

The Duel for Power: Caesar vs. Pompey 49 BC-48BC

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- This research paper (ca. 1.5 hrs ppt. lecture/presentation) was presented at Historicon 2011. A separate research paper which deals specifically with Caesar's use of unorthodox warfare, spies and agent provocateurs was presented at ICMG 2013 and will be published later in the conference proceedings. This latter presentation was the most difficult that I have ever made because my mother died during it and the preparation of this 2011 version for academia.edu certainly reminded me of this (and slowed down the process of posting this lecture on this site) because there are similarities in content.
- This presentation aims to dispell many of the myths surrounding the late Republican Roman armies.
- When reading the text the reader is adviced to pay particular attention to:
 - 1) The continued use of citizen cavalry;
 - 2) The training of the legionaries to use slings and bows;
 - 3) Importance of navy and ports;
 - 4) Differences in the composition and training of the various Roman armies;
 - 5) And in particular to the use of agents, double agents and political propaganda by Julius Caesar to mislead his enemy to commit a series of blunders.

- This presentation also suggests that Caesar and his successors used the position of High Priest (Pontifex Maximus) to obtain information of the questions posed by the superstitious persons of the future. The use of this method of intelligence gathering is proven by the fact that Caesar and his successors were constantly being given reports of the prophecies asked by the nobles and others regarding Caesar's health (proved the existence of potential plot) or some other suspect projects. As a result of this the emperors became aware of the plans of those who sought advice from soothsayers or astrologers etc.
- The fact that the emperors were able to learn of the potential plots against them from soothsayers/astrologers meant that the emperors opposed all new religions that they could not control.
- At this stage of research, it is not known with certainty whether Julius Caesar initiated the intelligence gathering project as Pontifex Maximus, or whether the same system was also used before that by the patricians to control the plebeians. For the former speaks the fact that Augustus considered the position of Pontifex Maximus so important that he made it one of the three basic pillars of his rule. In short, Augustus's intelligence gathering network came to consist of three pillars: Regular intel handled by Maecenas, military intel. handled by Agrippa, and religious intel. handled by Augustus himself. This system was based on the precedent set by Caesar.

- Of note is that the Christian Church was also later employed in intelligence gathering role by the emperors. I will also deal with this form of intelligence gathering in other studies some of which are forthcoming (e.g. in the five vols series *A Military History of Late Rome* and in studies that deal with the 'Byzantine' period).
- Therefore, the use of the Church apparatus in the similar manner as the Roman religion can be seen as a continuation of the old practice possibly initiated for the first time by Julius Caesar, the principal difference obviously being that the Church also developed independent intelligence gathering organizations, the most famous of which are the Jesuits of the Catholic Church. One should not make the mistake of believing that the same practices would not be followed today.
- One should also realize that the way in which international and national politics are formed today sometimes bear close resemblance to the methods already employed by the Romans and 'Byzantines' (Rhomaioi) even if there are also some differences.

- The presentation forms a part of a much larger study (some of which have been published e.g. on this and other fora or is forthcoming) which I intend to finish at such a time when I get funding to do that and/or such job that allows (I am currently seeking a new job) the conducting of research on similar topics and the writing of such studies.
- Of particular note are also the similarities with modern practice of employing double agents and political propaganda to direct the responses of the enemy and to force them to commit mistakes. Caesar used these to make his 'party' appear as the wronged party that only protected the rights of the people and Caesar as their representative.
- **The skillful use of propaganda for one's own purposes is nothing new! Caesar is certainly among the greatest spy masters in the history of mankind and his masterful use of intelligence gathering and political propaganda has not received the attention they deserve.** One can say with some justification that Caesar defeated Pompey thanks to his ability to mislead his enemy to commit a series of horrible blunders and mistakes. This is not to say that Caesar would not have been a conventional military genius (tactics, operations, strategy) – he certainly was and I will also pay particular attention to this too – but that his abilities as spy master have not received the attention they deserve. **The ability to direct and misdirect the actions and reactions of the enemy is obviously the highest form of warfare even if those on the receiving end dislike it intensely.**
- As regards the contents of the research paper/lecture, I have corrected one mistake, changed the maps and illustrations into such for which I have the copyright, and have corrected a number of grammatical mistakes and clarified some poorly formulated sentences. However, since I am not a native English speaker a number of mistakes have certainly passed unnoticed for which I apologize.



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1. The Sources

- The most important sources for the Civil War are Caesar's own Civil War and other books belonging to the Caesarian Corpus (Gallic War, Hirtius' BG VIII, Alexandrian War, African War, Spanish War) as well as Cicero's letters and speeches.
- Caesar's works were meant for public use and were written to gain political and military support for him. Consequently, he presented everything in the best possible light. However, in order for his side of the story to be believable he still stuck to the facts as much as possible and even presented unfavorable facts in his commentaries. The things in which he is unreliable are those which deal with his own underhand tactics or which could prove that the enemy was right or that the enemy received support from such circles that could be considered good Roman citizens. He also wanted to downplay any Roman casualties caused by him.
- On the other hand, Cicero's texts are full of his own upper-class prejudices which do not necessarily correspond with the mood of the people, or the mood of the equestrians or even of the majority of senators.

- The other sources consist of Velleius Paterculus (favorable), Livy's Periochae, Lucan (poem presenting the republican side of view), Plutarch's Lives (Caesar, Pompey, Antony, Brutus, Crassus: very valuable info), Suetonius (gossipy, but contains very valuable info), Appian (Civil Wars, very valuable), Dio (very valuable), Florus, and Orosius.
- The value of these sources comes from the fact that they often represent other alternative interpretations based on other sources such as Asinius Pollio's history (Caesar's officer who claimed that C's commentaries were inaccurate) and/or they tell us information entirely missing from other Caesar's or Cicero's texts.

2. Intelligence Gathering

2.1 Political Intelligence Gathering

- Contrary to popular opinion among the modern experts of espionage, the private spy networks maintained by the Roman magnates were both efficient and sophisticated. What they obviously lacked was spy gear, but they more than made up for this in the sheer scale of the information gathering network. **Julius Caesar's private intel. gathering network was the most successful of these.**
- **Caesar intel gathering network encompassed the whole Roman society from the bottom up to the top.** It included trusted slaves, freedmen, clients acting as spies, opportunistic informers or politicians, members of the same political affiliation (*populares*), and double agents among the opposing party. Some of the spies also appear to have been professionals! Caesar spent freely money to obtain supporters and spies. In addition, he endeared the foreigners (with money and promises) and gladiators (with clemency) to his cause.
- All of these activities were directed by Caesar and his inner circle. On the basis of Cicero's letters, **Caesar's spy-masters were Lucius Cornelius Balbus Sr. and Caius Oppius, and probably also Aulus Hirtius.** Furthermore, as is well known, Caesar had developed his own secret code which he used in his letters making it more difficult for those who intercepted his secret messages to understand their contents.

- I would also suggest that Caesar as Pontifex Maximus had access to information provided by seers/augurs etc. of the things asked from them by private persons, and I would suggest that this was the reason why Augustus and all his successors occupied this same office and sought to prevent the arrival of new religious cults (like Christianity) in Rome that they did not control.
- Note that the information of the plot to kill Caesar on Ides of March in 44 BC was told to him by the *haruspex* (seer) Spurinna, in addition to which a Greek philosopher Artemidoros of Knidos handed him a list of the conspirators when he was walking to the faithful meeting of the senate. The former undoubtedly acted as a spy while the latter acted as informer. Another Greek philosopher Dionysius (worked for Cicero and Atticus) also appears to have worked for Caesar.
- The effectiveness of Caesar's regular spy network is also evident from the fact that his friends were aware of the plot to kill him in March 44, which can be seen from the fact that both Hirtius and Pansa urged C to use bodyguards. Suetonius (Caes. 75) also notes that Caesar was aware of the conspiracies against him, but chose just scare the plotters by publicizing that he was aware of these through edicts. This was obviously a grave mistake of judgment.

- **However, Caesar was not the only successful user of intelligence resources. Just like any intelligence organization his organization had also been infiltrated. Caesar's slave-secretary Philemon had agreed to kill Caesar by poison.** However, in this instance Caesar's counter-intelligence measures clearly paid off, since the plot was found out. This suggests that Caesar had compartmentalized his intelligence gathering network so that none of his subordinates knew the whole extent of operations. **Most importantly, Pompey's own spy-master Vibullius Rufus seems to have been Caesar's double agent!**
- **I would also suggest that there are strong reasons (but similarly improvable) to suspect that the Lentuli [con. 49 C. Lentulus Crus and C. Lentulus Spinther] acted as C's double agents/agent provocateurs. The reason for this suspicion is that their actions or inaction constantly contributed heavily to the Caesarian cause. This is obviously not conclusive evidence (only circumstantial). It is possible that they were just a bunch of incompetent idiots. But as said, the probability is on the side that they, just like Vibullius, were working for C.**

2.2 Military Intelligence Gathering

The military intelligence arm consisted of:

1) The speculatores, which was a scouting unit of soldiers who also engaged in covert intelligence gathering. E.g. Some of the centurions C sent to Rome to vote probably belong to this category. They also conducted reconnaissance and messenger duties both as groups and/or individuals.

2) The exploratores moved far in advance of the army to gather information of the route and suitable places for camp while seeking out possible enemy threats.

3) These and other units could also capture **prisoners** for interrogation.

4) **Deserters, locals, and travellers** (could also be spies in disguise) were also used as sources of info.

3. Roman Armed Forces

3.1. Roman Army: *Command Structure and Organization*

- Each of the late Republican armies was a special case, because the commanders (proconculs, pro-praetors, dictators, consuls) could and did vary the composition of their forces according to the availability of foreign troops and according to the political circumstances. Roman armies consisted of citizen legions (with cav. and LI), allies, and mercenaries in different proportions.
- **After Marius the legions were usually recruited from volunteers, but the traditional levy of citizens (with light infantry) and citizen cavalry was never abolished, but its use depended upon the circumstances.** Note for example: App. CW 2.49 (Pompey with five Italian LG with their cav = 5x5000+5x500); Pompey's words in 49 BC (Plu. Pomp. 57.5, tr. by Perrin, Loeb p.267): "For in whatever part of Italy I stamp upon the ground, there will spring up armies of foot and horse."

3.2. High Command

The command structures of both Caesar and Pompey were traditional, improvised and exceptional all at the same time.

- **Caesar's inner circle consisted of his closest friends (*Amici*) who acted as a sort of private cabinet of ministers and controlled the handling of almost all political, business and military matters. Their power was not based on official magistracies but on their closeness to Caesar.** The members of this inner circle consisted at least of Vibius Pansa, Aulus Hirtius, Lucius Cornelius Balbus, Caius Oppius, Caius Matius, and (Marcus Curtius?) Postumus. **These men, especially Hirtius and Balbus, were also responsible for the clandestine operations and for the safety of Caesar.**
- **The bulk of Caesar's officers (legates, quaestors etc.) belonged to the senatorial class whose loyalty was for the most part to their own class and to their own relative position in it, and they stayed loyal only as long as they considered that to be in their own interest!**
- **The command structure of Pompey's army was more problematic.** Just like Caesar Pompey had an inner circle of friends who acted as his council, but **he could not force upon the other *optimates* and senators the decisions reached in his council.** Indeed, **throughout the Civil War Pompey faced a bunch of noble senators who disagreed amongst themselves and with him and who did not even grant him sole command of all armies.** **Furthermore, it appears probable that Caesar had managed to infiltrate a double agent or agents into Pompey's inner circle of friends!**

3.3. Regular legion:

- 4,800 heavy infantrymen part of who could also act when necessary as light infantry were commanded by legates chosen by the consul, praetor, proconsul or pro-praetor, dictator.
- Legion consisted of 10 cohorts each 480 men strong. Commanded either by the six tribunes chosen yearly by the *comitia centuriata* or by the tribunes appointed by the commander. **For combat the LG were deployed in one to four lines of cohorts.**
- The cohorts consisted of centuries of 80 men that were grouped together to form three 160 men maniples of *pili/triarii*, *principes* and *hastati*. Each cohort had by six centurions. It is possible that the veterans were grouped together in the 1st Co to form an extra large unit.
- The centuries and maniples in their turn were divided into ranks and files so that the regulation depth of formation was four to eight men (could also be 6 or 10 according to the number of men).

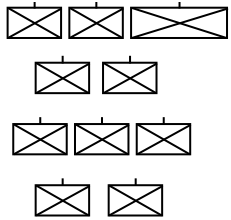
Typical Deployment Patterns of the 10 Cohort Legion for battle:

The most likely deployment patterns for the centuries of the cohorts in these arrays were the single line (centuries either posted separately or posted side by side as maniples) or the *orbis* (centuries posted back to back as maniples). Each of these arrays could also be used for marching.

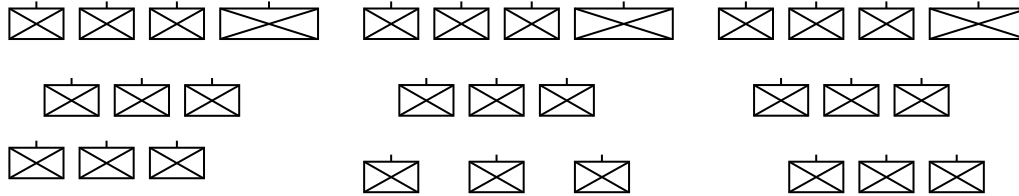
Single line of cohorts



Quadruple line of cohorts



Three different ways to form a triple line of cohorts.



Double line of cohorts

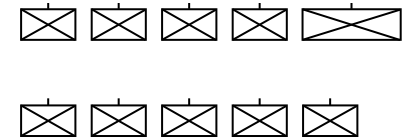
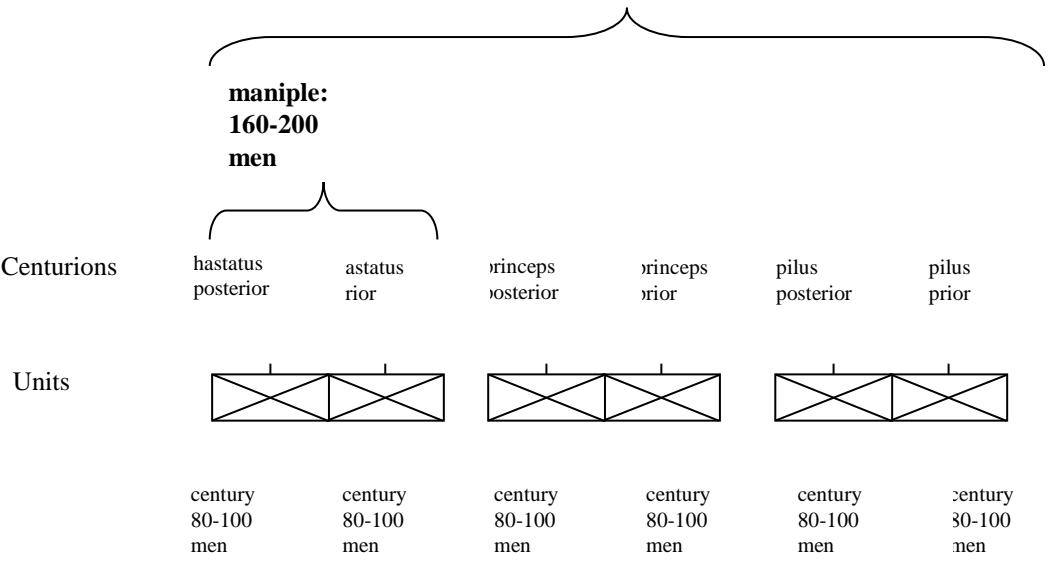


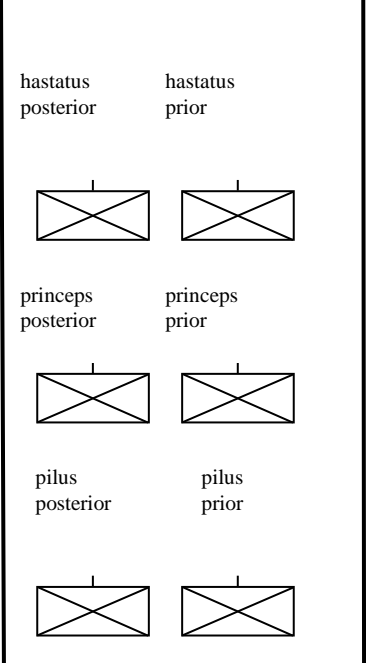
Diagram 2: The different ways to deploy cohorts and centuries in theory

Regular Cohort of 480-600 men deployed in line

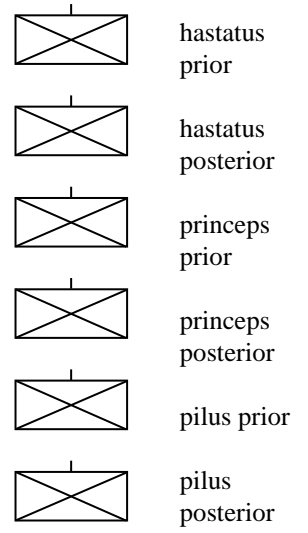
- Commander of the cohort: a tribune or other officer appointed by the general (Vegetius 2.12).
- The leading centurion of each pair of centuries was the prior.
- The order in which the *hastati*, *principes* and *pili* are placed is conjectural. On the basis of Vegetius' text, which places the *principes* always to the front in manipular order, their place would have been either on the left or right flank and that of the *hastati* in the middle. In the diagram, the *hastati* are placed on the left, which would have been their likeliest position, if they formed the front line. However, it is quite possible that their place had been changed after Polybius wrote his treatise.
- The depth of the centuries would have been made to match the needs of the situation.
- When in full strength it is possible that the centuries were not always grouped together as maniples as shown below but fought as independent units.
- On the basis of the fact that the centurions are said to have always led from the front (Vegetius 2.13), the arrangement shown below appears to be the most often used.



Possible triple line cohort deployment of maniples (note Frontinus 2.3.16). As noted on the left box, the *principes* may have been placed in the front and *hastati* in the middle. In addition, the *hastati*, *principes* and *pili* could be deployed as individual ranks to form a phalanx.



Possible deployment of centuries in a single marching column. The depth of each century could also be changed to reflect the circumstances.



- The regular centuries consisted of *contubernia* so that each *contubernium* consisted of 8 fighting men deployed as a file in formation, 1 recruit and 1 servant (both usually left behind to defend the camp with a mule) making the entirety a *decanus/dekarkhia* (8+1+1 =10).
- The regular cavalry component of the legion appears to have consisted of 512 horsemen that were divided into 32 horsemen *turmae* each led by decurio (512 + 16 decurions + 5 centurions + vexillum + trumpet + cape-bearer = 536 plus prefect or tribune). The number of horsemen could also be considerably smaller as a result of wear and tear.

3.4. Regular Training and Equipment

- The training of the Roman legionaries began with the march, run, jump, swim and then proceeded to the training of the fighting techniques and to the building of fortified camps and other work.
- **The regular Roman legionaries were trained by professional trainers and gladiators to use the various fighting techniques including the use of the open order.**
- The legionaries were equipped with ring-mail armor and officers with metal or leather muscle armor, helmets, and trained to use sword (70+ cm *gladius*), *pugio*-dagger as a side-arm, javelins (heavy and light *pilum*, *pilum muralia*, fire-javelin), and shield (*scutum*) offensively. D'Amato has also proved that the legions never entirely abandoned the use of the *hasta*-spear. **The standard tactic was to throw the *pila* in a volley and then use the *gladii*.**
- Tacitus' account of the Battle of Augustodunum in AD 21 (Annals 3.43 ff.) also suggests that when needed the legionaries could use axe (*securis*), pikes (*trudis*), pole (*furca*) and pickaxe (*dolabra*).

- “Vegetius’ text (1.16) and the narrative sources make it abundantly clear that **all legionaries were taught to use slings and throw stones by hand.**
- **According to Vegetius, a third or a quarter were trained to use wooden bows** apparently ever since Scipio Aemilianus introduced the practice during the Numantian War. Presumably, the bows would have been distributed to the men only when needed.
- **The men were also trained to use small torsion-bows (i.e. scorpions, *manuballistae*) and/or crossbows.**

- **The regular Roman cavalry** was trained to charge, to skirmish in files, use weapons (swords, spears, javelins, small *tormenta*, slings) and to fight as infantry. In addition, some may have learnt to use bows.
- All of the allied cavalry forces were trained to use the direct charge, but on top of this each nationality had its own specialties: **1) The Germans** (armed with a sword and spear) were adept at charging as a cohesive block of men as well as in the inclusion of light infantry in their support; **2) The Gauls** were particularly adept in the use of certain skirmishing techniques with spears and javelins and in the use of the direct charge with a *contus* and shield; **3) The Cantabrians** (Spanish cavalry) were famous for their use of the Cantabrian gallop/circle for skirmishing; **4). The Numidians** were particularly mobile javelin-armed light cavalry that employed irregular loose formations; **5) The Armenians and Parthians** and other Easterners practiced mounted archery and used rhombus formation when doing so; **6) The so-called Scythians** also used bows, but in the wedge formations; **7) The Easterners** could also employ super-heavy cavalry called **cataphracts**.

- Unless traveling light, the Roman legions always included as an integral component **a siege train with specialists.**
- According to Vitruvius (Caesar's ballista), the legionaries could themselves build ladders and other easy to build and use siege equipment, but the rest were to be built by specialists under the direction of military "architect".
- **According to Vegetius 2.25, the mobile field artillery component of each legion** consisted of 10 stone-throwers (*onagri*) and 55 bolt-shooters (*carroballistae*) each manned by 11 men. Unfortunately, we cannot date Vegetius' information accurately. All we can say with certainty is that all of the late Republican legions had integral artillery component and we know full well that each of Caesar's and Pompey's legions had an equestrian officer called *praefectus fabrum* (and/or *castrum*?) and/or architect in charge of the siege equipment (mining equipment, towers, shed, rams etc.), baggage, artillery (arrow/dart/spear shooting scorpions/catapults and stone-shooting ballistae) and camps.
- **Caesar's prefects/architects incl. such names as Balbus (spy), Mamurra, and Vitruvius and Pompey's such as Vibullius (spy). This suggests that the prefects controlled espionage activities and that they also used merchants and workmen as their spies and messengers.**

3.5. Navy

- The Romans maintained small numbers of warships in readiness so that when needed the people inhabiting the coastal areas of Italy as well as all those who would be detached to naval duty (legionaries included) would be able to man the ships.
- The Romans did not maintain permanent professional fleets, but rather maintained ships that were manned by levies as a result of which the actual combat effectiveness of these forces varied greatly. **The fleets were based and operated wherever the current strategy dictated them to be and everything was organized accordingly *ad hoc*.**
- **Caesar's naval resources consisted solely of his small Gallic fleet as well as of the ships of Aquileia and Ravenna. While Pompey controlled all of the major fleets with the sizable allied eastern fleets.**

3.6. Caesar's Armed Forces

- **Initially, Caesar's army was a regular Roman army that followed the regular pattern set up by Marius and his successors with the exception that his integral legionary cavalry consisted of the Provincials.** In 58 BC Caesar had 6 legions of Italians with 4,000 cavalry of which 3,000 were regular cavalry (BG 1.15.1, BC 1.39.2: recruited from the Transalpine Gaul; 512 per legion plus supernumeraries), the rest apparently consisting of allied Gauls.
- Caesar fails to mention that he also had 400 Germanic cavalry bodyguards (BG 7.13.1: Caesar's *corporis custodes*), a cohort of friends (BG 1.39.2: *Amici, cohors amicorum, cohors praetoria, excubiae* and the men attached to the baggage trains. He may also have already formed his Spanish Guard (praetorians or bodyguards?) as a result of his stay as governor of Further Spain in 61-60 BC or from the mercenaries he had recruited from Spain.
- **Caesar subsequently increased the size of this army by adding new legions that were raised in Cisalpine and Transalpine Gaul** (local citizens, locals with Latin rights, Italian volunteers) **whose upkeep Caesar paid out of his own pocket.** These **"private legions"** apparently did not receive from Caesar's provinces the standard cavalry contingent belonging to the legions, but cavalry variously drawn either from the Gallic allies or from Spanish provinces or from mercenary commanders that could also include Roman knights (*equites*) as commanders. However, whenever possible, Caesar always sought to attach to each of his legions a cavalry contingent of at least 500 (i.e. 512 plus the supernumeraries) men variously drawn from whichever source possible. By not levying the equestrians Caesar endeared himself with this class.
- **In 49 BC Caesar's armed forces consisted of 9 or 11 legions (3,000 'regular' provincial cav. + Gauls, Spaniards and Germans), bodyguards, new levies, allies, mercenaries, and Gallic fleet with the fleets of Aquileia and Ravenna.**

- Caesar promoted men according to their abilities and not for their birth (Suet. 65, 72).
- C imposed strict discipline, but let his men indulge themselves as pleased after victories (except against Romans in Civil War) and off duty.
- Caesar's *contubernia* of veteran troops didn't have recruits amongst their ranks, but had probably more slaves as a result of their campaigns.
- Caesar also doubled the pay and rewarded his men amply.
- **Caesar's cavalry consisted of the provincials, Gauls, Cantabrians, Spaniards, Germans, and Romans (esp. new levies after 49 BC).** He did not have access to the eastern mounted archers until after the defeat of Pompey

- **According to Suetonius (Caesar 26) Caesar did not follow the regular training practice, but had his recruits trained by experienced Roman knights and senators in their homes.**
- **Caesar's legionary recruits fought really well when deployed as close order combat units (this included also the *antesignani*), but lacked adequate training for the use of more fluid individual fighting techniques in the open formation.** This was to have consequences during the Spanish campaign.
- Caesar's men faced difficulties on two occasions: **1)** In Spain against Pompey's legionaries who had adopted fluid local light infantry tactics; **2)** In N. Africa against the Numidian light infantry and cavalry.
- In the latter occasion Caesar (Afr. W 71-3) set out to correct the situation **by training his men as if he was a gladiatorial instructor.** Caesar trained his men how to advance, retreat, feint, target their attacks, and how to discharge their missiles. In this instance he also brought elephants from Italy so that his infantry and cavalry learnt how to fight these beasts. In other words, **if there was enough time at hand, the legionaries and horsemen could be retrained to use new techniques.** **Consequently, the combat capabilities of Caesar's legions varied greatly according to the type of training and combat experience.**

Caesar's legionaries appear to have been equipped just like the regular legionaries, except:

- 1) 1) According to Suetonius (67), Caesar gave or rather rewarded his soldiers with very valuable weapons in order to buy their loyalty and also to make certain that they would not throw their weapons away. Caesar also did not care if his soldiers wore expensive non-regulation equipment or clothes or perfume just as long they fought well and were loyal to him.
- 2) It is therefore quite possible that the hooks (similar to used in the segmented armor) that have been found in Caesarian context may have been used in the **hide-armor** (see Gilbert 2008 and below) **or** in the *lorica segmentata*. My own suggestion is that some of Caesar's forces indeed wore the *lorica segmentata*. This correlates with the armor worn by the Gallic *crupellarii* gladiators and with the high price-tag of such armor (could be a reward) and Caesar's practice of giving such expensive items to soldiers!
- 3) Caesar's men also appear to have adopted the use of the Celtic *gaesum* javelin.



Photos taken by author at the Kalkriese Musuem.
Visiting this museuam is highly recommended. It is
probably the best of its kind in the world.

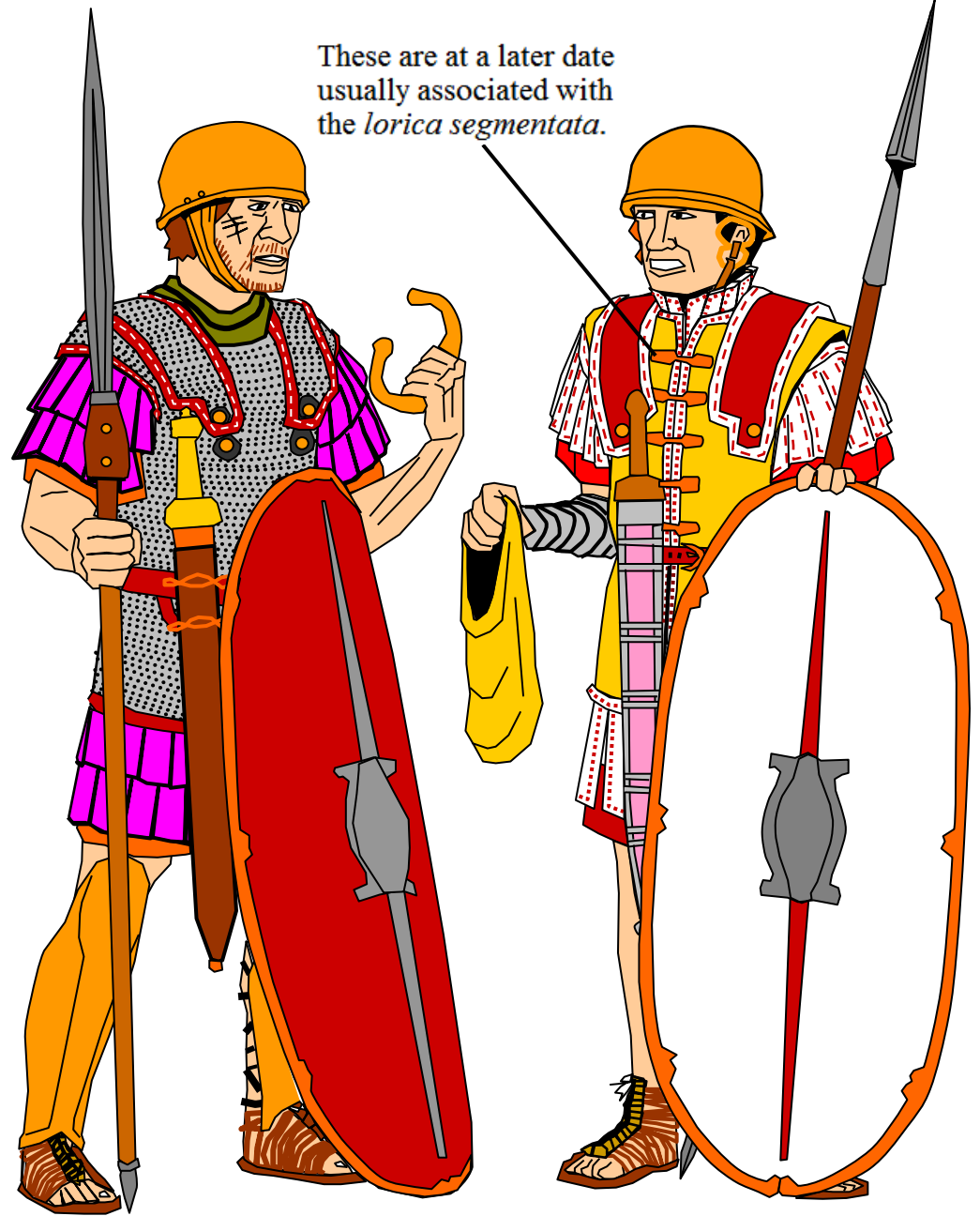


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- Reconstructions of Caesar's legionaries by François Gilbert and Stéphane Lagrange (AW 2.4 2008, 20)



Drawn after
Lagrange 2008.



Two legionaries (Mainz , Mogontiacum) probably equipped lightly as *expediti*. Note the use of the curved rectangular shield and heavy *pilum*-javelin. The intention of the artist may have been to portray the use of the *testudo* formation, which was practically necessary against missiles when the men did not wear armor. Other relieves in the same monument prove that the legionaries were at other times using the so-called *lorica segmentata*. The use of the curved shield meant that the legionaries could not form the overlapping rim-to-boss shield wall, but at the same time it gave each individual legionary superb personal protection when he fought as an individual swordsman for example in the woods of Germany.

Auxiliary infantryman, Mainz (Mogontiacum). Note the use of flat oval shield and three javelins. The flat shield enabled the use of the overlapping rim-to-boss shield wall. In other words, even though the auxiliaries could be used as fleet footed skirmishers, they could also be used as a close quarters heavy infantry. This type of auxiliary was particularly useful in the forests of Germany.



Funerary monument depicting the auxiliary cavalryman using the standard tactic of pushing the enemy footman over with the thrust of horse's chest.



Funerary monument depicting the auxiliary cavalryman using the standard tactic of pushing the enemy footman over with the thrust of horse's chest.

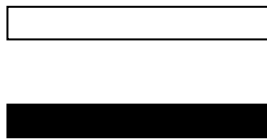
3.7. Roman Tactics

Vegetius' Seven Tactics 3.20, 3.26:

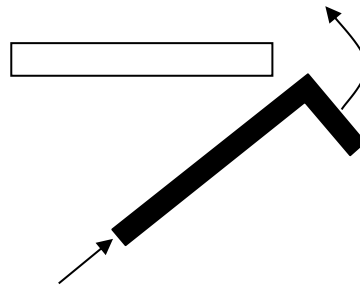
The aim in all formations was to pit one's best troops against the enemy's weakest.

The same formations with some additional ones like hollow square can be found from Onasander and Frontinus

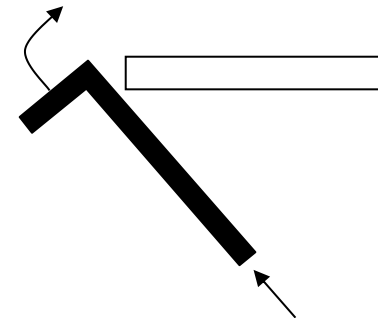
1. Oblong rectangle array was the standard array, but it was considered unsafe because the length of the line could cause a breach of the line during advance. It was also necessary to post reserves to protect the flanks. Its use was recommended only in such instances where there were enough brave troops to surround the enemy formation on both sides (*hyperfalangesis*).



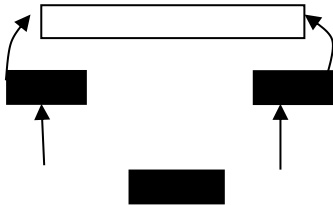
2. Oblique array vs. enemy's left wing. This version of the oblique array was considered better since the attack was directed against the shieldless side. The purpose was to place the best inf. and cav. on the right and use them to surround the enemy.



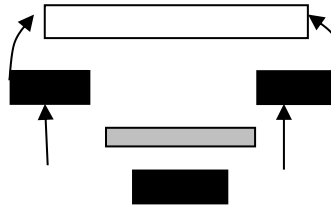
3. Oblique vs. enemy's right wing. Note the wedge shape of the tip of the oblique array. It seems probable that the reason for calling Epaimenondas' array both a wedge and oblique has resulted from this. This was considered weaker than the 2nd tactics and its use was recommended only when the left wing was much stronger than the enemy's right. In that case, the commander posted his reserves on the left. The general was also to take special care that enemy wedges wouldn't penetrate the array.



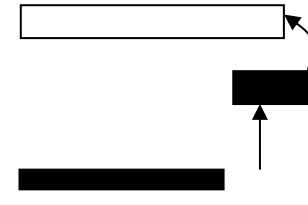
4. The forward-angled array (in Greek epikampios emprosthia) was used to outflank the enemy suddenly on both sides when he did not expect it. When the army was 400-500 paces away from the enemy, the wings suddenly charged forward to surprise the enemy. This was dangerous tactic, if the enemy managed to hold its own, because the wings were separated from the center.



5. The fifth formation was an improvement of the fourth. In this array the light-armed and archers were placed in front of the 1st line (*ante primam acie*: this proves that Vegetius' source envisaged the presence of at least two lines). The presence of these protected the center from the failure of the wings. This tactic was used by Scipio Africanus at Ilipa in 206 BC.

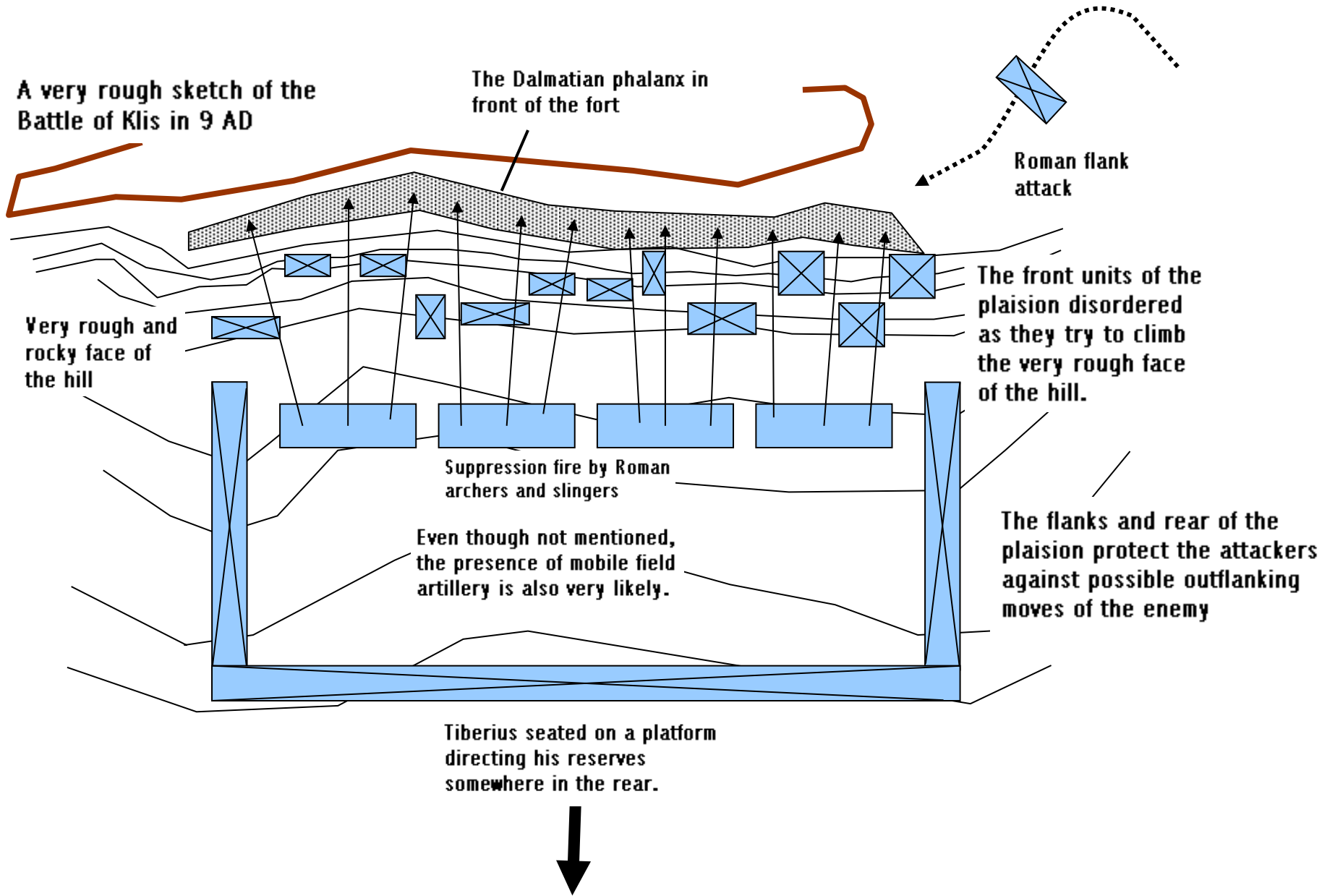


6. Outflanking on one side (hyperkerasis). According to Vegetius, this array was the best formation for those who were outnumbered by the enemy. When the army advanced towards the enemy, the general suddenly sent the right wing consisting of his best cavalry and very swift infantry against the enemy, while the remaining part of the army stayed behind and lengthened the line to a straight javelin-like line. This method of attack was often used while on the march (i.e. vanguard was sent against one enemy wing).

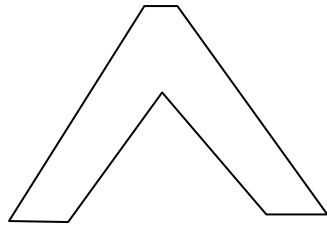


7. When the army had fewer men (including cases with fewer brave men), it was possible to even out the odds by resting one wing against a mountain, a sea, a lake, a river, a city, a swamp, or broken ground, and then by placing all the cavalry and light-armed on the opposite wing.

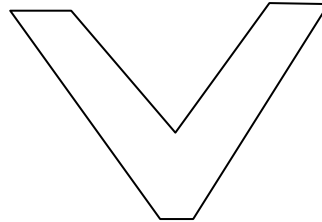
A very rough sketch of the Battle of Klis in 9 AD



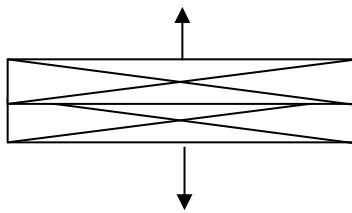
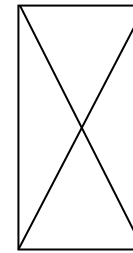
Vegetius 3.17, 3.19: *Cuneus* (wedge, Greek *embolos* like the letter lambda Λ) also known with the name *caput porci* (swine's head) was a formation used to break through enemy formations. It was usually formed in the center of the formation with the help of the reserves.



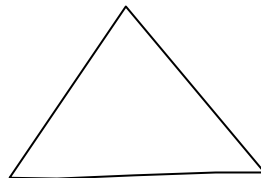
Vegetius 3.17, 3.19: *Forfex* (scissors)/ *forceps* (pincers, tongs) formation (Greek *koilembolos* like the letter V) was used to counter an enemy wedge. It was usually formed in the center of the formation with the help of the reserves.



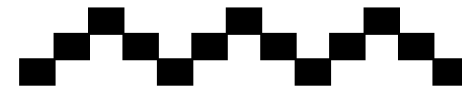
Gellius 10.9.1 also mentions a military formation called *turres*, but, unfortunately, we do not know what it was. My best guess is that it was a deep column (*falanx orthia* in Greek).



Vegetius 3.17, 3.19: *Orbis* (circle) was the equivalent of the Greek double front (*amfistomos falanx*).

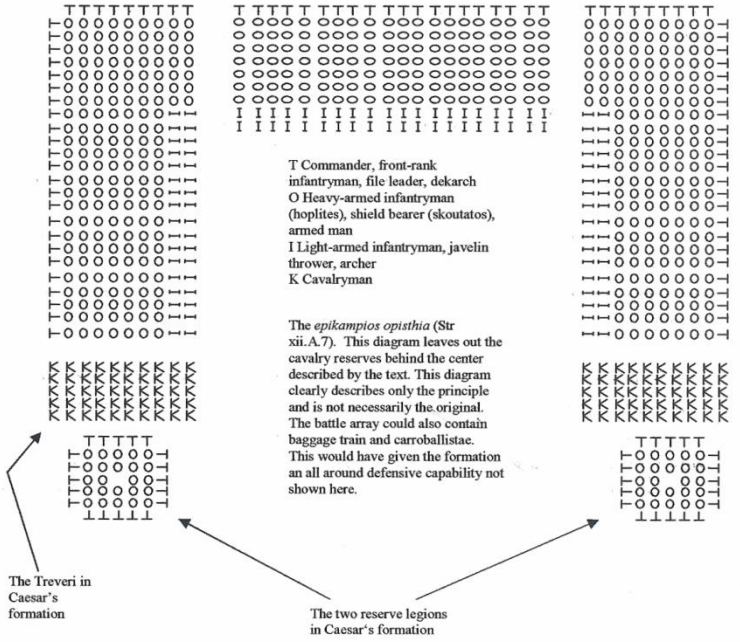


Vegetius 3.17, 3.19: *Globus* (globe, ball, troop, crowd, mass)/*drungus* (*drouggos*, *droungos*, *drungus*, a throng of men) was an irregular independently operating unit formation of cav. that was usually approximately wedge in shape.



Vegetius 3.17, 3.19: *Serra* (saw, Greek equivalent the *peplegmene*, woven formation) was a formation in which units advanced and retreated. It was used to disrupt the cohesion of a static infantry formation such as the *plaision* (hollow rectangle). This was the array used by Paulus to disrupt the Macedonian phalanx of Perseus at the battle of Pydna in 168 BC. Note that the array in question also explains the *cunei* (wedges) mentioned by Frontinus (Stratagems 2.3.20: “triplicem aciem cuneis instruxit”) in the context of triplex acies.

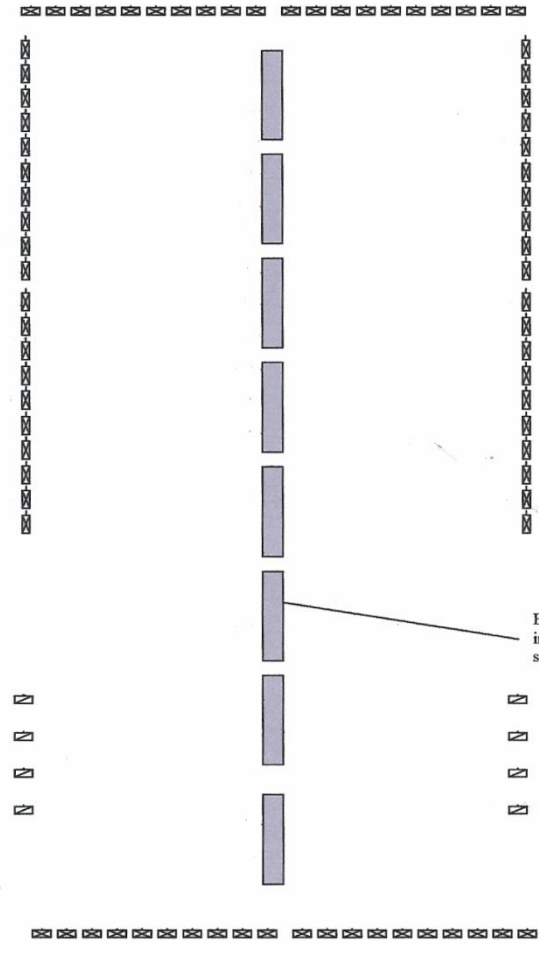
Diagram 4
The epikampios opisthia-formation in the Strategicon.



Reconstruction of Caesar's Marching Formation
Not in scale!



Cavalry vanguard together with light infantry support for difficult terrain. True distance to the *epikampios opisthia* would have been greater than shown in the diagram.

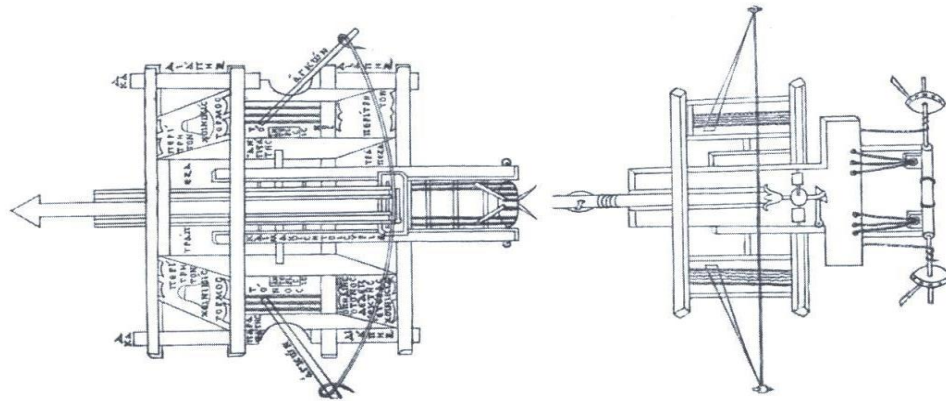


Epikampios opisthia with the likely light infantry outer section. Not in scale.

Baggage train of the legions in column formation. Not in scale!

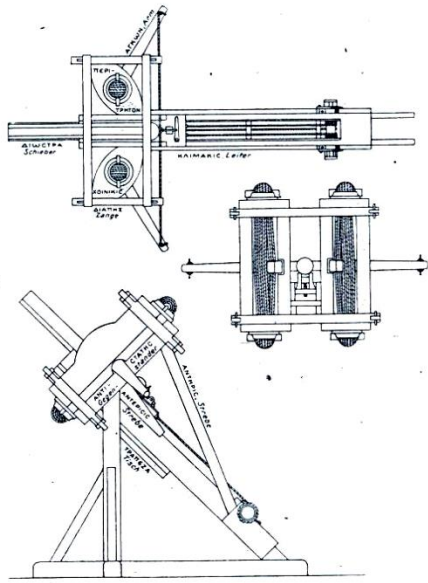
The Treveri.

The rear guard and the bottom of the hollow square consisting of two legions.



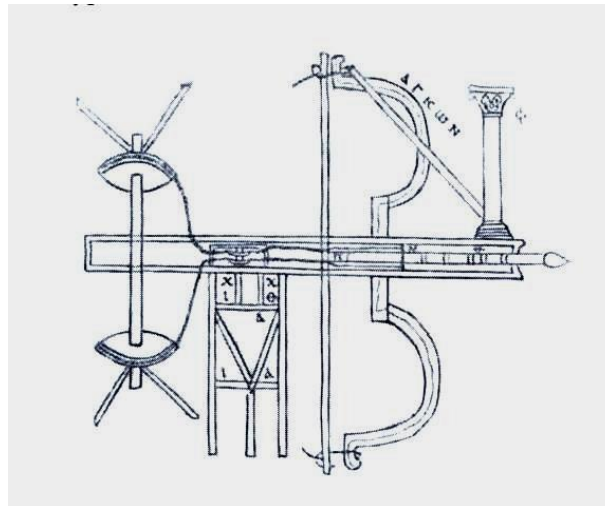
Heron's Belopoiika c. 23. 24.

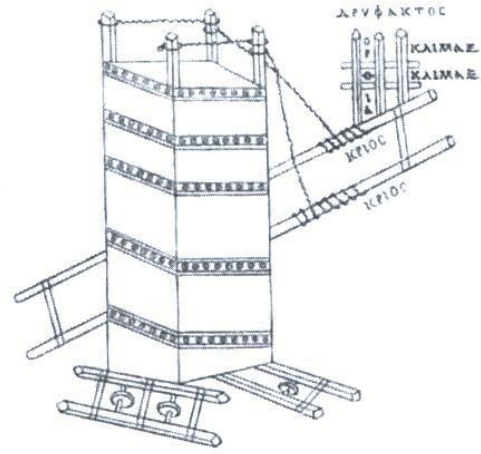
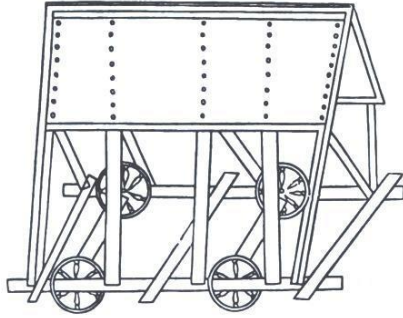
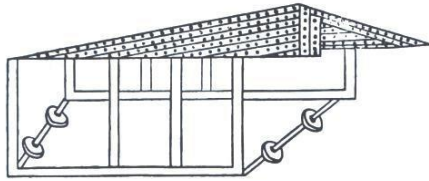
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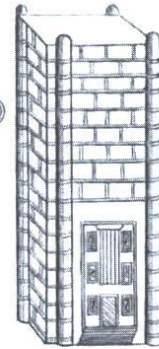
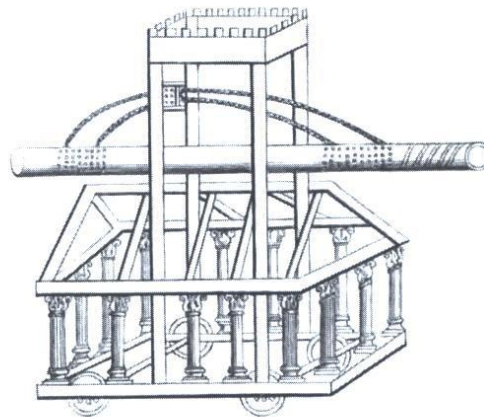
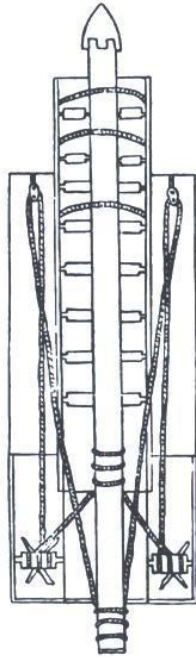
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Bild 18 (siehe c. 23 S. 38, 13).





Κεῖ ἡ κατασκευή.



4. Background

- Ever since 130's BC Rome was a city divided into **reformist populares** (populists) politicians, and into **optimates** (Best) politicians who favored the status quo. The latter were controlled by the oligarchy of noble senators most of whom were utterly corrupt and incompetent.
- In the course of 60's Caesar became the de facto leader of the populares movement and therefore a threat to the *optimates* lead by Cato and by the Metelli family. Caesar became the best hope of all those (Italians, knights, provincials, foreigners) who wanted reforms and protection from the abuse of power practiced by the nobles.
- In 60 BC the three most powerful men in Rome, Caesar, Pompey and Crassus, formed **the so-called First Triumvirate**. The alliance of the three men was reaffirmed at the Conference of Luca in 56, but from then onwards things started to unravel.
- In 54 BC Julia, Caesar's daughter and Pompey's wife, died at childbirth with the result that the strongest bond between the men was irrevocably cut.
- In 53 BC Crassus was killed by the Parthians at the disastrous battle of Carrhae.

- From 53 onwards Pompey started to openly court the *optimates*. He sealed his alliance with the *optimates* by marrying the daughter of Metellus Scipio.
- **The *optimates* did not hide their intentions. They stated that Caesar would face prosecution immediately he left office** and some even required that Caesar should be handed over to the enemy for the war crimes he had committed against them. The fight to break Caesar's hold onto the power had started.
- **Caesar recognized the danger. He used money to bribe** a succession of politicians, equestrians, slaves, freedmen and made a string of promises to the people, equestrians, Italians, Transpadane and Cisalpadane Gauls, and to foreigners. E.g. he managed to buy C. Scribonius Curio (people's tribune) in 50 BC. Curio was wise enough to hide his conversion with the result that he was able to obtain insider information from the enemy for long periods of time.

- **According to Hirtius (BG 8.49-55), Caesar was quite aware of the intentions of Pompey and optimates** and contrary to his usual practice Caesar visited Italy in person in 50 BC after the winter was over to canvass support for himself. The towns and colonies welcomed Caesar with open arms. Caesar was laying out the groundwork for the Italian campaign.
- Caesar left Labienus in charge of Cisalpine Gaul and then returned on the double back to Gaul. **While Caesar was in Gaul, he learnt from frequent reports that his enemies were attempting to induce Labienus to change sides.**
- **Caesar lost two legions** when the senate demanded legions (1 Caesarian and 1 Pompeian on loan) for Parthian war. **By handing over the LG XV Caesar removed from Labienus his only legion.**
- **Caesar replaced the 15th with the 13th legion, which he led in person to its winter quarters in Cisalpine Gaul and ordered the raising of new legions to replace the lost ones.**
- **Caesar placed the rest of his legions into winter quarters so that four were posted under Trebonius in Belgium and four were posted under Fabius among the Aedui.**

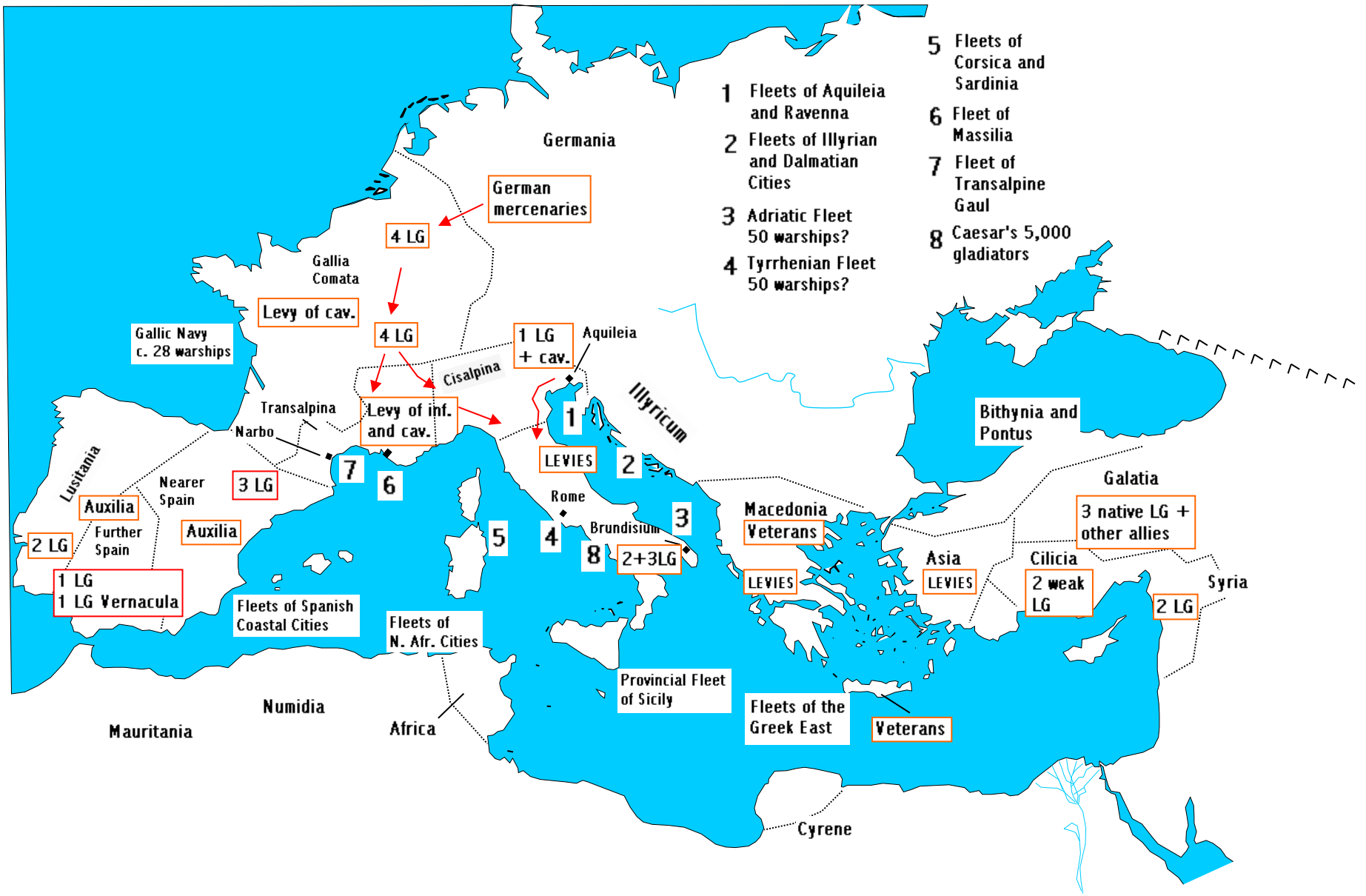
- **Through his agents Caesar was kept abreast of the plans of his enemies.** He even managed to intercept the private letters of several leading politicians to each other as the instances (Dionysios not loyal, then two letters stolen) recorded in Cicero's letter indicate.
- **It seems probable that Caesar intentionally sought a Civil War with Pompey by feeding such info that suggested that he would be willing to compromise and that his position was weak. The intention was to make Pompey break the law and initiate hostilities.** Even if he did not have double agents Caesar would be fully aware on the basis of intercepted letters (e.g. Cicero's letters leaked and stolen) that Pompey was underestimating him and believed that Caesar would back down.

5. Pompey Hands the Die !

Caesar casts the Die!

- The supposed weakness of Caesar's position encouraged the consul Marcellus (with the consul elects incl. Lentulus Crus!) to go to see Pompey at his villa. He invested on his own authority Pompey with powers to save the republic. **Pompey and his associates had now acted illegally.**
- On January 2, 49, the senate voted that Caesar should disband his army by March 1 or be considered traitor, but this was **vetoed by the new tribunes in Caesar's service, Marcus Antonius and Quintus Cassius Longinus.**
- On January 7 Pompey's officers, centurions and re-enlisted men and many from the two legions that had been handed over by Caesar occupied the city to put pressure on the senate and Caesarians.
- Curio, Antonius, Cassius and Caelius Rufus (an opportunist who thought that Caesar would win or Pompey's double agent) fled in disguise and the senate passed the ultimate decree to protect the state against Caesar. **Pompey had violated the rights of people's tribunes.**
- On January 8 Pompey met the senate outside the city and stated that he had 10 legions in readiness while in contrast Caesar's soldiers felt hostility towards their commander. **Pompey was officially granted the powers to levy troops and save the republic.**

- When Caesar learnt the news at Ravenna, he immediately sent some LG XIII Cohorts over the boundary of his province into Italy while he supposedly continued his daily activities as if nothing had happened in order **to gain the advantage of surprise.** **Caesar was aware that his upper class friends included enemy spies and in this case it appears probable that Labienus was meant.** Caesar also sent an order for the LGs VIII and XII to follow together with the levy of 22 Transalpine COs and allied forces, and that 6 LG in Gaul, with allied cavalry, were to march to Transalpine Gaul to protect his rear by blocking the route from Pompey's Spanish forces.
- Altogether, depending upon the source, Caesar had either 9 or 11 legions plus levies, allies and mercenaries.
- Then after having spent most of the night in the company of his friends (apparently these included Labienus), Caesar and his retinue of trustworthy friends crossed the River Rubicon in secret and Caesar uttered his famous words:
- “The Die is Cast!”.



- 1 Fleets of Aquileia and Ravenna
- 2 Fleets of Illyrian and Dalmatian Cities
- 3 Adriatic Fleet 50 warships?
- 4 Tyrrhenian Fleet 50 warships?
- 5 Fleets of Corsica and Sardinia
- 6 Fleet of Massilia
- 7 Fleet of Transalpine Gaul
- 8 Caesar's 5,000 gladiators

German mercenaries

4 LG

Gallia Comata

Levy of cav.

Galic Navy c. 28 warships

4 LG

1 LG + cav.

Cisalpine

Aquileia

Illyricum

Levy of inf. and cav.

1

LEVIES

2

3

4

8

2+3LG

Rome

Brundisium

Macedonia Veterans

LEVIES

Asia LEVIES

Galatia 3 native LG + other allies

Cilicia 2 weak LG

Syria 2 LG

Transalpina

Narbo

7

6

Nearer Spain

Auxilia

3 LG

Lusitania

Auxilia

2 LG

Further Spain

1 LG

1 LG Vernacula

Fleets of Spanish Coastal Cities

Fleets of N. Afr. Cities

Provincial Fleet of Sicily

Fleets of the Greek East

Veterans

Numidia

Africa

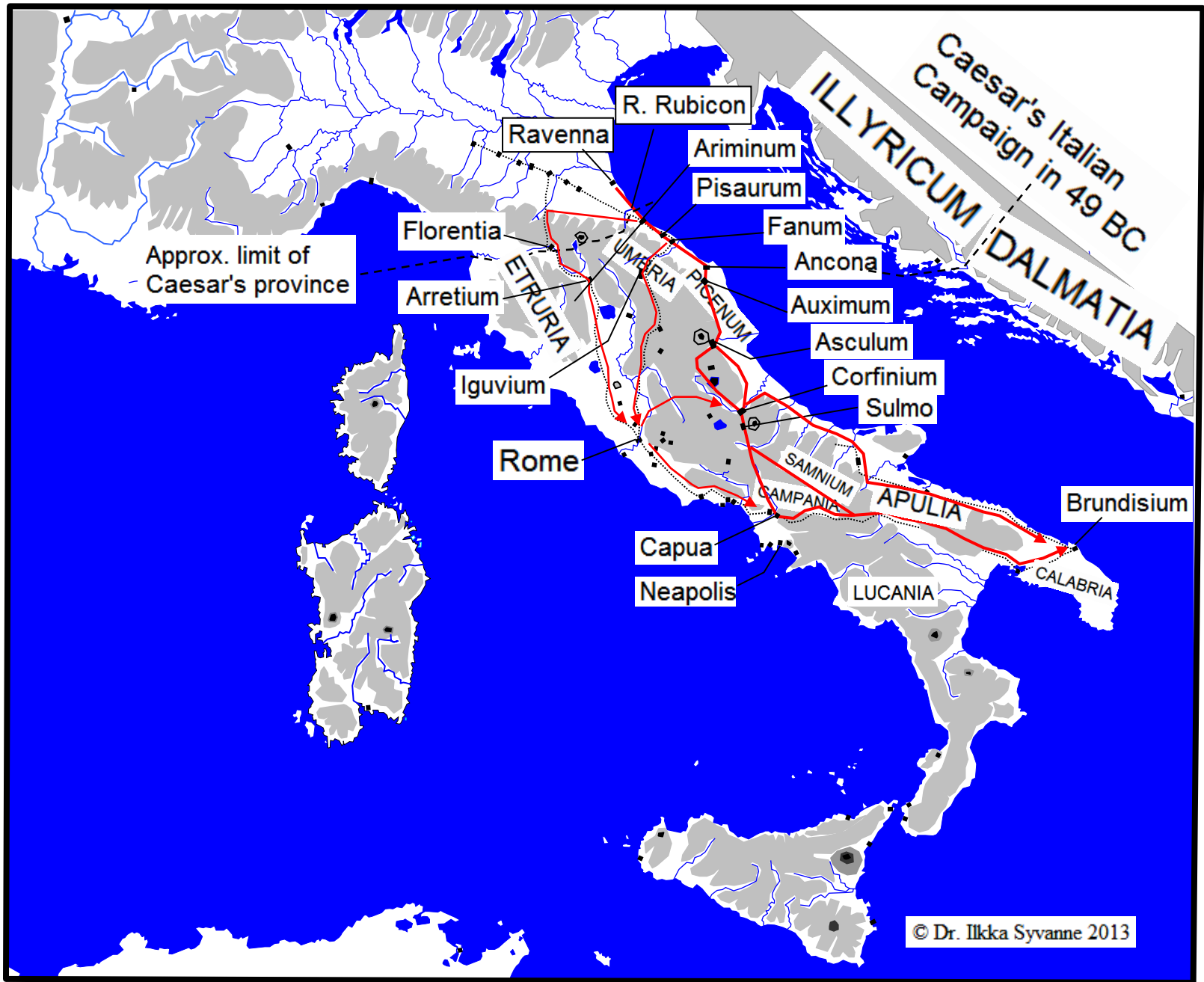
Mauritania

Cyrene

- More than anything this was a political war for the hearts and minds of the Italians and all the oppressed people in it. Caesar promised salvation and the common people and the knights flocked to join him. As noted by Billows (206), Italy decided to back Caesar.
- What is even more important Caesar and tribunes looked like the wronged party. The overconfident Pompey had swallowed the bait. Public statements like the one by consul Lentulus Crus that he (Lentulus) would be new Sulla only worked to Caesar's benefit, and Pompey spread around similar announcements.
- I would suggest that Lentulus Crus was acting as C's agent provocateur in this instance! He blackened the optimate cause quite purposefully. In contrast, Caesar publicized after Corfinium loudly his own clemency.

- Caesar's propaganda worked like a dream. According to Plutarch (Pomp. 59.2), when Pompey began to levy recruits, some refused outright, others came reluctantly, while most demanded that he should reconcile himself with Caesar. In other words, Pompey was in truth levying an army for his enemy Julius Caesar.
- Town after town in Italy (Arretium, Pisaurum, Fanum, Ancona, Ariminum, Iguvium) threw their gates open for Caesar while throwing out Pompey's representatives. And with every desertion Caesar's army grew in size. Umbria and Etruria fell and the road to Rome was open.

- When the news of the loss of Ancona and Arretium reached Rome and it was reported that the arrival of Caesar's cavalry was imminent, Pompey and the *optimates* panicked. **The initial success of Caesar caused immense dissatisfaction among the senators against Pompey who had claimed that he could just stamp his feet to raise an army.** It should be noted though that it is very likely that Caesar's cavalry arrived ahead of his two legions and cohorts as a result of which we can state that **Caesar has purposefully played down his numerical advantage in both cavalry and infantry in the initial stages of the conflict, which only increased with every addition of local levies and arrival reinforcements.**
- Pompey instructed all senators to leave Rome or be considered enemies and left for Capua on January 17. The "panic-stricken" consul Lentulus Crus (in all probability bribed by Caesar to do so under instructions from Balbus?) didn't even load the state treasury on carts, but left it behind for Caesar who sorely needed it.
- **Rome was now free to be taken over by Caesar's agents in Rome. Caesar's agents Balbus and Oppius were definitely in control of Rome by March 1, when the former sent a letter from there to Cicero.**



- On January 22, Pompey was joined by the consuls, many of the senators and by Labienus, who had now deserted, at Teanum Sidicinum just north of Capua.
- **Labienus brought encouraging but false news regarding the size and morale of Caesar's army. It is likely that Caesar had purposefully kept the haughty Labienus in the dark of his real plans in order to mislead the enemy.**
- **Consequently, Pompey sent Vibullius Rufus, one of his prefects of engineers and his confidant and agent (and the likely double agent) to Picenum in the hopes that it might be possible to stop Caesar's invasion.**
- **On January 23 Pompey left to join his two legions at Larinum in N. Apulia with the intention of marching into Picenum.**

- When Pompey arrived in Apulia he found out that there was no other alternative open to him than to evacuate Italy:
- 1. The levying of troops in Apulia and Campania was not progressing as expected.
- 2. The two legions handed over by Caesar could not be trusted to fight Caesar.
- 3. Vibullius informed Pompey that Picenum would fall. In fact, Picenum welcomed Caesar with open arms, which was a great humiliation for Pompey and Labienus both of whom were Picenians.

- Notably, Arretium (the 1st town in Picenum) had been held by Lentulus Spinther (until then Caesar's friend and member of the pontificate and who is in my opinion therefore likely to have been a double agent), who fled immediately with his 10 COs that duly deserted to Caesar. After this Spinther met C's other likely double agent Vibullius.
- Notably, Caesar stated (BC 1.15) that the noble Spinther gave a report of his activities to the equestrian Vibullius who then dismissed him curtly. This suggests that Vibullius was his superior in the hierarchy. **If the circumstantial evidence and my line of analysis are correct, then Spinther briefed Vibullius of his services to Caesar's cause!**

- Meanwhile, the remnants of Pompey's levies under Vibullius had assembled at Corfinium, which was held by Domitius Ahenobarbus. He decided to remain there when Vibullius informed him that Caesar was close by with only two legions, which gave Domitius the false impression that he possessed numerical superiority when in actual fact reinforcements would reach Caesar shortly.
- **I would suggest that Vibullius misled Domitius in order to prevent him from joining forces with Pompey.**
- Pompey asked and implored Domitius to bring all his forces or at least send 19 cohorts to him, but to no avail. Caesar arrived, reinforcements followed and siege began. Domitius' position was desperate.

- Domitius' soldiers mutinied when they learnt (from Vibullius?) that D. planned to escape in secret.
- **Notably, the surrender of the town was organized by Lentulus Spinther after he had had a private meeting with Caesar!**
- In a gesture of clemency Caesar sent senators, equestrians etc. away unharmed and even gave Domitius back his treasury.
- **Caesar's gesture of clemency had several purposes: 1) He intended to prove that it was safe to surrender, he was no Sulla; 2) He sent back the incompetent commanders; 3) He infiltrated his double-agents and spies (esp. Vibullius, Spinther) back for further use.** All of these goals were fulfilled.
- At this stage the most important achievement was that this gesture of clemency convinced many of the wavering senators to remain in Italy.

- After resting his men for seven days at Corfinium Caesar marched to Brundisium in an effort to cut Pompey's route of retreat, which failed.
Pompey had fled.
- **The siege of Brundisium includes an important example of the use of (BC 1.25-26) arrows, slingshots and other missiles (arty ammo) by men belonging to Italian cohorts on both sides suggesting that their use was part of the regular training scheme and was also part of Caesar's training system.**

6. Italy Secured and Spain Neutralized

- After Caesar had failed to stop the flight of Pompey, he decided to eliminate the threat of Spanish legions first.
- The first of order of business was to secure corn supply for Rome, which Caesar did by sending Curio with 4 new LG to conquer Sicily with orders to take also N.Afr. if possible, and by sending Q. Valerius to Sardinia.
- Ships, men and supplies were ordered to be assembled at Brundisium for the Greek campaign.
- The men at Brundisium were dispersed to winter quarters.

- Caesar travelled to Rome where he convened a session of the senate in order to create for himself a legal basis of rule. He also took possession of the state treasury.
- Caesar granted full citizenship to the Transpadani as he had promised both to secure their utmost loyalty for the Spanish war and also to prove to all that he rewarded those who supported him.
- **Tribune in Pompey's service made it impossible for C. to achieve his goals quickly as a result of which Caesar travelled to Transalpine Gaul and Spain to join the troops he had assembled there.**

- When Caesar reached the province, he learnt that Vibullius (I would suggest that Vibullius was the informant), whom he had captured and released at Corfinium, had been sent by Pompey to Spain, and that Domitius had managed to secure Massilia for Pompey.
- At first Caesar attempted to negotiate Massilia's surrender, but when this failed he brought 3 legions to besiege the city and ordered the building of 12 warships (probably only outfitted) under Decimus Brutus to blockade the sea-side. Caesar didn't let himself be bogged down or slowed down by this. Caesar sent Fabius in advance to secure the passes and advance into Spain with 6 LG, 3,000 regular Transpadene legionary cavalry and 3,000 Gallic cavalry with no auxiliary inf. Caesar intended to add to these afterwards the Aquitani and mountain dwellers of the Pyrenees.
- The siege of Massilia proved to be a difficult one and lasted until the news of Caesar's victory in Spain arrive.

- In the meanwhile Vibullius gave "Pompey's orders" (probably Caesar's orders) to Afranius (Nearer Spain 3 LG), Petreius (Lusitania 2 LG) and Varro (Further Spain 2 LG). It was decided that Petreius and Afranius would concentrate their forces at Ilerda (5 legions; 80 Nearer Spain scutati and Further Spain caetrati COs; 5,000 cav.) and Varro was to stay where he was. **For some unexplained reason Afranius didn't defend the passes but rather assembled all the forces at Ilerda for which he was later accused of being bribed. I would suggest that it was Vibullius who convinced the commanders to leave the passes undefended and who ensured that the enemy forced would not unite.**
- According to Caesar, he was at the time informed falsely that Pompey was marching through Mauritania to Spain. Who gave this info or was it a rumor?
- Caesar secured the loyalty of his men by borrowing money from his officers and centurions and then by distributing the money to the men, or were these used to bribe Afranius?

- What followed was a war of maneuvers to cut the other side off supplies and water.
- In the end it was Caesar who won this contest for two reasons:
 - 1) He possessed superior numbers of superior Celtic and German cavalry who foiled every attempt made by the enemy to flee;
 - 2) Caesar was master at improvising.
 - It is possible that the area of operations had been chosen by Vibullius and Caesar to give Caesar the advantage. The rivers and mountains enabled Caesar to use his cavalry to block the movements of the enemy infantry and to block the supply routes.
- In the course of the campaign Caesar also worked to undermine enemy's willingness to fight by having his men fraternize with the enemy.

- Another instance from this war shows what were the defects of Caesar's training system and infantry tactics (resulted from the use of equestrians and senators to train the forces rather than the gladiators):
- **“The method of fighting employed by Pompeian troops was simply to charge violently at the outset and seize a position; they had no particular concern about keeping their ranks but fought dispersedly; if they were being worsted, they did not think shame to retreat and give ground. ...This upset our troops, who were not at all accustomed to this sort of fighting; when they were going to be surrounded on the flanks, where they were exposed; and they believed that they ought to keep in their lines and should never leave the standards nor allow themselves to be dislodged from a position they had taken up, except for a very serious reason. The result was that the antesignani were thrown into confusion and the legion posted on that wing did not stand its ground but retreated to higher ground nearby.**

...Panic spread through almost the whole force.

Seeing this unexpected and unusual occurrence, Caesar began urging his men on, and led up the **Ninth legion in support the others; he beat back the enemy, who were boldly rushing in hot pursuit of our men, and forced them in turn to retreat and withdraw to Ilerda, under whose walls they halted.** ...Ninth ..., rashly pursuing **the enemy's flight too far**, they found themselves in a dangerous position at the foot of the hill on which Ilerda stands. When they tried to withdraw from this position, the enemy once again began pressing on them from above. ... the ground was just broad enough to admit three cohorts drawn abreast; **...The enemy's numbers were increasing, and fresh cohorts were constantly being sent up from the camp through the town, so that their men could be replaced as they grew tired. Caesar was forced to do the same and send up fresh cohorts so that he could draw the weary men out.**

...After five hours of continuous fighting, our men had used up all their missiles, and their inferiority in numbers was beginning to tell on them. **They drew their swords and, charging uphill against enemy cohorts, they cut down a few and forced the rest to give ground. The enemy retreated right up to the walls, and some in their panic were driven right into the town, so that the way was left open for our men to withdraw.** In addition, our cavalry, although they had been posted low down on the slopes, struggled up valiantly at either side to the top, and rode up and down between the two armies giving cover for our men to retire.”

Caesar CW 1.43-6, tr. by Jane F. Gardner, Penguin Books 1967, 58-60.

- **Afranius and Petreius decided to surrender. They were set free (notably Vibullius was not yet released, probably because there was fear that his cover had been blown), and their army disbanded, excepting those who volunteered to join C's army. The Spanish communities flocked to Caesar's side and Varro in Further Spain decided to surrender. His men were handed to C's cousin Sextus Caesar and Varro retired from public life.**
- C left Q. Cassius with 4 LG in charge of the region and set out for Italy.
- En route Caesar accepted the surrender of Massilia where he left a garrison of 2 LG.

- While in Massilia C learnt that Lepidus in Rome had managed to have C. appointed as dictator after the news of his victory in Spain had been announced. **It was now impossible for any people's tribune to block C.'s decisions. For political reasons C always wanted to maintain the illusion of legitimacy.**
- At Placentia Caesar faced his first serious mutiny. The LG IX mutinied apparently because they had been denied the chance of pillage and plunder. C confronted the mutineers boldly and the mutiny ended.

7. Credit Crisis

Now Caesar needed to secure Rome, Italy and the provinces.

- As a result of the Civil War a major credit crisis had brought everything at a halt. C. settled the matter (Caesar set the price of property at pre-war levels and set a maximum interest for loans etc.) so that the credit market was revived. By this action C proved that he was not enemy of the propertied classes (i.e. the equestrians) whose support he needed to win the war.
- C. distributed grain and money to the poor to retain their support.
- As dictator, C. presided over elections. He was chosen as consul together with P. Servilius Isauricus for the year 48, and provincial appointments were also made. After this C. resigned from his dictatorship.
- The sons of the proscribed (during Sulla's dictatorship) were restored to full citizenship, and, with the exception of Milo, those exiled by Pompeius' law and courts in 52 were recalled.

8. To Greece

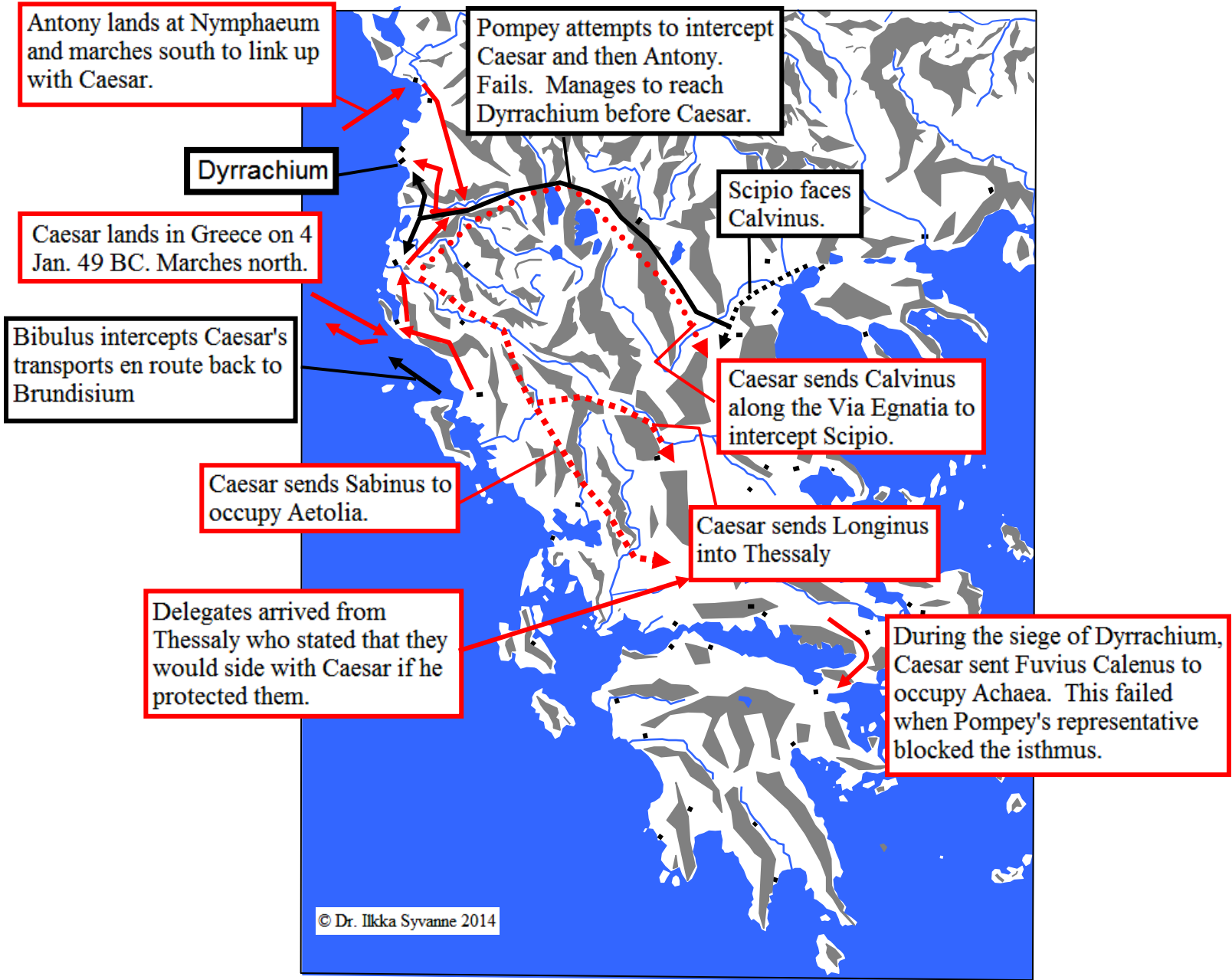
- When C. arrived at Brundisium, he found that there were not nearly enough ships to ship his men.
- C. also learnt that Curio's campaign in N.Afr. had ended in disaster. He had been killed and his army destroyed.
- In addition, the forces under P. Dolabella and C. Antonius had been defeated in Illyria.
- Adriatic was patrolled by Pompey's powerful navy.
- Regardless of these setbacks, Caesar decided that it was better to maintain the initiative than to hand it over to the enemy.

9. The Greek Stand-off

- C. decided to ship his army over in the middle of winter when no-one would expect this.
- On Jan. 4 Caesar embarked upon his ships as many men as he could and sailed to Epirus where he disembarked 7 LG (20,000 men) and 500 cav. on Jan 5.
- The fleet was sent back with orders to bring the rest of the army across, but the Pompeian fleet prevented this.

- C. had taken a huge risk when he had crossed to Epirus with a small force, but fortunately the Epirotes sided with C.
- A stand-off followed. Pompey's admirals, foremost of them Bibulus, blockaded the coast while C.'s army blocked the landing beaches.
- In the meanwhile, P.'s admiral Octavius had stirred up the Dalmatians against the Romans in Salonae. The latter, however, managed to defend themselves successfully.

- Meanwhile, Pompey had assembled and trained his men in Macedonia in person and was marching slowly towards Epirus, when he learnt of C's arrival. P. Managed to reach Dyrrachium first.
- Before this, C had already sent Vibullius (who had been captured in Spain) as ambassador to Pompey with a peace proposal. In my opinion C.'s apparent purpose with this was once again to send his trusted double agent to spy upon P.



Antony lands at Nymphaeum and marches south to link up with Caesar.

Pompey attempts to intercept Caesar and then Antony. Fails. Manages to reach Dyrrachium before Caesar.

Dyrrachium

Caesar lands in Greece on 4 Jan. 49 BC. Marches north.

Scipio faces Calvinus.

Bibulus intercepts Caesar's transports en route back to Brundisium

Caesar sends Calvinus along the Via Egnatia to intercept Scipio.

Caesar sends Sabinus to occupy Aetolia.

Caesar sends Longinus into Thessaly

Delegates arrived from Thessaly who stated that they would side with Caesar if he protected them.

During the siege of Dyrrachium, Caesar sent Fuvius Calenus to occupy Achaea. This failed when Pompey's representative blocked the isthmus.

- Since both armies were in close proximity from each other, C once again tried the same trick as in Spain. He allowed his men (undoubtedly most consisting of his trustworthy **speculatores** and **exploratores and agents**) to fraternize with the enemy. Labienus put a stop to this with missiles (*tela* = darts/bolts?) shot from all directions simultaneously that failed to injure Vatinius (C.'s officer) while injuring Cornelius Balbus (**spy-master Balbus' nephew whose declared mission was to convert their patron Lentulus Cornelius Crus to their side, but who was probably used as a go-between with a cover story**), M. Plotius (an agent?), L Tiburtius (an agent?), and some centurions and soldiers.

9.1. Pompeian plot to undermine Caesar's position in Italy foiled

- At about the same time there was an attempted revolution in Italy on behalf of Pompey led by Marcus Caelius Rufus and Milo, which was foiled. Both were killed.
- In the course of the disturbance **Milo circulated letters brought to him by Vibullius according to which Milo was acting on Pompey's authority.**
- Notably, the Caesarians were constantly aware of everything the Pompeians did to undermine their position when the agent in charge was Vibullius. **Consequently, there are very strong reasons to suspect that Vibullius was a double agent whose services proved particularly valuable to C in Corfinium, Spain and now in Italy. After this, Vibullius disappears from the pages of history undoubtedly because his credibility and cover had been blown by these events.**

- In the course of the winter and spring the effective blockade of the Dalmatian and Greek coast by the Pompeian navy made C's position difficult. His reinforcements had not reached him and he lacked supplies.
- Finally on April 10 Antony arrived with reinforcements and C. managed to join up with his lieutenant by forced marches.
- With the arrival of reinforcements, Caesar's position improved considerably and he decided to place P.'s numerically superior army under siege in Dyrrachium.

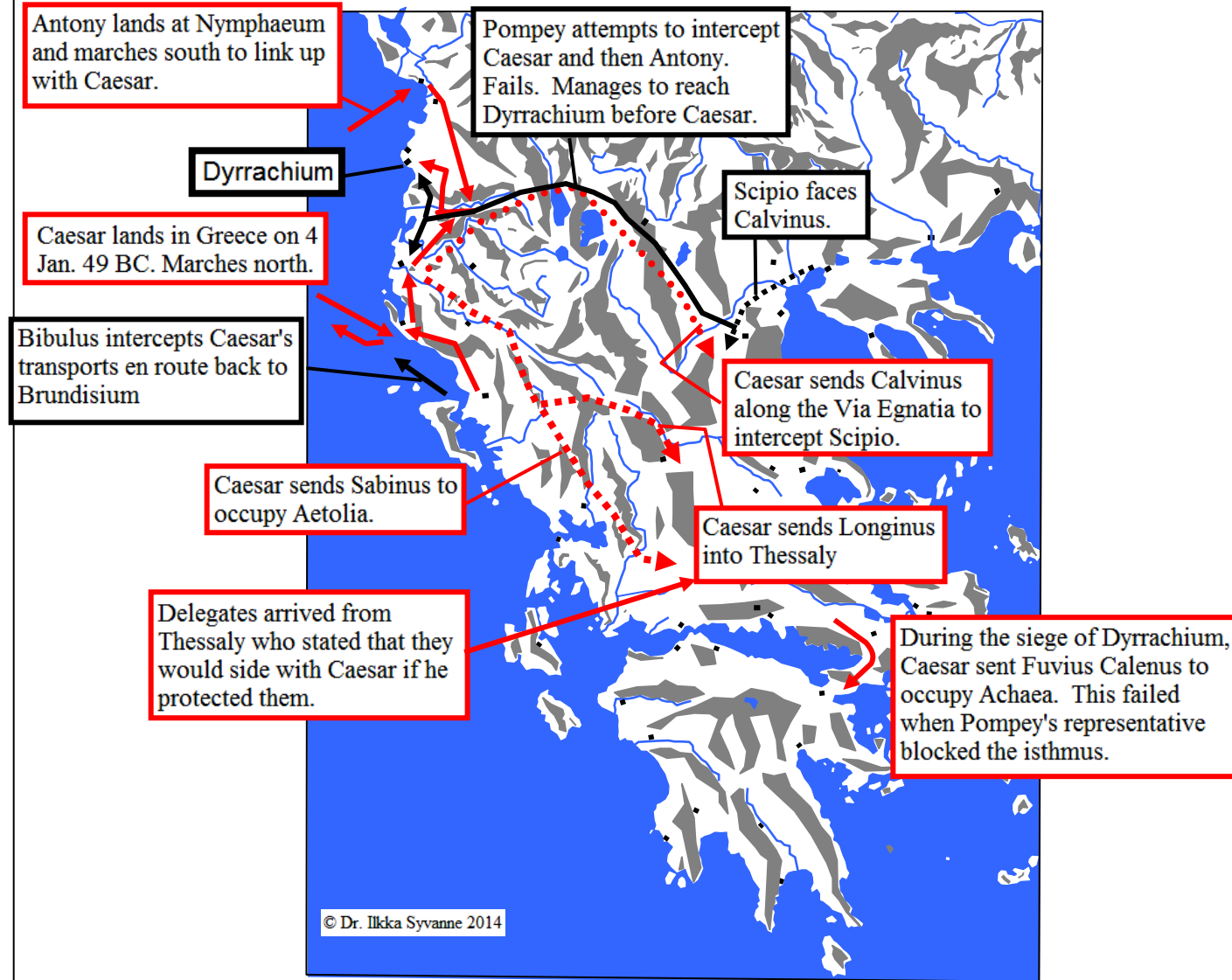
9.2. Siege of Dyrrachium

- C decided to resort to an unconventional blockade of his enemy by constructing a contravallation and circumvallation with forts and camps.
- This decision was foolish because C couldn't put P's army on a complete blockade:
 - 1) The latter possessed superior fleet;
 - 2) Both ends of C's line were vulnerable to being bypassed with an amphibious assault.

- Delegates arrived from Thessaly and Aetolia who stated that they would side with him, if he would send to them protection:

- 1) C. sent Lucius Cassius Longinus to Thessaly with a LG XXVII of recruits and 200 cav.;
- 2) Gaius Calvisius Sabinus was sent to Aetolia with 5 co and some cav.
- 3) C urged the delegates to supply him with grain.
- 4) C. also ordered Cnaeus Domitius Calvinus with 2 LG (XI, XII) and 500 cav to go to Macedonia to block the arrival of Syrian reinforcements for P under Scipio.

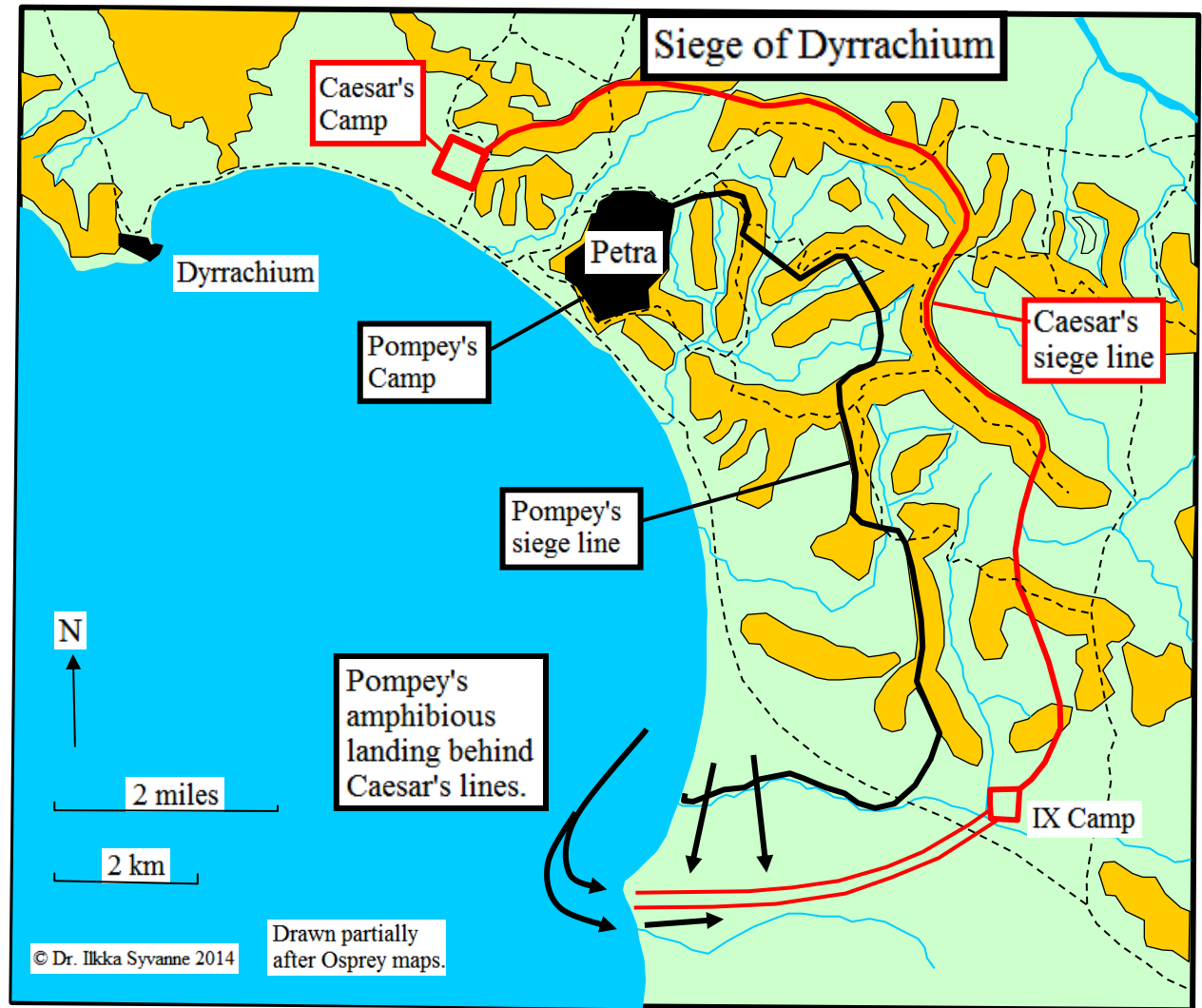
- During a stalemate in the siege of Dyrrachium Cesar sent Fuvius Calenus to secure Achaea, but P's representative managed to block the isthmus.



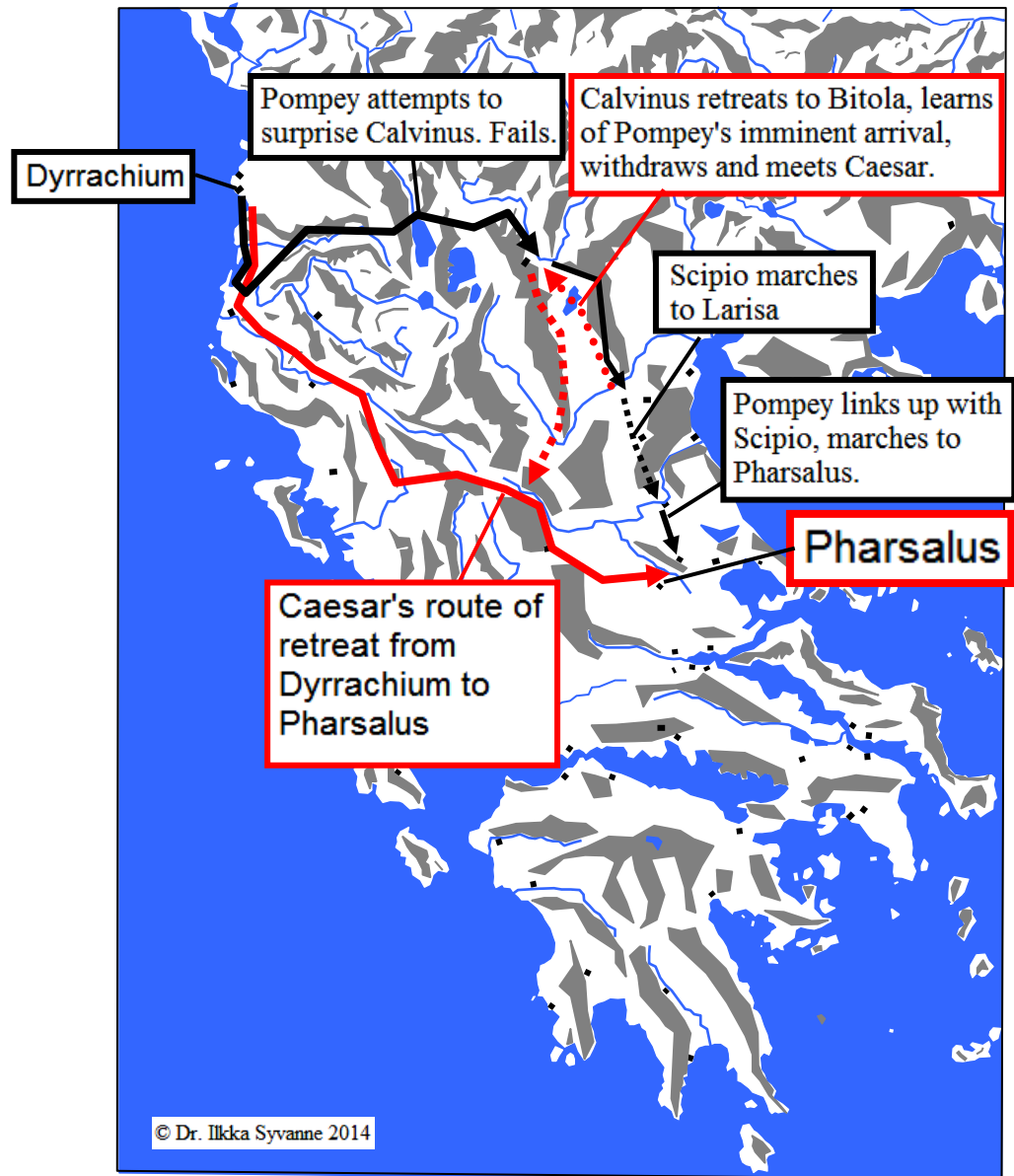
- In the course of the siege of Dyrrachium, Cornelius Balbus Jr., with huge personal risk, entered the enemy camp on several times to negotiate with his patron Lentulus Crus whose only doubt is said to have been what price to put upon himself (Vell. Pat. 2.51.3).
- The mission is usually thought to have been unsuccessful because Lentulus accompanied Pompey even to his exile in Egypt where both were killed.
- I would suggest that this once again an instance in which C had managed to place a spy in P's inner circle. It is probable that Crus had already been converted while consul, because it was he who left the treasury behind for Caesar and loudly shouted to be a new Sulla. The rewards Balbus received (Vell. Pat. 2.51.3: pontificate, triumph, consulship) for his services for Caesar (and probably also later for Octavian) as a Spaniard also suggest strongly that he had managed to convert at least Lentulus Crus (and Spinther?) who accompanied P to Egypt. It is also likely that he had other similar missions of which we know nothing about (note his presence during the fraternization of soldiers!).

The feared amphibious assault occurred when P had been told by two Allobrogan deserters what were the weaknesses of C's defenses.

According to C the defection of these brothers and their retinues was the first instance of its kind. Until then it was more typical for the Pompeians to desert to his side, but none of these deserters was as well informed as the Allobrogans. They informed that C's fortifications were not yet ready.



- After the defeat at Dyrrachium, Caesar decided to march elsewhere, revive the spirits of his army, seek provisions, and threaten Scipio so that P. would have to follow.
- Some of the senators advised P. to sail to Italy, but P. decided to save Scipio and his legions while denying Caesar supplies.
- Near Palaeopharsalus the senators finally managed to change P.'s mind that the time was ripe to destroy C. After all, they had numerical superiority in every arm. P knew better. He knew that most of his men were green and he was taking a risk, but he was still convinced that his numerically superior cav. would give him a victory.



10. The Battle of Pharsalus Aug. 9, 48BC

- **Pompey had 110 cohorts consisting of 45,000 legionaries and 2,000 special-duty *beneficarii*** that Pompey placed in the front rank to stiffen them. Pompey's cavalry consisted of **7,000 horsemen** of which approximately 2,500 were Italians (App. CW 2.49: 5 LG = 5x500 cav). In addition to these he had **3,000 infantry archers and 1,200 slingers** and **Greek auxiliaries** who fought like Romans. Pompey's plan was to use his superior cavalry to outflank Caesar's RW.
- **Caesar's battle line consisted of 80 cohorts totalling 22,000 men.** Since his left wing was protected by the river, he posted his **1,000 cavalry on the RW.** When Caesar realized Pompey's plan, he posted six cohorts from the reserves as his fourth line against the enemy cavalry.

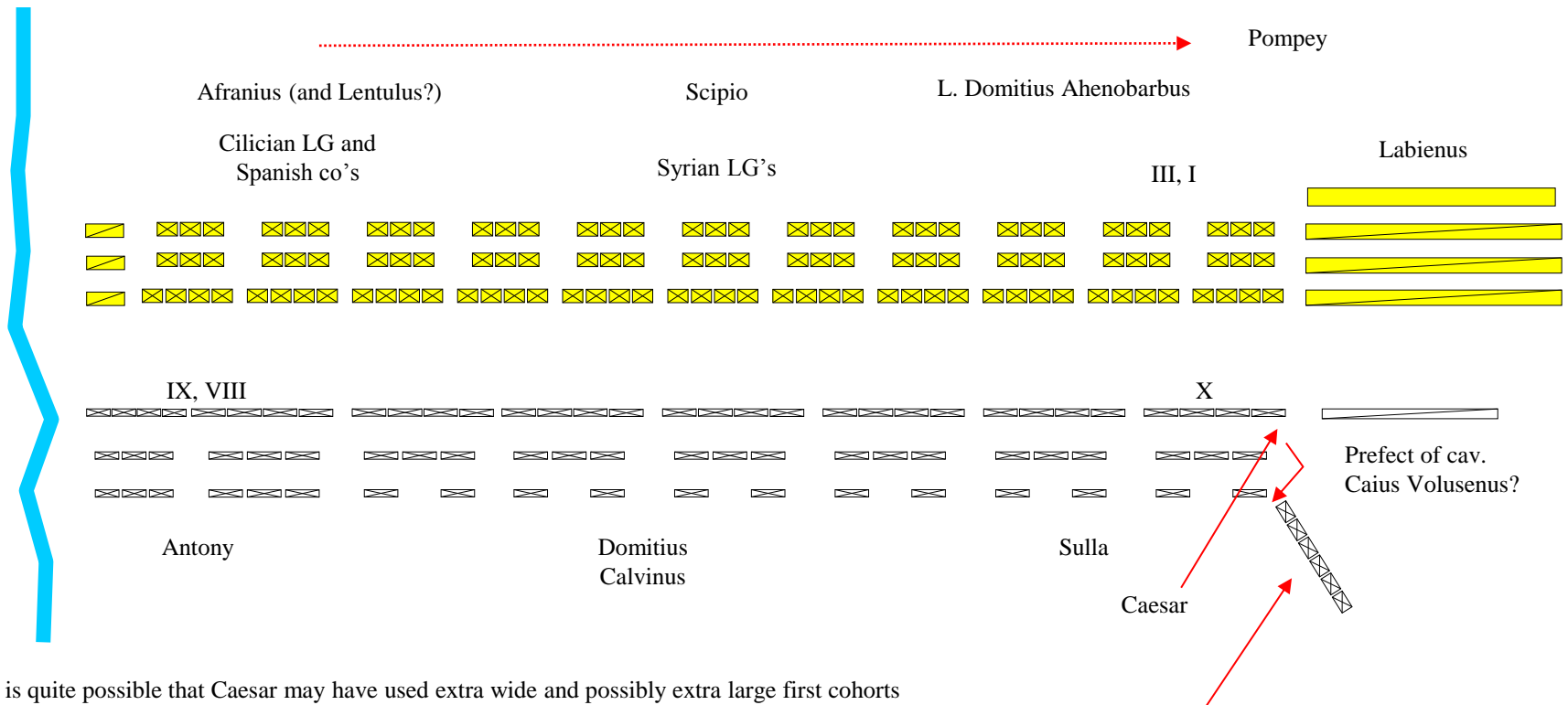
Italian and Allied Infantries?

- According to Appian (BC 2.70ff.) none of the sources enumerated the allied forces in Caesar's service in detail, but concentrated solely on his Italian soldiers and to their dispositions.
- However, according to Appian, who also used Asinius Pollio, who was one of Caesar's officers and present at the battle, Caesar had Celtic cavalry, Greek "peltasts" consisting of Dolopians, Acarnians, and Aetolians. Considering the fact that the Greeks were peltasts (at this time probably armed like the Romans) it is likely that they were posted among the legions as reinforcements for Caesar's depleted forces (most likely on the left wing to fill up IX's numbers). I would also suggest that these were included in the figure of 22,000 just like the sources do not differentiate the individual components making up the 1,000 cavalry. **(Comment 2014: this doesn't preclude the possibility that Caesar may have had more foot than 22,000; He may have wanted to hide the fact that he had more men and that foreigners contributed to his victory).**

- **Appian also mentions that both placed their Italian troops in the middle in three lines with archers and slingers mingled among them, and stated that the allied troops were marshaled separately from those.**
- **Appian also mentioned that the battle began with an exchange of arrows and stones.** It is quite possible that Caesar has left out this regular, but not too important phase out entirely, or that there was no such phase in this battle at all, because Caesar's orders were to engage the enemy immediately at close quarters.
- **The implication of Appian's statement is that each side had Italian archers and slingers**, but it is almost impossible to confirm this from the other sources, and it would not necessarily have been in Caesar's interest to detail his already too few legionaries to light infantry duty:
 - 1) Unless of course the allied peltasts were used as their replacements (not entirely plausible);
 - 2) Or the regular tactic consisted of having them first skirmish as "*antesignani*" after which they returned back to their places in the battle line to take their regular place in the legionary formation where they would change their arms back into *pila* and *gladii* (this is plausible);
 - 3) Or (this is also plausible) both sides employed their armed servants and *ballistarii* as light infantry. None of the sources mention the presence of Cretan archers or Balearic slingers among Caesar's troops at this time, on the basis of which it is unlikely that Caesar had these in this occasion.

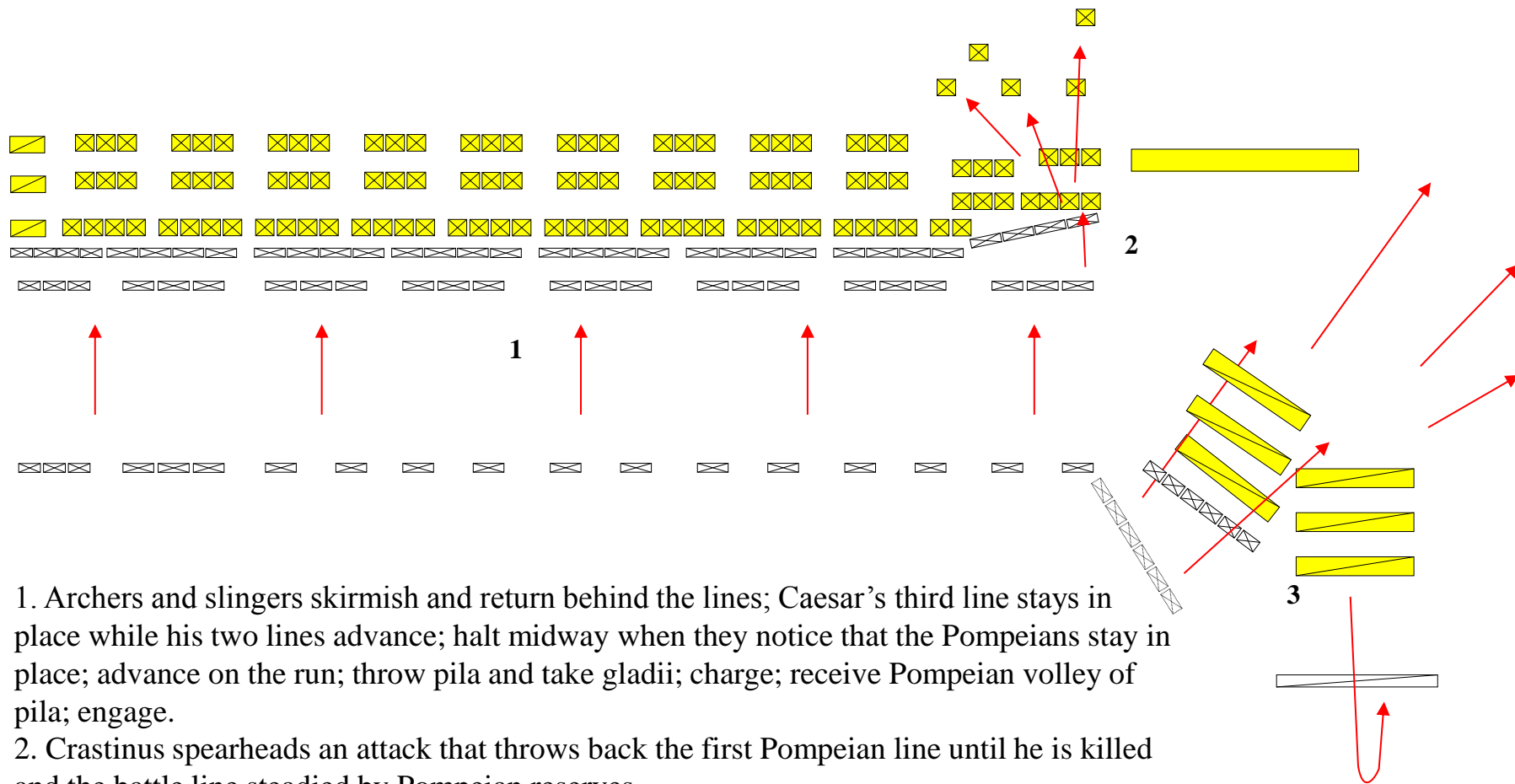
- As regards Pompey's allied infantry, Appian states that the Macedonians, Peloponnesians, Boeotians, and Atheanians were placed near the Italian troops because of their good order with the implication that they were posted as cohorts (Note Caesar BC 3.4).
- The rest of Pompey's allies, the light infantry archers and slingers, were posted outside the battle line, which from Caesar's text (3.88) can be located to have been behind the cavalry.

The sources are in disagreement regarding the command structure: Plutarch (Pomp. 69.1) places Pompey on the RW and places L. Domitius on the LW, Appian (2.76) places both Pompey and Afranius in the camp and Lentulus in charge of the RW, while Caesar (BC 3.88) places Pompey on the LW. It is easy to reconcile the versions by having Pompey first take his place on the RW from which he then moved to right and to make Lentulus sub-commander of Afranius and L. Domitius wing commander of LW.

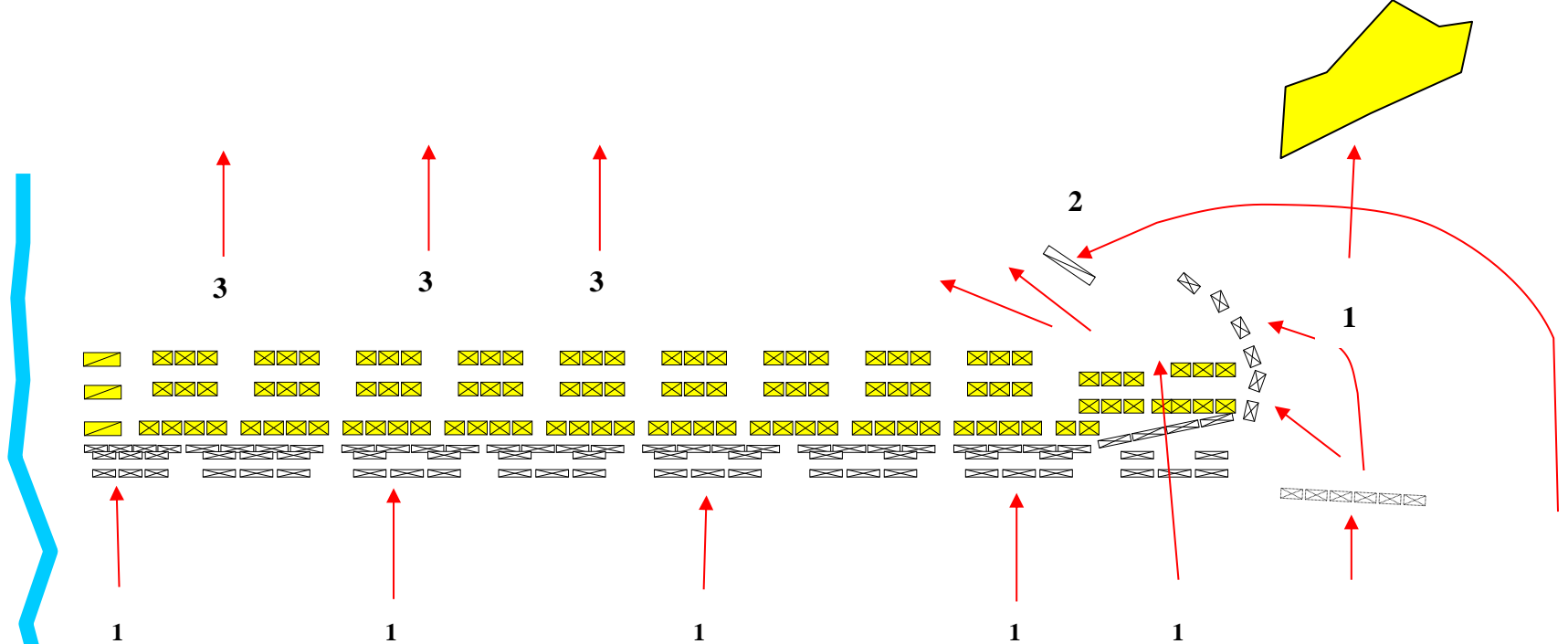


It is quite possible that Caesar may have used extra wide and possibly extra large first cohorts in this battle to make his line of eight legions as wide as that of his enemy's 11 legion wide formation. However, since Pompey deployed his cohorts ten deep (length of the 110 co. line without intervals c. 1566m), it would have sufficed Caesar to deploy his cohorts four deep to make his infantry line longer than his enemy's (length of the 80 co. line without intervals c. 1833m). It is likely that the c. 600 horsemen that were according to Frontinus posted on Pompey's right wing were placed there to make his line equal that of Caesar on that flank to enable Pompey's LW cavalry to outflank Caesar's RW. The deployment of cav. is conjectural. The Pompeian array is based on the info of other Roman battles in which the cav. was arrayed in three lines, while the Caesarian formation is based on a guess that Caesar would have wanted to make his cav. line as long as possible.

- The Fourth Line of 6 Co.
- Unfortunately none of the sources mention, if Caesar had posted his legionary *antesignani* in support of his cavalry at this battle. If he did, it is practically certain that they were posted somewhere in the rear as reserves. However, I am almost certain that in this battle Caesar's Fourth Line formed his cavalry support and that most of these men would have consisted of elite troops he had previously used as *antesignani*.



1. Archers and slingers skirmish and return behind the lines; Caesar's third line stays in place while his two lines advance; halt midway when they notice that the Pompeians stay in place; advance on the run; throw pila and take gladii; charge; receive Pompeian volley of pila; engage.
2. Crastinus spearheads an attack that throws back the first Pompeian line until he is killed and the battle line steadied by Pompeian reserves.
3. Pompeian cavalry attack; Caesar's cavalry retreat; when Pompeian cavalry starts to redeploy as turmae to outflank (i.e. the cav line is in disorder), Caesar's fourth line charge and uses pila as spears against the faces of the enemy's inexperienced young Roman knights causing the latter to flee headlong towards the other turmae infecting all with panic. The Pompeian cavalry flees to the nearby hills evidently pursued by Caesar's regrouped cavalry.



1. Caesar gave his third line order to advance and replace the tired. Caesar's fourth line followed up its success by advancing against Pompey's light infantry which fled and then outflanked Pompey's LW.
2. According to Appian, Caesar's cavalry (if true only part of it) also attacked Pompey's LW with the result that Pompey ordered his men to halt, not to throw javelins but to point them at enemy and form a *probolê* (i.e. bulwark/phalanx) formation to oppose the cavalry. This would indeed have been standard array to adopt against cavalry, but unfortunately Appian associates it with Pompey's initial order for his men to stay in place, which Caesar criticised, which in turn makes his comment unreliable. Regardless, I am still inclined to accept it for the reason that the tactic in question does fit the circumstances. It would also suggest that Pompey did not immediately flee after having witnessed the flight of his cavalry but still tried to save the situation as one would expect from such a good and experience general. However, the Pompeian LW could not respond properly to the combination of Caesar's cavalry and infantry attacking from the front, flank and behind with the phalanx formation and the LW collapsed. Pompey lost his composure and fled to the camp in a state of despair.
3. When Pompey's center and RW saw that their LW was outflanked they at first started to withdraw in good order, but when the flight of the LW became apparent, they also panicked. However, when Pompey's LW had collapsed Caesar sent heralds everywhere to announce clemency for those who would surrender with the result that some of the Pompeians surrendered and let Caesar's men through their ranks to kill the foreign cohorts amongst them. The rest fled to the camp or elsewhere.

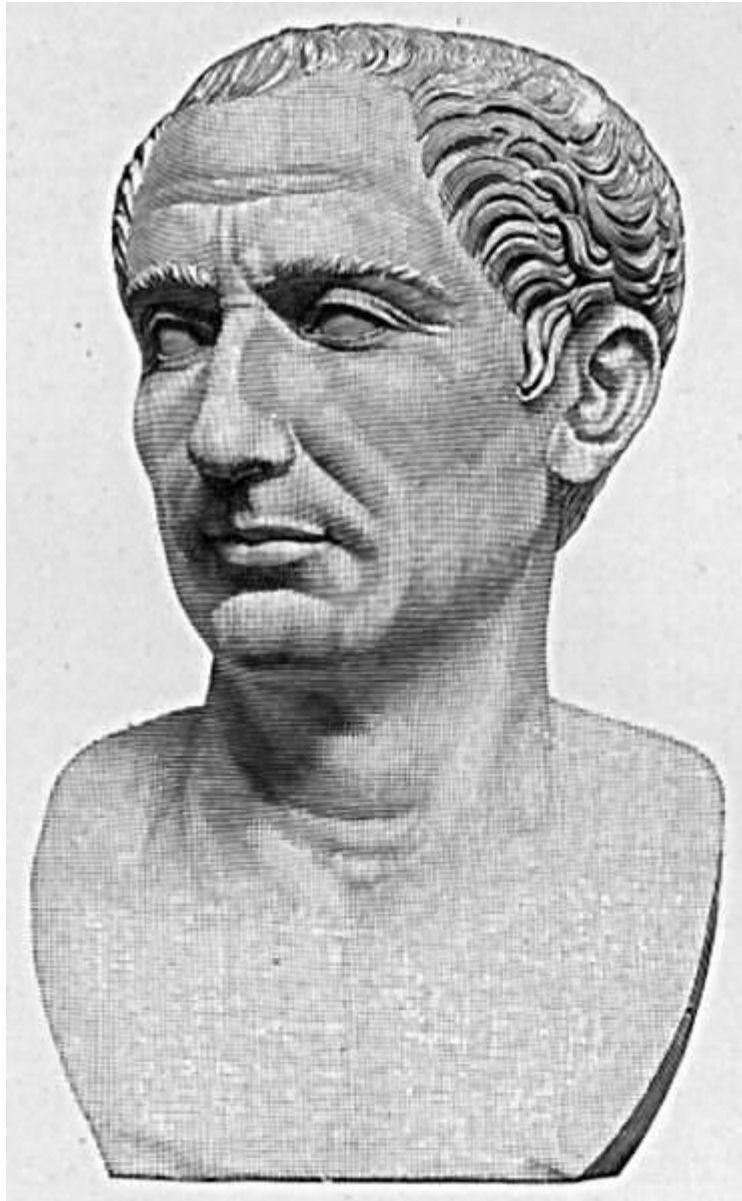
- After the battle the effective mopping up of pockets of remaining enemy resistance and the relentless pursuit of the defeated enemy forces was just as important as the battle in itself and this is what Caesar set out to do and achieved.
- Eventually Pompey fled with the Lentuli to Egypt Caesar in hot pursuit. Egyptians attempted to please Caesar by killing both Pompey and Lentulus Crus, which failed to please Caesar.
- If Lentulus Crus (possibly with Sprinther who died in Rhodes during the flight) was in Caesar's service, he would have kept Caesar informed of Pompey's movements. Caesar was certainly aware of the very move Pompey made during the flight.

Some Conclusions

- I hope to have demonstrated that Caesar's army was atypical army like all armies of the late Republican Rome as a result of which we should not use his army as an example of typical Roman army at the time as has been done by historians.
- I also hope to have shown that the Romans still continued to use legionary cavalry and that the training by gladiators prepared the regulars for fighting in open formation and that the Roman armies included integral light infantry and artillery arms (even Caesar's army had those!)

- I also hope that I have sufficiently demonstrated how significant services Caesar's intelligence arm performed for him under the guidance of C. Balbus Sr., Caius Oppius, and Aulus Hirtius as well as the important role of C. Balbus Jr. Unfortunately, most of their activities remain guesswork based on circumstantial evidence and probability.
- I also hope to have demonstrated that much of Caesar's successes against Pompey were probably the result of one man's services to him who deserves credit (or infamy depending upon the point of view) for his service. This man was Vibullius Rufus. Caesar had to thank him for the spreading of disinformation to Pompey, dividing Pompey's forces at Corfinium, for the opening up of the passes in the Pyrenees (and division of Pompey's forces into two) and for the quelling of the revolt in Italy in 48 BC.

- My aim has also been to show that there are circumstantial evidence that would suggest that C. Lentulus Crus acted as Caesar's agent provocateur who communicated via C. Balbus Jr. at least in Dyrrachium.
- On the basis of circumstantial evidence it is also likely that Lentulus Spinther, who owed his political career to Caesar (incl. his position among the pontificate), may have been a double agent who acted as if he would have deserted Caesar to choose the Pompeian side in 49 BC.
- If these suggestions are accurate, then the services of the Lentuli to Caesar's cause were also very significant.



Source: Wikimedia
Commons

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