ABSTRACT

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Caesar's *Commentaries*: A Lesson in Repetition and Representation
(Under the Direction of Dr. Robert I. Curtis)

This paper examines the prose style, genre, diction, and dramatic structures of Caesar's commentaries on the Gallic and Civil War. The paper utilizes these elements in order to uncover the way in which Caesar used repetition and representation to validate and justify his own illegal actions. The repetition, contrast, selection, and sequence present a consistent argument about the causes of the war and who was responsible. Caesar considered it his duty to save the republic from the privatizing efforts of the Pompeians and therefore endeavored to generate hostile sentiments towards them in regards to the causes of the war. Caesar is willing to misrepresent facts and to distort episodes in order to achieve his goal of de-familiarizing and de-Romanizing Pompey, his commanders, and his army. This paper aims to prove that Caesar did not write as an indifferent reporter, but rather, as one motivated to save the republic and, even Rome itself, from the clutches of Pompey and his supporters.

INDEX WORDS: Caesar, Commentaries, Gallic War, Civil War, repetition, representation, genre

CAESAR'S *COMMENTARIES*: A LESSON IN REPETITION AND REPRESENTATION

by

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this work to my parents, Cindy and Taylor, who taught me to live, love, and learn with all of my heart and to embrace life and all of its challenges with the courage and strength to succeed.

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I would like to give a special thanks to Dr. Curtis for his wonderful encouragement and assistance in writing this thesis. I would also like to thank Dr. Anderson and Dr. Curtis, two teachers, whose knowledge and experience fostered my own love of learning and inspired me to greater heights than I thought possible. The positive effect you both have on the minds of young students is truly indescribable and I would like to express my gratitude to you both for supporting me throughout my college career.

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Julius Caesar was a prolific author and well-respected orator during his career in politics. The grammarian M. Antonius Gnipho and the best rhetorician of the day, Apollonius Molon, educated Caesar during his early years and the result was a simple style with clear and formal syntax.[1] In the *Brutus*, Cicero has Brutus say that Caesar's orations are very admirable and praises Caesar's writing for its clear, apposite brevity and the plain, unadorned style of writing.[2] Apart from his two sets of commentaries on the Gallic and Civil War, Caesar's writings exist only in fragments quoted in other works. Plutarch mentions a funeral oration delivered in 69 BC for Caesar's maternal aunt Julia, the wife of Marius, in which Caesar stated that the family can trace its history to Ancus Marcius on one side and to Venus on the other.[3] Caesar composed commentaries as well as other works, such as a hostile polemic written after the suicide of Cato the Younger in response to the panegyrics written by orators such as Cicero. Entitled the *Anticato*, Caesar wrote the book in order to blacken Cato's reputation as well as to denounce men who admired him as a hero of the republic.[4] Caesar also composed a treatise of two volumes titled the *de Analogia*, written in 55 or 54 BC while crossing the Alps.[5] Caesar dedicated the book to Cicero and in it he defends the principle of analogy and a reformed *elegantia*. Aulus Gellius quotes Caesar from the work, "avoid as you would a rock, the rare and

[1] Suetonius Gramm. 7; Plutarch Caesar 3
[2] Cicero Brutus 262
[3] Plutarch Caesar 5; Suetonius Caesar 6.5
[4] Suetonius Caesar 56
[5] Ibid.

obsolete word," implying that simplicity and purity of diction were the most important factors in well-rounded language and literature.[6]

[6] Aulus Gellius Noctes Atticae 1.10.4

CHAPTER 2
GENRE

In view of the fact that Caesar's *Commentaries* are his only surviving works, modern scholars look to these two accounts to derive the nature of Caesar's prose style, diction, syntax, and dramatic structures. The first requirement is to determine the genre into which the *Commentaries* fall. The *commentarius* prior to Caesar's writings referred to a journal, personal diary, or a collection of notes. In his letter to Lucceius, Cicero beseeches the historian to write a favorable account of his exploits as consul.[7] In the letter, Cicero mentions that he will send a *commentarius* concerning his consulship, which Lucceius can then work into a proper history. The reference to the use of the *commentarius* as a journal or collection of notes exemplifies the meaning of the word and exhibits the nature of the genre as a private account, most likely never intended for publication. The Greek equivalent to the *commentarius* is the *hypomnemata*, or memory helps, similar to the modern French phrase *aide-mémoire*, which refers to notes by the author, meant to enlighten more refined literary composition.[8] Although none of these *hypomnemata* survive, a possible literary correlation is the *Anabasis* of Xenophon. The work is a third person account of Xenophon's hero, Cyrus, and his march into Persia, culminating at the battle of Cunaxa. Like Caesar's commentaries, Xenophon's style is straightforward and unadorned and the third person narrator is seemingly objective.[9] These literary correlations allow modern scholars to gain a better understanding of the *commentarius* genre before Caesar

[7] Cicero Ad. Fam. 12
[8] Vincent J. Cleary, "Caesar's *Commentarii*: Writings in Search of a Genre," Classical Journal 80 (1985): 346.
[9] Ibid.

discovered its real utility and developed it into much more than a journal or information for later historians

The *Commentarii* of Caesar are more than just field notes or military accounts meant to inform the general public about the army and to provide later historians with source material. Kelsey argues plausibly for *C. Iuli Caesaris Commentarii Rerum Gestarum* as the original title for the corpus covering both the Gallic and Civil War. Kelsey arrives at this title by evaluating the various manuscript traditions as well as analyzing the diction used by contemporary authors when referring to the commentaries.[10] Arriving at the above title, Kelsey points to another, previously restored title of Sulla's work as *Commentarii Rerum Gestarum* to validate his own title as not only fitting but also having literary precedents.[11] Cicero, Hirtius, and Suetonius all refer to the *commentarii* of Caesar and therefore the word *commentarius* must either act as a descriptive word or as part of the title, Kelsey arguing for the latter.[12] If Kelsey is correct then Caesar considered his *commentarii* to be comparable to the quality of work normally confined to the genre of *res gestae*, or polished history. The absence of a phrase like *de bello civili* or *de bello Gallico* attached to the title may denote that the work was not originally confined to the strict genre of military records. Caesar's works more closely resemble *historia*, the word denoting the genre of history, yet contemporary writers such as Cicero and Hirtius stress that Caesar only wrote source material for later historians.[13] Consider then the combination of *commentarius* and *res gestae* in the Kelsey-restored title of Caesar's work as something that resembled *historia* in content but differed in presentation. While contemporary authors evidently

[10] Francis Kelsey, "The Title of Caesar's Work," Transactions of the American Philological Association 36 (1905): 211-38.
[11] Ibid., 233.
[12] Ibid., 226-29.
[13] Suetonius Caesar 56.4

viewed Caesar's *Commentarii* as nothing more than commentaries and notes on various military campaigns, it seems clear that Caesar himself intended much more for his new genre than an annalistic record of events. The first historian to discuss contemporary events in which he lived was M. Porcius Cato, or Cato the Elder. Up until the *Origines*, written in the first half of the second century BC, no man had thought to use history as a political weapon. Yet, following the model of the Elder Cato, later authors developed the genre and used explanations of contemporary events to attack or defend political actions and opponents. It is probable that the genius of Caesar broke through contemporary constraints on the *commentarius* and *historia* genres and forged them into a new genre that was entirely his own, in which the primary character acts as the author of both deeds and words.[14] In Caesar's new genre he has elevated the *commentarius* and placed it equal to and, in fact, analogous to *historia*.

[14] J.H. Collins, "A Selective Survey Of Caesar Scholarship since 1935," Classical World 57.3 (1963): 82.

CHAPTER 3
REDEFINITION OF GENRE

The first *commentarius* Caesar wrote pertained to his actions as proconsul in Gaul from 58 to 52 BC. At the outset of the work Caesar describes each individual event as a separate and distinct occurrence. The author of Books 1 through 3 is a military-minded man who cares little for embellishment and focuses primarily on military affairs, mentioning little else unless it had direct consequences on the campaign. Caesar demonstrates what the typical form of the *commentarius* most likely was up until that time, an over-precise account that lacked the ability to draw several contemporary events together in any way other than near-list form.[15] This periodic style utilized short, concise sentences with words, phrases, and clauses in the order which gives a commanding position to what is most important, fixing the attention on each individual idea. The periodic style found early on in Book 1 of the *Bellum Gallicum* created a legalistic tone that steadily transformed into a more narrative style in Books 3 through 7. After Book 3 a notable change occurs in Caesar's writing style. Long sentences with clauses that precede the dominant verb begin to appear in Book 3 and give the work a more narrative feel. Caesar developed his narrative style by using more ablatives absolute and participles that followed the dominant verb, which allowed for more even distribution of sentences while reducing the prevalence of periodic sentences. The periodic sentence found in the original *commentarius* genre did not lend itself to much other than an annalistic record of events. By increasing the usage of noncommittal words of easy transition, specifically the conjunction 'and,'

[15] J.J. Schlicher, "The Development of Caesar's Narrative Style," Classical Philology 31 (1936): 218.

at the beginning of and within sentences, Caesar is able to present subsequent events free from interpretation.[16] The work continues to develop a more narrative style in Book 4, as Caesar begins to incorporate contemporary and explicatory events into the main narrative concerning matters beside those directly related to the war. In *B.G.* 6.21-8, Caesar discusses, at length, his understanding of German culture and society. This sort of digression would have been more difficult to incorporate under the initial form of the *commentarius*. An increase in the grammar and word usage stated above allowed Caesar to incorporate non-military events into the main military narrative as contemporary events, something that he would have been hard-pressed to achieve in the straight-forward, annalistic form of the *commentarius*. By using noncommittal words like *atque, neque,* and the enclitic *-que* Caesar can relay and connect events without having to offer any explanation of either event, which allowed him to relate incidents in his own way while maintaining the appearance of objectivity.[17] Caesar expands and develops the narrative style of the work throughout the *Bellum Gallicum*. The development of this dramatic style and its usage allowed Caesar to maximize the necessary content that he was able to put into his work. Without the ability to draw together several trends and events, the old mode of over-precision would have held Caesar to merely stating the affairs of the army and nothing else. By realizing the potential for the *commentarius*, Caesar transformed the genre into a powerful tool, which he used to keep himself in the ears and mouths of the aristocracy, and subsequently the *plebs* as well.

[16] Ibid., 222.
[17] Ibid., 221.

CHAPTER 4
PUBLICATION AND PURPOSE

Upon realizing the full potential of his new genre Caesar began the composition of seven books concerning the first seven years of the war in Gaul. These served a far more utilitarian purpose for Caesar than simply taking stock for later historians. The initial reason for Caesar's records most likely stemmed from a need to inform Rome and the Senate of the army's affairs in Gaul by way of dispatches;[18] however, Caesar seems to have quickly realized the potential for the genre in which he was writing. It is unknown when the *Bellum Gallicum* was published. Scholars, however, such as Collins and Adcock, seem to agree on a date of late 51 or early 50 BC, which was more than apt on account of the upcoming elections.[19] Cicero does not make mention of the work at any point, but an argument of silence is not strong when considering the caprice of fortune that governs the survival of texts. Scholars, such as T. Rice Holmes, take the preface of Hirtius found in Book 8 of the *Bellum Gallicum*, describing the ease with which Caesar composed his works,[20] to mean that the whole work was the result of one continuous effort and therefore was most likely composed at one time after 52 BC.[21] It is more probable, however, that Caesar did not compose the books on the Gallic War all at once, but instead wrote in stages, as evidenced by the development in the narrative style over the course of

[18] T.P. Wiseman, "The Publication of *De Bello Gallico*," Caesar as an Artful Reporter: The War Commentaries as Political Instruments, ed. Kathryn Welch and Anton Powell (London: Duckworth & Co., 1998), 4.
[19] See J.H. Collins, "On the Date and Interpretation of the Bellum Civile," The American Journal of Philology (1959): 113-32; F.E. Adcock, Caesar as Man of Letters, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956: 83-9.
[20] Caesar Bellum Gallicum 8.praef, "nos etiam quam facile atque celeriter eos prefecerit scimus (indeed we know how easily and how quickly he composed them)."
[21] Adcock, 80.

the work. The question when Caesar composed the commentaries on the Gallic Wars cannot be resolved beyond dispute. The hypothesis that the books were written over a period of intervals, however, is more plausibly argued than the hypothesis of T. Rice Holmes.

Once Caesar established a written account on the campaigns in Gaul, writing about events at the earliest opportunity would have been the most prudent and expedient thing to do.[22] Caesar probably wrote each year's account and then sent it to Oppius and Balbus in Rome so that they might distribute the work to the public and the Senate.[23] T.P. Wiseman explains in his article that Caesar had extended dispatches read aloud in Rome so that his achievements would be talked about amongst citizens.[24] Caesar's desire to inform the people in Rome of the army's campaigns led him to compose these works quickly after each event occurred. Since Caesar wanted to tell the story himself and because he did not know what the next day on campaign would bring, it seems probable that he compiled his records while his memory of the events was still fresh and his subordinates, who had been involved in the actions, were still at hand for questioning.[25] Besides the obvious advantages of relating events still fresh in the memory, the development of Caesar's style throughout the *Bellum Gallicum* lends weight to the hypothesis that Caesar composed the work at intervals over a period of years. Had Caesar composed the work in a matter of weeks or even months the change in style to an easier and freer composition would have been inexplicable.[26] If, however, a considerable period of time existed between the annalistic form of Book 1 and the more narrative form of Book 7 then the development of the *commentarius* is more easily understood and explained. Although the composition date for the

[22] Ibid., 81.
[23] Wiseman, 4.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Adcock, 81.
[26] Ibid.

Bellum Gallicum cannot be determined, it seems probable that Caesar composed the work at intervals over the course of the war.

Since the work may have been published in 51 or 50 BC, many scholars, such as Ferrero and Klotz, believe the primary motive for the *Bellum Gallicum* to have been propaganda for the elections.[27] This notion, however, loses much of its influence under the supposition, argued above, that Caesar did not compose the work in one interval some time after 52 but instead wrote over a period of years. Wiseman illustrates Caesar's publicity campaign of publishing each year's events by way of public readings and distribution.[28] The promotion of his *gloria* and *res gestae* was paramount to Caesar's ability to retain popularity and favor, being absent from Rome. Adcock and DeWitt argue that the work was not nearly as propagandistic as some scholars claim, primarily due to the fact that the common people did not read books and therefore public opinion was essentially the opinion of the Senate.[29] Wiseman, in relative agreement, states that the public reading and the promotion of Caesar's actions denotes his political insight more than it denotes an overall propagandistic campaign in the *Bellum Gallicum*, as Ferrero and Klotz argue.[30] Owing to the foreign nature of the Gallic War, Caesar needed to inform the citizens of Rome of the campaign through dispatches, most likely derived from his own private *commentarius*. The official publication of the texts prior to the elections does not necessitate propagandistic material throughout the work, but rather exhibits Caesar's political insight by waiting to remind the Roman people of his *res gestae* at the most appropriate time.

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[27] N.J. DeWitt, "The Non-Political Nature of Caesar's Commentaries," Transactions of the American Philological Association 73 (1942): 341. See E.g. A. Klotz, Cäsarstudien (Leipzig: Teubner, 1910) 25-6; and G. Ferrero, The Life of Caesar (New York: Putnam, 1933) 364-5.
[28] Wiseman, 5.
[29] DeWitt, 341.
[30] Wiseman, 6-7.

DeWitt views the details found within the *Bellum Gallicum* not as propaganda, in the modern sense, but as an account of Caesar's actions that will bring him *gloria* and ensure personal fame in posterity.[31]

Even if propagandistic material was not pervasive in the *Bellum Gallicum*, the simple nature of publication in the ancient world and distribution through public readings would keep an author on the tongues of the learned aristocracy and *plebs*. Caesar already had control of an army and was well liked in Rome by the *plebs*; he only needed to influence public opinion as far as the Senate was concerned and the publication of his *Commentarii* was the ideal means to achieve that goal.[32] By 50, with Caesar's relationship with Pompey souring and the consular elections approaching, it seems the appropriate time to allow for a unified publication of Books 1-7 of the *Bellum Gallicum*. It is probable that Caesar would have officially published the collection of *commentarii* as a unified work, rather than year-by-year because of the deficiencies in ancient book publication and its lack of widespread production.[33] A political purpose supports year-by-year publication; however, a man of Caesar's ingenuity may have utilized his commentaries in more than one way. The first use occurred when he sent long dispatches to Oppius and Balbus to be read aloud in the Forum and the Senate in Rome.[34] The second use occurred when Caesar had an even greater need to extol his virtues and *res gestae* in 51 or 50 and published the work in a unified volume.[35] Of course, the actual publication date cannot be verified, although there seems to be evidence pointing to publicly read dispatches followed by a unified publication sometime after 52 BC. The publication was not primarily driven by a

[31] DeWitt, 342.
[32] Adcock, 21.
[33] Ibid., 86.
[34] Wiseman, 4-5.
[35] Adcock., 87.

propagandist nature, but rather, it served to praise and lionize Caesar in the eyes of Romans at times when he was in need of recognition and validation. The Roman world Caesar resided in taught him to preserve and extend the power of Rome and he was ready to be judged by the extent to which he fulfilled that purpose.[36]

While Caesar only needed to influence public opinion and remain in the ears and mouths of the people in Rome during the Gallic Wars, he had a third and vitally more important purpose to achieve during the Civil War. The repetition and representation in the *Bellum Civile* all derive from the original purpose of the work, that is, to validate Caesar's course of action. It is republican through and through and Caesar never makes any indications that he planned to restructure or reorganize any part of the government.[37] After Caesar returned from Egypt it is unlikely that he maintained any sort of republican façade, especially as his actions would have negated his republican sentiments in the *Bellum Civile*. Under this supposition it seems improbable that Caesar would have either written or published the work after his return from Egypt. The largest question at hand concerning the *Bellum Civile* is when it was written. Scholars such as Collins and Boatwright agree that the first two books were probably written before 47 BC, owing to the republican sentiments within the work, and were most likely unpublished at the time of Caesar's assassination in 44 BC because Caesar had lost interest in the work.[38] Adcock agrees that Caesar most likely composed the works between 49 and 47, but unlike Collins and Boatwright he supposes, although without certainty, that Caesar published the first two books prior to the Battle of Pharsalus, owing to the incredible political power the first

[36] Ibid., 23.
[37] Collins, "Date and Interpretation," 117.
[38] Ibid., 115; Mary Boatwright, "Caesar's Second Consulship and the Completion and Date of the Bellum Civile," The Classical Journal (1988): 39-40.

two books of the *Bellum Civile* possessed.[39] Fowler argues that Caesar did not compose the *Bellum Civile* until after Thapsus in 46 owing to the great detail with which he describes Utica in Book 3 and to the lack of leisure time available to Caesar prior to that time.[40] This argument, however, seems refuted by the fact that Caesar had been known to write while on campaign, as evidenced by his composition of the *de Analogia* while crossing the Alps in 54 BC and because his character after 46 is completely incongruent with the champion of the republic found within the *Bellum Civile*. It can be stated with some surety that the republicanisms found within the *Bellum Civile* and Caesar's need to validate his position prior to victory point to him composing the work as soon as he was able after each event.

In the same way that historians after Cato the Elder realized the potential of history, Caesar realized that he could accomplish the same end without having to publish a full and proper history by evolving the *commentarius* into a political tool of consequence and utility. The evolution began in the *Bellum Gallicum* and reached its culmination when Caesar needed it to justify his reasons for crossing the Rubicon during the Civil War. Considering how much time and energy Caesar put into creating these accounts it seems improbable that he would not use them to the fullest extent. A political and military mind the likes of Caesar's would never have disregarded the support and influence the publication of his *commentarius* could garner, especially during the Civil War. Therefore, it is most probable, but by no means certain that the first two books of the *Bellum Civile* were published prior to the Battle at Pharsalus because after Pompey's defeat the initial purpose and effectiveness of the work would have been significantly reduced.

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[39] Adcock, 92-4.

[40] W. Warde Fowler, "When Did Caesar Write His Commentaries on the Civil War," Classical Philology 3 (1908): 129-36.

Contemporary writers and critics of Caesar, however, profess that Caesar left his works unfinished, and apparently unpublished, upon his death and, indeed, the preface that Aulus Hirtius composed for Book 8 of the *Bellum Gallicum* states that Hirtius himself finished Caesar's most recent work from Alexandria up until his death.[41] The implication that the work was incomplete and unrevised may actually validate the notion that Caesar wished to have the first two books published quickly before Pharsalus, so much so, that he was willing to forego revisions. The quotation from Hirtius seems to imply that he may have only needed to finish Book 3 after events at Alexandria, perhaps omitting the previous books because they had been published already. On account of this, it is not impossible that Books 1 and 2 of the *Bellum Civile* were in fact published prior to the Battle of Pharsalus in order to utilize properly the political advantages contained within the new *commentarius* genre. After Caesar's time in Egypt and return to Rome it became more and more apparent that he intended to remain in power while reshaping and restructuring certain republican systems that were outdated for handling such a large population of citizens and provinces. Under these circumstances reasons for working on or publishing the *commentarius* concerning Pompey seem non-existent. Caesar needed the *Bellum Civile* in order to justify his position while de-familiarizing the Pompeian army in Romans' eyes; if he had already possessed the supreme validation offered by victory it seems improbable that he would have either continued to write the commentary or seen the need to publish it.[42]

Caesar's primary objective that he needed to achieve in the *Bellum Civile* was to prove that the Senate no longer operated for the good of the republic but only for private individuals and their interests. If Caesar is able to achieve this end then the fundamental illegality of his own actions (i.e. crossing the Rubicon) will be regarded as legal and he will

[41] Caesar BG 8.Praef.2
[42] Collins, "Date and Interpretation," 116.

appear to be the liberator of Rome. Caesar sets out to accomplish this goal in the first four chapters of the *Bellum Civile* in a number of ways. In these chapters Caesar relates the antagonistic nature of the Pompeians in the Senate, explaining their abuses and coercions used to force a vote against the proposals he had sent.[43] Immediately following this Caesar gives the reason for such behavior: private interest. In *B.C.* 1.4.1-3, Caesar explains that Cato was enraged by his previous loss in the election to Caesar, Lentulus was oppressed by debt and hoped to be a second Sulla, Scipio was enticed by higher commands from his son-in-law Pompey, and Pompey himself was beguiled out of his friendship with Caesar by Caesar's enemies and his own egotism. This list illustrates that the leading Pompeians all sought to advance their own private interests during the Civil War. By establishing the Pompeian side as one driven by private interest, Caesar is able to associate himself with the true republic, and in so doing implies that Pompey, by turning his back on Caesar, has rejected the fundamentals and *mores* of the republic as well. In 1.6.8, Caesar explains the effects of this privatization of the government and how even Sulla did not entirely deprive the tribunes of their power to veto. The theme of privatization is a recurrent one in the *Bellum Civile* and the Pompeian tendency to put private interests above the *res publica*, literally a public thing, is what leads to the loss of debate, reason, and sound policy found in the Senate described in *B.C.* 1.1-2[44].

The most clear-cut example of this privatization occurs at Corfinium. In this account, the Pompeian general Domitius stalls and lies to his troops while holding private discussions with a few men.[45] The troops, who admit that they stayed because of their hope and trust in Domitius, realize that he is now making plans for his own safety and decide to bring his private

[43] Caesar BC 1.1-2
[44] Cynthia Damon and William Batstone, *Caesar's Civil War* (Oxford: OUP, 2006), 60.
[45] Caesar BC 1.19

discussions out into the open.[46] Damon and Blatstone say, "What results is a mini-civil war."[47] As the Pompeian leaders privatized the discussion in the Senate, so does Domitius privatize his own councils, compelling the soldiers to restore the traditional *mores* of the republic by force. This is a direct comparison to Caesar's own position, which he has most conveniently illuminated in the previous two chapters leading up to the episode. The event almost comes to arms; however, the soldiers ultimately expose Domitius, *productum in publicum* (brought back into the public), and turn him over to Caesar.[48] Caesar's portrayal of Pompey's soldiers' inability to reject traditional *mores* and customs only heightens the effect of his previous list of the Pompeian commanders' desire to pursue their own private interests while shedding the customs and traditions the republic was founded upon.

Caesar reveals the motivation, which, in his opinion, necessitated his invasion of Italy; namely to support the rights of the tribunes, to free the Roman people from the *factio paucorum*, and to preserve his own *dignitas* against the *inuriae* and *contumeliae* of his inimici.[49] After this initial list, it is not the actions of Caesar that force the reader into the desired interpretation of events but the strategy of representation which he uses to blacken the reputation of the Pompeian army. From the outset of the work Caesar portrays town after town as eager to comply with his army, while submitting to Pompey's army only with great reluctance[50] Caesar knew that if he did not make Pompey out to be the law-breaker then no amount of justification by victory would convince the people of Rome that he was their true leader and savior. Attaining this goal was absolutely vital to Caesar's objective owing to the initial illegality of his

[46] Ibid., 1.20
[47] Damon and Blatstone, 65.
[48] Caesar BC 1.20.3-5
[49] Ibid., 1.22.5
[50] Caesar BC 1.12-8; Collins, "Date and Interpretation," 119-22.

own actions. In 1.8.1 Caesar says, "*cognita militum voluntate Ariminum cum ea legione proficiscitur, ibique tribunos plebis qui ad eum confugerant, convenit* (with the desire of the soldiers having been known, he sets out with this legion to Ariminum, and there he joins the tribunes of the plebs who had fled to him"). In this short sentence Caesar has broken one of the most important laws in the republic. He has crossed out of his province into Italy with a legion at his back. Nowhere is there any mention of him crossing the Rubicon or the illegality of the action. Instead, Caesar has created a rift between the Senate and the republic in the preceding chapters and, operating under this strategy, illustrates how the Senate is under the control of Pompeian private interest and in so doing begins to establish himself as defender, rather than aggressor. By crafting the account of the outset of the war to his benefit, Caesar is able to dispute the legality of his own actions in acting against a renegade Senate and also to smear the reputation of Pompey, his commanders, and his army.

The repetitive strategy that Caesar employs in describing the Pompeian side is most apparent in Book 3 of the *Bellum Civile* when Caesar describes Pompey's camp. Although this book was probably unpublished at the time of Caesar's death and therefore unknown to his immediate contemporaries, it demonstrates the continued effort of Caesar to tarnish the Pompeian reputation. In the account, Caesar describes the luxury found in Pompey's camp is reminiscent of Herodotus' account of the Greeks entering into the Persian camp after the battle of Plataea.[51] In 9.80.1, Herodotus mentions the gold cups and tents, the food, and the extreme *luxuria* found everywhere throughout the camp. It is clear that the literate Roman aristocrat would have thought of Herodotus while reading Caesar's work, and by so doing, Caesar has established Pompey as a new threat arising from the East. Cicero notes in a letter that Pompey

[51] Caesar BC 3.96.1-2; Herodotus 9.64.1

intended to arise from the East as Sulla had, triumphing over Marius,[52] although Cicero seems to fear Pompey's too-close connection with the Eastern barbarians.[53] The charges of *avaritia* and *luxuria* laid upon the Pompeians do not serve a legal point, but rather serve to elucidate the army's true nature. Namely, that it was coerced and manipulated by its leaders into abandoning the true principles of the republic. In Livy's preface to the *Ab Urbe Condita*, he says that recently wealth has brought avarice and greed into Rome and it has ruined men through licentiousness and self-indulgence.[54] Therefore, while these charges of *avaritia* and *luxuria* have no legal basis, there is a heavy tone of contempt for the two principles that brought a wake of corruption to the republic following Sulla's return from the East.[55] Not only does Caesar represent Pompey as closely connected to *avaritia* and *luxuria*, but he also separates himself and his army from these two concepts in 3.97.1 when he refuses to allow his troops to plunder Pompey's camp.[56] The strategy to de-familiarize and de-Romanize the Pompeian army, while confirming his own position, is what allowed Caesar to remove himself as the enemy of Rome and, in the eyes of many, to become the savior of the republic from Eastern greed and avarice.

Caesar charges Pompey and his army with more than *luxuria* and *avaritia* during the course of the *Bellum Civile*. Caesar also chastises the Pompeian army for arming slaves, from the outset, to be used in battle, something that Caesar's supporters at Salonae are willing to do only as an *extremum auxilium*, or final measure.[57] Although the comparison is not direct, it is clear throughout the events that Caesar relates that a sharp contrast exists between his own

[52] Cicero Ad. Att. 8.11.2
[53] Ibid., 11.6.2
[54] Livy Ab Urbe Condita Praef.12
[55] Ibid., 39.4
[56] Andreola Rossi, "The Camp of Pompey: Strategy of Representation in Caesar's Bellum Civile," The Classical Journal (2000): 245-50.
[57] Caesar BC 1.24; 3.9.3

soldiers and the soldiers of Pompey. Caesar mentions the fact that Pompey's army is made to swear oaths of loyalty to Pompey in two different instances, revealing the wavering nature of some contingents fighting for Pompey.[58] While the army of Pompey is coerced into taking oaths, Caesar portrays himself in the exact opposite light after conquering Afranius and Petreius in Spain, stating that no man would be forced into an oath unwillingly.[59] Caesar makes these comparisons repeatedly in the work and in each instance the Pompeian reputation is blackened a little more. Through the development of the *commentarius* into *res gestae*, Caesar creates the opportunity for such comparisons and he is able to relate events, which chronologically occurred separately, to contemporary outcomes and actions while drawing the reader towards his own assessment of Pompey and his army.

Perhaps the most notable comparison throughout the *Bellum Civile* exists between Curio on Caesar's side and Varro and Lucius Domitius on Pompey's side. After Curio's eventual loss in Africa at the Battle of the Bagrades River, he is unwilling to face Caesar again and dies in the fighting, unlike Varro and Lucius Domitius who both lose their armies (indeed, Domitius loses his twice once at Corfinium and once at Massilia).[60] The evolution of the *commentarius* allows Caesar to offer Curio, Varro, and Domitius up for judgment in the same way he offers himself. Any contemporary reader of Caesar's work would admire the virtue and courage of Curio while reflecting on his death and feel ashamed by the actions of Pompey's commanders, if not for the actual events, then for the method in which Caesar portrays them. In this comparison Caesar shows that loyalty in subordinates is more important than victory within

[58] Caesar BC 1.76.2-3; 2.18.5
[59] Caesar BC 1.86.3
[60] Caesar BC 1.23; 2.42.3

his own army and at the same time exposes the shortcomings of Pompey's commanders in this aspect.[61]

While Caesar vilifies and smears the Pompeian army and its leaders, he extols the virtue of his own men. Caesar, however, does not only praise the virtues of his own men. The *lenitas* or, to use a modern word, clemency of Caesar is well attested in both the *Bellum Gallicum* and the *Bellum Civile*. Excluding betrayals by enemies such as the Helvetii[62] and the town of Gomphi,[63] which Caesar dealt with harshly, he treats conquered enemies and armies fairly. When the rout at the Battle of Pharsalus occurs, Caesar calls men down from the hill and instructs his own men to look after the survivors.[64] The reason for Caesar's portrayal of his own clemency is obvious. After lessons taught by the war between Marius and Sulla, most Romans feared proscription at the conclusion of the war by the victorious party. Cicero, in debating the outcome of a fight between Pompey and Caesar says that there will be "proscription if you are beaten, slavery if you win."[65] If this opinion was widespread it is clear why Caesar would have incorporated events that displayed his willingness to forgive. Caesar's policy of clemency was so pervasive that Cicero, discussing the treatment of allies and enemies, writes that the one (Caesar) is considered the savior of his enemies, the other (Pompey) the deserter of his friends.[66] Caesar constantly reminds the reader of this character trait and uses it to promote not only his own position, but also to direct further disgrace at the Pompeian side.

The most noteworthy example of Caesar's mercy comes early on in the *Bellum Civile*. At Corfinium, the Pompeian soldiers, some 30 cohorts, under Domitius turned him over to

[61] Damon and Blatstone, 101.
[62] Caesar BG 1.27
[63] Caesar BC 3.81.2
[64] Ibid., 3.98
[65] Cicero Ad. Att. 7.7.7
[66] Ibid., 8.9a.1

Caesar after they discovered his plan for securing his own safety. Caesar does not let his soldiers enter the city at this time because he fears that in the dark they may start looting.[67] At the same time he reminds the reader that the citizens who decided to come to him could still be enticed by false reports or even bribes, making his position seem more vulnerable and, in turn, his action more laudable. In relating this event, Caesar shows that he is willing to accept strategic risks in order to avoid chaos and cruelty, even while facing the only real opposition between himself and Rome thus far in his march through Italy. This sort of action should be compared to the way in which Pompey treats the Parthini in 3.42.5, taking their grain and stripping their houses of anything useful.

During the description of the events at Corfinium Caesar lists the leaders he captured, including Domitius, Spinther, and Varus.[68] A list of names is a rarity in Caesar's accounts, yet this one has particular importance because of the three individuals on it. By naming these men he draws additional attention to them in the situation and, because all three of them return to Pompey's side, he highlights the disdain they have for his clemency. Elsewhere in the text it seems Caesar pointedly avoids creating lists of individuals who had aligned themselves against him. The reason behind this is clear. Caesar wants to be able to rebuild the republic once Pompey is defeated rather than to divide it further. This can be attested by Caesar's generosity in granting his opponents life, citizenship, and the retention of their property after the war.[69] Indeed, the same idea is seen in a letter to Cicero when Caesar writes that he aims to recover everyone's support and experience a lasting victory.[70] Caesar, from the outset of the work, insists on the need to rectify the state of affairs in Rome and by the time he offers aid to the

[67] Caesar BC 1.20
[68] Ibid., 1.22
[69] C.C. Coulter, "Caesar's Clemency," The Classical Journal (1931) 513.
[70] Cicero Ad. Att. 9.7c

retreating Pompeians in 3.98 it seems the notion has come full circle. In 3.90.1-2, Caesar says that he never wasted the blood of his soldiers, a thought that echoes his desire to find a peaceful resolution with Petreius and Afranius in Spain in 1.75-9. Drawing on Caesar's representation of his own actions and the words in Cicero, it can be stated with some certainty that Caesar saw the need to rebuild politics on personal relationships, something which he thought he could achieve through his clemency. Caesar realized that if he did not establish himself as the leader in this matter then others would not line up behind it and the strife and discord within the Roman world would survive. Caesar's utilization of representation and repetition is paramount to his ability to contrast his army, his leaders, and himself against the Pompeian side. By creating his new genre, Caesar has generated a new type of political tool that, once developed and strengthened in the *Bellum Gallicum,* can be used to fashion any reader's view of events to the desired outcome and understanding.

CHAPTER 5
VERACITY

Caesar's *commentarius* was so influential because of its ability to allow the author to recount contemporary events while offering up judgments on situations that would not have been as dramatic in the original, more annalistic format of the *commentarius*. Owing to the fact that these are not the writings of an impartial writer, it is not the least surprising that several events and situations were tweaked or omitted in order to maintain Caesar's purpose. The veracity of the *Bellum Gallicum* and the *Bellum Civile* has been widely disputed ever since the initial publication of the texts in antiquity. Overall, there were too many people who would have had some knowledge of events either in Gaul, Italy, or Greece for Caesar to misrepresent factual information pervasively; however, this did not stop many contemporary and modern scholars from calling many of Caesar's words and actions into question. Asinius Pollio, a contemporary author and critic of Caesar, said that Caesar did not draw up the works with enough care or proper concern for the truth.[71] Pollio was under the impression that Caesar, had he lived, would have revised the works into a formal history that would have eliminated the factual errors which he mentions. Although Pollio was a harsh critic of Caesar, when describing these inaccuracies, he uses very mild language to describe them.[72] If the misrepresentations were as great as some modern scholars seem to believe it seems unlikely that Pollio would have been as moderate in his depiction of Caesar's truth-twisting as he was.[73]

[71] Suetonius Caesar 56
[72] J.P.V.D. Balsdon, "The Veracity of Caesar." Greece and Rome 4 (1957): 27.
[73] J.H. Collins, "Selective Survey," 87.

"The most powerful propaganda in Caesar's day was truth, and a reputation for truth-telling the most valuable asset of the writer."[74] Caesar realized that he needed to maintain an appearance of objectivity in the commentaries and so he writes, as Xenophon did, in the third person. Adcock believes Caesar used his own name to assert his detachment or perhaps to show his conscious preeminence;[75] the necessity for Caesar to appear to tell the truth was vital to the purpose-driven nature of both commentaries, but especially for the Civil War. The use of the third person had several other important implications as well. Owing to Caesar's goal of portraying himself as the savior of the republic he uses the third person in order to align his own cause with the Roman reader's interest while gaining an impersonal perspective.[76] Caesar also combines the third person singular with the first person possessive when referring to 'Caesar and our troops,' etc. This structure occurs 115 times in the *Bellum Civile* and promotes an image of Caesar as symbolic of what is truly Roman.[77] A strong example of this structure occurs early on in 1.18.2 when the town of Sulmo and its people align themselves with 'our standards,' thus forcing Lucretius and Varus (Pompeian commanders) to remove themselves from the city.[78] These structures create a common understanding between the reader and writer that was absolutely necessary if Caesar was going to achieve his purpose set down at the outset of the work.

Due to the nature of the *commentarius* there was a need for Caesar to be as truthful as his purpose permitted him to be. If Caesar became known for consistently distorting the truth in his works then his ability to achieve his desired purpose could have become ineffectual.

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[74] Ibid., 88.
[75] Adcock, 76.
[76] Damon and Blatstone, 142-3.
[77] Ibid., 147.
[78] Ibid.

Although several letters of Cicero point out discrepancies in Book 1 of the *Bellum Civile*, overall the corpus of over 900 letters verifies a large amount of information detailed by Caesar.[79] The readers of Caesar's works were indubitably the aristocracy, who were able to afford books and spend the necessary leisure time reading or listening to them. This same class of people was the one with the most contacts across the Roman world and therefore the most knowledgeable about events occurring in more distant locations. Considering this, it was imperative for Caesar to be as truthful as his purpose permitted, due to the fact that a proliferation of factual errors would have been well noted by the people whom he was trying to influence and win over.

There are omissions found in both the *Bellum Gallicum* and the *Bellum Civile* that reveal that Caesar was willing to exclude episodes that would have significantly affected the purpose-driven nature of the *Commentarii* if he needed to do so. In the *Bellum Gallicum*, Caesar inflates the imminence of the German threat in order to rationalize his campaign against them, even though in reality the tribes were relatively innocuous.[80] There is a more notable omission in the *Bellum Civile*, primarily because it was written with a more direct purpose in mind, which would have been appreciably weakened had the episode been included. In the *B.C.* 2.22.6 Caesar says that he set out for Rome after Domitius' capitulation at Massilia. However, he fails to mention that before he goes there he must go to Placentia in Cisalpina because Legion IX, one of his oldest and best legions, had mutinied.[81] The fact that soldiers of Caesar had mutinied would have been damning to his account and because Caesar is the author it is obvious why he chooses to omit this affair. In 1.76.2-3 and 2.18.5 Caesar tarnishes the reputation of the Pompeian army by displaying the dithering loyalties that were apparently widespread throughout

[79] Balsdon, 25-6.
[80] Ibid.
[81] Suetonius Caesar 69; Dio Cassius 41.26-35; Appian BC 2.47

the army and which required two separate oaths to quell; yet, only a little while later one of his own legions is not wavering but has in fact, mutinied. Caesar dealt with the sedition severely, putting the ringleaders to death, after he was dissuaded from even harsher measures.[82] It is clear why Caesar would exclude the event: it happened during a time when victory was far from certain and he had yet to convince the populace that he was the defender of the republic and Pompey, the aggressor. While the quantity of omissions is debatable, however, examining the letters of Cicero and the words of Caesar's critics, it seems that omissions of this sort are not prevalent throughout the work and therefore have no real implications for the overall veracity found within the rest of the *Bellum Civile*.

The type of truth-bending Caesar engaged in is best exhibited in the negotiations between Pompey and Caesar through the legates L. Roscius and L. Caesar. A look at the sincerity of these negotiations will help to point out the clever ways in which Caesar is able to manipulate truth subtly enough that the manipulation goes nearly unnoticed while still achieving his goal of appearing to be the peace-seeking party. The negotiations are mentioned in the *B.C.* 1.8 as well as in the letters of Cicero and in the history of Dio Cassius.[83] In 1.8, Caesar relates the details of the proposal, stating that both he and Pompey should disband their armies, that Caesar must return to Rome to stand for the consulship, and that the levies in Italy must stop and the two legions retained for the Parthian war be returned to Caesar. Caesar himself states that he is willing to submit to these propositions for the good of the republic and by so doing appears to be the one who has a greater desire for peace. Caesar is, however, conspicuously ambiguous when it comes to the full terms of these proposals, which led authors such as Cicero and Dio Cassius to express their fears that Pompey and Caesar may have tried to join together in order to

[82] Balsdon, 21.
[83] Cicero Ad. Fam. 16.12; Ad. Att. 7.14; Dio Cassius 41.5

rule Rome.[84] Adcock writes, as quoted by Griffin, "It is impossible not to suspect, both that something more seductive was suggested and that the suggestion was intended to gain time by delaying Caesar's advance."[85] The full details of these proposals are lost, although Caesar's vagueness surrounding them certainly seems to verify the notion that a more lucrative offer may have been suggested.

Caesar's method of representation in this section creates the impression that Pompey and the Senate have no real intention to seek a peaceful resolution to this conflict, while showing he is prepared to undergo anything to achieve a lasting peace. Von Fritz examines the chronology represented during the negotiations led by L. Caesar and L. Roscius and comes to several conclusions. Caesar misrepresents the chronological order of events when he says that he did not advance past Ariminum until the negotiations broke down, when in reality he had started to move already. He had also taken Pisaurum, Fanum, and Ancona before the negotiations started and had sent orders to advance farther still before their conclusion, implying that he had no real hope for the negotiations to succeed.[86] The violation of chronology occurs in order for Caesar to maintain his appearance as the peace-seeking party, a vital point to his overall purpose. Not only does Caesar misrepresent where he is and what he is doing, but also he is very ambiguous about the proposals with Pompey and what they detailed.[87] Finally, there is a line from one of Cicero's letters that states that the legates of Caesar laughed at L. Caesar, *irridet L. Caesaris legationem*, because they thought the negotiations were a sham, a notion they

[84] Cicero Ad. Fam. 16.12.3; Dio Cassius 41.5.3
[85] Miriam Griffin, "The Intellectual Developments of the Ciceronian Age," *Cambridge Ancient History: The Last Age of the Roman Republic, 146-43 BC*, vol. 9, eds. J. A. Crook, Andrew Lintott, Elizabeth Rawson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 639.
[86] K. Von Fritz, "The Mission of L. Caesar and L. Roscius," Transactions of the American Philological Association 72 (1941): 142.
[87] Ibid.

probably would not have expressed so publicly if Caesar did not think the same.[88] The question now at hand is why Caesar specifically manipulated these facts in his account. The answer comes from Caesar's own attitude toward the proposals between Pompey and himself. Caesar must have known that both Pompey and the Senate did not put any stock in the negotiations, otherwise they would have sent official envoys with clear-cut proposals under direct order of the Senate. Since they did not send official envoys Caesar must have realized that the negotiations were a fraud. It is clear that if Caesar had actually submitted to the proposals he would have essentially been handing himself over in chains,[89] which is why Cicero calls them *absurdissima mandata*.[90] There is no doubt that Caesar would have been brought to trial after he laid down his *imperium*, and therefore another reason for his submission to the negotiations must be sought. Von Fritz explains that Caesar would not have been able to advance much farther south without reinforcements after advancing to Ancona, which explains a much needed delay in his operations on both January 16 and January 22 or 24 which was accomplished by engaging in the negotiations.[91] Caesar and Pompey clearly thought about the negotiations in the same light. The difference, however, comes from Caesar's formulated account of the episode and the rhetoric he uses throughout, which allows him to maintain the pretense of objectivity and good faith. Caesar, it seems, never really intended to abide by the proposals either; he was, however, willing to utilize the time and circumstances to his advantage. Damon sums up Caesar's ability to alter subtly information when she writes, "This is not the writing of an indifferent or impartial

[88] Cicero Ad. Att. 7.19
[89] Fritz, 144.
[90] Cicero Ad. Att. 7.13.2
[91] Fritz, 147.

reporter, but an eminently practical selection and arrangement of incidents, to achieve an utterly damning whole."[92]

The veracity of Caesar's *Commentaries* is open to debate; however, it appears that for the most part Caesar told the truth to the fullest extent that he knew, unless an incident required manipulated representation in order to maintain the author's purpose . Obviously he could not have been aware of everything all the time, so at times he relates information that he understands to be true, whether it is or not. Caesar had the ability to craft an episode with pertinent information redacted, encouraging readers to come to the conclusions that he draws for them. The main conclusion drawn about the veracity of Caesar's *Commentaries* is that it was truthful the majority of the time, and even though contemporary authors and critics thought the work was not fully revised and edited, the language used to criticize Caesar's inaccuracies was extremely mild. The belief of Hirtius and Pollio that Caesar would have corrected these inaccuracies is based primarily on their understanding of the *commentarius* genre before Caesar; however, they fail to recognize the significance of Caesar's new invention and reinterpretation of the *commentarius* genre, making it analogous to *res gestae*, or polished history. Due to the new form of the *commentarius* developed by Caesar, it seems unlikely that he ever intended to revise or edit his commentaries from the Civil War.

[92] Cynthia Damon, "Caesar's Practical Prose," The Classical Journal 89 (1994): 188.

CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSION

In Caesar's accounts of the Civil War it is his rhetoric that makes the difference. The repetition, contrast, selection, and sequence present a consistent argument about the causes of the war and who was responsible.[93] Through the repetition of a story it starts to take on a veracity it may not intrinsically possess. Caesar realized that through repetition and representation he could de-Romanize his enemies so that the only acceptable stance towards the Pompeians was the one he had displayed all along. Caesar knew that the Civil War was a struggle for the very existence of Rome and the republic. Because of this, Caesar develops and employs his model of repetition and representation to sanction his initial, illegal action of crossing the Rubicon, to denigrate the Pompeian army and its commanders, and ultimately, to cast harsh judgement on both Pompey and the Senate for the privatization of the republic and for the responsibility of instigating the war. What is so incredible about this account is the colossal transformation that occurs between the outset of the war and the conclusion. Many may have argued that Caesar was acting out of pride and fear when he initially crossed the Rubicon, unwilling to relinquish the *imperium* that was no longer his. It is, however, these same readers, who by the end of the account, realize that Caesar not only saved the republic from the hands of greed, avarice, and private interest, but also performed this duty without the aide of the state and with the threat of great political and personal injury to himself if he failed. It is for the sake of the republic and the foundations upon which it was constructed that Caesar crosses the Rubicon; it is for these reasons that he chastises and blackens the reputations of Pompey, his commanders, and his army;

[93] Damon and Blatstone, 75.

and, it is for these reasons that he is willing to incorporate misrepresentations and ambiguities into his account. For Caesar, there was not even the choice between marching on Rome and submitting himself to the law after he laid down his *imperium*; for Caesar, there was only one choice, to save the republic and its *mores* at any cost. The focal notion to bear in mind, however, is that Caesar did not resort to the arming of slaves, he did not resort to the looting of towns, and he did not resort to compelling men into involuntary oaths. He achieved his goals as peacefully as possible, accepting strategic setbacks, at times, in order to keep Roman citizens from harming Roman citizens whenever he was able. It is through the repetition and representation of these ideas in the *Bellum Civile* that allows Caesar to supplant Pompey as the savior of Rome and ultimately to recast Pompey as the epitome of Eastern greed and avarice which sought to destroy the fundamental foundations of the republican system.

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