to be thirty-nine to hold the praetorship, and only then could he stand for the consulship at forty-two. A ten-year interval was prescribed before iteration of the consulship. To deal with the new business of law courts and provincial governance, the number of praetors was raised to eight. The tribunate was taken out of the *cursus honorum*: a man who held the tribunate was made ineligible for other magistracies, and the powers of the tribunate were curtailed by limitation of the veto and abolition of the tribune's right to

initiate legislation, making this an office no ambitious nobles (or reformers) would seek in future. Production of coinage was regulated, and distributions of free or cut-price grain ended. The priestly colleges of *pontifices* and *augures* were increased in number to fifteen members each, and admission to these colleges was again made by the traditional method of co-optation. The provinces were regulated, and the rule established that they would be governed by ex-consuls and ex-praetors in the year after holding office at Rome, for only a one or two-year term. The powers of provincial governors to wage war were curtailed under a revised treason law.[63]

The aim of this reordering of the state was essentially to turn the clock back to pre-Gracchan times. The Senate was to be firmly in control of the Roman government, as Sulla's previous law of 88 requiring that the Senate approve of proposed legislation before it was subjected to a popular vote had been reinstated. Reforming tribunes, those trouble makers who had started Rome's descent into violence according to the optimate view of the matter, were made a thing of the past. The Roman army was again to be a citizen militia army, recruited by magistrates under senatorial decrees; and the great independent commands that had spawned the overweening power of Marius and Sulla himself were to be no more. The traditional *cursus honorum* was to be strictly observed, with raised age limits and little or no repetition of office holding.

In order to ensure that this new–old governing system would be accepted, Sulla initiated a ruthless programme of eliminating all opposition to the optimate clique and their notion of how Rome should be structured and governed. Some initial justification for Sulla's ruthlessness could be found in a last-minute massacre of suspect leaders at Rome ordered by the younger Marius in 82,[64] but the scale of Sulla's executions of opponents or those suspected of opposition went far beyond anything either of the Marii or any of the Cinnans had done – so much so that some of Sulla's own supporters cavilled at it and questioned when the killing would be over. Sulla responded by bringing a new form of orderly violence into Roman political life, with a new word to refer to it: the proscriptions. Regular lists were posted up in Rome's public spaces of persons 'proscribed': that is, essentially declared outlaws. Anyone thus proscribed could be killed on sight, and bounties were paid to the killers. At a minimum, several thousand wealthy Romans were proscribed thus, including dozens of senators; and although not all of them were actually killed, it remained true that the opposition 'party' was largely killed off. In addition, a law stripped the sons of the proscribed of most active rights of citizenship, including the right to seek or hold public office.[65] The estates of the proscribed were auctioned off, with the moneys going into state coffers to pay for Sulla's many projects – such as the settlement of his veteran soldiers, mostly in Etruria and Campania – but there was doubtless a good deal of corruption involved in this process. Crassus in particular was thought to have laid the foundations of his massive fortune by acquisition of the wealth of the proscribed.[66]

Caesar, as the nephew of Marius and son-in-law of Cinna, naturally fell under suspicion of favouring the Cinnan cause, and was in danger of being proscribed. He was 17 years old at the beginning of 82, the age at which Romans often began their period of military service; but he had wisely refrained from participating actively in the civil war on either side. We could speculate that he was already sensible enough to see that Sulla would win, but couldn't bring himself to serve the winning side. That may have saved him from summary execution, but he was still at risk. Sulla demanded a formal show of loyalty to the new regime: Caesar was to divorce his young wife Cornelia, Cinna's daughter, and marry a new wife of Sulla's choice, from a safely loyal family. Other young nobles had been made to do this, including even Pompeius, who had been assigned a new bride who was hastily divorced from an existing husband and arrived in Pompeius's home heavily pregnant. Despite his relatively strong position as commander of an independent military force, Pompeius accepted this.[67] Caesar did not. He refused categorically to divorce Cornelia at Sulla's bidding, and when Sulla responded by seizing Cornelia's dowry for the state, Caesar went into hiding in fear for his life.

Fortunately, he had relatives in Sulla's circle who interceded for him. His mother's cousin Caius Aurelius Cotta, and his distant cousin Mamercus Lepidus, accompanied by the Vestal Virgins – who were connected to Caesar by his position as nominated candidate for the post of *Flamen Dialis* – pleaded with Sulla, and he grudgingly agreed to leave Caesar alone. This is the occasion when Sulla is supposed to have told his supporters who were interceding for Caesar that they were foolish not to see that Caesar had 'many Mariuses' in him.[68] This supposedly prescient statement is no doubt apocryphal, but it does reflect something unique about Caesar already at this tender age: the willingness to stand up to the all-powerful and extraordinarily ruthless Sulla at the height of the latter's power showed some of the remarkable qualities of self-assuredness, courage and refusal to give in to intimidation that were hallmarks of Caesar's personality and career. Sulla did, however, end Caesar's candidacy for the post of *Flamen Dialis*. This was no doubt intended as a punishment, but in fact it relieved Caesar of what would have been an exceptionally difficult and burdensome role, which would in principle at least have precluded him from having a significant political or military career.

At the end of the year 81, Sulla took up a second consulship for the year 80, with Metellus Pius as colleague. After his year as consul, he continued as dictator, rounding off his refashioning of the Roman governing system, until the consular elections for the year 78 had been conducted. Then, in the middle of the year 79, he abdicated from the dictatorship and quietly stepped back into private life, in the belief that the reforms he had instituted, and his ruthless elimination of opposition, would secure the sound and conservative governance of Rome for the foreseeable future.[69]

Italy and the empire were relatively peaceful. Sulla had been obliged to accept the enrolment of the Italian new Roman citizens in all thirty-five

tribes: that achievement of Cinna could not be rolled back. However, though a censorship was due in 81 or 80, no censors were elected, and it was clear that the optimate regime's new approach to denying the Italians full active citizenship lay in holding no more censuses, so that the vast majority of new citizens would simply never be enrolled: the censorship of 86 had only started the job, enrolling a little over 100,000 of the new citizens. Thus the principle of the Italians' citizenship may have been settled, but the putting of it into practice still was not.

Beyond that, however, Sulla left a legacy of appalling violence that could not be forgotten. His example, in leading a Roman army against Rome, could not be legislated out of existence: it was there as a temptation to any future powerful general who felt that the Roman government was not giving him and/or his men their due. And his system of proscribing opponents had ratcheted up Roman political violence one more level. Once again, from the murder of Tiberius Gracchus and his supporters, to the use of official force to massacre C. Gracchus and his supporters, to the unwarranted massacre of the already arrested and disarmed Saturninus and his supporters, to the march on Rome by Sulla and his army, to the official outlawing and execution of all persons suspected of being on the wrong side of the political divide that was the proscriptions, it was the optimate group in Roman political life that was responsible for bringing ever new levels of violence into Roman politics. They did this in their continuing desperate attempt to pretend that the Roman governing system was functioning smoothly as things were, that reforms and changes were not only unnecessary but positively harmful, and that any who sought to bring about reform or change were thus traitors to the Roman state. It hardly takes the hindsight of history to perceive that this optimate outlook was a delusion. Sulla's reactionary reforms were doomed to failure from the moment they were enacted, because they simply did not conform to the social, economic and political realities of the time.

Sulla himself, withdrawing into a luxurious retirement at his magnificent villa on the Bay of Naples, died unexpectedly of a sudden disease within a year of his retirement, and so did not see the process of the unravelling of his system begin;[70] but had he lived just a few months longer, he would have done.

III

CAESAR'S EARLY MANHOOD: THE RISE OF POMPEIUS

The dictatorship of Sulla had come very close to putting a premature end to Caesar's life and/or career, and we can see in the skilful way Caesar handled the very dangerous situation he found himself in a clear foreshadowing of the man he was to become. Tied as closely as he was to Sulla's bitter rivals and enemies Marius and Cinna, it had taken the greatest courage for Caesar to resist Sulla's demand that he publicly display his loyalty to the new regime by divorce and remarriage. He had had to walk a very fine line indeed to maintain that stance of principled independence and yet preserve his life and full citizen rights. Reportedly, he even had to spend some weeks or months in hiding and on the run, buying off bounty hunters pursuing him, until Sulla relented and accepted his defiance.[1] Having pulled this off, with the help of his relatives in Sulla's circle, Caesar found it prudent to absent himself from Rome for some time, lest Sulla change his mind or renew his pressure on him to conform.

Caesar had in any case reached the age at which young men of the senatorial elite began to demonstrate their capacity for a public career by undertaking military and administrative duties on the staffs of Roman governors and generals. In 81 and 80, therefore, Caesar served on the staff of the praetor M. Minucius Thermus who was governor of Asia.[2] His duties under Thermus were both military and diplomatic. Roman magistrates, generals and governors customarily surrounded themselves with young up and coming nobles who served as a pool they drew on for officers, administrative aides and representatives for any mission that might arise. Which young man would get used for what sorts of services depended very much on the nature of a young noble's relationship to his superior, and the degree of confidence and trust he was able to inspire.

Caesar evidently won the confidence of his commander Thermus. As governor of Asia – that is, the region of western Asia Minor that used to be the Attalid kingdom – Thermus had to deal with some minor warfare left over from the Mithridatic War. In particular, the island of Lesbos still held out against Roman power, and in order to invest the island properly, Thermus needed a fleet. In a clear sign of his trust, Thermus sent the young Caesar as

his ambassador to king Nikomedes IV of Bithynia to request that king to place part of his royal fleet at Thermus's disposal. Caesar was successful in this mission, and evidently very much enjoyed his visit to Nikomedes' court. Indeed, according to report, he enjoyed the visit rather too much. One thing that both friends and enemies of Caesar remarked on was his extraordinary charm. Few men, or women, were immune to it when in Caesar's presence; indeed, its effect seemed to some almost demonic, since even men who strongly disliked and/or disapproved of Caesar found themselves, to their later dismay, falling under his spell. For example Cicero, who after Caesar's death frequently expressed his hatred of Caesar in his letters, found Caesar charming company when actually in his presence.[3]

Nikomedes was not immune to Caesar's charm, and treated him with very distinguished attention, giving him a full taste of the lifestyle of Hellenistic royalty. The visit, and a brief follow-up visit to deal with a property issue, spawned lurid gossip that was to dog Caesar through the rest of his life. It was alleged that Caesar had a homoerotic fling with Nikomedes, and more damagingly that he had been the passive partner in the encounter. Bisexuality was quite common among the elite classes of ancient Greece and Rome, and was not particularly frowned upon. But a man should always be a man, and to be the passive, penetrated partner in a homoerotic affair was to play the role of a woman. That was considered disgraceful, particularly by the Romans with their macho culture. In later years, Caesar's enemies elaborated the gossip regarding his relationship with Nikomedes into a lurid tale of Caesar dressing in filmy feminine gowns and being taken to the royal bedchamber, powdered and perfumed like a courtesan, to be the king's catamite.[4] This Caesar always denied. What, if anything, really happened is lost amidst all the malicious elaborations, but it would not be particularly surprising if Caesar – who was unconventional and pleasure loving – did sample all the pleasures available at the king's court, including homoerotic ones. More significantly, though, Caesar established a lasting relationship with the royal family of Bithynia, acting as their patron at Rome in subsequent years.

As mentioned, Caesar was successful in gaining the aid of the Bithynian fleet for Thermus's operations, and Thermus was thus able to closely besiege the main city of Lesbos, Mytilene. After a fairly brief siege, Mytilene was taken by storm, and here Caesar distinguished himself by saving the life of a fellow soldier during the fighting, for which Thermus honoured him by formally bestowing the *corona civica*, Rome's highest military decoration. Besides the reputation for military valour that went with this honour, it apparently carried other advantages: Caesar was eligible for, and held, Rome's top magistracies – the praetorship and consulship – two years earlier than was the norm, and it seems it was winning the *corona civica* that gave him this early eligibility.[5]

After his successful spell on Thermus's staff, Caesar followed up by taking a position on the staff of the consul for 79, P. Servilius Vatia, who had been

made governor of Cilicia in southern Asia Minor in 78. Servilius campaigned extensively against the pirates who made their bases along Cilicia's rocky coast, and Caesar gained further military experience in the opening stage of this campaign.[6] But when news arrived of Sulla's sudden death, Caesar received permission to return to Rome, where the political situation was roiled by the unexpected freedom of the great dictator's passing. It turned out that, as ruthless and brutal as he had been, Sulla had by no means settled the political issues and disputes Rome had been grappling with since the Gracchi. They burst into new life almost as soon as he was gone from the scene, and indeed it can be argued that he had undercut his own system even before his abdication.

One of the most important sources of the violent upheavals that had troubled Rome repeatedly since the late second century was the problem of military recruitment and leadership. Tiberius Gracchus's reforms had been in great part prompted by the decline of the small farming class that formed the backbone of Rome's citizen militia army; and the career of Marius had been shaped by the need for more effective military leadership than annually elected magistrates could provide, and by his solution of Rome's military manpower problem through the recruitment of proletarian armies. Sulla's own career had been shaped by a long-term military command that placed him beyond the Senate's control, and a Marian-type professionalized proletarian army that was loyal to him rather than to the governing system of Rome. In theory, the new Sullan regime was no longer to permit such excessively powerful commands, nor to rely on professionalized proletarian armies the Senate could not control. Yet even as Sulla enacted his laws as dictator, a great military commander with an army loyal to himself rather than to the *res publica* was busy campaigning on Sulla's behalf in Sicily and Africa: Pompeius and his privately raised and trained army.

Pompeius had held no political office that would qualify him for military command. As dictator, Sulla could and did empower Pompeius, granting him pro-praetorian authority; but since *imperium* (the power of command) was supposed to flow only from the people's grant, without popular election Pompeius's power technically could only be a delegated power from Sulla, as a *legatus pro-praetore.*[7] When Pompeius had brought his campaign to a successful conclusion, Sulla as his superior commander instructed him to disband his army and return to Rome. Pompeius, however, was not playing by the legal rules. He declined to disband his army on Sulla's orders, and instead demanded a triumph, a distinction for which only commanders acting under their own auspices, with *imperium* granted by the people, were eligible. Pompeius made it clear to Sulla that this was his army, loyal to him. Sulla realized that if he wanted to bring Pompeius to heel, he would have to fight. He had no appetite for such a fight: he was looking forward to retiring from the struggles and stresses of political and military leadership. So Sulla caved in and gave Pompeius the triumph he demanded.[8]

No 'state' or governing system that does not have a monopoly, or at least exercise dominant control, of military force in its territory can be considered secure or effective. The history of the post-colonial governments in the modern world, with their frequent military coups, illustrates well how precarious any governing system necessarily is when it lacks full control of the military. Again, Sulla's own example had showed that the Roman governing system did not control military power at Rome after Marius's reforms. Sulla's reforms had nominally turned the clock back to pre-Marian days, restoring the collegial, turn and turn about system of military command and the citizen militia form of army. But his reliance on Pompeius and his army, and bending to Pompeius's illegal demands, exposed that for the sham it was. Pompeius showed that nothing had really changed: Rome still needed competent long-term commanders to meet her important military challenges; those commanders needed professionalized armies of the Marian type, recruited from proletarian volunteers, which would be loyal to their commanders; and the Sullan regime was still in no position to exercise real control over such commanders and armies. From the beginning, therefore, Sulla's reformed governing system was hollow, and Pompeius's triumph exposed that fact to the world.

No sooner was Sulla dead and buried (or rather, cremated), than one of the consuls of 78 began to attempt to roll back key elements of Sulla's reforms. M. Aemilius Lepidus, from an ancient and influential patrician clan, proposed to restore full powers to the tribunate, restore confiscated lands to their previous owners and their civic rights to the sons of the proscribed, and re-establish a system of grain distribution to the urban populace.[9] He was opposed by his consular colleague, Q. Lutatius Catulus, who had the optimates and the majority of the Senate on his side, and the dispute quickly degenerated into violence. Meanwhile reports came in of 'rebel' forces gathering in northern Italy from among all those dispossessed, displaced or otherwise discomfited by the Sullan regime. The consuls were sent to deal with this, and Lepidus in particular began to levy troops; but it soon became clear that he was in cahoots with the 'rebels'. He refused to return to Rome to conduct the consular elections for 77, which were thus put off past the end of the year.

At the end of 78, Lepidus nominally became the governor of Transalpine Gaul, but never went to his province, instead remaining in north Italy, especially Etruria, where he built up his military forces. But both he and the Senate vacillated, not quite able to make up their minds to move to open conflict.[10] This was the situation to which Caesar returned, and on his return to Rome he was immediately wooed by Lepidus to join his uprising. Caesar's name and connections, and particularly his close relationship with both Marius and Cinna, would have been of value to Lepidus. Caesar, however, perceived at once that a leader who could not make up his mind what to do was no man to follow.[11] He remained aloof, and meanwhile the Senate,

prompted by Catulus and Pompeius, plucked up the nerve to take decisive action. Lepidus had divided his forces: he himself finally marched on Rome with a substantial force from Etruria, while further north his lieutenant M. Junius Brutus (father of the famous Brutus who assassinated Caesar in the end) commanded a force stationed at Mutina (Modena) in the Po valley. Catulus defended Rome against Lepidus, defeated him, and drove him back to Etruria. Meanwhile the Senate had turned to Pompeius for help, and once again Pompeius received a command for which he was not legally qualified: he led his army against Brutus's force at Mutina, defeated and captured Brutus, and executed him. He then marched south towards Lepidus and his army, encountering and defeating them at Cosa. Lepidus took refuge in Sardinia, where he died. His subordinate Perperna then took the remnants of his force to Spain.[12]

With the crisis over, Catulus ordered Pompeius to disband his army, and once again Pompeius defied the order. The Senate had to realize there was no way they could compel him. Pompeius demanded another major command. The civil war was not in fact entirely over: Cinna's former right-hand man Sertorius, who had been sent in 82 to govern Nearer Spain, still held out there. He had managed to win great popularity and loyalty both among Roman settlers in Spain, and among the Spanish provincials. He was a just and honest governor, an inspirational leader and a brilliant general, and he represented everything that was best about Rome and the Romans. It was his and Rome's tragedy that his talent was to be wasted representing a lost cause. However, rather than negotiating with him and trying to bring him and his talents back into the fold, Sulla and – after Sulla's death – the Senate insisted on destroying him.

That proved exceptionally hard to do. Sulla had sent his consular colleague Metellus Pius to Spain as governor with a strong army and orders to crush Sertorius. Pius was a thorough and fairly honest governor, and an efficient general, but he lacked Sertorius's inspirational qualities and was militarily outclassed. Sertorius defeated Metellus's forces repeatedly, and succeeded in taking control of most of Roman Spain, obliging Metellus finally to send dispatches to Rome pleading for the Senate to send him urgent reinforcements.[13] This was Pompeius's opening: at the senatorial debate on Metellus's needs, Pompeius (who was not a senator and hence not present) let it be known through intermediaries that he was willing to go to Metellus's aid, but not as Metellus's subordinate. After a lively debate, the senior ex-consul Marcius Philippus persuaded the Senate to send Pompeius to Spain as Metellus's equal colleague, with pro-consular authority.[14] Once again Pompeius demonstrated that Sulla's reforms had changed nothing: to adapt Mao's famous statement, power flowed from the point of a spear, and Pompeius had the spears.

Pompeius was in fact the great man of this era. His achievements as an independent commander in his twenties, when he should have been serving

as a junior officer and preparing to run for the quaestorship, combined with his youthful good looks and charm, had prompted comparisons to Alexander the Great. He loved to add the *cognomen* Magnus ('the Great') to his name, and styled his hair in imitation of Alexander's hairstyle, affectations which only increased the adoration of his soldiers and of the urban populace. He was by far the most popular figure in Rome. However, though he was undoubtedly an excellent general, his military abilities were in fact somewhat over-rated, not least by himself. His career was to show very clearly that he knew how to make himself idolized by his soldiers, that he was a brilliant organizer, and that he had an excellent grasp of grand strategy, all great qualities for a general to have. But when it came to fighting battles, his strategy and tactics were routine and uninspired, and like Metellus he found himself outclassed by Sertorius in this respect.

Arriving in Spain at the beginning of 76, Pompeius evidently expected to defeat Sertorius and finish off the war in short order. Instead, he was defeated in battle himself at Lauro, and had to retreat back towards the Pyrenees in order to be able to draw supplies from Gaul.[15] In 75 he advanced again against Sertorius, only to be defeated once more at the river Sucro. He was saved from a third ignominious defeat at the Turia only by the arrival of Metellus Pius and his army to reinforce him. Sertorius was forced onto the defensive by the sheer weight of preponderant force. He had been obliged to divide his forces when Pompeius arrived in Spain, sending part of his army under his subordinate Hirtuleius to face Metellus while he himself fought Pompeius. As we have seen, Sertorius handled Pompeius very successfully, but Hirtuleius's force was destroyed by Metellus. It was this that made it possible for Metellus to come to Pompeius's aid; and faced by two larger armies, with his own forces diminished by Hirtuleius's disaster, Sertorius could only retreat.[16]

Despite being outnumbered and pressed by two enemy forces, however, Sertorius was far from beaten. Hard pressed by Pompeius and Metellus, he undertook a brilliant campaign of manoeuvre, using guerrilla tactics to hamper his enemies' movements and prevent them from capturing his strongholds. He was so successful with this through 75, that at the end of the year Pompeius and Metellus separated with little achieved and most of Spain still under Sertorius's control.

Obviously the fault for this lack of success could not lie with Pompeius himself: he wrote a bitter letter to the Senate complaining of a lack of proper support, demanding substantial reinforcements of men, money and equipment, and threatening to abandon the war in Spain and march back to Italy with his army if this support was not forthcoming.[17] The Senate conceded what he demanded, and in 74 he and Metellus were able to renew hostilities against Sertorius with overwhelmingly superior force, and a new campaign plan of occupying territory and towns and gradually strangling Sertorius by restricting him to a smaller and smaller sphere of control. Even so, Sertorius

continued to resist brilliantly, forcing the combined armies of Metellus and Pompeius to retreat from Calagurris near the end of 74, but the writing was on the wall. Though Sertorius held out through 73 and into 72, he was constantly losing territory and support, and it was clear that the conflict could only end one way. Nevertheless, it was in the end not Pompeius, but a conspiracy of some of Sertorius's Roman officers that brought his resistance to an end. Led by M. Perperna, Lepidus's former lieutenant, a group of disgruntled Romans assassinated Sertorius, and with the great man out of the way, Pompeius was able to defeat the remnants of Sertorius's army, led by Perperna, with ease, finally bringing the war to a close and 'pacifying' Spain. Sertorius had very clearly shown himself to be a better general than Pompeius, but nevertheless Pompeius received the credit and glory of having won in the end.[18]

During these years, Caesar was living the life of a typical young noble and aspiring politician. Having taken his first steps in the fields of warfare, diplomacy and overseas governance in 81 to 80 under Minucius Thermus and in 79 to 78 under Servilius Vatia, between 78 and 75 Caesar began to make a name for himself in Rome itself. One of the ways in which ambitious young Roman nobles demonstrated their abilities and got themselves known, as a preliminary to entering on the official career ladder, was by undertaking prosecutions of Roman magistrates and governors for various kinds of official malfeasance. Building a thorough and effective prosecution case and presenting it eloquently and persuasively at trial, a young noble showed that he had the qualities needed to make his way in Roman politics. Caesar undertook several high-profile prosecutions in these years, acquitting himself so well that he won a reputation as one of the most eloquent public speakers in Rome. In 77 he prosecuted the ex-consul Cn. Cornelius Dolabella for extortion in his governing of the province Macedonia. Dolabella was defended by the outstanding defence counsel and greatest orator of the time, Q. Hortensius, and was acquitted by the jury of senators, as usually happened. But Caesar's prosecution speech was widely admired and remained long in circulation as a literary classic.[19]

In 76 Caesar prosecuted C. Antonius, also for extortion, and proved so effective that Antonius, in a panic, appealed to a tribune for protection.[20] Cicero's judgment, expressed many years later in his treatise on Roman oratory called *Brutus*, was that Caesar's simple and lucid prose style was extremely effective, and that the only thing that kept Caesar from rivalling the very best orator (that is, Cicero himself) was that he did not devote himself totally to the study of rhetoric. The time and effort Caesar put into these prosecutions also began to build him a reputation as a loyal and effective patron, a reputation he was to maintain throughout his career. Thus he prosecuted M. Iuncus later in the 70s and justified this as a duty he owed to the Bithynian royal family as their Roman patron. He also prosecuted the ex-consul C. Calpurnius Piso in 63 for extortion, attacking him bitterly for the

unjust execution of a *Transpadanus*, one of the inhabitants of Cisalpine Gaul north of the Po, a region of whose inhabitants Caesar had become a patron. Also in the year 63 he defended another client named Hiempsal, a member of the Numidian royal family, so vehemently that he seized the Numidian crown prince Juba by his beard in the court room – an assault for which Juba never forgave him. When Hiempsal lost his case and was to be extradited to Numidia to face the king's punishment, Caesar still protected him by hiding the man in his own house and smuggling him out of Rome to safety in his official entourage when he went to Spain as governor in 61.[21]

Besides all this Caesar also became a noted figure in Roman high society. He acquired a reputation as a bit of a dandy, paying elaborate attention to the way he was dressed and introducing several new styles: he added fringed sleeves to his tunics, for example, and adopted a special rather loose way of belting them. He dabbled in poetry as well as rhetoric, and was to be seen at literary get-togethers. His easy manners and charm, as well as his birth and connections, won him a welcome everywhere, and he soon became notorious as a ladies' man too. His affairs with an array of married women, reputedly including the wife of the great Pompeius among many others, were notorious. Few women were impervious to his charm, and sexual mores among the Roman elite did not frown very strongly on extramarital affairs so long as they were not too overtly flaunted. The poetry of Catullus, written mostly rather later in the 50s, gives us an inside view of this side of Roman life. The most notorious, and long-lasting, of Caesar's many affairs was with Servilia, widow of the M. Brutus whom Pompeius had executed in 77 and wife of Dec. Junius Silanus. Reputedly Caesar on one occasion gave her as a gift the most exquisite pearl that had ever been brought to Rome, paying for it the fabulous sum of 60,000 gold pieces.[22]

This brings us to another aspect of Caesar's lifestyle: his extravagance. Though his personal fortune was, by the standards of the Roman elite of this time, distinctly moderate, he lived in the grandest style. He was a keen art collector, and paid extravagant prices for gems and well-trained slaves. Most famously, he had a magnificent country villa built for himself at the fashionable resort of Nemi, but when it was completed he found fault with various features and had the whole building torn down and rebuilt according to improved specifications. All of this extravagant living was funded by borrowing, with the result that even before Caesar entered on a political career he was already heavily in debt, reportedly to the tune of some 1,300 talents.[23] The willingness of creditors to lend him money for this lifestyle does show how highly his political prospects were rated already in the 70s.

In 75 Caesar left Rome to travel to the east. Though his prosecutions of Dolabella and Antonius had already won him a reputation for eloquence, he wished to improve his oratory further by studying with the most famous teacher of rhetoric of this age, Apollonius Molon of Rhodes.[24] More than what he learned from Molon, this trip was to be memorable for marginally

involving Caesar in two great conflicts that were to trouble Rome well into the 60s. On his way to Rhodes, as he sailed along the coast of Ionia, Caesar was intercepted and captured by pirates some way north of the island he was making for. Piracy had, for nearly 100 years, been a growing problem in the Mediterranean world. With the growth of Mediterranean-wide trade networks in the centuries after about 800, peoples living along poor, rocky, coastal regions like Cilicia in southern Asia Minor, the island of Crete, Aitolia on the north shore of the Gulf of Corinth, and Illyria along the eastern Adriatic coast, had been tempted to cash in on the wealth passing along the shipping lanes adjacent to their coasts by taking to the seas and seizing whatever they could. It needed strong naval powers with an interest in protecting trade to keep such piracy under control. In the fifth and fourth centuries that role had been played by the Athenians and the Carthaginians, in the eastern and western Mediterranean regions respectively. In the third and early second centuries the Rhodians had taken up the task of combating piracy, and done so very effectively until the Romans decided to break Rhodian financial, and hence naval, strength in the aftermath of their third Macedonian War, in 166. Since then, the Romans had been the only Mediterranean power with the strength and means to combat piracy, but they had shown very little interest in doing so.

It may well be that the Romans deliberately turned a blind eye to the growth of piracy, because they found the role the pirates played in the Mediterranean slave trade to their advantage, given their ravenous appetite for ever more slaves to fuel the growing slave economy of Italy in this period; though doubtless mere negligence also played a part in the Romans' overlooking of the pirate menace. At any rate, by the end of the second century, piracy had grown rife throughout the Mediterranean, such that the Romans could overlook it no more. Still, the Senate's attempts to come to grips with the pirates for long proved half-hearted at best.

The praetor Marcus Antonius, a great orator but not a noted military figure, was instructed to campaign against pirate bases in Cilicia in 102 to 100.[25] Though Antonius was granted a triumph for this campaign, in plain truth it achieved little and for some 25 years there was no follow-up. By 75 piracy was more endemic than ever, and Caesar was far from being the only notable Roman to fall victim to it. The pirates who had seized Caesar held him to ransom, demanding 20 talents to set him free. Caesar reportedly laughed at this demand, telling the pirates they had no notion of whom they had captured, and told them he was worth at least 50 talents. He sent members of his entourage to the Greek cities along the Ionian coast to raise this money, holding them to blame for his capture in that they had failed to police their coastal waters properly. Remaining on the pirate ship with a single friend and two slaves, he treated his captors with great insolence, and repeatedly promised them that once he was freed he would capture and kill them all. The pirates simply laughed at this: they were neither the first nor

the last to underestimate Caesar. As soon as the ransom money arrived and he was freed, he raised a small flotilla of armed ships from the nearby Greek city of Miletos, pursued the pirates, and captured them just as he had promised. He imprisoned the pirates at Pergamon, and contacted the governor of Asia, M. Junius Iuncus, to have them punished. Finding that Iuncus delayed and seemed more interested in the pirates' money than in properly punishing them, however, Caesar ignored him and crucified the pirates on his own authority, as he had promised them he would.[26] This episode shows up the whole nature of the pirate menace admirably: the unwillingness of coastal cities to police their waters, and the negligence and avarice of the Roman authorities, that made the piracy possible; and yet the ease with which piracy could in fact be dealt with by any Roman determined and efficient enough to undertake to do so properly.

By this time, in fact, piracy had become such a large-scale enterprise that pirate leaders began to form a kind of shadow state, making alliances with each other and with genuine states and rulers, like Mithridates and (reputedly) even Sertorius.[27] In 74, no doubt spurred by these alliances, the Senate approved an unusually ample command against pirates throughout the Mediterranean, which in typical Roman fashion was granted to the second Marcus Antonius, who was praetor in that year, for no other apparent reason than that his father had campaigned against pirates.[28] This second Antonius was no more successful than the first, in fact rather less so. After some campaigning in the western Mediterranean in 74 and 73, extensive preparations in 72 for an attack on the pirate bases in Crete led to a disastrous defeat at the hands of the Cretan pirates, probably in early 71. Antonius was forced to make a humiliating treaty, and died soon afterwards.[29] The Senate rejected this treaty, and in 69 the consul Q. Caecilius Metellus was sent to fight the Cretan pirates once more. Though he was somewhat more successful than Antonius, his operations soon bogged down into successive sieges of pirate bases in Crete, with little effect on the overall pirate nuisance.[30]

In the early 60s, however, the pirates overreached: a pirate fleet dared to attack and sack the Roman harbour of Ostia at the mouth of the Tiber; and pirates kidnapped two praetors with their lictors and official insignia. The result was a widespread feeling that the pirates needed to be taken on more thoroughly and on a much larger scale, and that there was only one man at Rome suited to the job: Cnaeus Pompeius. One of the tribunes of 67, Aulus Gabinius, proposed a bill setting up a Mediterranean-wide command for three years, with *imperium* superior to all other Roman magistrates and governors up to 50 miles inland from every coast, and with almost limitless resources, to eliminate the pirate menace once and for all. No one doubted that Pompeius was the man for whom this command was intended. The scale and scope of this command were unprecedented, in effect creating a supreme commander of the entire Mediterranean and its coastal lands, and we could argue that it was out of proportion to the real menace the pirates represented, as annoying as

piracy had certainly become. The Senate, led by Q. Lutatius Catulus, resisted fiercely, and the bill was only carried after much disorder and over attempted vetoes by the tribune L. Trebellius and the consul C. Calpurnius Piso. We are told that only one senator spoke in favour of the bill: Caesar.[31]

Invested with this vast power, Pompeius demonstrated his brilliant capacity for organization. He divided the entire Mediterranean into sub-regions, to each of which was assigned a legate with a flotilla of ships to combat piracy locally. He himself, with his main fleet, sailed to the Strait of Gibraltar and then, cooperating with the local commanders and flotillas as he went, he swept across the Mediterranean from west to east, driving any uncaptured pirates before him until he cornered them all at Korakesion off the coast of Cilicia, where he defeated them in a grand battle. Thus the great pirate menace was brought to an end in just about six months in an extraordinary display of the use of superior force and sheer efficiency. This campaign showed Pompeius at his very best, highlighting his undoubted talents; but it also showed how limited the true menace of the pirates was, and how much it had been magnified by mere Roman indifference and inefficiency. It only needed the Romans to get serious and put someone serious in charge, and the job was done quickly and easily. Pompeius then set about attempting to solve the underlying roots of the pirate problem, by establishing the former pirates in settlements along the Cilician coast where they could live peaceful and (it was hoped) productive lives.[32]

Turning back to the year 75, Caesar finally arrived on Rhodes and studied with Apollonios Molon for some months, but his studies were interrupted by another great crisis.[33] Caesar's old host and friend Nikomedes IV of Bithynia died in the year 75, and in his will left his kingdom to the Roman state. The governor of Asia, Junius Iuncus, was charged with initially organizing Bithynia into a Roman province: Caesar later prosecuted him for extortion during his activities in Bithynia, as we have seen. Mithridates, however, who had been contained rather than decisively defeated by Sulla, and who continued to chafe under Roman restrictions on his power, was deeply troubled by the new expansion of Roman power in Asia Minor that the acquisition of Bithynia represented. He foresaw a time when his own kingdom would be next on the menu to be swallowed up by Rome, and decided not to wait, but to fight.[34] He allied himself with some of the pirate chiefs, as we have seen, and also sent representatives to Sertorius proposing an alliance against their common enemy: those governing Rome.[35] Early in 74 he began an all-out war against Rome, by invading and taking control of Bithynia, and he also sent out detachments towards the Roman provinces of Asia and Cilicia.

Caesar at Rhodes learned of a Mithridatic force operating, apparently unchecked, in Asia – perhaps because the governor of Asia, Iuncus, was absent in Bithynia – and decided to take action. He crossed to the mainland, took charge of local guard troops in Ionia, and drove Mithridates' force out of the province.[36] This episode, along with the pirate episode, shows the enormous

authority even a young Roman noble with no official position could wield in Rome's provinces if he chose, though few young Roman nobles had Caesar's decisiveness and force of personality. The episodes shed an interesting light on the character and abilities of Caesar even at this very early stage in his career; but they also shed a rather harsh light on the deficiencies of Roman governance.

The task of dealing with Mithridates would naturally fall to the governors of the three Roman provinces in Asia Minor, Bithynia, Asia and Cilicia. After some initial hesitation and intriguing, it was the consuls of the year 74, M. Aurelius Cotta (Caesar's cousin) and L. Licinius Lucullus (Sulla's former trusted officer), who were entrusted with these governorships and the war, Cotta receiving Bithynia with a substantial fleet, and Lucullus both Asia and Cilicia, along with the former soldiers of Fimbria in Asia and of Servilius Vatia in Cilicia. Cotta proved to be wholly unequal to the task: he was defeated by Mithridates and forced to take refuge in the city of Chalkedon, where Mithridates' army besieged him. Lucullus, however, was an altogether different proposition. He proved to be one of the very best generals Rome produced in this era of great Roman generals. In terms of technical skill as a strategist and tactician, he was the equal or superior of any other great Roman commander, even Caesar himself. If his qualities as a leader of men had equalled his technical skills, he would be remembered today as one of the great generals of history.

After taking control of his provinces and combining his forces into one army, Lucullus marched to Bithynia to the relief of Cotta. He successfully raised the siege of Chalkedon, defeated Mithridates' army at the Rhyndakos River, and during the winter of 74–73 intervened against Mithridates as the latter besieged Kyzikos, drawing him into a trap and destroying his army. Mithridates was forced to flee back to his home kingdom of Pontos, while Lucullus cleared all Mithridatic forces out of western Asia Minor, and then invaded Pontos itself in the summer of 73. In 72 Lucullus defeated Mithridates again at Kabeira and drove him out of Pontos, and he followed that up by capturing the cities of Pontos during the remainder of 72 and the early part of 71. By summer of 71 the war seemed to be over and Lucullus victorious.[37] He returned to Asia and set about reorganizing it. The Greek cities were racked by debt, the result of the devastations of war, of the financial penalties imposed by Sulla, and the depredations of Roman financiers (who had lent the cities the moneys to pay Sulla, at extortionate interest rates) and of Roman tax farmers. Lucullus relieved the cities of the extortionate debts and interest rates, and reined in the Roman financiers and tax farmers. He thus showed himself to be a good man and an honest and responsible governor, winning the gratitude of Rome's subjects here. But at the same time, Lucullus deeply angered the Roman money men, and incurred their bitter and lasting hostility.[38]

Caesar, after his initial foray to secure Roman control in Asia, was not involved in all this. An inscription from Crete suggests that he may have

served briefly as a legate under M. Antonius in the latter's failed campaign against the pirates, but in 73 he received news that induced him to return post haste to Rome.[39] His cousin C. Aurelius Cotta, the consul of 75, had died. Cotta was one of the *pontifices*, priests who played an important role in Roman politics as well as religion, since it was their responsibility to establish the official calendar each year, determining which days were or were not eligible for public business. The college of *pontifices* had since Sulla's reform been made up of fifteen members, who served for life and were recruited by co-optation. Whenever a *pontifex* died the surviving members selected a new member of the college, with each existing member having a veto over anyone they did not want as a colleague.

Caesar was selected to replace C. Cotta.[40] This was a signal honour: only members of the most prominent noble families were recruited into Rome's major political priesthoods – there were fifteen *augures* as well as the *pontifices* – at such an early stage in their careers. Most Romans never got into these great priestly colleges, and even the greatest Roman leaders, if they came from outside the inner circle of the nobility, had to wait until much later in their lives to attain membership. Pompeius, for example, only became an *augur* well after his consulship in 70, and Cicero had to wait until 53, ten years after his consulship. Thus Caesar's co-optation into the pontificate in his twenties, before he had held any magistracy at Rome, is another indication of his high status and his secure prospects of a great political career. Another indication of this was Caesar's first election to an official post, which occurred in this year: he was elected one of the twenty-four annual military tribunes, or junior military officers, for the year 72.[41] Every Roman army had military tribunes, most of them appointed at his choice by the army's commander. In early times, however, Rome's army had consisted of four legions, two for each of the annual consuls, and the twenty-four military tribunes for these legions were elected by the people. Though the army had changed, the election of these tribunes continued, and the positions were much sought after as an indication of popularity and political prospects.

Rome was, in 73, on the cusp of yet another great social and political crisis. Political dissension over Sulla's reforms continued. In 75 C. Cotta had, as consul, passed a law restoring to the tribunes of the people the right to hold other subsequent magistracies, but agitation for restoration of the tribunes' full former powers continued. In 73 the tribune L. Licinius Macer argued in favour of this, and was supported by Caesar.[42] In addition, the staffing of the jury courts remained an issue. Sulla had established that the juries would be manned by senators, but the notorious Oppianicus trial of this time put the senatorial juries under suspicion of dishonesty, and led to calls for reform of the jury system again. These issues were to pale into insignificance, however, with the outbreak of the greatest slave rebellion Rome ever faced, the famous Spartacus revolt.

Spartacus was a Thracian slave who had been purchased by the owner of a gladiator training school, where he was trained to fight in the Roman arena. Most of the great gladiator schools were concentrated in and around Capua in Campania. Conditions there were very harsh: because the gladiators were trained fighters and had (necessarily) access to weapons, and because they knew they were being prepared to bleed and very likely even die for the amusement of the Roman populace, they were deeply mistrusted by their owners and trainers and were kept on a very short leash under very harsh discipline. Early in 73 Spartacus and a small group of fellow gladiators seized weapons, broke out of their training school, and fled to the wild slopes of Mount Vesuvius nearby, where they hid out and set up as a robber band. Initially they were only a few dozen strong, but they were such good fighters and so desperate that they easily fought off the Roman guard troops sent to deal with them, and this success brought other runaway gladiators and renegade slaves to join them. Soon their band numbered hundreds, and then thousands, and they began to pose a serious threat to the Roman authorities, especially as they found in Spartacus a very resourceful and effective leader. Initial Roman attempts to deal with this situation were ineffectual. A praetor, that is a very senior magistrate, named C. Claudius Glaber was detailed to hem in and capture Spartacus's band on Mount Vesuvius, showing that the Romans were taking the situation very seriously, but Glaber failed. A second praetor, P. Varinius, arrived with troops to deal with the runaways, but was defeated in battle; and when yet a third praetor, L. Cossinius, came to his aid, the outcome was the same, and Cossinius himself fell in battle.[43]

After these remarkable successes, Spartacus's fame and the slave rebellion he led grew apace. Many thousands of slaves joined, and even some free men who were impoverished and disaffected attached themselves to Spartacus's army. At the height of the revolt, Spartacus's force is said to have numbered in excess of 70,000 fighting men, as well as many women and children.[44] The Roman authorities were clearly unprepared for this event, which challenged the Roman system in a radical way that not even the Social and civil wars had done. The roots of this rebellion, like most of the grave issues Rome faced in this period, went back to the Hannibalic War. During that war, much of the Italian countryside was devastated, scores of thousands of people were killed or dislocated, and in the aftermath, a massive transformation began in the basic socio-economic structure of Roman Italy.

The Italian economy had been dominated until this time by small farming and artisan manufacturing. With money and slaves flowing into Rome and Italy from the imperial expansion of the decades after the Hannibalic War, more and more of the Italian countryside was gathered into vast slave-staffed *latifundia* (agribusinesses), and manufacturing became the province of large slave-staffed *ergastula* (manufactories). The numbers of slaves can only be guessed at, in the absence of reliable data giving us figures. But there were certainly hundreds of thousands. For example, just one punitive expedition,

Aemilius Paullus's devastation of Epirus in 167, is said to have netted over 150,000 slaves for the Italian market.[45]

Dislocated from their homes and previous lives, carried off to a foreign land, forced into servitude and put to hard labour under often harsh conditions, in the service of rich absentee owners whose only concern was very clearly to extract profit, the anger and bitterness of these slaves can easily be imagined. Since free men acting as overseers had to be paid, diminishing the profits to be made, the gangs of slaves working on the land or in manufacturing workshops were often inadequately supervised, and in order to keep them cowed and submissive all the time they were subjected to harsh restraints and cruel discipline. Nevertheless, many of the rural slaves, particularly those working as 'cowboys' on vast cattle ranches in southern Italy, necessarily enjoyed a fair amount of freedom to roam during their working hours. They could not easily escape, since they had no money and nowhere to go, and the punishments inflicted on runaways were exceptionally cruel – brutal floggings, and brandings, often on the face – but they were in a position to cause a great deal of trouble if the right circumstances should ever arise.

Two major slave uprisings in Sicily in the late 130s and just before 100 should have put the Roman authorities on notice as to what could transpire in Italy given the unchecked rise in slave numbers, the harsh conditions and consequent frequent despair of many of the slaves, and the disaffection from the Roman system of even many of the free impoverished country folk.[46] As usual, however, no serious attention was paid to the potential threat until it became an active threat: to have taken preventive, ameliorative measures would have required reform, and reform of any kind is what of all things the Roman elite opposed.

In early 72 Spartacus defeated yet another praetor, Cn. Manlius, and faced by a huge and growing rebellion, the Senate took the unprecedented step of sending both consuls of the year, the most powerful magistrates in the Roman state, to put an end to it. The two consuls, however, L. Gellius Poplicola and Cn. Cornelius Lentulus Clodianus, fared no better than the praetors who had tried to crush Spartacus and his men. The consuls were ignominiously defeated, first separately, and then even when they joined forces.[47] At this stage the Senate had to face the fact that they were confronted with a crisis beyond the capacity of the average annual Roman magistrate, who owed his position to ancestry and connections rather than to any actual talent or ability.

Again and again in this era, the Roman governing elite had to relearn the basic reality that coming from a famous and ancient family does not in itself make a man a capable governor or general. More even than the socio-economic conditions I have outlined, and the immense disaffection of the slaves and the impoverished poor, Spartacus's rebellion succeeded to the degree it did because of the utter incompetence of the men sent by Rome to deal with it. It really is an indictment of the Roman system that such completely useless men were

placed by it in positions of leadership and responsibility. As soon as a man of genuine experience and ability was given the power and charge to deal with such crises, they proved readily soluble by the forces available to the Roman state, and Spartacus's rebellion was no different.

Spartacus has been built up, in the modern era, into a romantic hero by Marxists, who have seen in him the world's first true proletarian revolutionary (which he certainly was not), and by a justly famous but historically inaccurate film, directed by Stanley Kubrick. Nothing in our ancient evidence suggests that Spartacus entertained any revolutionary ideas or ideology. He and his people wanted freedom for themselves, revenge on their masters and personal enrichment through plunder and pillage. All of that is very natural and understandable, to be sure; but that is no reason to delude ourselves into imagining that they had ideas beyond those basic human urges.

After the failure of the consuls, the Senate selected the ex-praetor M. Licinius Crassus to take over command of Italy with the authority to raise forces and do whatever was necessary to end the rebellion. Like Pompeius, Crassus had proved himself as an officer during Sulla's civil war, particularly distinguishing himself at the battle of the Colline Gate, where he commanded one wing of Sulla's army and saved Sulla from defeat. Again like Pompeius, though to a lesser degree, his talent as a general lay largely in the field of organization. Since the end of the civil war, Crassus had exercised his organizational talents mostly in a private capacity, building up for himself a stupendous fortune in real estate and finance, and becoming the richest man in Rome. He had, for example, organized a private fire brigade and trained crews of construction workers. When he heard that a building in Rome was on fire, he would arrange to buy it for next to nothing, have his fire brigade put out the fire, and send in his construction crews to repair and rebuild. Since Rome, expanding hugely and without any central organization or oversight since the early second century, was a city of largely jerry-built wooden construction, fires were frequent, and Crassus soon became by far the largest landlord in Rome.[48] He was more than capable of putting this sort of imaginative organizational ability to military use once more. Crassus raised and trained an effective and superior army in the second half of 72, and by the end of the year had manoeuvred Spartacus's followers into the toe of the Italian peninsula, where he blockaded them and prepared to starve them into surrender. Early in 71 Spartacus did somehow manage to break out of this blockade and head north through Italy, causing the Senate in a panic to send urgent messages to Pompeius, who was on his way back to Italy with his army after reorganizing Spain, to hurry to the rescue. That was not really necessary, however.

Crassus pursued Spartacus's fleeing army, caught up and forced it to fight a battle, and inflicted a crushing defeat that effectively ended the rebellion. Spartacus himself reportedly died in this battle, fighting heroically to the last. Some 5,000 men managed to escape from the disaster and fled

northwards; but they were unlucky enough to fall in with Pompeius's advancing army, and were slaughtered. That enabled Pompeius, to Crassus's chagrin, to claim some credit for helping to finish off this greatest of all ancient slave rebellions. Crassus drove home very brutally to Italy's slave population the lesson that it would not pay to rebel in future: 6,000 captive slaves, we are told, were crucified along the Via Appia, lining this great highway between Rome and Capua with a truly gruesome spectacle.[49] Unsurprisingly, the Roman authorities, having seen the rebellion crushed in this way, were satisfied and took no steps to address the underlying causes of the great revolt: that had to wait until Caesar's dictatorship decades later.

The Senate was preoccupied with a different and unpalatable fact: there were now two victorious armies loyal to two overbearing and uncontrollable personalities in Italy. The question of the moment was what Pompeius and Crassus wanted and/or would do. Both wanted a triumph, and both wanted the consulship for the year 70. Though Pompeius had still held no elective office that would qualify him to hold the proper *imperium* to be eligible for a triumph, he could not be denied one for his Spanish victories, any more than he had been denied one for his African victory by Sulla. Crassus, however, in view of the fact that he had defeated 'mere' slaves, had to be satisfied with a lesser honour called an *ovatio*. As to the consulship, though Pompeius had held none of the preliminary qualifying magistracies and was technically not yet old enough, he could not be denied that either; and Crassus was eminently qualified by offices held, by achievements and by age. Both men were elected consul for the year 70 as colleagues, and entered their year of office with a joint programme of reform, having been persuaded to cooperate although they frankly loathed each other.

The issues for reform were essentially those around which controversy had swirled at Rome over the previous decades: the powers of the tribunate, the citizenship of the Italians, the composition of the juries of the *quaestione,* land allotment and, in addition, the citizen rights of those on the losing side in Lepidus's 'rebellion'. As consuls, Pompeius and Crassus sponsored a law restoring the full powers of the tribunes, thereby overturning one of the crucial props of the Sullan system.[50] As to the citizenship of the Italians, another crucial issue from Sulla's era, they sponsored a revival of the censorship: only through the holding of a census could the new Italian citizens who had failed to be enrolled in 86 get themselves enrolled in tribes and centuries and so fully activate their citizenship. The inadequate consuls of 72, Gellius Poplicola and Lentulus Clodianus, were (oddly) elected censors and enrolled over 900,000 citizens – that is, half a million more than in 86. Many Italians certainly continued to be missing from the census rolls, but this census was all the same a major step forward in the full enfranchisement of the Italians.[51]

A praetor, Caesar's cousin L. Aurelius Cotta, sponsored a law revising the make-up of the juries. The staffing of these juries had been a political football struggled over by the senators and the equestrians since the time of C.

Gracchus. Cotta's law finally settled the issue: he apportioned the juries between the contending groups, decreeing that in future juries would be staffed one-third by senators, one-third by equestrians, and one-third by men drawn from a property rating just below the equestrians, known as *tribuni aerarii*.[52]

With these three reforms, the Roman governing system had essentially reverted to pre-Sullan times. Sulla had never succeeded in restoring senatorial control over the military, as we have seen. Now that the tribunes had their powers restored, the Italians were more fully enfranchised, and the jury courts taken from exclusively senatorial control, there was essentially nothing distinctively Sullan left: the remaining reforms of Sulla had been essentially practical and administrative in intent and effect. It is worth pausing to reflect on the fact that it should have been precisely Pompeius and Crassus, two men who had been prominent supporters of Sulla in and immediately after the civil war, who presided over this dismantling of the key elements of the Sullan system. These two were no doubt primarily political mavericks rather than Sullans or optimates, pursuing their own interests rather than any 'party line'; but they certainly were not in any pure or simple sense 'reformists' or *populares* either. I think we see here the broad dissatisfaction that Sulla's attempt to 'turn back the clock' had aroused.

As was usual with the professionalized proletarian armies of this time, loyal to their commanding officers, Pompeius's soldiers expected to receive land allotments to retire to as a reward for their military service. Armed with the newly restored tribunicial powers, a tribune named Plautius carried a land allotment law which was no doubt intended to serve Pompeius's veterans (and perhaps some of Metellus Pius's and Crassus's too), although it is not clear whether and to what degree the law was really put into effect.[53] Pompeius was soon to embark on new campaigns, and may have recruited again into active service many of his Spanish veterans, postponing their final reward for some years. Plautius also carried a law restoring citizenship rights to the surviving followers of Lepidus and Sertorius. Though we know that Caesar was in Rome and politically active at this time, it is only in connection with this last measure that we hear anything of him. He spoke, we are told, in favour of the law, referring specifically to the obligation he owed to do all he could for his brother-in-law L. Cornelius Cinna (son of the great Cinna), who was one of those affected.[54] In this way, Caesar advertised two themes that were to recur again and again in his career: his determination to do all he could for those bound to him by ties of loyalty, kinship or obligation, and his connection to Cinna and his faction and policies.

Another notable event of the year 70 was Cicero's successful prosecution of Caius Verres for extortion during his governorship of Sicily. Throughout the 70s, young M. Tullius Cicero had been gradually building up a reputation as a brilliantly persuasive orator, and as the most outstanding advocate in the law courts after the great Q. Hortensius. Cicero always appeared for the defence: as a 'new man' he was eager to put as many Roman nobles as possible

under an obligation, and unwilling to give offence by prosecuting. With his growing reputation for oratorical brilliance, he was able to win the quaestorship for 75, which he served in Sicily, and in 70 successfully stood for the plebeian aedileship of 69. He was ready to make his mark, and become the 'king of the courts', and to do that he needed a showy prosecution in which he might defeat Hortensius. Verres was the perfect target: he did not come from a noble clan, his misrule of Sicily was notorious, and Cicero could claim his duty to stand by the Sicilians – one of whose patrons he was since his quaestorship there – in mitigation of the invidious role of prosecutor. The prosecution was a triumph for Cicero: as leading defence counsel Hortensius was left with nothing to say by Cicero's brilliant tactics and exposition of the evidence against Verres.[55] Verres fled into voluntary exile in anticipation of being found guilty, Cicero was acknowledged as the undisputed best orator and leading advocate in Rome, and he was henceforth able to return to his norm of defending Roman governors and officials and finding excuses for their crimes and misrule.

After their year of office as consuls, Pompeius and Crassus both declined to take up provincial governorships. Both men no doubt considered themselves rather too important to be concerned with the petty business of overseeing a single peaceful province of the Roman Empire; and neither needed the money that a provincial governor could expect to acquire through his office. Crassus remained at Rome, building his connections among the senatorial and equestrian elites, and overseeing his vast, empire-wide business interests. Pompeius was looking for a rather more significant command than mere governorship of a province. His appetite for power and glory was by no means sated, and a great field of action, worthy of his talents as he saw it, was beckoning in the east, where the Mithridatic War still dragged on. For despite his brilliant military successes, Lucullus's operations had begun to bog down, as he had failed to win the affection or loyalty of his troops, had alienated the influential class of *publicani* by criticizing and putting an end to their depredations in Asia Minor, and was not accorded anything like steadfast support by the Senate.

It will be recalled that in 71, the war had seemed to be won, with only mopping-up operations still to be conducted. Lucullus had requested the Senate to send the usual ten senatorial commissioners to help settle the territories affected by and/or acquired during the war; and his command over the province of Asia was ended at the beginning of 69 as part of this settlement process.[56] The notion that the war was over proved premature, however. Lucullus realized that the war could not be considered to have been brought to a final conclusion so long as Mithridates himself was at large. The king had in the past shown a remarkable, almost phoenix-like ability to come back from apparent demise. When Lucullus had obliged him to flee from his kingdom of Pontos, Mithridates had taken refuge with another rising king in eastern Asia Minor, Tigranes of Armenia.

Tigranes had built up Armenia into a large and apparently formidable kingdom during the 80s and 70s, mostly at the expense of the remnants of Seleukid power: he had added parts of Syria and Mesopotamia, and Phoenicia, to his original kingdom of Armenia, and built himself a grand new capital city called Tigranocerta after himself. Mithridates had long ago allied himself with Tigranes, and given one of his daughters to Tigranes in marriage. When Lucullus now (in late 70) sent to Tigranes demanding that he hand over Mithridates to Rome, Mithridates was able to persuade his son-in-law that Rome represented a threat to Armenian power as much as to Pontic, and hence to reject Lucullus's demands and maintain his alliance with Mithridates. That proved a disastrous choice by Tigranes. In 69 Lucullus invaded Armenia, inflicted a crushing defeat on Tigranes at Tigranocerta, and captured the great new city, obliging Tigranes and Mithridates to flee.

This was the high point of Lucullus's success, however. He failed to capture either Tigranes or Mithridates, though he spent the fall and winter in negotiations with the Parthians and with various Syrian and Armenian vassal princes. In 68 he prepared to attack the Parthians, in pursuit of a final encompassing victory; but the Senate, jealous as ever of any great man holding a position of power for too long and/or winning too much acclaim, took the province of Cilicia from him, and his troops garrisoning Pontos refused to march east to join him in this projected invasion. Lucullus was obliged to campaign in northern Armenia, seeking to shore up his position there instead, but he did not yet give up his project of invading the Parthian Empire. Although his authority and power had been weakened, he still proved himself able to win battles by a victory at the Arsanias, and then marched his army south to winter at Nisibis in northern Mesopotamia, ready to advance south-east in the spring.[57]

Meanwhile, however, Mithridates had managed to make his way back to Pontos, where he gathered troops and defeated Lucullus's legate Fabius Hadrianus. Though this reverse was quickly made good by another legate of Lucullus, Valerius Triarius, who forced Mithridates to retire from besieging Cabira, the impression began to spread that Lucullus was losing control of the war. In the winter of 68 to 67, unrest spread among Lucullus's own troops wintering with him at Nisibis. Lucullus, a confirmed optimate and a stern disciplinarian, had never managed to win his soldiers' affection, and he now lost their loyalty. Many of these men were the remnants of the army of Fimbria, originally sent east under the consul L. Valerius Flaccus in 86 and serving in Asia Minor ever since. They were no novices in mutinying against their generals – having supported Fimbria's murder of Flaccus, and then abandoned Fimbria for Sulla – and they had no appetite, after nearly 20 years of continuous service, for the projected attack on the Parthians.

In the spring of 67, Lucullus's army refused to move, and meanwhile Mithridates gathered more support in Pontos and inflicted a serious defeat on Triarius, with Lucullus helpless to intervene.[58] At this point the pirate

menace blew up, and the tribune Gabinius established Pompeius's vast command against them, as we have seen. Since Pompeius was therefore not quite ready to take over the war against Mithridates, Gabinius passed a law stripping Lucullus of his remaining provinces and powers, and handing them to the consul of the year, Manius Acilius Glabrio. With Lucullus thus paralysed, both Mithridates and Tigranes were able to recover control of their kingdoms, and it looked as if all of Lucullus's achievements had been empty victories: much show but little result. In reality quite the opposite was true. The apparent returns to power of Mithridates and Tigranes were hollow show, their real power having been broken by Lucullus. But with the Senate unwilling to support him, his provinces and powers stripped from him, and his army in open mutiny, there was nothing Lucullus could do to prevent the fruits of his achievements from being reaped by a more popular leader. For though it was Acilius Glabrio who was nominally governor of the provinces Bithynia and Pontos and in command of the Mithridatic War in late 67 and early 66, in reality he achieved nothing and was merely holding the fort until Pompeius was ready to take over.

In 66 the tribune C. Manilius proposed a bill to transfer the provinces of Cilicia, Bithynia and Pontos to Pompeius, and with them full command of the Mithridatic War. Bearing in mind that Pompeius still had two years to run of his Mediterranean-wide pirate command, this was an extraordinary concentration of power in the hands of one man – Pompeius was effectively to be in command of the whole Mediterranean basin, and the eastern provinces and client kingdoms of the Roman Empire at the same time – and the optimates and a majority of the Senate naturally opposed it. Only a handful of senators, prominently including Caesar and Cicero, spoke for the Manilian law, but it was passed amid popular acclaim, and it became Pompeius's duty and privilege to finish off the Mithridatic War.[59]

The task was not an onerous one. Early in 66 Pompeius met with Lucullus in Pontos to take over from him formally, and treated him in a most unpleasantly arrogant manner. Lucullus returned to Rome in ignominy, there to be forced by the jealousy of political rivals to kick his heels on the outskirts of the city for three long years before finally being permitted, in 63, to celebrate a triumph for his great victories over Mithridates and Tigranes. He then retired into private life, a disappointed and embittered man, only to return briefly to public life on one occasion.

Meanwhile Pompeius quickly defeated Mithridates and drove him from Pontos again, this time for good. Tigranes was equally easily dealt with: Pompeius concluded an alliance with the Parthians, and Tigranes surrendered, throwing himself on Pompeius's mercy. Pompeius permitted him to retain his original kingdom of Armenia as a Roman client king. So much for the supposedly revived power of these two kings. Pompeius spent the remainder of 66 and much of 65 campaigning in the Caucasus region, then returned to eastern Asia Minor to intervene in a border dispute between Tigranes and

the Parthian king Phraates. During the winter of 65 to 64 he reorganized the provinces of Bithynia and Pontos, undoing the work of Lucullus and his senatorial commissioners and resettling things his own way on his own authority. In 64 he moved south into Syria, bringing to an end the rump of the Seleukid Empire and turning Syria into a Roman province, and finally settled the border dispute of Tigranes and Phraates.

In 63 Pompeius campaigned further in Syria and Palestine, including the siege and capture of Jerusalem, where he inspected the Temple and infamously insisted on entering the sacrosanct 'holy of holies'. Late in the year he received news that Mithridates, who had taken refuge in his territories in the Crimea, had been obliged by his son Pharnakes to commit suicide. With Mithridates' death, the Mithridatic War was finally at an end. Completing his organization of Syria and Palestine, Pompeius returned north to winter in Pontos.[60] In early 62 he completed his resettlement of Asia Minor, and then finally set sail with his army for Italy, having put his personal stamp on the entire eastern Mediterranean world, and made himself the most famous conqueror in Roman history, albeit by taking the credit for another man's achievements. Rome and Italy, meanwhile, waited with baited breath to find out what the great conqueror with his invincible army would do upon his return.

IV

ROMAN POLITICS IN THE 60s

On a summer day in the year 60, the Roman Senate met to discuss and decide what would normally have been a routine matter. The election of consuls for the year 59 was approaching, and under a law of C. Sempronius Gracchus from 123, the Senate was obliged to determine in advance the commands to be allotted to the future consuls after their year in office. The aim of Gracchus's law was to prevent favouritism and other forms of manipulation in the assignment of pro-consular commands, since in theory the identities of the future consuls were not yet known. The decision taken on the day in question, however, was anything but routine. It was decided that after their year in office at Rome, the future consuls of 59 would spend the year 58 overseeing the *silvae callesque* (forests and footpaths), presumably those of Italy since no other location is specified.[1] The assigning of such an insignificant 'province', to not just one but both future consuls, was a unique act in the history of the Republic.

Just how unusual this decision of the Senate was has been generally overlooked, and as a result so has its significance. Care of the roads in Rome and outside the city was the responsibility of six magistrates belonging to the group called the *vigintisexviri* (the twenty-six men), minor magistrates who stood at the very bottom of the Roman politician's career ladder. Upkeep of the major highways of Italy, the great military *viae*, was assigned to curators who were normally junior senators: thus Caesar himself was appointed curator of the Via Appia at some time between his quaestorship and his aedileship, and an ex-praetor named Thermus was curator of the Via Flaminia in 65, as Cicero informs us.[2] The only other occasion on which care of the *calles* – footpaths, forest paths, cattle tracks, mountain tracks – is mentioned in our sources, it was made the responsibility of a quaestor 'by ancient custom'.[3] What, then, could have induced the Senate in the summer of 60 to assign to not one, but both future consuls of the year 59 the care of forests and footpaths? Was there some emergency situation brewing in the more out of the way regions of the Italian peninsula that would require the joint efforts of two of Rome's most powerful magistrates to handle?

There was not. Besides the fact that neither of the consuls of 59, in the event, ever paid the slightest attention to the forests and footpaths, which

are in fact never heard of again in this period, Suetonius tells us explicitly that the Senate's decision had a very different motivation. It was an accepted fact that Caesar was certain to win the consulship for 59, and it was at him that the Senate's decision was aimed. The optimates, the conservative grouping who tended to dominate the Senate most of the time, were determined to see to it that Caesar did not enjoy a powerful pro-consular command, and thus induced the Senate to designate for the future consuls provincial commands 'of the slightest importance'.[4] Note that, in order to make sure that Caesar would be stuck in these forests and tracks, both consuls were sacrificed to this duty, even though the Optimate M. Calpurnius Bibulus was the leading candidate to win the other consulship. How is it that Caesar had attained such a looming and fearful presence in the minds of the optimates by the summer of 60, that they not only saw him as a shoo-in candidate for the consulship, but decided to establish an unprecedentedly insignificant provincial command in order to keep him in line? Evidently Caesar's political career during the 60s, which brought him to this fear-inducing state, was no ordinary one.

On the surface, Caesar's political career in the 60s was a conventional one: he held each of the major magistracies in the legally prescribed order and at the legally prescribed age, which certainly provided a contrast with his older contemporary Cnaeus Pompeius. The first major step on the Roman politician's career ladder (*cursus honorum*) was the quaestorship. Since, after Sulla's reforms, twenty quaestors were elected annually, men from prominent political families usually had no difficulty in attaining this office at the minimum permissible age of thirty. Caesar too almost certainly held this office as soon as he was eligible, in the year 69. The duties of the quaestors were primarily administrative and fiscal, generally assisting more senior magistrates. Besides the experience and contacts thus acquired, the chief advantage of the office was that, under the Sullan constitution, it conferred automatic membership of the Senate. By holding the quaestorship, Caesar became a member of Rome's ruling council.

As quaestor, Caesar was assigned to assist the governor of Hispania Ulterior (western Spain and Portugal), not a particularly important assignment although it would afford him the chance to make connections in a major Roman province. His relations with his praetor, C. Antistius Vetus, were excellent, initiating a long-term connection between Caesar and Vetus's family: Caesar was later, during his own praetorship, to arrange for Vetus's son to be his quaestor in turn.[5] But the truly important events of this year, which began to establish Caesar's name and to point out the path he would follow in politics, occurred shortly before and after his time in Spain.

At the beginning of 69, before Caesar had left Rome to take up his provincial assignment in Spain, his aunt Julia died. It was the custom at Rome, when elderly ladies of prominent political families died, to give public funeral orations in their honour. Since Julia's only son, the younger Caius

Marius, was long dead, care of her funeral arrangements fell to her nephew, Caesar. In view of the fact that she was the widow of the anathematized Marius, no one would have blamed Caesar if he had foregone the public oration in her honour, or made it a brief and inconspicuous one. He did the opposite. Not only did he take the occasion to publicly parade and laud the antiquity and importance of the Julian clan, but he emphasized Julia's (and so his own) connection to Marius, proudly displaying the *imago* (portrait mask) of the great general in the funeral procession, the first time Marius's image had been publicly seen at Rome since Sulla's victory in the civil war. The sight of Marius's image caused a sensation, as Plutarch tells us, and though some were displeased, the majority of the Roman populace applauded Caesar for restoring Marius's honour.[6] At this same time, Caesar's wife Cornelia also died unexpectedly, and though it was not customary to give public funerals for such young women, Caesar did so. This not only won him a public reputation for being a loyal husband, but also afforded him the opportunity to emphasize again his relationship to Cinna, his wife's father.[7]

The months in Spain passed uneventfully. Caesar travelled around the province dispensing justice, and in the course of these travels visited Gades (Cadiz). The story goes that he saw there a statue of Alexander, and sighed to think that at the age of thirty Alexander had conquered the Persian Empire, while he himself had achieved next to nothing. This story is pretty certainly a later invention: ancient authors loved to compare Alexander and Caesar, the two greatest conquerors of the ancient world.[8] A far more important event did most likely occur while Caesar was at Gades, though: he would have made the acquaintance of the local magnate L. Cornelius Balbus, who was to become over the following years one of his closest friends and most important and trusted political helpers and agents. When Caesar left the province in 68, however, somewhat in advance of his praetor we are told, he did not travel directly to Rome, but lingered among the Latin (that is, in effect, semi-Roman) colonies and Romanized towns of the province of Gallia Cisalpina (today north Italy). This was the most thoroughly Romanized area outside of peninsular Italy: a string of larger and smaller Roman settlements established in the southern part of the plain of the Po during the second century had achieved this effect, the most important of them being Bononia (Bologna), Regium (Reggio in Emilia), Mutina (Modena), Parma, Placentia (Piacenza) and Cremona. Most of these colonies lay along the great Roman highway named the Via Aemilia, built in 187, from which the region still to this day bears the name Emilia. Troops were being levied among the Latin colonies north of the Po on behalf of Caesar's cousin Q. Marcius Rex for the eastern war, and there was some agitation as a result for granting these communities full Roman citizenship, like the rest of Italy's municipalities. Caesar actively encouraged this agitation,[9] and remained throughout his career one of the main advocates for the extension of Roman citizenship to the *Transpadani*, the inhabitants of Gallia Cisalpina north of the Po.

By his two funeral orations and his encouragement of the *Transpadani*, Caesar had laid down a definite line to follow in politics: espousal of the cause of Marius and Cinna, which included further spreading of Roman citizenship to people suitably qualified by familiarity with the Latin language and political traditions. The question for his political future was whether this was a temporary political tactic aimed at gaining popularity, or the choosing of a definite and permanent position in Roman politics.

Two key issues dominated Roman politics in the years immediately following Caesar's return from Spain: the growing nuisance, not to say menace, of the pirates, of which Caesar had some personal experience; and the conduct of the eastern wars against Mithridates and his allies. We have seen how these two issues led to great new commands for Pompeius, with Caesar's support. That support strengthened Caesar's posture of being on the *popularis* side of Roman politics. On the other hand, a new marriage he entered into sometime around 68 or 67 may have suggested that his politics were still malleable, for he married Pompeia, grand-daughter of Sulla and of Sulla's colleague and friend Q. Pompeius Rufus.[10] That marriage connection will certainly have kept open Caesar's lines of communication with the Sullan, optimate faction.

It was probably in the year 67 that Caesar accepted appointment as curator of the Via Appia, a post that held excellent prospects for patronage and winning popular favour. Such curators received a grant from the public treasury to help defray the costs of highway maintenance, but it was normal for those who could afford it to supplement that grant from their own funds, spending their own money on maintaining and upgrading the highway, its amenities, and especially the amenities of the towns along its route. The free inhabitants of these towns were Roman citizens whose gratitude and support could be valuable to a rising politician. Caesar, his personal fortune rather modest by the standards of his class and time, could not really afford to spend lavishly on this curatorship, but he did so anyway.[11]

The years 67 and 66 were notable for the contentious legislation passed by tribunes invigorated by the restoration of the tribunate's full powers in 70. The law of Gabinius in 67 creating Pompeius's command against the pirates, and the law of Manilius transferring command in the Mithridatic War to Pompeius in 66, have already been discussed. The meaning of Caesar's support for these laws should not be exaggerated. Although Caesar was the only senator to support the Gabinian law, and one of only a few to support the Manilian law, that does not make him at this time a hanger-on or adherent of Pompeius. It is rather the case that Caesar saw the need for decisive action against the pirates and recognized that Pompeius was the man to carry it out; and that he likewise recognized that Pompeius was the only man capable of pulling all the strings of the Mithridatic conflict into his hands and finishing it off, as needed to be done. His policy, that is to say, was to support what was good for Rome and the empire, rather than to support Pompeius. For during the years 67 to 62 Pompeius was in a unique position to dispense patronage –

opportunities for financial and career advancement – through the holding of posts on his extensive military and administrative staffs; and many nobles and would-be office holders flocked to serve with Pompeius as legates and tribunes.[12] Conspicuously absent from the parade of those accepting and benefiting from Pompeius's patronage and largess is Caesar, notwithstanding his support for Pompeius's commands, and his massive indebtedness. Caesar remained at Rome, pursuing his own path in politics unaided by Pompeius, and part of the time at least in association with Pompeius's rival and enemy Crassus. There is not the faintest hint in our sources that Caesar regarded himself or was regarded by Pompeius or others as a 'Pompeian'.

In some ways more interesting and important than the Gabinian and Manilian laws was the legislative programme of the tribune C. Cornelius in 67. Cornelius proposed a package of laws that would a) forbid Roman financiers making loans to foreign states, b) require the people (or, as a compromise, at any rate a quorum of at least 200 senators) to approve exemptions from the laws, c) require the praetors in charge of the various law courts to dispense justice in accord with their own edicts, by which they announced at the start of their year in office the judicial rules and principles they would follow, and d) establish more stringent rules against various forms of electoral bribery.[13] These all seem to be sound, practical and salutary proposals.

Electoral bribery was an admitted scandal at Rome in the middle of the first century. It was obviously highly desirable for the praetors to stick to the rules they had announced, and in fact over the next century or so the praetorian edict, seen as a single entity with accretions by successive praetors over the years, became one of the cornerstones of Roman civil law. The sort of hole-and-corner jobbery whereby a relative handful of senators might hold a 'Senate meeting' and pass legal exemptions to benefit their friends was obviously wrong. And the naked exploitation of allied peoples that could result from Roman financiers loaning large sums of money at exorbitant interest rates is neatly illustrated by a case that Cicero had to deal with as governor of Cilicia in 51, when he was pressured to give military aid to a financial syndicate seeking to enforce a loan at 48 per cent interest against the people of Cyprian Salamis.[14] Nevertheless, Cornelius's proposals generated tremendous controversy and opposition, a sign of the very polarized nature of Roman politics, and in the end only the law on the praetorian edict and a watered-down version of the law on legal exemptions were passed. The consul Calpurnius Piso, who opposed Cornelius's legislation root and branch, as he opposed Gabinius's laws, did pass a milder law on electoral bribery to stave off Cornelius's law on the topic.[15]

Fresh controversy arose in 66 over the consular elections for 65. These were bitterly contested, and it was an open secret that electoral bribery was rampant. The two victorious candidates, P. Cornelius Sulla (a nephew of the late dictator) and P. Autronius Paetus, were immediately prosecuted under Piso's law and (unusually) found guilty and deposed. Their defeated rivals, L.

Manlius Torquatus and L. Aurelius Cotta (Caesar's maternal cousin), assumed their place as consuls elect.[16] The two deposed would-be consuls did not take this judicial setback quietly. Exactly what happened, or was planned, is now impossible to determine. We know from speeches of Cicero delivered in the years 64, 63 and 62 that there were rumours at that time of a plot in 66 involving at least Sulla, Paetus and the infamous L. Sergius Catilina; but Cicero's speeches are highly tendentious in that he sought to discredit Catilina and defend Sulla.[17] In the 50s and 40s various writers related an elaborate story of conspiracies set afoot to overthrow the Senate and magistrates and seize control of the state; conspiracies in which Caesar, who was in 66 a candidate for the curule aedileship, was assigned a central role.[18]

That Sulla and Paetus complained vociferously and muttered darkly about revenge to be exacted is believable and understandable, but whether there was ever anything more than that is open to question. Purportedly, the new consuls were to be attacked and killed on the first day of 65, as they were being inaugurated, together with many of the leading senators. Fires were to be set around Rome at strategic locations to create disorder and panic; and in this disorder, Crassus was to be appointed dictator to save the state, with Caesar as his *magister equitum* (second-in-command), while Sulla and Paetus were to be reinstated as consuls – or in an alternative version Catilina was to become consul, from which the affair came to be called the 'first Catilinarian conspiracy'. The signal for all this to happen was supposed to be given by Caesar himself, but for some reason or other he did not do so, and the conspiracy hence fizzled out. Another part of the conspiracy, or perhaps an additional or alternative conspiracy, arranged by Caesar or Catilina, was to send out the quaestor Cn. Calpurnius Piso as governor of Spain with praetorian power, to seize control and raise an army in support of his confederates in Rome; but again the plot failed to come off, as Piso was assassinated by some disaffected soldiers.

In other words, elaborate and far-reaching conspiracies to overthrow the established order and take control of Rome and her western provinces were alleged to have been formed; but nothing at all actually happened. Caesar didn't signal, Piso died, and with that everything faded away. What is one to make of this whole set of non-events? It is crucial to note that our sources for most of these supposed plans and plots were bitterly anti-Caesarian politicians and writers: the vengeful Bibulus, C. Scribonius Curio the elder, M. Actorius Naso, M. Tanusius Geminus, to some extent also Cicero, men who opposed Caesar in 59 and subsequently in the civil war of the 40s, and sought to discredit him by any means.[19] In the super-heated political atmosphere of 59 and of the 40s, almost anything could be alleged and receive credit by those partisan enough to want to believe; and the name of Catilina in particular lent credibility to any alleged plot no matter how hare-brained. Indeed the pro-Caesarian historian Sallust created, based on Cicero's allegations, a streamlined version of the plot in which Catilina was the lead figure (Cat.

18).[20] What is extremely hard to believe is that a man as careful, hard-headed and well placed as Crassus would have taken a lead in plots this nebulous and absurd, or that someone as intelligent as Caesar would have participated, let alone that a man as family-oriented as he would have countenanced the killing of his relative and friend Cotta. It has long been suspected that the whole conspiracy story is just a farrago of anti-Catilinarian and anti-Caesarian prejudice, built up from nothing more than loose language on the part of the discomfited Sulla and Paetus, contemporary gossip and scandal-mongering, Cicero's need in 64 and 63 to discredit Catilina and in 62 to justify his suppression of Catilina and his associates, and later wilful distortion by Caesar's enemies; and that is surely correct.

At any rate, his growing reputation at Rome had allowed Caesar to stand successfully for the office of curule aedile for the year 65. Though a lesser magistracy than the praetorship in terms of dignity and authority, the curule aedileship was a truer indication of a politician's prospects of gaining the consulship. Since Sulla's reforms, eight praetors were elected annually, but only four aediles, of whom only two were the more prestigious curule aediles (the other two were plebeian aediles, a post for which patricians were not eligible). Two was also the number of consuls elected annually, and a man who won the coveted curule aedileship could therefore have very real hopes for an eventual consulship. Naturally, much would depend on how he conducted himself as aedile.

The main reason the curule aedileship was so coveted was that, besides various administrative and essentially policing functions, it carried the duty of organizing two of the most popular of the annual Roman festivals. By spending lavishly from his own funds on exhibitions and games during these festivals, a politician could win himself immense popularity. Once again, despite his modest fortune and heavy indebtedness, Caesar spent lavishly, reputedly putting all previous aediles in the shade by the magnificence of his preparations for the games. Expensive and beautiful materials of every sort for the shows he put on – theatrical performances, wild beast hunts, public banquets – were exhibited to the public weeks in advance of the festivals, in temporary colonnades set up in the Forum, in the Comitium and on the Capitol. The cost of all of this lavish expenditure was shared by Caesar's colleague in the aedileship, M. Calpurnius Bibulus, but somehow all the credit and the resulting popularity seemed to go to Caesar alone, much to Bibulus's dismay.[21] This was the beginning of a bitter hostility between these two men that was to last the rest of their lives.

Characteristically, Caesar was not satisfied simply to impress with the official shows his office required him to put on. By two other splashy activities he advertised his family, his connections and his own political stance. In the first place he decided, some 20 years after the event, to commemorate his father's death by putting on a spectacular gladiatorial show. Such shows were a traditional part of prominent Roman funerals, but not normally after decades had

passed; and Caesar's show dwarfed all previous funeral combats, we are told. Plutarch states that he presented no less than 320 pairs of gladiators fighting in single combats, and according to Suetonius this was actually fewer than he had intended to exhibit, as a result of last-minute limitations set by his opponents in the Senate.[22]

The other striking action Caesar took in 65 once again emphasized his connection to the great Marius. One night, Caesar had the triumphal monuments commemorating Marius's victories over Jugurtha and the Cimbri and Teutones, which had been destroyed during the civil war, set up again on the Capitol. This was clearly a carefully planned action – the monuments must have been secretly reconstructed during the preceding months – and it created a sensation when Romans awoke to see those monuments once more resplendent in the heart of the city. We hear that thousands of old Marian veterans wept openly at the sight of their revered chief's memorials, and loudly praised Caesar for restoring the great general's honours. Not everyone was pleased, however. The urban populace cheered, but the optimate nobility in the Senate, led by the senior ex-consul Q. Lutatius Catulus – whose own father had been assassinated on Marius's orders – protested vociferously, at a Senate meeting at which Catulus went so far as to accuse Caesar of plotting to overthrow the state. Caesar effectively defended himself, arguing that it was reasonable to forget past hostilities and honour Marius's real benefits to the state, so that the Senate let his action stand.[23] However, by this Caesar acquired the bitter and permanent hostility of Catulus and his optimate associates, and confirmed himself once and for all as the leader of the former supporters of Marius and Cinna and their policies.

During his aedileship, indeed, Caesar became a leading figure in Roman politics whose views were heard on every important public matter. Crassus and Catulus had been elected censors for 65, and Crassus tried to use the censorship in novel ways. He attempted to enrol as citizens the *Transpadani,* we are told, but was blocked by his colleague. That Caesar would have supported Crassus in this is clear from his agitation on behalf of the *Transpadani* three years previously.[24] Further, Crassus proposed to annex Egypt, which a previous king had purportedly left to the Roman people in his will, and according to Suetonius, Caesar was also involved: indeed it was supposedly Caesar who would have taken command of the operation.[25] Again, the proposal foundered on optimate resistance, bolstered by a speech opposing the idea delivered by Cicero. These are the first indications of friendship and political cooperation between Caesar and the immensely wealthy Crassus, a friendship that was later to be of great importance to Caesar. In the end, the hostility between Crassus and Catulus grew so bitter that they were forced to resign the censorship with nothing accomplished.

Another notable event of this year was the trial of Catilina for extortion during his governorship of Africa in 67–66. Surprisingly, given his unsavoury reputation and the strong evidence against him, Catilina was acquitted: the

consul Torquatus was his defence counsel, and a large number of ex-consuls appeared on his behalf as character witnesses. Even Cicero briefly thought of defending Catilina. As Cicero admitted years later in the 50s, Catilina was a man of great charm and many excellent qualities, although those excellent qualities were later overshadowed by his worse side.[26] It is worth emphasizing that Catilina would hardly have received the support he did if the purported 'conspiracy' of late 66 had been real.

The year 64, when Caesar's distant cousin L. Julius Caesar was consul, was fairly quiet at Rome: the most important event seems in fact to have been the election for the consuls of 63. Two leading candidates for this consulship were Cicero and Catilina, of whom the latter enjoyed the support of Crassus and Caesar. L. Sergius Catilina came from an ancient patrician clan, prominent in the early days of the Republic, but which had fallen into obscurity since the 380s. During the Hannibalic War, one C. Sergius Plautus began to restore the clan's status by achieving a reputation as a fierce warrior and officer, eventually rising to the praetorship in 200. Various other Sergii held magistracies during the second century, but none rose higher than the praetorship, and it was Catilina's burning ambition to restore his clan's consular standing. M. Tullius Cicero, by contrast, came from a family wholly new to Roman politics: he was born in the municipality of Arpinum, one of the last Italian towns to receive Roman citizenship before the Social War, in 188. He belonged to the class of wealthy local notables (the so-called *domi nobiles*) who formed the backbone of the equestrian order, and who were just beginning to press for high office at Rome in this period. Another case would be the later emperor Augustus's father C. Octavius of Velitrae, who was praetor at Rome in 61. With no Senatorial ancestry at all, Cicero had to make his own way in Roman politics, encouraged by the glorious career of his townsman and distant relative Marius, that other famous son of Arpinum.

It would be hard to imagine two more different men than Cicero and Catilina in almost every respect. Catilina had made his name as a military man, an officer of daring and ruthlessness in the army of Sulla during the civil war. He was in many respects the quintessential dissolute aristocrat: arrogant, supercilious, self-assured, charming, reckless, somewhat depraved in his personal life (although not all stories concerning this should be trusted), both greedy for money and profligate in spending it. He clearly fascinated much of the wilder element of Rome's gilded youth of the 60s, and in those to whom his character appealed – and there were many – he was capable of arousing fanatical loyalty.[27] Cicero's talents, much greater and of more durable effect than Catilina's, lay in quite different directions. Extraordinarily intelligent, Cicero in his youth attracted the interest of Rome's brightest legal minds and orators, notwithstanding his non-noble origins. His talents were not suited to military life: he was diligent, intellectually inventive and bold, but inclined to personal timidity unless greatly roused, a brilliant speaker who could sway an audience almost at will, but who did not arouse enduring loyalty except in

a small circle of close friends. Knowing that the nobles inevitably saw him as an outsider, he was often somewhat lacking in assurance even though he clearly perceived that he was the intellectual and moral superior of all but the very best few Roman nobles. That lack of perfect self-assurance allied to a sense of superiority made him often vain and boastful, which has rather unfairly harmed his reputation through the ages: for he was without a doubt one of the greatest men Rome ever produced. Of his contemporaries only Caesar himself could rival Cicero for the range of his intellectual gifts and the impact he had on Roman society and culture.

These two very different men, Catilina and Cicero, were destined to come into sharper and sharper conflict during the years 64 and 63, until one of them was driven from Rome and killed, and the other acknowledged as one of Rome's pre-eminent statesmen. The roots of the conflict lay in their rivalry in the consular elections of 64, and their very different temperaments and policies. The field of candidates at this election was not in fact a very distinguished one, which is well illustrated by the fact that one of the favoured candidates was C. Antonius Hybrida. C. Antonius was third rate in every way: incompetent, corrupt, dissolute, brutal, timid, a habitual drunkard, in short a man whose many character flaws had led to him being expelled from the Senate at the census of 70 as unworthy to sit in that council. The only thing he had to recommend him for the consulship was the fame of his great father, the elder M. Antonius. It is an indictment of the Roman electoral system of this time that such a man could be a strong candidate. A number of other holders of famous noble names were running, but none of them was personally distinguished by anything except utter mediocrity and indolence. Cicero and Catilina were clearly the best two candidates, and it might have seemed sensible for the two of them to reach an electoral pact to secure the consulships for themselves.[28] Such a pact was actually contemplated by Cicero, but in the end he could not bring himself to make it: Catilina's character and ideas were just too alien to him.[29] In the event, it was Catilina and C. Antonius who made an electoral pact together, aimed at winning the consulships for the two of them and excluding Cicero.

Caesar is reported to have been a backer of Catilina in his candidacy. During this year, Caesar was serving as *iudex* (judge) in charge of one of Rome's permanent criminal courts, the *quaestio de sicariis* (murder court, essentially), appointed to this post by the Senate – an indication of the considerable respect he enjoyed despite his *popularis* leanings. In a further display of his *popularis* political stance, Caesar encouraged persons to bring charges against those who had killed Roman citizens during the Sullan proscriptions, as evidenced by their receipt of bounties for having done so. In this way, Caesar challenged the legitimacy of Sulla's measures as dictator; but when Catilina himself – a notorious bounty hunter during the proscriptions – was charged before him, Caesar desisted.[30] This is the best evidence for Caesar's support of Catilina at this time; but it seems probable that he

viewed Catilina as a strong candidate for the consulship who was likely, as consul, to follow policies more *popularis* than not. And evidently Caesar's backing was already considered well worth having: his great popularity among the Roman populace was bought at the cost of enormous indebtedness and the definite alienation of the optimates, but he could undoubtedly influence Roman voters.

Cicero was well aware that the electoral compact between Catilina and Antonius, with the backing of the immensely wealthy Marcus Crassus as well as Caesar, represented a serious threat to his chances of winning the consulship. A few days before the election therefore, he took the occasion of a senatorial debate about electoral corruption to deliver in the Senate a great speech, *In Toga Candida,* denouncing his two rivals. In it, Cicero alleged, among numerous other aspersions of criminal and immoral behaviour, that Catilina and Antonius were conspiring to overthrow the existing order.[31] This is the first we hear of what was to become the infamous Catilinarian conspiracy, and it is worth noting that it was raised in an electoral speech, a type of speech in which Roman candidates notoriously enjoyed a wide latitude to defame their opponents. Roman rules regarding libel and slander were exceedingly lax at the best of times, and when it came to political invective were virtually non-existent. In the event, Cicero was triumphantly elected consul at the head of the poll, Antonius narrowly squeaked into office in second place, and Catilina was defeated.[32] Thus the scene was set for the year 63, thanks to Cicero's many references one of the best-known – and certainly among the more dramatic – years in Roman history.

Although Cicero's determination to have a memorable year as consul inevitably – given the sheer volume of Ciceronian writing about his consulship – provides the year's *leitmotif* in retrospect, at the time itself one of the major preoccupations filling people's minds was the looming prospect of Pompeius's victorious return to Rome. His campaign in Asia was clearly winding down, and the question of how he would return, and what he would do upon returning, was one of the issues of the day. One thing that was absolutely clear was that Pompeius would need a land allotment programme to reward his veteran soldiers. It is no coincidence that one of the early events of the year 63 was the proposal precisely of a land allotment bill, by a tribune named Servilius Rullus. Our knowledge of the proposed law comes mostly from Cicero's speech *Against Rullus* opposing it, and there has been a lively scholarly debate as to whether Cicero's speech portrays the law accurately, or tendentiously misrepresents its purpose. At any rate, Cicero portrayed the bill as being hostile to Pompeius's interests; he derided the commission of ten, which was to be set up for five years with wide powers of action to implement the bill, as 'ten kings'; and he undermined the bill's provision to pay for the lands to be allotted from the revenues of new conquests, by picturing the commission of ten's auctioneers selling Pompeius's military camp out from under his feet. It seems that, as a result of Cicero's opposition, the bill was

never actually put to a popular vote.[33] But was it really hostile to Pompeius in intent, as Cicero claimed? As noted, Pompeius was the one commander who was soon going to need a large land allotment programme, and it seems very likely that in fact Rullus's bill was intended to serve Pompeius's needs. That, along with the wide powers to be allocated for five years to the bill's ten commissioners, would explain the opposition to the bill of the optimates. For since the land to be allotted was to be fairly purchased from its owners, issues of land titles did not come into play, as in the case of the Gracchan land bills.

By way of securing his position at the head of the Roman state during his year as consul, Cicero made a deal with C. Antonius to detach him from his alliance with Catilina. Antonius, chronically indebted, needed a rich province to exploit as governor after his year as consul, and one of the two provinces set aside for the consuls of 63 was Macedonia. Antonius wanted this province, and Cicero – who had neither desire nor intention of leaving Rome to govern a province – guaranteed that even if allotted the province of Macedonia he would cede it to Antonius.[34] That showed a rather cynical disregard for the interests of the wretched Macedonians, destined thus to suffer Antonius's misrule and extortion; but Cicero felt that the circumstances warranted it. For he was convinced, or at any rate claimed to be convinced, that there was a conspiracy afoot to undermine the Roman governing system, led by Catilina. An air of imminent crisis definitely loomed over Rome and Italy in this year, and not all of it was generated by Cicero's overheated rhetoric or by speculations as to Pompeius's future course of action. Rome and Italy were in the grip of one of the periodic economic crises, particularly involving credit and indebtedness, that were a feature of this era. This particular crisis had two elements, which can conveniently be classed as rural and urban.

The rural side of things was part of the ongoing process of deracination of the Italian small farming class, a process that had begun during the Hannibalic War. At this time of the mid-60s, it was mainly the former soldiers of Sulla, settled on farming allotments primarily in Etruria and Campania, who found themselves in financial difficulties. Our sources speak critically and dismissively of these men, attributing their failure as small farmers to a purported inexperience as farmers, an unwillingness to do hard work and love of luxury, and profligacy. The moralizing tone of these criticisms is clear, and the explanatory power of such criticisms is belied by the fact that Sulla's veterans had by 63 been settled on their farms for some seventeen or eighteen years: surely incompetence, laziness, and profligacy should have led to failure much sooner! The explanation for their failure must rather be sought in the same socio-economic conditions that had been making small farming in Italy an increasingly unprofitable enterprise for more than 100 years. It was hard for Italian farmers to sell surplus and cash crops for a profit when the market was dominated by abundant and more cheaply produced crops from the *latifundia* of the wealthy elite, and by crops imported in bulk from regions like Sicily and Egypt. In addition, the normal fluctuations of

agricultural production made it necessary for farmers to borrow in years of shortfall, against their profits in years of abundant crops. That worked fine when credit was good; but when there was a squeeze on credit and interest rates rose, the small farmers found that they could not make the steep interest payments and their creditors sought to foreclose on their lands.

The effects of the credit squeeze of the mid-60s are well illustrated in the manifesto circulated by the leader of the indebted and/or dispossessed farmers, a former Sullan centurion named C. Manlius.[35] His manifesto was dismissed by Cicero and the optimates, and has rarely been taken seriously by modern scholars, but it deserves our attention. He alleged that the cruel harshness of moneylenders had robbed most of them of their homes, and that the praetor [*urbanus*] had even allowed moneylenders to physically seize debtors, presumably to make them work off their debts.[36] His words certainly cast a harsh relief on the effects of the credit system on the small farming class.

On the urban side, the abundance of money in Rome due to the vast influxes of booty and tribute from the empire made lending and borrowing of money easy and attractive. Rich financiers wanted to put their money to work, and there were plenty of people who wanted or needed money and were ready to borrow for their needs or wants. At the higher end of the socio-political scale, the lifestyle of the senatorial and equestrian elites had been rapidly growing more and more ostentatious and expensive since the early second century. The letters of Cicero are particularly revealing of the perceived need for a leading Roman of this period to own a huge and luxurious urban mansion, expensive villas scattered around Italy in favoured locations as rural retreats, expensively imported furnishings and decorations for all of these 'homes', large staffs of specialized slaves to maintain these properties, and so on. In addition, the costs associated with a political career, the only suitable career for a man of a senatorial family, had become astronomical. Added to that, was a lifestyle of ostentatious display and consumption, and all of this had to be indulged in whether one's resources were sufficient or not. Many nobles were consequently massively in debt by the time they embarked on a political career, and fell further and further into debt as they progressed up the political ladder.

Caesar is himself a prime example of this phenomenon, as we have seen. So long as a noble's career remained successful, his creditors would continue to fund him in the expectation that a military command or provincial governorship would eventually provide the sums for repayment. But woe betide the noble whose career stalled short of those expected windfalls: the creditors would demand repayment as soon as his political career seemed stalled, and how was he to repay? If any outside phenomenon, such as the depredations of pirates or a major war disrupting trade, were to negatively impact the credit market, raising interest rates, the effects on many debtors could be disastrous. And indebtedness was not limited to the elites, but was to be found

throughout the urban small business classes: craftsmen, shopkeepers and other retailers, tavern keepers and so on each in their smaller ways might need to resort to borrowing at times, and be affected similarly by a credit squeeze and interest rate hike.[37]

Catilina was known to be heavily indebted, notwithstanding his ostentatious and expensive lifestyle, and many of the younger men who formed his circle were likewise extravagant and heavily in debt. In this time of fiscal instability, when the negative effects of the piracy of the early 60s and the dislocations of the Mithridatic War were still being felt, but not yet the positive economic effects of Pompeius's victories and settlement of the east, it was easy to see an air of recklessness and even desperation in the continued heavy spending of hugely indebted men like Catilina and his admirers among Rome's *jeunesse dorée*. It was this that lent colour to Cicero's frequent claims of brewing conspiracy; yet for most of the year 63 nothing dramatic actually happened. Indeed, since Catilina's energy and attention were focused on a second candidacy for the consulship, and his backers and creditors were evidently willing to give him leeway in the hope that he might indeed win the consulship for 62, it is hard to believe that any conspiracy to overthrow the governing system was contemplated as yet.[38] Catilina clearly wanted to be the duly elected consul of the Roman *res publica*, not the head of an insurrectionist regime whose lifespan would inevitably last only as long as it took Pompeius to transport his legions back to Italy! All of this leads to the notion that, whether Cicero himself believed what he was saying or not, his hints and statements concerning the supposed conspiracy led by Catilina to overthrow the state were simply not true until at least some time after the consular elections in July. It may even be supposed that Cicero was intent on manufacturing a conspiracy, a crisis that he could heroically resolve, thus winning renown and making his consulship memorable.[39] Cicero himself complained repeatedly that his warnings about the purported conspiracy were not believed; but a remarkable public demonstration engineered almost certainly by Caesar indicated that the opponents of the optimates were very much expecting a display of official violence.

One of the tribunes of the year, a Picene named Titus Labienus, brought a charge of murder against an elderly senator named C. Rabirius, alleging that he had been the man responsible for killing Saturninus almost 30 years earlier. But rather than bringing his charge via the normal procedure for the time, in front of either the *quaestio de vi* or the *quaestio de sicariis et veneficis* – the court on public violence or the murder court, as we would say – Labienus utilized an archaic procedure that hearkened back to Rome's earliest history and had to be dug out of antiquarian studies (not to say invented). Labienus's law required two judges, called *duumviri perduellionis*, to pronounce on Rabirius's innocence or guilt, and the persons so appointed reveal who was behind this show trial: Caesar himself, and his cousin L. Julius Caesar. Labienus, as events were to show, was closely allied to Caesar, and L. Caesar

tended to follow his cousin's lead throughout his career. The two Caesars declared Rabirius guilty, perhaps in effect a way of saying that there was a case to answer, and Rabirius then appealed to the people, bringing about a formal trial before the *comitia centuriata* with Labienus as prosecutor.

Most of our knowledge of this trial comes from Cicero's speech for the defence, which was of course highly tendentious. Though Rabirius admittedly was part of the mob that attacked Saturninus and his supporters in the Senate house, there was good reason to doubt that he had actually killed Saturninus, and in any case why prosecute him for this so many years later? The trial was clearly intended to make a point, as scholars have long recognized; but the point was not, as many have argued, to attack the use of the *Senatus Consultum Ultimum* in itself. For quite simply, Saturninus was not killed under the umbrella of that emergency decree: he was killed, as we have seen, after the emergency was over, after he and his supporters had laid down arms and surrendered, after they had received a guarantee against summary execution and been placed under arrest to await trial. The point of the Rabirius trial was surely to caution any who might be authorized by the Senate to employ official force under a *Senatus Consultum Ultimum,* to do so in a responsible manner and be sure to limit the use of force to what was strictly necessary. This does very much indicate that Caesar and his allies anticipated a possible crisis which would elicit the Senate's emergency decree. As to Rabirius's trial, it was not pressed: in keeping with the somewhat unreal and archaic nature of the entire proceeding, the praetor Metellus Celer halted the trial by lowering the flag on the Janiculum Hill, a sign indicating in olden days that an Etruscan army was approaching to attack Rome, and public business must be suspended. After senatorial intervention on Rabirius' behalf, the matter was allowed to drop: the warning had been delivered.[40]

Another opportunity for advancement presented itself to Caesar in 63, when the *Pontifex Maximus* – the effective head of Rome's public religious life – died. This was Sulla's old ally, Q. Metellus Pius, the consul of 80. Traditionally, the man chosen to head the pontifical college was an elder statesman and one of the most senior members of the college, and though Caesar had been a pontifex since 73 he would not normally have been a serious candidate for *Pontifex Maximus* at this time. However, Caesar knew a good opening when he saw one, and he persuaded Labienus to propose to the people a revival of a law of 104, under which the state priests were to be elected by an assembly made up of seventeen of the thirty-five tribes, selected by lot, rather than by co-optation as under Sulla's law.[41] The measure passed, and Caesar promptly used the popularity it gave him to announce his candidacy to become *Pontifex Maximus*. He had two rivals, P. Servilius Vatia the consul of 79 and Q. Lutatius Catulus the consul of 78, both very much more senior men against whom Caesar should have stood little chance; but Caesar was prepared to put his popularity to the test, and with his usual self-confidence and determination was ready to risk his career on the outcome.

Though he was already one of the largest debtors in Rome, he borrowed vast new sums to invest in this election, placing himself so heavily in debt that losing the election would mean certain financial and career ruin. It is said that when he left his home on the morning of the election, he told his mother as he kissed her goodbye that he would either return home as *Pontifex Maximus* or not at all – meaning that if he lost his debts would force him to flee into exile. He was not the only one, however, to feel confidence in his popularity with the Roman electorate. We hear that Catulus was so nervous of the outcome, fearing the humiliation of defeat by so much younger a rival, that he offered a vast sum of money if Caesar would only withdraw. Caesar scorned the offer, and the outcome was as he had hoped: he won the election by an overwhelming margin, winning more votes in his rivals' own tribes than they won in the whole poll.[42]

Being elected *Pontifex Maximus* changed Caesar's life in a number of ways. He was now, as incumbent of Rome's most important and influential priesthood, undoubtedly one of the leading men in the state. And the post carried with it an official residence called the *domus publica*, situated on the *Via Sacra* in the *Forum Romanum* near the Temple of Vesta and House of the Vestal Virgins, over whom it would be his duty to exercise supervision. Caesar gladly gave up his 'modest' family house in the Suburra and moved into the *domus publica*, living there in a grand style and in the very political heart of Rome.[43] His victory in this election is a testament to the truly extraordinary popularity he had attained among the Roman people: it is evident that only Pompeius now outweighed him in terms of popularity. Caesar was at all times careful to cultivate this popularity, by his lavish expenditures, but also by his support of or opposition to public policies and proposals.

Three other laws put forward by tribunes this year are noteworthy. One proposed to restore the right to hold office to the sons of those men proscribed under Sulla. This would have been a salutary 'burying the hatchet' measure, and Caesar naturally supported it.[44] Another proposal offered significant debt relief to ease the credit squeeze and problem of foreclosures discussed above. Given the acknowledged danger of some form of uprising by those oppressed by debt and high interest, a debt relief measure certainly seems to make sense.[45] Needless to say, however, both of these measures were opposed by the optimates; and the consul Cicero sided with the optimates, effectively burying both proposals. To salvage some popularity with the people, however, Cicero backed the third measure, proposed by the tribunes Labienus and Ampius Balbus and also supported by Caesar, to allow Pompeius – in honour of his victories – the right to wear triumphal robes at the public games.[46] It is unfortunately rather typical of Cicero that, in his eagerness to please the wealthy and the optimates, he would oppose serious reforms aimed at ameliorating public problems or injustices, while currying favour with the people and Pompeius by supporting a measure aimed solely at cashing in on Pompeius's popularity and appealing to his vanity.

The summer election of magistrates for the year 62 marked another triumphant stage in Caesar's career, but a disaster for Catilina. Caesar was comfortably elected praetor, and his prospects for an eventual consulship were clearly exceedingly bright; Catilina failed again to win the consulship, defeated by D. Junius Silanus and L. Licinius Murena. The fact that Cicero, the presiding consul, had a body of armed guards present at the election, alleging a plot by Catilina to seize office by force, may have contributed to Catilina's defeat.[47] The bribery employed during this election was so notorious that the rigidly moral and upright young M. Porcius Cato had declared in advance his determination to prosecute whoever the successful candidates might be. In the event, he allowed family loyalty to blur his sense of duty in the case of Silanus, his brother-in-law, but he did prosecute Murena, much to Cicero's chagrin.[48]

Cicero's speech in defence of Murena was a masterpiece of special pleading. In Cicero's view, the danger from the unsuccessful candidate Catilina and his band of desperate debtors was such that it was politically foolish in the extreme to do anything to upset the outcome of the elections: if Murena were found guilty he would be deposed, and that could benefit Catilina as one of the defeated candidates. Consequently, he also made fun in his speech of Cato's inopportune moral inflexibility, and in private he was even more scathing about him, complaining in a letter to his friend Atticus that Cato spoke as if he were living in Plato's ideal Republic, rather than in Romulus's sewer.[49] At any rate, this electoral defeat spelled the end of Catilina's prospects as any sort of mainstream politician: as it was now clear that he would never win a consulship, his creditors withdrew their backing and began to hound him for repayment. Since he was in no financial position to repay his debts, his thoughts turned to ways and means of avoiding having to do so. The tribunicial bill offering debt relief having failed, it was clear that only extra-legal means were likely to be of any help in the immediate future: the Senate was sure to block any further legal attempts to secure debt relief. It is from this point on that we can take seriously the notion of a 'Catilinarian conspiracy'.

As it unfolded, the conspiracy had two parts: one focused in the city of Rome, and one in the Italian countryside.[50] In the city of Rome, around Catilina himself so long as he remained, there were a band of senators and magistrates – mostly fairly junior, or second rank or under a cloud of some sort – and a larger group of reckless and mostly indebted young nobles. The most notable of the senatorial group were P. Cornelius Lentulus Sura and C. Cornelius Cethegus. The former came from a great noble clan and family, and had been consul in the year 71; but he had been expelled from the Senate by the censors of 70, and obliged to win back his former standing by gaining re-election to the various magistracies. By 63 he had succeeded in rising again as far as the praetorship, but he must have been aware that his prospects of again holding the consulship were dim. He was not without connections however:

besides his own great clan and family, he was married to Caesar's cousin Julia, the sister of L. Caesar the consul of 64, and through her was the step-father of the famous Marcus Antonius. Cethegus belonged to a lesser family of the great Cornelius clan, but he was the most energetic and daring of the conspirators after Catilina himself, and consequently seems to have played an important role despite being only a junior senator.

There may have been as many as several dozen involved with the conspiracy to one degree or another in Rome, but our evidence is so tendentious it is hard to be sure of the personnel or numbers. Certainly, however, the group was large and undisciplined enough that it produced numerous leaks: Cicero boasted constantly of the information he was receiving from sources inside the conspiracy. It was later charged, too, that Crassus and/or Caesar were involved,[51] but this is highly improbable for numerous reasons. Neither of them was the sort to play second fiddle to a man like Catilina, for example, and Crassus, as the wealthiest man in Rome and its largest creditor, will have wanted nothing to do with a conspiracy aimed at abolishing debt. In general, both men were too well placed and had too much to lose to be involved with a conspiracy that could at best only succeed for the few months it would take for Pompeius to wrap up his activities in the East and return to Italy. For there could be no doubt that Pompeius would not allow anyone to take control of Rome without a fight, and the outcome of such a fight was a foregone conclusion given Pompeius's overwhelming preponderance of force. On the other hand, there is not much doubt that like Cicero, both Crassus and Caesar had contacts inside the conspiracy: Cicero indeed publicly admitted that he had received information from both of them. It was in fact a document passed to Cicero by Crassus on 21 October that persuaded the Senate the conspiracy was real and led them to pass the *Senatus Consultum Ultimum* authorizing Cicero to use any necessary force to protect the state.[52]

In the Italian countryside, meanwhile, especially in Etruria, there were numerous indebted and dislocated people who felt a sense of grievance against the established system and the wealthy elite, as we have seen. Catilina was in contact in particular with a group focused around Sullan veterans in Etruria who had failed as small farmers, and their leader C. Manlius. According to Manlius's manifesto, referred to above, these men sought mainly some relief from their situation of chronic indebtedness and the sufferings it imposed, and only resorted to violence because the unresponsiveness of the Senate and other authorities to their situation left them no other choice, as they saw it. The idea seems to have been to stage a joint demonstration, in Rome and in Etruria, on 27 October. In Etruria, a force of some 10,000 men led by Manlius would raise the standard of revolt and stand ready to march on Rome, while in Rome itself there would purportedly be some sort of uprising initiated by setting fires in various parts of the city to create confusion, and then launching an attack on Cicero and at least some of the leading senators.

The demonstration in Rome never occurred: Cicero's watchfulness and armed guards prevented it, if it was ever seriously planned. Manlius and his men did appear under arms near Faesulae, but were immediately hemmed in by forces commanded by the pro-consul Marcius Rex, who was in Italy awaiting a triumph.[53] Meanwhile Catilina continued to appear in public in Rome and attend Senate meetings as if nothing was amiss. It was only at a Senate meeting on 7 November that Cicero, unleashing on Catilina the full blast of his rhetoric in his so-called 'First Catilinarian' speech, finally brought matters to a crisis by forcing Catilina to leave Rome and join Manlius and his men in open revolt. Even then, however, the conspiracy remained oddly inactive and quiet until early December, raising questions as to how much was really planned or afoot.

This account of the famed 'Catilinarian conspiracy' is much briefer and vaguer than what is to be found in most histories, but with good reason. Our chief sources for the conspiracy, Cicero's speeches *in Catilinam* and Sallust's monograph on the *Bellum Catilinae*, are so clearly tendentious that it is methodologically unsound to trust the details they present (which are often at variance with each other). Later writers were influenced by partisan motivations as much as Cicero and Sallust, and/or were simply dependent on those two. Only two things really stand out as clear in this conspiracy. At the end of November, Catilina's allies in Rome, led by the praetor Lentulus Sura, tried to negotiate an agreement with representatives of a Gallic tribe, the Allobroges, to raise a distracting rebellion in Gaul. Five of the leading conspirators affixed their seals to a document detailing this arrangement, which was clearly treasonous. The Allobrogean ambassadors, no fools, betrayed the deal to Cicero via their Roman patron, and Cicero was thus able to arrest these conspirators and present them and the evidence of their guilt to the Senate on 3 December. Second, there was undoubtedly an armed insurrection in Etruria, led by Manlius and, when he joined them, Catilina. Ironically, the consul Antonius, Catilina's former electoral ally, was given the charge of dealing with this insurrection, though the actual work of organizing an army and leading it in battle was done by Antonius's experienced legate Marcus Petreius.[54] Beyond these few hard facts, all other details must be regarded with suspicion because of the numerous and tendentious partisan distortions mentioned above.

The wretched conspirators in Rome were dealt with at a grand Senate meeting in the Temple of Concord on 5 December, a meeting portrayed in detail by Sallust in one of the most famous passages of Roman historiography.[55] We hear that between 3 and 5 December enemies of Crassus and Caesar, notably Catulus and C. Calpurnius Piso, made frantic efforts to persuade Cicero to implicate Crassus and/or Caesar in the conspiracy with the Allobroges, so as to destroy them. Cicero refused, though he was later to allege that Crassus and Caesar really were involved in Catilina's conspiracy somehow, most notably in his memoir *de consiliis suis*, which was conveniently

published only posthumously.[56] Perhaps aware of these efforts to implicate him, Crassus did not attend the Senate meeting on 5 December, but Caesar with typical sangfroid was not only present but played a major role in the debate.

As Sallust describes it, the consul Cicero presided over the Senate meeting with calmness and impartiality, presenting the clear evidence of the conspirators' guilt and asking the Senate for guidance as to how they should be treated. First to be asked to speak was the consul designate for 62, Junius Silanus, who proposed 'the ultimate penalty', clearly meaning death. The rest of the consular senators concurred, but the debate was dominated by Caesar, who as praetor designate was one of the first to speak after the consulars, and by the junior senator, only tribune designate as yet, Cato. Their views were diametrically opposed, and everything we know suggests that their forceful eloquence really did dominate the proceedings, though Sallust's account is clearly built up as a display piece setting out the rivalry of these two men, whose opposed policies were to play such a great part in bringing about the civil war that ended the Republican system at Rome. Caesar argued calmly and rationally for restraint, urging that extreme measures taken in the heat of passion were seldom sound, and that there was no urgent need to make irrevocable decisions. Let the conspirators be imprisoned under the most secure guard, and when the period of crisis was over, the Senate could with calmer minds determine whether to imprison these men for life – as Caesar recommended – or punish them in some other way, even by death. Cato spoke with vehement passion for the death penalty, and carried the day.[57]

In principle, M. Porcius Cato was entirely too young and inexperienced a man to play any major role in Rome's politics and public debates at this time; but what he lacked in seniority he more than made up for in force of character, strength of conviction, passion and sheer determination. For the next fifteen years, in fact, he was to play a leading role in Rome's political life as the acknowledged leader of the optimate faction. Since Sulla's retirement, the optimates had been led by Metellus Pius and Lutatius Catulus, helped by somewhat younger men like the orator Hortensius and the consul of 67, C. Calpurnius Piso. Metellus Pius was now dead, however, Catulus was old and had not long to live (he died in 61), and the next generation of Optimates like Hortensius and Piso lacked the energy and force of personality to take over leadership. Cato stepped into the breach. He was a man of utter conviction: in any situation, he knew what was right and knew it without doubt or hesitation. Steeped in Stoic philosophy, and in a romanticized vision of the career of his great-grandfather Cato the Censor, whom he sought to emulate, Cato managed to make himself, in the eyes of his contemporaries, virtually an embodiment of Roman virtue.[58] Cicero might make jokes about Cato's rigid moral rectitude, or occasionally be irked by it, but like most Romans he was at bottom deeply impressed; and it was this moral rectitude that gave Cato the respect of all conservative Romans and made him their leader. As a junior

senator in the late 60s and early 50s, his voice was listened to on all public issues with the sort of respect normally reserved for the most highly regarded former consuls, and by the later 50s – though he never attained the consulship – he was undoubtedly the most important man in Rome after the great military leaders Pompeius and Caesar.

As a conservative and a Stoic, and as a man who thought that in Cato the Censor's day the Roman governing system had attained a state as close to perfection as was possible, Cato was convinced that there was nothing wrong with the Roman system itself, nothing about the system that needed reform. He was too intelligent not to see that much in Roman politics and society was wrong, but he believed that the problem was not institutional but moral. If only Roman leaders, and Roman citizens, would once again adopt the moral outlook and behavioural norms of his great-grandfather's generation, all would be well. Cato provided in himself an exemplar of how it should be done, and hoped that others would follow his example. That was naïve, and even contemporaries like Cicero could see that it was naïve: the inhabitants of, as Cicero put it, Romulus's sewer simply were not going to behave in accordance with Cato's romanticized notion of *prisca virtus* (antique virtue). But Cato's remained a powerful example. He was ready to do whatever it took. He even declared that, if Rome's traditional system was incompatible with running an empire, the Romans should give up their empire, not their traditional system. That was never going to happen, yet the underlying belief in Rome's traditions moved people, and caused them to follow Cato. It is ironic that, as we shall see, Cato's inflexible certainty of right and wrong led him more than anyone else to push the state towards civil war, and the system towards collapse: he ended up destroying what he was trying to save. Yet he remained throughout and ever since an iconic figure: the archetype of the righteous politician.

The debate on the Catilinarian conspirators was the first of many occasions when Cato's certainty carried the Senate with him, and the first of many occasions that he crossed swords with Caesar. He hated Caesar, not just for political reasons, seeing in Caesar the embodiment of all he considered wrong about modern Roman politics and society, but also for personal reasons: he hated the fact that Caesar was conducting a notorious affair with his (Cato's) beloved half-sister Servilia.[59] Usually unflappable, affable, slow to take offence and quick to forgive, in this one instance Caesar returned the loathing. Cato was a man who was utterly impervious to persuasion or charm, utterly convinced that he was right and Caesar was wrong, and that was an attitude Caesar clearly found insufferable.[60] Because, of course, Caesar knew with equal certainty that Cato was wrong and he was right. Nevertheless, on this occasion, Caesar was forced to leave the Senate meeting under Cicero's protection to prevent him being harmed by the anti-Catilina faction, while Cato triumphed. The conspirators were led to the Roman state prison below the Capitol hill, and executed. Cicero was hailed as the saviour of Rome and given the honorific title *pater patriae*: father of the fatherland.

Catilina and Manlius, with their small and ill-equipped force, were cornered by the army of Antonius and Petreius and brought to battle in February of the next year. They fought valiantly and well, as Sallust acknowledged, but were inevitably wiped out, bringing this whole over-hyped episode to an end. Cicero had his memorable consulship, and his standing as one of the leading men of Rome, but he was not destined to enjoy that status undisturbed: as Caesar had warned, many Romans never forgot nor forgave that he was the man who had executed Roman citizens without trial, however justifiably. When Cicero sought, on the last day of the year, to close out his consulship with an oration to the people describing and justifying his actions and achievements, the tribune Q. Metellus Nepos intervened with a veto, and permitted Cicero only to swear that as consul, he had upheld the laws of Rome.[61]

The first day of 62 was the first day also of Caesar's praetorship, and he made it memorable with a political demonstration of his own. In 83, the Temple of Jupiter Optimus on the Capitol had burned down, and in 78 the responsibility, and honour, of overseeing its rebuilding had been handed to Q. Lutatius Catulus. Fifteen years later, the temple was still not finished, and Caesar proposed that in view of that, the responsibility be taken from Catulus – who had by implication shown lack of commitment to getting the job done – and handed, via a popular election, to someone else – Pompeius being perhaps the person intended. Caesar allowed Catulus to defend his record with regard to the work on the temple, but forbade him to mount the speaker's platform, obliging him to address the crowd from ground level. This undoubtedly increased the old man's humiliation. The aim was no doubt in part to get revenge for Catulus's attempts to implicate Caesar in the Catilinarian debacle; but all the same it did highlight the complacency and inefficiency of the Optimate elite. When Catulus's friends showed up in droves to support him, Caesar let the matter drop, having made his point.[62] As praetor, Caesar oversaw one of the permanent *quaestiones* (law courts) instituted by Sulla, but did nothing of note in that regard. He was, however, caught up in three dramatic episodes at the beginning, middle and end of his praetorship.

One of the tribunes for 62, Metellus Nepos, who had already made waves by attacking Cicero's execution of the Catalinarians in late December of 63, began the year 62 with some bold proposals to the benefit of Pompeius. Metellus Nepos was Pompeius's brother-in-law (Pompeius's wife Mucia was Metellus's half-sister), and had served on his staff in the east since 67. In early January, he proposed a bill to the effect that Pompeius and his army be summoned from the east to deal with Catilina's armed insurrection in Italy. Since Catilina's army was small and poorly armed, and already hemmed in by superior forces, Pompeius's intervention was hardly needed, and it was apparent that the bill was merely an excuse for Pompeius to return to Italy under arms. In addition, it seems, Metellus Nepos planned to pass a law permitting

Pompeius to stand for the consulship of 61 in absence: without such a law Pompeius would not be eligible for a second consulship until 59 (observing the ten years interval since his first consulship in 70), and would have to appear as candidate in person.

Cato, who was also one of the tribunes, was vehemently opposed to any new powers or privileges for Pompeius, and announced his intention to veto the bill summoning Pompeius to Italy. Caesar supported Metellus, and appeared with him on the tribunal on the day set for the bill to be voted on. Metellus, anticipating opposition and possible violence, had stationed an armed guard, including gladiators, in front of the tribunal; but Cato and his colleague Q. Minucius Thermus nevertheless forced their way through and mounted the tribunal, seating themselves between Metellus and Caesar. When Metellus ordered the herald to read out the bill, Cato vetoed it. Metellus then took the bill and began to read it out himself, but Cato snatched the paper from his hand; and when Metellus still kept announcing the bill from memory, Thermus put a hand over his mouth to shut him up. At this Metellus's armed guards intervened with force, and drove Cato's supporters away; but with typical courage and obstinacy, Cato stood firm under a hail of blows, until some of his supporters, inspired by his example, returned and the meeting degenerated into a general scuffle. Eventually the consul Murena came along and led Cato away to safety, but by now the chaos was such that Metellus could not proceed to a vote.[63]

The Senate reacted to this violence by passing the *Senatus Consultum Ultimum*, calling on the consuls to defend the state by any means necessary, and suspending Metellus and Caesar from office for their sponsoring of violence. With typical coolness, Caesar appeared to defend Metellus and himself in a speech that survived until the time of Suetonius, and continued to exercise his functions as praetor in despite of the Senate's decree.[64] Metellus Nepos, however, fled Rome to join Pompeius in Asia, perhaps with the notion of giving Pompeius an excuse for armed intervention at Rome in defence of a wronged tribune; and when Caesar perceived that the consuls were prepared to act against him with force, he bowed to the inevitable. Dismissing his lictors and putting off his ceremonial purple-edged toga, he retired to his home. After two days, however, a crowd appeared in front of his house demonstrating in his favour and offering to restore him to office by force. The Senate was hastily summoned to deal with this, but was astonished to be told, before they could decide on any action, that Caesar had addressed the crowd peacefully and persuaded them to disperse. Impressed, the senators reacted by officially restoring Caesar to his functions as praetor, ending this particular *contretemps* with considerable credit for Caesar.[65]

Despite the defeat and death of Catilina and his army in early February, hearings were still being held at Rome about the conspiracy, with the aim of tracking down and punishing all who were concerned in it. Rewards had been offered to informers who could reveal those guilty of participating in the

conspiracy, and two such informers in particular – Quintus Curius and Lucius Vettius – attempted to implicate Caesar. Vettius included Caesar in a list of co-conspirators he presented to the judge Novius Niger, who was presiding over the court of inquiry, and he alleged that he had a handwritten letter from Caesar to Catilina proving Caesar's complicity. Curius confirmed Caesar's complicity at a Senate meeting, alleging that Catilina himself had told him of this. Again, Caesar's reaction showed his customary coolness and decision. In the Senate, he firmly defended himself against Curius's allegation, and called on Cicero himself to witness that in point of fact he (Caesar) had provided information exposing the conspiracy. He was thereby able to prevent Curius from receiving the informer's reward. Vettius he dealt with more vigorously: he sent his attendants to arrest Vettius, beat him, throw him into prison and destroy his personal effects. Further, he sent his lictors to arrest and imprison Novius Niger for daring to permit a magistrate with greater *imperium* (power of command) than his own to be indicted before him. All of this was high-handed, to be sure, but it met with general approval as the proper actions of a magistrate with *imperium* in defence of the dignity bestowed on him by the Roman people.[66]

Towards the end of his praetorship, Caesar became embroiled in an ugly scandal through no fault of his own. Every year, the women of Rome celebrated a special religious festival in honour of a deity known to us only by the title *Bona Dea* (good goddess). The rites were highly secret, and no men were permitted to witness them or be near. The festival was held at the house of one of the senior magistrates – a consul or praetor – chosen by the Senate, and in 62 the house of Caesar was chosen. All men had to leave the house on the day of the rites; indeed, even male animals were removed, so that the house became a female sanctuary. The wife of the chosen magistrate, in this case Caesar's wife Pompeia, oversaw the rites, which took place at night. On this occasion, however, a young patrician noble named P. Clodius Pulcher sneaked into Caesar's house on the night of the ceremony, disguised as a woman. Allegedly, he was engaged in an affair with Pompeia, who had arranged to have one of her servant girls admit Clodius so that they could meet clandestinely. However, Clodius was apparently also curious to witness the rites, and instead of staying quietly in the room where he was to meet Pompeia, wandered around the house, and was discovered by a young woman who alerted Caesar's mother Aurelia. Aurelia immediately had the house locked up and a search instituted, which discovered Clodius hiding in a maid's room. Clodius was thrown out, and the authorities were immediately informed that the rites of the *Bona Dea* had been desecrated, arousing an extraordinary scandal.[67]

Clodius was an altogether remarkable character, who was to make quite a name for himself over the course of the next ten years through a series of violent and outrageous actions. A scion of one of Rome's most revered and powerful patrician *gentes*, the Claudii, Clodius had already announced his

eccentricity by preferring the more 'plebeian' spelling of his clan name with an 'o': Clodius instead of Claudius. Not especially wealthy, Clodius nevertheless lived on the grandest scale, helped out by his sisters – he had three, and each had married splendidly – with at least two of whom he was alleged to have incestuous relations. Nothing was too outrageous for him, and he carried everything off with high-handed arrogance on the assumption that a Claudius was essentially above censure.

On this occasion, however, it seemed as if Clodius might have bitten off more than he could chew. The Senate insisted that the matter of this sacrilege be thoroughly investigated and a prosecution brought against the guilty party, and though Clodius surrounded himself with an armed guard of friends and began to play on popular dislike of the Senate, he could not in the end prevent the prosecution from occurring. Caesar, as soon as he learned of the scandal, had sent Pompeia a notice of divorce: although he was notorious for his own affairs with married women, he did not care to be so publicly exposed as a cuckold. He refused, however, to testify against the popular and well-connected young Clodius, alleging that he knew nothing of any affair between Clodius and Pompeia and could not personally witness to any wrongdoing by Clodius. When he was asked why, in that case, he had divorced Pompeia, he famously responded that his wife must be above suspicion.[68]

Using every conceivable delaying tactic, Clodius managed to put off any action until well into the year 61. When he could no longer get action put off, he managed to have a tribune, Fufius Calenus, institute a special prosecution on terms rather less difficult for him than those the Senate had proposed and instructed the consul Pupius Piso to institute. Crassus then obligingly stepped in with funds to bribe the jury, and in an example of notorious injustice, Clodius was found not guilty. The most lasting effect of the entire affair was a bitter enmity between Clodius and Cicero. In his own defence, Clodius had alleged he was many miles away from Rome on the evening of the *Bona Dea* festival, but Cicero had blown his alibi and exposed him as a liar by testifying that he had personally met Clodius in Rome late that afternoon.[69]

Caesar had been allotted, as his provincial governorship after his year as praetor, the same province of 'Further' (that is, western) Spain where he had served as quaestor. Since the Clodius affair had delayed this assignment until March of 61, he was anxious to settle his affairs in Rome and set off to Spain to take up this governorship as expeditiously as possible.[70] He ran into a serious problem, however: in spite of his success and popularity, his indebtedness was so vast that his creditors were becoming seriously nervous. Reportedly, Caesar's debts at this time amounted to the staggering sum of 25 million sesterces. While we cannot, given the very different societies and economies involved, and issues of purchasing power, usefully express this sum in any modern currency equivalent, it was a truly stupendous burden of debt. His creditors wanted assurances of payment, and sought to block him from leaving Rome until they were satisfied; but he was not financially able

to give any satisfaction other than his word. At this point, the relationship of political alliance and friendship he had built up over the past few years with Crassus proved its worth: Crassus stepped forward to settle or guarantee the most pressing of these debts, reportedly to the tune of 830 talents.[71] With Crassus behind him, Caesar's creditors were content to remove their objections, and Caesar was able to hurry to Further Spain. His aim as governor was to enhance his standing in Roman politics and to improve his finances, and he succeeded in both with his usual flair. In fact he was able to return to Rome towards the middle of 60 as a victorious general, a successful governor, with his financial credit repaired, and as a prime candidate for the consular elections for 59.

The province of Further Spain, roughly modern Portugal, was – from the Roman perspective at least – troubled by 'bandits' living in the northern and interior mountain ranges of the province. The unpacified tribes in question would no doubt have described themselves as something other than bandits, but the trouble they represented to Roman governance of the province justified Caesar, in Roman eyes, in attacking and 'pacifying' them. Levying additional troops to bolster the normal occupation force of the province, Caesar spent the summer fighting a very successful campaign against these hill tribes, capturing numerous towns and winning at least one significant battle, as a result of which his troops hailed him as *imperator*, the honorific designation given by Roman armies to a general who had led them to victory. The campaign was so successful that large quantities of booty were acquired. Roman standards allowed considerable latitude to the victorious general in disposing of booty, although it was expected that a major portion should enrich the state treasury. Caesar was careful, both to disarm criticism and to enhance his standing, to send a large sum of money to Rome along with his report on his campaigning. His achievements were rated highly enough, as a result, that the Senate voted to award him a triumph. Caesar also took care of his soldiers, awarding them each a substantial sum as their share of the booty. But he also retained a large sum of money himself, to help restore his finances.[72]

After the campaigning was finished, Caesar turned to the judicial and other governance business of the more fully pacified parts of his province. Here too he showed himself energetic, thorough and efficient. In particular, he endeared himself to the provincials by cancelling a punitive tax imposed by the Senate because of the region's support of Sertorius in the 70s. Further, like Italy at this time, the province was suffering an economic crisis of credit and indebtedness. Here Caesar offered a simple yet reasonably fair solution: he decreed that debtors must repay their debts, but to preserve their properties and livelihoods, he limited repayments to no more than two-thirds of the debtor's yearly income until such time as the debt was discharged.[73]

Interestingly, we find that after his year in Spain, Caesar was no longer severely troubled by debt, indicating that he was able to enrich himself very

significantly through his province. Some sources suggest that he engaged in extortionate pressuring of wealthy provincials, and deliberately plundered inoffensive communities along with the 'bandits' he campaigned against. These charges, however, seem to stem from nothing more than malicious gossip. Caesar had bitter and determined enemies at Rome – Cato and Bibulus for example – who would have been delighted to prosecute him on any plausible charge, and would not have been put off by any consideration if there was a legitimate case to be made against Caesar. No such prosecution was even openly discussed, let alone attempted, however; and from this we must conclude that his actions in Spain were generally considered to have fallen within the accepted rules and norms.

This illustrates the very substantial possibilities of legitimate enrichment governing a province offered to the Roman elite. Besides the booty gained from legitimate campaigning, there were other accepted means of gaining wealth. It was traditional, for example, for the various communities of the province, as the governor made his round of the territory, to make grants to him for the upkeep of himself and his entourage, and for prominent and wealthy provincials to solicit his goodwill with gifts. Roman practice set no clear limits to such grants and gifts, so long as no undue pressure was used to extort such moneys, and so long as the gifts did not amount to actual bribery to distort justice or something similar. This was all a very grey area, but so long as the provincials themselves were satisfied with their interactions with their governor, the Romans were not inclined to cavil. In the case of a man like Caesar – powerful, important, well connected, a man who could be a very useful patron at Rome, particularly as he had a reputation as a loyal and effective patron – provincials were motivated to give generously in order to cultivate his goodwill.

It is perhaps worth noting here too, that the frequent statements in our sources that Caesar employed blatant bribery to win his electoral successes, should be evaluated in the same way as the suggestions of wrongdoing in his province. Simply put, Caesar was never prosecuted for bribery, nor do we even hear that such a prosecution was attempted or seriously contemplated. Why not? Caesar had bitter enemies, as I have noted. For example, why did not Catulus, or some proxy for Catulus, prosecute Caesar for bribing the people to elect him *Pontifex Maximus*, if his bribery was as blatant and notorious as some sources suggest? It seems clear that Caesar did not in fact engage in electoral bribery. The Roman laws on *ambitus* (electoral bribery) defined specific actions as illegal – most obviously the straightforward purchasing of votes – but left open a wide compass for the expenditure of moneys aimed at gaining favour among the electorate. Like modern American elections, ancient Roman elections were fuelled by money, and the careful legal restrictions on how money could be spent do not mean that a man could not legitimately spend money on his elections. Caesar, we know, spent lavishly on his elections, far more than he could afford to spend, far more than most contemporaries and rivals spent. But

he must have been careful to spend his money in ways considered legitimate under Roman electoral laws: if not, he surely would have been prosecuted repeatedly by those who hated and despised him.

Towards the middle of the year 60, then, Caesar returned to Italy with, as Cicero put it, a fair wind in his sails. He had been awarded a triumph, and had an excellent prospect of winning the consulship for the following year.[74] In Italy, the political landscape had altered considerably since the end of 62, offering Caesar both certain difficulties and an outstanding opportunity. Pompeius had finally wrapped up his reorganization of Rome's eastern provinces and client kingdoms in the aftermath of the Mithridatic Wars, and arrived back in Italy with his army at the end of 62. To the relief of the many in Rome and Italy who had feared what Pompeius might do with the great victorious army he had at his back, he held a review of his troops at the port of Brundisium, and then dismissed his men to their homes, telling them they would be sent for when it was time to hold his triumph. He then proceeded peacefully to Rome, cheered and feted by every community along the way, and arrived on the outskirts of the city as the conquering hero, but not as a new Sulla determined to seize control of Rome by force, as many had feared.

Pompeius was at bottom a man who sought recognition as the great man of his time by his peers, and adulation from the rest of the Roman people, but not autocratic power won by force. Throughout his life he had always overcome every obstacle in his path, and achieved whatever he wanted to achieve by sheer determination, leadership and organizational skills. He clearly assumed that those same skills and determination, together with his unmatched popularity and achievements, and the *auctoritas* that should accrue to him as a result, would enable him to get what he wanted from the Roman Senate and assemblies. However, he found things much more difficult in Rome than they had been in his various military commands, where he could give orders and those around him had to obey. He had powerful and determined opponents. Lucullus was bitterly angry at the way Pompeius had stepped in to take over the remnants, and with them all the glory, of the Mithridatic War after he (Lucullus) had done the hard part of breaking Mithridates' power. He was determined to have his revenge on Pompeius. Crassus, who had carefully gone away from Italy on a journey when Pompeius returned, now came back envious of Pompeius's success and determined to thwart him at every opportunity. And Cato, now leading the optimate faction, was determined to cut Pompeius down to size and make him fit into the collegial oligarchic way of doing things that he considered appropriate for a Roman noble.

Pompeius had three specific demands, and a general desire. He wanted to celebrate triumphs for his victories over the pirates and Mithridates; he wanted land allotments as reward for his veterans; and he wanted his reorganization of the east to be ratified officially by the Senate. And more generally, he wanted to be recognized and looked up to as Rome's leading statesman.

The triumph for his victories could not be denied him, and it was celebrated with great magnificence in 61.[75] The other two demands, however, he found he would have to fight for; and he soon discovered that he did not know how to. And unquestioned precedence and reverence as Rome's greatest man was quite simply not accorded to him, except by the adoring urban crowd. When he took advantage of the legal privilege granted him of wearing triumphal robes to the games, he found it made him unpopular. When he let the Senate know what he needed or desired, he found himself questioned and opposed. His career had been made commanding armies. He had never spent much time at Rome, sitting in the Senate, and he was not accustomed to the senatorial debating and infighting, particularly in the style of the indomitable Cato.

Pompeius had secured the election of a noted supporter, M. Pupius Piso, to the consulship of 61, but Piso proved to be an ineffective advocate for Pompeius's wishes. Agrarian legislation was put off until the next year, and when Pompeius presented his eastern settlement to the Senate, that body refused simply to ratify it and, prompted by Cato and the vengeful Lucullus, insisted on reviewing it point by point.[76] Lucullus had the detailed knowledge of affairs in the east to argue credibly that Pompeius's measures required review; and in that Pompeius had settled the provinces and client kingdoms in the east on his own authority, without the usual senatorial commission of advisers, there was a real case to be made for conducting such a review. On the other hand, the provinces and client kingdoms in the east needed a clear decision regarding their status, and there is not much doubt that the detailed review of Pompeius's measures insisted on by Lucullus and Cato had much more to do with opposing Pompeius than seeing to the proper needs of the provinces and client states concerned.

Pompeius put his efforts into achieving the election of a subordinate of unquestioned loyalty and proven efficiency as consul for the year 60, one who would take control of getting his necessary measures passed. His choice was his long-time officer L. Afranius, a new man who would owe his election entirely to Pompeius's backing, and who would act as Pompeius wished. Afranius was indeed successfully elected, but proved to be a disastrously poor choice. Loyal he undoubtedly was, and he had certainly been an efficient officer under Pompeius, but he had no idea how even to begin to bend the Senate to his wishes. Cicero several times remarked bitterly on Afranius's total unsuitability and incapacity as consul.[77] Cicero, of course, would have liked to play the role of Pompeius's right-hand man and chief adviser himself, but Pompeius was not interested: Cicero was much too prone to tell Pompeius what he ought to do, rather than advising him how to achieve what he wanted to do. The stalemate initiated in the second half of 61 thus continued through the year 60. Ratification of Pompeius's eastern settlement drew no closer, and a land allotment bill proposed by a tribune named Flavius was stymied by the determined opposition of the optimates, led by Cato and the other consul of 60, Q. Metellus Celer. Pompeius had alienated his erstwhile allies the Metelli by

divorcing his wife Mucia, their half-sister.[78] Cato rejoiced in his success at discomfiting Pompeius, and thereby cutting him down to a more suitable size, and went further by putting Crassus in his place too.

The tax-farming companies who had contracted to raise the tribute from the province of Asia had, in their greed and optimism, seriously overbid for the contract, and found that the tax was not producing nearly as much as they had expected, leading to huge losses for them. They came to the Senate for relief, pleading for remission of a substantial portion of the sum they had contracted to pay for the right to collect the tax. Crassus, the great financial magnate of this time, with his finger in every pie, expected to use his influence in the Senate to get them their relief; but Cato vehemently attacked the greed of the tax farmers, and the consul Metellus Celer prevented the measure going through.[79]

It was at this juncture that Caesar returned from Spain with two things on his mind: to hold the triumph the Senate had awarded him, and to stand for election as consul for 59. In order to do both, however, he would need the Senate to grant him the privilege of announcing his candidacy for the consulship *in absentia*, since he could not enter the sacred *pomerium* (boundary) of the city so long as he was a pro-consul commanding an army, nor hold a triumph if he gave up his command and entered the city. On the whole, the Senate seems to have been not unwilling to grant Caesar this relatively trifling privilege; but Cato capped his achievements of this year by filibustering the motion and forcing Caesar to choose between his triumph and his candidacy.[80] Faced by this necessity, Caesar unhesitatingly entered the city and formally announced his candidacy for the consulship, forgoing his triumph.

Although his provincial command had enabled Caesar to settle much of his debt, he remained short of the sort of cash needed to campaign lavishly, and his bitter rival Bibulus was a strong candidate for the other consulship and if victorious would certainly do all he could to obstruct Caesar. Consequently, Caesar made an electoral compact with the third candidate: a wealthy new man named Lucius Lucceius, who enjoyed Pompeius's support but was clearly the weakest of the three candidates. Lucceius agreed to put up the money for an all-out joint campaign, the hope being that Lucceius's cash and Caesar's popularity would see them both elected.[81] Bibulus, however, spent lavishly too, with even Cato contributing to his campaign funds, although he normally disapproved of lavish spending on elections.[82] It was a case of anything to obstruct Caesar, and Cato had also tied himself closely to Bibulus by marriage: Bibulus had married his daughter Porcia.

Given his family background and immense popularity, Caesar's election was a formality: he was returned at the head of the poll, with every century reputedly voting for him. But Bibulus was elected his colleague.[83] This brings us back to where we started this chapter: the inevitability of Caesar's election as consul, and the fear this generated among the optimates, such that they engineered the naming of utterly insignificant provinces for the future

consuls, and such that they overcame their disapproval of lavish electioneering in order to assure Caesar an obstructionist colleague. What was it about Caesar that engendered this fear and dislike?

It is clear that in the course of the 60s, Caesar had made himself one of the five most important and influential politicians at Rome. First place undoubtedly went to Pompeius, whose military achievements gave him a unique standing in the state and made him the idol of the urban masses. Second was Crassus: he used his legendary wealth to build up a vast network of contacts and obligations among senators and equestrians whom he could mobilize for his political purposes. Cicero, the unrivalled king of the law courts, was now a key political leader too, with his matchlessly persuasive eloquence, his popularity and influence among the Italian upper classes from whom many of the more junior senators were drawn, and the prestige of his consulship. Each of these three was, however, a politician representing essentially his own interests only; none of them led a political movement or grouping other than followers attached to them by personal ties. Pompeius had his former officers and his veteran soldiers, who would vote for him when called upon out of a sense of personal loyalty and mutual ties of obligation. Crassus had the many people tied to him by various financial links and obligations; and Cicero all those who owed him gratitude for his advocacy, or were carried along by his eloquence on any given issue. Cicero, it is true, dreamed of leading a grand coalition of 'all good men' drawn from 'all of Italy' in pursuit of the state's best interests; but that dreamed-of coalition had no substance, and of course the best interests of the state were understood in the light of what would be best for Cicero and his associates who were members of the wealthy elite. Certainly Pompeius and Crassus too would consider themselves motivated, on the major policy issues of the day, by the good of the Republic; but as with Cicero that good was largely understood through the prism of their own interests and desires.

All of our sources, particularly the contemporary sources like Cicero and Sallust, state repeatedly that there were two major political outlooks or movements in this period which, alongside such great individual leaders as the three just mentioned, and in various ways utilized by them, shaped the politics of the time. The names they used for these outlooks or movements were *optimates* and *populares*.[84] These were not political parties in any modern sense. There was no formal membership, no formal policy platform, at best only a general agreement on an attitude towards the Roman governing system, and consequently towards proper policy with regard to the issues of the day. The best way the difference between these political outlooks can be expressed is by stating that one had a static view of the Roman state, and the other a dynamic one. The *optimates* believed that the Roman governing system was close to ideal as it was, and needed therefore no significant change or reform. Their aim was to keep things the way they were, with the traditional noble elite firmly in charge in a strictly collegial manner. The *populares* believed that the Roman governing

system required substantial ongoing change and reform to meet the changing needs of the times. In particular, it was necessary to recruit new leaders from outside the traditional nobility, new citizens from among Latinized allies, and to create new systems of oversight and regulation to rein in the excesses of Roman magistrates in their dealings with allies and subject provincials.

Roman politicians might change their allegiance with respect to these movements, being a *popularis* at one stage of their careers or on certain issues, and an optimate at another stage or on other issues. But there were at all times men who were firmly committed to one outlook or the other, and made up thus the core groupings around which these movements were built up. At the end of the 60s these two outlooks and/or movements had come to be led and dominated by two great political leaders who were thus rivals of Pompeius, Crassus and Cicero for leadership of the Roman state, and who – having aims and followings based on something bigger and more lasting than merely personal interests and ties – tended to determine the shape of politics. I refer, of course, to Caesar and Cato.

Cato was by the year 60 the unquestioned leader of the optimates, the heart and soul of this political movement. The core group of fellow optimates clustered around him was small – his son-in-law Bibulus, his brother-in-law L. Domitius Ahenobarbus, his nephew M. Junius Brutus and his devoted follower and imitator L. Favonius – but the influence he wielded was great, and he could usually count on the more or less lukewarm and variable support of hundreds of senators, especially those drawn from the traditional Roman nobility. It was for their interests and traditions, their primacy as undisputed lords of the Mediterranean world, that Cato and his fellow optimates stood. However much Cato might deprecate the morals and character of most of the *nobiles* of his day, and however little those nobles might be moved to follow Cato's example of rigid rectitude, Cato believed firmly that the traditional *nobilitas* was the only proper governing body for Rome and her empire, and the nobles admired Cato's character, principles, adherence to tradition and leadership.

Caesar had spent the decade of the 60s establishing himself as a *popularis* through and through, as the political and spiritual heir of Marius and Cinna and their policies, as the one Roman leader who dared to attach himself openly and consistently to the legacy of Marius and Cinna and to take up the leadership of their defeated cause and policies. From his quaestorship in 69, with his funeral speeches for his aunt Julia and wife Cornelia, through his advocacy of the claim to citizenship of the *Transpadani* in 68 and 66, his restoration of Marius's monuments in 65, his support for restoration of the rights of the sons of the proscribed in 63, and in general his support for measures to relieve debt, distribute land, limit the Senate's more extreme powers, and increase honesty and efficiency in governance, Caesar had pursued a consistent political line that had made him hated by the optimates, beloved by the people, the one Roman politician whose *popularis* outlook was unquestioned on any issue, and consequently the clear leader of the *popularis* movement. It is this that explains

the fear and bitter dislike that led the optimates to do whatever they could to limit the efficacy of his coming consulship, and to prevent him holding any important command after his consulship. In this aim, however, the optimates much underestimated the man they were dealing with.

In his inflexible determination to stand on principle as he saw it, Cato had succeeded in thwarting and angering three of the most powerful political leaders in Rome, by the end of the year 60. Caesar, one of the three, was well aware of the opportunity this represented: if three powerful leaders could unite together, they could dominate Rome. The problem was, that the other two thwarted and angered leaders, Pompeius and Crassus, heartily disliked each other and as fierce rivals had made a habit of thwarting each other as best they could. To anyone but Caesar that might have seemed an insuperable obstacle to creating the sort of powerful coalition he desired, but Caesar was not easily put off. With his almost demonic charm, his long-standing friendly relations with both men and his powers of patient rational persuasion, he brought both Pompeius and Crassus to see that it was in their interests to cooperate with each other and with himself.[85]

With their backing, he undertook to see to it, as consul, that Pompeius would get his land allotments for his veterans, and his ratification of the eastern settlement; that Crassus would get remission of the payments for the tax-farming corporations; that together they would determine Roman policies and the outcomes of elections. For himself, he sought a powerful and long-lasting provincial command with an opportunity to undertake major military campaigning. Caesar had not lived through the time of Sulla without learning that, for the Sullan/optimate system to be overthrown and a *popularis* system open to reform and expansion of the Roman citizen body and governing elite to become possible, a powerful military force backing and underpinning the *popularis* movement would be needed. He hoped to be able to build such a force if given the right sort of provincial command. If we wonder why Pompeius and Crassus, the two most powerful political leaders and patrons of this time, should have taken Caesar as a partner, rather than simply using him as an agent, it is again his position as leader of a broad political movement that explains this.

There were few, if any, important nobles attached or committed to the *popularis* cause, it is true; but among the Italian *domi nobiles* who made up much of the Senate's number and the preponderance of the equestrian class, and among the urban and rural proletariats, the cause of Marius and Cinna remained hugely popular for obvious reasons. Caesar brought real and important strength to the partnership, therefore, besides his simple position as consul able to take the political initiative. Although an attempt to draw Cicero into the coalition as well foundered on Cicero's conservatism and over-optimistic sense of self-worth,[86] Caesar could enter his year as consul confidently expecting to achieve great things.

V

THE LONG YEAR 59 BCE

As January of the year 59 BCE began, Caesar stood atop the Roman world, at the apex of the Roman politician's career ladder. He was consul, one of the two annual presiding officers of the Roman state, holder of the office that was, for Roman nobles, the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. As he went through the rituals of the first day of the official year, surrounded by the lictors (attendants) carrying the ceremonial rods (*fasces*) that symbolized his power, he must have felt a deep satisfaction: he had fulfilled his responsibility to his *gens*, the Julii, to maintain their status at the forefront of the Roman nobility. Whatever happened hereafter, he would never have to feel shame before his ancestors. For Roman nobles, the year in office as consul was a watershed stage in their lives. Twelve months of dignity and power – presiding over official functions and debates, summoning and leading meetings of the Senate, dealing with whatever state business might arise – would be followed by a year governing a foreign province, with a chance to repair a fortune dented by the expenses of years of political campaigns, and perhaps even a chance of military glory should an insurrection or border war happen to occur; and then the active phase of the noble's life would be over. For the remainder of his years, he could rest on his laurels, a senior and respected member of the Senate whose opinion would be sought and whose voice would be heeded on all important state business, but who would no longer be required to bestir himself to take action or put himself to expense or trouble.

That was the normal pattern; but that is not how Caesar saw things. He had fulfilled his duty to his *gens* by achieving the consulship, but as the leader of a political movement and as a man deeply convinced that the Roman state – the ruling power of a vast empire – needed fundamental reforms, attaining the consulship was for Caesar only a step towards much bigger and more important things. He had a whole programme of reforming activity in mind for his year as consul, and he knew that those reforms would meet resistance, that there was a great likelihood of violence having to be employed, and that after his year of office – far from being able to rest on his laurels – he would need to develop for himself a position of great military strength in order to withstand the inevitable backlash from his political enemies. The immediate

military force needed to override potential violent opposition to his reforms would be provided by Pompeius and his veteran soldiers, and the first order of business for the year was hence to address Pompeius's needs: land allotments for the veterans of his eastern wars and official confirmation of his settlement of the eastern provinces. Once Pompeius's support had thus been locked in, the rest of Caesar's plans for the year could be addressed in the secure knowledge of having overwhelming military force at his disposal if needed.

So it was that at one of the first Senate meetings of the year, Caesar introduced a bill to provide land allotments to Pompeius's veterans, among others. He was determined to be conciliatory, and to accomplish his reforms as far as possible by consensus. He had prepared his ground by arranging for the Senate's *acta* to be recorded and published daily, so that the populace could keep informed of what was being said and done in the Senate's meetings.[1] The land allotment bill Caesar now proposed was carefully crafted to take into account the lessons of past attempts at land reform, especially Rullus's failed bill of 63, and to address in advance most likely objections. Land was to be purchased, not seized or confiscated, and the cost was to be born by the new state income deriving from the new provinces Pompeius had added to the empire. Though focused towards Pompeius's veterans, the proposed allotment programme included needy Roman citizens who were fathers of children. The land commission which was to implement the bill was to have a broad membership of twenty men, so that the credit for the land distribution and any political gains therefrom would be distributed widely. Caesar himself, as proposer, was expressly excluded from membership of the commission; and even the key committee of the commission which would be invested with the necessary judicial power was to have a relatively broad membership of five men.[2]

Caesar's address to the senators proposing this bill was mild and respectful, and he expressed a readiness to listen to any and all constructive criticism, and to accept every reasonable change or amendment. He called, in fact, for all men of goodwill in the Senate to join him in working in collaboration towards the good of the state.[3] Of course, we may doubt his sincerity here, but at the very least his tactics were brilliant, and put his opponents on the defensive. And if the Senate had in fact risen to Caesar's challenge and cooperated in what was without doubt a necessary and salutary piece of legislation, it is clearly possible that Caesar's year as consul might have been reasonably harmonious, as his own rhetoric would have obligated him to continue as he had started: mildly and cooperatively. The response he met with, however, must have surpassed his worst expectations.

Finding that the bill Caesar proposed was exceptionally fair, moderate and well-drafted, that existing titles and ownership of land were carefully respected, and that the expenses of purchasing land and settling colonists on it were not to be borne by the treasury but defrayed by the new income deriving from Pompeius's eastern conquests, the extreme optimates were at a loss

to come up with any reasonable criticisms or objections. That did not dismay them or turn them from their course. Led by Cato and by Caesar's consular colleague Bibulus, they were determined to thwart Pompeius and Caesar at all costs. Finding nothing specific to object to in Caesar's land bill, they simply declared that they had no intention of allowing Caesar to pass any new law, however well drafted and fair seeming. Bibulus declared that his policy as consul would be not to allow any new measures whatsoever to be enacted. When Caesar pressed for serious discussion and a vote, Cato simply began one of his patented filibusters, intending to talk through the remainder of the business day and prevent Caesar from taking a vote. The only recourse Caesar could find was to order Cato to be silent, and when Cato refused, to have him arrested and led off to prison. This, however, caused an immediate wave of sympathy for Cato among the senators, always jealous for their cherished freedom of speech, and many senators got up to accompany Cato to prison. Seeing this, Caesar signalled a tribune to intervene and free Cato, and gave up hope of getting senatorial cooperation with his plans.[4]

Once again, therefore, it was the die-hard optimates who pushed the political process towards crisis, in their purely negative determination not to accept change of any sort, not to permit those they viewed as their enemies any opening for advancement if they could prevent it. For if they thought that Caesar would back off after failing to gain senatorial approval, they misjudged their man. It is unlikely that they had any such notion: they knew Caesar well enough, and were prepared in advance to continue the struggle in the forum and the *comitium*. Caesar's reaction was that if the Senate refused to cooperate with him in doing what was necessary, he would do it nevertheless without the Senate's backing. No less than the Gracchi and Drusus, he was fully convinced of the necessity of his reforms; unlike them, he was not only ready to do whatever was necessary, but also had a winning hand lined up for himself in advance.

He introduced his land reform bill to the Roman populace at a series of *contiones*, and at these meetings he cleverly allowed Bibulus to address the people and explain his opposition. Bibulus had very little to say, and when Caesar pressed him to let the people have what they clearly wanted and needed, urging the assembled throng to plead with Bibulus to give way, Bibulus was foolish enough to state haughtily that he would never permit the bill to pass even if they all wanted it. At this point both Pompeius and Crassus were brought forward to express their agreement with and support of the bill. Caesar took care to ask Pompeius, specially, what his response would be if the bill's opponents tried to stymie it by force. Pompeius responded that if the enemy took up the sword, he would take up his shield as well![5] To anyone thinking seriously about the situation, that settled things. Pompeius's veterans, who stood to be the gainers from this bill, provided more than enough force to overcome anything the bill's opponents could possibly try to introduce to stop the bill. So long as Pompeius was prepared to order his

veterans into action, the outcome could not be in doubt; and Crassus's vast patronage thrown into the balance tipped the scales even more Caesar's way. He knew he could not lose if he was determined enough, and determination was never a quality he lacked.

Although the optimates should not have been surprised, after the way they – and particularly Cato – and stymied Pompeius and Crassus in 61 and 60, they evidently were in fact surprised to find both Pompeius and Crassus aligned with Caesar. They had apparently relied on the mutual antipathy of Pompeius and Crassus ruling out such an alliance; they had reckoned without Caesar's charm and persuasiveness. Since the rules on legislation imposed delays during which proposed laws were to be debated and discussed, and objections or improvements could be brought forward, before they were formally voted on, the optimates had some weeks to organize their resistance. They failed to come up with anything. Not only could they find no reasonable grounds to object to the content of Caesar's law, or even to its intent, they could mobilize no counterforce, no mass of voters, to stand up against the bill's eventual passage. They were obliged, since they would not give way, to resort to mere obstructionism.

One of the exacerbating factors in the Roman governing system of this time, leading to frequent breakdowns of normal politics and resorts to violence, was the enormous scope the traditional system gave for pure obstructionism. Over the centuries, the Romans had acknowledged or instituted an array of customs and measures by which a priest or magistrate could hold up public business. The most notorious was the tribune's veto, but there were many other means of obstruction. Any magistrate could, up to a point, veto proceedings of another magistrate of equal or lesser *imperium*, for example. A *pontifex* could declare days *nefasti*, or religiously ineligible for conducting public business. An *augur* could perceive, or even merely declare that he was looking for, omens indicating that the gods objected to what was being done. Since the top magistrates with *imperium*, notably the consuls, also exercised priestly functions, a consul too could announce or seek omens, or declare days unsuited to public business. All of these devices were intended to assure the religious scrupulosity (and hence the gods' acceptance) of the conduct of public business, and when necessary to impose delays so that dissensions could be debated and thrashed out, and compromises reached to maintain a degree of consensus regarding public policy. They had never been intended simply to block the conduct of public business once and for all, but this is how the optimates now used them. Since Caesar was *Pontifex Maximus*, they could not manipulate the calendar, but they had the consul Bibulus and several tribunes.

As consul, Bibulus took to watching the heavens for omens, meaning that in principle no public meetings could take place until he had observed a favourable omen indicating the gods' concurrence. Three optimate tribunes joined him in this activity. In addition Bibulus declared all the remaining *dies comitiales* of the year – that is, days which were eligible for public assemblies to

occur – to be holidays, meaning that no assembly could legally be held, and hence no law passed.[6] Caesar shrugged off this naked obstructionism, and went ahead with preparations to hold an assembly to vote on his law. Bibulus held a meeting of sympathetic senators at his house, and it was agreed to proceed as a body to the place of assembly and disrupt the proceedings.[7] Bibulus would exercise his veto against his fellow consul Caesar, and prevent a vote from occurring. Pompeius had called out his veterans to come to vote on the law which would grant them their reward, and the Forum was packed in advance. Caesar was addressing the crowd and preparing for the vote from the steps of the Temple of Concord in the Forum, and in spite of the hostile crowd Bibulus and Cato and their supporters forced their way through and reached the temple's steps. However, when they mounted and Bibulus began to address the crowd to end the proceedings, they were confronted by the counter-measures Caesar had prepared. One of the tribunes of this year, P. Vatinius, was a loyal ally of Caesar and was standing by in readiness with an armed gang. As the crowd below booed Bibulus and pelted him and his supporters with filth, Vatinius and his men attacked and drove the optimates off. Bibulus and Cato, and even the tribunes supporting them, were severely manhandled and beaten, Bibulus's lictors had their *fasces* (the consul's rods of office) broken, and once they had been forced away from the temple, Caesar held the vote and passed the law.[8]

On the next day, Bibulus summoned the Senate and inveighed against the indignity and violence inflicted on him, and urged the Senate to respond to this public violence by passing the ultimate decree suspending the laws and empowering him to take all necessary steps to save the state. To his bitter chagrin, the Senate declined to do so.[9] The proposal was frankly an absurd one, and though the majority of the senators sympathized with Bibulus against Caesar, they could see this. What force exactly could Bibulus hope to raise against a fellow consul who had the backing of Pompeius's veteran soldiers? Did he imagine that Caesar and Pompeius would tamely allow themselves to be rounded up and massacred, like the Gracchi and their followers? They would fight, and the streets of Rome would again be filled with bloodshed, as in the days of Marius and Sulla. And what was more, they would certainly win, and what would be the consequence of such a victory over a magistrate backed by the Senate's decree? The senators were not foolish enough to grant Bibulus his decree, and the wounded consul retreated in angry disappointment to his urban mansion, where he sequestered himself for the remainder of the year. During this time he was posting daily announcements that he was watching the heavens to invalidate any public acts of Caesar, and posting scurrilous edicts attacking Caesar and his allies in obscene and libellous ways. These edicts of Bibulus achieved considerable popularity. Common folk almost always enjoy any scandalous gossip about leading personalities, and Bibulus's edicts were well written and amusing as well as being salacious and malicious.[10] It is worth recalling here that much of the more extreme personal gossip and accusations of arrogance and pure power

lust aimed at Caesar in our sources derives from Bibulus's edicts, and from similar writings composed at this time by other enemies of Caesar like the elder C. Scribonius Curio – sources that are entirely unreliable.

Caesar was left by Bibulus's retreat to his home in sole charge of Rome, and it became the joke of the day to pretend to date documents to the consulships of Julius and Caesar, instead of Bibulus and Caesar, since only Julius Caesar really held office.[11] Opponents of Caesar and his allies – and there were many as it became more and more fashionable to side against the group in power – criticized the 'gang of three' (Caesar, Pompeius and Crassus) as despots who had illegally seized control of the state. This was not true, of course. Pompeius and Crassus held no position of power, other than being particularly influential senators, and being able to mobilize unusually large groups of clients to back them and vote for any measures they backed. Caesar was the duly elected consul of the *res publica*. They had the support of several other duly elected magistrates, most notably the praetor Q. Fufius Calenus and the tribune P. Vatinius, but that was not unusual.

The sort of political pact Caesar, Pompeius, and Crassus had formed was a traditional part of Roman politics. It was how the state had been governed and things had been done since time immemorial – by leading men forming agreements to implement certain policies or laws that they deemed necessary or for the good of the state. The optimates themselves were just such a grouping: the *factio paucorum* or 'faction of the few' as Caesar's supporter the historian Sallust liked to call them. Certainly Pompeius and Crassus were unusually powerful leaders, and traditional rivals, and for them to have united together behind an unusually energetic and effective consul like Caesar was surprising, and to many unwelcome. And certainly Caesar's blithe ignoring of the obstructionism of his opponents lent his activities an air of technical illegality, though this was mitigated by the obvious fact that the means employed by Bibulus and co. had never been intended to simply prevent any and all public business from being conducted no matter what. If that kind of obstructionism were to become an accepted part of Roman politics, it would become impossible for anything to get done, since there was always someone who opposed any policy or proposal, and a magistrate or priest could always be found to veto or watch the heavens or declare a holiday, whether from conviction or suasion (such as bribery).

At any rate, having set the tone for the year by the dispute over the land allotment law, neither Caesar nor his opponents backed down for the rest of the year. Caesar had included in his law, in imitation of Saturninus's land law, a provision that all senators must swear, within a certain period of time, to accept and abide by it or face exile. Some optimate leaders, notably Cato, contemplated holding out and refusing to swear, but Cicero persuaded them that to do so would be political suicide and that the *res publica* needed them to remain in Rome and politically active. The oath was consequently sworn, and the land law was implemented, but the battle lines had been drawn.[12]

Pompeius and Crassus were naturally among the men chosen as commissioners to implement the land allotment programme, and the process of allotment went on for a number of years, with as many as 40,000 soldiers and citizens ultimately benefiting.[13] Of course, it was the very fact that large numbers of poor citizens would benefit to which the optimates objected. They cared nothing about the welfare of veteran Roman soldiers and impoverished fellow citizens; they only cared that as beneficiaries of the land allotment programme these soldiers and citizens could be expected to show gratitude and hence political allegiance to the programme's backers.

With the land allotment under way by early March, Caesar had two other pieces of important business to transact on behalf of his allies: the rebate for the tax farmers of the Asian tribute, and the confirmation of Pompeius's settlement of the eastern provinces and client states. Caesar proposed a law granting the tax farmers a rebate of one-third of the amount they had pledged, but then read them a stern lecture not to allow greed to influence them to such incautious bidding in future.[14] Pompeius's eastern settlement Caesar delegated to Vatinius, who proposed a plebiscite enacting all of Pompeius's arrangements and treaties in one go. As much as Pompeius had overstepped his proper authority in settling matters alone and without consulting the Senate, his arrangements were admittedly sound, and practical necessity demanded that the eastern Mediterranean region be granted the peace and security that Rome's firm commitment to the system in place since 63 could provide. The last thing that troubled region needed was to become again a political football struggled over by Roman leaders and rivals of Rome.

Apparently only Lucullus, still bitterly angry at Pompeius's treatment of him, held out in opposition to this enactment, but Caesar cowed him. Lucullus was threatened with a prosecution in which all of his own actions in the east, placed in the most unsavoury possible light, would be held up to judicial scrutiny by a hostile prosecutor and jury, and at this he caved in and begged Caesar's pardon.[15] Pompeius's settlement of the east was made legally binding, and Lucullus retired once more into private life at his palatial villa on the bay of Naples, devoting himself (with the fabulous wealth he had won in the east) to raising fancy fish, and to the luxurious lifestyle for which he has become a byword. It is sad, but all too characteristic of this era, that a man of Lucullus's enormous talents and (for his time and class) integrity should be remembered chiefly as a gourmand and epicure.[16]

Two further acts were intended to strengthen and enrich the alliance of three, and to stifle opposition. The *de facto* ruler of Egypt, Ptolemy XII Neos Dionysos, more commonly known as Ptolemy Auletes or the 'flute player', was troubled by the fact that an alleged will of his predecessor Ptolemy XI left Egypt to the Roman people, and that Rome had never repudiated this will and acknowledged Auletes as king. He now applied to Caesar and his allies, and offered them an enormous bribe to have the Roman people officially endorse his right to the throne. Money and power broking were always

welcome to Pompeius and Crassus, and Caesar still had substantial debts to pay off, so the three allies willingly fell in with Ptolemy's wishes.[17] The Romans in any case had at this time no intention, or at any rate no sufficient agreement among each other, to invade Egypt and attach it to Rome as a province, nor was there any real rival to Auletes' claim to the throne.

Meanwhile, Cicero's old consular colleague C. Antonius was on trial for extortion as governor of Macedonia. He was no doubt guilty as charged, but Cicero felt obliged to defend him, and in the course of his defence he too vociferously critiqued the present political situation of domination by Caesar and his allies.[18] For more than a year now, Cicero's bitter enemy P. Clodius had been seeking to get himself transferred from the patriciate to the plebs, so that he could seek election to the tribunate, with the stated aim of using that magistracy to get revenge on Cicero. There were significant religious and legal obstacles to Clodius's wishes; but on the afternoon of Cicero's speech, Caesar as *Pontifex Maximus* and Pompeius as *augur* together swept aside all religious and legal technicalities and presided over Clodius's transition to the plebs by way of adoption by a plebeian citizen. Since the adoptive father, a certain Fonteius, was in fact young enough to be Clodius's son, and since Clodius never in fact changed his name to reflect his adoption into a new clan, the procedure was an open farce. However, it did nevertheless enable Clodius to stand for the tribunate, and serve as a warning to Cicero, and other critics, to take heed.[19]

Cicero had been offered the chance, by Caesar, of joining the alliance with Pompeius, Crassus and himself, more or less as an equal.[20] The unique persuasiveness of Cicero's rhetoric, the wide respect he enjoyed among ordinary senators, equestrians and the Italian upper classes, and the prestige of his consulship, made him a political figure worth cultivating, and Caesar always had an appreciation for Cicero's talents. Cicero had rejected this offer, and instead ranged himself alongside the optimates, in opposition to Caesar and his allies. He regarded the optimates as the *boni*, the 'good men' of the state, the men whose values were authoritative and whose opinions were to be heeded, the men by whom he most wished to be esteemed. It is rarely noted how remarkable this was.

Cicero was a keen reader of philosophy and a major philosopher in his own right: he knew very well that the word 'good' ought to have a moral significance, and not be merely a term of self-approbation. And as the great advocate who pleaded in mitigation of the many crimes and malfeasances of the Roman governing elite in the law courts, none knew better than Cicero that the majority of Roman nobles were anything but 'good' in a moral sense. Wherein lay the 'goodness' of the *boni*, those 'good men' whose approbation Cicero craved? Cato, to be sure, could legitimately be seen as a good man, but other than that the 'goodness' of the optimates was far to seek. What was 'good' about the bitter vengefulness and narrow-mindedness of Bibulus, the stupidity and corruption of Domitius Ahenobarbus, the money-grubbing of Brutus, the inconstancy and self-seeking of C. Memmius, the limitless

self-satisfaction of the Metelli, and so on? The *boni* alongside whom Cicero ranged himself were 'good' only in the sense that they were the representatives of the traditional ruling class who had always defined themselves as the 'best men' in the state. Cicero knew all too well, even as he took his position, what feet of clay these *boni* had, and he was to find that his devotion to them and their cause was singularly one-sided.

As a 'new man', Cicero craved acceptance by the establishment, and as a useful man they might seem to give it him as long as he was useful; but they never accepted Cicero as one of themselves, and did not hesitate to leave him to fend for himself when his usefulness ended. Cicero would have served himself, and arguably Rome, better by accepting Caesar's offer.

By now Caesar had made it clear that he and his allies could and would enact any laws and policies they deemed necessary, and that they would neither be put off by obstructionism nor shy from using force if needed. He had thus achieved what had seemed impossible to bring about during the past two years, but had made even more bitter enemies in doing so and had also damaged his popularity with the people. The masses love the underdog, and Caesar's ruthless efficiency had made Bibulus and Cato seem the underdogs in Roman politics.

The rising young man of the next generation of Roman nobles was the younger Curio. He adopted the fashion of criticizing the three 'despots' who dominated Rome, and won wide popularity in doing so.[21] Demonstrations of public approval for Curio at the games, along with booing or at most tepid applause for Pompeius, Caesar and their supporters, alerted Caesar to the public mood, and he was well aware that Pompeius was very much attached to his own popularity. Since the threats of the optimates to annul Caesar's laws as soon as he left office would hurt Pompeius most of all – by halting his land allotments to his veterans and throwing open again his eastern settlement – there was no real danger that Pompeius would break the alliance with Caesar, but Caesar decided all the same to tie Pompeius more closely to himself.

Caesar's daughter Julia, born about 78 or so and his only known child, had reached marriageable age. She had been carefully raised by Caesar's mother Aurelia since the death of her own mother Cornelia in 69, and was much beloved by her father. He had arranged a marriage for her to a highly regarded young noble named Q. Servilius Caepio, but he now changed his mind and proposed a marriage to Pompeius, who had divorced his wife Mucia some years earlier. Although Pompeius was some years older than Caesar, and therefore by definition old enough to be Julia's father, the marriage was entered into in April of 59 and proved to be a remarkable success. Pompeius knew how to make himself loved, and Julia evidently possessed some of her father's charm: despite the disparity in age the two became devoted to each other, and Julia thereby formed a strong link between Caesar and Pompeius. Caesar himself also contracted a new marriage, his third: he took as wife Calpurnia, daughter of L. Calpurnius Piso, a prominent noble whose support in the Senate would be valuable.[22]

Thus far, though his actions had benefited important communities – the veteran soldiers who received pension allotments, the business community that was saved from potentially disastrous losses on the tax-farming contracts, the provinces and client states of the east who had their status settled securely – Caesar had been acting largely in the interests of his allies and his and their joint position of dominance. He now undertook two major reform programmes that were overtly aimed at improving the condition of some of Rome's poorer citizens, and making provincial governance more honest.

Excluded from the land allotment programme aimed primarily at the needs of Pompeius's veterans had been a huge parcel of land – some 200 square miles around the old city of Capua – that the Roman state had owned in Campania since the end of the Hannibalic War. This was the former civic land of Capua, seized by the Romans to punish Capua for having sided with Hannibal. The land, very fertile and agriculturally productive, had been leased to smallholders – many no doubt the land's former owners – whose rents had been a secure mainstay of the Roman public income ever since. Caesar now argued that with the vast new revenues streaming into Rome from the east, this source of income was no longer needed by the state, and he introduced a second land allotment law redistributing this land to poor Roman citizens who were the fathers of at least three children. Many ex-soldiers and former leaseholders no doubt received distributions, but a significant number of the urban poor were also enabled to return to their country roots and take up a prosperous farming existence. Over 20,000 citizens benefited from this allotment programme, and the city of Capua was revived as a Roman colony for them.[23]

Noteworthy is the specification that only fathers of three children could benefit: for many decades Roman leaders had been concerned about a decline in the citizen birthrate. As far back as 131 the censor Q. Caecilius Metellus Macedonicus had given a speech, which long remained famous, urging Roman citizens to procreate and raise more children, for the good of the state.[24] These were wise words, but only words. Caesar gave citizens a practical reason to raise children – in order to benefit by receiving a land allotment – and the means to maintain those children. There was of course the usual opposition to the law. Cato filibustered it in typical fashion, not because he could find anything wrong, but because Caesar proposed it and it must therefore be wrong. Caesar again had Cato arrested by his lictors for refusing to stop talking, much to the other senators' dismay; but he had a tribune interpose to rescue Cato once the point had been made, and the law was passed. Senate meetings became rather sparsely attended after this, as senators (including Cicero) left the city to avoid having to see themselves overridden in this way.[25]

The other law Caesar proposed, in August, dealt with what the Romans called *rebus repetundis*, literally demanding the return of goods, with the implication that goods had been wrongfully taken (as we would say, extortion).

There had been a number of laws dealing with extortion by Roman magistrates and governors since Piso's original law setting up the permanent *quaestio de rebus repetundis* in 149, but extortion had only become more endemic and more of a problem. Caesar's *Lex Julia de rebus repetundis* became the standard law on the matter of extortion for the remainder of Roman history, and a classic of responsible administrative legislation. The law, though containing little that was new in itself, systematized Roman law on this topic, combining the salutary measures from existing laws into a coherent whole, removing contradictions and inconsistencies, and establishing precise definitions of the various offences and classes of persons who came under the scope of the extortion law, as well as more rational procedures for bringing them to trial.

While it remained true that, to Roman eyes at all levels of society, the provinces existed for the purpose of exploitation by Romans, this law helped to set reasonable bounds to that exploitation, beyond which no Roman officials might go, and helped the provincials to call to book any Roman officials who overstepped those bounds. In that the law explicitly dealt only with officials and their entourages – that is, men of the senatorial elite – the law was still an incomplete treatment of the extortion issue, since much extortion was also carried out by the equestrians who owned and ran the tax-farming companies, and their agents. But the law did at least recognize that not only the actual extortioners, but also the recipients of the extorted goods and moneys, should be pursued. The law was acknowledged to be so sound and salutary, that though Caesar was its proposer it passed without opposition: even Cato approved of it.[26]

While these two laws evidence Caesar's genuine concern for reform, he also had to be concerned about his own future career, and the strength of the political movement he led. Since the passage of the first land allotment law, his enemies had been loud about their determination to annul his laws and prosecute Caesar himself as soon as he was no longer consul and his position of power and official immunity ended. Whether or not Crassus and Pompeius would have cared greatly about a successful prosecution of Caesar, they could not accept the annulment of his laws, since that would directly affect their own interests. As usual, Cato and the optimates were too rigid in their thinking to perceive this, and practise any sort of 'divide and rule' tactic by exempting the laws allotting land to Pompeius's veterans and endorsing his eastern settlement from the proposed annulment, for instance. Of course, it was precisely the land law for Pompeius's veterans that had aroused their bitterest ire, so we should not be too surprised at their rigidity. But in providing the clearest motivation for the three allied dynasts to remain united, they damaged their own political goals.

In order to prevent the undoing of what had been achieved in the first half of 59, the three allies agreed that it would be necessary for Caesar to hold a powerful provincial command that would exempt him from prosecution and

provide him with a strong military force with which he could threaten to intervene at Rome if political events required it; and for the consuls of the year 58, and as many other magistrates as possible, to be men loyal to the three dynasts and their programme. As to Caesar, the province most obviously suited to giving its governor a chance to intervene at Rome was Cisalpine Gaul, immediately north of peninsular Italy and with a garrison of three legions and a large Romanized population from amongst which it was possible to recruit Roman soldiers. So far as the purposes of the threefold alliance was concerned, therefore, making Caesar governor of Cisalpine Gaul for a number of years, with some power of military recruitment, would do. But Caesar wanted more than that: he wanted a sphere of military operations. He had not lived through the careers of Sulla and Pompeius without learning the basic lesson of whence real power came in Rome of his day. He knew that if he was to be a political leader with the kind of power to match Pompeius and overmatch the optimates, and if his Cinnan/popular political movement was to hold once again an equal or even dominant role in Roman public life as against the Sullan/optimate one, he would need a strong and highly effective army. He needed, therefore, a province which would give him the scope to engage in large-scale campaigning, in the course of which he could raise and train an army that would provide the requisite force to secure his and his political movement's standing in the Roman governing system.

Caesar's opponents were as well aware of the realities of contemporary power politics as Caesar himself. As we have seen, they had attempted to stymie him in advance by allocating to him and his consular colleague the insignificant task of tending the forests and country paths of Italy. Though it was legally the Senate's duty and prerogative to set the provincial assignments of future magistrates, Caesar was not about to abide by this decree of an overtly hostile Senate. Gallia Cisalpina was held in 59 by the ex-consul L. Afranius, Pompeius's loyal henchman, and there was no obstacle to legislation conferring it after his year as consul on Caesar. Cisalpina was bordered to the north east by Illyria (Croatia), and to the north-west by Gallia Transalpina (Provence). The latter was held in 59 by Q. Metellus Celer, an optimate from the most influential and well-connected of all plebeian noble families. Both provinces offered potential opportunities for military undertakings: Caesar judged best not to disturb Metellus, but to take Illyria and seek to campaign in the Balkans. It happened that a Dacian leader named Burebistas had just founded a new empire of sorts in the lower Danubian region, and it seemed – or could be made to seem – that he was or might become a threat to the Roman provinces of Illyria and Macedonia, and to Roman friends among the tribal leaders of Thrace. No doubt a suitable excuse for large-scale campaigning could be found there.

In early May Caesar's ally, the tribune P. Vatinius, therefore proposed a law setting aside the Senate's decree on the consular provinces, and instead assigning to Caesar for five years the governance of Cisalpine Gaul and

Illyricum, with three legions and the necessary means to sustain them.[27] Soon, however, it began to appear that Transalpine Gaul might be the more appealing sphere of command. There was plenty of unrest in Gaul (roughly, modern France). Metellus Celer had high hopes of campaigns there sufficient to win him a triumph, and though those hopes were dashed first by the victory of the governor C. Pomptinus (Celer's predecessor) over the rebellious Allobroges, and then by Celer's own untimely death before ever he reached his province, the situation in Gaul still looked promising. Pompeius was induced to propose that, in view of Celer's death, the province of Gallia Transalpina with one legion should be added to Caesar's command. Although Cato objected vehemently, the Senate bowed to the inevitable and acceded to Pompeius's proposal.[28]

The position and policies of the three dynasts could now be regarded as secure, so far as military force was concerned. Even the cry of the opposition that the Lex Vatinia was illegal, because of Bibulus's watching of the heavens, was rather undermined by the Senate's decree to add Transalpine Gaul, which implicitly accepted the Lex Vatinia. Caesar could now, stung by the bitter invectives constantly hurled at him, boast that he had achieved his desires in spite of his opponents and could use his position of strength to stamp on their heads; and Pompeius could respond to threats of undoing his policies by stating, 'I shall keep you down with Caesar's army' *(oppressos vos tenebo exercitu Caesaris)*.[29]

It remained highly desirable, however, to control the actual levers of government at Rome by getting sympathetic magistrates elected. P. Clodius, who owed Caesar and Pompeius a debt of gratitude, was considered a shoo-in to be elected tribune, but he was hardly a reliable ally. Volatile, self-willed and overweeningly proud of his Claudian heritage, he regarded himself as bound to none and inferior to none. He would only follow the three dynasts' policies if it suited him. The dynasts therefore put their efforts into getting loyal allies into the consulship for 58: Pompeius's supporter A. Gabinius and Caesar's father-in-law L. Capurnius Piso. Here Bibulus stepped in and issued an edict postponing the consular elections, which were due to be held in July, until the autumn. Pompeius and Caesar both opposed this edict, but finding that they could arouse little popular support against it, found it best to let it stand.[30] In the event, the edict made no difference. In October Gabinius and Piso were duly elected to the consulships for the year 58, illustrating that the deep unpopularity of the dynasts and their supporters portrayed in our sources, principally Cicero, is to a considerable degree misleading. Clearly the dynasts were still popular enough to influence the vote of the *comitia centuriata* that elected consuls. An attempt to prosecute Gabinius for illegal electoral practices, mounted by C. Cato – a distant cousin of the famous Cato – was unsuccessful, and the dynasts had their magistrates for the following year.

As just noted, our knowledge of the events and general mood of this year comes to a very great degree, both directly and indirectly, from Cicero. In his letters and speeches of this time his views and observations are preserved

directly, and he exercised a powerful influence on later writers too. The hostility towards the dynasts he portrays as being felt by all right-thinking men, whether senators, equestrians, Italians or the urban crowd, and the deep mood of bitterness at the domination of Caesar and his allies, is often taken more or less at face value. It should not be. Cicero's letters to Atticus, in particular, give us the sense of being for once truly on the inside of the Roman political process, and that is very seductive to the historian. The problem is that although Cicero was unquestionably an insider, he was an insider who had taken sides. He was avowedly an opponent of Caesar and Crassus, and although he harboured more friendly sentiments towards Pompeius, he disapproved strongly of Pompeius's alliance with Caesar and their joint policies and actions. He had ranged himself with the optimates, and the hostility and bitterness towards the dynasts he portrays is the bitterness and hostility felt by the optimates.

Of course, the optimates believed themselves to stand for and represent everything that was fine and good about Rome, the true and old Roman way of seeing and doing things; and by definition therefore, all 'right-thinking' men thought and felt as they did. Anyone who sided with the dynasts, or at least saw anything good in their actions and policies, was *ipso facto* not 'right thinking', and to be dismissed as a dupe or a sell-out. This means that Cicero's animadversions against the dynasts have to be taken with a sizeable grain of salt, at least in so far as they purport to represent the views and mood of the Roman and Italian people generally, as opposed to those of Cicero's cronies and the optimates specifically. We can believe that there was a certain amount of public sympathy with the defeated Cato and Bibulus and their colleagues, and that the popularity of the big three wavered at times during the year, as they were successfully lampooned by Bibulus and upstaged by the flamboyant and popular young Curio. But as we have seen, they retained at all times sufficient real popularity to pass their laws, get their allies elected consuls, and even sway the Senate to pass decrees in their favour.

Shortly before the time for the elections, in mid-July, there erupted a scandal surrounding an alleged plot to assassinate Pompeius, who was very much still seen as the dominant partner in the alliance of the three dynasts. The same L. Vettius who had played such an equivocal role as informer concerning the Catilinarian conspiracy apparently approached the young Curio, attempting to recruit him into the assassination plot. Curio told his father, who passed on the information to Pompeius himself, who alerted the Senate. Vettius was hauled before a Senate meeting and interrogated. After initially denying everything, he admitted that there was a plot, and alleged that it was instigated by Bibulus and its active leaders were L. Aemilius Paullus, Q. Caepio (aka M. Junius Brutus, who had been adopted by a Caepio), and Cornelius Lentulus, the son of one of the candidates for the consulship of 58.[31] It is to be noted that Paullus and Brutus were the sons of the Aemilius Lepidus and Junius Brutus whom Pompeius had defeated, and in the case of Brutus executed, in 77. The young men thus had grudges

against Pompeius (making them plausible leaders in a plot to kill him), and the young Lentulus could be thought to be acting on his father's behalf, whose prospects for the consulship were damaged by Pompeius's enthusiastic support for Gabinius. Bibulus, however, had actually warned Pompeius of a possible plot in May, and so seemed an implausible instigator.

The alleged plot immediately and subsequently became the focus of a good deal of malicious gossip and partisan theorizing, and as with the purported 'First Catilinarian Conspiracy' of 66, it is extremely hard to get at the underlying facts (if any) of a plot that never actually took place. What we do know is that, the day after the Senate meeting, Caesar brought Vettius from prison – where he had been placed on the Senate's orders for illegally carrying arms – and interrogated him again in front of a *contio* (informal assembly) of the citizenry. Here Vettius insisted that the assassination plot was real, but changed his tune regarding its leaders. Brutus was dropped, and instead the leading optimates Domitius Ahenobarbus and Lucullus were named, along with Cicero's prospective son-in-law Cn. Piso. Like Brutus and Paullus, Ahenobarbus had a grudge against Pompeius, who had executed his older brother during his campaign in Africa in 80; and it was common knowledge of course that Lucullus loathed Pompeius. These new allegations, and particularly the omission of Brutus, damaged Vettius's credibility fatally. As Cicero remarked, it was clear that a night and some nocturnal pleading had intervened. It was common knowledge that Brutus's mother Servilia was Caesar's mistress, and it was assumed that Caesar had Vettius drop Brutus at her behest.[32] This led to a widespread assumption that Caesar himself was behind Vettius's allegations, and that the Vettius affair was some plot of Caesar's to discredit his opponents, particularly young Curio. If so, Caesar was remarkably clumsy in having Vettius name Brutus in the first place, when he did not in fact want Brutus implicated.

We should recall, for a moment, the known relationship between Caesar and Vettius: they were enemies. Vettius had attempted to implicate Caesar in the Catilinarian conspiracy, and Caesar had had him arrested and beaten up, thrown into prison and his property destroyed in retaliation for this allegation. That hardly makes Vettius a plausible ally of Caesar, and nor is it consistent with Caesar's methods to be so slapdash about upon just whom an allegation was to cast suspicion. We may concur with Cicero that a night had indeed intervened but it seems more likely that, although Caesar may well have stepped in at Servilia's behest, his interrogation of Vettius before the *contio* was his first involvement in the affair, and that his aim was primarily to pressure Vettius into leaving out Brutus. Who, if anyone, was really behind Vettius's approach to Curio and initial allegations cannot be known. The man was returned to prison, where he then died mysteriously. Rumours circulated that he had been poisoned or strangled. The optimates blamed Caesar for his death, and Caesar blamed the optimates.[33] Either is possible. Given the highly partisan nature of everything we are told about the affair, it seems pointless to speculate.

As the year progressed, the main legislative agenda of Caesar and his allies had been taken care of, and the elections for 58 seemed well in hand, Caesar's thoughts turned more towards his coming provincial command. He had long been, as we have seen, a proponent of extending the Roman citizenship to the *Transpadani*, the inhabitants of Cisalpine Gaul north of the Po. The region was peaceful and prosperous, and its numerous population lived predominantly in towns that had been given Latin status already in 89. Thirty years later, in 59, the *Transpadani* were as thoroughly Latinized as any inhabitants of peninsular Italy, and so could very properly be argued to be ready for Roman citizenship; and since the region had become a major recruiting ground for Roman armies, they could be said to be deserving.

The upper class of the towns in fact were already Roman citizens, since by ancient right men elected to magistracies in Latin towns became by that fact Roman citizens. And just how thoroughly Roman the upper class of Cisalpine Gaul was is revealed by the fact that a number of the leading lights of Roman literary culture in this era were *Transpadani*. The poets Valerius Cato and (most notably) C. Valerius Catullus, and the historian Cornelius Nepos stand out; and a generation later of course Cisalpine Gaul was to give to Roman literature two of its greatest names – Virgil of Mantua and Livy of Padua.

As a pro-consul planning to engage in major military operations, Caesar would depend on his province Cisalpine Gaul as his base and recruiting ground, and he now took steps to advertise again his commitment to Roman citizenship for the region's inhabitants. His ally Vatinius passed a law permitting Caesar to strengthen the Latin colony of Comum (Como) in the north of Cisalpine Gaul, and in adding 5,000 new settlers Caesar made it clear that he regarded the colony's inhabitants as Romans and that he would treat all *Transpadani* as Roman citizens during his governorship.[34] The three legions attached to Cisalpine Gaul were established in winter quarters around Aquileia in the north-east, on the border with Illyria (Croatia), indicating that Caesar's thoughts were still turned towards a Balkan campaign.

The situation in Gaul, nevertheless, continued to attract Caesar's attention also. Two major sources of potential disruption and conflict loomed, which would inevitably impact the Roman province in the south in some way and hence provide an excuse for the governor to intervene. To the east of the Roman province, in modern Switzerland, the tribe called the Helvetii were restless. They had only settled in Switzerland a few decades earlier, and were considering moving on to seek a new home somewhere in Gaul. If they did so, their best route lay through Rome's province, and the displacement of other tribes they would cause could not help but impact Rome's province.

Further north, a long-standing conflict between two powerful peoples, the Aedui and Sequani, was of importance to Roman interests. The Aedui were officially 'friends' of the Roman people, and this relationship was a crucial part of Rome's protective diplomacy north of its province. The Sequani, finding themselves on the losing side in their conflict with the Aedui, invited

the German chieftain Ariovistus with thousands of warriors from his tribe the Suebi to cross the Rhine as their allies. Ariovistus helped the Sequani defeat the Aedui, but then seized a third of the lands of the Sequani as payment, and invited thousands more Suebi across the Rhine to join him.[35] He seemed well on the way to establishing a major German power west of the Rhine, in part at the expense of Rome's friends the Aedui; and the Romans had been understandably nervous of German migrations across the Rhine since the time of the Cimbri and Teutones. For the present, Caesar as consul negotiated with Ariovistus and induced the Senate to acknowledge him as a 'friend' of the Roman people,[36] but that was clearly inconsistent with Rome's long-standing friendship with the Aedui, and the Senate's instructions to governors of Transalpine Gaul to aid the Aedui if called upon to do so. In 59, it was certainly still possible that the Helvetii might decide against moving, and that Ariovistus's power and apparent threat might prove transitory, but no less than Burebistas in Dacia, the Helvetii and/or Ariovistus could potentially provide the cause or excuse for major Roman military intervention if they did make any move that seemed to threaten the province.

Caesar's year as consul was now drawing to an end. On 10 December the new tribunes for 58, P. Clodius among them, assumed office, and the political manoeuvring of the year 58 began. Clodius was determined to do big things, not least among which was to achieve the exiling of Cicero in revenge for his role in the *Bona Dea* prosecution. He had been breathing threats against Cicero throughout 59, but especially since his election to the tribunate in July. Cicero, with his typical inability to remain silent, had only exacerbated Clodius's hostility by ridiculing him in a series of public confrontations. Cicero was the wittiest man of his time as well as the most eloquent, and his numerous jokes and witticisms at Clodius's expense were widely appreciated and infuriated Clodius.[37] Beneath his public humour, however, Cicero was exceedingly nervous about Clodius's intentions, and sought reassurances from leading politicians that he would be protected against him.

The optimates assured him that they would stand by him, and Pompeius promised Cicero that he would not permit Clodius to harm him.[38] These were reassuring words, to be sure, but Cicero could have used a more solid bulwark against Clodius's hostility. It was Caesar who offered him one. When one of the twenty commissioners implementing Caesar's land allotment programme died, Cicero was offered the chance to replace him as commissioner. If he had accepted the offer, Cicero would have enjoyed immunity from prosecution and held a position of power from which to ward off Clodius'sattack.[39] Mindful of optimate objections to the land allotments, however, and relying on their promise of support, Cicero spurned the offer.

Clodius's stated intention was to pass a bill outlawing anyone who had put Roman citizens to death without judicial condemnation. This was nothing new: if passed, the law would merely be a re-enactment of the law of C. Gracchus of 123 to the same effect. There was, however, only one Roman

magistrate who had notoriously caused Roman citizens to be executed without a preceding trial and condemnation – Cicero's execution of Lentulus Sura and the other conspirators in 63 – and it was clearly at Cicero that the bill was aimed. Caesar now offered Cicero a post as a *legatus* on his staff as governor of the Gauls and Illyria. Again, if Cicero had accepted the offer, he would have been immune from prosecution due to his absence from Rome on official state business; but again, he could not bring himself to be beholden to the optimates' chief enemy Caesar, and declined.[40]

On the last day of 59, Bibulus finally emerged from his self-imposed seclusion and announced his desire to lay down office with a speech to the people, in which he would presumably have justified himself and attacked Caesar and his allies. Clodius interposed his veto, and Bibulus's consulship thus ended with a whimper.[41] Although the consuls of 58 were firm allies of Caesar and Pompeius, two of the praetors – L. Domitius Ahenobarbus and C. Memmius – were staunch optimates, and at one of the year's first Senate meetings they brought up the issue of Caesar's consulship. Their demand was that all of Caesar's acts and laws be annulled as illegal. Caesar coolly announced his willingness to submit to the Senate's judgment, and there followed three days of inconclusive debate on the issue. Then, satisfied that no definite judgment against him was forthcoming, Caesar crossed the sacred *pomerium* of Rome and thereby formally assumed his governorship of his provinces.[42]

He lingered on the outskirts of Rome for some time, observing political events, since it was too early in the year to campaign anyway. He produced three speeches attacking Ahenobarbus and Memmius, and responded to an attempt by the tribune L. Antistius to prosecute him before the people by persuading the other tribunes to declare him immune from prosecution while he was absent from Rome on the state's business. Having thus secured his rear, as it were, Caesar also took care of his loyal ally Vatinius – who was likewise threatened with prosecution – by granting him a post as a legate on his staff.[43] Vatinius held this position, and the immunity from prosecution that went with it, for the next three years, until he secured election to the praetorship for 55. Caesar always made a point of standing by his friends and allies, no matter what.

Meanwhile Clodius pressed ahead with his plan to avenge himself on Cicero. He formally proposed his law exiling anyone who had executed uncondemned Roman citizens, and rather than ignoring the law as irrelevant to his position – which was that the Catilinarian conspirators had forfeited their citizenship by committing treason with enemies of Rome – Cicero showed his concern by putting on mourning and making the rounds of Rome's leaders calling on them to protect him and help defeat Clodius's bill.[44] Although another tribune, Ninnius Quadratus, did his best to stand up for Cicero, and various senators and leading equestrians attended demonstrations on his behalf, Clodius's bill progressed. Called upon to oppose the bill, the consuls let it be known that they did not intend to interfere, and the

three dynasts announced that their own policies stood in too much danger to permit them to intervene against a popular tribune.[45] Clodius organized a *contio* to discuss his law in the Circus Flaminius just outside Rome's pomerium, and introduced both consuls and Caesar to address the crowd. Piso avowed that, as to the execution of the Catilinarians, he always favoured compassion in politics and the killing of citizens without trial had displeased him; and Gabinius concurred. Caesar gave a classic speech. In his calm, measured, rational way he reminded the people that he had opposed the executions as unnecessary, but stated that he did not favour passing laws retrospectively condemning men for what had already been done.[46] That is, he neither denied nor admitted the legality of Cicero's actions in 63, but distanced himself from them; and without openly supporting Cicero or condemning Clodius, he deprecated the sort of vendetta they were involved in. The main impression, no doubt, was that he had disapproved of the executions carried out by Cicero, and this was all Clodius desired.

Seeing that Clodius's bill was likely to be passed, Cicero attempted to get Pompeius to intervene; but Pompeius had withdrawn to his Alban villa and refused to see Cicero. When a delegation of senators came to plead with him on Cicero's behalf, he replied that as a private citizen he could not interfere with a tribune, and advised them that it was the consuls' business to take steps if steps needed to be taken. If the Senate declared a state of emergency and called on him to take up arms in defence of the state, he would do so. The Senate showed no such inclination. Cato instead went so far as to advise Cicero that he would do better to defuse the situation by going into exile voluntarily.[47]

Of all those who had promised Cicero protection in late 59, there was one who honoured his promise: Caesar. He renewed his offer to Cicero of a post as *legatus* on his staff, but again Cicero declined it.[48] In the middle of March Cicero anticipated the passage of Clodius's bill into law by going into voluntary exile, and Clodius immediately followed up by passing a law specifically condemning Cicero and seizing his property.[49] At the same time, events in Gaul called Caesar away from Rome.

Cicero's exile, though Caesar personally regretted it and would have saved him from it, had shown that the optimates had neither the will nor the power to stand up against their opponents, and with that Caesar's presence near Rome was no longer necessary. He began the next, and most famous stage of his career: the conquest of Gaul.

VI

THE CONQUEST OF GAUL

'All Gaul is divided into three parts': thus began Caesar's famous commentary on his campaigns of conquest that culminated in the subjection of Gaul and its absorption into the Roman Empire. Caesar was thinking in terms of a combination of geography, ethnicity and language. As he perceived it, no doubt somewhat simplifying and systematizing a more complicated reality, the territory he thought of as Gaul – bounded by the Alps, the Mediterranean Sea and the Pyrenees in the south, the Atlantic Ocean and Channel in the west, and the rivers Rhine and Rhone to the north and east – was inhabited by three major population groups who were ethnically and/or linguistically distinct, and lived in three broad regions of Gaul. The *Galli* or Gauls proper, an agglomeration of Celtic tribes and peoples, lived in the southern and central region, from the Alps and the Mediterranean roughly to the Seine valley. To the north of them, between the lower Rhine and the Atlantic and Channel, lived the *Belgae*, a group of tribes purportedly of mixed Celtic and Germanic stock, inhabiting what is today northern France and the modern country of Belgium, named after them. In south-western Gaul, between the Pyrenees to the south, the Atlantic to the west and the Garonne to the north-east, lived the *Aquitani*, a less numerous people than the other two, who were more closely related in language and customs to the peoples of north-west Spain than to the Celtic Gauls, it seems.

Like the Gaul of Caesar's observation, we can in a rough and ready way divide Caesar's campaign of conquest into three major parts or phases. First, in 58, were his operations against intruders into Gaul, the Helvetii and Ariovistus's Suebi, operations that were welcomed by most Gauls. Second, between 57 and 54, came the actual subjugation of Gaul between the Rhine and the Atlantic, accomplished with startling rapidity and apparent ease, and accompanied in its closing phases by armed demonstrations across the borders of Gaul into Germany and Britain. Third, between 54 and 50, came the much more difficult phase of Gallic uprisings against Roman domination and the final 'pacification' of the whole region under Roman rule.

A problem for the modern historian trying to write an account of this conquest is that our information about it overwhelmingly derives from

Caesar's own commentaries, a source that can hardly be called unbiased. Caesar was admittedly not writing history as such, but commentaries reflecting his perception and perspective on what happened. He did it so well, however, and by his famous device of always referring to himself in the third person, as if he were a neutral observer writing about 'Caesar', created such an impression of objectivity, that it has been from the start extremely difficult to escape the influence of his account. As Cicero already noted, Caesar wrote so lucidly and persuasively that historians have found little to do but accept his version of events.[1]

The most important alternative narrative will have been the history of Asinius Pollio, which covered events beginning from the year 60, but it no longer survives. Pollio was an officer under Caesar during the civil wars, and thus able to investigate the events of the Gallic War for himself, from eyewitness accounts. It does not seem, however, that his version differed materially from Caesar's. He is said to have criticized Caesar for occasional inaccuracies caused by the haste of composition or over-reliance on the reports of careless or self-serving subordinates, but by implication he accepted the main lines of Caesar's narrative as factual, and was most likely right to do so.[2] We must bear in mind Caesar's purpose in writing: he wanted to impress the people of Rome with his character and achievements, and while that meant always putting the best possible 'spin' on his decisions and actions, to have written demonstrable falsehoods would have fatally undermined his credibility and caused his aim of guiding popular opinion in his own favour to fail. Cicero, no friend of Caesar and no supporter of his policies, found much to praise in Caesar's style and expressed no criticism of Caesar's veracity. We may therefore trust the basic facts recorded by Caesar, so long as we bear in mind that events are always depicted from a Roman perspective, and will have looked rather different from the viewpoint of the Gauls and Germans.

The news that called Caesar from the outskirts of Rome to Gaul was that the Helvetii were preparing to move. Their easiest route from Switzerland into south-central Gaul lay through the northern part of the Roman province, and their intention was to induce the Allobroges, recently subdued by the Romans, to let them pass through. Since some of the tribes making up the Helvetii had been part of the broad movement of peoples led by the Cimbri and Teutones, of whom the Romans retained fearsome memories, the Romans had no intention of allowing them into their province, and it would be Caesar's task as governor of Gallia Transalpina to deal with the threat the Helvetii represented in Roman eyes. To confront the apparent menace of the Helvetii, Caesar had available initially only a single legion of Roman soldiers stationed in Provence: he had three other legions under his command but they were at Aquileia in north Italy, near the border with Illyria.[3]

Obviously Caesar's first need was to buy some time to gather his forces. The Roman province bordered on the territory of the Helvetii along the Rhone, and the route the Helvetii planned to use crossed from their territory

into the province at Geneva, where there was a bridge across the Rhone. Caesar rushed to Geneva and had the bridge destroyed, then summoned his soldiers to set about fortifying the west bank of the Rhone and simultaneously gathered auxiliary troops from the province to supplement his legion. Realizing that they could not pass through the province without Roman permission, the Helvetii sent ambassadors to Caesar explaining that they had no designs on Roman territory, but merely wished to pass through it, and promising that if permitted to do so they would cause no harm or damage. Caesar replied that he would take their request under consideration, and instructed them to return for his answer on 13 April. That gave his men enough time to finish fortifying the Rhone bank between Lake Geneva and the Jura, blockading the passage the Helvetii planned to pass through. When the Helvetic representatives returned, he told them that under no circumstances would Rome permit outside forces, who had in the past been hostile to Rome, to pass through Roman territory. Some of the Helvetii probed the Roman defences, attempting crossings of the Rhone in small boats, but they soon found that there was no way through for them here.[4] They faced the choice of either returning to their homes, or taking a different and much less attractive route into Gaul. The former alternative was not appealing since, in anticipation of their migration, the Helvetii had already destroyed all their towns and villages, leaving nothing to go back to but 'scorched earth'. There was a more northerly route into Gaul, through the territory of the Sequani, but the route passed through a narrow and easily blockaded defile, so the permission of the Sequani would be needed. To get this permission, they appealed to a friendly Aeduan leader named Dumnorix.[5]

Dumnorix played a crucial role in Gaul's history at this time, and in Caesar's account of events. There was apparently a general shake-up going on in Gallic political life in this period, with both leaders within tribes jockeying for power, and tribes jockeying for power and influence as against each other. As Caesar tells it, a period in which tribal leadership was characterized by monarchy had recently given way to more collective forms of governance, leading to conflicts between groups who favoured more aristocratic/oligarchic forms of governance, groups who favoured more democratic/populist forms of governance, and leaders who sought to bring back monarchy, with themselves of course as tribal kings. In addition, a period of domination in inter-tribal affairs by the Aedui was being challenged by another major tribe, the Sequani, while a third tribe, the Arverni, also had aspirations to dominance, having been a dominant tribe in the past. Into this volatile mix came the Romans, who favoured aristocratic leaders and the Aedui, and Germanic tribes crossing the Rhine in search of better lands to settle on.

One of the primary leaders of the Aedui, favouring a distinctly aristocratic governing system and alliance with Rome, was Diviciacus, an older and highly respected leader. Dumnorix was his much younger brother, and a man who is represented as jealous of his brother, as pursuing a populist line in the

politics of his tribe while really harbouring monarchical aspirations, and as a man who had ambitions of wider Gallic leadership beyond his own tribe. He had cultivated close relations with some of the key leaders among the Helvetii – his wife was a Helvetic woman – and among the Sequani, and was on all counts inclined to be hostile to the Roman presence in Gaul. This was because the Romans favoured aristocratic governance, because his brother Diviciacus was pro-Roman, because Roman influence interfered with his personal ambitions, and because his friends amongst the Helvetii and Sequani were potential sufferers from Roman influence and/or intervention.[6] The picture we get of him from Caesar is distinctly negative, a hostile portrayal; but it must be said, if seen from a Gallic perspective and if we take his stated concern for the people's interests and his patriotism seriously, that in his methods and ambitions he seems in many respects not unlike Caesar himself.

At any rate, Dumnorix was able to broker an arrangement between the Helvetii and the Sequani, permitting the Helvetii to pass peacefully through the territory of the Sequani into central and western Gaul. When Caesar learned of this he was, or at any rate claimed to be, deeply concerned about the threat this movement of the Helvetii could nevertheless pose, whether directly or indirectly, to the Roman province. Directly, the Helvetii might decide to move southwards towards the province; indirectly, their settling anywhere in south-central Gaul could have a domino effect, forcing other tribes to move with an eventual knock-on effect on Rome's province. Certainly, given Rome's history with Gallic/Germanic tribal movements, it was not unreasonable of Caesar to perceive this threat. On the other hand, there is little doubt that he intended from the beginning to fight the Helvetii as a way of intruding himself and Rome into Gallic lands, and that this perceived threat was a convenient *casus belli*.

Leaving his most trusted legate T. Labienus in command at the Rhone, Caesar travelled post haste to Aquileia, gathered his three legions there, recruited – as he passed through Cisalpine Gaul – men to form two additional legions, and returned to the frontier between the Helvetic territory and the province with five legions to add to the one already holding the west bank of the Rhone.[7] He was thus ready to face the Helvetii in battle, if necessary. We see here, at the very beginning of Caesar's career of conquest, one of his most famed and important qualities as a general: the extraordinary rapidity of his decisions and actions. He almost always did things more rapidly and travelled further and faster than his opponents thought possible, and therefore appeared where they did not think he could be with forces they did not think he could get there. Much of his extraordinary success as a general derived from this rapidity of decision and movement, and the element of surprise he thereby attained.

With his army of six legions, Caesar crossed the Rhone to the north bank, ready to search out the Helvetii, when he received representatives from some Gallic tribes bringing him a further justification for hostilities. It seems that

the Helvetii, as they passed through the lands of various tribes, had caused considerable damage and loss, and ambassadors from the Aedui, the Ambarri and the Allobroges living north of the Rhone complained to Caesar and asked him to intervene to protect them. In spite of the fact that Dumnorix favoured the Helvetii, the official chief magistrate of the Aedui, Liscus, supported by Diviciacus, agreed to supply Caesar's army in return for his protection.[8]

Since there was a long-standing senatorial decree instructing Roman governors of Transalpine Gaul to help the Aedui, as friends of the Roman people, if called upon, Caesar now had all the justification he needed to advance to the river Saone and intercept the Helvetii. Reaching the river, Caesar found that the majority of the Helvetii had just crossed, about a quarter remaining. He attacked at once, and crushed them. It turned out they were the Tigurini who, allied to the Cimbri and Teutones in 107, had inflicted a serious defeat on a Roman army, so he regarded this as a proper – if delayed – revenge.[9] He then crossed the river himself, and was met by an embassy from the main body of the Helvetii. They requested that Caesar designate an area where they could settle, undertaking to abide by his choice. Caesar responded by first requiring reparations for the damage done to the Aedui, Ambarri and Allobroges, and also demanding hostages to guarantee their good faith. These terms the Helvetii rejected, and they resumed marching northwards, with Caesar cautiously trailing them. This continued for about two weeks, until supply difficulties and a defeat inflicted on Caesar's Gallic cavalry auxiliaries changed the situation.

The pro-Roman Aeduan leaders informed Caesar that Dumnorix was behind the failure to produce the supplies the Aedui had promised, and the poor performance of their cavalry, so Caesar turned aside towards the Aeduan capital Bibracte to rectify matters.[10] Interpreting this as a sign of Roman fear, the Helvetii turned to pursue Caesar, exposing themselves to battle on terms Caesar considered favourable as a result. His legions crushed the Helvetii in a sharply fought encounter, and three days later the refugees from this battle, finding no help from any surrounding tribes who feared Roman punishment, surrendered to the Romans. They were obliged to hand over hostages and disarm, and agree to march back to their homeland and reoccupy their burnt and abandoned settlements. The numbers Caesar gives for those who fought and were killed in this engagement seem inflated, but he claimed that 110,000 of the Helvetii returned to Switzerland to take up again their old lives. The Allobroges, their neighbours, were instructed to help them with food supplies until their next harvest. A small splinter group called the Boii were permitted, by agreement with the Aedui, to occupy a small portion of Aeduan territory as allies of the Aedui.[11]

Already right at the start of his governorship, then, Caesar had shown remarkable qualities of generalship, qualities that could hardly have been anticipated from his very limited prior military experience, as successful as that had been. He had been decisive and remarkably swift to move and act, yet

patient and unwilling to be drawn into battle except on his own terms. And above all he had shown supreme confidence in his own leadership abilities.

Impressed by this victory, a number of Gallic chiefs arrived at Caesar's camp, congratulating him on his victory and asking for audience on a matter of great importance. The issue they had to bring up was that of Germanic penetration of Gaul, and especially the increasing power of Ariovistus and his Suebi in east-central Gaul. Though Ariovistus had originally been invited in voluntarily by the Sequani, as allies in their previously unsuccessful war against the Aedui, they had found cause to regret their decision. Though they were victorious with the Germans' aid, Ariovistus demanded a third of their territory as payment, and from that foothold in Gaul had begun to expand his power and oppress the Sequani, the Aedui and their various neighbours, constantly inviting new Germans to cross the Rhine and swell his power. After his victory over the Aedui, the Gauls were afraid to confront him again, but they now hoped that Caesar and the Romans might be willing to help them drive Ariovistus and his Germans out.[12] This was, of course, exactly the sort of opening and excuse Caesar was looking for to expand his operations farther into Gaul.

Though he had personally been responsible, as consul, for recognizing Ariovistus as an official 'friend' of the Roman people, he could now argue that the German's growing power in Gaul represented a potential threat to Rome's interests, and more specifically that it was his duty to protect Rome's older friends, the Aedui, against him. Caesar sent an emissary to Ariovistus, inviting him to come and meet him half way between their present positions, to discuss matters of mutual concern. He must have been delighted to have received an arrogant refusal from Ariovistus, indicating that if Caesar had anything to say to him, it was up to Caesar to travel to meet him. That sort of arrogance towards a representative of Rome would play well to the Roman people as an excuse for hostilities. In subsequent exchanges of messengers, Ariovistus let it be known that his part of Gaul was of no concern to the Romans, that he did not interfere in their province and expected no interference in his, and that he would never have accepted Roman friendship if he had thought it would come with such interference. Caesar for his part demanded that German immigration into Gaul cease, that Ariovistus return the hostages he and/or the Sequani had taken from the Aedui, and that he cease molesting the Aedui in any way. In the face of Ariovistus's blunt refusal to accept these demands, and news of fresh German arrivals in Gaul, Caesar set off into the territory of the Sequani and occupied their capital Vesontio.[13]

At this point Caesar faced his first crisis of military leadership. His men heard terrifying tales of the Germans' huge size and irresistibility in battle from the Sequani, tales which of course were given credence by the terrible stories of the Cimbri and Teutones they would have heard while growing up. Learning of the panic in his army, and being told by some officers that the men would be too afraid to advance further against the Germans, Caesar

called a meeting of his centurions of every grade. These latter were a crucial part of any Roman army. The officers were mostly young Roman nobles who held their positions because of various social and political connections they had, and who might or might not have any particular military ability or experience. Caesar had certainly taken care to bring some officers of sure military value, like Labienus, but on the whole the junior officers were not the most reliable part of his army, and that was typical of Roman armies. The centurions, on the other hand, like modern non-commissioned officers, were men who rose from the ranks by sheer ability. They knew their men, they were experienced and able fighters and leaders, and they played a crucial role in leading and commanding the troops in the thick of actual battle.

At this meeting with the centurions, Caesar demonstrated a brilliant grasp of military psychology, another of his outstanding and highly characteristic qualities as general. He reminded his men that the Romans had defeated Germans in the past and that he himself had shown that he was a capable commander already. He reassured them that he had taken careful thought about the strategy and supplies for this campaign, and upbraided them for cloaking cowardice as worries about such matters that were not in their sphere of concern and on which they had reason to trust him. He told them bluntly that it was not the Roman way to abandon their generals, particularly when the general in question had shown no fault or lack of ability or luck; and he finished – his psychological masterstroke – by announcing that in the face of their fears, he planned to set out the following night, to test who was ready to obey and who was a coward, confident that if no one else would accompany him, the Tenth legion at least would do so and serve as his bodyguard. When the centurions reported on Caesar's words to the troops, the Tenth legion was naturally puffed up with pride at Caesar's confidence in and praise of them, and sent to thank him for his confidence and express their readiness to go wherever he commanded. The other legions were jealous of the Tenth and Caesar's confidence in it, and sent to say that they would certainly go and do, at Caesar's command, wherever and whatever the Tenth would go and do.[14]

Thus Caesar was able to set out with a determined and resolute army, arriving in the neighbourhood of Ariovistus's camp in modern Alsace six days later. Now Ariovistus sent to propose a face-to-face meeting, at which Caesar reminded him of the friendship shown him by the Romans and Caesar himself, and noted that it was not the Romans' custom to allow their friends to be harmed, so that they could not permit him to harm the Aedui. Ariovistus responded that he had entered Gaul by invitation of some of the Gauls, and remained there by right of conquest. Caesar was now in territory that belonged to him, and must either leave or be treated as an enemy. And, according to Caesar, he added that he knew many leaders at Rome would be only too glad if he (Ariovistus) were to rid them of Caesar. But if Caesar recognized his right to hold the lands he had conquered, he would be happy to be Caesar's ally in future.

It was clear that there would be no meeting of minds, and after a few more exchanges, negotiations were broken off, and Ariovistus marched his army past Caesar's, attempting to disrupt Caesar's lines of communication. This led to several days of complex manoeuvring, until finally Caesar managed to force Ariovistus to fight a battle on his terms, by leading his legions right up to Ariovistus's camp as if to assault it. Noting that the German left was rather weak, Caesar led his right into action first, and after a fierce struggle overwhelmed the German left wing. Meanwhile his own left came under severe pressure, until his cavalry commander P. Crassus (son of the famous Crassus) sent in reserve troops to strengthen it. At that, the Germans' resistance broke, and the victorious Romans pursued them fifteen miles to the Rhine. Only a relatively few fugitive Germans were able to cross the river; the rest were hunted down by Caesar's cavalry, and Germans stationed on the east bank of the Rhine waiting to cross into Gaul now made off in haste.[15]

Caesar had waged and won two great campaigns against feared intruders into Gaul in one summer. On the whole, the Gauls were pleased to be relieved of the threat posed by the Helvetii and the Suebi, and thus pleased with what Caesar had so far done. Now, however, rather than withdrawing back into the Roman province, Caesar established his army in winter quarters in the territory of the Sequani. He left Labienus in command, and himself travelled to Cisapline Gaul to see to affairs in his other two provinces and inquire into political doings in Rome, but these winter camps in the heart of Gaul gave the Gallic peoples food for thought.[16] They seemed a clear sign that Caesar had no thought of retreating from central Gaul. Had the Gauls known rather more about Roman history than they appear to have, they would have been aware that the Romans had never, in their history, completely and permanently pulled out of any territory they had once entered in force and fought in. Entering a territory to protect friends or allies from their enemies was a standard precursor to Roman conquest, and it was never safe to enter into any such relationship of dependency with the Romans.

There was not much the Sequani and other tribes of central Gaul could now do about the Roman presence in their midst, but tribes in northern Gaul took notice of the Roman advance and began to make warlike preparations for the following spring. Very likely these preparations were purely defensive in aim: the Belgic tribes of the north wanted to be ready to fight off any Roman advance into their lands. But warlike preparations are warlike preparations: it was fatally easy for Caesar to present these preparations as a threat to his army and the Roman position in Gaul. Thus, the warlike preparations of the Belgic tribes of northern Gaul gave Caesar the excuse to do exactly what they feared he might do: advance into northern Gaul in the spring.

Reports that the Belgic tribes were allying and exchanging hostages with a view to common action against the Romans, and that a number of Gallic tribes – concerned at the quartering of Roman legions in their midst – were sympathetic to them, were received by Labienus and forwarded by him to

Caesar in Cisalpina. Caesar responded by raising, on his own authority, two new legions in Cisalpine Gaul and sending them across the Alps to reinforce his army in Gaul, under the command of his nephew Q. Pedius, bringing his army up to eight legions.[17]

Early in spring he crossed the Alps himself to join his army, and gathered further information among the tribes of north-central Gaul, confirming that the Belgae were indeed preparing for war. He set out at once for northern Gaul, after arranging for grain supplies, and arrived after two weeks' hard marching on the borders of the Belgic lands, much to the surprise of the tribes there who did not expect his arrival for some time yet. The Remi, one of the key tribes of the southern Belgae, immediately surrendered to him, declaring their pro-Roman sympathies and explaining that they had taken no part in the preparations for war. They were to become Rome's key allies among the Belgae, as the Aedui were among the Galli, and furnished Caesar with crucial intelligence about the Belgic tribes, their numbers and military capabilities, and their plans and intentions.[18]

Two key tribes were singled out as the most powerful of the Belgae, and the leaders in the present alliance: the Bellovaci and the Nervii, the former reputed the most powerful of the Belgae, and the latter the fiercest fighters. It was clear that it would be an uphill struggle to fight the entire Belgic confederation, so in order to weaken them Caesar arranged with Diviciacus for the Aedui to invade the territory of the Bellovaci, hoping to draw their forces away.[19] Then he marched towards the approaching Belgic army and crossed the river Aisne, planning to fight with the river at his back. He had a bridge built across the river, establishing his camp on one side and a fortified guard post held by six cohorts on the other. In this way he secured his rear and his supply lines from enemy attack, and was able by use of the river to limit the danger of outflanking by the more numerous enemy as well.

When a nearby town of the Remi, Bibrax, was assaulted by the Belgae in retaliation for the decision by the Remi to side with Rome, Caesar sent his most mobile auxiliary forces – Numidian cavalry, Cretan archers, Balearic slingers – to the town's aid and succeeded in lifting the siege. Encouraged by this success, when the Belgae encamped two miles from his own camp and challenged him to battle, Caesar kept his legions in camp but used his mobile forces, especially cavalry, to skirmish and probe and test the enemies' strength and resolve.[20]

Several days of such skirmishing convinced Caesar that his men would be more than capable of standing up to the Belgae, and he decided to offer battle. His camp lay on a slight rise, with steep slopes on either side but a gentle slope in front towards the enemy position. He had trenches dug to reinforce the two side slopes against outflanking manoeuvres, and drew up his six veteran legions between them, on the slope in front of his camp, keeping the two newly recruited legions in camp as a reserve. The Belgae drew up their army facing his, but a standoff ensued, as a marsh lay between

the two armies and neither side was prepared to cross it and risk the danger of being attacked while doing so. After a cavalry skirmish in which his men had the upper hand, Caesar led his army back into camp, and the Belgae responded by marching up to the river Aisne and trying to ford it to attack Caesar's guard post on the other side, destroy his bridge, and cut his army off in their territory. Informed of this by the officer commanding his guard post, Titurius Sabinus, Caesar crossed the bridge with his cavalry and other light-armed troops, and attacked the enemy forces trying to cross the river, inflicting heavy losses and driving them back.

This reverse led the Belgic leaders to rethink their strategy. Running short of supplies, they decided to break up their great army and return to their various home territories – the Bellovaci being particularly keen to do so since they had heard of the Aeduan forces threatening their territory. They would await Caesar's move, and reunite their forces in the territory of whichever tribe Caesar decided to attack first. However, poor discipline proved their undoing. Leaving camp about midnight, the men made off towards their own particular homes in no good order and with great uproar. At first Caesar kept his own men in camp, fearful of some sort of trickery; but at dawn, when the enemy's withdrawal became apparent, he sent his cavalry after the retreating Belgae to harass and slow them, followed by Labienus with three legions to inflict whatever damage he could. As a result, the Belgae's planned withdrawal became a rout, men rushing off to home and safety as best they could, leaving the rearmost to be slaughtered in considerable numbers by the pursuing Romans.[21] This enabled Caesar to conquer the Belgae piecemeal. He at once invaded the lands of the Suessiones, attacking their main city Noviodunum, and receiving their surrender through the mediation of the Remi. Then he entered the lands of the Bellovaci, with similar results. They did not dare to fight, but negotiated a surrender to Caesar through the mediation of Diviciacus.[22]

These successes enabled Caesar to advance into northern Belgic territory, the region in which the Nervii were the strongest force. This region – modern-day Belgium and the southern Netherlands – was in antiquity in parts heavily forested and in parts extremely marshy, and it was the habit of the peoples living there to use these geographic features to enhance their safety. Thus the Nervii had placed all their women, children and old folk into a region surrounded by marshes, secure from attack, and concentrated all of their warriors in a great forest along Caesar's line of march.

As Caesar proceeded through the Nervian country, he reached the river Sambre, aware that a large army of the Nervii and their neighbours the Atrebates and Viromandui was in the field, but not aware of their exact location. Since the Nervii had no cavalry, they had long ago criss-crossed their country with large dense hedges to discourage enemy cavalry forces from ravaging their lands, and these hedges impeded the Romans in their marching and scouting. Meanwhile, some of the Belgic auxiliaries attached to

Caesar's army were keeping the Nervii apprised of Caesar's movements, and advised them that they would be likely to succeed if they made an attack on the Romans just as they finished their day's march and were still strung out and encumbered by baggage before they were properly encamped.

As Caesar's army approached the Sambre valley, therefore, and began to lay out a camp on a hill overlooking the three-foot-deep river, the Nervian army was hidden in the woods across the river waiting to attack. Because he was in enemy territory and knew that enemy forces were about somewhere, however, Caesar did not have his army in its usual line of march – one legion at a time, each followed by its own baggage – but instead marched with cavalry forces in advance, his six veteran legions marching together after them, and all of the baggage collected in the rear under the protection of the two new legions. This saved Caesar that day. When the Nervii unexpectedly burst from the protection of the trees, charged across the shallow river and attacked Caesar's men, they found a disorganized force to be sure, but not one as hopelessly strung out as they had been led to believe by their Belgic informants.[23]

The ensuing battle was a desperate affair for the Romans, as the legions were in no proper order for battle and were taken by surprise. More than the efforts of Caesar and his senior officers to impose some sort of order on their formations, it was the sheer discipline of the Roman legionaries that saved the day. Every man took up arms and rushed to take position under the nearest military standard, regardless of proper unit formations, and thus – and in great part thanks to heroic efforts on the part of some of the centurions – a kind of military order was established and the battle devolved into three separate fights.

On Caesar's left, his Ninth and Tenth legions found themselves confronted by the Atrebates. A volley of javelins halted the charge of the winded Belgic warriors, and the two veteran legions then charged with the sword and drove the Atrebates back to the river, across it, and up to the woods on the other side, inflicting great slaughter throughout. Towards the centre, the Eleventh and Eighth legions faced the Viromandui, and similarly managed to halt their advance and, in stern fighting, drive them back to the river. On the right, however, Caesar's situation was desperate. The Twelfth and Seventh legions found themselves separated from each other and opposed by the entire force of the Nervii themselves. The Nervii charged up to and around the legions, putting them in great danger of destruction, and meanwhile capturing Caesar's camp and driving off the servants and some of the auxiliary forces, notably a force of cavalry from the Treveri who rode off announcing that Caesar was defeated and his army destroyed. It was here that Caesar tells us he intervened in person. Taking up a shield and advancing into the fight, he managed to gather the surviving centurions and military tribunes and get them to gradually join the two legions together, open out their ranks so as to give the men space to fight, and form them into a square to prevent further outflanking. This sounds deceptively simple in Caesar's calm and lucid

narrative, but if anything like this was really achieved in the midst of the chaotic fighting, it certainly sheds a light on the magnificent quality of the centurions and of the legionaries themselves, who managed to do this.

The situation was saved, and victory achieved by two factors. Hearing that battle had been joined, the two new legions which were marching behind the baggage as rearguard quickened their pace and arrived on the scene in time to save the Seventh and Twelfth legions and drive back the Nervii surrounding them. Meanwhile Labienus, commanding the Tenth and Ninth legions, observed from a hill on the far side of the Sambre the desperate plight of the legions on the right, and sent the Tenth to the rescue. Charging back across the river to their commander's relief, the arrival of the Tenth legion in front and the two new legions (the Thirteenth and Fourteenth) from the rear changed the battle entirely, and turned the imminent danger of defeat into overwhelming victory. Although they put up a relentless struggle – and Caesar highly praises their outstanding courage and fighting quality – the Nervii were overwhelmed and their army was destroyed.[24]

After this great victory, achieved by the extraordinary quality of his legions rather than by any strategic or tactical skill of Caesar's own, there was little further resistance from the remainder of the Belgic tribes. The remnants of the Nervii surrendered at once, and the tribes of the Atlantic seaboard likewise surrendered without a fight when Caesar sent Publius Crassus against them with one legion.[25] Only the Atuatuci, a Germanic tribe which had branched off two generations earlier from the coalition of the Cimbri and Teutones and settled between the Rhine and the Meuse, put up a fight. They withdrew all of their wealth and forces into a great stronghold near Namur which they were convinced was impregnable. When Caesar led his forces to besiege the place, the Atuatuci at first laughed at the apparently insignificant Romans, only to change their minds and open negotiations when they saw the sort of siege tower the Romans quickly constructed, able to overtop the seemingly impregnable walls of their fort. A peaceful surrender was negotiated, on condition that the Atuatuci give up all their weapons and place themselves under Roman protection. In fact, although they did hand over many weapons, the Atuatuci held many back, and hoping to take Caesar's men by surprise, launched a night attack. They underestimated Roman vigilance and discipline. The Roman pickets sounded the alarm, and Roman legionaries poured from their tents to engage the attacking forces. The Atuatuci were driven back into their town with great slaughter, and the next day Caesar had his men assault the enemy fortifications. They burst in and destroyed the remaining enemy fighters, sacked the town, and enslaved the non-combatant population. This atrocity was to serve as a warning to all other inhabitants of Gaul who thought of further resistance.

It seemed that in two great campaigns fought over just two summers, all of Gaul had been conquered and added to Rome's domains. Caesar established his legions in winter camps in northern Gaul, in the territories of the

Carnutes and of the recently conquered tribes, and then set out for his winter visit to his other provinces Cisalpine Gaul and Illyricum, and his review of the political situation in Rome.[26]

All of Gaul was not in fact fully conquered and pacified: far from it. The peoples of Gaul had been overawed by the Romans' intrusion and victories, and were temporarily cowed, but their desire for independence and fighting spirit were far from broken. During the winter of 57–56, Caesar had his officer Sulpicius Galba fight a campaign, with one legion, to secure the Alpine passes.[27]

In early spring of 56, the Atlantic seaboard tribes, most notably the wealthiest and most powerful of them – the Veneti of Brittany – who had surrendered to P. Crassus without a fight, were moved to assert their freedom. They were motivated specifically by some measures Crassus took to secure supplies, and seized various Roman supply officers to hold as hostages against the safe return of the hostages they had themselves handed over to Caesar the previous autumn. Caesar was still in northern Italy when he was apprised of these events, and sent back instructions to his senior officers to keep his legions in their winter camps until he arrived, but meanwhile to begin building ships on the Loire with which to engage the naval forces of the Veneti, for this maritime tribe could not be defeated by land alone. The settlements of the Veneti were sited for the most part on promontories and peninsulas, difficult of access by land, and some at times cut off by the tides. The Veneti dominated the trade between Gaul and Britain, and had a large fleet of warships on which they relied to defy the Romans.[28]

When Caesar arrived in Gaul in early spring, he divided his forces. He sent Labienus with a cavalry force into the land of the Treveri, to guard against Germans attempting to cross the Rhine. Crassus with a little over one legion and a strong contingent of cavalry was sent into Aquitania, to subjugate that part of Gaul. Sabinus with three legions was ordered to march against the tribes of northern Brittany and Normandy, to prevent them helping the Veneti. His aim was to prevent the 'rebellion' of the Veneti from spreading. Caesar himself with a little under four legions marched into the Venetic lands in southern Brittany, ordering young Decimus Brutus to take command of the warships he had ordered built, and to bring them to the coast of Venetia as soon as the fleet was ready.[29]

Initially, Caesar campaigned by attacking the coastal strongholds of the Veneti one by one, using Roman siegecraft and the almost limitless work ethic of his legionaries to create a situation in which his men could get onto the walls and capture each stronghold. However, as each stronghold threatened to fall to the Romans, the Veneti would bring up their ships and evacuate the population and their possessions, rendering the Romans' capture of the place pointless. Caesar soon realized that only with his fleet could he make decisive headway, and that he would have to suspend operations until the fleet was ready. The ships the Romans had built were essentially

Mediterranean war galleys, the kind of ships they were familiar with. As well adapted as they were to Mediterranean conditions, however, these ships were not well suited to the huge waves and extreme tides of the Atlantic, and were held up for long by the weather. Finally, however, the weather became calm enough to allow them to sail to the south Brittany coast and confront the Veneti. It was an exceptionally ill-matched battle. The ships of the Veneti and their allies, some 220 strong, were of a very different sort from the Roman vessels: high decked, to withstand Atlantic waves, shallow bottomed, so as not to be stranded by low tides, and powered by sails rather than oars, as once again the Atlantic waves are not suited to rowing.

The Roman war galleys relied on ramming and boarding tactics, but their rams were ineffective against the strongly built and shallow-bottomed Venetic ships, while those ships' high decks and manoeuvrability under sail prevented easy boarding. At first the Romans were at a loss to know how to proceed. However, they devised an ingenious device for cutting the rigging of the Gallic vessels: hooks mounted on the end of long poles, which could be used to snag the rigging on Venetic ships. Since the weather was calm, the Roman galleys could row up to a ship, snag its rigging with hooks, and then row away hard, pulling down the rigging and attached yards and sails. In this way, Venetic vessels were immobilized, and the Romans could then row alongside and, by the Roman marines' superior fighting discipline, force their way aboard and capture the vessel. When a number of the Venetic ships had been captured in this way, the rest sought to sail away to the safety of harbour, but – providentially for the Romans – the wind died down, leaving the ships of the Veneti becalmed and easy pickings for the Roman galleys. Only a few Gallic ships escaped towards evening, when a breeze finally arose to give them some motive power.[30]

This stunning naval victory ended the resistance of the Veneti. They surrendered, and Caesar decided to make an example of them, to discourage other 'rebellions'. The councillors who had decided to fight the Romans were executed, and the general population were sold into slavery. Meanwhile, Sabinus had cleverly broken the resistance of the tribes of Normandy, and Crassus's campaign in Aquitania had brought about the subjugation of that region.[31]

By late summer, only two tribes remained obdurate: the Morini and Menapii who inhabited the coasts of modern-day Flanders and Zeeland. Caesar marched against them, but found their tactics extremely frustrating. Seeing that all Gauls and Germans who had confronted the Romans in battle had lost, these two tribes refused to come out into the open to fight, but took refuge instead in the marshes and forests in which their region was rich. Caesar set his legionaries to timber felling, seeking to make a road into the heart of this region so as to capture the herds and non-combatants of these tribes. When some of them did come out and fight, the Romans beat them off with heavy losses, but at this point autumn arrived with such heavy

rainfall that it proved impossible for Caesar to keep his men in the field. He had to withdraw, therefore, leaving the Morini and Menapii still unsubdued. He quartered his troops among the recently defeated tribes of Normandy, and left to spend the winter again in north Italy, confident that Gaul was now at peace under Roman control.[32]

The next year, 55, was scheduled to be Caesar's last year in command of his provinces, but his allies Pompeius and Crassus – the consuls of the year – extended his command for five years while also taking up important five-year commands for themselves. Caesar's plans for the year in Gaul were no doubt to consolidate Roman control and begin to set up an administration, but any such plans were upset by the arrival across the Rhine of a large new band of Germans: two allied tribes called the Usipetes and Tencteri, fleeing the constant pressure of the stronger Suebi. After initial resistance by the Menapii along the lower Rhine, these Germans were able, by the trick of a pretended withdrawal, to force their way across the river and encamp for much of the winter in the territory of the Menapii. When Caesar was informed, in north Italy, of their arrival, he was instantly worried that this new force on the scene might give some of the tribes of Gaul ideas of anti-Roman insurrection, and so cut short his customary stay in Cisalpine Gaul. His fears proved well grounded, as several tribes of north Gaul sent to the Usipites and Tencteri inviting them to range deeper into Gaul, hoping to use them against the Romans. Caesar summoned a meeting of tribal leaders as soon as he was back in north Gaul, and instructed them to supply cavalry and grain for his upcoming campaign against the intrusive Germans.[33]

Having taken care of these preliminaries and concentrated his army, Caesar marched against the German tribes, intending to drive them out of Gaul at once, before they could establish any foothold. Caesar's own account of his negotiations and dealings with these two Germanic peoples is compressed and highly tendentious, and it seems clear that he had something to cover up. We hear that Cato later complained that Caesar's actions in this matter had been treacherous, and that in order to avoid the gods punishing Rome generally for this treachery, Caesar should be handed over to the surviving Germans for punishment. Of course, Cato's view was no less biased than Caesar's, but a Roman would hardly suggest this about a fellow Roman aristocrat without some cause. At any rate, the Usipites and Tencteri certainly sent envoys to Caesar when they learned he and his army were approaching, and certainly sought to delay or prevent a military showdown. Caesar believed, or claimed to believe, that their real aim was to win time for a large cavalry force they had sent across the Meuse to forage, to rejoin the main body before any battle. Consequently Caesar kept advancing, and used a cavalry skirmish, which he claimed broke an agreed truce, as an excuse to hold the envoys the Germans had sent – their leaders – under arrest. Bereft of their leaders and lacking their main cavalry force, the Usipites and Tencteri proved easy prey for Caesar's legions, and were slaughtered.[34]

The number Caesar gives for these slaughtered Germans – over 400,000 – seems as exaggerated as his account of the affair is elliptical and tendentious. From his perspective, the main issue was that Gaul was now Roman space, and he would not and could not tolerate continual incursions into Gaul, across the Rhine, by Germanic peoples whenever the chronically unsettled condition of Germany prompted a movement of tribes. The destruction of the Usipites and Tencteri was thus a deliberate policy, aimed at making a point both to the Gauls – that they should not rely any more on German help against Rome – and to the Germans themselves: to stay out. This latter point was now reinforced by one of Caesar's most striking actions. He advanced to the banks of the Rhine and, in the space of a few weeks, had his legionaries build a bridge across the wide, deep, strongly flowing river, cross it, and stage an armed demonstration of Rome's might on the German side of the great river. This bridge, built with such rapidity and (in Caesar's telling at least) seeming ease, was a marvel of Roman military engineering, and it impressed the German tribes very strongly. They had never imagined such a thing to be possible, and the tribes living on the Rhine bank scattered inland, taking refuge in the forests that then covered much of Germany, rather than trying to fight the fearsome Roman legions. An exception was the tribe of the Ubii which, under pressure from the Suebi, had already sent messengers to Caesar before his crossing, seeking Roman friendship and aid against the Suebi. After marching up and down the Rhine bank, pillaging and burning, and establishing friendly relations with the Ubii, Caesar considered his point made, and withdrew back across the Rhine into Gaul, destroying the bridge behind him lest it be used by the Germans themselves for incursions into Gaul.[35]

He now turned his thoughts to another matter: Germany was not the only place from which unwelcome interference in Gallic affairs was coming at this time. The tribes of south-east Britain, who were closely akin to the tribes of north-west Gaul, being derived from there, were in the habit of sending aid of various sorts to their distant cousins in their struggle with Rome. Caesar decided that an incursion into Britain was in order, to teach the Britons too to stay out of Gallic affairs.

The first Roman invasion of Britain, in late summer of 55, was a hastily arranged affair and did not really amount to much more than an armed reconnaissance of the part of Britain adjacent to Gaul. Caesar sent an officer named Volusenus with a warship to scout the coasts of Britain, while he personally oversaw the gathering of shipping for a crossing of the Channel in force. By commandeering ships and adding them to the fleet built for the campaign against the Veneti, Caesar got together enough transports to ferry two legions and a force of cavalry across to Britain, and a protecting squadron of warships. While he was waiting for the ships, he received formal submission and hostages from the Morini, thus securing his rear while he invaded Britain; and he also received envoys from some of the British tribes, promising surrender.

He sent a trusted Gallic chieftain, Commius of the Atrebates, back to Britain with these envoys, to urge full submission to Rome.

When the ships were ready, Caesar embarked the Seventh and Tenth legions on eighty transports, with a further eighteen designated for cavalry and sailing from another port. P. Sulpicius Rufus was placed in charge of the port of departure with a sufficient garrison, while Sabinus and Aurunculeius Cotta commanded the rest of the army in a campaign against the as yet unsubdued Menapii and northern Morini. Then Caesar set sail for Britain at night, arriving off the British coast the next morning, only to find that his cavalry transports had been unable to make the crossing, and that hostile forces had occupied the coast where he needed to disembark. He was not put off: after waiting for some hours just off shore, surveying the situation and waiting in vain for the cavalry transports to arrive, he sailed a few miles along the coast until he found a beach that looked suitable to attempt to force a landing. His transports were ordered to run in until they were aground, when the legionaries were to jump down into shallow water and fight their way ashore. To aid them, the accompanying warships were rowed into shallow water on the flank from where they provided covering fire with on board artillery: catapults and stone throwers. At first the men hesitated to undertake the danger of trying to wade ashore under enemy attack, but finally the standard bearer of the Tenth took the lead and the rest of the legion followed. To help his men gain a footing on land, Caesar embarked as many soldiers as he could on small boats to row to where the fighting was thickest and lend aid. In the end, by sheer discipline and determination, Caesar's legionaries forced their way ashore, drove off the British tribesmen, and established a beach head.[36]

Lacking cavalry, however, and with the year so far advanced, there was little Caesar could do. A few days after his arrival, the cavalry transports did attempt to cross again, but when they had almost reached Caesar they were blown back by adverse winds. Meanwhile, the leaders of the tribes that had opposed Caesar's landing had first sought to surrender on easy terms, but seeing Caesar's difficulties now – exacerbated by the fact that many of his ships suffered damage from the high tides and winds – they launched an attack on the Seventh legion as it foraged for food. Caesar was able to extricate it safely from this danger, but his position was becoming very precarious. A few days later, a large British force – determined to destroy the Romans or drive them off for good – attacked Caesar's camp. But in a sharply fought battle his men were able to defeat them and drive them to flight. This brought forth the usual offers of surrender and hostages, which gave Caesar the breathing space he needed to repair his ships as best as circumstances allowed, and embark his two legions to return to Gaul. It was no doubt with considerable relief that they pulled safely into their port of embarkation. A small detachment, blown off course, was harassed by tribesmen of the Morini, which gave Caesar all the excuse he needed to attack this tribe and confirm its

subjugation, ending this year with a last small victory before he settled his legions in winter quarters in the territory of the Belgae, and himself set out again for northern Italy.[37]

Other than the destruction of the Usipites and Tencteri, the military actions of this year can have a rather indeterminate and unsatisfactory appearance. Germany had been invaded, but no serious fighting had occurred, and after a few weeks of pillaging of abandoned lands, Caesar had returned with little apparently achieved. Britain too had been invaded, but again with no definite results, although the fighting had been rather more serious. To see in these actions any sort of failure, however, would be to miss the point of them entirely. In neither case had Caesar's aim really been to conquer substantial new territories – he had all he could cope with in that respect in Gaul – or necessarily to fight great battles and win more victories, though victories were always welcome. The point of the invasions of Germany and Britain was merely that Germany and Britain had been invaded.

Down to this time, Germany had been a land of fearsome and feared peoples who invaded and troubled Gaul and Roman territories, but no Roman force had ever entered Germany under arms. By crossing the Rhine and cowing the Germans on their own soil, Caesar had scored a propaganda success of the highest order, raising his fame at Rome even higher than he had by his conquests in Gaul. And the invasion of Britain had the same effect, but even more so. Whereas Germany was a land that was at least known, however feared its inhabitants might be, Britain was an almost mythical island before Caesar's crossing. Greek geography knew very little about the island at all, and much that was told about it was clearly invented. Yet Caesar had now crossed to this fabulous island, putting it firmly on the map, and defeating its inhabitants in battle. Small wonder that the Senate decreed a thanksgiving to last an unprecedented twenty days on receipt of Caesar's dispatches; small wonder that in one of his poems Catullus referred to 'the monuments of great Caesar, the Gallic Rhine and the dreadful and remotest Britons'. Everything Caesar did, was done with an eye on its effect back home at Rome. At Rome the crossing of the Rhine and the invasion of Britain raised him to a peak of fame and glory that previously only Pompeius had attained.[38]

Yet Caesar was not satisfied. When he left Gaul for north Italy, he left instructions that during the winter a vast new fleet of transports and warships, designed specifically to handle the waves and weather of the North Sea and Channel, was to be constructed with a view to a much larger and more determined invasion of Britain in the following year. That still should not be taken to suggest that Caesar planned long-term conquest in or of the island, however, a project for which new legions would have needed to be raised, at a minimum. Caesar wanted to build on the glory of expanding the bounds of the known world, and in particular there were hopes of rich booty to be won.

Like fabulous places throughout history, Britain was rumoured to conceal spectacular riches. There was talk at Rome of gold and other precious metal,

and fresh water pearls were also expected to be found in quantity. Caesar was himself a noted admirer and connoisseur of pearls.[39] But before this invasion could be undertaken, there was other business to attend to. After taking care of the annual administrative and judicial business of his provinces Cisalpine Gaul and Illyricum, Caesar had to undertake a minor winter campaign in the latter to deal with some local unrest. Still, he was able to return to Gaul proper rather earlier than he usually did so, arriving back in north Gaul in late winter to conduct a tour of inspection of his legions in their winter encampments. He reports that 600 new transport ships had been constructed, and twenty-eight warships, ready for the invasion of Britain in early summer. These he instructed were to be gathered at Portus Itius on the Channel (probably modern Boulogne).

Meanwhile, he gathered four legions and 800 cavalry for a spring campaign against the Treveri, who were resisting his authority and reportedly intriguing with German tribes across the Rhine. The Treveri were not ready for a fight. The tribe was divided between two chiefs, Cingetorix and Indutiomarus, the former strongly pro-Roman. After both chiefs and the other tribal leaders had submitted to him, Caesar took 200 hostages from Indutiomarus – including his son – and urged the rest of the tribe's leaders to heed Cingetorix, which naturally angered Indutiomarus deeply. For the time, however, this matter of the Treveri seemed settled, and Caesar turned to his plans regarding Britain.[40]

Caesar had gathered his entire army of eight legions at the Channel, and had in addition summoned 4,000 cavalry from the various Gallic tribes, including most of the more important tribal leaders, whom he names. It was his intention to bring these leaders to Britain with him, to make sure that they did not foment trouble in his absence. Among them was Dumnorix the Aeduan, who was determined not to go. As adverse winds held up the expedition's sailing for several weeks, Dumnorix had time to plead with Caesar not to be obliged to go, and when that failed, to intrigue with the other leaders alleging that they were being taken to Britain to be killed. In the end though, he found that he could avoid going only by fleeing. He was pursued by Roman cavalry, captured and killed. He went down fighting and crying out that he was a free citizen of a free land who owed no obedience to Caesar or anyone else.

Although both Indutiomarus and Dumnorix had thus been dealt with apparently satisfactorily, it was clear all the same that dissatisfaction with Rome's power and presence, and indeed outright disaffection towards Caesar and Rome, were rising. Caesar finally embarked for Britain with five legions and 2,000 Gallic cavalry, leaving the remaining three legions and 2,000 cavalry at Portus Itius under Labienus to secure the port and watch over Gaul against Caesar's return. After a slightly difficult crossing, the army landed at the same place as the previous year's landing, but this time unopposed. The local tribes were overawed by seeing nearly 800 ships approaching together –

including the ships from the previous year and many privately owned vessels as well as the 600 new ships – and withdrew inland to a local stronghold.[41]

The campaign in Britain lasted a couple of months, but included few large-scale engagements. The Britons preferred to use hit and run tactics with their squadrons of mobile cavalry and charioteers, the latter fighting in a style highly reminiscent of Homeric chariot fighters, and Caesar's heavily armed legionaries found it hard to come to grips with them as a result. Overawed by the scale of Caesar's invasion, the tribes of south-east Britain had temporarily united together under a powerful local chieftain named Cassivellaunus, whose stronghold was near Canterbury. After some initial successes had established Caesar's position in Kent, and he had overcome severe damage to his beached ships due to a fierce gale, Caesar forced a crossing of the river Thames into Cassivellaunus's own lands, and eventually captured the latter's main stronghold. That was enough to bring Cassivellaunus, whose allies were abandoning him, to the negotiating table. Caesar demanded hostages and annual tribute payments, and then set out to return to his now repaired fleet.

Caesar had no intention of spending the winter in Britain, well aware that his and his legions' presence could not be spared in Gaul.[42] The return crossing to Gaul, around the time of the autumn equinox, was largely uneventful, and Caesar was able to beach his ships, disembark his army, and summon a meeting of Gaul's tribal chiefs to discuss dispositions for the coming winter. The year's harvest had been poor because of a lack of rainfall, and supplies were consequently scarce. Caesar therefore took the unusual risk of breaking up his army for winter quarters into much smaller detachments than usual, so as not to place too great a strain on any one region's resources.[43] That, added to the growing discontent with Roman dominance that had been evident already in the spring, proved the catalyst for the start of the most difficult phase of Caesar's conquest of Gaul: a spreading and eventually nearly country-wide resistance movement that almost succeeded in reasserting Gallic independence.

For all the glory gained by campaigning beyond the previously known world, Caesar's second invasion of Britain was clearly a mistake. No significant advantage or booty was gained. As Cicero wrote disconsolately in Rome, the only thing brought back from Britain was a few slaves, and they so poorly educated as to be fit only for rough labour.[44] And the time and effort expended in Britain would have been much better expended in consolidating control of Gaul.

The eight legions making up Caesar's army of occupation were then broken up into eight separate winter camps, each with a legion, more or less. In the north there were camps in the territories of the Morini, the Nervii and the Eburones, commanded respectively by C. Fabius, Q. Tullius Cicero (younger brother of the great Cicero), and Aurunculeius Cotta and Titurius Sabinus jointly, the camp in the territory of the Eburones being the largest at one legion

and five cohorts. To the south, L. Roscius commanded a camp in the territory of the Essuvii in Brittany, and three more were strung out among the southern Belgic tribes, commanded by M. Crassus (older son of the great Crassus), L. Munatius Plancus and C. Trebonius. Labienus commanded a legion encamped in the territory of the reliable Remi, near their border with the Treveri, and thus in a fairly central location able to oversee to some degree the entire set of winter encampments. All the camps, except that of Roscius in well-subdued Brittany, were within 100 miles (that is, a few days' march) of each other.

Caesar lingered in the region, to make sure that all the various encampments had been established and properly fortified before he set out for his customary winter visit to north Italy and his other two provinces. In the event, however, he never left. The first sign of trouble came from the Carnutes in the heart of Gaul. Caesar had established a leader named Tasgetius as king of the tribe, but he was now assassinated, and the report of this caused Caesar to change his dispositions. Fearing a rebellion by the Carnutes, he moved Munatius Plancus and his force from their camp among the southern Belgae to the land of the Carnutes, with orders to discover those responsible for killing Tasgetius and send them on to Caesar for punishment. Meanwhile Caesar himself remained at Samarobriva in the heart of the Belgic territory to see that all was calm and settled. It was not. In point of fact, a great rebellion broke out among the Belgic tribes, who saw in Caesar's dispersed army an opportunity.[45]

The first great move occurred among the Eburones, a relatively minor tribe who had traditionally been in the orbit of the Nervii and Treveri. They had received the forces sent under Titurius Sabinus and Aurunculeius Cotta to winter among them peacefully, providing supplies and allowing them to establish and fortify a camp. But two weeks after Tasgetius's murder, a message from the Treveran leader Indutiomarus induced Ambiorix, the chief of the Eburones, to lead his people in an attack on the Roman camp in their midst. The initial attack failed, but Ambiorix then induced Sabinus and Cotta to send out an envoy to him for talks. He informed the envoy that his attack on the Romans was part of a concerted uprising throughout Gaul; that every other winter camp was under attack too simultaneously; and that a large party of German mercenaries had already crossed the Rhine to join in this uprising and would reach the winter camp among the Eburones in a few days. He pretended to feel some continuing goodwill towards Caesar and the Romans, and especially towards Sabinus whom he knew well, and advised the Romans therefore to leave their camp while they still could, and march to join either the camp of Q. Cicero among the Nervii, or that of Labienus among the Remi. If they chose to do this, he (Ambiorix) promised to ensure their safe passage through his territory.

In a classic example of the danger of divided command, Sabinus was persuaded by Ambiorix's words and wanted to set out for Cicero's camp, trusting in Ambiorix's safe conduct, while Cotta rejected the notion of

leaving the safety of the fortified camp or making any major move without first communicating with Caesar. After a sharp debate between the two commanders in the presence of the officers and centurions, Sabinus's view won out, unfortunately for the Romans. Abandoning the camp, they set out on their winter march only to be ambushed and destroyed. Sabinus was reportedly treacherously killed by Ambiorix while trying to parley; Cotta, who had no trust in Ambiorix, died fighting to the last. Part of the legion (the Fourteenth) managed to fight its way back to the camp and hold off the first enemy attack; but realizing that they had no hope of defending the camp the next day and fearing capture, they all committed suicide overnight. Only a small handful of men managed to escape from the fighting and make their way, by backwoods trails and with much suffering, to Labienus's camp to inform him of the destruction of the Fourteenth. This loss of a legion and five cohorts was the biggest military disaster of Caesar's career, and when he eventually learned of it, he swore to avenge it in full and not to cut his hair or beard until he had done so.[46]

Ambiorix, in the first flush of his triumph, set out for Cicero's camp. Passing through the territory of the Atuatuci, he told them of the destruction of a large part of Caesar's army and two commanders, and persuaded them to join his uprising. Then he reached the territory of the Nervii, and induced them to attack Cicero's camp with his aid. Cicero had heard nothing yet of the fate of the Fourteenth, and the attack on his camp came as a complete surprise. The initial assault on the camp by the combined forces of the Nervii, Atuatuci and Eburones was beaten off with great difficulty. Overnight, Cicero set his men to improving the fortifications of the camp, building towers and strengthening the defences, enabling his men to beat off subsequent assaults on the camp for several days. Meanwhile, he attempted to send messengers to Caesar to report on the danger he and his men were confronting, but all routes were carefully watched and his messengers were intercepted. Eventually the Nervian leaders tried the same approach as Ambiorix had used with Sabinus. They requested a parley and warned Cicero that all Gaul had risen, that the other Roman camps were under attack too, that he could expect no help therefore and that German mercenaries were on their way to help attack him. They described the deaths of Sabinus and Cotta and their men, and they offered Cicero safe conduct out of Nervian territory.

Cicero, however, refused to budge. He replied that it was not Roman custom to accept terms from an armed enemy. If they would lay down their arms and sue for mercy, he would personally intercede with Caesar on their behalf. Disappointed, the Nervii built Roman-style siege works around the camp, and stepped up their attacks, attempting to set the camp on fire and striving by might and main to break in. Cicero, despite being quite ill, allowed himself no rest night or day in encouraging his men to resist and seeing to the repair of the fortifications wherever the enemy damaged them. Finally, after the siege had dragged on for two weeks or more, a messenger

disguised as one of the attackers managed to get through the enemy lines and bring news of Cicero's desperate straits to Caesar at Samarobriva.[47]

Caesar immediately ordered M. Crassus to bring his legion from the territory of the Bellovaci to Samarobriva, and sent to C. Fabius among the Morini to set forth and join Caesar on the march in the territory of the Atrebates, through which both would have to pass to reach the land of the Nervii. As soon as scouts reported that Crassus was only a few hours' march from Samarobriva, Caesar set out from there with Trebonius's legion, ordering Crassus to occupy Samarobriva and look to the safety of the Roman camp and supplies there. He met with Fabius and his legion on the march, and advanced into Nervian territory with two legions. He had also instructed Labienus to join him if possible, but Labienus was detained by news of Sabinus's disaster: he expected daily to be attacked by the Treveri, and felt that he could not leave his camp in safety, a decision of which Caesar approved. He now realized that he faced a serious uprising in northern Gaul, and that it would be crucial to defeat the Nervii and save Cicero and his legion if this uprising was to be overcome. He sent a Gallic cavalryman to get a message to Cicero letting him know of the relief force's imminent arrival. The message was tossed into Cicero's camp tied to a javelin, where it unfortunately went unnoticed for two days; but Cicero did finally receive it, and by then the smoke of the relief force's fires could be seen on the horizon, confirming that they were indeed approaching. This was not before time, as scarcely a man in Cicero's camp was unwounded.

Seeing Caesar's approach, the Nervii and their allies abandoned the siege of Cicero's camp and turned to confront Caesar's force. Cicero at once sent a messenger to warn Caesar of his danger. When Caesar came within sight of the enemy, he halted and had his men construct a camp. However, though he had two legions with him, he had the camp made very small and crowded, so as to give the impression that the force with him was quite small; and he kept his men strictly inside the camp despite all enemy challenges and provocations, giving the impression that he was afraid to risk a fight. As a result, the Nervii and their allies became bolder and bolder in approaching Caesar's camp, and eventually began to assault it in some disorder. At that Caesar sent all of his legionaries pouring out of the camp gates to attack the surprised enemy, and then sent his cavalry out after them, to pursue the fleeing Nervii who had not stood up to the surprise attack. As a result, the Nervii and their allies were routed and many were killed, and Caesar was able to join Cicero without losing any men himself. He praised Cicero and his men highly for their stout resistance, and viewed with some surprise the siege works built by the Nervii.[48] He realized that the Gauls were learning from their Roman enemies, and that the job of subjecting them was still far from complete.

Throughout that winter, during which Caesar remained in northern Gaul near his army, rumours continued to fly of Sabinus's defeat, on the one hand, and of Gallic plans to 'rebel' and assert their freedom on the other. After

relieving Cicero's legion, Caesar had sent Fabius and his legion back to its camp among the Morini, and had brought Cicero's legion along with Trebonius's back to Samarobriva, where he kept both along with Crassus's legion throughout the winter as a strong force ready to deal with any trouble. He contacted tribal leaders to let them know he was well aware of plans afoot to rise up against him, and tried to intimidate them into remaining quiet. Meanwhile Indutiomarus did lead the Treveri to attack Labienus's camp, but by secretly bringing a large cavalry force into his camp and then sending it out suddenly to attack the unwary Treveri, Labienus succeeded in driving them off and killing Indutiomarus himself.[49]

Caesar knew full well that trouble was brewing. He ordered his legates in the province and in Cisalpine Gaul to recruit new forces to replace those lost under Sabinus and Cotta, and also persuaded Pompeius to send him a legion of newly recruited soldiers from northern Italy. In this way, by the end of the winter Caesar had raised three new legions, double the number of men lost under Sabinus, and raised his overall army in Gaul to ten legions. The aim was to impress the Gauls with Rome's power, and cow them into quiescence; but nothing could keep the Gauls quiet at this point.[50]

Early in 53 a serious uprising did break out, but fortunately for Caesar it was confined to northern and north-central Gaul – essentially to the Belgic peoples – and the Gauls were still unable to unite fully against the common foe. In anticipation of the difficult spring and summer to come, Caesar gathered four legions before the winter was over for a surprise invasion of Nervian territory. He seized a large quantity of booty, and since the Nervii did not dare to fight they were obliged to surrender, removing one of the core tribes from the uprising before it even got properly underway. In the spring, Caesar summoned a tribal council at Lutetia; only the leaders of the Treveri, Senones and Carnutes failed to attend, making it clear which tribes were the most seriously disaffected. He therefore invaded the land of the Senones in great force and by rapid marches, catching them by surprise. Not being in any proper state to defend themselves, the Senones too were obliged to surrender to Caesar without a fight, through the mediation of the Aedui. Seeing this, the Carnutes too sent emissaries pleading for forgiveness, using the Remi as intermediaries. Thus most tribes involved in the proposed uprising had been pacified without even a fight, by sheer use of hard marching and surprise.[51]

Leaving Labienus to deal with the Treveri, Caesar now invaded the territory of the Menapii, who had never formally surrendered to Rome, with five legions, marching in three columns and doing maximum devastation as they marched, until the Menapii too were obliged to sue for peace and give hostages for their future good behaviour. At the same time, Labienus inflicted another crushing defeat on the Treveri, again utilizing the strategy of pretended fear to good effect to lure the Treveri into a battle on terms unfavourable to them.[52] Caesar joined Labienus shortly after this victory, uniting his army, and decided now that only one more thing needed to be

done before he would be ready to seek full vengeance on the Eburones. He had heard much of emissaries to and fro across the Rhine seeking German aid in the projected Gallic uprising, and wanted to make it quite clear again to the German tribes that they would do better not to intervene in what was now Rome's sphere of influence. He had another bridge constructed across the Rhine, and led his troops across on a plundering expedition on the German bank. As before, the Ubii sent messages of friendship, while the Suebi withdrew into the internal forests of Germany. After a few days, feeling that his demonstration of force had made its point, Caesar led his army back to Gaul; but this time he only destroyed about a third of his bridge, on the German side, leaving the rest standing and heavily guarded to let the Germans know that he could return at any time if they gave him cause.[53]

Now Caesar was finally ready to exact vengeance from the wretched Eburones, who were to pay dearly for Ambiorix's few weeks of glory. Stationing one legion at Sabinus's old camp in the heart of the Eburones' territory in charge of the baggage and stores, and dividing the other nine legions into three forces, Caesar systematically ravaged the entire land of the Eburones, with the aim of eradicating the tribe completely. Neighbouring Gallic tribes were forbidden to shelter fleeing Eburones and invited to join in the pillaging and plundering. All Eburones were to be killed or enslaved; and a special bounty was promised for the capture or slaying of Ambiorix himself. The Eburones suffered horribly, their only hope of survival being hiding in the most inapproachable parts of their territory, or flight to unfrequented parts of neighbouring territories, constantly avoiding being seen, since to be seen was to risk death or enslavement. Still Ambiorix, though almost captured on several occasions, somehow escaped, and his ultimate fate is unknown.[54] But if Caesar meant all of this horrible suffering as a final lesson to the Gauls, he underestimated their fierce will to freedom.

When the destruction of the Eburones seemed complete, Caesar finally withdrew his legions to the territory of the Remi, where he held a council of Gallic chieftains at Durocortorum to inquire into the 'conspiracy' (as he termed it) of the Senones and Carnutes. He decided that a chief of the Senones named Acco was the instigator, and had him put to death in the traditional Roman manner, which included a preliminary public scourging. Various supporters of Acco were exiled, and Caesar then distributed his legions into winter camps, two on the border of Treveran territory, two among the Lingones, and six at the chief city of the Senones, Agedincum. Then, with Gaul apparently pacified, Caesar travelled to Cisalpine Gaul to catch up on political events at Rome.[55]

Meanwhile in Gaul, representatives of various tribes began to meet to plan a full-scale uprising against Rome, to try to shake off the Roman yoke once and for all. The fate of the Eburones and of Acco merely spurred them on, as they felt that at any time any of them might meet the same treatment, and that if they did not move to recover their liberty now, they would never be

able to. The political troubles in Rome, which seemed likely to detain Caesar, added to their determination, and the Carnutes undertook to make the opening move in what was to be an uprising of almost all of the Gallic tribes proper of southern and central Gaul, north of the old Roman province. On an appointed day, the Carnutes fell on the Roman inhabitants of their chief town, Cenabum (Orleans), slaughtering them all and seizing their property.[56] This was the signal for the general uprising to begin.

The uprising of 54–53 had been almost exclusively an affair of the Belgic tribes of the north. The uprising of 52 was predominantly among the Celtic peoples of central and southern Gaul, with many of the Aquitani joining them, although in the later stages some of the Belgic tribes did join in too. The leading figure of this uprising, the Arvernian noble Vercingetorix, proved to be an able and effective commander, and one who had learned much from watching Caesar and the Romans and how they operated. After news of the slaughter at Cenabum spread, the Arverni, led by Vercingetorix, seem to have been the first to respond. A number of smaller neighbouring tribes were quickly persuaded by Vercingetorix to join the uprising, enabling him to raise a large force and invade the territory of the Bituriges to the north of Arvernian lands (modern-day Auvergne, that is). This was a direct challenge to the Aedui, whose allies the Bituriges were, and through them to Rome of course, since the Aedui were the chief Roman allies in Gaul. When the Aeduan response proved ineffective, the Bituriges joined in the anti-Roman alliance under Vercingetorix, giving the latter a great initial success. Caesar, meanwhile, was in Cisalpine Gaul when news of the troubles in Gaul reached him, and he hurriedly recruited new soldiers and crossed the Alps into the transalpine province, arriving not a moment too soon. For Vercingetorix had sent a leader named Lucterius with a large force to attack the old province in Caesar's absence, and Caesar was barely able with his new recruits and the provincial militia to put the province into a state of defence in time to ward off this threat.[57]

The situation facing Caesar now was a very dangerous and perplexing one. He was cut off from his army, which was wintering in north-central Gaul, both by mountain passes covered in winter snow, and by large enemy forces. Although he had with his army a commander whom he could trust in Labienus, the events of the winter of 54/53 must have made him extremely anxious about what might happen in his absence. His immediate aim, therefore, was to find a way to join his army. In order to pass from the old province into central Gaul, he would have to cross the Cevennes mountains, where the passes were deep in snow and considered impassable until spring arrived. The Arverni, therefore, kept no close watch on these passes, and that was Caesar's opportunity. Having recruited further soldiers in Provence, raising the force available to him to twenty-two cohorts (or just over two legions), he set the men to digging through the deep snowdrifts in the Cevennes passes. He then crossed the mountains and debouched into the territory of the utterly

surprised Arverni with a substantial force of cavalry, which he sent out to ravage and pillage in all directions.[58] This was classic Caesar: to arrive where the enemy thought he could not possibly be, and so take them completely by surprise. He stayed in Auvergne only two days, long enough for news of his presence there to reach Vercingetorix and bring him hurrying to the rescue of his native land.

Caesar meanwhile set out with the stated aim of going to fetch reinforcements and returning within three days, leaving young Decimus Brutus in command of the cavalry with orders to continue the widespread ravaging and pillaging. Caesar did not in fact travel south for reinforcements, but went east to Vienne, picked up a small escort of cavalry there, and made a mad dash through the lands of the Aedui and Lingones to join the two legions wintering among the latter tribe. From there, he sent messages to his two other winter camps, and so concentrated his whole army under his personal leadership before Vercingetorix was aware that he had left Auvergne. Finding himself thus outwitted and obliged to face a concentrated Roman army under Caesar himself, Vercingetorix led his army back into the territory of the Bituriges and then attacked the small tribe of the Boii, whom Caesar had settled in Aeduan territory after the war with the Helvetii, aiming either to draw Caesar into a very difficult winter campaign, or show that he was unwilling/unable to protect his allies. Caesar realized that, the difficulties of winter campaigning notwithstanding, he had to go to the aid of his allies or lose face disastrously.[59]

Once again, Caesar displayed his usual traits of swift decision and movement. Leaving two legions with all the army's heavy baggage at Agedincum, he marched with eight legions towards the Boii, sending instructions to the Aedui to forward supplies. He reached Vellaunodunum in the territory of the Senones on the second day, and at once laid siege to it so as to secure his supply line. With their customary energy, his legionaries completed encircling siege works in two days, causing the people of the town to surrender on the third day. Caesar left his officer Trebonius to receive this surrender, and at once marched with most of the army for Cenabum, arriving there in just two days. The Carnutes had just heard of the siege of Vellaunodunum, assumed that this siege would take some time, and were consequently caught entirely by surprise at Caesar's appearance, having barely begun to put Cenabum into a state of defence. Once again the sheer rapidity of Caesar's actions won him a major advantage. Since he arrived at Cenabum too late in the day to mount an immediate assault, he made camp, but kept two legions on watch overnight in case the inhabitants of the town should try to escape. At about midnight, this did in fact occur, but Caesar immediately ordered his two legions to attack and break into the town. Cenabum was captured and burnt down, and its inhabitants were enslaved, as a punishment for the slaughter of the Roman inhabitants.

Caesar then crossed the Loire and entered the territory of the Bituriges. At news of his approach, Vercingetorix left the territory of the Boii and marched

towards Caesar's army. Caesar was attacking the Biturigan town of Noviodunum, which had just promised to surrender when the advance columns of Vercingetorix's army were seen approaching. At this, the people of the town changed their minds, closed their gates, and determined to resist. However, Caesar's Gallic cavalry, reinforced by 400 mercenary Germans, attacked and drove off Vercingetorix's advance cavalry force, and at this the people of Noviodunum promptly surrendered again, handing over the men responsible for the brief change of policy and begging Caesar's forgiveness.[60] Thus, in the space of little more than a week, Caesar had captured three major enemy towns and put Vercingetorix firmly on the defensive.

Vercingetorix was an intelligent enough leader to draw the proper conclusion from these early setbacks. At a council of Gallic leaders, he proposed a scorched earth strategy. Challenging the superior Roman siege-craft or battle-fighting ability was foolhardy. The Gauls' advantages lay in the fact that they were in their own lands and could draw supplies and raise new troops with ease; they had superior numbers, to constantly harass the enemy; and time was on their side, as Caesar's period of command was winding down and his enemies at Rome were preparing his downfall. The Gauls, therefore, must not defend any towns that Caesar attacked, they must not offer battle, they must instead concentrate on making it difficult or impossible for Caesar to get supplies and wear his army down with hunger, fatigue and constant harassment.

There seems little doubt that this policy, if carefully and thoroughly pursued, could have been successful. The difficulty lay in getting the Gauls, although they initially agreed, to stick to it. For although the Bituriges and neighbouring tribes at once began to burn down their own towns and villages so as to provide no place for attack or supply or comfort to Caesar's army, they could not bring themselves to destroy their chief town, Avaricum. They pleaded that the place was the pride of their people, and that it was so strongly situated and fortified that it could easily be held against attack. That of course provided Caesar with the opening he needed. He at once marched his legions to Avaricum and began an assault on the town. It was an exceptionally difficult siege, because of the strength of the town's fortifications and the marshes and woods surrounding it, but Caesar encamped by a gap between two marshes and set his men to building a ramp up to the city wall. Vercingetorix encamped his army nearby, in a strong position – surrounded by marshes – and made it well nigh impossible for Caesar's men to forage; and since the Aedui proved very reluctant to send supplies, Caesar's men were soon suffering severely from shortage of food. He offered, in fact, to raise the siege if the food situation was too hard for his men to cope with, but they would not hear of it and begged him to stay and let them capture the town. And capture it they did: despite heroic and ingenious resistance, the Romans completed their ramp, broke into the town, and – exasperated by their sufferings during the siege – slaughtered the entire population.[61]

Ironically this Gallic disaster only strengthened Vercingetorix's position. The Gauls remembered that he had opposed the defence of Avaricum from the beginning, and urged a policy of destroying their own towns so as to offer Caesar no scope for this kind of military success, and his policy now seemed vindicated. Caesar remained some days at Avaricum to rest his army and allow it to recuperate its strength, using the abundant supplies captured in the town.

Meanwhile, a dispute arose among the Aedui over their chief magistracy, which Caesar was obliged to go and settle in person. It was all too clear that the pro-Roman policy of the Aedui was wavering, but Caesar sought to strengthen it as best he could. In particular, he called on the Aedui to provide the promised supplies, to send their cavalry to fight with him and to post infantry along his supply routes to secure them for him. He then decided to divide his army. He sent Labienus with four legions to campaign against the Senones and Parisii in central Gaul, while himself with the remaining six legions marching south into the land of the Arverni, confident of drawing Vercingetorix after him to the defence of his native land. This is indeed what happened. Vercingetorix shadowed Caesar's army, seeking to impede his progress by preventing a crossing of the river Allier. When Caesar managed to trick him and get his army across, however, Vercingetorix marched away into Auvergne, fearful of being forced into battle on unfavourable terms, and Caesar marched at speed to Gergovia, the chief city of the Arverni.[62]

Like the Bituriges with their chief town Avaricum, the Arverni had not been able to bring themselves to destroy Gergovia, and it now fell to Vercingetorix to try to defend it. Gergovia was situated in an even more naturally strong position than Avaricum, and with Vercingetorix's large army posted in front of it to make an assault practically impossible, Caesar was at a loss at first how to proceed. His position was soon made even more difficult by the outright defection of the Aedui to the anti-Roman coalition, and it seemed clear that there was no hope of a major success at Gergovia with the forces available to him. Nevertheless, he did not give up: he thought he perceived a weakness in the enemy position, and sent men forward to try to take advantage. That led to a large-scale engagement in which his men were definitively repulsed, the most serious setback in all of Caesar's campaigns in Gaul.[63]

Caesar realized at once that he had been too stubborn and that his position was now extremely precarious. On the day after the repulse he addressed his troops and upbraided them for being too impetuous and exceeding their instructions: it was important to him to maintain his reputation for infallibility in their eyes. Then he drew up his army in battle formation on the open plain, challenging Vercingetorix to come down from the slopes around the town and fight on open ground. Vercingetorix, of course, refused to surrender his advantage and risk defeat. After a minor cavalry skirmish, Caesar brought his men back into camp. On the next day he again offered battle in vain, and having thereby sufficiently restored his men's confidence, he marched away

towards the territory of the Aedui, repairing a bridge over the Allier and putting that river again between himself and Vercingetorix's army. However, his forced retreat from Gergovia made his position ever more difficult: the Aedui moved from covert and partial 'rebellion' into open and complete alliance with Vercingetorix and the other Gauls. Caesar's supplies and all the hostages of the Gallic tribes, whom he had concentrated at an Aeduan town, were seized, and Aeduan forces began to campaign against him, harassing his forces along the Allier.

To some it seemed that the only course open to Caesar now was a retreat to the old province, but that would have meant abandoning Labienus and his four legions in north-central Gaul, and accepting the loss of all his conquests. Caesar would not contemplate such an action. Instead, he turned north and by a series of forced marches again surprised the enemy by appearing at the river Loire and crossing it in a place not normally considered fordable. He stationed his cavalry in the stream in two lines, and had the legionaries cross between them, submerged up to their shoulders but holding their arms and armour above their heads as they waded.[64] Again, the extraordinary ability and willingness of Caesar's legionaries to exert themselves to do the seemingly impossible created the situation Caesar needed, in this case the ability to link up again with Labienus and unite the whole army in the middle of Gaul.

Labienus's campaign against the tribes of north-central Gaul had been mostly successful until news of Gergovia arrived and encouraged the tribes to continue resisting and more tribes – especially the Bellovaci – to join the uprising. Labienus had already forced a crossing of the Seine, but now found himself on the wrong side of the river and had to exercise all his ingenuity to bring his legions safely back to the south bank. There he fought a battle against a large Gallic army commanded by the Aulercan chief Camulogenus, and won a notable victory thanks to the skill and daring of the Seventh legion. Camulogenus and thousands of his warriors were killed, and the victory enabled Labienus to march safely back to his base at Agedincum, pick up the garrison force and his baggage there, and proceed to effect a junction with Caesar.[65]

The uprising against Rome had now become virtually pan-Gallic. Only a handful of tribes – the Remi and Lingones who remained loyal, and the Treveri who stood aloof – did not participate when a pan-Gallic council was called at the Aeduan town Bibracte. Claims by the Aedui to hold the chief command were rejected, and Vercingetorix was overwhelmingly confirmed as commander in chief: the wisdom of his strategy and his success in defeating Caesar at Gergovia made his case irresistible. It seemed as if it was now just a matter of time before Caesar was obliged to leave Gaul, and Vercingetorix could hope to become the paramount leader of a liberated Gaul. He gathered 15,000 cavalry in addition to the infantry he already had at Bibracte, and enforced his strict scorched earth policy, obliging the tribes to destroy all supplies that could not be secured against Caesar's legions. Forces were sent to

harass the borders of the old province, in the hope of drawing Caesar south to its defence; but his cousin and legate L. Caesar organized the provincial militia of twenty-two cohorts effectively to ward off these attacks.

Caesar's chief difficulty now, besides his precarious supply situation, was his relative lack of cavalry. He remedied this by recruiting cavalry from the Germans across the Rhine, who fought in squadrons combined with specially trained light infantry, who would attack enemy horses as their cavalrymen companions engaged the riders.[66] He then began to march south-east across the land of the Lingones towards that of the Sequani, so as to be nearer the province in case of need. Vercingetorix led his army to intercept, judging that the time was now ripe to try a test of arms: it seemed that Caesar was on the run, and he found in his huge numerical advantage in cavalry grounds to hope for a great success against the Romans. The Gallic cavalry were divided into three squadrons, and attacked Caesar's army as it marched in column, one squadron barring the advance of the vanguard, while the other two attacked from either side. Caesar too divided his numerically inferior cavalry into three squadrons and ordered them to counter-attack, while legionary troops were ordered to advance in support whenever and wherever the cavalry found themselves hard pressed. In this way, Caesar's cavalry held their ground for some time against great odds, until his German mercenaries gained some high ground, and from there charged into one of the Gallic squadrons and routed it. As the other Gauls saw their fellows fleeing and being pursued and slaughtered by the Germans, they too gave way and turned to flight, pursued by Caesar's cavalry.[67]

This unexpected rout of the prized Gallic cavalry changed the complexion of the war at once. Vercingetorix withdrew from his positions confronting Caesar, and marched for the Mandubian stronghold of Alesia, where he took refuge. Caesar, pursuing, established his army – his ten legions probably amounted to not much more than 40,000 men at this time – in camps around Alesia, and began a siege of the place.

The siege/battle of Alesia was the deciding engagement in the Gallic uprising, and one of the most extraordinary military engagements in the history of warfare. Alesia, positioned on a hilltop with steep slopes on all sides, was virtually impregnable, and with Vercingetorix's numerically superior army (perhaps 50,000 to 60,000 strong) inside it, there was no way that Caesar could assault the town with any hope of success. He could only build siege works around it and trust to being able to starve the occupants into surrender. However, the size of the town and the nature of the terrain made the siege lines uncomfortably long, and hence vulnerable to assault by the forces inside the town. It is rare that an army has successfully besieged a numerically superior force holding an impregnable position, being obliged to over-extend its siege lines in order to complete the siege. As if that was not enough of a challenge, Vercingetorix sent away most of his cavalry at the start of the siege, before the Roman siege lines were complete, with orders to raise

a relieving army from the united forces of Gaul and come to the rescue: Caesar's besieging force was to be attacked by a numerically superior army from the outside, at the same time as the forces inside Alesia were to pour out and attack the siege lines in the rear, as it were. This forced Caesar to have a second set of siege works constructed, longer than the first and facing outwards, so that his army was simultaneously besieging and besieged, and facing superior numbers in both directions.[68] It is hard to imagine any commander but Caesar, with his almost limitless daring and confidence, or any army but Caesar's, with its incredible capacity for exertion and confronting odds and its limitless belief in its commander, undertaking such a seemingly hopeless endeavour.

Yet Caesar and his army succeeded, indeed triumphed. By prodigies of sheer hard work, extraordinary siege works were constructed with great rapidity facing both directions. Caesar spaced his encampments around the siege lines brilliantly, as the test was to show: for every attack from without and within was beaten off, and at every point the seemingly hopelessly over-stretched lines were held by men rushing from post to post to shore up whichever section of the line seemed most endangered. The valour displayed by Caesar's men in these engagements, and their tireless ability to work and fight and work and fight some more, seems almost superhuman. The victory the Romans won at Alesia should not, by normal calculation, have been possible, yet victory was achieved.

The culminating point came in a great double assault on Caesar's lines from both sides which was beaten off by amazing exertions, and then followed up by Caesar's Germanic cavalry who pursued the Gauls retreating from the failed attack from without, and drove them off in rout with great slaughter. The survivors of the relieving army dispersed to their homes, and the army inside Alesia found itself in a hopeless situation in which the options were slow starvation, suicide or surrender. They surrendered. Vercingetorix rode out, after the surrender had been agreed upon, and knelt before the victorious Caesar, laying his weapons at Caesar's feet, and being taken into custody to grace Caesar's eventual triumph in Rome.[69]

The uprising was essentially broken and defeated. But there was still work to do, as the embers of 'rebellion' continued to smoulder and flare up here and there in Gaul for months to come. Of the soldiers in Alesia who surrendered, Caesar set aside the Arverni and Aedui as hostages to recapture the goodwill of these crucial and powerful tribes; the remainder were enslaved and distributed as booty among his men, a reward for their exertions. Caesar then marched into Aeduan territory, where he was met by envoys from the Aedui and Arverni to offer surrender. He accepted the surrender of both tribes graciously, freed the 20,000 prisoners he held from the two tribes, and demanded and received hostages for their future good behaviour. He then distributed his army into winter quarters, with two legions among the Sequani, two among the Remi to protect them from the still unsubdued

Bellovaci, and the rest distributed around Gaul, including two legions among the Aedui to collect supplies. Caesar himself remained in Gaul over the winter of 52/51, stationed at Bibracte, to keep an eye on things. At Rome, news of his great victory was greeted by a Senate-decreed thanksgiving of twenty days.[70]

The year 51 saw the final 'pacification' operations whereby Caesar secured all of Gaul as a province of the Roman Empire once and for all. In spite of the massive defeat inflicted on the combined Gallic forces at Alesia, a number of tribes still refrained from finally surrendering in the hope that, operating independently and thereby obliging Caesar to try to deal with them piecemeal (though some of them would inevitably be forced to surrender) some might hold out until Caesar's looming departure from Gaul would (they hoped) grant them respite. Caesar was determined not to permit this to occur. Still in December of 52, he had led a raid into the territory of the Bituriges which (once again) took them by surprise and forced them to submit. In January a similar large-scale raid was undertaken into the land of the Carnutes, where he occupied the rebuilt Cenabum and stationed two legions under Trebonius to cow the tribe into submission.[71]

The most important of the holdouts, however, were the Bellovaci, the largest of the Belgic tribes. Reports from the Remi indicated that they had gathered a large army including German mercenaries, commanded by their chief Correus and by Caesar's former ally Commius of the Atrebates, who had become a committed proponent of Gallic freedom. Caesar invaded the lands of the Bellovaci with four legions, and as spring arrived called in Trebonius and his two legions also. The Bellovaci put up a determined resistance and made things difficult for Caesar, but eventually he gained the upper hand when he learned that 6,000 picked infantry and the best of their cavalry, led by the chief Correus himself, had set up an ambush for the Roman foragers. Caesar was able to ambush the ambushers, and destroy the entire force, including Correus.

This disaster persuaded the Bellovaci to give up: they sent envoys to Caesar pleading for lenient terms, arguing that the loss of so many of their best men was already punishment enough. Caesar, who was looking to reconcile the Gauls to Roman rule, accepted this argument and punished the Bellovaci no further.[72] He did, however, decide to make a further example of the Eburones, the survivors of whom had reoccupied their territory, still led by Ambiorix. The land of the Eburones was subjected once again to systematic plundering and pillaging, with killing or enslavement of any of the Eburones who were caught. Although Ambiorix again escaped, Caesar felt that any Eburones who still survived would by now loathe the very name of Ambiorix, whose ill-judged attack on Caesar's legion had brought upon them such suffering.[73]

In the south of Gaul, the forces Vercingetorix had dispatched to harass the province were still at large, led by Lucterius and Drappes. They took refuge at the fortified town of Uxellodunum, and there held out against the local

Roman forces. While Caesar was busy finalizing the submission of the Carnutes, the tribes of Brittany and Normandy, and the Treveri, he received messages from his legates in the south describing their difficulties at Uxellodunum. Leaving M. Antonius and Fufius Calenus in charge in the north, he travelled to take charge himself at Uxellodunum. He was determined to make this the last stand of the Gallic uprising. When the people of Uxellodunum were finally forced to surrender, he rounded up all the men who had carried arms in the fighting, had their hands cut off, and sent them around Gaul as an object lesson of the folly of continuing to resist.[74]

After this atrocity, Caesar followed a policy of mildness and reconciliation, to show the Gauls that they would not suffer if only they submitted. It was enough: the Gauls were exhausted and could fight no more; they were content to accept the reality of Roman power and look for considerate treatment. As a final act, Caesar visited Aquitania – where he had not previously set foot – and personally accepted the submission of the local leaders. He then distributed his legions widely around Gaul for the first peaceful winter camp in several years. Four legions were encamped among the Belgae, two to watch over the tribes of the Atlantic coast, two among the Aedui, and two in the land of the Lemovices near the border of Auvergne, while Caesar himself travelled to the province to reward the provincials for their loyalty. Then he returned to north Gaul to join his legions stationed among the Belgae, and spent the winter there. He did what he could, during this time, to reconcile the Gallic leaders to Roman power, wishing to ensure that on his departure from Gaul – which was growing imminent – he would leave a thoroughly pacified country behind.

At the end of the winter he travelled south to the province and thence across the Alps to Cisalpine Gaul to give much needed attention to the political situation in Rome.[75] For events at Rome were moving inexorably towards a showdown between Pompeius and the optimates on one side, and Caesar himself as leader of the reform movement on the other. Although he spent the year 50 doing everything he could to prevent that showdown from turning into civil war, straining every nerve to find a political compromise, there was in the end no compromise possible, as we shall see.

The conquest of Gaul, achieved in eight years of hard and relentless campaigning, permanently extended Rome's northern frontier to the Atlantic and Rhine, and permanently turned Celtic Gaul into part of the 'romance' world: that is, the part of Europe in which the spoken languages derive from Latin, the language of the Romans. It was by any measure a remarkable achievement, although from the modern perspective it might also be deemed an atrocious one. There were certainly atrocities aplenty committed during these eight years of warfare, but we should not too facilely apply modern standards in judgment. To a Roman like Caesar, the only applicable standards were the welfare of Rome, the power of Rome, the glory of Rome, and of course the enrichment and glory of the Roman commander himself and his

officers and men. And certainly Caesar and his officers were enormously enriched. The wealth of Gaul poured into their hands, but by no means all of it stayed there. Caesar poured vast sums into Rome and Italy, on gifts and loans to politicians and leaders of all sorts, and on huge building projects at Rome and in numerous Italian towns. This illustrates an important point about the conquest of Gaul: it was carried out not just for its own sake, or to extend the Roman Empire, but also to further a political career and movement. The gifts, loans and building projects financed by the wealth of Gaul were intended to secure political support for Caesar from the numerous beneficiaries of his largess. More even than this, though, the campaigns in Gaul may be said to have been about the building of an army.

As we have seen, military might had been for decades the final arbiter in Roman politics, and Caesar knew that to further his political career, and the success of the Cinnan political movement he led, he would need a powerful army at his back. The army Caesar created during these eight years was one of the great armies of history. The way in which Caesar inspired in his soldiers a dedication to himself, a discipline, a daring confidence, and a willingness and ability to endure danger, hardships and effort, marks him out as one of the great commanders of men. His generalship is marked above all by this ability to inspire devotion, but also by the way that, time after time, he did the unexpected and achieved the crucial advantage of surprise by the amazing speed and/or boldness of his decisions, actions and movements. There was, seemingly, nothing that Caesar would not dare to undertake, and his men would not agree to make a go of at his behest. He has been criticized in some quarters for the excessive daring, amounting to foolhardiness, of some of his decisions. We can only say that invariably Caesar made his decisions work; and on the rare occasions that he could not, he very quickly found ways to make good whatever difficulties his over-boldness had got his army into. Soldiers admire, indeed require, confidence in a leader, and in Caesar they had a leader whose confidence in his ability to find a way never wavered. They admired and loved him for it.

For Gaul and its inhabitants, Caesar's campaigns of conquest were in many respects a horrific experience. Numbers are hard to gauge, as Caesar seems (like most ancient sources) to have exaggerated the size of enemy forces and the number of enemy killed, but the death toll over these eight years likely rose into the hundreds of thousands – many of them Germanic invaders rather than Gauls to be sure – and tens if not hundreds of thousands more were enslaved. Some entire communities were largely wiped out – the Veneti and Eburones for example,[76] and the inhabitants of Cenabum – and destruction of all sorts was widespread. It is perhaps worth noting that this was not entirely Caesar's choice: tribes like the Remi and Aedui who submitted readily and cooperated with the Romans flourished, and it is clear that Caesar had no desire to inflict destruction and atrocities. Of course, from their own native perspective, there was no reason that Gallic and Belgic tribes should

tamely submit to Roman domination, and in that it was Caesar's choice and determination to impose that domination, the responsibility for all the suffering and damage that followed was indeed his. But he should then also receive some credit for the flourishing history of Roman Gaul over the next three centuries or more.

Rome was an expansionist, imperial state, and Gaul was fairly certainly destined to be brought under the imperial sway of Rome before long, Caesar or no Caesar. And it does seem that Gaul was at this time in a state of flux. If it had not been Caesar conquering the region, it likely could have been Ariovistus and his Germanic invaders, or one of the ambitious Gallic/Belgic chieftains of this era – the likes of Dumnorix, Indutiomarus or Vercingetorix. A case can be made that, in the long run, falling under Roman sway was the best option for Gaul. It is not necessary to try to make that case here, however, for once again, the long-term good of Gaul was really not what motivated or drove Caesar and his army. At all times Caesar's focus was on Rome and Roman politics. The conquest of Gaul was a means to an end, and the end was dominance of Caesar and his approach to Roman governance at Rome.

The question that faced him as his term of governance in Gaul, and the 'pacification' of Gaul, came to an end was whether he would be accepted back at Rome peacefully as one of the leaders in Roman governance, winning a second consulship and using that as a platform to bring about further reforms; or whether he would be obliged to fight. It became clear that Pompeius and the optimates were determined to oblige him to fight, and with his superb veteran army he was ready for that.

VII

ROMAN POLITICS IN THE 50s

When Caesar left the outskirts of Rome in March of 58 to take up command of his provinces, he left Rome apparently firmly under the control of his two great allies Pompeius and Crassus, and of the loyal consuls A. Gabinius and L. Piso. As it turned out, however, the dominant figure in Rome with Caesar gone was none of those men, but the mercurial tribune Publius Clodius. The consuls Piso and Gabinius proved to be inactive or ineffective, or both, in the face of Clodius's outrageous and violent tactics. Pompeius had frankly no idea how to deal with any situation in which he was not able to issue orders and have them obeyed. The fact that he had never served an apprenticeship in Roman politics but gone straight to the top as an army commander, left him at a loss to understand and deal with the dirty political infighting that characterized Rome in this era. And with Caesar no longer present, Crassus seems to have reverted to giving rein to his jealousy of Pompeius. He sat back and enjoyed Pompeius's discomfiture, if he was not (as some suspected) actively encouraging Clodius behind the scenes. In terms of the day-to-day conduct of political life in Rome itself, Clodius was the dominant figure not just during his tribunate in 58, but down to the beginning of the year 52, and it is of some interest to see how he went about attaining and maintaining that dominance. It is certainly very revealing of how low Roman political life had sunk.

One of the old and important institutions of Roman social life was the *collegium*. The term could refer to any organized group with a shared purpose or function: the great Roman priesthoods like the *pontifices* and *augures* were *collegia*, as were the magistracies like the praetors and quaestors. Many *collegia* had a religious function, being organized for the worship of some specific deity, and – like ancient social groups and life in general – essentially all *collegia* had some religious basis. From quite early times, however, certain *collegia* were set up as tradesmen's associations and/or funeral clubs, *collegia funeraticia*. The smiths, fullers, cloth makers or practitioners of numerous other trades might create a *collegium*, often with the stated purpose of setting up mutual funds to help cover the funeral costs of deceased members, but generally with broader social, convivial and mutual self-help functions as well, or instead. Some of these *collegia* were very old. Report had it that the legendary

king Numa had founded some of the *collegia*, and a number of them certainly went back to the time of the Punic Wars. Given the fundamentally hierarchical nature of Roman society, it was inevitable that the *collegia* would get drawn into the patron/client nexus that was a defining feature of Roman life. Wealthy men, sometimes even senators, might offer or be invited to become the patrons of *collegia*, helping them with gifts of money and other goods, and receiving various forms of honour and support from the *collegia* in return.

In this way, inevitably, the *collegia* were drawn into Roman politics. Candidates for office sought to mobilize *collegia* of which they themselves or their political associates were patrons to support their election campaigns. In the first place, they would want the members to vote for them, but they could also use the members of *collegia* to help canvass on their behalf, to swell their entourages and make them look powerful and important, and eventually – as Roman politics began to become corrupt and violent in the later second century – to accept and/or distribute electoral bribes and simply fight for their patrons in the street battles that often accompanied elections and legislative campaigns. As the competition for office, and the disputes over laws and policies, became fiercer and more corrupt and violent, *collegia* were seen as a particularly convenient way of mobilizing and organizing support for the bribery and violence that were endemic to late Republican political life, and more and more *collegia* were hence set up that had little or nothing to do with the traditional religious, trade and mutual aid functions of the *collegium*.[1] This proliferation of *collegia* was finally perceived as a serious problem, and in 64 the Senate passed decrees limiting the number of men who could attend candidates for office in their canvassing, and abolishing all *collegia* except those that could show they were old foundations fulfilling legitimate, traditional functions.[2]

In the early phase of his tribunate, Clodius enacted laws to expand the distribution of grain to poor Roman citizens by the state, and making the public grain entirely free as opposed to cut-price; and to remove all restrictions on the setting up of *collegia*. He then had various agents – the most notorious was his personal *scriba* (secretary) Sextus Cloelius – organize *collegia* of poor Roman citizens, freed from worries about making a living by the free grain dole and grateful for that to Clodius, whose sole function was to support Clodius in whatever way he needed. The members of these new *collegia* were effectively trained and organized as gangs of thugs, and Clodius used them to take control of the streets of Rome.[3]

Clodius had noticed that violence and physical force were the ultimate arbiters of Roman politics in his day, and simply created the most efficient organization for mobilizing and employing physical force and violence on a daily basis. His gangs could appear in force anywhere in the city at very short notice, and being trained street fighters, they easily beat and drove off the entourages of supporters, clients and slaves with which other Roman politicians sought to enforce their wishes. Even veteran soldiers, for all their

military training, experience, and discipline, found it hard to cope with Clodius's thugs, with their specialized skills of fighting in the narrow streets and porticoes and tenement blocks of Rome. Thus Clodius became, during his tribunate, the king of the Roman streets. Anyone who crossed the great tribune found himself subjected to vicious harassment such as being accosted in the street and beaten, being loudly booed and showered with filth at the games, even being besieged at home by gangs of thugs hurling rocks or even weapons at their house, at times going to the length of trying to set a house on fire. Under these circumstances, although most Roman nobles and senators disapproved fundamentally of what Clodius was doing, opposition to him became muted and ineffective.

Initially, Clodius operated to some degree in accord with the policies and wishes of the three great magnates, Caesar, Pompeius and Crassus. They had wanted Cicero's criticisms of their actions silenced, and although Clodius's law exiling Cicero was extreme, it was effective and they did not oppose it. They wanted Cato silenced too, and here Clodius proved cleverly effective. He proposed a law to annex the island of Cyprus as a Roman province, and when the people duly passed it, he had Cato appointed to an extraordinary command to carry it out. Cato, of course, had always opposed extraordinary commands of all sorts; but Clodius assured him that he had chosen him (Cato) as the most upright man in Rome, who would do the job in the most honest way, and that if he refused to go the task would inevitably fall to someone more corrupt and venal. In the end, Cato was swayed by this and by the consideration that it was not his place to reject the state's call to duty, and he went.[4] Thus Cato was conveniently removed from Rome, and Roman politics, for the remainder of 58 and much of 57; and Caesar humorously congratulated Clodius, by letter, for making it impossible for Cato in future to object to extraordinary commands. In addition, in order to reward the two consuls for their loyalty to the three dynasts, and of course their non-intervention in his activities, Clodius enacted a law granting them the wealthy and important provinces of Macedonia (Piso) and Syria (Gabinius) after their year as consuls.[5] However, Clodius's wayward character and violent tactics soon palled on Pompeius, who began to voice criticisms and bring up the possibility of recalling Cicero from exile. Infuriated by that, Clodius turned his fire on Pompeius, and began systematically to harass the great general, reputedly with Crassus's secret connivance.

After the elections in July at which Q. Metellus Nepos and P. Lentulus Spinther, both men with past connections to Pompeius and Caesar who had now switched to more optimate sympathies, were elected consuls for 57, Pompeius discussed the question of Cicero's recall with the tribune Terentius Culleo. Culleo proposed that Pompeius break with Caesar and divorce Julia, but Pompeius refused and insisted that nothing could be done without Caesar's agreement.[6] These talks, however, led Clodius to step up his harassment of Pompeius, culminating in an attempt on Pompeius's life in August and an

all-out blockade of Pompeius's house. The great general, to his humiliation, found himself obliged to stay at home for the remainder of the year in order to avoid Clodius's attacks. Clodius, in his frustration, turned his fire on Caesar too, declaring the legislation of 59 illegal. That, of course, simply raised hopes that Caesar would now consent to Cicero's recall: eight tribunes, backed by Pompeius, sponsored a bill to end Cicero's exile. It was at once vetoed by Clodius, but the scene was set. One of Cicero's loyal supporters, P. Sestius, who was tribune elect for 57, travelled to Cisalpine Gaul to seek Caesar's formal approval for a renewed attempt in 57, and although Caesar's initial response was noncommittal, he did eventually agree to Cicero's return.[7]

It was clear that nothing could be done so long as Clodius was tribune, but as soon as his year of office ended on 9 December, the process of recalling Cicero was set in motion. Two of the new tribunes were allies of Clodius, and attempted to continue blocking the recall motion. More important, however, was the simple reality of Clodius's continued domination of Rome's streets and public spaces through his gangs. In the face of his violence, the first attempt to pass the recall bill in January – sponsored by the tribune Q. Fabricius – foundered, and it became clear that violence would have to be met by violence.[8]

With Pompeius's approval, the tribunes T. Annius Milo and P. Sestius set about raising street gangs of their own to combat Clodius's thugs. The inherent problem was that Rome had no real, certainly no adequate, police force. Supervision of public order was primarily the responsibility of three very junior magistrates, the *triumviri capitales* or *nocturni,* who were part of the set of minor magistrates called the *vigintisexviri* (twenty-six men) along with the curators of roads and bridges, the mint magistrates, and various minor judicial officials. These magistracies were below the official *cursus honorum* (career ladder) of the major magistracies, beginning with the quaestorship, and the authority they wielded was hence slight. In 58, confronted by the violence sponsored by a tribune – a magistrate far superior to them in authority – they could do nothing. But even with Clodius no longer holding that power, they were essentially helpless because they lacked the kind of force needed to overcome Clodius's gangs.

Like most ancient communities, public order in Rome was maintained by consensus and mutual aid; in particular, the clients of the senators and other leading men of the community could be expected to be mobilized to help deal with any threat to public order. If necessary, as a last resort, the praetors and/or consuls could mobilize troops. In the present instance, Clodius had strong enough allies in the Senate and the tribunate to prevent troops being called up against him, especially as the optimates feared that any move towards a military solution might result in Pompeius being called upon to take command, which they vehemently opposed. Fortunately for Cicero, Milo turned out to be a match for Clodius when it came to the raising and leading of street gangs.

T. Annius Milo was a Latin from the town of Lanuvium, born into a non-noble clan (the Papii), though adopted by a man of the Annius clan which had produced consuls in the second century. The name he is famous under – Milo – was properly a nickname: the original Milo was a renowned athlete of the Greek city of Croton in the late sixth century, a wrestler who won the crown at six successive Olympic festivals, and whose feats of strength were legendary. Like the man from whom he got his nickname, T. Milo was enormously strong, and he proved to be ruthless and brutal too. He had an interest in some of the gladiator training schools in Campania, and to give the gangs he raised to combat Clodius an edge, he employed some gladiator-trainers and ex-gladiators as leaders and trainers. Street battles raged through the first half of 57, but eventually Milo and Sestius got the upper hand sufficiently to allow the bill recalling Cicero, which was also supported by both consuls and most of the praetors as well as Pompeius, to pass.[9]

An attempt to prosecute Clodius for public violence failed, but Cicero returned to Italy, making his triumphal way from Brundisium to Rome amid scenes of public rejoicing, scenes that quite turned his head and gave him an inflated idea of his political importance. For Cicero was above all a symbol. Pompeius and most senators were thoroughly fed up with Clodius's domination of the city and violence, and ending the exile of Clodius's most hated enemy Cicero was a way of breaking that domination. The Senate voted that all Cicero's properties, which Clodius had ordered seized and/or destroyed, were to be returned and restored at public expense.[10] Although Cicero had to struggle for years to get that decree realized, he basked in the praise showered on him at this time, and imagined he might now lead a new political movement at Rome of universal consensus to stamp out violence and corruption, and return Rome to the 'good old days' of conservative senatorial control as in the time (so he imagined) of his idols Scipio Aemilianus and C. Laelius, before the Gracchi.

He expressed his gratitude for Caesar's acquiescence in his return by co-sponsoring with Pompeius a decree of fifteen days of public thanksgiving for Caesar's victories in Gaul, but in reality he was far from reconciled to Caesar's position of power, and gave most of the credit for his return from exile to Pompeius.[11] He began to nurture hopes that Pompeius would let himself be guided by his (Cicero's) political advice, and that together they might oversee and guide Rome as the great statesman of unparalleled *auctoritas* (Pompeius) and his wise and revered adviser (Cicero), just as he imagined Scipio Aemilianus and Laelius had done in the past. Pompeius, however, relied on quite other advisers, and was in fact working towards the creation for himself of another great command that would maintain his position of superiority over his allies Caesar and Crassus.

Besides the endemic street violence and gang warfare, which by no means ended with Cicero's recall, the other main consequence of Clodius's tribunate was a crisis in Rome's food supply. Clodius's *lex frumentaria* providing for free

monthly grain doles to needy citizens placed an enormous stress on the system for importing and distributing grain at Rome. Understandably, more and more people got themselves enrolled on the list of recipients – by the mid-40s the number had swelled to well over 300,000 – while the law had made no special provisions for finding the funds to pay for the grain or increasing the capacity of ships to import and granaries to store it.[12] The inevitable result was a shortfall of imports, leading to food riots and the threat of famine. The whole public food supply system desperately needed a thorough overhaul by someone with the power and authority to take whatever financial and organizational measures were needed to make it work.

This was Pompeius's opening, because taking charge of major systemic problems and organizing things to work properly and efficiently was exactly what he was good at. In September of 57 a tribune, C. Messius, was found to propose a bill for Pompeius to take charge of Rome's grain supply with almost unlimited financial powers and *imperium maius* (supreme command) over the entire Mediterranean region, similar to his great piracy command of 67. This was too much for the Senate to stomach, however. Although in light of the food riots it was acknowledged that something must be done, the consuls sponsored a more modest proposal, according to which Pompeius would receive a five-year *curatio annonae* (oversight of the grain supply) with pro-consular power and the authority to appoint fifteen legates to assist him. Cicero spoke for the motion in the Senate, and it was approved and passed into law with Pompeius's public acquiescence, though it was generally known that he had wanted much more power.[13] Even so, Pompeius took up the task with his customary energy and efficiency, and soon had the supply of grain back on track. The financial strains on the state's income stream could not be easily overcome, however: that would require measures to limit the number of recipients, which in turn would require finding for those removed from the dole list an alternative means of living.

Another major issue that arose in 57 and spilled over into 56 was the question of Egypt. Although Caesar, as consul, had formally recognized Ptolemy XII 'Auletes' as king, the people of Alexandria did not agree and drove him out. The deposed king came to Rome to seek reinstatement by Roman force, a task which promised power and wealth to whatever Roman commander might be charged with seeing to it. Naturally, Pompeius would have liked that to be himself, but he faced rivals: in particular, the consul Lentulus Spinther campaigned to be given the job. Meanwhile Ptolemy Auletes was spreading or promising huge bribes to senators and magistrates who would back his reinstatement, and intriguing violently against ambassadors from the Alexandrians who sought to persuade the Senate of his unsuitability to rule. The infighting over this issue turned violent, as usual at Rome in this era, and by March of 56, supposedly in fear for his life, Pompeius summoned followers from his estates in Picenum as guards. In the end, the opposition of Clodius and the optimates prevailed. The Senate decreed that no military

intervention was to occur on behalf of Auletes, backed by an oracle found in the Sibylline Books.[14] Disappointed of his hopes, Pompeius nevertheless took money from the deposed king to persuade his associate Gabinius, who was governing Syria, to use his provincial troops – quite illegally – to restore the king to his throne.[15]

In early 56, then, Roman politics were as chaotic as ever. Violence in the streets between the gangs of Milo and Clodius continued to be a feature of Roman life. Clodius was curule aedile in this year, despite Milo's violent attempts to block his election, while Milo was a candidate for the praetorship in 55, a candidacy which Clodius naturally opposed with violence. Looking forward, Caesar found two major upcoming problems to concern him. After the year 55, his command of his provinces would run out, and unless that command was renewed he would have to return to Rome as a private citizen to face his enemies. In the consular elections for 55, the strongest candidate, who was regarded as an absolute shoo-in, was Caesar's enemy L. Domitius Ahenobarbus. As Cicero put it, Ahenobarbus had been destined for the consulship of 55 from the cradle;[16] it would take something special to prevent his election, even though he was a man who was intellectually mediocre and morally bankrupt, having no particular talent for anything, distinguished by nothing but wealth and a great name. All the same, as consul Ahenobarbus would be well situated to prevent any renewal of Caesar's command: he had made it clear in fact that he was determined to take over the governorship of Gaul himself.

Caesar knew quite well that on his own he could not be sure of preventing Ahenobarbus's consulship or defeating his aims should he become consul. He still needed the support of Pompeius and Crassus, and his problem was how to revive their unravelled alliance of 59. He was never the man to be stumped by a problem of that sort. His political agents at Rome, C. Oppius and L. Cornelius Balbus, were working hard, and the vast wealth that was filling his coffers thanks to his great victories in Gaul began to flow to Rome to buy the support of any senator or noble in need of money.

In March of 56 Cicero ranged himself openly with Caesar's opponents by attacking his command in a speech against Vatinius, who had sponsored the law granting Caesar that command. Vatinius's law was tantamount to 'murder of the ancestral constitution', said Cicero. Then in April, when the Senate was obliged to commit 10 million *denarii* to Pompeius's funds for the grain supply, Cicero broadened his fire by attacking Caesar's second agrarian law, which had robbed the state of its income from the Campanian land leases, he declared.[17] Unbeknown to Cicero, however, Caesar's counter-stroke was almost ready. Putting the finishing touches to his usual winter tour of his provinces Illyricum and Cisalpine Gaul, Caesar was in Ravenna just outside what was then Italy proper.

Senators began to trickle out of Rome and head northwards, chief among them Crassus, who had a long private interview with Caesar at Ravenna. The

two then moved on to the small town of Luca in Liguria, where more and more senators and magistrates joined them, including Clodius's oldest brother Appius Claudius who was nominally on his way to his province of Sardinia. On 11 April Pompeius also set out for Sardinia, to see to grain purchases there: Cicero had recently paid him a farewell visit, and then written to his brother Quintus – one of Pompeius's legates – to expect the great man to arrive in Sardinia soon. What Cicero did not know was that Pompeius's route would take him through Luca: there he held a long conference with Caesar and Crassus, in the course of which their alliance was renewed and the future of Rome's politics for the next six years determined. The conference was hardly a secret. Luca seemed more like Rome at this time, we are told, there were so many senators and magistrates in attendance, all looking to get in on the division of political spoils being made.[18] Their ignorance of the conference shows that Cicero and the optimates were not nearly as fully cognizant of political developments as they imagined.

The deal that Caesar brokered with Pompeius and Crassus was a masterpiece. The original alliance between them had broken down over perceived inequalities in power and influence. In the first place there was Crassus's continued jealousy of Pompeius, but more importantly Caesar's astounding and to most people, probably including Pompeius and Crassus, unexpected military achievements put him in a stronger position in relation to his allies. That was now to be remedied. In order to ensure their supremacy in the state, and their ability to carry out their plans securely, Pompeius and Crassus were themselves to assume the consulships for 55. Having been consuls together in 70, both were eligible for a second consulship, and it was a given that no one – not even the rich and well-connected Ahenobarbus – could prevail against them. If necessary, the elections could be postponed until the winter, when Caesar could send many of his soldiers to Rome on leave to vote for his allies and provide any needed military muscle.

As consuls, Pompeius and Crassus would sponsor a law extending Caesar's provincial command for five further years, while a loyal associate to be elected tribune would sponsor a law setting up equivalent five-year provincial commands, with suitable armies, for Pompeius and Crassus. Pompeius would hold the Spanish provinces with the right to raise an army of seven legions. Crassus, who was looking for military glory to raise him to the level of his allies, would receive Syria with a large army: his aim was to make war on and conquer the Parthians. All three commands were to be secured against senatorial interference by clauses forbidding discussion of naming replacement governors before 1 March of the year 50. To aid Crassus and Pompeius during their year in office as consuls, Vatinius was to be elected praetor, and C. Trebonius (one of Caesar's officers in Gaul) was to be tribune. And Cato, a candidate for the praetorship of 55, was to be prevented from gaining election, like his friend Ahenobarbus. There were further details of provincial assignments and projected elections to magistracies, but only two points are

particularly notable: it was agreed that in 49, when the mandated ten-year interval was past, Caesar would be elected to a second consulship for 48; and Cicero was to be obliged to end his criticisms and become a loyal spokesman for the alliance.

In the event, this deal proved easier to make than to enforce. Cicero was fairly easily brought to heel. He had been made utterly miserable by his exile from Rome, and could not face the prospect of more. His brother Quintus was detailed to make him see reason, and whatever exact threats were uttered or implied, the great orator bowed to the inevitable.[19] At the beginning of June the Senate took up the matter of the provinces to be assigned to the future consuls of 55, and it was proposed that Caesar be stripped of Cisalpine and Transalpine Gaul and the future consuls be granted these provinces. Cicero was obliged to speak against this motion. In his speech 'On the consular provinces', he argued that Caesar's activities in Gaul were so successful and so important to the future benefit and security of the state, that he should not be interrupted; instead other provinces called for new governors, Macedonia for example, where Piso's pro-consulship had lasted long enough. In subsequent years the dynasts made use of Cicero's eloquence on a number of occasions – for example, defending their partisans Gabinius and Vatinius against prosecutions – but for the most part he retreated from active politics to the composition of some of the great treatises that make him one of Rome's most important philosophers.

The elections for 55, however, turned out to be harder to manipulate. The consul Lentulus Marcellinus, who was to preside over the elections, refused to be intimidated and would not accept the candidacies of Pompeius and Crassus. Resort had to be made to obstruction and violence. By these means, the elections were postponed until after the year's end, when Marcellinus was no longer in office, and an *interrex* had to be selected to preside over the elections.[20] Caesar sent a thousand legionaries to vote for his allies, and all other candidates for the consulship withdrew in the face of intimidation. However, Cato would not permit his ally Ahenobarbus to do so: they had to be driven from the electoral assembly by violence.[21] Pompeius and Crassus were finally elected to their second consulships in January 55, and then themselves presided over election of the year's other magistrates, including Vatinius as praetor and excluding Cato.[22] As consuls, the two magnates duly passed the promised law extending Caesar's command, while the tribune C. Trebonius sponsored the laws setting up their provincial commands.[23]

Once again, the optimate traditionalists found themselves overridden, and were obliged to realize that real political power at Rome belonged to those who had military force to back them. They should not have been surprised by this. From the start, after all, it had been the optimates who had brought violence and force into Roman politics as the ultimate deciding factor. From this point on, the main question facing the optimates was how to find the force to stand up to the three dynasts. That would not be an easy

thing to do. Many of the notable optimate leaders had retired from active politics in dismay, disgust or simple tiredness. Their best orator, Hortensius, and best general, Lucullus, had for years avoided the Senate and spent their time at their luxurious villas, raising fancy fish and pursuing a life of ease and pleasure. Lucullus died in 57, rich to be sure, disappointed without doubt, but lucky on the whole not to have lived too much longer. Hortensius lived on a few more years but died before the decade was out. By the time Hortensius passed on, civil war was again looming, and even contemporaries like Cicero commented on Hortensius's good fortune in dying when he did. The 50s were the last decade of the old era of Roman history, the era of the predominance of the traditional nobility, and the signs of that fact were plain to see in the crudely violent and corrupt way politics were conducted.

But we should not let too exclusive a focus on politics deceive us into thinking that all was bad in this decade. The 50s were also one of the great decades in Roman culture, the decade in which Cicero began to adapt the Latin language and mindset brilliantly to Greek philosophy, in which Lucretius turned Epicurean philosophy into a great Latin epic poem, in which the glorious poetry of Catullus opened a window into the life of Roman high society. Catullus's poems reflect the lifestyle in Rome of the early to mid-50s of himself and his friends, young men of the Roman and Italian aristocracy. As aristocratic young Romans were supposed to do, they lived on the fringes of the political world, preparing for political careers when they reached their thirties, and meanwhile enjoying a life of indulgence. Love affairs, literary get-togethers, foreign travel in the entourages of governors, visits to country villas and complaints about lack of money and indebtedness were the standard fare of this lifestyle.

Catullus and his close friends and rivals – the orator and poet C. Licinius Calvus, the poet C. Helvius Cinna, the historian Cornelius Nepos, the rising young literary dabblers and men about town M. Caelius Rufus, C. Scribonius Curio, L. Gellius Poplicola, Q. Cornificius, C. Asinius Pollio, Vitruvius Mamurra, and many others – were truly the last generation of the Roman Republic, and a number of them did not survive the Republic's ending. All were, as a matter of course, interested in politics to some degree. Whereas the gilded youth of the mid-60s tended to gravitate towards the fascinating, scandalous and controversial figure of Catilina – no doubt as a natural reaction against the fusty old leaders of the governing optimate group of the time (Catulus, Metellus Pius, C. Piso) – in the early to mid-50s it was fashionable to oppose Pompeius, Crassus and Caesar, who represented the 'powers that be' of that time. Thus Calvus was the orator who prosecuted Caesar's staunch supporter and ally Vatinius, Caelius and Curio gravitated towards Cicero and attacked the 'three-headed monster' that ruled Rome, and a number of Catullus's poems attacked Caesar and/or Pompeius, as well as various supporters of the three dynasts like Vatinius or Q. Arrius.

It was 'cool' to oppose the powerful men who dominated Roman political life, and the lack of any Roman standards about slander or libel permitted opposition to take fairly extreme forms, in words at least. Caesar noted that some of Catullus's poems, alleging outrageous sexual behaviour and corruption, had put a permanent stain on his reputation, but he did not take such attacks too seriously. Catullus's father, one of the leading men of the Latin colony Verona in Cisalpine Gaul, was a personal friend, and Caesar did not allow the son's literary assaults to affect that friendship. And when the young Catullus was induced to apologize for his libels, Caesar forgave him at once and amicably invited him to dinner the same day.[24] He always had an appreciation of talent, and Catullus was clearly the best of the 'younger poets' (*neoteri*) who were the 'new wave' of Latin poetry.

One of the highlights of the year 55 was the dedication of great building projects in the heart of Rome, on which Pompeius had been lavishing some of the vast wealth he had acquired in the east. Caesar's heir, the emperor Augustus, was later to boast that he found Rome a city of wood and brick, and left it a city of marble, but that was not strictly true. The beginnings of turning Rome into a city with the sort of grand marble architecture appropriate to its standing as capital of a great empire occurred in the 50s, and Pompeius and Caesar were responsible. Pompeius had been underwriting, as memorials of his great victories and achievements, the creation of a vast and impressive complex in the Campus Martius, outside the *pomerium* but very much in the centre of urban Rome. A grand theatre, the first permanent stone theatre to grace Rome, was the most splendid part of the complex, its outline still visible in the street pattern of modern Rome. Attached to it was a magnificent portico with meeting rooms and shops, and a temple of Venus Victrix – Venus the bringer of victory – completed the whole with an appropriate tribute to the divine.[25]

From their dedication these buildings immediately became prominent centres of social and political life: in one of his poems Catullus writes of searching for a friend and dodging the prostitutes in Pompeius's portico;[26] and the meeting rooms began to be used by the Senate, the most famous such meeting being the one at which Caesar was assassinated in 44. Caesar was not to be outdone by Pompeius in this, as in any other respect. His victories in Gaul were making him too enormously wealthy, and it was understood that a general's acquired wealth should be spent in part on the public good.

In the later 50s, Caesar initiated three great building projects in Rome, which were to constitute the visible memorials of his greatness. He noted that the Forum Romanum, which had been the central town square and public meeting place of Rome since the earliest days of the city, was becoming inadequate to the growing city's needs. He began to buy up the land and buildings adjacent to the Forum to the north-east, to construct a new additional Forum and thereby relieve some of the pressure on the old Forum. The Forum Julium was to have as its centrepiece a temple to Venus too: Venus Genetrix

(the 'begetter'), that is Venus specifically as ancestress, through her son Aeneas, of the Roman people, but especially of the Julian *gens*. *Aeneadum genetrix, hominum divomque voluptas* – 'ancestress of the sons of Aeneas, delight of gods and men' – as the great poet Lucretius called Venus at this very time in the opening line of his epic poem 'On the nature of things'. Not content with this, Caesar decided to give the political heart of Rome, the space where the *comitia centuriata* met each year to elect the highest magistrates for the following year, a monumental structure: the *Saepta Julia* providing Rome's electors a far more relaxing, comfortable and organized arena in which to vote, and above all wait for their turn to vote. Finally, in the Forum Romanum itself, he had the old and inadequate Basilica Sempronia on the Forum's north-west side torn down, and constructed in its place a grand new building – the Basilica Julia – to provide Roman citizens crowding the Forum on public and private business with some protection from the weather, and a space for meetings, shopping and the like.[27]

Through these vast and expensive building projects – the purchase of land for the Forum Julium alone reportedly cost over 100,000,000 sesterces – the booty of Gaul flowed into Rome to enrich Rome's citizens and the Roman economy, and of course to enhance Caesar's status and popularity.[28] All the same, the elections that summer of magistrates for 54 demonstrated how incomplete the dynasts' control of political life still was. By concerted efforts and violence, they had prevented L. Ahenobarbus attaining the consulship in 55; they could not prevent him being elected consul for 54, with Clodius's brother Appius Claudius as his colleague, nor could they prevent Cato from attaining the praetorship.[29] Ancestry, connections, and reputation still counted for much at Rome, especially in the *comitia centuriata*.

A remarkable scene occurred late in the year when Crassus, not waiting for the end of his consulship or the usual senatorial decrees regarding funding, legates and the like, set off for his governorship of Syria in November. It was common knowledge that he intended to find an excuse to engage in war with the Parthians, and there were many at Rome who opposed this. The Roman Senate and people were supposed to decide on and declare wars, not provincial governors, and there was no immediately apparent threat to Rome's eastern provinces from the Parthians at this time. Crassus was bent on personal glory and power, to match that won by his allies Pompeius and Caesar. Two tribunes, consequently, strongly criticized Crassus's warlike preparations, and one of them, C. Ateius Capito, went so far as to attend Crassus's departure from Rome with formal curses and execrations.[30] This was again something new in Roman politics. It was certainly easy and fair to criticize Crassus's glory seeking, and the way he and his allies overrode the traditional mechanisms for deciding important issues of foreign and military policy. But for a Roman magistrate – a tribune of the people whose proper duty was to defend the interests of the Roman populace – to solemnly call on the gods to curse the governorship of a duly appointed official of the Roman

people, and thereby inevitably also to call down these curses on the army which said governor would lead into battle, was a new low in political partisanship, a new depth to which Roman politics sank, and it is not surprising to see once again an optimate dragging the political process down in this way.

While Crassus went off to war – a war that was to prove disastrous, of course – Pompeius did quite the opposite. Although he was invested with governorship of both Spanish provinces for a period of five years, he did not in fact leave Rome at all. He moved outside the sacred *pomerium*, but remained in Italy, mostly around the outskirts of Rome, keeping an eye on the political process, governing his provinces and armies through legates, and excusing this by the duties of his *curatio annonae* which still had several years to run. Political life in the city remained violent and scandal ridden. Pompeius's ally Gabinius was prosecuted for extortion, and despite Pompeius's efforts on his behalf, found guilty and forced to go into exile. Caesar gave him refuge. On the other hand, M. Caelius was prosecuted for attempted murder of the notorious Clodia, Clodius's scandalous sister, and defended by Cicero was found not guilty. Cicero's speech in Caelius's defence sheds a lurid light on society life of this era, confirming and filling out many elements of Catullus's picture in his poetry.

The great scandal of the year, though, involved the consuls and the competition for election to the consulships of 53, and revealed just how seriously one should take the traditionalist and high moral stance taken by Cato's close friend and ally Ahenobarbus: not at all! There were four leading candidates for the consulship of 53: C. Memmius and Cn. Domitius Calvinus, who had both joined Cato and his set in opposing Caesar during his consulship in 59, and M. Valerius Messalla Rufus and M. Aemilius Scaurus. Memmius, who was probably the meanly egotistical governor under whom Catullus served in Bithynia and whom he famously lampooned, had moved away from his former optimate sympathies and now purportedly enjoyed the backing of both Caesar and Pompeius. Scaurus's candidacy was also favoured by Pompeius. Memmius and Calvinus made an electoral compact which involved outrageous bribery and included the consuls Ahenobarbus and Appius Claudius. Together they undertook, in the first place, to pay whichever century was drawn to vote first at the elections a collective bribe of 10,000,000 sesterces. The vote of the first century was regarded by Romans, with a certain superstitious awe, as an omen to be followed by the remaining centuries. Second, they bribed the sitting consuls to aid their election by offering either to guarantee to each the governorship of whatever province they desired, or – should they fail to deliver that – the sum of 3,000,000 sesterces each. So far so good, and they might all have gotten away with it but that Memmius, apparently persuaded by Pompeius, who did not want Calvinus to become consul, read out the document setting out this bribery agreement to the Senate. They had gone so far as to create a formal contract, signed and sealed by both candidates and both of the consuls.[31]

Ahenobarbus, though he lacked the integrity not to get involved in such blatantly corrupt behaviour, was at least deeply humiliated by its public disclosure, and went into seclusion for a while. Memmius's political career was over. Appius Claudius, however, shrugged the whole matter off: he was a Claudius, and as such was above being touched by a mere bit of scandal. Calvinus likewise blustered and denied and brazened his way through the business. As a result of this extraordinary scandal, the elections were put off amidst scenes of violence and obstruction. Attempts to prosecute the candidates involved in this bribery were vetoed by the tribune Terentius. Another tribune, Q. Mucius Scaevola, responded by obstructing the holding of elections by *obnuntiatio* (observing the heavens for omens) throughout the remainder of the year, so that the year 53 opened without consuls.[32]

Meanwhile, in August of 54 the Roman state suffered a death which perhaps more than any other contributed to the decline into civil war. Julia, Caesar's daughter and Pompeius's wife, died in childbirth, and the baby son she bore died a few days afterwards. It seems that Pompeius returned home from one of the all too usual scenes of violence in the Campus Martius with his toga splattered with blood, and the sight shocked Julia – who assumed that Pompeius was wounded – into going into premature labour. Both father and husband deeply mourned the young woman whose death removed the most solid link between them; but they did not mourn more deeply than the common people of Rome. With that occasionally keen insight of the crowd, the people recognized that in Julia a strong bastion against discord between the two most powerful men of Rome, and a prop therefore of their own peaceful life, had been removed. As Julia's funeral procession wound through the streets of Rome towards Pompeius's suburban estate, where he planned to bury her, the urban crowd hijacked the body and gave Julia a spontaneous public funeral in the Campus Martius. When Caesar learned of the public honour accorded his beloved daughter, he was deeply moved and promised to reward the people with splendid funeral games to be held in Julia's name.[33]

Since there were no consuls in January of 53, and little prospect of being able to elect any, the resultant political power vacuum naturally encouraged rumour and speculation: the story was rife that Pompeius wanted a dictatorship. Caesar was preoccupied with events in Gaul, which was moving into open 'rebellion' against Roman domination, and so not able to offer serious resistance. That was left to Cato and the optimates, who feared that such a dictatorship would be the last step towards personal autocracy for Pompeius. Throughout the first half of 53, Cato unceasingly blocked all attempts to grant Pompeius any new power. He was helped, in the end, by Pompeius himself. The great man did not like to be seen openly pressing for power and command, he liked to maintain an image of graciously accepting the powers bestowed on him freely by the people. Consequently, he unwarily responded to the constant speculation about a dictatorship that it was no wish of his to be made dictator, and Cato promptly seized on this statement, praised

Pompeius loudly for his proper constitutional restraint, and urged him to exert his authority without any special new powers, to settle the crisis and bring about elections. Thus elections were finally held in July, at which Domitius Calvinus and Messalla Rufus became consuls for the remainder of the year.[34]

One of the first pieces of business confronting the new consuls was to take thought for the elections for 52. But here again the now customary violence and obstructiveness of Roman political life intervened. Among the candidates for high office in 52 were none other than the deadly enemies Clodius and Milo: Clodius was seeking the praetorship, and Milo the consulship, and neither wished to have their year of office marred by the interference of the other holding an important magistracy. Once again, the streets were made hideous by the bloody warfare between the thugs of these two gang leaders.[35] Although Clodius had receded into the background a little in 55 and 54, his gangs had continued to play a role in Roman life, and more importantly the method of influencing events by violence and intimidation that he had pioneered had become standard practice. In that sense, his personality and example overshadowed these years of the mid-50s, and demonstrated just how little there was left of the notion of 'sound, conservative governance' for which the optimates claimed to stand. For Cato and the optimates had no answer to Clodius and his methods, except to rely on the likes of Milo to employ the same methods against him. And Milo was certainly no better than Clodius. The open warfare between these two prevented elections from being held through the remainder of 53, so that the year 52 once again began without magistrates.

Meanwhile, in the summer of 53 a great disaster had occurred which removed the last restraining link between Caesar and Pompeius. Crassus and his army had been cut off and surrounded at Carrhae in northern Mesopotamia by a Parthian army vastly superior in cavalry. Unable to fight his way out or find supplies for his men, thanks to the more mobile bands of Parthian cavalry that harassed his soldiers' every movement away from their camp, Crassus found himself obliged to attempt to negotiate an exit from his ill-advised invasion of the Parthians' realm. At the resulting parley, he and his main officers were abruptly killed, and his leaderless army was then destroyed. Only a small handful of men, led by Crassus's indomitable quaestor C. Cassius Longinus (Caesar's later assassin) managed to fight their way out and back to safety in Syria. Crassus's severed head was carried to the Parthian capital of Ctesiphon, near modern Baghdad, where it arrived just in time to serve as a gruesome stage prop in a performance of Euripides' great play *The Bacchae*, which was being staged for the king's amusement in his palace. Cassius hastily organized a defence of the province of Syria, and prevented a worse disaster in the Roman east, but the effect of Crassus's disappearance from the scene had an incalculable effect at Rome and in Roman politics.[36]

For all his seniority, experience and wealth, Crassus had been from the start the lesser ally in the great compact of the three dynasts. Caesar's dynamism and achievements as consul and in Gaul, and the reputation and authority Pompeius held as Rome's greatest conqueror, overshadowed him. But even so, his wealth and contacts gave him strength, and he was able to act as a brake on any serious conflict between his two allies, since by joining one or the other he could give that one the upper hand. In general, because of his jealousy of his long-time rival Pompeius, he tended to side more with Caesar against the stronger Pompeius. This role as a brake or buffer between the two greatest leaders of Rome was only enhanced by the power he gained as governor of Syria and commander of a great army. Now that he and his army were gone, Caesar and Pompeius were left as the two great military leaders of the Roman world, with only Cato and his optimate faction in the Senate as a rival nexus of power. If frictions between Caesar and Pompeius were to lead to a breakdown in relations between them, with Julia and Crassus gone, would or could Cato and the optimates stand between them as effective mediators and agents for a peaceful solution?

The answer to that question came in the political events of the closing years of the 50s. As mentioned above, January of 52 opened without any senior magistrates having been elected to govern Rome. Recourse had to be had to appointing *interreges*, the temporary five-day officials drawn from the patrician nobles and empowered only to conduct elections; but a tribune vetoed even that. Violence continued between the gangs of Clodius and Milo, and reached a crescendo on 18 January. Clodius, accompanied by a (for him) relatively small entourage, happened to set out down the Via Appia at the exact same time that Milo, accompanied by a large gang of followers, was approaching Rome along that road. Initially, the two leaders and their gangs passed each other with no more than threatening looks; but at the tail of Milo's entourage were two ex-gladiators who took it upon themselves to attack one of Clodius's followers. That led to a general melee, in the course of which Clodius himself was wounded. He was carried out of the fight into a roadside inn for treatment, but when Milo learned that Clodius was hurt, he decided to end the rivalry between them once and for all. Accompanied by armed men, he burst into the inn, hunted Clodius out, and murdered him. Then he gathered his entourage and travelled on down the Via Appia as if nothing untoward had happened.[37]

Clodius's lifeless body was carried to Rome and put on display in the Forum overnight. As word spread through the city that he was dead, a crowd gathered: members of his gangs, other friends and supporters, and also large numbers of indigent citizens who remembered Clodius gratefully for having made the state grain hand-outs free. Before long, the mood of the crowd turned ugly, and it began to riot. Clodius's body was taken to the Senate meeting house at the north-east end of the Forum, the Curia Hostilia: the benches on which senators sat were heaped up around the body, and set

ablaze, turning the Curia into Clodius's funeral pyre. Violence spread out throughout the city. At an emergency meeting on the 19 January, the Senate finally appointed an *interrex* and passed the ultimate decree, entrusting the *interrex*, the tribunes and the pro-consul Pompeius with taking measures to see to the safety of the state.

Unrest nevertheless continued, prompting the Senate to order Pompeius to conduct a general levy of troops throughout Italy, all men of military age being instructed to register for service. Pompeius did gather troops, but remained outside the *pomerium* watching events, while gang warfare continued in the city, preventing elections from being held.[38] Everyone knew that Pompeius wanted an extraordinary command, that he would like to be appointed dictator in fact. It seemed that there was really no alternative to granting him his wish. Caesar had come down to Ravenna in north Italy, and prompted his agents at Rome to suggest a joint consulship of himself and Pompeius to settle the disorders, but that was wishful thinking.[39] Neither Pompeius nor the optimates would agree to it, and in any case Caesar would soon be urgently needed in Gaul, where Vercingetorix's great uprising was about to break out.

Still Pompeius hesitated: he did not wish to seize power, but to accept it when it was offered to him. Cato and the optimates still held out against offering the dictatorship, and finally Cato proposed a compromise that radically realigned Roman politics. He proposed that Pompeius be offered the consulship without a colleague in order to overcome the emergency situation. In that way, Pompeius would indeed hold sole and supreme power in Rome, but the *imperium* of the consul was inherently bounded by legal limitations even without a balancing colleague, whereas the dictator's power was untrammeled.[40] Hence the compromise Cato offered; but one must note how peculiar and unconventional that compromise was. The consulship was an inherently collegial office. The very word *consul* was etymologically rooted in the concept of joint action, as originally the consuls had been *praetores consules* – consulting leaders.

By Cato's offer of this unique and utterly unconventional office, and Pompeius's acceptance of it, a new political alliance was initiated between Pompeius and the optimates, which fundamentally undermined Pompeius's alliance with Caesar. That alliance immediately became in fact a thing of the past, because the optimates from the start used their new alliance with Pompeius to try to undermine and bring down Caesar. Cato had long ago identified Caesar as the real enemy of the traditional order for which the optimates stood, and saw in his new alliance with Pompeius a chance at last to find the military force necessary to crush Caesar and the reformist political movement he led. Caesar was, of course, alive to this danger. He tried to revive his alliance with Pompeius by proposing new marriage ties between them: he would divorce Calpurnia and marry a daughter of Pompeius, and would in turn give his grand-niece Octavia in marriage to Pompeius, to

replace Julia. Pompeius rejected both marriage proposals, making it clear that alliance with Caesar was no longer a part of his plans.[41]

It is worth reflecting briefly on the reasons for and meaning of this new political alignment. The hard-line optimate circle around Cato had originated in the late 60s in opposition to Pompeius. It was he who was seen as the great threat to the traditional governing system of the old nobility, who was seen as a leader aiming at personal dominance and autocracy. Several of the key members of Cato's circle bore personal grudges against Pompeius to reinforce their political enmity. Cato himself, and his devoted young nephew Brutus, hated Pompeius for having killed Cato's brother-in-law and Brutus's father M. Junius Brutus in the course of suppressing Lepidus's rebellion in 78. L. Domitius Ahenobarbus hated Pompeius for the death of his older brother Cn. Domitius Ahenobarbus, executed by Pompeius in the course of overcoming the remnants of the Cinnan faction in Africa in 80. It was certainly peculiar and unexpected, therefore, for these men now to align themselves with Pompeius against Caesar. Caesar very understandably complained that Pompeius should have allied against him with the very men who had originally been his (Pompeius's) enemies, and become Caesar's enemies precisely because of his alliance with Pompeius![42]

Why did Cato and his circle take this step then, overcoming their rooted grudges against Pompeius in order to find an ally against Caesar? There was, in their estimation, something so peculiarly dangerous about Caesar, something that threatened their values and beliefs so radically, that even alliance with a man they had deeply personal reasons for hating, a man whose entire political and military career had undermined their view of how the governing system should function, was acceptable if it gave them a chance to bring Caesar down. Evaluations of Caesar that see him merely as a ruthless egotist, an aristocrat who was simply more effective at the game of power politics than his rivals, an individual leader of great dynamism and ability who sought nothing more than his own power and *dignitas*, fail to explain this fact. Such evaluations make Caesar essentially the same kind of leader as Pompeius and Crassus, and do not at all enable us to understand why Caesar was the great threat to the traditional order who had to be broken at all costs, and not Pompeius. What does provide the explanation is an understanding, as I have shown in earlier chapters, that Caesar was much more than just a power-hungry egotist. It is Caesar the *popularis* faction leader, the promoter of a reform movement that sought to bring about major changes in the traditional governing system, that explains the enmity of Cato and his circle, an enmity so fundamental that their personal grudges against Pompeius were unimportant by comparison.

Once elected to his sole consulship, Pompeius ended the political crisis at Rome with the greatest ease, indicating that he could have done so at any time had he wished to. Soldiers were brought in to patrol the streets, ending the gang violence. Gang leaders were arrested on charges of public violence,

including Milo, and peace returned to the centre of Rome. Pompeius carried laws concerning bribery and violence, the two elements of Roman political life that had contributed most to the breakdown of the recent years. The main element of his legislation involved improved enforcement: court procedure was tightened up and speeded up in a variety of ways. The preliminary procedures leading to prosecution were streamlined, the time allotted to speeches was limited, and penalties were increased. The bribery law was explicitly backward looking, enabling wrongful actions as far back as 70 to be prosecuted.

A stream of prosecutions resulted under these new Pompeian laws, the most famous being that of Milo under the *Lex de vi*, the charge being of course the murder of Clodius. To ensure security for the court proceedings, soldiers ringed the court, creating an air of intimidation. Since Pompeius commanded the soldiers, the jurors were encouraged to render the verdicts he desired.[43] Despite the pleas of some of his new optimate associates, and Cicero's attempt at mounting a defence, Milo was inexorably found guilty and sent into exile. Metellus Scipio, on the other hand, who had been one of the consular candidates along with Milo and played a role in the violence that had marred the electoral campaign, though charged *de vi*, was found not guilty at Pompeius's personal intercession. Pompeius married his daughter Cornelia, and then had Metellus Scipio elected his colleague as consul for the remaining five months of the year.[44] Although many of those exiled by Pompeius's courts, like Milo, were certainly guilty as charged, the case of Metellus Scipio made it clear that favouritism still reigned, rather than strict justice. Many of these exiles of Pompeius's courts were given refuge by Caesar in Cisalpine Gaul.[45]

Given this new political alignment, the question of Caesar's future loomed large. Pompeius was not yet prepared for a total break with Caesar. He allowed the ten tribunes to pass a law explicitly protecting Caesar's right to stand for the consulship *in absentia* once the ten-year interval was past, that is to say, for the consulship of 48. This was important to Caesar since, if he left his provincial command and appeared in Rome as a candidate, he would at once be exposed to prosecution by his enemies for the acts of his consulship. Under Pompeius's new court procedures, Caesar had no confidence of getting a fair trial, let alone winning an acquittal. When Pompeius himself later in the year passed a law obliging candidates for office to appear to announce their candidacy in person, and it was pointed out that this undercut the privilege just granted to Caesar, he pretended to have overlooked that aspect and went to the archive to write in a rider by hand exempting Caesar. Whether such a rider could have any legal force was questionable, to say the least, and Caesar's agents were not convinced.[46]

In addition, Pompeius introduced a law imposing a five-year gap between holding a magistracy and governing a province. This was a good idea to be sure, because the blatant extortion in the provinces was fuelled by the governors' need to recoup the expenses of winning elections, and no legislation had

thus far succeeded in curbing electoral spending. It could be hoped that the realization that they would have to wait five years before being able to try recouping their expenditures, would oblige candidates for office to moderate their spending at last. The law required the state to call on every available ex-magistrate who had never yet governed a province to do so, to cover the four-year gap before the magistrates of 52 would be eligible. The reluctant Bibulus and Cicero thus found themselves pressed into service, obliged to go out and govern Syria and Cilicia respectively, in 51.[47] Pompeius himself was of course immune to this rule: his governorship of the Spanish provinces was extended for five more years with immediate effect, meaning that when Caesar's command of the Gauls was over, Pompeius would still have years of power left to him.[48] The breach was becoming more obvious.

The elections for the year 51 were conducted without violence or bribery for the first time in many years. The consulships were won by men with impeccable noble lineages – the patrician jurist Servius Sulpicius Rufus and the plebeian noble M. Claudius Marcellus. The same was true of the elections for 50, which returned the patrician L. Aemilius Paullus and the plebeian noble C. Claudius Marcellus; and of those for 49, in which L. Cornelius Lentulus Crus and C. Claudius Marcellus, brother of the consul of 51 and cousin of the like named consul of 50, were elected. An air of calm and normalcy pervaded the electoral atmosphere, and Roman politics in general, such that many modern historians have been convinced by it to believe that the Roman governing system had righted itself and that all was as it should be. In fact this air of normalcy was deceptive. A genuine normality would not have needed to be enforced by an all powerful pro-consul (Pompeius) lurking around the fringes of the city, with soldiers ready to intervene at a moment's notice. Indeed, a truly free and normal electoral process could hardly have produced such a resoundingly small roll-call of traditional noble victors, making it look as if the clock had somehow been turned back a century or so. The Roman electorate had been enormously expanded, the Senate had been enormously expanded, and there were numerous Italian *domi nobiles* who sought access to the highest steps of the Roman *cursus honorum.* All of this is in great part what the conflicts of the past generations had been about: the Social War, the civil war between the Cinnans and the Sullans, the violent electoral politics of the 60s and 50s.

For the Roman nobility, protected by Pompeius, to imagine they could now act as if the past 50 years had simply not happened, and that the same old narrow little elite circle of families could go on dominating Rome, was not a 'return to normalcy': it was the height of blindness and irresponsibility. The optimates had been pushing such 'returns to normalcy' after periods of crisis for several generations now, and in each case they had been merely tamping down the lid on a pressure cooker which blew up with greater violence the next time the pressure built up sufficiently. How could anyone seriously have imagined this time would be any different? It seems

clear, from their confrontational policy, that Cato and his optimate associates had no such belief.

It was also clear to the Italians, to the *Transpadani,* and to all the underprivileged and disaffected in Roman society and in the empire, that they could look for no meaningful changes or reforms in the traditional governing system from Pompeius and his new allies. In case they retained any doubts, the consul M. Marcellus in 51 put them to rest by having a magistrate from Caesar's Latin colony at Novum Comum publicly flogged, merely to emphasize that the *Transpadani* were not Roman citizens and should not expect to become Roman citizens if the optimates could prevent it.[49] This in contrast to Caesar's policy of promising them Roman citizenship and treating them as if they already had it. It might have been thought that, since they were moving towards a clear break in relations with Caesar, the optimates should have wanted to cultivate possible allies rather than alienating them, but such thoughts were contrary to their rigidly traditional outlook.

Early in the year 51, the consul M. Claudius Marcellus sounded the optimates' battle cry by raising the question of Caesar's provincial command, and proposing that he be stripped of it and his provinces allotted to new governors. In that the *Lex Licinia Pompeia* of 55 had explicitly forbidden discussion of Caesar's command before 1 March of 50, this was clearly illegitimate; and everyone must have understood that Caesar would not accept this diminution of his legal command without a fight. Marcellus's colleague Servius Sulpicius opposed him, and Pompeius let it be known that he did not want Caesar's command discussed at present, and so the matter was dropped.[50] Caesar recognized, however, that the fight to break his power was on, and that he would need strong backing in Rome in the year 50 to maintain his position unscathed. He managed to win the support of the consul L. Aemilius Paullus, who was seeking to refurbish the great monument in the heart of the Forum built by his most famous ancestor – the Basilica Aemilia built by the censor M. Aemilius Lepidus in 189 – by offering to lend him the money to do so. More importantly, however, he gained the support of the young C. Scribonius Curio, who had been elected tribune for 50. Curio was regarded as the most brilliant of the younger set, and had for years been an overt opponent of Caesar and Pompeius. Times were changing however: allied to Pompeius, the optimates now once again represented the 'powers that be', and Caesar was the outsider. More and more of the younger set began to drift towards support of Caesar in these years of the late 50s: Helvius Cinna, Q. Cornificius and Asinius Pollio, to name a few. Curio's change in sympathies was aided by a huge bribe from Caesar, which helped him settle some enormous debts; and he proved to be a brilliant investment.[51]

Curio's tactic as tribune was to continue to criticize Caesar, and attack his past 'crimes', as before, but to take care to include Pompeius in his field of fire. He let it be known that he held Pompeius just as responsible as Caesar for all that had gone wrong at Rome since 59, and that he regarded Pompeius's

command and army to be as much of a threat to the free governance of Rome as Caesar's. When the consul C. Marcellus raised the question of sending successors to take charge of Caesar's provinces, Curio agreed but insisted that for the good of the state, Pompeius must give up his provinces too. He won by this stance great popularity, showing that the people recognized the threat of civil war clearly, and knew that it did not come merely from the position held by one side. If it were up to the people, both Pompeius and Caesar would have relinquished the huge forces which they commanded, and which threatened the stability of the Roman order. The result was a stalemate in the Senate, with Marcellus and the optimates insisting that a decision must be reached about Caesar's provinces in isolation, and Curio insisting that he would permit such a decision only in the context of a bi-lateral disarming.[52]

Meanwhile, an apparent crisis loomed in the east, in the aftermath of Crassus's disaster. Crassus's quaestor C. Cassius had successfully defended Syria against initial Parthian assaults, which were neither very determined nor in overwhelming force. It now seemed that a more serious Parthian counter-attack was in the offing, and Cicero and Bibulus – who as governors of Cilicia and Syria would have to confront any such attack – wrote to express their concern. The Senate decided to send two extra legions to reinforce the garrison of Syria: Caesar and Pompeius were each asked to contribute a legion, and agreed. But Pompeius designated as his legion to be contributed, the legion that he had lent to Caesar in 53, so that in the event Caesar had to give up two of his legions. He spoke to the men personally, praising their service highly and thanking them for their efforts, and gave them each an extra donative of 250 *denarii* before sending them off; and replaced them by recruiting new troops in Cisalpine Gaul.[53]

In the event, the Parthian threat did not materialize, and the two legions never left Italy, being detained there by Pompeius. Cicero did undertake some minor warfare in the Cilician highlands, for which he was saluted by his troops as *imperator* and received, with Caesar's backing, a vote of thanksgiving from the Senate. Arguably more significant in terms of what it reveals about Roman politics was a minor issue of internal policing. Along with Cilicia, Cicero also governed Cyprus, and he received a request to provide troops to help force the Council of Cyprian Salamis repay a debt to Roman financiers. When Cicero looked into the matter, he found that the financiers were trying to enforce an illegal interest rate of 48 per cent, and that the man who was actually behind the loan was young M. Brutus, Cato's nephew – despite the fact that it was illegal for senators to make such loans.[54] Brutus had a reputation as one of the most upright, honest and promising of the next generation of optimates. Finding him involved in such illegal 'loan sharking', which is what this matter amounts to, illustrates very nicely what the provincials could look forward to from even the best of the optimates – Cato himself being always an honourable exception. The problem was that he was an exception, a unique one.

In the face of Curio's obstruction, the consul Marcellus found it impossible to press forward with the issue of replacing Caesar. At the summer elections, besides the selection of another C. Marcellus and Lentulus Crus as consuls, censors were also appointed: Caesar's father-in-law L. Piso Caesoninus and Appius Claudius Pulcher. They were an ill-assorted pair to be overseeing Roman morals, which was one of the traditional roles of the censors: Piso was an avowed Epicurean, and Appius Claudius had been a principal in the infamous bribery scandal of 54. That did not prevent Claudius from taking a high moral tone as censor, and ejecting a number of men from the Senate as unworthy. It can be imagined with what bitterness the senators so treated resented this, coming from a man of Appius Claudius's stained reputation. Not surprisingly, the majority of those singled out for censure, such as the future historian Sallustius Crispus, were supporters of Caesar and the 'popular' movement, Piso proving too uninterested to intervene to help them. Only when Appius tried to censure Curio, did Piso – with the aid of the consul Paullus – bestir himself.[55]

It may well be at this time that Sallustius composed and sent to Caesar a document critiquing the present governing system and arguing that the stranglehold of the old, narrow nobility on power must be broken, the influence of money in the political process must be reduced, new citizens must be enrolled, and calling on Caesar to take the necessary steps. These are precisely key policy elements in the long-time *popularis* or (as I have called it) Cinnan outlook or movement, of which this document confirms that Caesar was seen as the leader.[56] The situation more and more seemed to be moving towards a crisis, and Curio's popularity for seeming to offer the one sure way out rose. This culminated finally late in the year when C. Marcellus initiated a Senate debate with the aim of censuring Curio, only for the brilliant young tribune to take charge of the meeting and succeed in bringing about a vote on the proposal that both Pompeius and Caesar should lay down their commands. The outcome was 370 senators voting for this proposal, and only 22 against, illustrating what a tiny minority the hard line optimates really were in the Senate, when it came right down to it. Curio was ecstatically cheered for this by the urban crowd who had gathered around the Senate meeting place to hear the debate, and who optimistically saw in this vote a real hope of peace.[57] That was a mistaken view.

Marcellus and the rest of the optimates were merely infuriated at their discomfiture by this vote, and more determined than ever to force a crisis. They had spread rumours that Caesar was already moving his veteran legions to the border of Italy, ready to invade. This was completely untrue since in fact Caesar's legions were in winter quarters in Gaul and only one was in Cisalpine Gaul.[58] On the other hand, they were encouraged by the report spread by the younger Appius Claudius, nephew of the censor, who had been sent to bring Caesar's two legions earmarked for Syria to Italy, that Caesar's veterans were disaffected and unwilling to fight for Caesar. This equally

untrue report seemed to be confirmed by the fact that Caesar's most trusted lieutenant, Titus Labienus, was in negotiations with Pompeius to switch sides, feeling that Caesar did not sufficiently appreciate him, and that he was in fact the great general most responsible for the victories in Gaul, not Caesar. When Labienus did actually desert Caesar's side and join Pompeius, Caesar made a point of sending all of his baggage and goods after him, taking the moral high ground as ever and spreading the notion that Labienus would not be missed; but Labienus's disparagements of Caesar and his army were widely (and understandably) believed in optimate circles.[59]

All of this made the optimates disinclined to any compromise. The consul Marcellus, accompanied by the consuls designate for 49, went to see Pompeius early in December, and on his own authority and without senatorial backing, invested Pompeius with emergency powers and called on him to save the state, alleging (untruthfully) that Caesar was marching on Rome. Pompeius accepted the charge, and this is at bottom the beginning of the civil war between Pompeius and the optimates on one side, and Caesar and the reformists on the other.[60]

There remained some hope, in the following weeks, that it might be possible to find a way to pull back from the brink, and certainly Caesar strained every nerve to bring that about, making several compromise suggestions and proposals. But this decision was a decision for civil war, a decision taken in the teeth of the Senate's unwillingness to agree and of the people's desire for compromise, and at no point did Pompeius and the optimates draw back from this illegal decision. Instead they enforced it on the rest of the Senate and rejected every offer or suggestion of compromise. They left Caesar and his supporters only two choices: accept defeat at once, or fight.

It is of interest at this point to consider Cicero, supporter of the traditional governing system, friend and admirer of Pompeius, and inclined to side with the optimates on most matters. He returned to Italy in December of 50, after a notably honest and upright governance of Cilicia, to find the state moving inexorably towards civil war. Meeting Pompeius near Capua on 10 December, where Pompeius was taking charge of the two legions sent by Caesar, he was told that civil war was inevitable. He did not accept that, and he did not range himself alongside Pompeius and the optimates (whom he admired and liked) nor against Caesar (of whom he deeply disapproved); rather, he strove to mediate, to find a compromise.[61]

It is fair to see in Cicero's attitude, as in the Senate vote elicited by Curio, an indictment of the decisions taken at this time by the optimates and Pompeius. There was no need for war; the state would not, in the judgment of most senators and Romans, be irreparably harmed by allowing Caesar to remain in Gaul for another year, and take up a second consulship in 48. The war was being pushed by a partisan few, for narrow partisan reasons. But the views of men like Cicero were not permitted to prevail. On 10 December Curio left Rome, at the close of his tribunate, and travelled to meet Caesar at

Ravenna and warn him that war was inevitable. He left the newly elected tribunes M. Antonius and Q. Cassius to look after Caesar's interests in Rome, but they lacked Curio's political adroitness. Caesar moved his legion in Cisalpine Gaul to Ravenna, near to the border with Italy proper, and sent instructions for two more veteran legions to cross the Alps into Cisalpine Gaul, while three others were to move to southern Gaul to guard the border with Spain in case Pompeius's legions there should attempt to invade. Meanwhile he continued to offer compromises. Caesar would give up Transalpine Gaul, and retain only two legions, until his second consulship. Ultimately, he offered to give up everything except Illyricum and one legion; but he would not give up the principle that he should stand for the consulship of 48 in absence, as the law of the ten tribunes in 52 had granted, and retain some protecting *imperium* until that time.[62]

Pompeius and the optimates would accept nothing less than Caesar's complete surrender. At a Senate meeting in early January, having made it clear that they would not compromise, they cajoled the Senate into taking sides. Pompeius's father-in-law Metellus Scipio proposed a motion calling on Caesar to dismiss his army or be considered a public enemy, and the senators finally voted overwhelmingly in favour of this, ignoring a letter from Caesar setting out his achievement on behalf of Rome and urging compromise. The tribunes Antonius and Cassius vetoed the motion. Cicero attempted a final mediation, urging Pompeius to accept Caesar's proposal of retaining only Illyricum with one legion, and to go to his provinces in Spain himself. Cato and the new consuls persuaded Pompeius to reject Cicero's urgings, and prepare for war instead. The veto of Caesar's two tribunes was overridden and they were threatened with harm if they persisted. The final emergency decree was passed, declaring the state in danger, and replacement governors for Caesar's provinces were named, with Ahenobarbus taking Transalpine Gaul as he had long wanted. The two tribunes fled in disguise to join Caesar, and the war was on.[63]

Much ink has been spilled over the question of the legal situation: when exactly Caesar's command was due to expire, whether Caesar had a legal case to remain in command and so on. All of this is fundamentally beside the point. Legally, it is clear that Caesar could be replaced as of 1 March 50, but that does not mean that he had to be or should have been replaced. The decision was not a legal one but a political one. Again, had Caesar been merely a single Roman politician, pursuing his own singular career, there would have been no possible grounds for him to resist the Senate, nor is it likely that he would have had significant support in doing so.

The great reformers of Republican Rome's last decades, from Tiberius Gracchus on, are often painted in our sources as egotistical careerists, but any examination of their policies and supporters immediately belies that. There was a large segment of the population of Rome, of Italy, of the Empire that sought reforms, and supported the men who proposed reforms. Without that

fact, the repeated conflicts of this period are incomprehensible. Caesar was not pushed into civil war because Cato hated him personally, or because Pompeius was jealous of him personally (although these were factors), but because he represented and led a political movement that a core of Roman nobles wanted stamped out; and he was supported in civil war because he represented and led broad interest groups who looked to his success as their own success.[64] Not the least of these was his army, which could only expect to be rewarded for its nine years of effort and danger in Gaul by Caesar, but his army was not Caesar's sole source of support by any means, as the events of 49 were to show.

Ironically, the optimates who stood for the old order unchanged and unchangeable used against Caesar the methods and forces created by the reformers. For although Pompeius now stood with the optimates, his whole career had undermined the traditional order and been based on utilizing the new kind of army, the new kind of warfare, the insistence on efficiency over tradition, that characterized the *popularis* reform movement. Unfortunately, Pompeius – for all his devotion to efficiency – could not envision any political programme beyond seeking his own power, and was therefore willing to turn his back on his past and his former allies and provide the force the optimates needed to destroy Caesar and the reform movement.

That very desire of the optimates showed how disordered Roman politics had become. In a well-ordered state one political faction does not seek the utter destruction of another, and the ruination of its leaders: stable politics is based upon compromise, upon toleration of political differences, and upon acceptance of defeat in the peaceful political process, or at any rate working to overturn such defeat through peaceful politics. Rome was not a well-ordered, stable state at the beginning of 49, and had not been for many decades. If it had been, the events of the 40s simply could not and would not have come about.

VIII

CAESAR'S PLACE IN ROMAN LITERATURE AND CULTURE

Schoolchildren and students who learn the Latin language invariably, once they have learned enough of the basics of grammar, syntax and sentence structure to be let loose on actual passages of Latin prose, find themselves confronted with a paragraph of Caesar's writings, usually from his *de Bello Gallico* (On the Gallic War); or at any rate that used to be the case until recently. There are good reasons for this, as we shall see, but the effect has not exactly been to make Caesar a popular writer, even among those who enjoy reading Latin literature. The struggles of fledgling Latinists to make sense of Caesar's condensed prose too often give them a dislike of a writer who is actually the most readable and engaging of Latin prose authors. It is of course exactly that readability that makes Caesar the favoured author to confront beginners with. Unfortunately, that reputation as an author suited to beginners has tended to disguise the enormous influence Caesar had on the development of Latin prose style, arguably second only to Cicero. Caesar's lifetime was not only characterized by profound conflict over political and social issues: there was also a less violent but hardly less passionately argued conflict over the Latin language, how it should be spoken and written, and Caesar was one of the protagonists in this conflict.

Latin prose had its beginnings, at least in a literary sense, with the elder Cato in the first half of the second century. It may be that some few remnants of Latin prose writing from before the time of Cato the elder survived into the first century. Cicero at any rate claimed that the famous speech of Appius Claudius Caecus, urging the Senate not to compromise with king Pyrrhus of Epirus in 278, could still be read in his day.[1] But Cato's numerous speeches, and above all perhaps, his historical work the *Origines* – the first major historical treatise written in Latin prose – as well as his surviving treatise *de Agricultura*, represent the beginnings of the use of Latin prose as a vehicle for literary composition and expression. A number of other historians and writers followed Cato's example in the later second and early first centuries, but only wretched fragments of their writings survive, and nothing that we hear of them suggests that their loss is much to lament from a literary perspective, however much we may regret it as historians.

In the middle decades of the first century, Hellenistic Greek literary models and controversies began to make an impact on Latin literary activity, leading to the development of several rival theories of prose composition and the appearance of some of the great classics of Latin prose literature. Cato's writings and style had, in the eyes of men living in the middle of the first century, been spare, archaic and extremely simple. To some, as we shall see, those qualities seemed a virtue. But a Hellenistic prose style called 'Asianic' from its origins in the Greek cities of Asia Minor, and characterized by verbosity and a very florid, at times even theatrical, vocabulary and turn of phrase, became popular and was used to great effect by the leading orator of the 70s, Quintus Hortensius. Thanks to Hortensius's success and influence, this style was much admired and taken up by many other Roman orators and writers, but its artificiality and effusiveness struck many as un-Roman and led to criticism. The most important writers and stylists of the first century were critics and opponents of this 'Asianic' style, and were influenced by it in their thinking and writing for that very reason.

By far the most important writer and Latin stylist of this era, arguably indeed of any era, was Cicero, and he was also one of the earliest and most important critics of the 'Asianic' prose style. His theories about Latin style and the Latin language were argued explicitly in a number of surviving treatises about various aspects of style, and about what makes a good orator.[2] Those who, like Cicero, objected to the 'Asianic' style took their inspiration instead from the classical Greek prose style of the Attic orators of the late fifth and fourth centuries: above all Isokrates, Lysias and Demosthenes, but in some cases the speeches of Thucydides were also much admired and imitated. Cicero famously took Demosthenes as his model, and achieved unparalleled success as orator and writer with a prose style that sought greater purity and clarity than the Asianic style, and avoided its affectations. But Cicero's flowing, rhythmic prose, and his long sentences of carefully jointed subordinate clauses that seemed to lead one inexorably to the conclusions he wanted drawn, were much easier to admire than to imitate.

After or along with Cicero – and partly no doubt thanks to learning from the same teachers, Antonius Gnipho and Apollonius Molo – Caesar was one of the main voices calling for a pure, unaffected 'Attic' style of Latin, in Latin oratory above all, but also in all other Latin composition, both prose and poetry. As a champion of the purer and simpler style of Latin, Caesar came to be acknowledged as one of the very best Latin orators – second only to Cicero himself, in the estimation of some – as one of the purest and best writers of Latin prose in his historical commentaries, and as an expert on the Latin language itself.

As an orator, Caesar made his name, as we have seen, with a number of forensic speeches in the 70s and 60s, speaking both as a prosecutor and in defence, but he was also famous as a political orator, for his speeches delivered on matters of public policy in the Senate or from the public rostra at

assembly meetings. Indeed his most famous speech was no doubt the one he delivered at the debate on the fate of the Catilinarian conspirators. Unfortunately, none of his speeches survive, though a number of them were available to be read more than 150 years after his own day. The teacher of rhetoric Quintilian, in the late first century CE, was an admirer of Caesar's prose style, and a generation later Suetonius read and admired Caesar's prosecution speeches against Dolabella and C. Antonius, and his speech in defence of Metellus Nepos and himself.

We are told that Caesar initially based his style on that of a noted orator of the previous generation, his father's cousin C. Julius Caesar Strabo.[3] It is characteristic of Caesar that he should have chosen a relative and fellow clansman to emulate. Strabo was known for the purity of his Latin, but above all for his skilful use of wit to make his case. Caesar too employed wit as a rhetorical device – though he did not in this rival the king of Latin wits, Cicero – but concentrated more on the issue of purity and clarity. He spoke and wrote in a style that was instantly intelligible to every hearer and/or reader, with words carefully chosen to convey his meaning exactly and accurately, sentences that were skilfully constructed and relatively brief – and so easy to follow – and an overall emphasis on making clear and exact sense. He avoided any affectations, and sought elegance through being concise and understandable – the elegance of simplicity and lucidity. Although he was known, as a performer of his speeches, to employ impassioned gestures and voice modulations, his language was rarely impassioned. He preferred to present a rational and carefully constructed argument that would persuade through logic, than to try to sway the emotions. Yet he was superbly skilled at manipulating the details of a case so as to make his argument seem reasonable and persuasive, even when he was in fact being highly partisan. We can say all of this partly thanks to the comments of prose critics like Cicero and Quintilian, but largely thanks to the survival of his historical commentaries and the version of his Catilinarian speech preserved by Sallust.[4]

Now certainly Sallust did not preserve Caesar's actual words in the speech he has Caesar give in his history. Sallust too was an 'Atticist' of a sort, but his stylistic principles differed from Caesar's in some important respects, and his prose style was noticeably different: he admired Thucydides, and emulated his rather choppy, abrupt and often highly pregnant style. But various indications show that Sallust's Caesar does present the basic argument that the real Caesar presented, in essentially the same terms. We know, that is, that Caesar really did argue strongly against a death sentence and for imprisonment, and we know that he made his case in a calm and rational way, accepting the guilt of the conspirators but arguing from the public good and the law to conclude that it would be politically unsound to permit the passions of the moment to lead to irrevocable and precedent-setting actions. And we know from Caesar's preserved historical commentaries what his prose style was like, so that it is fairly easy for us to imagine how he must actually have made his case in that

famous speech. He was cool and reasonable, he sought to persuade by appealing to logic rather than emotion, he conceded what he could not usefully dispute, he deflected the senators' thoughts away from their anger and partisan passion towards a consideration of law and precedent and possible future consequences of harsh and precipitate action. Since we find Caesar frequently talking/writing in the same sort of style in other crucial debates – during his consulship, and during the months leading up to the outbreak of civil war, for example – it is reasonable to see all this as highly characteristic of Caesar and the way he preferred to argue and debate. Caesar put his case so persuasively, in fact, and presented the known facts in such a light, that the senior senators who had previously been solidly behind the idea of a death sentence were swayed, until Cato's intervention. Cato's style was evidently very different: in the place of calm and reasoned argumentation he put passion and vehemence, and in this case passion and vehemence won the day.

When it comes to the details of style, Caesar's ideas and contribution are not just limited to the example of his (now lost) speeches and his commentaries, however: he wrote a technical treatise setting out his ideas, called *de analogia* ('on the choice of words') and dedicated to Cicero. Unfortunately, the work is lost, but we know that it did enunciate a crucial stylistic principle that was at the root of all Caesar's prose. He insisted on the use of words that were in regular, everyday use, and on the avoidance of words that were archaic or unusual – 'as the sailor avoids the reef, so should you avoid the rare and obsolete word'.[5] What this means is that Caesar prized clarity above all. For him, the function of speaking and writing was to inform and persuade, and the way to achieve that was by composing prose that was above all understandable. What is remarkable about Caesar as a writer, is that he limited his vocabulary, pursued simplicity in his syntax and purity in his grammar, and thereby achieved his fundamental goal of being easily understood, all without sacrificing elegance.

It would have been all too easy, with those principles, for Caesar's prose to have become dry and/or repetitive. Marcus Brutus, for example, Caesar's eventual assassin, adopted very similar stylistic principles of purity and clarity, yet Cicero – while acknowledging these virtues in Brutus's style – takes him to task for being too often dry, dull, and in particular lacking in passion.[6] No one ever accused Caesar of those failings. Instead, Cicero acknowledged Caesar as the most eloquent and persuasive of speakers and writers after himself, and Quintilian noted that no one could have rivalled Cicero except possibly Caesar, if Caesar had devoted himself to literary pursuits as opposed to his military endeavours.[7] Besides Brutus, a number of other notable young orators agreed with Caesar's stylistic principles. Of the generation immediately following Cicero and Caesar, the best were considered to be Licinius Calvus and the younger Curio, both of whom seem to have agreed with Caesar's emphasis on clarity and lucidity. Of course, not all younger writers did. The most successful of all the younger contemporaries of

Cicero and Caesar was Sallust, whose short historical treatises on Jugurtha and Catilina still survive as literary classics. But though Sallust joined in rejecting the affectations of the Asianic style, he admired the 'old-style' Roman writers, and sought inspiration in the works of the elder Cato in particular, positively revelling in the use of archaic words and spellings, and in choppy archaic-looking syntax.[8]

At the end of the day, of course, it is not on his lost writings, like his speeches and his technical treatise on word choice, that Caesar must or can be judged as a writer. Nor is it on the infamous 'Anti-Cato' (also lost) that he wrote as dictator, in a failed attempt to quell the growing cult of Cato as a 'Republican' hero and martyr, fostered by the 'Cato' memoirs of Cicero and Brutus. Nor, finally, is it on his letters, many books of which were available to Suetonius, but only a handful of which survive among Cicero's letters.[9] It is on his surviving commentaries on his wars: the *de bello Gallico* on his campaigns as governor of Gaul, and the *de bello civile* on his civil war campaigns down to the death of Pompeius and his arrival in Alexandria.

The historical commentary was not a new literary form when Caesar wrote his commentaries. Restricting the list just to Roman authors, P. Rutilius Rufus, the consul of 105, had written a memoir of his times and deeds that was probably in effect a commentary in the Caesarian sense, and the dictator Sulla too had composed a self-justifying memoir, which was used by Plutarch in his biography of Sulla. Cicero tells us that Lucullus wrote a memoir of his deeds in Greek, deliberately (so he claimed) including some 'barbarisms' so as to avoid seeming too thoroughly at home with Greek style and culture. And Cicero himself wrote a number of accounts of his consulship, in both Greek and Latin,[10] in prose and in verse: he has long been ridiculed for the unfortunate jingle he perpetrated in the first line of his verse account: *O, fortunatam natam me consule Romam* – 'Oh lucky Rome, born when I was consul'. It was an accepted feature of such memoirs or commentaries that they were frankly partisan and self-justifying, and the idea was that they presented material for the historian or biographer proper, whose role was to sift them along with other sources to arrive at 'the truth'. None of these earlier memoirs survive, and given that Cicero's writings are among them, the reason cannot be entirely based on judgments of style. Evidently these memoirs really were subsumed into more 'factual'-seeming, or at any rate more highly contextualized, histories (especially that of Livy), and so ceased to be widely read and copied.

That did not happen to Caesar's commentaries, and the reason is that from the beginning they were viewed as being so well written, so seemingly accurate, so full, so persuasive, that far from being mere material for the historian to work on and subsume into a more substantial narrative, they were accepted as self-standing historical works of the highest quality and interest. As Cicero famously put it, 'while his [Caesar's] sole intention was to supply factual material for historians, the result has been that, while some fools have been

pleased to primp up his narrative for their own glory, every writer of sense has given the topic a wide berth'. Or to quote Aulus Hirtius, 'these commentaries are so highly regarded by judicious critics, that the opportunity he [Caesar] purports to offer historians of enlarging and improving them, is in fact withheld from them'.[11]

One topic of discussion among modern scholars has been the question of when Caesar wrote and/or published his commentaries. The Gallic War commentaries are arranged on a year by year structure, with each ancient 'book' (that is, papyrus roll) covering a single year of campaigning: so book 1 covers the campaigns of 58, book 2 those of 57, and so on, down to book 7 which covers the campaigns of 52. This clearly raises the possibility that each book was written separately, as each year's campaigning ended, and each was published when written, giving the Roman people a running account of Caesar's achievements. On the other hand, it is certainly conceivable that the entire account of the Gallic War was written and published at one time, after the end of the great rebellion of Vercingetorix, in either 51 and/or 50, when the aim of writing and publishing them will have been to make positive propaganda for Caesar's aim to be accepted as one of Rome's leading statesmen and permitted to stand for the consulship of 48 in absence, while retaining his governorship of Gaul until the start of his second consulship. In favour of the former notion are the immediacy of Caesar's narrative, which does not suggest any long remove of time from the action being described; the absence of any significant forward looking in the earlier parts of the narrative to issues and problems that would arise in subsequent years; and the awareness that clearly existed at Rome of just what and how Caesar was doing in Gaul. In favour of the latter notion are certain long passages of generic contextual material – such as the accounts of Gallic and Germanic customs in book 6 – and the absence of an account of the years 51 and 50, although Caesar would have had comparatively plenty of leisure to write during precisely those years, if the narratives of the previous years had already been written and published. On the whole, a middle position, which has won wide acceptance, is most likely correct.[12]

The core of the narrative in each book was probably composed at the end of each year in the form of a substantial dispatch sent to the Senate, describing that year's activities and achievements. It will have been on the basis of these annual dispatches that the Senate, for example, voted periods of public thanksgiving for Caesar's victories in 57, 55 and 52, and that people at Rome more generally became aware of Caesar's doings and achievements. However, it is likely that it was during 51 and 50 that Caesar collected these annual dispatches into a single work, expanding the narrative, adding contextual material, and publishing the entire work as a single book aimed at making the case for his unique and important achievements, and consequent desert of special treatment with regard to retaining his powers and standing for a second consulship.

The situation with respect to the Civil War commentaries is somewhat clearer. Caesar wrote three 'books', covering the events from the decision to go to war in 49, to his arrival at Alexandria after Pompeius's death in late 48, and the entire work was probably written and published late in 47 and/or early in 46 as propaganda intended to bolster his position as Rome's ruler in the period leading up to the war of Thapsus against the hold-out optimates and king Juba. Book 1 of the work recounts Caesar's campaigns in Italy and Spain during 49, and book 2 recounts the campaigns of Caesar's subordinates Dec. Brutus and Trebonius at Massilia, and Curio in Africa, with an account of final mopping-up operations in Spain sandwiched between them. The third book, finally, tells the story of Caesar's campaign in 48 against Pompeius himself, culminating in Pompeius's defeat, flight, death at Alexandria, and Caesar's arrival there to receive Pompeius's remains and begin to deal with his killers. Both sets of commentaries were left incomplete by Caesar, partly perhaps due simply to the enormous amount of business he was constantly confronted with, but also no doubt because he felt that in each case what he had written served sufficiently the purpose he had in mind. The lack of completeness was felt already in antiquity, however.

As we have already seen, Caesar's friend Aulus Hirtius wrote an eighth and final book of the Gallic War commentary, bridging the two years (51 and 50) between the end of Caesar's own Gallic War narrative and the beginning of his Civil War commentary. Hirtius tells us in his introduction that he undertook this task at the urging of other friends of Caesar, notably Balbus, after Caesar's death. He adds that he had completed Caesar's Civil War narrative up to Caesar's death. It is thought that the addition to Caesar's Civil War that is usually called the Alexandrian War, although it relates events in Asia Minor, in Illyria, in Spain, and again in Asia down to Caesar's arrival back in Italy at the end of 47, as well as the Alexandrian campaign, may be that addition written by Hirtius in uncompleted form. The surviving narratives of Caesar's campaigns in Africa in 46, and in Spain again in 45, were written by anonymous writers of little literary talent and limited insight – especially the Spanish war narrative – with the clear aim of completing the history of Caesar's campaigns. In view of the perceived need to do so, we may perhaps suppose that Hirtius did not in reality complete an account of Caesar's campaigns right down to his death, as he says, but merely intended to do so.

One of the most frequently admired features of Caesar's commentaries are their seeming neutrality and objectivity. Caesar famously achieved this effect in part by rigorously referring to himself in the third person, always as 'Caesar', never as 'I'. The idea for this may have been taken by Caesar from Xenophon's famous *Anabasis*, his account of his journey with 10,000 Greek mercenaries into the interior of the Persian Empire in the army of the would-be usurper Cyrus the younger, and their perilous journey back home again. Xenophon always referred to himself in the third person, to create an air of objectivity, but he went further in originally publishing his memoir under a

pseudonym. Caesar never pretended that he was not the author of his commentaries, and yet that appearance of objectivity remains. It is not just due to use of the third person in reference to himself: his plain and lucid style and the calm rationality of his account contribute. In addition, there is the fact that he frequently pays tribute to the qualities and abilities of his opponents, the Gauls and Belgae and Germans and their various leaders – the likes of Ariovistus, Vercingetorix, Commius, Ambiorix – and to the abilities and achievements of his own subordinates. Although Caesar's chief lieutenant Titus Labienus came to feel under-appreciated by Caesar, and claimed that he deserved much more credit for the successes in Gaul than Caesar gave him, every reader of Caesar's Gallic War commentary must come away with a sense that Labienus was an outstanding general and leader in his own right.[13] Other subordinates, such as P. Licinius Crassus, Dec. Junius Brutus and L. Aurunculeius Cotta, are depicted as highly capable commanders who could and did undertake with success independent campaigns and operations. Sharing the credit with his subordinates and also with his men – especially the centurions who are often singled out by name – and acknowledging the qualities and abilities of his opponents, makes Caesar seem genuinely neutral and fair in his account and assessment of events. At the same time, of course, being the revered leader of all these magnificent soldiers and officers, and the victor over strong and capable opponents, all redounds in the end to the greater glory of Caesar himself.

The simplicity and rationality of Caesar's narrative is often deceptive, and used to create literary effects that aim to persuade the reader into seeing and accepting events as Caesar wished them to be seen and accepted. One of the clearest and most impressive examples of this is Caesar's narrative of the battle against the Nervii at the river Sambre in 57.[14] I noted in Chapter 6 that Caesar's cool and simple explanation of how order and success were pulled out of a seemingly chaotic and desperate situation on his right wing in that battle can hardly correspond in any straightforward or direct way with what actually happened. The fight, as Caesar depicted it, broke down into three distinct battles. Given his fondness for tripartite division, we might wonder just how distinct these three fights were. Two of the three fights went well for Caesar's men, but the third, on the right wing, did not. Caesar's two legions there were disunited and disorganized, they were surrounded by a superior foe, the camp behind them was captured by the enemy, and the camp servants and auxiliary cavalry fled in a panic, spreading word of the Romans' defeat.

The next word in Caesar's narrative, after the announcement of this panic flight, is *Caesar*, and it introduces Caesar's personal intervention in this part of the battle. In a swift-moving narrative that carries the reader along, Caesar – aided by his tribunes and centurions – produces order out of the chaos on this wing, and sets the stage for victory.[15] The effect is superb: all relies on Caesar, and Caesar's intervention works like magic. Yet even here Caesar is

careful not to overdo this effect. Labienus is credited with looking back from his victorious part of the battle, seeing the difficulties on the right, and sending the Tenth legion to the rescue; and the narrative ends with an extended tribute to the superb courage and fighting quality of the Nervii themselves. Surely a man who gives credit to his subordinates so readily must be telling the plain truth when he reveals his own actions and achievements? And surely the leader who orchestrated victory over such opponents must be a great man, a man to be admired and followed? It is small wonder that friends of Caesar like Hirtius admired the man so, and that even those like Cicero who did not like or admire Caesar, nevertheless admired his writing. Cicero, of all men, knew a brilliant literary effect when he saw one, and he rightly judged that Caesar's achievement in these commentaries was not to be topped, and that all writers of sense would stay away from the topic rather than invite invidious comparison with Caesar's narrative. It is amusing to note that Caesar once deprecated his style as that of a plain soldier, in comparison with Cicero's urbane and sophisticated style.[16] For there was, as both Cicero and Caesar himself well knew, no one more sophisticated or urbane than Caesar.

On careful analysis, then, Caesar's commentaries are anything but simple. They are highly sophisticated and well thought-out narratives in which simplicity and clarity of language are harnessed along with a host of literary effects and careful arrangements and slants of presentation, to lead the reader to see and accept Caesar's version of reality.[17] It is a version of reality that makes sense, that is complete and persuasive, and one in which Caesar is always in the right, always understands what is happening and how best to respond, and is always in control of himself and the situation. Of course, the effect could not work if Caesar's reality departed radically from generally perceived reality. It works precisely because Caesar always did come out in the end on top, always did find a way to cope with situations, and therefore can very easily be accepted as having understood and been in the right and planned the exact outcome. Caesar was sophisticated enough and wise enough, that is to say, to limit his literary manipulations to slant and interpretation, never altering what happened in any too obvious way. When what really happened could not be convincingly turned to his credit, his response was not to lie outright but to abbreviate and gloss over, as with his all too brief and elliptical account of his dealings with the Usipites and Tencteri in 56.[18] And this remarkable literary sophistication of construction and arrangement is all the more impressive when we bear in mind how Caesar wrote. In his preface to his additional eighth book of the Gallic War commentary, Caesar's friend Hirtius commented that while Caesar's style was universally admired, his close friends admired it all the more because they saw with what startling ease and rapidity Caesar composed his writings. Caesar wrote 'on the fly', as it were. He was hardly ever at rest or at ease: his constant business left him very little time for leisure.

Caesar's close friend Oppius related how Caesar worked constantly, travelling in his carriage or litter surrounded by secretaries taking dictation, two or three at a time.[19] One secretary might be taking down a letter to some political associate in Rome, a second an administrative document of some sort, and a third be writing a piece of historical commentary or a poem. Caesar could keep several texts in his mind at once, like a modern chess grand master playing multiple games of chess blindfold at the same time. He would dictate a sentence or two to each secretary in turn, without losing his way, or losing the coherence, clarity or style of the texts he was dictating. In this way he could, and did, compose his two-volume work *de analogia* (on the proper choice of words) while travelling from north Italy over the Alps to join his troops in Gaul in the spring of 54, or his epic poem 'the Journey' (*Iter*) while being carried from Italy to Spain in fall of 46 to fight the battle of Munda.[20] The energy, versatility, appetite for work, and sheer brilliance of Caesar can hardly help but astound.

Mention of his lost poem *Iter* reminds us that Caesar was not just a historian, an orator and an authority on prose style and the Latin language. He was also interested in poetry throughout his life, and an active poet throughout his life, though none of his poetry survives beyond his six lines in praise of the comic dramatist Terence. It is worth noting here that Caesar was very much in touch with the latest trends in Roman high culture, including poetic culture. He moved in the same circles as the sophisticated young poets of the 'new style', the *poetae novi* (new poets) or *neoteri* (younger set) of the 50s, and appreciated their art. He was, indeed, something of a patron.

The new poet Furius Bibaculus wrote a long poem called *Annales* in praise of Caesar's achievements in Gaul, for example. This was despite the fact that earlier Furius had, like Catullus and his friend Licinius Calvus, written poems making fun of Caesar.[21] We know that, however painful Caesar may have found the bitter and wounding attacks in these poems, he appreciated the poetic skill. He noted that Catullus's poems attacking him constituted a lasting blot on his good name, and he would hardly have said so had he not realized that the poems were so good that they would indeed last. He went out of his way, therefore, to win these poets over. He readily forgave Calvus and Catullus for their attacks on him, and initiated friendly relations with them instead.[22] He brought Catullus's close friend Helvius Cinna, another of the noted 'new poets', into his circle.[23]

Furius's poem on the Gallic War is evidence of the same process, of Caesar winning these young poets to his side. It seems likely that, like Calvus and Cinna, Furius too was a friend of Catullus. Catullus addresses a certain Furius in a number of his poems, making fun of his poverty and his erotic predilections in a way that should not be assumed to be hostile: it is more likely 'all in good fun', as the saying goes, the mutual belittling of playful young men. It is by no means unlikely that this Furius of Catullus is the 'new poet' Furius Bibaculus: the world of the 'new poets', and Roman high society in general,

was a small one, in which everyone knew everyone else. Notable is Catullus's poem 11: he suggests that Furius and his friend Aurelius could be Catullus's companions on a visit to, among other outlandish places, 'the monuments of great Caesar, the Gallic Rhine and remote and awful Britons'. Could this be a veiled reference to Furius's agreement to write, for Caesar, a poetic glorification of his Gallic War? At any rate, it is clear that Caesar was interested in and involved with this latest poetic trend in Roman culture. Like his heir Octavian/Augustus, who cultivated the heirs of the 'new poets' Cornelius Gallus, Horace and Vergil for their ability to immortalize his achievements and new regime in their poetry, Caesar seems to have seen in the likes of Furius Bibaculus and the other 'new poets', potential literary allies in his quest to transform Roman society.

Of all of these 'new poets', only the poems of Catullus survive, of course, to reveal to us what they were like. It is surely clear that a poet capable of writing a poem like Catullus's 'Peleus and Thetis', or his 'Attis', was worth cultivating by a patron who hoped for verse glorification, to say nothing of any simple literary enjoyment. We do know that Caesar thoroughly enjoyed the pleasures of reading and literary conversation over dinner. I have noted that Catullus's poems shed a fascinating light on Roman high society of this time: how sophisticated and wealthy Romans lived and thought and interacted.[24]

By way of emphasizing yet again what a small world Roman high society was, we should note that we meet many of the same people in Catullus's poems that we meet in Cicero's correspondence and in Caesar's circle. Catullus of course wrote scathing poems about Caesar and Pompeius, and about Caesar's associates Vatinius and Mamurra. He wrote poems revealing his friendships with the noted young orator, politician and poet Licinius Calvus, well known also to Caesar and Cicero, and with Helvius Cinna, who was to hold the post of tribune under Caesar's regime. Most famously, he wrote poems detailing his passionate and agonizing love affair with the beautiful and 'wanton' Lesbia. Lesbia was of course a code name: she was a married woman, and Catullus could not reveal her identity openly in his poems. But he could and did drop clues to amuse his friends. The key clue to Lesbia's identity is Catullus's poem 79: *Lesbius est pulcher. Quid ni? Quem Lesbia malit quam te cum tota gente, Catulle, tua* – 'Lesbius is handsome. How not? When Lesbia prefers him to you and all your clan, Catullus.' The name Lesbius indicates a close male relative, probably brother of Lesbia, and the poem clearly implies an incestuous relationship between the two. But Lesbius was also '*pulcher*'. The word means 'handsome', but it was also the family name of the main branch of the famous patrician Claudii, particularly of P. Clodius Pulcher. Clodius had three sisters named Clodia, and was reputed to have had incestuous relations with at least two of them. Lesbia, that is to say, was Clodia, one of the beautiful and notorious sisters of the infamous Clodius. Again we see that Catullus's world and 'set' is the same as that in which Caesar moved. In other poems Catullus refers to his rivals for Lesbia's

affections, including a former friend named Caelius. Like Catullus, Caelius was eventually hurt by Lesbia's infidelity, as poem 58 reveals, talking about the 'wanton' habits of 'our Lesbia, Caelius, the Lesbia, that Lesbia Catullus once loved more than himself and all his'.

Here we have a Clodia and a Caelius, entangled with others in an ultimately bitter and faithless love affair. Cicero too wrote of a Caelius and a Clodia entangled in a bitter and faithless love affair – his speech *for Caelius* defended the young man about town and aspiring orator and politician Marcus Caelius Rufus, who was charged by his ex-lover Clodia with attempted murder. In an example of the remarkable excess of scepticism many scholars are able to argue themselves into, it is often doubted that the Caelius and Clodia of Cicero's speech are the same Clodia and Caelius of Catullus's poems. We are to believe that a different Caelius fell in love with a different sister called Clodia, with similar bitter results.

I would point out again, Roman high society was a small world, a narrow elite circle of aristocrats, politicians, orators and literary dabblers attending the same dinner parties and talking about the same political trials, or Senate debates, or policy proposals, or new literary works. It is certain, to my mind, that Catullus's Caelius was none other than the Caelius Rufus who acted as Cicero's political correspondent during his (Cicero's) absence from Rome as governor of Cilicia, and who became a partisan of Caesar in the early years of the civil war. It is not irrelevant that Catullus composed a poem in gratitude to Cicero (poem 59): it was likely Caelius's trial that was the occasion for it. That requires some adjustment to our traditional chronology of Catullus's life: he was active already in the late 60s, and was probably some years older than thirty when he died in the late 50s, but that is hardly an issue in view of the poor evidence on which the traditional chronology of Catullus's life has been based.[25] The point of all this, is to note that in Caesar's Rome 'everyone knew everyone', and a man of Caesar's talents and tastes was intimately involved in the literary high society and salons because they were part and parcel of the world in which he lived and moved.

To most of the people who lived in Roman high society, this small world was *the* world: they could not think outside its terms and preoccupations. Cicero was of this sort. After serving a term as quaestor in Sicily, he resolved as far as possible never to leave Italy again, because Italy and Rome were the only places that counted.[26] He was thoroughly miserable, as a result, when he was forced into exile for a year, and was none too happy about having to serve a year as governor of Cilicia. Although not all Romans shared Cicero's unwillingness to travel abroad for profit and glory, they mostly shared his view of the rest of the world as mere periphery, unimportant compared with Rome and Italy. This narrow focus on Rome, on Rome's high society, and on that society's activities, thoughts, beliefs and concerns, which we see reflected in Catullus's poetry as well as Cicero's many writings, helps to explain the remarkable blindness of the traditional Roman nobles, the optimates, to the

narrowness and inconsistency – not to say hypocrisy – of their political outlooks, beliefs and behaviour.

One of the many unusual things about Caesar is that, although he lived in this same narrow high society and was fully at home in it, he did not share its narrowness of outlook. His ability and willingness to imagine a wider Roman society, and to include ever new groups and peoples within its compass, deeply angered men like Cicero, Cato and the other optimates. But it perhaps helps to explain why, in the end, the younger set of Rome, the 'new poets' and their crowd, joined Caesar. Men like Catullus, Cinna and Caelius – two *Transpadani* and a north Italian – came precisely from outside the traditional circle of Roman high society, and will have understood very well and sympathized with Caesar's desire to expand it.

IX

THE CIVIL WARS AGAINST POMPEIUS AND THE OPTIMATES

It should be clear by now that when Caesar paused at the river Rubicon on that fateful January day in 49, it was not just his own career, his future and his life that were at stake. Over the course of the previous 20 years he had established himself as the leader of a broad political movement. He had worked to rebuild that political movement from the ashes of defeat into a powerful factor in Roman life once again. All that he had achieved, while of course furthering his own career and enhancing his own standing, had at the same time been in the service of broad groupings in Roman society who were in various ways disadvantaged under the traditional oligarchy, and of a fundamental reform of the Roman governing system. The ten years he had spent building a peerless army via the wars of conquest in Gaul had not just created a personal power base and following, but had more importantly created an army that could stand up for the political movement he, Caesar, headed, against the determination of extremist optimate oligarchs to repress that political movement, prevent significant reform, and maintain the traditional system unchanged – by force if necessary.

Grasping all this is vital for a proper understanding of what happened in the civil war that Caesar's optimate enemies unleashed against him, and that he accepted by crossing the Rubicon under arms. For what happened was deeply surprising to some of Caesar's supposedly well-informed and perspicacious contemporaries, and has continued to be surprising to many modern scholars. Until the last moment, Pompeius – who, if anyone, ought to have had a clear grasp of public sentiment in Italy – claimed that, should Caesar be so foolish as to attempt to fight, he (Pompeius) had but to stamp his foot for armies to rise from the soil of Italy to defend the traditional government.[1] When Caesar advanced into northern Italy, Domitius Ahenobarbus rushed to establish himself in Corfinium in the northern Appenine region, the heartland of his family's ancestral estates, the area where his personal prestige and following were supposedly dominant. Clearly Ahenobarbus expected the people of this region to flock to his banner and follow his lead in thrusting Caesar back out of Italy.[2] Even as well-informed a man as Cicero, with his matchless contacts and prestige among the upper classes of the Italian towns,

expected Italy to reject Caesar and stand solidly in support of Pompeius, the Senate, the oligarchy, the traditional *res publica*.[3]

But the armies of Pompeius failed to materialize. Ahenobarbus found the people of Corfinium and its surroundings disinclined to follow his lead, on the whole in fact very ready to receive Caesar. To Cicero's stunned dismay the towns of Italy one by one threw open their gates to Caesar and received him, if not with open arms, at any rate with great complaisance, the local upper classes taking the lead in this. Why did this happen, and how could men like Pompeius, Ahenobarbus and Cicero – men who could and should have known better – be so mistaken? It happened precisely because Caesar was not a self-seeking, power-hungry opportunist, as he has often been portrayed, by his contemporary opponents first and by historians through the centuries since; nor was he merely a ruthless aristocrat playing the game of aristocratic power politics according to the rules established by Sulla and Pompeius, as others have thought. The people of Italy, the towns of Italy, the upper classes of Italy accepted Caesar, sided with him, even took service with him, because they understood what he stood for and agreed with his political programme. They knew that Caesar stood for the policies of Marius and Cinna: policies of extending all the privileges of Roman citizenship in a fair and equal way to the people of Italy, of opening up the higher magistracies and the corridors of power to the upper classes of Italy, of holding Roman magistrates and potentates properly responsible for their actions and especially their misdeeds, of extending Roman citizenship to the people of Cisalpine Gaul – or north Italy, as it was to become. They understood that Caesar meant to break the lock that the traditional noble oligarchy had on power and privilege in the Roman world, and that it was in their interest, would be to their benefit, for him to succeed.

Caesar did not, that is, win control of all Italy in a few short months, with scarcely a blow being struck, due simply to his own brilliance and decisiveness, or to the excellence or preponderant force of his army. In fact he had only a small number of his veteran troops, initially amounting to just over one legion, available to him for this campaign. Nor was it due to any pusillanimity among his opponents. Italy decided to back Caesar, and the position of Pompeius and the optimates in Italy thereby became untenable, because the Italians knew that Caesar would at last grant them in full and free measure what they had been struggling for since the days of Caius Gracchus: an equal share and position in the Roman state with the traditional Roman citizenry and oligarchy. It is only by understanding Caesar the politician, and the political movement he led, that the success of Caesar the civil war leader can be understood too.

The optimate oligarchs had always resisted the spread of citizenship, the equal treatment of new citizens, the opening of the political career to the *domi nobiles* (Italian upper classes). The settlement imposed by Pompeius and the optimates after the disturbances of the mid-50s had shown their determination

to hold fast to this policy, as we have seen. Cicero evidently imagined that his own efforts as powerful patron and spokesman inside the governing elite would and should be enough to satisfy the wants and needs of the Italians and the *domi nobiles*. Only Caesar saw what the Italians really wanted, saw that it was not only right but in the long run inevitable that they should get it, and put himself at the head of the Marian-Cinnan movement that alone promised to offer it. That is why the foresight of Pompeius and Cicero failed. That is why the towns of Italy opened their gates to Caesar and accepted his leadership. That is why Caesar won the opening round of the civil war with ease, speed, and scarcely so much as a fight.

The details are less important than this basic understanding, and can be treated fairly summarily. Initially Caesar had available to him only the Thirteenth legion, which had been stationed in Cisalpine Gaul, and some cavalry and auxiliary forces.[4] He had secured the key cities of Ariminum and Arretium by sending detachments of soldiers ahead to occupy those cities before news spread that war had broken out, and he marched with great rapidity to join his advanced detachment in Ariminum.[5] There he was joined by the tribunes Q. Cassius and M. Antonius, fleeing from Rome, and also by the young L. Caesar (son of his cousin and legate L. Caesar the consul of 64) and the praetor L. Roscius bearing messages from the Senate and Pompeius.

Having received official notice of the actions taken against him, and a private message of personal excuses from Pompeius, Caesar gave these two messengers a peace proposal to bring to Pompeius and the Senate. Pompeius should go to his provinces in Spain, the recruitment of soldiers in Italy should cease, Caesar and Pompeius should both take steps to disband their armies, free elections should be held for the magistracies for the following year, and the Senate and people should govern Rome in peace. To discuss precise terms and conditions Caesar proposed a meeting between Pompeius and himself.[6] This was akin to the proposal Curio had induced the Senate to vote on late the previous year, and which the Senate had overwhelmingly approved. When L. Caesar and Roscius found Pompeius and the consuls and put Caesar's proposal to them, the response was that first Caesar must leave Ariminum and return to his province, and begin disbanding his army; only then would Pompeius leave for Spain. This was clearly not acceptable to Caesar, and he resumed his advance through Italy, at first rather cautiously. Antonius was sent with five cohorts to secure Arretium, and Curio with three cohorts to Iguvium, while Caesar himself remained at Ariminum, levying new troops in the region.

The praetor Thermus was holding Iguvium with five newly raised cohorts, but the townsfolk were so favourably inclined towards Caesar that, when he heard of Curio's approach, Thermus fled with his troops, who abandoned him on the march and returned to their homes. Iguvium gave Curio a warm welcome, and from this reception Caesar realized that the Italian towns would not resist him, and began to march south at speed and with confidence.[7]

At Auximum, which was held by Attius Varus, a similar scene occurred. The townsfolk made it clear to Attius that they would not resist Caesar and that he would do best to save himself. Attius fled with his troops, but his troops would not stand by him and either returned home or left to join Caesar, while Auximum welcomed Caesar. He received the same warm welcome from other towns as he hastened south through Picenum, and was joined on his march by the Twelfth legion, the first of the legions from Gaul to reach him. With two veteran legions now and numbers of newly recruited troops, Caesar made for Asculum, the chief town of Picenum, held by Lentulus Spinther with ten cohorts. Spinther did not dare to remain, but fled towards Corfinium, most of his soldiers leaving him just as those of Thermus and Attius had done. On the road he fell in with Pompeius's officer Vibullius Rufus with new Picene recruits, and Lucilius Hirrus fleeing from Camerinum with six cohorts, and together they joined Domitius Ahenobarbus who was holding Corfinium with twenty locally raised cohorts, on his way to replace Caesar as pro-consul of Gaul. The four decided to make a stand at Corfinium, where Ahenobarbus's authority was great, with the troops they had mustered, amounting to some three legions in principle (thirty cohorts).[8]

Meanwhile news of Caesar's rapid advance, and the friendly reception he was receiving from the north Italian towns, reached Rome and caused a panic there, as people feared that Caesar's cavalry might arrive at any time. The consuls fled, leaving the money in the treasury behind, and joined Pompeius at Capua. Pompeius was on his way to Apulia to join the two legions he had stationed there, the legions he had received from Caesar the previous year, ostensibly for the war in Syria. Together, they ordered all magistrates and senators to abandon Rome and join them, warning that any senators who remained in Rome would be treated as enemies on the principle of 'anyone who is not with us, is against us'.[9]

When Caesar reached Corfinium he found the town strongly held against him, and initiated a siege. The siege of Corfinium was the key event of this Italian campaign, in terms of both securing Caesar's control of Italy, and establishing the basic policy Caesar planned to follow in dealing with his enemies. Ahenobarbus at first kept his soldiers' loyalty by promising them land allotments from his own estates in the region, and holding out the hope of Pompeius's arrival with a relief force. He sent dispatches to Pompeius in southern Italy, warning him of the danger he and his army faced at Corfinium, and imploring Pompeius to come to his aid, suggesting that together they could defeat Caesar once and for all. However, Pompeius had no intention of coming anywhere near Caesar with his two legions which had so recently been under Caesar's own command, and sent back instructing Domitius to leave Corfinium with his troops and hurry south to join him (Pompeius) at Brundisium. This Domitius was no longer in a position to do: Caesar had already been joined by another of his veteran legions, the Eighth, as well as twenty-two cohorts of newly levied troops from Cisalpine Gaul, and

had fully invested the town with siege works. Consequently, he began to make plans to escape from the town himself, with his immediate friends, but was suspected of doing so by his soldiers, who seized him and opened the city gates to Caesar, handing over Ahenobarbus and the other senators and officers in the town.

Ahenobarbus's thirty cohorts Caesar enrolled into his own army, nearly doubling its size at a stroke, and after an interview with Ahenobarbus, Lentulus Spinther, and the other leading Romans he had captured, he let them go free, even permitting Ahenobarbus to keep 6 million sesterces he had brought with him to pay his men.[10] Caesar wanted it to be known that he was fighting to preserve his own *dignitas* (honour, position) and the rights of his men, not to do any harm to any other Roman in so far as he could avoid it. He would not willingly kill or despoil any fellow Roman, and would pursue that policy regardless of the other side's policy. He made sure that this act of forgiveness, or *clementia* as the Romans called it, was widely advertised through his chief political agents Oppius and Balbus, and persisted with this policy throughout the civil wars that followed.[11]

While the people of Italy showed, at the very least, no propensity to oppose Caesar, the reaction to the civil war of Rome's traditional governing elite was more equivocal. As usual, Cicero's correspondence is particularly interesting in this regard. Cicero himself was never in any doubt that Caesar's actions in invading Italy and prosecuting war against his opponents were wrong. Yet it is clear at the same time that he did not feel that the optimates, who had pushed the political situation into civil war, were in the right. He had put all his efforts, in the closing months of 50 and first few weeks of 49, into trying to find some compromise between Caesar and the optimates whereby peace could be maintained.[12] Since war had broken out, he officially accepted the charge of recruiting troops and guarding the region of Capua on behalf of Pompeius, but did nothing except attempt to mediate. Pompeius's evacuation of Italy left him stranded, and in exchanges with Caesar's agents Oppius and Balbus, and with his own friend Atticus, he made clear his dislike of the war and of having to choose sides.[13] In an interview with Caesar himself, he acknowledged that Caesar had been wronged, but spoke up for Pompeius and refused to attend Caesar's Senate meetings.[14] Caesar implored him simply to remain quiet and neutral; but in the end, in May, Cicero made up his mind to join Pompeius, more out of a sense of personal obligation than any conviction of the rightness of the optimate cause.[15]

Cicero's young friend Caelius Rufus, in a letter to Cicero, analysed the prospect of civil war in 50, and although his sympathies were on the side of the traditional governing system, argued that in civil war all traditional allegiances are put on hold and a man must choose the side most likely to win. He deduced that Caesar's veteran army made him the most likely winner. It is interesting that Caelius did not simply declare one side in the right and the other wrong.[16] In the event, many senators and nobles judged as Cicero and

Caelius did: that both sides were morally to blame for the outbreak of war, and the sensible thing was to stay out of it or join the winning side. Most however judged, unlike Caelius, that Pompeius was likely to be the winner. The forces apparently available to him and his reputation as Rome's greatest general still outweighed Caesar's army and achievements in most minds, leading many nobles and much of the Senate to follow Pompeius. Still, in the end more than half of the Senate remained quietly in Italy throughout the civil war, and not many fewer *nobiles* sided with Caesar than with Pompeius, for whatever reasons.[17]

The fall of Corfinium and Caesar's public act of clemency there ensured that Pompeius would have to evacuate Italy, and at the same time confirmed Caesar's popularity throughout Italy. It induced many senators who had been wavering about what to do, to remain peacefully in Italy. There had been much fear that Caesar would prove a cruel and ruthless ruler, a second Sulla, and Corfinium was in part intended to allay that fear. Caesar let it be known that, just as he had no desire to inflict avoidable harm on his opponents, he had no desire to force anyone who had not taken sides to do so. His policy was that anyone who was not openly against him, was for him, and he would leave anyone who did not openly act against him in peace.

Having been held up for seven days by Ahenobarbus's defence of Corfinium, Caesar set out from there with all speed to Brundisium, where Pompeius had concentrated all the forces he could muster in order to evacuate them from Italy. Caesar hoped to prevent Pompeius from leaving, and sent repeated messages inviting Pompeius to meet with him person to person, arguing that it was not too late to settle the whole dispute peacefully if the two leaders could only talk directly to each other. Pompeius refused to meet. He had gathered as many ships as he could, and sent most of his army away on them, under the command of the two consuls. He himself remained at Brundisium with twenty cohorts, waiting for the empty ships to return. Caesar arrived before the ships, and set about trying to besiege Pompeius and block the ships from reaching him, but this failed: the ships arrived, Pompeius embarked his men, and managed to slip out of the port before Caesar could prevent it.[18] It was clear that there was going to be a real war, and it was clear that this was because Pompeius and the optimates wanted it. For his part, Caesar never ceased seeking a peace settlement until the final showdown battle between himself and Pompeius occurred.

Pompeius's strategic choice at this juncture was to sail to Greece and organize a new army based on the troops he had evacuated from Italy, and drawing on all the resources of the eastern Roman Empire, which was solidly on his side. The peoples of the east regarded Pompeius, since his campaigns of the 60s and his settlement of the region, as virtually synonymous with Rome. We may wonder, however, if Pompeius's strategy was really sound and well chosen. He had a veteran army of seven legions in Spain, and joining them with the troops from Italy (about five legions all told) and recruiting new

troops in the region, he could easily have built up an army well in excess of twelve legions with a solid veteran core, with which he could have taken on Caesar's army with some confidence. Raising and training a new army in the east would take much longer and prolong the war.

Once Pompeius was gone, Caesar set out for Rome, where he had to try to organize some sort of government, with most of the year's magistrates and much of the Senate having followed Pompeius. One of the praetors, M. Aemilius Lepidus (son of Pompeius's old opponent in 77) had chosen to side with Caesar, and summoned a Senate meeting on Caesar's behalf. Since many senators had decamped with Pompeius, it was very much a rump Senate that met to listen to Caesar, but the difference between Caesar's Senate and that of Pompeius should not be exaggerated. Cicero famously boasted that Pompeius's camp included ten former consuls, including himself; but at least fourteen former consuls remained in Italy and lent lustre to Caesar's Senate, including some very senior men: P. Servilius Vatia, consul in 79 and almost the oldest living senator, for example; also Caesar's relatives L. Aurelius Cotta (cos. 65), L Julius Caesar (cos. 64), and L. Calpurnius Piso (cos. 58); and a number of other consuls from the 60s and 50s.[19] According to Cicero, though, only a sad rump of senators made an appearance at Caesar's Senate meeting on 1 April, and the Senate's attitude that day proved wholly passive.[20]

Caesar urged the Senate to join him in governing Rome, and especially in continuing to seek peace. The senators willingly concurred with Caesar's notion of a peace mission to Pompeius, but none could be found to volunteer to go: they remembered Pompeius's threat to treat any senators who remained in Rome as enemies. Perforce accepting this, Caesar put Lepidus, as praetor, in charge of Rome with what remained of the Senate to assist him, made M. Antonius responsible for the security of Italy with pro-praetorian power, and took thought for his military strategy. He was helped by the fact that, in their haste to flee Rome, the consuls had failed to empty the treasury. Despite attempts by one of the tribunes, L. Metellus, to block him, Caesar took possession of the millions stored there, in order to fund his operations.[21]

Having won control of Italy and established a governing set up at Rome, the strategic situation that confronted Caesar was certainly a very difficult one, but at the same time it offered interesting possibilities. Caesar's strengths lay in the incomparable quality of his veteran army, battle-hardened through nine years of warfare in Gaul, and in his control of Italy and Rome: for Italy was the recruiting ground for Roman soldiers, and Rome was the seat of government. Even though much of the Senate and most of the magistrates had decamped with Pompeius, controlling and governing from Rome gave Caesar an undeniable form of legitimacy. On the other hand, his position had obvious weaknesses. Rome had not for many decades been sustained from the resources of Italy: food needed to be imported in large quantities from overseas regions (Sicily, Egypt, the Cyrenaica), and Pompeius controlled the

sea. If food became scarce at Rome, Caesar's popularity and control were likely to be diminished rapidly. Spain was still governed by legates loyal to Pompeius, with a veteran army of seven legions under their command. The eastern half of the Roman Empire, with its vast resources, was entirely controlled by and loyal to Pompeius, and he had the example of Sulla to show that a Roman army based in the Hellenistic world could invade and take control of Italy. Caesar had to be concerned about the threat Pompeius's resources in the east and control of the sea represented, and yet he could not afford to commit his forces to dealing with Pompeius's threat as long as a large Pompeian army occupied Spain and threatened to invade Gaul and Italy as soon as his back was turned.

The way Caesar summed up this dilemma – that he faced an army without a leader in Spain, and a leader without an army in the east[22] – was intended to project an air of confidence, and did justice neither to the military experience and ability of the Pompeian generals in Spain (Afranius and Petreius), nor to the army Pompeius was building and training in Greece. However, Caesar did deduce the correct course of action. Pompeius's army needed months of further recruitment and training before it could pose a threat to invade Italy, whereas Caesar could not invade Greece as long as the Spanish army was intact. As a consequence, as galling as it was to leave Pompeius to continue building up his force, it was vital to deal with the Spanish army first. Even more vital, however, was to shore up support in Italy and do something about the food supply of the city of Rome.

Caesar had a praetor, L. Roscius, sponsor a law granting full Roman citizenship to the *Transpadani*, fulfilling a long-standing promise and advertising that he (Caesar) would reward those who supported him.[23] He also dispatched an army of four legions (newly recruited) under Curio to invade Sicily and bring that crucial grain-providing province under his control. If that job was successfully carried out, Curio was to continue on to north Africa, another region from which food supplies could be imported.[24] He gave instructions that ships were to be gathered from every available quarter and concentrated at Brundisium, ready to transport his army to Greece when he got back from Spain. Then Caesar himself set out to join his army of Gallic War veterans who had been instructed to gather in southern Gaul for the invasion of Spain.

When he arrived in southern Gaul, he found another annoying problem facing him. Domitius Ahenobarbus had sailed into Massilia with a small force and persuaded the Massiliotes to side with Pompeius. Neither Caesar's nine years of friendly interaction with the people of Massilia as governor of Provence, nor his clemency shown to Ahenobarbus at Corfinium, abated Ahenobarbus's hatred of him one jot or persuaded the Massiliotes to remain loyal to the governor who had treated them so well. As it was the greatest city and key port in Provence, squarely astride Caesar's lines of communication to Rome, Massilia's hostility was a serious problem. Caesar did not allow it to divert him from the task in hand, however: he initiated a siege of Massilia by

three recently recruited legions and twelve specially constructed siege ships, and left Trebonius and Dec. Brutus in charge of the operation.[25] He himself proceeded to Spain, where veteran legions sent ahead had already secured the passes through the Pyrenees.

Caesar's Spanish campaign is a classic in the annals of warfare. The Chinese philosopher of war Sun Tzu declared that in war 'supreme excellence consists in breaking the enemy's resistance without fighting', and this is what Caesar achieved in Spain. When he arrived in northern Spain, he found that the Pompeians there had concentrated five of the region's veteran legions at Ilerda to fight him, leaving two under the command of the antiquarian Terentius Varro to garrison Further Spain. In addition to the five veteran legions at their disposal, the Pompeian leaders Afranius and Petreius had, according to Caesar's account, some eighty cohorts of Spanish auxiliaries (that is, the equivalent of eight Roman legions in number) and 5,000 cavalry. Against this force Caesar led six veteran legions and about 6,000 cavalry.

Afranius and Petreius had occupied the city of Ilerda, and brought in supplies from the surrounding territory. When they refused to advance onto the open plain in front of the city to meet Caesar's challenge to battle, Caesar realized that he would have to besiege Ilerda, which presented great difficulty because of the terrain, difficulties that were exacerbated by unexpectedly heavy rains leading the two rivers that cut through the plain in front of Ilerda to flood, temporarily trapping Caesar's army between them. News of Caesar's difficulties reached Rome, leading many waverers to decide to join Pompeius so as to be on the winning side. However, constructing boats to cross the swollen river Sicoris, and then building a bridge across it working from both sides, Caesar's men managed to overcome the danger of the flooding, and recover the upper hand. Caesar used his superiority in cavalry to harass enemy foraging parties and eventually pen the Pompeians inside the city. Seeing this, surrounding tribes and communities began to side with Caesar, and Afranius and Petreius decided to leave Ilerda while they still could and move their forces south of the river Ebro.[26]

Here the incomparable zeal and quality of Caesar's veterans showed itself. When they perceived that the Pompeian army was escaping, Caesar's cavalry pursued to harass and slow down the enemy's march, while his legions forded the deep and swiftly flowing river Sicoris and then executed a forced march, whereby they caught up with the Pompeian army, which had had several hours' start on them. In the next few days, by swift and skilful manoeuvring and the extraordinary exertions of his men, Caesar managed to press the Pompeian army into a position where it was isolated on a dry hill without access to food or water. Every enemy move was swiftly countered by Caesar's men; every attempt to reach water or food was harassed by Caesar's superior cavalry and driven back; and before long Afranius and Petreius found themselves obliged to capitulate to Caesar in order to save their men from dying of thirst and starvation.[27]

Thus Caesar overcame the apparently formidable Pompeian army in Spain in just a few weeks of campaigning, and with only minimal losses, without needing to fight any major engagement. Afranius and Petreius themselves were set free to go wherever they might wish: both took advantage of Caesar's clemency by rejoining Pompeius and continuing to fight against Caesar. The Pompeian army was discharged and its men were permitted to return to their homes, except for any who volunteered to continue serving under Caesar. As news of this almost bloodless victory spread, the communities throughout Spain began to side with Caesar, and the Pompeian commander Varro in Further Spain soon found his position untenable. Sending to Caesar an offer to submit, he handed over his troops to Caesar's representative, his cousin Sex. Caesar, and himself rendered a full account of his administration to Caesar in person before returning to Rome and withdrawing from political life. After Caesar had swiftly settled affairs in Spain and left Q. Cassius in charge of the region with four legions as garrison, he set out to return to Rome.[28]

The siege of Massilia had been very efficiently pressed by Trebonius and Brutus, who had reduced the city to dire straits. When news of Caesar's success in Spain arrived, Ahenobarbus took ship on a stormy night and managed to escape from Massilia. The Massiliotes themselves were obliged to surrender to Caesar, who spared them harsh punishment but disarmed the city and imposed a heavy fine.[29] While he was at Massilia he learned that, on receiving news of his victories, Lepidus in Rome had sponsored a law naming Caesar dictator. Leaving two legions to garrison Massilia, therefore, Caesar set out to return to Rome and prepare for the showdown with Pompeius in the east.

On his way to Rome, Caesar confronted the first major sign of strain in his own army: his veteran Ninth legion mutinied at Placentia and demanded the rewards for loyalty Caesar had promised at the outbreak of the war. Apparently the soldiers were annoyed at the restraints imposed on them by Caesar in this civil war: they could not plunder and pillage their opponents, and in Spain had been denied the chance to fight and kill the enemy by Caesar's insistence on avoiding bloodshed if possible. Caesar confronted this mutiny in characteristically bold and decisive fashion. He announced that he would punish their insubordination by decimating the legion (selecting every tenth man by lot for execution), and then dismissing the remainder into private life. Their promised bounties would be granted in due course. The legionaries, who had assumed that Caesar needed them more than they needed him, were astounded, and begged to be forgiven and taken back into service. Eventually Caesar relented, on condition that 120 ringleaders of the mutiny were handed over for punishment. These 120 were then decimated, with the unlucky twelve being inexorably led off to execution.[30]

At Rome Caesar confronted a major credit crisis brought on by the uncertainties of the war. Money had gone underground, interest rates and prices had risen steeply, and debtors had stopped paying off their debts. As dictator, Caesar issued an edict declaring that all property was to be assessed at pre-war

prices, and accepted in repayment of debts at that valuation, and that interest already paid was to be counted against the principal of debts up to a quarter of the original loan. In addition he restricted interest rates, and reinstated an old law to the effect that no one might hold in his personal possession cash in excess of 15,000 *denarii.* The aim was to restore the credit market.[31] Rumours had abounded that Caesar intended to cancel debts, and engage in massive appropriations of private wealth, like a traditional popular revolutionary. In response, Caesar wanted to make clear to the propertied classes that he was not their enemy, and that traditional property rights would be respected, although some measures to grant relief to the most fiscally threatened or burdened were necessary. His aim was to restore confidence and liquidity to the economy, and further to this he rejected emphatically any idea that slaves who denounced their masters for hoarding cash should be rewarded. These measures, to be sure, satisfied neither the propertied nor the indebted, but they did ease the credit crisis for the time being. As an additional measure of relief for the poor, Caesar ordered a distribution of grain and money.[32]

The main purpose of Caesar's dictatorship was most likely to empower him to preside over elections for the following year. As soon as the current year ended and the magistrates with Pompeius ceased to hold office, new magistrates elected under Caesar and from among Caesar's followers would greatly increase the legitimacy of his cause. He was himself elected to his second consulship for the year 48, with as his colleague P. Servilius Isauricus, son of his old commander Servilius Vatia.[33] Provincial assignments were made, and the city of Gades in Spain was granted Roman citizenship in reward for having led the uprising against Pompeius's governor Varro. Other important legislation was sponsored by the tribune M. Antonius: the sons of those proscribed under Sulla were at last restored to full citizenship, and those exiled under Pompeius's law and courts of 52 were recalled, with the explicit exception of Milo.[34]

To complaints that Caesar was surrounding himself with the dregs of society, a veritable *nekuia* (raising of the dead) as Cicero put it, Caesar reputedly replied that even if bandits and cut-throats supported him, he would reward their loyalty.[35] Loyalty, both given and received, was always one of Caesar's primary characteristics and concerns.

With crucial business taken care of at Rome, Caesar resigned his dictatorship and set out to join the army he was concentrating at Brundisium for the confrontation with Pompeius. Twelve legions had been designated for this task, but when Caesar arrived he was disappointed to find that there was not nearly enough shipping available to carry them all. He had other disappointing news to contend with. Curio had succeeded in seizing control of Sicily with the four legions Caesar had entrusted to him; but proceeding to Africa, he had become over-confident and allowed himself to be lured by king Juba of Numidia and his optimate allies into an ambush. Curio's army was destroyed, and he himself died fighting. In Caesar's sympathetic account, he

was determined not to outlive his failure in command.[36] Additionally, forces sent under P. Dolabella to secure shipping in the Adriatic, and under C. Antonius to guard the approaches to Illyria from the south, had been severely defeated.[37] These setbacks to some extent offset Caesar's success in Spain, particularly as news continually came in of Pompeius's control of the sea and massive preparations for a spring assault on Italy.

Under these circumstances, Caesar was determined not to wait for Pompeius to make his move, but to confront him in the Balkans at the earliest opportunity, seizing the initiative as was his habit. Although it was winter and therefore a dangerous time to be at sea, and although he had not enough ships to transport his army, Caesar embarked as many men as he could on the ships available, and set sail for Epirus on the first reasonably calm day. He tells us that he took with him seven legions, but these were far short of the expected strength of about 35,000 men, as he had been refraining from filling up his veteran legions with new recruits and they were now far under strength as a result. The seven legions may have totalled about 20,000 men at this time. Pompeius had nine full-strength legions, as well as large forces of auxiliaries and cavalry, so Caesar took an enormous gamble in crossing with such a small force.[38] The empty ships were sent back at once with orders to bring the rest of the army as soon as possible, but Pompeius's fleet – which was stationed at Corcyra under the command of Bibulus, and had been rather lax in blockading the coast due to the assumption that Caesar would not dare sail at this time of year – learned of his arrival and intervened effectively to prevent Caesar's ships from crossing a second time.[39] Caesar was thereby obliged to confront Pompeius's vastly superior army with his own under-strength force for several crucial months. He had taken a huge risk, as he had done before and was to do again, and has been criticized for this by military analysts. It needs to be borne in mind that such risky decisions and strategies were made by Caesar based on not military calculations, but political ones.

In order to maintain his political strength in the face of the widespread conviction that Pompeius was the more likely winner, Caesar had to keep the initiative and show waverers that he had Pompeius on the back foot. Based on purely military calculations, it might have made sense to rest and restore his legions in Italy, wait for Pompeius to invade, and attack him at his landing site; but politically such passivity would have been suicidal. Political considerations obliged Caesar to gamble, and he relied on his own inventiveness and rapidity of decision and movement, and on his veteran soldiers' incomparable ability to overcome obstacles, to make the gamble work.

Initially, Caesar needed a secure base in Epirus where his soldiers could be stationed and from which he could operate and draw supplies. He quickly seized control of the towns of Oricum and Apollonia, and then worked to take under his control as large a stretch of the Epirote coast as possible, both to give his remaining troops, whom he expected to appear at any time, a secure landing area, and to improve his supply situation, which was difficult to say

the least. There was effectively a stand-off, as Bibulus's fleet blockaded the harbours and prevented any ships from sailing in, while Caesar's soldiers controlled the coast and would not allow Bibulus's ships to land for water or supplies, so that they had to sail to and fro to Corcyra for everything.[40]

Meanwhile Pompeius's army, which had been training in Macedonia and was making its way in leisurely fashion to Epirus for the winter, learned of Caesar's arrival and seizure of Apollonia, causing a panic. Pompeius had not at all expected Caesar to cross the Adriatic, and now had to hasten his march in a desperate rush to reach Dyrrhachium before Caesar could take control of that crucial port also. Dyrrhachium was intended to be the base for Pompeius's spring invasion of Italy, and was full of supplies and equipment of all sorts as a result. Pompeius won the race, and established his army in a fortified camp near Dyrrhachium, while Caesar stationed his army on the south bank of the river Apsus, between Dyrrhachium and Apollonia.[41]

Caesar had brought with him Pompeius's officer Vibullius Rufus, whom he had captured for a second time in Spain, and he sent him to Pompeius with a renewed peace proposal. Caesar pointed out that both sides had suffered serious reverses – himself in the loss of Curio and his army in Africa, and C. Antonius's army in Illyria, and Pompeius in being driven from Italy and Sicily, and losing his army and provinces in Spain – so that it would be wise to arrive at a compromise settlement before either side was harmed further. He proposed that both sides should swear to lay down arms and disband their armies within three days, and that they should let the Senate and people of Rome settle the differences between them. That amounted to a return to politics as normal before the creation of Caesar's and Pompeius's great commands; but this proposal was dismissed out of hand by Pompeius.[42] Since the two armies were stationed not far from each other, however, and soldiers from both were in the habit of going down to the Apsus river on their respective sides for water, a certain amount of fraternizing arose between men on each side, which Caesar encouraged. It culminated in an exchange of harangues between Vatinius on Caesar's side, and Labienus on Pompeius's, at which Labienus had his troops suddenly fire a volley of missiles at Caesar's men and closed things by declaring that the only acceptable peace terms were Caesar's head on a platter.[43]

The blockade by Pompeius's fleet, which was vigorously pressed through the winter despite the death of Bibulus from over-exertion, made Caesar's supply situation more and more difficult, and at the same time prevented the remainder of his army from crossing to join him, causing great anxiety.[44] It is an indictment of Pompeius's generalship that he failed to capitalize on this situation: a truly great general would surely have found a way to force Caesar's under-strength army into a decisive engagement and won the war. That did not happen. Pompeius was content to play a waiting game, trusting to his superior resources to keep Caesar isolated from the rest of his forces in Italy and eventually wear him down. However, as the worst of the winter weather

abated Caesar was able to get a message across to Antonius at Brundisium to embark the rest of the army and risk a crossing at all costs.

On 10 April Caesar was both relieved and alarmed to see the ships carrying his soldiers sailing along the Epirote coast: relieved that they had evaded the Pompeian blockade and crossed; alarmed in that a stiff southerly breeze, while carrying them away from pursuing Pompeian ships, also carried them past both his and Pompeius's camps to land at Lissus, well to the north of Pompeius's base at Dyrrhachium.[45] This gave Pompeius another opportunity for a potentially decisive success, if he could catch Antonius and his relatively small force and destroy it before it could join up with Caesar. Very much alive to the danger, Caesar set out at once, and by heroic marching on the part of his veterans, managed to get past Pompeius's army and effect the junction with Antonius's force, bringing his army up to 34,000 infantry and 1,400 cavalry, and enabling him to offer battle with good prospects of success. He approached Pompeius's position at Asparagium and drew up his forces for battle, but Pompeius kept his army in camp, in spite of a large superiority in numbers, especially of cavalry.[46]

Caesar now tried another of the extraordinarily bold ploys for which he is known as a general. Seeing that Pompeius's camp was some way south of his base at Dyrrachium, Caesar moved inland as if to withdraw from the region, but then by hard marching along narrow tracks managed to insert himself between Pompeius and Dyrrhachium. When Pompeius fortified a camp as close to Dyrrhachium as possible and used ships to ferry supplies from his base into his camp, Caesar built field fortifications down to the coast and began to besiege Pompeius's much larger army. To complete the siege, he had to enclose Pompeius to the south as well. Pompeius knew this quite well, and built his own field works southwards, forcing Caesar to extend his lines ever further southwards in order to besiege Pompeius completely. In the short term, Caesar achieved a signal propaganda success, in that it became known that Pompeius's army was passively besieged by him; and being bottled up on a narrow stretch of coast also had a damaging effect on Pompeius's cavalry, who could neither exercise their horses properly nor obtain sufficient fodder for them. Pompeius responded by ferrying his cavalry out of the encirclement to Dyrrhachium, from where they were able to roam the surrounding countryside and prevent Caesar's forces from foraging, so that Caesar's besieging army became, in a sense, itself besieged.[47]

In the hopes of bringing the war to a quick and final end, Caesar's men endured extraordinary hardship, living on roots and anything they could find that seemed edible. A famous anecdote has some of Caesar's men tossing some 'bread' made from roots into Pompeius's camp, and Pompeius ordering it to be destroyed lest his soldiers find out what beasts they were fighting.[48] In this case, however, Pompeius's tactics proved sounder: in forcing Caesar to keep extending his siege line southwards, he eventually made him over-extend, enabling his troops to break out through Caesar's under-manned line.

As Caesar perceived that the breach was a large one and irreparable, he realized that he was in the greatest danger of being defeated decisively, and worked frantically to draw off his troops and disengage them from Pompeius's army, abandoning his siege works and pulling away into the interior of Epirus. Pompeius, fearing some new trick by Caesar, did not pursue vigorously enough, and lost touch with Caesar's army, allowing it to get away to safety. Caesar remarked to his officers that, if Pompeius truly knew how to win a battle, the war would have been over that day.[49] As it was, Caesar and his men lived to fight another day, and Caesar was forced to rethink his strategy completely. He decided that it had been a mistake to let his army, whose strength was its superb discipline and manoeuvrability, get tied down under such difficult conditions at Dyrrhachium.

Caesar's new strategy was to march into Greece, seeking to draw Pompeius after him in the hope of forcing a showdown on more favourable terrain in Thessaly. He ran the risk that Pompeius might instead sail for Italy, and recover control of Italy and Rome in Caesar's absence, but there was an important factor that made it much more likely that Pompeius would feel the need to pursue. His ally and father-in-law Metellus Scipio was advancing through Macedonia towards Thessaly with two legions from Syria, on his way to join up with Pompeius. Caesar correctly calculated that Pompeius could not risk seeing Metellus Scipio cut off and overwhelmed by Caesar's far superior army.

Caesar himself had, earlier in the spring, detached forces under trusted lieutenants to take control of as much of Greece as possible. In particular, Domitius Calvinus was shadowing Scipio with two of Caesar's legions, and Caesar's hope was to join with him and destroy Scipio's force before Pompeius could come to its rescue. Leaving his wounded and heavier baggage at Apollonia with a few cohorts as garrison, he marched for Thessaly with all the speed he could muster, his hurry dictated also by his lack of supplies. In agriculturally wealthy Thessaly he hoped to find abundant food for his men.[50] His hardy veterans outpaced Pompeius's army readily enough, but news of his setback at Dyrrhachium travelled even faster, and when Caesar reached the border of Thessaly he found that the cities shut their gates against him, having decided that he was the loser in the war. That provided Caesar with the opportunity to let his troops recover their spirit. The first town that refused to admit Caesar, Gomphi, was attacked by his soldiers, who broke in within a few hours and relieved their frustrations (and hunger) in a few hours of killing and pillaging. News of the horrific fate of Gomphi taught the other towns of Thessaly not to despise Caesar's army, so that he was able to gather supplies without much difficulty from here on.[51] In the event, both Scipio and Domitius were able to join their forces safely to the armies of their respective chiefs, and the two forces drew together on the broad Thessalian plain near the ancient city of Pharsalos.

Caesar repeatedly drew up his army for battle on the open plain. Pompeius, encamped on hills overlooking the flat plain, refused to bring his army down

but drew it up on the slopes in front of his camp, confident that Caesar would not send his men to charge uphill at an enemy superior in numbers. Daily cavalry skirmishes occurred, in which Caesar overcame his cavalry's great inferiority in numbers by mixing among them lightly armed infantrymen, specially picked for their youth and agility. In his commentary on this war, Caesar alleges that Pompeius's camp was filled with arrogance and quarrelling at this time. Made overconfident by the success at Dyrrhachium, Pompeius's leading supporters were critiquing him for unnecessarily dragging out the war and hence his own position of command, and arguing about the apportionment of priesthoods and magistracies, distribution of the properties of their opponents, and punishment of all who had not joined them, as if they had already won.[52] Caesar's account is of course partisan; but it is to some extent corroborated by Cicero, who was on Pompeius's side, and was highly critical too of the arrogance, greed and intended cruelty of most of the optimate leaders.[53]

All of this put Pompeius under enormous pressure to give up his preferred strategy of slow attrition, and fight. It is certainly easy to understand the impatience of Pompeius's optimate associates: their army outnumbered Caesar's by about two to one in infantry, Caesar's twelve legions numbering only about 22,000 men at this time while Pompeius had around 47,000. In cavalry the disparity was even greater, more than 7,000 on Pompeius's side against less than 1,500 on Caesar's. Lacking Pompeius's deep military experience and strategic sense, they did not share his belief that battle is always a risk better avoided if you do not need to fight. Yet I cannot help feeling that Pompeius's caution was a sign of age diminishing his self-confidence and fighting spirit, and that a younger and fiercer Pompeius would have fought, and fought better.

At any rate, just as Caesar, according to his own account, was ready to give up hope of a decisive battle and initiate a campaign of marching and countermarching in the hope of exhausting Pompeius's less hardened soldiers and/or manoeuvring Pompeius into a position where he could not avoid battle, Pompeius decided to fight after all. He brought his army forward to the lower slopes of the hill on which he had camped and drew them up in battle formation. He rested his right wing on a stream with steep banks, which protected them from out-flanking, and drew up his entire cavalry force, supported by archers and slingers, on his left. It was clearly his aim to strike a decisive blow with his cavalry, driving off Caesar's inferior cavalry and then outflanking Caesar on his right and rolling up his line right to left. This could certainly have been a successful tactic, but it was hardly very inventive, and the intent was obvious to the enemy.

Caesar's counter-measure, as soon as he had observed Pompeius's formation and divined his intent, was unorthodox and brilliant. Having drawn up his legions in the customary three lines, with the most senior soldiers in the third line and ordered to hang back in reserve, he now withdrew one

cohort from the third line of each legion, and drew them up as a fourth line stationed obliquely behind his right wing, probably about 2,000 in number. The cavalry were instructed to give way to Pompeius's superior force after an initial fight, but when Pompeius's cavalry turned to attack Caesar's infantry in flank and rear, the special fourth-line troops, equipped with lengthened spears, were to charge forward, thrusting the spears up at the chests and faces of the cavalrymen. Caesar exhorted these special troops to fight fiercely, letting them know that the success or failure of the battle depended on them.[54]

When the signal for battle was given, and Caesar's men charged forward, they observed that Pompeius's men held their ground and did not charge to meet them. Pompeius hoped that Caesar's men would be worn out by having to charge forward twice the usual distance, but Caesar's highly experienced troops scotched this hope by spontaneously pausing for a breather halfway to Pompeius's battle line, and then charging home when they had recovered their breath. Caesar criticized Pompeius's decision as detracting from the aggressiveness of his men: battle is a fearful thing, and the act of charging forward in a mass, yelling, screws up the spirits, dampens the fears, and fosters the soldiers' aggression. It does seem that Pompeius made another mistake in having his men await Caesar's soldiers at passive rest.

The Battle of Pharsalos on 9 August 48 BCE was a turning point in Roman history. The hopes of the hard-line optimate ruling elite that they could maintain their traditional domination and traditional way of doing things effectively died on this battlefield. The fight unfolded according to Caesar's plans. Although Pompeius's infantry stood up to the initial charge of Caesar's veterans very steadily and courageously, the battle was decided on Caesar's right. Just as he had planned, when Pompeius's cavalry attempted their outflanking manoeuvre, they were taken by surprise by the appearance of Caesar's fourth line and their fighting tactics, and surprise quickly turned to panic. Pompeius's cavalry fled, harassed in their flight by Caesar's cavalry, and leaving their accompanying archers and slingers to be slaughtered by Caesar's fourth-line troops. These hardy veterans then drove on to outflank Pompeius's left wing, and at the same time Caesar ordered his third line, who had been hanging back, to charge into the fray. The double shock of an outflanking attack on the left and fresh troops joining the fight all along the front broke the resistance of Pompeius's infantry, and turned them to flight. Thus the battle was won and lost by a mixture of too obvious tactics and passivity on one side, against tactical brilliance and tough, experienced aggressiveness on the other.[55]

Pompeius withdrew from the battle as soon as he saw his cavalry routed, and went to his camp to await the final outcome. Caesar urged his victorious men not to let Pompeius's defeated army find a safe refuge in their camp and live to fight again, but to finish the war off immediately by pursuing the fleeing enemy and capturing their camp before it could be secured. This they did, and when the clamour of fighting announced that Caesar's troops

were breaking into his camp, Pompeius fled northward towards Macedonia with a small bodyguard of cavalry. Driven from their camp, Pompeius's soldiers took refuge on some neighbouring heights, but there Caesar's relentless veterans invested them and forced them to surrender by nightfall. Caesar's victory was complete.[56]

Several of the optimates perished in this battle, Ahenobarbus chief among them. Caesar's comment, as he viewed the enemy dead, was 'they wanted this'. He had made it clear from the first that he preferred not to fight, that he was ready to compromise, that he would rather decisions be made through the political process than by warfare.[57] All the same, we can suspect that as much as he would have preferred to avoid the extreme risks of outright civil war, confident in his ability – backed up by his veterans – to out-manoeuvre his opponents in political infighting, he will not have been too unhappy at the outcome. After more than eighty years of recurrent political violence and civil war, Rome needed a definitive decision in the conflict between reaction and reform, and Caesar was determined not to make Sulla's mistake of retiring from political control and allowing the conflict to resume.

In the aftermath of the battle, in which as many as 15,000 of Pompeius's soldiers reportedly died, Caesar had two concerns: to prevent any unnecessary killing once the fighting was over, and to pursue Pompeius to prevent him from raising new forces and continuing the war. With characteristic farsightedness, Caesar always bore in mind that civil wars are temporary, and that today's enemies become once again tomorrow's fellow citizens. He wanted to minimize the war's inevitable bitterness, and his clemency policy was aimed from the beginning at providing a basis for the resumption of normal, peaceful relations with his political opponents once a military decision had been reached. He gave instructions that all opponents who surrendered were to be spared and treated considerately as fellow citizens.[58] Among those who benefited from this policy were, ironically, a number of his future assassins, most famously young M. Brutus. As to Pompeius, he still had potentially large resources to draw upon: his fleet still ruled the sea, his partisans controlled Africa with a victorious army, and there was the possibility that the eastern provinces and client kingdoms might stand by him and provide new soldiers and moneys despite his defeat.

Caesar, following the fleeing Pompeius, arrived at Larissa to learn that Pompeius had recently left that city for the coast with only a few dozen cavalry as his guard. Caesar therefore pursued with a cavalry escort, ordering one of his legions to follow as best it could. The trail led to Amphipolis, where Pompeius was trying to raise money and had a single ship anchored just off shore. When he heard news of Caesar's approach, Pompeius set sail for Mytilene, the home town of one of his closest friends and advisers, Theophanes. From there, after gathering a few more ships, he set sail for Cilicia and then Cyprus. There he received bad news: as the report of Caesar's great victory spread, the cities and communities of the

east were making peace with the winning side and refusing admittance to the losers. Antioch had closed its gates to him, and he could expect no help in Syria. The ex-consuls L. Cornelius Lentulus and P. Lentulus Spinther, following him in his flight, reported that Rhodes had refused to admit them, and the towns of Cyprus now told them to leave too, as word of Caesar's approach spread.[59]

Caesar was making all speed he could in the hope of catching up with Pompeius and ending the civil war by taking him into custody and making some sort of public agreement with him. As usual when he was set on a goal he deemed politically crucial, he had thrown caution to the winds. So we hear that as he crossed the Hellespont in a small boat with only a few soldiers on board to guard his person, he was intercepted by a detachment of ten Pompeian warships which could easily have arrested and/or killed him without so much as a struggle.

In another typical Caesarian episode, far from trying to flee, Caesar ordered his small boat to turn towards the approaching warships and, standing tall in the boat, loudly announced that he was Caesar and would now accept their surrender. Totally bluffed by this, the Pompeian squadron's commander, L. Cassius, meekly surrendered his ships to Caesar's control.[60] Arriving in Asia, Caesar visited Ilion, the supposed hometown of his alleged mythical ancestor Aeneas, and granted the community autonomy and freedom from taxes. Proceeding through the province, he found it in dire economic straits as a result of the fiscal demands of Pompeius and his ally Metellus Scipio, who had extorted huge sums for the war effort. Despite his own need of funds, Caesar freed the Greek cities of the debts they had thus accumulated, reduced their tribute for the future by one-third, and allowed them to gather the tribute themselves rather than leaving collection in the hands of the hated and extortionate Roman tax farmers.[61] Again we see Caesar, in the midst of his preoccupations, giving thought to the sound and honest governance of the Romans' subjects.

In Asia, Caesar learned that Pompeius had sailed for Egypt, hoping to use that kingdom as a refuge and base. That was an odd choice, when Pompeius still had a Roman army loyal to him in Africa, but he no doubt counted on the young king Ptolemy XIII's gratitude for the fact that Pompeius had helped his father regain the throne of Egypt in 57. This proved a mistake. Although the core of Ptolemy's army consisted of Roman troops left there by Pompeius's ally Gabinius when he forcibly restored Ptolemy XII, the young king – or rather his advisers who ruled for the fourteen-year-old youth – did not feel the gratitude Pompeius anticipated, and certainly did not intend to see Egypt made the scene of a continuation of Rome's internal squabble. Pompeius was politely asked to come ashore for an interview with the king. Although his entourage were dismayed at the small boat sent to ferry the great general, which had no room for his guards, Pompeius was reassured to see in the boat a former military tribune of his own army named Septimius,

and went aboard. Septimius, a true mercenary, then killed Pompeius and cut off his head in the service of his new paymasters.[62]

Caesar arrived a few days later with thirty-five warships and 4,000 soldiers, to be given Pompeius's head and signet ring by Ptolemy's advisers, who expected him to be grateful to them for getting rid of his great rival. He was not: to the contrary he was horrified that a great Roman leader and (recent rivalry notwithstanding) long-time friend had been treated so. In another of his characteristic displays of abrupt and daring decision making, Caesar decided to stay in Alexandria and involve himself in Egyptian affairs, before returning to Rome to deal with Roman business.[63] More often than not he made these bold moves work somehow, but this was not one of those occasions. The decision to intervene in Egypt was nearly disastrous to him personally, and certainly harmful in that his attention was urgently needed elsewhere, not least in Italy and at Rome.

Affairs in Italy had not been going smoothly in Caesar's absence. Early in 48 M. Caelius Rufus, who had been elected praetor the previous year when Caesar was dictator, used his position and Caesar's absence to agitate for a far more radical debt relief measure than the one Caesar had passed as dictator. Caelius proposed to cancel debts entirely and suspend the payment of rents for a year. Since they knew that these measures went against Caesar's wishes, the consul P. Servilius and Caelius's fellow praetor Trebonius opposed him. When Caelius resorted to violence, Servilius had the Senate pass its emergency decree, took command of a detachment of soldiers on their way to Gaul, and used them to depose Caelius and drive him out of the city. Caelius now joined up with the infamous Milo, who had illegally returned from exile and gathered some of his old gladiator bands to cause trouble. Caesar's nephew Q. Pedius, however, another of the year's praetors, marched against them with a legion of soldiers and crushed the rebellion: Milo died in battle and Caelius was caught and killed soon afterwards.[64] When news reached Italy of Caesar's victory at Pharsalos, Servilius named him dictator for the second time, and Caesar nominated M. Antonius his *magister equitum* (second in command) and sent him back to Italy with some of his legions to take charge of the situation there.

Antonius proved a less than reliable governor of Italy. He oversaw the confiscation of the property of some of Caesar's irreconcilable enemies, but used the confiscations to try to enrich himself, and in general gave an example of loose living and mismanagement. Meanwhile, the Pompeian fleet had been continuing to harass the coasts of Italy and Sicily under its commanders D. Laelius and C. Cassius, until they heard of Pharsalos. Only when they were sure that Pompeius's defeat was true did they desist, and seek Caesar's pardon. In Spain, Caesar's choice of Q. Cassius as governor had proved disastrous. Cassius was so greedy and cruel that he turned the provincials against Caesar and eventually brought about an uprising among some of his own troops, led by his quaestor Marcellinus.[65] The pro-consul

of nearer Spain, M. Lepidus, had to intervene and try to restore order, but unrest in Spain continued.

In Africa, meanwhile, a significant anti-Caesarian force was being organized based on the troops that had defeated Curio, and king Juba of Numidia's army. Many of the diehard Pompeians and/or optimates, who preferred to flee from Greece after Pharsalos rather than seek Caesar's pardon, gathered there while Caesar was tied up in Egypt. At first the fugitives from Pharsalos had gathered at Dyrrhachium, where Pompeius had left Cato and Cicero in charge. In discussions of what to do in Pompeius's absence and how to continue the fight, Cato – ever the strict constitutionalist – declared that Cicero, as the senior ex-consul, should be in command. The wholly unmilitary Cicero, who had only joined the war out of a sense of personal obligation to Pompeius anyway, was horrified and declined out of hand, announcing his intention to surrender to Caesar and seek clemency. Pompeius's son Cn. Pompeius junior threatened angrily to kill Cicero, but Cato intervened to protect him, and gave Cicero and any others who had decided not to fight on a safe passage to Italy.[66]

Cato himself made his way to Africa, and eventually both of Pompeius's sons, Metellus Scipio, Afranius and Petreius, and Labienus gathered there too, among others. Most of the leaders very sensibly offered Cato the command, but Cato demurred that he had never been consul and that therefore command should go to the ex-consul Scipio. This was another in a long line of cases of Cato choosing technical legal propriety over good sense. There can be little doubt that Cato, who for all his rigidity and untimely scrupulosity that almost amounted to stupidity, was an honest, efficient, determined and universally revered leader, would have made a far better commander than the corrupt, venal and incompetent Metellus Scipio. Still, during Caesar's long preoccupation in Egypt, a formidable force was created in Africa, which Caesar would be obliged to fight at considerable risk once he was free of the Egyptian entanglement.[67] Not the least of this was the force provided by king Juba, who felt a deep personal animosity towards Caesar, going back to the time that Caesar, defending a client against the Numidian king, had seized Juba by the beard in a Roman court, a gesture that was to haunt Caesar in the months to come.

When Caesar had arrived at Alexandria and been given the head of Pompeius, he found a civil war going on in Egypt between the young king Ptolemy XIII's army and forces loyal to the king's older sister Cleopatra. Caesar decided to mediate this dispute, and settled himself into the royal palace with his 4,000 soldiers as guard. He demanded from the king's advisers the payment of some 10 million *denarii* owed to him by Ptolemy Auletes, which the king's chief adviser Pothinus did everything to avoid paying, meanwhile whipping up the people of Alexandria against the Roman intruders. The Alexandrians were in any case inclined to be resentful of Roman interventions in Egypt, and needed little prompting to rise up against Caesar,

who had declared that the king and his sister Cleopatra should appear before his judgment seat to have their dispute settled. When Cleopatra, who was with her army at Pelusium, heard of this, she had herself daringly smuggled into the palace at Alexandria. Reputedly, she had a servant roll her up in a costly rug, and carry her into the palace as a gift for Caesar. When the beautiful gift rug was unrolled in Caesar's presence, out popped the attractive twenty-one-year-old princess, who then proceeded to captivate the fifty-two-year-old Caesar with her charm and intelligence.

Caesar decided that young Ptolemy and Cleopatra should rule jointly as husband and wife, in the Egyptian royal tradition of sibling marriage; but Pothinus was in no way satisfied with this and persuaded the commander of the royal army, Achillas, to enter Alexandria with 20,000 soldiers to 'rescue' the king. Caesar found himself closely besieged in the palace. He had Pothinus executed, but had to endure months of hard and dangerous fighting to preserve himself and his soldiers alive against the attacks of the royal army.[68]

Besides defending the perimeter of the royal quarter, Caesar's chief concern was to retain control of the harbour of Alexandria, so as to maintain a passage for supplies and reinforcements to reach him. In hard fighting, he succeeded. The brilliance of the Rhodian ships he had brought with him contributed much to this. However, on one occasion he was cut off with a detachment of soldiers on a mole of the harbour, and only saved himself from death or capture by swimming to safety, reportedly holding one hand above water with important papers, and towing his scarlet cloak behind him by his teeth. The importance of this success was underscored when a supply convoy with grain and a legion of newly raised soldiers reached him early in 47.[69] The famous report that, in this fighting, the great library of Alexandria was burned down is an exaggeration however: the Alexandrian library is attested as operating unharmed for many more centuries, down to the end of the Roman Empire. At most, an outbuilding with spare volumes stored in it was burned.

Eventually, Caesar sent the young king out to join his army, in the hope that he would bring the siege of the palace to an end, but he simply joined Caesar's enemies. Only when large reinforcements reached him from outside, could Caesar hope to raise the siege he was under, and that finally came about in March of 47. A renegade offspring of (supposedly) Galatian royalty named Mithridates of Pergamon raised an army of local forces from Syria and Palestine, attacked the Egyptian garrison at Pelusium, and managed to force his way into Egypt. He marched down the Pelusiac branch of the Nile to Memphis, which he captured, and then started up the western branch of the Nile towards Alexandria to relieve Caesar. The royal army left Alexandria to intercept him, but as soon as Caesar had news of Mithridates' advance, he too led his forces out of Alexandria and, by hard marching, managed to join up with Mithridates before the royal army could intervene. Caesar then led his combined force in an attack on the royal army, which was crushingly defeated, Ptolemy XIII perishing in the fighting. That left Caesar finally in

control of Egypt: he marched back to Alexandria, which surrendered to him, and placed Cleopatra on the throne with her younger brother nominally as husband and co-king – Ptolemy XIV.[70]

This Egyptian imbroglio had cost Caesar six wasted months, during which his enemies had built up their army in Africa to ten Roman and four Numidian legions, with a strong cavalry force. According to Cicero, people in Rome estimated their chances of defeating Caesar quite highly, and there was even talk of them invading Italy.[71] In addition, the situation in Italy had taken a turn for the worse, as the tribune of 47, P. Dolabella, began to agitate for the same debt relief programme as Caelius, leading to armed clashes between his supporters and forces commanded by Antonius. In this situation of uncertainty, Caesar's veteran legions, being gathered in Campania to prepare for a campaign against the Pompeians in Africa, became restive and began to demand payment of their promised bonuses and demobilization. Antonius had to leave Rome to calm them, leaving the city to chaotic fighting between supporters of Dolabella and a rival tribune named Trebellius; but Antonius could not in the event talk the veteran legions back to obedience.[72]

The situation badly needed the presence of Caesar, who alone could control and solve the issues and problems. Nevertheless, Caesar took time to go on a month's cruise up the Nile with Cleopatra, for which he has often been severely criticized, and understandably so. Politically and militarily, this choice made no sense. But Caesar had been operating at a constant level of extraordinary activity and focus since the start of his consulship in 59, and the strain of those twelve years must have been enormous: not least the strain of the desperate months he had just spent under siege at Alexandria. The impression of his extraordinary energy, almost demonic willpower and unfailing success can make Caesar seem almost super-human, but he was not. We must remember that in the end, he was just a man. Men need to recharge their energies from time to time, and even the best and most dedicated are given to occasional foibles. To be sure, Egypt was a strategically important country. It played an increasingly great role in providing the grain needed to feed the population of Rome, and ensuring that Egypt was settled and in reliable hands was therefore important. To support Cleopatra, Caesar left behind three Roman legions under the command of a certain Rufio, the son of one of his freedmen: an officer chosen above all for personal loyalty and reliability.[73]

At any rate, it was not until June of 47 that Caesar finally left Egypt, and even then he was not yet able to proceed directly to Italy or Africa. The unexpected defeat and death of Pompeius had caused a sensation in the east where, as remarked above, Pompeius had for fifteen years and more been virtually synonymous with Roman power. To the effect of that upset was added, in the winter of 48/47, the news of Caesar's extreme difficulties at Alexandria, and it is hardly surprising that various adventurous rulers or would-be rulers were stimulated to try to take advantage of Roman disarray. Some, like Mithridates of Pergamon, saw their chance in aiding the seemingly strongest Roman

leader. Others pursued a different agenda. One of them was Pharnakes, the son of the great Mithridates of Pontos. In that Pharnakes had played a role in bringing about Mithridates' suicide, and had submitted to Roman domination, Pompeius had left him in charge of the Crimean part of his father's realm. Now Pharnakes thought he saw the chance to recover control of his father's ancestral kingdom, and invaded Pontos with an army, calling on his father's former subjects to support him. Caesar had left the experienced ex-consul Domitius Calvinus in charge of Asia Minor, with what seemed adequate troops at the time, but Calvinus proved unequal to the threat Pharnakes posed: Pharnakes inflicted a decisive defeat on Calvinus near Nicopolis, leaving Calvinus to retreat to Asia with the wreck of his army.[74]

This and the confusion in Syria and Palestine required Caesar to remain in the east until affairs there were properly settled. Caesar arrived in Syria with just one veteran legion, and arranged the affairs of Syria and Palestine according to a few key guidelines. Those who had helped Mithridates of Pergamon's relief expedition to Egypt were rewarded, including the famous Herod's father Antipater; those who had sided with Pompeius were forgiven, if they submitted to Caesar, on payment of suitable fines; and all moneys that had been collected for Pompeius were of course forfeit to Caesar.

Suitably enriched for his further operations, Caesar held audience at Tarsus in Cilicia in the same manner, and then joined Calvinus in central Asia Minor for the task of dealing with Pharnakes.[75] Calvinus had restored his two shattered legions by further recruitment, and the Galatian ruler Deiotarus, who was hoping to win Caesar's forgiveness for having sided with Pompeius, added his territories' forces to Caesar's army. Even so, since Caesar's own veteran legion had dwindled to not much more than 1,000 fit men, the army with which Caesar advanced on the victorious Pharnakes, who had taken up a strong hilltop position near Zela, was rather a scratch force. This was, however, the campaign which Caesar famously summed up in the pithy three word remark: *veni, vidi, vici* – came, saw, conquered. In two days in August Caesar advanced to within a mile of Pharnakes' camp, and on the third day a sharp battle was fought in which Pharnakes' army was destroyed, the discipline and ferocity of Caesar's veteran legion, in particular, proving too much for Pharnakes' levies. Pharnakes fled with a few soldiers to Sinope, but was soon killed by some rebels. Caesar wrote to his close friend C. Matius remarking that Pompeius was lucky to have won such a military reputation against such opposition, rather unfairly as Mithridates had been by far a tougher proposition than his son.[76]

Travelling through Asia Minor towards the coast, Caesar settled the affairs of the region in a hurry, forgiving Deiotarus, rewarding Mithridates of Pergamon, freeing Amisos from taxation, and generally putting things to rights as best he could in such haste. He sailed to Greece and then on to Italy, finally arriving at Tarentum in late September. On the road north he was met by Cicero, who was awaiting Caesar's final decision on his fate with great

anxiety. Caesar was all charm, descending from his carriage to walk with Cicero and talking with him completely as an equal, making it clear that Cicero had nothing to fear. Caesar always appreciated Cicero's many excellent qualities as a writer, a philosopher, a wit and an orator, and had no intention of blotting his name by harming a man he could clearly see would be remembered as long as Latin literature was read and appreciated.[77]

The most urgent task awaiting Caesar's attention was dealing with the optimate army in Africa, but Caesar could not take up that task before arranging things at Rome. In his absence during the latter part of 48 and most of 47 no magistrates had been elected, leaving governance in the hands of those Caesar had appointed in haste, primarily Antonius. Nothing substantial was done. All awaited the guiding hand and decisiveness of the dictator, and much business consequently awaited Caesar at Rome, where he arrived in early October. He quickly arranged the election of magistrates for the brief remainder of the year, with his loyal allies from his first consulship, Q. Fufius Calenus and P. Vatinius, elected as consuls to see out the year.

For the year 46, Caesar himself was elected to a third consulship with M. Aemilius Lepidus as colleague, which involved two breaches of the traditional electoral rules. First, Caesar was legally not eligible for a third consulship until ten years after his second in 48, and second, both he and Lepidus were patricians, breaking the rule that one consul must always be plebeian. From this time on we see that legal niceties were less and less important to Caesar, as compared with what was practical and/or necessary, in his view.

As we have seen, the issue of debt and credit had raised its head again during Caesar's long absence in the east. He now remitted all interest owed since the war's start and freed tenants in Rome of the first 500 *denarii* owed, those in the rest of Italy of the first 125 *denarii*.[78] After this measure to relieve the worst of the debt crisis, while still assuring creditors that there would be no mere cancellation of debt or expropriation, Caesar had to turn his attention to preparing for the next round of warfare. Before he could cross to Africa, he had to settle the unrest among his veterans. Various emissaries sent to quell the mutiny among his legions, including this time even his favourite Tenth legion, were unsuccessful, and the legions finally decided to march on Rome to demand their rewards and demobilization from their chief himself.

Against the advice of his friends, who feared the ugly mood of the veterans, Caesar went out alone in his *imperator's* garb to address his men in the Campus Martius, just outside Rome proper. He strode up to the general's platform, and addressed his soldiers not, as was his custom, as *commilites* (fellow soldiers) but as *quirites* (citizens). He assured them that he had no further need of their service; he would take other, more loyal troops with him to Africa, and when he had defeated the last of his enemies there, he would pay the promised rewards to his veterans despite their disloyalty. The effect was as magic. Immediately the truculence of his soldiers vanished, and they – who had come to hear Caesar beg them to remain loyal – instead

begged their revered and beloved commander to forgive them and take them back into his service.[79]

He did so, of course: his bold words notwithstanding, he needed these men, but he was not going to let himself be dictated to by them. The bond between Caesar and his veteran soldiers was a remarkable one, seldom equalled in the annals of warfare and I dare say never surpassed. It was above all the presence of Caesar that his men had been missing for months, and it was Caesar's sheer presence that composed their anger and restored their willingness to do what was necessary. Caesar then explained in some detail his plans to reward them with allotments of land when their service was completed; but although he did not punish his men for their mutiny, he did note the names of the ringleaders for use on specially dangerous missions in the fighting to come. He resigned his dictatorship, and arranged for his army to be concentrated in southern Sicily, at Lilybaeum, the usual port of departure for Africa. We hear that when he joined his men there in December (really September, as the calendar was still out of whack), he pitched his tent on the spit of land extending farthest out towards Africa, to symbolize his eagerness to cross over and get to grips with the enemy.

As in 49, his most immediate problem was a lack of adequate shipping, and in addition four of his veteran legions had not yet arrived from Campania. Nevertheless he set out as soon as he could with six legions, only one of which was a veteran legion. He could not give his ships' navigators a specific destination, merely telling them to sail for Africa and let circumstances dictate where a landing would be feasible. He knew only that the main enemy base was Utica, to the north-west of Carthage, and that his destination must therefore be the south-eastern shore of the province. Unfortunately bad weather scattered his ships, so that Caesar eventually landed near Hadrumetum with only 3,000 infantry and 150 cavalry, and with no knowledge of where the rest of his soldiers were. As he disembarked, he stumbled and fell, but with typical presence of mind turned what his soldiers might have seen as an unlucky omen in his own favour by grasping the earth and crying aloud '*teneo te, Africa*' (I have you, Africa).[80]

Finding Hadrumetum held by a strong enemy garrison, he marched south to Leptis Minor and established his base there, where he was joined on 4 January by the rest of his troops. On a foraging expedition, he was unexpectedly attacked and nearly cut off from his main force by cavalry under Labienus, who was soon joined by an infantry force under Petreius, but with his usual coolness and strategic sense Caesar managed to hold his small foraging force together and force his way to a string of hills, along which he was then able to retreat to his base.[81]

For some weeks, the campaign bogged down into a positional struggle, made difficult for Caesar by the enemy's superiority in cavalry and his consequent need to supply his troops mostly by sea. The optimates had an excellent opportunity here, having Caesar pinned down with inadequate numbers and

a difficult supply situation, but they failed to capitalize on it. The optimate force had an inspirational and universally revered leader in Cato, and an excellent general who thoroughly understood Caesar's military methods in Labienus, but they failed to make proper use of either of them. Thanks to Cato's legal scruples, Metellus Scipio was in command, and he had made sure to leave the unpleasantly influential Cato far from the scene of operations, in command of Utica. And Labienus was neither a noble nor a man of great seniority: he was overshadowed in Scipio's councils by the likes of Petreius and Afranius. Scipio liked to boast of the fated invincibility of all Scipios in Africa – referring to the great Scipio Africanus and his grandson Scipio Aemilianus, who had first defeated and then destroyed Carthage – but Caesar jokingly countered this by placing one of his own junior officers, P. Cornelius Scipio Salutio, in nominal command of his army.[82] In plain fact, Metellus Scipio was far from being a great commander, or even a good one, and was certainly over-matched by Caesar. The supply difficulties Caesar somewhat mitigated by inducing king Bocchus of Mauretania to send a renegade Roman officer in his employ, one P. Sittius, to invade Numidia, obliging king Juba to withdraw his forces temporarily to defend his kingdom.

Meanwhile, Caesar also brought over to his side the Gaetuli in the interior of Africa and Numidia, and spread propaganda about the folly of Roman soldiers serving under the ultimate authority of the Numidian Juba, instead of a duly elected Roman magistrate like Caesar himself, leading to defections from the optimate camp. When Caesar's four veteran legions finally joined him, he decided that he was ready to force the war to a conclusion. Since Metellus Scipio consistently declined to come out to fight a battle, Caesar had to find a way to force him to do so. As Sun Tzu put it, to force an enemy to fight one must 'appear at points which the enemy must hasten to defend'. Caesar made for the port of Thapsus, which was strongly held by the enemy, and forced Metellus Scipio to come after him to the city's defence.[83]

Thapsus lay on a peninsula, separated from the mainland by a lagoon, but connected to it by two narrow isthmuses. Caesar had entered the peninsula, so that in order to try to defend the city, Scipio had to divide his forces and attempt to blockade each of the two isthmuses. That was Caesar's opportunity. As part of Scipio's army, led by Scipio himself, tried to block the northern isthmus, Caesar sent in a force of his veterans to attack them, and after some sharp fighting they were driven off in panic flight. Meanwhile other troops had engaged the rest of Scipio's army at the southern isthmus and driven them back, and the arrival of the victorious veterans from the fight at the northern end in the enemy's rear completed the enemy's rout.

Although Caesar had, as usual, given instructions to spare any enemies who wished to surrender, his soldiers refused to do so, killing upwards of 10,000 enemy soldiers and many optimate officers in their fury at the enemy's determined continuation of the war in spite of repeated defeat and forgiveness. When Caesar's officers tried to restrain them, they even turned

on them, regarding them – as nobles – as being also responsible for the war they had been obliged to fight for so long now. Of course it was easy to blame others: the soldiers fought as much out of self-interest – to secure rewards of money and land – as anyone else in this conflict.

Scipio escaped from the battle, but died at sea when intercepted by some ships of the renegade P. Sittius. The great Sulla's son Faustus was also captured and killed by Sittius, as was Afranius, on Caesar's instructions: even Caesar's clemency had its limits. Petreius and Juba fled to Juba's capital Zama, only to find that news of their defeat had preceded them and the city had locked its gates against them. Rather than fall alive into Caesar's hands, they fought a duel against each other to the death. Petreius was the unlucky winner, and then had a loyal slave stab him to death in turn.[84] Labienus and Pompeius's two sons Cnaeus and Sextus, however, escaped to fight again.

Caesar himself left five legions to finish mopping-up operations in the south, and with the rest of his army marched north to Utica, the optimates' base of operations in Africa, and the city most escapees had fled to. Cato, in command there, initially tried to put the city in a state of defence; but when it became clear that the citizens did not wish to fight, he helped any Romans who wished it to get away, and then himself committed suicide on the eve of Caesar's arrival. He did not wish to receive Caesar's clemency. As he is said to have put it, 'I do not wish to be indebted to a tyrant for his illegal actions. He acts against the laws, when he pardons men over whom he has no sovereignty, as if he were their master.' This statement, quoted in Plutarch's biography, is often cited admiringly as evidence of Cato's outstanding virtue as a man and political leader.[85] So far as sincerity and integrity go, Cato perhaps deserves the praise. But if it were not for the fact that he appears to have believed in his position with perfect sincerity, it would be all too easy to find a certain hypocrisy in Cato's words. He was in Utica, a city of Phoenician colonists in north Africa, commanding the city and deciding the fate of its inhabitants, and of other Romans and Italians there, as of some right he felt he possessed. Whence came that right?

What made a Roman noble like Cato able to command and decide the fate of people in north Africa? The answer, of course, is the force of Roman arms: nothing more or less than that. And it was also, at bottom, Roman arms that put Cato in charge of fellow Romans: he held no legal post or mandate from the Roman people. What made Caesar able to decide the fate of others, including Roman nobles like Cato himself, was the same as what gave Cato such power as he had: the force of arms, Roman arms, Roman soldiers who decided to obey him and enforce his will. And in Caesar's case he did have, for what it was worth, the mandate of the 'Roman people's' election to back up his position of authority, too. Calling Caesar a 'tyrant' was a cheap and easy political jibe: it should be remembered that Cato had considered Pompeius a 'tyrant' too, until Pompeius came around to his way of seeing things, or at least became useful to his (Cato's) political

programme. Cato was sincere enough, and in that sense a man of integrity; but he stood for the untrammelled power of a corrupt clique who had nothing to recommend them but a long tradition of holding power. He could not bring himself to see that there were others in Rome, in Italy, in the wider Mediterranean world who wanted and deserved something better than to be mercilessly exploited by men whose sole claim to power was descent from consuls of the past. Nevertheless, his suicide made Cato a martyr to his cause, and he has been revered ever since as the ideal type of the political leader of selfless uprightness and rectitude.

Caesar settled Africa as rapidly as he could, imposing fines on the Roman citizens and African communities that had supported his opponents, both as a punishment and to meet his need for funds, and placed the later historian Sallustius Crispus (known to us as Sallust) in charge of the province as proconsul. The more troublesome elements in his veteran legions, Caesar now separated and granted lands in Africa in two new colonies at the coastal towns of Clupea and Curubis. He then sailed back to Italy via Sardinia, where he also collected moneys.[86] He had been appointed dictator for the third time, and had a great deal to do to organize the Roman state and empire after the enormous disruptions of the civil war. To celebrate and both impress and reward the people, he held four successive triumphs – over the Gauls, over Egypt, over Pharnakes, and over king Juba – each accompanied by great pomp and magnificence. Of course his Roman opponents of the civil war were not mentioned, though they were clearly hinted at in the African triumph.[87] But it turned out that the civil war was not yet quite over and done with.

Through most of the rest of 46 Caesar was able to stay at Rome and work at the peaceful task of reorganization and revitalization of Rome, Italy and the Empire, as we shall see. But all the while, the seeds of further conflict, which had been sown in Spain by Caesar's disastrous choice of the greedy and cruel Q. Cassius as governor in late 49, were blossoming into the last stage of the civil war. It was to Spain that Labienus and Pompeius's sons, along with many other fugitive Pompeian and optimate officers, had fled after Thapsus. Caesar attempted to curb the growing 'rebel' forces in Spain by sending subordinates to deal with them: at first C. Trebonius, then Q. Pedius and Q. Fabius Maximus. They were unsuccessful, however, and by the middle of 46 the younger Cn. Pompeius was commanding a force in Spain that was nominally thirteen legions strong, with his brother Sextus and Labienus as two of his main subordinates.[88]

Finally, in November, Caesar found himself obliged once more to take up command in person in Spain. Few of his veteran legionaries were still on active service to stand by him in this final campaign of the civil wars, and he made it clear later that he found this one of the most difficult campaigns of his career. Most of the optimates and Pompeians who still survived had long ago made peace with Caesar, and even most of them found themselves in a

quandary at this time as to what outcome to hope for. Cn. Pompeius and Labienus were harsh men, and were threatening the most cruel and brutal reprisals on all opponents and insufficiently loyal former allies. Even Caesar's later assassin C. Cassius remarked in a letter that, given the character of the younger Pompeius, it would be best if 'our old and clement master' (that is, Caesar) were to win.[89] And win Caesar did, but not without a very hard fight. Now that the Pompeian and optimate ranks had been so thinned of men of nobility and seniority, Labienus was finally able to come to the fore in the Pompeian camp and match his generalship against that of his former chief and now bitterly hated enemy.

During late 46 and early 45, Caesar gradually got the upper hand in a war of position and attrition, so that it became clear the Pompeians would have to face him in battle. The two armies came together at Munda in southern Spain, in March of 45. Of Caesar's famous veterans, only the glorious Tenth legion and the Gallic legion called the 'Alaudae' were with him: the rest of his troops were newer recruits. The battle was long and hard, and not marked by any particular strategic or tactical inventiveness. At first, Caesar's men were very hard pressed; at the height of the battle, the Tenth legion itself nearly turned to flight, and Caesar had to intervene in the fighting in person to steady it.[90] The crucial moment, however, came about through a tactical error by Labienus. Caesar was strong in cavalry, which was gathered on the left for a decisive charge. Seeing this, Labienus withdrew some cohorts from his left and ordered them to march across behind his line to reinforce his right and stem the expected Caesarian cavalry charge, a manoeuvre reminiscent of Caesar's at the battle of Pharsalos. But Caesar had stationed this special force in preparedness before the start of the battle; Labienus's manoeuvre took place at the height of the battle. Seeing troops moving behind them, and not knowing who or why, the Pompeian forces seem to have assumed that either their fellow soldiers were defeated and running, or an enemy force was about to attack them in the rear. Either way, the uncertainty and fear broke them, and they turned to flight. Caesar's victorious army pursued in the midst of great slaughter: Caesar's clemency was now virtually exhausted. Some 30,000 of the Pompeian army are said to have fallen in this battle, Labienus among them, dying in the bitter awareness of never having been able to get the better of Caesar. The brothers Pompeius fled in different directions. Cnaeus was killed in flight, and his head brought to Caesar at Hispalis. Sextus got away to Corduba and then out to sea, where he took up a career as a pirate.[91]

The last word on the civil wars, and on the reverence Caesar's soldiers had for their commander, should go to the junior officer – perhaps, it has been suggested, a veteran centurion – who composed the 'Commentary' on the Spanish campaign that has come down to us under Caesar's name. He makes Caesar say to the citizens of Hispalis, 'Did you not realize that my legions could pull down the sky around you?'[92] That was the confidence of Caesar's

veteran legionaries, and their commitment to their leader, that made the outcome of the civil wars what it was: total defeat for the forces of tradition, of the optimate cause; victory at every point for Caesar and the cause he led. What that victory would mean remained to be seen. At any rate Caesar had already begun to make it clear that there would be no return to the old order.

X

CAESAR THE DICTATOR

On the evening of 14 March of the year 44, two of Rome's palatial aristocratic mansions were filled with important guests at sumptuous dinner parties. At the house of the great patrician Marcus Aemilius Lepidus, Caesar's *magister equitum* (second-in-command), an exceptionally distinguished group was gathered, including – besides Caesar himself and his closest associates like Oppius and Balbus – the alluring Egyptian queen Cleopatra, Caesar's friend and co-consul Marcus Antonius, and ironically Decimus Brutus, who was conspiring against Caesar. His position in the state no doubt required Caesar to attend many such dinner parties, though he was not really very much interested in food and drink. Being an extraordinarily busy man, he withdrew somewhat from the general conviviality, and passed the time reviewing state papers with his various secretaries and signing documents. Meanwhile the topic of conversation among the (presumably well-oiled) guests had turned to a discussion of the best kind of death. At this, in one of his disconcerting displays of his ability to fix his attention upon multiple matters at the same time, the seemingly distracted Caesar unexpectedly interposed his view: a sudden and unanticipated death was the most to be desired.[1]

Ironically, the guest list at the other great dinner party, held at the home of the praetor Caius Cassius Longinus to celebrate the fact that his son would, on the next day, assume the *toga virilis* – the symbolic rite of passage marking the young Roman's transition from childhood to manhood – was made up of many of those who were planning to assassinate Caesar, thereby giving him the very sort of death he expressed a preference for.[2] The famous assassin Marcus Brutus was the most distinguished guest at this party. On the very next day, the Ides of March, Caesar was to get his wish – a sudden and unexpected death – at the hands of Cassius, Brutus and their co-conspirators.

The conspirators who assassinated Caesar on that infamous Ides of March of 44 BCE, reputedly more than 60 in number, included many close associates of Caesar from his years in Gaul as well as the civil war – notably Decimus Brutus, Caius Trebonius and Ser. Sulpicius Galba – and many men who, having initially sided against Caesar in the civil war, had surrendered and been granted clemency and subsequent political advancement by Caesar,

most notably the host C. Cassius and M. Brutus, who were both praetors of this year through Caesar's favour.[3] We may wonder what caused long-time friendly collaborators with Caesar, and men who had reason to be grateful for Caesar's lack of vindictiveness in victory, to band against him in a conspiracy to assassinate him. The answer lies in the way Caesar held power, and the nature of his wielding of power, both in the past, since the outbreak of the civil war, but more importantly the way in which the conspirators understood that Caesar planned to hold and wield power in the future.

The Roman nobility had a deeply ingrained belief in the traditional collegial, turn-and-turn-about system of oligarchic governance. They also had an exceedingly exclusivist view of their own right, as descendants of old noble families, to hold the top positions in the political hierarchy at Rome. Caesar upset their applecart on both of these counts. His autocratic position in the state, to which they could see no end except in Caesar's death, aroused their opposition. Perhaps even more important though, his inclusion of non-nobles, relatively recently Romanized Italians, and even some non-Italians in the circles of political power, which was clearly intended to be permanent, aroused their bitter anger and hostility. To such men it seemed that only one conclusion could be drawn: Caesar must go and the traditional governing system must be restored.

Victory in the civil war left Caesar in control of the Roman world, just as Sulla had been a little over 30 years earlier. Like Sulla, Caesar expressed his controlling position by having himself appointed dictator. The office was a traditional part of the Roman governing system, though it had fallen out of use after the Hannibalic War until Sulla's revival of it, and it gave the holder the sort of unrestricted power – free from the tribune's veto and the other obstructions built into Rome's political system – that Caesar needed. His first dictatorship, in 49 on the nomination of M. Lepidus, was strictly an emergency office and was held only for a short period. The second dictatorship, to which Caesar was appointed by the consul Servilius Isauricus in autumn of 48, lasted for a full year until the autumn of 47. It too could be seen as an emergency measure, in that the state was in civil war and everything depended on what the victor in that civil war would choose to do. In the spring of 46, however, Caesar was appointed to a series of ten annual dictatorships which, since he was at nearly 54 already older than most Romans ever lived to be, meant that he would presumably remain dictator for most or all of his remaining life.[4] The latter was made formally the case early in 44, when it was decreed that Caesar was to be *dictator perpetuus*, dictator for life.[5]

This was a radical departure from the traditional form and use of the dictatorship, which was intended as an emergency magistracy with a strictly limited lifespan: the appointee should hold office only as long as the emergency situation lasted or for six months, whichever was shorter. That is, the maximum term of the magistracy was supposed to be six months, but the holder was expected to resign if he managed to end the emergency situation

short of that six-month term.[6] Sulla had already breached that traditional dictatorship, by taking the office for an unlimited term and holding it, in the end, for the better part of three years. Yet Sulla did finally resign his dictatorship, indicating that the emergency situation he had been appointed to deal with was over, and return to private life. By taking the dictatorship at first for ten years, and then for life – and reputedly publicly declaring that Sulla was a political ignoramus for laying down his dictatorship – Caesar made it clear that the autocratic powers the dictatorship gave him were to be a permanent feature of Roman political life, at least so long as he was alive.[7] By implication too, Caesar made it clear that he felt Rome needed an autocratic leader to preside over the political system with the power to guide and control the process and the individual politicians.

That was hardly a new or unexpected view on Caesar's part, as unwelcome as it undoubtedly was to many of the nobles. The need for a dominant leader to oversee the political system had already been acknowledged at Rome in the years before the civil war, both in political philosophy and in practical politics. Cicero, an admirer of the traditional governing system, wrote his treatise *de re publica*, loosely based on Plato's *Republic*, during the late 50s.[8] In it he idealized the Roman governing system as it had been in the time of Scipio Aemilianus and Caius Laelius, in the period immediately before the era of the Gracchi, that is in the 140s and early 130s. Yet his political reflections were clearly meant to have relevance to his own time. He expressed the need for the Roman system, in order for it to function smoothly and well, to have a sort of overseer – his term was *rector* – who could use a universally acknowledged *auctoritas* (influence, essentially) to maintain order and prevent individual politicians from harming the governing system.[9] His notion was that Scipio Aemilianus, aided by his wise friend and adviser Laelius, had played that role in his day, and that Rome needed such a leader in every generation. By clear implication, Pompeius was to play the role in Cicero's own time, and it may well be that Cicero envisaged himself as the Laelius to Pompeius's Scipio. In Cicero's idealization, however, the *rector* would hold no actual powers but would be heeded, and if not actually obeyed, at any rate deferred to by other politicians voluntarily out of respect for his *auctoritas* and the ideas and system for which he stood. That was, needless to say, a pipe dream.

If Roman political life of the decades leading up to the 50s, and of the 50s themselves, showed one thing, it was that the unruly and self-seeking Roman nobility could only be tamed by force, and the political system was ruled by force. As a practical political matter, Pompeius had indeed effectively risen to the position of *rector* of the state in 52, but he had not done so by wielding *auctoritas*. The dire political crisis which reconciled the optimates to Pompeius's dominant position was brought about by rampant violence and corruption, and it was solved by Pompeius through the deployment of overwhelming force, which he wielded through his possession of *imperium* (power of command), not *auctoritas*. All the same, by agreeing to

Pompeius's sole consulship and the measures he took as sole consul, and to his five-year prolongation of his pro-consular power while remaining on the outskirts of Rome ready to intervene again with force if necessary, the optimates and the rest of the Senate and nobility accepted that Pompeius would be for the foreseeable future the *rector* of the Roman political system, with the power to guide and control through the application of force as and when he deemed it needed.

Caesar's permanent dictatorship was merely a stronger and more overt form of that widely acknowledged need for a dominant overseer to prevent the violence and corruption of Roman political life from getting out of hand. Men like Cicero acknowledged that Pompeius would most likely not have laid down his powers and ceased being the supreme overseer of Roman politics – under whatever title(s) – had he won the civil war.[10] Even a man like C. Cassius acknowledged, as we have seen, that Caesar's domination was to be preferred to the likely alternative to be expected from Pompeius's sons. Yet in spite of all, nobles continued to hope that the traditional governing system would be restored by Caesar and allowed to function once again untrammelled. Cicero expressed that hope in a public oration in 46.[11] Even a strong supporter of Caesar like the historian Sallustius, if he was really the author of the two *epistulae ad Caesarem senem* (letters to Caesar the 'elder') as I believe he was, expected Caesar at some point to step aside and allow a reformed version of the traditional governing system to function freely.

It was almost impossible for Romans of the senatorial class to understand that in future they could not and would not be permitted to run the Roman Empire without a dominant leader to rein them in and hold them to account. Over the course of the previous century, they had proved unworthy, certainly untrustworthy, by again and again giving free rein to seemingly insatiable appetites for corruption, violence, brutality and jealous exclusivity, to say nothing of their all too frequent mismanagement. Consequently Caesar had no intention of giving up the reins of power and control. The only question was how such oversight and control was to be maintained after his own death. This is why Caesar is reported to have remarked that the state needed him to live on much more than he himself needed to live longer. He could clearly see that in the absence of himself, or someone capable of fulfilling the same autocratic role, the political system would inevitably once again decline into violence and civil war.[12] His tragedy, and Rome's tragedy, was that he was one of the very few in the Roman upper class who did perceive this.

Besides the autocratic position of Caesar himself as dictator, the other major gripe the old nobles had with Caesar's governance was its lack of proper exclusivity. Since the first rumblings of what became the Social War, in Caesar's childhood and youth, the question of full and equal access to citizenship and the political career for Italians had been a burning political issue. Caesar's uncle and father-in-law, Marius and Cinna, had as we have seen come out firmly in favour of granting such access; their political movement had

been brutally suppressed by Sulla and the optimates as a result. Throughout his political career, Caesar had stood for the policy of Marius and Cinna, and even for further extension of that policy to new groups of allies/subjects who were suitably qualified to receive Roman citizenship: the *Transpadani* in the first place. As dictator and victor in the civil war, Caesar had the power to implement this policy, finally. We have seen that extension of the citizenship to the *Transpadani* was one of his first acts.

It is important to note that he really did open the Senate and the political career ladder to new men, as he had promised. Although men of old noble families were not neglected when it came to holding the consulship under Caesar – for example P. Servilius Isauricus was consul in 48, M. Aemilius Lepidus in 46, Q. Fabius Maximus in 45, and M. Antonius and P. Cornelius Dolabella in 44 – new men rose to the consulship in these years in equal proportion: P. Vatinius and Q. Fufius Calenus in 47, C. Trebonius and C. Caninius Rebilus in 45, A. Hirtius and C. Vibius Pansa designated by Caesar for the consulships of 43. Many of the known praetors who held office under Caesar are also from previously obscure, 'new' families: we find such names as M. Caelius Rufus, Q. Pedius, C. Rabirius Postumus, C. Calvisius Sabinus, C. Carrinas, T. Furfanius Postumus, C. Sallustius Crispus, C. Asinius Pollio, Q. Cornificius, L. Munatius Plancus, L. Staius Murcus, L. Tillius Cimber, C. Cestius, C. Cusinius, Sp. Oppius, C. Turranius and M. Vehilius. These were not names that had filled the lists of Roman consuls of the Republican era, though many of them were to crop up on the consular lists of future decades. Families like those of Caelius, Sallustius, Asinius, Staius, Munatius and so on came from the *domi nobiles*, the Italian aristocracies who had been jealously kept out of the circles of power since the Social War by the traditional nobility. It was for his promise of standing by the Cinnan policy of equal access that such men, and the class of the *domi nobiles* in general, had backed Caesar before and during the civil war, and in the lists of senior magistrates of this period we see their reward.[13]

It was not only at the very top that we find this generous policy put into effect by Caesar. In replenishing and expanding the Senate, Caesar brought into that governing council many men from families that had not previously been of senatorial standing, drawn from all over Italy. Indeed, to the shocked dismay of the remaining optimate sympathizers, some new senators even came from beyond Italy proper: from the newly made citizens of Cisalpine Gaul, even a few from the Romanized elites of the old province of Transalpine Gaul. We hear that some would-be 'wits' posted notices around Rome suggesting that no one should be willing to give these 'foreign' senators directions to the Senate House.[14] Picking up on this sentiment, at his Gallic triumph, Caesar's soldiers sang satirically of how Caesar obliged the Gauls to switch their traditional trousers for the senator's purple-bordered toga. What these 'traditionalists' refused to see was that Caesar was the truer traditionalist in his generous policy.

Rome had grown great by progressively incorporating defeated peoples into the Roman citizen body, and their leaders into the Roman governing class. The decision by the senators of the 180s to cease expanding the citizen body in this way was a break with tradition. Caesar's generous expansion of the citizen body and the governing elite was a reversion to the true old traditions of Rome. But it won him bitter hostility from those – the surviving optimates, forgiven but not truly reconciled, and their sympathizers – who believed that the exclusivity introduced by the generation of the elder Cato represented the only *mos maiorum* (ancestral tradition) one should adhere to.

Firmly entrenched at the top of the political system as dictator, and supported by a broad coalition of those traditional nobles who were willing to accept change, aspiring Italian aristocrats, new citizens and his adoring veteran legions, Caesar used his power to carry out an astonishing array of reforms which began the reshaping of Roman politics and society. It is remarkable that Caesar, in the midst of his constant military distractions, found the time, energy and sheer inventiveness to propose and carry through a reform programme touching almost every aspect of Roman life. But he had always been characterized by an almost demonic energy, and by a daring intellectual inventiveness, as we have seen. Although some of his reforms can be dated exactly, on the whole no precise chronology of his political activities and reforms in the years 47–44 can be established, and the precise order in which he carried his reforms is in any case not very important. It seems best, therefore, to review his reforms and proposals by topic or theme, so as to get a good overall impression of the scope and significance of his reform programme.

First place should probably go to his *political reforms*, since it was the breakdown of the Roman political system that brought him to civil war and hence to power. No doubt his most important and controversial political reform was simply his assumption of the perpetual dictatorship which gave him the role of overseer of the political process. By that post, he was able to prevent the sorts of abuses and violence that had marred the closing decades of the Republican era. In order to reduce the unhealthy competition for office that had fuelled much of the corruption and violence of Roman politics, Caesar nominated the candidates for political office as dictator, at first informally and seemingly for all posts, but then he took/received the formal right to nominate candidates to half of all annual magistracies – although in effect he still tended to control the elections as a whole fairly thoroughly.[15]

Caesar refilled the Senate, which had been seriously depleted by war – a censorial responsibility – and then significantly increased its size, reportedly to 900 members or half as large again as it had been under Sulla's laws. Many of the new senators, as pointed out above, came from non-traditional backgrounds, in line with his policy of invigorating the senatorial class with new blood drawn from all of Italy and beyond.[16] He also increased the number of annual magistrates: the praetors went from 8 to 16; the aediles from 4 to 6 by

the addition of a new college of two *aediles ceriales* with specific responsibility for the public grain supply and storage; and the quaestors were increased from 20 to 40.[17] Although he did not find it expedient to increase the number of consuls serving at any one time beyond the traditional two, he did begin to make more extensive use of suffect consulships – having one or more consul(s) resign during the year and be replaced by (an) additionally elected consul(s) – thereby in fact increasing the number of consuls beyond the traditional two per year.[18]

This increase in magistrates served at least three purposes: it further reduced the unhealthy competition for office, it provided more officials able to undertake the increasing public business of the expanded Roman Empire, and it allowed more Italians and other non-nobles to rise to high office. In view of the larger senatorial class, and the much expanded equestrian class since the inclusion of Italians and *Transpadani* as Roman citizens – as well as the reduction of excessive partisanship his own oversight offered – Caesar revised the juries of the great public *quaestiones*, providing that they be made up half of senators and half of equestrians for the future, ending the role of the slightly lower *tribuni aerarii*.[19] Further, since there were more magistrates available to take up the role of provincial governance, and any large-scale imperial tasks would in future be taken on by himself or his nominee(s), he felt able to limit governorships of provinces to one year for a former praetor, and two years for a former consul.[20]

With regard to what could be termed *social reforms*, the most important were Caesar's measures to deal with the issues of impoverishment and regulating the population. Since Clodius's institution of the free grain dole, the list of annual recipients of this handout had ballooned to over 300,000. Caesar carried out a careful revision of this list, and reduced the recipients to 150,000, greatly easing the burden on the treasury and on the grain supply facilities. The praetors were made responsible for maintaining this list in the future, adding a new recipient to the list whenever one died.[21] He did this in part by removing from the list men who had no real need for free grain from the state, but above all thanks to his colonization programme, which saw upwards of 80,000 citizens transferred to colonies founded outside of Italy – in Africa, southern France, Greece (Corinth), and elsewhere – where they could start prosperous new lives at the same time as Rome's overcrowding was eased.[22] Of course he also had a parallel colonization programme for his veteran soldiers, tens of thousands of whom received large allotments of land along with large cash bonuses to fund their shift into a settled and agricultural style of life.

Since the 130s, at least, there had been concern about the birth rate in Roman citizen families. Although Caesar recruited vast numbers of new Roman citizens by expanding the citizen community to Cisalpine Gaul and even to select groups in Transalpine Gaul, he also gave thought to bolstering the birth rate among the traditional citizen community. A programme of

rewards was instituted for fathers of three or more children, thereby encouraging men to father more children.[23] To control emigration and maintain Italy's population, Caesar also instituted a rule that citizens between the ages of 20 and 40 could not reside outside of Italy for more than three consecutive years. For sons of senators, the rule was more restrictive: they could only leave Italy on official business – as military officers or on the staffs of provincial governors, or the like.[24] Since the old patrician class had declined, over the previous centuries, to only a handful of families – only about 14 patrician *gentes* are still attested as active in Caesar's lifetime – and yet the patricians exercised important religious and political functions in the Roman system, Caesar created new patrician clans. One such new patrician family was that of his great-nephew and eventual heir, C. Octavius.[25] We see here Caesar's concern to maintain and renew all sectors of Roman society.

Caesar was also concerned about social control in the sphere of public morals. To that end, he disbanded all of the *collegia*, which had contributed so greatly to making Roman life so violent in the 50s, with the exception of the ancient *collegia* that fulfilled legitimate social and religious functions.[26] Caesar also sought, despite his own reputation for luxurious living, to curtail excessive displays of luxury: the use of litters to travel around the city was limited, as were specialized luxury foods and banquets.[27] Furthermore, since the great slave uprising under Spartacus it had been clear that the enormous scale of the slave economy, and harsh conditions along with lax supervision, were a serious problem, yet nothing had been done about it. Caesar now ruled that one-third of all herders in the Italian countryside must be freeborn, thereby ensuring much better supervision of the slave herdsmen, improving conditions for them since they would inevitably have similar working and living conditions to their free fellow herders, and provided work for many thousands of impoverished free Italians.[28]

That brings us to the matter of *economic reforms*. We have seen that Caesar took steps to ease the economic difficulties brought on by the civil conflict, by ordering that all property be assessed at pre-war prices, by remitting interest owed since the war started, and by remitting part of the rents owed by tenants throughout Rome and Italy. The aim was, on the one hand, to grant debtors and tenants relief from the ruinous rise in prices and interest rates, and the general credit squeeze, brought on by the civil war; and on the other to assure creditors and landlords that their basic property rights would be respected: there were to be no simple cancellations of debts or seizures/redistributions of property.[29]

To stimulate economic life, as well as build his own popularity and glory, Caesar continued work apace on his huge building projects: the Forum Julium and Saepta Julia, and the Basilica Julia, in Rome itself, as well as numerous building projects around Italy and beyond – in southern Gaul for example. In addition, he took over the rebuilding of the Senate house, burned down in the rioting attendant on Clodius's death. The Senate had given the

task to Faustus Sulla, son of the great dictator, who had died during the fighting in Africa in 47, however. The new Senate house was to be named the Curia Julia, after the new and more popular dictator. Caesar also reinstituted the collection of customs dues in Italy, which had been discontinued since the Social War. The aim may have been to help Italian towns recover fiscal stability after the strains of the civil war.[30] Other major projects are attributed to Caesar that would have had a significant economic impact – rebuilding of the port of Ostia to improve Rome's overseas trade, draining of the Pomptine marshes and the Fucine lake, to make additional land available for agriculture – but these were never actually undertaken in his lifetime. They do, nevertheless, attest to the scope and thoroughness of his reform programme.

Roman law and jurisprudence also received attention. Caesar ruled that the penalty for being found guilty on charges *de vi* (public violence) or *de maiestate* (treason) was to be exile, while wealthy men found guilty of murder were to forfeit at least half of their property in addition to being exiled. The purpose was in part no doubt social control, since these were the pre-eminent public and political crimes, but regularizing procedure and result in the Roman courts had long been a topic of concern. In that regard, Caesar now also proposed to have a thorough codification of Roman law made, so that the exact laws, rules and procedures of both civil and criminal law would be brought together into a single accessible source, and rendered more coherent in the process.[31] This great project, like a number of others he proposed, was interrupted by his death, and was in the event not finalized until centuries later, under the late antique emperors Theodosius and Justinian: an indication of just how visionary some of Caesar's projects were. He commissioned the great scholar and antiquarian Varro to oversee the setting up of public libraries in Rome, modelled on the great libraries of Hellenistic cities like Alexandria and Pergamon.[32] Rome was to be a centre of culture and education, fully on a level with the great cities of the eastern Mediterranean.

Perhaps Caesar's most famous and lasting reform, though, was the *reform of the calendar*. Until this time, the Roman calendar had been based on a lunar year of twelve months with either twenty-nine or thirty-one days, except for February which had twenty-eight. This gave a total of 355 days for the entire year which, since the solar year actually lasts for 365 and a quarter days, meant that the official year grew progressively out of whack with the solar year, by a matter of ten days per year. To adjust for this fact, the pontifices were supposed to add a short intercalary month every two years after February; but in the late Republic this often failed to happen because of either negligence or resistance to lengthening the year of office of a political rival. Thus by the 40s the official year had fallen seriously behind the solar year, as we have seen, with consequent disruption of state festivals and the times of year (harvest, equinox and so on) they were supposed to celebrate.

In 46 Caesar instituted a new calendar, which came into effect at the beginning of 45, based on precise astronomical calculations performed by a noted

Greek scientist named Sosigenes, which established for Rome (and the western world generally since then) a solar calendar of 365 days, with every four years a leap year with an extra day. To synchronize this new official Julian calendar with the actual solar year, Caesar instituted two intercalary months between November and December as well as the normal short intercalary month after February in the year 46, meaning that year actually had 15 months, totalling 445 days.[33] This scientifically established Julian calendar has continued to be the basis of western calendars ever since, although minor additional modifications were made in 1582 under the auspices of Pope Gregory XIII.

In addition to reforms, Caesar was also constantly busy with the normal running of the Roman state and empire: all important business was now transacted through him more than through the Senate and magistrates. Although consuls and praetors continued to conduct their routine administrative and judicial business, and the Senate continued to meet and advise them, the dictator saw to the most important matters, and especially anything to do with foreign and military policy. Caesar himself arranged treaties, the precise holdings and relationships of client kings, and so on. Cleopatra, for example, was granted the status of friend and ally of the Roman people.

Although such matters were nominally supposed to be decided only with the agreement of the Senate and people, Caesar did not always find time to consult them, but simply ordered it to be noted that they had been consulted. Thus senators might find themselves noted as having witnessed or voted on documents and decrees they actually had no knowledge of. Cicero, for example, reports that he was stunned to receive a letter of thanks from a minor eastern king he had never even heard of, for having voted to accord him favoured status. Because of the enormous press of business, Caesar simply could not be bothered with the long-winded debates and wrangling of the Senate. Increasingly, he conducted business with only a small group of loyal advisers – Oppius, Balbus, Matius, Hirtius, and various freedmen secretaries and experts. This too was a cause of anger and increasing hostility among many members of the Senate and nobility, who found themselves marginalized as a result. Caesar was aware of this hostility: he noted on an occasion when he was too busy to see Cicero, who had called to see him, at once but had to make him wait, that he could not doubt that even he, good natured as he was, must hate him (Caesar). And of course, Cicero did hate him.[34]

Caesar's position in the state, by 45, was so overwhelming and deforming that Roman politics and society could not function even with the freedom Caesar felt able to permit. It was no doubt partly for this reason that Caesar, in his last months, was planning another great military campaign. Ever since Crassus's disaster, the eastern border of the Roman Empire had not been fully secure, and Caesar's own brief dashes through the eastern provinces and client kingdoms in 48 and 47 had hardly secured those regions' loyalty to himself.

In fact an army of several legions in Syria, commanded by Caesar's young cousin Sextus Julius Caesar, had revolted in 46 under the leadership of a certain Caecilius Bassus and murdered its commander.[35]

Caesar planned to lead a great army against the Parthians to stabilize the eastern empire and avenge Crassus's defeat and death.[36] Those motives were imperially necessary and sufficient; but no doubt Caesar hoped that his absence from Rome for several years, and the winning of glory against a noted enemy of the Romans, would have a settling effect on Roman political life and help the senators and nobles grow to accept the new restrictions within which they were obliged to function. Not having the great dictator constantly present and obtruding into their daily political and social lives should relieve at least somewhat the stress of having to accept his dominance.

As to the ordinary citizenry, Caesar had no such worries about hostility. He was immensely popular. In large part this was no doubt due to the military glory he had achieved, the benefits the people received from his building projects, and the popularity he had always had as a generous and reforming leader. But Caesar took care to increase that popularity by a series of public festivals and displays intended to bolster his own fame and entertain the people. As far back as the year of her death in 54, Caesar had promised funeral games in honour of his daughter Julia. His activities in Gaul and the subsequent civil war had obliged him to put these games off, but he celebrated them finally on a grand scale and at great expense, entertaining the people with gladiatorial shows and wild beast hunts.[37] He also celebrated four successive triumphs in 46: over the Gauls, over the Egyptians, over Pharnakes of Pontos and over Juba of Numidia. Each triumph was the occasion not just of magnificent parades and displays, and of donatives to his veteran soldiers, but of gifts to the people and vast public banquets. No expense was spared, as the modern saying goes. The great Gallic leader Vercingetorix and the Egyptian princess Arsinoe were among the foreign captives led in these triumphs, to the people's delight. However, Caesar did overstep the bounds in his African triumph when he permitted recognizable caricatures of some of his deceased Roman opponents, including Cato, to be carried in the procession as well.[38] In 45 he added a fifth triumph, over Spain, the first and only triumph that was entirely and overtly over his Roman opponents.[39]

Caesar was also generous in permitting subordinates to triumph: for example, both his nephew Q.Pedius and his legate Q. Fabius were permitted triumphs *ex Hispania* in 45, though they had in fact achieved little or nothing there.[40] The regular festivals were celebrated with special magnificence too, with Caesar presiding in triumphal robes and a laurel wreath crown; for the Senate had decreed that he was permitted this extravagant style of dress.

That was in fact only one of many, and increasingly extravagant, honours voted to Caesar in these years. Despite Caesar's clemency and general affability, the Senate found it necessary to express its loyalty and submission to Caesar by constantly voting him honours. Some of them were no doubt

welcome to Caesar; but it seems clear that he became uncomfortable with the constant stream of honours, recognizing that no genuine good feelings underlay them. Besides the right to wear triumphal garb and a laurel wreath – denoting his invincible military reputation and no doubt welcome enough – he was given the right to enter the city on horseback at the Latin festival, the right to extend the sacred *pomerium* (boundary) of Rome, the title *Imperator* (victorious commander) for life for himself and his heirs, and a golden chair to sit upon at state occasions. It was decreed that a statue of him be set up on the *rostra* (the speaker's platform) in the Forum, facing the *comitium*. The statue was adorned with both the *corona civica* (crown for saving a citizen's life in battle) which he had fairly won in his youth, and the *corona obsidionalis* (crown for being the first over the wall at a siege) which he had never won. In addition, statues of him were to be set up in the temples of Rome, including a statue next to that of Romulus/Quirinus in the temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus on the Capitol.

Eventually it was decreed that Caesar be recognized formally as a god – Divus Julius – and that a priest to him be appointed: the so-called Flamen Julialis, to which post M. Antonius was appointed. He was granted an oversight of public morals for life, although as dictator he had already been exercising that essentially censorial responsibility, along with other aspects of the censors' duties. He was named *Pater Patriae* (father of the fatherland), all magistrates were required to swear to uphold his acts, and all senators were required to swear to help protect his person. The post of Pontifex Maximus, which he had so famously won by election in 63, was made hereditary for his heirs, and it was decided to erect a temple to *Clementia*, that is specifically to Caesar's clemency. And of course the month of Quintilis, in which he was born, was renamed July in his honour: the only one of all these honours to have survived to the present day.[41]

In the end, these extravagant honours caused yet more exacerbation of the hostility felt towards him by many of the senators and nobles, and it may well be that some were in fact proposed with that effect deliberately in mind.[42] For there is no doubt that hostility was growing in 45 and early 44. In effect, Caesar found himself in what we might call a 'damned if you do, damned if you don't' situation with respect to these honours. If he declined them, he seemed to show a lack of gratitude and to show that he felt himself above the honours and the Senate that bestowed them; if he accepted them, he seemed to show an insatiable appetite for flattery. Either way, he seemed to have an overweening arrogance. And despite the quite extraordinary and unprecedented honours accorded him, rumours constantly circulated alleging that he was not satisfied, that he wanted more. Specifically it was rumoured that he would be satisfied with nothing less than the title of *rex* or king. Various stories went the round regarding this. His cousin L. Cotta was, according to one, going to introduce a motion allowing him to use the title *rex* outside of Italy, because a prophecy found in the Sibylline books had

purportedly declared that only a king could conquer the Parthians. Another rumour had it that not only did he plan to become king, he intended to move the capital of the Empire from Rome to Alexandria – that is, evidently, Cleopatra would be his queen – or to Ilium, a reference to the supposed Trojan descent of the Julii.[43]

Several modern historians have been convinced by the rumours of Caesar's desire to be king, despite the fact that Caesar publicly took steps to quash the notion. On one occasion a man in the crowd, as Caesar was passing, hailed him as *rex*, and he responded that his name was Caesar not Rex: that is, Caesar pretended to believe that the man had mistaken him for a member of the Marcius Rex family, as opposed to a Julius Caesar, and implicitly thereby repudiated accepting *rex* as a title. At the Lupercalia festival in February of 44, M. Antonius as both a Lupercal priest and consul of Rome repeatedly offered Caesar a royal diadem in the mode of Hellenistic kings, and Caesar rejected it and finally ordered that the diadem be taken to the temple of Jupiter and dedicated there to the god, the only king Rome had or needed.[44]

In the end, we surely have to accept Caesar's public acts rather than unsubstantiated rumours. Caesar had made it clear that he did not wish to be king, and indeed it is not clear why he would have wanted to be. As dictator for life, he had all the power of a king, and his privilege of wearing triumphal robes and the laurel wreath gave him the look of a king, should he desire to affect it. All the actual title *rex* could have brought him was further hostility, as he well knew.

Yet the rumours did not die, and since Caesar had rejected the diadem, it was alleged that he had done so with visible reluctance, and that he had really wanted to accept. It is not clear why historians should take seriously such non-history, the pseudo-history of rumour and innuendo clearly motivated by spite, over the plain fact of what was done. What these rumours do show is that Caesar was in a position where he could not by doing anything or not doing anything overcome the anger, spite and hostility he had aroused – at any rate short of resigning all his powers and returning to private life. And even then, it seems likely that his enemies' hostility would have pursued him.

By February of 44 the conspiracy to assassinate Caesar had long been in preparation. We hear that as early as the fall of 45 one of the key members of the conspiracy, C. Trebonius, had sounded out M. Antonius as to whether he might be willing to participate in a scheme to get rid of Caesar. Antonius remained personally loyal to Caesar, but did not go so far as to warn Caesar of this sounding out.[45] As already noted, the conspiracy involved both long-standing supporters of Caesar and former opponents. Their motivations were doubtless varied. Some former supporters were clearly unhappy with how Caesar had rewarded them – thus Ser. Sulpicius Galba resented not having been granted a consulship, and L. Minucius Basilus was angry at being fobbed off with money rather than a governorship he desired. Some were relatives of as yet unforgiven opponents, as L. Tillius Cimber whose brother remained in

exile. Many simply resented Caesar's dominant position in the state and the restriction it imposed on their own ambitions; and some perhaps genuinely felt that Caesar's dictatorship was illegal and a bad thing for the Roman state. They were, at any rate, united in hostility to Caesar, to his position and/or to one or more of his policies. The leaders of the conspiracy were several very prominent former supporters, and several very important and influential former opponents. C. Trebonius and Decimus Junius Brutus Albinus stand out among the former, while C. Cassius Longinus and M. Junius Brutus (also called Q. Caepio Brutus after his testamentary adoption by a relative named Q. Servilius Caepio) were the most significant of the latter.[46]

Traditionally, Cassius and M. Brutus have been singled out as the leading lights of the conspiracy, a notion that goes back to Cicero – who was a close friend of M. Brutus and who favoured those who had opposed Caesar from the beginning – and to Plutarch's highly laudatory biography of M. Brutus.[47] The idea has also gained currency that Caesar had a particularly close relationship with M. Brutus – loved him almost as a son, in fact – indeed, that perhaps M. Brutus really was his son.[48] This latter notion, based on Caesar's well-known and long-standing affair with M. Brutus's mother Servilia, is chronologically impossible, since M. Brutus was born ca. 85, when Caesar was only 14 or 15 years old: Caesar's affair with Servilia belongs in fact to the 60s and 50s, and possibly also the 40s, but not to the 80s when M. Brutus was born. No doubt Caesar may have had some special interest in M. Brutus as the son of his long-time mistress, and more importantly, as a man whose support would be invaluable since he was revered by the remnants of the optimates.

However, the Brutus whom Caesar loved almost as a son was the other Brutus: Dec. Brutus Albinus. Dec. Brutus had been a close collaborator and supporter of Caesar throughout the Gallic and civil wars – commander of the fleet against the Veneti in 56, commander of the cavalry Caesar left in Auvergne in 52 to engage Vercingetorix while Caesar rushed to join his army in central Gaul, commander (significantly with Trebonius) of the siege of Massilia in 49, and governor of Gaul for Caesar in 46. Dec. Brutus was in fact named in Caesar's will as a secondary heir – that is, one who would inherit if a primary heir were unwilling or unable to accept his inheritance – and it has even been suggested (by the great Roman historian Sir Ronald Syme) that Dec. Brutus, who was born about 81 when Caesar was around 19, may possibly have been Caesar's illegitimate son.[49]

Certainly Dec. Brutus had a very close relationship with Caesar, and was a very important leader of the conspiracy, a fact that has generally been obscured by the adulation of M. Brutus and a good deal of confusion between the two Bruti, with M. Brutus getting credit for some of Dec. Brutus's attributes – that closeness with Caesar being the most obvious instance.[50] If there is any truth to the widespread story that, at the actual assassination, it was when Brutus attacked him that Caesar sighed (in Greek) 'You too, my son?' or in

Latin '*Et tu, Brute?*' (you too, Brutus?) and gave up resistance in despair, then it will have been Dec. Brutus's attack that called forth this response – not the attack of M. Brutus, who had fought against Caesar at Pharsalos and written a biography of his father-in-law and uncle (and Caesar's enemy) Cato, praising him to the skies.

The problem confronting the conspirators was how and when to attack Caesar in safety and with a high probability of succeeding in killing him. They faced a deadline in Caesar's plan to leave Rome on 18 March 44 to join his army, gathered ready in Greece, for the planned campaign against the Parthians. Once Caesar was surrounded by his adoring soldiers, opportunities for attack would be scarce and dangerous; and no one wanted to wait until Caesar came back victorious from that campaign. On the other hand, the plan was aided by Caesar's decision in early 44 to do away with the bodyguard that had protected him for years. It was when some of his close friends protested at this decision, that Caesar is reported to have stated that he had lived long enough already, whether one counted by years or by achievements; and that it was now more important to the state than to himself, that he live longer.[51] Eventually, the conspirators settled on a Senate meeting that had been set for 15 March – the ides of March – ironically to be held in the meeting room attached to the portico of Pompeius's theatre, as the moment for the attack.

Another issue was that of whom to kill: just Caesar himself, or some of his most important supporters also? Here the influence of M. Brutus is said to have been crucial. Known as a bit of a philosopher in the Stoic style, M. Brutus argued that the assassination of Caesar himself was justified by the fact that Caesar had become a tyrant, and that it was the duty of all good men to slay a tyrant regardless of any other obligations or ties, or of the normal moral injunction against murder. However, whereas killing Caesar could be presented as a morally pure act, and indeed as an act of liberation, to kill his supporters too would immediately reduce the deed to a partisan political slaughter.[52] This view won the day, and perhaps the reluctance of those conspirators who were themselves former supporters of Caesar to kill their friends may in fact have weighed more heavily than M. Brutus's reputed philosophical scruples. At any rate, it was decided to attack and kill only Caesar himself, and Trebonius was designated to detain his good friend M. Antonius outside the meeting room, so that he could not come to Caesar's aid: Antonius was immensely strong and a feared fighter.[53]

When the ides of March dawned, a further problem arose in that both Caesar and his wife Calpurnia had had troubled nights, and Caesar was not feeling well. Caesar had long been susceptible to occasional seizures, probably epileptic in nature, and in recent years – no doubt as a result of the immense stresses he had been undergoing almost continuously since 59 – the seizures had become more frequent and his health generally, which had always been excellent, had shown signs of deteriorating.[54] This likely also accounts for a certain irritability Caesar displayed in his last years, a trait he had not

previously been known for at all. For instance, when a tribune of 45 named Pontius Aquila failed to rise in respect at Caesar's triumphal procession, Caesar showed a quite uncharacteristic annoyance at what was a trivial matter.[55]

On the ides, then, as the Senate gathered in Pompeius's meeting room and waited, the conspirators were greatly troubled to learn that Caesar was thinking of not coming to the Senate meeting as he was feeling ill. It was Dec. Brutus who stepped forward to deal with this problem: he hurried to Caesar's house and persuaded Caesar to come after all, arguing to him that to show the Senate the lack of respect that a non-appearance would suggest, would incur just the sort of hostility Caesar wanted to avoid.[56]

In the end, then, Caesar did set out to attend the fateful Senate meeting. Various legends arose about his short journey from his home – the *domus publica* on the *Via Sacra* – to Pompeius's portico, which may or may not be true. The best known concerns the *haruspex* (a priest who ascertains the divine will by inspecting the entrails of sacrificed animals) Spurinna, who had predicted great danger for Caesar on the ides of March. Supposedly Caesar met him on the way to the Senate and said, 'Well, the ides of March have come,' to which Spurinna responded, 'They have come, but they are not yet past.' Then there was the minor Greek philosopher Artemidoros of Knidos, who is said to have stepped forward from the crowd along Caesar's route and handed the dictator a memorandum naming exactly the conspirators and their plans, and urged Caesar to look at it at once as it concerned him closely. Reputedly the memo was still clutched in Caesar's hand when he was carried away dead after the assassination.[57]

At any rate, Caesar did of course arrive at Pompeius's meeting room, where he took his official seat and was at once surrounded by the conspirators. They pretended to be supporting Tillius Cimber, who knelt before Caesar to plead on behalf of his exiled brother, but at an agreed signal the daggers were drawn and the attack on Caesar began. The first to strike was said to have been one Servilius Casca, who inflicted a shallow wound on the neck from behind. As Caesar cried out, and turned to seize Casca, more and more blows rained on him. He rose, and attempted to force his way clear of the ring of attackers; but soon realized there was no way out. He then, according to report, arranged his toga so that his private parts would not be exposed when he fell, and collapsed dead, very neatly, at the foot of the very statue of Pompeius he had himself saved from destruction: for he had ordered that the statues and memorials of his great enemy were to be left alone.[58] The conspirators had agreed that all should strike Caesar, to ensure that the responsibility was shared and no one would know who had struck the fatal blow. According to Suetonius the *post mortem* conducted by Caesar's personal physician Antistius found twenty-three wounds, of which only one – a blow to the chest – was mortal.[59]

While the attack was occurring, the rest of the senators present stood by stunned. When they saw Caesar dead, and the mob of conspirators turning towards them with bloody daggers upraised, they stampeded in fear, not

knowing what was planned or by whom, and concerned only to get away safely. Thus, the conspirators rapidly found themselves alone with the dictator's corpse. This was not according to their expectations: in turning to the other senators, they meant to raise the cry of 'liberty', and they expected to be hailed as tyrannicides and heroes. They were not. After some period of uncertainty, they abandoned their original plan of dragging the 'tyrant's' corpse to the steps of the Tiber – the bodies of criminals were traditionally pitched down those steps into the river rather than given proper burial – and instead went as a close group, through streets that had become eerily silent as news of the assassination spread and people responded in fear and uncertainty by taking to their homes, to the Capitol where they barricaded themselves in for safety and dedicated their bloody daggers to Jupiter.[60]

Meanwhile Caesar's body was left lying abandoned in the meeting room, until three of his slaves, who had at first fled, returned and – finding their master's body unattended – loaded it into his litter and carried it, one arm reputedly dangling from the litter with Artemidoros's warning still clutched in the hand, to his house, where Calpurnia received it with deep grief.[61]

In the aftermath of this assassination, in fact, nothing went according to the conspirators' expectations. Looking back, it is very hard to credit the stupendous political naivety of these seasoned Roman senators, officers and politicians (for they were all of them, as a matter of course, all three). They imagined that, with the hated dictator removed from the scene, the traditional Roman governing system would once again begin to function as if the years and events since January of 49 had never taken place. It does not seem to have occurred to a single one of them that the apparent normalcy of the late 50s had only been made possible by the looming presence of Pompeius and his soldiers just outside the *pomerium* of Rome. It does not seem to have occurred to them that the traditional governing system had not been functioning properly for decades and had been drastically damaged by the civil war. It does not seem to have occurred to them that many of the crucial magistrates and other office holders were Caesar's nominees, supporters and friends, who would hardly welcome his removal. It does not seem to have occurred to them that the people were motivated by basic needs and emotions – food, entertainment, admiration for those like Caesar who provided them – and cared little or nothing for the oligarchic governing system. Above all, it does not seem to have occurred to them that power in Rome had for generations been wielded by those who commanded legions, and that the legions in existence at this time were overwhelmingly Caesar's legions, manned by soldiers who adored the dictator and would want blood for his assassination.

To say that these would-be 'liberators' of Rome had not thought things through is the kindest thing one can say of them. The spontaneous applause they expected from Senate and people alike, as having freed them from tyranny, never materialized. Instead, after some few days of uncertainty, the

consul Antonius and Caesar's *magister equitum* Lepidus took control of the political situation, and turned things to their advantage. At first, they negotiated a truce with the 'liberators', agreeing not to attack or harm them for their deed in return for a general agreement that Caesar's appointments and acts would all be accepted as valid. This turned out, ironically, to be in the interest of the 'liberators' themselves, as many of them held or were promised official positions by Caesar's grant – another little matter that seems not to have occurred to them before. Before long though, the public mood turned decisively against the 'liberators', and they found themselves besieged by hostile mobs in their own homes, and soon found it necessary to leave Rome for their own safety.[62]

The reading out to the gathered urban crowd of Caesar's will was crucial. In this will, Caesar bequeathed a substantial sum of money to every Roman citizen, and the use of his own pleasure gardens on the north bank of the Tiber as a public park. At this, the people took up Caesar's body and gave him a spontaneous public funeral in the Forum itself, and then turned to attack his assassins, famously killing the innocent poet and tribune Helvius Cinna in mistake for the conspirator Cornelius Cinna. Caesar was declared a god, and the urban crowd on their own accord set up an altar to him at the site in the Forum where he was cremated, and began to worship there and swear to agreements and contracts in his name.[63] The 'liberators' were not regarded or treated as such by the people they thought they had freed. Famously, hardly any of them lived more than three years beyond the assassination, almost all coming to violent – and in a few cases quite gruesome – ends, as Caesar's heirs and soldiers pursued their quest for vengeance.

It is worth considering for a moment why this act of 'liberation' met with such little honour or acclaim. Liberty is, by common consent, a noble thing, a desirable thing, a thing worth risking death or even dying for. But we must always ask, what liberty? Liberty for whom, to do what exactly? The liberty for which the conspirators assassinated Caesar found no resonance among the people of Rome, because it did not concern the people of Rome. The 'liberty' for which the assassins acted was the liberty of a narrow elite of oligarchs, drawn from a handful of traditional noble families, to dominate Roman politics and share out between themselves the chance to exploit the common citizens and (especially) the subjects of Rome as they saw fit. Why should the ordinary citizens and soldiers care about this 'liberty' of which they had no share? Why should even the rich and aristocratic families of Italy care for this 'liberty', from a due share of which they were frozen out by the old nobility, indeed a share of which was promised them only by the very man these 'liberators' had just killed? Again, the very fact that it was evidently beyond the imagination of the 'liberators' to grasp that the 'liberty' that was so important to them was of no concern to people who would never share in that 'liberty', is another indication of how utterly the realities of Roman political life had passed them by.[64] The 'liberators' belonged, in the famous and pungent

phrase of Trotsky, in the dustbins of history, to which Caesar's political heirs soon consigned them.

All the same, the assassination of Caesar at the height of his power, and the breakdown of the Roman government into renewed civil war within scant months of his death, has generally been seen as a failure on Caesar's part. This notion that in the end Caesar failed, that he could not find a way to solve and settle Rome's problems, to make the governing system function peacefully, is by no means new. It goes all the way back to one of Caesar's closest friends, Caius Matius, who wrote in a letter to Cicero shortly after Caesar's assassination that, if Caesar with all his genius could not find a solution to Rome's problems, there was no hope of finding one with him gone.[65] This idea of Caesar's final failure has been taken up by numerous modern scholars, and become virtually a truism. As a judgment on Caesar's years in sole power, few as they were, it is however distinctly unfair in two important respects.

First, it must be said that Caesar did not fail to find a solution: he was merely assassinated by enemies while he was putting the solution into place. It fell to Caesar's heir, Octavian/Augustus, to establish the new governing system therefore, but it must be noted that in every important respect, he followed the outlines discernible in Caesar's reform programme. Augustus copied Caesar's system in gathering all important power into his own hands, and especially of course military power. He involved the leading families of the rest of Italy, and even leading Romanized families from beyond Italy, in the governing elite. He placated the people with 'bread and circuses' and with magnificent and costly building programmes. He carefully limited and controlled the governing of provinces by members of the Roman elite. He insisted upon proper standards of governance, with respect to both justice and efficiency. He frequently absented himself from Rome so as not to overwhelm the Senate and magistrates by his continued and deforming presence, and in the end he championed the idea of reconciliation under the name of *clementia*

There were only two major differences. Augustus had learned from Caesar's assassination that the title *dictator* had become as hated, since Sulla, as the title *rex,* and avoided it, instead accumulating the necessary powers via a collocation of less invidious titles and positions; and by the time Octavian became the accepted and acclaimed leader of the Roman world under the name Augustus, he had conducted a thirteen-year reign of terror, replete with proscriptions that put Sulla's brutality in the shade, so that no one was left who had held any position of importance under the old Republic, indeed scarcely anyone of the governing class who could remember the Republic before Caesar's dictatorship. Everyone was just so weary of civil warfare and slaughter that all they wanted was peace and stability, which Augustus gave them.

Second, if Caesar's assassination is to be seen as a failure, it was a very human failure. No one can read the story of Caesar's conquest of Gaul and not

be aware that Caesar could be exceedingly ruthless and brutal when he felt it necessary to be so. Yet it is clear that brutality and ruthlessness were traits that Caesar adopted, rather than inherent elements of his nature or character. In particular, when dealing not with foreign opponents with whom, however much he might understand their motivations and appreciate their abilities and character, he felt no intrinsic connection or empathy, but with fellow citizens and social peers, Caesar was not willing to employ ruthlessness and brutality if it could in any way be avoided. In the civil war, he was determined at whatever cost, even the cost of his own life, not to be another Sulla. He would not slaughter his opponents, he would not despoil their property, he would not take away their rights and their standing in Roman society.

He acknowledged that his opponents had a right to oppose him, just as he and his supporters had a right to fight for their position and policies.[66] He insisted that in the end, Rome's problems must be solved by as many Romans as possible cooperating peacefully with each other, despite their differences. To that end he sought to avoid civil war to begin with by seeking compromise, and insisted on pursuing a policy of reconciliation throughout and after the war. To govern Rome and the empire, magistrates, governors, officers and aides of all sorts would be needed who had the experience and standing to do the job; and though Caesar was determined to bring new blood from Italy and the more Romanized provinces into the governing elite, he knew well that the cooperation of the traditional governing elite would be indispensable.

His policy of clemency, or as we might say 'forgive and forget', was both a personal and a political choice, therefore. Personally, it suited his character and the way he wished to be viewed and remembered; politically, it seemed to him the right and necessary thing to do to reconcile with his former opponents. If his opponents were not truly willing to be reconciled, that was hardly Caesar's fault. If the memory of their freedom to struggle with each other untrammelled by an overseer, who would not tolerate extremes of violent and/or corrupt competition, was still too recent to make them willing to accept oversight, that was as much a flaw in them as in Caesar. In this case Caesar's failing was of insufficient ruthlessness, and can that really be called a failing?

At bottom, if Caesar failed it was by overestimating his contemporaries and peers in the Roman governing elite. Roman morality required that the one who had been granted a *beneficium* (that is, a favour or gift of any sort, a benefit) owed a duty (*officium*) of *gratia* (gratitude in the active sense of returning good for good) to his benefactor. By treating men who had fought against him, seeking his death and/or political destruction, with forbearance, forgiveness and even favour, Caesar had granted them *beneficia* for which they owed him a great deal of support and gratitude in return.[67] In expecting his opponents to abide by this traditional morality, however, Caesar grossly overestimated their actual moral worth. Far from feeling grateful, they resented and hated him for putting them in a position where they ought to have been

grateful. Further, by assuming that it would be plain to his opponents, as it was to him, that events of recent decades, and particularly of the 50s and early 40s, had shown that the traditional oligarchic game of squabbling over the spoils of empire, like hungry children fighting for the biggest share of a delicious pie, could no longer be continued, that Rome and Italy and the Empire required a governing system that provided some consistency of policy, some integrity in governance, some controlling oversight to keep governance peaceful and responsible, Caesar again grossly overestimated his contemporaries' political judgment. He might have been aware that the state needed him to live on, or else would inevitably fall back into violence and civil war; his opponents and other contemporaries could not or refused to see this.

Had Caesar been willing to slaughter his opponents brutally, to eliminate ruthlessly any of his supporters who became too strong or seemed insufficiently enthusiastic or submissive, he might have lived on for a while and died a natural death still in command of Rome. He preferred not to do that, but to trust in the gratitude and good sense of his peers. He was aware that this policy might cost him his life, but he was willing to pay that price. Augustus, of course, in the end emulated Caesar's policy of clemency and reconciliation; but only after more than a decade of ruthless and brutal slaughter had eliminated all opposition and taught his contemporaries to be submissive and compliant. Caesar chose the more human path. He would not be a Sulla – or as we might now say, he would not be an Ivan the Terrible, a Stalin, a Hitler – and if refusal to take that sort of path is failure, then and only then was Caesar a noble failure.

As a final point to consider here, there is Caesar's choice as his heir of the young man who eventually became the emperor Augustus. This choice has sometimes been seen as another sign of Caesar's uncanny acumen, of his genius. How else to explain the fact that the rather unprepossessing youth he selected to be his son and bear his name, turned out to be one of the great politicians and statesmen of all time?

Was this just chance? Many, indeed most, modern historians would say that it was chance. It is often suggested that Caesar had little choice but to adopt the young Caius Octavius, that he was only doing the natural thing of taking as his heir his nearest male relative. This is not true at all. In the first place, Caesar had closer male relatives than C. Octavius. True, the young cousins from his own Julian clan, whom he might have adopted as heirs, were dead: L. Julius Caesar was killed at the battle of Thapsus, after fighting against Caesar; and Sex. Julius Caesar, whom Caesar may have been grooming for an important role, was killed in 46 in a military mutiny in Syria, as mentioned above. However, Caesar had two sisters named Julia. One he had married to an Italian aristocrat named M. Atius Balbus. The marriage produced, so far as we know, only one daughter, Atia, whom Caesar married off in turn to another Italian magnate, the wealthy Caius Octavius of Velitrae. This man went into politics at Rome and reached the praetorship in 61, but

died shortly afterwards leaving a young son – the C. Octavius whom Caesar eventually adopted. The other sister was married to another man of obscure but wealthy family, Q. Pedius, and the marriage produced a son likewise named Q. Pedius. A second marriage, after the elder Q. Pedius's death, was arranged with a man from the ancient but decrepit patrician clan of the Pinarii, and also produced a son: L. Pinarius. Caesar, then, had two nephews – Q. Pedius and L. Pinarius – as well as his great-nephew C. Octavius. Of the three, it was Q. Pedius who was most closely associated with Caesar before the assassination: he served capably under Caesar as a commander in the Gallic War, and again in the civil war.[68]

In making Octavius his adopted son and heir, Caesar passed over two nearer male relatives, one of whom had a much closer and more long-standing relationship of collaboration with him. Further, the unofficial rules of adoption in noble Roman families tended to require that the adoptee be related to the man adopting, whether in the male or female line, but not to insist by any means that a very close relative be adopted. It is relevant here that there was available to Caesar for adoption yet another son of a Julia: none other than Marcus Antonius, son of the sister of L. Julius Caesar the consul of 64, Caesar's cousin. Our sources make it clear that, when M. Antonius learned of Caesar's will and the adoption of C. Octavius and not himself, he was surprised and displeased.[69] Evidently, Antonius had rather hoped or even expected to be adopted as Caesar's heir himself: he was eligible, he was loyal, and he had for years been Caesar's right-hand man. Caesar decided he did not fully trust Antonius, or Pedius or Pinarius: he preferred Octavius.

Seen in this light, Caesar's selection of C. Octavius, a youth not yet nineteen years old, frail in health and not particularly robust in physique, as his adopted son and heir is a remarkable choice. Was it really mere chance that Octavius turned out to be a genius, or did Caesar already see in the young man the extraordinary intelligence and abilities that made him one of the greatest political leaders in Roman history, if not the greatest? It is often argued that this is irrelevant, because in adopting Octavius – who thus became C. Julius Caesar Octavianus, or Octavian in English parlance – Caesar was not naming a political heir, a successor to his ruling position, but merely an heir to his family name and fortune, or whatever of it was left after his bequests to the Roman people and others. But this notion really shows a strange disregard of the dynastic nature of Roman politics. It had always been an expectation at Rome that a son would aspire to and should attain the powers and positions held by his father. It was a rule that a father's supporters and clients would be inherited by the son. It would fall to a son and heir to pay out the bequests left by a father in his will, and receive the popularity and gratitude accruing therefrom, as Octavian did in regard to Caesar's bequests. Caesar was no fool: he knew perfectly well that whoever he named as his son and heir would inherit, along with the name and fortune, the reverence of his (Caesar's) veteran soldiers, the popularity he had enjoyed among the people of

Rome (enhanced by the testamentary bequests to them), the support of his closest friends and collaborators (the likes of the invaluable Oppius and Balbus, that is), and the obedient aid of his freedmen. All of this is to say that in selecting Octavius to bear his name, Caesar was selecting Octavius to have a strong chance at attaining a leading, if not *the* leading, position in the Roman state, as indeed he did.

There is a reason why Sir Ronald Syme in his great book *The Roman Revolution*, describing the rise of Augustus and the Augustan political system, consistently referred to the young Octavian/Augustus as 'Caesar's heir'. It was the support of Caesar's veterans, Caesar's officers, Caesar's closest collaborators and freedmen that carried the young Octavian through the fraught first five or six years of his meteoric ascent to power after the ides of March, and prevented M. Antonius from simply ignoring or killing the young man, as he would clearly like to have done. There can really be no doubt that Caesar saw something in Octavius: already before his death he had designated Octavius to become his second-in-command (*magister equitum*) during the planned Parthian campaign. Caesar is justly renowned for the careful thought and long-range planning that infused his political decisions, and the choice of an heir was a political decision. His remarkable choice of Octavian as his adopted son can be seen as Caesar's final act of political genius.

EPILOGUE

Caesar's death was, in certain important respects, not the end of Caesar's career. To the dismay of his assassins, and of others like Cicero who had objected to his power and position in the state, Roman political life continued for years to revolve around Caesar: his wishes, his policies, his appointments, his heir, his friends, his soldiers and his enemies. Relationship to Caesar seemed to be the litmus test for everything. It proved necessary, as we have seen, to ratify all of Caesar's decisions and appointments, for the simple reason that everyone who held any major governing or administrative position in Rome and the Empire did so by Caesar's appointment, and it would have created chaos to call their positions into question. It proved necessary to ratify Caesar's prospective appointments and policies, because those to whom positions of power and influence had been promised were not willing to forgo them and it would have created endless bickering and strife to take back what had been promised.

In terms of Caesar's policies, there were no other policies by which the state could immediately be governed, and there was no immediate prospect of gaining agreement on new policies. Things had, of necessity, to continue running in the course laid out by Caesar for the immediate future. Moreover, under Caesar, the running of public affairs had been taken almost completely into Caesar's hands, and had been dealt with – under his guidance – by a sort of 'cabinet' of his close friends and associates: L. Cornelius Balbus, C. Oppius, C. Matius, A. Hirtius and Caesar's personal secretary Faberius. These men had effectively been running the state, and it was not easy or really possible to simply take affairs out of their hands at once. Caesar's personal and state papers, and his funds – which were both private and public moneys intermixed – were taken almost immediately after his death, presumably by his secretary Faberius, and put in the hands of his closest political associates Antonius and Lepidus, his co-consul and *magister equitum*. That enabled them to take control of public affairs at once, and in doing so to begin to undermine from the beginning the position of the assassins.

Antonius and Lepidus, however, failed to win the adherence of Caesar's 'cabinet', in large part because Caesar's closest friends and collaborators from

the first wanted revenge for Caesar's assassination, and Antonius and Lepidus out of caution agreed at first to forgo vengeance and accept an amnesty for the assassins. Into this mix came Caesar's heir, the young Octavian, demanding vengeance and demanding also recognition as an equal colleague in governance by Antonius and Lepidus. Antonius, the dominant partner, refused to recognize Octavian's claim to be Caesar's political heir; but Caesar's 'cabinet' rallied around the young man and helped him to push towards power. With their help, Octavian also won the adherence of many of Caesar's soldiers, themselves thirsting for vengeance for the death of their revered commander. This split in the Caesarian camp gave the assassins and their supporters some breathing room to try to assert their vision of Rome's future, but it was brief and ephemeral. Cassius and M. Brutus soon fled to the east, the least 'Caesarian' part of the Roman Empire, where the memory of Pompeius was still strong, to raise armies with which to fight for their political futures.

Decimus Brutus took up the governorship of Cisalpine Gaul which, ironically, Caesar had promised him, but was soon besieged by Antonius. And though he was rescued from this siege by Octavian, it was a brief respite. Because though Octavian was temporarily opposing Antonius, he nevertheless wanted Dec. Brutus dead – and Dec. Brutus did die within the year, cut down by forces of Antonius and Octavian. For the Caesarian soldiers and officers soon obliged Antonius and Octavian to reconcile and cooperate in the great task that all Caesarians sought: the avenging of the great man.

Cicero, feeling a sense of liberation and rejuvenation from the death of Caesar, strained every nerve during the second half of 44 and the first half of 43 to revive the traditional governing system, to put the Senate back in control of Rome. It was a losing struggle from the start. His only successes were won by temporary alliance with Caesarians – Hirtius, Pansa, Octavian – who cooperated with him only in order to make Antonius acknowledge their rights. All Cicero had to work with was the senators, men whom he could persuade to vote how he wished by the power of his eloquence – and his great speeches from this year, the *Philippics*, are a lasting testimony to the extraordinary power of that eloquence – but in truth the Senate had become a paper tiger. Power in Rome depended on armies, not senators' votes; and as to armies, Cicero had not a legion to stand on. There is something noble in the determined struggle of this undeniably great old man to revive a lost cause; and in the end Cicero died heroically, as he had not always lived. But he did die: sitting in the litter his slaves had tried to carry him to safety in, bedraggled and tired in the dusty road, but stretching out his neck bravely to the assassin's sword, paying the ultimate price for having angered Antonius, got in the way of Octavian, and championed a cause that had been lost years before. Cicero imagined that he was giving his life in the cause of freedom, but again we must call to mind what that freedom was.

In Cicero's letters of the 40s, his recurring lament is for the loss of the law courts, in which he had spent his professional life and achieved fame and

greatness. It is true that under Caesar the law courts were silenced. But what was this freedom of the Republican law courts? It was the freedom of Roman nobles to prosecute other Roman nobles for the grotesque cruelties and extortion they had practised governing Rome's provinces, and the freedom of yet other nobles like Cicero to plead in mitigation and secure acquittals, permitting those brutal and extortionate governors to retain their seats in the Senate and live out their days in comfort and security on their ill-gotten gains. And in due course, they would sit on juries in judgment of other corrupt and extortionate fellow-nobles, to vote to acquit them too. Inevitably, to the millions of Rome's subjects, these law courts were no great loss: it was not law courts they wanted, but fair and just governance. Cicero knew this full well, but he refused to draw the appropriate conclusions.

Cicero fought too, for the right of traditional Roman nobles to remain the free and untrammelled overlords of the Roman world. Yet he knew that those traditional nobles had never fully accepted him and appreciated him. Ironically, Caesar was really the only Roman noble who had truly liked and appreciated Cicero as he deserved, and even Cicero himself had acknowledged as much. In a letter to his brother Quintus in November 54 (number 3.5 in the collection) he wrote, 'in all the world Caesar is the only man who cares for me as much as I could wish, or (as others would have it) who wants me to care for him'.

Cicero never valued Caesar at his true desserts, but many other Romans did. We have seen how his soldiers loved and revered him; we have seen how the urban populace adored, and in the end literally worshipped, him. Consider too the words of some of Caesar's elite friends. Asinius Pollio wrote to Cicero early in 43, 'as for Caesar, I loved him in all duty and loyalty, because in his greatness he treated me, a recent acquaintance, as though I had been one of his oldest intimates' (Cicero *to his Friends* 10.31). And C. Matius, who was one of Caesar's oldest intimates, wrote:

> why are they angry at me for praying that they [the assassins] may be sorry for what they have done? I want every man's heart to be sore for Caesar's death .... Caesar never put any obstacle in the way of my associating with whom I pleased, even persons whom he himself did not like. And shall the people who have robbed me of my friend try to stop me with their carping tongues from liking whom I choose?
> (Cicero *to his Friends* 11.28)

Pollio, though he understood Cicero's position and remained friendly towards him, chose the side of the Caesarians, and the political friendship of Antonius and Octavian, over Cicero and the old Republic. Caius Matius, though he too felt the pull of Republican values, and liked Cicero, stood with his loyalty to Caesar and supported Caesar's heir. A year after Cicero's death, on the battlefield of Philippi, the last champions of the old Republic – if that is truly what

Cassius and Marcus Brutus were – were defeated and died. And though Antonius and Octavian were in command, it was Caesar's soldiers and Caesar's officers who exacted that ultimate vengeance, and asserted the permanent victory of the new order Caesar had fought for. All that was left, after years of proscriptions and violence, was the final showdown between Caesar's last right-hand man, Antonius, and Caesar's heir Octavian. It was Octavian, of course, who emerged victorious, and remade himself in the following decades as Augustus – the venerable one. But it was Caesar's name that became synonymous with power, and has remained so down to the present day, in languages like German, Russian and Dutch, in which the words for 'emperor' – kaiser, csar, keizer – are directly derived from the name 'Caesar'.

In the end though, that tradition of seeing Caesar as synonymous with autocratic power does the real Caesar a disservice. Because in Caesar's living career, we must always set beside him, as he did in his writings and would have wished us to do, the men who served with him, fought with him, believed in the vision of Rome that – as leader of the Marian, Cinnan, *popularis* movement in Roman politics and society – he stood for and fought for. These were the crowds of Roman citizens who filled the *forum*, the *comitium* or the *campus Martius* to cheer at Caesar's *contiones* and vote for the laws he proposed; the legionary soldiers who marched, laboured and fought to become an irresistible force and bring down the old nobility; the centurions and tribunes, who led those soldiers and represented the truest traditions of old Roman courage and can-do, never-say-die spirit; the provincials, *Transpadani* and *domi nobiles* who saw in the movement Caesar led their hope of a fairer deal in the Roman system. Then there were the young and not so young nobles who saw what Caesar saw, that the old governing system had lost its way and needed to be replaced by one more responsive to the Empire's needs. All of these are the ones who truly brought down the Republican governing system and remade the Roman world. Caesar was merely their agent. He got the glory, and probably always will. But in his own commentaries he made a point of sharing that glory, while certainly taking care to boost his own; and that was the true measure of the man.

Caesar was one of the truly outsize personalities in world history, but he was just one man. We must not apportion him more credit or blame than one man is due, whatever our sources say, and whatever the temptation. If Caesar had been just a superhuman pattern of genius, a quintessential aristocrat vying for pre-eminence, an outsider tearing at the system from the sides, or a grumpy old man refusing to make way for his youngers, his career would and could have amounted to no more than that of a Lucullus or at best a Pompeius. It was the movement behind him, pushing him onward and carrying him to greatness, that made him what he became: the Roman who bestrode the world like a colossus, while his rivals found dishonourable graves.

NOTES

1 ROME AND ITALY IN THE SECOND CENTURY BCE

1 Full sources on the Galba affair, and Cato's role in it, can be found in Gruen (1968) 13 n. 11.
2 Gruen (1968) 13 n. 12.
3 Detailed discussion of this whole change in the Roman governing system in Billows (1989).
4 The classic account of the Roman nobility is still Gelzer (1912).
5 Evidence for the careers of these men, and for all other Roman magistrates under the Republic, can be found in T. R. S. Broughton, *Magistrates of the Roman Republic* (1952, 1960).
6 Polybios 23.14; Livy 38.50.4–60 & 39.52; Cicero *about the Orator* 2.249; Aulus Gellius *Attic Nights* 4.18, 6.19; Diodorus Siculus 29.21; Valerius Maximus 3.7.1, 4.1.8 & 5.3.2; Plutarch *Cato the Elder* 15. The full analysis of the sources and details in Scullard (1959) app. 4, 290–303 is still very useful.
7 Livy 40.44.1.
8 Further on all the above in Billows (1989).
9 Rosenstein (1990) offers an excellent account and analysis of all this.
10 Livy 38.36.7–9.
11 All of this was established by Gabba in 1949: see Gabba (1976) 1–19 especially at 5–7.
12 Classic statement of this problem is Gabba (1976) 9–10.
13 Toynbee (1965) is a superb treatment of Rome's changes and problems after the Hannibalic War.
14 Plutarch *Tiberius Gracchus* 9; Cicero *Academica Priora* 2.5.13.
15 Plutarch *Tiberius Gracchus* 8.4.
16 Sallust *Jugurthine War* 41; Plutarch *Tiberius Gracchus* 8.
17 Cato *Origines* 5.95e (= Aulus Gellius *Attic Nights* 6.3.37–38); Plutarch *Tiberius Gracchus* 8.; Appian *Civil War* 1.8; Livy 33.42.10 and 35.10.11–12; and note the analysis of Elster (1976) 17–25.
18 Appian *Civil War* 1.9; Plutarch *Tiberius Gracchus* 9.
19 Plutarch *Tiberius Gracchus* 9.
20 Appian *Civil War* 1.10.12; Plutarch *Tiberius Gracchus* 10–13; Cicero *Brutus* 25.95; Cicero o*n the Laws* 3.10.24.

21 Land commission: Cicero *on the Land Law* 2.12.31; Appian *Civil War* 1.18; Livy *Summaries* 58. Law on Pergamene revenues: Plutarch *Tiberius Gracchus* 14; Livy *Summaries* 58.
22 Plutarch *Tiberius Gracchus* 16–19; Appian *Civil War* 1.14–16; Valerius Maximus 3.2.17; Cicero *Against Catilina* 1.1.3 and 4.2.4; [Cicero] *ad Herennium* 4.55.68.
23 Plutarch *Tiberius Gracchus* 20; Cicero o*n Friendship* 11.37; Sallust *Jugurthine War* 31.7; Velleius Paterculus 2.7.3; Valerius Maximus 4.7.1.
24 Appian *Civil War* 1.19.
25 Velleius Paterculus 2.3.3; Cicero o*n the Republic* 1.19.31.
26 Cicero o*n Duties* 2.21.72; Cicero *Tusculan Disputations* 3.20.48; Plutarch *Caius Gracchus* 5; Appian *Civil War* 1.21.
27 Plutarch *Caius Gracchus* 5; Velleius Paterculus 2.6.3 & 13 & 32; Tacitus *Annals* 12.60; Appian *Civil War* 1.22.
28 Appian *Civil War* 1.21 & 34; Valerius Maximus 9.5.1.
29 Livy *Summaries* 60.
30 Plutarch *Caius Gracchus* 5; Appian *Civil War* 1.23; Julius Victor 6.4.
31 Plutarch *Caius Gracchus* 5 & 10; Velleius Paterculus 2.6.3; Livy *Summaries* 60.
32 Cicero *for Rabirius on a treason charge* 4.12; Plutarch *Caius Gracchus* 4.
33 Cicero a*gainst Verres* 3.6.12; Appian *Civil War* 5.4.
34 Plutarch *Caius Gracchus* 5; Diodorus Siculus 35.25.
35 Cicero o*n his own House* 9.24; Sallust *Jugurthine War* 27.
36 Cicero *for Cluentius* 55.151 & 56.154.
37 Appian *Civil War* 1.23; Plutarch *Caius Gracchus* 9; Suetonius *Tiberius* 3.
38 Plutarch *Caius Gracchus* 11–12.
39 Plutarch *Caius Gracchus* 13–17; Appian *Civil War* 1.26; Orosius 5.12; Cicero *Philippics* 8.4.14; Diodorus Siculus 34.28; Sallust *Jugurthine War* 16.2 & 31.7 & 42.1.
40 Cicero a*bout the Orator* 2.30.132 & 2.25.106; Cicero f*or Sestius* 67.140.
41 Appian *Civil War* 1.27; Cicero *Brutus* 36.136.
42 Our main source on all issues concerning the Jugurthine War is Sallust's historical memoir of that name.
43 Sallust *Jugurthine War* 33; Livy *Summaries* 64.
44 Sallust *Jugurthine War* 40; Cicero *Brutus* 34.128.
45 On Marius's background and youth see particularly Plutarch *Caius Marius*.
46 Sallust *Jugurthine War* 64.
47 Sallust *Jugurthine War* 86; Valerius Maximus 2.3.1; Aulus Gellius *Attic Nights* 16.10.10; the classic modern discussion of this crucial step is still Gabba's paper 'The origins of the professional army at Rome' in Gabba (1976).
48 Plutarch *Sulla* 3 & *Marius* 10; Valerius Maximus 6.9.6; Diodorus Siculus 35.39.
49 Strabo 7.2.1; Plutarch *Marius* 11.
50 Appian *Celtic Wars* 13; Livy *Summaries* 63.
51 Florus 1.38; Livy *Summaries* 65.
52 Caesar *Gallic War* 1.7; Livy *Summaries* 65; Orosius 5.15; [Cicero] *ad Herennium* 1.15.25.
53 Sallust *Jugurthine War* 114; Livy *Summaries* 67; Granius Licinianus p11–14F; Dio Cassius fr. 91.
54 Plutarch *Marius* 13–15; Pliny *Natural History* 10.4.16; Festus 267L; Strabo 4.1.8.

55 Plutarch *Marius* 15–26; Livy *Summaries* 68; Florus 1.38; Frontinus *Stratagems* 2.4.6.
56 Cicero *Brutus* 62.224; [Victor] *on famous men* 73; [Caesar] *African War* 56.
57 [Cicero] *ad Herennium* 1.12.21.
58 Appian *Civil War* 1.29; Cicero *for Sestius* 16.37; Livy *Summaries* 69.

II CAESAR'S CHILDHOOD: THE SOCIAL WAR AND THE SULLAN CIVIL WAR

1 Appian *Civil War* 1.29; [Victor] *on Famous Men* 73; Cicero *for Balbus* 21.48.
2 Livy *Summaries* 69; Valerius Maximus 3.2.18; Florus 2.4; Velleius Paterculus 2.12.
3 Cicero *for Rabirius on a treason charge* 7.20; [Victor] *on Famous Men* 73.
4 Orosius 5.17; Florus 2.4; Velleius Paterculus 2.12; [Victor] *on Famous Men* 73; Cicero *for Rabirius on a treason charge* 10.28; Plutarch *Marius* 30.
5 Cicero *for Rabirius on a treason charge* 6–12.
6 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 6.
7 As always, sources and details on these magistracies and careers can be found in Broughton's *Magistrates of the Roman Republi*c (1952, 1960).
8 Evidence for all the magistracies listed above is given in Broughton, *Magistrates of the Roman Republic* (1952, 1960); Caesar's family connections are given by Suetonius *Divus Julius* esp. at 6.
9 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 46.1: *in Subura modicis aedibus*.
10 Crawford (1974) no. 258/1, no. 320/1.
11 *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* I^2 1439; also Tacitus *Annals* 2.41 & 15.23.
12 *Inscriptiones Italiae* XIII.3 nos. 7 & 75 (Caesar's father) and 6 (Caesar Strabo).
13 Cicero *about the Orator* 3.2.8; Livy *Summaries* 80.
14 Suetonius *Lives of Grammarians* 7; Gnipho reportedly also tutored Cicero.
15 See Morel [1927] 91 for the text of this poem; Suetonius *Divus Julius* 56 mentions youthful poetic works called *In Praise of Hercules, The Tragedy of Oedipus* and *Collected Sayings* and cites a letter from Augustus to the 'overseer of libraries' Pompeius Macer ordering their suppression.
16 Velleius Paterculus 2.13; Florus 2.5; [Victor] *on Famous Men* 66; Livy *Summaries* 70 & 71.
17 Velleius Paterculus 2.13; Livy *Summaries* 70; Cicero *Brutus* 30.115; *for Fonteius* 17.38; Cassius Dio fr. 97.1; Valerius Maximus 2.10.5.
18 Cicero *on Duties* 3.11.47; *for Cornelius* at Asconius 67C.
19 Appian *Civil War* 1.35; Cicero *for Rabirius on a treason charge* 7.16; *for Cluentius* 56.153.
20 Appian *Civil War* 1.35; Velleius Paterculus 2.14.
21 Cicero *about the Orator* 3.1.1; Florus 2.5; [Victor] *on Famous Men* 66.
22 Asconius 68C; Cicero *on his own house* 16.41 & 19.50; Diodorus Siculus 37.10.
23 Velleius Paterculus 2.14–15; Appian *Civil War* 1.36; [Victor] *on Famous Men* 66.
24 Appian *Civil War* 1.37; Asconius 22C & 73C; Valerius Maximus 8.6.4.
25 Livy *Summaries* 72; Appian *Civil War* 1.38.
26 Velleius Paterculus 2.16; Diodorus Siculus 37.2; Strabo 5.4.2.
27 Appian *Civil War* 1.39–40 states that the former allies raised an army of 100,000, and lists the chief commanders and officers on both sides.

28 Plutarch *Marius* 33.
29 On the general course of the war see Appian *Civil War* 1.40–8; Livy *Summaries* 73–4; Orosius 5.18.
30 Appian *Civil War* 1.49; Cicero *for Balbus* 8.21; Aulus Gellius *Attic Nights* 4.4.3; Velleius Paterculus 2.16.
31 Cicero *for Archias* 5.11; Pliny *Natural History* 13.3.24; Festus 366L.
32 Asconius 3C; Pliny *Natural History* 3.20.138.
33 Appian *Civil War* 1.50–3; Velleius Paterculus 2.16–21; Orosius 5.18.22–4; Livy *Summaries* 75–6.
34 Plutarch *Sulla* 6.
35 Plutarch *Sulla* 5; Livy *Summaries* 70; Velleius Paterculus 2.24.
36 Cicero *for Archias* 4.7 naming the tribunes by their *cognomina*: [Plautius] Silvanus and [Papirius] Carbo.
37 Appian *Civil War* 1.49 (ten new tribes); Velleius Paterculus 2.20 (eight existing tribes).
38 Livy *Summaries* 77; Appian *Civil War* 1.55–6; Plutarch *Sulla* 8–9; *Marius* 35.
39 Appian *Civil War* 1.60; Livy *Summaries* 77; Plutarch *Sulla* 10; *Marius* 35–40; Velleius Paterculus 2.19.
40 Appian *Civil War* 1.59.
41 Appian *Civil War* 1.63; Plutarch *Sulla* 10; Livy *Summaries* 77; Valerius Maximus 9.7.
42 Appian *Civil War* 1.64; Cicero *Philippics* 8.2.7; Velleius Paterculus 2.20; Livy *Summaries* 79.
43 Livy *Summaries* 79; Granius Licinianus 16–19F; Plutarch *Sertorius* 5; *Marius* 41.
44 Velleius Paterculus 2.21; Granius Licinianus 18–19F.
45 Livy *Summaries* 80 & 83; Appian *Civil War* 1.53; Granius Licinianus 20F; Cicero *against Verres* 2.1.143; Cassius Dio 41.14.5; Jerome *Chronicles* for the year 85 lists 463,000 as the number of citizens enrolled in this census.
46 Velleius Paterculus 2.21; Plutarch *Marius* 43.
47 Livy *Summaries* 80; Cicero *about the Orator* 3.2.8; Appian *Civil War* 1.71; Plutarch *Marius* 43–4.
48 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 1; Plutarch *Caesar* 1.
49 Plutarch *Sertorius* 5.
50 Appian *Civil War* 1.75; Plutarch *Marius* 45; Diodorus Siculus 37.29.
51 Velleius Paterculus 2.23.
52 Appian *Mithridatic War* 11–22; Memnon 22.
53 Appian *Mithridatic War* 22–51; Plutarch *Sulla* 11–14; *Lucullus* 2; Pausanias 1.20.5; Livy *Summaries* 76–82; Memnon 22.
54 Plutarch *Sulla* 20; Memnon 24; [Victor] *on Famous Men* 70; Livy *Summaries* 83; Plutarch *Lucullus* 3.
55 Appian *Mithridatic War* 49; Frontinus *Stratagems* 2.3.17 & 2.8.12; Granius Licinianus 25F.
56 Appian *Mithridatic War* 54; Memnon 25; Plutarch *Sulla* 22–4; Granius Licinianus 26F; Livy *Summaries* 83.
57 Appian *Mithridatic War* 61–63; Memnon 26; Livy *Summaries* 83; Velleius Paterculus 2.24; Plutarch *Sulla* 25; *Lucullus* 4; Cicero *to his brother Quintus* 1.1.33; *for Flaccus* 14.32; Granius Licinianus 28F.
58 Livy *Summaries* 83–4; [Victor] *on Famous Men* 69; Appian *Civil War* 1.76.

59 Appian *Civil War* 1.79.
60 Appian *Civil War* 1.80–6; Livy *Summaries* 85; Cicero *Philippics* 12.11.27 & 13.1.2; Plutarch *Sulla* 27–8.
61 Appian *Civil War* 1.87–94; Plutarch *Sulla* 28–30; *Pompeius* 8; *Crassus* 6; Livy *Summaries* 85–8; Velleius Paterculus 2.26–7.
62 Plutarch *Pompeius* 10–12; Appian *Civil War* 1.95; Livy *Summaries* 89; Valerius Maximus 9.13.2; Eutropius 5.8.
63 Sources on Sulla's reform programme are too many and complex to be listed here; see most conveniently Greenidge and Clay (1960) 211–22. Brief overviews of the legislation are in Appian *Civil War* 1.100; Livy *Summaries* 89.
64 Appian *Civil War* 1.88; Livy *Summaries* 86; [Victor] *on Famous Men* 68.
65 Plutarch *Sulla* 31; Appian *Civil War* 1.95–6; Velleius Paterculus 2.28; Orosius 5.21; Cicero *for Roscius of America* 45; *for Sulla* 26 & 72.
66 Plutarch *Crassus* 2.
67 Plutarch *Pompeius* 9.
68 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 1; Plutarch *Caesar* 1.
69 Plutarch *Sulla* 34; Appian *Civil War* 1.103.
70 Plutarch *Sulla* 35–37; Appian *Civil War* 1.104–5.

III CAESAR'S EARLY MANHOOD: THE RISE OF POMPEIUS

1 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 1; Plutarch *Caesar* 1.
2 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 2.
3 See Cicero's letters *to Atticus and to his Friends* from the years 44 and 43.
4 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 49; Dio Cassius 43.20.4.
5 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 2; the notion that it was the *corona civica* that gave Caesar eligibility for high office two years earlier than normal was proposed by Lily Ross Taylor (1957).
6 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 3.
7 *Contra* Broughton *Magistrates of the Roman Republic*, who under the years 81 and 80 lists Pompeius as a pro-praetor based on Granius Licinianus 39B: given Pompeius's lack of *imperium* this must be carelessness on Granius's part.
8 Cicero *on the Manilian law* 61; Sallust *Histories* 2.21M; Plutarch *Pompeius* 13–14.
9 Appian *Civil War* 1.107; Granius Licinianus 33F; Sallust *Histories* 1.77.14M & 55.22M.
10 Granius Licinianus 34F; Sallust *Histories* 1.65–9M; Appian *Civil War* 1.107.
11 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 3.
12 Sallust *Histories* 1.77.22M; Appian *Civil War* 1.107; Florus 2.11; Valerius Maximus 2.8.7; Plutarch *Pompeius* 16; Orosius 5.22; Livy *Summaries* 90.
13 The most important source on Sertorius is Plutarch *Sertorius*; also Appian *Civil War* 1.108–14.
14 Plutarch *Pompeius* 17; Valerius Maximus 8.15.8; Cicero *Philippics* 11.8.18; Livy *Summaries* 91.
15 Appian *Civil War* 1.109; Frontinus *Stratagems* 2.5.31; Orosius 5.23.6.
16 Appian *Civil War* 1.110; Orosius 5.23; Livy *Summaries* 91; Livy excerpt from bk. 91 (fr. 18 in Teubner edition).
17 Sallust *Histories* 2. 98.1M; Plutarch *Pompeius* 20.

18 Appian *Civil War* 1.111–14; Plutarch *Sertorius* 23–5; Plutarch *Pompeius* 20; Livy *Summaries* 96; Velleius Paterculus 2.30.
19 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 4; Plutarch *Caesar* 4; Cicero *Brutus* 92.317; Asconius *on the Speech for Scaurus* 26C.
20 Plutarch *Caesar* 4; Asconius *on the Speech in toga candida* 84C.
21 Cicero *Brutus* 317; Aulus Gellius *Attic Nights* 5.13.6; Sallust *Catilinarian Conspiracy* 49.2; Cicero *for Flaccus* 98; Suetonius *Divus Julius* 71; Cicero *on the Land Law* 2.59.
22 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 45 & 50.
23 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 46–47; Plutarch *Caesar* 3 & 5.
24 Plutarch *Caesar* 3; Suetonius *Divus Julius* 4.
25 Livy *Summaries* 68; Cicero *on the Orator*; Cicero *for Rabirius on a treason charge* 9.26; Plutarch *Pompeius* 24.
26 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 4; Plutarch *Caesar* 2; Velleius Paterculus 2.42; Valerius Maximus 6.9.15.
27 See Plutarch *Pompeius* 24 for a very highly coloured account of the pirate menace.
28 Appian *Sicilian War* 6; Velleius Paterculus 2.31; [Asconius] *on the Speeches against Verres* 2.259St.
29 Diodorus Siculus 40.1; Livy *Summaries* 97; Plutarch *Antonius* 2.1.
30 Cicero *against Verres* 1.26–29; Plutarch *Pompeius* 29.1; Diodorus Siculus 40.1.
31 Plutarch *Pompeius* 24–26; Appian *Mithridatic War* 93–96; Cicero *for the Manilian Law* 34–35, 44, 52–58; Velleius Paterculus 2.31–2; Valerius Maximus 8.15.9.
32 Besides the sources in Note 31, see especially Appian *Mithridatic War* 96, mentioning Mallos, Adana and Epiphania, and also noting that some former pirates were settled in Achaia at Dymae.
33 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 4; Plutarch *Caesar* 3; Cicero also studied with Molon *Brutus* 312 & 316.
34 Our main sources on Mithridates are Appian *Mithridatic War*; Plutarch *Lucullus & Pompeius*.
35 Cicero *for the Manilian Law* 4.9 & 16.46; Cicero *for Murena* 15.32; Orosius 6.2.12.
36 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 4; Velleius Paterculus 2.42.
37 Details on all this can be found in Appian *Mithridatic War* and Plutarch *Lucullus*.
38 Plutarch *Lucullus* 20 & 23.1; Appian *Mithridatic War* 83; Cicero *Academics* 2.3.
39 Dittenberger *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum* 748 line 22.
40 Velleius Paterculus 2.43.1.
41 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 5; Plutarch *Caesar* 5.1.
42 Sallust *Histories* 2.49M, 3.48M; cf. Suetonius *Divus Julius* 5.
43 Plutarch *Crassus* 8–9; Sallust *Histories* 3.90–8M; Frontinus *Stratagems* 1.5.21–2; Appian *Civil War* 1.116; Florus 2.8.4–5; Orosius 5.24.1; Livy *Summaries* 95.
44 Appian *Civil War* 1.116 says 70,000 men; at 117 Appian speaks of 120,000 followers of Spartacus.
45 Livy 45.33.8–34.6; cf. Plutarch *Aemilius Paullus* 29.
46 Orosius 5.9; Diodorus Siculus 34.2.22–23 & 36.3–10.
47 Livy *Summaries* 96; Sallust *Histories* 3.106M; Plutarch *Crassus* 9–10; Appian *Civil War* 1.117; Florus 2.8.10; Orosius 5.24.4.
48 See above all the account of Plutarch *Crassus* 2.

49 Plutarch *Crassus* 10–11; Appian *Civil War* 1.118–121; Sallust *Histories* 4.20–32M; Livy Summaries 96 & 97; Florus 2.8.10–13; Orosius 5.24.5–6.
50 Cicero *Against Verres* 1.41–46; Sallust *Catilinarian Conspiracy* 38.1 & *Histories* 3.48.23M; Livy *Summaries* 97; Velleius Paterculus 2.30.4; Caesar *Civil War* 1.7.2–4.
51 Livy *Summaries* 98; Cicero *against Verres* 2.5.15, *for Flaccus* 45, *for Cluentius* 120; Valerius Maximus 5.9.1; Aulus Gellius *Attic Nights* 5.6.15.
52 Livy *Summaries* 97; Cicero *Philippics* 1.20; Velleius Paterculus 2.32.3; Plutarch *Pompeius* 22.3.
53 Cicero *to Atticus* 1.18.6.
54 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 5; Aulus Gellius *Attic Nights* 13.3.5; Dio Cassius 44.47.4.
55 See Cicero's *orations against Verres*; Plutarch *Cicero* 5–8.
56 Cicero *to Atticus* 13.6a; Plutarch *Lucullus* 24.1, 35.5, 36.1; Cassius Dio 36.43.2 & 46.1.
57 Plutarch *Lucullus* 23.2–32; Appian *Mithridatic War* 84–87; Sallust *Histories* 4.58–80M.
58 Plutarch *Lucullus* 33–35; Appian *Mithridatic War* 88–90; Cicero *for the Manilian Law* 5, 12, 16 & 26; Livy *Summaries* 98; Cassius Dio 36.3–8 & 14–17.
59 Cicero *for the Manilian law*; Plutarch *Lucullus* 35.7–36.6 & *Pompeius* 30; Appian *Mithridatic War* 97.
60 Appian *Mithridatic War* 97–118; Plutarch *Pompeius* 30–45; and many other sources.

IV ROMAN POLITICS IN THE 60s

1 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 19.
2 Cicero *to Atticus* 1.1.
3 Tacitus *Annals* 4.27.2: *vetere ex more*.
4 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 19.2: *provincia … minimi negotii*.
5 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 7.1; Plutarch *Caesar* 5.3; Velleius Paterculus 2.43.3.
6 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 6; Plutarch Caesar 5.1.
7 Plutarch *Caesar* 5.2–3.
8 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 7.
9 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 8.
10 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 6.2; Plutarch *Caesar* 5.3.
11 Plutarch *Caesar* 5.9.
12 See the entries for the years 67–63 in Broughton, *Magistrates of the Roman Republic* (1952, 1960) for Pompeius's many legates and other subordinates.
13 The main evidence for Cornelius's legislation is Asconius's commentary on Cicero's lost speech *for Cornelius* (Asconius 57–59C).
14 Cicero *to Atticus* 6.1.
15 Cicero *for Murena* 46, 67 & 72–3; Sallust *Catilinarian Conspiracy* .2; Cassius Dio 36.38–39.
16 Cicero *for Sulla* 11, 49–50, 81; Sallust *Catilinarian Conspiracy* 18–19; Livy *Summaries* 101.
17 The speeches in question are his *in toga candida* (speech as candidate), the speeches against Catilina, and his defence speeches *for Murena* and *for Sulla*.
18 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 9.

19 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 9.2–3.
20 Sallust *Catilinarian Conspiracy* 18–19.
21 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 10; Plutarch *Caesar* 5.
22 Plutarch *Caesar* 5; Suetonius *Divus Julius* 10.
23 Plutarch *Caesar* 6; Suetonius *Divus Julius* 11.
24 Cassius Dio 37.9.3.
25 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 11; Plutarch *Crassus* 13.1–2; Cicero *on the Land Law* 2.44.
26 Cicero *to Atticus* 1.2.1 & 16.9; Asconius 85–7C; Cicero *for Caelius* 12–14 offers the more favourable evaluation of Catilina's qualities.
27 Sallust's portrait in his *Catilinarian Conspiracy*, though biased and containing numerous calumnies, does show the fascinating qualities and energy of the man.
28 Besides Cicero's *letters to Atticus* 1.1 & 2, we are fortunate to have the small *Commentary on how to be a Candidate* by Cicero's brother Quintus Cicero.
29 Cicero *to Atticus* 1.2.
30 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 11; Cicero *to Atticus* 1.16; Cassius Dio 37.10.1–3.
31 The speech itself does not survive, but we know quite a bit about it from Asconius's surviving commentary.
32 Plutarch *Cicero* 11; Sallust *Catilinarian Conspiracy* 23; Appian *Civil War* 2.5.
33 See also Cicero *for Rabirius on a treason charge* 32; *for Sulla* 65; *to Atticus* 2.1.3; Pliny *Natural History* 7.117 & 8.210; Cassius Dio 37.25.4.
34 Cicero *to his Friends* 5.5 & 5.2; Cicero *against Piso* 5; Sallust *Catilinarian Conspiracy* 26.4; Plutach *Cicero* 12.4; Cassius Dio 37.33.4.
35 Plutarch *Cicero* 14; cf. Cicero *against Catilina* 1. 5 & 7 & 10 & 23–24; 2.14; *for Murena* 49.
36 Sallust *Catilinarian Conspiracy* 33.
37 See Cicero *against Catilina* 2.21; Sallust *Catilinarian Conspiracy* 20.13. The analysis of Gruen (1974 [1995]) 42–48 is valuable on this matter.
38 Sallust *Catilinarian Conspiracy* 26–27, with the usual anti-Catilina bias, which must be discounted.
39 A case for this view was put by Michael Parenti (2003) ch. 5 'Cicero's Witch-hunt': although Parenti's analysis is very one-sided, he makes some thought-provoking points.
40 Cicero *for Rabirius on a treason charge*; Suetonius *Divus Julius* 12; Cassius Dio 37.26–8.
41 Cassius Dio 37.21.4 & cf. 37.1; Velleius Paterculus 2.40.4.
42 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 13; Plutarch *Caesar* 7; Sallust *Catilinarian Conspiracy* 49.2; Velleius Paterculus 2.43.3; Cassius Dio 37.37.1–3.
43 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 46.1.
44 Velleius Paterculus 2.43.4; Plutarch *Cicero* 12.2; Cicero *to Atticus* 2.1.3 attests to a lost speech by Cicero opposing the proposal.
45 Cassius Dio 37.25.4
46 Velleius Paterculus 2.40.4; Cassius Dio 37.21.3–4.
47 Plutarch *Cicero* 14.8; Cicero *for Murena* 52.
48 Plutarch *Cato the Younger* 21.2–3.
49 Cicero *for Murena*; Plutarch *Cato the Younger* 21.5; the remark in *to Atticus* 2.1 belongs to the year 60, but reflects well Cicero's impatience with Cato's inopportune inflexibility.

50 For all that follows we are forced to rely mostly on Cicero's speeches *against Catilina* and Sallust's *Catilinarian Conspiracy*, but we must remember that these (and all later sources more or less based on them) are highly biased against Catilina and his followers.
51 Plutarch *Caesar* 7–8; *Crassus* 13.
52 Plutarch *Cicero* 15 & *Crassus* 13; Cassius Dio 37.31; Suetonius *Divus Julius* 17.
53 So Sallust *Catilinarian Conspiracy* 30.3 & 33.1–34.1.
54 Sallust *Catilinarian Conspiracy* 56–61.
55 Sallust *Catilinarian Conspiracy* 50–55.
56 Sallust *Catilinarian Conspiracy* 49; our information on Cicero's posthumously published pamphlet is from Asconius's commentary on Cicero's speech *in toga candida.*
57 Besides Sallust, Cicero's account in his *against Catilina* 4 is of interest, particularly for his respectful treatment of Caesar.
58 See most notably Plutarch's biography *Cato the Younger*.
59 See especially Plutarch *Cato the Younger* 24.1–2.
60 Caesar famously vented his bitter hostility towards Cato in his regrettably lost work called *Anti Cato*.
61 Cicero *to his Friends* 5.1 & 2; Plutarch *Cicero* 23.1–2; Cassius Dio 37.38.2.
62 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 15; Cicero *to Atticus* 2.24.3; Cassius Dio 37.41.
63 Plutarch *Cato the Younger* 27–29; Cassius Dio 37.43.1–3.
64 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 16.1 and 55.3.
65 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 16; Cassius Dio 37.42–4.
66 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 17.
67 Plutarch *Caesar* 9–10; Cicero *to Atticus* 1.12 & 13.
68 Cicero *to Atticus* 1.13.3; Plutarch *Caesar* 10.8; Suetonius *Divus Julius* 74.2.
69 Cicero *to Atticus* 1.14 & 16.
70 Cicero *to Atticus* 1. 13.5 & 15.1.
71 Appian *Civil War* 2.8; Plutarch *Caesar* 11.1–3 & *Crassus* 7.6.
72 Plutarch *Caesar* 12.1–3; Appian *Civil War* 2.8; Suetonius *Divus Julius* 18; Cassius Dio 37.52.1–53.4.
73 Plutarch *Caesar* 12.3.
74 Cicero to *Atticus* 2.1.
75 Many sources, see for example Diodorus Siculus 40.4; Livy *Summaries* 103; Velleius Paterculus 2.40; Plutarch *Pompeius* 43–5.
76 Plutarch *Lucullus* 42.5–6; *Cato the Younger* 31.1; Cassius Dio 37.49–50.
77 Cicero *to Atticus* 1.16.12, and also mentions in 18 &19 & 20.
78 Cicero *to Atticus* 1.18.6 & 19.4 & 2.1.8; *to his Friends* 5.2.6; Dio Cassius 37.49–50.
79 Cicero *to Atticus* 1.17 & 18; also 2.1.
80 Appian *Civil War* 2.8; Plutarch *Caesar* 13; Suetonius *Divus Julius* 18; Plutarch *Cato the Younger* 31.2–4.
81 Cicero *to Atticus* 1.17.11; Suetonius *Divus Julius* 19.1.
82 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 19.1.
83 Plutarch *Caesar* 14.1.
84 Cicero gives a particularly good description of the main outlooks and differences in his *speech for Sestius*.

85 Cicero *to Atticus* 2.3; Suetonius *Divus Julius* 19; Plutarch *Caesar* 13–14; Appian *Civil War* 9.
86 Cicero *to Atticus* 2.3.

V THE LONG YEAR, 59 BCE

1 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 20.1.
2 Cicero *to Atticus* 2.6.2 & 7.3–4 & 9.2a.1; *to his Friends* 13.4.2; Cassius Dio 38.1.3–7.
3 Cassius Dio 38.1.1–2; Appian *Civil War* 2.10.
4 Cassius Dio 38.2.1–3.3; Aulus Gellius *Attic Nights* 4.10.8.
5 Cassius Dio 38.4.1–5.5; Plutarch *Caesar* 14.2–6; *Pompeius* 47.5–8.
6 Cassius Dio 38.6.1–2.
7 Appian *Civil War* 2.11.
8 Cicero *to Atticus* 2.16.2; Appian *Civil War* 2.11; Plutarch *Cato the Younger* 32.1–2; *Pompeius* 48.2–3; Suetonius *Divus Julius* 20.1; Cassius Dio 38.6.1–3.
9 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 20.1; Cassius Dio 38.6.4.
10 Plutarch *Caesar* 14.7; Suetonius *Divus Julius* 9.2, 20.1 & 49; Cicero *to Atticus* 2.19.2 & 5.20.4.
11 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 20.2; Cassius Dio 38.8.2.
12 Plutarch *Cato the Younge*r 32.3–6; Cicero *to Atticus* 2.5.1; Cassius Dio 38.7.1–2.
13 Cassius Dio 38.1.7; Cicero *to Atticus* 2.12.1; for the law's implementation and the numbers ultimately provided for, I follow Gelzer (1968) 82–83 and n. 3.
14 Cicero *to Atticus* 2.16.2; *for Plancius* 35; Suetonius *Divus Julius* 20.3; Cassius Dio 38.7.4.
15 Cicero *against Vatinius* 29; Suetonius *Divus Julius* 20.4; Plutarch *Pompeius* 48.4; *Lucullus* 42.6; Velleius Paterculus 2.44.2.
16 Plutarch *Lucullus* 39–43.
17 Caesar *Civil War* 3.107.2; Cicero *for Rabirius Postumus* 4; Suetonius *Divus Julius* 54.3.
18 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 20.4; Cassius Dio 38.11.2; Cicero *on his own house* 41.
19 Cicero *on his own house* 35–39; *to Atticus* 2.72.2, 9.1, 12.1, 21.4, & 22.3; Cassius Dio 38.12.2.
20 Cicero *to Atticus* 2.3.
21 Cicero *to Atticus* 2.18.1 & 19.3.
22 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 21; Plutarch *Caesar* 14.8; *Pompeius* 47.10; Cassius Dio 38.9.1; cf. Cicero *to Atticus* 2.17 where 'Sampsiceramus' is a code name for Pompeius.
23 Cicero *to Atticus* 2.15.1, 16.1–2, 17.1, 18.2, 19.3; Velleius Paterculus 2.44.2–4; Plutarch *Cato the Younger* 33.1–4; *Caesar* 14.11–12; Suetonius *Divus Julius* 20.3; Cassius Dio 38.7.3.
24 Aulus Gellius *Attic Nights* 1.6; Livy *Summaries* 63.
25 Plutarch *Cato the Younger* 33.1–2; Plutarch *Caesar* 14.8; Cicero *to Atticus* 2.24.4.
26 Cicero *to his Friends* 8.8.3; *for Rabirius Postumus* 8 & 12; *for Sestius* 135; *against Piso* 37 & 50; Cassius Dio 38.7.5; *Digest* 48.11; *Codex Iustiniani* 9.27.
27 Cicero *against Vatinius* 36; *on the Consular Provinces* 36–37; Suetonius *Divus Julius* 22; Plutarch *Caesar* 14.6; *Pompeius* 48.3; Cassius Dio 38.8.5; Velleius Paterculus 2.44.5.

28 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 22; Cicero *to Atticus* 8.3.3.
29 Cicero *to Atticus* 2.16.
30 Cicero *to Atticus* 2.20, 21 & 24; *Brutus* 219.
31 Cicero *to Atticus* 2.24.
32 Cicero *to Atticus* 2.24.3.
33 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 20.5; Cassius Dio 38.9.4; Cicero *against Vatinius* 24–26 alleged that Vatinius was behind the affair.
34 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 28.3; Plutarch *Caesar* 29.2; Appian *Civil War* 2.26; cf. Cicero *to Atticus* 5.11.2.
35 Cicero *to Atticus* 1.19, of March 60, attests the unrest of the Helvetii and defeat of the Aedui.
36 Caesar *Gallic War* 1.31, 40 & 42.
37 For an example of Cicero's wit at Clodius's expense see *to Atticus* 1.16.
38 Cicero *to Atticus* 2.21, 22, 24, 25.
39 Cicero *to Atticus* 2.19.4; *on the Consular Provinces* 41.
40 Cicero *to Atticus* 2.18.3 & 19.5; *against Piso* 79.
41 Cassius Dio 38.12.3.
42 Cicero *against Vatinius* 15 & 35; *for Sestius* 40; Suetonius *Divus Julius* 23.1.
43 Cicero *against Vatinius* 35.
44 Plutarch *Cicero* 30.
45 Cicero *to Atticus* 3.8.4, 9.2, 14.1, 15.5; *for Sestius* 25–32; Cassius Dio 38.14.4–7.
46 Cicero *to the Senate after his return* 13 & 17; *for Sestius* 33; *against Piso* 14; Plutarch *Cicero* 30–31; Cassius Dio 38.16.6–17.2.
47 Plutarch *Cato the Younger* 35.1; *Cicero* 31; Cassius Dio 38.17.3; Cicero *to Atticus* 10.4.3; *for Sestius* 39–41; *against Piso* 77.
48 Plutarch *Cicero* 30.
49 Cicero *to Atticus* 3.1 and in numerous passages in his speech *on his own House*; Cassius Dio 38.17.4–7; Plutarch *Cicero* 31.5–32.1; Velleius Paterculus 2.45.1.

VI THE CONQUEST OF GAUL

1 Cicero *Brutus* 262.
2 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 56.
3 Caesar *Gallic War* 1.10.3.
4 Caesar *Gallic War* 1.7–8.
5 Caesar *Gallic War* 1.9.
6 Caesar *Gallic War* 1.18–20.
7 Caesar *Gallic War* 1.10.
8 Caesar *Gallic War* 1.11 & 16.
9 Caesar *Gallic War* 1.12; Labienus later claimed that the credit for this victory belonged to him: Plutarch *Caesar* 18.1.
10 Caesar *Gallic War* 1.13–17 & 21–23.
11 Caesar *Gallic War* 1.24–29; Plutarch Caesar 18.
12 Caesar *Gallic War* 1.30–33.
13 Caesar *Gallic War* 1.34–38; Cassius Dio 38.34.1–6.
14 Caesar *Gallic War* 1.39–41; Cassius Dio 38.35–46. Dio's account varies from that of Caesar, but we do not know what source Dio may have been following, or how good it may have been. Note also Plutarch *Caesar* 19, largely agreeing with Caesar.

15 Caesar *Gallic War* 1.41–54; Plutarch *Caesar* 19; Cassius Dio 38.47–50.
16 Caesar *Gallic War* 1.54.2: Plutarch *Caesar* 20.1.
17 Caesar *Gallic War* 2.1–2; Cassius Dio 39.1.2;
18 Caesar *Gallic War* 2.2–3; Cassius Dio 39.2.3.
19 Caesar *Gallic War* 2.4–5.
20 Caesar *Gallic War* 2.5–7.
21 Caesar *Gallic War* 2.8–11; Cassius Dio 39.1.3–2.2.
22 Caesar *Gallic War* 2.12–15.
23 Caesar *Gallic War* 15–19.
24 Caesar *Gallic War* 2.20–27; Plutarch *Caesar* 20; Florus 1.45.4; Valerius Maximus 3.2.19; Orosius 6.7.16.
25 Caesar *Gallic War* 2.28 & 34; note that Caesar greatly exaggerates the disaster to the Nervii – reputedly only 500 men surviving out of 60,000 – as the later involvement of the Nervii in the uprising of 54–53 shows: Caesar *Gallic War* 5.38.
26 Caesar *Gallic War* 2.29–33 & 35; Cassius Dio 39.4–5.
27 Caesar *Gallic War* 3.1–6.
28 Caesar *Gallic War* 3.7–10; Cassius Dio 39.4.3.
29 Caesar *Gallic War* 3.11.
30 Caesar *Gallic War* 3.12–15; Cassius Dio 39.40–3; Cicero *for Balbus* 64.
31 Caesar *Gallic War* 3.16–27; Cassius Dio 39.45–6.
32 Caesar *Gallic War* 3.28–9.
33 Caesar *Gallic War* 4.4–6.
34 Caesar *Gallic War* 4.7–15; Cassius Dio 39.47.1–48.2; Plutarch *Caesar* 22; *Cato the Younger* 51.1–5; Appian *Celtic War* 18.1–4. Plutarch *Caesar* 22.4 states that Cato's suggestion of handing Caesar over to the Germans for punishment was reported by the anti-Caesarian historian Tanusius Geminus, not the most trustworthy of sources. Note also, though, Suetonius *Divus Julius* 24.3.
35 Caesar *Gallic War* 4.16–19; Plutarch *Caesar* 22.4–23.1; Florus 1.45.14; Cassius Dio 39.48.3–49.2; Cicero *against Piso* 81.
36 Caesar *Gallic War* 4.20–26.
37 Caesar *Gallic War* 4.27–38; Cassius Dio 39.51.1–53.1.
38 Caesar *Gallic War* 4.38.5; Cassius Dio 39.53.2; Cicero *to his Friends* 7.7.1; Catullus 11 lines 9–11; Plutarch *Caesar* 23.2–3 specifically stating that many geographers denied the very existence of Britain, and that in crossing to Britain, Caesar 'carried the Roman empire beyond the limits of the known world'.
39 Strabo 4.199; Cicero *to his Friends* 7.7.1; Suetonius *Divus Julius* 47.
40 Caesar *Gallic War* 5.1–4.
41 Caesar *Gallic War* 5.5–8.
42 Caesar *Gallic War* 5.9–23; Cassius Dio 40.1–4; Orosius 6.9.4–9; Plutarch *Caesar* 23.2–4; Suetonius *Divus Julius* 25.2; Polyaenus *Stratagems* 8.23.5.
43 Caesar *Gallic War* 5.24.
44 Cicero *to Atticus* 4.17.6; Cicero's correspondence of this period attests to the exaggerated hopes and consequent disappointment of the British campaign: *to his Brother Quintus* 2.15.4, 3.1.10, 3.9.4; *to Atticus* 4.15.10, 4.18.5; *to his Friends* 7.7.1, 7.17.3, 7.16.1.
45 Caesar *Gallic War* 5.24–25.

46 Caesar *Gallic War* 5.26–37; Cassius Dio 40.4–10; Suetonius *Divus Julius* 25.2; Plutarch *Caesar* 24.
47 Caesar *Gallic War* 5.38–45.
48 Caesar *Gallic War* 5.46–52; Cassius Dio 40.5–10; Plutarch *Caesar* 24; Polyaenus *Stratagems* 8.23.6; Cicero *to his Brother Quintus* 3.8.2; *for Rabirius Postumus* 42.
49 Caesar *Gallic War* 5.53–58; Cassius Dio 40.11.1–2; cf. Cicero *to his Friends* 7.10.2, 7.11.2, 7.12.1, 7.13.2.
50 Caesar *Gallic War* 6.1; Plutarch *Caesar* 25.1.
51 Caesar *Gallic War* 6.2–4.
52 Caesar *Gallic War* 6.5–8; Cassius Dio 40.31.2–6.
53 Caesar *Gallic War* 6.9–10 & 29.1–3; Cassius Dio 40.32.1–2.
54 Caesar *Gallic War* 6.29.4–43.6; Cassius Dio 40.32.3–5.
55 Caesar *Gallic War* 6.44.
56 Caesar *Gallic War* 7.1–3.
57 Caesar *Gallic War* 7.4–7; Plutarch *Caesar* 27.1; Polyaenus *Stratagems* 8.23.9; Orosius 6.11.7.
58 Caesar *Gallic War* 7.8.
59 Caesar *Gallic War* 7.9.
60 Caesar *Gallic War* 7.10–13.
61 Caesar *Gallic War* 7.13–28; Cassius Dio 40.34; Orosius 6.11.1–4.
62 Caesar *Gallic War* 7.29–35; Cassius Dio 40.38.2.
63 Caesar *Gallic War* 7.36–51; Cassius Dio 40.37; Suetonius *Divus Julius* 25.2; Orosius 6.11.6.
64 Caesar *Gallic War* 7.52–56; Appian *Celtic War* 21; Cassius Dio 40.38.1–3.
65 Caesar *Gallic War* 7.57–62; Cassius Dio 40.38.4.
66 Caesar *Gallic War* 7.63–65.
67 Caesar *Gallic War* 7.66–67; Cassius Dio 40.39.1–3; Plutarch *Caesar* 26.
68 Caesar *Gallic War* 7.68–74: the account Caesar gives of the siege works that were constructed is well worth reading and illustrates as nothing else the almost superhuman capacity for work and improvisation of his soldiers; see also Cassius Dio 40.40.1–4; Plutarch *Caesar* 27.1–2.
69 Caesar *Gallic War* 7.75–89; Plutarch *Caesar* 3–5; Cassius Dio 40.41; Polyaenus *Stratagems* 8.23.11; Florus 1.45.23–26; Orosius 6.11.11.
70 Caesar *Gallic War* 7.90; Cassius Dio 40.44.1.
71 [Caesar](Hirtius) *Gallic War* 8.1–6.
72 [Caesar] *Gallic War* 8.7–23; Cicero *to his Friends* 8.1.4; Cassius Dio 40.42–43.
73 [Caesar] *Gallic War* 8.24–25.
74 [Caesar] *Gallic War* 8.26–44; Orosius 6.11.20–30.
75 [Caesar] *Gallic War* 8.45–49; Suetonius *Divus Julius* 25.1.
76 Plutarch *Caesar* 15.5 famously alleged that Caesar fought against 3 million men in all, killing 1 million of them and enslaving another million (cf. Appian *Celtic War* 1.6 raising the number to 4 million). This is obviously systematized – note the neat division into thirds – and exaggerated. The number of killed, however, may go back to Caesar himself, as Pliny *Natural History* 7.92 states that Caesar boasted of 1,192,000 enemy killed at his Gallic triumph in 46. Again, however, like enemy numbers generally through the Gallic War, that is likely to be a gross exaggeration intended to boost Caesar's glory in the eyes of the Roman people.

VII ROMAN POLITICS IN THE 50s

1 On Roman *collegia*, their history and the modern scholarship concerning them, see now Perry (2006).
2 Cicero *for Murena* 71; *against Piso* 8; Asconius 8C.
3 Cicero *for Sestius* 34 & 55; *against Piso* 9; *after his return to the Senate* 33; *on his own House* 129; t*o Atticus* 3.15.4; Asconius 7–8C; Cassius Dio 38.13.2.
4 Plutarch *Cato the Younger* 34.2–4; Livy *Summaries* 104; Velleius Paterculus 2.45.4; Cicero *for Sestius* 60–63.
5 See particularly Cicero *on the Consular Privinces* 2–9; full sources in Broughton *Magistrates of the Roman Republic* (1952, 1960) under the year 58.
6 Cicero *to Atticus* 3.8, 3.15, 3.18; Plutarch *Pompeius* 49; Cassius Dio 38.30.
7 Cicero *to Atticus* 3.23; *for Milo* 37; *for Sestius* 69 & 71; *on his own Hous*e 40; *on the Response of the Haruspices* 48; *after his return in the Senate* 8; Plutarch *Pompeius* 49.
8 Cicero *to his Brother Quintus* 1.4.3; *for Sestius* 75 & 78; Plutarch *Pompeius* 49; Cassius Dio 39.7.2.
9 See especially Cicero *to Atticus* 3.17, 3.19, 3.23 and *for Sestius* throughout.
10 See Cicero's speeches *on his own House, after his Return in the Senate*, and *on the Response of the Haruspices*; also his speeches *for Sestius* and *for Milo*.
11 Caesar *Gallic War* 2.35.4; Cicero *for Balbus* 61; *against Piso* 45 & 59; *on the Consular Provinces* 27; Cassius Dio 39.5.1; Plutarch *Caesar* 21.
12 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 41 gives the number of free grain recipients ca. 46 as 320,000.
13 Cicero *to Atticus* 4.1; *on his own House* 3 & 16–19; Cassius Dio 39.9–10.
14 Cassius Dio 39.12–19; Plutarch *Pompeius* 48–49; *Cato the Younger* 35; Cicero *to his Friends* 1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 1.7; *to his Brother Quintus* 2.2, 2.3, 2.4.
15 Cicero *to Atticus* 4.10; *for Rabirius Postumus* 19–21; *against Piso* 48–50; Livy *Summaries* 105; Valerius Maximus 9.1; Cassius Dio 39.55–58.
16 Cicero *to Atticus* 4.8A.
17 Cicero *against Vatinius* 35, see also 16–18, 23, 36, 38; *to his Brother Quintus* 2.5; *to his Friends* 1.9.
18 Plutarch *Crassus* 14; *Caesar* 21; *Pompeius* 51; Appian *Civil War* 2.17; Cassius Dio 39.54. Of course Cicero did eventually learn the details: Cicero *to his Friends* 1.9; *to his Brother Quintus* 2.4 & 2.5.
19 Cicero *to his Brother Quintus* 2.6; *to his Friends* 1.9.
20 Cassius Dio 39.27–30; Plutarch *Pompeius* 51; Cicero *to Atticus* 4.5; *to his Friends* 1.7 & 1.8, and *to his Brother Quintus* 2.7.
21 Cassius Dio 39.31; Plutarch *Cato the Younger* 41–42; *Pompeius* 52; *Crassus* 15; Appian *Civil War* 2.17.
22 Cicero *to his Brother Quintus* 2.7; Cassius Dio 39.32; Plutarch *Cato the Younger* 42.
23 Cicero *to Atticus* 4.9, 7.7, 7.9, 8.3; *to his Friends* 8.8, 9.5; Velleius Paterculus 2.46.2; Livy *Summaries* 105; Plutarch *Crassus* 15; *Pompeius* 52; *Cato the Younger* 43; *Caesar* 21; Suetonius *Divus Julius* 24; Cassius Dio 39.33–36; Appian *Civil War* 2.18.
24 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 73.
25 Plutarch *Pompeius* 52; see Coarelli (1997) 539–79.
26 Catullus 55 lines 6–8: in *Magni simul ambulatione femellas omnes, amice, prendi, quas vultu vidi tamen serenas*; cf. Ovid *Ars Amatoria* 1.67 & 3.387 for the popularity of Pompeius's portico as a meeting place for 'lovers'.

27 Cicero's advice on these building projects was solicited: Cicero *to Atticus* 4.17; Pliny *Natural History* 36.103.
28 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 26 gives the price for the land of the Forum Julium as 1 million gold pieces.
29 Caesar *Gallic War* 5.1; Plutarch *Cato the Younger* 44.
30 Cicero *on Divination* 1.29–30; Velleius Paterculus 2.46.3; Plutarch *Crassus* 16; Appian *Civil War* 2.18.
31 Cassius Dio 40.45; Appian *Civil War* 2.19; Cicero *to Atticus* 4.16 & 17.
32 Cicero *to Atticus* 4.17.
33 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 26; Plutarch *Pompeius* 53; *Caesar* 23; Cassius Dio 39.64, 40.44; Livy *Summaries* 106; Appian *Civil War* 2.19; Velleius Paterculus 2.47.2; Cicero *to his Brother Quintus* 3.1.
34 Plutarch *Cato the Younger* 45; Cicero *to his Brother Quintus* 2.14.
35 Plutarch *Pompeius* 54; *Cato the Younger* 47; Appian *Civil War* 2.20; Cicero *for Milo* 24–26.
36 Plutarch *Crassus* 18–33; Velleius Paterculus 2.46.4; Cassius Dio 40.25.
37 The details are given, from a very pro-Milo perspective, in Cicero's defence speech *for Milo;* see also Appian *Civil War* 2.20–22; Cassius Dio 40.46–50.
38 Cicero *for Milo* 70; Asconius 33–35C.
39 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 26; Cassius Dio 40.50.
40 Cicero *for Milo* 61; Plutarch *Cato the Younger* 47.
41 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 27.
42 Caesar *Civil War* 4, for example.
43 Plutarch *Pompeius* 54; *Cato the Younger* 47; *Caesar* 28; Cassius Dio 40.50; Velleius Paterculus 2.47.3; Appian *Civil War* 2.23–24 (with a careless misplacement of Cato's Cypriote command).
44 Plutarch *Pompeius* 55; Cassius Dio 40.51; Appian *Civil War* 2.25.
45 Sallust *to Caesar the 'elder'* 2.3.
46 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 26 & 28; Cassius Dio 40.51; Cicero *to Atticus* 7.1, 7.3, 7.6, 8.3.
47 Cassius Dio 40.30 & 56; for sources on the reluctant pro-consulships of Bibulus and Cicero, among others, see Broughton *Magistrates of the Roman Republic* (1952, 1960) under the year 51.
48 Plutarch *Caesar* 28; *Pompeius* 55; Cassius Dio 40.56; Appian *Civil War* 2.24.
49 Cicero *to Atticus* 5.2, 5.11; Plutarch *Caesar* 29; Appian *Civil War* 2.26.
50 Cicero *to his Friends* 8.1, 8.2, 8.5 (all letters by Caelius at Rome to Cicero in Cilicia), also 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.9; *to Atticus* 8.3; Suetonius *Divus Julius* 28–29; Plutarch *Caesar* 29; Cassius Dio 40.59; Appian *Civil War* 2.25–26.
51 Appian *Civil War* 2.26; Suetonius *Divus Julius* 29; Plutarch *Caesar* 29.
52 Appian *Civil War* 2.27; cf. Plutarch *Caesar* 30.
53 Appian *Civil War* 2.29–30; also Plutarch *Caesar* 29.
54 Cicero *to Atticus* 6.1, 6.2, 6.3.
55 Cicero *to his Friends* 8.12, 8.14, 8.17; Cassius Dio 40.63–64; Plutarch *Pompeius* 58.
56 Sallust *Letter to Caesar the 'elder'*.
57 Appian *Civil War* 2.30; Cassius Dio 40.64; Plutarch *Pompeius* 58; *Caesar* 30.
58 Appian *Civil War* 2.31.
59 Plutarch *Caesar* 29 & 34; *Pompeius* 57; Appian *Civil War* 2.30; Cassius Dio 41.3; Cicero *to Atticus* 7.12, 7.13, 7.13A.

60 Appian *Civil War* 2.31; Plutarch *Pompeius* 59; Orosius 6.15.1.
61 Cicero *to Atticus* 7.4.
62 Appian *Civil War* 2.32; Cassius Dio 41.1; Cicero *to his Friends* 16.11; Suetonius *Divus Julius* 29; Velleius Paterculus 2.49.3; Plutarch *Caesar* 31.
63 Appian *Civil War* 2.32–33; Cassius Dio 41.3; Cicero *to his Friends* 16.12; Plutarch *Caesar* 31; *Pompeius* 59; *Cato the Younger* 51; Suetonius *Divus Julius* 29–30; Velleius Paterculus 2.49.
64 It is worth noting here that Plutarch's hostile portrayal of Caesar's position, and laudatory portrayal of that of Cato, in his *Cato the Younger* 51, nevertheless states: 'outside [i.e. outside the Senate] he (Cato) could do nothing, for the people wanted Caesar to be their leader [literally, to be greatest], and though the Senate agreed with him it was afraid of the people.'

VIII CAESAR'S PLACE IN ROMAN LITERATURE AND CULTURE

1 At any rate, that seems to be implied at Cicero *Brutus* 61.
2 Notably Cicero *about the Orator; Brutus; on the best sort of Orator; and the Orator*.
3 Quintilian 10.1.114; Suetonius *Divus Julius* 55.
4 Sallust *Conspiracy of Catilina* 50–51; note also Cicero *Brutus* 261.
5 This sentence from Caesar's *de Analogia* is preserved by Aulus Gellius *Attic Nights* 1.10.4.
6 See for example Cicero *to Atticus* 15.1A.
7 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 55 quotes Cicero as writing to Cornelius Nepos 'Do you know anyone who speaks better than Caesar, even if he has concentrated on the art of oratory to the exclusion of all else?' See also Quintilian 10.1.114; Plutarch *Caesar* 3.1–2.
8 Suetonius *Augustus* 86.3 has Octavian write to Marcus Antonius of those who 'use words that Sallustius Crispus borrowed from Cato's *Origines*', for example.
9 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 56; see Cicero *to Atticus* 9.6A, 9.7C, 9.13A, 9.14, and 9.16 for a few surviving letters of Caesar embedded in Cicero's correspondence.
10 Cicero to *Atticus* 1.19 refers to an account he had written of his consulship in Greek, and mentions Lucullus's memoir, likewise in Greek, but sprinkled with deliberate 'barbarisms'; and Cicero also here refers to his plans to write a Latin prose version and a verse account.
11 Cicero *Brutus* 262; Hirtius's comment comes from the introduction to bk. 8 of Caesar's *Gallic War*, which was an addition actually written by Hirtius. Both comments are also quoted by Suetonius *Divus Julius* 56.
12 See the argument of Ogilvie (1982) 108.
13 Plutarch *Caesar* 18 as against Caesar *Gallic War* 1.12; see further Cicero *to Atticus* 7.16 and Hirtius in [Caesar] *Gallic War* 8.52.
14 Caesar *Gallic War* 3.19–28; see the treatment by Ogilvie (1982) 110.
15 Caesar *Gallic War* 3.25.
16 Plutarch *Caesar* 3.2; the remark comes from the preface to Caesar's lost Anti-Cato, his response to Cicero's highly laudatory work on Cato.
17 For a full account of Caesar's literary art, and the way he manipulates history through it, see Riggsby (2006).
18 Caesar *Gallic War* 4.4–15.
19 Plutarch *Caesar* 17.4–5.

20 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 56.
21 Macrobius cites the *Annales* of Furius in his *Saturnalia* (as *annales Belli Gallici*); for the poems attacking Caesar see Tacitus *Annals* 4.34.5; see also Quintilian 10.1.96 and Horace *Satires* 2.5.40–41.
22 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 73.
23 Note for example Suetonius *Divus Julius* 52 and Plutarch *Caesar* 68.2–4.
24 On Roman literary society, and the *poetae novi*, at this time, the best treatment in my view is that found in Wiseman (1985), see also Wiseman (1969) and Wiseman (1974).
25 The evidence is two notices in Jerome's *Chronica*: 150H (Olympiad year 173.2 = 87 BCE) for Catullus' birth; 154H (Olympiad year 180.3 = 58 BCE) for Catullus' death aged 30. The problem is, that several of Catullus's poems refer to events later than 58, such as Caesar's invasions of Britain (in 55 and 54). Jerome is thus wrong, and we cannot believe either the date of birth or the age at death if the date of death is demonstrably erroneous.
26 Cicero *for Plancius* 16–17.

IX THE CIVIL WARS AGAINST POMPEIUS AND THE OPTIMATES

1 Plutarch *Pompeius* 57.5, a boast of which Favonius rudely reminded him when Caesar's invasion actually occurred: Plutarch *Pompeius* 60.4; Appian *Civil War* 2.37.
2 Caesar *Civil War* 1.15.
3 See for example Cicero t*o Atticus* 7.11, which is often cited as proof of Caesar's unpopularity when in fact all it shows is Cicero's delusion.
4 Caesar *Civil War* 1.7–8; Plutarch *Pompeius* 60.1; *Caesar* 32.1; Appian *Civil War* 2.32.
5 Appian *Civil War* 2.35; Plutarch *Caesar* 32.2.
6 Caesar *Civil War* 1.8–9; Plutarch *Caesar* 32.2–33.1.
7 Caesar *Civil War* 1.10–15; Plutarch *Caesar* 33.1–2.
8 Caesar *Civil War* 1.15–16.
9 Caesar *Civil War* 1.14; Appian *Civil War* 2.36–37; Plutarch *Caesar* 33.4–34.2; *Pompeius* 61.2–4.
10 Caesar *Civil War* 1.17–23; Plutarch *Caesar* 34.3–4.
11 See notably Cicero *to Atticus* 9.7 with 7A, 7B and 7C, letters between Cicero, Atticus, Oppius & Balbus, and Caesar himself discussing this policy, and *to Atticus* 9.16 enclosing a letter by Caesar to Cicero expressing his determination to stand by his policy of clemency no matter what.
12 Note also Plutarch *Cicero* 37; *Caesar* 31.1; *Pompeius* 59.3; Appian *Civil War* 2.36.
13 Cicero's letters *to Atticus* from the first half of 49, found in books 7 to 10 of the collection, are filled with his anguished prevarications, his deep dissatisfaction with both sides in the conflict, his conviction that nothing good would come out of victory by either side, his desire for some sort of compromise that would restore peace.
14 Reported in Cicero *to Atticus* 9.18.
15 Cicero *to Atticus* 9.19, and cf. 10.8.
16 Cicero *to his Friends* 8.14.3.

17 It is notable that many key former consuls remained quietly in Italy, awaiting the outcome of the conflict or even attending Caesar's Senate meetings: P. Servilius Vatia (consul in 79), M. Aemilius Lepidus and L. Volcacius Tullus (consuls in 66), L. Aurelius Cotta (consul in 65), L. Julius Caesar (consul in 64), M. Valerius Messalla (consul in 61), L. Calpurnius Piso (consul in 58), L. Marcius Philippus (consul in 56), Ser. Sulpicius Rufus (consul in 51), L. Aemilius Paullus and C. Claudius Marcellus (consuls in 50) are all known to have done so.
18 Caesar *Civil War* 1.24–8; Appian *Civil War* 2.38–9; Plutarch *Pompeius* 62.2; *Caesar* 35.1.
19 In addition to the eleven ex-consuls listed in note 17 above, we can add three ex-consuls brought back from exile by Caesar: A. Gabinius (consul in 58), Cn. Domitius Calvinus (consul in 53) and M. Valerius Messalla Rufus (consul in 53).
20 Cicero *to Atticus* 10.1, a very biased report to be sure.
21 Caesar *Civil War* 1.33.3; Cicero *to Atticus* 10.4.8 & 8.6; Plutarch *Pompeius* 62; *Caesar* 35.3–4; Appian *Civil War* 2.41; Cassius Dio 41.17.2.
22 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 34.
23 Cassius Dio 41.36.3; Tacitus *Annals* 11.24; *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* 12 2.600.
24 Caesar *Civil War* 1.30.2, 2.23–44; Cicero *to Atticus* 10.4.8–11; Livy *Summaries* 110; Appian *Civil War* 2.44–46; Cassius Dio 41.41.1–42.7.
25 Caesar *Civil War* 1.34.2, 36, 56–58; Cassius Dio 41.21.3; Cicero *to Atticus* 8.14.3 & 15.1.
26 Caesar *Civil War* 1.37–55 & 59–61.
27 Caesar *Civil War* 1.61–87; Velleius Paterculus 2.50.4; Livy *Summaries* 110; Cicero *to Atticus* 10.9.1; *to his Friends* 9.13.1; Suetonius *Divus Julius* 34.2 & 75.2; Plutarch *Caesar* 36; Appian *Civil War* 2.42–3; Frontinus *Stratagems* 1.8.8, 2.1.11; Cassius Dio 41.20–23.
28 Caesar *Civil War* 1.87, 2.17–21; Livy *Summaries* 111; Appian *Civil War* 2.43; Cassius Dio 41.24.2.
29 Caesar *Civil War* 2.1–16 & 22; Cassius Dio 41.25.2.
30 Appian *Civil War* 2.47; Cassius Dio 41.35.5.
31 Caesar *Civil War* 3.1; Plutarch *Caesar* 37.1; Suetonius *Divus Julius* 42.2; Appian *Civil War* 2.48; Cassius Dio, 42.22 & 51.1–2.
32 Appian *Civil War* 2.48.
33 Caesar *Civil War* 3.1; Appian *Civil War* 2.48; Plutarch *Caesar* 37; Cassius Dio 41.36–38.
34 Appian *Civil War* 2.48; Cassius Dio 41.18.2, 24.1 & 36.2; Plutarch *Caesar* 37.2.
35 Cicero *to Atticus* 9.18 and several other letters; Suetonius *Divus Julius* 72.
36 Caesar *Civil War* 2.23–44.
37 Caesar *Civil War* 3.10; Appian *Civil War* 2.47 & 49.
38 Caesar *Civil War* 3.2–7; Appian *Civil War* 2.49–54; Cassius Dio 41.44.2–3; Plutarch *Caesar* 37.3; Suetonius *Divus Julius* 58.2; Velleius Paterculus 2.51.1.
39 Caesar *Civil War* 3.8; Cassius Dio 41.44.4.
40 Caesar *Civil War* 3.15.
41 Caesar *Civil War* 3.11–13; Appian *Civil War* 2.55–56; Cassius Dio 41.47.1–2.
42 Caesar *Civil War* 3.10–11 & 18.
43 Caesar *Civil War* 3.19; Cassius Dio 41.47.2–3 adds an unsuccessful attack by Pompeius at this time.

44 Caesar *Civil War* 3.18.1; Cassius Dio 41.48.1; Orosius 6.15.10.
45 Caesar *Civil War* 3.25–26; Cassius Dio 41.48.4; Appian *Civil War* 2.57–60.
46 Caesar *Civil War* 3.29–30.
47 Caesar *Civil War* 3.39–53; Cassius Dio 41.49–50; Appian *Civil War* 2.60–1.
48 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 68.2; Plutarch *Caesar* 39.2–3; Appian *Civil War* 2.61; Lucan 6.106–117; Pliny *Natural History* 19.144.
49 Caesar *Civil War* 3.54–72; Cassius Dio 41.50–1; Suetonius *Divus Julius* 68.3–4; Appian *Civil War* 2.61–2; Orosius 6.15.21; Plutarch *Pompeius* 65–6; for Caesar's remark: Suetonius *Divus Julius* 36; Plutarch *Caesar* 39; *Pompeius* 65; Appian *Civil War* 2.62.
50 Caesar *Civil War* 3.73–79; Appian *Civil War* 2.64.
51 Caesar *Civil War* 3.80–81; Plutarch *Caesar* 41; Cassius Dio 41.51.4–5; Appian *Civil War* 2.64.
52 Caesar *Civil War* 3.82–4; Plutarch Caesar 41–2; *Pompeius* 67; Cassius Dio 41.54–9; Appian *Civil War* 2.67 & 69.
53 Cicero *to Atticus* 11.4.1, 6.2, 6.6; *to his Friends* 4.9.2–3, 4.14.2, 6.6.6, 7.3.2, 9.6.3.
54 Caesar *Civil War* 3.85–89; Appian *Civil War* 2.76.
55 Caesar *Civil War* 3.89–94; Plutarch *Caesar* 46; Cassius Dio 41.62; Appian *Civil War* 2.70–81.
56 Caesar *Civil War* 3.95–7; Orosius 6.15.27; Plutarch *Caesar* 44; *Pompeius* 69–72; Appian *Civil War* 2.81–2.
57 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 30.4, giving Caesar's officer Asinius Pollio as his source.
58 Caesar *Civil War* 3.98–9 and 102.
59 Caesar *Civil War* 3.102–3; Appian *Civil War* 2. 83; Plutarch *Pompeius* 73–6.
60 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 63; Appian *Civil War* 2.88.
61 Caesar *Civil War* 3.105; Cassius Dio 42.6.3; Plutarch *Caesar* 48; Appian *Civil War* 2.89.
62 Caesar *Civil War* 3.103–4; Plutarch *Caesar* 48; *Pompeius* 77–80; Cassius Dio 42.8; Velleius Paterculus 2.53.4; Appian *Civil War* 2.84–6.
63 Caesar *Civil War* 3.106–7; Cassius Dio 42.34.6.
64 Caesar *Civil War* 3.20–2; Cassius Dio 42.22–5; cf. Cicero *to his Friends* 8.17.
65 Caesar *Civil War* 3.100–1; [Caesar] *Alexandrian War* 48–64; Cassius Dio 42.15–16, 18.2, 20–1, 27, 35.5; Livy *Summaries* 112; Plutarch *Marcus Antonius* 8–9.
66 Plutarch *Cato the Younger* 55.3; *Cicero* 39.
67 Plutarch *Cato the Younger* 55–7; Cassius Dio 42.13 & 57; Appian *Civil War* 2.87; Cicero *to Atticus* 11.17A.
68 Caesar *Civil War* 3.106–10; Cassius Dio 42.34–35, 51.5.4; Plutarch *Caesar* 48–9.
69 Caesar *Civil War* 3.111–12; [Caesar] *Alexandrian War* 1–23; Cassius Dio 42.36–40.
70 [Caesar] *Alexandrian War* 24–33; Cassius Dio 42.41–3; Plutarch *Caesar* 49; Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 14.127–36; Suetonius *Divus Julius* 64; Appian *Civil War* 2.89–90.
71 Cicero *to Atticus* 11.10.2; cf. also 14.1, 15.1, 16,1, 18.1.
72 Cassius Dio 42.27–30; Plutarch *Marcus Antonius* 9; [Caesar] *Alexandria War* 65; Cicero *Philippics* 6.11, 10.22, 11.14.
73 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 52 & 76; Appian *Civil War* 2.90.

74 [Caesar] *Alexandrian War* 34–40; Cassius Dio 42.9 & 45–46; Strabo 12.547.
75 [Caesar] *Alexandrian War* 65–6; Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 14.137 & 143–144; Cassius Dio 42.49.
76 [Caesar] *Alexandrian War* 67–78; Cicero *for Deiotarus* 13–24; Cassius Dio 42.47–8; Suetonius *Divus Julius* 35 & 37; Appian *Civil War* 2.91; Plutarch *Caesar* 50.
77 Plutarch *Cicero* 39; see also Cicero *to Atticus* 11.20 & 21.
78 Cassius Dio 42.30–33l; Livy *Summaries* 113; Suetonius *Divus Julius* 38; Plutarch *Marcus Antonius* 10; *Caesar* 51.
79 Cassius Dio 42.52; Suetonius *Divus Julius* 38; Plutarch *Caesar* 51; Polyaenus *Stratagems* 8.23.15; Cicero *to Atticus* 11.20, 21 & 22; Appian *Civil War* 2.92–4.
80 [Caesar] *African War* 1–3; Plutarch *Caesar* 52; Suetonius *Divus Julius* 59; Cassius Dio 42.58.
81 [Caesar] *African War* 3–18; Cassius Dio 43.2; Appian *Civil War* 2.95; Plutarch *Caesar* 52; Valerius Maximus 3.2.19.
82 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 59; Plutarch *Caesar* 52; Pliny *Natural History* 7.54.
83 [Caesar] *African War* 19–79; Cassius Dio 43.3–5.
84 [Caesar] *African War* 80–86 & 91–6, making Juba the winner of the duel; Cassius Dio 43.12 & 29–30; Livy *Summaries* 114; Valerius Maximus 3.2.13; Appian *Civil War* 2.96–7.
85 [Caesar] *African War* 87–8; Plutarch *Cato the Younger* 58–72 (see 66 for Cato's remark about Caesar's clemency); *Caesar* 54; Cicero *to Atticus* 12.4.2; Appian *Civil War* 2.98–9.
86 [Caesar] *African War* 89–90 & 97–8; Cassius Dio 43.9 & 14; Appian *Civil War* 2.100.
87 Appian *Civil War* 101–2; Suetonius *Divus Julius* 37–39; Plutarch *Caesar* 55.
88 [Caesar] *Spanish War* 1–2; Cassius Dio 43.28–31; Cicero *to his Friends* 6.18.2; Appian *Civil War* 2.103.
89 Cicero *to his Friends* 15.9.4, adding 'you know what a fool Cnaeus is, you know how he takes cruelty for bravery, you know how he always thinks he is being made a fool of: I fear that like a peasant he will reply with the sword'.
90 [Caesar] *Spanish War* 2–27 for the campaign leading up to the battle; on the opening phase of the battle see Plutarch *Caesar* 56; Velleius Paterculus 2.55.3; Suetonius *Divus Julius* 36; Florus 2.13.82–3; Polyaenus *Stratagems* 8.23.16; Frontinus *Stratagems* 2.8.13; Cassius Dio 43.37.
91 [Caesar] *Spanish War* 29–40; Cassius Dio 43.38–9; Plutarch *Caesar* 56; Florus 2.13.85–6; Appian *Civil War* 2.103–6.
92 [Caesar] *Spanish War* 42.

X CAESAR THE DICTATOR

1 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 87; Plutarch *Caesar* 63.4; Appian *Civil War* 2.115; the guest list is conjectural.
2 Plutarch *Brutus* 14 attests to Cassius's son assuming the *toga virilis* on the Ides; the dinner the night before is conjectural, but very probable.
3 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 80 says that the conspirators numbered more than 60, and singles out Cassius and the two Bruti as the leaders; the importance of these three is confirmed by Cicero's letters from the year after Caesar's death.

4 Cassius Dio 43.14.3.
5 The evidence and timing are listed and analysed listed in Broughton's *Magistrates of the Roman Republic* (1952, 1960) under the year 44.
6 See Cicero *on the Laws* 3.3.9.
7 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 77 records Caesar's remark about Sulla on the authority of T. Ampius Balbus, a source hostile to Caesar and hence of dubious reliability, but the sentiment is plausible.
8 The time of composition is established by Cicero's letters *to his brother Quintus* 2.12 and *to Atticus* 4.16.2 & 5.12.2.
9 Cicero *on the Republic* 2.29, 5.3, 5.6–8, 6.1.
10 Cicero *to Atticus* 9.7.5, 9.11, 10.4, 10.14.
11 Cicero *for Marcellus*.
12 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 86.2; cf. Cicero *for Marcellus* 21–25, protesting in 46 already against Caesar's remark that 'he (Caesar) had lived long enough already, whether measured in years or in glory', because the state needed him.
13 For the magistracies held by men of the above names in the years 48–43, see Broughton *Magistrates of the Roman Republic* (1952, 1960); Syme (1939) chapters 5 and 6 are the classic exposition of Caesar's following and new senators.
14 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 76.3 & 80.2.
15 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 41.
16 Cassius Dio 43.47.3 & 48.22.3; Cicero *on Divination*; *on Duties* 2.29; *to his Friends* 6.18.1; Aulus Gellius *Attic Nights* 15.4.3; Suetonius *Divus Julius* 72.
17 Cassius Dio 43.47.2, 49.1 & 51.3–6; Velleius Paterculus 2.58.1; Suetonius *Divus Julius* 41.
18 Most notably in 45 with three suffect consuls: Cassius Dio 43.46.2–4, cf. Cicero *to his friends* 7.30.1–2 for the dismay caused by the third suffect consul.
19 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 41.
20 Cassius Dio 43.25.3; Cicero *Philippics* 1.19, 3.38, 5.7.
21 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 41.3; Plutarch *Caesar* 55.5–6; Livy *Summaries* 115; Cassius Dio 43.21.4 & 25.2.
22 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 42.1 gives the number 80,000. The evidence for Caesar's colonization programme is too extensive and diverse to list here: see e.g, Gelzer (1968) 287–8, 297–9 & 311–13.
23 Cassius Dio 43.25.2; Cicero *for Marcellus* 23.
24 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 42.1.
25 Cassius Dio 43.47.3; Suetonius *Divus Julius* 41.1; Tacitus *Annals* 11.25.2.
26 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 42.3; Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 14.215.
27 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 43; Cassius Dio 43.25.2; Cicero *to his Friends* 9.15.5 & 26.3; *to Atticus* 12.13.2 & 35.2.
28 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 42.1.
29 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 42.2.
30 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 43.2.
31 Cassius Dio 43.25.1; Suetonius *Divus Julius* 41.2, 42.3 & 44.2; Cicero *for Marcellus*; *Philippics* 1.19, 5.12–16.
32 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 44.2.
33 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 40; Censorinus *on the birthday of Rome* 20.8–12; Macrobius *Saturnalia* 1.14.2–3; Pliny *Natural History* 18.211; Plutarch *Caesar* 59.5–6; Cassius Dio 43.26.

34 Cicero *to Atticus* 14. 1 & 2.
35 Livy *Summaries* 114; Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 14.160–80; Cassius Dio 47.26.3; Appian *Civil War* 3.77.
36 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 44.3; Plutarch *Caesar* 58; Appian *Civil War* 2.110.
37 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 26.2, 38.2 & 39.1; Cassius Dio 43.22.3 & 23.4.
38 Cassius Dio 43.19.4; Pliny *Natural History* 7.92; Appian *Civil War* 2.101–2; Suetonius *Divus Julius* 30.
39 Livy *Summaries* 116; Velleius Paterculus 2.56.2; Cassius Dio 43.42.1.
40 Cassius Dio 43.31.1 & 42.1.
41 Honours are listed by Suetonius *Divus Julius* 76 and Appian *Civil War* 2.106.
42 This is alleged by Plutarch *Caesar* 57.
43 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 79; Appian *Civil War* 2.107; Plutarch *Caesar* 60; *Marcus Antonius* 12.
44 Plutarch *Caesar* 61; also Suetonius *Divus Julius* 79 and Appian *Civil War* 2.108–9.
45 Plutarch Marcus Antonius 13.1–2.
46 Appian *Civil War* 2.111 and Suetonius *Divus Julius* 80.3 explicitly name Cassius and the two Bruti as leaders.
47 Cicero's collection of letters *to Marcus Brutus*, and much of his other correspondence of this time, singles out M. Brutus as the key leader in the conspiracy, and he is the only one for whom Plutarch composed a biography. One should also note, though, Cicero's letters to Dec. Brutus, which make it clear how important the other Brutus was.
48 Appian *Civil War* 2.112; Plutarch *Marcus Brutus* 5.
49 Plutarch *Marcus Antonius* 11.1; Suetonius *Divus Julius* 83.3; Plutarch *Caesar* 64; Appian *Civil War* 2.143 & 146; also Syme (1980) 422.
50 In his biography of M. Brutus, Plutarch in fact belittles Dec. Brutus as a man of little account and no courage, brought into the conspiracy only for his gladiators: *Marcus Brutus* 12.
51 Appian *Civil War* 2.109; Suetonius *Divus Julius* 86.
52 Appian *Civil War* 2.114; Plutarch *Marcus Antonius* 13; *Marcus Brutus* 18.
53 Plutarch *Marcus Brutus* 17; *Marcus Antonius* 13; Appian *Civil War* 2.117; Plutarch *Caesar* 66 inconsistently names Dec. Brutus as the man who detained the feared Antonius outside the meeting room.
54 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 86 particularly notes Caesar's failing health at this time, and cf. Plutarch *Caesar* 60 & Appian *Civil War* 2.110; for Caesar's and Calpurnia's troubled night see Plutarch *Caesar* 63 & Suetonius *Divus Julius* 81.
55 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 78.
56 Appian *Civil War* 2.115; Suetonius *Divus Julius* 81; Plutarch *Caesar* 64; this episode further emphasizes Dec. Brutus' closeness to Caesar.
57 Appian *Civil War* 2.116; Suetonius *Divus Julius* 81; Plutarch *Caesar* 65.
58 Appian *Civil War* 2.117; Plutarch *Caesar* 66; *Marcus Brutus* 17; Suetonius *Divus Julius* 82.
59 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 82.
60 Appian *Civil War* 2.118; Suetonius *Divus Julius* 82; Plutarch *Caesar* 67; *Marcus Brutus* 18.
61 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 82; Appian *Civil War* 2.118.

62 Appian *Civil War* 2.118–35; Plutarch *Marcus Brutus* 19–21; *Marcus Antonius* 14–15.

63 Plutarch *Caesar* 68; *Marcus Brutus* 20; Suetonius *Divus Julius* 84–85; Appian *Civil War* 2.136–48.

64 Appian *Civil War* 2.120 particularly notes the political naivety of the conspirators; and Cicero dwells upon it over and over in his letters of 44 and 43.

65 Cicero *to Atticus* 14.1.1.

66 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 74–75 remarks particularly on Caesar's determination not to be vindictive; Caesar himself wrote to Cicero that he was content for his opponents to be true to themselves, as he was true to himself: Cicero to Atticus 9.16.

67 Suetonius *Divus Julius* 84 notes the particular anger elicited by the reading, at Caesar's funeral, of a line from a play by Pacuvius: 'What, saved I these men that they might murder me?'; also Appian *Civil War* 2.146.

68 On Octavian's family background, see Suetonius *Augustus* 1–8; Suetonius *Divus Julius* 83 states that Octavian was adopted in Caesar's will and received three-quarters of all his property after other legacies were met, and that Q. Pedius and L. Pinarius shared the remaining quarter, calling them too sororal great-nephews like Octavian. This is chronologically impossible for Pedius, who as praetor in 48 was certainly born in the late 80s. Pedius (certainly) and Pinarius (probably) were nephews, and Suetonius was simply careless in grouping all three together as great-nephews.

69 For example, Plutarch *Marcus Antonius* 2 for Antonius's mother, and 16 for Antonius's great displeasure at Ocatavian's adoption.

APPENDIX: ROMAN MAGISTRACIES AFTER SULLA

Vigintisexviri: literally, twenty-six men – twenty-six minor civic magistrates appointed annually. They ranked below the official *cursus honorum* (career ladder) and held no *imperium* (power of command); the holders of these magistracies were usually young men in their mid to late twenties preparing for an official career. They were made up of six distinct colleges, each with a distinct sphere of competence. The *decemviri stlitibus iudicandis* were ten judges of minor civic lawsuits, particularly to do with determining free or slave status. The *tresviri monetales* were three men placed in charge of the Roman mint, including the important right to determine the design of that year's coins. The *tresviri capitales* or *nocturni* were three men placed in charge of the *carcer*, the prison of Rome just below the Capitol hill, where they oversaw executions; they also had some responsibility for policing Rome at night. Four *praefecti Capuam Cumas* were sent each year to oversee those Campanian communities which had been deprived by the Romans of autonomous civic rights at the end of the Hannibalic War. Finally *quattuorviri viis in urbe purgandis* and *duoviri viis extra urbem purgandis* were in charge of cleansing and upkeep of the city streets (four men) and the suburban streets (two men), respectively.

Quaestores: quaestors – twenty of these magistrates were elected annually. This magistracy was the lowest rung on the *cursus honorum*; the minimum age for eligibility was thirty. The quaestors were essentially official assistants, providing administrative and financial aid to higher magistrates – praetors, consuls and provincial governors – but election to the quaestorship did give automatic membership of the Senate.

Tribuni plebis: tribunes of the people – ten tribunes were elected each year, and the office was held after the quaestorship and before the praetorship. Patricians could not hold this magistracy. Although the tribunes were young men in their early to mid-thirties and still at an early stage in their official careers, the office was important and potentially powerful. Tribunes could summon assembly meetings and enact legislation, and they could summon and preside over Senate meetings. They had strong negative powers: a tribune could veto any and all state business, although he

had to appear in person to intervene. Officially thought of as the defenders of the people and their rights, the persons of tribunes were sacrosanct and inviolate.

Aediles plebis: plebeian aediles – two were elected each year, no patricians being eligible. The office was held between the quaestorship and the praetorship, usually instead of rather than in addition to the tribunate. Besides certain administrative and policing functions, the plebeian aediles presided over – and helped pay for – certain important religious festivals at which entertainments were put on for the Roman people.

Aediles curules: curule aediles – two were elected each year, patricians were eligible, and the office was more prestigious than the plebeian aedileship because it was not limited to plebeians, the games over which curule aediles presided – including the *ludi Romani* – were more important and prestigious, and competition for these magistracies was thus fiercer. Attaining the curule aedileship was considered a strong indicator for eventual advancement to the consulship.

Praetores: praetors – eight praetors were elected each year. Men had to be thirty-nine years old to be eligible for election, and the office conferred *imperium* (power of command) second only to the consuls. The two most prestigious praetorships, given normally to those who came first and second in the poll, were the *praetor urbanus* and *praetor peregrinus.* They were, in essence, the chief judicial officials in the state, the urban praetor being in charge of lawsuits between Roman citizens, the peregrine praetor of lawsuits between Romans and foreigners (*peregrini*). The other six praetors presided over permanent *quaestiones* (public law courts concerned with special crimes) during their year of office. After serving at Rome for a year, a praetor was normally sent out to govern one of Rome's provinces as proconsul, usually for a term of one or two years.

Consules: consuls – two were elected annually, to be the presiding officers of the Roman state. The minimum age at which men could hold the consulship was forty-two, unless they had a special exemption. To be elected to the consulship in his first year of eligibility (*suo anno*) gave a Roman politician special prestige. Consuls held the chief *imperium* in the state; they presided over most Senate meetings, and had a wide array of religious and administrative functions and powers. Chief limitations on their power were: the ability of consuls to veto each other's actions, the right of the tribunes to veto, and the inherent right of Roman citizens to appeal against exercises of magisterial power. After his year in office, the ex-consul was normally granted a term as governor of an overseas province, normally one of the larger, wealthier and more important provinces, and normally for one or two years.

Censores: censors – two were elected, usually every five years although there was some variation, with intervals of three, four and six (in rare cases even more) years between appointments of censors being known. Censors

were invariably ex-consuls, held office for an eighteen-month term, and were responsible for: conducting a census of the Roman citizen body, making a count and assigning citizens to appropriate census classes, centuries and tribes; conducting a review of the *ordo equester* (equestrians); conducting a review of the Senate, with the power to expel senators for inappropriate conduct; holding auctions for public contracts to carry out upkeep of public and religious amenities, to undertake major public building projects, and to take on the task of raising taxes in certain provinces.

Dictator: dictator – this was an emergency office with essentially unlimited power, superseding all other magistrates and the normal operation of the laws and limitations. A dictator was supposed to be appointed by a consul in consultation with the Senate, when it had been agreed that an emergency existed which it was beyond the ability of regular magistrates with limited powers to cope with. The dictator was not supposed to remain in office longer than six months, and he normally appointed a **Magister Equitum** as second-in-command. In practice, the dictatorship had fallen into abeyance since 217, until the office was revived by Sulla and Caesar in a new and temporally unlimited form.

LIST OF CICERO'S WRITINGS

Rhetorical works

on Invention – De Inventione
on the Best Kind of Orator – De Optimo Genere Oratorum
Topics – Topica
on the Orator – De Oratore
on Speech – De Fato
Stoic Paradoxes – Paradoxa Stoicorum
on the Subdivision of Oratory – De Partitione Oratoria
Brutus – Brutus
the Orator – Orator

Speeches

for Quinctius – pro Quinctio
for Roscius of America – pro Roscio Amerino
for Roscius the Comic – pro Roscio Comoedo
on the Agrarian Law – de Lege Agraria (contra Rullum)
Divination against Caecilus – Divinatio in Caecilium
against Verres – in C. Verrem
on the Command of Cn. Pompeius – de Imperio C. Pompeii (pro Lege Manilia)
for Caecina – pro Caecina
for Cluentius – pro Cluentio
for Rabirius on a Treason Charge – pro Rabirio Perduellionis Causa
against Catilina – In Catilinam
for Murena – Pro Murena
for Sulla – pro Sulla
for Flaccus – pro Flacco
for Archias – pro Archia
after his Return in the Senate – post Reditum in Senatu
after his Return to the Citizens – post Reditum ad Quirites
on his own House – de Domo Sua

on the Response of the Haruspices – de Haruspicum Responsis
for Plancius – pro Cn. Plancio
for Sestius – pro Sestio
against Vatinius – in Vatinium
for Caelius – pro Caelio
on the Consular Provinces – de Provinciis Consularibus
for Balbus – pro Balbo
for Milo – pro Milone
against Piso – in Pisone
for Scaurus – pro Scauro
for Fonteius – pro Fonteio
for Rabirius Postumus – pro Rabirio Postumo
for Marcellus – pro Marcello
for Ligarius – pro Ligario
for King Deiotarus – pro Rege Deiotaro
Philippics – Philippica

Philosophical treatises

on the State – de Re Publica
on the Laws – de Legibus
on the Boundaries of Good and Evil – de Finibus Bonorum et Malorum
Tusculan Disputations – Tusculanae Disputationes
on the Nature of the Gods – de Natura Deorum
Academics, Prior and Posterior – Academica I & II
on Old Age – Cato Maior de Senectute
on Friendship – Laelius de Amicitia
on Divination – de Divinatione
on Duties – de Officiis

Letters

to Atticus – ad Atticum
to his Friends – ad Familiares
to his Brother Quintus – ad Quintum Fratrem
to Brutus – ad Marcum Brutum

Spurious works

to Herrenius – Rhetorica ad Herrenium (author unknown)
Commentary on Being a Candidate – Commentariolum Petitionis (by Quintus Cicero)

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