

# **‘Portfolios of Power’: Julius Caesar in the Late Roman Republic**

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of Arts in Classical Studies

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## **ABSTRACT**

Julius Caesar's rise to power was achieved through a combination of different sources of power. These 'portfolios of power' were money and connections, oratory, and religion, and they worked either in conjunction or separately throughout Caesar's life to further his career. Each portfolio served multiple functions. For instance, connections were used to advocate on his behalf when needed, money was utilised to create financial dependency (i.e. loaning to potential allies), rhetoric was applied to promote himself, while religion was used to assert his hegemony over the Gauls. It was indeed his cultivation and expansion of these diverse portfolios that led to his eventual supremacy over the Roman world. One asset alone would not have sufficed during the various challenges throughout his career. Furthermore, it was his diverse portfolios of power that set him apart from other Roman politicians. For example, Cicero and Pompeius, each relied chiefly on one portfolio to acquire power, oratory for Cicero and military prowess for Pompeius. The extent to which Caesar sought to be sole ruler is debatable, but we can say with confidence that throughout his career, he had clear goals and developed strategies to achieve them.

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# CHRONOLOGY

c. 13<sup>th</sup> July 100 BCE: Caesar's birth

86-84 BCE: *Dominatio Cinnae*, or Cinnan regime

84 BCE: Marriage to Cornelia

Late 82 BCE: Sulla's victory at the Battle of Colline Gate; Sullan proscriptions

81 BCE: Military service in Asia Minor under Thermus and Vatia

77 BCE: Prosecution of Dolabella

75 BCE: Studied under Apollonius Molon

69 BCE: Elected quaestor

65 BCE: Elected aedile

63 BCE: Trial of Rabirius; Elected pontifex maximus; Catiline conspiracy

62 BCE: Elected praetor; *Bona Dea* scandal

61 BCE: Governor of *Hispania Ulterior*

60 BCE: Beginning of so-called 'First Triumvirate'

59 BCE: First consulship

58 BCE: Beginning of Gallic Wars

56 BCE: Luca Conference

52 BCE: Battle of Alesia

50 BCE: End of Gallic Wars

49 BCE: Beginning of Civil War

48 BCE: Battle of Pharsalos

47 BCE: Battle of the Nile

45 BCE: Creation of Julian Calendar; Battle of Munda; End of Civil War

45-44 BCE: Sole ruler of the Roman Republic

March 15<sup>th</sup>, 44 BCE: Caesar's assassination

# INTRODUCTION

## Portfolios of Power and Caesar

The thesis is based on two premises. First, the success of the *nobiles* depended in many ways on talent and personal qualities because promotion through the *cursus honorum* was connected to merit and achievement.<sup>1</sup> Second, as David B. Hollander outlines, power in the late Republic came in multiple forms or ‘portfolios’, to use his terminology. The main portfolios were violence, money, connections, and oratory. For Hollander, the basic definition of power is the ability to pursue and attain goals.<sup>2</sup> Expanding on this definition, he used the example of money as a useful parallel to power, stating that in economics, someone would choose from a portfolio of assets in order to respond to their needs as well as potential risks and rewards, and power was no different.<sup>3</sup> Thus, using Hollander’s term, Caesar furthered his career by building diverse portfolios of power that included money and connections, oratory, and religion. It was precisely his broad portfolios that provided him with the resources to eventually dominate the Roman world. It is important to note that the military was a vital component in Caesar’s portfolio, if not his most significant portfolio, but his martial capabilities and their pivotal role in his ultimate rise to autocratic power has been discussed at length in scholarship and they will not be discussed in this thesis.<sup>4</sup> This thesis is not meant to be a biography, nor an outline, of Caesar’s career, but instead

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<sup>1</sup> Flower (2009), 25-26 states that family status for the *nobiles* was based on electoral success, which was based broadly on how one utilised his resources, such as money and connections, and how successful they were militarily.

<sup>2</sup> Hollander (2016), 19 expands on this general statement by breaking down the three main groups of Roman power. First, there is state-sanctioned power, which means magistrates, courts, assemblies, and armies. Second, there is social power like patronage, friendships, family, and reputation. Third, there is economic power, meaning bribery, corruption, creating bonds of financial dependency, and gifts.

<sup>3</sup> Hollander (2016), 24.

<sup>4</sup> Meier (1982) dedicates a large part of his biography to Caesar’s military endeavours, 224-348 on Gaul and 367-429 on the Civil War. Rosenstein (2009), 83-99 is excellent on Caesar as a general and imperialist.

aims to analyse what strategies, tactics, and methods Caesar exploited to eventually dominate the Roman world.

## Literature Review

There has been much written about Caesar in both academia and popular literature. Three works stand out from this vast pool, Matthias Gelzer's *Caesar: Politician and Statesman* (1968), Christian Meier's *Caesar* (1982), and the Wiley-Blackwell's *A Companion to Julius Caesar* (2009), edited by Miriam Griffin.<sup>5</sup> Both Gelzer's and Meier's monographs are centred around a political analysis of Caesar's career but also the political climate of the Roman Republic during his life (100 to 44 BCE). Both authors reject the dualistic conflict between the *optimates* and *populares* in favour of a more nuanced understanding of the late Republic. They argue that Caesar's political success, and others', was based on a combination of personal skills, notably martial prowess, and the employment of their connections. Moreover, Meier specifically highlights how political success had many paths, evident in the different careers of notable figures such as Cicero, Pompeius, Cato, and Caesar.<sup>6</sup> Griffin's edited volume provides an excellent introduction to Caesar's life, writings, and legacy.<sup>7</sup> Regarding the role of these works, this thesis fits within the tradition of Gelzer and Meier, as well as Hollander, because it focuses on how Caesar brought together different assets, whether it be a skill like oratory or a commodity like money, to create an unmatched political apparatus. The Companion, although rich in information, did not influence the *ethos* of this thesis. In addition, Henriette van der Blom's *Oratory and Political Career in the Late*

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<sup>5</sup> Matthias Gelzer's and Christian Meier's books were originally written in German, but they have both been translated.

<sup>6</sup> Westall's review (2010) of Gelzer is excellent and explains the importance of Gelzer's contribution to Caesarian and late Republican scholarship. Gelzer's account of Roman politics for the 50s is said by Westall to be the best comprehensive analysis of the decade. Badian's review (1990) of Meier is also superb and provides a detailed analysis of Meier's strengths and shortcomings.

<sup>7</sup> The volume is divided into five parts: 'Biographical Narrative', 'Biography Themes', 'Caesar's Extant Writings', 'Caesar's Reputation at Rome', and 'Caesar's Place in History'.

*Roman Republic* was significant in shaping the chapter on oratory as this original work has a chapter dedicated to the effectiveness of public speaking throughout Caesar's career and how rhetoric worked alongside his other assets.<sup>8</sup>

## Outline

This thesis is divided into five parts: four chapters and a conclusion. The first chapter is a source chapter, where the nature of the main ancient authors concerning Caesar and the late Republic are discussed. Notably, the first half of the chapter discusses on the use of Caesar as a source, and I primarily focus on the purpose of ancient commentaries, Caesar's intentions, and the objectivity of his writings. The second half of the chapter analyses the importance of Cicero, Sallust, Suetonius, and Plutarch. Cicero and Sallust are irreplaceable sources on both Caesar and the late Republic, while Suetonius and Plutarch are our most complete ancient biographies on Caesar. The second chapter analyses money and connections, and concentrates on Caesar's family, friends, his broad network of clients, politicians, and political agents, and his conquests. The third chapter examines oratory and how Caesar's rhetoric was instrumental in creating and projecting his image as a capable leader, forming and consolidating political alliances, espousing his populist stances, and motivating his soldiers during crises. The fourth chapter studies the way he used religion to amass political influence, enhance his status, and undermine his opponents. The conclusion will include a short section on the reception of Caesar's career in Late Antiquity. All dates in this thesis are BCE unless stated otherwise. Any errors and omissions remain my own.

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<sup>8</sup> van der Blom (2016).

# CHAPTER ONE: SOURCES

## Julius Caesar As A Source

### Introduction

The writings of Julius Caesar have been both celebrated and criticised for over a millennium. His two most prominent works, *De Bello Gallico* and *Bellum Civile*, have recently received detailed monographs from Andrew M. Riggsby and Luca Grillo, where they both depart from the older scholarship that often discarded the *commentarii* as simple propaganda, neglecting the nuance and artistic quality of these ancient works.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, the question of whether the *commentarii* can be used as ‘objective’ sources for a thesis on Caesar’s career must be addressed, and the answer to the question is quite complex. First of all, the concept of objective truth would have been foreign to the ancient world. Although, Roman historians were not held to the standard of objective truth as modern historians, they were still not free to indulge in their personal biases. They still had to produce a coherent account that was subjectively true.<sup>10</sup> Caesar was no different, because he constructed narratives that were based on true events, but he used them to justify his intentions and actions. The goal of this chapter is to provide a fresh and holistic view of the *commentarii* by examining the genre of ancient commentaries, how the *commentarii* fit within the genre, how politics played a role in their creation, and their objectivity and the notion of propaganda in an ancient context.

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<sup>9</sup> Grillo (2012), 1-12; Riggsby (2008), 191-214. Both authors provide an up-to-date analysis of Caesar’s two commentaries. Riggsby focused on the *Gallic War* while Grillo discussed the *Civil War*. From now on, I will be refereeing to these two works by their English titles. I will use the term *commentarii* to refer to both the *Gallic War* and the *Civil War*.

<sup>10</sup> Krebs (2017), 212.

## Ancient Commentaries

The genre of ancient commentary is a fluid one, since it is difficult to indicate specific characteristics that define it. Ancient commentaries may range from private letters to public records, and from handbooks to memoirs. Their topics may be literary, philosophical, legal, or philological, and the authors may be magistrates, jurists, priests, philosophers, and so on.<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, amongst all this diversity, there are tropes of the genre that can be identified. All commentaries record a specific human project or projects, or actions, whether they be battles, official acts, or rhetoric. For example, there are no commentaries on towns or regions, a specific year, or animals. Moreover, most of our surviving commentaries seem to be defined by their individual intentionality rather than pre-existing categories.<sup>12</sup> Quintus Tullius Cicero's commentary on electioneering is prime example, because he specified in his introduction why he intended to write a commentary, stating that "Although you are furnished with all that men can acquire by ability, experience, or application, I thought it in keeping with our affection to write in full to you what has been coming into my mind as I think day and night about your canvass [...]."<sup>13</sup> Riggsby presents a short list of defining characteristics of the genre, but he acknowledges that not all of these qualities apply to every commentary. He argues that commentaries were usually a memory aid for a specific scholarly endeavour such as history, oratory, philosophy and so on, an assemblage of material lacking literary quality, or official or private records of Roman magistrates.<sup>14</sup> Caesar's *commentarii* simultaneously conform to and challenge this description.

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<sup>11</sup> Dimitrova (2018), 5; Raaflaub (2018), 17; Riggsby (2006), 134-135.

<sup>12</sup> Riggsby (2006), 135-139.

<sup>13</sup> Q. Cicero, *Electioneering*, 1; Riggsby (2006), 135.

<sup>14</sup> Riggsby (2006), 139-140.

It is important to clarify that the *commentarii* do not qualify as history in both the ancient and modern sense of the term. Cicero, Hirtius, and Suetonius all referred to the *Gallic* and *Civil War* as commentaries and not history.<sup>15</sup> The *commentarii* lack a proem, and to an ancient reader who knew the style of history, this would signal that Caesar's *opera* were not history, since a proem was an essential part of proper historical writing. However, Cicero implied that although Caesar was attempting to create 'notes' for history, one of the various functions of a commentary, his polished style and mastery of the Latin language made his *commentarii* a history in their own right rather than mere 'notes' for a future history. Essentially, Cicero expressed how the *commentarii* balanced themselves between the genres of commentary and history, a balance between the simplicity of commentaries and the literary art of historiography.<sup>16</sup> His assessment is not without merit because the *commentarii* do often drift into the style of history. The use of clear, concise, and direct language signals Caesar's goal of writing a commentary or 'notes' for proper history, but his use of direct speech is what one would expect to find in a regular history, where it was often used to analyse a given situation or reveal the speaker's character and motivations. Yet, a closer examination demonstrates that Caesar applied direct speech differently from ancient historians. Direct speech in the *commentarii* does not serve an analytical purpose, but rather is used to display isolated acts of heroism, as is the case in Valerius Maximus' *Memorable Doings and Sayings*. Caesar wanted to give the impression that these speeches were more real than their counterparts in history, since they neither explain nor advance the narrative than the fact that they supposedly happened. Xenophon used direct speech in the same manner in his commentary on

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<sup>15</sup> Cicero, *Brutus*, 262; Hirtius, *Gallic War*, 8.2; Suetonius, *Julius*, 56.1; Grillo (2012), 1; Riggsby (2006), 143.

<sup>16</sup> Cicero, *Brutus*, 262; Raaflaub (2018), 17; Krebs (2017), 210; Grillo (2012), 4; Riggsby (2006), 147.

Socrates' sayings.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, Caesar no doubt wanted to present the *commentarii* as historically accurate.

There is good reason to believe that the original title of the *commentarii* was *Commentarii rerum gestarum*, which translates to 'commentaries on deeds' or 'notes on deeds or (future) history'. Thus, the *commentarii* would not have been considered history, but viewed as preparatory for or complementary to a history.<sup>18</sup> Essentially, the *commentarii* were meant to present Caesar's accomplishments in an elegant and readable style to people who were supposed to be swayed and impressed with his deeds. Furthermore, the blending of historical accuracy with autobiographical aspects made the *commentarii* an important vehicle for his self-promotion. Caesar additionally utilised his skill as a gifted writer and orator to create a work of art.<sup>19</sup> Therefore, the *commentarii* represent a unique combination of commentary, as a result of their clear and direct language, but also history, as a result of their polished style. This mixture brings us to the question regarding Caesar's intentions in writing the *commentarii*.

## Caesar's Intentions

Before discussing Caesar's intentions, we should discuss the context in which the *commentarii* were written. While Caesar was campaigning in Gaul, he was obviously not in Rome, and therefore, he was placed at a great disadvantage politically regarding domestic politics, because his enemies would have had free rein to attack him in front of the Roman people and his allies in the nobility. Naturally, he had to keep his achievements fresh in the minds of the public and the elite alike.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, his consulship in 59 was stained with repeated constitutional

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<sup>17</sup> Riggsby (2006), 141-142.

<sup>18</sup> Krebs (2017), 210.

<sup>19</sup> Raaflaub (2018), 18; Dimitrova (2018), 5.

<sup>20</sup> Wiseman (2009), 4.

violations, and additionally, his invasion of Gaul was initiated without senatorial authorization. Therefore, he was open to prosecution once his proconsulship ended, so he needed to secure his popularity to avoid criminal charges. Therefore, the *commentarii* became part of an extensive project of self-promotion, working alongside patronage and other avenues to protect his political power.<sup>21</sup> Caesar's prime objective was to create a meticulously self-authored character, who was fierce in his defence of the interests of Rome and his personal dignity. This character was also simultaneously empathetic and reasonable, in order to justify his conduct during his conquest of Gaul, and later during the Civil War against Pompeius.<sup>22</sup> Although his objectives seem clear, the discussion with regard to who his intended audience was and the implications needs more examination.

The debate over whether the *commentarii* were intended for an elite or non-elite audience would answer whom exactly was Caesar trying to convince and why. It is important to clarify that, although the *Civil War* was intended for publication, it was not, whereas the *Gallic War* was certainly published during Caesar's life.<sup>23</sup> Most modern scholars, like Wiseman and Raaflaub, reject the older view that the *commentarii* were intended for a purely aristocratic or literate audience. Caesar's use of a simple yet elegant style of prose and the overall theme of his self-representation as a champion of the Republic and its people, suggests that the *commentarii* were for a non-senatorial audience as well. In his speech against Ariovistus, Caesar explicitly praised the bravery of his plebeian soldiers, contrasting their bravery with the cowardice of his upper-class

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<sup>21</sup> Raaflaub (2018), 18-19.

<sup>22</sup> Caesar, *Civil War*, 1.1-8; Dimitrova (2018), 2. See Caesar, *Civil War*, 1.5 where the Senate is portrayed as dealing in bad faith with Caesar.

<sup>23</sup> Hirtius, *Gallic War*, 8.1; Raaflaub (2018), 21; Wiseman (2009), 2.

officers who feared Ariovistus.<sup>24</sup> Even though the *Civil War* was never published, it was no doubt created to enhance his public image with the Roman elite and people alike, since the narrative stressed his Republican convictions, the justice of his cause, and his love for Rome and its people.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, another reason that the *commentarii* were likely not intended for a purely elite audience is due to his life-long populist stances. He acquired the provinces of *Gallia Cisalpina* and *Illyricum* for a five-year mandate after his consulship in 59 through a plebiscite, thanks to the advocacy of the tribune Publius Vatinius. His appointment went against the wishes of much of the Senate. Therefore, Caesar had to continue to foster his image as the ‘People’s General’, justifying his conquests and actions as beneficial to the non-elite members of society.<sup>26</sup> Additionally, on the more theatrical side, historical narrative was a popular form of entertainment during the late Republic, which had its roots in Hellenistic culture.<sup>27</sup> The evidence implies then that the *commentarii* may have had a diverse audience, and this leads to the question of how were the *commentarii* disseminated en masse in a pre-printing-press society.

There were three principal ways in which the *commentarii* may have been distributed in Rome and the rest of Italy. First, Caesar’s political operatives, the most notable being Lucius Balbus and Gaius Oppius, would have received sections of the *commentarii* in order to make copies for public performances. Second, Caesar sent private letters to his elite friends, which sometimes included sections of the *commentarii*, so they could read them out in public. Finally, when Caesar was given a *supplicatio* for his military victories, official reports of his victories were read out to the people, likely in his case from his *commentarii*. They were then decreed by the Senate to be

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<sup>24</sup> Caesar, *Gallic War*, 1.40-41; Raaflaub (2018), 21-22; Riggsby (2006), 148-150. Caesar used the term *populus Romanus* a total of forty-one times in Book 1 of the Gallic War alone. For his entire speech against Ariovistus, see Caesar, *Gallic War*, 1.30-54.

<sup>25</sup> Raaflaub (2018), 21-22; Wiseman (2009), 2.

<sup>26</sup> Wiseman (2009), 2-3.

<sup>27</sup> Wiseman (2009), 4-5.

published and included in the *acta*.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, the internal inconsistencies and stylistic development between chapters in the *Gallic War* prove that each book was meant to be dispatched annually in order to be circulated. For example, there is a clear break in the *Gallic War* between books one through four (58-57 and 55-54) and books five through seven (53-51). The style of the first four books are closer to proper commentary, whereas the last three books are highly stylised and literary. The reason for the heightened style was most likely a product of an increase in military related complications during the last three years of Caesar's Gallic campaign, hence he needed to hide his difficulties with a more literary style, to protect his image as a proper and successful Roman politician and general.<sup>29</sup> The annually dispatches and style indicate that he was concerned with his appearance, particularly in front of the Roman and Italian masses.<sup>30</sup> In light of these facts, we can now explore more about Caesar's aims than just the vague explanation of self-promotion.

Caesar wanted to play to the collective self-image of the Roman people through the *commentarii*. The idea of a Roman's obligation to act justly, meaning to act for the benefit of the Republic and to preserve the *mos maiorum*, was integral to Rome's view of itself. He needed to demonstrate that his actions, whether they be his conquest of Gaul or the Civil War against Pompeius, were impartial and beneficial to the Republic. Hence, he portrayed himself as the ideal Roman general in service to the Republic, who exhibited the virtues necessary to overcome Rome's partisan fighting and polarization, so that his actions could be trusted and embraced. His style of command is specifically represented as that of the ideal general, displaying physical courage, tactical prowess, and *virtus* to inspire his soldiers.<sup>31</sup> Consequently, the *commentarii* became powerful tools in advertising his achievements and *Romanitas* in both elite circles and

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<sup>28</sup> Krebs (2018), 32-35; Wiseman (2009), 4-5.

<sup>29</sup> Krebs (2018), 41; Wiseman (2009), 6.

<sup>30</sup> Krebs (2018), 41-42; Wiseman (2009), 6.

<sup>31</sup> Raaflaub (2018), 21-22; Goldsworthy (2009), 211.

amongst the public. Caesar does not convince his audience or reader through argumentation, shown with his avoidance of the imperative mood, but he exploited his audiences' already held beliefs. The absence of the mood does not take away from its propagandistic elements, but on the other hand, it displays how skilfully he inserted himself into Rome's self-image.<sup>32</sup> Therefore, the *commentarii* are self-serving at least with regard to the promotion of his character within an already established cultural milieu. This leads us to the discussion of the objectivity of the *commentarii*.

### **Objectivity of the *Commentarii***

Before we begin our discussion on how 'objective' the *commentarii* were, it is important to clarify the misleading nature of the term and its relation to antiquity. In the introduction of this chapter we already explained that Roman historians and the ancient writers in general did not recognise the standards of 'objective truth'.<sup>33</sup> Nevertheless, we can still debate the self-promotional nature of the *commentarii* and how we can utilise the *commentarii* in an analysis on Caesar's career. This debate over whether the *commentarii* were propaganda or not has preoccupied scholars since the Second World War, when the propagandistic endeavours of fascist regimes in Europe became topics of popular discourse. Early scholars such as Rambaud in his *L'Art de la déformation historique dans les "Commentaires" de César* argued that the *commentarii* were written solely as propaganda. Rambaud claimed that the *commentarii* were simply created to serve Caesar's interests by giving the readers a false impression of the facts.<sup>34</sup> However, modern scholars like Grillo challenge Rambaud's thesis. Grillo argues that Rambaud

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<sup>32</sup> Raaflaub (2018), 22-26; Dimitrova (2018), 28; Riggsby (2006), 213-214.

<sup>33</sup> Krebs (2017), 212.

<sup>34</sup> Rambaud (1966), 98. The exact quotation is « L'historien établit des faits en regroupant des indices et rattache les faits entre eux par des relations causales. César, suivant une intention tout opposée, s'efforce souvent de rompre la continuité des événements et d'empêcher cette synthèse de l'historien ou la reconstitution spontanée des lecteurs. »

failed to grasp the centrality of the *commentarii* and Caesar's technique of characterization, and too often without appreciating their art.<sup>35</sup> So this raises the question, are the *commentarii* propaganda?

The word propaganda is often used generously, which distorts its true meaning, and the usage of the term can be problematic when applied to the ancient world. Jacques Ellul stated in his seminal work *Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes* that, "Without the discoveries made in the past half-century by scientists who 'never wanted this,' there would be no propaganda. The findings of social psychology, depth psychology, behaviourism, group sociology, sociology of public opinion are the very foundations of the propagandist's work."<sup>36</sup> Ellul acknowledges that certain kinds of propaganda existed before the modern period, but the emergence of propaganda as we understand the term is inseparable from a number of modern scientific discoveries.<sup>37</sup> Propaganda is a tool that attempts to impose specific beliefs and ideologies while trying to replace previous and pre-existing forms of identities and ideologies. The term also implies an imperative, the act of telling the audience directly and precisely what to do and think. A propagandist would not admit of any failings on their part and would at will omit or fabricate evidence to serve their worldview. Moreover, the concept of ideology is modern, and difficulties arise when applied to antiquity.<sup>38</sup> Thus, he cannot say the *commentarii* were propaganda in the modern technical sense, but we can say that they were self-serving because they were promoting both Caesar's *Romanitas* as well as the idea that his campaigns were *bella iusta*. Caesar shared the same worldview of his audience, as he sought to explain his thoughts and actions in accordance with the already established social order. He was not pushing a new worldview, on the contrary, he wanted to assert

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<sup>35</sup> Grillo (2012), 3. Grillo (2012), 14-36 goes into more detail.

<sup>36</sup> Ellul (1965), 89.

<sup>37</sup> Ellul (1965), 88.

<sup>38</sup> Riggsby (2006), 208-210.

himself into the traditional Roman *ethos*.<sup>39</sup> A critical eye is necessary to separate the promotional elements and the factual evidence.

One of Caesar's contemporaries, Asinius Pollio, criticised the *Civil War*, saying that Caesar cared little about accuracy and the truth. He believed that Caesar should have revised and reviewed his 'notes' to create a proper historical work. This should be taken with a degree of skepticism since Pollio wrote his own history of the Civil War, so his criticism no doubt was trying to advertise his own work. Historians in antiquity often criticised their predecessors in order to establish their own authority.<sup>40</sup> Nevertheless, Pollio's criticism should not be disregarded and the historical value of the *commentarii* should be investigated. The *Gallic War* is an irreplaceable historical document that provides us with an exclusive account of Caesar's Gallic campaigns, but also offers valuable geographical and topographical information about Gaul.<sup>41</sup> Regarding the *Civil War*, once one recognises the rhetorical mechanisms portraying Caesar in a positive light, it is possible for a historian to acquire important information about the cultural and socio-economic environments of the Roman world during the last days of the Republic.<sup>42</sup> Essentially, scholars must look beyond the self-promotional and rhetorical aspects of the *commentarii* in order to draw upon the historical insight that they provide. We need to approach the *commentarii* as rich historical source, not what Caesar wanted his compatriots to see. They are literary works and not simply propagandistic works for Caesar's self-promotion, and they should be treated as such.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Caesar, *Gallic War*, 1.6-11; Caesar, *Civil War*, 1.1-8; Riggsby (2006), 211-212. Riggsby (2006), 175-189 discusses section on Caesar's use of 'just war' throughout the *Gallic War*. Caesar, *Gallic War*, 1.6-11 looks at his justification for war with the Helvetii.

<sup>40</sup> E.g. Suetonius, *Iulius*, 56.4; see Westall (2018), 320-321; Krebs (2017), 212; Grillo (2012), 4-5.

<sup>41</sup> Dimitrova (2018), 2-3.

<sup>42</sup> Westall (2018), 322.

<sup>43</sup> Dimitrova (2018), 5-7; Westall (2018), 20. Grillo (2012), 8-10, 142-143 has a comprehensive analysis on the use of rhetoric in the *Civil War*.

## Conclusion

Caesar's *commentarii* are complex works of literature. They exhibit typical tropes of the genre but also incorporate aspects of historiography, and they likewise serve to promote his interests but also provide valuable historical documents. His objectivity and self-promotional aims remain a debated subject in scholarship, but many contemporary scholars, notably Riggsby and Grillo, have produced more nuanced opinions of the *commentarii*, specifically regarding their literary quality and historical context. Regardless of Riggsby's and Grillo's divergent conclusions, they agree that the *commentarii* served as a means to promote Caesar's accomplishments and character. Nevertheless, provided one recognises these self-serving intentions and techniques, one can move past the surface of the *commentarii* and study them as unique insights into the political and social conditions of the late Republic. If we couple Caesar's writings with other primary sources that examine his life and career, a holistic narrative can be constructed concerning his rise to power.

## Other Sources

### Cicero

Cicero was a contemporary of Caesar's and it goes without saying that our image of the late Republic is primarily built on his literature, as we are presented with the picture of a declining Republic throughout his letters from 59 onwards.<sup>44</sup> We are indebted to Cicero for much of our knowledge of the political and social environment of Roman elites in the late Republic. Nevertheless, using him as a historical source is not so straightforward. For a complete understanding of Cicero as a source, it is important to understand his views on history, to examine

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<sup>44</sup> Dench (2013), 123-124.

the unique insight and limits of his letters and speeches, to investigate his political beliefs and motivations, and, finally, to examine his relationship with Caesar and his writing. This section, then, will serve to uncover his influence on our modern opinions and biases about the late Republic and Caesar.

Cicero's works cannot be considered faithful records of history. They contain biases, misrepresentations, and even full on falsehoods, attributes that are likewise found in ancient written history in general. He also never wrote a proper history, and his writings are largely made up of letters, treaties, and speeches. However, he did have opinions on history and historians, and he recognised that the first duty of a historian was to articulate the truth. Yet, he also acknowledged that the use of history in literature, for example, was an entirely different matter than the pursuit of truth.<sup>45</sup> His *De re publica* illustrates well this use of history, because he used the history of the 'great men' of the second century to show how the Romans of his day had strayed from the *mos maiorum*, and how this loss of virtue was leading to the breakdown of the Republic.<sup>46</sup> For Cicero, history was a guide to how individuals and a society as a whole were meant to conduct themselves. Thus, history was utilised as a rhetorical device.<sup>47</sup>

He may have not written history, but the vast collection of his letters, treaties, and speeches provide a unique insight into the late Republican world. The use of epistolary evidence is difficult because all of Cicero's letters served specific purposes. There are over nine-hundred letters attributed to him that preserve for us personal and professional dilemmas, gossip, parental worries, political successes and speculations, art history, architectural renovations, and literary projects. These epistles are invaluable for our knowledge of the social and political life of the late Republic

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<sup>45</sup> Cicero, *De Oratore*, 2.62; Lintott (2008), 3; Brunt (1988), 208.

<sup>46</sup> Cicero, *De re publica*, 1.1-13,

<sup>47</sup> Rawson (1972), 35-36.

as well as ancient epistolary culture in general. Politically speaking, he wrote letters for a variety of reasons, to ask for acquire favours, consult or console friends, and to appease enemies. Many of these political letters were often written so the addresser could acquire a report on the political events in Rome from the addressee. Therefore, many of these letters provide valuable personal insights into Rome's political arena. Although these epistles cannot be considered history, they still tell us of events in history with effects and consequences.<sup>48</sup> For instance, one of Cicero's letters to Atticus in 65 related to his consular campaign. This letter was basically a progress report on his campaign as he was attempting to secure Atticus' friendship, because he had insulted Atticus' uncle Caecilius and a group of creditors. He needed Atticus' friendship to help him obtain the support of the *nobiles*, who were hostile to Cicero's candidacy, so he framed the insult towards Caecilius as an accident, stressing that the offense was caused by an attempt to avoid a transgression against another friend.<sup>49</sup> The letter is clearly self-serving, and Cicero is presenting the facts to best suit his needs, which displays clearly the limitations of epistolary evidence. Nevertheless, this letter provides valuable insight into electioneering and how political partnerships were created and maintained.<sup>50</sup> Moreover, it demonstrates how useful letters were in the daily life of elite Romans in acquiring favours.

Speeches, like letters, had specific purposes since they also captured a precise moment in history. Thus, they should be understood in their political context as they served as a vehicle for Cicero's political advancement. His involvement in the prosecution of Clodius in the *Bona Dea* scandal is a good example, because he was attempting to end the career of his fierce opponent who

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<sup>48</sup> Morello (2013), 196-199; Lintott (2008), 3-4. Morello goes into more detail concerning the role of the addressee as an interpreter of Rome's politics.

<sup>49</sup> Cicero, *Atticus*, 1.1.

<sup>50</sup> Cicero, *Atticus*, 1.1; Lintott (2008), 5.

was a nuisance to him and his allies.<sup>51</sup> Although there are obvious problems when confronted with these speeches. The primary concern is that we lack the preservation of the arguments of the opposing side or even the other orators on Cicero's side. Thus, even if an entire speech is preserved, it still does not provide a complete picture of the event, since we are presented with only half the story. Furthermore, another issue arises as a result of the subsequent revision and editing of a speech for publication. These published versions tended to lack the *testimonia* and *altercatio*, which were important parts of the Roman judicial process.<sup>52</sup> The question of truth and fiction is also difficult to answer because every orator preferred persuasiveness over truth. There are instances of false statements throughout Cicero's speeches.<sup>53</sup> Thus, there are clearly problems when using epistolary and oratorical evidence, but there is still much to be learned if the evidence is analysed in its social and political context. And so, to properly understand Cicero as a source, we must discuss his political positions and their impact on his writing.

Cicero was a *novus homo* from Arpinum, a member of the Italian aristocracy, and he used his 'newness' to shape his identity. The 'new man' character who relied on his own merits rather than ancestral heritage was by no means invented by Cicero, but he exploited the already established concept to his advantage. This new Italian nobility of *novi homines* were a product of a massive influx of new elites into Rome's political arena after the Social War of 91-89, and Cicero championed their rise to political power. These new Italian nobles were now 'new Romans' and to Cicero, they were part of this new *tota Italia*, a unified Roman Italy.<sup>54</sup> Cicero's *tota Italia* was

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<sup>51</sup> Lintott (2008), 8-10.

<sup>52</sup> Lintott (2008), 19-20. Lintott (2008), 19-32 provides an extensive section on the problems of speeches as evidence.

<sup>53</sup> Cicero, *De Officiis*, 2.51; Lintott (2008), 33. Lintott (2008), 33-39 is a short but thorough chapter that covers this question of truth and fiction in Cicero's speeches and its implications. Lintott argues that using statements in Ciceronian speeches out of context presents obvious problems for a historian, but if understood in their context, valuable information can be drawn from his orations and also knowledge of the oratorical genre can be gathered.

<sup>54</sup> Q. Cicero, *Electioneering*, 31; Dench (2013), 126-131. Dench (2013), 122-137 presents a concise chapter on Cicero and his Roman identity. She discusses his multiple identities, his conception of Roman Italy, his understanding of

invoked during his prosecution of Verres, as he called upon ‘the whole of Italy’, who were in Rome for elections, games, and the census as a witness against Verres.<sup>55</sup> This concept of a united Roman Italy played into his self-styled persona as the standard-bearer of Republican principles or the *parens patriae*. Even during the various political crises that threatened his career and safety, he consistently fostered this saviour image of himself. For example, after being labelled as a tyrant by the tribunes Bestia and Nepos for his role in the execution of the Catilinarian conspirators without a trial, Cicero claimed that his allies in the Senate, the *boni*, had bestowed upon him the title of *parens patriae* for his duty to the Republic in executing the conspirators. Moreover, Plutarch specifically claimed that Cato the Younger persuaded a crowd to hail Cicero as the ‘father of fatherland’.<sup>56</sup> This title was never official, but this anecdote demonstrates that Cicero attempted to display his actions in a way that was positive to the Republic, even when he broke with tradition in the case of the Catilinarian conspirators. This self-styled saviour character was a recurring theme throughout the height of his career, and this self-representation not only shapes both our perception of Cicero, but also of the entire political and social conditions of the late Republic.<sup>57</sup> The modern idea of a declining republic that was split between two factions, the *optimates* and *populares*, with the *optimates* being Cicero’s faction of the *boni*, is largely a product of his writing. Therefore, this idea of a polarised conflict is the result of one source that has shaped traditional scholarship of this period for centuries.<sup>58</sup> A historian must be cautious of taking such arguments at face value.

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Roman history and identity, and the role of this new Italian aristocracy in it. The central theme is how inconsistent and elusive Cicero’s identity was, specifically relating to his mixture of his Roman and local *patria* identities. It is possible in my opinion that his elusiveness was a product of his rhetorical skill and desire to be persuasive.

<sup>55</sup> Cicero, *Verres*, 1.54; Dench (2013), 128.

<sup>56</sup> Plutarch, *Cicero*, 23.2-3.

<sup>57</sup> Hall (2013), 215-216. Hall (2013), 215-229 is a short but insightful chapter on Cicero and his self-styled image as the savior of the Republic. Hall also goes over Catiline, Cicero in the Civil War, and his infamous conflict with Marcus Antonius.

<sup>58</sup> For excellent and concise chapters on Cicero’s reception in Western history, and his impact on the study of Roman history, see Fox (2013), 318-336 on Cicero during the Enlightenment and Cole (2013), 337-349 for Cicero in the nineteenth century. Cole’s chapter is particularly good, as he discusses Mommsen and his re-evaluation of Cicero’s

To conclude our discussion, a short analysis of Cicero and Caesar's relationship is necessary for a thesis on Caesar and his career. Both figures knew each other quite well, but their relationship was complicated. They were bitter opponents on some occasions, epitomised in their debate over the fate of the Catilinarian conspirators and their opposition to each other during the Civil War. Nevertheless, they also had both a political and a private friendship. For instance, Caesar did grant clemency to Cicero when he defected from Pompeius' camp after the Battle of Pharsalos.<sup>59</sup> During Caesar's conquest of Gaul, he and Cicero communicated extensively through letters, to the extent that Suetonius divided into three groups: Caesar's letters, those to the Senate, those to his friends, and those to Cicero. Cicero's brother Quintus even served under Caesar during the Gallic Wars, and one letter between the two brothers stated that Caesar and Cicero had a warm and friendly correspondence.<sup>60</sup> Cicero spoke highly of the literary qualities of Caesar's *commentarii*, stating that he displayed a mastery of the Latin language.<sup>61</sup> Thus, due to their intimate relationship and regular correspondence, Cicero is well placed to be used as a source on Caesar.

Cicero is indeed a complex source to tackle. He is, on the one hand, vital to our knowledge of the late Republic, but on the other hand, his narratives are shaped by his own biases and personal inclinations. Nevertheless, if we compare Cicero with other sources that cover the late Republic and, more specific to this thesis, Caesar, a holistic and nuanced view of the subjects can be achieved.

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image as the perfect un-corruptible republican that was previously held by scholars. Fotheringham (2013), 350-373 on Cicero in the twentieth and twentieth-first century is also good, specifically the section on judging Cicero and Caesar.

<sup>59</sup> Meier (1982), 171-173, 313-314, 413.

<sup>60</sup> Cicero, *Letters to Quintus*, 3.5.3; Pauli (1958), 128-131.

<sup>61</sup> Cicero, *Brutus*, 262; Grillo (2012), 4; Riggsby (2006), 147.

## Sallust

Sallust also lived during the late Republic, and he too argued that the Republic's decline was the result of the loss of traditional virtues. However, his idea of Rome's decline was quite different from Cicero's. Sallust was born in Amiternum to a wealthy family of Sabine origins who had long held Roman citizenship. He arrived in Rome in his late teens to pursue a political career, where he achieved moderate success as he was elected tribune and quaestor. However, he lamented how the politics of his day corrupted him, which led to his disgraced political end as a result of his corrupt governorship in Africa during Caesar's dictatorship.<sup>62</sup> He then took on historical writing in his political exile. His view of the late Republic, as revealed by his historical writings, can be characterised as pessimistic, since his central theme revolves around the inevitable decline of Rome, which was caused by its unchallenged political power and unprecedented wealth following the sack of Carthage in 146. He believed that Rome was plagued with rampant political and moral corruption. Caesar was the only possible saviour for the Republic in Sallust's eyes, and that was best demonstrated by the passage of anti-corruption laws under Caesar's dictatorship.<sup>63</sup> Moreover, he believed the upper stratum of Rome's elites was plagued by luxury and greed, and they were to blame for the Republic's decline. His view was epitomised in his representation of Catiline, a corrupt and impoverished noble who embodied the social and political decay of the nobility. Cicero, on the other hand, saw Catiline as the antithesis of the virtues of the *nobiles*. Sallust and Cicero were political adversaries, since Sallust associated himself with popular politicians like Caesar, while Cicero allied himself with the upper cadre of the Senate.<sup>64</sup> Like Cicero, Sallust mourned the decline of the virtues of the previous generations. This respect for the past led him to

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<sup>62</sup> Mellor (1998), 30-31.

<sup>63</sup> Sallust, *Jugurtha*, 41.1-3; Mellor (1998), 32; Meier (1982), 427.

<sup>64</sup> Levene (2007), 280-282; O'Gorman (2007), 380-382; Mellor (1998), 35-38. Mellor (1998), 30-47 also presents a solid summary of Sallust as a historian.

fill his histories with archaisms. His archaic language is an appeal to past virtue in both a semantic and a moral sense.<sup>65</sup> For example, Sallust used the rarer and antique word *subdolos*, meaning treacherous, instead of the normal word *perfidus* or *fallax* when describing Catiline's character. In the same passage, he also used archaic sentence structure that favoured short sentences and lacked conjunctions between lists of nouns and adjectives.<sup>66</sup> To conclude, Sallustian historiography was shaped by his idea of Rome's decline, and henceforth, one must interpret his histories in the context of this overarching moral message.

## Plutarch

Our last two authors present a departure from both Sallust and Cicero for two reasons. Both are both biographers and neither was a contemporary of Caesar. Plutarch wrote biographies during the late first and early second century CE of distinguished Greeks and Romans. As a moralist writer, his interests rested in the investigation of a person's character. Moralists explored ethical truths and tried to understand how these truths related to the character at hand. Thus, small episodes of a character's life are often analysed as much as the more significant chapters in Plutarch's *Lives*, because they present a holistic portrait of the individual.<sup>67</sup> The central themes of demagogy and tyranny are specifically emphasised throughout Plutarch's moralizing of past figures. He was critical of what he perceived as demagogues who led the *demos* in rebellion, and who subsequently established a tyranny with the support of the people. For instance, he praised the actions of Brutus for his assassination of Caesar, because it was considered a noble deed to overthrow a tyrant.<sup>68</sup>

Plutarch lived during the reigns of Trajan and Hadrian, which was known for its benevolent

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<sup>65</sup> O'Gorman (2007), 380-382. O'Gorman's (2007), 379-384 provides a short but useful account of Sallust's politics.

<sup>66</sup> Sallust, *Catiline*, 5. 3-5; O'Gorman (2007), 381.

<sup>67</sup> Pelling (2011), 13-16; Pelling (2002), 237. There is a comprehensive chapter on moralism in Pelling (2002), 237-251.

<sup>68</sup> Plutarch, *Brutus*, 7.

autocracy, and therefore, these concerns over popular tyrannies would have been far removed from his time. However, these ideas were well established in the Greek literary and historical traditions.<sup>69</sup> Therefore, there are elements of Plutarch's *Lives* that can be considered history. For example, he stated that Caesar's rise to power was due to both his championing of the people and his *philotimia*, the love of ambition. He also stated that the loyalty of friends and soldiers were other major factors to Caesar's rise. Here, he was writing history and not moralizing. The moralizing part was when he criticised Caesar's *philotimia* as a vice and the cause of his decline.<sup>70</sup> Furthermore, he also used a variety of historical sources in his biography of Caesar, the most notable being the now lost histories of Asinius Pollio. Notably, Plutarch accepted Pollio's thesis that the First Triumvirate created the conditions for the future Civil Wars.<sup>71</sup> In all, the preservation of Plutarch's *Life of Caesar* is invaluable to our study of the late Republic's most notable figure. Yet, it is important to recognise that Plutarch was a moralist, and thus, the *Life* exhibits certain biases on the part of the author. Nevertheless, there are still historical elements that could be drawn from this vital source. Our next author also wrote a biography on Caesar. His motivations, however, were different than Plutarch's.

## Suetonius

Suetonius has been labelled both a historian and biographer, but, like Plutarch, the title biographer will suffice because he wrote about the lives of individual emperors, poets, and writers. Like Plutarch, he was interested in the moral character of his subject. Although unlike Plutarch,

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<sup>69</sup> Pelling (2002), 5-6, 240-243.

<sup>70</sup> Plutarch, *Caesar*, 4.4-7, 5.8-9, 17.9-11, 29.4-7, 37.6-9, 38.7, 39.2, 42-6, 44.9-12; Pelling (2011), 21-22; Pelling (2002), 242.

<sup>71</sup> Plutarch, *Caesar*, 13-14; Pelling (2011), 42-43; Pelling (2002), 3. Pelling (2011), 42-43 presents a list of named authors used by Plutarch in his *Caesar* and Pelling (2002), 3 provides a list that found Asinius Pollio's central thesis in the other lives of late Republican Romans.

Suetonius was trying to understand what virtues and vices made a good or bad emperor. A good emperor, according to Suetonius, performed his administrative duties properly, maintained public order, and respected or even enhanced the hierarchy and traditions of Roman society. Suetonius also believed that a proper ruler passed on the so-called virtues of *res publica* of old to his successor. Most emperors were portrayed as mixed, demonstrating both virtue and vice, while others, like Augustus or bad like Galba, were fairly virtuous.<sup>72</sup>

Suetonius was a member of the *equites*, who made up the administrative class of the Roman Empire. The loss of freedom lamented by senatorial historians such as Tacitus is not a feature of Suetonius, because equestrians did not enjoy such freedoms in the Republic. Therefore, Suetonius wrote a treatise for the bureaucracy, who judged an emperor based on his effectiveness. For example, he listed Nero's actions to promote *equites* to the disadvantage of senators as a vice, because Roman tradition clearly designates what was the role of the two orders.<sup>73</sup> Relating to this thesis, Suetonius' biography of Caesar is one of our most complete narratives about him.<sup>74</sup> For instance, he claimed that Caesar's rise to power was due to his pursuit to vindicate his *dignitas*, shown in a variety of examples from his humiliation at the hands of pirates, to his claim that the Civil War was in defence of his honour.<sup>75</sup> Whereas Plutarch was concerned with Caesar's ambition as a moral failing, Suetonius was simply trying to figure out what motivated Caesar and how his actions should be perceived in terms of his effectiveness as a ruler.<sup>76</sup> Suetonius was also well

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<sup>72</sup> Power (2014), 2-3; Wallace-Hadrill (1983), 142-143. Wallace-Hadrill (1983), 142-174 discusses Suetonius' view of what made a 'good' or 'bad' emperor. Power (2014), 2-3 gives detailed information on the labelling of Suetonius, how some authors in antiquity called him a historian and some a biographer.

<sup>73</sup> Suetonius, *Nero*, 37; Mellor (1998), 152. Mellor (1998), 147-157 has a section on Suetonius that is quite wide-ranging in Mellor.

<sup>74</sup> Mellor (1998), 150-151.

<sup>75</sup> Suetonius, *Julius*, 4.1, 29-30.

<sup>76</sup> . Mellor (1998), 150-151; Wallace-Hadrill (1983), 108. Mellor discusses some of the possible reasons why the lives of the Caesar's and Augustus' are more detailed than the other biographies.

acquainted with Caesar's *commentarii* as he referred to them extensively in his section on Caesar's generalship, where he discussed battles, tactics, Caesar's relationship with his troops, and his personality.<sup>77</sup> Essentially, Suetonius wrote a handbook, as well as biographies, for an administrative class to understand how to judge an emperor based on their character and on what he perceived were virtuous and vicious qualities.

## **Conclusion**

Each one of these authors has shaped our perception of the late Republic and of Caesar himself. The purpose of this chapter is to understand that they all bring unique perspectives to the investigation of Caesar. These sources also have limitations, as they were shaped by the author's motivations and biases. Nevertheless, all these sources complement each other. Cicero grants us an insight into the innerworkings of late Republican politics, whereas Sallust, Plutarch, and Suetonius offer historical details from Caesar's life. Plutarch and Suetonius specifically present biographies on Caesar with different views on the attributes and tactics that led to his rise to power. In all, with a degree of skepticism and an understanding of the limitation of these sources, a historian can extract invaluable knowledge and nuance on Caesar, his career, and the late Republic. The next chapter begins our analysis of Caesar's portfolios of power with a discussion on his utilisation of money and connections.

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<sup>77</sup> Suetonius, *Julius*, 57-70; Mellor (1998), 155-156.

# CHAPTER TWO: MONEY AND CONNECTIONS

## Introduction

In the late Republic, both money and connections were paramount and interconnected. Money allowed a politician to acquire connections, and connections, regardless of hierarchy, were often sources of revenue. Caesar, like no other Roman politician before him, understood the importance of both money and associates, from his extensive borrowing during his early career to his vast network of political operatives who advocated for him while he was campaigning in Gaul. To understand how he used these vital portfolios, we must analyse the main sources of his money and connections: family, friends, a broad network of clients, politicians, political agents, and the military. Family provided Caesar with his earliest connections, found among both Marian and Sullan supporters. Nevertheless, his family was no longer prominent, and it was through his friends, notably Crassus and Pompeius, who gave Caesar the necessary early resources to succeed. Once he was established financially, he used his wealth to acquire a network of fellow senators, politicians, clients, and political agents, who created from him an extensive political machine across Italy. Military connections also brought him valuable political assets and sources of revenue, as his Gallic subjects were a major source of money. Through these revenues, he secured the loyalty of his soldiers and officers, which was integral to his victory in the Civil War.

## The Importance of Money and Connections in the Late Republic

In the last twenty years, important research has revealed the extent to which money influenced Republican politics. Alexander Yakobson in 1999 wrote the seminal *Elections and Electioneering in Rome: A Study in the Political System of the Late Republic*, in which he broke down earlier hypotheses of factional politics in the late Republic and highlighted various factors

that determined elections, such as popular participation, person ties, and clientelism, but the most important of these was found to be bribery and money.<sup>78</sup> In the edited volume by Hans Beck, Martin Jehne, and John Serrati, *Money and Power in the Roman Republic*, money is found to be a driving force in politics, especially during the late Republic.<sup>79</sup> Likewise, Hollander established in *Money in the Late Republic* that monetization became a defining aspect in Roman world, having a profound impact on politics.<sup>80</sup> Through these studies, we can now better understand the political environment in which Caesar operated. It is important to note that before these studies of money, late Republican politics had been seen as a conflict between two great factions, the *populares* and *optimates*, who dominated the political landscape. Furthermore, there is no proof that these terms were in common usage during the Republic and may have only existed in Ciceronian texts. This theory has been largely rejected by modern scholarship because, as this dissertation will demonstrate, political success in the late Republic was based on how an individual politician brought together a variety of different assets to for his own benefit, not his identification with one group or the other.<sup>81</sup>

As Rome built its empire during the third and second centuries, there was a drastic increase in wealth that was concentrated in the senatorial and equestrian classes. This concentration of wealth fundamentally changed Roman politics as the old patron-client system, which was the underpinning of Republican politics to this point, began to collapse under the growing influence of money. Wealthy senators began to use their new-found wealth to win elections, which triggered a growing competition throughout the late Republic to outspend rivals. By Caesar's time, the days of old political friendship between great senatorial houses, who mobilised their vast network of

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<sup>78</sup> Yakobson (1999).

<sup>79</sup> Beck, Jehne, and Serrati (2016). Hollander (2016) and Rosillo-López's (2016) are especially good on this topic.

<sup>80</sup> Hollander (2007), 87-136.

<sup>81</sup> Konstan (1997), 129 summarises why we now reject this factional view of the late Republic.

clients to win elections, no longer existed. Financial indebtedness, created by credit and loans, was a natural fact of many senatorial careers in the final days of the Republic.<sup>82</sup> Bribery, or *largitio*, were a central feature of the elections during Caesar's life. This *largitio* came in various forms, including holding feasts and games, cultivating personal ties, or simply bribing voters.<sup>83</sup> For example, Cicero stated that in 54, four candidates were engaged in such a heated competition that ten million sesterces had been offered as bribes to the *centuria praerogativa*.<sup>84</sup> Caesar himself had borrowed a staggering amount when he was aedile in 65 in order to host magnificent gladiatorial games in honour of his father. Although Caesar had put himself into debt, the debt was necessary to increase his popularity, vital for his upcoming elections.<sup>85</sup> Furthermore, bribery became central to securing the votes of the lower propertied classes, because Rome's ruling class became more and more divided, thus splitting the first and second propertied classes, the more the lower classes played a decisive role in elections. Cicero recalled an instance of a politician, Lucius Turius, who lost by a margin of few centuries. No doubt the centuries of the lower propertied classes played a decisive role in such a close election.<sup>86</sup>

Money likewise altered the nature of political connections. There is a notable silence when it comes to our late Republican sources concerning *clientela*. The late Republic, to a certain degree, can be characterised by the breakdown of the relationship between the senatorial class and the rural

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<sup>82</sup> Lintott (1990), 14; Brunt (1988), 361; Frederiksen (1966), 131. Kay (2014) is an excellent monograph on Rome's economic expansion during the Republic.

<sup>83</sup> Yakobson (1999), 22-25; Lintott (1990), 7; Ross (1949), 67. Chapters two (20-59) and three (65-111) in Yakobson's monograph are irreplaceable on this topic.

<sup>84</sup> Cicero, *Letters to Quintus*, 2.15.1; Rosillo-López (2016), 33.

<sup>85</sup> Plutarch, *Caesar*, 5.9-6.1; Suetonius, *Julius*, 10-11; Meier (1982), 148; Shatzman (1975), 347. The aedileship was a seminal moment in the career of an aspiring politician, especially in the competitive environment of the late Republic. Aediles would spend vast sums of money, often going into debt, in order to make a name for themselves so they could run for praetor and then the consulship. More will be said on Caesar's aedileship in this chapter and how it fits into his career progression. Deniaux (2016) is excellent on this topic of money and aedileship.

<sup>86</sup> Cicero, *Brutus*, 237; Yakobson (1999), 48-51. The year of Lucius Turius' candidature is uncertain, though it is likely to have been 73, 71, or 65.

peasantry, where much of the soldiery came from. This is why generals like Sulla and Caesar could lead their men against the state for promise of land. Although the old system of patronage had largely disappeared, it does not mean that clients were not still a vital asset.<sup>87</sup> For example, Caesar actively supported the enfranchisement of the people of *Gallia Transpadana*, since he had many clients there who had supplied him with money and soldiers for his Gallic conquest. In 50, he counted on his clients in the region to support Marcus Antonius and others in their elections.<sup>88</sup> Moreover, established senators used their wealth to become the financial patrons of young aspiring politicians in exchange for their support. Pompeius and Crassus supported Caesar financially throughout the 60s, and in return, Caesar became his enthusiastic ally. He supported Pompeius' motion to restore the tribunate, played an essential role in securing Pompeius' command against the pirates and Mithridates, and later, acquired land for Pompeius' veterans.<sup>89</sup> These examples therefore demonstrate clearly that money and associates were not only interconnected, but were paramount during the late Republic.

### **Familial Connections**

Caesar was a man of means in his youth as his mother's family, the Aurelii Cottae, were a distinguished house of great wealth. Four members of the Aurelii Cottae, including Caesar's grandfather, had been consul in the last century and a half, whereas the Iulii had not produced a consul in two centuries. The most distinguished member of the Iulii at the time of Caesar's birth was Gaius Marius, who was married to Caesar's aunt Julia. Caesar capitalised on his Marian

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<sup>87</sup> Brunt (1988), 388-389, 431-438; Epstein (1987), 60; Ross (1949), 42. Brunt's chapter eight (382-442) on *clientela* provides an in-depth discussion on how clientelism evolved from the early Republic, as well as the theoretical and practical aspects of the system. Section five (424-431) on how the supposed electoral importance of the *clientela* has been overvalued as a theory, argues against the orthodoxy of clientelism's supreme power over election.

<sup>88</sup> Caesar, *Gallic War*, 8.50.1-3, 8.52.1; Brunt (1988), 398. The example of the Transpadane Gauls will be addressed again in this chapter.

<sup>89</sup> Plutarch, *Pompeius*, 25.8; Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, 36.43.3-4; Meier (1982), 142-145; Gruen (1974); 79.

connection very early in his career, particularly during his oration for his aunt, which introduced him into politics and began his quest for popularity among the Roman people.<sup>90</sup> Furthermore, his first major familial connection outside his immediate family was his first wife Cornelia, who was the daughter of Lucius Cornelius Cinna. His marriage to Cornelia in 84 was significant because it occurred during Cinna's regime (86 to 82); thus he was married to the daughter of one of the most powerful men in Rome. Cinna appointed Caesar *flamen dialis*, which was a prestigious religious office and an honour for young politician whose house was no longer notable. Caesar also shared in Cornelia's substantial dowry through the *gentiliciae hereditates*.<sup>91</sup> Therefore, his early career prospects seemed bright. However, Caesar's fortunes changed with the ascension of Sulla.

When Sulla took Rome, he had originally proscribed Caesar since he was the nephew of Marius and the son-in-law of Cinna. However, through the Aurelii Cottae, Caesar was saved. The family was well connected to Sulla, and thus, Caesar's maternal relatives convinced Sulla to pardon him. However, in exchange for his life, Caesar had to divorce Cornelia and renounce Cinna. He refused and Sulla stripped him of his priesthood, Cornelia's dowry, and his inherited fortune, which forced Caesar into hiding. He had to resort to bribery to escape Sulla's political operatives. Caesar's familial connections had both simultaneously condemned and saved him from Sulla.<sup>92</sup> Nevertheless, his maternal connections to Sullan partisans advanced his military career in 81, when he served as military tribune in Asia during the continuing Mithridatic War under the command of Marcus Minucius Thermus, who had held the praetorship in 81 during Sulla's dictatorship. After Thermus, Caesar served under Publius Servilius Vatia, who was Sulla's choice for consul in 79.

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<sup>90</sup> Flower (1996), 124; Meier (1982), 55; Gruen (1974), 76. Plutarch, *Caesar*, 5. 2-4 and Suetonius, *Julius*, 6.1 discuss the oration. For more on his oration to Julia, see pages 60-61 in this thesis.

<sup>91</sup> Suetonius, *Julius*, 1; Meier (1982), 85; Shatzman (1972), 29. For more on *flamen dialis*, see page 74 in the chapter on religion.

<sup>92</sup> Plutarch, *Caesar*, 1.1-7; Suetonius, *Julius*, 1; Velleius Paterculus, *Roman History*, 41.2; Meier (1982), 92; Ferrill (1977), 105; Shatzman (1972), 29.

At this time, he supposedly distinguished himself above the other officers because of his bravery, winning the *corona civica*. Thanks to his military service, Caesar now acquired some modest wealth, while also receiving funds through his mother and the Aurelii Cottae.<sup>93</sup> When Caesar returned to Rome, he had acquired modest wealth but not enough to finance a successful political career. This is where his friends, notably Pompeius and Crassus, became his main source of wealth and connections.

## Friends

Even before Caesar began his public career, he had acquired friends and borrowed substantially from them. Candidacy for office demanded a considerable amount of money, and Caesar used his connections in the nobility to acquire the necessary funds to succeed politically. Some scholars suggest he even borrowed up to 31,000,000 sesterces before his election for aedile.<sup>94</sup> During his aedileship, he had to co-sponsor the *Ludi Romani* and the *Megalesia* alongside his fellow aedile Bibulus, which was costly. Moreover, as aedile, Caesar went on to finance the most extravagant gladiatorial games known to date in honour of his deceased father. It was said to have involved around three-hundred and twenty pairs of gladiators. These games also included a feast for the masses. Additionally, he restored the statues of Marius to commemorate his victories over Jugurtha, the Cimbri, and the Teutones, and he repaired the Appian way.<sup>95</sup> His liberality made him tremendously popular with the people, as feasts were a sure and quick way of acquiring popularity, because the more one spent, the more people remembered your name for future elections. Furthermore, Marius was still popular with Rome's non-elites, and Caesar's restoration

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<sup>93</sup> Suetonius, *Julius*, 2-3; Meier (1982), 110; Gruen (1974), 78.

<sup>94</sup> Coffee (2017), 117; Meier (1982), 147. Shatzman (1972), 39.

<sup>95</sup> Suetonius, *Julius*, 10-11; Plutarch, *Caesar*, 5.8-9; 6.1-2; Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, 37.8.1-2; Appian, *Civil War*, 2.8; Deniaux (2016), 178.

of his war statues was no doubt popular. Therefore, Caesar continued to borrow, which at this point, he no doubt realised was essential for his electoral success.<sup>96</sup>

His elections to the pontificate and praetorship demonstrate this fact perfectly. Caesar's election as Pontifex Maximus in 63 was achieved primarily through bribery and the aid of his friend, Pompeius. Pompeius was the most successful politician and general of the 60s and was also very popular with the common people. Caesar had aligned himself with Pompeius as early as 67. No doubt he saw political opportunity in aligning himself with the distinguished general in the infancy of his political career.<sup>97</sup> His support paid off during his election for the pontificate, since he not only had to borrow an unprecedented amount of money from creditors, but he also relied on Pompeius' political operatives to ensure his victory over his more distinguished opponents, Quintus Lutatius Catulus and Publius Servilius Vatia Isauricus.<sup>98</sup> Caesar's association with Pompeius was clearly advantageous. Another example of his friends proving essential to his career is after he had ended his tenure as praetor in 61, when he was assigned the governorship of *Hispania Ulterior*. Since he had amassed such a large debt canvassing for praetor, his creditors prevented him from leaving, because he owed an estimated 830 talents (19,000,920 sesterces). Caesar's friend and associate, Marcus Licinius Crassus, intervened on his behalf and paid his debt to the creditors. Crassus' actions would prove beneficial to both him and Caesar, since Caesar enriched himself greatly as propraetor, and was thus able to pay off his debt to Crassus.<sup>99</sup> This moment in Caesar's career was seminal, because he was now eligible for the consulship.

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<sup>96</sup> Coffee (2017), 117; Verboven (2002), 151; Meier (1982), 148; Shatzman (1975), 347.

<sup>97</sup> Brunt (1988), 482-483; Gruen (1974), 79. For the role of rhetoric in Caesar's election to the pontificate, see pages 57-58 in this thesis.

<sup>98</sup> Plutarch, *Caesar*, 7.1-4; Suetonius, *Julius*, 13; Meier (1982), 160-161; Shatzman (1975), 347. Plutarch suggests that intimidation was employed by Pompeius' agents.

<sup>99</sup> Plutarch, *Caesar*, 11.1-2, 12.1-4; Suetonius, *Julius*, 18.1, 54.1; Verboven (2002), 151; Meier (1982), 182; Ferrill (1975), 106; Shatzman (1975), 347-348; Shatzman (1972), 30-31; Frederiksen (1966), 130.

Through Caesar's governorship of *Hispania Ulterior*, he finally was able to accumulate a surplus of cash and clients, but they were not enough to canvass for consul in 59. His election to the consulship was only possible because of Pompeius and Crassus. An alliance among Caesar, Pompeius, and Crassus was forged in 59 in part as a result of Caesar's mutual connection to both men, who had been political opponents before this alliance. The premise of the alliance was that Caesar would be an advocate for Pompeius and Crassus as consul, and in exchange they would aid him in the election.<sup>100</sup> Crassus had the most sway over the equestrian class, since he had championed the order for much of his career, and no doubt mobilised them for Caesar. Pompeius brought his wealthy friend Lucius Luceius into the pact along with his own extensive economic portfolio. Luceius was instrumental as he financed much of the campaign. He was responsible for distributing money to the centuries, and in return, he ran alongside Caesar for consul.<sup>101</sup> Even though he was not elected, Caesar was elected, which greatly elevated Caesar's *dignitas*. His election to the consulship was only possible with this coordinated alliance of his more distinguished friends. This relationship, nevertheless, was reciprocal.

Once Caesar's Gallic conquests allowed him to acquire a substantial surplus of wealth, he provided aid to senators and men of worth who needed financial backing in the way Pompeius and Crassus had done for him. Suetonius commented on how Caesar obtained supporters and influence in Rome by giving loans at low or no interest.<sup>102</sup> The most notable example is Cicero, who received a loan from Caesar of 800,000 sesterces at low interest in 54.<sup>103</sup> Cicero then became an active

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<sup>100</sup> Epstein (1987), 46-47; Gruen (1974), 89-90. I hesitate to use the phrase 'First Triumvirate' when discussing this alliance, as it is misleading and problematic. The problematic title is best explained by Gruen (1974), 90. For one, Pompeius and Crassus continued to undermine each other while they were in this three-way alliance.

<sup>101</sup> Suetonius, *Julius*, 19.1; Plutarch, *Caesar*, 13.4-14.2; Cicero, *Atticus*, 1.17.11; 2. 1.9; Meier (1982), 184-185; Ferrill (1977), 107; Shatzman (1975), 348.

<sup>102</sup> Suetonius, *Julius*, 27.1; Verboven (2002), 157; Shatzman (1975), 79.

<sup>103</sup> Cicero, *Atticus*, 5.5.2; Verboven (2002), 124; Brunt (1988), 364; Shatzman (1972), 40

supporter of Caesar, Pompeius, and Crassus throughout this period, and therefore advocated on their behalf in the Senate. Moreover, his private letters seem to suggest he was quite fond of Caesar in particular.<sup>104</sup> The goodwill found in his private correspondence indicate that Caesar's financial aid realised its aim, which was to strengthen his relationship with Cicero, who was a powerful and respected member of the upper cadre of the Senate. Furthermore, a letter to Atticus indicated that he was conscious of the fact that Caesar's generous loan came with political obligations, regardless of friendship.<sup>105</sup> For instance, in 52, Caesar wanted to run for the consulship *in absentia* once his tenure as governor had ended. The reason for this was that if he wished to take part in a triumph, he would have to remain outside the city as a soldier, and he had to be physically present in Rome as a citizen in order to run for office. Caesar had no desire to relinquish his *imperium* while he was still in the midst of the Gallic War. Furthermore, he was also threatened with prosecution by his opponents, from which his *imperium* protected him. Therefore, he wanted a tribunician bill to allow him to stand *in absentia*. Cato furiously opposed Caesar's measure as he did in 60 when a similar Caesarian *in absentia* motion was proposed and defeated through his advocacy.<sup>106</sup> However, Caesar now had much better connections and resources to combat Cato than in 60. Both Cicero and Pompeius used their connections alongside Caesar's to secure the vote. Cicero used his connection with Caelius, tribune for 52, to sponsor a tribunician bill on Caesar's *ratio absentis*. The tribunician proposal was passed unanimously into law.<sup>107</sup> Thanks to Cicero, Caesar now had the legal authority to run for the consulship once his governorship ended. As Cicero indicated

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<sup>104</sup> Cicero, *Letters to Quintus*, 2.14.1-3; 2.15.2; 2.16.5; 3.1.8-13; Shatzman (1972), 40-41.

<sup>105</sup> Cicero, *Atticus*, 7.3.11; Shatzman (1972), 41. Cicero wrote to Atticus: *ille mihi litteras blandas mittit; facit idem pro eo Balbus. mihi certum est ab honestissima sententia digitum nusquam; sed scis illi reliquum quantum sit. putasne igitur verendum esse ne aut obiciat id nobis aliquis, si languidius, aut repetat, si fortius? quid ad haec reperis? 'solvamus' inquis. age, a Caelio mutuabimur. hoc tu tamen consideres velim. puto enim, in senatu si quando praeclare pro re publica dixerit, Tartessium istum tuum mihi exeunti, 'iube sodes nummos curare.*

<sup>106</sup> Caesar, *Civil War*, 1.32; Suetonius, *Julius*, 26; Gruen (1974), 455. For events of 60, see Plutarch, *Caesar*, 13.

<sup>107</sup> Cicero, *Atticus*, 7.1.4-5; 7.3.4; 8.3.3; Caesar, *Civil War*, 1.9.2; Gruen (1974), 455.

himself, and as the events of 52 demonstrate, he knew of the political obligations that came with Caesar's financial generosity. Although future events complicated Caesar's consular election *in absentia*, those events did not directly involve Cicero.

The following example does not necessarily portray Caesar creating a political friendship through his wealth but is an example of how money could turn a political foe, or *inimicus*, into a neutral player. The two successful candidates for the consulate of 50 were Lucius Aemilius Paullus and Gaius Claudius Marcellus, who were known *inimici* of Caesar.<sup>108</sup> Since 51, there had been attempts to take Caesar's Gallic command away from him, and thus, it was vital for Caesar to have a consul who was not hostile to his interests. Paullus had gone into debt trying to restore the Basilica Aemilia, which gave Caesar the opportunity he needed to use his wealth to his political advantage. Caesar loaned Paullus 1,500 talents of gold, 22,500,000 sesterces, in order to finish the restoration of his family's famous basilica. Although Paullus did not become an enthusiastic supporter of Caesar, in return for Caesar's generosity, he restrained his hostility, even counteracting his co-consul Marcellus' antagonism.<sup>109</sup> Clearly, friendships were an important avenue for Caesar to expand his wealth and connections, both in his early career, when he lacked his own connections and wealth, and later, when he had amassed his own fortune and a network of contacts. Our next section will demonstrate how Caesar acquired his own clients, whether it be politicians or military men, in order to expand his political portfolio.

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<sup>108</sup> Caesar, *Gallic War*, 53; 55; Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, 40.64; Appian, *Roman History*, 2.26; Gruen (1974), 475; Shatzman (1972), 41.

<sup>109</sup> Plutarch, *Caesar*, 29.3-4; Suetonius, *Julius*, 29.1; Coffee (2017), 117; Verboven (2002), 151; Epstein (1987), 83; Shatzman (1972), 41.

## Networks of Clients, Politicians, and Agents

There were various avenues by which Caesar acquired connections with his money. He provided loans to candidates, and engaged in bribery in exchange for support. Caesar understood that using his wealth to acquire allies was a sure path to power. This strategy of financial altruism was a model employed previously by Sulla.<sup>110</sup> The best examples are from Caesar's campaigns in Gaul. During the Gallic War, he expanded his wealth and political network significantly. His network was broad, and included clients, politicians, and agents, notably in Rome and the rest of Italy. Caesar's earliest known clients most likely came from *Gallia Cisalpina*, possibly as early as his propraetorship in 61. He famously enfranchised the Transpadane Gauls once he established his hegemony over Rome in 49, and on various occasions mentioned their importance. He specifically refers to his lobbying of ex-magistrates of Latin communities in the province to aid in the election of his candidates for 49, and he mentioned their significance as a source of recruitment for his legions.<sup>111</sup>

Likewise, local *principes* from Italian *municipia* served as important allies. Caesar understood that political ties amongst senatorial families were unstable and volatile, whereas alliances with Italian nobles and equestrians were much more stable. Italian aristocrats and *equites* were well-connected in their own locality, but many needed the patronage of a Roman senator if they wished to find electoral success in Rome. Electoral success was essential in elevating one's house and name as it guaranteed membership in the Senate. Leading noble families in Rome already had members in the Senate and wide-spread influence, and therefore, they did not need to

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<sup>110</sup> Plutarch, *Sulla*, 12.7-9; 33.2-3; Coffee (2017), 118-120.

<sup>111</sup> Caesar, *Gallic War*, 8.50.1-3; Caesar, *Civil War*, 3.87.4; Brunt (1988), 398; Meier (1982), 141-142.

maintain long-term alliances with their pairs.<sup>112</sup> Caesar exploited this fact. For instance, he married one of his sisters to Marcus Atius Balbus, a wealthy equestrian in Aricia. The daughter of this union, Atia, went on to marry another wealthy *eques*, Gaius Octavius, the father of Augustus. Both Balbus and Octavius were the first of their families to achieve senatorial rank, as they both had attained the praetorship by the late 60s. Thus, they were loyal and grateful to Caesar for their new-found status. Atius Balbus allegedly enjoyed displaying the *imagines* of the Iulii in his home.<sup>113</sup> Another example involves Caesar's other sister, who married two husbands of equestrian rank, Quintus Pedius and Lucius Pinarius. His sister's children later became heirs to a portion of Caesar's inheritance.<sup>114</sup> Caesar's association with Italian aristocrats and members of the *ordo equester* would prove to be fruitful. This collection of allies created a broad network of local nobility, patrons, and financiers, groups which Caesar's opponents did not exploit as potential assets. In contrast, Pompeius drew much of his important connections from the Senate's upper cadre. Therefore, Caesar had the ability to call upon allies across the Italian peninsula, which became vital during his conquest of Gaul and the subsequent Civil War. These allies served as his powerbase in Italy with some form of financial and political obligations.<sup>115</sup> Furthermore, many served as officers in his legions and were fiercely loyal to him since their economic prosperity and political success were tied to Caesar's success. These men remained loyal through the Civil War, no doubt bringing their associations across Italy into the Caesarian fold. One of Caesar's most successful officers during his Gallic Campaign was Lucius Minucius Basilus, who was specifically referred to by Cicero as a "*patronus agri Piceni et Sabini*".<sup>116</sup> Basilus also served during the Civil

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<sup>112</sup> Gruen (1974), 118, 179. During Sulla's reforms, membership in the Senate was expanded to anyone how had held elected office, see Flower (2010): 118-134.

<sup>113</sup> Suetonius, *Augustus*, 2-4; Velleius Paterculus, 2.59.1-2; Gruen (1974), 118.

<sup>114</sup> Suetonius, *Julius*, 83; Appian, *Roman History*, 3.22.82; Gruen (1974), 119.

<sup>115</sup> Gruen (1974), 118-119.

<sup>116</sup> Cicero, *De Officiis*, 3.73-74; Gruen (1974), 118.

War and most likely brought these Picene and Sabine clients under Caesar during the conflict.<sup>117</sup> Furthermore, the Italian cities took note of Caesar's generosity when he crossed the Rubicon. Italy was taken by Caesar's legions without bloodshed, as the *municipia* believed that Caesar would treat them generously if they opened their gates to him. He proved them correct by sparing them from violence. The sheer reputation of his liberality proved to be advantageous.<sup>118</sup> Likewise, Caesar's reputation of financial liberality clearly benefitted in his swift capture of Italy.

Caesar also built an impressive and powerful political machine in Rome. This political apparatus was based on two groups, the Senate and most importantly, the tribunate. It goes without saying that a solid base within the Senate was important for a fruitful political career. Caesar had built up ardent supporters in the Senate, especially once his wealth grew during the Gallic War, which allowed him to canvass senators through financial aid.<sup>119</sup> For example, if we examine Caesar's relationship with the Senate during his first consulship in 59, we can conclude that it was not positive. The alliance between Caesar, Pompeius, and Crassus created zealous opposition, led by Cato, to the alliance's program. For instance, Pompeius' settlement of the East was passed through the assemblies and not the Senate, even though foreign policy was traditionally the Senate's domain.<sup>120</sup> Furthermore, violence plagued Caesar's first consulship, as clandestine methods were often employed to force legislation through.<sup>121</sup> However, by the time of the conference of Luca in 56, we can see that Caesar was better connected with certain high ranking members of the Senate. According to Plutarch, there were more than two-hundred senators who

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<sup>117</sup> Shackleton Bailey, "Introduction", in Cicero's *De Officiis*, 29. This footnote is referring to the page number in the introduction, where Shackleton Bailey indicates that Basilus served in Civil War and was praetor in 45. See Broughton (1951), 307 for Basilus' praetor in 45.

<sup>118</sup> Appian, *Roman History*, 2.40; Coffee (2017), 122.

<sup>119</sup> Shatzman (1972), 43.

<sup>120</sup> Plutarch, *Caesar*, 14.2-4; Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, 38.2-4; Shatzman (1972), 44.

<sup>121</sup> Plutarch, *Caesar*, 14.4-5.

attended the conference, surely a sign of the influence of the three men.<sup>122</sup> In the same year, following Luca, the Senate passed two proposals in favour of Caesar, one motion authorizing him to appoint ten legates of his choice, and the second allocating funds to pay for his additional legions. Cato was not present but his ally Favonius was, and he attempted to block this legislation but failed. Caesar's allies, who attended the conference, certainly championed these motions in the Senate, alongside Pompeius, Crassus, and their supporters.<sup>123</sup> Senators were thus vital contacts as they secured for Caesar much needed resources.

Caesar's utilisation of tribunes was also essential, perhaps more so than that of the Senate, to his political success. The first and most notable example of his close relationship to tribunes was with Public Vatinius, who rallied the votes in the *concilium plebis* to grant Caesar the governorship of *Illyricum* and *Gallia Cisalpina* for five years. There was resistance in the Senate to granting Caesar a governorship because his behaviour during his consulship in 59. Furthermore, neither the tribunes nor the plebeian assembly technically had the legal power to bestow governorships. Nevertheless, it was Vatinius' advocacy that gave Caesar the basis for his ascendance to political supremacy, because without his governorship of the two provinces, he could have never conquered Gaul.<sup>124</sup> Cicero stated that Vatinius' support was a result of a financial alliance with Caesar, which would mean that one of most significant events in Caesar's political career came from money.<sup>125</sup> Vatinius went on to serve Caesar as a legate in Gallic Wars, and he was supported by Caesar when he was a candidate for the praetorship. Furthermore, he remained loyal in the Civil War, and was rewarded with consulship in 47.<sup>126</sup> We can safely state that

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<sup>122</sup> Plutarch, *Caesar*, 21.5.

<sup>123</sup> Plutarch, *Caesar*, 21.6-9; Cicero, *Letters to Friends*, 1.7.10; Shatzman (1972), 45.

<sup>124</sup> Meier (1982), 226-237; Shatzman (1972), 36.

<sup>125</sup> Cicero, *Vatinius*, 29.

<sup>126</sup> Meier (1982), 418; Gruen (1974), 115, 173; Shatzman (1972), 36.

Vatinius' loyalty to Caesar was in part motivated by economic and political self-interest. Furthermore, Vatinius' early advocacy demonstrates how Caesar brilliantly forged political alliances, even before he acquired the wealth and prestige of his Gallic conquest.

Vatinius was not the only tribune who supported for Caesar. Caesar was a committed populist throughout his career and coupled with his financial capabilities, he was able to gain the support of many tribunes. For example, in 55, the tribunes Allienus, Peducaeus, Fabius, Roscius Fabatus, and Mamilius championed a law which completed Caesar's agrarian bill of 59. Both Roscius Fabatus and Fabius then became legates for Caesar: Roscius Fabatus for only 54 and Fabius from 54 to 49.<sup>127</sup> This fact shows that Caesar was able to create military allies from political ones. He originally acquired these connections through financial aid and then brought them into his legions with their desire for loot and *dignitas*. These officers became essential for his political and military success during the Civil War, a topic which will be discussed at length in the last section of this chapter.

Nonetheless, politicians were not the only valuable connections in Rome. Political agents also served an equally important role.<sup>128</sup> The two best documented political agents who worked for Caesar were Lucius Cornelius Balbus and Gaius Oppius. Both men were bankers who became trusted political confidants and were responsible for the receipt of confidential information. Balbus specifically, who was an *eques* from Gades, was Caesar's main political operative in serving his interests in Rome and became his private secretary. Additionally, he remained loyal throughout the Civil War, and later served Octavian, eventually becoming consul in 40.<sup>129</sup> Regarding his

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<sup>127</sup> Shatzman (1973), 38. Shatzman provides more examples.

<sup>128</sup> For the purposes of this thesis, the definition of a political agent or operative is a person who works in the interest of a specific politician.

<sup>129</sup> Meier (1984), 224; Gruen (1974), 117, 119. The introduction in *Pro Balbus* by Gardiner (1958) provides valuable biographical information, notably from 731-734 on Balbus' allegiance to Caesar and Octavian.

service to Caesar, he showed his worth in 50 when Gaius Claudius Marcellus Minor attempted to pass a bill terminating Caesar's Gallic command. Even with Caesar's strong base in the Senate, his enemies were still a force to be reckoned with.<sup>130</sup> The motion gained the support of another of Caesar's *inimici*, Metellus Scipio, who was a distinguished member of the upper cadre of the Senate and Pompeius' father-in-law. Nevertheless, Balbus struck down the motion for Caesar. He held a private audience with Metellus Scipio and expressed his disapproval of the bill. He seems to have been successful as there is no record of the bill after this private interaction.<sup>131</sup> In spite of the fact that he was a provincial, Balbus was particularly well connected among the Rome's elite. He had served under Pompeius and Metellus Pius in the Sertorian War, and because of his service, Pompeius bestowed on him Roman citizenship, a home at Tusculum, and various other gifts. Thus, he became an important client of Pompeius in the 60s. Even Caesar recognised his skills early on when Balbus helped him with the administration of the *Hispania Ulterior*. Furthermore, it was Balbus' mutual connection with Caesar, Pompeius, and Crassus which helped facilitate their alliance in 60, which was vital to Caesar's election to consulship.<sup>132</sup> Balbus' activities indicate that he was a useful political operative, who was a vital player in Caesar's vast network.

### **Military Revenues and Connections**

Caesar was able to acquire the wealth necessary to build the entire political apparatus we have just discussed through the profits generated during the Gallic War. There is no exact figure for the profit which Caesar made through his conquest of Gaul, since we have no sources for it. We do know, however, that the wealth pillaged from Gaul was staggering. Before Caesar's Gallic campaign, he was in the shadow of Pompeius in terms of wealth, loyal subordinates, military

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<sup>130</sup> Cicero, *Atticus*, 8.3.3; Gruen (1974), 467.

<sup>131</sup> Cicero, *Letters to Friends*, 8.9.5; Gruen (1974), 468.

<sup>132</sup> On Balbus: Cicero, *Pro Balbo*, 5-7; 63. On alliance: Cicero, *Atticus*, 2.3.3-4; Gruen (1974), 312.

might, and reputation, but by the late 50s, he was Pompeius' equal.<sup>133</sup> There are specific references to plunder. In one instance, Caesar had so much gold that he sold it at a rate of 3,000 sesterces a pound, seventy-five percent of the regular price.<sup>134</sup> Additionally, he levied taxes on his Gallic subjects; the first was an annual tax on Britain and the other a tax exemption to the Atrebates.<sup>135</sup> Suetonius stated that Caesar's annual tribute from Gaul was 40,000,000 sesterces, which is doubtful because it would have been difficult to raise taxes yearly. Shatzman argues that Caesar's revenues were probably around 40,000,000 *denarii* in total, but it is impossible to know the exact number.<sup>136</sup> Regardless, we can deduce that Caesar's tax revenue from Gaul was large enough to bankroll an extensive political machine back in Rome and supply the necessary resources to achieve victory in both the Gallic and Civil Wars.

The main benefactors of this vast revenue were Caesar's own soldiers and officers. Suetonius stated that Caesar doubled his soldiers' pay at some time after 52, and he promised each soldier fifty *denarii*, and no doubt more to centurions and legates, once the subjugation of Gaul was completed. Fifty *denarii* to each soldier would add up to about 2,500,000 *denarii*, as he had an estimated fifty-thousand soldiers. Moreover, in 46, he even promised to his restless soldiers that he would divide lands among them from his own private property in Italy.<sup>137</sup> Likewise, his officers found ample fortunes under his command, although, it was his extensive patronage of his legates' political career, which was far more consequential. Unlike Pompeius, who drew his officers from the Senate's upper cadre during the wars against the pirates and Mithridates, Caesar recruited

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<sup>133</sup> Gruen (1974), 112.

<sup>134</sup> Caesar, *Gallic War*, 6.3.2; 7.11.9; Hirtius, *Gallic War*, 8.4.1; Shatzman (1975), 348; Shatzman (1972), 31.

<sup>135</sup> Caesar, *Gallic War*, 5.22.4-5; 7.76.1; Shatzman (1975), 348-349; Shatzman (1972) 31-32.

<sup>136</sup> Suetonius, *Julius*, 25; Ferrill (1977), 107; Shatzman (1975), 349; Shatzman (1972), 32; 34. Shatzman (1975) has a section on Caesar's expenditure (349-350), where he argues these vast expenses regarding military pay support the fact that Caesar's revenue was equally large or larger.

<sup>137</sup> Suetonius, *Julius*, 26.3; Caesar, *Gallic War*, 8.4.1; Appian, *Roman History*, 2.94; Plutarch, *Caesar*, 51.2; Shatzman (1975), 349-350; Shatzman (1972), 33

legates from a variety of backgrounds. Roman *nobiles*, *equites*, and local Italian *nobiles* were all found in his officer corps. Notably, Cicero's brother Quintus fought in his legions in 54. Two of Crassus' sons served under him, Publius as prefect of his cavalry in 58 and Marcus as his quaestor in 54. Decimus Junius Brutus Albinus also served in Gaul and later elected praetor in 45 under Caesar's patronage. In all, there were ten men from consular families who fought in Gaul.<sup>138</sup> Thus, his legions did not lacklegates from the *nobiles*. Nonetheless, the majority of his officers came from lesser senatorial houses, equestrians, and local Italians. Quintus Titurius Sabinus came from a minor senatorial house. His family achieved senatorial status after Sulla's expansion of the *curia*.<sup>139</sup> Of non-Roman families, Mamurra, Caesar's *praefectus fabrum*, came from the Volscian Formiae; Titus Sextius, praetor in 45, was a native of Ostia; Gaius Trebonius, an *eques*, was tribune in 55 and *praetor urbanus* in 48.<sup>140</sup> Although the most well-known example is Marcus Antonius, who benefitted the most economically and politically from Caesar. Antonius served as a quaestor and legate in 52-51 and went on to be elected augur and tribune in 49 with Caesar's support.<sup>141</sup> His loyalty throughout the Civil War paid off when he was appointed *magister equitum* in 48 and was elected consul with Caesar in 44. All achieved under the auspices of Caesar's patronage.<sup>142</sup> There is no need to discuss Antonius' military prowess here since this is well documented.<sup>143</sup> It is clear that many of Caesar's officers went on to have fruitful careers, but it does not tell us much about why they remained loyal to him. It was precisely his willingness to accept men from outside Rome's elite families, men who lacked reputation and fortune, that made these legates so loyal. Just as Sulla had discovered in the 80s, Caesar learned that patronage

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<sup>138</sup> Gruen (1974), 113-114; Broughton (1951), 576.

<sup>139</sup> Gruen (1974), 114.

<sup>140</sup> Serrati (2013), 160-168; Gruen (1974), 115-117; for Sextius; Broughton (1951), 620; for Trebonius; Broughton (1951), 677.

<sup>141</sup> Caesar, *Gallic Wars*, 8.50; Plutarch, *Antonius*, 5.1; Shatzman (1972), 37.

<sup>142</sup> Meier (1982), 381; 464-5; Shatzman (1972), 37; Broughton (1951), 531.

<sup>143</sup> Meier (1982), 416 summarises perfectly Antonius' prowess and importance.

fostered fierce fidelity. The economic fortune of his soldiers and officers rested on his success, and his liberality in sharing the spoils of his legions' conquests created the bond that allowed him to convince his men to embark on an extensive campaign across the Mediterranean.<sup>144</sup> His patronage of future officers and ex-officers no doubt strengthened his alliances because this new crop of politicians was grateful to him for their elevated status, which created loyal subordinates in the Senate and the plebeian assembly. When we couple these military assets with his other clients, career politicians, and operatives, we realise that Caesar created an important component of a political apparatus that allowed for his eventual domination of the Roman state.

## **Conclusion**

Caesar's use of money and connections is a story of evolution and ingenuity. Although early on in his career, Caesar lacked money and may have come from an unimportant aristocratic house, nevertheless he capitalised on his early connections to launch his career. Aware of his limitations, he created friendships with prominent members of the Roman political class, particularly Pompeius and Crassus, who gave him the necessary resources to become consul and make a name for himself. However, it was the wealth generated by his Gallic campaigns that allowed him to emerge from the shadow of his more distinguished allies. He used this new-found wealth to bankroll the creation of an extensive network of politicians, operatives, and clients. This wealth also allowed him to give lavish donations to his soldiers and officers, making them fiercely loyal. Furthermore, Caesar exploited the talents of men from a variety of different backgrounds, from senators like Brutus Albinus, to provincials like Balbus, which created a broad political network that provided him with the necessary resources to ascend to political supremacy. As we will see in the next chapter, money and connections were not the only vital components of Caesar's

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<sup>144</sup> Coffee (2017), 121-124; Ferrill (1977), 107-108.

rise to power. Oratory also played an equally important role in building friendships, strengthening his reputation, and fostering loyalty in his armies.

# CHAPTER THREE: ORATORY

## Introduction

Much of the scholarship relating to Caesar's oratory has been limited to brief assessments of his speeches and his style. The relationship between his oratory and his political career had been discussed less often, which has resulted in a failure to understand the importance of oratory in the promotion of his character and his career.<sup>145</sup> Caesar utilised oratory to create an image of a capable and competent leader, to create or consolidate political alliances, to profess his populist stances, and finally, to inspire his soldiers during crises. First, a discussion on Gnaeus Pompeius' and Marcus Aemilius Lepidus' oratory will show the importance of rhetoric in Republican politics.<sup>146</sup> Afterwards, our analysis of Caesar will begin with his rhetorical education and an overall assessment of his oratory, followed by his speeches in the courts, civil *contiones*, the Senate, and finally, military *contiones*. Part of his oratorical success was the application of his talents to three different audiences, the people, his aristocratic peers, and his soldiers. In order to prove that Caesar employed oratory to his advantage, we will assess the possible benefits for delivering each speech based on the primary evidence. This approach will determine if the speech furthered his political success.

### The Importance of Public Speaking: Pompeius and Lepidus

The political landscape of the late Republic was hypercompetitive, and not all players were oratorically gifted. The careers of Gnaeus Pompeius and Marcus Aemilius Lepidus demonstrate that if oratory was not utilised properly or improved upon as an asset in their portfolios, it was

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<sup>145</sup> van der Blom (2016), 147.

<sup>146</sup> Marcus Aemilius Lepidus consul in 78 BCE. These two figures were chosen because both figures were contemporaries of Caesar.

detrimental to one's career. Beginning with Pompeius, his rhetorical abilities were said to be average, but general assessments of his oratory by the ancient authors are quite limited. Cicero provides the best evaluation of Pompeius' oratory, and his appraisal is mixed. Cicero did say that Pompeius exhibited a fine voice and delivery, and his language was elevated, but he relied more on his *dignitas* than oratorical brilliance. He was also not known as a cunning speaker, since he was prone to vagueness during speeches and did not possess the skills to hide his true intentions. Moreover, he was said to be more focused on military glory than oratorical accomplishments.<sup>147</sup> His focus on the military rather than oratory is a product of his unorthodox career where he was a general before becoming a politician.<sup>148</sup> Thus, unlike Caesar, it is not known whether Pompeius had any formal rhetorical training that could help us understand his oratorical abilities. However, the evidence suggests that Pompeius' oratorical averageness hindered his political career on various occasions.

After successful campaigns in the eastern Mediterranean between 67-63, Pompeius returned to Rome in 61 as a triumphal general and he immediately began to advocate for his organization of the East and the distribution of land for his veterans. These policies faced opposition from Lucullus and Cato the Younger, as Lucullus specifically had a personal vendetta against him for taking away his command against Mithridates IV in 66. Pompeius attempted to advocate for his policies in the Senate, but Lucullus and Cato countered him and convinced the Senate to not approve his legislation. As a result, he fled to the tribunes for political protection, and his failure brought him closer to Caesar and Crassus.<sup>149</sup> Pompeius had humiliated himself in front of the Senatorial elite because he failed to advertise his policies and character, which was

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<sup>147</sup> Cicero, *Brutus*, 239; Cicero, *Letters*, 8.1.3 (SB 77); van der Blom (2016), 113-116.

<sup>148</sup> van der Blom (2016), 114, 118.

<sup>149</sup> Plutarch, *Lucullus*, 42.5-6; Plutarch, *Pompey*, 46. 5-8; Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, 37.49.5-50.1.

one of the basic functions of a Roman politician. It was actually Caesar who eventually secured land for Pompeius' veterans during his consulship in 59, using oratory and violence to promote land distribution.<sup>150</sup> Pompeius may have been successful on the battlefield, but he was more of a failure in the realm of politics where oratory was a fundamental skill.

The mediocrity of Pompeius' oratory also hindered him in front of the Roman people. His altercation with Helvius Mancina in 55 displayed his oratorical averageness to the Roman people. Mancina had publicly accused Lucius Libo, an ally of Pompeius, of an unknown crime in front of the censors. Pompeius then came to Libo's defence by attacking Mancina for his low status, as Mancina was the son of a freedman, and for his old age. Pompeius had joked that Mancina came from the underworld to attack Libo. This attack prompted Mancina to deliver an extensive rebuttal where he depicted his descent into the underworld and saw Pompeius' distinguished victims from the Sullan proscriptions. Pompeius' attack thus forced Mancina to remind the Roman people of Pompeius' involvement in the atrocities during Sulla's reign of terror. Valerius Maximus does not indicate whether Pompeius gave a successful rebuttal or not. However, he does judge Pompeius for failing to protect his image in public, claiming that Mancina was successful in his rebuttal because Pompeius was politically weak.<sup>151</sup> Pompeius' opened himself to this kind of public attack as he challenged Mancina first and unwisely raised the topic of the underworld. Moreover, Roman politicians usually had to face oratorical challenges in public, and they needed to have the rhetorical skills necessary to defend their character, which Pompeius clearly did not have.<sup>152</sup>

Mancina's public confrontation could not have happened at a worse time for Pompeius because his influence over Roman politics was being challenged throughout 50s. Pompeius was

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<sup>150</sup> Seager (2002), 82; Meier (1982), 207.

<sup>151</sup> Valerius Maximus, *Memorable Doing and Sayings*, 6.2.8.

<sup>152</sup> Steel (2013), 157-159; Seager (2002), 124.

consul alongside Crassus in 55 when Mancina accused Libo, and his other political opponents were causing him major problems as well. Clodius and his supporters were openly violent and hostile to Pompeius and his ally Titus Annius Milo, who can be characterised as Pompeius' personal political agitator. Clodius had even won the aedileship in 56 and avoided criminal charges throughout the 50s as a result of his important connections in the Senate. He had even brought Milo to trial in 57, which ended in violence between Milo's agitators and the *Clodiani*. The trial was humiliating for Pompeius and his allies due to the violence and chaos.<sup>153</sup> Furthermore, many senators used Clodius to weaken Pompeius' political power, while overlooking his violent tendencies. Clodius' eventual downfall in 53-52 was not achieved by Pompeius or his allies, but by Clodius' overuse of violence, which eventually led many in the Senate to abandon him.<sup>154</sup> His activities against Pompeius demonstrate how difficult Pompeius' political reality was in the 50s, and how his oratory evidently was no aid as shown in the case of Mancina, since he could not even defend his character against an unknown man of low status. Therefore, the evidence suggests that oratory was not utilised as a valuable portfolio of power by Pompeius, even in a challenging political environment, since he lacked the skills to apply rhetoric to his advantage.

The career of Lepidus sheds a different light on the importance of oratory. We only have a small glimpse of his oratorical abilities in a reconstruction of his speech addressing the Roman people in 78, which is preserved in a fragment from Sallust's *Histories*. In this speech, he mentions tradition and ancestral precedent, and expresses populist sympathies. The speech can be characterised as anti-Sullan, as his goal was to attack the Sullan regime.<sup>155</sup> However, it is difficult to assess much from this reconstruction regarding Lepidus' actual rhetorical skill, since it is a

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<sup>153</sup> Gruen (1974), 294-299.

<sup>154</sup> Gruen (1974), 309-310.

<sup>155</sup> For the entire speech, Sallust, *Histories*, fr. 49.

rhetorical reconstruction in a history. Nevertheless, his downfall demonstrates an important aspect concerning oratory and its significance in Roman politics. In 78, he was elected consul with Catulus, and after the death of Sulla, he became openly hostile to the Sullan constitution, of which Catulus was a staunch defender. Thus, there was friction between Catulus and Lepidus, and even prior to their election, Lepidus had supported the restoration of the tribunate and attempted to block Sulla's public funeral.<sup>156</sup> During their consulship, the Etruscan city of Faesulae rebelled and attacked the recently settled Sullan colonists over land issues. As a response, the Senate dispatched Lepidus to quell the rebellion, yet he was inspired by the populist uprising and decided to champion the Faesulae natives. This was contrary to the Senate's orders, but the Senate did not wish to start a conflict which could have potentially led to another civil war. Therefore, he still enjoyed friendly relations with the Senate, which is evident by their allotment of *Gallia Transalpina* and *Cisalpinga* to him after his consulship.<sup>157</sup> However, Catulus did not agree with the Senate's diplomatic approach and wanted war. The famed orator Lucius Marcius Philippus, an ally of Catulus, changed the entire situation with an impassioned speech in the Senate. Philippus argued that Lepidus was an enemy of the state and convinced the Senate that he was plotting to take up arms against the Senate and Rome. The Senate was persuaded by Philippus' speech and they changed their stance. The *patres* then passed a *senatus consultum ultimum* against Lepidus.<sup>158</sup> Once the Senate abandoned him, his cause was finished as he posed no serious threat to the state.

The downfall of Lepidus attests to oratory's significance in Roman politics. Lepidus' intentions to champion the Faesulae natives did not clearly infuriate the Senate, since they resorted to diplomacy and still conferred provinces on Lepidus after his consulship. It was one speech by

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<sup>156</sup> Mackay (2009), 196; Gruen (1974), 12-14.

<sup>157</sup> Mackay (2009), 196-198; Gruen (1974), 14; Scullard (1959), 73-74.

<sup>158</sup> Sallust, *Histories*, fr. 67 (Reconstruction of Philippus' speech); Mackay (2009), 198; Gruen (1972), 15; Scullard (1959), 74.

Philippus which turned the Senate against him and ended his political aspirations. His defeat at the hands of Philippus' oratorical skills reveals just how important oratory was. Pompeius' career suffered and Lepidus' career ended because they either lacked oratorical skill or did not employ it. Unlike Pompeius and Lepidus, Caesar used public speaking in a variety of different circumstances and settings to acquire more power. Before examining Caesar's use of oratory, a brief overview of his education and the assessment of his oratory by ancient authors will reveal how his oratory was praised and noted for its elegance in both his own lifetime and posthumously.

### **Caesar's Education and Oratory**

Roman teenagers of the upper class typically learned rhetorical skills from their *grammaticus*, a core element of their education. The objective was for a young man to perform first in the lawcourts and then politics. Yet, it was not common for elite boys to study under a *rhetor*, because once elite males reached the age of military service, their formal education ended. However after 88, the political turmoil in Rome led many elite families to send their sons away to continue their education, since staying in Rome could mean immediate peril.<sup>159</sup> Caesar, like many Roman youths after 88, had the opportunity to continue his education. His formal education began as a child with Marcus Antonius Gniphio, who was a Gallic grammarian known for his skill in rhetoric, and who was learned in both the Greek and Latin traditions. Cicero even frequented Gniphio for training. Caesar's education under the *grammaticus* Gniphio was thus nothing out of the ordinary.<sup>160</sup> After Caesar's failed prosecution of Hybrida in 76, he continued his education and studied briefly in Rhodes under the tutelage of the famed Greek *rhetor* Apollonius Molon, who

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<sup>159</sup> Fantham (2009), 143. For more detail on Roman education Corbeil (2001), 261-287.

<sup>160</sup> Fantham (2009), 144-145

also taught Cicero.<sup>161</sup> Although some young adults had the privilege to advance their rhetorical training, Caesar had the opportunity to learn rhetoric from one of the best *rhetores* of his day.

His education paid off. Plutarch wrote that “Caesar, they say, had a remarkable gift for political oratory, and he trained and developed this talent with a great eagerness for glory.”<sup>162</sup> The quotation recognised Caesar’s oratorical abilities, but also expressed the view that Caesar understood the importance of using oratory to advance his political career. Plutarch was indicating the significance of oratory in his rise to power. Other authors commented on his public speaking, since he was remembered as one of Rome’s greatest orators, an honour Suetonius bestowed upon him after his prosecution against Dolabella. Quintilian specifically lauded his vigour as the best amongst the great Roman orators, saying that he possessed a style and quality to be emulated by aspiring orators.<sup>163</sup> These praises, nevertheless, are equally present amongst his contemporaries, as Cicero provides a detailed account on Caesar’s oratory. His assessment is found in both the *De Oratore* and *Brutus*. Caesar was said to have surpassed all others in his employment of wit, which was an important art to master.<sup>164</sup> Moreover, he placed Caesar as the leading orator of his day for his use of the Latin language. He wrote “...that of all our orators he is the purest user of the Latin tongue.... he has sought to bring to perfection that merit of correct speech by diligent and enthusiastic studies of a recondite and esoteric kind.”<sup>165</sup> Caesar was also known to have carefully selected his words. Cicero stated that he attempted to correct the distorted and corrupted usage of words.<sup>166</sup> Cicero’s view is best summarized by his statement that “He is master of an eloquence

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<sup>161</sup> Plutarch, *Caesar*, 3. 1-2; Fantham (2009), 144-145; Kennedy (1972), 285.

<sup>162</sup> Plutarch, *Caesar*, 3.2.

<sup>163</sup> Quintilian, *The Orator’s Education*, 12.10.11; Suetonius, *Julius*, 55.1; Kennedy (1972), 284.

<sup>164</sup> Cicero, *De Oratore*, 216-217.

<sup>165</sup> Cicero, *Brutus*, 252. Caesar wrote a grammatical work on the Latin language that surviving fragments of which have been recently translated and given extensive commentary by Garcea (2012), see pages 30-33, 53-78.

<sup>166</sup> Cicero, *Brutus*, 226; van der Blom (2016), 148; Kennedy (1972), 284.

which is brilliant and with no suggestion of routine, and which in respect of voice, gesture, and the speaker's whole physique, possesses a certain noble and high-bred quality."<sup>167</sup> Thus, whether it be his vigour, use of wit, or choice of words, ancient authors acknowledged Caesar as a well-rounded and great orator. We can now proceed to how Caesar used his public speaking skills to advance his career in a variety of different circumstances.

## The Courts

The possession of rhetorical talent and eloquence was one of the most important qualifications for public office, as oratory was the heart of Republican political life.<sup>168</sup> The courts were the first place where a young man could publicly display his oratorical skill in front of a audience, since the trials took place in the Forum and thus, they were open to the public. The courts presented the best opportunity for an aspiring politician to launch his political career.<sup>169</sup> Caesar followed this political tradition and began his public career with the prosecutions of Gnaeus Cornelius Dolabella in 77 and Marcus Antonius Hybrida in 76. Both defendants were charged with *de repetundis*; Dolabella was specifically charged with corruption and maladministration during his governorship of Greece.<sup>170</sup> Caesar lost both cases, but Valerius Maximus stated he had lost the case against Dolabella because of Lucius Cotta's behind-the-scenes advocacy. Plutarch made a similar comment about his case against Hybrida, that Hybrida appealed to the tribunes for protection, claiming the trial was unjust after he had witnessed Caesar's effective oratory. In the end, the tribunes shielded Hybrida from persecution.<sup>171</sup> Caesar nevertheless gained a reputation for his eloquence and rhetorical skill, and his advocacy against corrupt magistrates won him the

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<sup>167</sup> Cicero, *Brutus*, 227.

<sup>168</sup> Tacitus, *Dialogus*, 36.6-8; van der Blom (2016), 1.

<sup>169</sup> van der Blom (2016), 26-27, 31-32.

<sup>170</sup> Plutarch, *Caesar*, 4.1; Alexander (1990), no.140-141.

<sup>171</sup> Valerius Maximus, *Memorable Doings and Sayings*, 8.9.3; Plutarch, *Caesar*, 4.2-3; Kennedy (1972), 285.

people's respect and admiration.<sup>172</sup> Caesar's *divinatio* against Dolabella was specifically well known: it was mentioned by Plutarch, Valerius Maximus, Suetonius, Tacitus, Velleius Paterculus, Quintilian, and Aulus Gellius. The latter stated that the *divinatio* circulated after the trial and was preserved for educational purposes.<sup>173</sup> Shortly after these trials, Caesar went to Rhodes. However, it was short stay because he decided to fight in the Third Mithridatic War. After his military service in Asia Minor, he was elected as one of the twenty-four military tribunes for 71, which was his first elected office.<sup>174</sup> All the sources stated that the Roman people recognised Caesar's rhetorical qualities from both trials. Therefore, the display of oratorical eloquence during the Dolabella and Hybrida trials would have undoubtedly played a role in Caesar's election to the military tribunate. As stated at the beginning of this section, oratory was the defining virtue for a successful Republican politician. Oratorical prowess was a sign of suitability for public office, and as a result, Caesar showed his electability and aptness for political office to Roman people, who in turn elected him as military tribune.

The trial of Gaius Rabirius in 63 also proved advantageous for Caesar's political career. In the previous year, Caesar had successfully prosecuted Lucius Bellienus and Lucius Luscus. Both men had taken part in the Sullan proscriptions and had acquired ill-gotten wealth. Bellienus and Luscus were both insignificant political figures, but their successful convictions opened the door for the prosecution of more important men. The issues surrounding old senatorial abuses and unlawful murders became a topic of popular anger, and therefore those who prosecuted such cases

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<sup>172</sup> Plutarch, *Caesar*, 4.4; Suetonius, *Julius*, 55.1.

<sup>173</sup> Tacitus, *Dialogus*, 37.7; Velleius Paterculus, *Roman History*, 2.43.3; Quintilian, *The Orator's Education*, 12.6.2; Gellius, *Noctes Atticae*, 4.16.8-9; Velleius Paterculus, *Roman History*, 2.43.3; van der Blom (2016), 154. It was after these prosecutions that Caesar went to Rhodes to continue his rhetorical education under Apollonius Molon.

<sup>174</sup> Plutarch, *Caesar*, 5.1; Suetonius, *Julius*, 5; van der Blom (2016), 156; Meier (1982), 130-131; Gelzer (1968), 29.

were admired by the Roman people.<sup>175</sup> Rabirius was charged by the *iudicium populi* for *perduellio*, as he had murdered the tribune Saturninus thirty-seven years prior under the pretext of a *senatus consultum ultimum*. Rabirius was an elderly and political insignificant *eques* by 63, but these allegations of old abuses of power were being brought to the fore of Roman politics as a result of the activism of anti-Sullan politicians. Caesar served as *duumvir* during the trial, and so he would have given a speech in support of the motion since the *duumvir* passed the sentence.<sup>176</sup> He used Rabirius' trial in an attempt to establish his populist *bona fides* in order to cultivate a relationship with the Roman people. Furthermore, the premise of the case against Rabirius was not to challenge the legitimacy of the *senatus consultum ultimum*, but to contest the decree's excesses. The prosecutors argued that a citizen without office like Rabirius could not act under a senatorial decree as a magistrate could. If so, then due process would be wiped out.<sup>177</sup> Caesar condemned Rabirius for *provocatio*, but the trial was stopped by the Praetor Metellus Celer. Regardless of the outcome, Caesar demonstrated his opposition to these previous abuses of power. Rabirius' case was the first trial before the Roman people since the end of Sulla's regime, and the case against Rabirius was popular amongst the common people. As a result, Caesar continued to grow his popularity with the people through his advocacy.<sup>178</sup>

Caesar's populist stance paid off because, in the same year, he was elected Pontifex Maximus. The other candidates in the pontifical election were two distinguished men of consular rank, Isauricus and Catulus. Caesar's victory, which was an upset for the upper cadre of the Senate, which was partially a result of Caesar's strong relationship with the Roman people. Suetonius

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<sup>175</sup> Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, 37.10.2; Suetonius, *Julius*, 11.6-9; Appian, *Roman History*, 1.101; Alexander (1990), no. 215-216; Gruen (1974), 277.

<sup>176</sup> Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, 37.26; Alexander (1990), no. 220; Gruen (1974), 278.

<sup>177</sup> Cicero, *Pro Rabirio*, 20; Gruen (1974), 278.

<sup>178</sup> Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, 37.27; van der Blom (2016), 163-164; Alexander (1990), no.220; Gruen (1974), 278.

stated that lavish bribes contributing to Caesar's success, which was undoubtedly the defining and most significant factor in his election, but Plutarch also stated that the Senate feared how Caesar employed his favourability with the people to acquire the highest pontifical office.<sup>179</sup> The Pontifex Maximus was elected by a distinct assembly of seventeen tribes chosen by lot from the thirty-five urban and rural tribes. These tribes were divided geographically, contrasting with the centuriate assembly that gave more centuries to Rome's noble families than the rest of the population. Thus, this assembly was more representative of the population as a whole.<sup>180</sup> Consequently, favour with the people in general, not just the upper class, was essential for being elected Pontifex Maximus. Therefore, Caesar's active courting of the people with his oratorical performances demonstrated his aptitude for political office and it won him the support of the common people.

The *Bona Dea* scandal represented a different side of Caesar's oratorical skills in court, since on this occasion, he was a defendant. Publius Clodius Pulcher, a tribune and ally of Caesar, had broken into Caesar's house during the *Bona Dea* rites, when Caesar was living in the house of the Pontifex Maximus. This constituted a sacrilege because these rites were exclusively for women. Caesar was called as a witness in the highly politicised case in 61 because his wife Pompeia was also implicated in the sacrilege, and rumours had circulated of her alleged involvement in Clodius' crimes.<sup>181</sup> He was tactful in his own defence and did not provide evidence against Clodius, because Clodius was a popular tribune and he did not wish to damage his reputation and popularity with Rome's populace.<sup>182</sup> Caesar successfully defended himself, aided by his mother Aurelia and sister Julia's corroborating testimonies, and his divorce of Pompeia.<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>179</sup> Plutarch, *Caesar*, 7; Suetonius, *Julius*, 11; Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, 37. For the role of money and connections, see page 34 in this thesis.

<sup>180</sup> van der Blom (2016), 164; Zecchini (2001), 38; Beard (1994), 746; Lintott (1990), 49-52.

<sup>181</sup> van der Blom (2016), 168.

<sup>182</sup> Plutarch, *Caesar*, 10. 8-10.

<sup>183</sup> Plutarch, *Cicero*, 29.9; Suetonius, *Julius*, 72.2.

The primary sources do not comment on Caesar's speech, nevertheless, coupled with the evidence that has already been established regarding Caesar's rhetorical skill, his successful defence during the *Bona Dea* scandal was an effective use of oratory in order to defend his character. Moreover, Caesar's rhetorical expertise could not have been employed at a more opportune time. He had just completed his tenure as praetor, and so he was now eligible for the consulship. He needed to protect his public image and not upset his supporters in the Senate and among the people.<sup>184</sup> Plutarch reports that Caesar divorced Pompeia "... 'Because I [Caesar] thought my wife should be beyond suspicion,' ..."<sup>185</sup>, to shield his image as a dignified and proper Roman politician and husband.<sup>186</sup> Caesar would later be elected consul for 59 and his oratorical prowess no doubt played a role.<sup>187</sup> We have now shown how the courts were used by Caesar to promote his aptness for politics and to put forth his populist ideas.

### ***Civil Contiones***

The *contio* was different from other spaces for oratorical performances, as it was the sole gathering where the orator communicated directly to the people. The basic definition of the *contio* is simply a meeting or gathering, but more specifically an oration or speech in front of a public audience. This public congregation gave the people a venue to come face-to-face with their leaders. Furthermore, the judgement and will of the Roman populace played a fundamental role in the *contio*. The public would shout, murmur, or even use silence to signal its displeasure or approval of a speech. The masses lacked formal power, particularly in the *comitia centuriata*, and the *contio* provided the people with a say over proposed legislation through their reaction.<sup>188</sup> Especially in

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<sup>184</sup> van der Blom (2016), 169.

<sup>185</sup> Plutarch, *Caesar*, 10. 9.

<sup>186</sup> Meier (1982), 181; Gelzer (1968), 60.

<sup>187</sup> For the role of money and connections, see page 35 in this thesis.

<sup>188</sup> Morstein-Marx (2004), 120-127; Brunt (1988), 345.

the late Republic, this forum became the battleground for politicians to obtain *fama* and *popularitas*. Thus, the *contio* exhibited a specific electoral aim because it served as the means for politicians to sell their ideas and achievements to the people.<sup>189</sup> In various instances, Caesar used such opportunities to further his career by directly appealing to the people, advertising his leadership, and backing legislation to create alliances.

Caesar's funeral orations for his aunt Julia and his wife Cornelia in 69 were both good examples. Two fragments of the speeches are preserved by Suetonius and Plutarch, and these speeches reveal eloquence with regards to rhythm and choice of words.<sup>190</sup> In the funeral oration for Julia, Caesar glorified his divine and regal ancestry, claiming descent from Venus through the Iulii and from Ancus Marcius via the Marcii Reges. Moreover, as previously mentioned, Caesar also displayed the *imagines* of the Marii, as Julia had been married to the late Gaius Marius. The people were delighted with the sight of Marius' image since he was a popular figure.<sup>191</sup> Caesar's oration for Cornelia was unique at the time since the address was the first funeral oration for a young noblewoman. The people praised Caesar for his tenderness and sensitivity.<sup>192</sup> Therefore, these two funeral orations promoted Caesar's leadership to the people. The parading of the Marian ancestral busts and Caesar's lauding of his divine and regal ancestry were meant to promote his potential as a future great politician. He was simply a quaestor when he gave these speeches, thus through his oratory, Caesar was trying to demonstrate his electability for future office and competence as a future leader. Julia's funeral was also the first public display of the Marii *imagines* since the death of Sulla, who was Marius' archnemesis. Thus, Caesar was trying to show himself

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<sup>189</sup> Hölkeskamp (2013), 17-18; Pina Polo (1995), 204-209.

<sup>190</sup> Malcovati (ORF), 389-390; Albrecht (1989), 56-57.

<sup>191</sup> Plutarch, *Caesar*, 5. 2-4; Suetonius, *Julius*, 6.1; van der Blom (2016), 161-162. See pages 31-32 in this thesis.

<sup>192</sup> Plutarch, *Caesar*, 5. 2-4; Suetonius, *Julius*, 6.1; van der Blom (2016), 161-162.

as the political heir to Marius and his policies.<sup>193</sup> The *imagines* were a significant aspect in how noble families maintained political power over generations. The display of one's ancestry advertised their family and history, specifically the notable deeds of their ancestors. A major aspect of electioneering was competition among noble families to extol the virtues of their ancestors. In turn, this justified the hegemony of the noble families in Roman politics. For instance, it is estimated that two-thirds of consuls between 249 to 50 had a direct consular ancestor in the preceding three generations.<sup>194</sup> Caesar's display of the *imagines* and lauding of divine and regal ancestry were part of the traditional norms of Roman politics and the purpose of the *contio*.

Oratory was employed for a different purpose when Caesar supported the *Lex Gabinia* in 67 and the *Lex Manilia* in 66. He utilised his rhetoric here to create an alliance with Pompeius by openly championing him in front of the Roman people. The bills faced opposition from members of the upper cadre of the nobility, and Caesar was their sole supporter in the Senate. Nevertheless, both were passed through a popular vote, and Caesar's advocacy, according to Plutarch, was instrumental in their passage. Pompeius was the most popular politician and general in the 60s, and the sources stated Caesar's only motive for helping Pompeius was to court the goodwill of the masses.<sup>195</sup> However, the speeches can be viewed as more than Caesar's simply trying to elevate his status with Pompeius' supporters.<sup>196</sup> Pompeius was a more established player in Roman politics at this point, whereas Caesar had only been a quaestor, and thus only at the beginning of his political career.<sup>197</sup> Political networks were always vital during the Republic for a variety of

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<sup>193</sup> van der Blom (2016), 162.

<sup>194</sup> van der Blom (2016), 47-48; Flower (1996), 89-90; Hopkins (1983), 45-47. Hopkins (1983) is the original work on this topic of consular ancestors and electoral success.

<sup>195</sup> Plutarch, *Pompeius*, 25.8; Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, 36.43.3-4; Meier (1982), 142.

<sup>196</sup> van der Blom (2016), 163.

<sup>197</sup> Meier (1982), 142-146 provides a solid summary on Pompeius.

reasons, as we have discussed in chapter two.<sup>198</sup> Caesar was not a client of Pompeius, but he knew that his open support for Pompeius could provide potential political advantages, and it did. As we have discussed in chapter two, his election to the highest pontificate was aided by Pompeius' clients and agents. Furthermore, Caesar was competing against Catulus, one of Pompeius' political enemies. He was therefore the natural choice for Pompeius to support, since he had shown his favourability to Pompeius in 67 and 66.<sup>199</sup> Consequently, Caesar used his oratory to encourage a fruitful political alliance with Pompeius and to foster a closer and more enthusiastic relationship with the people.

Caesar employed these very same skills when he became consul. The successful passage of his *Lex Agraria* in 59 revealed how Caesar could use oratory to promote his leadership and populism. Caesar, Pompeius, and Crassus created an informal alliance which propelled Caesar to the consulship in 59.<sup>200</sup> All three supported agrarian reforms that would redistribute land to the urban poor, since these redistributions were popular. Caesar's co-consul Bibulus opposed the bill along with Cato the Younger and many in the Senate. Caesar appealed to the people in a *contio* for support, knowing the law would be popular with the masses.<sup>201</sup> Our two main sources, Cassius Dio and Appian, disagree on certain details pertaining to the event, nevertheless, they both agree there was considerable strife between the two camps. Caesar and Bibulus debated in front of the people, and both sources depict violence erupting as a result of the debate. Caesar even had Cato dragged off the *rostra* and thrown into prison, but he quickly released him because this detention was viewed unfavourably by the people. Caesar's partisans succeeded in the end and the law was

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<sup>198</sup> van der Blom (2016), 52-53. For the role of connections, see pages 28-47 in this thesis.

<sup>199</sup> van der Blom (2016), 164; Gruen (1974), 80-81. For Pontifex Maximus election, see page 35.

<sup>200</sup> Suetonius, *Julius*, 19-20.1; Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, 53.3-4. For Pompeius' and Crassus' role in Caesar's election to the consulship, see page 35 in this thesis.

<sup>201</sup> van der Blom (2016), 171.

passed.<sup>202</sup> Violence was the deciding factor, but oratory also played a vital role in the enactment of the legislation. Caesar had brought Bibulus to debate the legislation in the *contio*, asking why he objected to the bill. Bibulus chose his words wisely and answered ambiguously since he feared the crowd's reaction, and he could not be seen disagreeing with the crowd, which would have been political suicide. Caesar's goal was to trap Bibulus into either expressing indifference or support for the legislation, which Bibulus recognised, and that is why he articulated his opinion ambiguously. As a result, Caesar was viewed more favourably by the crowd because he created his own opportunity to express himself more clearly.<sup>203</sup> Furthermore, Caesar illustrated how useful the support of the crowd could be in a legislative deadlock. He decided to evade the Senate by bringing the legislation directly to the people as some politicians like the Gracchi had done. The Senate was paralyzed by fear of the mob and there was no legal basis for repealing the law.<sup>204</sup> Consequently, Caesar demonstrated his political acumen and showed Crassus and Pompeius that he was a worthy partner. Evidently, the *contio* created an avenue for him to advance his career, as he utilised his oratory to solidify alliances, to champion populism, and to advertise his leadership. His success demonstrates how he could utilise his oratorical talents in public settings, which he replicated in private settings amongst his aristocratic peers in the Senate.

## The Senate

Caesar's speeches amongst his fellow elites were equally bold in his promotion of his character, populism, and political alliances. The Senate was the oratorical setting which had the most rules and traditions. Only senators, someone invited by the Senate, or magistrates could speak, and only the most prominent senators would have had the opportunity to speak

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<sup>202</sup> Appian, *Roman History*, 2.10-12; Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, 38.4-6; van der Blom (2016), 171.

<sup>203</sup> Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, 38.4.2; Morstein-Marx (2004), 166-167.

<sup>204</sup> van der Blom (2016), 171; Meier (1982), 211.

frequently.<sup>205</sup> One of Caesar's most famous speeches was his opposition against the death penalty for the Catilinarian conspirators in 63. His oration opposed Cicero's impassioned speech that depicted Catiline's invading army destroying Italy and the Republic.<sup>206</sup> Caesar argued that the conspirators should be placed in various Italian municipalities under house arrest, and for their possessions to be confiscated till the crisis had ended so a proper trial could be held. Moreover, he argued that house arrest was a more severe sentence than death, so that the conspirators could dwell on their treasonous conduct. Tradition was invoked as Caesar claimed that the ancestors of the Republic would not condemn fellow citizens to capital punishment and instead would have preferred house arrest. His call to ancestral tradition was powerful, because past precedent and ancestral veneration was at the core of Roman culture and politics. However, contrary to Caesar's claim, there was no precedent for life-imprisonment.<sup>207</sup> His speech convinced many to switch sides, including Cicero's own brother Quintus.

Caesar was praetor-elect during these proceedings, and he needed to demonstrate he exhibited the virtues to hold such a high office. Whether it was genuine or not, adherence to tradition was a powerful indicator of leadership and electability. Tradition also played a role in the much larger question during the Catilinarian debate, to decide whether a Roman citizen could be executed without a trial. Many saw Cicero's proposal as an affront to the *lex Sempronia*, referred to when Caesar spoke of "...*novom consilium*..."<sup>208</sup> in his speech. The *lex Sempronia* was passed in 123 by Gaius Gracchus when he was tribune, which prohibited the Senate from condemning a citizen to death without the approval of the popular assemblies. Therefore, Caesar championed the

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<sup>205</sup> van der Blom (2016), 38-40.

<sup>206</sup> Sallust, *Catiline*, 51; Gruen (1974), 281; Kennedy (1972), 285-286. For Cicero's speech, see Cicero, *Catiline*, books two and three.

<sup>207</sup> Sallust, *Catiline*, 51.1-4, 43; Cicero, *Catiline*, 4.7-9; Plutarch, *Caesar*, 7.8-9; Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, 37.36.1; Gruen (1974), 281.

<sup>208</sup> Sallust, *Catiline*, 51.8 with Ramsey (2007), 196.

popular position, in opposition to Cicero.<sup>209</sup> Cicero said in his rebuttal that Caesar took the *via popularis*. Furthermore, it continued to foster his public persona as man of the people, a consistent image throughout the 60's. Even though he lost the debate, his performance still demonstrated his determination to stand up rights of the people against influential senators like Cicero.<sup>210</sup>

Before Caesar began his first consulship, he advocated for the Asian *publicani* in 60. These *publicani* wanted to break a third of their contract to collect taxes in the province of Asia. These tax collectors complained that the Senate had sold them the contract for far too much and had overvalued the potential gains. Caesar faced opposition from Cato and others in the Senate, he nonetheless persuaded the Senate in the end to support the *publicani*.<sup>211</sup> His successful support for the *publicani* began his association with the *equites*, since these tax collectors were members of the order. The *equites* also consisted of landowners, tax collectors, bankers, merchants, and shipowners, all important occupations for the economic prosperity of the Republic. Moreover, the equestrian order held moderate political and judicial power.<sup>212</sup> Alliances with members of the *equites* were beneficial to Caesar's political career, and he cultivated a relationship with both the Roman and Italian *equites* over the course of the 60s, as Gaius Gracchus had done before him. Many notable officers in his army were from the Roman or Italian *equites*. As we have already mentioned earlier, he even married his family members to wealthy *equites*. Julia, one of his sisters, was married to M. Atius Balbus, a wealthy entrepreneur in Aricia. Balbus' and Julia's daughter Atia married another wealthy *eques*, Gaius Octavius. Both Balbus and Octavius became the first of their families to achieve senatorial rank. Therefore, Caesar had begun to make powerful

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<sup>209</sup> van der Blom (2016), 165-166; Ramsey (2007), 196; Gruen (1972), 281.

<sup>210</sup> Cicero, *Catiline*, 9; van der Blom (2016), 166.

<sup>211</sup> Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, 38. 7. 4-6; Cicero, *Atticus*, 1.17.8-9; Cicero, *Atticus*, 1.18.7; Bonnefond-Coudry (1989) 623, table 27.

<sup>212</sup> Brunt (1988), 24, 144-145. For more on *equites* in late Republic, see Brunt (1998), 144-193.

alliances with wealthy families, who were fiercely loyal to him for their new-found status.<sup>213</sup> As Caesar continued to achieve political success and then military success in Gaul, these *novi homines* and *equites* looked to him for offices and careers not generally attained by men of their rank and ancestry. Caesar anticipated around the end of the Gallic War, because of the political climate in Rome, that he would return to a hostile political landscape. Alliances with bankers, merchants, and patrons within Rome and Italy meant Caesar had a large, diverse coalition of dependents that could aid him politically outside elite circles. Caesar had by the late 50's a powerful political apparatus, which would be vital for any future political endeavours after his Gallic campaigns.<sup>214</sup> The fruitful relationship between Caesar and the *ordo equester* began with his aiding of the Asian *publicani*. Oratory helped him initiate a political alliance that would provide him officers in the Gallic Wars, and political allies who supported him throughout the Civil War. His senatorial speeches evidently sold his leadership, populist sympathies, and started valuable political alliances, but also demonstrated that he could apply his rhetorical prowess amongst the elites.

### **Military *Contiones***

Military *contiones* could take place anywhere the army was. Consuls, proconsuls, propraeors, dictators, and even *legati* could preside over military *contio* in the late Republic. It was expected to a commander would address his army for variety of different circumstances, such as to inspire his men in demanding situation or to praise them after a victory.<sup>215</sup> Caesar was no different. First of all, we have, no doubt reconstructed, speeches from his commentaries on the Gallic and Civil Wars.<sup>216</sup> This fact, coupled with our second-hand understanding of his oratorical

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<sup>213</sup> Gruen (1974), 118-119. For Caesar's connections to the equestrian class, see pages 38-40 in this thesis.

<sup>214</sup> Gruen (1974), 119-120. For detail on how Caesar's alliances were advantageous in the Civil War, see Brunt (1988), 488-501.

<sup>215</sup> Pina Polo (1995), 213-214.

<sup>216</sup> For the discussion on the *commentarii*, see pages 5-7 in this thesis.

abilities, allows a unique opportunity to analyse Caesar's own words and his rhetoric first-hand. His speech before his march against Ariovistus and the Suebi in 58 is noteworthy, because he motivated his soldiers and centurions to overcome their fear. Fear of the Germanic chief and his warriors had spread throughout Caesar's camp, and even his officers were not immune. When his officers brought their concerns to him, he summoned a *contio*.<sup>217</sup> At first, Caesar reprimanded his officers for their questions and dishonourable conduct. He then declared that Ariovistus was still currently a friend of Rome and if he were to recklessly wage war on Rome, he could not triumph against his army's strength and valour, and his superior leadership skills.<sup>218</sup> Ariovistus and his warriors are compared by Caesar to the Cimbri and Teutones, who had terrorised Italy a generation before but were decisively defeated by Gaius Marius. Caesar continued by stating that the Suebi had fought against the Helvetii on numerous occasions but never succeeded, and the Helvetii had just been defeated by the them, thus implying that the Suebi had no chance of victory.<sup>219</sup> Caesar ended his speech explaining that if the rest of his forces submitted to cowardice, he would march against Ariovistus alone with the Tenth Legion, since they were always loyal to him.<sup>220</sup> The entirety of this speech employed what Leeman calls the 'rhetorical paradox'. Caesar combined praise with blame and companionship with humiliation. Caesar belittled his officers for questioning his leadership and their martial prowess, and then he argued how Ariovistus would be no match for his army's courage and valour. The speech ended with Caesar's praise of the Tenth Legion for their loyalty and dedication, essentially shaming the rest of his army for their hesitation to follow him into battle.<sup>221</sup> The speech was successful, as according to Caesar, his officers and

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<sup>217</sup> Caesar, *Gallic War*, 1.39.2- 40.1.

<sup>218</sup> Caesar, *Gallic War*, 1.40.1-4.

<sup>219</sup> Caesar, *Gallic War*, 1.40.5-7.

<sup>220</sup> Caesar, *Gallic War*, 1.40.14-15.

<sup>221</sup> Leeman (2001), 102-103; Meier (1982), 243-244.

soldiers were inspired by his words, and they displayed great eagerness to follow him into battle. His officers assured him that their ranks harboured neither fear nor doubt in his leadership.<sup>222</sup> In the end, Caesar stated that his army triumphed over Ariovistus, ending Suebian ambitions in Gaul.<sup>223</sup> It is important to note that, although oratory was clearly an important asset here, no doubt Caesar's skill as a general was the defining factor in his triumph.

The same oratorical skills were employed during the Civil War. Pompeius had inflicted an almost catastrophic defeat on Caesar at the Battle of Dyrrhachium in 48. As a result, Caesar's army was demoralised, and he gave a speech in order to rally them to overcome the loss. He began his speech by reassuring his soldiers that they should be grateful to Fortune, since they had recaptured Italy without bloodshed and had beaten many of Pompeius' experienced and skilled armies in Spain. Their successful reconquest of Spain secured for Caesar and Rome much needed grain, which he commended as a significant achievement.<sup>224</sup> The speech even ended with him taking responsibility for the loss, but demanding courage from his soldiers in order for them to overcome this setback, as his soldiers had done previously in Gaul at Gergovia. After the speech, he demoted some standard bearers.<sup>225</sup> His actions are quite the opposite of taking responsibility for the loss. There was a clear contradiction between his words and actions. Yet, Caesar's speech was effective because it created a sentiment of remorse and disgrace throughout his camp, so that the army wanted to rectify its shame and failure. According to Caesar, all of his ranks sought to fight another day and bring victory to their *imperator*.<sup>226</sup> His army would encounter Pompeius' army at Pharsalos shortly after their defeat at Dyrrhachium. Pompeius far outnumbered Caesar's army,

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<sup>222</sup> Caesar, *Gallic War*, 1.41.

<sup>223</sup> Meier (1982), 245-247; detailed account in Caesar, *Gallic War*, 1.42-54.

<sup>224</sup> Caesar, *Civil War*, 3.73.2-4.

<sup>225</sup> Caesar, *Civil War*, 3.73.4-74.1.

<sup>226</sup> Caesar, *Civil War*, 3.74.2; Gelzer (1968), 233-234.

roughly forty-seven thousand men against Caesar's twenty-two thousand. On the left flank alone where the cavalries of both forces were stationed, Caesar was outnumbered seven to one. However, he had one important advantage over Pompeius, his army was formed of hardened veterans who had served in Gaul, whereas Pompeius' army was mostly composed of fresh recruits. Caesar won at Pharsalos, which decided the outcome of the Civil War. Undoubtedly the battle was won by his more experienced army, but oratory played a partial role in his victory since his speech at Dyrrhachium encouraged his soldiers to fight another day.<sup>227</sup> His oratory thus served him well in a crucial moment in his career. His soldiers had been demoralised and his speech helped uplift them out of their despair. While many generals before and after Caesar were successful in their oratorical performances on campaigns, the preservation of his writing provides us with his own written orations, where he brought the same public speaking skills he utilised in politics to the battlefield.

## **Conclusion**

Whether it be in front of the masses or the nobility, a leader's ability to communicate his message successfully is vital for self-promotion. Whether it be in the courts, addressing the Roman people, debating with his aristocratic peers, or on military campaigns, he utilised his oratorical skills to communicate particular messages to a diverse audience. Therefore, oratory helped shape his image and message to a variety of distinct groups. The successful advertisement of his leadership qualities meant that people believed he was suitable for office and military command. Thus, public speaking was a vital component in his portfolios of power. The next chapter will

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<sup>227</sup> Meier (1982), 397-399; for detail account of battle Caesar, *Civil War*, 3.92-99.

investigate a different portfolio in which Caesar used to promote his character and to further his career: religion.

# CHAPTER FOUR: RELIGION

## Introduction

Religion and politics were intertwined in Ancient Rome. Caesar understood this fact well as he manipulated religion to his political benefit, making it an integral part in his portfolios of power. Through priesthoods, *interpretatio Romana*, and self-promotion, he used religion to acquire political influence, enhance his reputation, or tarnish his opponents. Priests in Ancient Rome held powers that were vital to the political workings of the state, and Caesar exploited the powers and prestige of these priesthoods throughout his rise to political supremacy. He may have also manipulated, according to Zecchini, the office of Pontifex Maximus to bridge the cultural divide between Gauls and Romans in order to strengthen his alliances with the various Gallic peoples, who were a major source of clients and wealth.<sup>228</sup> This exploitation may be an early instance of a practice called *interpretatio Romana*. Finally, he often painted his enemies as impious, specifically during the Civil War, in order to assert his own *Romanitas* and piety.

## Religion and Politics

The modern idea of a separation between religion and state was a foreign concept in the Roman world, as the main concern of both the government and the civic religion was the health and protection of the state. The welfare of the state and its inhabitants was supposedly guaranteed through a strict adherence to rituals and tradition, called the *mos maiorum* by the Romans. This theoretically secured the favour of the Roman pantheon. These rituals and the day-to-day politics of the state went hand-in-hand as political actions had to be approved in accordance with

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<sup>228</sup> For significance of the Gallic War in Caesar's wealth, see pages 43-46 in this thesis.

favourable omens. Unusual phenomena, such as meteor showers or lightening, meant a disturbance of the *pax deorum*, and showed the gods' disapproval of Rome's conduct.<sup>229</sup> This interconnection between political action and rituals was reflected in how priests and politicians were made up exclusively of the senatorial class, the same class which had a monopoly on political power. The Senate was also always the source of final decisions on religious matters throughout the Republic's existence. Furthermore, both the political and religious systems operated on the ideal of collegiality and cooperation. Simply speaking, political offices had different functions and so did the priestly ones. The priestly colleges were divided amongst the pontiffs, the augurs, the *flamines*, and the *quindecemviri*. The main role of these colleges was to interpret the different signs and omens that the gods indirectly revealed. Therefore, these priests had a monopoly on the reading of omens, which were vital to political decisions.<sup>230</sup>

Religion had always been at the centre of the Republic's political disputes. The early Republic's political struggles between the patricians and plebeians was framed by the ancient sources as a conflict against a patrician monopoly over religious power. Livy, our best source for the early Republic, described the passage of the *Lex Ogulnia* in 300 as the last major event of the so-called 'Struggle of the Orders', which allowed plebeians the right to hold office in the pontifical and augural colleges.<sup>231</sup> However, the late Republic's political conflicts and religion's role in these disputes were fundamentally different from those of the past because this interwoven constitutional structure was exploited by power-seeking nobles for personal gain. In 104, Gnaeus Domitius Ahenobarbus, a tribune of the plebs, successfully passed the *Lex Domitia*, which handed over the

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<sup>229</sup> Orlin (2007), 58-60; Beard (1994), 729.

<sup>230</sup> Orlin (2007), 58-59; Beard, Price, and North (1998), 115; Beard (1994), 730-731; Beard and Crawford (1985), 30-34. Cicero, *On His House*, 1-3 explains the role of the *pontifices*, which by all measures were the most senior religious college.

<sup>231</sup> Livy, *History of Rome*, 10.6.1-9.2; Beard, Price, and North (1998), 134; Beard (1994), 745.

selection of priests of the major colleges to the tribal assembly. Previously, when a member of a priestly college died, the remaining members of the college choose a replacement. With the *Lex Domitia*, colleges still retained the right to draw up a list of candidates for elections, but the law effectively shifted the selection process for priests from the existing members of the college to the populace. Thus, priestly offices became a part of the growing competition between Roman nobles for political hegemony.<sup>232</sup> Neither the populists nor the upper cadre of Senate challenged the traditional framework of the civic religion and its role in politics during the heated disputes of the late Republic, but they did fight bitterly over who monopolised its power.<sup>233</sup> For example, during Caesar's first consulship in 59, his colleague Bibulus tried to obstruct his land legislation in the assemblies on religious grounds, by claiming that he was observing bad celestial omens. Caesar blocked Bibulus from leaving his house through violent means and as a result he could not report the supposed bad omens to the assemblies. Caesar's legislation passed but his actions were marred with controversy.<sup>234</sup> Nevertheless, his actions demonstrated how the *nobiles* used and distorted religion to their political advantage. It was in this political environment that Caesar utilised and manipulated religious procedures to advance his career.

## Priesthoods

It was in the religious hierarchy that a young Caesar acquired his first office. In 87 or 86, he was appointed *flamen dialis* by Cinna and Marius, replacing Lucius Cornelius Merula, a Sullan who had committed suicide to avoid death at the hands of the Cinnan regime. Quintus Mucius

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<sup>232</sup> Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, 37.37.1-2; Orlin (2007), 65; Beard (1994), 746-747; Beard, Price, and North (1998), 136. Sulla had repealed the *Lex Domitia* since the law was no doubt a threat to hegemony of the upper cadre of the Senate, but the law was reinstated in 63 by the tribune Labienus, an ally and associate of Caesar. Later the same year Caesar was elected Pontifex Maximus under the reinstated law (Gruen (1974), 253).

<sup>233</sup> Beard, Price, and North (1998), 139; Beard (1994), 748.

<sup>234</sup> Suetonius, *Julius*, 20.1; Wardle (2009), 103; Brunt (1988), 59; Beard and Crawford (1985), 37-38.

Scaevola, who was the Pontifex Maximus at the time and a Sullan supporter, attempted to block Caesar's appointment but failed. The *flamines diale* were a priesthood dedicated to the god Jupiter, whose members were exclusively of patrician birth. These priests of Jupiter carried great religious and political authority because they were responsible for the rituals relating to the Ides of each month, most notably the sacrifice of a white ram.<sup>235</sup> However, the priesthood had a disadvantage, because it had sacral restrictions and ritual rules that hindered the advancement of one's political career. There is no evidence to suggest that Cinna or Marius were trying to hinder the young Caesar; after all, they were his father-in-law and uncle respectively. Caesar at the time would have assumed his *toga virilis* and his appointment to the priesthood was no doubt seen as an honour for a young man from a family that had been politically insignificant for several generations.<sup>236</sup> This prestigious appointment, however, was short lived, since once Sulla took power in Rome, he stripped Caesar of his priesthood. When Sulla established his regime after defeating Cinna, he abrogated all of Cinna's and Marius' laws and appointments. Caesar was a natural target of Sulla's wrath because of his familial connections to both Cinna and Marius. Furthermore, Sulla may have believed that the flaminiate belonged to the more distinguished Corneli, his own family, than the Iulii.<sup>237</sup>

Caesar's fortunes changed with Sulla's death. While campaigning in the east in late 73 or early 72, he was co-opted as one of the fifteen *pontifices*, who were the most senior priests. He replaced his mother's cousin, Gaius Aurelius Cotta, something which was only made possible through the advocacy of his mother. This was a particularly challenging feat since the college was

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<sup>235</sup> Suetonius, *Julius*, 1.1; Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, 1.15.15; Rüpke (2012), 86; Wardle (2009), 101; Zecchini (2001), 36; Weinstock (1971), 30.

<sup>236</sup> Wardle (2009), 101; Meier (1982), 86.

<sup>237</sup> Suetonius, *Julius*, 1.2; Velleius Paterculus, *Roman History*, 2.43.1; Plutarch, *Caesar*, 1.3; Wardle (2009), 102; Weinstock (1971), 30. For Sulla's proscription of Caesar, see pages 32-33 in this thesis.

filled with Sullan supporters. The Sullan establishment may have been trying to bring Caesar into the fold as he had already showed promise with his military career and his prosecution of Dolabella.<sup>238</sup> Furthermore, it was standard practice to co-opt a young noble to replace a deceased relative as *pontifex*. It was also customary for the college to have a wide range of ages in order to pass down traditions to new members. The customs of the *pontifices* were numerous, naturally, since the institution was ancient, and thus it would have taken time for a young *pontifex* to become well versed.<sup>239</sup> The political implications of Caesar's new priesthood were numerous. Although the Senate was the supreme body regarding religious decisions, the advice of the *pontifices* on religious matters was taken very seriously. They advised the Senate about the gods, supervised ceremonies, making sure they were properly performed according to the prescribed ritual, and interpreted omens when they appeared. All these functions were central to the political workings of the state. Moreover, they were the custodians of the *libri pontificii*, which included the official *acta*, *indigitamenta*, *ritualia*, *commentarii*, *fasti*, and *annals*, and were the only people allowed to access these texts.<sup>240</sup> More importantly, it allowed the future opportunity to truly distinguish himself amongst his rivals, as his co-option meant he could run for the Pontifex Maximus.

When Caesar was elected Pontifex Maximus in 63, he acquired immense influence and power. He not only became the head of the *pontifices*, but he also had the undisputed right to determine the days when assemblies could be held, votes casted, sacrifices offered, and valid decisions of the Senate brought forth. This power was personified in the Pontifex Maximus' authority to determine the calendar. These decisions were addressed to the magistrates through a *decretum*, or *responsum*, which three other *pontifices* had to approve. They, however, could be

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<sup>238</sup> Velleius, *Roman History*, 2.43.1; Zecchini (2001), 36; Meier (1982), 110; Weinstock (1971), 30. For Dolabella's trial, see pages 55-56 in this thesis.

<sup>239</sup> Meier (1982), 111.

<sup>240</sup> Szemler (1972), 21-22.

overruled by the Pontifex Maximus, if need be.<sup>241</sup> An example of the significance of this power is best shown when Caesar was dictator. His reform of the calendar in 46 created a fixed calendar of 365 days, which essentially ended the role of the *pontifices* in deciding the start of months and performing intercalation.<sup>242</sup> The prolonging of offices by intercalation had increasingly been used as a political weapon during the 50s and after, and although we do not have any ancient evidence that provides us with Caesar's intentions for his calendrical reform, it seems likely that in order to secure his dictatorial powers, he had to eliminate intercalation as a source of political turmoil. This speaks to the political nature of his aims with the reform.<sup>243</sup> Overall, after his election, Caesar was now for the first time a major player in Roman politics. He was a thirty-seven-year-old who had not even been elected consul but was now one of the heads of Rome's nobility. This promotion in prestige can be seen during the Catilinarian conspiracy in the same year of his election. Even though Cicero and Caesar were found at the opposite sides of the debate, Cicero addressed Caesar with the respect worthy of the Pontifex Maximus. Furthermore, he praised Caesar's sense of responsibility, adherence to tradition, and interest in the welfare of the populace.<sup>244</sup> These various priesthoods that Caesar had acquired throughout his early career evidently helped build his profile.

### *Interpretatio Romana*

In the *Gallic War*, the benchmark of civilization was set at Rome, and the Gallic tribes fell short on many occasions. In one example, the Gauls are referred to as being prone to outbursts and rage, tropes attributed by the Roman to people they deemed 'uncivilized'. Once we are introduced

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<sup>241</sup> Szemler (1972), 23-24. For election to the Pontifex Maximus, see pages 34 and 57-58 in this thesis.

<sup>242</sup> Suetonius, *Julius*, 40; Plutarch, *Caesar*, 59; Wardle (2009), 104.

<sup>243</sup> Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, 1.14.2; Rüpke (2011), 109-111.

<sup>244</sup> Cicero, *Catiline*, 4.5.9-10; Meier (1982), 161; Gelzer (1968), 54. For Caesar's popularity with the people, see pages 60-66 in this thesis.

to the Suebi and the Britons, however, this characterization changes.<sup>245</sup> In book six, Caesar displays a deep understanding of Druidism and Gallic culture, and there is no evidence to suggest that his accounts were meant to disparage the priests or the Gallic culture. His source may have been the druid Diviciacus, a priest of the Aedui, who accompanied Caesar during the campaign against the Belgae as the commander of the Aeduian cavalry.<sup>246</sup> Caesar's motivation to forge an alliance with Diviciacus and to positively portray Druidism were probably for self-serving purposes. He was most likely trying to exploit Diviciacus' religious authority to persuade the Gauls to accept Rome's hegemony and his power. This fact is evident in book six where he fails to mention important differences between Roman and Gallic cultures in order to promote the idea of cultural similarity. For instance, he inaccurately related Celtic henoticism and Roman polytheism.<sup>247</sup> Therefore, the purpose of these passages was evidently for a more self-promotional purpose than out of the desire to write an accurate ethnography.

Zecchini has theorised that when Caesar recognised the compatibility of Gallic and Roman polytheism, a process known as *interpretatio Romana*, he was attempting to exploit and manipulate the powers of the Pontifex Maximus in order to quicken the Romanization of the Gauls.<sup>248</sup> *Interpretatio Romana* is a literary term, first found in Tacitus' *Germania*, which was used to describe one, the syncretistic approach the Romans had toward foreign religions, and two their system of dual names for deities. It is unknown whether this term existed outside of literature.<sup>249</sup> Zecchini's argument rests on the premise that the Pontifex Maximus would have had the authority to recognise a basic compatibility between Roman and foreign religions.<sup>250</sup> Whether the Pontifex

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<sup>245</sup> Caesar, *Gallic War*, 3.8; Schadee (2017), 224-226.

<sup>246</sup> Caesar, *Gallic War*, 2.5.1-3; 2.10.5; 2.14.1; Zecchini (2001), 42.

<sup>247</sup> Caesar, *Gallic War*, 6.17.1-5; Zecchini (2001), 41-43.

<sup>248</sup> Zecchini (2001), 43.

<sup>249</sup> Tacitus, *Germania*, 44. For more on *interpretatio romana*, see Ando (2005).

<sup>250</sup> Caesar, *Gallic War*, 6.17.1-5; Zecchini (2001), 43-44.

Maximus ever had this formal power is unknown since we do not have primary evidence to support this claim. Nevertheless, this use of *interpretatio Romana* as a tool for political advancement would have been completely in line with Caesar's character. There was a pattern throughout his career where he strengthened his alliances through reward and incorporation, especially when it came to the Gauls. As Dictator, he enfranchised the Transpadane Gauls in 49 after years of advocating for their citizenship.<sup>251</sup> Furthermore, he enfranchised many aristocratic Gauls who were allies during his conquest. When he famously increased the number of senators from 600 to 900 in either 45 or 44, some of the new senators were these Gallic citizens. These new appointments enraged the upper cadre of Senate.<sup>252</sup> Additionally, Garcea has argued that Caesar's *De analogia* was part of his greater plan to standardise and simplify Roman politics and culture in order to integrate non-Romans more easily.<sup>253</sup> Thus, based on this pattern, it is reasonable to suggest that Caesar may have manipulated the authority of the Pontifex Maximus in order to reinforce alliances in Gaul.

### **Impious Enemies**

One of the core purposes of the *Civil War* was to highlight the moral failings of Pompeius and his supporters. They were portrayed as a threat to the Republic whose ambitions engulfed the state in civil war. Terminology often associated with foreigners, such as *crudelis*, *crudeliter*, and *crudelita*, were employed by Caesar to depict Pompeius.<sup>254</sup> In one instance, there is a stark contrast between how Caesar treated his enemy captives and how the Pompeians treated Caesarian soldiers.

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<sup>251</sup> Brunt (1988), 398; Meier (1982), 141-142. For the role of Gallic clients, see page 38 in this thesis.

<sup>252</sup> Suetonius, *Julius*, 80.1; Meier (1982), 464.

<sup>253</sup> Garcea (2012), 3-7. Garcea argues the *De analogia* fits in the pattern of Caesar's enfranchisement of foreigners, his standardization of the legal system, his cultural policy of centralizing literature (i.e. the creation of public libraries), and his calendar reforms.

<sup>254</sup> Caesar, *Civil War*, 1.76.5-77.2, 3.38.4; Grillo (2012), 111; Rossi (2000), 242. Grillo (2012), 106-130 goes into a detailed discussion about the barbarization of Caesar's enemies.

Caesar used the word *crudelitas* to describe his opponents' conduct against captive soldiers, whereas he treated his captives with *magno in honore*.<sup>255</sup> Charges of impiety were especially a useful means to tarnish his enemies. Pompeian partisans were often portrayed as acting impiously, specifically regarding their treatment of temples and their treasures. Furthermore, the actions of Pompeius and his supporters are compared to Caesar's own piety; his respect for the sanctity of temples, his dedication to their preservation and restoration, and his overall devotion to the Republic and its traditions. For example, before Caesar's invasion of Italy in 49, he gave a speech to his soldiers in order to justify their actions against the Roman state. Pompeius was said to have neglected the auspices and looted temples in order to enrich himself. Caesar, on the other hand, portrayed himself as the defender of the Republic, who did not wish to plunge the state into a bloody civil war.<sup>256</sup> These religious charges were important in his vilification of his opponents. As has already been shown, the success of the Roman state was seen in conjunction with its relationship to the gods. If Rome's leaders were looting temples and not taking the auspices, they were disturbing the *pax deorum* and consequently, their actions would bring disaster to Rome. Therefore, Caesar was depicting himself as the logical choice for leader of the Republic because of his respect and commitment to the *mos maiorum*.

While it is difficult to determine the direct effectiveness of Caesar's smear campaign. As mentioned in chapter one, there is no evidence that suggests the *Civil War* was published in Caesar's lifetime.<sup>257</sup> Nevertheless, when placed within a greater pattern from throughout his career, the *Civil War* was part of a greater strategy. Caesar espoused a personal connection with the gods, specifically the goddess Venus, throughout his political career. He was not the first

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<sup>255</sup> Caesar, *Civil War*, 1.76.5-77.2.

<sup>256</sup> Caesar, *Civil War*, 1.6.8-9; Grillo (2012), 141; Wardle (2009), 108; Le Bohec (2003), 545. For Pompeian impiety vs Caesarian piety, see Caesar, *Civil War*, 2.21.3, 3.105.3-6.

<sup>257</sup> See pages 8-12 in this thesis.

Roman aristocratic to do so; Sulla also claimed the personal favour of Venus in his lifetime. Sulla's agnomen *Felix* indicated his connection to the goddess.<sup>258</sup> Caesar's once friend and great rival Pompeius likewise claimed that the goddess favoured him, building a grand theatre-temple complex to Venus Victrix.<sup>259</sup> Caesar followed a similar pattern. He boasted about his divine ancestor Aeneas, the son of Venus, in his funeral oration for his aunt Julia. As discussed in chapter three, he benefitted tremendously from that speech because his claimed divine ancestry and oratorical prowess showed himself to be a capable upcoming leader, which helped with his future electoral success.<sup>260</sup> Moreover, once he had established his dictatorship, he built a temple complex to Venus Genetrix in order to promote not only his ancestor, but also the ancestor of the entire Roman people. The purpose of this public work was not only to enhance his personal stature by equating his clan's ancestry with that of the Roman people, but also to display his supposed personal piety.<sup>261</sup> This form of self-promotion has been shown throughout this thesis to have benefitted Caesar since the beginning of his career. Therefore, when we incorporate these displays of divine connection and piety with the *Civil War*, Caesar was attempting on multiple fronts to sell himself as a proper Roman leader, who was pious and an adherent to the *mos maiorum*.<sup>262</sup>

## Conclusion

Throughout his career, Caesar used religious procedures as one of his main assets to achieve political success. Whether it be obtaining political influence through priesthoods, specifically the Pontifex Maximus, or the promotion of his piety, religion was important in

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<sup>258</sup> Plutarch, *Sulla*, 19.5, 34.2; Beard, Price, and North (1998), 144.

<sup>259</sup> Beard, Price, and North (1998), 144.

<sup>260</sup> Plutarch, *Caesar*, 5. 2-4; Suetonius, *Julius*, 6.1; van der Blom (2016), 161-162; Wardle (2009), 102; Zecchini (2001), 37; Weinstock (1971), 5. For the funeral oration for Julia, see pages 60-61.

<sup>261</sup> Orlin (2007), 69; Beard, Price, and North (1998), 145.

<sup>262</sup> For promotion of Caesar's *romanitas*, see pages 7-11 in this thesis.

multiple ways. It was through the priesthood that Caesar acquired his first political office, and since religion and politics were intertwined, this in turn gave him political influence, notably with the mending of the calendar and the reading of omens. It was specifically his election to the Pontifex Maximus that distinguished him. It was also through the Pontifex Maximus that he may have manipulated the powers of the office to strengthen his alliance with the Gallic people and their aristocrats, who were an important facet of his clients and a significant source of income. Finally, he used religious themes to disparage his opponents in order to promote his own piety, religiosity, and adherence to Rome's traditions. This tactic was used throughout his career to his benefit. Therefore, he acquired political power, strengthened his alliances, and improved his stature by applying religion in a variety of different contexts.

# CONCLUSION

## Caesar and Late Antiquity

In Late Antiquity, Caesar's legacy was centred around his role in the birth of the empire, and for most late antique writers, he was regarded as the first Roman emperor rather than Augustus. This characterization was evident even before Late Antiquity as Josephus stated that Caesar ruled for three years and seven months when he was assassinated. Therefore, Josephus was implying that Caesar became a monarch after he defeated Pompeius at Pharsalos in 48.<sup>263</sup> Likewise, Suetonius began his *De vita Caesarum* with Caesar, placing him before Augustus as the first emperor.<sup>264</sup> In the Emperor Julian's *Symposion*, where he studied the virtues and vices of previous emperors, he had Caesar be the first to enter in the banquet of the gods. He was then followed by Augustus, Tiberius, and the rest in chronological sequence.<sup>265</sup> Ammianus Marcellinus, a major source for the 4<sup>th</sup> century CE, alluded to both Caesar's martial abilities and imperial status when he included Caesar alongside the emperors Claudius (268-270 CE) and Galerius (293-311 CE) as the ideal *veteres principes* whom Constantius did not emulate.<sup>266</sup> However, some authors like Orosius argued against Caesar's designation as the first emperor. Nevertheless, even Orosius recognised that Caesar was an important figure the birth of the empire.<sup>267</sup> Thus, late antique writers

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<sup>263</sup> Josephus, *The Jewish War*, 1.218; Barnes (2009), 280.

<sup>264</sup> Suetonius, *Julius*; Barnes (2009), 280. See chapter one for section on Suetonius.

<sup>265</sup> Julian, *Symposion*, 308 D; Barnes (2009), 280.

<sup>266</sup> Ammianus, *Roman History*, 16.10.3; Barnes (2009), 280.

<sup>267</sup> Orosius, *History Against the Pagans*, 7.2.14; Barnes (2009), 281. Orosius wrote "Then in the present epoch Christ, Who had been promised to Abraham in the reign of Ninus, the first king, was born at almost the end of the 42nd year of the rule of Augustus Caesar, the first of all Rome's emperors, although his father, Caesar, too distinguished himself, though rather as the architect of the empire than as an emperor." Barnes (2009), 281-286 goes over how some Christian writers, such as Tertullian and Eusebius of Caesarea, placed Augustus as the first emperor in order to align the birth of Jesus with the creation of the Roman Empire (281).

evidently understood the significance of Caesar in terms of the immense power he amassed at the end of his career and his role in the creation of the Principate.

Yet, besides the labelling of Caesar as the first emperor, he was not discussed in much detail. In the Greek speaking east, Alexander the Great was favoured over Caesar by Greek orators as the standard measure of comparison. For example, in Libanius' joint panegyric for Constantius and Constans, he never referred to Caesar, but he named Alexander seven times.<sup>268</sup> Furthermore, in his orations for Julian, he mentioned Alexander constantly but never Caesar.<sup>269</sup> Even in the West, specifically in Gaul, Caesar was hardly mentioned by Latin orators. He is mentioned only four times throughout eight orations, commonly known as the *Panegyrici Latini*, from 289 CE to 313 CE. In one of these examples, Constantine's capture of Segusio, where he ordered his victorious soldiers to show clemency, was compared to Caesar's taking of Gomphi, where he destroyed the undefended town. The comparison is not flattering to Caesar.<sup>270</sup> Although another of these examples praised Constantine's military swiftness in which he emulated both Caesar and Scipio Africanus.<sup>271</sup> The reason for this lack of interest in Caesar was in part due to the rise of Christianity. He faded behind Constantine, whose status as the first Christian emperor made him not only the most dominating figure for most of Late Antiquity, but the main figure of comparison for subsequent Christian emperors. In many ways, late antique authors understood Caesar's role in the creation of the empire, but he was rarely discussed in detail. He was mostly referred within the conversation on when the Roman Empire was created.<sup>272</sup>

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<sup>268</sup> Libanius, *Orationes*, 59.24, 53–5; Barnes (2009), 283.

<sup>269</sup> Libanius, *Orationes*, 14.34, 15.2, 74, 79, 17.17, 18.260, 19.13–14, 20.22, 30, 32, 42; Barnes (2009), 283.

<sup>270</sup> *Panegyrici Latini*, 12.5.4–6.2; Barnes (2009), 283. Other examples are *Panegyrici Latini*, 5.3.3, 6.19.3, 12.15.3.

<sup>271</sup> *Panegyrici Latini*, 12.15.3; Barnes (2009), 283.

<sup>272</sup> Barnes (2009), 286.

## Conclusion

Caesar's diverse portfolios of power were fundamental to his political success. One asset alone, such as money, would not have sufficed during the various stages of his career. He could have never established his hegemony over the Roman world, let alone have been elected consul, if he did not cultivate and expand his various portfolios. Caesar's election as Pontifex Maximus displays plainly the convergence of all these portfolios of power. His electoral success was only possible because of his willingness to borrow a tremendous amount of money, to utilise Pompeius' connections, and to apply his oratorical skill in order to build his popularity among the Roman populace. Such an astute use of his portfolios led him to his surprising win over more distinguished and experienced opponents. This election had a profound impact on his career because his status amongst Rome's elites subsequently skyrocketed as he became one of its leading members. This is shown symbolically in his moving from the Subura to the Forum. Moreover, in being elected Pontifex Maximus, he acquired an array of political and religious powers. In all, although Caesar was a particularly gifted orator according to ancient sources, he was not the first nor the best at utilising money, connections, or religion to further his political aims. However, he brought together these portfolios in an unprecedented way, and this, combined with his military acumen, which was itself a vital, if not the most significant portfolio, accounts for his political success and eventual domination of the Roman world.

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